

‘One Rwanda For All Rwandans’: (Un)covering the Twa in Post-Genocide Rwanda

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The unity of the Rwandans is the expression of a historic will, an ancient and deliberate choice: the Rwandans have found themselves to be three (Hutu, Twa and Tutsi) and they have decided to be one (Rwandans). Since then, the nation of Rwanda was not an association of ethnic groups but an entity of citizens who had chosen to live together.

Servilien Manzi Sebasoni (2007: 10)

Why are the other Rwandans called Rwandan, and why are the Batwa called historically marginalized? [...] We are also Rwandan [...] we want to be Rwandan. We have the thirst to be Rwandan, but the poverty stops us. We want that our state makes it possible for us to be at the same level as other Rwandans.

Jean-Bosco (personal interview, 2016)

¹ The authors’ names do not appear in any particular order. We want to avoid falling into the unsaid academic tradition of ranking based on contribution or where we fall in the alphabet, and instead make clear that this paper would not be possible without the teamwork and individual hard work of each author. The authors would like to thank the African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization, the Third Generation Project, the University of St Andrews, Queen’s University, and the Aegis Trust in their support of our research.

Pursuing reconciliation and building national unity after mass violence is a uniquely challenging task as victims and perpetrators – albeit rarely straightforwardly defined – must live side by side, and struggle to rebuild broken social networks, and reimagine their political and moral community (Purdeková, 2015: 5). Rwanda fits this description, for it is difficult to fathom the degree of disruption, devastation and social anomy the genocide produced both inside Rwanda and throughout the wider Great Lakes region. The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi claimed the lives of an estimated 800,000 Rwandans,² produced millions of refugees, generated the chaotic return of hundreds of thousands of people and catalysed a continental war in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (Reyntjens, 2009: 10–44). Brutal massacres were carried out on Rwandan soil by ‘intimate enemies’, many of whom were acquaintances, neighbours, friends and even family (Purdeková, 2015: 5). In its aftermath, the genocide heightened tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, and as time marched on, generated a complex web of new social identities related to heterogeneous experiences of marginalization, exile, ethnic and regional violence, and state-sponsored violence, as well as nationality, language and region of exile.

The post-genocide regime’s response to this kaleidoscope of complexity is to promote the discourse of *ubumwe n’ubumwiyunge* – unity and reconciliation – twin concepts the government generally defines together. As a corollary, state authorities have implemented an ambitious social re-engineering project, which entails promoting a ‘unifying’ Banyarwanda identity, epitomized by the ubiquitous popular slogan – ‘One Rwanda for All Rwandans’ – and predicated on the current government’s version of Rwanda’s history. National unity is naturalized as ‘a traditional value which must be reasserted, reinforced and taught to all Rwandans’, while ethnicity is presented as a sinister, foreign construct associated with the political ideology of oppression and violence which caused the genocide (Office of the President of the Republic, 1999: 16). On this basis, the government seeks to ‘de-ethnicize’ political space (see Purdeková, 2008; 2015), and to eradicate the ‘bad mentalities’ of ‘divisionism’ and ‘genocide ideology’ that continue to circulate among *génocidaires*, genocide sympathizers and

² We use the figure 800,000 with some reservation, simply because it is the most commonly cited. The exact number of victims remains unknown, and estimates should be thought of as rough approximations based on census data. Estimates by NGOs and researchers typically range from 500,000 to 800,000 deaths while the government of Rwanda cited a much larger figure of nearly one million in its 2002 report. For a more detailed discussion of estimated death tolls, see Reyntjens (1997).

negationists.³ ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ are no longer recognized social categories, and public expression of ethnic identity outside the frame of the genocide is proscribed to replace atavistic substate loyalties with a progressive form of national belonging.

The government of Rwanda’s unity and reconciliation project has attracted considerable interest among regional experts, journalists, democratic practitioners, and academics alike, and while the popular literature has tended to mark a clear difference between pre- and post-genocide Rwanda – attributing Rwanda’s ‘social transformation’ and ‘the cooling of sectarian passions’ to President Paul Kagame’s model of ‘guided reconciliation’ and ‘honest governance’ (Kinzer, 2007: 3; Crisafulli and Redmond, 2012; Soudan, 2015) – much of the academic literature sees the twin concepts of *ubumwe n’ubumwiyunge* as deeply politicized terms that serve to paper over divisions, and to disguise the monopolization of power by a small regime elite (Ingelaere, 2010; Purdeková, 2015; Reyntjens, 2013; Thomson, 2013). This literature has contributed enormously to our understanding of the dynamics of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda, from both top-down and bottom-up perspectives, but there are noteworthy gaps in the analysis. Chief among them is the tendency among scholars to reify the ethnicity dichotomy by focusing exclusively on the experiences of Hutu and Tutsi, while ignoring the perspectives of Rwanda’s most marginal minority, the Batwa (Twa).⁴ With few exceptions, the historical narratives and post-genocide experiences of the Twa elicit a mere footnote in the leading academic scholarship, mirroring the tendency of Rwandan governments, both past and present, to render the Twa invisible.

