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**Teaching after a violent past: the secondary school history
curriculum and a child's right to education in present day
Rwanda**

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Abstract

Teaching after a violent past: the secondary school history curriculum and a child's right to education in present day Rwanda

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The primary purpose of this thesis is to determine the impact the present history curriculum, taught in secondary schools in Rwanda, has on a child's right to education. The thesis analyzes the teaching of history before the genocide, and the manner in which it contributed to the 1994 genocide. Thereafter, the national government placed a moratorium on the teaching of history, until 2006. Put under pressure by national and international non-governmental organizations, as well as by civil society organizations, President Paul Kagame's government created a new history curriculum for secondary schools. This syllabus portrays pre-colonial Rwanda, post-independence Rwanda and the narrative of the 1994 genocide in a biased and one-sided manner. Consequently, this thesis determines that the curriculum violates a number of articles included within both the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These are related to the freedom of expression, the best interests of the child, the right to education and the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. However, the Rwandan Constitution, adopted in 2003, ascertains that the respect of these different rights is determined by Rwandan national law.

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Dedication

Dedicated to the children of Rwanda, past and present, who endured the horrors of the 1994 genocide, and who, today, continue to suffer from the consequences of the “world’s fastest genocide”.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My Rwandan Tale

My introduction to Rwanda came in 2004 when the film *Hotel Rwanda* was released. The film tells the true story of Paul Rusesabagina, the manager of the Hôtel des Mille Collines, located in the capital of city of Rwanda: Kigali. As the genocide unfolds, he is compelled to allow refugees to take shelter in his hotel, as he tries to save as many lives as possible. This also marked my first contact with the phenomenon of genocide. I was shocked by the United Nations and foreign governments' inability to prevent the genocide or bring it to a halt once the killings had begun.

My interest grew further when I was asked to write an essay, during my undergraduate studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, United Kingdom. It compared the transitional justice phases in South Africa and Rwanda, setting out the positives and negatives in both. From there, I began to research in more detail Rwanda's history and current status economically, politically and socially, 20 years after the genocide. In 20 years, Rwanda has made immense progress economically, considering that in July 1994 it was characterized as one of the poorest countries in the world by the World Bank, with a GDP per capita of \$575 and 77.8% of the population living in poverty. Politically and socially it has also remained extremely stable since 1994. I wanted to understand how the country had been able to achieve such success in such a short space of time and in the wake of the fastest, most efficient genocide ever recorded. I therefore began to look more deeply into the components of the country's transitional justice phase and how they helped the country rise up after the genocide.

Formulating my research question

While conducting my initial research into Rwanda's transitional justice phase, I discovered that, in the aftermath of the genocide, the national government put in place a moratorium on history teaching in schools throughout the country. The topic was seen as too controversial and sensitive to teach after the 1994 genocide. However, the teaching of history is a key component in a country's transitional justice and post-conflict phase. It allows children and the future generations to learn about and understand the country's past mistakes and therefore prevent them from re-occurring.

The moratorium remained in place until 2006. Thereafter, the national government, with the help of the University of California, Berkeley and the National Curriculum Development Center, an autonomous body of the Rwandan Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports created by the NCDC (National Curriculum Development Center) Act Chapter 135 in 2000, began creating a new history curriculum. It considers two topics differently from the previous one: the subject of ethnicity and Rwanda's pre-colonial history. Some of the points may be considered contentious. The narrative of the genocide in this new curriculum, has been disputed by many individuals within and outside Rwanda. Many believe that it fails to provide an accurate account of the events which occurred between April and July 1994.

An educated population is indispensable to ensure a country's enhanced development and growth. Conventional wisdom holds that the more a country's workforce is educated, the more a country will witness economic prosperity. The right

to education is therefore a prerequisite to ensure a country's success economically, but also socially. In Rwanda, education and access to it were made a priority by the national government in the aftermath of the genocide, especially as a majority of the country's schools had been destroyed during the genocide and a significant number of the teachers had either fled to neighboring countries or been murdered.

These issues led me to formulate the following thesis research question:

Creating an account of history is an important step in a country's transitional justice phase. How is the current historical narrative associated with the 1994 Rwandan genocide defined in the current history curriculum in secondary schools in Rwanda affecting a child's right to education? Is this a serious violation of a student's right to education?

Relevance of the project

First of all, as mentioned previously, developing a new history curriculum is an element which contributes to a country's transitional justice phase. The curriculum needs to be given the correct content. This, by definition, means that the curriculum needs to provide the population with reliable and unbiased information for the transition to be successful. Future generations need to be taught an unprejudiced and truthful history in order to be able to successfully advance the country.

