“Us” and “them”: reciprocal perceptions and interactions between *amoko* in contemporary Burundi

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To my grandma, who gifted me her passion for travelling
and aroused my curiosity about the world,
who gave me strength every time I felt weak,
and who would have felt so proud of her granddaughter
“following in her grandpa’s footsteps”.

« Car c'est notre regard qui enferme souvent les autres dans leurs plus étroites appartenances, et c'est notre regard aussi qui peut les libérer »

Amin Maalouf, *Les identités meurtrières*

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Abbreviations

AFP: *Agence France Presse*

APDH: *Association pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme*

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CENAP: *Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits*

CNC: *Conseil National de Communication*

CNDD-FDD : *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*

CNRS: *Commission Nationale pour la Réhabilitation des Sinistrés*

CNTB: *Commission Nationale des Terres et Autres Biens*

CVR: *Commission Vérité et Réconciliation*

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FIDH: *Fédération Internationale pour les Droits Humains*

FRODEBU: *Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi*

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

IRRI: International Refugee Rights Initiative

IRSAC: *Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale*

JEDEBU: *Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi*

MONUC: United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

ONUB: United Nations Operation in Burundi

Palipehutu-FNL: *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu – Forces Nationales de Libération*

RADEBU: *Rassemblement des Démocrates pour le Développement au Burundi*

RN: *Route Nationale*

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

SRD: *Société Régionale de Développement*

SSRC: Social Science Research Council

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNIPROBA: *Unissons-nous pour la promotion des Batwa*

UPRONA: *Union pour le Progrès National*

VOA: Voice of America

List of Kirundi terms used in the thesis

Ubwoko (plural *amoko*): "ethnicity". Kirundi term used to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa

Umuryango (plural *imiryiango*): "clan", "extended family", family"

(U)mwami (plural *(a)bami*): figure at the head of Burundi's political organisation until 1966, "king"

Umurundi (plural *Abarundi*): Burundian

Umuzungu (plural *abazungu*): white (man)

Umuzungukazi (plural *abazungukazi*): white woman

Umugenzi (plural *abagenzi*): friend

Umwansi (plural *abansi*): enemy

Umukozi (plural *abakozi*): worker

Ubugabire: agreement in which a donor lent cattle to a client in exchange for part of the products deriving from the animals and some additional services

Ubuhake: Rwandan version of the *ubugabire*

Ubugererwa: agreement in which a donor lent fields to a client in exchange for part of the crops; sometimes, additional services were required from the client in exchange for the cultivation of the fields

Ikiza: scourge

Abamenja (sing. *umumenja*): traitors, enemies of the state, guilty of a morally reprehensible crime

Sindumuja: "I am not a slave"

Abstract

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are Burundi's three *amoko* (sing. *ubwoko*), and are usually referred to as "ethnicities" or "ethnic groups". Open violence between Hutu and Tutsi has existed in this country since independence (1962). Major episodes of violence took place in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, and in 1993 a civil war broke out that lasted several years. In 2000, the signing of the Arusha peace agreement inaugurated a transition period towards the adoption of a new Constitution and the democratic election of a new president, which took place in 2005. The peace agreement institutionalised the presence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa at every level of the state institutions, which allowed for the "de-ethnicisation" of political competition. In the absence of open violence, average citizens could gradually return to their occupations, though the consequences of past conflict remained to be dealt with. In the absence of alternatives, most people adopted practices of "everyday peace" in daily life, in order to be able to live side-by-side with those who had perpetrated violence. Under these circumstances, the salience of belonging to a specific *ubwoko* seemed to have progressively reduced. In 2015, the late President Nkurunziza presented his candidacy for a third term, despite the fact that only two presidential terms were allowed by the 2005 Constitution. This sparked unprecedented street protests in Burundi's then capital city, while hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the country and the repression of the protests caused several hundred deaths. During the violence, references to the *ubwoko* and to past violence appeared more frequently in political discourse, which raised the question of the increased relevance of the *ubwoko* as an overarching identity marker.

Adopting a boundary-making approach, my PhD research aims at understanding how Burundians today define themselves and the others − "us" and "them" − and how salient the *ubwoko* is in the identification of in-groups and out-groups. In different research sites, each characterised by specific space and time dimensions (colonial literature on Burundi, contemporary Burundi, and the Burundian Twittersphere), I analyse processes of boundary making and remaking between "us" and "them", focusing on perceptions and interactions between *amoko* in order to better understand the salience of this belonging. Analysis conducted in different research sites allowed me to build a more complete understanding of the dynamics of group making,

and of the factors making group belonging more or less salient in contemporary Burundi. This type of analysis is of interest to scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners who also work on, or in, other conflict-affected societies. In addition, the innovative application of this type of analysis to the virtual reality of Twitter is of particular relevance in the contemporary age of social media.

Introduction

On a sunny Sunday morning in spring 2018, I was driving down the highway with my mum sitting in the passenger seat. "*I polacs e son proprit une brute race!*" ("the Polish really are a bad race!") she grumbled, while I was passing a huge truck with a Polish number plate. We had just seen the truck passing another truck in front of us, despite it not being allowed to do so. My mum was terrified that while we were passing it, the truck could have made an unexpected move and put us in danger.

At that moment, my mum called the Polish a "race". Should I think that my mum was racist, that she perceived the Polish to be different from "us" and a threatening category because she observed that they were dangerous on the street?

I am quite sure that my mum does not believe in the existence of races that are superior or inferior. In my native language (Friulian), the term *race* does not exactly correspond to the English "race" as it is commonly understood. *Race* in Friulian means "type" and is used in reference to animals, plants, sometimes even objects, and yes, people. It indicates a type, a category of elements that is distinct from another one. When my mum saw the Polish truck passing another truck on the highway, in a moment of panic, she perceived the danger represented by the driver of the truck, whom she assumed to be Polish and who performed an illegal manoeuvre that could have put our lives in danger (my mum, as I assume many mums are when they sit in the passenger seat, is quite anxious when her daughter drives). I am sure that by saying that "the Polish are a bad race", she was not expressing hatred for any alleged Polish race; back then, she also knew that I had a very dear Polish friend. Still, in the very moment when we were about to pass the truck, she observed a behaviour that she distanced herself from, and which she attributed to a group of other people, the Polish, that she judged to be a "bad race". Through her affirmation, a boundary was established between an alleged "us" (Italians? Friulians? Our family?) and "them", the Polish.

How relevant was this boundary for my mum? Was it only related to this allegedly Polish way of driving, or was it related to other Polish characteristics too? Did it only exist in moments of perceived danger, or was it present in her everyday life too? Did any event ever make my mum change her mind about the Polish "race", making this

boundary disappear? Or on the contrary, did any event confirm my mum's fears and thus reinforce the boundary?

To answer these questions, I should have investigated my mum's perceptions of other behaviours of members of the alleged Polish *race*, and her reactions when faced with them. I should have observed under what circumstances this boundary emerged, to what elements it was due, whether it applied to the entire "race" of the Polish or if exceptions were made for some individuals, if it was strong enough to persist over time or if it faded after a while, and for what reasons this happened.

This is the type of analysis I embarked on in my PhD research. In my work, I focused on the Burundian *ubwoko*, a term by which Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are referred to in Burundi, and something I found more intriguing than any alleged Polish "race". Through the analysis of boundary making and remaking between Burundian *amoko* (sing. *ubwoko*), my PhD research tries to shed light on the salience of belonging to a specific *ubwoko* in contemporary Burundi.

*

In Burundi, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are the three *amoko* (sing. *ubwoko*) usually referred to as "ethnicities". Like the Friulian *race*, *ubwoko* means "type" and can be used in reference to plants, animals, inanimate objects, and people (Mworoha 1987: 96).

Figure 1: Writing at the entrance of a shop in Rumonge (South of Burundi): "We sell [sim] cards of all types" (picture taken by myself, 15 January 2020)

My research question aimed to understand the salience of belonging to one *ubwoko* or another in Burundi after the extended series of episodes of violence that started after the country's independence (1962), culminated in the 1993 civil war,[1] was appeased by the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000, and was reignited after the late President Nkurunziza presented his candidacy for a third term in 2015.

My research question originated in my personal trajectory in Burundi. My first stays in this country date from 2012 and 2013, when I conducted a study for my Master degree in the northern neighbourhoods of Bujumbura (the capital city at the time) on youth's perspectives on the past. In 2012 and 2013, the country was experiencing its "post-transition" period, following the election in 2005 of a new president (the late President Nkurunziza, Hutu) and the adoption of a new Constitution. This was a requirement of the Arusha Peace Agreement, signed in 2000 to put an end to the 1993 civil war.[2] Thanks to the quotas provided by this agreement, the presence of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa was institutionalised at all levels of the state. Open tensions between Hutu and Tutsi were thus alleviated, and conflict seemed to belong to the past. I will never forget a puzzling anecdote from 2012, when a Tutsi friend of mine was telling me about the bloody events of the past as we were walking through the streets of Kamenge, stronghold of the Hutu rebellion during the 1993 civil war. While walking, all of a sudden he turned to a random person on the street and asked her if the relations between Hutu and Tutsi were "not good now". We received a prompt "*ego…*" ("yes…"), and continued walking. When I returned to Burundi at the end of 2014, a few months before the 2015 elections, some sort of tension seemed to be in the air. I recall being reminded to be careful by the NGOs for whom I was working back then, while my Burundian friends living in Bujumbura repeatedly reassured me that I didn't have to worry. Whatever tension existed, it seemed to be political, situated in the run-up to the 2015 elections. In 2015, however, references to conflictual relations between Hutu and Tutsi started to circulate again in political discourse. After President Nkurunziza announced his candidacy for a third term in April 2015, a decision which was judged by many

[1] In June 1993, for the first time in the history of the country, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, became president through democratic elections. On October 21st, 1993, Ndadaye was killed in a coup executed by Tutsi military officers. Following the assassination of the president, throughout the country Hutu started to persecute their Tutsi neighbours, accusing them of killing "their" president. A civil war started that was fought mainly between Hutu and Tutsi. In chapter 1 I give an overview of the most relevant events of the history of the country.

[2] At the signing of the agreement in 2000, the two most important rebel groups (CNDD-FDD and FNL) were still active. They officially agreed on a ceasefire in 2003 and 2008 respectively.

opponents as non-constitutional and against the spirit of the Arusha Peace Agreement, unprecedented protests took place in Bujumbura. Many people took to the streets in neighbourhoods inhabited in large part by Tutsi, although protests took place in those mainly inhabited by Hutu, too. The repression of the protests by state security forces targeted predominantly Tutsi neighbourhoods more than the others. Thus, many questioned to what extent the 2015 crisis was "really" political. When I returned to Burundi in 2016, I could sense the tension in the air. Policemen were standing on the streets in Bujumbura, steady, their muscles tense on their guns as if they were ready to shoot at any moment. Once, a friend was driving me around the city centre of Bujumbura; we were chatting cheerily when a van of the *Brigade Anti-Emeute* (anti-riot brigade) unexpectedly pulled into the crossroads in front of us and blocked the street. My friend went quiet, his facial expression changed, and he turned the car around and left the place at unprecedented speed, along with the rest of the cars on the street. The panic was palpable. Was this violence really targeting the Tutsi, as some were saying? It was almost unbelievable to me, considering the atmosphere that I had observed only a few years before. I thus decided to learn more about this question, which is how I embarked on my PhD study. How much did it still matter, to be Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa in Burundi? Did it still represent an overarching identity marker, after the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement (2000) allowed for a de-escalation of tensions and the 2015 violence seemed to revive them?

*

Before discussing the research approach that I used to try to answer these questions, I would like to emphasise that hereafter, I adopt the Kirundi term *ubwoko* (plural *amoko*) to refer to the Hutu, the Tutsi, and the Twa, even though the three groups are commonly referred to as "ethnicities" in English ("*ethnies*" in French). The use of the Kirundi term *ubwoko* in place of "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" is motivated by two main reasons. On the one hand, the label "ethnicity" was first applied to the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa by Western observers during the colonisation of the country, as I demonstrate in chapter 2. The choice to use the emic term *ubwoko* is thus intended to be a first step towards the decolonisation of knowledge on Burundi, which I understand as the endeavour to avoid or at least to reduce the imposition of Western concepts and frames in the study of non-Western realities. On the other hand, the notion of "ethnicity" is understood in different ways by different disciplines, and its meaning changes in time and space (I

discuss these aspects in chapter 1). Before asking the question of whether the Burundian *amoko* "are" ethnicities or not, one should define what is meant by ethnicity, which is in itself a complicated question. By using the term *ubwoko*, I am not suggesting that Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are not ethnicities. In my view, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa can be considered different ethnicities as long as they "entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves" (Eriksen 2010: 16). Regardless of the possible correspondence between the notions of *ubwoko* and ethnicity, in a historical period when different claims for the decolonisation of knowledge on Burundi underline the importance of revising Western framings of Burundian realities,[3] I believe that the use of the Kirundi term *ubwoko* is necessary and that it better reflects the object of my analysis. In my thesis, in only two cases will I use the terms "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" when talking about Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa: either when the terms are included in a citation, or when the use of the term *ubwoko* would hinder the readability of the text, in which case I will include "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" in quotation marks.[4]

The main approach that I use in my thesis to study the salience of the *ubwoko* is through the analysis of boundary-making processes. Like all human groups, Burundian *amoko* are defined by boundaries that allow them to be distinct from other categories. Boundaries between human groups, including *amoko*, do not necessarily "imply closure and clarity" (Wimmer 2013: 10): they emerge when a group of people observe difference in another category of people, which allows them to distinguish an "us", or an in-group, from a "them", or an out-group. Between "us" and "them", boundaries are not necessarily barriers. Even in the presence of boundaries, movements and interactions take place across them. The quality and frequency of these interactions depend on the characteristics of the boundaries, which are never established once and for all. In addition, boundaries never separate one "us" from one "them" but rather there

[3] Within this trend, a debate exists on the genesis of Burundi's "ethnicities", which according to some have been invented and implanted in Burundi (see chapter 1). In my thesis, I do not engage in this debate. The use of the term *ubwoko* instead of "ethnicity" does not aim at avoiding Western notions because they were made up: Western notions may have been imposed in the past, but they have been appropriated by Burundians to some extent, in different ways, for different purposes, and through different strategies.

[4] I am not using quotation marks to imply that Burundi's *amoko* are a sort of imperfect ethnicity or almost-ethnicity, which would reproduce a positivistic understanding of "ethnicity" (according to which ethnic groups are defined by commonality of language, territory, and culture in opposition to other ethnic groups, which does not apply to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi). Not using quotation marks, however, would assume the same positivistic understanding, which is very widespread. I discuss these aspects in chapter 1. Because the term "ethnicity" has been, and is still, understood in different ways by different disciplines, quotation marks intend to serve as a reminder of the ambiguity of the notion, regardless of the fact that in French and English, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are usually called "*ethnies*" and "ethnic groups".

are several "us" and several "them": boundaries can be of different types (political, religious, socio-economic, or cultural, for example), they can partially or entirely overlap, they can have different positions for different sub-categories within the larger group, and these positions vary in space and time, depending on specific circumstances. I dwell on these aspects in chapter 1.

Based on this understanding of "boundaries", in my PhD research I analysed processes of boundary making and remaking between Burundian *amoko* in sites that are located in different spaces and times: the colonial literature on Burundi (analysed in chapter 2), contemporary Burundi (in chapters 3 and 4), and the Burundian Twittersphere (in chapter 5). The study of boundary making and remaking in all these different sites helped me to better understand the salience of the *ubwoko* in contemporary Burundi. Drawing conclusions from studies conducted at different sites, my multi-sited research allowed me to gain a better grasp on the different "ways in which – and conditions under which – [… the] powerful crystallization of group feeling can work" (Brubaker 2004: 10).

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to my study through an in-depth exploration of its theoretical and methodological frameworks. The chapter opens with an overview of the different meanings of "ethnicity" as an analytical category, in order to situate what is commonly understood by *ubwoko* in Burundi. After a short overview of the evolution of the study of "ethnicity" through primordial and constructivist approaches, I contextualise the perspective that I have adopted to study the salience of the *ubwoko* in Burundi: though the analysis of boundary-making processes in people's reciprocal perceptions and interactions. In this section, I explain what I mean by "boundary", how boundaries emerge in perceptions and interactions, what types of boundaries I have considered in my study, what their characteristics are in terms of rigidity and thickness, and how they transform. I dwell on Wimmer's taxonomy of boundary-making strategies (2013: 73), which inspires the analysis conducted in the rest of the chapters. I then explain my methodological framework. I provide information on the methods used to collect and analyse data in each of my research sites, which are characterised by different space and time dimensions. The sites are the colonial literature on Burundi (chapter 2); Bugendana and Mugara (in Burundi) between 2008 and 2020 (chapter 3); Bugendana, Gasunu, and Mugara (in Burundi) between 2018 and 2020 (in chapter 4); the Burundian Twittersphere between 2014 and

2017 (chapter 5). More detailed information on each research site is provided in the relevant chapters. Finally, I reflect on the challenges of conducting anthropological research on identity as a white young woman in an African society where open violence between *amoko* has only recently ended.

Chapter 2 consists of an in-depth review of the literature on Burundi produced by Western observers during the colonisation of the country (1885-1962). In this chapter, I examine the work of boundary making and remaking undertaken by explorers, missionaries, colonial officers, and academics in their descriptions of Burundi's population between 1894 (the year that *Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle*, one of the first written accounts of a journey through Burundi, was published) and 1962 (when the country became independent). The analysis focuses on the position, type, and thickness of the boundaries set by different authors between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. I observe the position of these boundaries in order to detect possible processes of boundary expansion and contraction (Wimmer 2013: 50). To observe along which lines (political, cultural, economic, etc.) the *amoko* were perceived to be different, I analyse the type of boundaries. I examine the rigidity of the boundary to identify transvaluation strategies, aimed at changing "the normative principles of stratified ethnic systems" (Wimmer 2013: 57); boundary crossing, indicating a movement "within a hierarchical system of ethnic categories" (Wimmer 2013: 58); and boundary blurring, which "reduces the importance of ethnicity as a principle of categorization and social organization" (Wimmer 2013: 61). The aim of this analysis is to observe how boundaries changed over time and among authors, in order to better understand the evolution of the early narratives around Burundi's *amoko*. This analysis is relevant to the contemporary debate on the role of Belgian colonisation in Burundi, as it sheds light on the development of the narratives that informed Belgian reforms in the colonies, which in turn affected the social reality of the country, including the relations between *amoko*. More importantly, during my fieldwork in Burundi I could hear several narratives on other *amoko* that retrieved purely colonial narratives. This happened both during the interviews and in mundane situations. Today, in Burundi, colonial narratives still circulate in private spaces, among friends at a bar, or they can be found on social media. This highlights the lasting impact of colonial narratives on people's contemporary perceptions and narrations of each other.

Chapter 3 analyses boundary making and remaking in the reciprocal perceptions of 180 Hutu and Tutsi interviewed between 2008 and 2020 in Bugendana and Mugara. Bugendana (Gitega, centre of the country) was particularly affected by mass categorical violence in 1993, following the assassination of Hutu President Ndadaye in a coup executed by Tutsi military officers. Mugara (Rumonge, southern Burundi) was one of the places in which originated a rebellion in 1972, followed by a brutal repression by the army that targeted educated and wealthy Hutu, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths. This chapter analyses Hutu and Tutsi "groupness", a subjective sense of belonging to a bounded group accompanied by a sense of difference from, or even antipathy towards, out-group members. The analysis focuses on both the ways in which boundaries between *amoko* became thicker in interviewees' recollections, reinforcing groupness, and the ways in which they were perceived to become thinner, reducing groupness. The analysis presented in this chapter shows how violence, either as a physical act or as a discourse, reinforces boundaries and groupness, and how in the absence of violence, boundaries start to fade or become blurred, and groupness decreases. Boundaries fading or becoming blurred are a consequence of, on the one hand, the observation of others' behaviours and experiences of positive contact, and on the other hand, the adoption of categorisations that are not related to the *ubwoko* in the identification of "us" and "them".

Chapter 4 is centred around the notion of "interstitial identities": identities adopted by people situated in an interstitial position, in between the two main groups of their social landscape of reference. The chapter relies on data collected through life histories in three research sites (Bugendana, Gasunu, and Mugara) during 12 months of fieldwork between 2018 and 2020. The notion of "interstitial identities" is one of the most important findings that emerged from my fieldwork. In Bugendana, I could observe two types of interstitial identities: Tutsi former IDPs (internally displaced persons) who left the Tutsi IDP camp and returned to their hills of origin, where mostly Hutu live, and Hutu IDPs living in the Tutsi IDP camp. The interstitial position of these persons is navigated with varying degrees of difficulty. In Bugendana, Tutsi former IDPs seem to live in an existential limbo, suspended between the IDP group, to which they feel they no longer belong, and their community of origin on the hill, into which they do not feel reintegrated, either. In the IDP camp, Hutu IDPs seem to be integrated into the IDP community, but the perception of them, as well as their own self-perception, as "other"

seems to persist. From a boundary-making perspective, individuals in an interstitial position are situated *on* the boundary between groups: they do value belonging to them, but they are stuck in between them, unable to really be reintegrated into either. It is in this way that interstitial identities actually challenge boundaries: not by moving them or altering their meaning, but by positioning themselves *on* the boundaries. Analysis of interstitial identities thus represents an important contribution to the literature on boundary-making processes: it does not focus on the movement and changing meanings of the boundaries (the two main ways identified by Wimmer through which boundaries are re-made) or on their varying degrees of thickness (analysed in chapter 3), but on individuals situated in yet another different position, *on* the boundary between groups. Focusing on people in the interstice helps us to understand how people who find themselves on the boundaries, between "us" and "them", accept, ignore, or contest those boundaries in their everyday life and thus survive, socially speaking.

Chapter 5 analyses the salience of the *ubwoko* through boundary-making and interactions in the virtual field of social media, whose relevance increased in the everyday life of many Burundians after the outbreak of the 2015 violence. Following a shutdown of the main non-governmental radio stations in the country, many turned to social media to keep access to information open. Online, references to the *ubwoko* were made increasingly often in political debate. This chapter analyses the process of increased "ethnicisation" of the memory of Burundian President Ntaryamira between 2014 and 2017 on Twitter. In the first phase of the study, I analyse five discursive strategies, identified inductively and focusing on the text within the tweets, through which boundaries were established between two virtual communities ("us" and "them"). These strategies were accusations against the out-group, use of specific appellatives, expression of praise for members of the in-group, publicisation of commemorative activities, and use of references to the *ubwoko*. The analysis of the employment of these strategies shows that although the boundary separated two communities associated with different *amoko* (Hutu and Tutsi), the two communities were also importantly characterised by different political orientations. In the second phase of my study, I focus on the interactions with the tweets under scrutiny (likes, retweets, and replies), to observe the extent to which interactions between Twitter users followed each other's *ubwoko* and/or political orientation. The findings of my study show that the *ubwoko* was brought up in Twitter conversations for political purposes,

and that interactions primarily followed political lines. The predominantly political nature of interactions on Twitter sheds light on the mobilisation of the *ubwoko* on social media within the establishment of hegemonic discourse.

I conclude my thesis with a reflection on the salience of the *ubwoko* in contemporary Burundi. After summarising the main findings of each chapter, I dwell on memory as one of the most important elements that maintain the high salience of the *ubwoko* in contemporary Burundi, and I emphasise the potential of interstitial identities to challenge the contemporary position of the boundaries between "us" and "them", and to modify the view of Burundi as a "deeply divided society". Therefore, my study is relevant to scholars and policy makers interested in gaining further insight into the waxing and waning of the salience of the *ubwoko* in a post-war context like Burundi, and to those who are willing to reflect on strategies that could encourage the reduced prominence of the rigid divisions of the social world.

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Note for the reader: as a general rule, quotes and citations in the thesis are in English. Excerpts of interviews and tweets in Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, and Kiswahili are always translated into English; the original tweets and the transcriptions of the excerpts are reported in footnotes, when available (not all interviews were recorded). Excerpts of interviews and tweets in French are maintained in French; citations from literature in German and French are translated into English (my translation).

Chapter I: Studying the *ubwoko* in Burundi

« Si vous acceptez la définition de l'ethnie, il n'y a pas d'ethnies au Burundi. […] il n'y a pas non plus de classes sociales. Parce que la classe sociale commence avec l'industrialisation. […] Alors, s'il n'y a pas de classes sociales, s'il n'y a pas d'ethnies, qu'est-ce qu'il y a ? Ils ont trouvé un terme, un néologisme, qu'il y a des 'catégories'. Parce que les Hutu existent réellement, s'ils se considèrent comme tels. Si vous vous considérez comme Hutu, vous l'êtes ! Si vous vous considérez comme Tutsi, vous l'êtes ; si vous ne vous considérez pas comme tel, vous ne l'êtes pas. Et d'ailleurs, sur cette question, il ne peut pas y avoir de secret. »

President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, 2015[5]

Introduction

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are three groups referred to as "ethnicities" in Burundi. Since the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000, these groups have been institutionalised at every level of the state.[6] On the designation of these groups as "ethnicities", however, many scholars do not agree. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa have been referred to in different ways over time: *Völker*, *Stämme*, races, castes, tribes, classes, *amoko*, phratries, totemic groups, ethnic groups, social statuses, hereditary social cleavages, super-clans, ranks, orders, categories.[7] Some believe that Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa do not meet an alleged (sociological) definition of ethnicity because they share territory, language, and culture, for which reason they cannot be called ethnicities (see the late President Bagaza's quote at the beginning of this chapter). Others go as far as to say that ethnicities were invented and implanted in Burundi by the colonisers.[8] Some affirm that every Burundian knows who is Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa.[9] Others affirm that

[5] Jean-Baptiste Bagaza was President of the Republic of Burundi between 1976 and 1987. The quote is from an interview carried out within the project *« Médias-Mémoire-Histoire »* led by the UMR Développement & Sociétés (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne). Online: https://umr-developpement-societes.univ-paris1.fr/menu-haut/recherche/projets-de-recherche/afrique-des-grands-lacs/burundi-2015-medias-memoire-histoire/emission-2-jean-baptiste-bagaza/, accessed 25 December 2020.

[6] I give more details about this in section 1.1.

[7] Chapter 2 of my thesis illustrates the evolution of the understanding of Burundi's *amoko* in the colonial literature on Burundi.

[8] See Burundi AG news, 2018. « Burundi : le 1er coup d'état belge de 1929 ethnicise les Barundi ». Online: https://burundi-agnews.org/histoire/burundi-le-1er-coup-detat-belge-de-1929-ethnicise-les-barundi/, accessed 12 January 2021.

[9] I was told this by several key informants and friends during my fieldwork in Burundi, especially during the debates that followed the government's requirement of international NGOs to provide information on the "ethnic" affiliation of their staff (in September 2018; see Vandeginste (2019) for a detailed explanation of the event). Many NGOs were against providing "ethnic lists" of their staff because this could have exposed employees to potential

Burundians play around with identities according to the circumstances they find themselves in (Gatugu 2018: 50).

In this chapter, I describe how I approached the study of what is commonly known as "ethnicity" in Burundi: the Burundian *ubwoko* (plural *amoko*), a term used to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Kirundi, the main language spoken in Burundi. In the first section, I provide a short overview of the evolution of paradigms for the study of ethnicity, and I introduce the Burundian concept of *ubwoko*. In section 2, I provide an historical overview of the episodes of violence that took place in Burundi, which critically shaped the notion of *ubwoko*. In section 3, I introduce the theoretical framework of my study and I explain the angle that I took to study the *ubwoko* in Burundi: through the analysis of boundary-making in reciprocal perceptions and interactions between "us" and "them". In section 4, I explain my methodological framework, providing information on the methods used to collect and analyse data in my different research sites, each of which is located in a different time-space dimension. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on the challenges encountered during my fieldwork in Burundi, while doing anthropological research on identity as a white young woman in an African society where open violence, oftentimes perpetrated in the name of identity, has only recently ended.

1. Different understandings of "ethnicity": from *ethnos* to *ubwoko*

An excursus on the different meanings assumed by the term "ethnicity" in different times and spaces is necessary at the beginning of every study on ethnicity because it makes it possible to better situate and understand what is meant by "ethnicity" in a specific context. Different groups of people in different parts of the world and in different moments in time used the term "ethnicity" in different ways under different circumstances. Today, groups that are considered "ethnicities" in one context can be called "nations", "minorities", "races" in other contexts. "Ethnicity" can refer to modern migrants, indigenous peoples, proto-nations, ethnic groups in "plural societies", post-slavery minorities (Eriksen 2010: 18-20). Because language is a conventional activity, agreed on by a community for the sake of communication, a

violence against specific "ethnicities", in the present or the future. Many Burundians reacted to this concern by saying that "if they want to eliminate this or that ethnicity, they do not need ethnic lists to know who is who".

universal definition of "ethnicity" does not exist: several definitions and understandings of the concept have existed, and still exist today (Eltringham 2004: 9-10). Different academic disciplines also comprehend "ethnicity" in different ways.

The word "ethnicity" derives from the Greek *ethnos*, which in ancient Greek literature indicated a "body of men" (Liddell & Scott 1968: 480), a distinct category of "beings of common origin or conditions" (Bailly 2000: 581).[10] *Ethnos* was used to refer to populations, to troops, to the category of the males and that of the females, to the ancestors and to the mortals. The term could also be used in reference to animals, indicating races or species. *Ethnos* sometimes indicated a class or corporation within the society, a group of people with a specific occupation.

In anthropology, the term began to be used when the discipline emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in the study of peoples that were being discovered worldwide during Europe's expansionism on other continents. The term then became more common in the 1940s in Francophone anthropology (De Heusch 1997: 185)[11] and from the 1960s in Anglophone social anthropology (Eriksen 2010: 5). In the first publications on Burundi, terms like "race", "caste", and "class" were more common than "ethnicity" to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Although the term "ethnicity" appeared occasionally at the turn of the twentieth century,[12] it started to be used more frequently in the 1940s to indicate Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. This was in line with the scientific paradigms of the time, characterised by a positivistic "obsession of classification and labelling" inherited from eighteenth-century natural science (Chrétien 1985: 131). These studies, adopting primordialist perspectives, conceived of ethnicities as human groups defined by clear boundaries, each group encompassing a specific "cultural stuff" (Eriksen 2010: 44), usually consisting of close ties among the members, a shared identity, and a common culture and language (Wimmer 2013: 16). According to primordialist perspectives, the cultural and genetic patrimony of the group was transmitted to the next generations

[10] *Ethnikos*, the derived adjective of *ethnos*, meant "related to (different) origins".

[11] After the publication of Montandon's *L'ethnie française* in 1935. According to Amselle (1990: 18), the term *ethnie* was introduced by Vacher de Lapouge (in 1896) into the French language: to this author, "*ethnies*" were segments of populations who came in contact with other "races" and ended up being similar to the latter because of linguistic and cultural proximity ("*mixité*").

[12] I analyse the colonial literature on Burundi in chapter 2. In his description of the Twa (1903: 165-75), White Father Van der Burgt affirmed that "Twa" was the "ethnic name" of the race of the Pygmies among the Bantu (1903: 171). Van der Burgt also cited Weule, who mentioned a uniform "*couche ethnique*" of all the pygmies in the world" (1903: 168), and explained that the Pygmies of New Guinea were considered the basis of the entire "ethnic structure" ("*édifice ethnique*") of the Indonesian archipelago" (1903: 173).

through endogamy, making the distinctive physical and cultural traits of the group immutable, or primordial. The aim of primordialist analysts was thus to identify and circumscribe the characteristics of each group, and then put every group in its "right" spot in the puzzle of the world population.

After the publication of Barth's *Ethnic groups and boundaries* (1969), constructivist perspectives started to take hold in anthropological studies of ethnicity. Barth's collection of essays demonstrated that groups' characteristics were not established once and for all: boundaries between ethnicities were porous, and people were allowed to pass from one group to another under specific social circumstances. This profoundly challenged the primordial conception of ethnicities as well-defined static entities, "ideal types" with stable content (Eltringham 2004: 7). Ethnicities started to be conceived of as social constructs, products of social dynamics that varied according to social demands and constraints. These social constructs were adopted by individuals as an identity reference, giving meaning to their social existence. The understanding of these meanings was inseparable from the understanding of the social processes that shaped the ethnicity.

Constructivist approaches to ethnicity, nowadays established in anthropological studies (Eriksen & Jakoubek 2019: 15; Jenkins 2008: 11), shifted attention to the ways in which boundaries are negotiated between groups, and how this work of boundary-making guides the construction of ethnicities. My study adopts this approach to analyse processes of boundary-making between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, Burundi's *amoko*. To identify boundaries, I focus on reciprocal perceptions and interactions between "us" and "them". This focus on perceptions adheres to a cognitive perspective, which analyses "how people see the world, parse their experience, and interpret events" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 43). In my research, I observe the ways in which individuals and groups construct boundaries between themselves and the others, paying specific attention to the differences perceived between "us" and "them", which allow for the establishment of boundaries between in-group(s) and out-group(s). Thus, I approach the Burundian *ubwoko* from a constructivist and cognitive perspective. Before describing the theoretical and methodological frameworks of my study (in sections 3 and 4), in the next subsection I provide some insights on the contemporary notion of *ubwoko* in Burundi.

1.1.Ethnicity in Burundi: defining the **ubwoko**

A constructivist approach in the study of what is usually called "ethnicity" is all the more necessary in Burundi since in this country, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa share most of the markers that are usually adopted to differentiate ethnic groups (language, territory, religion, culture), and physical differences between them are not always as evident (Lemarchand 1993: 160). For this reason, their identification as distinct "ethnic groups" is not as evident as in the case of other groups that have their own language and territory. Along what lines is the differentiation made, then?

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi are considered different *amoko* (sing. *ubwoko*), a term that means "types" in Kirundi. *Ubwoko* is translated as "category", "sort", "variety", and can be applied to tree and mineral species as well as other types of classifications (Mworoha 1987: 96; see also Figure 1 in the introduction of my thesis). The term "ethnicity" was applied to Burundian *amoko* by Western observers during their study of the Burundian population, when the term "ethnicity" was taking hold in their own scientific milieus. The application of a Western notion to a non-Western reality certainly led to an inaccurate comprehension of the local reality (Eltringham 2004: 11); nevertheless, the Kirundi meaning of *ubwoko* is actually close to the meaning of the Greek *ethnos*, a "body of men" (see earlier in this section). This might be due to the fact that "in Indo-European languages as well as in precolonial Africa, part of the terms designating social statuses are ethnic […]. In the names that peoples give to themselves, there is, manifest or not, the intention to distinguish themselves from the neighbouring peoples" (Amselle 1990: 16).

Today, the meanings that substantiate the term *ubwoko* in Burundi fluctuate between "type" or "category" of people, on the one hand, and "nature" of individuals, on the other hand. Two excerpts from interviews conducted during my fieldwork are illuminating in this regard. In January 2020, an interviewee explained the character of past tensions between Tutsi and Hutu. He used the term *ubwoko* twice in his explanation. The first time, he used it to indicate the Hutu. The second time, he talked about the *ubwoko* of the Imbo plain (on Burundi's western lakeshores). In the second case, he restricted the group to a specific portion of the Burundian population. In both cases, however, the term *ubwoko* indicated a specific, distinct "category" or "type" of people.

> "When I returned in 1993, […] I realised that it was a war of hatred between *amoko*. The Tutsi who had the power to govern the country and who composed the large majority of the state institutions, they hated the *ubwoko* of the Hutu. They hated the *ubwoko* of the Imbo plain especially".[13]

In August 2019, another interviewee described her interactions with her former neighbours, who still lived in her community of origin on the hill. When she used the term *ubwoko*, she seemed to refer to the "nature" of her former neighbours.

> "There are some people that we visit and to whom we bring our contribution in drinks when there is a party. But there are other people who really have an evil heart, I do not know how they have been created, or of what *ubwoko* they are".[14]

This interviewee made a distinction between two categories of people among her former neighbours, one that they visit and one with an evil heart. Both categories belonged to the Hutu *ubwoko*, as it became clear during our conversation. The term *ubwoko* as used by this interviewee thus referred to the "nature" of the second category, described as evil.

In addition to these two meanings ("type/category" of people and "nature" of individuals), *ubwoko* is also used to indicate Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi. This underlines the polysemantic quality of the term. When Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are referred to as different *amoko*, they are perceived as different categories of people. If ethnicities are defined as groups of people that "entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves" (Eriksen 2010: 16), as long as Burundian *amoko* entertain ideas of each other as different, they can be considered different ethnicities. In this case, the term *ubwoko* can be translated as "ethnic category". However, because "ethnicity" has been, and still is, understood in different ways, as I explained in the previous section, in my thesis I will strive to use the term *ubwoko* to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Only when the use of the term *ubwoko* would lead to awkward wording, for the sake of readability I will employ "ethnicity" or "ethnic group", keeping these terms in quotation marks. Unless otherwise stated, I will only use the term *ubwoko* to refer to

[13] "*Aho mpungukiye 1993, intambara naciye menya icivuga n'ingene imeze, tuca dusanga n'intambara y'ukuzirana kw'amoko. Abatutsi kuko aribo bari bafise ububasha bwo kuganza igihugu, aribo yari Reta, banka ubwo bw'abahutu. Na cane cane rero banka ubwoko bw'ikiyaya c'Imbo*". Interview, Hutu, male, 59, returnee, Mugara, January 2020.

[14] "*Hariho benshi twaja kuramatsa mbere bafise n'imanza tukabaterera inzoga. bamwe tukagenda. Mugabo hariho abantu bamwe umenga imitima yabo yaraboze, sinzi ingene bameze, sinzi ngira n'ubwoko bavamwo*". Interview, Tutsi, female, 59, IDP, Gasunu, August 2019.

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as the equivalent of "ethnicity" or "ethnic group", leaving aside the other meanings of this polysemantic term ("type/category" and "nature").

Because Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa share the same territory, language, and culture, and physical differences between them are not always as evident (Lemarchand 1993: 160), to identify a Burundian as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa is particularly challenging, and not only for non-Burundians. This problem does not exist when the *ubwoko* of someone's father is known: because the transmission of the *ubwoko* is patrilineal in Burundi, when the *ubwoko* of a father is known, the *ubwoko* of his descendants is also known. When the *ubwoko* of a person is not known, it is detected with more difficulty. More precisely, the person concerned is rarely asked directly, and it is preferable to assume.[15] On several occasions during my fieldwork in Burundi, I was able to observe that physical appearance seemed to be the first, determinant criterion to identify another Burundian in terms of *ubwoko*, when this was not immediately known. A friend once revealed to me: "I can tell you that we Burundians, when we meet someone that we do not know, I observe if he is Hutu or Tutsi".[16] The shape of the nose seemed to be particularly important for this purpose. The recognition made by an interviewee in November 2018 of the *ubwoko* of my translator is illuminating in this regard. The interviewee explained to me that he was Hutu; he then looked at my translator and while touching his own nose, he pointed to the similarity of their noses, which he perceived as large, as a marker of their common Hutu *ubwoko*.

> *« **A: Les natifs du village, eux aussi appartenaient à votre même ethnie ?***
> *I : Non non. C'étaient des militaires, c'étaient des autres ethnies, de même ethnie… peut-être vous aurez entendu parler de « Hutu »…*
> ***A: Oui oui.***
> *I: …Moi je suis Hutu.*
> (The interviewee looks at my translator, and while touching his own nose continues:)
> *I: T. aussi il me semble…*
> ***T: Eh… Ça semble être Hutu.***
> *I: Ça semble…*
> ***T: …Mais je doute!***
> (The interviewee and my translator laugh.)

[15] It is interesting to note, however, that during dowry ceremonies the *umuryango* (usually translated as "extended family" or "clan"), not the *ubwoko*, is the information explicitly requested of the family with which the union is going to take place. The same *umuryango* can include members of different *amoko*. This seems to suggest that when it comes to important life events like marriage, the *umuryango* is a more relevant identity than the *ubwoko*. It is also possible, however, that the *ubwoko* of the other family is "assessed" in other ways before the dowry ceremony.

[16] *« Je peux te dire que nous les Burundais, dès qu'on rencontre quelqu'un qu'on ne connait pas, je regarde s'il est Hutu ou Tutsi »*. Informal conversation, Bujumbura, January 2019.

I: Ok. Mais enfin, l'apparence n'est pas réelle, ne peut pas affirmer que vous êtes de telle ethnie ou de telle ethnie. Mais à partir de cela on peut supposer ! ».[17]

The size and shape of the nose were two of the physical markers of ethnic difference adopted by physical anthropologists in the 1940s and 1950s in their anthropometric measurements of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi. If the use of stereotypical categorisations to identify the "others" based on physical differences exists in most, if not in all, human societies, in Burundi this happens through the use of colonial stereotypes.[18] Obviously, this type of identification of the "others" is not always reliable. Once, my translator and I had dinner with a very tall Hutu friend of mine. Being tall was also considered a distinctive marker of the Tutsi *ubwoko* in the colonial literature on Burundi. We never talked about my friend's *ubwoko* that evening, nor did we in the following days. When I happened to mention, later on, that my friend was Hutu, my translator almost could not believe it: given his height, he was almost certain that my friend was Tutsi. The use of stereotypes around nose, height, and other physical traits (skin colour, wrists, fingers) when identifying another's *ubwoko* shows the lasting impact of colonial narratives around Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, and at the same time perpetuates these narratives. The observed thus seem to "return to the contemporary ethnologist the image that the ethnologist gave to them of themselves" (Amselle 1990: 31). For this reason, analysis of the evolution of colonial narratives around Burundi's *amoko* (in chapter 2 of my thesis) is all the more relevant.

Today, the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa *amoko* are officially recognised as ethnicities thanks to the quotas introduced at every level of state institutions by the Arusha Peace Agreement, signed in 2000 to put an end to the 1993 civil war.[19] In the agreement, Burundi recognises Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, "who make up the one nation of Burundi"

[17] Interview, Hutu, male, former political prisoner, Gasunu, November 2018.

[18] The observation of one's nose to detect his or her *ubwoko* derives from colonial anthropometric practices. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the shape of humans' skulls and other features like hair, skin colour, shape of lips and nose were used by physical anthropologists, in Burundi and elsewhere, as criteria to identify and position different peoples on the world map of human races. In Burundi, to give but one example, in 1916 German geographer Hans Meyer described the prognathous skull of the Hutu as "authentically negro" (1984: 18). I analyse colonial literature on Burundi in chapter 2 of my thesis. To my knowledge, before the colonisation of the country, no physical criteria were used by Burundians to identify each other in terms of *ubwoko*.

[19] The trigger for the 1993 civil war was the assassination of Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye in a coup executed by Tutsi military officers. I provide more information about the main episodes of violence that have marked the history of Burundi in section 2.

(Prot. II, Chap. 1, Art. 2.1).[20] The final *Comments on individual points in the proposals* (Appendix I, section II, Article 2, paragraph 1) mention the difficulties that emerged during the peace negotiations which debated whether to consider Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa "as 'communities', 'ethnic groups', 'peoples', or 'tribes'"; on the one hand, there are no "distinguishing characteristics between these groups or communities (there are no religious, linguistic, colour or reliable physical distinctions)", on the other hand, "the distinction is nonetheless prominent in the people's consciousness". The agreement ultimately adopted the notion of "ethnic group" or "community", relying on the idea of "ethnic identity […] without preferring any particular classification". In addition, the question was raised during negotiations of whether the Ganwa, the *mwami*'s descendents,[21] represented "a separate community or a dynastic clan". Ultimately, the Arusha agreement did not foresee any quotas for the Ganwa. Today, there is no agreement on considering the Ganwa as *ubwoko* or as *umuryango*, a term usually translated as "clan".[22] According to Mworoha (1987: 96), the Ganwa were considered an *ubwoko* in nineteenth-century Burundi. Since 1996, Ganwa representatives have been asking repeatedly for official acknowledgment of the Ganwa as ethnic group (Mworoha & Chrétien 2003: 394). Most of my interlocutors defined the Ganwa as an *umuryango*. Another group that asked for acknowledgment as an ethnic group is the Waswahili, a group of Swahili origin who arrived in Burundi in the 1820s for trading purposes and installed themselves on the shores of Lake Tanganyika (Mworoha 1987: 236). Since 2007, the Waswahili have been denouncing the discrimination against them

[20] Reliable demographic data on the number of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi currently do not exist. The percentages usually mentioned in descriptions of the population of Burundi (85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, 1% Twa) date from colonial times and it is not always clear how they have been elaborated. The most reliable percentages of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi (respectively 86.16%, 12.14% and 1.7%) were provided by Victor Neesen in 1956, after conducting a sample census in 1952 (I discuss this in chapter 2 of my thesis). These percentages are not valid today as they evidently do not take into account all the casualties of mass categorical violence that took place after 1956, and they also do not consider unions between *amoko*, following which out of two *amoko*, only one is transmitted to their descendants. The Arusha Peace Agreement (2000) adopts the percentages of +/- 85% Hutu and +/- 13% Tutsi (Appendix I, section I, B.16). In 2008, in a report on Twa land tenure, the UNIPROBA association (*Unissons-nous pour la promotion des Batwa*) estimated 78,071 Twa in Burundi, equivalent to 1% of the population (Quétu 2020). The methodology used to obtain this number is not clearly explained in this report, either.

[21] Until 1966, the *mwami* (commonly translated as "king") was at the head of Burundi's political organisation.

[22] The *umuryango* (plur. *imiryango*) represents the "family", the "extended family", or the "clan". The same *umuryango* can include members of different *amoko*. According to Simons (1944: 166-169), members of the Ababanda and Abahimba *imiryango* could be found among Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa, and almost all of the *imiryango* classified under the Twa *ubwoko* also figured under the Tutsi or the Hutu *ubwoko*. During my fieldwork in Burundi, a key informant, relying on Marcel d'Hertefelt's *Les clans du Rwanda ancien* (1971), confirmed that the *imiryango* are "mixed" and included members of different *amoko*. As for the Twa, he explained that the Twa usually adopted the *umuryango* of those (Hutu or Tutsi) they were living alongside. This key informant required me not to disclose his identity in my thesis.

introduced by the Arusha Peace Agreement through ethnic quotas (Via Volonté 2017), showing their desire to be recognised as an ethnicity.[23] A proper investigation should be conducted to understand if, when, and why Ganwa and Waswahili are defined as *amoko*, a topic which did not represent the main focus of my own research.

The coexistence of several meanings of the term "ethnicity" is expressed at its best in Burundi through the "semantic plasticity" (Saur 2014: 138) of the term *ubwoko*. A more important question than the definition of these meanings, however, regards their meaning in people's lives. What does the *ubwoko* represent for Burundians, if the distinction between *amoko* is "prominent in the people's consciousness", as observed during the Arusha peace negotiations? A historical overview of the relation between violence and the *amoko* in Burundi will help to better situate this question.

2. Historical overview: violence and the *amoko* in Burundi

The *amoko*, social constructs adopted by individuals as identity references, have assumed different meanings at different points in time in Burundi. To be Tutsi or Hutu did not "have the same meaning in 1994, at the time of the [Rwandan] genocide, in 1894, when the Whites arrive[d], in 1794, when the ancient kingdoms [were] almost at their peak, in 1594, when they start[ed] to structure themselves" (Chrétien 2000: 68). As a consequence of the long series of episodes of violence between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, the *ubwoko* adopted a particular significance. "Dramatic acts of violence" between *amoko* became "absorbed in people's sense of self-identity", rigidified social boundaries between them, and "became a traumatic element of the culture of prejudice" (Uvin 1999: 265-66). Today, identifications and self-identifications in terms of *ubwoko* are often determined by the memory of violence (Chrétien et al. 1989: 51), and they become evident in the different ways in which the historical events of the country are narrated (Nindorera in Gatugu 2018: 50; Manirakiza 2011: 39; Mukuri 2004: 427; Lemarchand 1996: 33). People's reciprocal perceptions and interactions (analysed in chapters 3 and 4 of my thesis) still present signs of past violence. In this section, I

[23] In 2017, the Waswahili expressed their desire to be recognised as an ethnicity during a meeting of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue in Arusha (https://twitter.com/Ikiriho/status/832243935540019200, accessed 13 January 2021).

provide an overview of the main episodes of violence that took place in Burundi and that targeted either the Hutu or the Tutsi *ubwoko*.

Open tensions between Hutu and Tutsi have existed in Burundi since the independence of the country (1962). It is not clear what type of relations existed between these two *amoko* before Belgian colonisation. Some scholars point to "little evidence of ancestral hatreds between Hutu and Tutsi" in precolonial Burundi (Lemarchand 1993: 153). Others describe Burundi's precolonial society as characterised by hierarchy and deep inequalities due to the social division of labour between Hutu agriculturalists and Tutsi herders (Botte 1982: 272). During colonisation, some of the policies implemented by the Belgians (1919-1962) facilitated Tutsi access to power and education to the detriment of the Hutu.[24] This was in line with Belgium's indirect rule approach: the authority of the Tutsi, considered to be "destined to reign" (Borgerhoff 1928: 21), needed to be used to administer the country (Ryckmans 1931: 160).[25] Discrimination towards the Hutu was more significant in neighbouring Rwanda,[26] but in Burundi too the number of Hutu in positions of power or able to access power decreased significantly.[27] Open tensions between Hutu and Tutsi were evident in Rwanda at the end of the 1950s, when the so-called "social revolution" (1959), aimed at ousting the monarchy and the Tutsi nobility, pushed thousands of Tutsi into exile, at least 50,000 of which arrived in Burundi (by early 1965, Lemarchand 1996: 60). This had an impact on the reciprocal perceptions between *amoko* in Burundi (Chrétien & Dupaquier 2007: 19; Mariro 2005: 63), causing a "rapid and irreversible hardening of ethnic solidarities"

[24] The creation of "schools for future chiefs" (in 1919 in Nyanza, Rwanda, and in 1922 in Muramvya, Burundi) and the reduction of the number of *chefferies* (through the administrative reforms of the 1930s) were among the most important policies in this regard.

[25] This view was imbued with theories of Tutsi Hamitic superiority. I discuss these aspects in chapter 2 of my thesis.

[26] As in Burundi, the population of Rwanda is composed of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. In Rwanda, the Belgians "facilitated the investiture of Tutsi chiefs, nominated by the mwami" (Groupe de Travail pour l'Etude du Problème Politique au Ruanda-Urundi 1959: 15), and the "schools of the Administration" were "strictly reserved for sons of chiefs and *notables* of Tutsi race" (Belgian Ministry of Colonies 1930: 62). Additionally, in Rwanda more people had access to higher education ("*enseignement secondaire*", Groupe de Travail 1959: 36). In Burundi, "mixed schools" were established where "some sons of chiefs and of young Tutsi sit next to some Hutu, or some sons of soldiers and of Asiatic traders". In 1929, for instance, the school for future chiefs in Burundi counted 68 sons of chiefs, 118 Tutsi and 110 Hutu (Belgian Ministry of Colonies 1930: 62).

[27] Gahama (1983: 109) reports that between 1929 and 1945, the percentage of Hutu at the head of a *chefferie* (local administrative entity) decreased from 20% to 0%. In 1959, the Belgian working group sent to Ruanda-Urundi to analyse the situation of the territory in view of its forthcoming independence observed that "the Hutu [were] conscious that the benefits of education had been reserved almost exclusively for the Tutsi at the beginning" and that they "[knew] that the Tutsi still represent the majority in higher education establishments [*établissements secondaires*], the large majority in higher education schools [*écoles secondaires*]" (Groupe de Travail 1959: 36).

(Lemarchand 1993: 156). On the eve of independence in Burundi, political competition was not between Hutu and Tutsi but between Ganwa factions. The UPRONA party (*Union pour le Progrès National*), which won the 1961 legislative elections, included Hutu and Tutsi at all levels of the party (Chrétien et al. 1989: 41), and following these elections, the government appointed by the UPRONA leader Prince Louis Rwagasore, a Ganwa, showed an exemplary balance between Hutu and Tutsi (Deslaurier 2002: 1092). The *ubwoko* has assumed a central role in the history of the country since 1965, after Hutu Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe was assassinated by a Rwandan Tutsi refugee (Mariro 2005; Chretien & Mukuri 2002: 13; Chrétien et al. 1989: 42). In the elections announced after the assassination of Ngendandumwe, two thirds of the seats in parliament were won by Hutu representatives of different political parties (Lemarchand 1996: 70).[28] Despite this, the *mwami* appointed Léopold Biha, a Ganwa, as prime minister. Discontented, Hutu gendarmes attempted a coup against the monarchy, which failed.[29] Order was restored by the military, and within the army purges of Hutu elements were carried out. Following these events, according to Lemarchand (1993: 157), "politicised ethnicity became the dominant characteristic of Hutu-Tutsi relations in the countryside".

In 1966, Tutsi general Michel Micombero put an end to this period of instability through a military coup. Micombero abolished the monarchy and installed an entirely Tutsi government; the army was also almost entirely Tutsi. In 1972, Hutu insurgents started a rebellion near Rumonge, in the South of the country. Mugara, one of my three research sites, is one of the centres from which the rebellion is said to have started. The army-led repression caused hundreds of thousands of deaths,[30] and over 100,000 Hutu fled the country (Weinstein in Malkki 1995: 32). The targets of this repression were not only the rebels (called *abamenja*, "traitors")[31] and their suspected accomplices but also Hutu who were educated, wealthy, and in positions of power. In the recollection of many, the

[28] From the UPRONA and the *Parti du Peuple*.

[29] According to Lemarchand (1996: 70-71) and to Chrétien & Dupaquier (2007: 21), the gendarmes were Hutu. Mariro (2005: 184-185) drew attention to the Belgian and French framing of the coup in terms of *ubwoko*: *Le Soir de Bruxelles* (20 October 1965) reported that 40 Hutu military officers attacked the royal palace in Bujumbura, and *Le Monde* (21 October 1965) stated that Biha was Tutsi and a member of the minority that dominated the Hutu until independence.

[30] The number of victims reported by different authors varies between 100,000 and 300,000 Hutu and between 3,000 and 5,000 Tutsi victims (Lemarchand 2002: 552).

[31] The term can also be translated as "enemies of the state" (Purdeková 2017: 343). There is a moral dimension to the term (Manirakiza 2020: 290): "*abamenja*" derives from the verb *kumenja*, "to betray, deceive, or commit an unforgivable act" (Berckmoes 2015: 30).

event became known as *ikiza*, the "scourge" (Chrétien & Dupaquier 2007: 9). Some authors class what happened in 1972 as genocide (Reyntjens 2016: 66; Chrétien 2008: 59; Lemarchand 2002).[32] In the country, these events created "sufficient fear to suppress Hutu unrest for two decades" and "crystallized Hutu and Tutsi identities" through "a climate of permanent mutual fear" (Uvin 1999: 258). Outside Burundi, in Tanzanian refugee camps, the important presence of Hutu facilitated the emergence of a Hutu consciousness through the elaboration of "mythico-histories", which recast and reinterpreted the past in moral terms, "*heroizing* the past of the Hutu as 'a people' categorically distinct from others" (Malkki 1995: 54-55). It was in Tanzanian refugee camps that the Palipehutu, "Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People",[33] was born in 1980.

In 1976, Tutsi colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza installed his rule through another coup d'état. The event was a palace revolution and no open violence took place in the country. Bagaza came from the same municipality (*commune* Rutovu, in the southern province of Bururi) and the same family as Micombero. With the aim of promoting reconciliation, Bagaza adopted a policy of "ethnic amnesia", banning all references to the *ubwoko* (Lemarchand 1996: 108). His argument was that divisions between *amoko* were a colonial heritage and that "ethnicities" did not exist.[34] Tensions between *amoko* were thus passed over. Even if "discussion of ethnicity was taboo", however, it "dominated people's mind" (Uvin 1999: 259). In 1987, Tutsi major Pierre Buyoya took power through yet another coup d'état, and installed an entirely Tutsi Military Committee for the National Salute (*Comité militaire pour le salut national*). Buyoya also came from Rutovu and from the same family as Bagaza and Micombero, and his coup also represented a palace revolution. In 1988, additional violence took place in the northern *communes* of Ntega and Marangara following the killing of some local

[32] Qualifications of the events as genocide were made (outside Burundi) as early as 1972. In September 1972, in a confidential memorandum to US President Richard Nixon, US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger observed that Belgium "publicly denounced the Burundi genocide" (https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/oldcontent/container49546/files/Burundi/ethnic/200972.pdf?_ga=2.260533773.1600245167.1610355587-1622920905.1607690661, accessed 13 January 2021). In 1985, the UN Whitaker report "on the question of the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide" acknowledged that "the Tutsi massacre of Hutu in Burundi in 1965 and 1972" could be counted among examples of genocide in the twentieth century (United Nations Economic and Social Council 1985, par. 24, p. 5).

[33] *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu*.

[34] In an interview conducted in 2015, Bagaza affirmed that he had created a commission in charge of clarifying the "ethnic question" in Burundi from the point of view of social sciences like anthropology, ethnology, and sociology. The commission concluded that "ethnicities" did not exist in Burundi but Hutu and Tutsi were real. To refer to them, the commission adopted the term "category" (see quote at the beginning of this chapter).

Tutsi administrators by some Hutu. The government's reaction was, once again, brutal and targeted the Hutu (Lemarchand 1996: 126). According to Uvin (1999: 259), up to 3,000 Tutsi were killed during this episode of violence; after the army intervened to restore order, up to 20,000 Hutu were killed, and tens of thousands of people took refuge outside the country.[35] In 1991, Palipehutu rebels attacked military positions in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital city at the time,[36] and in the North-West of the country. Clashes took place between rebels and the army, however, casualties were also found among civilians in Bujumbura, as well as among Rwandan Tutsi refugees and Hutu in the countryside. Over a thousand victims were estimated following these attacks (Thibon 1992: 156).