³ The government has adopted various legal measures to criminalize the public expression of ethnicity, and to eradicate divisionism and negationism. The 2001 Law criminalizes ‘the use of any speech, written statement or action based on ethnicity’ to curtail ‘discrimination and sectarianism’. Further to this, the 2003 Constitution proscribes ‘ethnic, regional, racial or discrimination of any other form of division’, and prohibits political parties ‘from basing themselves on race, ethnic group, tribe, clan [...] or any other division which may give rise to discrimination’, to ensure that they ‘reflect the unity of Rwandan people’ (Title II, Ch. 1, art. 33; Title III, art. 54). Article 13 of the Constitution further prohibits ‘Revisionism, negationism and trivialisation of genocide’ as outlined in the 2003 Law ‘Repressing the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, and War Crimes’, and the 2008 Law ‘Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology’.

⁴ Following British academic conventions, the stem ‘Twa’ is used here interchangeably with *batwa* (plural) and *mutwa* (singular). ‘Twa’ is a form of the word ‘Tua’, which is the most widespread term in local Bantu languages covering the autochthonous peoples of Central Africa. ‘Tua’ means ‘hunter-gatherer’ or former hunter-gatherer autochthonous people.

Yet the Twa are profoundly impacted by post-genocide reconstruction and development processes. In line with its unity-building agenda, the government of Rwanda discourages the public expression of Twa identity, and has eliminated ethnic indicators from all formal decrees and policies. In its place, the 2003 Constitution introduced the quasi-official and ambiguously defined category of ‘historically marginalized people’ (HMP). While the HMP label is widely interpreted as a moniker for ‘Twa’, many government officials and civil society organizations suggest it applies to ‘all Rwandans left behind by history’, including women, people with disabilities, genocide survivors and religious minorities (Beswick, 2011: 502). Based on interviews and focus groups conducted in Rwanda between March 2014 and March 2016, as well as personal testimony provided by three Twa civil society leaders, this chapter sheds light on the ways in which Twa perceive, experience and enact *ubumwe n’ubumwiyunge* on the ground. As a component of this, we also examine popular perceptions of the HMP label within the broader framework of unity-building and reconciliation. This snapshot of Twa interactions with government policy and practice shows that many Twa feel excluded from participation in post-genocide politics and decision-making, especially concerning efforts to foster national pride, unity and reconciliation. Equally, our findings illuminate both the unpopularity of the HMP label among individual Twa, and the continued relevance of Twa identity and culture at a community level.

Becoming ‘Historically Marginalized’: A Historical Overview of the Situation of Twa in Rwanda

Few historians disagree that the semi-nomadic Twa were the first inhabitants of the Great Lakes region of Africa. Oral traditions common to all three ethnic groups in Rwanda concur in identifying the Twa as autochthonous peoples who lived in the equatorial forests near the great marshes on the borders of central Rwanda and survived for centuries as hunters and foragers (Vansina, 2001: 36). The forests were their homelands, providing the Twa with sustenance and medicine, and containing burial grounds and sacred sites for religious practice and ancestral connection. Their low-impact lifestyle and use of forest resources allowed the Twa to sustain their unique culture and way of life for millennia (see Klieman, 2003). Likely beginning in the eighteenth century, the Twa were gradually pushed out of their ancestral lands by agriculturalists who converted forests into farm land, pastoralists who created pasture for grazing cattle and European colonizers who encroached on these lands for the purpose of lucrative resource extraction and the creation of commercial plantations. Large-scale

