8 Ingando

Re-educating the Perpetrators in the Aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide

Suzanne Hoeksema

Thirteen years after the Rwandan genocide of 1994, thousands of prisoners accused of genocidal crimes were transferred to ingando solidarity camps for re-education and rehabilitation before being released. The six-week stay in *ingando* followed a decade in prison. How can we understand *ingando* solidarity camps in post-genocide Rwanda, and what impact does ingando have on its participants? For eleven weeks, I followed nineteen men and two women during and after their transit from prison to home. They were charged with lower-category crimes, such as burglary, pillaging, causing bodily harm, and in some cases, complicity to murder. Before 1994, they were farmers, tailors, shopkeepers, teachers or chauffeurs. In the absence of an operating judiciary, their cases had not been investigated. After having passed through *ingando*, they would come up before the *gacaca* village courts. The National Community and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) was in charge of organizing the *ingando* camps. My research shows that Rwandan society, including the ex-prisoners themselves, consider the *ingando* a transit space. *Ingando* presents the new order of wrong and right; the period of genocide is an evil episode in a bright past. Ex-prisoners appreciated the practical information about work, housing, and health, but they also felt humiliated, indoctrinated, and stigmatized. Based on the stories of ex-prisoners, this chapter interprets the *ingando* 'passage' using three different levels: the political, social, and psychological.

A wide range of authors have focused on the historical context and causes of the Rwandan genocide, the documentation of the genocide from the perspective of the survivors as well as the perpetrators, the role of the international community and the United Nations, the aftermath of the genocide and the politics of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, and the various tools for justice and reconciliation that the government has applied. Except for one study, there are no scholarly publications on the *ingando* solidarity camps.¹ The following chapter in this volume will deal with aspects of

¹ Susan Thomson, "Re-education for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on Ingando", in: Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (eds.), Reconstructing Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights

ingando within a broader analysis of transitional justice mechanisms in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a well-trained rebel army of exiled Tutsi living in Uganda, invaded Rwanda in October 1990 and fought a bitter civil war against the regime of Habyarimana. In April 1994, after an airplane of Habyarimana was shot down in Kigali, the war suddenly escalated into the large-scale killing of Tutsi and moderate Hutu at the hands of the extremist Hutu militiamen. In July 1994, the RPF was able to put an end to the genocide, which had killed an estimated 800,000 Rwandans. The genocide and the failure of the international community to intervene are at the core of RPF's political legitimacy. In front of national and international audiences, the RPF portrayed itself as the liberator of Rwanda. A new national identity replaced the former ethnic categories, and divisive speech (such as using the words 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi') was penalized. The government encouraged the adoption of this new national identity by introducing a new flag, creating the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, inaugurating a national Liberation Day, setting up re-education camps (ingando) to learn about Rwandan culture, and holding ceremonies to commemorate the genocide and to disseminate the message of Never Again.

The (Re-)Invention of *Ingando*

Ingando is the beginning. There we cut the weed and plant the seeds.2

According to the Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), *ingando* originates from the old tradition of *kugandika*, meaning "a halt to one's usual preoccupations to contemplate issues of great national concern such as war and disaster". Unofficially, *ingando* is said to originate from *kugandura*, meaning "to change, to give another image, like repainting an old house". Change may also mean inner change or retrospection. "The *ingando* used to be a place to retreat and rethink one's life, it was meant to enrich oneself with knowledge, to deal with the challenges of life." Most likely the first *ingando*s of national concern were organized in the

after Mass Violence (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), pp. 331-9. Chi Mgbako, "Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda" in: *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol. 18 (2005), p. 201.

- 2 Interview with Clémence, officer at RDRC office in Ruhengeri, 28-05-2007.
- 3 Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 7.
- 4 Interview with Serge, 25-year-old ex-prisoner, 07-05-2007.
- 5 Interview with Christophe, ex-combatant, Mutobo, 07-05-2007.

nineteenth century by the *mwami*, the Rwandan king, to mobilize young men for battle. Young peasants and cattle-keepers were taught discipline, patriotism, and "true Rwandanness" to resist the enemy. In contrast to most other African states, in Rwanda a sense of national consciousness existed long before colonization due to the centralized administration of the kingdom. The *ingando* lost its relevance and legitimacy during Belgian colonial rule, as the governors were quite suspicious of these "royal military training camps". When Rwanda became independent in 1959, *ingando* was formally abolished by the ruling Hutu elite, just as most other traditions that were associated with the (Tutsi) monarchy.

Whereas inside Rwanda the practice of *ingando* disappeared, the rebel movement Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) recruited young men for a revolutionary war against the Habyarimana regime very much in the same *ingando* style as the *mwami* recruited his soldiers a century ago. RPF's revolutionary thought was (and still is) based on a type of nationalist romanticism that is typical of refugee communities. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the RPF recruited thousands of soldiers among Rwandan refugees whose parents had fled during the 1959 massacres. RPF training curricula contained a high degree of ideological spirit to create togetherness among the combatants, who had grown up in Uganda, Congo, Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Europe, and the United States. Knowledge of Rwandan history and culture was an essential part of the military training. Tanzania.

Different understandings of *ingando* exist among Rwandans. Genocide survivor Simon said that "once it [*ingando*] meant the search for solutions, now it means the presentation of solutions. The new *ingando* is much more organized from above". One of the few scholars who did fieldwork on *ingando*, Chi Mgbako, states very clearly that "the government claims that *ingando* is simply an updated version of Rwandan tradition, [but] *ingando* in its present form appears to be a modern RPF political creation that serves to

⁶ Paul Nantulya, Evaluation and Impact Assessment of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. Executed by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (Kigali 2004).

⁷ Eveline de Bruijne, Ingando. Internship Report, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (2005) 11.

⁸ Liisa Malkki illustrates and analyzes the phenomenon of exile nationalism in her book, Purity and exile: Violence, memory, and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania (Chicago 1995). Another example is Halleh Ghorashi, Ways to Survive Battles to Win. Iranian Women Exiles in the Netherlands and the United States (New York, 2003).