Secondly, prior to the genocide, Rwanda's national history curriculum was very constrained – the teaching of the history of pre-colonial Rwanda was dictated by the Hutu majority and therefore critical and unfavorable towards the Tutsi minority.

Official reports and inquiries have acknowledged this taught history is what led, in part, to the 1994 genocide. A similar scenario is emerging today– the teaching of the 1994 genocide portrays a one-sided story where Hutus are solely responsible for the genocide. A pattern has developed where each government tends to rewrite earlier history to favor its own ethnic group. Combined with the current uneasy political situation in Rwanda, the country is at risk of imploding once again.

Thirdly, by teaching this subjective history and imposing on the local population a sense of ‘Rwandaness’ by denying the existence of the different ethnic groups, the current Rwandan government is preventing a majority of its population (more than 80% Hutus) from connecting with an important part of their identity and their history. This attitude will only fuel tensions and increase Hutus’ strong sense of identity.

Finally, the right to education is a primordial right for children around the world. Access to education allows children to learn the fundamentals they will need to succeed economically and socially in life. Having this education opens many doors for individuals and prevents grievances from escalating. Without an adequate education, a country’s economic development will either recede or stagnate. As a result, this situation will have detrimental effects on the political and social structure of the state.

Methodology

The thesis will analyze the former history curriculum, and the current history curriculum of the secondary school syllabus, the ordinary and advanced level curricula,

respectively taught in Junior Secondary school and Senior Secondary school. I will determine whether a child's right to education is violated in the present syllabus, drawing on the standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and the Rwandan Constitution (2003). The analysis of the history curricula will be conducted in a chronological manner in order to demonstrate the changes that have been made to it since Rwanda gained independence in 1962.

In 1991, Rwanda signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2001, Rwanda signed and ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Consequently, the state needs to ensure it respects the rights set out in these international and regional human rights documents. I will focus my attention on specific articles within these two documents.

My research is based on my reading of books and articles in appropriate academic journals. I also based my findings on government documents and reports, as well as reports produced by non-governmental and international organizations. Finally, I utilized theses and dissertations written by other students.

After conducting my literature review in Chapter 2, I will undertake in Chapter 3, a brief analysis of the history curriculum taught prior to the 1994 genocide, focusing on its description of pre-colonial Rwanda and the place of ethnicity within the country. Chapter 4 covers the period between 1994 and 2006 when history was simply not taught in Rwandan schools because the national government placed a moratorium on it. In Chapter 5, I will analyze the present-day history curriculum, focusing on the 1994

genocide narrative. In Chapter 6, I will attempt to demonstrate whether the current Rwandan history curriculum either violates or upholds a child's right to education. The final Chapter 7 will record my conclusion.

Limitations

The first limitation encountered while writing my thesis was the absence of the school curriculum which was used in schools prior to the 1994 genocide, specifically the history curriculum. During and in the aftermath of the genocide, school materials were destroyed. Furthermore, the current national government does not want this curriculum to be made available to the public due to its contents. As a result, these materials are today very hard to locate. Despite this, many authors refer to the history curriculum in great detail, principally focusing on the role the history curriculum played in the lead-up to and the start of the genocide. However, these authors very rarely directly quote or refer to the curriculum. I was able to find two authors who referred directly to the curriculum: Eric Mutabazi and Jean-Damascène Gasanabo. Eric Mutabazi informed me that he was able to obtain the original copies of the curriculum from a teacher in Rwanda and that the only way to obtain the curriculum was to travel to the country itself. Consequently, in my brief analysis in Chapter 3 of the history curriculum, I refer it by quoting these two authors' academic articles.

Secondly, I was also unable to obtain the curriculum used within the Ingando Solidarity Camps. There was no formal curriculum used in this environment, to teach the history of pre-colonial Rwanda and the 1994 genocide, as the teaching was dependent on which ethnic group was being taught. I therefore make no direct reference to the matters taught in the Ingando Solidarity Camps in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

The teaching of the 1994 genocide in Rwandan schools is a sensitive topic in the country itself. This was another limitation I faced while writing this thesis. I was unable to contact people in official positions in Rwanda, such as in the Ministry of Education or at the National Curriculum Development Center, due to the sensitivity of the topic. Their opinions would have been valuable and insightful ones for my analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature review

There is an extensive amount of literature written on this thesis topic. The following writings and authors are my reference points: *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* by Bush and Saltarelli (2009), *Education and Ethnic Violence: A Cross-National Time-Series Analysis* by Lange and Dawson (2010), *ABC's, 123's and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980-1999* by Thyne (2006), a report by UNICEF (2007) *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All*, and *Education for Diversity: Investing in Systemic Change through Curriculum, Textbooks and Teachers* by Smith (2005). The aim of Chapter 2 is to conduct an in-depth analysis of this literature, to demonstrate the theoretical base of this research topic and to show the links that exist between the current literature and my findings, which will help provide a better understanding of the topic. The literature review will be in the order of my reference points above.