deforestation, conflict leading to violence and, more recently, conservation and the creation of national parks, meant that as early as the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of Twa were unable to survive as hunters and foragers, and were integrated into mainstream society at the lowest level, with pottery providing their primary occupation. Some Twa also provided important services at the (Tutsi) royal court in Rwanda as dancers, musicians, spies, secret messengers, warriors and even assassins and court executioners (Lewis and Knight, 1995: 25–37). In general, a pattern of avoidance emerged between Twa and the wider population primarily because of the antediluvian association of Twa with gluttony, barbarism and moral indecency – degrading stereotypes that persist today.⁵ Though it is unclear how much the ‘pygmoid race myth’ contributed to these stigmas for the Twa of Rwanda in particular, it is abundantly clear that dwarfish forest peoples across the continent were seen as the lowest form of human under Eurocentric racial ideology (Klieman, 2003: 1–20). As recently as the 1990s, the remaining forest-dwelling Twa in Volcanoes National Park and Gishwati-Mukura National Park in the north-western corner of Rwanda, and Nyungwe National Park in the south-west of Rwanda were expelled without consultation, compensation or reparation, despite many tireless attempts to defend their homelands against encroachment. Owing to their sustainable use of forest resources, the Twa did not leave evidence of land exploitation and/or

⁵ Well before the arrival of Europeans in Rwanda, labour involving direct contact with the earth was considered impure according to Rwandan court culture. The most esteemed labour involved the earth in the most mediated fashion, pastoralism. Agriculture entailed working and tilling the land, but with tools, whereas hunting, foraging and pottery-making, the most common occupations of the Twa, implied the most extreme forms of moral indecency and impurity because they necessarily involved a direct connection to the earth. Early written sources also suggest that the association of the Twa with ‘gluttony’ derives from their consumption of mutton. The taboo against eating mutton was, and still is, extremely strong in Rwanda because sheep are valued for their pacific qualities, as they historically accompanied cattle herds and were thought to exert a moderating influence. The Rwandan proverb ‘One must not mix sheep and goats’ speaks to this precedent, and was used in part to justify the practice of segregating Twa during meals. Eating and or drinking in the presence of Twa was publicly proscribed: Twa were expected live apart, collect water downstream and remain on the fringes of society. Although many of these practices have ceased today, particularly among city dwellers, they are sometimes permitted to continue in rural areas, and negative and damaging stereotypes of Twa as gluttonous, greedy, unkempt, impure and ‘animal-like’ persist unabated (Taylor, 1992: 38; Lewis, 2000: 14).

agricultural and industrial development, which enabled colonial administrations and post-independence governments to claim the land as 'vacant' from a Eurocentric legal framework. On this basis, the Twa were denied land claims and rights over the forested areas they customarily used (Huggins, 2009: 9–10). They now constitute the poorest and most vulnerable people in Rwanda, comprising a mere 33,000 individuals, approximately 0.003% of Rwanda's total population of nearly 12 million (CAURWA, 2000: 8). As in the past, the Twa remain a marginalized minority that faces unique challenges and uncertainties related to landlessness, high unemployment and underemployment, poverty, limited access to education and health care, social discrimination and acute political marginalization. Women and girls deal with multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage and dislocation, and suffer from extremely high rates of gender-based and sexual violence relative to their non-Twa counterparts (see Ramsay, 2010).

Despite the government of Rwanda's sustained efforts to advance the socio-economic position of Twa/HMP by way of national policies, such as compulsory nine-year basic education, community-based healthcare insurance and promotion of economic cooperatives, Twa communities lack direct political representation, and are conspicuous in their absence from the government's *ubumwe n'ubumwiyunge* project – a key focus of government programming. They are perceived as tangential to the causes and consequences of the genocide, and therefore tangential to Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction. Yet Twa communities were dramatically affected by the volatile events of the 1990s. They were often victims of the Interahamwe, the extremist Hutu militia, which targeted Twa as sympathizers of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and more generally, 'friends of the Tutsi', based on widespread perceptions of a historical connection between the pre-colonial (Tutsi) royal court and Twa families who provided services at court (Lewis and Knight, 1995: 26–27). Some were mistaken for Interahamwe, while others were killed for their 'Tutsi' features. Many also died as collateral victims of the carnage. An estimated 30% of the Twa population perished during the 100 days of violence (CRIN, 2006: 5).