⁹ Former employee of Congolese sensitization program of Rwandan Patriotic Front.

¹⁰ Eveline de Bruijne, *Ingando*. Internship Report, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

¹¹ Conversation with Simon, 28-year-old genocide survivor, Kigali Province, 02-04-2007.

consolidate the RPF's power."¹² She does not deny that indigenous practices certainly have the potential to provide fertile ground from which reconciliation processes may bloom, but in the process of reinforcing the nation, the RPF – similar to other post-colonial governments – has an interest in 're-inventing traditions' that legitimize current forms of social control or practice. Additionally, the government's appeal to culture may be an attempt to "de-emphasize the political utility of *ingando* as a mechanism of pro-RPF ideological indoctrination".¹³

Ingando Today

Rwanda is a small and landlocked country. From hilltop chief to king or president, the country has always been sophisticatedly and centrally organized.¹⁴ Top-down rule provides the ruler with far-reaching control over the population. Because local leaders at all administrative levels need to follow their superior leaders to retain their position, the ruling party's power was – and still is – felt in the farthest corners of the country. 15 Gérard Prunier speaks of a "Rwandan political tradition" through the ages before, during, and after colonialism as "one of systematic, centralized and unconditional obedience to authority". 16 This unquestioned obedience to authority has not changed after the genocide. Rwandans perceive themselves and their surrounding world in collective terms of the community and not as independent individuals. Yet, the community of which one is now a member and with which one must identify has changed. The principal community to which one is supposed to contribute has been stretched to the nation-state. Rwanda's post-genocide nationalism aims to overcome Hutu and Tutsi divisions by reinventing national culture, history, and symbolism. One particular place where this reinvention takes place is ingando.

¹² Chi Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18 (2005), 202-224, q.v. 208.

¹³ Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps', 208.

¹⁴ In 2007, there are five *provinces*: Northern Province, Western Province, Eastern Province, Southern Province and Kigali Province. Each province has been divided in about five *districts*, each district includes a similar number of *sectors*, each sector covers several *villages*, each village contains a few *imidugudu*, which is the lowest administrative level, containing a hundred households. Every level has its own leaders and all leaders have to answer to higher levels for their tasks.

¹⁵ For information on Habyarimana's one-party system, see for example ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998, Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu, 'Historical context of the events in Rwanda 1994'.

16 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 141-142.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission called upon a period of *kugandika* (reconsideration) after the shock of the 1994 genocide and the displacement of millions of people.¹⁷ It was believed that the traumatization and mixture of ideologies would result in renewed hatred and bloodshed.¹⁸ Therefore, "*ingando* offers the opportunity to people from various backgrounds to come together for some time to share common programmes or exercises and [share] the mutual consensus on the causes of Rwandan conflicts, historical disunity, good governance and subsequently discovering a way towards lasting peace, unity and socio-economic development".¹⁹

Today's ingando is designed to eliminate "bad" and "divisive" ideologies and correct "historical and ethnic distortions". 20 History education and the "redefinition" of ethnicity are central to the *ingando* program. Moreover, the ingando is meant to give Rwandans a "proper and positive understanding of politics as a way of managing the society and not as a dirty game". 21 Another objective of *ingando* is to help local leaders "transcend petty thinking and raise them to a new level of competence in the best interest of Rwandans".22 The ingando activities and curricula aim to "inculcate healthy, liberated minds with a clear vision about issues of national interest and development". 23 The NURC and RPF use a heavily polarized discourse: 'distorted' versus 'positive' ideology and 'petty thinking' versus 'liberated mind'. Negative words such as 'racist', 'genocidal', and 'divisive' are ascribed to the previous government; positive words such as 'united', 'peaceful', and 'clean' refer to the RPF government. Ingando has tailor-made programs for special target groups: politicians, businessmen, teachers, students, demobilised soldiers, and released prisoners. This article only focuses on released prisoners.

The Prisoners of Ingando

By 1999, thousands of alleged genocidaires were being kept in overcrowded prisons. The situation was unbearable. Rwanda had no justice system that was able to handle such a massive number of (real and imagined) perpetrators. The government decided to gradually release prisoners and have

¹⁷ Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 7. Note that only the labels 'perpetrators' and 'victims' are used.

¹⁸ Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 7-8.

¹⁹ NURC, 'The ingando concept and its syllabus reform', NURC documents (2004).

²⁰ Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 10.

²¹ Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 11.

²² Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 11.

²³ Ndangiza, 'Community Sensitization: Case of Ingando in Rwanda', 11.

them tried in the public *gacaca* sessions. The first release (21,385 prisoners) followed the presidential pardon in January 2003. In 2005 (22,678 prisoners) and 2007 (10,000), similar acts of release were carried out. ²⁴ The majority of these prisoners were men between thirty and fifty years of age, poorly educated, who had been farmers or craftsmen before the genocide. They were classified as second-, third- or fourth-category genocide perpetrators, meaning they participated in raids, robberies, pillaging, and also killings in 1994. ²⁵ They were not ringleaders of the genocide. Most of them were arrested between 1994 and 1998 after accusations by their neighbors and by genocide survivors, and some were taken to prison without an explanation. The arrests were often violent and sometimes involved the kidnapping and killing of family members. ²⁶ Memories of arrests were therefore painful and traumatic, with those who had been arrested displaying a deep fear of RPF soldiers and the current government.

Prisoners had to confess their crimes in order to be released.²⁷ The confession was to be assessed by the *gacaca* judges and the community members. When the confession was deemed true, an appropriate punishment was given, taking into account the years already spent in prison. This could be in the form of a financial compensation to the victims or community service like the construction of houses and schools.²⁸ All exprisoners knew they had to pass through *ingando* before going home, but few knew what it actually meant. "The smell of freedom was so attractive, we did not even think about *ingando*. We would have done anything to be released, so we just went there and put on a show, even willing to sing the praises of the president."²⁹ *Ingando* had to function as a transit phase between prison and home. *Ingando* is the place "where genocidal ideologies

²⁴ The 2003 act of release and its consequences have been reported by Felix Muramutsa of the League of Human Rights for People in the Great Lakes Region, 'Etats des Lieux de la Liberation de certains Detenus, suite au Communiqué de la Présidence de la Republique du Rwanda du 1^{er} Janvier 2003' (Kigali 2006).