After the violent events in Ntega and Marangara, Buyoya took measures that recognised the existence of tensions between Hutu and Tutsi and acknowledged the need to resolve them. This took place after 27 Hutu sent a letter to the president of the republic in August 1988, to ask him to stop massacres and arbitrary arrests of Hutu, to designate a "multiethnic" national commission to analyse the country's structural problems, and to integrate the Hutu into the political administration of the country.[37] In October 1988, a "government of national unity" was formed that included an equal number (12) of Hutu and Tutsi ministers.[38] In 1991, a "Charter of Unity" was adopted, which every educated person was required to explain to peasants during propaganda sessions (Uvin 1999: 261). In addition, Buyoya opened the country up to democratisation by introducing a multi-party system where parties associated with an *ubwoko* were banned, and he announced democratic elections for 1993. After an electoral campaign characterised by the use of hate speech (Reyntjens 2016: 71; Palmans 2008: 197-221), the 1993 elections were won by Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu from the FRODEBU (*Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi*, founded by Ndadaye himself and others in 1983). Ndadaye

[35] These numbers were communicated to the AFP (*Agence France Presse*), on condition of anonymity, by a Burundian senior official; the following day, Burundi's minister of foreign affairs acknowledged the death of 5,000 persons (Chrétien et al. 1989: 32).

[36] In December 2018, Burundi's political capital was moved to Gitega. Bujumbura remains the economic capital of the country.

[37] « Lettre ouverte du 22 aout 1988 ». *Iwacu – Le Magazine* No. 19, Septembre-Octobre 2013, p. 12. Online: https://medialibrary.uantwerpen.be/oldcontent/container2143/files/DPP%20Burundi/Justice%20Transitionnelle/%C3%A9v%C3%A9nements%201988%20Ntega%20Marangara/Dossier_IWACU_0913.pdf, accessed 05 July 2021.

[38] Nevertheless, despite a Hutu prime minister, the departments of justice and the interior, the police, and the army remained under Tutsi control, and Buyoya assumed the functions of minister of defence alongside his functions as president of the republic and president of the UPRONA (Uvin 1999: 261).

was the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi. His impressive victory (65% of the votes over incumbent Tutsi President Buyoya) came as a surprise for many. More importantly, "although Buyoya clearly had attracted thousands of Hutu votes, the vote was generally ethnic" (Nindorera 2012: 12).[39] Three months after he took office, Ndadaye was killed in a coup executed by Tutsi military officers. The event triggered popular unrest, which then led to a civil war in which hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives. Throughout the country, in retaliation for the assassination of Ndadaye, Hutu attacked and killed their Tutsi neighbours. When the army intervened to restore order, many Hutu were killed. The war severely affected the central province of Gitega, where two of my research sites, Bugendana and Gasunu, are located. After the assassination of Ndadaye, the Hutu dominated CNDD-FDD (*Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*) started a rebellion against the Tutsi army (Nindorera 2012: 13). In 1996, CNDD-FDD rebels attacked the Tutsi IDP camp in Bugendana (one of my research sites), killing more than 600 people in one night.[40] A few days later, Buyoya led a second coup d'état to restore order in the country. The neighbouring countries responded with an embargo on Burundi. In 1998, under pressure from these neighbouring countries, negotiations started in Arusha involving the delegations of 17 political parties to put an end to the violence. In 2000, the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed and a transition period was inaugurated towards the adoption of a new Constitution and the democratic election of a new president. The CNDD-FDD and the Palipehutu-FNL,[41] the two most important rebel groups, were still active. In 2002, a confrontation took place between the army and the FDD on the hills surrounding Gasunu, one of my research sites.[42] According to government sources at the time, the conflict was related to the *ubwoko* because the rebels "were implementing a genocidal ideology directed essentially against Tutsi" (Minister of Defence Gen. Ndakuriye in Human Rights Watch 2002). In 2003, the CNDD-FDD agreed to sign a ceasefire, then in January 2005 it was recognised as a political party and thus joined the political competition. In 2005, elections were held and won by the CNDD-FDD, making its leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, the new president

[39] The Hutu represent the majority of the population in Burundi. See footnote 20 on percentages of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in the country.
[40] I provide a more detailed description of my three research sites in Burundi in chapters 3 and 4 of my thesis.
[41] The FNL (*Forces Nationales de Libération*) were the armed wing of the Palipehutu.
[42] The FDD (*Forces de Défense de la Démocratie*) were the armed wing of the CNDD-FDD.

of Burundi. The last major Hutu rebel movement, the Palipehutu-FNL, was active until 2008 (an important attack on Tutsi Banyamulenge living in Gatumba refugee camp was carried out in 2004);[43] in 2008, it signed a ceasefire sealing the end of open hostilities in Burundi.

A period of relative peace followed these events until 2015, when Hutu President Pierre Nkurunziza (CNDD-FDD) presented his candidacy for a third presidential term, despite only two terms being allowed by the 2005 Constitution.[44] This decision caused unprecedented protests in the streets of Bujumbura, Burundi's capital city at the time. Protests took place in the so-called *quartiers contestataires* ("protesting neighbourhoods"), many of which happened to be populated in large part by Tutsi. Because the repression of the protests focused on these neighbourhoods, many suspected that Tutsi people were being targeted. The question was thus raised about the relevance of the *ubwoko* in the dynamics of violence. While some underlined the fact that among the protesters were Tutsi as well as Hutu (Van Acker 2015: 8), supporting the purely political nature of the crisis,[45] others attributed to the protesters motivations related to the *ubwoko*; according to this second view, an international conspiracy existed for regime change in Burundi that was supported by "the Tutsi" (Ndayicariye 2020; Kavakure 2016), and "the Tutsi" took to the streets because they would not accept the same Hutu president for another five years.[46] During the 2015 violence, clashes between protesters and security forces provoked several hundred casualties, and hundreds of thousands of people took refuge outside Burundi. Several human rights violations were observed by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (United Nations Human Rights Council 2017). Media were also hit hard. After the four main non-governmental radio stations were shut down during the repression of the protests

[43] In a joint report into the Gatumba massacre, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that "the available evidence points to a Burundian rebel organization, the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu – Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL), the only group to claim responsibility, as having probably participated in the massacre, but as being unlikely to have done so on its own. Evidence of the presence of other groups, largely produced by the testimony of survivors of the attack, was credible, but could not be independently confirmed by the United Nations team in its subsequent investigations" (United Nations Security Council 2004: 4).

[44] The CNDD-FDD judged Nkurunziza's candidacy as legitimate because in 2005 the president was elected by the Parliament and not by the population, as required by the Arusha Peace Agreement. Following this argument, Nkurunziza's first effective term would have been between 2010 and 2015, and in 2015 he could have started his second term (Vandeginste 2016: 45).

[45] Chrétien, J.-P. 2015. « Tournant historique au Burundi ». *L'Histoire*. Online: https://www.lhistoire.fr/tournant-historique-au-burundi, accessed 04 January 2021.

[46] The latter explanation was given by some interviewees in Mugara, one of my three research sites in Burundi.

(Frère 2016), many journalists and political activists fled the country and continued their activities from abroad, through social media platforms. Social media thus became a fundamental tool for both information and political purposes. My last research site (analysed in chapter 5 of my thesis) is located on Twitter, one of the platforms showing increased usage since 2015.

This short historical overview shows how since independence, the *ubwoko* has become increasingly intertwined with politics in Burundi: politics was "ethnicised" and the *ubwoko* became increasingly politicised. Violence catalysed this dual process. The consequences of the conflict between *amoko* were not limited to the political arena, however. Violence affected people's lives in several ways, and for a long time. Today, the legacy of this violence is still palpable, both physically and psychologically. Collective memory and identifications in terms of *ubwoko* have been impacted in an important way. It is these identifications that I analyse in my research.

3. The salience of the *ubwoko* in Burundi: boundary-making in everyday perceptions and interactions

The intensity of violence in Burundi fluctuated over time and did not affect all the members of an *ubwoko* in the same way. As a consequence, people's sense of belonging to their *ubwoko* was influenced in different ways. My research aims at understanding the dynamics of the waxing and waning of group feeling for individuals and groups in contemporary Burundi, after the long period of open tensions between *amoko* which began in 1965, a period of relative peace after the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement, and renewed conflict since the outbreak of the 2015 violence.

To analyse the fluctuations of this group feeling, I analysed the work of boundary-making between *amoko*. This responds to a constructivist conception of the *ubwoko* as a social construct to which individuals attach a specific sense of belonging that varies in time. My study focuses on the ways in which boundaries are positioned between *amoko*, which sheds light on the meaning of belonging to one or another *ubwoko*.

In my analysis of boundary-making processes, I have mainly been inspired by the approach proposed by Wimmer (2013), particularly his description of boundary-making strategies (2013: 49-63). In this section, I explain how I have applied Wimmer's approach in my study, and how I have integrated other aspects (namely, the

characteristics of the boundaries) that were not taken into consideration as such by Wimmer (2013). In what follows, the terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic boundary-making", used by Wimmer and other scholars whose work I have relied on, correspond to "*ubwoko*" and "boundary-making between *amoko*" respectively.

In accordance with a constructivist perspective on ethnicity, "the key to identifying communal groups is not the presence of a particular trait or combination of traits, but rather the shared perception that the defining traits, whatever they are, set the group apart" (Gurr in Uvin 1999: 255). This "setting the group apart" corresponds to the establishment of a boundary. When a group of people observe difference in another group of people, they are establishing a boundary between themselves and the others. A group of people is always identified as "other" in relation to "our" group, an in-group that is "non-other" and which comes into existence through the definition of the "others". Boundaries "draw the line that delimits an imagined community of 'people like me'" (Lamont 2000: 3), which always implies the acknowledgment of those who do not belong to that community: "each identification ('I am Swiss') […] implies a categorical boundary (the non-Swiss)" (Wimmer 2013: 3). The definition of community boundaries, however, "is a continuous process of endo- and exo-assignation: […] the fact of being and considering oneself as Jewish is inseparable from the way in which the others, the *goyim*, perceive the Jewish as such" (Amselle 1990: 36).[47] This permits a better understanding of Eriksen's conception of ethnicities as social and cultural constructs indicating groups of people that "entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves" (2010: 16). In line with this definition, Burundian *amoko* can be considered different ethnicities as long as they entertain ideas of each other as different. When this happens, a boundary emerges between *amoko*.

Boundaries are not necessarily barriers: they do not always "imply closure and clarity" (Wimmer 2013: 10) and they do not necessarily lead to cleavages. In the first place, boundaries allow an "us", an in-group, to distinguish itself from a "them", an out-group. This responds to the human need for identity and belonging and does not automatically imply the existence of tensions or conflict between "us" and "them". In fact, boundaries

[47] Maalouf (1998: 35) goes as far as to say that "what determines a person's belonging to a group is essentially the influence of the others: the influence of the close ones […] who try to appropriate her, and the influence of the opposite ones [*ceux d'en face*], who strive to exclude her".

can be more or less thin or thick, and present different levels of rigidity. The thicker the boundary, the bigger the distance between "us" and "them", and the higher the probability of experiencing tensions between "us" and "them". The thinner the boundary, the closer the groups transpire to be.

Boundaries also have other types of characteristics. Boundaries can be porous to differing degrees: even in the presence of boundaries, and regardless of their thickness, movements and interactions take place across them. According to specific circumstances, individuals can cross the boundary and join the "other" group (which thus expands its boundary), or they can be "expelled" by a group that does not recognise them anymore (which thus contracts its boundary). The quality and frequency of these movements depend on the characteristics of the boundaries, which are never established once and for all. Boundaries can be of different types: territorial, political, economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic. The type of boundary reflects the lines along which the differentiation between groups is made: a political boundary emerges when groups are characterised by different political interests; an economic boundary when they have different positions in the economic system; a social boundary when they have different positions in the social structure; a cultural boundary when cultural differences are evident; and so on. On these "bases of societal segmentation […] across groups", "patterns of inclusion/exclusion" then emerge (Lamont 2000: 241): boundaries thus make possible the defining of who belongs to "us" and who belongs to "them". Boundaries of different types can have different positions between groups, entirely or only partially overlapping, and they can have different positions for different sub-categories within the larger group. Boundaries can exist between different groups (inter-group) or inside the group itself (intra-group). For this reason, boundaries never separate one "us" from one "them", rather there are always several "us" and several "them". Because different types of boundaries with different positions and characteristics coexist at the same time, individuals have "multiple belongings", which "have not the same importance, in any case not at the same moment" (Maalouf 1998: 19), and not for all the members of the same group. Thus, in Burundi, depending on different factors and circumstances, boundaries are relevant in different ways for different members of the same *ubwoko*. Through my research, I do not aspire to provide a comprehensive explanation of how Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa perceive each other in contemporary Burundi, which would ultimately reproduce (wrong) culturalist

perspectives. Through a purely qualitative analysis of individual life histories, my study provides in-depth insights into the factors and circumstances that allow specific processes of boundary-making to take place in contemporary Burundi.

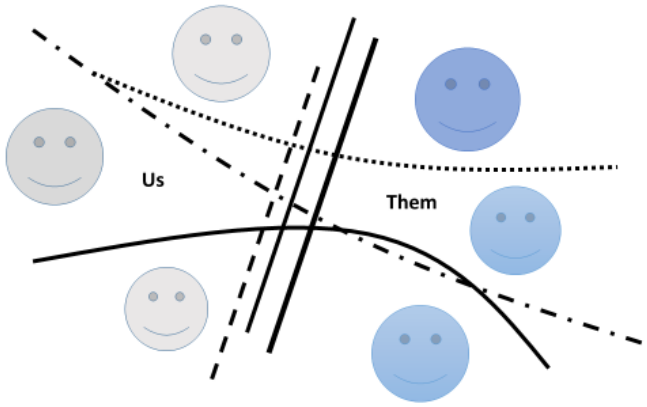

Figure 2: Different boundaries between "us" and "them"

Individuals and groups relate to boundaries in different ways depending on the boundaries' characteristics (thickness, porosity, type, position) and according to specific circumstances that vary in space and time. The identification of these elements represents the focus of my analysis of boundary-making processes. Wimmer identified two main ways in which boundaries are made and remade: through changes in the position and changes in the meaning of the boundaries. Changes in position happen through boundary "expansion" and "contraction", which "shift an existing boundary to a more inclusive or a more exclusive level", either "through fusion, which reduces the number of categories and expands existing boundaries, or through fission, which adds a new category and thus contracts previous boundaries" (Wimmer 2013: 50). Changes in the meaning of the boundaries happen through transvaluation strategies, which "try to change the normative principles of stratified ethnic systems" (Wimmer 2013: 57). This happens either through "normative inversion", when "the category of the excluded and despised comes to designate a chosen people, morally, intellectually, and culturally superior to the dominant group", or through "equalization, which aims at establishing equality in status and political power" (Wimmer 2013: 57). Transvaluation strategies do not challenge the position of the boundaries but redefine their meaning. Boundary "crossing" and "blurring" do not contest the position of the boundaries themselves either, but they do allow group members to change position vis-à-vis the boundaries, in

different ways. Boundary "crossing" indicates an individual or a collective repositioning on the other side of a boundary (Wimmer 2013: 59). Boundary "blurring" reduces the importance of the main principle of categorisation and social organisation while other principles are promoted (Wimmer 2013: 61), for instance by emphasising local or global communities of belonging (Wimmer 2013: 62).

In the different chapters of my thesis, I analyse boundary-making processes not only by observing changes in the position and meaning of the boundaries, but also by observing changes in the characteristics of the boundaries, especially their thickness. In this way, my analysis sheds light on an additional aspect that is not analysed as such in Wimmer's taxonomy of boundary-making strategies: inter-group distance. The distance between two groups depends on each group's perception of each other as different. Perceived differences can be cultural, linguistic, religious, etc. The more different the out-group is perceived to be, the more distant it is from the in-group. Inter-group distance reveals the thickness of the boundary between them: the bigger the distance, the thicker the boundary between "us" and "them"; the thinner the boundary, the closer the groups will be. Inter-group distance, like boundaries, varies over time, leading to processes of inter-group distancing (when the distance increases and the boundary becomes thicker) or inter-group rapprochement (when the distance decreases and the boundary becomes thinner). Inter-group distancing and rapprochement do not coincide with movement of the boundaries or with changes in their meaning, but these processes represent the basis for the occurrence of the strategies identified by Wimmer. Figure 3 shows the relation between boundaries' thickness, which reveals degrees of inter-group distance, and boundary-making strategies. After a boundary appears, specific circumstances can make it thinner (up arrow in Figure 3) or thicker (down arrow), otherwise it remains as it is (right arrow). Boundaries become thinner when groups become closer; if the circumstances that made the boundary thinner do not change, the process continues in the direction of the dissolution of the boundary. Wimmer's strategies of boundary expansion and boundary blurring (second column in Figure 3) are more likely to take place when a process of inter-group rapprochement is underway. On the other hand, boundaries become thicker when groups become more distant; processes of inter-group distancing lead to more rigid boundaries that are more difficult to dismantle. Wimmer's strategy of boundary contraction is more likely to take place under these circumstances. Finally, when the degree of thickness remains the same, strategies of boundary crossing

and transvaluation, which do not challenge the position of the boundaries in the social structure, are more likely to take place.[48]

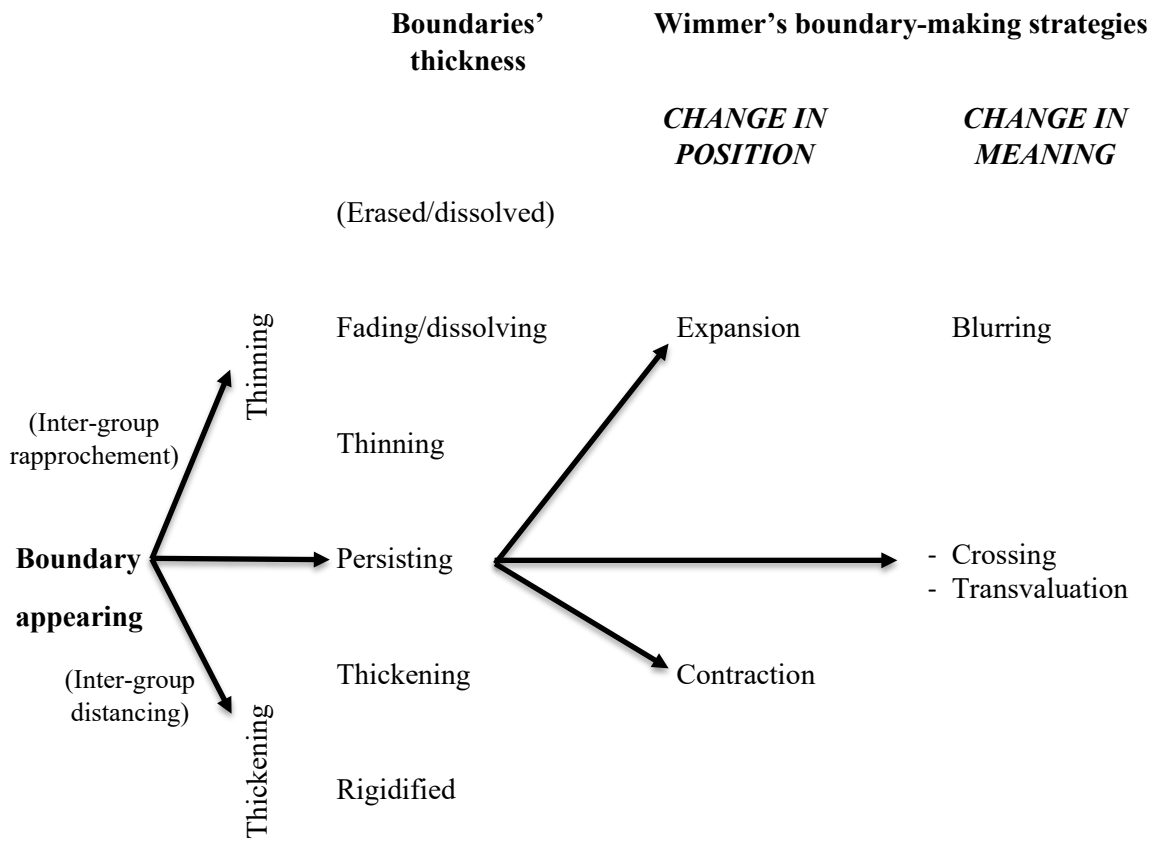

Figure 3: Relation between boundaries' thickness and boundary-making strategies

Boundaries have both a categorical and a social or behavioural dimension. By dividing the social world into "us" and "them" (categorical dimension), according to their different characteristics, boundaries also offer "scripts of action – how to relate to individuals classified as 'us' and 'them' under given circumstances" (Wimmer 2013: 9), which highlights the boundaries' behavioural dimension. This means that boundaries can be detected and analysed in perceptions, or "acts of social classification and collective representation", which reveal the boundaries' categorical dimension, and in interactions, or "everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing" (Wimmer 2013: 9), which reveal the boundaries'

[48] In Figure 3, transvaluation strategies, boundary crossing and boundary blurring are in the same sub-column ("change in meaning") because none of the three strategies changes the position of the boundary. However, they do change the meaning of the boundary, in different ways. Through transvaluation strategies, the system of boundaries is not contested and individuals' positions in that system do not change but they assume new meaning; through boundary crossing, the system of boundaries is not contested but individuals' positions in that system do change. Boundary blurring, on the other hand, emphasises other levels of community belonging.

behavioural dimension. Adhering to a cognitive perspective, my study of people's perceptions allowed me to observe "in and through [what] perceptions, interpretations, representations, classifications, categorizations, and identifications" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 45) the *ubwoko* existed. Through the analysis of life histories, I aimed to identify when and how "change" happened in perceptions, when "people accept[ed] or question[ed], consciously or unconsciously, the meaning of existing social relations" (Robin 2020: 375). The analysis of perceptions was completed and sustained by the analysis of interactions, as the influence between perceptions and interactions is reciprocal. If perceptions orient one's actions when faced with the others, the actions of the others also "get classified (and thereby interpreted and experienced)" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 43), influencing the original perception of the others. Perceptions can be affected by actions taken by members of the in-group too. The analysis of people's interactions, through participant observation, allowed me to better understand people's perceptions and to assess their reliability, especially because people do not always behave in accordance with the opinions they express. In addition, such analysis allowed me to detect elements of the "struggle over the boundaries of belonging" that are "more subtle, implicit, and nested into the everyday web of interactions among individuals […]: the subtle joke that tells the immigrant what her place in the social fabric should be, the quick glance indicating 'I know what you mean' when someone evokes the bonds of shared ethnicity" (Wimmer 2013: 4). These elements, which can only be observed in people's interactions, also helped to contextualise people's perceptions.

A focus on perceptions of "us" and "them" is in line with Wimmer's invitation to select "nonethnic units of observation" in research designs, which makes it possible "to observe *both* the emergence of ethnic closure and its absence or dissolution" (Wimmer 2013: 38). Following this approach, boundaries would emerge in a setting that is not ethnically marked and the researcher would observe when and how boundaries are ethnic, to detect "when and why people interpret social experience in […] ethnic […] terms" (Brubaker 2004: 87). This helps us to avoid assumptions about the salience of ethnicity by observing when, where, and how it becomes salient (Brubaker et al. 2006: 15), and it prevents the misinterpretation of boundaries as ethnic, when they actually derive from other types of connections (like family ties, common trajectories of migration, spatial proximity, similar educational background), although such

connections may nevertheless "produce an ethnic pattern in the aggregate" under certain circumstances (Wimmer 2013: 6).

While this is the approach that should ideally be adopted to de-ethnicise research designs in order to have a better grasp on the salience of ethnicity (Wimmer 2013: 38), it has been challenging to apply it in Burundi, a country where conflict between Hutu and Tutsi has left an important mark on both territory and society. In my research, I tried to keep my approach as inductive as possible in order to observe "the taken-for-granted categories [that people] mobilize when interpreting and organising the differences that surround them, without predefining specific dimensions of identity as particularly salient" (Lamont 2000: 4). I used this inductive approach during my fieldwork in Burundi (discussed in chapter 4) and in my research on Twitter (presented in chapter 5). Thanks to this inductive approach, during my fieldwork I could identify individuals who seemed to fit into neither of the two main groups of reference in their social landscape, but instead seemed to show an "interstitial identity". To elaborate this notion, I relied mostly on the work of four scholars who studied liminality (anthropologists Van Gennep, Turner, Honwana) and in-between spaces or interstices (critical theorist Bhabha), whose literature I discuss in chapter 4.[49] On the other hand, I focused explicitly on the boundaries between *amoko* in the study of the colonial literature on Burundi (in chapter 2), and in the analysis of the waxing and waning of Hutu and Tutsi groupness (in chapter 3), "the emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 19). In these two chapters, I observed the characteristics of the boundaries separating different *amoko* and their transformation over time.

During my fieldwork in Burundi, perceptions and interactions in everyday life were the object of my analysis for two main reasons. Firstly, ethnicity is best understood in terms of "practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines" (Brubaker 2004: 11). During my fieldwork, I tried to observe how the *ubwoko* was "experienced and enacted […] in everyday life" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 167) because "what people do on a daily basis is central in the construction of selves and societies" (Robin 2020: 384): people "learn about their world

[49] In itself, this literature did not represent background literature for my fieldwork, which was therefore not informed by it. I deem it more appropriate for discussion in chapter 4 to help the reader contextualise the notion of "interstitial identities", which does not emerge in the rest of the chapters.

through situated interactions with the materials and spaces of daily life, which encode and express social identities and power relations" (Robin 2020: 375). Secondly, a focus on everyday life recognises "the agency and significance of actors at the sub-state level" (Mac Ginty & Firchow 2016: 309) in the construction of the *ubwoko*. "Ethnicity" is associated by many Burundians with a political sphere that is perceived as elitist, distant, confused, and where incomprehensible decisions are taken that are a source of trouble for the average citizen, who might only care about "having to eat, go to sleep and be able to wake up the following day".[50] This has certainly been reinforced by the political tradition of the country (Manirakiza 2017: 66-67), and by the history of open conflict between *amoko*, started after the *ubwoko* became a fundamental card in the political game and an essential tool for political mobilisation and activity. A focus on everyday life aimed to correct for the "elite bias of much constructivist research", which mostly takes into consideration "visible constructions, such as those of political entrepreneurs" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 52). Academic research on Burundi has similarly analysed mainly the relation between ethnicity (*ubwoko*), politics, and conflict,[51] while a minority of studies have taken into consideration bottom-up perspectives or analysed the ways in which people relate to their *ubwoko* in daily life (Berckmoes 2014; Samii 2013; Sommers 2013; Ingelaere 2010; Turner 2010; Malkki 1995). Focusing on the salience of the *ubwoko* outside the institutional or political sphere, therefore, is not only a way to recognise that people's daily activities are equally "constructive" of the *ubwoko* (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 855), but it also fills a gap in academic literature on Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi. Of course, this does not intend to support any alleged separation of a political sphere from the societal one, as politics is always a product and part of the society and is very present in people's everyday life.

[50] This was the definition of "security" given by many interviewees during the study conducted in 2008 and 2015, discussed in chapter 3 of my thesis.

[51] A comprehensive list of scholars who have worked on these aspects would be too long to be included here. Historians (like Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Emile Mworoha, Melchior Mukuri), political scientists (like René Lemarchand, Filip Reyntjens, Devon Curtis, Patricia O. Daley), and constitutionalists (like Stef Vandeginste) have worked extensively on the relationship between ethnicity (*ubwoko*), politics, and conflict.

4. Methodological framework

My research can be defined as multi-sited (Marcus 1995) because it has been conducted in different research sites, each of which presents a different time-space dimension. This helped me to approach my object of analysis from different angles and to thus have a more complete understanding of the work of boundary-making in contemporary Burundi. Drawing conclusions from studies conducted on different sites, my multi-sited research gave me more insights into the different "ways in which – and conditions under which – [… the] powerful crystallization of group feeling can work" (Brubaker 2004: 10).

My research sites are located in the colonial literature on Burundi (analysed in chapter 2 of my thesis), in contemporary Burundi (studied in chapters 3 and 4), and in the Burundian Twittersphere (investigated in chapter 5). In each of these sites, the objective of the analysis was the same: the study of boundary-making processes in reciprocal perceptions and interactions between "us" and "them" or between *amoko*. Because of the distinct nature of each site, the methods employed for data collection and analysis were slightly different in each one. Table 1 summarises the characteristics of each research site and the methods used to collect and analyse data.

Chapter	**Time dimension**	**Space dimension**	**Methods used**		
			Type of data	**Data collection**	**Data analysis**
Chapter 2	Burundi's colonial period (1885-1962)	Colonial literature on Burundi	Colonial writings	Desk study	Narrative analysis
Chapter 3	2008; 2015	Bugendana; Mugara (Burundi)	Life histories	(Secondary data analysis)	Narrative analysis
	2018-2020	Bugendana; Gasunu; Mugara (Burundi)	Life histories	Semi-structured interviews; informal conversations; participant observation	Narrative analysis; participant observation
Chapter 4	2018-2020	Bugendana; Gasunu; Mugara (Burundi)	Life histories	Semi-structured interviews; informal conversations; participant observation	Narrative analysis; participant observation

Chapter 5	2014; 2015; 2016; 2017	Burundian Twittersphere	Tweets	Data scraping through Twitter Search Tool	Content analysis; discourse analysis

Table 1: Summary of the characteristics and methods used in each research site

The perceptions and interactions analysed in chapter 2 are those observed between Burundian *amoko* and described by authors writing on Burundi during the colonial period. The perceptions analysed are actually those of the authors of the writings, who filtered through their lens the reciprocal perceptions and interactions observed between Burundian *amoko*. The distinctions under scrutiny in the chapter are therefore not those made by Burundians between "us" and "them", but those made by "external analysts […] between 'them' and 'them'" (Eltringham 2004: 8). In their descriptions of Burundi's population, the authors set specific boundaries between *amoko*; the evolution of their narratives shows the work of boundary-making that they applied (top-down) to Burundi's society. Because colonial narratives had an important performative character (colonial officers had the power to implement policies that reflected their perception of the local reality), the analysis of the evolution of those narratives is of particular interest. In addition, not only do many contemporary narratives around the *ubwoko* derive from colonial narratives, but some of the contemporary narratives reproduce the colonial ones in their entirety, which raises the question about the reasons for the persistence of specific categorisations of "us" and "them" over time.[52]

In chapters 3 and 4, the analysis of people's perceptions was made possible by the collection of life histories, through which extremely in-depth insights into one's life can be gained, and which represent the best method to analyse subjectivity, the realm of perceptions. A life history is "a purely subjective account – a detailed *perspective* on the world" (Plummer 2001: 20), and it is in this type of lengthy account, which explains how events have been experienced and interpreted, that perceptions more easily emerge and can be analysed. Human beings organise their "experience and […] memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative-stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on" (Bruner 1991: 4). For this reason, life histories shed light on the way people interpret "'reasons' for things happening" (Bruner 1991: 7). In life histories, both perceptions and scripts for action can be identified that shed light on

[52] To Gatugu (2018: 54), this is due to people's difficulty to distance themselves from colonial stereotypes and elaborate a new image of themselves, which results in the adoption of a non-reflexive identity (2018: 63). I touch upon these aspects in chapter 2 of my thesis.

the nature of the boundary between "us" and "them", because they suggest to the protagonist how to relate to the "others". In addition, the long format of life histories facilitates the detection of life disruptions and is certainly relevant for the study of change, as it sheds light on "the processes by which social life and human relationships are made and changed" (Laslett in Riessman 2013: 171).

The analysis of people's interactions was conducted during my fieldwork in Burundi through participant observation, during my long-term or repeated presence in the research sites. I conducted two periods of fieldwork in my three research sites (Bugendana, Gasunu and Mugara), one between mid-October 2018 and the end of January 2019 (3 and a half months), and one between the end of July 2019 and the beginning of April 2020 (8 and a half months). During these 12 months I was based in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital city; to reach my three research sites, I stayed in Gitega, in the centre of the country, and Rumonge, in the South, from where I travelled with my translators to the research sites.[53]

Figure 4: Location of my three research sites (Bugendana, Gasunu, and Mugara) in Burundi

[53] I discuss further the methodology adopted during my fieldwork in Burundi in chapter 4 of my thesis.

My translators and I could not spend the night in the sites, either for security reasons or because there was simply no place to sleep. For this reason, it was not possible to conduct the traditional type of anthropological participant observation in the sites, which requires the researcher to "live" the everyday life of her interviewees, to participate in their lives while observing them. To address this flaw, my translators and I went to the research sites every day for several days in a row, returning to our "base" (Gitega or Rumonge) at the end of the day. Even when we were in the research sites, however, conducting participant observation was extremely challenging for us as outsiders, especially because we aimed to investigate sensitive topics like boundary-making between groups after episodes of violence directed against specific *amoko*. In the sites, we could not observe interactions in more private areas of people's everyday life, where "ethnicity [might have] 'happened' in the course of ordinary daily routines" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 16). For this reason, many of the interactions analysed were not directly observed but instead were narrated by their protagonists during the interviews. The interpretation of these narrated interactions poses the same problems as the interpretation of life histories, as I discuss in the next subsection. However, my long stays in Bujumbura, in addition to my previous experiences in the country, allowed me to observe interactions and hear stories that also unveiled boundary-making dynamics. Although these interactions and stories did not come from the research sites in the countryside, they allowed me to contextualise what I could hear and observe there, as they gave me more tools with which to assess the verisimilitude of the data collected in the research sites (Bruner 1991: 13).

In chapter 5, boundary-making in perceptions and interactions was observed in yet another way: through content and discourse analysis of tweets, conducted inductively. On Twitter, I observed a process of boundary-making that led to the emergence of two distinct communities within a time span of four years. Perceptions of "us" and "them" emerged in the tweets through the use of specific discursive strategies. Interactions between Twitter users took the form of likes, retweets, and replies, which represent the only type of interactions between accounts publicly observable in a virtual reality.

4.1. Challenges and limitations of the fieldwork

Conducting research never comes without challenges or limitations. In this subsection, I discuss the most important challenges that I encountered during my fieldwork in

Burundi. I reflect on the interpretation of the life histories that I collected, and on some ethical aspects of my research. In the next subsection (4.2), I reflect on the way in which two of my identities (being a *muzungu*, "white", and being a woman), which transpired to be particularly salient in the field, might have affected the data collected and the way in which I understand them.

One of the most important challenges of my research is related to the analysis and interpretation of the life histories. As narratives are always situated in social spaces and in time, they need to be contextualised in order to be properly understood. Individual autobiographies are at "the intersection of biography, history, and society" (Riessman 2013: 170), "placed within a continuity provided by a constructed and shared social history in which [interviewees] locate [their] Selves and [their] individual continuities" (Bruner 1991: 20). Past events, narrated retrospectively, are told "from the vantage point of present realities and values" (Riessman 2013: 182). For this reason, one must not approach life histories in a realist or positivist way, looking at the content of the story, but in an interpretive way (Plummer 2001: 238), looking at the way in which the content is narrated. The aim of the analysis is not to reconstruct the events as they happened but to observe their narration: "'truths' rather than 'the' truth of personal narrative is the watchword" (Riessman 2013: 181). In addition, individual narratives are situated on the very stage on which the interviewee performs her story in front of the researchers. Narratives are in fact performances co-produced by the teller and the listener(s). By telling stories about their lives, people perform their preferred identities (Riessman 2013: 176), and during these performances, the audience is placed in a specific position of power and knowledge. The positioning is reciprocal, as audiences also position the tellers in terms of their background knowledge, and in the light of their presuppositions about the interviewees' background knowledge (Bruner 1991: 17). The outcome of these performances depends strongly on both the listener's and the teller's "intention attribution" and background knowledge (Bruner 1991: 11). This co-produced character of narratives is particularly accentuated in countries like Burundi, where people need to navigate the uncertainty provoked by alternating periods of "enduring crisis" and "looming crisis" (Berckmoes 2017). Under these circumstances, the "issue of *intention*", i.e. "'why' the story is told how and when it is" (Bruner 1991: 10), is especially relevant: the word ultimately becomes "a means to an end", serving "the status connection between the interlocutors or the broader relationship with the socio-

political environment surrounding them" (Ingelaere 2009: 518). Burundians are thus able to show an "extraordinary capacity to be double",[54] adapting their identity (including their *ubwoko*, Gatugu 2018: 50) to the circumstances, in a more radical and instrumental way than other individuals for whom their own identity and beliefs do not pose any problem and can therefore be expressed without fear.

In front of a *muzungu*, a white person, this is even more accentuated because of the extremely powerful figure represented by the *muzungu* in the eyes of many Burundians.[55] A *muzungu* represents a gateway to opportunities (of any type): for this reason, social desirability is particularly strong before a *muzungu*. Narratives about past episodes of violence may not be told eagerly not only because violence is morally (and socially, at least publicly) reprehensible, but also because any possible negative judgment from the *muzungu* must be avoided: a negative impression on its[56] part would undermine any possibility to improve one's life (through the opportunities that the *muzungu* could provide). On the one hand, this perception of the *muzungu* might have pushed many people to agree to answer my questions, because by having a conversation with me, they would have been exposed to higher chances of benefitting from any possible advantage deriving from me. In this regard, the "issue of *intention*" (Bruner 1991: 10) was particularly relevant: in a post-war society characterised by widespread impunity, interviewees may open up to a foreigner "when they have identified in her an ally who would support their ideas or causes" (Gatugu 2018: 56); when the foreigner is a *muzungu*, perceived as an extremely powerful figure, this tendency can be more accentuated. On the other hand, discomfort felt during narrations of violence was sometimes concealed with the provision of "readerly texts", narratives that were "so socially conventional, so well known, so in keeping with the canon" that they would

[54] Rugero, R. 2016. « L'extraordinaire capacité de dédoublement au Burundi ». Facebook post. Online: https://www.facebook.com/notes/roland-rugero/lextraordinaire-capacit%C3%A9-de-d%C3%A9doublement-au-burundi/1098402783557753/?comment_id=3128079490590062, accessed 29 December 2020.

[55] To give but one example: one day I was asked by an interviewee, outside the context of an interview, if I had any contacts at the United Nations because "the community" wanted to send a letter to Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, to have their complaints about land issues heard.

[56] I use the pronoun "it" to emphasise the alien character of the *muzungu* to many Burundians, especially to inhabitants of small villages in the countryside who are rarely exposed to the views of *bazungu* (plural of *muzungu*). Within the *muzungu*, the behaviours, emotions, and needs of a human, i.e. vulnerable, being are most often not recognised, precisely because of the perception of the *muzungu* as an extremely powerful figure. In this non-acknowledgment of the *muzungu*'s sometimes basic emotions and needs, in this "denial of subjectivity" (Nussbaum 1995: 257), I see the objectification of an important part of the figure of the *muzungu*. In my view, to recognise one's subjectivity is to recognise his/her person, and so I refer to the *muzungu*, deprived of his/her subjectivity, through the pronoun "it".

not have required any interpretation (Bruner 1991: 9). Thanks to several exchanges with my translators and thanks to my previous knowledge of the Burundian context, gained through previous stays in the country, I could more comfortably detect when this was the case. Readerly texts allowed interviewees to avoid facing painful experiences from their past while fulfilling their moral duty to welcome a foreigner and accommodate her requests, which is a culturally valued behaviour. The *muzungu* could thus be pleased, and then got rid of, as it was provided with what it seemed to be looking for, however superficial that could be. The same happened with questions that in the interviewees' opinion touched upon political topics, which I nonetheless carefully avoided, given the political situation of the country when I did my fieldwork.[57] Answers to my questions were never refused, but Burundians' well-known discretion (the so-called "*réticence*" or "*réserve*" in French) was expressed at its best in them. I am convinced that such discretion reveals an accurate calculation of the interests at stake in a conversation (people protect themselves by avoiding saying things that could get them into trouble, Longman 2013: 261) more than it expresses a romanticised view of Burundian culture as one of politeness and reserve.

This calculation of the interests at stake during the conversations, however, requires a reflection on the ethical dimension of anthropological research on identity in a society where open violence, oftentimes perpetrated in the name of identity, has only recently ended and its legacy is still very present in people's everyday life. In different ways and times, violence has affected everyone in Burundi. To ask someone to open up about her life means to ask her to recall and narrate violent episodes of her life, which is very demanding. At the very least, one needs to be able to detect topics that the interviewee does not want to discuss, and accommodate her will. This might be challenging given Burundians' way of dealing with emotions, the open showing of which is considered inappropriate ("tears always fall inside [one's body]" says an illustrative proverb).[58] My repeated visits and previous research experiences in Burundi helped me a great deal in detecting these moments and in trying to be delicate when asking sensitive questions.

[57] My fieldwork took place in the two years before the 2020 elections. Elections are always awaited with fear in Burundi because in the past they have always been followed by violence. For years, democratic space has been shrinking in Burundi. Political opponents were persecuted in the run-up to the 2020 elections, but human rights violations are still happening throughout the country (The Burundi Human Rights Initiative 2020). In addition, since 2015 at least, an explicit anti-*muzungu* discourse exists that considers the whites as enemies of the government.

[58] "*Amosozi y'umugabo atemba aja mu nda*" in Kirundi.

Nevertheless, several times I had the impression that when asking about the past, though as delicately as possible, it was as if I were scratching around a scar that had never healed properly and was still painful. The further the conversation went, the closer to the scar I was scratching. I will never forget some of the interviewees' looks (defiant, angry, alienated), gestures, and postures when they were telling me their stories. A couple of times, when the interviewee could not bear it any longer – moments which were effectively beyond my control – the wound seemed to open again. The interviewee then opened up impressively, telling us all the details of her suffering, sometimes in an incredibly detached way, sometimes shedding a few tears. This only happened with a few interviewees, luckily. When this happened, I felt terribly guilty, and apologised for asking overly sensitive questions. Unexpectedly, this opening-up created an incredible bond between the interviewee, my translator, and myself. I could see how relieved the person was after this cathartic moment, as if she had removed at least part of an abscess that she was hiding even from herself. After the interview, when I was seen in the research site, I felt I was treated as a more familiar person. Some even thanked me at the end of an interview for asking such personal questions, leaving me even more disoriented. I like to think that they thanked me because during our interview they had the chance to get some pain off their chest, which they might not always have the opportunity to do with their family members and neighbours, and that in this way I could thank my interviewees for the data they provided me with.[59] Others, on the contrary, tried not to have anything to do with me anymore and treated me like a total stranger.

This last aspect reminds us that in Burundi, the way in which past events are recalled and narrated can be affected by trauma. Besides all the ethical considerations involved in interviewing possibly traumatised people, when trauma impacts memory, leading to confused and inconsistent accounts of life events, perceptions can be difficult to analyse, even from an interpretive point of view. For all these reasons, which underline the situatedness of the narratives, I am convinced that the life histories that I collected in Burundi "were not about 'what happened' (itself a questionable concept). What I

[59] I did not give any money or any other type of material benefit in exchange for an interview. The interviewees were informed of this at the beginning of the interview. Participation was entirely voluntary. The interviewees were informed that they were not obliged to answer questions that they did not want to answer, and that the information provided during the interview was confidential and would remain anonymous. My methodology was examined and approved by the Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Antwerp before I went to the field.

heard was how people *saw* what happened, or, rather, how people *remembered* what they saw, or, rather, how they *talked* about what they remembered, or, rather, how they talked to *me* about what they remembered – or, rather, what I heard people say to me about what they remembered" (Roy 1994: 5).

4.2.Researching identity in Burundi as a **muzungu**

When analysing Burundians' perceptions of "us" and "them", I could not help but reflect on the ways in which I, white young woman doing research in an African country, was perceived as "other" – or rather, how I perceived myself to be perceived as "other". People's perceptions of me provoked specific self-perceptions in me that affected my approach to the field, the quality of the data collected, and the way in which I later analysed that data.[60] The reciprocal influence of perceptions and self-perceptions of the researcher in the field is not particular to anthropological research but exists in every type of research, regardless of the discipline of reference, because every conversation between two human beings is co-constructed. It is important to understand the reciprocal positioning of researcher and researched because it is central to the type of data that the field constructs, and on which the researcher later relies for her final analysis.

The two identities that were attributed to me and that most affected my approach to the field were the identities of *muzungu* and of woman. My identity as *muzungu* was the most visible when face-to-face with my interlocutors. Skin colour, in the first place, made me a *muzungu*. Like the word "white", "*muzungu*" as a social construct has different meanings, most of which are positive in Burundi: the *bazungu* (plural of *muzungu*) are usually seen as wealthy, healthy, beautiful, powerful, reliable, effective, they attract admiration. For these reasons, a *muzungu* has easier access to data than a non-*muzungu* researcher. A *muzungu* should be pleased because it represents the possibility to access (life) opportunities. In addition, in my three research sites in Burundi, a few *bazungu* had been there before me on behalf of NGOs or international organisations, which reinforced this perception of the *muzungu* as someone in a position of power. Because of my skin colour, this was also the assumption about me. This came with an entire set of expectations that were addressed to me in differing degrees of

[60] During data analysis, I needed to make an important effort to detach myself from the memory of the self-perceptions experienced in Burundi evoked by the data under scrutiny.

politeness, at the end of the interviews or at any time during my daily life – when I was seen on a moto-taxi, walking down the street, eating at a restaurant, and so on. Many times, besides requests for money, jobs, or material things, no other type of conversation was started with me. This represented a heavy psychological burden for me because it was a daily reminder of what I perceived as my objectification, of the fact that I was not considered as much as a person as I was perceived as a thing from which opportunities could have been extracted.[61]

My second most visible identity was that of woman. This identity also helped me to gain access to sensitive information because women are usually perceived as less powerful than men in Burundi, and therefore more inoffensive if "secret" information is revealed to them. Women are expected to be "well behaved", more reserved, more polite. When my female identity was recognised, these were the types of assumptions that were projected onto me too.[62] At the same time, a woman can provide men with sex, marriage, children. More or less consciously, these are the expectations that came into the minds of some men and that were more or less explicitly expressed when I came onto the scene. In fact, if the *muzungu* is desirable because it is a gateway to opportunities, a female *muzungu* (a *muzungukazi* in Kirundi, by which name I have been rarely called though) can be even more desirable because as well as money, jobs, and material benefits, a man can dream of, expect, or demand sex too. Evidently, what I perceived as my sexualisation, next to my objectification as a *muzungu*, represented an additional layer of psychological burden.

Many other scholars before me have reflected on the relation between the researcher's gender and the field. In Rwanda and Burundi, Johnstone (2019), Wittig (2015), and Vorrath (2013) explained how a "gendered introduction" to the field provokes strong, uncomfortable emotions in the researcher that are difficult to handle in the presence of the interlocutors and that affect the type of answers that the researcher will be able to

[61] See footnote 53 on the "denial of subjectivity" (Nussbaum 1995: 257). A puzzling anecdote illustrates well this perception of the *muzungu* as someone from whom resources should be extracted. The owner of the house where I was staying during my first period of fieldwork (2018) once came to me to tell me that she had heard people calling the *bazungu* "*mangement*" in the city centre of Bujumbura, a word which she had never heard before. *Mangement* is an invented word in French deriving from the verb *manger*, "to eat": to call a *muzungu* "*mangement*" is then to consider the *muzungu* a thing to eat or a place where one can eat. I myself have never heard that word applied to a *muzungu*, and I have never understood why the lady told me this anecdote.

[62] Vorrath (2013: 62) reported being told by a "close Burundian contact" that "you can ask everything, because as a white female researcher they [elites] will confront you differently and maybe are more willing to talk", a preferential position which was repeatedly confirmed, and sometimes made her feel uneasy.

collect; this in turn can make her question her skills as a researcher, who is supposed to be objective, distant, and asexual (Johnstone 2019: 78). It is in this way that people's perceptions of and interactions with me (or the way in which I perceived them to perceive and interact with me) affected both my perception of them and my approach to the field. Reflecting on people's perceptions of me certainly affected my self-perception, which also had an impact on the way in which I approached the field.

The interplay between the others' perceptions of me (or the ways in which I perceived myself to be perceived) and my perception of the others is at the basis of the establishment of boundaries, as I have explained in section 3. This interplay closely resembled the "continuous process of endo- and exo-assignation" (Amselle 1990: 36) in reciprocal perceptions of "us" and "them" that I was exploring in my research. Because the identities of *muzungu* and of woman were often attributed to me in a categorical way,[63] leaving little or no room for other types of identity, I wondered if the establishment of boundaries between "us" and "them" was made with the same level of categorical violence,[64] and whether the same cognitive mechanisms (stereotypes, social categorisations, and schemas, Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 37-44) used by many Burundians to situate me were employed in the same way to situate other Burundians as well. Although I do not have an answer to this question, nor will I answer it through my research, I believe that the way in which I noticed identities to be attributed categorically to the "others", be they people from another *ubwoko*, neighbourhood, region of origin, gender or other "belongings", was influenced by the way in which I noticed identities being attributed categorically to me. To acknowledge this is not to admit my incapability of providing an intended objective analysis (analysis is never really objective, in any type of research, though different degrees of objectivity may exist) but to recognise the "human factor" in my research, my subjectivity, my positionality, and the situatedness of my research.

A flaw in my research is represented by the fact that I did not have any conversations with Twa people. This is due to the ethno-geographical setting of my three research sites in Burundi, where the Twa seem to live separated from Hutu and Tutsi, and to the

[63] Many times I felt that there was "no need to interact" with me, "to listen, to think, it suffice[d] to look: to see is to know" (de Montaigne 2018: 31). Because of my skin colour, visible to everybody, I was simply a *muzungu*.
[64] The non-acknowledgment of one's "multiple belongings" (Maalouf 1998: 19) represents, to me, a form of violence.

approach adopted to select the interviewees in the field (described in chapters 3 and 4 of my thesis). Although this might shed light on Burundians' reciprocal interactions, I recognise this as a flaw because it reproduces a long-standing focus on the Hutu-Tutsi conflict within research on Burundi (Quétu 2020), which overlooks the dynamics of violence that the Twa, as an *ubwoko*, have gone through. Due to time constraints, I could not investigate this aspect during my periods of fieldwork, and it is definitely worth investigating in future research.

Chapter II: The making and remaking of the *ubwoko* in the colonial literature on Burundi

> "When I was young, the *amoko* were already separated. […] The Hutu excluded the Twa, the Tutsi excluded the Hutu. The same source [of water] could be shared between Tutsi and Hutu, but the Twa had their own source. Pottery was for the Twa, cows for the Tutsi. Hutu could have cows, but not many [Hutu]. And they did not become Tutsi. They used to say that the Tutsi came from the Banyarwanda. Not all the Hutu were poor though. Some who had cows were very influential in society."[65]

Introduction

The quote at the beginning of this chapter was provided by a 71-year-old woman interviewed in October 2019. The lady drew very clear-cut boundaries between Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa in the society that she could observe when she was young. She admitted however that some Hutu had cows, at a time when cows were "for the Tutsi", and that some Hutu were rich and influential, apparently thanks to the cows, a condition which seemed to pertain to the Tutsi. This description followed her statement that "today things have evolved ("*c'est le progrès*"), but in the past, a Twa could not approach a Hutu". When asked how she came to learn all this (did her parents tell her? Her teachers at school? Her neighbours?), the lady replied that she had learned this through proverbs.

Burundian proverbs provide stereotypical descriptions of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa. Guillaume (1956: 116) reported that the Hutu said of the Tutsi that they are not grateful; Rodegem (1983) reported several proverbs about the Twa being negligent and despicable, the Hutu being unreliable, and both the Tutsi and the Hutu being ungrateful.[66] During my fieldwork, I heard sayings such as "hurry up, like poverty among the Tutsi", or "*umuhutu wawe*", "your Hutu", to indicate a person at someone's service.

The lady's description of Burundi's society as characterised by thick boundaries between *amoko* very much resembles the rigid descriptions provided by some of the colonial literature on Burundi, which I analyse in this chapter. In this literature review,

[65] Interview, Hutu, female, 71, never displaced, Bugendana, October 2019.
[66] In addition, there were explicit links between pottery and the Twa, and cows and the Tutsi.

I focus on the knowledge produced on Burundi by external observers during the colonial period of the country, more precisely on the way in which Burundi's society has been narrated in the colonial literature. The aim is not to assess to what extent colonial narratives were faithful representations of the "reality" of colonial Burundi, which would adhere to a realist approach and would be an impossible task. In this chapter, I study the evolution of the narration of Burundi's society, contextualising the major turning points in the development of these narratives.

This study consists of an in-depth review of the literature produced by explorers, missionaries, colonial officers, and academics writing during Burundi's colonial period (1885-1962), and is focused exclusively on Burundi.[67] The focus is on the relations between *amoko* in Burundi as narrated by these authors. This analysis is inspired by Wimmer's taxonomy of boundary-making strategies (2013: 49-63, see chapter 1) and focuses on three characteristics of the boundaries between *amoko* as described in colonial literature: position, type, and thickness. The position of the boundary could be between *amoko*, or within the same *ubwoko*. The type of boundary between *amoko* was determined by the lines along which the *amoko* were perceived to be different: phenotypic boundaries were detected when the *amoko* were said to have different physical traits; occupational boundaries when their dedication to different occupations or professions was described; political boundaries when the *amoko* were characterised by different political positions and interests; economic boundaries when they were said to have different economic systems; cultural boundaries when cultural differences were pointed out between *amoko*; social boundaries when the *amoko* were said to occupy different positions in society. The thickness (or degree of rigidity) of the boundary revealed the degree of inter-group distance perceived by the authors. Alongside these three characteristics, I observed the employment, by the authors of the texts, of strategies that changed the meaning of the boundaries: transvaluation strategies, which aim to change "the normative principles of stratified ethnic systems" (Wimmer 2013:

[67] The list of publications analysed tried to be as comprehensive as possible. I identified all the authors who have written on Burundi since the appearance of the first written texts on the country, then restricted the selection to writings that described the population of the Urundi (leaving out, for instance, analyses of economic issues). When an author was particularly prolific (e.g. Van der Burgt, Ryckmans), I took into consideration his main works, leaving out notes and shorter reports. Only works on Urundi and on Ruanda-Urundi were analysed. In the works on Ruanda-Urundi, I focused on the sections talking about the Urundi (although this procedure was often difficult to apply, as I explain in section 2 of this chapter). Publications that mostly reproduced previous narratives without showing a significant work of boundary-(re)making were not taken into consideration. The authors of the writings had different nationalities and backgrounds. In total, 27 books and articles (in French, German, and English) were scrutinised. The publications are mentioned throughout the text and a list can be found in the final bibliography.

57); boundary crossing, which indicates a movement "within a hierarchical system of ethnic categories" (Wimmer 2013: 58); boundary blurring, which "reduces the importance of ethnicity as a principle of categorization and social organization" (Wimmer 2013: 61).

The aim of this study is to observe how boundaries between *amoko* transformed over time and among authors, in order to gain a better grasp on the evolution of the narratives around Burundi's *amoko*. This analysis does not aim to understand "what it meant" to be Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa in colonial times for the members of these *amoko*: for this purpose, one should investigate the meanings attributed to belonging to a specific *ubwoko* by its members, which could only be done through interviews and retrospectively. Instead, this chapter analyses the perceptions of external observers of Burundi. The purpose is not to grasp the "varying degrees of boundedness" (Wimmer 2013: 10) of Burundi's *amoko* in colonial times as experienced by their members, but to understand the boundary work done by authors writing in colonial times.

This study has important added value for the academic literature on Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa for different reasons. From a methodological point of view, this work is innovative because, to my knowledge, no analysis of boundary making and remaking has ever been applied to a literature review on Burundi. This type of analysis allows scholars working on Burundi to disentangle the different elements by which the early narratives on Burundian *amoko* were composed, and to contextualise and deconstruct the concepts and ideologies proposed by their authors in colonial times, thereby gaining a better understanding of each narrative and of its evolution. In addition, only texts on Burundi are taken into consideration in this analysis. This aims to fill an important gap in the literature on Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in the African Great Lakes Region, since most texts are focused on Rwanda,[68] or they treat Rwanda and Burundi indistinctly. This is likely because Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are found in both countries, or because of the (shifting) administrative demarcations under colonial rule.[69] A focus on Burundi counters a

[68] Publications in the field of genocide studies bloomed after the Rwandan genocide, with most literature focusing on "ethnicity" as a trigger for genocide(s). To give an idea of the disparity between the number of publications on Rwanda and on Burundi, as of January 18th, 2021, Google Scholar retrieves 79,100 results for the search "ethnicity Rwanda" and 34,700 for "ethnicity Burundi".

[69] Rwanda and Burundi were administered as one single entity under German rule. In 1907, they became two separate "residencies". In 1919, after Germany's defeat in World War I and the signing of the Orts-Milner agreement, Belgium obtained a mandate on the Ruanda-Urundi territory. In 1925, Ruanda-Urundi was attached to Belgian Congo.

practice dating from colonial times that treats Burundi as a simple extension of Rwanda (Prunier 2016a) and overlooks important differences between the realities of the two countries, including the relations between *amoko*. A focus on Burundi thus avoids assimilating Burundian Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa with their Rwandan counterparts, allowing for a better understanding of the Burundian reality. Last but not least, this analysis is relevant for the contemporary debate on the role of Belgian colonisation in Burundi, as it sheds light on the evolution of the narratives that informed Belgian reforms in the colonies,[70] which according to Burundi's Senate imposed a cleavage that fuelled conflict after independence.[71]

The chapter is divided into four sections, following the chronological order of the publications and the background of their authors: one section is dedicated to German literature, one to missionary literature, one to literature produced by Belgian colonial officers, and one to academic literature. Conclusions are provided in the final section.