As mentioned above, in the post-genocide period, the government removed Twa identity from public policy and discourse as a means of de-emphasizing ethnicity in political spaces, and introduced the non-ethnic HMP label in 2003. Article 80 (2) of the 2003 Constitution, revised in 2015, requires that the president appoint eight senators to represent 'historically marginalized groups'. At present, only one of 26 senators identifies as HMP. Moreover, the term was never officially defined, and the current Constitution does not clarify the groups to which it applies. Most Rwandan civil society organizations interpret the term as an 'inclusive category', encompassing 'all Rwandans

disadvantaged throughout history'. At present, however, the Twa are the only people that uses the HMP category as a method of collective identification because, unlike other marginalized groups (i.e. women, peoples with disabilities, genocide survivors and children) that have formed organizations to lobby on behalf of their specific needs, the Twa cannot legally refer to their identity, which complicates efforts to address their particular situation.

The Rwandan government refuses to use the indigenous label in Rwanda on the grounds that all Rwandans are native to the region. There are legitimate and historical reasons for this, especially because the Twa are not the first people to claim indigenous status. The leaders of Rwanda's first (1962–1973) and second republics (1973–1994), Grégoire Kayibanda and Juvénal Habyarimana, respectively, used the concept of indigeneity in a racialized sense to distinguish between the 'native-born' Hutu majority and the 'Hamitic' Tutsi minority, depicted as 'foreign invaders' of a different racial stock. These manipulations undoubtedly stoked racial tensions, and contributed to the genocide in 1994, which in turn was preceded by waves of anti-Tutsi violence in 1959, 1963 and 1973. A localized reading of the terms *abasangwabutaka* and 'indigenous' thus rouses memories of Rwanda's violent past.⁶ Yet there are also more practical reasons for denying Twa claims of indigeneity. As NGOs and human rights activists begin to connect Twa discourses to the global indigenous rights framework, they open up the possibility of internationally recognized human rights claims. The government sees this as unacceptable because it involves 'meddling into the affairs of Rwanda' – a country where much of the historical conflict is attributed squarely to external, and namely, European intervention. Conveniently, however, government rhetoric also serves to deny the Twa a special status to address marginalization and pursue land claims. The UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues and the UN Human Rights Council have repeatedly condemned the government's thinking. Most recently, in May 2016, the UN Review Committee on Rwanda's Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination proclaimed that 'without the adoption of specific measures protecting them, the Twa risked extinction', and urged the Rwandan administration to address the acute poverty and discrimination which Twa face in health, employment and education. The government's response was predictable: Rwandan ambassador François Xavier Ngarambe replied that 'the government did not consider any group of Rwandans as distinct from others' (United Nations Human Rights Office

⁶ See Adamczyk (2011: 181–84) for an excellent discussion of the debates surrounding the concepts of 'Autochthony' and 'Indigeneity' in post-genocide Rwanda.

of the High Commissioner, 2016). As such, ‘members of formally marginalized communities had now, thanks to inclusion policies, access to health, education and employment services without discrimination’.

Twa Perceptions of Rwanda’s Nation-Building Project

Given the recent shift in the legal and political framing of Twa identity, how effective has the government’s approach been in terms of transforming systems of classification and social practice at the individual level? How do Twa perceive, understand and enact Rwandan national identity on the ground? Do Twa feel Rwandan? Do they feel integrated into Rwandan society, socially, politically and economically? Furthermore, how do they relate to the HMP label as a component of the government’s wider national unity and reconciliation project? Do they see this label as a positive step in terms of combatting discrimination, and specifically targeting the needs of Twa communities? Or do they see it as a means of further stigmatizing Twa as a backward people ‘left behind by history’?

To begin to answer these questions, we conducted 20 semi-structured and informal focus groups with approximately ten to 15 participants per group. Focus groups were conducted in Kinyarwanda and then translated into English by our research assistants. In general, we found informal focus groups to be the most appropriate method of data collection because they allow for multiple voices to be heard, and more easily incorporate important cultural practices, such as traditional song and dance, which create a relaxed and open environment for conversation. It was also difficult to isolate individuals for interviews. Often, other village members would interrupt the interview or join in with their own observations. That said, an additional 20 people were interviewed individually in Kigali, but these interviews were prearranged and participants were carefully selected based on their standing within their respective communities. Interviews were conducted in French or English. We were also able to conduct structured focus groups with ten of Rwanda’s 45 university-educated Twa, and draw from the survey findings on Twa perceptions of the HMP label published in Collins and Ntakirutimana’s (2017) policy brief.⁷

Our combined research findings suggest that government-led projections of national unity and reconciliation do not necessarily correspond to the realities of Twa on the ground. Many participants shared experiences of ongoing marginalization, exclusion and discrimination in the realms of