 $^{2^{}nd}$ category perpetrators are those accused of committing one or more killings during the genocide but who were not ringleaders; 3^{rd} category perpetrators are those who committed assaults without the intention to kill; 4^{th} category perpetrators are those accused of looting or destroying property.

²⁶ Interviews in Kigali Province with Eugène (27-03-2007), Jean-Baptiste (03-04-2007), Moses (09-04-2007), Vincent (13-04-2007) and Boniface (30-03-2007).

²⁷ Most ex-prisoners said that they had participated in the plundering and robbing of houses and fields. Only rarely did they confess to having killed. See also Hatzfeld, *Machete Season*, about the psychology of the perpetrators in Rwanda.

²⁸ The practicing of the gacaca courts is well illustrated in the documentary of Bernard Bellefroid, 'Rwanda – Les Collines Parlent' (Belgium 2005).

²⁹ Interview with Léon, 38-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 16-05-2007.

have to be eliminated"³⁰ and "where those men learn to live as humans, not as animals".³¹

The ex-prisoners explained their transit through *ingando* in different ways. Jean Baptiste, one of the prisoners accused of robbery, said that "we really had to change, because the genocide made a mess of us. In the camp, we got new ideologies for a new society... I learned so many things. I think I know more about my country than my neighbours!"³² Boniface, on the contrary, said: "They just want to wash our brains [and] empty our minds and fill them with new ideas. As if we are children! It is only to serve the current power."³³ In general, younger participants (25-35) were more positive than older participants (40-55).

A Day in Ingando

By 2007, every province has its own *ingando* solidarity camp, each hosting around 2,000 ex-prisoners. The camps I had access to were *Kinyinya* in Kigali province and *Iduha* in Eastern province, located in a remote valley. The place felt like a quiet refugee settlement. The women's area was divided from the men's area by an assembly hall made of wooden sticks where lectures and cultural activities were organized. A few other tents contained a simple kitchen, a grocery shop, and a bathing spot. The camp was not a prison, as the territory was not surrounded by wire or fences, but nonetheless the inmates were closely watched by soldiers and the local defence officers. The atmosphere was tense.³⁴

The morning was meant for community work. Ex-prisoners constructed houses for genocide survivors living in the neighborhood. Most interviewees were happy to use their bodies and energy with a purpose. For those who had confessed and shown remorse (which was a minority), building a house for a survivor was felt as atonement and a reconciliatory gesture. The afternoon brought education. Ex-prisoners were taught about HIV/Aids, gender equality, conflict management, modern farming, and entrepreneurship,

³⁰ Conversation with Noel, 4th year student KIST, about the purpose of *ingando* for ex-prisoners, Kigali City, 05-04-2007.

³¹ Conversation with Germaine, female genocide survivor, about the purpose of *ingando* for ex-prisoners, Kigali Province, 05-05-2007.

³² Conversation with Jean Baptiste, thirty-nine-year-old ex-prisoner, two weeks after *ingando*, Kigali Province, o6-o4-2007.

³³ Conversation with Boniface, 34-year-old ex-prisoner, one month after *ingando*, Kigali Province, 28-04-2007.

³⁴ Observations, ingando Kinyinya, Kigali Province, 14-03-2007.

³⁵ Interview with Marcel, 50-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 17-04-2007.

which were appreciated by most participants, especially those without an educational background. The gatherings were very much a collective experience. Participants were told to applaud enthusiastically after every lecture, which contributed to an uncanny atmosphere. The evening was filled with culture. Ex-prisoners sat together, sang songs, and danced traditional dances. These activities were meant to stimulate togetherness and 'Rwandanness' but had a rather involuntary character.

Shaping the National Narrative

Ingando aims to address the 'roots of the genocide'. The root causes of the genocide, as explained by the RPF government, are to be found in the Belgian occupation and their ethnopolitics. Ethnic identification must be removed from the national consciousness and the identification with the Rwandan nation. Therefore, *ingando* camps pay attention to the 'elimination' of ethnicity and the 'correction' of genocidal ideologies that have 'possessed' the minds of the perpetrators. Genocidal ideology is seen as an external threat to unity and reconciliation and can therefore be 'eliminated' by treatment. The new history is one of pre-colonial Rwandan unity, of peaceful coexistence among the different groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa). The old history of racism and divisiveness had to be revised. This revision starts in *ingando*.

Age, religiosity, and education explain the extent to which my informants accepted the new historical conduct. Young, religious, and uneducated ex-prisoners embraced the new story: it gave them comfort and relieved them from the burden of individual guilt. They now say they fell victim to a trick of history. Bernard explained: "When I was a child, I was told about the differences [between Rwandans]. The majority [Hutu] should rule the country; that is what we learned in school. Now I see we are just the same, members of one nation. We should forget about ethnicity completely. [...] We were taught to kill, and we did. Now we are taught to reunite, and we will do so."36 This type of ex-prisoner is pragmatic. They accept the new discourse in exchange for security. Female ex-prisoners in particular felt a strong wish to return to a normality: "I just want to forget about all this. My children missed me long enough [...] I want them to grow up without fear and violence, without knowing about Hutu or Tutsi. I will tell my children what they told me in there [in *ingando*], because they need to know these things."37

³⁶ Interview with Bernard, 30-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 18-05-2007.

³⁷ Interview with Rose-Marie, 47-year-old female ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 18-05-2007.