The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict – Bush and Saltarelli

According to Bush and Saltarelli, education has “two faces”. It can play both a ‘peacebuilding’ and a ‘peacedestroying’ role within a society: “Formal education can shape the understandings, attitudes, and ultimately, the behavior of individuals. If it is true that education can have a socially constructive impact on intergroup relations, then it is equally evident that it can have a socially destructive impact” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 9).

Schooling can contribute to building a society by tying together different ethnic groups who have dissimilar cultures, religions, and may speak another language; or

individuals of divergent social backgrounds. This can be accomplished through formal and informal ways of teaching. Formal methods include the teaching of history, social and civic studies, as well as the study of religions and human rights. Theatrical plays, field trips and artistic activities are examples of informal ways of teaching.

Bush and Saltarelli identify two measures which may have negative impacts on a country and its social and economic development: “Restricted access to education should be viewed as an indicator of deteriorating relations between groups” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 9). The favoritism of one ethnic group in the educational system may also be viewed as negative. The authors use Rwanda as an example here to demonstrate their theory. The Tutsi population was held in much higher regard than those individuals of Hutu ethnicity, during the German and Belgian colonial eras (1885-1919 and 1922-1962 respectively). They had access to the best schools in the country and were the only ethnic group allowed to attend the sole secondary school in the country (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 10). Furthermore, the article discusses the school curriculum put in place by the German and the Belgian colonialists which emphasized the ‘physical differences’ which exist between the Tutsi and the Hutu ethnic groups, “linking physical appearance and intellectual capacity according to prevailing racist doctrines” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 10).

Graham-Brown (1994), referred to by Bush and Saltarelli, discusses the influence a government can have on its own history curriculum. He puts forward the idea that if one ethnic group controls the entire government, it can dictate the standing of the history curriculum that can therefore be biased and one-sided. This misrepresentation of history can “take place intentionally and unintentionally” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000:

12). These types of actions can, and often do, increase the prominence of one ethnic group within society. Bush and Saltarelli note “one possible negative impact of education is the manipulation of history for political ends” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 19) whereby the government can impose its own ideals and ensure it is viewed in a positive way throughout a history curriculum for instance. This model can be applied to present-day Rwanda and the curriculum that has been created by the Tutsi government. The syllabus portrays a version of the 1994 genocide viewed by many as biased and lacking in detail. This matter will, however, be discussed extensively in the following Chapters.

“Those individuals and groups within war-torn, war-born, and war-threatened societies themselves” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 27) need to be at the forefront of creating a ‘peacebuilding’ education. This must be seen as a response to the violence which occurred during the conflict, or which might resurface in the aftermath of the conflict. Education must be seen as one of the central components that help shape a society in the wake of conflict and human rights violations. Bush and Saltarelli believe ‘peacebuilding’ education “allows students to articulate, accommodate and accept differences between and within groups” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 23).

Despite noting the essential role that education can play as a ‘peacebuilding’ tool, Bush and Saltarelli conclude: “In many conflicts around the world, education is part of the problem not the solution, because it serves to divide and antagonize groups both intentionally and unintentionally” (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000: 33).

Education and Ethnic Violence: A Cross-National Time-Series Analysis – Lange and Dawson

Lange and Dawson, in their writings, focus heavily on the positive effects education may produce. They believe that by contributing to the growth of each person, education can promote the development of communities, and consequently entire nations.

The authors provide substantive reasons as to why education should be seen as a positive element in a country's post-conflict phase. "Education might enhance the ability of individuals to think critically and connect ideas" (Lange and Dawson, 2010: 218). This allows humans of different ethnic backgrounds to interact and provide each other with the norms and ideals to which they choose to adhere. Secondly, and very much linked to the explanation above, being exposed to an educational environment grants individuals the right to accept the norms and ideals which are followed by those of different ethnic groups. Consequently, education ensures one learns about the importance of tolerance and acceptance of others. The risks of ethnic tensions and violence imploding are therefore minimized. This, as a result, prevents conflict from arising. This is the theory Lange and Dawson establish.