⁷ Questionnaires were written in Kinyarwanda, and translated by Richard Ntakirutimana.

education, employment and daily social life. For example, in a focus group discussion with five young, university-educated Twa, two individuals shared experiences of discrimination in education and employment. François, a 25-year-old Twa, recounts his experience as both student and teacher:

You know, when I was teaching, there was a teacher. He was teaching with me. He said, 'Did you know that this one is a Twa?' [lowers voice, laughter] Because, he don't know that also, me, I am a Twa. I said, 'Oh! Is it true?', because being a Twa is shameful I tell you. In Rwanda, it is shameful. You cannot say this. I am telling you the truth [...] If they know you are Twa, it will be a very big problem.

His colleague, 26-year-old Emmanuel, shared a similar experience:

Me, I am advisor of 300 students [...] The students, they think that I am one of them [...] They think that I am Tutsi or Hutu. They don't know I am Twa [...] Then I converse with my fellow Twa, a girl that is Twa. When I converse with her, another girl talked to me, 'Are you converse with Twa? You start making relationship with Twa?' I told her, 'Also me, I am Twa'. Then I told my colleagues, 'Also me, I am Twa'. When you are saying that, they say, 'You are lying. It is not possible'. [...] So, that job I was getting because they don't know me [...] Everything which is bad belongs to Twa [...] So, I am telling you, when someone knows you are Twa, he does not give that kind of job you want.

In addition to describing daily experiences of discrimination, many participants associated the HMP category with increased dislocation and marginalization. Part of this stems from the confusion surrounding the label's origins and use. Nowhere were we able to locate the origins or official meaning of the term, and we found no evidence during our fieldwork that Twa were consulted before the term was adopted, or sensitized on its meaning and use. When asked why the Twa are called HMP instead of Twa, 28-year-old Philibert responded: 'We don't know the reason. You can't guess the reason. There is no reason. Why not just find a new name for people who committed genocide? Why the government only just create a new name for Mutwa?' When asked how she learned about the HMP label, one middle-aged Twa woman, Fidela, answered: 'I heard the term from the other population. One day, when walking – walking to find food, I found people calling me HMP. I do not know where it came from'. Fellow participants in her focus group nod in general agreement. The results of Collins and Ntakirutimana's (2017) questionnaire analysis further confirm this confusion. Looking at the responses to the question 'Do you know the meaning of HMP?', 67% of respondents either 'did not know' or were unsure of the term's meaning.

The 20% of respondents who claimed to have knowledge of the term did not provide a clear, singular interpretation (Collins and Ntakirutimana, 2017: 4). For example, the following is a sample of answers which Collins and Ntakirutimana received in response to a question that asked respondents to define 'Historically Marginalized People':

- A. A word cursed by god.
- B. A word showing that people should not have a seat at the table.
- C. An English word that means 'Twa' [response to reading the Kinyarwanda version of HMP].
- D. A word that implies a person has been discriminated against for a long time.
- E. A word showing that a person is physically short.
- F. Impoverished.
- G. Twa.⁸
- H. Left behind.⁹

Answers A, B and F imply a negative interpretation of the HMP label. Answers D and H offer more sterilized and 'official' definitions of the term, even if the interpretations are quite literal. Answer G, repeated six times by respondents, suggests a common view that HMP is synonymous with Twa, challenging the interpretation of Rwandan civil society, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, that HMP is an umbrella term that includes multiple groups. Answer C is perhaps the most telling as it unveils a view that the HMP label is something alien, unfamiliar and perhaps decidedly 'un-Rwandan'.

Despite this confusion, few participants displayed indifference towards the label, and many expressed open disdain for its continued use. Several respondents expressed pride in their identity as Twa, emphasizing that Twa are a peaceful and 'happy people' who avoid politics, and have always been victims of violence but never instigators (interview, Philibert, 2016). Twa participants contested and challenged the adoption of the HMP label in a number of ways. While some expressed a desire to be fully integrated into Rwandan society, and to be referred to simply as 'Rwandan', others wished to preserve their Twa identity and culture, and did not see this as incompatible with their Rwandan identity. Likewise, when asked: 'how would you preferred to be called?', 59% of Collins and Ntakirutimana's respondents answered, 'Twa', while only 19% answered 'HMP', 8% answered 'both' and 6% answered

⁸ 'Twa' was the response given by six participants, indicating that the label helps to identify them as an ethnicity.