The second type of ex-prisoner was older, better educated, enjoyed a higher social status before the genocide, and was more openly critical of the RPF regime. They did not confess. It was difficult to assess their innocence or guilt; their attitude shifted from cautious criticism to genocide denial. Theonèste, a forty-year-old ex-prisoner, described the large-scale imprisonment of Hutu men (1994-1998) as 'biological genocide': "Guilty or not, every healthy Hutu in his twenties was put in prison. We all thought the RPF would come and kill us. They didn't kill us. But did we live?"³⁸ The perceived victimization of Hutu as a people was central to the justification of their misery.

The new narrative about the genocide and pre-colonial harmony was confusing; it did not correspond with the old story, what they were once told and taught: "My parents always told me that [before the Belgian occupation] this time was full of injustice, but now they tell us we all lived in harmony. About [what happened in] 1959, we used to say this was a revolution to overthrow the monarchy, but now we hear this was the starting point of the genocide. So can you [pointing at me] tell me what is true? Was my teacher lying to me? Was our government that led us through many good years as bad as they tell me now?"39 They (want to) remember pre-1990 Rwanda as peaceful and prosperous. Every discussion between Hutu and Tutsi boils down to the same thing: responsibility. 40 Who is to blame for the genocide? For the fate of Rwanda? The ex-prisoners look for arguments to shake off the burden of collective guilt: "they attacked us", "we were misled", "it is the bazungu". 41 The colonial argument gives comfort and justification. This narrative puts responsibility outside the individual and even outside national borders, enabling coexistence with oneself and with fellow nationals.

For the second type of ex-prisoner, the new history was a masquerade. They were bitter and disillusioned, and scoffed at the *ingando* history lessons: "The ten-cow story is a myth. The Hutu were the servants, the housekeepers of the Tutsi. We carried the Tutsi on our shoulders! There was a reason for the '59 genocide, we should not forget that. We suffered double colonisation, [...] the Belgians were invisible, the bazungu didn't bring the division, it was the Tutsi who dominated us". 42 This narrative does not

³⁸ Interview with Theonèste, 40-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 16-05-2007.

³⁹ Interview with Moses, 35-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 09-04-2007.

⁴⁰ Eltringham, Accounting for Horror, 177.

⁴¹ See similar justifications in Hatzfeld, Machete Season.

⁴² Interview with Boniface, 34-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 28-04-2007.

necessarily mean these men were all Hutu extremists. They were critical of all authoritarian regimes, including the Habyarimana government. "The dance is just the same, it is the dancers who have changed." 143

The evenings in *ingando* were devoted to songs, dances, and plays in which Rwandan culture was celebrated in order to create a "sense of Rwandanness inside the hearts of the perpetrators". The songs honored the new regime and its achievements of peace, national unity, and reconciliation. Singing together is energizing and emotional; they provide a safe space for sharing feelings of hope, pride, and friendship. When repeatedly chanted, songs are also powerful for indoctrinating purposes.

"The songs we were singing really helped me to clean [my mind], it made me feel happy. We sang about unity and reconciliation and I wanted to believe these words [...] But I did not like the songs about the liberation war [of the RPF] because it was our defeat, not our liberation. It made me feel weak." The polarization between the liberators and the defeated was apparent in all songs. Singing the praises of the victors' superiority made many ex-prisoners feel inferior. The perception of collective humiliation of Hutu was a powerful element of Hutu extremism and may find another fertile ground in these songs.

The atmosphere was tense. David recalls: "We had no choice. If we did not go there [assembly point] we would get punished. So we just went there and sang these songs. Of course we did not complain, we did not want to ruin our release." They had to sing songs repeatedly while standing straight and clapping hands for hours with an empty stomach. "They [authorities] wanted to make us feel ridiculous. It was not only very tiring, it was just indoctrination. The way we had to stand there every night touches the brain, the heart and the stomach […] Due to the bad food in prison many of us have aching eyes and bones, but we still had to go." ¹⁴⁶

The believer type, however, loved singing and dancing together. For them, the closing ceremony after six weeks of *ingando* was much appreciated. At the ceremony in the Kinyinya *ingando*, two thousand ex-prisoners sat together in the assembly hall covered with orange canvas and waited for the authorities to speak: the secretary executive of NURC and the mayor of Kigali. The speeches were full of positive energy but also patronizing. The

⁴³ Interview with Boniface, 34-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 31-03-2007.

⁴⁴ Interview with Léon, 38-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 16-05-2007.

⁴⁵ Interview with David, 59-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 02-05-2007.

⁴⁶ Interview with Gérard, 44-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 25-05-2007.

ex-prisoners were addressed as children.⁴⁷ They were instructed to applaud after every speech while shouting "*nibyiza*!", meaning "good".

Ex-prisoners who confessed and showed remorse were more willing to accept the new narrative and considered the singing and dancing as a positive experience. For them, *ingando* is a *rite de passage*, the ethnographic term used for rituals marking a change in a person's social status. ⁴⁸ *Rites de passage* have three phases: separation, liminality, and incorporation. The *ingando* camp is the liminal phase – no longer a prisoner, not yet a citizen – and feels like redemption or purification: "It [*ingando*] really changed me. I feel so much better now. These negative thoughts in me are gone. I do not even feel like a Hutu anymore." The transition was described as a passage from wrong to right, dirty to clean, and even from blind to 'able to see'. Ex-prisoners appear to see *ingando* as having a quasi mystic dimension, being experienced as a sort of purgatory through which everybody must pass. ⁵⁰ The *ingando* is imagined as a filter, not only by ex-prisoners but also by authorities and survivors. The wish "I hope they come out clean" was a common expression among genocide survivors.

Ingando wants to civilize or re-civilize its participants into proud Rwandan nationals: "The *ingando* made me feel Rwandan as something to be proud of. I felt like shit in prison, unwanted and useless. Now they say they want to develop the country. They need us."⁵¹ The sceptical type did not want to be healed, educated, or civilized. They explained the "obsession with national unity" as ongoing 'Tutsification'.

After the Camp

The return of ex-prisoners was often disappointing: "The house I started to build is gone now, the land is taken by a neighbour and my wife had left me for another man. Where to start?" Children did not recognize them,

⁴⁷ This approach was not only used towards ex-prisoners. Reyntjes quoted the former general secretary of the NURC, Aloysia Unyumba: "The ordinary citizens are like babies. They will need to be completely educated before we can talk about democracy". See Reyntjes, 'From Genocide to Dictatorship', 182-183.