Durkheim is quoted in the authors' research, as he believes education can only play a constructive role in society: "[education] helps build consensus in modern societies" (Lange and Dawson, 2010: 218). Furthermore, "education promotes nonviolent relationships between ethnic communities by promoting empathy and shared norms" (Lange and Dawson, 2010: 218).

Lange and Dawson do however make reference to literature which defines education in a pessimistic manner. Education may have a detrimental effect on tolerance and acceptance of individuals of other ethnic groups. Lange and Dawson believe that education could promote ethnic violence if it strengthens exclusive ethnic identities and promotes intergroup misunderstandings. The authors consider that the manipulation of the curriculum is the main manner by which education can affect a society negatively. Rwanda can be used as an example here. The historical narrative present in the history curriculum prior to the 1994 genocide emphasized the existence of the three different ethnic groups in the country. It encouraged the separation of these groups by noting their varied histories, the ‘so-called’ physical distinctions which defined them. This impacted the manner in which they were each seen socially. The narrative employed by this syllabus promoted ethnic violence and spurred the 1994 genocide.

ABC’s, 123’s and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980-1999 – Thyne

Thyne, like Lange and Dawson, stipulates the favorable effects education may have on a society. He notes how it can prevent individuals from developing grievances against their national government, and as a result, averts the risks of violence. Thyne states that education creates “economic development and social equality” (Thyne, 2006: 735). The presence of these two factors within a society prevents the formation of complaints, as the population is the first to benefit from its country’s economic development. Additionally, social equality is one of the positive consequences of economic development within a state. Thyne makes reference to a number of authors to demonstrate his argument, notably Adeola (1996), Saint-Paul (1992), Verdier (1992)

and Birdsall (1998). He concludes the first section of his article by saying: “Investment in education is a means by which a government can make a direct and lasting impact on the lives of its people, which can lower grievances in a society” (Thyne, 2006: 735).

Education can contribute to and promote social cohesion within a society. The first authors to note this were Montesquieu, Locke, Rousseau, Mill and Aristotle who believed education enabled individuals to be inculcated with a culture of peace. More recently, Heynman (2003) put forward four arguments demonstrating why education can play a part in the creation of social cohesion. “Schools teach people the interpersonal, political, social, and legal principles that underlie good citizenship, the obligations of political leaders, the behavior expected of citizens, and the consequences for not adhering to these behaviors” (Thyne, 2006: 737). Secondly, education permits individuals of divergent ethnic groups or from different social backgrounds to interact and live together. They therefore learn new norms and values. Thirdly, the aim of education is to provide students with equal opportunities in life by teaching them core identical skills. Finally, “school systems combine the interests and objectives of a wide range of groups while trying to establish a common underpinning for citizenship” (Thyne, 2006: 737). The long-term effect of having education ensure social cohesion is that it prevents any form of violence from exploding within a country.

Nevertheless, the author notes education can have harmful effects on society. “It can be used as a means of indoctrination, fueling chauvinism, militarism, and violent religious extremism, which may increase the probability of civil war onset” (Thyne, 2006: 738). These can be portrayed through a number of methods, most notably through the history curriculum. In Rwanda, the history curriculum put in place by the Hutu

government, in the wake of the 1962 independence, was used as a form of indoctrination. This ensured the government remained in power, as the narrative used favored the Hutu ethnic group and criticized the minority Tutsis.

A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All – UNICEF

In 2007, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), produced a report entitled “A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education – Education for All”. The report aimed to understand the inequalities which exist within the education system by utilizing international human rights standards and norms. A human rights-based approach to education may be defined as “inclusive and provides a common language for partnership” (UNICEF, 2007: 11), and can be seen as differing from an education system which solely promotes and focuses on the economic benefits (human capital theory) of being exposed to education. “The goal of a human rights-based approach to education is simple: to assure every child a quality education that respects and promotes her or his right to dignity and optimum development” (UNICEF, 2007: 1).

The study identifies six pragmatic consequences of using a human rights-based approach to education. Firstly, it “promotes social cohesion, integration and stability” (UNICEF, 2007: 12) by ensuring the values of children are heard and respected within their environment. Consequently, children are able to learn and appreciate the different norms and values of others. This ensures social cohesion in the educational environment and society at large.