1. German literature

Early colonial literature on Burundi was particularly influenced by diffusionist theories, which considered Africa's cultural areas to be the result of different waves of migration from Asia. Diffusionist theories made their appearance at the end of the nineteenth century within the debate on the single or multiple origins of humankind. The debate was revived by the discovery of new peoples during Europe's expansionism on other continents. Diffusionism justified the presence of different societies in the world by the transmission of cultural traits from one area to the other. Within this trend, the Hamitic hypothesis posited the immigration of a population of Hamitic origins to the African Great Lakes region. This was a strategic reinterpretation of the Bible's Table of Nations, according to which Noah's sons (Sem, Cham and Japhet) generated the three main "nations" living on earth: the Semites, the Chamites, and the Japhetites. According to a long-standing interpretation of the Table of Nations, after Cham saw his father Noah drunk and naked, the Chamites were cursed, destined to be slaves of Sem and Japheth

[70] In 2018, Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was mandated to clarify the colonisers' role in the cycles of violence that marked the history of the country. In July 2020, a special parliamentary commission was created in Belgium to examine the country's colonial past in Congo and Ruanda-Urundi. During a Senate retreat in July 2020, the recommendation was made to the government of Burundi to demand reparations from Germany and Belgium, its former colonisers.

[71] http://fr.senat.bi/2015/?p=7527, accessed 18 January 2021.

(Genesis 9: 20-27), and obliged to wander the hottest lands of Africa, making them black (Chrétien 1977: 174; Sanders 1969: 522-23). At the end of the nineteenth century, the discovery of new peoples in Africa and elsewhere challenged the belief in the Adamic unity of humanity (Chrétien 1977:176) and put the Bible's Table of Nations into question. The figure of Cham started to be transformed at a moment when diffusionist migration schemes were taking hold in intellectual milieus: emphasis was put on the fact that Cham would have been white, and that the Chamites would have become light-skinned as a result of interbreeding with local African populations, which pre-existed their arrival. This view became known as the "Hamitic" hypothesis, with "Hamites" deriving from "Chamites". Autochthonous populations that the Hamites allegedly found upon their arrival in Africa were defined as "Bantu", in accordance with the classification of languages of western and southern Africa made by German linguist Wilhelm Bleek's in the 1850s.[72] Thus, the first explorers in Eastern Africa distinguished two types of people: a group of light-skinned people, associated with the "Hamites" and considered closer to the whites, and a group with darker skin, the "Bantu", considered the real indigenous people. According to the racial views of the time, the Hamites were perceived as superior. Following the Hamitic hypothesis, any sign of civilisation observed in Africa, including the capacity to govern, could only derive from the light-skinned people, who brought it to the local underdeveloped populations (Sanders 1969: 528-29). In 1910, for instance, German explorer Franz Stuhlmann recommended to "always wonder, [concerning] each civilisation trait in Africa, if it does not come from abroad, namely from Asia" (Chrétien 1988: 64). Much of the early colonial literature on Burundi, as will emerge in the following paragraphs, reproduced this view.

The first writings on Burundi aimed at exploring the economic potential of German East Africa, the colony stretching from the Indian Ocean to the lakes Tanganyika and Victoria. During an exploration of the region aimed at assessing the possibility to open a commercial route between the eastern and the western sides of German East Africa, Oscar Baumann arrived in Burundi in 1892. The account of his journey (*Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle*, 1894) provides the very first written information on Burundi.

[72] According to Silverstein (1968: 211), Bleek first used the term "bantu" in 1956 to designate languages where "'Bantu' is a frequently occurring plural form of the word meaning 'person'"; these languages included "the whole South Africa, and most of the tongues of Western Africa".

Baumann dedicated his work to the memory of John Speke, who in 1863 (in his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*) derived the political organisation of the recently discovered kingdom of Buganda (currently Uganda) from a "nomadic pastoralist race related to the Hamitic Galla" (Sanders 1969: 528). This view became known as the Galla hypothesis, and it was exploited by many of the authors who wrote on the region after Speke. Baumann was one of them. The Tutsi were defined by Baumann as a group of Hamitic herders who emigrated with their cows from Southern Abyssinia or from the northern part of the Galla territory and who could be recognised by their "physical type" (1894: 203): tall, lean, with "beautiful delicate extremities", a thin nose, fine and regular features, and "expressive eyes" (1894: 204). According to Baumann, "especially where they [did] not appear as herders but as chiefs", the Tutsi were also called *Wahima* or *Wahuma* (1894: 203).[73]

The boundary between Tutsi and Hutu was clear-cut to Baumann: it was phenotypic, occupational, and political. The Tutsi were said to be either herders or chiefs ruling over the agriculturalists. To Baumann, agriculturalists corresponded to the *Warundi*,[74] a Bantu "*Stamm*" (tribe) of "undoubtedly very old settlers" who "occupied everywhere a position of *Wahutu* (subject) vis-à-vis the Tutsi nobility" (1894: 215). This boundary seemed to be reinforced by endogamy: "basically no mixed marriage" was said to occur between Tutsi and Hutu in Burundi and Rwanda (1894: 204). Cultural boundaries, on the other hand, seemed to have disappeared since the Tutsi, "originally a linguistically and ethnographically independent people", adopted the language, costumes, ornaments, and lifestyle of the "agriculturalists" (1894: 204).

Another important exploration of Burundi was that of geographer Hans Meyer in 1911, who took the occasion of an expedition to Rwanda as an opportunity to explore the neighbouring country and in 1916 published *Die Barundi*, a "summary of observations and studies" of the Barundi made until then (Meyer 1916: VII).[75] Meyer defined Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as three elements of the population anthropologically and culturally very different (1916: 6), sometimes calling them "*Rassen*" (races), sometimes "*Kasten*"

[73] The prefix *(A)Wa/Ba-* indicates the plural form and *(U)Mu-* the singular form of nouns referring to human beings in Kirundi.

[74] The Warundi (Barundi) are the inhabitants of Burundi.

[75] The monograph resulted from a three-week journey across the country. The author recognised the important contribution of his exchanges with Van der Burgt, one of the first White Fathers in Burundi, and with Von Langenn-Steinkeller and Von Grawert, German Residents in Urundi.

(castes), and sometimes using the adjective "*ethnisch*" (ethnic) with reference to them. The Hutu were described by Meyer as a mass of Bantu agriculturalists, the Tutsi were seen as a ruling caste of Hamitic herdsmen, and the Twa were considered the remains of a primitive pygmy population (1916: 6). The boundary was once again phenotypic, occupational, and political. To Meyer, the Hamitic origin of the Tutsi could be seen "at first glance" because of their height (1916: 8); except for their hair, they "did not really resemble the Negros", while Hutu's prognathous skull was said to be "authentically negro" (1916: 9). At the political and social level, however, Meyer's picture of Burundian society presented contradictory elements. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were said to live "next to each other or rather in a hierarchical relation, separated in a relatively rigorous way" but to have created "over centuries a solid political and social community" (1916: 6). A "clear judicial separation of the castes and the races" was observed in Burundi's society, in which the masses were said to be exploited through a "meticulously structured system of vassals" and a "hierarchy of priests, privileged lineages, princes" to the benefit of Tutsi's "rude selfishness" (1916: 16). A strong political boundary seemed to position "the ensemble of the Tutsi against the people of the Hutu and the Twa" (1916: 15). At the social level, a boundary seemed to separate Tutsi and Hutu from the Twa, who were considered pariahs (1916: 7). Nevertheless, the Twa were said to live in "symbiosis" with the Tutsi and in conflict with the Hutu: according to Meyer, the Twa blamed the Hutu for taking away their freedom when they destroyed the forest where the Twa were living, in order to create fields (1916: 13). Intermarriage seemed to be possible between Hutu and the "Hamitic lords of the Bantu" (Tutsi): this practice was said to have existed for centuries, and therefore justified the presence of features, among the Hutu, similar to those of the Tutsi (1916: 9). In addition, cultural influences appeared to be reciprocal between Hutu and Tutsi: the latter were said to have adopted Hutu language, clothing, and many customs, while the Tutsi were said to have given "their blood", their habitation type, their species of cow, and their political organisation to the Hutu (1916: 7).

Meyer also observed the existence of internal boundaries between members of the same *ubwoko*. Among the Tutsi, the presence of an economic boundary was possible: some "very poor" Tutsi could be obliged to work if needed, although "working [was] reserved to the Hutu subjects and therefore a real shame for the Tutsi" (1916: 15). Among the Twa, those living in the forest were said to be "intellectually" freer than those living

among Hutu and Tutsi, because every day Hutu and Tutsi reminded their Twa neighbours of their position as social pariahs (1916: 12).

The coexistence of different types of boundaries (occupational, political, social, economic), in different positions (inter- and intra-*ubwoko*) and with different degrees of thickness (more or less rigid), often described in a superficial way, led to important inconsistencies in Meyer's work. The same type of inconsistency exists in the writings of the first White Fathers in Burundi, who seemed to be particularly keen to restate the Hamitic hypothesis.

2. Missionary literature

The White Fathers were the first missionaries to arrive in Burundi: since 1879, they had been attempting to establish their presence in the South of the country.[76] Their task in Burundi was to study "pagan concepts and habits" in order to replace them with "a Christian mentality and Christian habits" (Gorju in Zuure 1929: 3), as required by the *Instructions aux missionnaires* (1878) sent by Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of their order. In response to Lavigerie's instructions, the White Fathers tended to confirm in their writings the Hamitic hypothesis, the main narrative in circulation in ecclesiastic milieus.

In 1903, one of the first White Fathers in Burundi, Jan Martin Michel Van der Burgt[77] published a comprehensive study on the country (*Un grand peuple de l'Afrique Equatoriale: éléments d'une monographie sur l'Urundi et les Warundi*), where he situated Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, which he considered "races", in a well-defined hierarchy. The boundary was occupational and political: to Van der Burgt, the Tutsi (considered Hamitic and sometimes called Hima) represented a superior race of herders; the Hutu, subjugated by the Tutsi, were committed to agriculture; and the Twa represented a race of pariahs.[78] The political boundary between Tutsi and Hutu was particularly rigid for

[76] The first mission in the country (Muyaga, eastern Burundi) was founded in 1898 (Perraudin 1963: 46-47). When the first German protestant missionaries (from the *Neukirchner Missionsgesellschaft*) arrived in Urundi in 1911, they found a "French element [already] strongly preponderant" (Von Langenn-Steinkeller in Roger Louis 1963: 182).

[77] Founder of the Uzige mission near Bujumbura (Van der Burgt 1903: VII).

[78] According to Van der Burgt, a fourth race was represented by the Wahinda (1903: 85, 1903: 178-80), which corresponded to the dynastic family. Different "tribes" were identified in Burundi, and named after their province of origin: Wamosso, Wayogoma, Wanyamugamba, Wanyakirimira (1903: 2).

Van der Burgt, leading him to describe the Tutsi as a race of "conquerors and intruders" (1903: 18) and the Hutu as their serfs: "the Barundi themselves call themselves, without feeling shame, *Wahutu*, i.e. serfs, vanquished, compared to the *Tutsi*, who are the nobles and aristocrats of the country" (1903: 42).[79] According to Van der Burgt, physical and moral differences separated the Tutsi from the rest of the Barundi: their skin was said to be lighter, they were said to be cleaner (1903: 108) and more polite (1903: 103).

The same rigid political boundary was observed by Monseigneur Julien Gorju (*En zigzags à travers l'Urundi*, 1926), first Vicar Apostolic of Urundi between 1922 and 1936, who divided Burundi's society into "serfs" (indigenous, Bantu) and "herders" (Hamitic, immigrated). To Gorju, "the autochthonous, him, a 'Bantu', […] has been subjugated, kept away from power by a superior and exclusive caste, and it is of little matter to him, since two hundred years at least, to be eaten by the one or the other, since he is born shapeable and exploitable at will" (1926: 10). This could happen because "the Hamitic society [was] found in possession and talented, incomparably more than the autochthonous, of the gift of exerting authority" (1926: 116). Besides the political boundary, an occupational boundary was underlined by Gorju by calling the Hutu "the peasants"; physical differences were highlighted by calling the Hutu "the blacks", as if the Tutsi were not black. This is an excellent illustration of the influence on Gorju's writings of the Hamitic hypothesis, which considered Cham's descendants to be closer to the whites.

In line with the Hamitic hypothesis, Gorju and Van der Burgt situated political power in the hands of Tutsi chiefs (Gorju 1926: 32, 1926: 101; Van der Burgt 1903: 35-37, 1903: 55). Only in rare cases were the *abatware*, local chiefs controlling smaller entities of the territory, said to be Hutu. Van der Burgt reported that Tutsi chiefs often domineered over the Hutu, whose attempts to resist or to appeal to either the king or the Ganwa (the *mwami*'s descendants) were mostly ineffective (1903: 56). The situation seemed to be even worse for the Twa (1903: 109). Nevertheless, according to Van der Burgt, political domination never resulted in real slavery (1903: 42).

The political boundary between *amoko*, however, was sometimes blurred with a territorial boundary. Van der Burgt observed that frequent conflicts among local chiefs

[79] The translation of "Hutu" with "serf" was first reported by Baumann, who explained that at his arrival in Burundi, people recognised in him the return of Mwezi Gisabo, king of Burundi, exclaiming "*Tuli Wahutu!*", which was translated as "We are serfs!" (Baumann 1894: 80).

(1903: 59, 1903: 66) were related to the king's legitimacy, not to a political competition between *amoko* for access to power: "if we interrogate the Warundi of the North-West (Uzige), North-East (Bugufi, Bweru), center (Mugera), South-East (Uyogoma), and South, we obtain very different answers to the question: who is currently the legitimate king? Kisabo, Kitinwa or Ndaviyariye" (Van der Burgt 1903: 37). Gorju also reported that under the rule of Mwezi Gisabo, the Bweru region (eastern Burundi) represented a refuge for those excluded from the central power who were trying to revolt against it (1926: 146-47), without mentioning their *ubwoko* of belonging, and thus underlining the relevance of the territorial dimension in access to political power.

Bernard Zuure, another White Father who spent several years in Burundi, described Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as "classes" separated by a socio-economic boundary (*Croyances et pratiques religieuses des Barundi*, 1929). The boundary appeared to be rigid: an inherent internal ranking seemed to prescribe different taboos (1929: 168), including marriage restrictions (1929: 173-74). In a later text (*L'âme du Murundi*, 1932), Zuure's "classes" became "races" with different occupations and origins (1932: 13). Additional research would be needed to establish if Zuure's revision was a response to possible admonitions from his superiors after he made some affirmations about the Hutu origins of the dynasty of Burundi.[80] Despite the rigid social boundary, Zuure described friendly relations between Hutu and Tutsi. He stated that contrary to Rwanda, in Burundi the Tutsi did not impose themselves but were influenced by the local Hutu environment, "Bantu type […] chap, nonchalant, shabby, without concerns, independent" (1929: 37). This seemed to be confirmed by Tutsi's language, described as purely Rundi and not presenting any sign of Hamitic descent (1929: 168).[81] Because of minimal differences between the two "races", Zuure spoke of a common culture (1932: 13). Cattle grazing and agriculture were not seen as exclusive occupations of either the Tutsi or the Hutu,

[80] While in 1926 Gorju had stated that the dynasty of Burundi was Hamitic, in 1929 Zuure reported that the first king of Burundi (Rufuku, father of Ntare) was Hutu: "everybody here says so, and the princes themselves told me that they do not descend from a Tutsi" (1929: 29). In addition, the same year, the anonymous author(s) of the yearly report of the mission of Kiheta (central Burundi) wrote that the Ganwa "are of Hutu origins as are the kings of Urundi, and are Ganwa only because of their descent, [which is a] mix of Hutu and Tutsi" (Gahama & Mvuyekure 1989: 320). In 1938, likely in response to these claims, Gorju observed that the question had been "obscured at will" and needed to be clarified (1938: 9), restating authoritatively that "Our dynasty is Hamitic" (1938: 11). Gorju explained that if the kings of Burundi did not like to be called "Tutsi", it was because the Tutsi were associated with the Hima, who were detested, and for this reason the Ganwa were sometimes called "Hutu" (1938: 13-15). However, this would have been in jest ("*une plaisanterie*"): Hutu and Ganwa were said to represent distinct races without any degree of kinship among them (1938: 15). In their arguments, neither Gorju nor Zuure mentioned their sources.

[81] "Rundi" indicates all that refers to Burundian culture.

however, according to Zuure, it was the Tutsi who taught the use of cows and its advantages to the Hutu, enabling them to develop themselves (1932: 14). A social barrier seemed to separate Hutu and Tutsi from the Twa: according to Zuure, the Twa were not even considered Barundi by Hutu and Tutsi (1932: 13). The same type of barrier was described by Van der Burgt: the Twa could not share the beer (1903: 17) nor get married (1903: 129) with Hutu and Tutsi.

The first missionaries in Burundi put different emphasis on different types of boundaries between *amoko*, though all of them observed a political boundary between the Tutsi and the rest of the population. This was very eagerly picked up by Belgian colonial officers, who built on missionaries' writings in their literary production.

3. Literature by Belgian colonial officers

Belgium received a mandate for the Ruanda-Urundi territory in 1919 and its indirect rule over Burundi was established until July 1st, 1962, when the country became independent. Belgian colonial literature aimed to identify the elements of the local administrative and juridical systems that needed to be reformed for a more efficient administration of the territory. In view of the implementation of indirect rule, particular emphasis was put on the alleged political skills of the Tutsi, on whom the administration of the country would have relied.

It is important to note that Belgian officers mostly wrote about their administrative entity of reference, the Ruanda-Urundi territory, neglecting the differences between the two countries. For this reason, it is challenging to extract information on Burundi from their writings. Sometimes differences were pointed out between countries and peoples, but they were not analysed properly. The different characteristics of the boundaries between *amoko* in Burundi and Rwanda were also overlooked. When Belgian officers spoke of "the Hutu", for instance, it is not always clear if they referred to Burundian or Rwandan Hutu. Moreover, Urundi was often treated as an extension of Ruanda, as the authors often referred to the Ruanda-Urundi territory but provided examples from Ruanda. Oftentimes, information on Burundi was simply inferred from Rwanda, whose

reality these authors seemed to be more familiar with.[82] This attitude had a fatal consequence: Burundian Tutsi, Hutu and Twa were assimilated into Rwandan Tutsi, Hutu and Twa, although, paradoxically, the same authors noticed a larger social divide in Rwanda than in Burundi.[83] This was not limited to observations in their writings but also resulted in concrete administrative reforms, which were modelled on the Rwandan reality but implemented in Burundi as well.[84] This is one of the ways in which colonial narratives created realities in Burundi (Bruner 1991: 5): not as pure inventions planted in a virgin field, but as particular readings of local realities, which thanks to specific historical circumstances allowed for the emergence of a reality that hitherto did not exist as such (as with "self-fulfilling prophecies", Lemarchand 1995: 60).

The emphasis on Tutsi's political skills is evident in the work of the first Belgian officers in Ruanda-Urundi. In the work of Robert Borgerhoff (*Le Ruanda-Urundi*, 1928)[85] and Pierre Ryckmans (*Dominer pour servir*, 1931),[86] the political boundary between Tutsi and Hutu became thicker: the Tutsi were considered a superior race of demigods and natural leaders (Borgerhoff 1928: 21), destined to reign ever since their arrival in the region (Ryckmans 1931: 26). The Hutu masses, "infinitely less talented", were said to have accepted Tutsi rule without attempting to revolt (Ryckmans 1931: 159). To both Borgerhoff (1928: 32-33) and Ryckmans (1931: 27-29), the Tutsi minority could establish their rule over the vast majority of the Hutu thanks to the adoption of a political organisation that was very similar to the European feudal system. Borgerhoff admitted the presence of some Hutu at the provincial and local level, as well as at the king's court, where they held some inherited positions, but it would have been

[82] Bourgeois provides an illuminating example of this attitude. In a work covering Ruanda and Urundi, Bourgeois described "the Tutsi *Mwami*" as a "*monarque absolu*" (1954: 61). The *mwami* (plur. *bami*) was the figure at the head of Burundi's and Rwanda's political organisations. Under colonial rule, two distinct *bami* were kept for Burundi and Rwanda. Bourgeois' statement seems to apply to both *bami*, unless the power of the same *mwami* were recognised in both countries. However, Bourgeois was likely to have spoken about the Rwandan *mwami*, as he made a reference to an essay on customary law in Rwanda. This information, however, was only revealed in the final bibliography, therefore the statement applied to Ruanda-Urundi as a whole.

[83] According to Bourgeois (1958: 36), the abolition of the "servitude contract" (1955) would have been welcomed with much more enthusiasm by Rwandan Hutu than by Burundian Hutu because Burundi showed "a considerable delay in terms of social evolution" and the reform was not felt to be urgent. The "servitude contract" actually presented significant differences in Burundi and Rwanda: the Burundian *ubugabire* was less harsh on the "serf" than the Rwandan *ubuhake* (Prunier 2016b). Within the *ubugabire* contract, a donor lent cattle to a client in exchange for a share of the products that came from the animals and for some additional services.

[84] The 1931 territorial reorganisation seemed to aim to remedy the situation in Rwanda (Groupe de Travail pour l'Étude du Problème Politique au Ruanda-Urundi 1959: 12) but it was applied to Burundi too.

[85] District Representative in Belgian Congo.

[86] Ryckmans spent several years in Urundi first (1916-1928) and then in Congo (as Governor-General, 1934-1946).

the Tutsi who gave them these positions to avoid the weakening of the aristocracy through the multiplication of privileges, revealing their political foresight and cunning (1928: 32). The choice to rely on the Tutsi to rule the country thus became obvious: in need of chiefs, Belgians had to "take[n] advantage of the authority of the existing ones" (Ryckmans 1931: 160).

The social boundary between Hutu and Tutsi was grasped with both difficulty and ambiguity by these first colonial officers. The coexistence of "races" that were "related to each other, although separated by blood hatred and dynastic quarrels" (Ryckmans 1931: 157) was difficult to explain. The Hutu's subordination to the Tutsi was at times described as well-accepted by the Hutu, yet at other times as a source of conflict. Borgerhoff (1928: 22) suggested that the numerically inferior Tutsi would not have been able to go against the will of the indigenous Hutu, given the good relations observed between them: intermarriage was said to be frequent (1928: 23) and their respective activities (cattle-grazing and agriculture) were seen as interdependent (1928: 26-28). Conflicts occurred due to the fact that the Tutsi owned the cattle, according to Ryckmans (1931: 34), and because it was they who controlled their division and distribution to the Hutu, who were obliged to give part of their profit to their chief, according to Borgerhoff (1928: 27). These descriptions hint at the presence of a politico-economic boundary between Tutsi and Hutu, with the former owning the means of production and living off the work of the latter. Nevertheless, however tyrannical a Tutsi chief could have acted towards a Hutu (Borgerhoff 1928: 34), the latter was said to retain "a visible attachment" to his Tutsi chief (Ryckmans 1953: 31).

In the 1940s and 1950s, a significant shift in the literature on Burundi was represented by the writings of Eugène Simons (*Coutumes et institutions des Barundi*, 1944) and René Bourgeois (*Banyarwanda et Barundi*, 1954-1958). Eugène Simons[87] paid more attention than his predecessors to specific elements of Burundi's social structure. For the first time, a more intensive use was made of Kirundi terms indicating Burundi's social components. Simons divided Burundi's population into three "races", which he sometimes called *amoko* (sing. *ubwoko*): Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa. The Tutsi *ubwoko* was made up of Tutsi Hima and Tutsi Banyaruguru, "those from above, of high rank" (Simons 1944: 163). Every *ubwoko* comprised several *imiriango* (sing. *umuriango*),

[87] Territorial administrator; his research was conducted mainly in the southern region of Burundi (1944: 148).

groups of people with the same name and likely descending from the same ancestors, or extended families whose members were not related to each other. In every *ubwoko*, the *imiriango* were classified by Simons (1944: 166-69) into "very good families" (*imiriango myiza chane*), "good families" (*imiriango myiza*), and "bad families" (*imiriango mibi*). Tutsi Banyaruguru and Tutsi Hima had separate lists of *imiriango*. The Tutsi Banyaruguru also included some "families of royal descent (*baganwa*)" and some "neither good nor bad families (*imiriango si myiza si mibi*)" (Simons 1944: 166-67).

According to Simons, the differentiation between "better" or "worse" families (*imiriango*) made it possible to pass from the notion of "race" to that of "caste", or "class" (1944: 169). While boundaries between families (*imiriango*) seemed to be fluid and based on lifestyle, those between "races" (*amoko*) seemed to be very rigid. Only in a "fable" could a Hutu become Tutsi through royal decree: the king was said to be "as incapable to change a Hutu into a Tutsi as [to change] a goat into a cow" (Simons 1944: 169). However, some Hutu seemed to be allowed to cross the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi. When these Hutu had a specific status, carrying out social or political tasks, and were married to a Tutsi woman, they were able to "become" Tutsi, and would have then been called *Abatutsi barihutuye* or *umwihuture* ("who have become Tutsi").[88] These labels actually highlighted the presence of a boundary between those who had become Tutsi and the "pure" Tutsi (Simons 1944: 169). This seems to be a perfect illustration of Wimmer's understanding of "boundary crossing", which allows for status change while "reproduc[ing] the overall hierarchy by reinforcing its empirical significance and normative legitimacy" (2013: 58-59). Moreover, intermarriage between a Hutu man and a Tutsi woman was said to be possible, though not frequent, when the Hutu had an important political task; wealth would have played a role, but not a determinant one (Simons 1944: 171). This represented a perfect illustration of "boundary blurring": political and economic dimensions assumed more importance than the *ubwoko* as a "principle of categorization and social organization" (Wimmer 2013: 61). As a general rule, however, marriage was said to take place between members of the same *ubwoko* and among families of the same level. Nevertheless, except for Tutsi Banyaruguru from "very good families", the marriage of other Tutsi

[88] This is the translation provided by Simons (1944: 169). Literally, the expression means "Tutsi who have left the condition of Hutu".

families with Tutsi Hima or with Hutu from "good families" was said to be "not infrequent" (1944: 171).[89] The Ganwa, at the top of the hierarchy, were only able to marry girls from "very good families" within the Tutsi Banyaruguru. The social structure described by Simons thus seems to be organised into ranks of prestige.

At the political level, the boundary between Tutsi and Hutu did not seem to be rigid. Although the Tutsi "gave a king to the country" and the Hamitic origin of the dynasty was no longer questioned (1944: 140),[90] Simons observed that the majority of the chiefs of the *ichibare ch'umwami*, territories directly dependent on the *mwami*, were Hutu (1944: 196). At the cultural level, no boundaries seemed to separate Tutsi (Banyaruguru), Hima, Hutu, and Twa, who appeared to speak the same language (1944: 273).[91] Tutsi and Hutu traditions, customs, institutions, and beliefs also seemed to be the same (1944: 279).

If Simons revised the description of Burundi's social structure and provided nuance, René Bourgeois[92] capsized the mainstream narrative around the Hutu by introducing some details that returned dignity to them. This reflects the general attitude adopted by the Belgians on the eve of independence. The 1956 elections at the level of the *sous-chefferies* in Ruanda showed that the Hutu were gaining significantly in political consent (Bourgeois 1958: 46). While upon their arrival in Ruanda-Urundi, the Belgians had identified the Tutsi as a politically superior category, in the 1950s they seemed to support the Hutu, likely to maintain good relations with the forthcoming governments of Ruanda-Urundi (whose independence had been under discussion since the early 1950s in Belgian and African milieus).[93] Thus, in the writings of Bourgeois (and others,

[89] Although the Hima were said to be endogamous, as well as the Twa: "In theory, a Tutsi can only marry a Tutsi and certainly not a Hima, since the Hima wed [other Hima]"; to the Twa, "poor pariahs, […] nobody would consent to get married" (Simons 1944: 171).

[90] For Simons too, being Hamitic, the Tutsi were "born to rule" (1944: 140) and the Hutu were "shapeable and exploitable at will" (1944:141), as described by Gorju (1926: 10).

[91] Tutsi, Hima, and Twa would have adopted the language of the Hutu.

[92] *Résident adjoint* in Ruanda and professor at the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida*, the Rwandan branch of Belgium's Institute of Scientific Research in Central Africa (IRSAC).

[93] In 1952, the report of the 1951 United Nations mission in Ruanda-Urundi underlined the "necessity for every country aiming at autonomy or independence" to send African students to study abroad, in response to the declarations of some officers who opposed this initiative because African students would have found themselves in an environment that "would not suit them" (United Nations 1952: 33). The independence of Ruanda-Urundi, and the form that the possibly independent state(s) would be given, were debated until the very last few years before independence was given (see the 1959 *Rapport du Groupe de Travail pour l'Étude du Problème Politique au Ruanda-Urundi*). Belgians' support to pro-Hutu political parties before independence in Rwanda and their attempts to provide the same type of support in Burundi, through the action of Albert Maus and the creation of

e.g. Neesen, see section 4), the alleged Tutsi superiority began to be questioned. Bourgeois challenged the hierarchical order of Hutu and Tutsi through processes of "equalization" and "normative inversion" (Wimmer 2013: 57). Equalization, aimed at "establishing equality in status", requalified the Hutu mainly on the intellectual level. Bourgeois affirmed that no etymological evidence supported the claim that "Hutu" meant "agriculturalist" or "serf" (1957: 34), although he himself had used these translations before (1956: 94-96).[94] Through normative inversion, "the category of the excluded and despised [came] to designate a chosen people, morally, intellectually, and culturally superior to the dominant group" (Wimmer 2013: 57): thus the Hutu became "intelligent, sociable, artists", the Belgians' "most precious and reliable auxiliaries" (Bourgeois 1957: 738). Based on his six-year teaching experience in Astrida, Bourgeois stated that the Tutsi held no intellectual superiority over the Hutu, and that the Hutu "frequently provide the best students in class" (1957: 750-51). Bourgeois went so far as to say that the development of the country essentially depended on the Hutu, who started practicing the professions introduced by the Europeans (1957: 38) in addition to agriculture, and that the Tutsi depended on the Hutu for manual labour (1957: 60).

Bourgeois retrieved the well-known political boundary between Tutsi and Hutu:[95] because of frequent power abuses committed by Tutsi local authorities, the relations between Tutsi and Hutu were said to be conflictual at times (1957: 765). Nevertheless, the Hutu were said to live in a symbiotic relationship with the Tutsi, not keen to contest their authority, which would have been pointless,[96] and in need of their protection. However, the masses were said to "tend to detach themselves from their Tutsi chiefs" thanks to the Belgians' introduction of "certain forms of democratic representation […] within the indigenous political power" (1957: 765). Bourgeois did not explain precisely how this detachment was taking place, and what "forms of democratic representation" allowed for it. In the last volume of his work, Bourgeois affirmed that thanks to the introduction of the European monetary economy and of Christian values, the Hutu

the *Parti du Peuple*, "essentially pro-Hutu" (Harroy in Mariro 2005: 73), is described at length by Mariro (2005: 62-103).

[94] Bourgeois reported that among the Mongo-Ekonda (western DRC), Bantu people governing on the local Twa were called Bahoto or Bawoto, terms similar to the "Bahutu" of Ruanda-Urundi, and which meant "lords" in the local language (not serfs) because they governed over the Pygmies.

[95] To Bourgeois, Tutsi's political superiority was proven by the establishment of the cattle contract (*ubugabire*, 1954: 270) and a legal system that guaranteed them more protection (1954: 415-16; 1954: 424).

[96] Bourgeois reported a Kirundi proverb that warns that "the neck does not pass the head" (1957: 765).

realised that "their human dignity was as respectable as that of the Tutsi" (1958: 10-11). This might have contributed to the detachment of "the masses", yet the link is not explicit in Bourgeois' words. If the Hutu were "detaching themselves" from their Tutsi chiefs, it meant that the political distance between them was increasing, and the political boundary between them was becoming thicker. This seemed to be due to the emergence of a new community in the political arena: the Hutu community, now conscious of its "human dignity". Since most of the people in positions of power were Tutsi, the arrival of the Hutu in the political arena was likely to rigidify the political boundary between Hutu and Tutsi.

Like Simons, Bourgeois too showed interest in the Kirundi terms indicating genealogical groups: he employed the terms *ubwoko* and *umuryango*, although with a confused understanding. According to Bourgeois, in Ruanda-Urundi the *ubwoko* represented a "phratry" or a "totemic group" including "all the clans gathered around a common ancestor, real or mythic, and in any case, around a same totem". In Burundi, the term *ubwoko* was said to be sometimes used to indicate the "race" (1954: 112), but no examples of Burundian *amoko* were provided (Bourgeois mentioned the Banyiginya, the Bega, and the Bagesera from Rwanda). *Umuryango*, translated as "clan", included for Bourgeois "all the families coming from the same ancestor" (1954: 111). In Burundi, the Bezi (Mwezi's descendants) were said to represent an *umuryango*; at another point in the same text, however, the Bezi were defined as a "royal phratry" (1954: 53), which according to Bourgeois' definition corresponded to a royal *ubwoko*. In a later text, Bourgeois used the term "ethnic group" to refer to Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa (1957: 365, 1957: 367): the Batutsi-Bahima,[97] the Bahutu, and "some Batwa acculturated to the Hutu" were identified as the "three Bantu ethnic groups" living in Ruanda-Urundi (1957: 314). Despite the presence of a poorly defined ethnic boundary between these groups, which were said to be different "from the ethnic point of view" (1957: 209), these groups were said to speak the same language. Elsewhere in the same text (1957: 591, 1957: 683, 1957: 741), Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were still called "races". Finally, Bourgeois observed that "being Tutsi" is a "quality representing more a social status than a racial criterion" (1957: 191), thus blurring the boundary between Hutu,

[97] According to Bourgeois, the Tutsi in Ruanda-Urundi were "in theory" of "hima origin" (1957: 58); after entering Burundi (descending from the North/East), "the Hima remained pure herders, while the Tutsi took the political command of the country" (1957: 61).

Tutsi, and Twa with a social dimension. In the last volume of his work, the author defined Tutsi and Hutu as "human groups" (1958: 10) with different types of economies, adding an economic boundary between Tutsi and Hutu.

4. Academic literature

Elements of the mainstream narratives on Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa persisted in the academic literature produced during the colonial period. Studies with more positivistic orientations (such as those in physical anthropology, and the 1952 census) tended to stick to the mainstream narratives, although some of their findings did challenge old narratives. More qualitative studies (in sociology, cultural anthropology, and history) provided more nuanced descriptions of the boundaries between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi, although they still adopted some of the preconceived ideas and vocabulary of previous narratives.

In the 1940s and 1950s, doctors Georges Gerkens (*Les Batutsi et les Bahutu : Contribution à l'anthropologie du Ruanda et de l'Urundi*, 1949)[98] and Jean Hiernaux (*Les caractères physiques des populations du Ruanda et de l'Urundi*, 1954; *Analyse de la variation des caractères physiques humains en une région de l'Afrique centrale : Ruanda-Urundi et Kivu*, 1956)[99] intended to contribute to knowledge on the population of Burundi by means of physical measurements. Their measurements confirmed a phenotypic boundary between Hutu and Tutsi, the latter being taller, thinner, and with lighter skin (in accordance with the Hamitic hypothesis). Gerkens did not specify the criteria used to determine respondents' *ubwoko*, and the procedure used to select his sample was not clearly explained either. Hiernaux, on the contrary, provided more detailed information on the types of measurements taken and on the selection procedure. In his sample, the *ubwoko* was that declared by the respondents themselves (1954: 11).[100]

To Gerkens, Hamites and Bantu (terms that he used as synonyms of "Tutsi" and "Hutu" respectively, 1949: 3) were "anthropometrically distinct" (1949: 95) because the Hutu

[98] Doctor and researcher at the Belgian Royal Institute for Natural Sciences.

[99] Doctor and researcher at the IRSAC.

[100] Gerkens declared that his sample counted 132 Tutsi and 109 Hutu. Hiernaux's sample included 119 Tutsi, 216 Hutu and 113 Twa (plus 48 Hutu from the Moso and the Imbo regions), all adults who came from different parts of the country. At most, 10 people came from the same village and were not related to each other.

were, on average, smaller (1949: 61) and with a shorter head (1949: 22). Among both Tutsi and Hutu, however, Gerkens admitted that some were taller and others were shorter; this led him to think that "pure" Hutu and Tutsi "types" existed in the past (1949: 62) and that a process of contamination was under way, which could have led to the disappearance of all differences between Hutu and Tutsi in the very near future (1949: 95). Gerkens also observed a socio-economic boundary between Tutsi and Hutu, likening their reciprocal relations to those between *patriciat* and *plèbe* in ancient Rome (1949: 4).

To Hiernaux, the levelling of physical differences between the two *amoko* could have been fostered by the Belgians' economic reforms, aimed at abolishing (Tutsi's) caste privileges (1954: 57-59). For Hiernaux, economic factors seemed to have an impact on social boundaries too: following the Tutsi's impoverishment due to cattle diseases, intermarriage was said to be more frequent. In addition, occasional sexual relations were said to occur between Hutu and Twa,[101] but also between Tutsi and Twa (1954: 13). Children born from such unions were said to be "incorporated into the Tutsi or the Hutu group according to the circumstances" (1954: 13). No details were provided on the circumstances and procedures used to assign the newborn to one group or the other. These fluid social boundaries are in profound contrast to the description of the three *amoko* as "very distinct in their history, their social role, their lifestyle" (1954: 5). Hiernaux stated that the findings of his anthropometric study "isolated clearly the Tutsi from the other groups" (1954: 97): the Tutsi were once again described as "a very clear group of the ethiopid race" with characteristics that conferred them "the taxonomic rank of great race" (1954: 104). In Hiernaux's later work (1956), the population of Burundi was presented as composed by three "castes" with more rigid social boundaries:[102] marriage was said to take place most frequently between members of the same "caste", and only in rare cases did one seem to be allowed to move from one "caste" to another (1956: 17).

In 1952, Victor Neesen, Doctor in Law and *licencié* in Economic Sciences, coordinated a census in Ruanda-Urundi based on samples of the population. Neesen's work

[101] According to Hiernaux (1954: 62), Hutu and Twa did not derive from two very different "racial stems" and their frequent unions explained the presence of few Twa in Burundi.
[102] A fourth, "smaller fraction of the population" was represented by the Hima, whose majority was said to be based in Uganda (Hiernaux 1956: 19).

represents the most explicit expression of the dialogue between academics and the Belgian colonial administration. The 1952 census aimed to provide the Belgian government with reliable statistics to remedy the bias of previous demographic surveys (non-representativeness, limited number of respondents, inaccuracies in the choice of the respondents, confused definition of some selection criteria, and calculation mistakes) in view of the implementation of the 1951 Decennial Plan for Ruanda-Urundi (Neesen 1953a: 470-72). In Urundi, the census identified 12.14% Tutsi, 86.16% Hutu, and 1.7% Twa (1956: 481). Respondents' "race" was that attributed by the "milieu" (1953a: 487, 1956: 481).[103] Within the evolution of colonial narratives, this represents an important new element: for the first time, the determination of someone's *ubwoko* depended explicitly on her social environment, not on her own declaration (as in Hiernaux's sample), and not on top-down identifications made by Belgian officers.[104] Neesen's analysis and conclusions, however, were still particularly Tutsi-centric and, once again, influenced by superior knowledge of the Rwandan reality. All the correlations made were based on percentages of Tutsi in specific regions (1953b: 1019-25), and the description of the rigid "caste structure" of Ruanda-Urundi relied on the definition adopted by Jacques Maquet in his work on the system of social relations in ancient Rwanda.[105] In line with Bourgeois' normative inversion, Neesen situated the obstacle to the country's economic development in the Tutsi's status of "leisure class": "freed from all types of productive work" and only dedicated to "the government, the war, the games" (1956: 483), the Tutsi would have had to understand that their position was "hardly compatible with the need for economic development" (1956: 501-2).[106]

Studies by sociologists and cultural anthropologists provided new details on the relations between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa that started to erode the well-known narratives in circulation. In *The structure of the Barundi community* (1946), sociologist Georges

[103] Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were also called "social classes" (1953b: 1020) and "castes" (1956: 481) by Neesen.

[104] It is not clear, though, how precisely the social environment determined or validated one's *ubwoko*. Neesen did not explain how many people were asked about someone's *ubwoko*, how they were related to the person in question, or how they were selected. The author only explained that "will be registered as 'mututsi' someone who is considered as such in his/her milieu" (1953a: 487).

[105] Maquet's "caste society" was composed of "different hierarchised groups, each of which [is] endogamous [and has] some hereditary occupation, and to which one belongs only by birth" (Neesen 1956: 481).

[106] In 1953, Pierre Gourou, Professor at the University of Brussels and member of the Belgian Royal Colonial Institute, made a similar observation when he noted that the Decennial Plan represented, "maybe correctly", the Tutsi as oppressors; he wondered if the abolition of the *ubuhake* could be seen by some as a way to ruin the position of the Tutsi, and he observed that "it [was] maybe necessary to ruin the position of the Tutsi" (Gourou 1953: 172).

Smets[107] defined Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as "ethnical groups" that "rather seem to become social strata" because of their frequent unions (1946: 13).[108] The socio-economic boundary between Tutsi and Hutu was seen as porous by Smets: "many impoverished Batutsi have been considered as Bahutu, rich Bahutu as Batutsi" (1946: 13). Smets also added a meaning to the word "muhutu" that highlighted its relational character: when an agriculturalist received a cow, he became the "muhutu" of his donor and he was expected "to obey him and carry out what commissions the other [cared] to entrust him with" (1946: 15). A similar type of contract was said to exist among "members of the aristocracy": the "ruling class" received specific goods in exchange for a cow, and "of course, the recipient of the cows [became] the *muhutu* of the donor" (1946: 15). Smets' reconfiguration of the meaning of "muhutu" is close to a strategy of boundary blurring, in the sense that the meaning of "muhutu" as "party in a contract" relativised the meaning of "muhutu" as "member of the Hutu *ubwoko*", reducing the "ethnic" dimension of the word. The "new" meaning, however, did not supplant the "ethnic" one and seemed to exist in parallel with it.

In *Une étude de valeurs en Urundi* (1960), anthropologist Ethel Mary Albert[109] noted a discrepancy between the political and the social hierarchies in Burundi. If, in terms of their social system, the Tutsi appeared to be superior, at the political level the *mwami* and the *baganwa* were said to be "the real permanent superiors", with Tutsi and Hutu as their subjects. A Hutu could hold an even higher position than a Tutsi, according to Albert, because of his origins, his distinction in war, his divination skills, or his wealth. However, a Tutsi would not have shared a drink with a Hutu because "socially, he is the superior. This is how *Imana* [Barundi's divinity] established the social order" (1960: 152). Boundary crossing was not possible according to Albert, who observed that "everybody will die at the social level where he was born" (1960: 152).

In *Le Burundi* (1962), a "monographic ethnography" based on extensive fieldwork in Burundi, anthropologist Albert Trouwborst[110] divided Burundi's society into five "castes" representing "different racial and social groups": the Twa, the Hutu, the Tutsi-

[107] Professor at the University of Brussels and director of the Solvay Institute of Sociology from 1935.
[108] Data was collected during 8 months of fieldwork in 1935 in Ruanda-Urundi. Gerkens' 1949 publication was based on the same data.
[109] Researcher at Harvard University (1953-55), Ford Foundation Fellow in Burundi (1955-57).
[110] Trouwborst (from Leiden University) carried out his fieldwork in Burundi in 1958 as associated researcher at the IRSAC.

Abanyaruguru (noble), the Tutsi-Hima (impure), and the Ganwa (ruling caste) (1962: 120). The *umuryango* was said to be "the only kin group that the [Barundi] clearly distinguish in their vocabulary […], a patrilineal clan whose members vaguely consider themselves as the descent of a same ancestor" (1962: 133). Two hundred *imiryango* were identified in Burundi, ranked within a hierarchy in every "caste". However, the name of the same *umuryango* could appear in more than one "caste", and names of "very noble Tutsi clans" could be found even among Twa. No explanation was given for this phenomenon.

Trouwborst provided an excellent example of boundary blurring by observing that although cultural differences could be observed among "castes",[111] these did not seem to cause "important local antagonisms. More important [was] belonging to the territory of this or that chief" (1962: 121). A cultural boundary was thus blurred with a territorial one. In addition, Trouwborst highlighted the relevance of economic status for boundary crossing: some "very rich and distinguished" Hutu clans were said to "like to marry girls from the Tutsi caste to thereby ameliorate their position. If these inter-caste unions continue, it is possible that the descendants start to be regarded as Tutsi" (1962: 134). Although "inter-caste" unions seemed to be rare and normally disapproved of, "the degree of disapproval [depended] on the concrete situation (partners' wealth, sex of the partner who commits the misalliance, relative ranks of the clans involved)" (1962: 138). Economic status also seemed to determine obligations towards the *mwami*: if the Tutsi usually provided him with cows, "rich Hutu" were said not to be exempt (1962: 149). An economic boundary between rich and less rich people thus blurred the boundary between Tutsi and Hutu.

Finally, in line with Smets, Trouwborst highlighted the relational character of the terms "Tutsi" and "Hutu". Trouwborst pointed out that within the *ubugabire* cattle contract, the donor (who could also be Hutu, although the majority of the donors were Tutsi, 1962: 152), could be called "Tutsi" or "father" and the client could be called "Hutu" or "son". Despite the unbalanced relationship, in Trouwborst's opinion, the employment of terms such as "father" and "son" revealed a "very close relation, often even

[111] The Ganwa were said to have a more ceremonial lifestyle and a specific vocabulary, and the Tutsi were said to love emphasising their particular characteristics, namely a more refined lifestyle and their abilities in fighting wars and cattle grazing.

amicable" (1962: 151). Trouwborst also admitted the possibility of local variations in the rules of the *ubugabire* (1962: 151).

In 1961, historian Jan Vansina (*Notes sur l'Histoire du Burundi*)[112] aimed to reconstruct the history of precolonial Burundi. Vansina observed that since the nineteenth century, political power had remained in the hands of the Ganwa. On the eve of independence, the country was said to be governed "not by an autocratic king, and not by a Tutsi aristocracy, but by the royal family as such" (1961: 1), an affirmation which countered the well-known Hamitic narrative. Vansina shifted the political boundary between two Ganwa groups, the Batare and the Bezi (1961: 6).[113] Nevertheless, the Tutsi (described as cattle grazers with minor political tasks) were put together with the Ganwa (and with the Hima, cattle grazers without political tasks) in the "ethiopid caste". In Burundi's "caste structure", next to the "ethiopids" figured the "negroid" Hutu, agriculturalists, and the "pygmoid" Twa, potters and hunters (1961: 1).

Conclusions

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as "ethnicities" were not created from scratch by the colonisers for the sake of their colonial project, as some affirm today.[114] Burundi's *amoko* existed before colonisation (Mworoha 1987: 176; Chrétien 1998), but external observers of Burundi perceived and portrayed them in a particular way. In this chapter, I analysed colonial narratives on Burundi's *amoko*, paying specific attention to the way in which the relations between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were narrated in the colonial literature on Burundi. I observed the type, the position, and the thickness of the boundaries positioned between *amoko*, and identified when and how authors writing in colonial

[112] Researcher first and then Director of the Astrida branch of the IRSAC. His research was conducted between 1957 and 1959. He relied on tales ("*récits*"), songs, proverbs and related commentaries collected from almost 140 people, who gave around 900 versions of "traditions" (1961: 2).

[113] The Batare were descended from Ntare Rugamba (first half of the nineteenth century), the Bezi from Mwezi Gisabo, Ntare Rugamba's successor (1961: 6).

[114] See for instance the interventions of some participants in a debate organised by the Burundian group of bloggers Yaga in January 2021 on the notion of *ubwoko* in Burundi: "Abahutu, abatwa, abatutsi...ivy'amoko vyatanguye gute mu Burundi ?", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yItRFNJjY0s&t=29s&ab_channel=YagaBurundi, accessed 28 January 2021. This type of discourse can often be found on social networks (see for instance the description of the video posted by Alliance Royale du Burundi on Facebook in January 2019, and the comments made: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=821436181526471, accessed 28 January 2021).

times employed boundary-making strategies (transvaluation strategies, boundary crossing, and boundary blurring) in their work.

Analysis of colonial narratives clearly shows how the authors' "intellectual stand [was] functionally dependent on the 'differentiated social group reality standing behind it'" (Sanders 1969: 527). The first explorers and missionaries in Burundi established the narrative of reference around relations between *amoko*, one which was largely inspired by the Hamitic hypothesis. The Tutsi were positioned at the top of a well-defined hierarchy and separated from the Hutu and the Twa through rigid phenotypic and political boundaries. Social boundaries had different and contradictory positions, while cultural boundaries appeared to be either very porous or inexistent. Among the missionaries, Van der Burgt (1903) and Gorju (1926) sometimes blurred the political boundary between *amoko* with a territorial dimension. Belgian colonial officers relied on the existing narratives and insisted particularly on the political skills of the Tutsi, which justified the decision to rely on them to indirectly rule the country. In the 1940s and 1950s, colonial narratives started to show important changes. In 1944, Simons revealed nuances in Burundi's social structure that shed light on the possibility of boundary crossing from the Hutu to the Tutsi *ubwoko*. On the eve of independence, after the 1956 elections in Rwanda showed that the forthcoming government was likely to be led by Hutu, Bourgeois (1957) made use of equalization and normative inversion strategies, requalifying the Hutu with dignity, intelligence, and zeal. Bourgeois also pointed out the thickening of the political boundary between Hutu and Tutsi following the introduction of forms of democratic representation at the local level. Among academic publications, studies with a more positivistic approach (Gerkens 1949; Hiernaux 1954, 1956) did not significantly challenge the established boundaries; Neesen (1956), however, supported Bourgeois' normative inversion by negatively judging the Tutsi's status as the "leisure class". Qualitative studies, more attentive to nuances in the social reality, blurred and repositioned boundaries. Smets (1946) and Trouwborst (1962) provided an additional meaning for the term "muhutu" that highlighted the relational dimension of the term. Trouwborst also blurred the political dimension of the boundary between *amoko* with a territorial one (whose relevance was noted by Van der Burgt and Gorju too), and he observed (like Simons) porous boundaries allowing for individual crossing under specific socio-economic conditions.

Albert (1960) repositioned the political boundary between the Ganwa and the rest of the population; Vansina (1961) moved it between Bezi and Batare, two Ganwa factions.

Boundaries between Burundi's *amoko* appeared to be well-established in the eyes of authors writing in colonial times, regardless of the predominance of the Hamitic hypothesis in the narratives, or of the authors' understanding of the *ubwoko* (which ranged from race to caste, ethnic group, human group, social stratum). Strategies of boundary-making employed in the colonial literature on Burundi essentially revised the meaning (boundary blurring; equalization; normative inversion) and the porosity of the boundaries (boundary crossing), or the position of political boundaries. In addition, when boundaries were blurred, it mostly happened within a territorial dimension.

Analysis of the evolution of colonial narratives around Burundi's population is of relevance for at least two reasons. On the one hand, colonial narratives informed reforms implemented during the colonial period which had an impact on the social reality of the country: thus, to some extent, colonial narratives as "self-fulfilling prophecies" (Lemarchand 1995: 60) came true. On the other hand, these narratives, in part or in full, were appropriated, redressed or dismissed in post-colonial narratives, elaborated after independence by Burundian authors.[115] The extent to which colonial narratives have been internalised by Burundians is difficult to assess and beyond the objectives of my PhD research. Statements like that of the lady quoted at the beginning of this chapter, however, or identifications of the others' *ubwoko* through the observation of their physical attributes (described in chapter 1), seem to suggest that a process of "ethnic learning" (Eltringham 2004: 11) took place. Some of the perceptions emerged during my fieldwork in Burundi and analysed in the next chapters clearly show that contemporary knowledge of the other *amoko* reproduces, in part or in full, narratives dating from colonial times. Gatugu (2018: 54) also underlined people's difficulty in distancing themselves from colonial stereotypes and elaborating new images of themselves. If Burundians, over the years, came "to regard themselves as members of an 'ethnic group' as defined by anthropologists, colonial administrators

[115] By "post-colonial narratives" I mean narratives elaborated after the colonial experience which may take a more or less critical stance towards the narratives diffused in colonial times, but are nonetheless shaped by those very colonial narratives. Post-colonial narratives do not reject colonial narratives in their entirety, in an attempt to "rewrite" the history of Burundi, but they engage with them, sometimes using their language, with the aim of validating them, developing them further, or correcting them. Among the most recent pieces of work written by Burundians that engage with colonial literature, it is worth mentioning those of Ndayisaba (2020) and Ndayikengurukiye (2013).

and post-independence governments" (Eltringham 2004: 11), it was not because of colonial narratives alone, but those narratives did lay an important basis for the development of specific perceptions and self-perceptions in terms of *ubwoko*.

Chapter III: The waxing and waning of groupness: belonging to an *ubwoko* in post-war Burundi[116]

> "If someone shows me that he does not want me, I need to take for a fact that we are not together. How could I return to him to beg him, when he had refused the first time? I have to turn to the others. If a path does not lead anywhere, you need to take another one".[117]

> "Here among us, we can say that there is trust among inhabitants, but it is difficult to confirm because there is no truth, someone can hate you without telling you. All *amoko*, Hutu, Twa, Tutsi, live here and nobody threatens the other. I am sure that there is a grudge because there has been a lot of damage here. People have died since 1965 and it still remains like hidden".[118]

> "There are no relations with the Tutsi nowadays, but if we meet we share the beer. But we do not know what they have in their heart. […] We can go work for them. They can also come to work for the Hutu. They bring food, they come pick you up and then you go together to the fields. But there was a period when even if you offered them some beer, they refused".[119]

Introduction

A great deal of literature has analysed the influence of violence on the formation of identities. In a complex situation of overlapping group membership, violence is one of the most important elements that marks "'them' off from 'us'" (Wimmer 2013: 71), reducing categorical uncertainty (Appadurai 1998). The experience of violence strengthens groups' self-consciousness and imagery (Smith 1981: 390), as it leads civilians to choose, more or less forcedly, "which side to support" (Wood 2008: 548), thus facilitating the polarisation of identities. Perpetration of violence can also increase identification with violent groups (Littman 2018), with conflict becoming a "form of sociation" (Smith 1981: 378). Violence can reinforce the sense of belonging to a distinct group, which corresponds to the emergence or the reinforcement of a boundary between

[116] This chapter builds on a paper elaborated in collaboration with Bert Ingelaere. Early versions of the paper were presented at the University of Leiden (the Netherlands) in April 2019 and at the 2019 ECAS conference (Edinburgh, United Kingdom) in June 2019.

[117] "*Iyo umuntu yamaze kukwikura ati wewe ntiturikumwe, ntimuba mukirikumwe. None wumva nosubira kuja kumwasamako gwaze kugiriki? N'ukurondera ukwonyene mubandi kuko vyanse aha uronderera ahandi*". Interview, Tutsi, female, 57, IDP, Bugendana, September 2019.

[118] Interview, Hutu, female, 54, returnee, Mugara, 2008. The interviewee refers to a well-known Burundian proverb: "*umuntu aguhisha ko akwanka ukamuhisha ko ubizi*", "someone hides that he hates you and you hide that you know it".

[119] Interview, Hutu, male, 80, never displaced, Bugendana, November 2018.

the in-group, an "imagined community of 'people like me'" (Lamont 2000: 3), and the out-group(s), necessarily different from that imagined community.

Different types of violence can lead to the emergence of boundaries in people's perceptions and interactions. It is not only physical violence (like killings, mutilations, kidnappings) that polarises identities. Verbal insults or threats, for instance, are also a form of violence (Galtung 1990: 292) that provokes a distancing from the authors of those insults or threats. Groups, in fact, are constructed through both discourse and action, through discursive logics as well as through the strategic actions of both elites and masses (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 847). Different types of violence exist and are studied by a variety of disciplines (Kalyvas and Straus 2020: 393). Violence can be physical, symbolic (Bourdieu 1977), structural (Galtung 1969, Farmer 2004), or epistemic (Spivak 1988), among others. What matters most is that "violence can never be understood solely in terms of physicality […] alone" and that it always "includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim", which is actually "what gives violence its power and meaning" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 1). For this reason, in this chapter I adopt a broad, all-encompassing definition of violence, which I consider as all "avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally to life, lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible" (Galtung 1990: 292).

In Burundi, the repeated episodes of violence that have marked the history of the country played a predominant role in shaping the meaning of the *ubwoko*,[120] a social construct adopted by individuals as an identity reference. Violence was "absorbed in people's sense of self-identity" (Uvin 1999: 265), determining identifications and self-identifications in terms of *ubwoko* (Chrétien et al. 1989: 51), and thus making the distinction between *amoko* "prominent in the people's consciousness" (Arusha Peace Agreement 2000). Violence has also left an important mark on the territory of Burundi, often leading to the creation of "ethno-geographical" settings that are still mainly inhabited today by members of the same *ubwoko*, such as IDP camps, or specific neighbourhoods in Bujumbura.[121] In these relatively closed settings, memories of the

[120] A summary of the most important episodes of violence that have taken place in the country can be found in chapter 1.