⁴⁸ Often ceremonies surrounding events such as childbirth, menarche, or other milestones within puberty, coming of age, weddings, menopause, and death.

⁴⁹ Interview with Marcel, 50-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 17-04-2007.

⁵⁰ PRI, 'Gacaca Report VI', 19.

⁵¹ Interview with Regine, 46-year-old female ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 13-05-2007.

⁵² Interview with Daniel, 39 -year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 02-05-2007.

family members felt ashamed, neighbors took their land, survivors were scared and suspicious. Ex-prisoners were outcasts. The stigma of prison has had deep personal and social consequences for both the ex-prisoner and his relatives. Poverty is the most poignant problem for ex-prisoners. Until their case is handled by the *gacaca* judges, they cannot apply for jobs nor buy a piece of land. They depend on their family. *Urugo rubi rurutwa na gereza*, they say,: "you are better off in prison than in a poor family". Poverty in Rwanda is a serious obstacle to durable peace. This is what Eugenia Zorbas calls the "you-can't-eat-peace argument". Rose-Marie, who spent eleven years in prison, explained: "What does this security mean when there is no security for the stomach?" Her friend Regine agreed: "Hunger does not bring us [Hutu and Tutsi] together, it makes us envious and greedy." 55

The image of a new Rwanda portrayed in *ingando* appeared to be an illusion. Ex-prisoners could not access the promised seed money to start up a small business: "There [in *ingando*] they said they'd help me to restart my tailor business. I lost my sewing machine in the war, so I went to the local office to ask about possibilities to buy or rent one. The officers didn't know about this arrangement, they sent me away, saying I was cheating." The attitude of local authorities was problematic; the gap between the government's words and deeds caused frustration and fear. The villages in the Kigali province are more heterogeneous than before the genocide. Now '59 Tutsi refugees, returned '94-'96 Hutu refugees, Tutsi (and some Hutu) genocide survivors, genocide perpetrators, Francophone as well as Anglophone Rwandans all live among each other. Ex-prisoners felt insecure in this new social reality with sifted power structures they did not understand. I will shortly display the interaction with survivors, local authorities, and the local defence.

The sector's office was responsible for informing and preparing genocide survivors about returning prisoners, but the office did not always do its job well. Too often, survivors were taken by surprise and felt very upset. In the villages where local leaders did prepare the community in a sensitive manner, the atmosphere was less tense. Some local leaders organized meetings between survivors and prisoners, where survivors were given the opportunity to ask questions about what happened to their family

⁵³ See also Ervin Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity (New York: 1963).

⁵⁴ Interview with Rose-Marie, 47-year-old female ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 18-05-2007.

⁵⁵ Interview with Regine, 46-year-old female ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 13-05-2007.

⁵⁶ Interview with Eugene, 44-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 07-06-2007.

members. Only the confessor type attended these meetings. The refuser type complained that survivors were inventing accusations, just to get money out of them.⁵⁷ In some cases, indeed, these sessions including *gacaca* hearings have been used for revenge, blackmail, and intimidation.⁵⁸

Ex-prisoners did not always understand they had to play an active role in the 'reconciliation'. "Why don't they stop accusing me? I thought it was reconciliation time! Let us just forget about everything". ⁵⁹ The returned prisoners discovered that *ingando* had not prepared them for real life, but for a life that did not (yet) exist. The lion's share of the leading positions in the villages are taken by '59 Tutsi returnees, because they were close to the RPF and because in the aftermath of the genocide there was no one else left to run the country. The new inhabitants did not match easily with the Rwandans – both Hutu and Tutsi – who had lived in those villages for decades. Growing envy frustrated them as the newcomers had clearly open access to leading functions and fertile pieces of land.

Ex-prisoners felt very uncomfortable when local authorities were around. Voices and faces changed quickly when village mayors approached. Every Friday, all ex-prisoners had to report to the sector's office. When office manager John was around, ex-prisoners were timid and submissive. Boniface recalls: "These men [of the sector office], you can just see they are nasty people. Especially that one who is counting us every Friday. He feels so superior. He knows he has power and we have not." Jean-Baptiste also said that the "Friday-man acts this way, because he won the war. Now he thinks he can treat us like animals." When I spoke to office manager John about the ex-prisoners he was supervising, he said that "those men are killers. They even killed babies. How monstrous. Look at them. They have nothing but a shirt and shorts, that's just what they deserve."

⁵⁷ Interview with Jean-Baptiste, Kigali Province, o6-04-2006; interview with Moses, Kigali Province, o9-04-2007; interview with Boniface, Kigali Province, 28-04-2007.

⁵⁸ Observations of gacaca session, Kacyru, Kigali City, 10-05-2007. See Human Rights Watch, 'Rwanda: Gacaca Trial Condemns Activist to Prison', 30 May (2007), Website Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org.

⁵⁹ Comment by an ex-prisoner in the documentary "In Rwanda we say the family that does not speak dies" from Anne Aghion, used by the NGO Réseau de Citoyens (RCN) Justice et Democratie in *ingando* sessions for ex-prisoners. RCN is one of the few NGOs in Rwanda that has gained access to the *ingando* camps.

⁶⁰ Interview with Boniface, 24-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 28-04-2007.

⁶¹ Interview with Jean-Baptise, 39-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 02-05-2007.

⁶² Conversation with James, head of executive of administrative sector, Kigali Province, 27-04-2007.