Secondly, it “builds respect for peace and non-violent conflict resolutions” (UNICEF, 2007: 12). This demonstrates why it is necessary to have a human rights-based approach to education in societies which are in a post-conflict phase and still reeling from past human rights violations and abuses.

Thirdly, this approach allows those who are learning from it to feel empowered and emancipated. It helps individuals in post-conflict societies discover “rights-respecting societies and social justice” (UNICEF, 2007: 12).

Fourthly, using this perspective will have long-term positive effects on a society and ensure that its stability is maintained. As a result, a country’s economic development will increase more rapidly and be more consistent.

Fifthly, a human rights-based approach to education is “more cost-effective and sustainable” (UNICEF, 2007: 12).

Finally, a rights-based approach to education “harnesses and develops the capacities of governments to fulfill their obligations and of individuals to claim their rights and entitlements” (UNICEF, 2007: 13).

Despite the favorable outcomes that a human rights-based approach to education may have, there are a number of tensions that arise when it is implemented. They include the ongoing debate between access and quality. In a post-conflict society, the first priority is to ensure all children have access to education. The quality of the teaching and methods used is not seen to be as important as ensuring all children are

able to attend school. Post-genocide Rwanda can be used as an example here, as the new government stated one of its main priorities was the reopening of schools and providing access to all. The curriculum taught in these schools, meaning the quality of the education, was seen as a secondary matter. This fact is demonstrated by the moratorium placed on the teaching of history in the aftermath of the genocide. Another tension arises when, in the aftermath of a conflict, a government is forced to prioritize, as it does not have the means to fund all forms of education. Therefore, primary school education is seen as a key investment sector, often leaving secondary education unattended. This prioritization, in the long term, affects the education of children as they either do not have access to secondary education, or the quality of it is insufficient.

Quality of education includes “the content of the curriculum, the nature of the teaching and the quality of the learning environment” (UNICEF, 2007: 33). According to this report, a curriculum “must enable every child to acquire the core academic curriculum and basic cognitive skills” (UNICEF, 2007: 33) to succeed both socially and economically in their lives. Furthermore, the curriculum must teach core human rights values and the fundamental freedoms to which each individual is entitled, as well as “promote respect for different cultures and values and for the natural environment” (UNICEF, 2007: 33).

Education for Diversity: Investing in Systemic Change through Curriculum, Textbooks and Teachers – Smith

Smith puts forward three different concepts regarding the dynamics which exist within educational institutions. Firstly, he describes ‘conservative pluralism’ as an

environment where “similarities among people and the view that all people share a common humanity” (Smith, 2005: 4) are emphasized. This means the expression of different cultural, social and religious values and ideals should remain within the private sphere, and should not be made a public matter. This theory can be applied to the situation in the education environment in Rwanda today. The history curriculum strongly emphasizes the existence of one unique identity within Rwanda society, and promotes the idea of ‘Rwandaness’.

Secondly, ‘liberal pluralism’ is viewed as an environment where individuals are encouraged to express their cultural, religious and social norms. There is a strong recognition and acceptance of differences. Finally, ‘critical pluralism’ represents a combination of these two theories. It understands there are dissimilarities and similitudes which exist within a society. It “also acknowledges differences in status, privilege, and power relations among groups within society and among societies” (Smith, 2005: 4). The theory attempts to understand the reasons behind these social distinctions, and attempts to find solutions to prevent them from expanding.

Conclusion

This literature review provides a framework in which to position the thesis topic and research question. It presents the ways in which education can influence a society. Bush and Saltarelli emphasize that education may either have a ‘peacebuilding’ or a ‘peacedestroying’ role, a positive or a negative footprint according to Lange and Dawson. The texts described in detail above all note the effect that a national curriculum can have on a society and its social cohesion. Bush and Saltarelli state a

syllabus can be manipulated and influenced by those who seek to benefit from it. Thyne has a similar stance. These readings are representative of present-day Rwanda and the history curriculum taught in schools, and the effect it is having, and will have in the future, on the children of the country.

Chapter 3: History curriculum pre-genocide

This Chapter focuses on the history curriculum that was taught in schools in Rwanda from 1962, the year the country gained independence, until 1994. I will concentrate on how this syllabus analyzes the history of pre-colonial Rwanda. There is not an agreed portrayal of pre-colonial Rwanda. I will therefore put forward the different historical narratives concerning this specific subject. The historical narrative used by the Hutu government, between 1962 and 1994, drastically affected the relations between the different ethnic groups due to its description of ethnicity, as a result of how the executive put forward the history of Rwanda before the colonial era. This narrative spurred the 1994 genocide. The second half of this Chapter shall illustrate this.