[121] Within the "balkanisation" of Bujumbura during the 1993 civil war, neighbourhoods that were inhabited by members of different *amoko* became inhabited mostly by members of only one *ubwoko*. Thus Ngagara, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, and Musaga became predominantly Tutsi, while Kamenge, Kinama, and Kanyosha became

past can be told and circulate more freely than in a setting inhabited by members of different groups, reinforcing group identity. Among people affected by experiences of past violence, this can give rise to mythico-histories, a recasting and reinterpretation of the past in moral terms (Malkki 1995: 54) which may lead to the creation of "not just 'imagined' communities, but communities of fear and hatred" (Lemarchand 1999: 10).

Violence in Burundi took different forms, did not always have the same intensity over time, and did not affect all the members of an *ubwoko* in the same way. Consequently, it affected individuals' sense of belonging to their *ubwoko* in different ways. In this chapter, I analyse the fluctuations of this sense of belonging by identifying the ways in which group feeling, as a result of violence or its absence, increased, persisted, and decreased over time.

The sense of belonging to an *ubwoko* is what I refer to in this chapter with the term "groupness", an "emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group, involving both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even antipathy to specified outsiders" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 19). Groupness has a "variable and contingent, waxing and waning nature" (Brubaker 2004: 19) and its intensity is always situated and determined by a series of different factors. The aim of this analysis is to shed light "on the processes through which groupness tends to develop and crystallize, and those through which it may subside" (Brubaker 2004: 19), as well as on the processes that allowed for a decrease in the intensity of groupness in post-war Burundi.

To analyse the waxing and waning of this group feeling, I observed the work of boundary-making between *amoko*, focusing on the varying degrees of distance between them. As explained in chapter 1, the distance between groups reveals the thickness of the boundary between them (the thicker the boundary, the bigger the distance between "us" and "them"; the thinner the boundary, the closer the groups prove to be) and depends on the perception of the out-group as different from the in-group (the more different the out-group is perceived to be, the more distant it appears in the eyes of the in-group; when fewer differences are noticed, the out-group is perceived as less distant).

predominantly Hutu (Chrétien & Mukuri 2002: 74). Tutsi and Hutu youth militias (the Tutsi *Sans Échecs* and *Sans Défaite*, the Hutu JEDEBU – *Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi*) patrolled the "border" of the neighbourhood, most often a street, to make sure that no Hutu entered a "Tutsi" territory, and vice-versa. On the balkanisation of Bujumbura and its experience by local inhabitants, see Chrétien & Mukuri (2002: 73-90) and Ntahe (2019) especially.

The distance between groups varies according to specific circumstances: processes of inter-group distancing occur when the distance increases and the boundary becomes thicker; inter-group rapprochement occurs when the distance decreases and the boundary becomes thinner. Generally speaking, and keeping in mind that exceptions are always possible,[122] when inter-group distancing occurs, groupness increases: as in a process of polarisation, individuals consider the out-group as more distant and feel more attached to the in-group, and their sense of belonging to their own group (i.e. groupness) increases. Accordingly, when inter-group rapprochement occurs, groupness decreases: individuals perceive the out-group as less distant and are better disposed towards it. Consequently, they feel less attached to their own group, which corresponds to a decrease in the level of groupness.

Of course, not all the members of the same group (of the same *ubwoko*) have exactly the same type of perception of the out-group, or of all the members of the out-group, which means that they are not equally distant from the out-group, or from all the members of the out-group (Mac Ginty 2014: 552). Individuals may have different perceptions of the "others" and different degrees of agency in their behaviours and attitudes towards the "others". The analysis of processes of inter-group distancing and rapprochement presented in this chapter does not consider Burundi's *amoko* as monolithic, homogenous entities. The analysis focuses on the personal trajectories and narratives of members of different *amoko* to understand the circumstances that explain individuals' attitudes towards the out-group. Focusing on individual narratives allows individuals' agency to be recognised and thus avoid "groupism", the "tendency to treat […] groups as substantial entities" (Brubaker 2004: 64), "chief protagonists of social conflicts" (Brubaker 2004: 8).

The chapter is divided into five sections. In section 1, I present the two research sites (Bugendana and Mugara) in which data was collected. Section 2 is dedicated to the methodology of the study. The following sections analyse the ways in which boundaries emerge and groupness increases (section 3), how boundaries persist and groupness is experienced in daily life (section 4), and how boundaries fade and are blurred, reducing high levels of groupness (section 5). Conclusions are provided in a final section.

[122] At the individual or sub-group level. In addition, different types of in-groups and out-groups can exist at the same time (see chapter 1, section 3).

1. The research sites: Bugendana and Mugara

The geographical and social landscape of both Bugendana, in the centre, and Mugara, in the South of Burundi (see Figure 4 in chapter 1), still show signs of the episodes of violence that took place in 1993 and in 1972 respectively. The analysis in this chapter focuses on these two dates because in Burundians' collective memory, in different ways for different *amoko* (Manirakiza 2011: 39), they represent important watersheds. In 1993, after the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye, throughout the country Hutu started to persecute their Tutsi neighbours, accusing them of killing "their" president.[123] It is not clear to what extent the killings were facilitated by Hutu local authorities.[124] When the persecution started, Tutsi fled their homes and sought refuge in the neighbouring hills, becoming IDPs (internally displaced persons).[125] Shortly after the killings started, the army, whose officers were mainly Tutsi and was perceived by many as pro-Tutsi,[126] intervened to restore order. In 1994, an important IDP camp started to be built on state-owned land in Bugendana, to gather all the IDPs from the neighbouring localities.[127] Tutsi IDPs were thus allowed to live closer to their fields on the hills, which they had had to abandon when they fled. When the intensity of the violence decreased, IDPs started to visit their fields to resume their agricultural activities, returning to the camp at the end of the day to spend the night there. In 1996, an important attack was carried out on Bugendana IDP camp by Hutu rebels (the so-called *assaillants*),[128] during which more than 600 Tutsi IDPs lost their lives in one night. Today, a graveyard at the entrance of the camp, with a large cross in its centre

[123] In 1993, for the first time in history and after three decades of Tutsi autocratic regimes, a Hutu was elected president of the republic through democratic elections. Ndadaye's victory came at the end of an electoral campaign characterised by the use of hate speech (Reyntjens 2016: 71; Palmans 2008: 197-221), and "the vote was generally ethnic" (Nindorera 2012: 12): a vote for the FRODEBU, Ndadaye's party, was a vote for the Hutu.

[124] This claim was made by several interviewees in Bugendana (and in Gasunu, my third research site that is described in chapter 4). Some of the remarks made by the UN International Commission of Inquiry on the assassination of President Ndadaye (United Nations 1996: 45-47) seem to support this claim. Chrétien & Mukuri (2002: 23) mapped the communes in which massacres took place after the assassination of the president, signalling those in which local authorities were involved in the massacres.

[125] In the area surrounding Bugendana, many Tutsi fled to Kibimba, Mashitsi, Giheta, and Gitega, where IDP camps were created.

[126] Several interviewees in Bugendana talked about the complicity between Tutsi IDPs and the army in actions led by the military in retaliation for the 1993 killings.

[127] Interview with Bugendana IDP camp representative, November 2018.

[128] The attack was attributed to the CNDD-FDD rebel movement, which according to Human Rights Watch (https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/08/13/burundi-seek-justice-war-crimes-victims, accessed 22 February 2021) acknowledged responsibility for the massacre.

mentioning the "genocide of 648 Tutsi survivors of 1993 in Bugendana", represents a daily reminder for all passers-by of this episode of violence and past suffering.

Past violence affected the geography of Bugendana in a particular way, giving rise to an "ethno-geographical setting"[129] with quite clear-cut boundaries between Hutu and Tutsi areas: the IDP camp remains almost entirely populated by Tutsi, while the hills surrounding the camp are populated by Hutu, as very few Tutsi returned to their homes on the hills.[130] Today, interactions between members of different *amoko* take place in two main spaces: in the fields, and on two main crossroads at the entrance of the IDP camp (see Figure 5). In the fields, Tutsi and Hutu not only come across each other but sometimes Hutu also come to agreements with Tutsi IDPs to cultivate their land. This is due, on the one hand, to the considerable distance separating the IDP camp where Tutsi live from their fields on the hill, and on the other hand, to the sometimes vast area of those fields. During the interviews, many IDPs stated that they were getting old and "did not have any more energy" to walk long distances to reach their fields. Some of their sons work the family land, but many prefer to travel to Gitega or Bujumbura in search of more remunerative work. The recruitment of local (Hutu) manpower thus becomes necessary. The other spaces where daily interactions between members of different *amoko* take place are the two crossroads at the entrance of the IDP camp. One of these crossroads, on the main tarmac road (RN 15) next to which the IDP camp is situated, is a growing and relatively vibrant trading area where kiosks for petty trade, small restaurants, and bars popped up to take advantage of the strategic position of the crossroads, on the road that connects Gitega (centre of the country) with Ngozi (North of the country).[131] Another small crossroads, called *centre* Bugendana, is found at the very entrance of the IDP camp. Here there is bike-taxi and moto-taxi parking, small kiosks for petty trade, and repair shops. Most IDPs buy their groceries at the *centre* Bugendana, which is closer to the IDP camp than the main crossroads on the tarmac

[129] The notion of an "ethno-geographical setting" considers the geographical distribution of "ethnicities", in my case the *amoko*, in a specific setting.

[130] I talk about the latter category of people in chapter 4.

[131] Local traders often load and unload their wares here, to exchange them with those from the markets of the neighbouring villages (Bitare, Mutaho). Staff of NGOs or other organisations often stop in this area to have a *brochette* (chunks of meat barbecued on a skewer) and a beer, and to buy some provisions for their families before continuing on their way to Gitega or Bujumbura. The "*brochettes* from Bugendana" are famous in Bujumbura and several other places in Burundi. Between 2018 and 2019, several new houses were built around this crossroads while one of the main roads departing from it was under repair.

road. Among the owners of the kiosks at the *centre* Bugendana are Hutu as well as some Tutsi IDPs, and they have both Tutsi and Hutu customers.

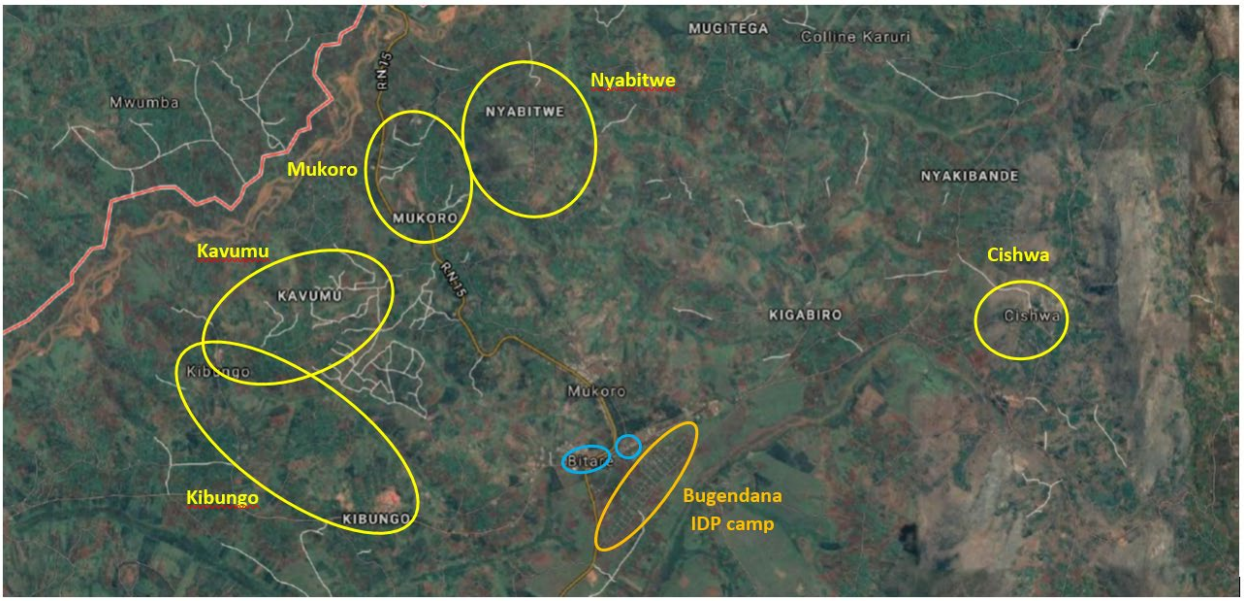

Figure 5: Bugendana research site. Interviews were conducted in the IDP camp (orange circle), and on the Kibungo, Kavumu, Mukoro, Nyabitwe, and Cishwa hills (yellow circles). The blue circles indicate the two crossroads at which most interactions take place between members of different *amoko*.

Mugara, in the southern province of Rumonge, is one of the bases from which Hutu insurgents were said to have started a rebellion against Tutsi domination in 1972. The brutal repression led by the military (under Tutsi President Micombero) targeted said rebels (called *abamenja*), their suspected accomplices, and Hutu that were educated, wealthy, and in positions of power. The number of casualties was staggering.[132] For these reasons, some believe that what happened in 1972 can be classed as genocide.[133]

[132] The number of victims reported by different authors varies from 100,000 to 300,000 Hutu and 3,000 to 5,000 Tutsi victims (Lemarchand 2002: 552).

[133] This claim is made by academics like Chrétien (2008: 59) and Lemarchand (2002), as well as by non-academic associations and individuals. The activity of the *Collectif des Survivants et Victimes du Génocide Hutu de 1972 au Burundi*, for instance, founded in 2013 in Canada, has become more visible since 2017 (see "Le collectif des victimes du Génocide contre les hutus de 1972 tient une assemblée constituante", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWFbc6IADWo%3Cbr%3E&feature=youtu.be, accessed 3 February 2021). On February 14th, 2020, at a public meeting organised by Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission during which the commission presented its first activity report, some people from the audience asked for official recognition of the 1972 genocide (I was present at the meeting). Several suspect that these demands are politically manipulated and instrumentalised (see the "*Rapport-alerte*" published in November 2020 by a number of Civil Society Organisations, *« La CVR, un outil pour mobiliser la population de l'ethnie Hutu derrière le CNDD-FDD par la reconnaissance forcée du génocide des Hutu en 1972 et occulter les crimes du régime »*). On April 28th, 2021, Burundi's Senate initiated a series of conferences on the "1972 events" during which claims for

To escape death, hundreds of thousands of people took refuge outside Burundi. In the southern part of the fertile Imbo plain, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, most Hutu fishermen, agriculturalists, and traders left their villages, fleeing to Tanzania or other neighbouring countries. Mugara was one of those villages from which most if not all Hutu fled in 1972.[134] In their absence, many Tutsi came to take advantage of their land.[135] In Mugara, Tutsi descended from the mountains of the neighbouring *communes* (Vyanda, Rutovu, Matana); several Hutu interviewees still remember today the arrival of "the Tutsi from Vyanda", who reportedly chased the Hutu away with spears and dogs in order to seize their fertile land.[136] In 1976, the government (under Tutsi President Bagaza) declared that all those who were occupying an area larger than 4 hectares were to surrender any exceeding land to the State.[137] The Mandi commission was created to follow up on the process. Since those who were occupying an area smaller than 4 hectares could keep it, in practice the Mandi commission regularised the *de facto* ownership and use of refugees' land (Vandeginste 2010: 55). According to International Crisis Group (2003: 4), this "legalization of massive spoliation" was at the origin of the creation of the Palipehutu by Hutu refugees in Tanzanian camps (see chapter 1, section 2), who were eager to return to Burundi and take back their land occupied by the Tutsi "enemy". The ultimate aim of the government's initiative was to implement its "*villagisation*" policy, aimed at exploiting vast areas of fertile land. Houses were to be gathered in "villages" to leave as much land as possible for the plantation of oil palms. In 1978, the Regional Society for Development (SRD) was created in Rumonge for the coordination of the State's project, aimed at increasing the region's agricultural production. After the SRD was created, plots of land were (re)distributed to existing or

acknowledgment of the 1972 genocide seemed to be made again (see https://twitter.com/BATUNGWALOYS/status/1387408309687291914, accessed 30 April 2021).

[134] According to the persons that I interviewed, either no Hutu remained in Mugara or very few, "maybe 5%" of those who were living there. When my translator and I asked if we could talk to them, the interviewees were not able to provide any names. Even the contacts that we were given told us when interviewed that they lived in exile for at least a short while following the 1972 violence.

[135] Hutu from other provinces came too (with the Tutsi for whom they were already working, according to some interviewees), although the majority of the newcomers were Tutsi, understandably because most Hutu had fled the country a few years before.

[136] This was a recurring narrative in many interviews in Mugara. The same narrative emerged during the presentation and discussion of Nintunze's 2019 book *Burundi 1972. Massacre des Tutsis dans le Sud* (the book talk, held on October 18th, 2020, can be watched through the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82C3W-Zscno&ab_channel=IwacuWebTV, accessed 2 February 2021).

[137] *Décret-loi n°1/191 du 30 décembre 1976 portant Retour au domaine de l'Etat des Terres Irrégulièrement Attribuées*.

recently arrived immigrants, who took care of the palms.[138] While implementing these reforms, in 1977 the government also announced a law "related to the restitution of their belongings to the persons who left Burundi following the events of 1972 and 1973",[139] apparently aiming for the return of refugees to Burundi. However, the violence experienced in 1972 was still fresh in the memories of most refugees, who preferred to remain in exile. A few refugees returned to Burundi some years after the beginning of the *villagisation* policy,[140] while the majority returned in the 2000s. The election of Hutu President Ndadaye in 1993 encouraged some Hutu to return, but most of them fled again after his assassination (Kamungi, Oketch & Huggins 2005: 196-197). The greatest number of returns occurred in 2004 and 2008, with more than 500,000 refugees returning to Burundi between 2002 and 2011 (Rema Ministries 2012: 19), the majority of whom returned to the southern provinces of Makamba and Bururi (UNHCR 2008), which at the time included the current province of Rumonge. When Hutu repatriated, they often found their land occupied, most frequently by Tutsi. Thus, land conflicts between returnees and immigrants reinforced the divide between Hutu and Tutsi, reigniting tensions dating from 1972 (IRRI, Rema Ministries & SSRC 2009: 36). The return of significant numbers of refugees created an important amount of work for the CNTB (*Commission Nationale des Terres et Autres Biens*), the National Land Commission created in 2006 with the task of dealing with issues related to land.[141] In 2010, the two provinces in which the CNTB registered the highest number of land issues were Makamba and Bururi (République du Burundi 2010: 42). The province of Rumonge, which at the time was included in the province of Bururi, accounted for almost two thirds of the total number of land conflicts registered in the province of Bururi (République du Burundi 2010: 36).

Today, the "ethno-geographical" boundary between Hutu returnees and Tutsi immigrants in Mugara is not as rigid as it was when the first Hutu refugees returned

[138] For an historical overview of the government's implementation of the *villagisation* policy in the 1970s and 1980s, see APDH (2011: 16-18) and Kohlhagen (2011: 53-55).

[139] *Décret-loi n°1/21 du 30 juin 1977 relatif à la Réintégration dans leurs biens des personnes ayant quitté le Burundi suite aux événements de 1972 et 1973*.

[140] In Mugara, five persons (out of the 45 interviewed between 2018 and 2020) either returned or had a friend or a family member who returned in 1979, 1981, 1986, and 1992.

[141] This commission replaced the CNRS, National Commission for the Rehabilitation of *Sinistrés* [sic], created in 2002 as required by the Arusha Peace Agreement, with the mandate of organising and coordinating the return of refugees and *sinistrés*, and assisting in their resettlement and reintegration; a Sub-Commission of the CNRS should have dealt with issues related to land (Prot. IV, Chap. 1, art. 3a and 3b). The French term *sinistrés* described "all displaced, regrouped and dispersed persons and returnees" (Prot. IV, Chap. 1, art. 1.2).

from exile. On the one hand, over the years some Tutsi sold or rented out the land to other people (Rema Ministries 2012: 29; Van Leeuwen 2010: 756), including Hutu.[142] On the other hand, increasingly more Hutu have returned since 1993 and especially since the 2000s. Thus, not only did the Hutu population in Mugara increase, but many Hutu came to be involved in land conflicts with other Hutu. As a result, the division between Tutsi immigrants and Hutu returnees lost its original salience: the "ethno-geographical" boundary in Mugara is increasingly blurred with the boundary between parties in land conflicts (Schwartz 2019: 128), who can belong to the same *ubwoko*. This also gives a different shape to the "ethno-geographical" landscape of the research site. In Mugara, Hutu and Tutsi do not live in separate, distant areas between which some spaces of interactions exist, like in Bugendana. Mugara rather resembles a village developed around a central area, presenting a centre, different neighbourhoods, and outskirts. In this setting, the mixing of Hutu and Tutsi is more accentuated than in Bugendana. Interactions between members of different *amoko* take place in the central area of the village, called *centre* Mugara, where there are small kiosks for petty trade, repair shops, the office of the local *chef de colline*, and a moto-taxi parking area (see Figure 6).

[142] According to some interviewees, today Tutsi people possess large plots of land in Mugara that they entrust or rent out to other people, while they live in their places of origin (in the province of Bururi) and come to Mugara only to collect rent payments; other Tutsi are said to have left Mugara to live in Rumonge or Bujumbura.

Figure 6: Mugara research site

Interactions in "mixed" spaces occur in different ways and depend to different extents on people's perceptions of each other (in Mugara, for instance, fears of being poisoned or a victim of sorcery prevent many people from frequenting those spaces, as explained by several interviewees). It is within these perceptions that boundaries can be observed, which allow us to understand who is considered one of "us", a member of the same social group, and who is situated among the "others". After explaining the methodology of the study, in the following sections I analyse the ways in which boundaries emerge, persist, and fade in interviewees' perceptions, shedding light on the circumstances under which groupness increases, persists, and decreases in the aftermath of violence.

2. Methodology of the study

The analysis presented in this chapter focuses on the Hutu and Tutsi *amoko*, who, at different points in time, have been the target of acts of violence in Burundi. This analysis relies on data collected by Bert Ingelaere in Bugendana and Mugara in 2008 and 2015, and on additional data collected by myself in the same localities during my two periods of fieldwork (between 2018 and 2020). 180 persons of different *ubwoko*

(Hutu and Tutsi), gender, and age were interviewed in total.[143] These people had different experiences of violence and were consequently categorised as "IDP" (internally displaced person), "former IDP", "never displaced", "returnee", "immigrant", "former prisoner", "demobilised". Table 2 provides an overview of the persons interviewed.

	2008 + 2015								2018-2020							
	Bugendana				**Mugara**				**Bugendana**				**Mugara**			
	Men		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**	
	Hutu	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**
IDP		7	1	10					2	3	3	9				
former IDP				2						1		4				
never displaced	22		3		12		6		11		8	1	4	1	2	
returnee	12				11		2		1				11		7	
immigrant						5		5					4	3	1	5
former prisoner	4				6				2							
demobilized	1				8								2			
	39	7	4	12	37	5	8	5	16	4	11	14	21	4	10	5
	62				**55**				**45**				**40**			

Table 2: Overview of the interviewees (Bugendana and Mugara, 2008-2020)

To select the interviewees, in 2008 lists were compiled for each community, in collaboration with the local authorities, which reported the names of all the heads of household and their *ubwoko*. Households were selected through a random sampling scheme, stratified by a number of identity markers including the *ubwoko*. The head of household or, in his/her absence, another adult member was then interviewed. All the interviewees were over 30 years old in 2008 (with a few exceptions for demobilised rebels), as it was necessary that they had lived consciously during, and had recollection of, the period of violence that started in the early 1990s. Data was collected by Ingelaere and a team of seven local collaborators that he had trained and supervised. During data collection, Ingelaere was continuously present in the field and personally present during one third of the interviews. The collected material was verified on a daily basis in order to provide feedback to the local collaborators and to guarantee the quality of the life histories. The entire research design and approach are lengthily described in a number of publications (Ingelaere & Verpoorten 2020: 525-527; Guariso, Ingelaere & Verpoorten 2018: 1367-1373; Ingelaere 2009: 30-38).[144]

[143] 22 persons were interviewed both in 2008-2015 and in 2018-2020.

[144] Ingelaere collected data from 302 individuals belonging to six different rural communities in Burundi selected according to the principle of maximum variation, aiming at a large variance in conflict and post-conflict

I myself worked with four Burundian translators from different *amoko*.[145] Three translators, at different points in my fieldwork, facilitated the conversation with the interviewees and helped me with the interpretation of the data and in the elaboration of new research questions. A fourth translator helped me with the transcription and translation from Kirundi to French of the interviews that I was able to record. When I started my fieldwork in 2018, after having some preliminary conversations with people who had been interviewed in 2008 and 2015, I decided to include new people in my sample who had not been interviewed before in order to gather new data. The reason for this was that people who had been interviewed previously tended to provide exactly the same type of perceptions that had been collected before, sometimes almost anticipating the questions that I was about to ask. To try to hear other, possibly different, narrations and perceptions, I decided to interview other people, who had never been interviewed before. To select the new interviewees, I proceeded through snowball sampling and by "following the story" or the "life" of the interviewees (Marcus 1995: 109-10). Through snowball sampling, I included in my sample people who appeared to be close to the interviewee, as well as people that the interviewee seemed to exclude from his or her frequent contacts. On the other hand, using the story "as an heuristic [to construct] multi-sited ethnographic research" (Marcus 1995: 109), I identified places that appeared in many people's narratives and that seemed to be relevant in people's "situated sense of [the] social landscape" (Marcus 1995: 109). According to people's narratives, different areas of the research sites presented different historical trajectories, and the inhabitants of those areas had different experiences of violence. Therefore, together with my translator I went to those areas, where we interviewed some of the people living there. In the research site itself, this led us to cover a larger area, up to a distance that was logistically feasible. Thus, in Bugendana we visited different hills

experiences across locations. The present analysis only takes into account data collected in Bugendana and Mugara.

[145] Their *ubwoko* was not the most important criterion for their recruitment, although it had to be taken into account because during the interviews, topics and events would have been discussed that might have put both the translator and the interviewee (and consequently, myself) in very awkward situations. The *ubwoko* of the translator, guessed or assumed by the interviewees (as explained in chapter 1; no interviewee ever asked my translators directly about their *ubwoko*), could have significantly affected the interaction between translator and interviewees and the answers that the latter were available to provide. One translator (Hutu) accompanied me during my first period of fieldwork (three and a half months between 2018 and 2019); two others (one Hutu and one Tutsi) were recruited for the second period of fieldwork (five months between 2019 and 2020). A few weeks after his recruitment, the Tutsi translator found another job and I continued my research with the other translator (Hutu). A fourth translator (Tutsi) helped me with the transcription-translation from Kirundi to French of the interviews that I had been allowed to record.

around the IDP camp (see Figure 5), and in Mugara we went to different "neighbourhoods" of the village, in all geographical directions. In this way, we explored the social landscape as narrated by our interviewees, co-constructing our research "fields" with them. To detect the *ubwoko* of persons that had not been interviewed in 2008 and 2015, we avoided asking direct questions about it, which would have created an awkward situation and negatively affected the atmosphere of trust that is necessary to collect useful data. Instead, we relied on information received from other inhabitants about the person's *ubwoko*; during the interview however, the person almost always came to reveal her *ubwoko*, simply by telling her story and her experience of violence. The ability of my translator was essential in this regard, as in a very culturally appropriate way he was able to ask the right questions at the right time. Nevertheless, in a couple of cases the interviewee's *ubwoko* could not be detected (in red in table 2), though this did not affect the quality of the data in a significant way.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted at the house of the interviewee, to allow him or her to speak freely. During the interviews, individual life histories were collected. Life histories collected by Ingelaere were structured by a ranking exercise in which the interviewees were asked to systematically comment on a series of topics (socio-economic situation, security, trust in members of the "other" *ubwoko*,[146] trust in members of their own *ubwoko*, political representation) for every year of their life story. Interviewees were asked to comment on their current situation regarding each of these topics, then a shift back in time was made to the year of marriage, or to the first year of adult life if the interviewee was single. From that year onwards, the interviewee was asked to comment on every year of his or her past life. When interviewees pointed out improvements in or deterioration of the situation, they were asked to explain the reasons for these changes. The analysis in this chapter focuses on two of the five topics on which the interviewees were asked to comment: trust in members of the "other" *ubwoko* and trust in members of their own *ubwoko*. When levels of trust changed, interviewees were asked to explain these changes, which shed light on their (changing) perceptions of the "other" *ubwoko* and of their own group. In these perceptions, the transformation of the boundaries between *amoko* could be observed, which illuminates the waxing and waning of groupness, i.e.

[146] The "other" *ubwoko* was Tutsi if the interviewee was Hutu, Hutu if the interviewee was Tutsi.

the increased and decreased distance between *amoko*, as explained in the introduction of this chapter.

Life histories collected by myself were less structured. Interviewees expressed themselves in the language they preferred (Kirundi, Kiswahili, or French); I recorded our conversations when they allowed me to do so, otherwise I took notes of their answers. Depending on how talkative the interviewee was, conversations varied between 30 minutes and several hours. After some preliminary exchanges during which my translator and I introduced ourselves to the interviewee, presented the objective of the research, and explained the modalities of the interview, we started our conversation by asking the interviewee if he/she had always lived on the plot of land where we were having our conversation, a question which allowed him/her to open up on his/her history of displacement, if there was any. If the interviewee had never moved from his/her plot of land, we asked about past life experiences, starting with education, work experiences, possible travels, and ending with experiences of violence. Then we enquired about contemporary daily activities. The aim was to observe who emerged as "other" in the interviewee's narration, to detect when and how the "others" were described in terms of *ubwoko*. For this purpose, we also asked for definitions of "friend" and "enemy" to understand which figures were perceived by the interviewees as close ("friends"), and who was situated among the "others" ("enemies"). This allowed us to observe when and why "friends" were members of the same *ubwoko*. I describe this approach more lengthily in chapter 4.

Life histories were analysed with the help of Nvivo. The analysis was conducted in an inductive way with the help of a few "sensitizing concepts" borrowed from the literature on boundary-making that I had taken into consideration in my PhD research (Wimmer 2013, Brubaker 2004, Lamont 2000). Sensitising concepts are not "definitive concepts [that] provide prescriptions of what to see" but they "suggest directions along which to look" (Blumer 1954: 7). Because the aim was to understand fluctuations in groupness, I coded passages of the life histories that talked about "inter-group distancing", "inter-group rapprochement", "boundary persistence", and highlighted processes of "intra-group distancing" and "intra-group rapprochement". I then analysed the ways in which the interviewees perceived distancing and rapprochement to take place between people and groups, and observed the circumstances under which this was said to take place. In the following sections, I present the results of this analysis. The focus is on the waxing

and waning of groupness in relation to the emergence, persistence, and fading of boundaries.

3. Boundaries emerging: increasing groupness following acts of violence

The relation between violence and groupness in Burundi, with violence leading to increased levels of groupness, seems to take shape in two main ways: through the personal experience of acts of violence and their memory, and through narratives of violence, experienced or transmitted.

Direct experience of violence seems to be the first cause of inter-group distancing: the perception of members of the "other" *ubwoko* is directly affected by it. Violent experiences seem to represent traumatic events that come abruptly into someone's life and provoke a shock, the consequences of which it is then very challenging to cope with. When violence was committed by persons considered to be close, the event was more unexpected and, as a result, more traumatic.

> "I lost all the trust that I had in the Hutu, considering the nastiness with which they chased us away [in 1993]".[147]
>
> "They killed all the members of my family and even my husband. My properties have been looted and destroyed. Our Hutu friends were the first ones to come kill my husband".[148]
>
> "Hutu military officers have been killed by their comrades. The reason? They were Hutu".[149]
>
> "The Tutsi always wanted to threaten the Hutu, and there have been many victims during the killings. They exterminated my family, my husband and my friends".[150]
>
> "I did not trust [the Tutsi] anymore, as they could kill me, especially the military".[151]
>
> "I was afraid that the Hutu could attack me because they considered all the Tutsi to be enemies who had killed the president".[152]

The memory of experiences of violence also affects groupness. Memory of the past provides scripts for the interpretation of more recent episodes of violence. Because past

[147] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, IDP, Bugendana, April 2008.
[148] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.
[149] Interview, Hutu, female, 51, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.
[150] Interview, Hutu, female, 54, returnee, Mugara, 2008.
[151] Interview, Hutu, male, 49, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.
[152] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, immigrant, Mugara, April 2008.

violence caused inter-group distancing, the interpretation of more recent violence based on the memory of the past contributes to reinforcing the distance between groups.

> "[In 1985] the threats to the Catholic religion recalled [memories of] the years of exclusion, and we thought that the massacres would have followed as well. The survivors of 1972 had bad memories, and we too".[153]
>
> "[In 1992] Hutu and Tutsi were throwing insults at each other, related to politics and to the 1972 events".[154]
>
> "There were massacres between *amoko* in Ntega [1988], that is why even here, Hutu and Tutsi were looking at each other in a bad way".[155]
>
> "Again, the Tutsi showed us that they did not want us, they had just killed our president and then they pursued the Hutu in town".[156]
>
> "The conflict was assuming an ethnic nature because they said that the Tutsi killed the president and we thought that we would have returned to the situation of 1972".[157]
>
> "[In 1996] the IDPs came to take revenge [for the violence experienced in 1993]".[158]
>
> "[…] this *ubwoko* [the Hutu, *NdA*] does not have any power, and has not had for a long time. We suffer great harm, they fight the idea that the Hutu become presidents. If you look at the succession of power, from the kingdom of Mwambutsa until Rwagasore and Micombero, […] all the successive institutions were governed by Tutsi. But when you do not accept that a Hutu comes to power, you see that when Ndadaye came to power, they killed him and nothing changed. […] [When] they killed him, [...] I felt much rage in my heart. What kind of hatred must those people have in their hearts?"[159]

In the same way, the memory of past violence provides scripts for the interpretation of "future" violence, perceived as very likely to take place. When possible outbreaks of violence are foreseen, some rely on memories of past violence to make sense of it. By drawing from past experience, people anticipate future violence, in order to be more prepared to face it, at least psychologically. The anticipation of violence expresses

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[153] Interview, Hutu, male, 53, returnee, Bugendana, 2008.

[154] Interview, Hutu, male, 48, never displaced, Bugendana, March 2008.

[155] Interview, Hutu, male, 48, immigrant and former prisoner, Mugara, May 2008. The same type of observation was made by a Tutsi IDP in Bugendana, who explained that "the crisis in Ntega and Marangara caused suspicion among *amoko*. We thought that the entire country was going to be affected" (interview, Tutsi, male, 49, IDP, Bugendana, 2008).

[156] Interview, Hutu, male, 50, immigrant, Mugara, 2008.

[157] Interview, Hutu, male, 68, immigrant, Mugara, April 2008.

[158] Interview, Hutu, male, 49, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.

[159] "*[…] ubwo bwoko ntibafise inganji, kandi kuva kera. Twebwe turanirwa cane, ubwoko bw'abahutu kuja kucubahiro c'ubuperezida barakirwanya cane. Turavye kunzego kuva kuri ba Mwambutsa nyene uravyunva, ukaza kuri ba Rwagasore canke nogushike kuri Micombero […], inzego zose zikurikirana rero n'abatutsi gusa. Ariko ukanaga kwunva umuhutu agiye kubutegetsi, urabona Ndadaye yaragiye kubutetsi ko baciye bamwica kandi ntacahindutse. […] Bamwishe rero […], ndetse ndunva ikintu c'inzigo nyishi mu mutima: nti bwa bundi babantu bafise inzigo nkiyi?*". Interview, Hutu, male, 59, returnee, Mugara, January 2020.

"hope against the expectation of violence and hope that the eventuality of what is anticipated will not be realized", however, "as soon as it is discussed and becomes conscious, the anticipation turns into a reality, a matter of fact", giving "the future an aura of being real, certain, and inevitable" (Hermez 2012: 335). The anticipation of violence refreshes the memory of past experience of violence, which leads to inter-group distancing, and in this way it contributes to increasing the distance between groups.[160]

> "Because of this anxiety, when we hear that there is no peace up there, we also do not have peace. We lose weight like this".[161]
>
> "The 2010 elections scare us, we risk returning to civil war".[162]
>
> "They use discourses that are not reassuring. They talk a lot about political parties and they say that if the current head of state is elected again, things are going to get worse".[163]
>
> "Today, they say that our camp will be moved [elsewhere] because they want to build an airport here. We would not like to be dispersed because we are already used to living together. If they [have to] move us, may they put us in another place but not require us to return to the hills. It is difficult to believe that they will not harm us anymore, if we return to the hills. There are some [on the hill] who would like us to return to live with them, and in a peaceful, good way, but they are not many".[164]

Positions adopted in anticipation of violence show the role that discourse and narratives play in determining levels of inter-group distancing, building on memories of the past and operating through fear. Verbal violence, through threats, direct insults, or narratives of violence, is another important element that gives rise to inter-group distancing.

> "The electoral campaign was conducted in a suspicious way, the Hutu were throwing threatening slogans against the Tutsi and the members of the UPRONA".[165]

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[160] This is one of the reasons why elections, for instance, are always awaited with anxiety and fear in Burundi: electoral appointments always came with violence in the past, and many people expect every new electoral period to be accompanied by violence. A Burundian neighbour in Bujumbura, for instance, once told me that if he can, he always tries not to be in Burundi during elections, like he did in 2015. Purdeková (2020) also points out that in 2015, "looking at the UNHCR refugee flow data, […] most people fled in anticipation of a major escalation, not in response to it". During informal conversations in Bujumbura, several of my interlocutors made a connection between the violence experienced in 2015 and the 1993 civil war. Even after the electoral period, another Burundian friend once told me that they "live a 24h rechargeable life" ("*une vie rechargeable à 24h*"), in an existential precariousness that prevents them from being able to foresee their future beyond the 24 hours of a day. In this way, violence seems to have become an "absent presence: a recollection of past violence and an imagination of future violence", "constantly present as a structuring force in social life" (Hermez 2012: 330).

[161] Interview, Tutsi, female, 59, IDP, Bugendana, 2015.

[162] Interview, Tutsi, female, 48, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

[163] Interview, Tutsi, female, 66, IDP, Bugendana, 2015.

[164] Interview, Tutsi, male, 58, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

[165] Interview, Tutsi, female, 48, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

> "Trust decreased sharply following the beginning of the havoc [created by] political parties. Bad words were spoken by the Tutsi".[166]
>
> "Some Hutu threatened us, aiming at taking revenge".[167]

These quotes show clearly how "threats of violence are also violence" (Galtung 1990: 292), the experience of which provokes inter-group distancing. The same result was obtained more explicitly through direct insults.

> "I could not come across military officers without being insulted by them because of my Hutu *ubwoko*".[168]
>
> "[The Tutsi] continued to maintain the same discourse. […] They could say that they did not want to come here to cultivate their fields, that if they came to cultivate very close to the Hutu, the Hutu could have set an ambush on the road, while no Hutu could have done that".[169]
>
> "I lost 300kg of beans in 1993, my brother [suffered a loss] as well. […] When we returned and came across the Tutsi, at the bar […], they said ironically: 'you really are agriculturalists'. They were happy that they looted a lot. We returned around three months after [the period of most severe] insecurity.
> **How did you answer them when they said that?**
> 'Eat them, we are going to cultivate more'".[170]

Narratives of violence, intended as discourses elaborated on the experience of violence, also provoke inter-group distancing.

> "They said that it was the Tutsi who did not want the Hutu in power".[171]
>
> "They said that Rwagasore had been killed by Rwandan Tutsi, and trust in [the Tutsi] decreased".[172]

In some cases, narratives of violence are transmitted to the younger generations, who do not have first-hand experience of the same type of violence. The top-down transmission of perceptions of the "others", considering the authority that narratives from older people have for younger members of the society, leads the latter to take positions that will be challenged with more difficulties (CENAP 2010: 6).[173] For some people living today in Mugara, this happened at school, or home.

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[166] Interview, Hutu, male, 50, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.
[167] Interview, Tutsi, male, 71, immigrant, Mugara, April 2008.
[168] Interview, Hutu, male, 38, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.
[169] Interview, Hutu, male, 62, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.
[170] Interview, Hutu, male, 63, never displaced, Bugendana, November 2018.
[171] Interview, Hutu, female, 48, never displaced, Bugendana, 2008.
[172] Interview, Hutu, male, 86, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.
[173] See also « Chers Burundais, parlons d'ethnie et de racisme » (Yaga Burundi, 10 March 2021. Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsYsDQkguDM&ab_channel=YagaBurundi, accessed 07 April 2021).

> "When we were at school, there was a Kirundi course every Saturday. The teacher was trying to make us revolt against the Tutsi. He pushed us to hate them and he incited us to start the rebellion".[174]

The son of a returnee, born in a Tanzanian refugee camp after the 1972 violence, explained what happened in 1972 as if it had happened in front of his own eyes:

> "They came in a crowd, around 200 people with guns, spears, dogs. They came and killed people. If they did not find anyone to kill, they looted the house. Many people were killed in 1972. Even though I was not born yet, they told us that at some point they also came by plane. They used to say it was the Hutu from Mugara who started [the rebellion]".[175]

In a later interview, he continued:

> "I heard it said, I was not born yet, that planes came to bombard those who were here, tanks also came that were sent by Micombero, and they shot the people. In Mugara, none of the natives remained. Those who remained are dead. Everybody left. Then, people from Bururi and Vyanda came to seize our land here in Mugara […].
> **You were not born yet, who did you learn all this from?**
> […] my father […] used to have coffee plants here. There were also houses that they had built where they sold the coffee that they had bought. You must have heard that they had a lot of money, it was because they sold coffee. But today that we are together, after returning to Burundi, we found oil palms. Not only him, other elderly people as well with whom we returned [to Burundi] told me that they had coffee plantations where you now see palms. This is why I have even more evidence of this".[176]

These types of narratives closely resemble what Malkki called mythico-histories (1995: 54), which provide precise visions of the world and moral evaluations of past events. It is from the transmission of these types of narratives that divergent accounts of the same violent events from persons of different *amoko* derive (Manirakiza 2011: 39; Mukuri 2004: 427; Lemarchand 1996: 33). This divergence highlights an important boundary between *amoko*, as Hutu and Tutsi emphasise different dimensions of violence and

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[174] Interview, Hutu, male, 32, demobilised, Mugara, April 2008. According to his account, the interviewee went to school in Tanzania, where he was born (in a refugee camp).

[175] Interview, Hutu, male, 25, son of a returnee, Mugara, December 2018.

[176] "*Numva amatwi ansumira sihonari sinari bwa vuke, numva ngo haraje n'indege ibarasira ngaho kukibuga, haraza zi blindés zirungitswe na ba Micombero na bande, zibica sur terrain zica abegihugu. N'ukuvuga ngw'iki rero, ku Mugara, abantu b'abavuke bo ngaha nta numwe yasigaye, uwasigaye nawe yarapfuye, bose barahunze. Haca hamanuka abantu bazananye i Bururi, Abanyavyanda, baza gufata urusi rwo ngaha ku Mugara […].* ***Tu n'étais pas encore né, par qui as-tu appris tout ça ?*** *Urabona igituma ndabizi cane, akarorero umutama w'iwanje Papa amaze kuvuka, yahora akorera agahawa ngaha. Kandi hariho n'amazu bafise bari barubatse bacururizamwo agahawa bararangura agahawa. Aho wumva ngo bari bafise amafaranga bandandaza agahawa, mugabo uno musi turi kumwe nawe canke tugarutse aha mu Burundi twasanzeho amabo. Mutama niwe yaza aravuga ati kandi siwe gusa benshi abatama twazananye canke bahungutse canke bakera bavuga ko aha mubona amabo hose hari agahawa. Niyo mpavu ico naciye ndagifitako ubuhamya burenze*". Interview, Hutu, male, 26, son of a returnee, Mugara, November 2019.

different aspects of the nature of responsibility,[177] and it represents an important obstacle to reconciliation (Rufyikiri 2021: 25; Bentrovato 2016: 229). Diverging narratives of violence, each specific to either the Hutu or the Tutsi *ubwoko*, show how boundaries can be made through discourses, and how groupness emerges in a discursive way.[178] In everyday life, however, groupness seems to be more directly experienced through the observation of the others' behaviours, and to derive from specific perceptions of external realities that are largely informed by the memory of the past.

4. Boundaries persisting: the experience of groupness in the aftermath of violence

Groupness derives from the emergence of a boundary between groups, which in Burundi is often a consequence of violence, as the previous section has shown. In the aftermath of violence, the persistence of boundaries in the everyday life of many Burundians is determined by two major factors: the memory of the past, and the observation of behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko*, the interpretation of which is still largely informed by the memory of the past.

In some cases, the memory of past violence plays a decisive role in contemporary perceptions of members of the "other" *ubwoko* and in the relationship with them. In Bugendana, both Hutu and Tutsi look at members of the "other" *ubwoko* with suspicion or fear. This seems to be facilitated by the "ethno-geographical" setting of the locality, where Hutu and Tutsi live separated from each other.

> "As a Burundian, can you say that there is peace in Burundi? There cannot be any peace in a country like Burundi where one *ubwoko* lives separately from the other. I do not know if there are any IDP camps at your place [of origin]. […] Go to Mutaho, you will understand. When you see it, if you are not afraid, it is because you have not seen what happened in Burundi".[179]
>
> "Seriously, if it were you, what would you do? After all, a tree cannot hit your eyes two times. And you can always protect yourself from an enemy by doing all that you can do. Do you get it? And do you not understand me? Then why

[177] The juxtaposition made by Ingelaere (2009: 123-136) of Hutu and Tutsi narratives around several episodes of violence in Burundi (in 1972 in Rumonge, in 1988 in Ntega, in 1993 and 1996 in Bugendana, in 1993 and 2002 in Itaba) clearly shows the divergence of Hutu and Tutsi accounts.

[178] This emerges clearly in the analysis of the increased ethnicisation of the memory of President Ntaryamira on Twitter (in chapter 5), made possible by the employment of specific discursive strategies.

[179] "*Nk'Umurundi urashobora kuvuga ko mu Burundi burya hari amahoro? Ntamahora ashobora kuba mugihugu c'Uburundi gipanze nk'uku ubwoko bumwe biba ukwabwo ubundi ukwabwo. Sinzi ko iwanyu hariho amasite. […] Urazogenda i Mutaho ucubitahura. Ubibonye ntugire ubwoba woba ataco wabonye mu vyabaye mu Burundi*". Interview, Hutu, male, 57, never displaced, Bugendana, October 2019. In this passage, the interviewee was addressing my translator, apparently with some anger.

> even the younger ones, when it rains on the hill, accept being hit by the rain and come here to the camp. They see that it is not safe there [on the hill]".[180]

In Mugara, memories of the past are retrieved in a different way. More recent episodes of a different type of violence, namely expropriation, are sometimes linked to past violence and determine specific attitudes towards the "other" *ubwoko*. The impossibility for some Hutu returnees to take their land back is sometimes seen as the Tutsi's fault, when Tutsi represent the opposite party in land conflicts.

> "How to trust someone who does not want me to live? Someone who took my land and my belongings and does not want anything good for me? It is because of the Tutsi that I did not get my properties".[181]

> "I do not trust them because they refused to give my land back, so my children will starve. Here in our locality, there is no trust between Hutu and Tutsi. The Tutsi have always thought that the Hutu returnees will kill them in order to take their land back. Therefore, a climate of suspicion dominates here".[182]

A Tutsi who had been expelled from the plot of land where she was living in Mugara also perceives an important boundary between her *ubwoko* and that of the Hutu, due to her recent expulsion from the house in which she had been living for decades.

> "I cannot go back to Mugara, I could have problems there.
> **Why?**
> Because of the *ubwoko*, because of what happened in Burundi. People who used to be friends became enemies. The Tutsi who remained in Mugara always have problems with sorcery. Myself, I do not have any contact with people from Mugara. The Tutsi who had the means fled Mugara. […]
> Before the war, I used to have good relations with friends and neighbours. But they did not help me [when I was expelled]. They were afraid.
> **Why?**
> The returnees had goods, my neighbours stood by their side. They said 'the Tutsi can go, we stay here with the returnees'".[183]

In the case of this interviewee too, the boundary between *amoko* does not derive solely from the experience of recent violence, but rather it relies on the memory of past violence.

> "How could I trust [the Hutu] when it is them who caused my fall? […] when it is them who are at the origin of my pain, who have killed my husband, and looted all my belongings?"[184]

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[180] "*None ga we sha, n'ukuri none wewe wogira gute. Erega burya igiti ntikigukora mujisho kabiri, kand'umwansi urashobora kumwirinda ahuburi hose muvyushoboye. Ntuvyumva? Kandi ntubitegera? None kuber'iki n'abakibasha bemera invura ikabakura kumutumba ibakubita, ibakubita, ibakubita mpaka bakaza ngaha muri site. None sukubona umutekano*". Interview, Tutsi, female, 57, IDP, Bugendana, September 2019.

[181] Interview, Hutu, male, 46, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.

[182] Interview, Hutu, female, 40, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.

[183] Interview, Tutsi, female, 51, immigrant, Mugara, December 2018.

[184] Interview, Tutsi, female, 54, immigrant, Mugara, 2015.

For many people in Mugara, however, the "ethnic" reading of the situation is not applicable because the parties in land conflict often belong to the same *ubwoko*. This blurs the boundary between *amoko* with a boundary based on the experience of cross-border migration: the distinction between returnees and those who never fled Burundi becomes more relevant than the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi, as land conflicts are between returnees and non-returnees (Schwartz 2019: 135) and among the latter are Tutsi as well as Hutu, sometimes even family members (Van Leeuwen 2010: 756; Kamungi, Oketch & Huggins 2005: 217). This is one of the ways in which boundaries between *amoko* are blurred and become thinner, allowing for a decrease in groupness. I talk about this process in section 5 of this chapter.

In daily life, the observation of behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko* is also central in the elaboration of specific perceptions of them. The inexplicability of their behaviour, in particular, causes a great deal of suspicion. In Bugendana, this is facilitated by the specific "ethno-geographical" setting of the locality, where Hutu and Tutsi live in separate, distant areas. The boundary perceived is reinforced by the physical distance between the two *amoko*.

> "We remain here in our place and they also remain in their place in the camp, we cannot trust people that we do not meet often. […] There have been land conflicts on our hill, some people had bought plots of land from [some] Tutsi, but at a certain point the Tutsi started to say that they had never sold those plots. […] You cannot trust people who change like this".[185]
>
> "These IDPs only pass by to harvest their crops and that is when we can greet each other, otherwise during meetings [announced by] authorities. I have more trust in the people who live here with me but I have little trust in the IDPs, who cannot come to live with us for an unknown reason, because if we invite them, they come, but I do not know what prevents them from coming to live here with us".[186]
>
> "Someone who has not returned so that we could live together, I trust him but since he does not want to return, that means that he does not trust me. I [can] trust him but I do not know what is in his heart".[187]

In Mugara too, the impossibility to have a solid grasp on members of the "other" *ubwoko* determines the perception of them.

> "The Tutsi are like snakes. They can show you that they trust you, while it is not true".[188]

[185] Interview, Hutu, male, 57, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.
[186] Interview, Hutu, male, 53, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.
[187] Interview, Hutu, male, 59, returnee, Bugendana, 2015.
[188] Interview, Hutu, male, 50, immigrant, Mugara, 2008.

> *« Ce sont des gens qui ont des ruses. Il est très difficile de faire de gens avec des ruses, de les considérer comme des amis intimes, on risque de… de déraper quoi ».*[189]

From being suspicious of figures perceived as shady to making assumptions about their bad intentions is a short step. Assumptions, once again, rely on the memory of the past. By trying to make sense of objects, persons, actions, or situations observed in daily life, people always bring in beliefs and expectations that are "embodied in persons, encoded in myths, memories, narratives, and discourses" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 38). In day-to-day situations, people are thus required "to 'fill in' unspecified information continuously from their stocks of tacit background knowledge" (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 42).

> "I think that they do not return because of their evil heart, because there are even some who are wealthier than them who live here. Some have a bad perception and think of returning when no Hutu will be on the hill, which is not possible".[190]

> "When we go to our fields to cultivate, we see that some receive us in a good way, but as they say, '*nuwawe arakwihinduka*', even your own child can revolt against you. We see that there are some who look at us in a bad way. It is true that they do not harm us, but I have been traumatised so much, I cannot return to live there. […] If they come to kill Hutu like them, will they have pity for us?"[191]

> "The real problem is that Tutsi do not want to be governed, they always want to govern. […] Look at NGOs. Only Tutsi are there. When NGO staff come to the *eaux thermales* here, only Tutsi are with them, no Hutu goes into the swimming pool with them. How come? You, in Europe, how do you handle that?"[192]

> "I do not like to go to the market, and when I need to buy something, I ask the worker of my father-in-law or the children of the neighbours if they can go buy what I need. […] They are bad people.
> **Why do you send someone else to the market?**
> I do not know how I can… I do not like them, they are particular, they are proud… and they use poison a lot. [Those people] do sorcery a lot.
> **Those at the market ?**
> At the market, listen, I really do not know how they are, I am not able to say it. I do not know".[193]

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[189] Interview, Tutsi, male, 46, immigrant, Mugara, December 2019.

[190] Interview, Hutu, male, 40, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.

[191] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

[192] Interview, Hutu, male, 62, returnee, Mugara, December 2018.

[193] "*Jewe kw'isoko sindahakunda, niyo ngomba gusuma mpfuma ntuma nk'umukozi wa mutama, canke nkatuma nk'abana b'ababanyi nti genda mungurire ikinaka. […] N'abantu bameze nabi.* ***Kw'isoko nikubera iki utuma?*** *Sinzi ingene ndabu… sindabakunda bamez'ukuntu, nabantu berura bi… kandi n'uburozi bwinshi bwinshi. [Abayo] bararoga cane.* ***Harya kw'isoko?*** *Kw'isoko ho urunva, sinzi ingene nomenya, jewe sinzi ingene navyisizemwo. Sinzi*". Interview, Tutsi, female, 30, immigrant, Mugara, December 2019. This person explained to us that her first son had been killed by sorcerers who were operating at the market. In her opinion, it was because her father-in-law (who is Tutsi) was rich and because he was not from Mugara. The divide between this

The persistence of verbal violence, which is also one of the behaviours coming from members of the "other" *ubwoko*, contributes to reinforcing the boundary between *amoko*.

> "In addition, the Hutu start to denigrate us, to insult us and to use divisive language. They say 'we have demystified you, we will make you work as goat herders', and that only provokes our anger".[194]

> "Here in the camp, people trust each other. We help each other, we share things… It is total love. Trust in people from the hill is there, but it is not total. For instance, we can visit them and vice versa, we can help each other sometimes. But I see that the people from my hill of origin are not comfortable yet with us, the displaced. When they see us, they often say shocking words to us and they also destroy our fields. Not everybody is mean but it is difficult to know what is in their hearts".[195]

Although important boundaries seem to persist between *amoko*, in daily activities they are either hidden or accepted in view of the practical needs of cohabitation. Economic activities especially seem to require members of different *amoko* to ignore (past) violence and conflicts in order to earn money, simply put, and thus have greater access to resources.

> "**Do you have any occupiers among your clients?**
> Of course. Trade is trade".[196]

> "I was targeted because I had a Tutsi wife. […] Those who were threatening were Hutu.
> **Do you ever meet [them]?**
> Yes, at the kiosks at the *centre Bugendana*.
> **Do you not feel uncomfortable?**
> Well, I cannot do anything about that. We greet each other, we exchange some words, hatred disappears little by little. But at the kiosks they cannot kill me".[197]

Because they need to cohabit, members of different *amoko* carry out the activities that good neighbours do, but trust never seems to be total. This employment of "ritualized politeness", one of the five mechanisms of everyday peace identified by Mac Ginty (2014), "accepts the existence of conflict […] but also facilitates interpersonal civility", aiming at survival and risk minimization (Mac Ginty 2014: 557).

> "I trust [them] one hundred percent, we are not going to lie to each other, even the one who put me in prison lives there but up to the present day, when he

interviewee and "the people from Mugara" (most of whom are Hutu) is not explicitly related to the *ubwoko*, but this account effectively shows how, after traumatic experiences of violence, suspicions around "shady" persons lead to assumptions about their bad intentions.

[194] Interview, Tutsi, male, 52, IDP, Bugendana, April 2008.

[195] Interview, Tutsi, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

[196] Interview, Hutu, male, 63, returnee, Mugara, November 2019. This interviewee was a tailor.