In public discourse, there is no space for variety and nuance: victims are victims, killers are killers. Society portrays the ex-prisoners as a homogeneous group of genocidaires, a term only used for Hutu. 63 How can they be human? Just like office manager John, the official narrative dehumanizes genocidaires as 'animals' or 'psychopaths' or at least something very unlike the Good Rwandan Citizen. Subjects of dehumanization, however, could turn into 'dehumanizers' themselves, as Rwandan history has shown. The term 'genocidaire' was considered by ex-prisoners as 'verbal revenge'. One ex-prisoner called Léon declared that "there is no Rwandan family that did not lose a family member, that was killed before, during, or after the genocide. So I ask myself, why are we the genocidaires, while they [RPF] are killers too?"64 Gérard stated that the word made him feel as if he belonged to an evil mankind: "I have confessed I did bad things, so I was punished. But the word keeps sticking to me as if it has been written on my forehead."65 In *ingando*, the crime of genocide was already attached to the ex-prisoners, when each of them was photographed with a cardboard with his or her name, and below that, 'genocide' written in bold. The event had a deep impact on the ex-prisoners.66

Another group that ex-prisoners had to deal with is the security service, including the army, the police, and the Local Defence Force. ⁶⁷ The latter was the most visible and perceived as the most threatening for ex-prisoners, resulting in an uneasy relationship full of suspicion. "Civilians carrying weapons? I do not trust them. They do not get paid, so of course they will use their weapon to get money from other people. I am not stupid." ⁶⁸ The Local Defence is composed of young unemployed Rwandans, "trained in an *ingando*-like camp for several months, but with a stronger military character", ⁶⁹ who patrol in red uniforms holding wooden sticks and sometimes guns. Many ex-prisoners saw the Local Defence as an RPF version of the *Interahamwe*. Initially, these militia were likewise meant to guarantee security at the local level. The Local Defence is not a militia nor a killing

⁶³ The term genocidaire in Rwanda is problematic, as it not only distinguishes perpetrators of genocide from perpetrators of war crimes, it also separates Hutus (a group of perpetrators found guilty of genocide) from Tutsis (individual perpetrators accused of war crimes): the first group is seen as a morally lower kind of people.

⁶⁴ Interview with Léon, 38-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 16-05-2007.

⁶⁵ Interview with Gérard, 44-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 25-05-2007.

⁶⁶ See Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity (New York: 1963).

⁶⁷ The Local Defence Force is established by the government to involve citizens in guarding security and resolving the problem of police shortage.

⁶⁸ Interview with Ferdinand, 39-year-old ex-prisoner, 01-05-2007.

⁶⁹ Conversation with police officer, Ruhengeri City, 23-05-2007.

machine, but it resembles the way in which political parties in Rwanda have always organized civil defence forces.

Ingando Revisited

Although the ingando solidarity camp has an authoritarian character, the curriculum includes some elements that help ex-prisoners to reintegrate into their communities. All participants appreciated the practical classes about entrepreneurship, modern agricultural, and health care. A new understanding of 'right' and 'wrong' is necessary for those still believing in Hutu supremacy. The use of rituals for 'cleansing' oneself of bad thoughts and bad behavior is meaningful to those who have confessed and feel guilty. These ex-prisoners felt a strong wish to purify themselves and start all over; ingando facilitates that process.70 On the other hand, this 'civic education' program of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission needs a critical assessment. How does education differ from indoctrination? Max Hocutt writes that the difference lies in the means they use. ⁷¹ Indoctrination resembles education in being a form of instruction, but it differs by seeking to inculcate belief or conviction - which may or may not be true - while education seeks to provide *knowledge* or *training*, i.e. belief in proven truth.⁷² From this point of view, *ingando* is indeed a form of indoctrination. In all organized education systems, including those of democratic societies, we find elements of indoctrination, but in authoritarian states such as Rwanda, education is interwoven with indoctrination.

The gap between *ingando*'s image of society on the one hand, and the socio-political reality on the other hand, is the most problematic. There is no unity and reconciliation in the village; there is poverty and there is fear. Ex-prisoners reported humiliating practices in the camp such as the photos being taken of them labelled as 'genocidaire', the drilling songs, and the arrogance of the camp management. The perception of humiliation continues outside the camp when interacting with local authorities and security forces. Humiliation, when orchestrated collectively, is a dangerous emotion in fragile people.⁷³

⁷⁰ See also Kelsall, 'Truth, Lies, Ritual', 363.

⁷¹ Max Hocutt, 'Indoctrination v. Education'. In: Academic Questions (2005) p. 35-43.

⁷² Hocutt, 'Indoctrination', 35-36.

⁷³ See for example Adam Jones, Genocide, 265-270.

The gap between the image and reality is fed by the silences that are imposed on ethnicity and RPF crimes. Although ex-prisoners were sceptical of the so-called 'elimination of ethnicity', most of them would have preferred to return to their villages as Rwandan, not as Hutu. All were relieved to discover that ethnicity was no longer mentioned in identity cards and that it was used to differentiate between people. The imagination of being *only* Rwandan made them feel safer. But, reality was different. One ex-prisoner explained: "In the village everybody knows each other; we don't need cards to know if someone is Hutu or Tutsi. Kigali is different. In a big city you are not confronted with ethnicity all the time, because people are mobile and independent, but in the village we rely on each other. Now we just pretend that Rwandan is all we are, as they said in *ingando*, but it is not true. It is still here [points at his heart]."⁷⁷⁴ One of them added that "the [ethnic] feeling is still there [touches his chest], it only needs a reason to be lit [...] if something bad will happen to our people [Hutu], I know this feeling will erupt again."⁷⁷⁵

The silencing, and mythmaking, of alleged RPF crimes impedes the reintegration of ex-prisoners and the process of Rwandan reconciliation in general. Experiences of RPF crimes and the stories told about them were the main reason for ex-prisoners to distrust the new authorities. The imagined Rwanda and the new historical narrative do not include RPF crimes. In the camp, ex-prisoners are instructed on how to deal with feelings of guilt or self-hatred, and how to react to the traumatization of survivors of genocide, which is important. Yet their own memories of abuse and violence are not recognized and form a fertile ground for mythmaking about 'le double genocide'.⁷⁶ In the absence of any objective investigation, myths and memories will continue to circulate among the population. "Where are my parents' bodies, where do I go in April [the month of commemoration], how can they expect me to show up at *gacaca* sessions when I am not allowed to speak out about my missing family members?"⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Conversation with Boniface, 34-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 28-04-2007.