It is important to note here that my findings for this Chapter are based on readings and other individuals' research, as I was unable to obtain an original copy of the pre-genocide history curriculum. During the genocide, 65% of the schools were either damaged or completely destroyed (Salmon, 2004: 83). As a result, much of the teaching materials were lost during the violence. Furthermore, many teachers were either murdered during the genocide, or fled to neighboring countries. Finally, the current national government wants to ensure the stability and unity of the country. These objectives are not transpired in the former history curriculum. Eric Mutabazi, a Rwandan researcher and author, has written a number of articles about the teaching of history in Rwanda, including "En quoi l'enseignement de l'histoire avant le genocide a-t-il contribue à la souffrance à l'école au Rwanda" (2011) and "Les enjeux des nouvelles valeurs dans l'enseignement de l'histoire du Rwanda après le genocide" (2010). In his articles, he refers to and directly quotes the curriculum used prior to the genocide. I will therefore use his articles to refer to the pre-genocide curriculum, along

with a paper written by Jean-Damascène Gasanado in 2004, which also refers directly to the pre-genocide history curriculum.

Establishing a history curriculum

After gaining independence from Belgium in 1962, the national government of Rwanda was firmly dominated by the Hutu ethnic group. The control imposed by the Hutu government is rooted in the political and hierarchical system the colonial power left behind. Representing more than 80% of the population, the Hutus therefore had considerable control over vast areas of the political, social and cultural domains. The government thus exercised a considerable amount of influence when the new post-independence school curricula were drafted. This included the history curriculum, where the history of pre-colonial Rwanda, and therefore the place of the different ethnic groups within the Rwandan society, was presented in order to ensure the Hutu ethnic group was seen positively and remained unquestioned. Consequently, the Hutu government guaranteed its place in power for the long term.

In 1961, a priest named Kamiya, who was part of the ‘Secrétariat National de l’Enseignement Catholique’ (SNEC), wrote the first history curriculum for Rwandan schools. This syllabus did not contain any concrete chapters or themes. It solely proposed the diplomas that children would receive after having studied the program. Ultimately, this curriculum was never used officially. In 1971, Roger Heremans, a Belgian author and historian, published “Introduction à l’histoire du Rwanda”. This publication prompted the Hayariman government to announce, in August 1973, that a reform of the education sector would be undertaken. Reforms began in September 1979.

The first history books were released in 1982. The history curriculum used in secondary schools was divided into two volumes: “Histoire du Rwanda, Première Partie” and “Histoire du Rwanda, Deuxième Partie”. These were respectively used between 1987 and 1994, and between 1989 and 1994. They were produced by the Ministère de l’Enseignement primaire et secondaire (MINEPRISEC).

“Histoire du Rwanda, Première Partie” covered the following topics: the sources of the history of Rwanda (oral, written and archeological), the first inhabitants of Rwanda, defining key terms used in the internal organization of the traditional Rwandan society (ethnicity, clan, tribe, lineage), Rwanda under the Nyiginya dynasty (1312-1896) and the traditional civilization of Rwanda (economic, spiritual and traditional life) (Translation by author)¹. “Histoire du Rwanda, Deuxième Partie” focuses on the following areas: Rwanda under German administration (1894-1916), Rwanda under Belgian administration (1916-1962) and independent Rwanda (1962-1975) (Translation by author)². Alongside these documents, teachers also used Roger Heremans’ history book.

¹ Original text reads as follows: “Principales sources de l’histoire du Rwanda (orales, écrites, archéologiques); Premiers peuplements du Rwanda; Définition des termes appliqués à l’organisation interne de la société rwandaise traditionnelle (ethnie, clan, tribu, lignage); Le Rwanda sous la dynastie Nyiginya (1312-1896); La civilisation traditionnelle du Rwanda (vie économique, vie spirituelle, société traditionnelle)”

² Original text reads as follows: “Le Rwanda sous l’administration allemande (1894-1916); Le Rwanda sous l’administration belge (1916-1962); Le Rwanda indépendant (1962-1975)”

Pre-colonial Rwanda according to the Hutu government

According to Anna Obura (2003) and Gail Weldon (2003), the three different ethnic groups living in Rwanda, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa, and their creation, are rooted in colonialism. Many are of the opinion that these three groups were present before the colonial period commenced. However, they were not distinct from one another. They lived together peacefully within one community. The arrival of the German colonizers (after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885) and Belgian colonizers (during World War I) stimulated the creation of the 'so-called' physical and historical distinctions which exist between these three groups. These colonial powers put forward the idea that Tutsis were both biologically and culturally superior to the other ethnic groups (Weldon, 2003: 62). This idea of superiority was mainly presented to the population through education.