[197] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

comes to work the fields where he used to live, he asks for water here, he leaves his grand-children here and he goes where he wants without fear […]. However, I do not know what is in their minds".[198]

« *Il y avait [quelqu'un] avec qui on travaillait ensemble ici, il avait fait de certains des gens d'ici des amis intimes, mais ce sont ces gens-là qu'il considérait comme amis qui l'ont tué. […] On l'avait tué en pleine nuit. On l'avait retrouvé le matin mort là-bas, dans la rue. Ah oui. Avec plusieurs indiscrétions on avait remarqué qu'il aurait… il avait été tué par ceux qu'il considérait comme ses amis, l'accusant d'avoir beaucoup d'argent. Mais il n'avait pas beaucoup d'argent comme on le disait, c'était très peu par ailleurs.*
Est-ce qu'il y avait un conflit de terre là ?
Il n'y avait pas de conflits de terre, il n'habitait même pas ici. Il venait d'ailleurs, il est venu ici pour travailler. […]
J'espère que ce n'était pas un truc ethnique !?
Bof…
Ça peut être ça aussi, non ?
On ne sait pas, on ne sait pas.
Mais est-ce qu'il avait refusé de donner de l'argent… ?
On n'a même pas demandé, peut-être on l'avait égorgé pour prendre par après. […]
Alors on avait commencé à haïr ces gens. On y va, ben. Nous nous entretenons, nous nous aidons souvent mais avec des réserves ».[199]

It is when people face the past and when they talk about it, as they did during our interviews, that boundaries emerge more distinctly. This clearly shows that "the memory is still stored in the mind, even though the group does not (choose to) have access to it at present": in a "chosen amnesia", "remembering to forget is […] essential for local coexistence" (Buckley-Zistel 2006: 134). Through this second important mechanism of everyday peace, called conflict "avoidance" by Mac Ginty (2014), people "'live exclusively in the present' and try, as far as possible, to dis-remember past trauma" (Grass in Mac Ginty 2014: 556). This also underlines the nature of the *ubwoko* as an "*intermittent* phenomenon", which "*happens* at particular moments, and in particular contexts, when [people] interpret their experience or diagnose situations […] in ethnic terms" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 208). The retrieval of memories of the past seems to be "that contingency which 'reactivates the historical'" (Laclau in Hall 1996: 14), making identification with an *ubwoko* stronger.

"**How is your relationship with your Tutsi neighbour here? Do you collaborate as neighbours, do you hate each other, do you fake good relations…?**
We can say that we fake it, but in our very heart we know what happened. But [we do this] to give ourselves peace, to avoid a heart attack.
Do you carry out any activities together?

[198] Interview, Hutu, male, 55, former prisoner, Bugendana, 2015.
[199] Interview, Tutsi, male, 46, immigrant, Mugara, December 2019.

> Not really.
> **Where do you happen to meet each other?**
> At the *centre* Mugara. But we behave like a chicken that drinks water and immediately raises its head to see if something is going on.
> **Do you still fear them today? Do you feel insecure when you see them?**
> There is hatred, but not open. When someone talks about land conflict, it reopens the wound. You act like you are not angry, but you cannot but be affected".[200]

The persistence of boundaries in everyday life seems to be facilitated by either the "ethno-geographical setting" of the locality, as in Bugendana, or by conflicts around vital interests like access to land, as in Mugara. In both cases, this persistence is motivated by the memory of the past, which drives specific perceptions of the "others", and boundaries. These boundaries can nevertheless be challenged by some behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko*, allowing for a rapprochement between groups, however apparent that rapprochement may be.

5. Decreasing groupness: boundaries fading and boundary blurring

Under certain circumstances, groupness can decrease and boundaries between groups can become thinner, resulting in a rapprochement between groups. The analysis showed that this happens in two main ways: when boundaries fade because members of different *amoko* renew (non-violent) interactions and relationships, and when boundaries are blurred with other types of dimensions (individual behaviours, territory of origin, economic status), which reduces the importance of the *ubwoko* "as a principle of categorization and social organization" (Wimmer 2013: 61).

The fading of boundaries can only happen when a fundamental condition is respected: security is ensured and the environment is safe. Absence of open violence allowed people to gradually resume their previous daily routines without being afraid of losing their life. The possibility to return to cultivating the fields was particularly appreciated by those for whom agriculture represented their main if not only livelihood. In the absence of open violence, the behaviour of members of the "other" *ubwoko* was under scrutiny. On the one hand, abstention from violence in itself showed willingness to have peace: the absence of threats deriving from the "others" allowed trust to gradually

[200] Interview, Hutu, male, 64, returnee, Mugara, November 2019. This interviewee found his house occupied by a Tutsi when he returned from exile. He turned to the CNTB to settle the conflict and, following its decision, he is now sharing his plot of land with the Tutsi immigrant. The two are living in neighbouring houses on the same plot, at a distance of only a few metres apart.

increase. On the other hand, visible actions and behaviours coming from the "others" that were judged as positive (greetings; warm welcomes; offers of beer, food, or jobs) were interpreted as an attempt at rapprochement, thus reinforcing trust in the "others".

> "After [the 2005] elections, I saw that some Tutsi too wanted peace".[201]
>
> "Among them, there were some who were coming here and we shared everything, and they started to greet us in the same way they were greeting the others".[202]
>
> "We returned to our houses and the Tutsi called us to go work for them".[203]

Even when there was awareness that these behaviours did not solve the root of the problems between *amoko*, and that tensions persisted to some extent, inter-group rapprochement was nevertheless appreciated.

> "The Tutsi also started to understand […]. We reconciled but we are not together because as they say, '*nta mwonga ubura isato iba idahizwe*', a snake cannot be missing in a ditch unless you chased it away. […] I realised that when we were at their place, there was no problem [anymore]. There were no verbal threats and they did not run after us anymore.
> **There were no verbal threats anymore?**
> No, and even if there were any, they were not [said] out loud. They spoke about that among themselves, maybe".[204]
>
> "Between us and the people from the hill, trust is not total. '*Ntawukundwa na bose*', one cannot be loved by everybody. Among them, there are some that I trust fully, whom I can ask for help directly in case of difficulty. Today, we see marriages between Hutu and Tutsi and if there will not be any other troubles, this is going to become more frequent".[205]

Alongside these more or less spontaneous instances of inter-group contact, some interviewees mentioned sensitisation and instructions received from political and religious figures in positions of power that facilitated inter-group rapprochement. This is in line with Allport's "contact hypothesis" (1954), according to which inter-group contact can help reduce prejudice, most effectively "in a societal context marked by supportive institutional structures [and] the agreement of relevant authorities" (Aiken 2013: 36).[206]

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[201] Interview, Hutu, female, 51, formerly displaced, Mugara, April 2008.

[202] Interview, Tutsi, male, 55, IDP, Bugendana, 2015.

[203] Interview, Hutu, male, 40, never displaced, Bugendana, April 2008.

[204] Interview, Hutu, male, 60, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.

[205] Interview, Tutsi, male, 48, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.

[206] To have the greatest effect, this should be facilitated by "a broader social and normative climate conducive to improved intergroup relations"; "positive intergroup contact must be of a non-adversarial quality, must take place between groups afforded equal status in society, must ideally be conducted over an extended period of time, and must be undertaken in the pursuit of cooperative or superordinate goals which actively aim to transform group divides" (Aiken 2013: 36).

> "There was an administrator […] who put us together and told us that there are no Hutu or Tutsi and he asked us to forget what happened and to love each other. […] It is him who brought peace back here. He could put together Hutu and Tutsi. […] He told us to meet and discuss, forgetting what had happened".[207]

> "Thanks to lessons that we received in prison concerning forgiveness, which is taught in the Bible, I started to forgive the Tutsi who caused my arrest".[208]

> "They have taught us forgiveness on the radio, and we have forgiven already. Even if we come across those who committed the crimes, we greet each other, then each one continues his path, without any threats".[209]

The second important way in which groupness seems to decrease is through boundary blurring. This happened in two main ways. On the one hand, the boundary between *amoko* was sometimes blurred with either a territorial or an economic dimension. Some interviewees explained how one's territory of origin sometimes prevails over the *ubwoko* in the vision and division of the social world.

> "When I see a group with a Tutsi who comes from here, even if he lives in Bujumbura, I feel confident because I see a Tutsi from my place of origin. The same applies to a Tutsi who sees a group with Hutu who come from here, he feels confident and goes to ask them what they are doing there".[210]

> "I do not have any problem with my neighbours, even those who remained on the hill, my former neighbours. There are some people whom I cannot trust. There are some, for instance, who do not want to approach us and do not want to have a conversation with us, especially people from specific hills, and they come from all *amoko*".[211]

> "When I arrived from Bujumbura, I discovered that the Tutsi here were different from those in Bujumbura because they did not threaten us".[212]

> "Even the Hutu who accept the land here are assimilated with the Tutsi, they are qualified as philistines, [as is the case with] people who come from the mountains surrounding the plain of Rumonge".[213]

In line with the relevance of the territory of origin in the identification of the "others", the experience of cross-border migration (in Mugara) contributed to blurring the boundary between *amoko*. Most of the time, this was related to the presence of land conflicts after returning to Burundi, as mentioned in section 4.

> "When I returned, I found that most of the Tutsi occupied our lands, but there were Hutu [among them] as well. As far as I am concerned, part of my land is

[207] Interview, Hutu, male, 60, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.
[208] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, former prisoner, Bugendana, April 2008.
[209] Interview, Tutsi, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.
[210] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.
[211] Interview, Tutsi, male, 35, IDP, Bugendana, 2008.
[212] Interview, Hutu, male, 50, immigrant, Mugara, 2008.
[213] Interview, Tutsi, female, 53, immigrant, Mugara, April 2008.

> occupied by Hutu and part by Tutsi. If they all could give me back my land, I would not hold any grudge against them".[214]
>
> "What I noticed is that if you have a plot of land here in Mugara, your first potential enemies are the locals, the natives from here, and especially the former refugees. Why? They think that you are richer than them. […] Life is still not good for them, so if they hear that you have one hectare, or half, where you can harvest palm nuts, you become [for them] one of those people who received land from the state, those who came from the countryside. The same people with whom you were together can be even more harmful than the others. Why? They see that you become rich, and they start asking themselves questions about you. […] As far as I can see, there is no Tutsi who constitutes a problem for me, and no Hutu [either]. Only those who know everything about your life and know if anything is missing at your house".[215]

In some cases, the political reasons that pushed some to flee the country and experience cross-border migration, while other people from the same *ubwoko* remained in Burundi, represented the element that blurred the boundary between *amoko*. In this way, "return migration to Burundi […] created a new set of group categories based on where individuals were during the war" (Schwartz 2019: 128).

> "If we consider [the Hutu] who remained here in the country, I do not know if we are going to consider them in the same way as those who were in Tanzania. Those who remained here were like the Tutsi, because they did not speak the same language as us, who were in exile.
> **Why did you flee, when others remained here?**
> If you understand well, we were not on the same page as those who remained here".[216]

Economic status can also make people reconsider the relevance of belonging to a specific *ubwoko* in the identification of the "others".

> "Not all the Tutsi harmed us. Tutsi [who were] poor like me suffered the same fate as myself".[217]
>
> "I would not say that there are differences [between Hutu and Tutsi]. Everything is mostly the result of poverty. We have seen this. Even if the fact of being Tutsi derives often from wealth, if a person does not represent any danger, an enemy is someone who is a source of trouble for you. Even the latter can help you with something. When you have problems, you can be helped by

[214] Interview, Hutu, male, 59, returnee, Mugara, April 2008.

[215] "*Gusa ico nabonye, ufise itongo ngaha ku Mugara, abantu bansi bambere bashobora kubaho mbere kuri wewe n'abasangwa, aba bantu bitwa ngo n'invukira zaho mvuze imvukira, neza neza muca mwumva abahungutse, uti kuber'iki? Urumva bafata ko wewe ubakiranye. […] Rero barya, neza na neza ubuzima ntiburatomora neza, rero yumvise kufise agahegitare canke akanusu k'ushobora guca ikigazi, ukamera nka wa muntu yahabwa itongo na Reta, babandi baje bava ruguru. Barya nyene mwari kumwe novuga mwazananye muvuye hariya barashobora kukubera intambanyi cane kurusha naba, kuber'iki? Babona k'umenga urabakiranye, bakakwibazaho cane. […] Jewe nivyo mbona kuko sinobesha ngo hariho umututsi ariko arambuza amahora ngaha canke n'umuhutu oya. Gusa ni babantu bazi kurya warubayeho, dufate ko mwari mubuze ibintu runaka*". Interview, Hutu, male, 26, son of returnee, Mugara, November 2019.

[216] Interview, Hutu, male, 43, returnee, Bugendana, 2015.

[217] Interview, Hutu, male, 69, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.

> him or by someone of your same [ubwoko] […]. You see that the *ubwoko* is not a problem [in itself]".[218]

On the other hand, several interviewees emphasised the importance of individual actions, rather than the *ubwoko*, in the identification of the "others". This represents another way in which boundaries between *amoko* were blurred: by refusing to make generalisations and by descending instead to the individual level, the interviewees reduced the relevance of the *ubwoko* "as a principle of categorization and social organization" (Wimmer 2013: 61), relying on the judgment of single actions (which could be positive, like supportive behaviours, or negative, like conflictual relationships, often related to land disputes) to position themselves and the others.

> "There are no groups, I trust people individually because there are honest people and dishonest people".[219]

> "Myself, I am a Hutu, and to trust another Hutu, one needs to see what good things he does; as for a Tutsi too, I can trust him considering what he is doing for me or for the country. […] I trust the Hutu because I am also Hutu. I also trust the Tutsi because so far, I do not have any problems with the Tutsi. We do not have any problems between Burundians, all harm comes from the politicians".[220]

By putting emphasis on the individual instead of the group, the "emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 19) necessarily decreases.

Conclusions

The *ubwoko* in Burundi is a social construct that results from specific social processes and is adopted by individuals as an identity reference. The sense of belonging to the *ubwoko*, called "groupness" in this chapter, varies among individuals and in time: the "content and grip" of the *ubwoko* "on individuals' imaginations are a function of social and historical conditions" (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 858). In Burundi, violence characterised social and historical conditions that had an important impact on groupness. This chapter analysed three major dynamics of boundary-making between

[218] "*Sinovuga ngo hariho amatandukaniro, vyose ahanini hariho ibiterwa n'ubukene. Twagiye turabibona. Erega nubwo bututsi kenshi riva murivuga gutunga, none nk'umuntu yinezererewe wumva abavuziki, umwansi n'uwuguteramagorwa. Nawene arashobora kuguha. Urunva uragirangorane harigihe ugiringorane ugatabarwa nawe, canke ugatabarwa n'uwundi musangiye [ubwoko] [...]. Urumva ivy'ubwoko siyo ngorane*". Interview, Hutu, male, 57, never displaced, Bugendana, October 2019.

[219] Interview, Hutu, male, 48, immigrant, Mugara, 2015.

[220] Interview, Hutu, male, 69, never displaced, Bugendana, 2015.

amoko in Burundi: how violence led (and still leads) to the emergence of boundaries between the Hutu and Tutsi *amoko* and to increased groupness; how boundaries are perceived and groupness is experienced in daily life; and how groupness decreases as a result of the fading of the boundaries or boundaries being blurred. By focusing on the thickening and thinning of the boundaries between groups, the analysis presented in this chapter complements Wimmer's taxonomy of boundary-making strategies (2013: 49-63), which takes into account changes in the position and the meaning of the boundaries. This allows for a better grasp of the waxing and waning of groupness as a result of boundary-making processes.

The analysis showed that both physical and verbal violence increase groupness. Violence, in fact, is one of the "means of boundary making" identified by Wimmer (2013: 70) through which boundaries increase their relevance. The experience of violence provoked a trauma in many people's lives that led to inter-group distancing and increased groupness. The memory of that experience reinforced groupness when it was recalled to interpret later episodes of violence, or to anticipate future (imagined) violence. Verbal violence is another type of violence that contributed to increased groupness. Direct verbal violence (through threats and insults) led to inter-group distancing. Narratives of violence, sometimes transmitted to the next generations, also contributed to increased groupness. In fact, the nature of violence "is not intrinsic to the act itself; it emerges through after-the-fact interpretive claims" (Brubaker & Laitin 1998: 444). Thus "violence generates mythmaking, which itself becomes a constitutive element of further violence" (Lemarchand 1996: xi). This shows how groupness is shaped by both human actions and speech (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 848), with speech actually being a type of human action. In the present day, the legacy of past violence is evident in the way boundaries are perceived in daily life. This happens when contemporary realities, like the "ethno-geographical" setting of Bugendana, and contemporary violence, such as expropriation (in Mugara), are interpreted as the direct consequence of past violence. It also happens when behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko* cannot really be grasped: the impossibility of situating the "others" in a specific position, which would mean knowing which behaviours are safe to adopt, pushes people to infer knowledge from their memories, and from the experience of violence directed against their *ubwoko*. All of this leads to perceptions of the "others" as threatening or harmful. Verbal violence, on the other hand, is one of the behaviours

of members of the "other" *ubwoko* that is clearly interpreted and linked with past violence. Many interviewees, however, seem to be aware of the existence of boundaries but pretend they do not exist, an attitude which is adopted strategically to prioritise the satisfaction of more or less vital needs, like securing a livelihood, and being able to cohabit, in the absence of alternatives. Thus, practices of everyday peace like conflict "avoidance" and "ritualized politeness" are employed for "survival and risk minimization" (Mac Ginty 2014: 557) in everyday life. At the same time, the employment of these types of practices allows for the persistence of boundaries between *amoko*, as they do not address the causes of the distance between those groups. Groupness can still decrease, however, and this seems to happen in Burundi via two main mechanisms: boundaries fade when behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko* (namely, abstention from violence, and offers of food, greetings, or jobs) are received positively, and boundaries are blurred when one's territory of origin, economic situation, and individual actions prevail over the *ubwoko* in his or her identification.

While violence increases groupness, in the absence of violence, and more precisely through inter-group contact, groupness can decrease. The challenge that stands in the way of inter-group contact is represented by geographical settings in which people live separated, and by the memory of past violence, which informs contemporary perceptions and interactions in different ways, as I have shown in this chapter. In addition, it is difficult to appreciate the effectiveness of inter-group rapprochement as long as important boundaries are perceived but "purposely" ignored in order to prioritise day-to-day survival. While practices of everyday peace "render tolerable the habitation of a 'sectarian imaginary'", they also "perpetuate and normalize a sectarian culture and help sustain the long-term nature of divisions" (Mac Ginty 2014: 557). The remark made by many interviewees about the impossibility of knowing what "really" is in the others' hearts, from this point of view, translates into the acceptance of a situation of cognitive disorder that cannot be changed and that people need to deal with every day: thus, the existence of divisions becomes normalised. This hinders the stability of relations between people: when the past is stored in the mind but not accessed at present (Buckley-Zistel 2006: 134), the potential for tensions and conflict is always present (Turner 2010: 125). This is even more so the case when the memory of the past continues to significantly inform people's daily perceptions and interactions, as this chapter has shown. This reinforces the "intermittent" nature of the *ubwoko*

(Brubaker et al. 2006: 208). Individuals have "multiple belongings", which "have not the same importance, in any case not at the same moment" (Maalouf 1998: 19), and the *ubwoko* can be one of these belongings. When the memory of the past is recalled, the historical is reactivated (Laclau in Hall 1996: 14) and the *ubwoko*, as identity, is more easily taken up by the subject (Hall 1996: 6). In the next chapter, I will show how this type of social context is navigated, perhaps with more difficulty, by people who find themselves in interstitial positions, in between social groups like the *amoko*.

Chapter IV: On the boundary: interstitial identities in contemporary Burundi

"Today, we are neither in the camp nor on the hill. If they bring [aid] to the camp, we are not informed. The same happens on the hill. We are not involved in the community's life".[221]

« Je ne dirais pas qu'il n'y a pas d'amis proches, mais non plus il n'y a pas d'ennemis ».[222]

Introduction

A great deal of academic literature on Burundi focuses on the "ethnic" divide between Tutsi and Hutu. This is related to the country's history of violence directed against either the Hutu or the Tutsi *ubwoko*, which resulted in the transmission of a certain type of memory among members of the same *ubwoko*, in parallel with the emergence and reinforcement of the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi, as shown in chapter 3. Such a boundary thus came to demarcate an "imagined community of 'people like me'" (Lamont 2000: 3) and to separate it from the "other" *ubwoko*, perceived as different.

The salience of the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi, as discussed in the previous chapters, is different for different members of the same *ubwoko*, as not all the members of an *ubwoko* experienced the same type of violence and therefore not all of them have the same perception of the members of the "other" *ubwoko*.[223] Moreover, the salience of the boundary can vary in time, depending on the events and dynamics that can have an influence on it (Brubaker 2004: 19). In addition, there is never only one "us" and one "them", one in-group and one out-group, the Hutu and the Tutsi: several types of boundaries exist at the same time, either partly or fully overlapping, which separate groups that are defined in different ways at different levels. This is because individuals have "multiple belongings", which "have not the same importance, in any case not at the same moment", and which represent the "constituents of personality" (Maalouf 1998: 19). In fact, the "very capacities in which one is defined on various levels, or

[221] Interview, Tutsi, female, 60, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

[222] Interview, Tutsi, male, 46, immigrant, Mugara, December 2019.

[223] Although there are at least three *amoko* in Burundi (the question exists of whether the Ganwa should be considered *ubwoko* or *umuryango*, see chapter 1; representatives of the Ganwa and the Waswahili have claimed the right of their respective groups to be acknowledged as ethnic groups), because of the history of violence between Hutu and Tutsi, the "other" *ubwoko* is usually Tutsi for the Hutu, and Hutu for the Tutsi.

within various circles such as family structure, local life, the workplace, and the nation, make one necessarily multiple and not fully congruent with only one identity definition" (Král 2009: 26).

By analysing the ways in which people adopt different practices and navigate their "multiple belongings" (Maalouf 1998: 19), one can gain insights into the relative salience of each of those belongings. Even when the "emergence of ethnic closure and its absence or dissolution" can be observed in "nonethnic units of observation" (Wimmer 2013: 38), which turned out to be very challenging in Burundi, as explained in chapter 1, those units of observation are never some sort of *tabula rasa* devoid of all belongings, but rather are realities inhabited by several "ethnic" and "nonethnic" belongings, which are more or less appealing for different individuals in different moments in time. Keeping this in mind, within a research design aimed at understanding the salience of the *ubwoko*, attention should be paid "to individuals who are 'lost to the group': those who do not maintain ties with co-ethnics, do not belong to ethnic clubs and associations, […] do not frequent ethnic cafés and shops, do not marry a co-ethnic, do not work in jobs that have an ethnic connotation, and do not live in ethnic neighborhoods" (Wimmer 2013: 42). This not only helps us to avoid "groupism", the tendency to treat groups as substantial entities (Brubaker 2004: 64), but it also helps us to shed light, from the perspective of those "lost to the group", on the relevance of group belonging for those who, contrary to them, decide to identify themselves with that group.

Being aware of the existence of multiple belongings and the different ways through which individuals can navigate them, in this chapter I focus on what I call "interstitial identities": identities assumed by individuals situated in what resembles an "interstice" between the two main groups of their social landscape of reference. The decision to focus on this type of identity derives from a theoretical concern, as explained above, but is also largely informed by my fieldwork. In an inductive way, during data collection and analysis I could observe that in each of my research sites, two major groups emerged as the main identities of reference. In Bugendana and Gasunu, an important social divide appeared to separate two *amoko* (Hutu and Tutsi), while in Mugara it separated two groups perceived as the main parties in land conflict (immigrants and returnees). More importantly, in one of my research sites (Bugendana) I could identify some individuals who seemed to "fit" neither "here" nor "there": they

seemed to belong to neither of the two main groups of reference, living in an in-between position, a middle ground between them, and relating to them in different ways in their everyday life. These were Tutsi former IDPs who had returned to their hills of origin, where mostly Hutu live, and Hutu IDPs living in the predominantly Tutsi Bugendana IDP camp. These people represented a very small minority of my interviewees: 5 former IDPs and 2 Hutu IDPs presented what I call an interstitial identity. This identity emerged in the perception of them as "other" by the two groups between which they were situated, and in their awareness of being perceived as "other". To adopt the boundary-making language, these people were situated *on* the boundary, at the edge between "us" and "them". More or less voluntarily, they distanced themselves from their "group of origin", or their group of belonging until the time they "left" it, but they were not integrated into the "other" group either. People in an interstitial position did not cross the boundary that separated their in-group from the out-group, but they remained situated *on* that very boundary, in an interstitial position. In this chapter, I analyse how these Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs navigated their interstitial position in their everyday life.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In section 1, I discuss the most relevant literature that helped me elaborate the notion of interstitial identities introduced in this chapter. In section 2, I describe Gasunu, the third research site in which I conducted fieldwork between 2018 and 2020, and I dwell on the methodology used in my work. In section 3, I analyse the two interstitial identities that emerged during my fieldwork. Conclusions are provided in the final section.

1. On liminality, hybridity, and interstitial identities

Four authors helped me conceptualise the notion of interstitial identities that I present in this chapter: anthropologists Arnold Van Gennep, Victor Turner, and Alcinda Honwana, who all focused on "liminality", and critical theorist Homi K. Bhabha, who dwelled on "in-between spaces" and "interstices".

Arnold Van Gennep was one of the first scholars to introduce the notion of "margin" in *Les rites de passage* (1909). Van Gennep conceived of human life as a series of passages from one age or occupation to another, with each passage characterised by specific rites. Among these rites of passage, Van Gennep identified three types of rites

in relation to a *limen*, i.e. a "border", a threshold, or a boundary: preliminary rites, i.e. rites of "separation from the previous world"; liminary rites, executed during the "stage of margin"; and postliminary rites, i.e. rites of "aggregation" or integration into "the new world" (Van Gennep 1981: 30). According to Van Gennep, during "periods of margin",[224] individuals adopt a temporary special status that separates them from the rest of the society, while they wait to be reintegrated into normal life. Individuals thus find themselves at the margins of society, in a liminal space that is a space of transformation. Separated by symbolic and often physical boundaries, during the period of margin this group of people goes through a transformation of its status, after which it will be reintegrated into the society.

Victor Turner focused on "liminality" in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969). In a condition of liminality, what Turner called "liminal *personae* ('threshold people') […] elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space": they are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner 1977: 95). To Turner, liminality represented "a 'moment in and out of time', and in and out of secular social structure", during which society assumes a different "model for human interrelatedness", called *communitas*. Through the alternation of structure and *communitas*, according to Turner, society comes into being.

In line with Van Gennep's and Turner's periods of liminality, which are situated within a transition from one social condition to another, Alcinda Honwana defined as "waithood" (in *The Time of Youth. Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa*, 2012) a "neither-here-nor-there position" between childhood and adulthood (2012: 20) in which "youthmen" are "waiting for adulthood" (2013). To Honwana, waithood is a period and condition of life experienced by many African youth who are "blocked in a stage of prolonged or permanent youth", when "access to social adulthood is delayed or denied" (2013). Like Van Gennep's period of margin, waithood consists of a transition between youth and adulthood, two "socially constructed categor[ies] defined by societal expectations and responsibilities". Contrary to Van Gennep and Turner's periods of liminality, which facilitated the transition to a more or less predetermined

[224] To Van Gennep, pregnancy and the engagement period represented periods of margin; other periods of margin were identified in puberty, initiation rites, enthronisations, and funerals.

new status in society, the transition to adulthood is much more uncertain for youth in waithood: they need to improvise livelihoods in order to be able to access the new status, sometimes with very creative solutions and yet with no guarantee of success, given the more or less structural conditions of the socio-economic contexts in which they live.

In a way similar to Honwana, Homi K. Bhabha conceived of "in-between spaces" (in *The Location of Culture*, 1994) as liminal spaces that allow for the creation of something new. Contrary to Van Gennep, Turner, and Honwana, Bhabha did not situate in-between spaces within a trajectory: in his view, they emerged in encounters with colonial realities, imposed and endured. In-between spaces were compared to a stairwell between different floors of a building,[225] an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications", a "liminal space, in-between the designations of identity" that represented "the connective tissue that constructs the difference" (Bhabha 1994: 4). These descriptions underline the liminal character of Bhabha's in-between spaces, which connect different statuses, or identities. However, these spaces are not positioned on a linear trajectory towards a predetermined new status: they "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood […] that initiate new signs of identity", and it is in these "interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (1994: 1-2). The encountering of differences in interstitial spaces, according to Bhabha, gives birth to something "hybrid" (Bhabha 1996: 58), new, unexpected, which is not the case for Van Gennep and Turner's ritual periods of liminality.

The two types of interstitial identities that I identified during my fieldwork (Tutsi former IDPs who returned to their hills of origin and Hutu IDPs living in a predominantly Tutsi IDP camp) present elements of each of the notions elaborated by these different authors. Like people in "periods of margin" (Van Gennep), Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs find themselves "between two worlds", "separated from a clearly defined state in the past" and with few prospects of being "incorporated […] into a clearly defined future state" (Bhandari 2020: 79). Like Turner's "liminal *personae*", Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs are "betwixt and between the positions assigned" by

[225] Bhabha used a metaphor elaborated by the artist Renée Green.

society (Turner 1977: 95). Like Honwana's youth in "waithood", they need to improvise survival strategies, expressing their agency to the full and yet with uncertain outcomes, for which reason they can have the feeling of being trapped in their interstitial position. Unlike people in positions of liminality, however, the interstitial position of Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs does not seem to be a temporary condition: while people in periods of margin (Van Gennep), liminality (Turner), or waithood (Honwana) live in a liminal condition for only a certain period within the trajectory to a new status, Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs are "stuck" in their interstitial position: they are not on their way to adopting the identity of the "other" group (Hutu for former Tutsi IDPs, Tutsi for Hutu IDPs) but rather they are in between the two groups, and they relate to both groups in daily life without really moving from their interstice. For this reason, they cannot be seen as liminal, for liminality is situated on a trajectory and represents a (pre)condition for gaining a new status in society. Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs are more similar to people in the "interstices" or "in-between spaces" studied by Bhabha, where an "interstitial intimacy" exists between "private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social" that "questions [the] binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed" (Bhabha 1994: 13). Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs are an excellent example of how living in an interstice is to live in a condition of "unhomeliness", which does not mean "to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres" (Bhabha 1994: 9). It is by challenging those familiar divisions of social life that interstitial identities bring with them a potential for change, the "possibility of a cultural hybridity" that more or less easily "entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 1994: 4). This is not possible for liminal identities, which do not challenge the new status that they are on course to join.

From the boundary-making perspective, analysis of interstitial identities provides an important contribution to the study of boundaries because it emphasises that individuals are not always situated on either one or the other side of a boundary, and that from this position they interact with the boundary (by crossing it, by revising its meaning and position, by increasing or decreasing its thickness). Interstitial identities show that individuals can remain *on* the very boundary, stuck in an in-between position. Analysis of the ways in which these people, situated between "us" and "them", accept, ignore,

or contest those boundaries in their everyday life shifts the focus from groups to individuals, from the main social groups of reference to those "lost to the group" (Wimmer 2013: 42), and by doing so, it complements analyses of boundary-making that focus on the movements and changing meanings of the boundaries (the two main ways identified by Wimmer through which boundaries are re-made) or on the varying degrees of thickness of the boundaries (analysed in chapter 3).

Besides Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs, other individuals may appear to be in an in-between position in contemporary Burundi. People married to a member of a different *ubwoko* (in what is commonly known as a "mixed" couple) or people whose parents belonged to different *amoko* ("mixed" descent)[226] are also somehow in-between. However, I consider these two groups of people to be situated not in an interstice but in the overlap of two different *amoko*: their own and that of their partner, in the case of "mixed" couples; the different *amoko* of their parents in the case of "mixed" descent. People who decide to marry a member of another *ubwoko*, regardless of the way in which the decision is received by the rest of the respective families,[227] still belong to their own *ubwoko* when they seal an alliance (through marriage) with a family of another *ubwoko*: their individual identity can thus be seen as situated in the overlap of their own and their partner's *ubwoko*. A similar case is that of children of parents of different *amoko*, whose identity is composed of both the *ubwoko* of the father and that of the mother, although socially speaking they inherit the *ubwoko* of the father (the *ubwoko* is transmitted through the male line in Burundi).[228] Interstitial identities, on the

[226] I would prefer to avoid the term "mixed" in reference to couples and descent because it retrieves the racial jargon of late XIX century physical anthropology, which was inspired by Mendel's study of gene transmission and hybridity through experiments with plants (Chrétien 1985: 131). In this paragraph, I only use the term "mixed" to facilitate the reading.

[227] Today, marriage between members of different *amoko* is not always received positively by members of the respective families, or by the larger society. During and after my fieldwork, several friends and acquaintances told me about the challenges that they had to face when they communicated the decision to marry a member of a different *ubwoko* to parents and relatives, and while they were organising the wedding. In August 2020, the marriage between the son of former President Ndayizeye (Hutu) with a Tutsi woman generated a buzz on social media (see https://twitter.com/Gnl_Dodo/status/1290344239885426689, accessed 07 April 2021). An interesting account of the challenges of an "interethnic marriage" between a Tutsi man and a Hutu woman can be found in the podcast "Turikumwe na Sandrine na Evrard | Mariages interethniques" (Burundi Turikumwe, 29 November 2020. Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tKumezf32c&t=115s&ab_channel=BURUNDITURIKUMWE (accessed 07 April 2021). This shows that marriage between members of different *amoko* exists but is not sufficiently common and easily accepted as to pass unnoticed, even when it does not lead to tensions between members of the same family.

[228] This is expressed by the word "hutsi", adopted by Aloys Niyoyita to define his identity as son of a Hutu father and Tutsi (actually Ganwa) mother (Kaburahe 2019: 21).

contrary, seem to exist in a void, in an interstice between identities. People with interstitial identities are "neither here nor there", while members of "mixed" couples and "mixed" descent can be seen as "both here and there". Besides people married to a member of a different *ubwoko* and people whose parents belonged to different *amoko*, there certainly are other individuals in contemporary Burundi who can be seen as occupying interstitial positions (between religious, political, or other types of affiliations). In this chapter, I focus on Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs because these are the two categories that emerged from my fieldwork. In the future, it would be interesting to conduct additional research on the ways in which other people with other types of interstitial identities navigate their interstitial positions in everyday life. A comparison of the strategies and difficulties of such people with those of the Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs analysed in this chapter would shed additional light on the effective salience of the *ubwoko* in everyday life: it would show to what extent the constraints of an interstitial position between *amoko* are more or less serious than the constraints of interstitial positions between other types of groups.

The interstitiality of Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs that I explore in this chapter emerges from the analysis of the reciprocal perceptions and interactions between "us" and "them": these individuals are not only perceived as "other" by both of the groups between which they are situated but they are also aware of this, and this is what makes their identity interstitial. Before presenting my analysis, in the following section I present Gasunu, the third research site in Burundi where I collected data during my fieldwork (in addition to Bugendana and Mugara, presented in chapter 3), and on whose data relies part of the analysis presented in this chapter.

2. The third research site: Gasunu

Like Bugendana, Gasunu (in the centre of Burundi, see Figure 4 in chapter 1) was significantly affected by the 1993 violence and the signs of that violence are still visible in the geographical and social landscape of the site. Following the outbreak of the civil war and the flight of many Tutsi from their homes, an IDP camp was built in Gasunu too, on a plot of land owned by the parish Buhoro, to offer refuge to Tutsi IDPs from the neighbouring hills. Additional violence took place in the area in September 2002, when the army led a brutal military operation on the Kagoma and Kanyonga hills, which

surround Gasunu. The operation aimed to counter the advance of FDD rebels,[229] which according to governmental sources of the time were using these hills as a base. According to the then Minister of Defence Gen. Ndakuriye, the conflict had an "ethnic nature" as the rebels were "implementing a genocidal ideology directed essentially against Tutsi", apparently with the support of local inhabitants who "tolerated the presence of rebels" (Human Rights Watch 2002: 2). Most of the victims of this military operation (between 173 and 300 according to different sources) were civilians.[230]

The IDP camp in Gasunu is much smaller than Bugendana IDP camp and is part of the village of Gasunu itself, given that the village is spread around the catholic church, which is on the same plot of land on which the IDP camp is built (see Figure 7). The "ethno-geographical" setting of Gasunu is similar to that of Bugendana because the IDPs have the same lifestyle: they live in the camp, together with other Tutsi IDPs, and go almost daily to cultivate their fields on their hills of origin, where Hutu live, returning to Gasunu at the end of the day. However, the distance separating the areas where Hutu and Tutsi live is smaller than in Bugendana. Inside the village of Gasunu, Tutsi and Hutu live close to each other, although segregated; they may have more frequent interactions in their everyday life (compared to their counterparts in Bugendana) as next to the IDP camp, right outside the catholic church, there are some bars and kiosks for petty trade, frequented by both Hutu and Tutsi inhabitants of Gasunu.

[229] The FDD (*Forces de Défense de la Démocratie*) were the armed wing of the CNDD-FDD. The movement agreed to sign a ceasefire three months later, on December 2nd, 2002.

[230] Amnesty International (2003) denounced the massacre of "between 173 and 267 unarmed civilians, many of them women, children and elderly people, who were deliberately and unlawfully killed" by the army; Keita Bocoum, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi, reported that "the total number of civilian deaths varies according to different informants, who put the number at anywhere between 173 and over 300"; "many were old people, children (sometimes mere babies) and women, some of whom were pregnant. Many of the women had been raped" (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2003: 9).

Figure 7: The village of Gasunu. The blue circle indicates the area where there are a few bars and small kiosks.

The considerable distance separating the IDP camp from the fields of some IDPs on their hills of origin (Cene Ruzi, Cene Mbeho), and especially a steep slope that needs to be climbed to reach those fields, pushed some IDPs to reinstall themselves on the hills. During the interviews, some IDPs also mentioned that during the 1993 civil war they took refuge on Cene hill, before coming to the IDP camp. For this reason, my translator and I went to Cene to interview some former IDPs and their (Hutu) neighbours. Figure 8 shows the position of Cene in relation to Gasunu. By motorbike and then on foot, it took between 30 and 45 minutes to arrive at Cene from Gasunu.

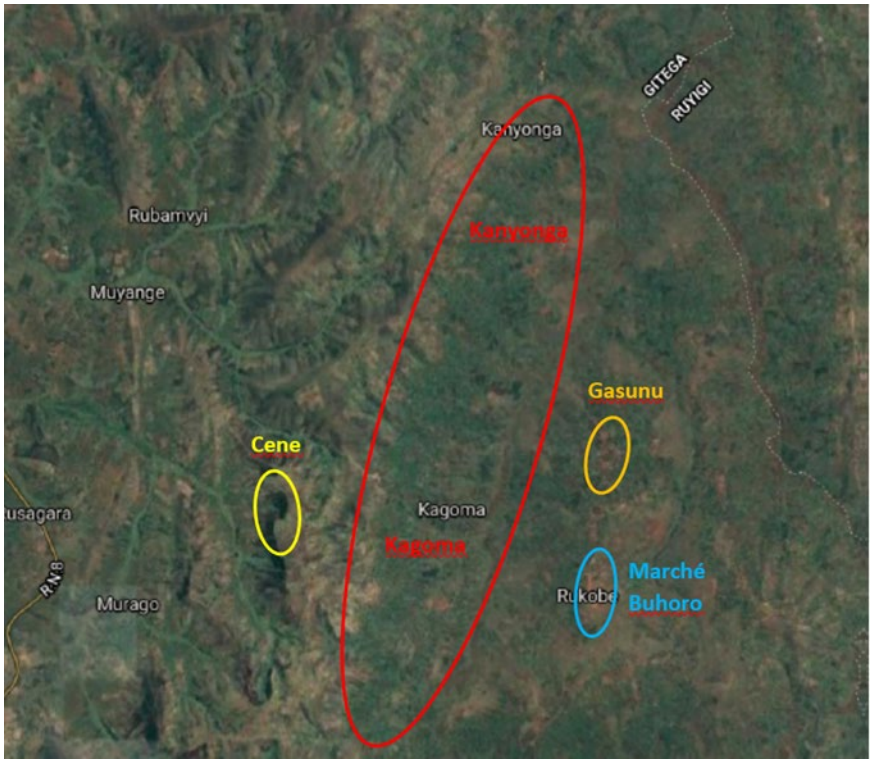

Figure 8: Gasunu research site. The red circle indicates the Kagoma and Kanyonga hills, where massacres took place in September 2002. The blue circle indicates another small trading area, called *marché* Buhoro, frequented by Hutu and Tutsi on market days and after Sunday Mass.

Figure 9: Location of former IDP houses in Cene (Gasunu)

The methodology used for data collection and analysis in Gasunu, Bugendana, and Mugara was explained in chapter 3. During my two periods of fieldwork (between 2018

and 2020), over the three research sites my translators and I interviewed 134 persons of different *ubwoko* (Hutu and Tutsi), gender, and age. Adopting the same classification used by Ingelaere in 2008 and 2015,[231] interviewees with different experiences of violence were qualified as "IDP" (internally displaced person), "former IDP", "never displaced", "returnee", "immigrant", "former prisoner", and "demobilised".[232] Table 3 provides an overview of the persons interviewed in the three research sites.

	2018-2020											
	Bugendana				**Mugara**				**Gasunu**			
	Men		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**		**Men**		**Women**	
	Hutu	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**	**Hutu**	**Tutsi**
IDP	2	3	3	9						4		5
former IDP		1		4						7		4
never displaced	11		8	1	4	1	2		9		8	1
returnee	1				11		7		5		2	
immigrant					4	3	1	5				
former prisoner	2								1	1		
demobilized					2				2			
	16	4	11	14	21	4	10	5	17	12	10	10
				45				**40**				**49**

Table 3: Overview of the interviewees (Bugendana, Mugara, and Gasunu, 2018-2020)[233]

During my fieldwork, I did not focus on the Hutu and Tutsi *amoko* but rather tried to understand, among interviewees' "multiple belongings" (Maalouf 1998: 19), which ones were the most salient in each research site. I tried to understand how people defined "us" and "them", in order to examine the nature of the boundary between the two communities, and to observe when and how these communities corresponded to different *amoko*. Inspired by Lamont (2000: 4), who explored "how workers concretely define 'us' and 'them'" in her research by asking them "to describe their friends and foes, role models and heroes, and the kinds of people they like and dislike", my translator and I asked our interviewees to explain who represented a friend (*umugenzi*) and who represented an enemy (*umwansi*) for them. Talking about friends and

[231] See Ingelaere (2009); Ingelaere & Verpoorten (2016).

[232] 45 people were interviewed in Bugendana, 49 in Gasunu, and 40 in Mugara. In every research site, I aimed at a balanced sample in terms of *ubwoko* and gender; different age groups were included ("young", between 20 and 39 years old; "adults", between 40 and 69 years old; "old", 70 years old and above), and different categories (IDPs, former IDPs, returnees, people who have never been displaced, demobilised people, former prisoners).

[233] The composition of every group of interviewees (in terms of *ubwoko*, gender, age, and category) in each of the research sites can be found in the Annexes at the end of the thesis.

friendship resulted to be easier than providing a definition of "enemy" for many interviewees, likely because it was not socially and culturally appropriate to talk about the enemies that one had in life (as in many other countries and socio-cultural contexts, but especially where impunity is widespread). While interviewees usually did not have any problems with providing real-life examples of acts of friendship or explaining the circumstances under which a friendship was born, many affirmed that they did not have any enemies. After being reassured that there was no need to provide names and that we were aiming for a general definition, most of the hesitant interviewees relaxed and gave their definition, while others restated that they were not able to answer the question. Thus, we asked about behaviours observed among other people that the interviewees did not like. Some provided vague examples, mentioning thieves, sorcerers or drunkards; others added that those who adopt "bad" behaviours did not become enemies, but prayers were needed for those persons to convert.[234] With these interviewees, to understand how the "others" were identified, we relied on the narration of their life histories, although in these narrations too, uncomfortable details were passed over. Therefore, we inquired more lengthily about the daily activities of these interviewees, to try to identify the persons with whom they interacted most often, assuming that those persons could represent "friends" for the interviewees.

Questions about friends and enemies aimed at avoiding an ethnic lens (Wimmer 2013: 38) in the interpretation of data from settings like Gasunu, Bugendana, and Mugara, where boundaries between *amoko* have a particular salience, as explained in chapter 3. By asking about "us" and "them", about "friends" and "enemies", we tried to avoid misattributing social patterns to the *ubwoko* when these could be actually generated by other mechanisms and processes (Wimmer 2013: 139). At the same time, this allowed us to take "identification with a group as seriously as identification of and against an Other" (Jenkins 2014: 813), an aspect often overlooked in analyses of boundary-making. Questions about friends and enemies helped us to more easily identify individuals for whom these two types of identification (with a group and against an Other) were not as strong as for the rest of the interviewees.

These individuals who did not strongly identify themselves with a group and against another group are those that I consider to be in an interstitial position, in between

[234] This attitude was particularly widespread among interviewees living next to the protestant Mission in Mugara.

groups. They are not in an overlap between categories, nor a transition between categories: like the joints between bones in the human body, they find themselves in an interstice between those that emerged as the two main groups of reference among people's "multiple belongings". These people are Tutsi former IDPs who returned to their hills of origin, where mostly Hutu live (in Bugendana), and Hutu IDPs who live in the predominantly Tutsi Bugendana IDP camp. By describing the ways in which these people navigate their positions in everyday life, and especially in their relations with members of the two groups of reference between which they are situated, the analysis presented in this chapter complements chapter 3 by giving additional insights into the ways in which groupness works in Burundi, namely for those "lost to the group" (Wimmer 2013: 42) who either more or less willingly adopt a position that is not in line with that of the main groups.

3. In between groups: interstitial identities in contemporary Burundi

3.1. Former IDPs

In Bugendana and Gasunu, with varying degrees of difficulty, some Tutsi left the IDP camp and returned to their hills of origin, among their former Hutu neighbours. In Bugendana, likely because of the specific ethno-geographical settings of the site and the weight of the memories inscribed in it (see chapter 3), former IDPs came to have an interstitial identity situated between *amoko*. In Gasunu, former IDPs seemed to experience their position and identity on the hill in a different way.

On the Mukoro hill surrounding Bugendana IDP camp (see Figure 5 in chapter 3), my translator and I talked to two former IDPs, a woman and a man. The woman had returned to Mukoro six years earlier and she was living completely alone in her house. She told us that she returned because she had health problems and she was getting older, therefore the distance between the camp and her fields on the hill was becoming too long. She still had many relatives and friends living in the camp. In fact, she seemed to still be attached to the IDP group in the camp. She told us that every day she goes to the camp, as her house and her friends are there. When we started our interview and asked when she left the camp, she said that she was still living there.

> "**When did you leave the camp?**
> I still live there! The administration [on the hill] does not know that I came back. I still have my house in the camp. Nobody came to help me return to my place of origin. […] When I am at the hospital, it is people from the camp who come visit me. That is why I say that I still live in the camp".[235]

Nevertheless, we never saw her when we were doing interviews inside the IDP camp, and when we asked other IDPs about her, they told us that she was living on the hill. This suggests that while she seemed to identify herself with the Tutsi IDP group, her identification by Tutsi IDPs was not exactly the same. The fact that she did not announce her departure to the other IDPs in the camp underlines her desire not to be rejected (as "other") by the group she felt more attached to. This behaviour can be seen as the employment of an "elusive tactic", which allowed this woman to remain "difficult to pin down" (Berckmoes 2014: 173) while buying time "in order to prepare more hopeful futures", "to prepare against adversity and to seize opportunities when they come along" (Berckmoes 2014: 19).

> "**What was the reaction of the other IDPs when you returned to the hill? Were they not mad at you?**
> I have never announced it officially. I came back but I had left my clothes and my things in the camp. When I went to the church, I first took my bath on the hill, I went to the church and then I went to my house [in the camp] to pick some of my clothes. Little by little I resettled on the hill. When they asked later on, they were already a bit used to not seeing me around. I explained that it was because of my rheumatisms, and they understood. Now it is ok.
> **So you think that they would not have taken it well?**
> I did not want them to know that I had abandoned them".[236]

At the same time, the frustration of not being reintegrated into her community of origin on the hill reveals her expectations, and that these expectations were not met. From her in-between position, integration into either the group of those living on the hill (Hutu) or the group of the IDPs (Tutsi) seemed to be understood in economic terms, through access to resources. Social rejection emerged when resources appeared to be kept for the two main groups and not shared with her, who was in between them.

> "I know that when [my neighbours] need to refer to me, they call me 'the displaced'.
> […]
> **Are you still in touch with the camp representative?**
> Yes. But there too, when hail and strong wind had damaged houses, I did not receive any rice nor aid, I was not on the list. Aid is distributed on the hill through the *chef de colline*, coming from the *commune*. I have never received a thing but I have also never been inscribed on a list. Even [my neighbour], if

[235] Interview, Tutsi, female, 51, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[236] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2019.

> he gave me his cow for me to take care of, it is only because we go to the same church".[237]
>
> "**No one helped you to resettle?**
> No, and even those from […] did it in exchange for money.
> **Why did the neighbours here not help, was it because of the 1993 crisis?**
> That is possible. They do not want me to develop economically".[238]

The latter quote actually suggests that the reason for social rejection can be a mixture of motives related to economic development and the *ubwoko*, or rather the memory of past violence related to the *ubwoko*. The other former IDP that we interviewed in Mukoro gave a more explicit explanation of this:

> "People take decisions, sometimes based on the *ubwoko*. When I returned to the camp [after being on the hill], the others were surprised. Maybe one day they will also change their minds. […] Since the moment I decided to return on the hill, I became their enemy. […] When I took the decision to leave the camp, I was considered suicidal: how could I return home, since my father had been killed on the hill? […] But all the problems that I had had, it was in the camp. They stole my cow, my bicycle, my clothes. Not on the hill! They stole every time. They were jealous of my ability to develop myself".[239]

This former IDP decided to return to the hill mainly because of the long distance between the camp and his fields. At the time of our exchanges with him (in 2018 and in 2020), he was trying to finalise the rehabilitation of his house on the hill. His separation from the IDP group seemed to be more traumatic than for the woman interviewed in Mukoro. Not only did his IDP neighbours and friends in the camp fail to support his decision, according to him they even tried to physically harm him. This indicates a more evident rejection from the group. At the end of our first interview, the man showed us the place where his former friends in the camp chased after him, allegedly with bludgeons in their hands in an attempt to kill him. He said that he was able to escape death because he was agile and fast.

> "**Did someone help you build your new house or did you work alone?**
> I can say that I worked alone. Those who were supposed to help me, that is, people from the camp, did not help me. At the camp, if they get to know that you are leaving the camp, you immediately become their enemy. They can come after you until they even try to harm you".[240]

[237] Interview, Tutsi, female, 51, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[238] Interview, Tutsi, female, 52, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2019.
[239] Interview, Tutsi, male, 34, former IDP, Bujumbura, March 2020. In 1993, this former IDP left his place of origin when he was 7 years old. The house on the hill to which he returned was that of his family.
[240] Interview, Tutsi, male, 33, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

> "When I took my decision, they went to my family to ask them to talk to their son [because] he must have lost his mind".[241]

On the hill, relations with Hutu neighbours seemed to be good for this former IDP, and this facilitated his return. For generations, Hutu neighbours used to be in a relationship of *ubugererwa* with the family of this Tutsi former IDP: they cultivated his family's fields in exchange for part of the crops.[242] Good terms between the two parties in the *ubugererwa* agreement seemed to have persisted after its official abolition in 1977. Friendship was strengthened in 1997, when this former IDP allegedly saved the life of a Hutu neighbour: he told us that after hearing people from the camp mention the name of his friend's father, he gave his clothes to his friend so the latter could flee unnoticed.[243] Hutu neighbours on the hill were the only ones who helped him rebuild his house.

> "If someone (influential) tells you that there is no peace, the '*petit peuple*' believes that. But I went there [to the hill] every day, and I could observe by myself that it was not true, that peace was there. […] I cannot say that I have a house in the camp now, I would say that my only house is on the hill. […] I sleep on the hill every day. In fact, I feel more secure on the hill than in the camp".[244]

> "**What will you do with your house when you leave the camp?**
> If I could, I would take away the doors, the windows, the tiles, and then destroy the house".[245]

The fact that this former IDP abhorred living in the IDP camp stresses his effective detachment from his previous (Tutsi) group. However, on the hill he does not really seem to be considered by his Hutu neighbours as "one of them". Although a couple of Hutu interviewees recognised that they helped this former IDP when he was rebuilding his house, they also pointed out that he had another house in the camp where his family lived, and that besides occasional work-based relations, they did not carry out any activity with him. As the following quote shows, a certain level of trust was

[241] Interview, Tutsi, male, 34, former IDP, Bujumbura, March 2020.

[242] Within an *ubugererwa* agreement, a donor lent fields to a client, who would have cultivated them in exchange for part of the crops. Sometimes, additional services were required from the client in exchange for the cultivation of the fields, which could lead donors to abuse their position of power. The *ubugererwa* was abolished in 1977. Following its abolition, when the agreement between a donor and a client had lasted at least seven years, the client automatically obtained ownership of the land.

[243] According to this interviewee, "at the time, the Tutsi wanted to take revenge for the 1996 attack [on the IDP camp]" (interview, Tutsi, male, 33, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018).

[244] Interview, Tutsi, male, 33, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

[245] Interview, Tutsi, male, 34, former IDP, Bujumbura, March 2020.

acknowledged because the former IDP was said to sometimes eat at the homes of his Hutu neighbours. Nevertheless, his life did not seem to be on the hill, or at least not yet.

> "We see him working here; he sometimes comes to our place and eats here, then he goes back to the camp.
> **Does he also eat at the neighbours' places, sometimes?**
> He does not. He trusts us, why would he go to the others".[246]

The apparent contradiction between the self-perception of the former IDP, who feels he does not belong to the IDP camp anymore, and the perception of his Hutu neighbours on the hill, who do not see him as fully reintegrated, highlights the interstitial position of this former IDP, between the group that he left and the group that he approached again.

On the Cishwa hill, another hill surrounding Bugendana IDP camp (see Figure 5 in chapter 3), we talked to three women who were related to each other.[247] The first of these three women returned to Cishwa in 2003, while the other two arrived a couple of years later. According to these women, five households in total had left Bugendana IDP camp to reinstall themselves in Cishwa, all belonging to the same *umuryango* (extended family). Their reasons for leaving the camp seemed to be the long distance between the camp and the fields on the hills (Cishwa is 4km away from Bugendana IDP camp) and the "bad living conditions" in the IDP camp. These women had a strong feeling of being suspended in the middle of two communities, to neither of which they belonged, at present.

> "Today, we are neither in the camp nor on the hill. If they bring [aid] to the camp, we are not informed. The same happens on the hill. We are not involved in the community's life. We are not even on the *Merankabandi* list.[248] When they plant hedges against erosion here, we are not invited. It is organised by agronomists, and workers are paid.
> **Why do they not invite you?**
> They do not trust us. They keep their anger. […] It is the Hutu who do not trust the Tutsi. […] At the camp as well, we are not informed [about what is going on]. The Tutsi of the camp also do not trust us. They did not want us to return to the hill. We did not actually inform them, we left the camp without saying a word".[249]

> "If only I could go back to the camp. They do not consider me here on the hill.

[246] Interview, Tutsi, female, 63, never displaced, Bugendana, November 2018.

[247] We ended up having a focus group with the three of them. We started talking to one of them, then the other two joined the conversation, one at the time. In order to keep the conversation flowing, we preferred not to ask them to return later to have an individual interview, and we conducted a focus group.

[248] "*Merankabandi*" is a World Bank programme aimed at the most vulnerable and managed through local authorities.

[249] Interview, Tutsi, female, 60, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

What about the relations with the rest of the people living in the camp?
Oh, we could not go back to the camp. We are not used to living there anymore".[250]

The fact that, like the woman in Mukoro, these women preferred not to announce their departure from the camp to the other Tutsi IDPs because this would have been perceived as abandonment or betrayal, reveals the strength of the bond between Tutsi IDPs. For these former IDPs in Cishwa, the damaging of this bond provoked a loss of trust, as the first quote shows, but not a complete truncation of interpersonal relations. Apart from the fact that these women still had some close relatives living in the camp, they sometimes went to the *centre* Bugendana (see chapter 3, section 1) to buy groceries, as they used to do when they were living in the camp, and despite the long distance from Cishwa. This seemed to be motivated by economic reasons, since in Cishwa the women reported that they were not allowed to buy on credit. It is not clear to what extent this could be related to a lack of social integration into the local community.

"We only go to the camp if we need something, for instance if we need salt, we go to the *centre* Bugendana. Last time I was there it was last week.
Why do you not go to the kiosks here?
There are not as many kiosks as in Bugendana, and they do not let you buy on credit.
They do not let *you* buy on credit, or they do not allow other people either?
We do not know, there are no interactions with the others".[251]

At the *centre* Bugendana, IDPs did not seem to show their lack of trust in former IDPs who "abandoned" them, or this was not perceived by former IDPs as too problematic.

"**What happens when you are in Bugendana, since they do not trust you?**
Well, we meet, we greet each other, we exchange some words, then we return to the hill".[252]

Even if the abandonment of the IDP group implied a more or less explicit rejection from the group, leading to what was perceived by these former IDPs as a lack of trust, IDPs did not seem ready to really expel them as traitors, as the following quote shows:

"It was difficult at the beginning, when I was alone. They were also shooting at some point. […] Another long period of insecurity was during the rebellion. The military sometimes found the door open and tried to shoot, they thought I was a rebel, but the others stopped them.
What others?

[250] Interview, Tutsi, female, +/-60, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[251] Interview, Tutsi, female, 60, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[252] Interview, Tutsi, female, 35, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

> People from the camp, coming from […]. The army used to come with them".[253]

This confirms the interstitial position of these women: they are neither members of the previous group anymore, nor part of the "new" group, in an interstice that is "neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past" (Bhabha 1994: 1).