⁷⁵ Interview with Aurore, 25-year-old ex-combatant, Mutobo ingando, 30-04-2007.

⁷⁶ Le double genocide has developed into a story that is told and retold mainly among the Hutu population in and outside Rwanda. 'The double genocide' refers to the alleged killing of innocent Hutu civilians by the RPF army during the civil war (1990-1994) and since RPF's victory (1994 until the present day). Reliable numbers do not exist, but estimates of between 100,000 and 3 million are made – including the Hutu Eastern Congo. Scholars agree on the fact that many more Hutu have been killed than is acknowledged by the government, but most agree that the word genocide does not apply to these killings. See Philip Verwimp, 'Testing the Double-Genocide Thesis for Central and Southern Rwanda, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 47, no 4 (2003) 423-442; and Reyntjes, 'From Genocide to Dictatorship', 195-199.

⁷⁷ Conversation with Innocent, 30-year-old ex-combatant, Ruhengeri City, 14-05-2007.

Ingando and National Unity

Rwandan national consciousness is at the core of RPF ideology and its historical narrative. The powerful nation-building exercise is what Pottier called the 're-imagination' of Rwanda,78 drawn from Anderson's theory on nation-states as 'imagined communities'.79 The construction of Rwanda's identity is an emotional and symbolic effort to 're-imagine' a new Rwanda. National consciousness is, just like ethnic consciousness, a construct, but it is not 'unreal'. Nationhood, says Eriksen, is a matter of belief: "The nation, that is the *Volk* imagined by nationalists, is a product of nationalist ideology; it is not the other way round. A nation exists from the moment a handful of influential people decide that it should be so, and it starts, in most cases as an urban elite phenomenon. In order to be an efficient political tool, it must nevertheless eventually achieve mass appeal."80 Kigali has its urban elite that is responsible for spreading Rwandan nationalism. Nations tend to imagine themselves as old, even when they are in fact modern. "Nationalism, which is frequently a traditionalistic ideology, may glorify [...] an ancient tradition shared by the ancestors of the members of the nation, but it does not thereby re-create that tradition."81 The use of 'typical' ethnic symbols in nationalism aims to stimulate reflection on one's own cultural distinctiveness and thereby to create a feeling of nationhood.82 The glorification of the language Kinyarwanda, the gacaca courts, the umuganda community work, ingando solidarity camps, and the visibility of the national colors are examples of this re-imagined Rwanda.

To overcome the boundaries of ethnicity among their citizens, the elites turned the nation into a 'super-ethnos'. The nation is [...] both post-ethnic, in that it denies the salience of old ethnic distinctions and portrays these as a matter of a distant past, and super-ethnic, in that it portrays the nation as a new and bigger kind of ethnos. Most nation-states, *however*, have failed to complete this project in that they included some ethnic groups and excluded others, or privileged some and marginalised others.⁸³

⁷⁸ Pottier, Re-Imagining Rwanda, 2-8.

⁷⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983).

⁸⁰ Eriksen, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 105.

⁸¹ Eriksen, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 101.

⁸² Eriksen, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 103

⁸³ Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle. Rethinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identities* (New York 1999) 31.

The phenomenon Bauman describes is illustrated by the performance of a Rwandan traditional dance I attended. Young men dressed in the national colors of blue and green, decorated with bells and beads, danced in praise of cows and milk. The dance is presented as 'national', as 'superethnic'. However, some Hutu claimed the dance was actually typical for cattle-keepers, mostly Tutsi.⁸⁴ To re-imagine the cultural expressions of a powerful minority as 'national', the minority guarantees its safety and justification. The current regime created a paradox: the political dogma is one of national unity and Rwandanness, while at the same time the definition of what is 'Rwandan' has been strictly narrowed. It is the exclusiveness of the imagined national unity that causes friction, because the unity is only true for those who commit themselves to the creators of the unity. When the nation does not provide national citizenship including civil rights, identification with the nation remains fragile. The boundaries of what is imagined as Rwandan, as opposed to 'anti-Rwandan' and 'divisive', are shaped by a minority of urban elites. 85. The nation-state, writes Baumann, would be nowhere if it had not taken possession of education. 86 An important aim of nationalist ideology is to re-create a sentiment of wholeness and continuity with the past; "to transcend that alienation or rupture between individual and society that modernity has brought about". 87 If we replace 'modernity' by 'genocide', it explains the purpose of ingando: to overcome the disturbing reality of the genocide and to cover an inconvenient truth, namely the responsibility question and the complexities of Rwandan history.

The genocide does not fit into the story of historical harmony and national unity, but at the same time, it strengthens the story. The postgenocide regime draws a continuum with pre-colonial Rwanda — as if the period in between was not purely Rwandan but damaged by external influences. For a majority of Rwandans, however, the imagined Rwanda is unimaginable.

⁸⁴ Observations (and conversation with Didier) in Kacyru, Kigali City, 10-04-2007.

⁸⁵ What is important to note here is that the division is more political than ethnic. The majority of Hutu and Tutsi have little power. Not all Tutsi, in particular genocide survivors, feel represented by the RPF. In fact, some feel their identity and victimhood is captured by the RPF as a moral justification of its power.

⁸⁶ Baumann, The Multicultural Riddle, 40.

⁸⁷ Eriksen, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 105.

Ingando and Reconciliation

Reconciliation means different things to different people. The ex-prisoners in this research thought reconciliation was about asking forgiveness and being forgiven. They used the word 'reconciliation' just like the government, as if it were a thing or medicine to heal the problematic past. Some ex-prisoners who had just arrived in their village said they "could not see the reconciliation" or they were annoyed by the hostility of survivors: "it is reconciliation time now". Genocide survivors who lived next to returned prisoners thought this attitude was disrespectful and arrogant. For them, forgiveness was a 'gift' and not a 'given'. Some ex-prisoners said they confessed only so that they could be released from prison; when there was no real charge against them, some even made up crimes they never committed. Only those few who felt ashamed and disturbed by the crimes they committed asked for forgiveness.