⁹ This response was given by two participants.

'Rwandan' (2017: 2). In contrast, a select number of respondents expressed a preference to identify as 'Indigenous' or 'First peoples', tying their identity as Twa to the broader, transnational indigenous rights movement to encourage the government of Rwanda to recognize their rights to ancestral lands and natural resources, and their political status as a 'people' with a distinct identity and culture. Again, participants who espoused this perspective did not see their identity as indigenous Twa as incompatible with Rwandan national pride and identity.

The vast majority of participants in our research also expressed a positive view of the government's efforts to de-emphasize ethnicity and reduce social stigma in the post-genocide period. They were equally encouraging of the government's efforts to support HMP communities to achieve economic sustainability, and wished to see the government continue to engage with community leaders, activists and youth to improve the livelihood and well-being of Twa in Rwanda.

Testimonies from Three Twa Civil Society Leaders

As a corollary, we couple the results of our past fieldwork with the following personal testimonies from three Twa community leaders and activists (one of whom is a co-author of this paper): Richard Ntakirutimana, Delphine Uwajeneza and Justin Sebanani. All three activists work for the African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO), one of several grass-roots organizations in Rwanda that focuses on the development of the Twa.¹⁰ These testimonies provide key insights and a greater sense of context to the dominant narratives on unity and reconciliation created and enforced by the government, for their narratives and life histories allow us to observe how community activists of Rwanda's most marginal minority perceive and represent their own lived experiences of violence, dislocation, discrimination and personal triumph, as well as their interactions with government policy and practice.¹¹

¹⁰ All three contributors are proficient in English, and chose to give their testimony in English rather than French or Kinyarwanda. This follows the broader 'anglicization' of the Rwandan state and society, when English was adopted by the government as the official language of instruction in 2008 to increase foreign investment, economic development and technology transfer. See, for example, Samuelson (2010).

¹¹ Moreover, we recognize, as three authors one of whom is Twa and two white and Western, that it is essential to give space to the voices and stories that are overlooked and under-represented in the academy.

Richard's Story

I was born in Uganda in 1988. My great-grandfather lived in the court of the Mwami. In 1959, he went into exile together with Tutsi and the king because he was among the persons who was dancing for the king. In 1995, my grandfather and his family came back to Rwanda after the liberation war of 1994.¹² At that time, I was seven years old. I started my primary school at Rwisirabo primary school in 1996. Later on, I moved from Rwisirabo to Kizirakome primary school closer to my home after a new primary school was constructed. It was so difficult to me [*sic*] at that time because I was the only person from my family, not even just my family, but from my community, who was Twa and a student. I faced discrimination when I was in primary school. However, I was so proud and a very strong student. I was good in mathematics and science. The head of the school used to ask the students a question related to science or maths. Only the first pupil who answered the question correctly had the chance to go home early. Sometimes the head would slap the pupils. At the time, I was always the first person to answer the question and go home. Pupils could even fear to say in the class 'UMutwa aragikoze sha', meaning that Mutwa has done it. During the primary leaving examination, I was the first person in our school, which very unbelievable to me to be the first one at school. This has caused the mayor of the district to come to see me. I was proud and very happy.

Although it was very difficult to me to join secondary school, this was a dream to me. The Rwandese Community of Potters (CAURWA) at the time was paying school fees for the Twa children. I went to Kigali to CAURWA's office with my father. CAURWA provided me with a mattress, books and school fees. The person who welcomed me first at secondary school was the child who used to call me 'Mutwa'. That time it was completely different. He treated me very well, as his brother with full respect and love. I felt excited to meet my friends. We came to the same place and they help me to get beds and so on until I got familiar with everything. The situation of discrimination changed dramatically at secondary school. But to me, it

¹² Rwandans use a variety of terms to describe the four-year civil war between 1990 and 1994, which ended in the Genocide against the Tutsi. The terms used to frame discussions of 1994 are sometimes revealing in terms of indexing ethnicity, and estimating one's support of the current RPF leadership. The official term used by the government of Rwanda to describe the civil war is 'the liberation war' or 'the liberation struggle', to emphasize the RPF's 'liberation' of the Rwandan people from a corrupt Hutu dictatorship in 1994. Rwandans 'show gratitude' for the sacrifices of Rwandan Patriotic Army soldiers on 4 July during the annual National Liberation Day celebrations (Mutesi, 2017).

was because of the good government which was teaching students to work together not discriminating against each other. The rules and regulations at schools were not tolerant of any discrimination based on colour, ethnic identity, etc.