The situation is quite different for a group of former IDPs in Gasunu, who have resettled in a sort of enclave on the top of the Cene hill (see Figure 9). For these former IDPs, life seemed to continue today as it used to before displacement. Cene is several kilometres from the IDP camp in Gasunu and in order to reach it one must climb a steep slope. Several households, many of which belong to the same *umuryango*, reinstalled themselves in this area. Only Tutsi people seem to live in these households. Outside this area, on the same hill, there are Hutu households (see Figure 9). When we first headed to Cene, while climbing the hill my translator and our moto-taxi driver asked some people on the road for directions. These local inhabitants asked us if we were going "to the Tutsi", meaning "where the Tutsi live". This shows how this group of former IDPs were perceived by their neighbours (or by people who were not living too far from them), and labelled with the name of their *ubwoko*. After we answered that we were indeed going where the Tutsi were living, one of those local inhabitants kindly accompanied us to the closest Tutsi household where we could find some people. After introducing us to the Tutsi and before leaving, this local inhabitant took the time to say that "violence took place in the past between *amoko*: I do not want anybody to think that this is the case today, so you know that I came in peace".

A couple of days later, we accessed another part of that "Tutsi" area (see Figure 9) to conduct interviews with other inhabitants. When we first arrived, the suspicion towards us could almost be physically sensed. After noticing us, people seemed to be on alert: they stood up in the middle of the field where they were working, they followed our movements, and when we approached them to ask for an interview, they received us with hesitancy. This seems to suggest that the area is rarely accessed by outsiders (be them Hutu, Burundians from other provinces, or white people), revealing a persistent level of segregation.

[253] Interview, Tutsi, female, 60, former IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

We talked to eight Tutsi former IDPs in Cene who returned between 2001 and 2012. Before living in the IDP camp in Gasunu, some of them had lived in Gitega (either hosted at the archbishopric or *archêveché*, or in Tankoma IDP camp), or in another IDP camp (today dismantled) in Mumuri, a locality close by. The presence of family members on the hill represented an essential factor that facilitated the return of these former IDPs to the hill. One of the first IDPs to return to Cene, despite the boldness with which he affirmed to have faced the situation, acknowledged the importance of his brother's presence when he returned to the hill.

> "I only spent a few months in the camp and even during those months I was coming here to cultivate. I did not fear anything. Not even the others. I used to see the others fleeing, even after Mumuri I decided to return. When I first spent the nights here, I was alone. Some metres further, my brother was living there. But I could not go to sleep at his place, I could not become his serf! And my door was not locked. I had fled together with my brother and we also came back together. We have the same trajectory. We also went in search of work together. I was physically strong, they could come and fight.
> **But were you not persecuted in 1993?**
> Not more than the others.
> […]
> **But if there was security here in 1993, why did you flee then?**
> They were coming after us but we hid ourselves".[254]

Other former IDPs in Cene underlined the importance of "not being alone" for returning to the hill. An IDP living in the camp in Gasunu also confirmed that these former IDPs could return to Cene because "they had their family members over there".[255]

> "**If you were alone, would you have returned anyway?**
> It would have not been easy. Many people refuse to return because if you are alone, it is not easy".[256]

> "**Were you not afraid of coming back here?**
> No, there were people here already.
> **Why do the others not come back?**
> I cannot know it, it is a personal decision.
> **Maybe because they do not have any other people living near them on the hill?**
> Most of the people living in the camp come from […] and have their fields nearby, so they can stay in the camp. I had my fields far away, it was tiresome to go and cultivate".[257]

Besides the return to the hill, the presence of family members facilitated, and still facilitates today, access to resources, be they land, cattle, or work opportunities. One

[254] Interview, Tutsi, male, 95, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.
[255] Interview, Tutsi, female, 76, IDP, Gasunu, August 2019.
[256] Interview, Tutsi, male, 37, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.
[257] Interview, Tutsi, male, 47, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.

former IDP bought a plot of land in Cene (from an IDP who was still living in Gasunu) thanks to information provided by another former IDP (his uncle); when we interviewed him, he was sharing the plot with another former IDP and relative, who came to Cene after him. Among these former IDPs, agreements concerning the loan of animals or fields seemed to be concluded mostly between members of the same *umuryango*. Even access to information happened through the radio of one of the former IDPs, who stated that he was too old to be able to switch it on and therefore needed to call the neighbours' children – most likely, his own grandchildren. This reinforces group feeling and identity. This former IDP named a distant relative as a kid (*umwana*) of the family, according to a custom that expresses a strong bond in the Kirundi language:

> "[On this hill], no one was killed. There have been some killings during the war between the *assaillants* and the military, between 1996 and 2002. The sister-in-law of [my neighbour] was killed that time. She was our kid. Here […], almost all of us belong to the same *umuryango*".[258]

The presence of a large number of family members on the hill, representing a source of support and the possibility to access resources, is something that former IDPs in Mukoro and Cishwa could not benefit from. In Cishwa too, former IDPs relied on family ties to support each other, but their network was not as extensive as that of former IDPs in Cene. Another important difference between the two groups of former IDPs was the relationship with Hutu neighbours on the hill. In Cene, relations were said to be good, apparently because local Hutu inhabitants did not persecute their Tutsi neighbours during the 1993 civil war. Some interviewees explained that the Tutsi in Cene were alerted by their Hutu neighbours when violence broke out, and thus were able to flee and save their lives.[259] This made the *ubwoko*, today, less salient than in other settings that have been more exposed to violence, like Bugendana. This confirms the divisive nature of violence, which provokes the emergence of boundaries, or their reinforcement (see chapter 3). In Cene, this did not happen because high levels of violence did not take place between neighbours of different *amoko*.

> "[Today] IDPs remain here [in the camp] because they know what happened there [on the hill].
> **Nobody returned home?**
> Some returned, but others do not return. Only in Cene, they returned.

[258] Interview, Tutsi, male, 47, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.

[259] This type of information was provided by both Hutu and Tutsi interviewees on the Cene hill and the IDP camp in Gasunu: interview, Tutsi, female, 32, IDP, Gasunu, October 2019; interview, Tutsi, male, 82, IDP, Gasunu, October 2019; interview, Hutu, female, +/- 60, never displaced, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.

How come then?
There have been no massacres in Cene. A good-hearted Hutu alerted them, and they fled. He was called […], a personal friend of mine. They left the cattle, they were stolen. In […], there has been no [saviour]".[260]

"**Were there other former IDPs [here], when you returned?**
Not many. But many came back together, almost at the same time. After us, many returned, one by one.
Were you not afraid when you returned home?
There had been parties already, people who used to help you were asking when you would return, then they helped us to build our house.
This has been happening since when?
Since 2003. But we were invited to parties even before. We greeted each other, we held conversations, we invited each other. I am talking about people from the hill, not family members. [Those neighbours] live in the *commune* Makebuko. In fact, it was people from […] who were persecuting us. In Makebuko, [we had] no problem at all".[261]

One former IDP affirmed that even when she was living in the IDP camp and happened to be on the hill to cultivate her fields in Cene, she could spend the night at a Hutu neighbour's house, with whom her husband's family had been enjoying good relations since before her wedding. Spending the night with a Hutu neighbour would be unthinkable for many of the IDPs living in Bugendana camp, as shown in chapter 3.

Today, Hutu direct neighbours of former IDPs come to work for them and seem to have good relations with them. One Hutu neighbour bought the plot of land where he is currently living from former IDPs, after working for them when they were living in the IDP camp; he also bought his chickens from other former IDPs, and said that he usually left his child with his Tutsi neighbours to be taken care of when he needed to go to the hospital. Given the good relations with the local inhabitants and the presence of many former IDPs on the hill, some of these former IDPs do not understand what prevents other IDPs who are still living in the camp from returning "home", to the hill. A former IDP seemed to suggest that IDPs remained in the camp because there they could receive aid.[262] An IDP living in the camp, though, explained that the first time two IDPs returned to Cene, thieves came during the night and beat them, for which reason they decided to return to the camp.[263] One of those two IDPs then remained in the camp, while the other resettled in Cene later on.

[260] Interview, Tutsi, male, 82, IDP, Gasunu, October 2019.
[261] Interview, Tutsi, male, 37, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.
[262] Interview, Tutsi, male, 47, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.
[263] Interview, Tutsi, female, 32, IDP, Gasunu, October 2019.

> "**Do you know any IDPs who returned to their hill of origin?**
> Most people remained in Gitega or Gasunu. The brother of [my nephew] is still in the camp in Gasunu with his nephews. I do not know what they like there".[264]

Although IDPs' and former IDPs' narratives around the decision to remain in the camp (among Tutsi) or to return to the hill (among Hutu) are different, they do not underline a real detachment of this smaller group of former IDPs from the bigger group of IDPs, as opposed to former IDPs in Bugendana. IDPs living in the camp in Gasunu who were related to former IDPs in Cene still went to cultivate on the hill, returning to the IDP camp at the end of the day, and former IDPs in Cene still descended to the IDP camp in Gasunu to visit their relatives, as well as for Sunday Mass.

The fact that the return of these former IDPs to the hill was not perceived as abandonment of the rest of the IDPs in Gasunu might be due to two elements that do not exist in Bugendana: the presence of a significant number of family members who had already successfully reinstalled themselves on the hill, and (present and past) good relations with Hutu neighbours on the hill. This might have made the decision to return to the hill more understandable and acceptable for the rest of the IDPs still living in the camp, avoiding a separation of IDPs and former IDPs (which would correspond to the emergence of a boundary between them) like in Bugendana. This might also encourage other IDPs to return to the hill in the future, if and when they have the means (poverty was indicated by an IDP as the reason why they were still living in the IDP camp).[265]

Because of the absence of this perception of abandonment of the group, former IDPs in Cene cannot be considered to have an interstitial identity: even though they left the IDPs camp, they still seem to be considered by Tutsi IDPs as part of their group. The perception of them as "other" came from only one group (Hutu neighbours on the hill), not from both of the groups between which former IDPs were situated: in interviews with IDPs, no perceptions of them as "other" emerged, while they were perceived as "the Tutsi" by their Hutu neighbours on the hill, regardless of the good relations with them. The perception of them as "other" on the hill was facilitated by the specific ethno-geographical setting of the top of the Cene hill (Figure 9), as the households of Tutsi former IDPs are concentrated in the same area, while Hutu neighbours live outside of

[264] Interview, Tutsi, male, 95, former IDP, Gasunu (Cene), October 2019.
[265] Interview, Tutsi, female, 32, IDP, Gasunu, October 2019.

it. This type of perception, however, is not sufficient to make the identity of former IDPs interstitial, as it came from one "side" only. Interstitial identities emerge in the perception of individuals as "other" by both the previous group of belonging (for former IDPs, Tutsi IDPs still living in the camp) and the recently approached group (Hutu living on the hill), as well as in the self-perception of those individuals suspended in between the two groups. In a similar way to former IDPs, Hutu IDPs living in the predominantly Tutsi Bugendana IDP camp are also perceived and perceive themselves as "other".

3.2.Hutu in a Tutsi IDP camp

Two Hutu men fled to the predominantly Tutsi Bugendana IDP camp after allegedly being persecuted on their hills of origin. My translator and I identified these Hutu IDPs thanks to information provided by Tutsi IDPs living in the camp with them. One of these two Hutu men seemed to be quite reticent to tell us his story. He told us that he joined the camp in 1996 after thieves repeatedly stole his crops in the place where he was living on the hill and made threats against his life. The other told us that he joined the IDP camp in 2010, after living in the DR Congo and in other places in Burundi between 1993 and 2009. In 1993, this second Hutu IDP suffered violence perpetrated by both Hutu and the military, the latter of which was usually perceived as being close to the Tutsi (see chapter 3): Hutu allegedly persecuted him because he had married a Tutsi woman, while the military represented a threat for him because it targeted the Hutu during operations aimed at restoring order (after Hutu attacked their Tutsi neighbours following the assassination of President Ndadaye).

> "**In the camp there are mainly Tutsi, and Hutu live on the hills. Was it not a bit weird for you to come to the camp?**
> The answer is difficult and easy at the same time. I am married to a Tutsi woman, and in 1993 I was beaten by Hutu and threatened because I did not want to participate in the killings. They even broke my wrist *[he shows his wrist]*. For this reason, I could not ask any of the Hutu on the hill [to give me a plot of land where I could live]. This is also why I went to my brother-in-law [when I returned from the DR Congo]. And it is thanks to the Tutsi that I have sheet metal for my house in the camp. In 1993, they stole three goats and burned down my house.
> […]
> Before 1993 and during the crisis, I used to work at […]. Then, the military wanted to kill me and I gave up. I gave back the keys […] and fled. I never went back there.
> **Is the military not supposed to protect the people?**

> It was difficult for me to be protected. And the military, when they were shooting [at people], they did not make any distinction between Hutu and Tutsi…
> […]
> Other people persecuted on the hill [where I was working] were Tutsi. Myself, as a Hutu, I was targeted because I had a Tutsi wife. When they started to threaten me, I left. Those who were threatening me were Hutu".[266]

Before joining the IDP camp, this person seemed to be in an overlap between categories (Hutu and Tutsi) because he had married a member of the "other" *ubwoko* (see section 1 above); when forced to take sides, he refused to make a choice, to mark "'them' off from 'us'" (Wimmer 2013: 71) through violence in a situation of categorical uncertainty (Appadurai 1998). While the overlap between categories was not problematic until a period of tensions, it became dangerous when violence broke out. Eventually, this person had to make a choice: he then turned to those who allowed him to continue to live, also by providing him with sheet metal for his house, as he mentioned during the interview. For these Hutu IDPs, access to resources and livelihood, along with the possibility to have their life protected in a safe space like Bugendana IDP camp, seemed to prevail over any type of consideration of their own and the others' *ubwoko*. Besides cultivating their fields, these Hutu IDPs were employed at the *centre* Bugendana, one as bike-taxi driver and one as watchman at a kiosk owned by a Tutsi IDP. Access to resources thus led to and reinforced an affiliation with the group providing resources. This is the same way in which the woman (former IDP) interviewed in Mukoro seemed to understand social integration and rejection (see previous section): she felt rejected because neither group between which she found herself shared resources with her, which underlined her interstitial position.

> "Today, I could not go back to the hill. Because of the thieves. I could not sleep there. I will stay at the camp because I do not have the money to buy land elsewhere".[267]

> "I cannot go back to [the hill] because I do not have any land there. But I cannot go there, not even for a short time, I have to manage my time there. If I go there, I need to come back before dark. You never know what might happen during the night".[268]

The fear of the dark on the hill mentioned by this Hutu IDP is a recurrent theme in many of the interviews with Tutsi IDPs, who live "entrenched in displacement" (Purdeková 2017: 2). This shows a certain degree of closeness with the Tutsi IDPs, which derives

[266] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[267] Interview, Hutu, male, 62, IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[268] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.

from the common experience of violence on the hill, perpetrated by members of the Hutu *ubwoko*. The discomfort felt in the face of those who caused his displacement is also similar to that of many Tutsi IDPs chased away by Hutu, as well as many Hutu and Tutsi who resort to a "chosen amnesia" as a strategy that is "essential for local coexistence" (Buckley-Zistel 2006: 134), as explained in chapter 3.

> "**Do you ever meet [the Hutu who threatened you]?**
> Yes, at the kiosks at the *centre Bugendana*.
> **Do you not feel uncomfortable?**
> Well, I cannot do anything about that. We greet each other, we exchange some words, hatred disappears little by little. But at the kiosks they cannot kill me".[269]

The common experience of being persecuted by Hutu seems to have made this Hutu IDP join the group of Tutsi IDPs, with whom most of his daily interactions seemed to take place. Some Tutsi IDPs who talked to us about these two Hutu IDPs seemed to consider them part of their group.

> "They asked the former camp representative in 1997/98 to join the camp because of political persecution. They were members of UPRONA. These people have the same problems as the Tutsi…"[270]

> "They saved some Tutsi. Those on the hill told them that they had problems because of them. The Tutsi in the camp welcomed them with open arms because they know what they did".[271]

However, these Hutu IDPs did not become Tutsi: they might appear to have crossed the boundary between *amoko*, but they were not perceived by the new group as "one of them" (and this was not their aim either, when they joined the IDP camp). This is what makes their identity interstitial: they seem to have left their Hutu group of origin but they are not fully integrated into the Tutsi IDP group. The very stereotypical description of one of them given by a Tutsi IDP reveals a perception of this Hutu IDP as "other".

> "There is one […] also known by the name *Murundi* ['Burundian']. There is another one who lives next to the road. They are considered IDPs when aid arrives.
> **Why is [he] called *Murundi*?**
> He is a pure Hutu. He is a brick maker, he likes working. He himself called himself that way. When he has been drinking and he comes back home he says

[269] Interview, Hutu, male, 56, IDP, Bugendana, November 2018.
[270] Interview, Tutsi, female, 62, IDP, Bugendana, September 2019.
[271] Interview, Tutsi, male, IDP, Bugendana, October 2019.

> 'here is the Hutu who comes back home!' He also calls himself *umukozi* ['worker']".[272]

According to the anecdote told by this interviewee, this Hutu IDP seemed to be aware of the perception of him as "other", living among Tutsi IDPs but belonging to a different *ubwoko*. The use of the names *Murundi* ("Burundian") and *umukozi* ("worker") by which he allegedly described himself might represent a strategy to ignore his *ubwoko* in his daily life in a place predominantly inhabited by members of the "other" *ubwoko*; only when he was drunk and inhibitions were lowered by the alcohol, his *ubwoko* would have come out.[273] This echoes the perception of the Tutsi woman and former IDP in Mukoro who was aware that her neighbours labelled her as "the displaced", to underline her difference from them. Both these interstitial figures seemed to ignore the perception of themselves as "other" in daily life, although they were aware of it and they put it forward under specific circumstances – under the effects of alcohol,[274] or before people like my translator and I, perceived as neutral regarding local people's perceptions and self-perceptions of themselves and the others, in front of whom it was therefore safe to open up.

Besides these two Hutu IDPs, we interviewed three Hutu women who were living in the camp and were married to Tutsi IDPs. These women seemed to be in a less interstitial position than their male counterparts because through marriage they joined the *umuryango* of their husbands, in accordance with Burundian custom. From their position, they seemed to simply adapt to the decisions of their husband or their husband's family. If this ever provoked a struggle within themselves, they did not bring it up during our conversations (it would have meant admitting to family conflicts, which is not appropriate before outsiders, not only in Burundi).

[272] Interview, Tutsi, male, IDP, Bugendana, October 2019. This stereotypical description of this Hutu as a hard-worker echoes colonial narratives around Hutu disposition towards work described in chapter 2.

[273] During my fieldwork, I was able to observe this phenomenon on several occasions, but two episodes were particularly puzzling, not to say shocking. Once, very late at night and after several beers, a Hutu friend of mine told his Tutsi wife that a specific behaviour of a group of people that they both knew was due to the fact that they were Tutsi; the wife answered "I knew that you were going to say that". On another occasion, still late at night and after several beers in a club, a Hutu person openly accused a Tutsi friend of mine of being responsible for killing "his people" during the 1993 civil war. It was the first time that the Hutu person met my Tutsi friend; he based his claim on the fact that my friend came from a specific area of a specific neighbourhood in Bujumbura. The young age of my Tutsi friend makes it impossible for him to be responsible for those killings.

[274] "We talk about the past when we get together, when we drink" said a person interviewed by Russell (2019: 79) when asked about the prospect of transitional justice in Burundi. In everyday life, according to that person, uncomfortable topics (like responsibility for past violence, in the case of Russell's research) are purposely ignored.

"**Have you never thought of coming back to [the hill]?**
It depends.
It depends on what?
If the others come back, I will also come back.
Who are the others?
The *umuryango*. [Including] brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, my mother-in-law…"[275]

"When my husband was courting me, he promised me that we would stay in the camp for a short time, just a couple of months, then we would return to the hill. Later on, we found peace in the camp and we remained there.
Was there more peace in the camp than [on the hill]?
There was peace there as well, but my husband could not leave his family in the camp. His father, his mother, three brothers and three sisters are [all] in the camp. […] Today, if they oblige us to return to our hill, it would be to kill us".[276]

The adherence of these Hutu women to the narrative of the danger of returning to the hills, which was widespread among Tutsi IDPs, signals the women's crossing of the boundary between *amoko*. One of these Hutu women explained that it was impossible for her to talk with her Tutsi neighbours in the camp about her visits to the hill, where Hutu live:

"**When your neighbours here in the camp see you coming back from [the hill], when they see that nothing happened to you, do they not change their mind?**
They do not. They must have too many memories of the past.
Do you ever talk with them about your nights spent [safely] [on the hill]?
We never have the occasion.
Have you ever had the impression that they changed their attitude towards you the day after you spent the night [on the hill], after you came back to the camp?
They cannot show if they are not happy with that.
But do you think they are not happy with you spending the night there?
They certainly are not.
How do you know that?
From the others.
And why do you think they are not happy? Do they fear for you?
Yes, they are afraid that what happened in the past could happen to us. They say that we are kids.
[…]
But really, when you go to the hill, spend the night there, and come back and they see that nothing happened to you, you never have the occasion to discuss this with them?
'*Hayaga abangana*', people talk with their peers".[277]

[275] Interview, Hutu, female, 32, IDP, Bugendana, September 2019.
[276] Interview, Hutu, female, 32, IDP, Bugendana, October 2019.
[277] Interview, Hutu, female, 32, IDP, Bugendana, September 2019.

For another one of these women, to be married and to have children ultimately seemed to be more important than her hill or *ubwoko* of origin.

> "**How about the IDPs' attitude and reaction when you first arrived at the camp?**
> When you go out with a boy, everybody has something to say. I let them talk. After all, my father accepted my husband's request, and that was enough. Now I have three children, including a boy, so…
> **Do people [on the hill] still talk, today?**
> No, they stopped. Anyway, from every hill at least one girl came to the camp to get married. They stopped after two or three years.
> **And how about the IDPs?**
> If they do [talk behind my back], I have never heard them.
> **So you are in a so-called 'mixed' couple.**
> Mixed marriages are recurrent today, we only fear when we approach elections, when tensions between *amoko* may arise again".[278]

While these women crossed the boundary between the Hutu and the Tutsi *amoko* to become part of Tutsi families, the same cannot be said for Hutu IDPs, who seemed to be perceived, and to perceive themselves, in a more ambiguous way: close to the Tutsi group because of their common experience of violence, but not really part of that group when they are called "real Hutu", or when they adopt distinctive names, like "*umurundi*" (Burundian) or "*umukozi*" (worker). It is in the combination of the perception and self-perception of these individuals as "other", a condition common to former IDPs in Bugendana too, where their interstitial identity resides.

Conclusions

Maalouf emphasised the importance of going beyond a binary conception of identity that separates "us" from "them" (1998: 44), according to which those who are between "us" and "them" are considered in a position of betrayal, either of their group of origin or of their group of destination. According to Maalouf, these "*êtres frontaliers*" (1998: 13), on the border between us and them, experience this alleged betrayal with bitterness and anger (1998: 54), primarily because the multiplicity of the belongings that make up their very specific identity is not recognised.

In this chapter, I analysed two categories of people who resemble Maalouf's "*êtres frontaliers*" and presented an identity that I called interstitial. These categories are that of Tutsi former IDPs in Bugendana and that of Hutu IDPs living in the predominantly

[278] Interview, Hutu, female, 32, IDP, Bugendana, October 2019.

Tutsi Bugendana IDP camp. I called the identities of these people "interstitial" because they seemed to be situated in an interstice, at the junction of the two main groups of reference in their social landscape, namely Tutsi and Hutu. Of course, there are never only two groups, as people always have "multiple belongings" (Maalouf 1998: 19): interstitial identities are "situated at the margins of contesting and, at times, divergent selves […,] in the spaces between [one's] various selves" (Ekdale 2013: 10). My research sites, however, seemed to be characterised by a binary division of the social world, where two main communities were predominant in people's identifications and self-identifications: in Bugendana, these were the Hutu and Tutsi *amoko*. In this chapter, I analysed how Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs navigate their interstitial positions between the two main communities in their everyday life.

Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs are in an interstitial position because they have left their group of origin and are not really part of the group that they have approached. Among former IDPs, an important difference existed between those who returned to their hills in Gasunu (Cene) and in Bugendana (Mukoro and Cishwa). In Cene, former IDPs enjoyed the important support of their family members, who lived alongside them, and they had good relations with their Hutu neighbours. This was not the case for former IDPs in Mukoro and Cishwa, who could not count on the same type of family support and did not enjoy to the same extent good relations with their Hutu neighbours. Former IDPs in Bugendana seemed to live in an existential limbo, rejected more or less openly by both Tutsi IDPs in the camp, to which group they used to "belong", and by Hutu on the hill, among whom they were living. They thus appeared to be stuck on the boundary between "us" and "them": they were neither here nor there, and they did not have good prospects of either integrating into the "new" group on the hill, or returning to their previous group in the IDP camp. Hutu IDPs in Bugendana IDP camp were also in an interstitial position because – like some Tutsi former IDPs – they adopted behaviours in the past that were perceived as abandonment of the group by the rest of its members. Hutu IDPs seemed to have almost fully integrated into the group of Tutsi IDPs: it was through members of the "new" group that these Hutu had their lives saved, both when they escaped violence in the past and today, when accessing resources and livelihood. Nevertheless, the perception of them as "others" persisted among Tutsi IDPs. For both the Hutu group of origin and the current group of Tutsi IDPs, these Hutu IDPs were not "one of them". Hutu IDPs, like former IDPs in Bugendana, were aware

of this perception of them: from this combination of the perception of these individuals and of their self-perception as "other" derives their interstitial identity.

The comparison between the position and identity of former IDPs in Bugendana and in Gasunu seems to suggest that in a context that had been exposed to higher levels of violence, like Bugendana, individuals cope with their interstitial identities with more difficulty. In Bugendana, the absence of support from family members and worse relations with Hutu neighbours on the hill are a product of past violence. The difficulties experienced by former IDPs who attempted to leave the camp in order to move (physically) towards the "others" highlight the thickness of the boundary between the group of Tutsi IDPs and that of the Hutu living on the hill. Individuals who left the IDP group thus ended up in an interstitial position on a particularly thick boundary, in the middle of a wide "no man's land" in the social landscape of the research site, between Tutsi IDPs and Hutu living on the hill. From this specific interstitial position, both groups are almost out of reach, hence the difficulty for these individuals to be socially reintegrated into either of the groups. In Gasunu, lower levels of violence did not create the same type of social scenario and today, former IDPs seem to have more easily resumed their previous lifestyle.

The analysis presented in this chapter represents an important contribution to the literature on boundary-making because it does not focus on the movements and changing meanings of the boundaries (the two main ways identified by Wimmer through which boundaries are re-made) or on their varying degrees of thickness (analysed in chapter 3). A focus on people in the interstices helps us to understand how people who find themselves *on* the boundaries, between "us" and "them", accept, ignore, or contest those boundaries in their everyday life. The in-between spaces where Tutsi former IDPs and Hutu IDPs live bring with them an important potential for the creation of something new (Bhabha 1994: 4): because these people adopted a bolder attitude when faced with an adverse situation, they appeared to more concretely challenge the boundary between the two main groups of their social landscape of reference. This did not come without consequences: their behaviour, perceived as an attempt to cross the boundary and therefore abandon the group, was sanctioned with a lack of trust and violence by the rest of the group members. Depending on how successfully they navigate their interstitial position, these individuals might ultimately

bring about a shift in the current position of the boundaries in the perceptions of the members of both groups between which they are suspended.

The existence of these interstitial identities in Burundi also highlighted the binary division of the social landscape of my research sites. The very existence of these identities, however, shows that those binary divisions are being challenged, with varying degrees of success. Research should be encouraged on the factors allowing people in the interstices to successfully navigate their interstitial positions, as such people may ultimately give rise to a society that could be less "deeply divided". An investigation would also be needed into the ways in which other people with other types of interstitial identities navigate their positions, in between groups other than the *amoko*. This would ultimately shed more light on the salience of the *ubwoko* in people's everyday life, as it would clarify the seriousness of the constraints of an interstitial position between *amoko* as compared with those of interstitial positions between other types of groups. For this purpose, research would also be needed on the ways in which people in an overlap between categories, like people who married someone from a different *ubwoko* and children born to members of different *amoko*, navigate their positions: the challenges encountered by these individuals also certainly shed light on the salience of *ubwoko* in their everyday life.

Chapter V: Boundary-making on social media: the salience of the *ubwoko* on Twitter[279]

> "*1/ Chaque 29 avril, les Burundais commémorent les milliers de Burundais assassinés dans les Crimes atroces de 1972. D'un côté, les uns commémoreront la mort des Hutu. De l'autre côté, il y aura ceux qui commémoreront la mort des Tutsi* #2904YourPainIsMine
>
> *2/ #Burundi Certains Hutus accuseront des Tutsis de négationnistes, et vice versa. Des Tutsis affirmeront avoir été les victimes des Hutus, et vice versa.* #2904You[r]PainIsMine".[280]

Introduction

Social media in Burundi have acquired particular importance since the outbreak of violence that followed President Nkurunziza's candidacy for the 2015 elections. His candidacy, considered legitimate by his party (CNDD-FDD) and unconstitutional by many of his opponents,[281] provoked unprecedented street protests in Bujumbura, the then capital city of Burundi. Clashes between protesters and security forces caused several hundred deaths, while hundreds of thousands of people took refuge outside the country.[282] Several human rights violations were observed by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (United Nations Human Rights Council 2017). This repression culminated in the shutdown of the four main non-governmental radio stations (Frère

[279] This chapter builds on two articles on the ethnicisation of memory on Twitter (Paviotti 2018; Paviotti 2019) published in *Conjonctures de l'Afrique Centrale*, and on additional data on the narratives around Covid-19 on Burundian social media which I analyse in another article (Paviotti 2021, forthcoming) to be published in the *Journal of African Media Studies*.

[280] Amilcar Ryumeko Digne-Sabin, 29 April 2021 (https://twitter.com/AmilcarRyumeko/status/1387608878557417474, accessed 30 April 2021).

[281] Even inside the CNDD-FDD, however, an important opposition to Nkurunziza's third term existed. Many of these internal opponents (the so-called *frondeurs*) left the country out of fear of political persecution. Two presidential terms were allowed by the 2005 Constitution. The CNDD-FDD judged the candidacy as legitimate because in 2005 the president was elected by the Parliament and not by the population, as required by the Arusha Peace Agreement (2000) at the end of the five-year transition. Accordingly, Nkurunziza's first effective term would have been between 2010 and 2015, therefore in 2015 he could have started his second term (Vandeginste 2016: 45).

[282] As often happens in reports on violence in Burundi, different sources provide different numbers of casualties. According to government figures, as of June 2017, 720 persons had died in the protests (https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/06/22/neglected-not-over-burundicrisis-continues-bite, accessed 26 August 2017); according to FIDH and Ligue Iteka (2017), they were at least 1,200. Violence provoked the flight of more than 400,000 people to neighbouring countries (as of mid-July 2017, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi estimated the Burundian refugee population at 417,098 persons, see UN Human Rights Council 2017: 5) and created more than 200,000 IDPs (OCHA 2017).

2016). Many journalists and activists took the road to exile and continued their activity from abroad. Social media thus became a fundamental tool, both for information purposes (Frère 2016: 141) and for political activity. Since then, there has been an increase in political polarisation between the government and journalists based in Burundi, on the one hand, and opponents and journalists in exile, on the other hand. This polarisation became particularly evident on social media (Frère 2017: 14), a virtual arena where heated verbal exchanges were and still are possible between those who remained in Burundi and those who left (Dimitrakopoulou and Boukala 2018; Vircoulon 2018).

In 2015, in Bujumbura, many of the protests against Nkurunziza's third term took place in the so-called *quartiers contestataires* ("protesting neighbourhoods"),[283] which happened to be populated in large part by Tutsi. Because the repression of the protests focused on these neighbourhoods, many suspected that it was targeting Tutsi people. Thus, questions were raised about the relevance of the *ubwoko* within the dynamics of violence. While some underlined the fact that among the protesters were Tutsi as well as Hutu (Van Acker 2015: 8), supporting the purely political nature of the crisis,[284] others attributed ethnic motivations to the protesters; according to this second view, an international conspiracy for regime change existed in Burundi that was supported by "the Tutsi" (Ndayicariye 2020; Kavakure 2016), and "the Tutsi" took to the streets because they would not accept the same Hutu president for another five years.[285] In a context of mounting tensions, memories of past violence surfaced again, raising fears that open violence between *amoko* could return.

On social media, references to the *ubwoko* were being made increasingly often.[286] This seemed to support the argument that violence was more related to the *ubwoko* than to politics. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this reflected perceptions and opinions circulating offline, however. On social media, as well as in traditional media, arguments can be put into circulation for political purposes (to gain influence, to

[283] Musaga, Nyakabiga, Cibitoke, Ngagara, Mutakura. Protests took place in Jabe, Kanyosha, and in other areas of the city as well. For a geography of the 2015 violence, see Nindorera and Bjarnesen (2018) and Van Acker (2018).

[284] Chrétien, J.-P. 2015. « Tournant historique au Burundi ». *L'Histoire*. Online: https://www.lhistoire.fr/tournant-historique-au-burundi, accessed 04 January 2021.

[285] The latter explanation was given by some interviewees in Mugara.

[286] See https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/08/21/hate-speech-stirs-trouble-burundi, accessed 24 March 2021.

mobilise supporters), especially during electoral periods. Nevertheless, what is said online has an impact on the ways in which issues are perceived offline. This is why I decided to analyse the ways in which the *ubwoko* became more relevant, online first and then possibly offline. I started by analysing Twitter as one of the social media where references to the *ubwoko* became more evident in political debate. To try to gain a better grasp on the increased salience of the *ubwoko*, I decided not to focus on a primarily political topic, like Nkurunziza's candidacy for a third presidential term, because around such topic the *ubwoko* could be more easily instrumentalised for political purposes. Instead, I searched for a topic that was not related *per se* to the 2015 violence, that had been discussed during a sufficiently long period, and that possibly did not represent a strong symbol of identification for members of a specific *ubwoko*. The aim was to observe if, when, and how such a topic underwent a process of "ethnicisation": if, when, and how such a topic was described, perceived, and identified in terms of *ubwoko.* I focused on the process of "ethnicisation" of the memory of President Cyprien Ntaryamira, one of the presidents for whom a national day of commemoration is observed in Burundi. It is true that this president, a Hutu who died in the plane accident considered the trigger for the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, could be associated with the Hutu *ubwoko* from the start. Nevertheless, Ntaryamira was not perceived to be a strong symbol of identification for the Hutu to the same extent as other figures of the past, like Ndadaye or Ngendandumwe. In addition, even a figure perceived as closer to the Hutu than to the Tutsi could go through a process of "ethnicisation" and become more strongly associated with one *ubwoko*.[287] I thus decided to observe how the commemoration of the death of Ntaryamira was being narrated over the years. I could observe that indeed, between 2014 and 2017, the commemoration of the late president on Twitter became increasingly "ethnicised". This happened through the employment of specific discursive strategies that allowed Twitter users to establish boundaries between two communities on the occasion of the commemoration of Ntaryamira: one community described as engaged in activities of commemoration and claims for justice (the in-group) and portrayed as victim of attacks attributed to the "others", and a second group of alleged criminals (the out-group), source of much suffering for the first community, both at the time of Ntaryamira's death and in more recent times (the "saints" and the "sinners", to use an expression from the Nigerian context, Egbunike

[287] I explain the process that led me to the choice of Ntaryamira in the methodology section.

2018: 43). After identifying these two communities, I observed when and how the boundaries between them were described and/or perceived as being related to the *ubwoko* (Brubaker 2004: 87), to try to understand if the two communities were conceived of in terms of *ubwoko*, political orientation, or other types of affiliation. In an inductive way, I was able to observe that between 2014 and 2017, the Twitter community associated with Ntaryamira became increasingly associated with a specific *ubwoko* (Hutu) and political orientation (closeness to the CNDD-FDD).

I conducted my study in two phases. In the first phase, I identified five discursive strategies through which Twitter users established boundaries between two main communities around the figure of Ntaryamira: an in-group that "sided" with Ntaryamira, and an out-group described as "opposite". Boundaries were established through strategies aimed both at the out-group and at the in-group: distance from the out-group was demarcated through accusations against it, while the internal bonds of the in-group were reinforced through the use of specific appellatives, the expression of praise for members of the in-group, and the publicisation of activities of commemoration. After identifying these strategies, I analysed the use of references to the *ubwoko* to build a better understanding of the real "implementation" (Holst 2011: 105) of the process of "ethnicisation" of the memory of Ntaryamira. During the second phase of my study, I explored the interactions within and between the two main communities which emerged on Twitter. By focusing on interactions with the tweets (retweets, likes, replies), I analysed the messages and accounts with which members of each community interacted the most, paying specific attention to their political orientation and *ubwoko*,[288] and observing if their reactions changed over time. The choice to focus on the accounts' political orientation and *ubwoko* derived from both the analysis conducted during the first phase of my study, which showed that political affiliation played an important role in the establishment of boundaries between the two communities, and from the original aim of my study, which was to gain a better grasp on the salience of the *ubwoko* on Twitter. Thus, on the one hand, I observed to what extent the most popular tweets, and the reactions triggered by them, were related to the *ubwoko* and/or to political affiliation. The characters of the accounts interacting with these tweets helped me understand if interactions took place according to the *ubwoko*

[288] Identified through Twitter "demographic proxies" (Sloan 2017). I explain the identification of these two elements in the Twitter accounts in the methodology section.

of the Twitter user, to his/her political orientation, or to other types of affiliation. On the other hand, I also observed the development of conversations between Twitter users. This ultimately helped to shed light on the role of Twitter as an echo chamber where political messages remained between like-minded users, or acted as a space for discussion and confrontation between different views.

This chapter is divided into 3 sections. In the first section, I dwell on the relevance and the advantages and disadvantages of doing research in a virtual field like Twitter. I provide some data about the use of Twitter in Burundi, and describe the methodology of my study. In section 2, I present the first phase of my study, in which I analysed the five discursive strategies through which boundaries emerged between the two main communities around Ntaryamira. In section 3, I present the second phase of the study. This section is divided into two parts, one focused on the use of retweets, likes, and replies, and the other focused on the development of the conversations between Twitter accounts. Conclusions are provided in a final section.

1. How does Burundi speak Twitter?

Social media should be approached and analysed as products of specific socio-political circumstances, in Burundi and beyond. The virtual world should be considered a product and an extension of the physical one (Whitehead & Wesch 2012: 35), where real communities emerge that "share social interaction, social ties, and a common interactional format, location or 'space' – albeit, in this case, a computer-mediated or virtual 'cyberspace'" (Postill & Pink 2012: 126). The Burundian Twittersphere is an excellent illustration of this. Following specific political events in 2015, many journalists, activists, and political opponents fled the country because of security concerns and continued their activities in exile. The shift to the virtual world was motivated by real, physical events happening in the offline world.[289] The use of online platforms by the Burundian diaspora was a means to be connected and to continue to interact with a distant, offline context (Kadende-Kaiser 2000). Thus, online and offline were never separated. Of course, the online world does not simply reflect the offline realm. Dynamics observed in the virtual world may or may not correspond with those

[289] https://qz.com/africa/622660/how-burundis-activist-journalists-fill-a-news-void-using-facebook-and-whatsapp/, accessed 24 March 2021.

taking place in the physical reality. Nevertheless, dynamics observed online "build" on the offline context and provide additional insights into it (Daniels 2016: 114). This is all the more valuable in contexts where (sensitive) data is difficult to collect because of security concerns.

The first reason why social media platforms, and especially Twitter, are worth investigating in Burundi is because political debate essentially takes place online today. Twitter is particularly apt for political communication, in Burundi and elsewhere, because on this platform many short messages can quickly be sent to reach broad audiences. In Burundi, political debate on Twitter has presented particular dynamics and relevance since 2015. In the country, the press cannot be considered free (although the situation showed some signs of improvement at the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021):[290] in order to continue to operate, media have to comply with the increasingly restrictive measures imposed and orientations recommended by the National Communication Council (CNC), perceived by many as government-oriented.[291] Outside Burundi, journalists can express themselves more freely. In a safe space, they "can express the in-expressible" (Turner 2008: 1177) and send out their attacks on the government. It is on social media that competing narratives can find their full expression.

Another important reason why social media deserve attention is that the reception of specific information can be more easily analysed, as it is expressed on the media itself. Before the advent of social media, discussions about information provided by the media led to a physical social platform, distinct from the media device (like a group of people commenting on the news they just heard on the radio or read in the newspaper). With social media, this type of social platform has become virtual and is integrated into the media itself. This is particularly relevant for researchers investigating sensitive topics

[290] In the country, the international broadcasters BBC and VOA have been suspended since 2018. In the coverage of the 2020 elections, local media had to respect a specific code of conduct, publishing only information provided by the national electoral commission. Since 2016, a journalist working for Iwacu Press Group has been missing. In October 2019, four Iwacu journalists were arrested while they were trying to report on two armed attacks on military and police posts in Bubanza (North-West of Burundi). At the end of 2020, their liberation on presidential pardon raised hopes that government control of local media would be less strict. This and other positive signs of openness were appreciated by Reporters Without Borders, which placed Burundi in 147th position (out of 180 countries, the 180th country having the worst score) in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index, 13 positions higher than in 2020 (https://rsf.org/fr/burundi, accessed 20 April 2021). Since 2013, Burundi had been either dropping positions or stabilising very low scores in the World Press Freedom Index.

[291] https://theconversation.com/how-burundis-independent-press-lost-its-freedom-143062, accessed 23 March 2021.

that are not easily discussed offline, such as the salience of the *ubwoko*. This also makes political content particularly relevant: compared to traditional media, reactions expressed on the social media itself contribute to both informing and influencing opinion (Frère 2015: 160). In Burundi, a special communication unit put in place by the government in 2014 (Vircoulon 2018: 17) and the efforts deployed to repress dissent on social media (Small Media 2017: 53) testify to the political relevance of information disseminated online.

Twitter and social media, however, cannot be approached as research fields without taking some precautions. To start with, there is an issue of representativeness: people active on social media are never representative of the larger offline society (Daniels 2016: 115), among other reasons because of different levels of access to the Internet. Inside Burundi, Twitter seems to be used by a restricted portion of the population: according to a study by DataReportal (2020), in January 2020 only 16,800 people (0.14% of the population) could be reached with advertising on Twitter.[292] In addition, on social networks a specific "online persona" is projected (Whitehead & Wesch 2012: 39) whose behaviours do not always correspond to those of the "offline" person. The relevance of information in circulation on social media therefore needs to be accurately weighted: on Twitter, people "easily get outraged or excited – and in 140 characters – that snowballs into a 'trend'" (Daniels 2016: 118). Online, people can feel that they are allowed to release anger and frustrations online that they would or could not express offline (Frère 2015: 157). Special attention must be paid to information provided by journalists in exile (Skjerdal 2010), who may be particularly prone to making biased statements because of their personal history (Frère 2017), especially in periods of political tensions. In addition, communication on Twitter in Burundi seems to be more aimed at international audiences than at audiences inside Burundi (Falisse & Nkengurutse 2019), and consequently Twitter users might orient their messages in a way designed to catch the attention of international audiences. Finally, online activity

[292] This information does not provide any insights into Twitter consumption among the diaspora, which would be more relevant information given the setting of Burundi's contemporary media landscape. In addition, this data does not reflect the real reach of messages disseminated through Twitter. Smartphones and mobile phones, used in place of radios, could spread information to more than one person; in addition, an increasingly common practice in Burundi is to share screenshots of tweets via WhatsApp.

can be produced by robot accounts; on Twitter, followers, likes, and retweets can even be bought.[293]

These observations are particularly relevant for someone aiming at assessing the correspondence between what is stated online and what people "really" think when they are offline. In my opinion, the question is pointless for at least two reasons. On the one hand, the extent to which people's thoughts are more "real" offline than those expressed online cannot really be measured, because offline people project different *personae* as well (Goffman 1956), and they can change their mind about specific topics over time. For this reason, "virtual identities, created and maintained by users' non-virtual identities, may be just as 'real' to users as their non-virtual identities" (Waggoner in Bullingham and Vasconcelos 2013: 102). On the other hand, social analysts should not approach social media with the aim of assessing the veracity of information read online, as if information on social media were an account of the offline world,[294] but with the aim of observing the evolution of discourses and narratives, to analyse processes and changes that can shed light on the socio-political dynamics that are taking place offline. To gain a better grasp on those dynamics, online research obviously needs to be complemented by research in the offline world, which would allow an observation of the extent to which dynamics identified online reflected what happened offline. This is particularly relevant in conflict-affected contexts like Burundi, where "[i]mmersion, 'contexting' and trust-building" are fundamental to research (Mwambari, Purdeková & Nyenyezi Bisoka 2021: 2).

1.1.Methodology of the study

To try to gain a better grasp on the increased salience of the *ubwoko* on Twitter, I aimed to detect possible processes of "ethnicisation", observing if, when, and how a specific topic was described, perceived, and identified in terms of *ubwoko.* This would allow me to specify when, where, and how, on Twitter, the *ubwoko* became salient (Brubaker et al. 2006: 15). For this purpose, I searched for a topic that was not related *per se* to the 2015 violence, that was discussed during a sufficiently long period, and that possibly did not represent a strong symbol of identification for members of a specific

[293] By searching "buy Twitter followers" or "buy likes on Twitter" in a web browser, one can easily find a list of websites suggesting the best options to buy Twitter followers, likes, and retweets. The same is possible with other social networking services.
[294] Of course, this does not apply to users of social media whose main purpose is to get informed.

ubwoko. To answer the first concern, I chose an event in the past; to answer the second concern, I chose an annual commemoration, which allowed me to observe changes in the narration of the same event over the years; to answer the third concern, I focused on national belonging, assuming that this would prevail over other types of belonging like the *ubwoko*, the *umuryango*, or the region of origin in people's collective identifications. Thus, I selected the commemoration of President Cyprien Ntaryamira, one of the three persons for whom a day of commemoration is observed in Burundi. It is true that Ntaryamira, a Hutu, could represent a hero for this *ubwoko*, since he died together with Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, also Hutu, on the airplane that was shot down in Kigali (Rwanda) on April 6th, 1994. Regardless of the identity of the authors of this attack, the event is commonly considered the trigger for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. I chose Ntaryamira instead of the two other persons for whom a national holiday is observed in Burundi (Prince Louis Rwagasore and President Melchior Ndadaye) because the latter could be even more strongly associated with a specific *ubwoko*. Prince Louis Rwagasore, Burundi's independence hero assassinated on October 13th, 1961, was a Ganwa, member of the princely category that together with the Tutsi was privileged during Belgian rule. In 1961, he was head of the UPRONA party, which today is usually perceived as a Tutsi party. President Melchior Ndadaye was the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi, killed three months after he took office (on October 21st, 1993) in a coup executed by Tutsi military officers.

I selected four periods of Twitter activity, two before and two after the outbreak of violence in 2015, in order to observe possible changes in the way the commemoration was acted out before and after 2015, especially because after the outbreak of the 2015 violence references to the *ubwoko* appeared more frequently. These periods were the two months between March 6th and May 6th (the month preceding and the month following the commemoration of Ntaryamira) in 2014, in 2015, in 2016, and in 2017. Data was retrieved through the publicly accessible Twitter Search tool (https://twitter.com/search-advanced), which retrieves a sample of the tweets produced during a selected period (at most 1% according to Mejova, Weber, & Macy 2015: 40). I launched a search for tweets containing the word "Ntaryamira" written worldwide and in all languages. When recurring hashtags containing the name Ntaryamira were found among the results (for instance, #JusticeForNtaryamira), I launched a new search to

include in the dataset all the tweets containing those hashtags. In total, 1,349 tweets were collected.[295] During the second phase of my study, I launched a new search (in June 2017) to check the availability of the tweets previously collected. The tweets that were no longer available (because they were deleted, or because the associated account was either suspended or did not exist anymore) were removed from the database. In total, 1,029 tweets were counted in the final database.[296]

Data was organised manually within a Microsoft Excel file where I reported the date of production, text, and URL of each tweet, and the translation of the message if it was originally written in Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, or Kiswahili. Translations were provided by two different Kirundi-speaking translators who were not in contact with each other, and were then triangulated with each other.[297] Through content analysis, I identified the main purpose of each tweet: "accusation", "praise", "publicisation of commemoration" (meaning "visibility given to activities of commemoration"). I also noted the use of specific appellatives and the presence of references to the *ubwoko*, relevant to the analysis of the salience of the *ubwoko*. In an inductive way, I thus identified five discursive strategies, presented in the first part of the next section, which led to the emergence of a boundary between the two main communities (an in-group and an out-group) around the figure of Ntaryamira.

During the second phase of the study, I identified the most popular tweets by observing interactions with the tweets: likes, retweets, and replies. Through content analysis, I detected the topics that were liked, retweeted, and discussed the most. I identified the *ubwoko* and political orientation of the most active accounts by observing the presence of explicit references to these two elements in Twitter "demographic proxies" (Sloan 2017): content of the tweets in the timelines, cover photo, profile picture,[298] description,

[295] 126 tweets in 2014, 98 in 2015, 688 in 2016, 437 in 2017.

[296] 123 in 2014, 99 in 2015, 488 in 2016, 319 in 2017.

[297] I chose the translators according to their education level and their familiarity with Kirundi. Both translators belonged to the same *ubwoko*. My basic knowledge of Kirundi allowed me to verify that the translations referred to the tweets in question. Tweets that were not in Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, English or French were translated with Google Translate.

[298] Many profile pictures and cover photos, for instance, showed images of the typical CNDD-FDD bald eagle (symbol of the CNDD-FDD party), President Pierre Nkurunziza, or Gen. Adolphe Nhimirimana (head of Burundi's intelligence service and Nkurunziza's right-hand man, assassinated on August 2nd, 2015), which signalled political affiliation with the CNDD-FDD. As for the *ubwoko*, few accounts mentioned it in their description; some accounts seemed to side with "the Hutu" through the content of their tweets, claiming justice for past crimes against them.

and pinned tweet if available.[299] Attention was paid to the account's "three A's" (activity, anonymity, and amplification),[300] to determine its identity as potential bot or fake account. Conversations, which developed when a tweet received at least two replies, were analysed through content and discourse analysis. I paid attention to the presence of four elements evoking the *ubwoko* in the conversations: references to past violence, more or less explicitly related to the *ubwoko*; references or appeals to the *ubwoko*; links between past and present violence, more or less explicitly related to the *ubwoko*; anticipation of violence. I considered references to past violence as a way to evoke the *ubwoko* because some dates, events, and figures from the past (like "1972", "1993", "Ndadaye") today represent important symbols in the collective memory of an *ubwoko*: to mention them is to send a specific message about or to an *ubwoko* without spelling it out. This illustrates the use of the so-called untold (*non-dit*), information that goes without saying because it is well known by everybody. This also underlines the importance of knowing the cultural, historical, and socio-political context that produced written texts to conduct a proper qualitative analysis of those written texts, in Burundi and beyond. References or appeals to the *ubwoko*, the second element identified in the conversations, represented a more explicit way to evoke the *ubwoko*: in these references, either the *ubwoko* was spelled out, or names and dates representing important symbols for the collective memory of an *ubwoko* (like "Ndadaye", "Ngendandumwe", "1972") were explicitly associated with episodes of violence related to the *ubwoko* (e.g., the "1972 genocide"). The third element, links between past and present violence, appeared when connections were made between past events and elements of the contemporary violence, which followed Nkurunziza's candidacy for a third term. The fourth element, anticipation of violence, were insinuations that (more) violence was coming. I observed the circumstances under which these four elements appeared in the conversations in order to analyse the role played by the *ubwoko* in them. Finally, the analysis of the participants in the conversations allowed me to determine whether communication remained within the same community or if confrontations took

[299] Of course, these elements were shown at the time of the analysis; their identification does not purport to classify the accounts in a definitive way, as these accounts could have changed their political orientation and their narrative about the *ubwoko* after this analysis was made. The identification of the *ubwoko* and of the political orientation of the accounts, which relied only on explicit references in their "demographic proxies" (Sloan 2017), was made for the purposes of this analysis, and aimed to identify the role of these two elements (*ubwoko* and/or political orientation) in the interactions between Twitter users.

[300] https://medium.com/dfrlab/botspot-twelve-ways-to-spot-a-bot-aedc7d9c110c, accessed 23 March 2021.

place between the two communities which had emerged around the figure of Ntaryamira.

2. Boundary making on Twitter

In this section, I will describe five discursive strategies, identified in an inductive way, that allowed for the emergence of a boundary between an "imagined community of 'people like me'" (Lamont 2000: 3) and a community perceived as "other", on Twitter, during the commemoration of the death of Ntaryamira. Boundaries separated an in-group, built around Ntaryamira, from an out-group, perceived as its opposite. Over the years, the group built around Ntaryamira became increasingly defined in terms of political orientation (closeness to CNDD-FDD) and *ubwoko* (Hutu).

A first quantitative observation is due concerning the production of tweets, which increased remarkably in 2016 and 2017, after the outbreak of the 2015 violence. This is in line with the increased usage of social media that followed the shutdown of the four main non-governmental radio stations in Burundi and the exile of many citizens, and with the use of Twitter for mainly political activity, in parallel with an intensification of political debate in Burundi in the aftermath of electoral violence. I will explore in section 3.2 the extent to which this political debate was an effective confrontation of different points of view. It is noticeable that around 30% of Twitter activity in 2016 and 2017 came from accounts that later (by June 2017) had either deleted their tweets or had been suspended or eliminated.

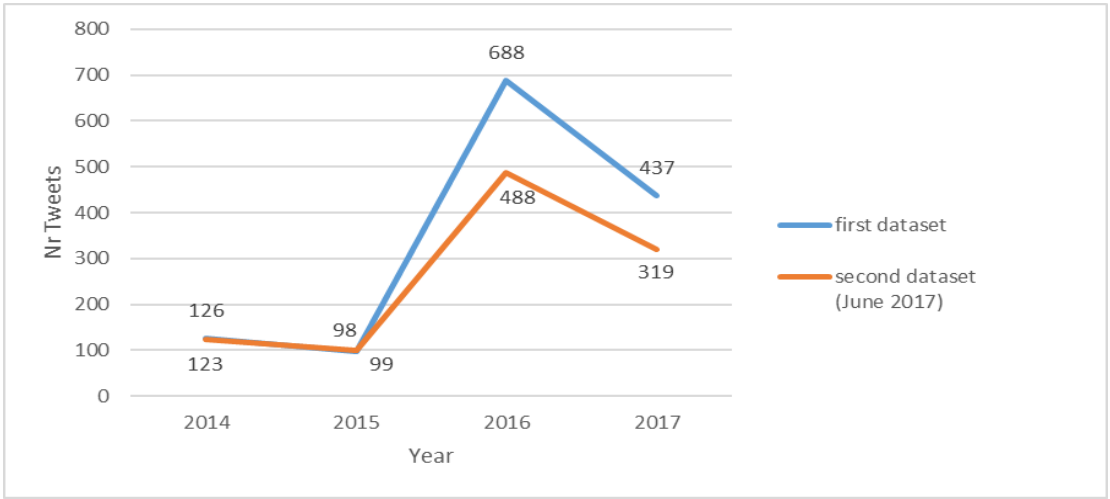

Figure 10: Number of tweets containing the name "Ntaryamira"

In the following subsections, I will describe the "means" (Wimmer 2013: 63) through which boundaries surfaced between online communities. Through accusations, distance from the out-group was demarcated (2.1). Through the use of specific appellatives in reference to Ntaryamira, the late president was more strongly associated with the in-group (2.2). Through the expression of praise, the in-group could reinforce its internal ties (2.3). Publicity for the activities of commemoration by politicians and political parties (2.4) served the same purpose. The use of references to the *ubwoko* in relation to the commemoration of Ntaryamira are analysed in the final subsection (2.5).

2.1.Accusations

Accusations represent one of the most explicit and immediate ways to establish a boundary between an in-group and an out-group. Through an accusation, distance is established from the behaviour of the accused: a clear line is drawn between the author(s) of the accusation and the accused.

Several tweets conveyed only one message in relation to the commemoration of Ntaryamira: to accuse Rwandan President Kagame or his party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), of the murder of the late president of Burundi. This type of accusation increased significantly after the outbreak of the 2015 violence: while 2 accusations were found in 2014 and 17 in 2015, 111 accusations were found in 2016 and 54 in 2017. In these tweets, explicit mention was made of "Kagame", "Rwanda", or "the RPF" as responsible for the assassination of Ntaryamira.