Catholic missionaries controlled the education sector prior to the 1962 independence. They “favored first Tutsi and then Hutu and incorporated into the curricula of the mission schools the lessons that pupils had clear ethnic identities” (Weldon, 2003: 62) and distinct historical pasts as a result of their different ethnic characters. Furthermore, this syllabus presented the Hutus as “indigenous or aboriginal to the country” (Obura, 2003: 103) and the Tutsis as “having migrated recently, anywhere between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries” (Obura, 2003: 103). Translated, the curriculum states: “Descendant from the ‘Bantu’ people, the Hutus arrived after the Twas between the ‘7th and 10th century’”³ (Translation by author) (Jean-Damascène Gasanado, 2004: p. 114), whereas the Tutsis arrived between the 10th and the 14th

³ Original text reads as follows: “Issus des peuples “Bantous”, les Hutu sont arrivés après les Twa “entre le 7ème et le 10ème siècle””

century (Jean-Damascène Gasanado, 2004: p. 116). Many dispute this narrative. However, Longman (1997) asserts that, after independence, “leaders trained in church schools [by the Catholic missionaries] exploited ethnic identities to gain support, helping to intensify and solidify, ethnic divisions” (Weldon, 2003: 62).

The assertions put forward by Longman are verified by the historical narrative of pre-colonial Rwanda which the Hutu government put forward in the wake of independence. “Distorted historical perceptions were included in civics (sic) education classes, and were incorporated by the total curriculum and the education system itself” (Obura, 2003: 103). The curriculum portrayed the Hutus as the first inhabitants of the lands which now form the country of Rwanda. The Tutsis were depicted as individuals who had arrived recently in Rwanda, migrating from the Northern regions. “Histoire du Rwanda, Première Partie”, translated, states: “Hutus settled in an insensitive manner, without noise, without disturbing their predecessors. Tutsis surged like an army and are invaders, therefore they are foreigners”⁴ (Translation by author) (Jean-Damascène Gasanado, 2004: p. 116).

Consequently, it was stated that the Tutsi population did not have a right to Rwandan land or citizenship. They were characterized as foreigners. “Histoire du Rwanda, Première Partie” describes the arrival of the Tutsis in the following manner: “Their arrival in Rwanda results from a series of raids, lootings and conquests which would have permitted them to tax Hutu populations, small numbers and lack of cohesion would not have favored a warrior entry”⁵ (Translation by author) (Jean-Damascène

⁴ Original text reads as follows: “Les Hutus s’installent d’une façon insensible, sans bruit, sans déranger leurs prédécesseurs. Les Tutsis déferlent à la manière d’une armée et sont des envahisseurs, donc des étrangers”

⁵ Original text reads as follows: “D’une part “leur arrive au Rwanda résulte d’une série de raids de pillages et de conquêtes qui auraient permis leur imposition aux populations

Gasanado, 2004: p. 117). The “geographical and supposed racial origin of the groups” (Obura, 2003: 103) were therefore emphasized and stated clearly throughout the curriculum. Furthermore, the ‘so-called’ Tutsi supremacy, an entrenched colonial narrative present in all sectors of society, was also included within the new Hutu government’s syllabus. This narrative was used “to demonstrate Tutsi abuse of power and some decades later, in the 1990s, to feed into the hate speech that contributed to the genocide” (Weldon, 2003: 62). The role that the curriculum played in spurring the 1994 genocide will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Alternative historical narratives

The narrative used to describe pre-colonial Rwanda in the curriculum created by the Hutu national government in the wake of the country’s independence is not the sole narrative which has been used to recount that time period. Many authors and historians disagree with the pre-colonial narrative adopted after independence, and believe it is not an accurate account or representation of what occurred before Rwanda became a German, and then Belgian, colony. It is often stated that this specific narrative was manipulated to ensure the Hutu ethnic group remained in power, and unquestioned by others.