I am among Twa students who received a university scholarship from the Ministry of Local Government. The scholarship was fruitful to me and has changed my life because it gave me a bachelor's degree. I used this degree to get funding for my Master's degree in Human Rights and Democratization at the University of Pretoria. I received my degree in December 2017, and became the first Mutwa man in Rwanda to have a Master's. I am very proud of this. The security and peace brought by the RPF government have become a point of departure for Batwa/Historically Marginalized People to receive sunlight like other Rwandans. I am keeping strong now. When I pass by people, what they say is, 'Look at that educated Twa', which is good for me because everything is possible when there is equality for everyone.

Delphine's Story

My name is Uwajeneza Delphine, and I am a Historically Marginalized Person, formally known as Mutwa. I am 30 years old and the mother of three children. I was born in 1988, before the genocide.

My father, mother and uncles studied in hard conditions where other children used to beat them at school for being Twa. My uncles retired from school early because of being afraid of other children. I remember one day my mum told us how her classmates took her school uniform and put it in water. When my mum came, she asked why they took her clothes into the water. 'We don't want you here. You are Mutwa. You must go and make pots', replied her classmates. She was poor, and she made pots after school in order to get something to eat. However, even with these struggles, my parents continued in school. This is why they encouraged us to continue no matter how hard [the] situation is. When I joined the school too, my teacher beat me every day. In addition, he always told me that he must beat me because no one should come and save me. He terrorized me as well when I was in nursery school. I was the only Twa in our community because my parents studied and they knew how important education was, but to other Twa families, it was nothing.

After the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, I was six years old. I went into Primary One. The children kept saying to me and my three brothers that we are Batwa, and Batwa don't have knowledge. What we know is making pots only. They sometimes beat us at school, but we didn't stop studying. For me, I studied with the goal of buying a car and one day I had a dream of

going to my village in my own car with my parents. But the others pointed fingers at me and told me that no Mutwa should study. They ordered me to leave. There was so much discrimination in my village. Even if we were intelligent, they didn't care. We tried to put on clean clothes and they said that even if we put on those clothes, we are still Batwa, 'Do you understand how bad those people are?'

When I arrived in secondary school, the other children said that everyone who does bad things is Mutwa. This caused me to become angry because I felt like I am alone and the worst in our society. I tried so hard in order to finish the school. After my schooling, I started my work in 2012, but I didn't think about marrying a man who is not Mutwa because I saw what happened to my aunt. Her fiancé took her [to meet his] family and they said that they can't have her as their daughter-in-law because she is Mutwa. They say that Batwa are the ones who steal, shout and disobey. They say we are dishonest and have other bad behaviours. This is the reason the man refuses to marry my aunt. I too choose to live only with Mutwa because I saw many bad things happen to those in my community. I was very sad because I couldn't do anything for them.

After getting a job, I told people many times that I am Mutwa, and I am proud of being Mutwa. I saw many cases where people violated my community, but because my community is voiceless, nothing happens. Some authorities come and take their cows and give it to other people. They also built bad houses, which makes me unhappy. This is the reason why I went to study law and become a judge. I need to show those who discouraged me that Twa are also able to do what they do, and through my advocacy work with AIMPO, I will continue to raise my voice to help those who still are still seeing discrimination and marginalization, and advocate for punishment for those who are doing this. Thank you so much.

Justin's Story

When I was growing up and saw other people, especially our neighbours, call us Batwa, I didn't know it had to do with our ethnicity. I took it as an insult for someone who looked ignorant, stupid, or any person who is vulnerable. For example, during my education, anyone who didn't perform well in class was told that they looked like they came from a Batwa community, and this was after the genocide until 2006 when I was prepared to finish my primary school. I remember that Tutsi and other powerful Hutu farmers brought their cows to graze in our gardens, which grew potatoes, sorghum, beans, etc., and we weren't allowed to claim reimbursement for our crops because we

would have risked being beaten by them as well as by the authorities, since they were often related.

Because of hard times, I didn't want to continue my studies in secondary school. I didn't see any of my extended family finishing primary school and there wasn't any Mutwa encouraging me to continue studying. I was discouraged from studying and sometimes I wanted to drop out of school completely, but it didn't happen in the end because of my mum's courage. She always told me that I needed to support the family, and by chance I succeeded in passing the national exam in order to finish my secondary school. I finished my secondary schooling and got a full university scholarship from the Ministry of Local Government through a programme that helped Batwa students who finished secondary school move on to studying a Bachelor's degree. I finished my studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences, in the Department of Development Studies.