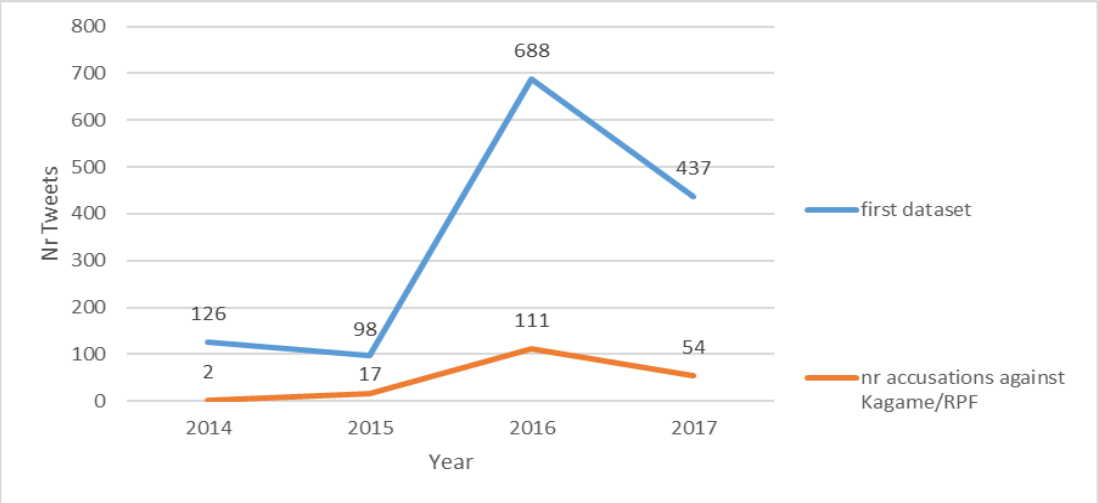

Figure 11: Number of open accusations against Kagame. Source: first dataset

Additional accusations against Kagame were made in more indirect ways, either by making reference to the country in which Ntaryamira perished, or by asking Rwanda to clarify the circumstances of the tragic event. Specifying that Ntaryamira died in an attack on the plane he was travelling in while landing in Kigali could have been a simple provision of information about the event; in many cases, however, the authors of the tweets took the trouble to add this geographical reference even when the message was already complete and understandable.[301]

> Ikiriho, 18 March 2017. "*Le #Burundi a notamment rappelé qu'il commémore à cette date l'assassinat de feu président Cyprien Ntaryamira, tué au #Rwanda*".[302]

Requests for clarifications and justice directed to Rwanda could also convey accusations: according to the authors of these tweets, Rwanda never gave a satisfactory explanation for the event.

> Magneto@, 05 April 2016. "22 years after th[e] fuck death of #Burundi-an President Ntaryamira. Want #JusticeForNtaryamira in order to ask Rwanda about his death" [sic].[303]

Besides responsibility for the death of Ntaryamira, Kagame was also accused of hosting and training Sindumuja activists, who opposed Nkurunziza's third term.[304]

> Gakiza Fierté, 05 April 2016. *« SE. NTARYAMIRA Cyprien : Homme d'#Etat #Burundi -ais assassiné par le parrain des #TerroristesSindumuja (#Kagame) »*.[305]

By linking a crime in the past (the death of Ntaryamira) with a crime in the present (Kagame hosting the Sindumuja), these types of tweets created an implicit connection between late President Ntaryamira and incumbent President Nkurunziza, both victims of Kagame's alleged crimes: if Ntaryamira was the victim of Kagame's past crime,

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[301] In many of the tweets under scrutiny, Ntaryamira is often associated with Burundi and the Hutu, in opposition to Kagame, Rwanda, and the Tutsi. In the first place, this derives from the fact that Ntaryamira died in Rwanda. In this chapter, I am not going to explore in depth the link between *ubwoko* and nationality but I will focus on the process through which the *ubwoko* gained increased salience on Twitter.

[302] https://twitter.com/Ikiriho/status/843151901084532739, accessed 22 March 2021.

[303] https://twitter.com/nduwamariyaN/status/717569264811655168, accessed 22 March 2021.

[304] The term *sindumuja*, "I am not a slave" was first used by archbishop Simon Ntamwana in March 2015, during a speech in which he expressed his opposition to Nkurunziza's third term and affirmed that nobody should make Burundians slaves. The term was appropriated as a political slogan and symbol of resistance by those against Nkurunziza's third term (see https://www.yaga-burundi.com/2016/yaga-decodeur-sindumuja-naissance-dune-devise/, accessed 24 march 2021).

[305] https://twitter.com/gakizafierte/status/717495908682829824, accessed 22 March 2021.

Nkurunziza was portrayed as the victim of the attacks of the Sindumuja, the latter being protected by Kagame.

In some cases, the Sindumuja were clearly situated in opposition to Ntaryamira. A couple of tweets described them as directly accountable for the death of Ntaryamira.

> Niné, 27 March 2017. *« V[ou]s avez oublié Ngendandumwe et Ntaryamira. Ils ont en commun d'avoir été abattus par la Belgique ou par ses suppôts #Sindumuja »*.[306]
>
> macedoine, 25 April 2016. "@souleymane1211 I think CPI will have a huge task from all crime committed by sindumuja, the death of Ndadaye, Ntaryamira and etc".[307]

Sindumuja activists obviously cannot be held responsible for crimes committed in the past, like the murder of Ntaryamira or Ndadaye, since their movement only came into being in 2015. For the authors of these tweets, "Sindumuja" replaces "those supported by Kagame", who was seen as responsible for the death of Ntaryamira. By associating Ndadaye with Ntaryamira, in opposition to Kagame and the Sindumuja, the boundary between these two first groups of people started to be more explicitly associated with the *ubwoko.* Ntaryamira could have been an accidental victim of an attack not targeted at him, but the death of Ndadaye is more evidently linked to the *ubwoko*.[308] Therefore, its association with Ndadaye gave a more explicitly "ethnic" connotation to the group of Ntaryamira. Thus, on Twitter, the memory of Ntaryamira became more strongly associated with the Hutu *ubwoko*. This is one of the ways in which the process of "ethnicisation" of the memory of the late president became more evident.

The following tweets most effectively confirm this interpretation. The deaths of Ntaryamira and Ndadaye are associated with the 1972 genocide against the Hutu,[309] the murder of Hutu Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe, and the assassination of Remy Gahutu, founder of the Palipehutu party.

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[306] https://twitter.com/bugarama124/status/846344589715877889, accessed 22 March 2021.

[307] https://twitter.com/macedoinewanje1/status/724544172284350464, accessed August 2017.

[308] The victory of Melchior Ndadaye, Hutu, in the 1993 presidential elections came after an electoral campaign characterised by the use of hate speech (Reyntjens 2016: 71; Palmans 2008: 197-221) and put an end to decades of Tutsi rule. The assassination of Ndadaye by Tutsi military officers led to the outbreak of a civil war in which the main parties in conflict were Hutu and Tutsi.

[309] As of today, the 1972 violence is not officially recognised as genocide. Some scholars class what happened in 1972 as genocide (Chrétien 2008: 59; Lemarchand 2002). Declarations of the 1972 violence as genocide were made in 1972 by US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and in 1985 in the UN Whitaker report (see chapter 1, section 2). More recently, claims have been made by individuals and associations (like the *Collectif des Survivants et Victimes du Génocide Hutu de 1972 au Burundi*) for official recognition of the 1972 genocide (see chapter 3, section 1).

> Jan ruhere, 18 March 2016. "@A_Bucumi Rwandans [...] have always interfered: Ngendandumwe, Rwandans participated 1972 & Ndadaye, Ntaryamira, sans echecs @AShingiro @US_SEGL".[310]
>
> menyimana philotaire, 08 April 2016. *« Et pour les autres ([N]dadaye, Ntaryamira, [G]ahutu Remy, genocide de 72...). [Ç]a sera quand? Quelle cynisme!!! […] »*.[311]
>
> Diana Nsamirizi, 06 April 2017. *« À l'époque j'avais 20 ans et mature, je n'ai jamais vu les Tutsi[s] condamner l'assassinat de Ndadaye ni celle de Ntaryamira. Personne »*.[312]
>
> Niné, 07 April 2017. "Too many bad things from you Rwandans: you killed Ngendandumwe, Ndadaye, Ntaryamira. During the 1972 genocide, you used an axe to kill all the Hutu".[313]

These associations were more frequent in 2016 and 2017 than before the outbreak of the 2015 violence. In 2014 and 2015, Ndadaye was mentioned once in tweets containing the name "Ntaryamira"; in 2016, he was mentioned 31 times, and in 2017 his name appeared 28 times. This confirms that the "ethnicisation" of the memory of Ntaryamira became more evident after the outbreak of the 2015 crisis.

More interestingly, in 2016 to this group of Hutu presidents and prime ministers was added Nkurunziza. Several tweets contested the arguments of the Sindumuja, insinuating that the real reason for their opposition to Nkurunziza was related to the *ubwoko* and was not political.

> Umuvuga Kuri, 02 May 2016. *« #Burundi @pnkurunziza & 3. Mandat s[on]t des prétextes. Ngendandumwe, Ndadaye, Ntaryamira. Ils avaient combien de mandats? »*[314]

Since unwanted presidents and prime ministers had been wiped out through physical elimination in the past, suspicion was raised that the Sindumuja actually aimed to eliminate Nkurunziza as well. Because the reason for such killings in the past was related to the *ubwoko*, the same was assumed for Nkurunziza.

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[310] https://twitter.com/JanRuhere/status/711059554688040962, accessed 22 March 2021.

[311] https://twitter.com/philotaire/status/718572925255860224, accessed 22 March 2021. This tweet was a reply to Burundian activist Pacifique Nininahazwe's claim for justice for Ernest Manirumva, vice-president of the anticorruption observatory OLUCOME (*Observatoire de la Lutte contre la Corruption et les Malversations économiques*) murdered in April 2009.

[312] https://twitter.com/diana_samirizi/status/849963477699633152, accessed August 2017.

[313] "*Ubugome bwanyu banyarwanda burarusha: mwatwiciye Ngendandumwe, Ndadaye, Ntaryamira. Muri jenoside yo mu 72 nimwe mwakubita agafuni abahutu*" (https://twitter.com/bugarama124/status/850389879213182977, accessed 22 March 2021).

[314] https://twitter.com/Umuvugakuri/status/727068656547586048, accessed 22 March 2021.

> macedoine, 27 March 2016. "@Manirakiza @ThierryU @grufyikiri Stop your jokes. Those [a]re old schemes. NGENDANDUMWE, NDADAYE, @ntibasy, NTARYAMIRA etc served how many terms?"[315]
>
> mizero racine [RacineMizero]. (08 April 2017). *« Au #Burundi on n[e] change plus le président élu en l[']assassinant, nous ne somme[s] plus en [19]93. #ndadaye #ntaryamira #StrongerTogether @fidh_fr »*[316]

Through accusations, a group of victims, including Ntaryamira, and a group of criminals were delineated. The association of Ntaryamira with names and dates like "Ndadaye" or "1972", central elements of Hutu collective memory, linked the group of victims more explicitly with this *ubwoko*. This is one of the dimensions of the process of "ethnicisation", which became more evident after 2015. Within this process, while accusations helped the in-group to establish distance from the out-group, other strategies reinforced the internal ties of the in-group.

2.2. The use of specific appellatives

The analysis of the appellatives used to make reference to Ntaryamira allowed for a better understanding of the position of the late president within the group of victims, especially of his relation to the other members of his group. In 2014 and 2015, references to Ntaryamira were made through his name, "(Cyprien) Ntaryamira", through the appellative "President Ntaryamira", or through his title "Head of State". One tweet emphasised the bond between Ntaryamira and Africa in 2014, referring to the late president as "one of [Africa's] gallant sons".[317] In 2015, one only tweet highlighted the relation between Ntaryamira, a "great man of discipline",[318] and Burundi.

In 2016, some appellatives appeared that had never been employed before. The use of the title "His Excellence", which elevated the status of Ntaryamira, was not seen in 2014 and 2015. Most of the time, this title was used in tweets that either commemorated him (6 out of 16 tweets in 2016) or accused Kagame and asked for justice (6 out of 16 tweets). By adding the honorific title "His Excellence" to the name of Ntaryamira, the

[315] https://twitter.com/macedoinewanje1/status/714058849414680576, accessed August 2017.
[316] https://twitter.com/RacineMizero/status/850569079584894976, accessed 22 March 2021.
[317] https://twitter.com/BwireJudith/status/452731250399539200, accessed 24 March 2021.
[318] https://twitter.com/sinrenovat/status/585297530134626304, accessed 24 March. "*Discipline mu nzego*", "discipline in the institutions" was Ntaryamira's motto.

crime allegedly committed by Kagame became more tragic, and his condemnation stronger.

Another important appellative that appeared in 2016 was the possessive "our". Ntaryamira was referred to as "our (beloved) president" and was associated with Burundi, after accusations were made against Kagame or Rwanda (in 12 out of 18 tweets using the possessive "our").

> Kwizera Jean de Dieu, 05 April 2016. *« #askToKagame, #Burundi, qui a tué notre cher président Cyprien NTARYAMIRA ».*[319]

In one case, the mention of Ntaryamira's *ubwoko* emphasised the link between the late president and the Hutu.

> Irakoze prosper, 31 March 2016. *« @pierreboisselet quant [à] moi je d[e]m[a]nd[e] la clarification d[e] la mort d[e] notre pr[é]sid[ent] hutu du B[urun]di #Ntaryamira C ».*[320]

The association of Ntaryamira with Burundi in opposition to Kagame and Rwanda was restated in 2017, but in a lower number of tweets (4 out of 6 in 2017). On the other hand, while the title "His Excellence" was used to elevate the status of Ntaryamira in 2016, in 2017 it was principally employed to commemorate the late president (12 out of 16 tweets).

Nevertheless, more tweets in 2017 than in the previous years celebrated Ntaryamira as a charismatic, forward-thinking, and respectable leader, concerned with the need for discipline in every institution of the country (7 tweets were found in 2017, 4 in 2016, and 1 in 2015).

> Fridolin Nzambimana, 06 April 2017. *« #Burundi Rendons hommage aujourd'hui, tout comme notre héros de la démocratie, à Ntaryamira Cyprien, un homme visionnaire et charismatique ».*[321]
>
> Guy Auriane, 06 April 2017. *« Cyprien NTARYAMIRA était un homme de conviction, très fidèle en amitié, grand travailleur, un véritable « bulldozer » au boulot ».*[322]

These tweets do not express any nostalgia or desire for better leaders than the actual ones, since their authors explicitly supported the CNDD-FDD on Twitter. By glorifying Ntaryamira as a person, those who cared about commemorating him were seen in the

[319] https://twitter.com/Kwizera68/status/717571353893806081, accessed August 2017.
[320] https://twitter.com/Irakozeprosper3/status/715525963027755009, accessed 22 March 2021.
[321] https://twitter.com/Fridolinandres/status/849866437929959425, accessed 24 August 2017.
[322] https://twitter.com/guy_auriane/status/849898024843313152, accessed 22 March 2021.

same positive light. It is remarkable, however, that the reaction of the Twitter community to these tweets was almost non-existent: only one of these tweets was retweeted and liked a significant amount of times (12 retweets and 7 likes).[323] The messages that were retweeted and liked the most, as shown in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, mainly provided information about participants in the commemoration of Ntaryamira taking place in Bujumbura, many of whom were CNDD-FDD representatives.

2.3.Praise

Members of a group expressing praise for other members of their same group helped to tighten the bond between them, consolidating the internal solidarity of the group. In tweets concerning the commemoration of Ntaryamira, this happened only in 2017. Praise was expressed for Nkurunziza, depicted as the direct heir to the late president's prestige. This established a clear link between the two presidents.

> Understand Burundi, 06 April 2017. "#Burundi 'Ntaryamira (and his comrades)'s philosophy is what is currently being implemented by @CnddFdd'".[324]

> Landry Sibomana, 06 April 2017. "#StrongerTogether Pic of the day: This day we remember Pres. CYPRIEN NTARYAMIRA @pnkurunziza lead by example & show peace with [Ntibantunganya]".[325]

In a couple of cases, Ndadaye and Rwagasore were added to the group. Nkurunziza was described as the person who best personified their ideas.

> Fridolin Nzambimana, 06 April 2017. *« #Burundi Le 'Gusabikanya' cet idéal socialiste qui animait Ndadaye et Ntaryamira puis concrétisé par Nkurunziza »*.[326]

> J.C Karerwa Ndenzako, 06 April 2017. "#Burundi: When you listen carefully to @pnkurunziza, you feel like his discourse echoes those by #Rwagasore, #Ndadaye and #Ntaryamira".[327]

These associations were aimed more at elevating the figure of Nkurunziza than underlining Ntaryamira and Nkurunziza's shared *ubwoko*. Expressions of praise underlined the commonality of political ideas between Nkurunziza and Ntaryamira, and therefore the political character of the boundary between the group of Ntaryamira and

[323] https://twitter.com/Fridolinandres/status/849866437929959425, accessed 24 August 2017.
[324] https://twitter.com/QCbdi/status/849851905404583936, accessed 24 March 2021.
[325] https://twitter.com/landrysibo/status/850064987708157952, accessed 22 March 2021.
[326] https://twitter.com/Fridolinandres/status/849865886680961025, accessed August 2017.
[327] https://twitter.com/KarerwaNdenzako/status/849946511706386433, accessed 22 March 2021.

the “others”. The same objective was reached through the provision of information about political parties and representatives paying tribute to the late president.

2.4.Politics and commemorations

It was not only Nkurunziza and the CNDD-FDD who were associated with Ntaryamira through the publicisation of their activities of commemoration. A correspondence in political views was apparent with the FRODEBU, Ntaryamira’s party, with the FNL (*Forces Nationales de Libération*), with Sylvestre Ntibantunganya (among the founders of the FRODEBU), and with Jean de Dieu Mutabazi (RADEBU, *Rassemblement des Démocrates pour le Développement au Burundi*). Activities of commemoration were publicised in 2017 especially: 33 tweets mentioned political parties engaged in either activities of commemoration, or claims for justice for Ntaryamira, or accusations against Kagame (see Figure 11). Before 2017, political parties had appeared in 2 tweets in 2014, 4 tweets in 2015, and 1 tweet in 2016. Except for three tweets in 2015 mentioning the tribute paid to the late president by the UPRONA, perceived as Tutsi, the rest of these tweets reported on the activities of the CNDD-FDD (1 tweet in 2014, 1 in 2015, 21 in 2017), the FRODEBU (1 in 2014, 1 in 2016, 5 in 2017), and the FNL (7 tweets in 2017), parties perceived by most as pro-Hutu. In addition, the CNDD-FDD appeared to be engaged in activities of commemoration (1 tweet in 2014, 1 in 2015, 4 in 2017) and claims for justice (17 in 2017), while the FRODEBU was exclusively described in terms of its efforts to claim justice for Ntaryamira (1 tweet in 2014, 1 in 2016, 5 in 2017). The FNL appeared in 7 tweets in 2017: 2 tweets claimed justice for Ntaryamira, 5 tweets accused Kagame.

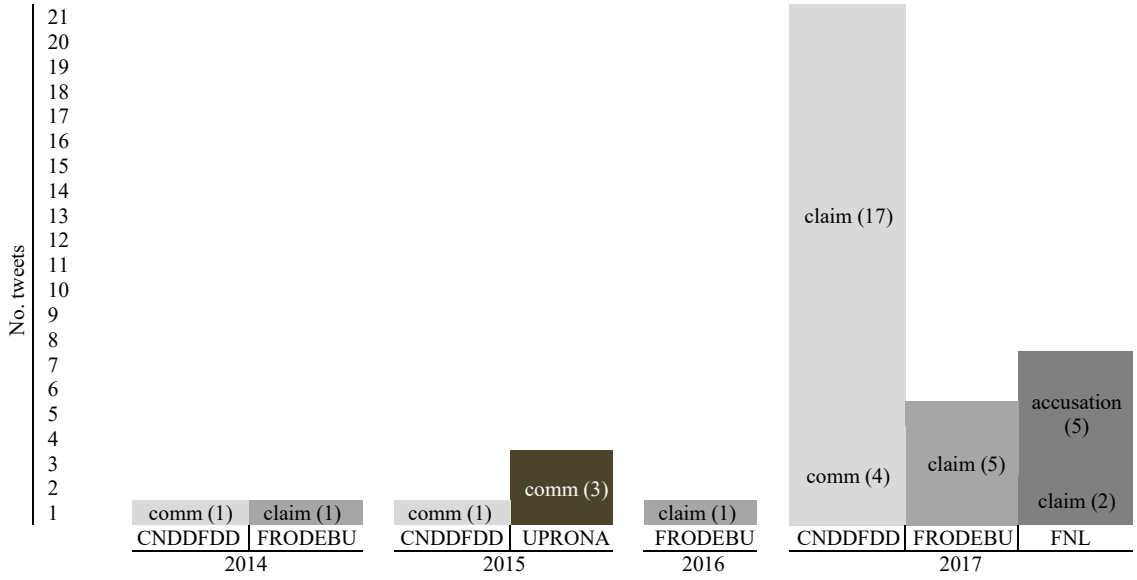

Figure 12: Political parties' participation in the commemoration of Ntaryamira. In the columns, "comm" means "commemoration", "claim" means "claim for justice", "accusation" means "accusation against Kagame".

The tributes paid to Ntaryamira by individual politicians also received attention. More attention was directed to politicians' activities of commemoration in 2017 than in previous years. In 2017, 23 tweets in total reported on the participation of Nkurunziza and Ntibantunganya (respectively 16 and 7 tweets) in the commemoration of the late president of Burundi. In addition, 2 tweets reported on Mutabazi's claims for justice. Before 2017, only Nkurunziza was described in terms of his activities of commemoration (5 tweets in 2015 and 10 in 2016).

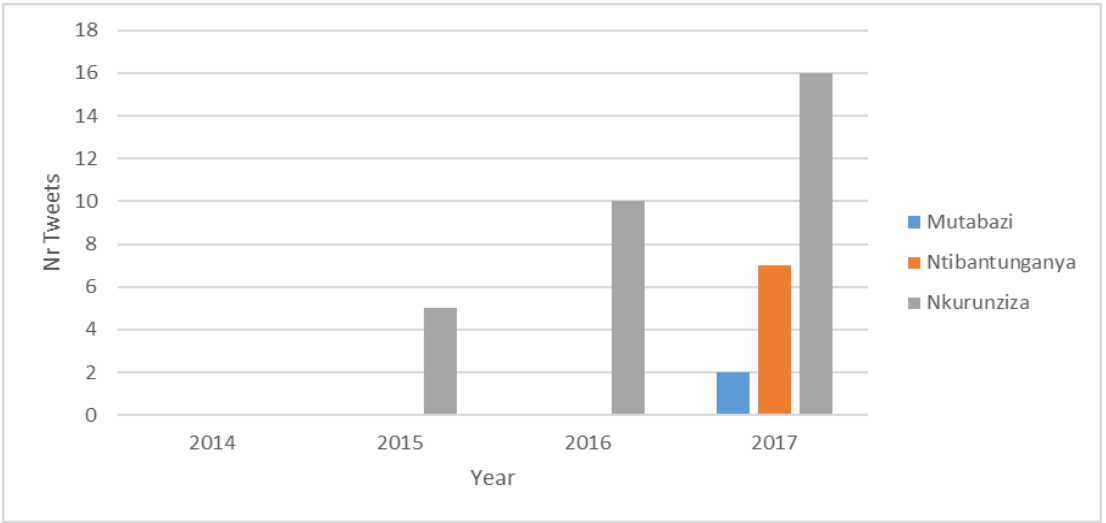

Figure 13: Political representatives' participation in the commemoration of Ntaryamira

It is interesting to note that on Twitter, Ntibantunganya appeared to be against Nkurunziza in 2015 and 2016, since he had stated that "there would have not been any controversy about the third term if the heritage of Ntaryamira was respected".[328] In 2017, the rapprochement between Ntibantunganya and Nkurunziza was celebrated on Twitter,[329] which allowed Ntibantunganya to join the group of Ntaryamira and Nkurunziza.

2.5. The use of references to the ubwoko

In a process of ethnicisation, the use of ethnic references may be the most evident strategy employed. Within the "ethnicisation" of the memory of Ntaryamira, however, this strategy was not employed very often: out of 1,349 tweets, only 4 tweets in 2014, 5 tweets in 2015, 25 tweets in 2016, and 5 tweets in 2017 used explicit references to the *ubwoko*. An increase, though slight, is observed in 2016, after the outbreak of the 2015 violence.

It is useful to remember here that most often, the *ubwoko* is preferably not spelled out in Burundi but instead evoked through details such as dates, places, and events, which allow one to make assumptions about someone else's *ubwoko* and life experience (see chapter 1, section 1.1). This corresponds to the use of the so-called untold (*non-dit*): information that does not need to be spelled out because it is supposed to be well known by everybody and therefore goes without saying. For this reason, to properly understand any possible process of "ethnicisation" in Burundi, one needs to have an excellent knowledge of the historical and socio-political context of the country. In this subsection, I focus on explicit references to the *ubwoko*, whilst being aware of the fact that they are not the only elements illustrating the "ethnicisation" of the memory of Ntaryamira.

To understand the meaning of these references to the *ubwoko*, it is imperative to analyse the context in which they were used. In 2014 and 2015, tweets mentioning the *ubwoko* mainly aimed to provide information about the event in which Ntaryamira died. It is true that by mentioning one *ubwoko*, the author could have been directing a veiled accusation at the "other" *ubwoko*,[330] seen as responsible for the death of the late

[328] https://twitter.com/NAWE_bi/status/585047227124600832, accessed 24 March 2021.
[329] https://twitter.com/landrysibo/status/850064987708157952, accessed 24 March 2021.
[330] Because of the history of violence between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, the "other" *ubwoko* is usually Tutsi for the Hutu, Hutu for the Tutsi.

president. Based on single tweets, however, it is difficult to establish with a good degree of certainty when this was the case. Moreover, no reaction was provoked by these tweets (only one like in 2017), which makes it impossible to grasp the perceptions of the rest of the Twittersphere.

> George Costanza, 06 April 2017. "Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira died with Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana, a fellow Hutu, after their plane was shot down".[331]

In 2016, however, when the highest number of explicit references to the *ubwoko* were made, 19 out of 20 tweets mentioning the Hutu aimed to portray them as a victim community. This was achieved in different ways. Some tweets specified that Ntaryamira was a Hutu. The aim of these tweets was not to provide information but to victimise the Hutu community.

> Irakoze prosper, 05 April 2016. *« @rwandabriefing @alinebarihenda q[ue] la justice soit faite sur la mort d[e] #NTARYAMIRA UN Hutu ».*[332]

> AnnGarrison, 22 April 2016. "Charles Onana on #ICTR failure to investigate Habyarimana/Ntaryamira murders, & indictment of Hutus only […]".[333]

Other tweets restated that Ntaryamira and many other Hutu were killed by Kagame, or by the Rwandans.[334]

> muzuka, 05 April 2016. "#Burundi seeking #JusticeForNtaryamira savagely assassinated in #Rwanda. Plus thousands of hutu killed in [19]72 genocide".[335]

> Psychologue Prosper, 06 April 2016. *« @CimpayeJean @gahigip #JusticeForNtanyamira. We'll never forget #CyprienNtaryamira victime de fameux génocidaire @PaulKagame tua n² hutus ».*[336]

A couple of tweets claimed that Hutu needed to be commemorated on an equal footing with Tutsi.

> Irakoze Prosper, 08 April 2016. *« #NTARYAMIRA e[t au]tre[s] Hutus bibukwe au m[ê]m[e] pied d[']égalit[é que] le[s] Tut[s]is ».*[337]

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[331] https://twitter.com/FeatOfStrength/status/849816876389613568, accessed 22 March 2021.

[332] https://twitter.com/Irakozeprosper3/status/717417273603006465, accessed 22 March 2021.

[333] https://twitter.com/AnnGarrison/status/723644338396229632, accessed 22 March 2021.

[334] One tweet with the same message was found in 2017: Niné, 07 April 2017. "Too many bad things from you Rwandans: you killed Ngendandumwe, Ndadaye, Ntaryamira. During the 1972 genocide, you used an axe to kill all the Hutu" (see footnote 310).

[335] https://twitter.com/muzuka3/status/717446722566426629, accessed 22 March 2021.

[336] https://twitter.com/NiyonzimaProsp4/status/716633986651152384, accessed 22 March 2021.

[337] "Ntaryamira and other Hutu must be commemorated on an equal footing with the Tutsi" (https://twitter.com/Irakozeprosper3/status/718417887560646656, accessed 22 March 2021).

On the other hand, it is worth noting that only one open accusation was made against the Tutsi, in 2017. Before 2017, references to the Tutsi *ubwoko* were simply providing information.

> Diana Nsamirizi, 06 April 2017. *« À l'époque j'avais 20 ans et mature, je n'ai jamais vu les Tutsi[s] condamner l'assassinat de Ndadaye ni celle de Ntaryamira. Personne ».*[338]

3. Interactions within and between Twitter communities

After analysing the emergence of boundaries between communities on Twitter, in this section I examine the nature of these boundaries. In the first part of this section, I focus on retweets, likes, and replies to observe the extent to which interactions between Twitter users responded to the *ubwoko* or to political lines. In the second part of this section, I observe the direction of the conversations, to understand if they remained within the same community or if they took place between the two main communities identified on Twitter.

3.1. Retweets, likes, and replies

The number of tweets that were liked, retweeted, or that received a reply increased significantly in 2016 and 2017: around +30% in 2016 and +40% in 2017 for retweets and likes, when compared with 2015 and 2016;[339] around +20% for replies.[340] In 2016, almost half of the tweets under scrutiny were retweeted (47%) and a similar amount received a like (41%). In 2017, these percentages rose above 50% (61% of the tweets were retweeted, 51% were liked). Replies did not have the same success: the highest percentage reached was 23% (in 2016). Twitter users interacted more with the tweets under scrutiny by retweeting and liking them than by replying to them and actively engaging in a conversation.

[338] https://twitter.com/diana_samirizi/status/849963477699633152, accessed August 2017.

[339] While 22% of the tweets were retweeted in 2014 and 20% in 2015, in 2016 47% of the tweets were retweeted (ca. +30%) and in 2017, 61% (ca. +40%). As regards likes, 12% of the tweets were liked in 2014 and 10% in 2015, while in 2016 this percentage rose to 41% (ca. +30%) and 51% in 2017 (ca. +40%).

[340] 4% and 3% of the tweets received a reply in 2014 and 2015, 23% and 22% in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

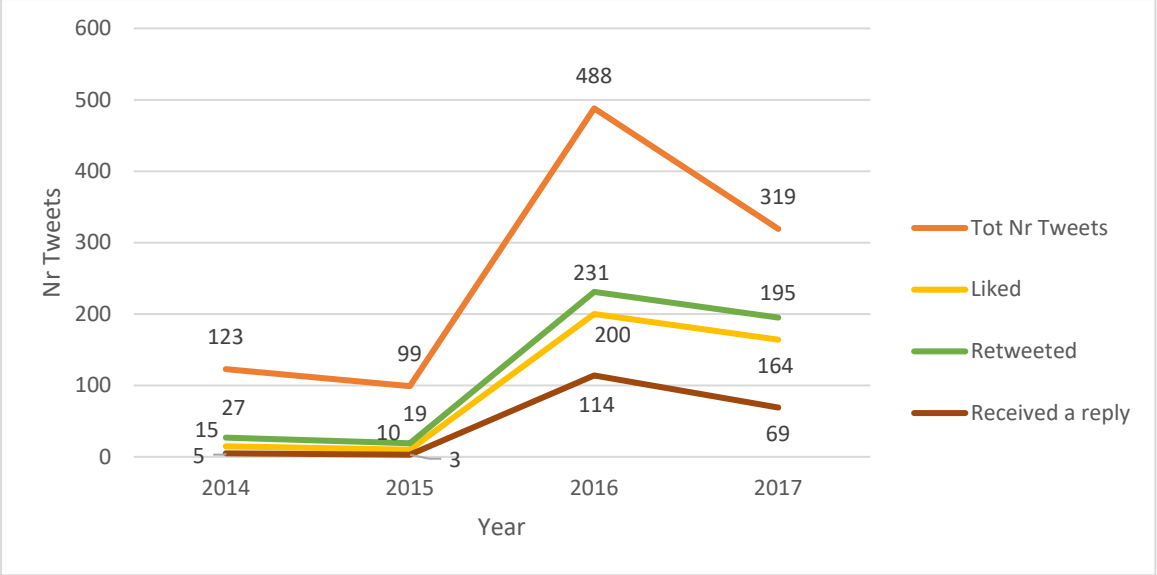

Figure 14: Number of tweets liked, retweeted, and that received a reply. Source: second dataset

3.1.1.Retweets

According to the definition provided by Twitter, retweets are tweets that Twitter users share publicly with their followers, representing "a great way to pass along news and interesting discoveries".[341] Retweets do not automatically represent an endorsement of the message of the original tweet: before retweeting, one has the option to add comments and/or media, which can either reinforce or redress the argument of the original tweet. This was not the case for the retweets under scrutiny here, which limited themselves to repeating the information provided by the original tweet, thus amplifying its diffusion.

To identify the tweets that were retweeted most often, I focused on those presenting at least half of the highest number of retweets received by a message in the correspondent year (e.g. if the highest number of retweets received by a tweet was 70, as was the case in 2016, the tweets under scrutiny received between 35 and 70 retweets).[342]

In relation to the massive production of tweets in 2016 and 2017, retweets focused on very few messages in these two years: 13 messages (out of 195 retweets) in 2017 and

[341] https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/how-to-retweet, accessed 15 April 2021.

[342] The highest numbers of retweets received by a tweet were 7 in 2014, 13 in 2015, 70 in 2016, 174 in 2017. I made an exception for 2017, when the highest number of retweets was 174 but no tweet received between 174 and 87 retweets. In this case, I took into account the second highest number (63). The tweet that received 174 retweets can be considered an outlier. It was posted by Pierre Nkurunziza to express satisfaction after an exchange with Ntaryamira's wife (https://twitter.com/pnkurunziza/status/844844356179668992, accessed 25 March 2021).

7 messages (out of 231 retweets) in 2016.[343] These messages mainly provided information about the commemoration taking place in Bujumbura, mentioning those present in such activities: Nkurunziza and his wife, Ntibantunganya and his wife, CNDD-FDD representatives, diplomatic representatives in Bujumbura, archbishop Ngoyagoye, and Burundian authorities. Except for one message in 2017, these messages were produced by accounts belonging or close to the government: the president's office,[344] the CNDD-FDD, the Burundian Ambassador to the UN, government and CNDD-FDD communication advisors,[345] and other pro-government accounts like Ikiriho,[346] Umuvuga Kuri,[347] Fridolin Nzambimana,[348] and Understand Burundi.[349]

The authors of these tweets chose to inform users about the presence of these people and not that of other participants at the commemoration of Ntaryamira. By doing this, they reinforced the link between these figures and the late president. The reach of these retweets is more important than the content of the message, which in itself is quite simple. Retweets seemed to be used to ensure that Ntaryamira was associated with these political figures. This complements the discursive strategy aimed at giving visibility to the tribute paid to the late president by political parties and representatives (see section 2.4), for it helped strengthen the internal ties of the in-group by increasing the political legitimacy of figures presented as being close to President Ntaryamira.

Among the other most retweeted messages, some pointed out that justice and truth were still needed; a couple of messages recalled Ntaryamira's values, and one message insinuated that the opposition to Nkurunziza's third term was actually related to the

[343] Given the big difference between the highest numbers of retweets in 2015 (13) and 2014 (7) and the highest numbers of retweets received in 2016 (70) and 2017 (174 or 63), it makes little sense to compare 2017 and 2016 with 2015 and 2014. Both in 2015 and 2014, 3 tweets could be counted among the most retweeted messages.
[344] President's office (https://twitter.com/BdiPresidence, accessed August 2017), President Pierre Nkurunziza (https://twitter.com/pnkurunziza, accessed 16 April 2021), Second Vice-President Joseph Butore (https://twitter.com/ButoreJ, accessed 16 April 2021), and the TV channel of the president's office (Ku Kirimba, https://twitter.com/kukirimba, accessed August 2017).
[345] Doriane Munezero (https://twitter.com/MunezeroDoriane, accessed August 2017), Landry Sibomana (https://twitter.com/landrysibo, accessed 16 April 2021), and Nancy Ninette Mutoni (https://twitter.com/nancymutoni, accessed 16 April 2021).
[346] https://twitter.com/Ikiriho, accessed 16 April 2021.
[347] https://twitter.com/Umuvugakuri, accessed March 2021.
[348] https://twitter.com/Fridolinandres, accessed August 2017.
[349] https://twitter.com/QCbdi, accessed 16 April 2021.

ubwoko.[350] The latter is particularly relevant because it was the most retweeted message in 2016. Again, the amplification effect of the retweets is more relevant than the content of the tweet itself.

> Umuvuga Kuri, 02 May 2016. *« #Burundi @pnkurunziza & 3. Mandat s[on]t des prétextes.Ngendandumwe,Ndadaye,Ntaryamira,. Ils avaient combien de mandats? ».*[351]

A large majority of the accounts that retweeted the most were also close to the government.[352] Within the fight for the establishment of hegemonic discourse on Twitter (Dimitrakopoulou & Boukala 2018), this is extremely understandable: to retweet a message is to expand its reach and by doing so, to try to prevent an opposing view from reaching the same goal (unless a commentary is added before retweeting that contests the message retweeted, which was not the case for the retweets under scrutiny here). The *ubwoko* of these accounts was not always evident. Few of them referred to their Hutu *ubwoko* in their profile pictures or descriptions; one account stated that it was Tutsi.[353] When retweeting, these accounts seemed to follow political lines. Given the high number of accounts identified as potentially fake or bots, one cannot rule out that these accounts were part of a "cyber troop" tasked with manipulating public opinion online through computational propaganda (Bradshaw & Howard 2018: 4).

3.1.2.Likes

Likes express more immediate support for the message of a tweet than retweets: by liking a tweet, Twitter users "show appreciation for a tweet".[354] To identify the tweets that were liked the most, I adopted the same approach used for the retweets: I focused on the messages presenting at least half of the highest number of likes received by a tweet in the correspondent year. Except for one tweet in 2016, the most liked tweets were also the most retweeted, and came from accounts close to the government. This is

[350] The other three most retweeted messages in 2016 and 2017 provided information about the event in which Ntaryamira died. In 2015 and 2014, the most retweeted messages mainly provided information about the event; one accusation was made in 2014 against France (https://twitter.com/golle_o/status/455337040465244160, accessed 25 March 2021).

[351] https://twitter.com/Umuvugakuri/status/727068656547586048, accessed 25 March 2021.

[352] When clicking on the number of retweets received by a message to see who retweeted that message, a maximum of 25 accounts are shown. 325 accounts (max. 25 accounts x 13 tweets) were therefore analysed for 2017, and 175 (max. 25 accounts x 7 tweets) for 2016. The *ubwoko* and political orientation of the accounts retweeting in 2015 (27 accounts in total) and 2014 (16 accounts in total) were identified with difficulty. Only 2 accounts could be identified as being close to the government and 2 as opponents in 2015. In 2016 and 2017, the attributes of the accounts were more easily detected because of their open statements.

[353] Ngabo Salvator (https://twitter.com/StopLies_1, accessed August 2017).

[354] https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/liking-tweets-and-moments, accessed 15 April 2021.

understandable given the function of a like, which is to show appreciation, and considering the use made of retweets, aimed at ensuring the spread of specific information in the Burundian Twittersphere. An exception, however, is represented by a tweet posted in 2016 by Pacifique Nininahazwe, a central figure of the Burundian "opposition" in exile in Belgium.[355] The tweet reported Ntaryamira's words about human rights and conflict between ethnicities, possibly alluding to the post-2015 situation in the country.

> Pacifique Nininahazwe, 06 April 2016. *« 'Personne n'a le droit de piétiner les droits humains, aucune ethnie n'est à exterminer !' SE C. Ntaryamira #Burundi ».*[356]

It is worth noting that Nininahazwe never tweeted about the commemoration of Ntaryamira before 2016. This message thus seems to come in reaction to the scores of tweets from accounts close to the government that remembered Ntaryamira and asked for justice, something which they did not appear to do to the same extent before the outbreak of the 2015 violence (see Figure 14). Similarly to Nininahazwe's message, several claims against the government were made in 2016, which was seen as showing a lack of interest in justice for Ntaryamira given their delay in asking for it.[357] According to such claims, the government's attitude was a cover for the human rights violations that it was committing,[358] as paradoxical as demanding justice for Ntaryamira while pursuing the members of the party that he contributed to founding.[359] By mentioning human rights violations and extermination of ethnicities in his tweet, Nininahazwe was insinuating that this was what the government was actually doing. In his tweet, the *ubwoko* was used to unveil the real intentions of the group he was opposed

[355] The term "opposition" is commonly used in Burundi to refer to individuals and groups who are opposed to the government's views: it includes opposition parties as well as civil society organisations, journalists, and activists in exile who express political dissent.

[356] https://twitter.com/pnininahazwe/status/717753756318883841, accessed 22 March 2021.

[357] See for instance Jean de la croix, 06 April 2016. "@boguar2 @willynyamitwe @QCbdi it's shame on Bdi gvt to ask 4 Ntaryamira's justice. What have u done in 22y[ea]rs 2 make it happen? Lazy gvt!!!!" (https://twitter.com/butdelacroix59/status/717823277717004289, accessed 25 March 2021).

[358] See for instance Rutuku john, 05 April 2016. *« #Burundi [Au] lieu de donner explications claires sur les graves violations des DH, le r[é]gime se perd d[an]s les massacres de 72 et mort Ntaryamira »* (https://twitter.com/Rutukujohn/status/717605380822540288, accessed 25 March 2021).

[359] See for instance Aline Damien, 06 April 2016. "*Ngo dusubize ntaryamira bariko bica aba FRODEBU biwe? Ndagukunda nka kwankira umwana biba kwa nyamitwe gusa #Burundi*" ("Give us Ntaryamira back while you are killing his FRODEBU partners? 'I like you but I hate your child' only exists with Nyamitwe". https://twitter.com/gahungumuhororo/status/717659475440697344, accessed 25 March 2021).

to. This is one of the three ways in which the *ubwoko* was used in the conversations (see section 3.2 below).

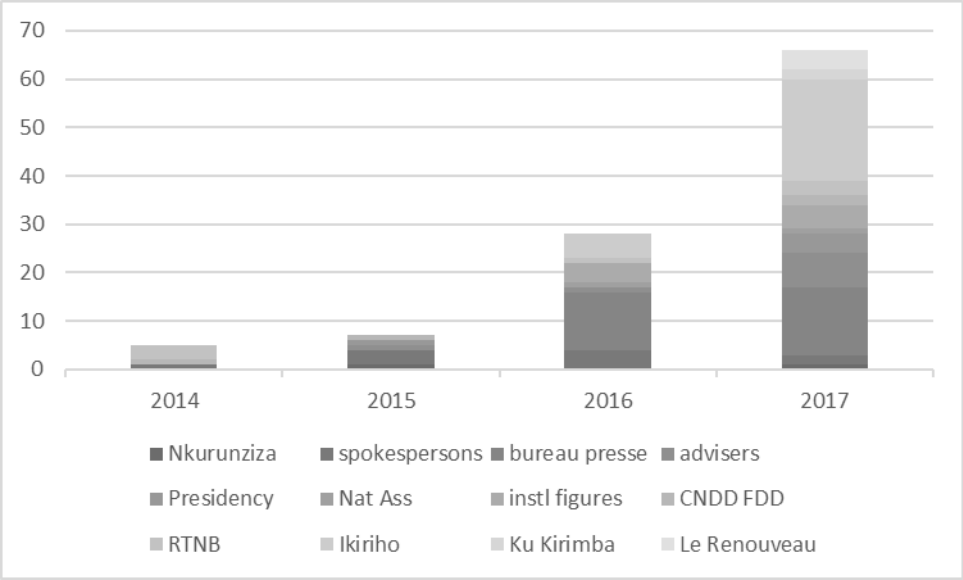

Figure 15: Number of tweets mentioning "Ntaryamira" produced by pro-government accounts. Source: second dataset

As well as retweets, likes followed the political orientation of the first message. It is interesting to note that two of the accounts that liked Nininahazwe's tweet belonged to a politically "opposite" community:[360] the tweets produced by these two accounts give publicity to or express support for the government's activities while condemning the opponents. However, the type and intensity of Twitter activity of these two accounts (they mainly retweet, at very high intensity and during specific periods of time), together with the anonymity of their profile pictures and descriptions, suggest that they are actually fake accounts. This would imply they liked Nininahazwe's tweet in an automated way, which would confirm the existence of accounts that were part of a cyber-troop operating automatically.

3.1.3.Replies

Replies are "responses to another tweet", and "one of the easiest ways to join in a conversation".[361] As with retweets and likes, to analyse replies I focused on the tweets that received at least half of the highest number of replies received by a message in the

[360] Aline Barihenda (https://twitter.com/alinebarihenda, accessed August 2017) and MANIRAKIZA Audace (https://twitter.com/manirakizaauda2, accessed 14 April 2021).
[361] https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/twitter-conversations, accessed 15 April 2021.

corresponding year. Here too, the tweets that received most replies came from accounts close to the government: the president's office, the president's spokesperson Karerwa Ndenzako, a couple of communication advisors, Umuvuga Kuri, and Jean de Dieu Mutabazi, president of the RADEBU, a party close to the CNDD-FDD. An interesting difference was observed between the 2016 and 2017 replies, however. In 2016, out of 38 replies made to the tweets under scrutiny, the majority (26) were voices of dissent and attacked the government on different issues: the lack of investigations into the assassination of Ntaryamira; the delay in asking for justice; contemporary killings; and the government's ignorance of juridical procedures and bodies. Some replies aimed to reject any possible responsibility of Rwanda or the RPF for the death of Ntaryamira. One tweet was an insult directed at the presidential couple, which was said to be faking the commemoration of Ntaryamira. In 2017, only 5 out of 36 replies could be interpreted as expressing dissent: 4 of them conveyed a personal attack on the account they were replying to,[362] and one tweet underlined Nkurunziza's delay in the commemoration of Ntaryamira. Because of the low number of tweets observed, it is not possible to establish whether the intensity of political debate was decreasing as a result of groupthink behaviour (Mourao 2015: 1109), through which members of a cohesive group follow influential members and seek unanimity of opinions, and if this corresponded to a decrease in the tensions existing offline. The focus of political debate could also have shifted to other issues, or this could have been the result of strengthened media monitoring by state authorities. This underlines the importance of complementing online research with offline investigation when aiming for the full picture of the phenomenon under examination.

Replies seemed to follow political lines: they reacted to political messages with political arguments. In response to the tweet by Umuvuga Kuri insinuating that the opposition to Nkurunziza's bid for a third term was actually related to the *ubwoko* and not to political reasons (see section 2.1), only one account counter-argued, more than one year after the first tweet was produced, that Umuvuga Kuri and its "paternal uncle" did not want to overcome ethnism, which was regrettable.

[362] Two messages questioned Nkurunziza's authority, one tweet insulted him, and another tweet reacted incredulously to a request for justice coming from a member of the community associated with Ntaryamira.

> MAZA, 13 July 2017. "Try to go a bit beyond. After Arusha, it is what they agreed upon! Overcome *amoko*! But Arusha is what you hate, you and your paternal uncle".[363]
>
> MAZA, 13 July 2017. "And do you think you are speaking, when you bring up strong arguments to support PN? Do you know that you are unveiling the intelligence that is limited to your Hutu ethnicity?"[364]

The rest of the replies expressed strong support for Umuvuga Kuri's stance.

> Leonard Ndolimana, 13 October 2016. "Remove the dirt from their ears so they can understand. If they don't understand, they will by force".[365]

Replies therefore seemed to adapt to the connotation of the first tweet: if it was political, political arguments were advanced; if the *ubwoko* was brought up, replies followed up on that. No references to the *ubwoko* were made in replies to political tweets. It is difficult to generalise this to the broader dataset, however, as only 1 of the tweets that received most replies contained a reference to the *ubwoko*. Additional research would be needed to understand if this was part of a broader trend on Twitter, which would require an analysis of tweets of political content only. Additional insights into the ways in which the *ubwoko* surfaced on Twitter were gained through the analysis of conversations.

3.2. Conversations

To analyse the conversations taking place around the figure of Ntaryamira, I focused on retweets and replies and targeted the messages that triggered at least one additional reply, leading to what I call a conversation. A conversation was thus formed by at least three tweets. 50 conversations in total were analysed: 3 in 2014, 1 in 2015, 38 in 2016, and 8 in 2017. The aim of this analysis was twofold. On the one hand, it allowed me to better understand the magnitude and role of the *ubwoko* in the conversations. On the other hand, through this analysis I could also observe the type of communication taking place within and/or between the communities that emerged on Twitter around the figure of Ntaryamira.

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[363] "*Gerageza urenze aho gatoyi!Après Arusha nivyo abagiyeyo bari bumvikanye!Kurengera amoko!Ariko banyina Arusha niyo muterekwa mwe na so wanyu*" (https://twitter.com/MAZA56531263/status/885645617321713664, accessed 22 March 2021).

[364] "*Nkaho rero urumva ko wayaze utanze ivyiyumviro bikomeye vyo gushigikira PN?Mbe urazi ko werekanye ubwenge bugarukira k'ubuhutu bwawe gusa?*" (https://twitter.com/MAZA56531263/status/885645120967770112, accessed 25 March 2021).

[365] "*ongera ubakuruguture amatwi bavyumve. Abatovyumva nabo bazovyumva kungufu*" (https://twitter.com/ndolimanaleonar/status/786629185313923072, accessed 23 March 2021).

To identify and analyse the position and role of the *ubwoko* in these conversations, I systematically pointed out four elements: references to past violence, more or less explicitly related to the *ubwoko*; references or appeals to the *ubwoko*; links between past and present violence, more or less explicitly related to the *ubwoko*; and anticipation of violence (see section 1.1 for an explanation of these four elements).

References to past violence appeared more often in 2016 and 2017 than before: one reference was found in 2014, one in 2015, 14 in 2016, and 6 in 2017.

> Jan ruhere, 19 March 2016. "@ndikumwenayo Facts:Rwandans killed our 1st democratically elected prime minister,helped in 1972,Ndadaye,93-94,Killed Bdians DRC,Ntaryamira".[366]

References to the *ubwoko* were also more frequent in 2016 and 2017: one reference was found in 2014, 10 in 2016, and 5 in 2017. For the purposes of this part of the analysis, I also considered as references to the *ubwoko* names and dates representing important symbols for the collective memory of an *ubwoko* (e.g. Ndadaye, Ngendandumwe, 1972, etc.), in tweets where they were associated with episodes of violence related to the *ubwoko*.

> iBurundi, 05 April 2017. "#Burundi—Another version of a song by imbonerakure demonizing Tutsi ! @CnddFdd".[367]

Links between present and past violence were few: 3 links were found in 2017, 3 in 2016, and 1 in 2014.

> No to DRC Partition, 3 May 2016. "@Joaobap57934294 Consult Burundi constitution and History to understand the situation.Why Ndadaye & Ntaryamira killed were they extremists?"[368]

Finally, 3 cases of anticipation of violence were found in 2016 and 1 in 2017. It is interesting to observe that anticipation of violence, supposed to occur before outbreaks of violence (Hermez 2012: 331), should have appeared more often in tweets produced before 2015. The fact that in 2016 and 2017 some tweets insinuated that the worst was yet to come, and that it was coming soon, might shed light on the intensity of violence, or it might also have been a discursive strategy aimed at demolishing the political arguments of the adversary. Reciprocal accusations that a genocide was under preparation, like in the conversation shown in Figure 15, represented a recurring

[366] https://twitter.com/JanRuhere/status/711268425058783232, accessed 25 March 2021.
[367] https://twitter.com/iburundi/status/849867207991586816, accessed 25 March 2021.
[368] https://twitter.com/isiatenda2/status/727459013047291904, accessed 25 March 2021.

narrative in the history of Burundi, with Tutsi concerned by a "Hutu danger" and Hutu fearing a repetition of the "Simbananiye plan", aimed at their extermination.[369] This narrative was retrieved and used on Twitter as political discourse against the "opposite" community.

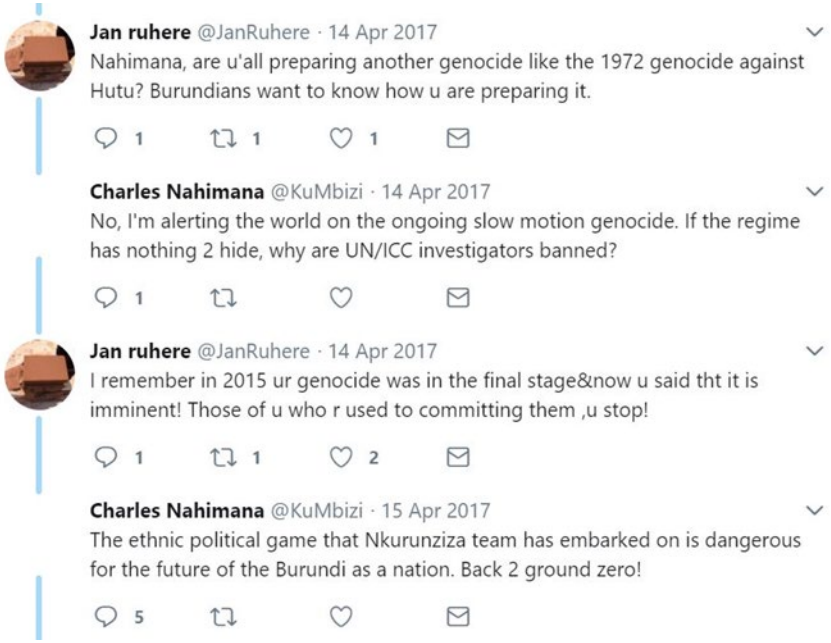


Figure 16: Anticipation of violence in the conversation. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/JanRuhere/status/853478440271523841, accessed 25 March 2021

After identifying these four elements within the conversations, I analysed the ways in which they came about, observing at what point in the conversation they appeared, and for what purposes.

I identified three types of conversations according to the role played by the *ubwoko* in them. The first type includes conversations starting with a tweet that contained a reference to the *ubwoko*. Four such conversations were found: 1 in 2014, 1 in 2016, and 2 in 2017. These conversations developed around the topic launched at their very inception.

[369] The "Simbananiye plan", named after its alleged author Arthémon Simbananiye, was a plan for extermination of the Hutu, denounced by Minister of Information Martin Ndayahoze in 1968.

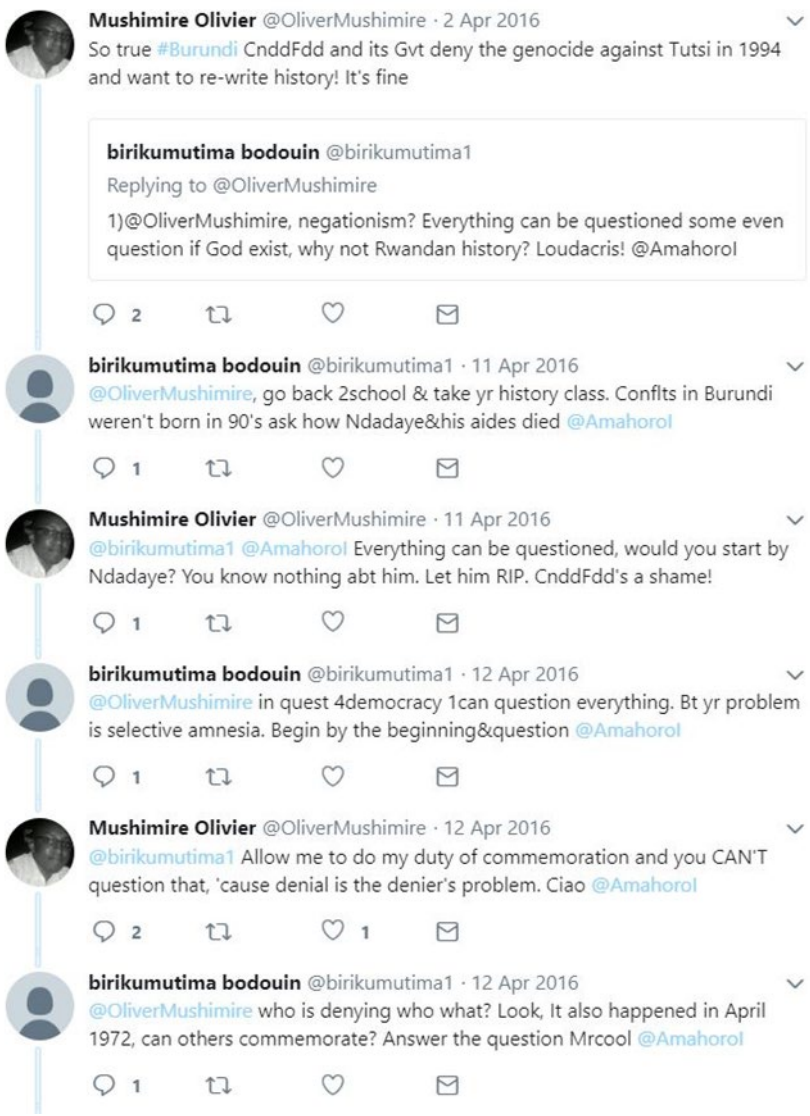


Figure 17: The *ubwoko* at the inception of the conversation. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/OliverMushimire/status/720139799554863104, accessed 25 March 2021

In a second type of conversation, references to the *ubwoko* were made through allusions, which surfaced every now and then throughout the conversation. Four such conversations were found: 3 in 2016 and 1 in 2017. The accounts that were somehow moved to respond to these references also replied by making allusions to the *ubwoko*.