The rules for reconciliation are strictly defined by the government. Rwandans are not really forced but rather pushed into a blueprint of reconciliation. There is no space for questions about who should reconcile with whom, how, and why. The government is the manager of truth, justice, and reconciliation but does not subject itself to this process. In the South African context, the African National Congress (ANC) was itself the subject of investigation by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Both crimes of the apartheid regime and the ANC were included in the hearings. In Rwanda, this is not the case. The reconciliation discourse is exclusive and biased, which has nourished feelings of frustration and fear among Rwandans, in particular among survivors of all sorts of violence, including RPF crimes, who cannot voice their concerns.

When I revisited several ex-prisoners in 2011, it turned out that three of them had been acquitted by *gacaca*. As with many other guilty or by-stander or innocent Hutus in 1994, Boniface had fled to DRC out of fear of RPF reprisal killings. Upon his return in 1997, he was taken into custody. The logic was simple: a young, well-educated Hutu who was not killed by the extremists and who fled to DRC was suspicious and must have had a

⁸⁸ Interview with Daniel, 39-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 02-05-2007.

⁸⁹ Interview with Ignatius, 39-year-old ex-prisoner, Kigali Province, 20-04-2007.

⁹⁰ This was also shown in the documentary "In Rwanda we say the family that does not speak dies" from Anne Aghion, used by the NGO Réseau de Citoyens (RCN) Justice et Democratie for *ingando* sessions.

⁹¹ Both Regine and Rose-marie, two female ex-prisoners, said they had made up stories in order to be released, Kigali Province, 13-05 and 18-05 2007.

connection to the genocide regime. In the chaos and turmoil of 1994-1997, many suspects were put in prison without a trial. Boniface showed me his certificate of acquittal signed in 2007 by the *gacaca* judges, declaring he was innocent. He did not get compensation for the ten years he spent in prison.

Truths and Trust

In Rwanda, people like to joke that hypocrisy and suspicion are typical Rwandan characteristics. In a country where a thousand truths go around a thousand hills but only one is recognized at the top, it is difficult to let the process of transitional justice depend on truth telling, like in *gacaca*. Instead of a truth commission – encouraged by scholars such as Jeremy Sarkin⁹² – the government established a Commission of National Unity and Reconciliation. Truth commissions investigate past crimes and ideally operate independentlt of the government. The NURC is a governmental institute and focuses on the future rather than the past. In its drive to create national unity and reconciliation, the NURC chose one truth to be true. The new historical narrative not only misinforms Rwandans about their history, it takes away the opportunity to reflect upon individual and collective responsibility.

The story of national unity and reconciliation is spread throughout Rwanda, but the top-down relationship between citizen and government does not contribute to mutual trust. Ex-prisoners said they would be more willing to take responsibility for their behavior and apologize if they would be given the opportunity to speak about the harm inflicted upon them and their families in the years after the genocide. Truth and trust are intertwined. From the government's point of view, citizens cannot be trusted and need re-education to believe in the new Rwanda. By controlling the information, the government also shows a lack of confidence in itself. Off the record, one civil servant explained: "The existence of RPF power and ideology is based on fear; the fear to be uprooted and threatened forever. I really do think they [RPF] did some good things for Rwanda [...]. But the fear is still in them, and not only there. It has impregnated the whole society."⁹³ Mamdani asked himself "how to build a democracy that can incorporate a *guilty majority* alongside an aggrieved and *fearful minority* in one single

⁹² Jeremi Sarkin, 'The Necessity and Challenges of Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda', Human Rights Quarterly, vol. 21 (1999) 767-823.

⁹³ Conversation with officer of Ministry, Kigali City, 27-04-2007.

political community?"94 A majority wishes democracy and freedom of space; the minority prefers security and unity.

Conclusion: Facing the Façade

The *ingando* solidarity camps can be analyzed at three different levels that follow the levels of transition that *ingando* stands for: the political, the social, and the individual. First of all, *ingando* is part of managing the political transition from an evil genocidal regime to a government of 'national unity'. Second, *ingando* indicates a social transition from an imprisoned life to a civil life. Third, *ingando* performs a psychological transition in the minds of the prisoners. The lectures, prayers, songs, and ceremonies not only inform the prisoners about the new imagined Rwandan, they may also relieve the burden of guilt and shame. Some prisoners, in particular the young and uneducated ones, appreciated the 'cleaning' aspect; the purifying experience of changing oneself from a bad person into a good person. For them, the closing ceremony was a special happening. In countries where rituals facilitate transitions, they may positively contribute to processes of reintegration and reconciliation.

How does ingando function as a reintegration tool? For ex-prisoners, the 'cleansing' experienced during the closing ceremony did not last very long, since they were not seen as clean at all by the community. Interactions with local leaders, security officers, and genocide survivors remained very tense and troublesome. The ex-prisoners have been released, but the community and its leaders do not see them as 'free'. For them, the gap between the imagined Rwanda in ingando and reality was very large. The reconciliation appeared to be a "décor",95 "performance", or "shop-window success" to guarantee foreign aid.96 National unity and reconciliation cannot be imposed upon citizens through re-education. The authoritarian ambition to 'eliminate' all evil from the hearts and minds of Rwandans builds a façade of peace and stability. The economy flourishes and the government deserves credit for rebuilding a devastated country into a functioning state in a very volatile region. But a façade will remain fragile. The forceful and humiliating character of ingando overshadows its potential benefits of ceremonial healing. Is the *ingando* like the regime itself: too good to be true?

⁹⁴ Mamdani, When victims become killers, 266.

⁹⁵ Jeroen Corduwener, 'Donor Darling, De explosieve situatie in Rwanda', in $Groene\ Amsterdammer$, 18 September, week 38 (2007) PAGE.

⁹⁶ Reyntjes and Uvin quoted in Corduwener, 'Donor Darling'.