I started talking about my history to show the change that happened for me and my family compared to before. I got a great chance to start volunteering with AIMPO, an organization that fights for the rights and interests of the HMP Batwa community to which I belong, after my time at university. So, this has given me hope that my childhood dream to develop my community will become a reality, as I took the first step to reach my goal.

Through volunteering, I've learned a lot but I was, and still am, interested in advocating for vulnerable people in my community across the country through our radio programme that we started at AIMPO to raise awareness about the challenges facing Batwa communities. Basically, one of the AIMPO team goes with a radio journalist to a Batwa community and during the show we [staff from AIMPO] discuss the issues faced by that particular community. We use the time to show the relevant local authorities what issues there are and how to improve them. The radio programme is having an impact on the communities we engage with. I'm already proud of being part of this programme but it's even better to see results.

Because of the many field visits and surveys that I carried out with AIMPO, we found that there are so many Batwa around the country who are still struggling from poverty, landlessness, homelessness, illiteracy and more. I can say that there is a little bit of improvement made on living conditions thanks to the government. But we can't say that it has been enough. Government, donors and NGOs should emphasize Batwa issues and take them on as an exceptional case in order to help the Batwa reach the standard of living that other Rwandans enjoy now.

Let us work together on Batwa issues in order to rehabilitate and integrate us into Rwandan society. So long as we continue to treat the Batwa as just other 'poor people', our problems will not be solved. It is not a case of

opposing what the government has done for us, like distributing livestock [cows] to Batwa households or giving us homes, because the problems are not just cows or houses. Why aren't Batwa children given free education? Why do Batwa with undergraduate and graduate degrees have such difficulty finding jobs? Why aren't communities given or, at least, loaned land? All of these are the key issues that must be taken into consideration in order to improve the livelihoods of the Batwa.

For me, seeing all Batwa children attending school is a major change to the situation as it was before the genocide. The problem is that even if these children try to integrate into society like others, there will always be the challenge that we have no land to call our own.

Concluding Remarks

Stepping back, the Twa are not confined to the borders of Rwanda. Rather, the Twa of Equatorial Africa,¹³ and the Great Lakes region in particular, share comparable narratives of discrimination and marginalization, owing to their forest-dwelling lifestyles and/or physical characteristics. In this sense, it is important to point out that their marginalization in Rwanda is by no means isolated, and this chapter makes no attempt to exceptionalize the Twa of Rwanda. Rather, we aim to reveal the gap in the post-genocide era in relation to policy and academic discourse that centres on the narratives, histories and well-being of the Twa. With the exception of a handful of academic papers produced over the past 24 years, the Twa have received only a footnote in the abundance of analysis surrounding the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and resulting fascination with Rwanda's past. It is of the utmost importance that Twa narratives are not only brought into future papers on the Banyarwanda, but also that Twa voices are given the space and opportunity to speak for themselves.¹⁴ Doing so would provide fuller and more complex narratives of the Banyarwanda, as Twa histories intersect with those of the Hutu and Tutsi.

The government's use of the term 'Historically Marginalized People', though, as a way of avoiding divisive terminology and as a possible means of identifying and integrating the Twa via positive discrimination, needs to be revisited. Without nuance and consultation with the Twa, socio-economic assistance, like knowledge production, will likely continue to show few

¹³ There are various forest peoples known as 'Twa' across Equatorial Africa.

¹⁴ Given the many barriers to accessing platforms of privilege within the academy and the specific expertise and knowledge found within Twa communities, we recommend that practitioners and academics adopt a community-collaborative methodology to produce Twa-designed and Twa-accessible outputs.

positive results, while straining relations between the Twa and their non-Twa neighbours who view such HMP programming as wasted resources. More than this, this label without official qualification continues to raise the quintessential question: How have the Twa been historically marginalized? To answer this, we call for the chance and space for Twa communities to explain their histories. From their ongoing struggle with the derivatives of the Pygmoid race myth to their roles in the Tutsi monarchy, to their history of dispossession from ancestral lands, to their intergenerational practices of *intwawa* music and dance and pottery, we must begin to fit the missing pieces into the large discussion of unity and reconciliation amongst the Banyarwanda.

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