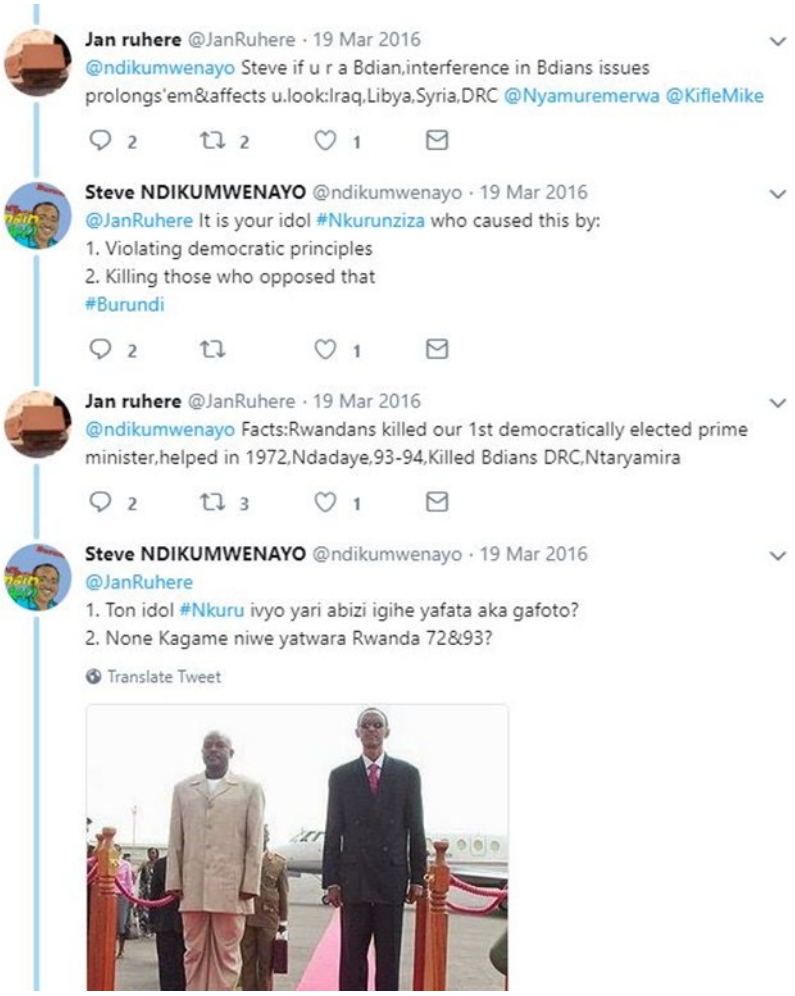


Figure 18: The *ubwoko* throughout the conversation. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/ndikumwenayo/status/711272620382167040, accessed 25 March 2021

In the third and most widespread type of conversation, the *ubwoko* was employed as an aggressive (political) counter argument. 10 such conversations were found: 8 in 2016 and 2 in 2017. When reference was made to the *ubwoko*, it seemed to have the aim of shutting down the conversation. At times this objective was reached, at times the exchange continued with high levels of verbal violence and reciprocal accusations. References to the *ubwoko* in these conversations either appeared in the second tweet of the conversation, as in Figure 18, or at its end, in a sort of decisive, final attack (Figure 19).

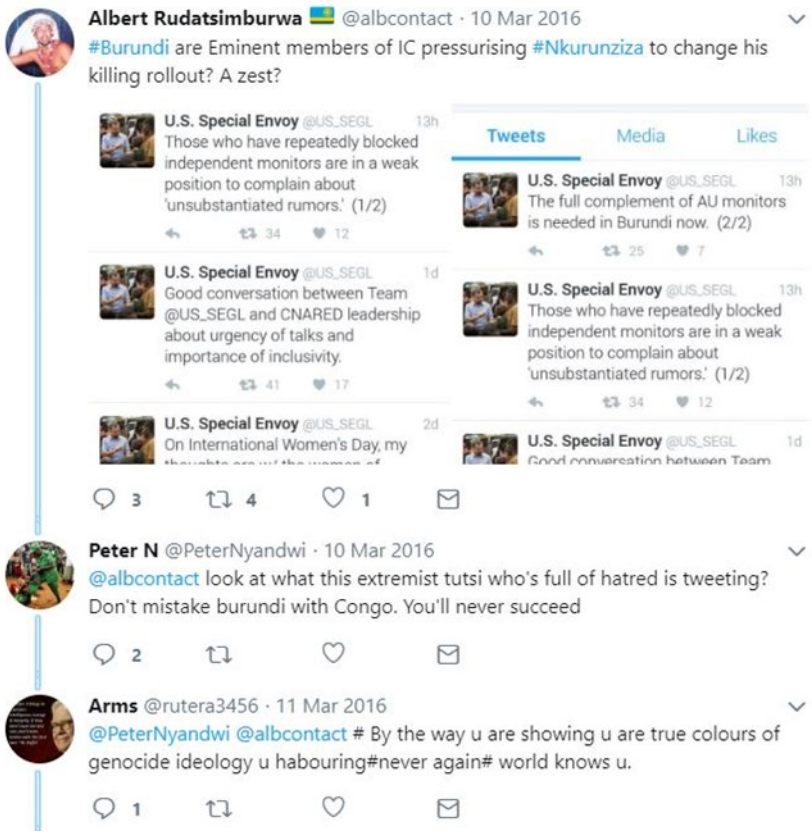


Figure 19: The *ubwoko* as aggressive counter argument. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/PeterNyandwi/status/708236978186231808, accessed 25 March 2021

Figure 20: The *ubwoko* as final attack. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/mahuragiza/status/717964306948694016, accessed 25 March 2021

Nowhere better than in these last conversations can conflict be seen as "a violent text, a violent attempt to tell a story" (Pottier 2002: 130), where each side strives to make its truth prevail. Within these violent texts, references to the *ubwoko* were used in an attack with the aim of unveiling the adversaries' real intentions and thus defying them.

In the final stage of my analysis, I sought to observe whether communication remained within the same community, with tweets following each other in an expression of support, or if exchanges occurred, as in a confrontation, between members of the different Twitter communities which had emerged around Ntaryamira.

Out of 50 conversations, 6 took place among members of the same community (5 in 2016 and 1 in 2017). Five conversations started and ended within the same community; one conversation started with a tweet from the community associated with Ntaryamira

and was “brought” into an opposing community through a retweet, with the aim of dismissing and degrading the political content of the message (Figure 20).

Figure 21: Conversation within the same community. Source: https://mobile.twitter.com/Manirakiza/status/717690094577127424, accessed 25 March 2021

In the 6 conversations which occurred among members of the same community, two main topics could be identified. Besides one conversation that simply aimed to commemorate Ntaryamira, 4 conversations developed around requests for justice and complaints about impunity, associated with accusations against Kagame, and one conversation accused the government of covering up the assassination of Rwandan

diplomat Bihozagara with the commemoration of Ntaryamira (Figure 20).[370] The *ubwoko* did not play a central role in these 6 conversations, which mainly focused on political issues.

The rest of the exchanges took place between different communities and with different intensities of verbal violence. The topics that triggered these confrontations related to both past and contemporary events. It was difficult to identify one topic for every conversation: long conversations especially started with one topic, touched upon several subjects, and ended on still different ones. Several conversations discussed the responsibility of different actors in the attack in which Ntaryamira died, and in the death of many (Hutu) in Burundi and the DR Congo. As regards contemporary events, several conversations developed around accusations against the government (see section 3.1.3 on "replies"); some conversations started as discussions around the death of Bihozagara and ended in an exchange of accusations against the governments of Burundi and Rwanda; and a couple of conversations questioned the role of the *ubwoko* in the 2015 crisis. One conversation started with a tweet accusing colonisers of fabricating ethnicities in Burundi as in a laboratory. In all these conversations, the *ubwoko* emerged in the three main ways described above.

Most of the conversations thus took place between the two Twitter communities, but with the result of only reinforcing each community's beliefs. Replies between different-minded individuals reinforced both in-group and out-group affiliation (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan 2013: 1280), fortifying the boundary between communities. Twitter thus served as a channel for top-down propaganda because no opposing views were really taken into consideration or discussed: they were simply refuted, also through references to the *ubwoko*.

Conclusions

After the outbreak of the 2015 violence in Burundi, references to the *ubwoko* were made increasingly often in political debate. This happened on social media too, where a large part of political debate had moved to, as a consequence of the shutdown of the main

[370] Jacques Bihozagara was a former Rwandan minister and ambassador to Belgium who was arrested in Burundi for espionage-related activities and died in jail in March 2016 under unclear circumstances.

non-governmental radio stations and the flight of many political opponents, activists, and journalists from the country. On Twitter, this affected the memory of President Ntaryamira, which became more strongly associated with a specific *ubwoko* (Hutu) through a process of "ethnicisation". In this chapter, I analysed precisely how the memory of Ntaryamira became increasingly "ethnicised". In the first phase of my study, I analysed five discursive strategies that led to the emergence of a boundary between a community associated with the late president, portrayed as a group of victims, and another "opposite" community, portrayed as a group of criminals (the "sinners" and the "saints", Egbunike 2018: 43). Then, I observed the ways in which the *ubwoko* was employed in this process of boundary-making. In the second phase of my study, I analysed the interactions between members of the two Twitter communities in order to understand the role played by the *ubwoko* in their exchanges, and the extent to which conversations remained within the same community or took place between communities.

Within the process of boundary-making that allowed a boundary to emerge between the two Twitter communities, the *ubwoko* was mainly used to make a connection between past and present violence. Ntaryamira was associated with political figures of the past (especially President Ndadaye) that were assassinated for reasons related to the *ubwoko*. Insinuations were also made that the opposition of the Sindumuja, hosted and trained by Kagame, to Nkurunziza's third term was actually related to the *ubwoko* and not motivated by political reasons.

Explicit references to the *ubwoko* were not widespread. The *ubwoko* was mostly evoked in indirect ways, by mentioning specific persons, places, and dates that occupy a central position in the collective memory of an *ubwoko*. When the term "Hutu" was used, it was mostly employed to depict "the Hutu" as a victim community, suffering from a lack of justice and attacks attributed to Kagame. This recalls the narratives around the Hutu as a martyr community analysed by Malkki (1995) among Hutu refugees in Tanzania (see also Lemarchand 1996). While those narratives were elaborated among Hutu refugees in the 1970s with no social media, almost fifty years later, Twitter users adopted the same type of narratives despite the changed socio-political context in Burundi. These online narratives, *per se*, are not an account of the reciprocal perceptions and interactions taking place between *amoko* offline, however, they show an attempt to revive painful memories shared by the Hutu *ubwoko*, which would not be

successful if those memories and their related narratives did not speak to the members of that *ubwoko*. Those memories seemed to be dormant and Twitter users attempted to bring them back to life: "old sentiments" were recalled through "new tools" (Egbunike 2018: 17), i.e. through social media platforms.

Like conflict, memory of past suffering thus transpires to be "always there, but at times it is latent under the surface, while at others it surfaces and becomes open" (Turner 2010: 125). After the outbreak of the 2015 violence, painful memories of the past were "mobilised" on Twitter: usually silent, they were recalled, revitalised, and inflamed. This stresses the use of memory in Burundi as a divisive political resource: following the implementation of discursive strategies that relied to a large extent on the memory of past events, boundaries emerged between two main communities on Twitter. This type of process is more evident and explicit on online platforms like Twitter, where users can maintain a high degree of anonymity in their profiles, than offline, where "remembering to forget is […] essential for local coexistence" (Buckley-Zistel 2006: 134). Moreover, this also confirms the divisive nature of violence (see chapter 3), as on Twitter too, boundaries between communities became more evident following the outbreak of the 2015 violence. Online verbal violence increased after violence increased offline: this also underlines the connection between online and offline, supporting the argument that the online world is a product and extension of the offline world (Whitehead & Wesch 2012: 35).

The political exploitation of memories of the past, more or less explicitly related to the *ubwoko*, emerged even more clearly in the analysis of the interactions between Twitter users. Interactions, especially retweets and likes, increased significantly after the outbreak of the 2015 violence and were mostly made by accounts close to the government with (few) tweets that came from the same milieu, most of which provided information about the participants in the commemoration of Ntaryamira in Bujumbura. This seems to reflect the characteristics of groupthink behaviour as described by Mourao (2015: 1109), where members of a cohesive group follow influential members and seek unanimity of opinions. It is interesting to observe that in parallel with a process of "ethnicisation", a process of politicisation took place that associated the figure of Ntaryamira more strongly with the CNDD-FDD and not with the FRODEBU, the party that the late president contributed to founding. This seems to confirm the use of Twitter, and especially of retweets and likes, in a logic of political legitimisation, in line with

the struggle for the establishment of hegemonic discourse (Dimitrakopoulou & Boukala 2018). This also explains the heated exchanges across the boundary between the two Twitter communities, in which the *ubwoko* was mainly used as a political argument, brought into a political conversation to unveil the "real" message or the "real" intentions of the opponents and thus demolish their arguments.

Methodologically speaking, the analysis presented in this chapter is relevant for other case studies besides Burundi. Boundary-making processes do not only happen among physical people and communities offline, but they also take place online, as this chapter has shown. Online processes of boundary-making are linked with the offline reality, though in different ways, and for this very reason they deserve investigation. These processes are not less real because they are virtual, but rather their relation with and their influence on the offline reality need to be carefully studied. Analyses of online boundary-making complement more traditional analyses conducted offline, and in particular settings and circumstances (like Burundi's contemporary media landscape in the aftermath of the 2015 electoral violence) they can allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Building on the approaches and tools developed to analyse boundary-making offline, in an increasingly connected world, analyses of online boundary-making should therefore be encouraged.

Conclusions

When I asked my mum if I could mention our adventure with the dangerous truck with a Polish number plate on the highway in my thesis, almost three years after that episode took place, she barely remembered it. After I reminded her what happened and how she reacted, she recalled: “Oh yes! You know why I said that? A couple of days earlier, exactly the same happened with your father. We were in the passing lane, and at the very last minute, right before us, another truck with a Polish number plate threw itself into our lane to pass another truck. Your father honked, and when we finally passed that truck, the driver looked at us and he even raised his middle finger!” In her perception, on the highway with my father, they risked an accident; a couple of days later, when I was driving, she observed a very similar scene and was afraid that we would have run the same risk. The ensuing nasty comment about the Polish was most likely a way for her to release stress.

My mum’s explanation is a good illustration of the role played by memory in shaping our perceptions of the others and our interactions with them, which emerged clearly throughout several chapters of my thesis. Memory of the past provides scripts for the interpretation of more recent events: we perceive the others and we behave towards them based on the memory that we have of them, based on what we have “learned” about them through past experiences and interactions with them. The more frequently past experiences are relived, the more often the memories associated with those experiences are recalled. This may represent one of the basic cognitive dynamics that allow human beings to learn about the surrounding world: children who play with fire and get burned usually remember their painful experience the next time they see a fire, and do not dare to approach it. When past experiences are experiences of violence involving other human beings, a very similar mechanism happens. Violence perpetrated by one group of people on another group of people leads the latter to establish distance from the others, which corresponds to the emergence of a boundary between the two groups. Later on, memories of past violence bring that boundary back to life. When later experiences are perceived as similar to those of the past, especially if the violence is perpetrated by the same actors, the boundary between groups is likely to be reinforced. In the case of my mum, if a couple of years after the dangerous adventure

with the truck on the highway she had forgotten about the episode, it was because she was not often exposed to the same type of experience (which she could have perceived as violence, as long as "threats of violence are also violence", Galtung 1990: 292), as she had not been driving on the highway every day. In Burundi, as my thesis has shown, Hutu and Tutsi relive past experiences of violence more often, and in different ways, for which reason the boundaries between them seem to be more difficult to dismantle.

*

Through my research, I tried to shed light on the salience of belonging to a specific *ubwoko* in contemporary Burundi by analysing processes of boundary making and remaking between *amoko* in people's reciprocal perceptions and interactions.

The main approach that I adopted to study the salience of the *ubwoko* in my PhD research was the analysis of boundary-making processes. Boundaries between groups emerge when a group of people feel the need to distinguish themselves from another group of people, to define who belongs to "us" and who belongs to "them". This definition of groups, in itself, does not correspond to the existence of conflict between them but rather it responds to the human need of identity and belonging. Even in the presence of boundaries, movements and interactions take place across them, depending on the characteristics of those boundaries. The position and the characteristics of the boundaries vary over time and according to specific reasons: in my work, I analysed the ways in which this happened among Burundi's *amoko*, in different research sites, each of which was characterised by a specific time-space dimension. The aim of my multi-sited research was to gain more insights into the different mechanisms through which and circumstances under which the "powerful crystallization of group feeling can work" (Brubaker 2004: 10).

After explaining my theoretical and methodological frameworks in chapter 1 of my thesis, in chapter 2 I explored the evolution of colonial narratives around the *amoko* in the work of explorers, missionaries, colonial officers, and academics who wrote on the population of Burundi during the colonial period (1885-1962). In this study, I analysed the position, type, and thickness of the boundaries set by these different authors between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, and I observed how these elements changed over time and among authors. This analysis showed that between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the narrative of reference around the relations

between *amoko* was established by the first explorers and missionaries in Burundi. This narrative was largely inspired by the Hamitic hypothesis and positioned the Tutsi at the top of a well-defined hierarchy, separated from the Hutu and the Twa by rigid phenotypic and political boundaries. Later authors revised some of the elements of this first narrative, according to the purpose of their writings. In the 1920s and 1930s, Belgian colonial officers emphasised the political skills of the Tutsi, which in their eyes justified the choice to rely on them to indirectly rule the country. In the 1950s, important strategies of "equalization" and "normative inversion" (Wimmer 2013: 57) were employed, which requalified the Hutu with dignity, intelligence, and zeal, while the Tutsi were blamed for their status as "leisure class". Increased political distance was also observed between Hutu and Tutsi following the introduction of forms of democratic representation at the local level. Among academics, those with a positivistic orientation did not significantly challenge the established boundaries; more qualitative studies blurred the political boundary between *amoko* with a territorial dimension, or they repositioned the political boundary emphasising the divide between the Ganwa and the rest of the population, the latter including Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.

Analysis of the evolution of colonial narratives around the *amoko* is of relevance because of the performative character of these narratives: by informing Belgian reforms in the colonies, they affected the social reality of the country, including the relations between *amoko*. It was beyond the scope of my PhD research to assess the extent of this influence. Nevertheless, during my fieldwork in Burundi I repeatedly heard narratives around other *amoko* that retrieved colonial narratives, in part or in full, which highlights the lasting impact of colonial narratives on people's contemporary perceptions and narrations of each other. Colonial writings represent one of the sources, if not the only source, of these narratives, and for this reason not only do they deserve to be investigated, but the findings of these investigations need to be discussed with those who more or less consciously, in Burundi and elsewhere, still adopt those narratives.

In chapter 3, I moved to contemporary Burundi. In this chapter, I analysed the waxing and waning of groupness, the subjective sense of belonging to a bounded group accompanied by a sense of difference from out-group members, among 180 Hutu and Tutsi interviewed between 2008 and 2020 in Bugendana and Mugara. I observed how group feeling increased and decreased by analysing how boundaries became thicker,

persisted, and became thinner in interviewees' perceptions. The analysis showed that the experience of violence provoked a trauma in many people's lives, leading to thicker boundaries and increased groupness. The memory of that experience reinforced groupness when it was recalled to interpret later episodes of violence, or to anticipate future (imagined) violence. Verbal violence, either through direct threats and insults or through narratives of violence, also contributed to increased groupness. Boundaries persisted when contemporary realities were interpreted as the direct consequence of past violence, and when behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko* could not be clearly understood, which prevented people from knowing what behaviours were safe to adopt in front of the "others". Verbal violence from members of the "other" *ubwoko* also signalled a persisting boundary. In all these cases, boundaries persisted because of the memory of past violence. Boundaries became thinner in two ways: they either faded, when behaviours of members of the "other" *ubwoko* were received in a positive way, or they were blurred with one's territory of origin, economic situation, and individual actions, when these elements prevailed over the *ubwoko* in his or her identification. This analysis also showed that many interviewees "accept" the persistence of boundaries in their daily life through practices of everyday peace like conflict "avoidance" and "ritualized politeness" (Mac Ginty 2014: 557): these practices, aimed at minimising risk in order to satisfy more or less vital needs like ensuring livelihood and cohabiting, actually maintain the boundaries intact, as they do not address the causes of the distance between *amoko*.

In chapter 4, I shifted the focus of my attention to people who seemed to fit neither among "us" nor among "them" but remained in-between, in an interstitial position between the two main groups of their social landscape of reference. In Bugendana, these were Tutsi former IDPs who had returned to their hills of origin, where mostly Hutu live, and Hutu IDPs living in Bugendana IDP camp. Tutsi former IDPs seemed to live in an existential limbo, suspended between groups: they did not feel that they belonged to the IDP group anymore, but neither did they feel reintegrated into the community of origin on the hill. Hutu IDPs seemed to be integrated into the IDP community, but the perception of them and their self-perception as "other" seemed to persist. From a boundary-making perspective, these individuals were situated *on* the boundary between groups: they valued belonging to them but were stuck in between them, unable to really be reintegrated into either of them. From this position, however, they navigated their

everyday life by accepting, ignoring, or contesting the boundaries on which they were situated. By doing so, they were actually challenging those boundaries. Depending on how successfully they navigate their interstitial position, these individuals might ultimately bring about a shift in the current position of the boundaries in the perceptions of the members of both groups between which they are suspended. An important challenge for these individuals seems to be represented by the need to find a support network other than the family or the *ubwoko*, especially in a setting that has been exposed to high levels of violence. In fact, in Gasunu (Cene), thanks to the important support of family members and good relations with Hutu neighbours, Tutsi former IDPs could more easily return to their hill of origin and resume their previous lifestyle, returning to the position they held in their social landscape before displacement. In the case of former IDPs in Bugendana, the absence of these two elements stresses their interstitial position, and their need to find alternative ways to survive this position, relying on networks other than the family, as long as their family members do not consider them as "one of us".

In chapter 5, I moved my study online, onto the virtual platform of the Burundian Twittersphere. On this platform, I observed boundary-making processes around the figure of President Ntaryamira during the commemoration of his death between 2014 and 2017. This study shed light on the increased salience of the *ubwoko* on Twitter following the outbreak of the 2015 violence, following which social media have occupied an increasingly central role in the everyday life of many Burundians. Following the shutdown of the main non-governmental radio stations in the country, a large part of political debate moved online and many turned to social media to keep access to information open. In political debate, references to the *ubwoko* appeared increasingly often. My study analysed how the commemoration of the death of Ntaryamira, which was not related *per se* to the 2015 violence, became increasingly "ethnicised" on Twitter. Through the analysis of boundary-making, I observed the emergence of a boundary between two virtual communities, one that appropriated the memory of Ntaryamira and another that was portrayed as its opposite. This happened as a result of the employment of five discursive strategies through which distance was established from the out-group and the internal ties of the in-group were reinforced. These two groups were defined both in terms of *ubwoko* and political orientation: the community of Ntaryamira became increasingly associated with the Hutu and with the

CNDD-FDD. In a later stage of my study, I observed the ways in which the *ubwoko* surfaced in tweets and conversations. The findings of my study showed that the *ubwoko* was brought up in Twitter conversations for political purposes, and that interactions primarily followed political lines. The establishment of hegemonic discourse on Twitter, a primarily political concern, was thus sought through the mobilisation of the *ubwoko* too.

The study of boundary making and remaking in all these different sites helped me to gain better insights into the salience of the *ubwoko* in people's daily lives in contemporary Burundi. In the different research sites where I conducted my investigation (i.e. the physical reality of contemporary Burundi, discussed in chapters 3 and 4, and the virtual reality of the Burundian Twittersphere, analysed in chapter 5), the *ubwoko* seems to play a central role today, although in different ways. This is due partly to the fact that memories of past violence are still relatively fresh in people's minds, and partly to the fact that boundaries between *amoko* have not been challenged in a sufficiently significant way since the last major episodes of violence.

Memory of past violence plays a determinant role in keeping the *ubwoko* salient. Chapters 3 and 5 showed that in Burundi's social landscape as well as on Twitter, boundaries emerged after violence took place, and that in the aftermath of violence, the memory of that violence reinforces the boundaries. Chapter 3 also showed that in the absence of violence, boundaries start to fade. Nevertheless, memories seem to be simply "stored in the mind", yet very present in people's minds: they are not accessed at present for the sake of local coexistence (Buckley-Zistel 2006: 134), or "to avoid a heart attack", as one interviewee explained in Mugara. Old memories are easily recalled when past episodes of violence happen to be discussed, or when contemporary realities and contemporary violence are explained through past violence. In this way, a link is made between past and present: the past is recalled and relived in the present, old tensions are awakened, and the boundary between groups becomes thicker. This exists in both the physical and virtual reality of contemporary Burundi. In Bugendana and Gasunu, the existence of IDP camps, accompanied by the presence of commemorative monuments, represent a visual, daily reminder of past violence; in Mugara, what is perceived as violent expropriation is interpreted as the direct consequence of past violence; on Twitter, in a discursive way, memories of the past are retrieved to make sense of contemporary violence, e.g. to explain the Sindumuja opposition to

Nkurunziza. These memories, both online and offline, can be retrieved for purposes of political mobilisation, but this does not change the fact that they would not be retrieved if they did not speak to those who receive the message.

In this regard, practices of everyday peace, which many Burundians are obliged to adopt in daily life to be able to cohabit and access livelihoods, may keep people receptive to discourses that mobilise memories of past suffering. As shown in chapter 3, inter-group distance in present-day Burundi relies in large part on the memory of the past. Because practices of everyday peace do not address the causes of the distance between *amoko*, these practices ultimately maintain the social *status quo*, as they do not really challenge the position and characteristics of the boundaries between *amoko*. As long as these practices are employed, there is no way for memories of the past, which are only temporarily stored but vivid in people's minds, to really fade away. Thus, these memories remain relatively easy to access. This is what makes narratives around past suffering recurrent and easy to employ for political purposes: those who mobilise these types of narratives can count on their impact precisely because the boundary between *amoko*, for many Burundians, has not been challenged in a sufficiently significant way.

Of course, this does not apply to all the members of an *ubwoko*: to think this would be to treat groups like substantial entities characterised by unanimity of thought and objectives (what Brubaker called "groupism", 2004: 64). The comparison between former IDPs in Bugendana and in Gasunu (Cene) is illuminating in this regard: both categories of former IDPs are Tutsi, but they live their everyday life and their relations with Hutu in very different ways (more or less problematically in Bugendana, relatively well in Cene). In addition, many interviewees, in all my research sites, acknowledged that individuals from the "other" *ubwoko* had helped them in the past, in more or less important ways, and that although at the group level, a divide could be recognised between Tutsi and Hutu, what really mattered for them in everyday relations were the behaviours of individual members of the "other" *ubwoko*. In both the case of these interviewees who recognise the importance of individual behaviours and in the case of former IDPs who returned to their hills of origin, once again, past violence seems to determine the way in which people relate to members of the other *ubwoko* today: those who have been exposed to higher levels of violence in the past, today maintain distance from the perpetrators of such violence, because they live in a social context that does not seem to have changed significantly since then. This is particularly evident in places

like Bugendana, where the "ethno-geographical" setting of the site has not changed markedly since 1993-1994.

Nevertheless, it is precisely in places like Bugendana that germs of change can be found, however paradoxical this may be. The presence of people in interstitial positions, in between *amoko*, represents an important challenge to the existing boundaries: very boldly, these people went against the general attitude that each group displays towards the "others", which put them in an interstitial position; despite the lack of support from either of the two groups between which they are situated, these individuals prove to be able to mobilise social skills and resources in their everyday life that allow them to survive. One former IDP in Bugendana stated that to take this type of decision and go against everyone's opinion is not for everybody, and that to do so, one needs to have *ubwenge* ("intelligence", "smartness"). Additional research is needed to understand precisely how these individuals employ *ubwenge* in their interstitial position, and what other networks they rely on to receive support. In fact, this represents the real potential for boundary transformation, although for the moment, it seems to reside at the individual level. By relying on social resources other than those represented by the family and the *ubwoko*, these individuals could be creating something new (Bhabha 1994: 4), an alternative to the traditional networks of support on which the rest of the members of the two *amoko* rely. If the strategies employed by these individuals to navigate their interstitial position are effective enough, other people might be encouraged to follow the same path and join them. Eventually, this could shift the boundary between these people and the "others" from its current position between *amoko*. If the group of people in an interstitial position grows enough, the social position of this group could even transform from interstitial into a new type of position, beyond *amoko*. Research would then need to focus on what type of new identifications of "us" and "them" emerged, and to what extent, when, and how these new identifications allowed people to overcome high degrees of groupness and rigid boundaries between *amoko*. This type of research, which for the moment can only be conducted at the individual level, would be particularly relevant for policy makers because it would bring to light spontaneous strategies for social survival, which might ultimately make society less "deeply divided", at least in terms of *ubwoko*. For these strategies to be successful, they need to be better analysed and then encouraged.

It is difficult to say, for the time being, what precisely will be the outcome of the strategies employed by individuals in interstitial positions. These people have the possibility to "deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy" (Bhabha 1996: 58), and in this resides their possibility to create something new. When the memory of the past plays a predominant role in the present day, however, this can be particularly challenging. Bhabha observed that in the world's contemporary "anxious age of identity", the past is "seen as returning" especially when "the consequences of cultural incommensurability make the world a difficult place", under which circumstances attempts to memorialise the past create "a culture of disparate 'interest groups'" (1996: 59). This seems to be especially applicable to places like Bugendana and to conflict-affected contexts in general, where the memory of past conflict and violence is still very present in people's lives. In these contexts, people in interstitial positions have to deal with a tough challenge: they need to negotiate "the recurrence of the image of the past while keeping open the question of the future", through "an ethics of 'survival' that allows [them] to *work through the present*" (Bhabha 1996: 59). Under these circumstances, "affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be *only* situational and strategic: commonality is often negotiated through the 'contingency' of social interests and political claims" (ibid.). This is particularly relevant in contexts like Burundi, where affiliation to a group or network, however pretended or real it may be, is fundamental for each individual's survival. In these contexts, not recognised by the group they moved towards and almost disowned by the group of origin (Fanon 2015: 65; Maalouf 1998: 11-12), people in interstitial positions will have a hard time inventing alternative networks for their survival. In addition, their "recognition [will require] the negotiation of a dangerous indeterminacy", dangerous because "that the 'false' are too visible will never guarantee that the 'true' are visible enough" (Bhabha 1996: 55-56). Change happens when the ground is prepared for receiving it, when conditions are in place that allow the novelty to be accepted (Fanon 2015: 67), otherwise it is violently rejected. Therefore, it is possible that individuals with an interstitial identity will be tolerated as long as they do not represent a vital threat to the main groups of their social landscape, and that problems will arise if they become "too visible" (Easthope 1998: 346). The moment in which they would become "too visible" is difficult to determine or foresee, but most likely, considering the role played by violence in thickening boundaries between groups

(see chapter 3), if acts of violence take place again, then individuals in interstitial positions will represent that threatening categorical uncertainty that will need to be reduced (Appadurai 1998).

Despite the threat represented by the memory of the past to their social and physical survival, individuals in the interstices adopted this position and decided to "confront that difficult borderline, the interstitial experience between what [is taken] to be the image of the past and what is in fact involved in the passing of time and the passage of meaning" (Bhabha 1996: 59-60). This is what actually frees "from the determinism of historical inevitability repetition *without a difference*" (ibid.) and creates a space for change. In contexts where narratives around the "others" are often vertically transmitted and adhered to, in Burundi (Uvin 1999: 264) and elsewhere, people "see what they have been taught to see" (Mazzocchetti 2021); when narratives around the "others" are narratives of violence, they constitute a background knowledge (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 42) that only needs to be activated when conflict erupts. Then, physical acts of violence make sense and are understood within the violent framework of reference about the "others", confirming and reinforcing that framework, and thickening the boundary between "us" and "them". Under these circumstances, the existence of people in interstitial positions challenges that violent framework of reference because it shows that the social landscape is actually not divided in a Manichean way into "us" and "them", into Tutsi and Hutu. It shows that alternative narratives around the "others" are possible, that "the others" are not the same as those who represented "the others" for previous generations, for instance, and that there are people in Burundi who manage to live *on* the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi, albeit with difficulties. In a society where the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi is generally still very relevant, the existence of people in interstitial positions starts to question the relevance of that boundary; shedding light on the existence of interstitial identities thus contributes to raising awareness that living "beyond" *amoko* is actually possible, though relatively difficult. This is not to suggest that people abandon their identity as members of specific *amoko*, if that is ever possible, but that they be open to different narratives around "the others" that may decrease the thickness of the boundary between Hutu and Tutsi in contemporary Burundi.

An avenue for future research, more in line with post-colonial studies of contemporary Burundi, concerns the persistence of specific colonial narratives around the "others"

and the persistence of specific behaviours, like individuals' identification of each other in terms of *ubwoko* based on physical traits, in contemporary times. If these practices are an entirely colonial heritage, meaning that many Burundians, at least in part, came "to regard themselves as members of an 'ethnic group' as defined by anthropologists, colonial administrators and post-independence governments" (Eltringham 2004: 11), why did only certain practices persist untouched and not others? If Burundians really cannot detach themselves from colonial stereotypes and elaborate new images of themselves (Gatugu 2018: 54), why were certain stereotypes and images preserved and not others? What is the role played by post-independence events and actors in this? When and how did political instrumentalisation intervene? What is the role played by violence in this? How does it contribute to the persistence of certain stereotypes, and the fact that many agents of violence, to be sure to kill the "right ones", identified their fellow countrymen and countrywomen by looking at their physical traits, as several interviewees told me? These questions have not been properly answered yet and certainly deserve further investigation. This would help to shed light on the precise role played by German and Belgian colonisation in Burundian society, around which a vivid debate exists today. This would also facilitate a recognition of the magnitude of colonial stereotypes and attitudes in the present day, and for those who so wish, their rejection.

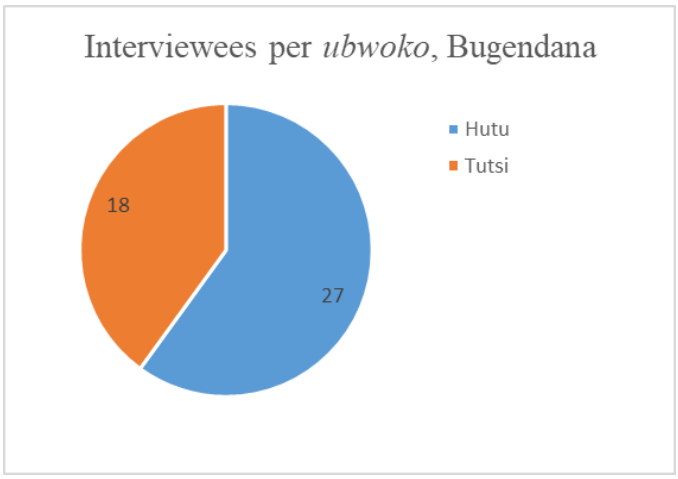
Finally, my research showed the possibility to apply to the virtual reality techniques developed for the analysis of boundary-making in the physical reality. In the physical reality of Burundi, during my periods of fieldwork, boundaries emerged in everyday "practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines" (Brubaker 2004: 11) as narrated in the interviews and observed by myself; the analysis of the characteristics of and changes in those boundaries relied on the written text of the transcriptions of the interviews and on the notes that I had taken about the interactions observed between people in Burundi. In the virtual reality of Twitter, my analysis relied on the written text of the tweets and on the observation of the interactions between Twitter accounts, indicated by likes, retweets, and replies. Methodologically speaking, the analysis of boundaries in the physical and in the virtual reality proceeded in a similar way: in both the written texts of the interviews and in those of the tweets, passages were coded that signalled a change in the position or the characteristics of a boundary, while elements representing or explaining the interactions observed, in the physical and in the virtual reality, were

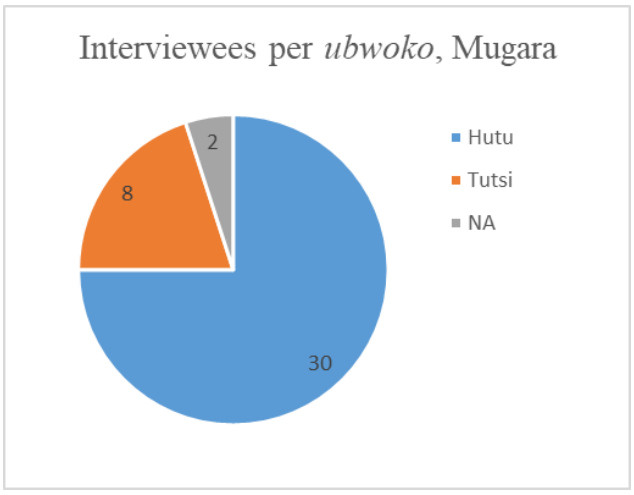
noted down, to refine and sustain the analysis of the boundaries in the written texts. The emergence of boundaries in perceptions and interactions could thus be observed and analysed in both the physical and in the virtual reality. This is due to the fact that discourse is a central element of boundary-making (Wimmer 2013: 64) and that boundaries emerge through discursive strategies, offline as well as online, although through different modalities. This emerged clearly in chapters 3 and 5 of my thesis, which showed the relevance of discourse, through narratives of violence, in boundary-making in the physical reality of Burundi and in the virtual reality of Twitter respectively.

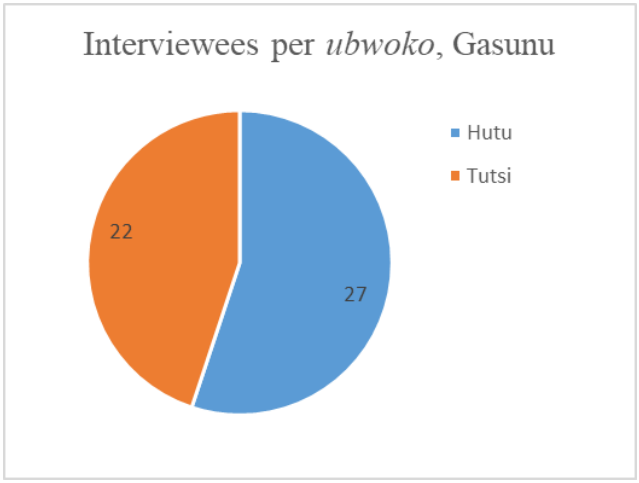
My research thus represents an innovative application of a methodology developed for the physical reality to a new field, the virtual reality, which is gaining increased relevance everywhere in the world. My research showed that it is *possible* to do so, but this does not mean that what is analysed online is the equivalent of what can be analysed offline. The "constant interplay" between "what we live", "what we think", and "what we do" (Roy 1994: 24) takes more time offline and marks in a more important way offline perceptions, which are thus deemed to be more thought through and reliable, while on Twitter a sort of imperative of speed seems to exist by which Twitter users need to abide if they want their opinion to be heard before that of the others and thus gain visibility on the social media platform. In addition, when verbalised, interactions usually take the form of conversations in the physical reality, while on Twitter the only three types of interactions that can be observed between accounts are likes, retweets, and replies, which are actually interactions with the content produced by those accounts. Non-verbalised interactions, on the other hand, cannot be observed on Twitter, while in the physical reality they usually play an important role in boundary-making. There are differences between perceptions and interactions in the physical and in the virtual reality, and it would be naïve to consider offline and online as the equivalent of each other. My research aimed to show that boundary-making happens and can be studied online as well as offline. Research should be encouraged on the ways in which online boundary-making might differ from offline dynamics, and particularly on the ways in which discourses may provoke different reactions online and offline, which would help to gain a better understanding of the role played by social media in society, in conflict-affected contexts like Burundi and elsewhere.

Annexes

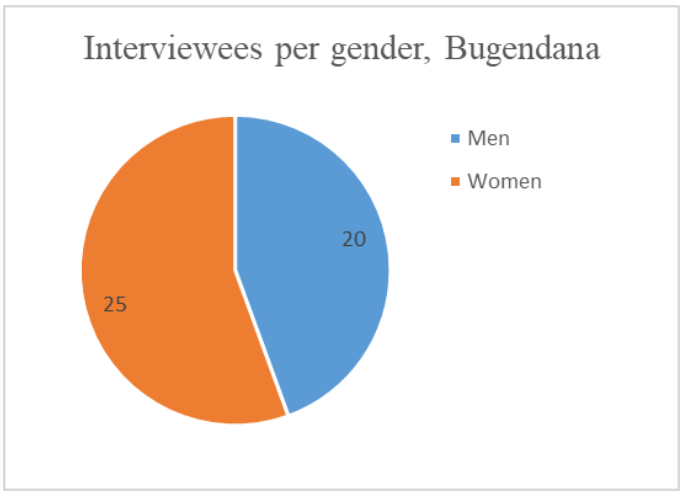
1. Shares of Hutu and Tutsi interviewed in every research site

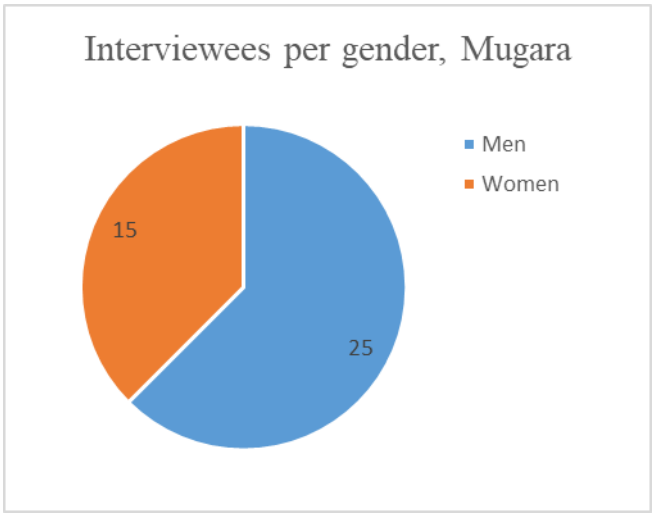


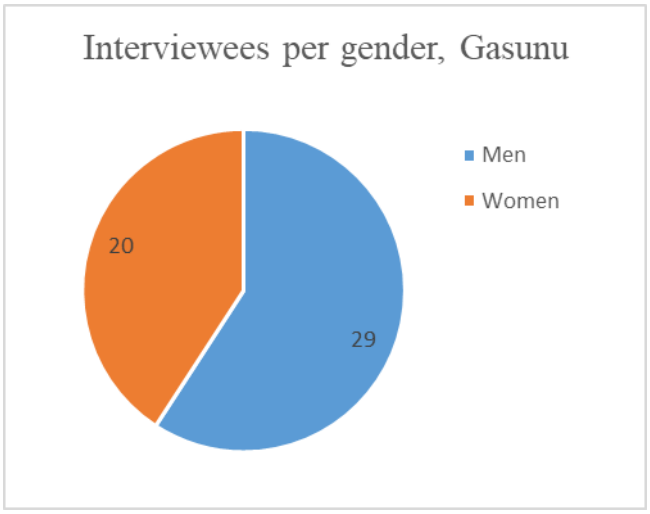




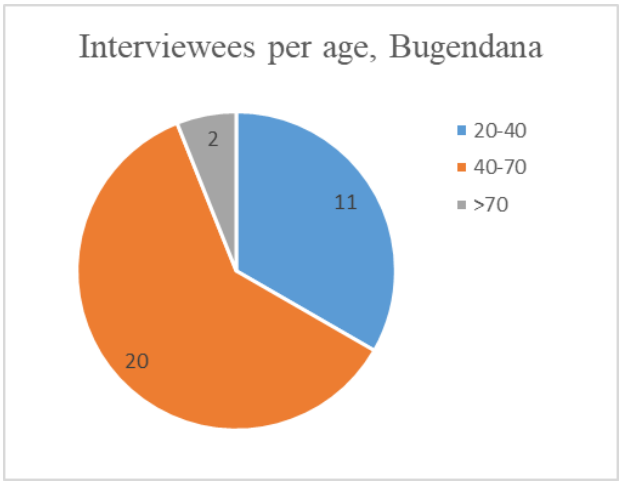
2. Shares of men and women interviewed in every research site

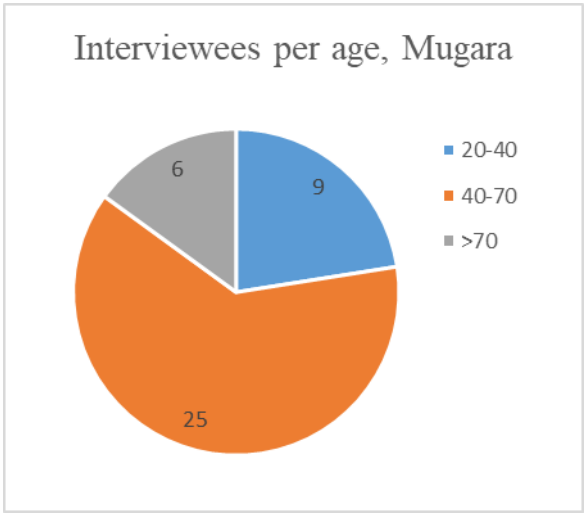


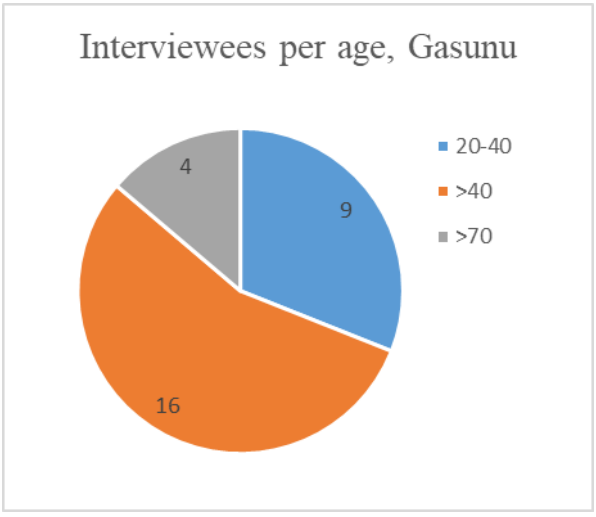




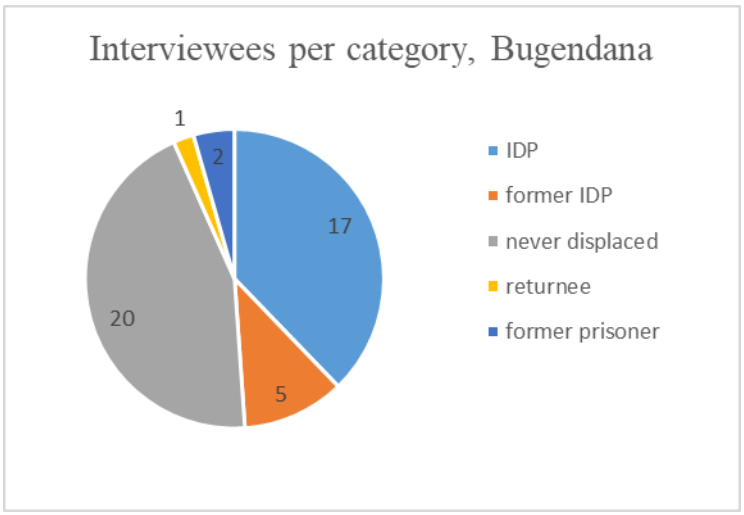
3. Shares of members of different age groups (20-40; 40-70; >70) interviewed in every research site

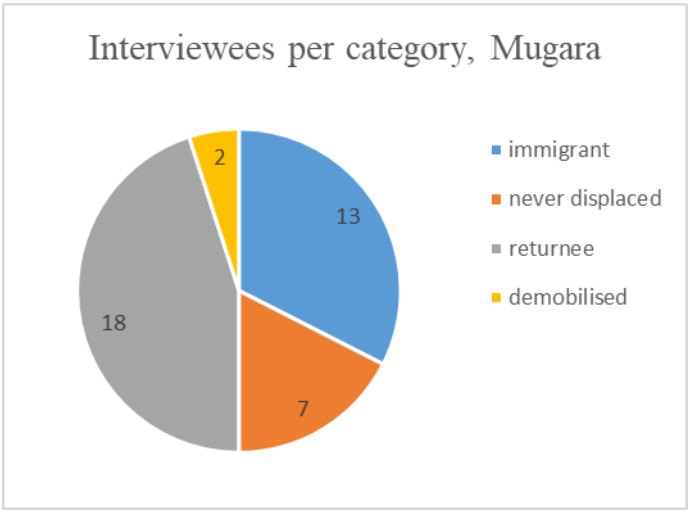


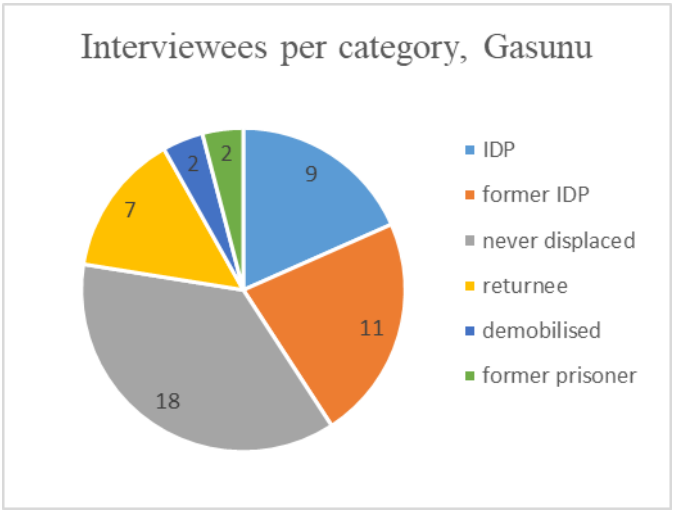




4. Shares of members of different categories (IDP, former IDP, never displaced, returnee, immigrant, former prisoner, demobilised) interviewed in every research site







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Samenvatting

Hutu, Tutsi en Twa zijn de drie *amoko* (enkelvoud *ubwoko*) van Burundi en worden gewoonlijk "etnische groepen" genoemd. Sinds de onafhankelijkheid van Burundi in 1962 is er openlijke geweldpleging tussen Hutu en Tutsi. Grote gewelddadige incidenten vonden plaats in 1965, 1969, 1972 en 1988. In 1993 brak er een burgeroorlog uit die enkele jaren duurde. In 2000 werd het vredesakkoord van Arusha ondertekend. Daarmee werd een overgangsperiode ingeluid die leidde naar een nieuwe grondwet en de democratische verkiezing van een nieuwe president in 2005. Het vredesakkoord institutionaliseerde de aanwezigheid van Hutu, Tutsi (en, tendele, Twa) op alle niveaus van de staatsinstellingen, waardoor de politieke strijd kon worden ontdaan van haar etnische lading. Nu er geen openlijke geweldpleging meer was, kunnen de gewone burgers geleidelijk aan weer hun dagelijkse leven leiden, hoewel de gevolgen van de conflicten uit het verleden nog verwerkt moesten worden. Bij gebrek aan alternatieven gingen de meeste mensen in het dagelijks leven over tot praktijken van "alledaagse vrede", zodat zij naast degenen die geweld hadden gepleegd konden leven. Onder deze omstandigheden leek het belang van het behoren tot een specifieke *ubwoko* geleidelijk aan verminderd te zijn. In 2015 stelde wijlen president Nkurunziza zich kandidaat voor een derde termijn, hoewel de grondwet van 2005 slechts twee presidentiële termijnen toestond. Dit leidde tot ongekende straatprotesten in de toenmalige hoofdstad van Burundi. Door de onderdrukking van de protesten vielen enkele honderden doden, terwijl honderdduizenden mensen het land ontvluchtten. Tijdens de conflicten verschenen in het politieke discours steeds vaker verwijzingen naar de *ubwoko* en naar geweldpleging in het verleden, wat de vraag deed rijzen naar de toegenomen relevantie van de *ubwoko* als een overkoepelend identiteitskenmerk.

Mijn doctoraatsonderzoek, dat uitgaat van een *boundary-making approach*, probeert te begrijpen hoe Burundezen zichzelf en de anderen – "wij" en "zij" – vandaag definiëren en hoe belangrijk de *ubwoko* is bij het identificeren van *in-groups* en *out-groups*. Op verschillende onderzoekslocaties, elk gekenmerkt door specifieke ruimte- en tijdsdimensies (koloniale literatuur over Burundi, hedendaags Burundi en de Burundese *Twittersphere*), analyseer ik processen van grensvorming en -wijziging tussen "wij" en "zij". Hierbij concentreer ik mij op de percepties en interacties tussen *amoko* om het

belang van het behoren tot een bepaalde *ubwoko* te begrijpen. Dankzij de analyses op verschillende onderzoekslocaties kon ik een vollediger beeld krijgen van de groepsdynamiek en van de factoren die het behoren tot een groep in hedendaags Burundi meer of minder belangrijk maken. Een analyse als deze is van belang voor wetenschappers, beleidsmakers en deskundigen die ook werken aan, of in, andere door conflicten getroffen samenlevingen. Bovendien is in het hedendaagse tijdperk van *social media* de innovatieve toepassing van dit soort analyse op de virtuele realiteit van Twitter bijzonder van belang.

Incamake

Abahutu, abatutsi, n'abatwa ni amoko (rudende: ubwoko) atatu yo mu Burundi, benshi bakunze kwita "*ethnicities*" canke "*ethnic groups*" (mu rurimi rw'icongereza) canke "*ethnies*" (mu rurimi rw'igifransa). Muri iki gihugu harabaye ubwicanyi bukomeye hagati y'abahutu n'abatutsi kuva cikukiye (1962). Ibiringo bikuru bikuru vy'ubwicanyi ni imyaka ya 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, maze mu 1993 havuka intambara hagati y'abanyagihugu yamaze imyaka myinshi. Mu mwaka w'i 2000, haratewe umukono ku masezerano y'amahoro ya Arusha, ari nayo yashikanye igihugu kw'ishingwa ry'intwaro nfatakibanza, kw'iyemezwa ry'Ibwirizwa nshingiro rishasha hamwe n'itorwa ry'Umukuru w'igihugu biciye mu nzira y'amatora rusangi yo mu mwaka w'i 2005. Amasezerano y'amahoro yarashinze ko abahutu, abatutsi, n'abatwa bosabikanya ubutegetsi mu nzego zose za Leta, gutyo aba agabanije uburakari bw'ubwoko mu mahiganwa ya politike. Mu gihe cose hari umutekano, abanyagihugu basanzwe barashobora gusubira mu mirimo yabo ya misi yose, ariko ingaruka z'amatati baciyemwo zikagumaho. Mu kurindira ko haboneka umuti urama, abantu benshi bahisemwo ingendo y'amahoro mu buzima bwabo bwa minsi yose, na cane cane kugira ngo bashobore kubana n'abagize uruhara mu bwicanyi. Gutyo, gushira imbere ubwoko bw'umuntu muri vyose bisa nkuko vyariko biragabanuka buhoro buhoro. Mu mwaka w'i 2015, umuhisi Perezida Nkurunziza yashatse kwitoreza ikiringo ca gatatu, mu gihe Ibwirizwa nshingiro ryo mu mwaka w'i 2005 ryoryo rirekurira umukuru w'igihugu ibiringo bibiri vyonyene. Ibi vyatumye haduka imyiyerekano yo kwiyamiriza ico kiringo ca gatatu, ku rugero rutari bwaboneke mu Burundi, na cane cane ku murwa mukuru wa Bujumbura. Gukoresha inguvu kw'inzego za Leta mu ntumbero yo guhagarika iyo myiyerekano vyatumye abantu amajana n'amajana bahasiga ubuzima, maze abandi ibihumbi n'ibihumbi barangazwa. Murico gihe cy'imyiyerekano n'inyuma yaho, ikibazo c'ubwoko ndetse n'ubwicanyi bwabaye muri kahise vyaragarutsweko cane mu mvugo y'abanyepolitike, maze bituma hibazwa nimba ubwoko butofatwa noneho nk'ishingiro nyamukuru ry'umwirondoro.

Nshimikiye ku vyo abantu bafatirako mu kwitandukanya n'abandi, ubu bushakashatsi bwo ku rugero ruminuza amashure ya kaminuza (*doctorat*) bwihaye intumbero yo kugerageza gutahura uko abarundi ba kino gihe bidondora hamwe n'uko badondora

abandi, “twebwe” na “bo”, ndetse n’agaciro baha ubwoko mu kwerekana ico abantu bari, haba mu mirwi y’abo bafise ivyo bahuriyeko canke mu mirwi y’abo bafise ibibatandukanya. Mu bibanza bitandukanye nakoreyemwo ubushakashatsi, mfatiye ku kibanza n’igihe (nifashishije ivyanditswe ku ntwaro y’ubukoroni, ivyanditswe ku Burundi bwa none hamwe n’ivyandikwa ku rubuga ngurukanabumenyi Twitter ku/mu Burundi), ngerageza kwihweza no gutahura ingene abantu bashiraho ibibatandukanya hagati ya “twebwe” na “bo”, nshimikiye cane cane ku migenderanire hagati y’amoko hamwe n’ingene aba canke bariya babona abandi, gutyo bikamfasha kwerekana agaciro ubwoko bufise muri ivyo. Isesangura nakoze mu bibanza bitandukanye vy’ubushakashatsi ryatumye ndushaho gutahura neza ingene imirwi y’abantu yiyubaka, hamwe n’ibituma kuba mu murwi uwu canke uriya bihabwa agaciro kanini mu Burundi bwa none. Iri sesangura rirafise akamaro kanini ku bashakashatsi, ku batunganya ama politike ndetse no ku bandi bose bakorera ahantu hasinzikajwe n’intambara. Vyongeye, gukora isesangura nk’iri hifashishijwe ivyandikwa ku rubuga ngurukanabumenyi Twitter birafise akamaro kanini, na cane cane muri ibi bihe ikoreshwa ry’imbuga ngurakanabumenyi ririko riratera imbere cane.