Jill Salmon (2004), in her article entitled ‘Education and its contribution to structural violence in Rwanda’, provides a singular narrative of pre-colonial Rwanda. She maintains that prior to becoming a colony, the control of the various regions of the

hutu”, d’autre part “leur petit nombre et leur manqué de cohésion n’auraient pas favorisé une entrée guerrière”.

country was divided up according to ethnicity. For instance, the center of the country was largely dominated by the Tutsis, whereas the North Western regions were controlled by the Hutus (Salmon, 2004: 80). Eventually, these regions were united with the help of the German military. Salmon describes pre-colonial Rwanda as a society suffering from structural violence, insinuating that there was no direct violation of human rights but simply actions which denied essential human needs. The society was an exclusionary one which emphasized ethnic divisions. Throughout the years prior to 1962, violence against the Tutsi ethnic group increased “in part because the departing colonial authorities had reversed their position and started empowering the Hutus” (Salmon, 2004: 80).

In ‘Nation, narration, unification? The politics of history teaching after the Rwandan genocide’ (2009), Susanne Buckley-Zistel puts forward a somewhat similar narrative to the one chronicled above, to describe pre-colonial Rwanda. The author claims that preceding the arrival of both the German and the Belgian colonizers, 19th century Rwanda was characterized by the intensification of aristocratic exploitation, which became more and more violent (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 45). The aristocrats mentioned here are believed to be represented by the Tutsi ethnic group, the minority within the country, as they were seen as superior to the Hutus socially, culturally and politically, by the colonial power. Social tensions were therefore very much present within society. Furthermore, it was asserted that the Hutus were the first inhabitants of the land which now constitutes Rwanda. As a result of these declarations, “the Hutu president Gregoire Kayibanda (1962-1973) argued that Tutsi were foreign immigrants and his objective was “to return the country its owners,” the Hutu” (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 37).

In his article, Chi Mgbako (2005) describes the ‘so-called’ differences which exist between the Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups: “In pre-colonial times the predominantly cattle-owning Tutsi were politically dominant over the predominantly agriculturalist Hutu and were sometimes distinguishable by their physical features” (Mgbako, 2005: 204). The Belgian colonial power ensured that these distinctions created a racial hierarchy which was reinforced through the creation of ethnic identity cards and discrimination against the Hutu ethnic group. There was a preferential attitude for the Tutsis both in the administrative department and in education. This corroborates the points put forward by Susanne Buckley-Zistel above, as well as other writers. Mgbako however notes these differences were more related to status within society than to anything else.

Finally, Anna Obura (2003) sets out the viewpoints of certain Rwandan and European historians who describe how the teaching of the history of pre-colonial Rwanda was taught, first by the colonizers which then influenced how the post-independence Hutu government implemented their own curriculum: “The product of the European world view in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which saw Rwanda/Africa and its culture/s through a Eurocentric cultural prism, and a prism particular to those centuries” (Obura, 2003: 100). The misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Rwanda created by the European colonial powers heavily influenced how the post-independence Hutu government constructed its history curriculum. Obura denounces “the erroneous *content* of the pre-1994 perceptions of history and to the unscientific *manner* in which the myths were constructed” (Obura, 2003: 100).

The effects of the curriculum on the Hutu-Tutsi relationship

The narrative adopted by the Hutu government, in the wake of the country's independence, to describe pre-colonial Rwanda negatively impacted the relationship between the Tutsi and the Hutu ethnic groups. Many assert that this curriculum spurred the 1994 genocide: "History narratives have been used at many stages in Rwanda's past to polarize and politicize social relations. Most tragically, they have been employed to incite hatred, culminating in the 1994 genocide" (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 31).

Anna Obura describes how the content of the curriculum spurred the events of 1994: "It is felt that the curriculum was both silent in areas where it should have been eloquent and eloquent where it should have been silent" (Obura, 2003: 86). The syllabus, as described in previous paragraphs, stressed the differences which exist between the various ethnic groups, and not on the elements that unified them. This, as a consequence, created division and hatred between the Hutus and the Tutsis. One can say that the Hutu government used ethnicity to achieve its political goals (Mgbako, 2005: 220), to ensure it controlled the national government and the country. These objectives, undoubtedly in part, led to the 1994 genocide, according to Chi Mgbako and other historians and authors.

Chapter 4: 1994-2006: no history curriculum

Shortly after the genocide came to an end, and despite the dramatic effects that the violence had on schools, classes resumed in September 1994. When Rwandan children returned to school, one subject was notably absent from the curriculum: history. The new Kagame government placed a moratorium on the teaching of history when it took power in Kigali in July 1994. This Chapter sets out to develop an understanding of why the national government decided to place this ban on history in the aftermath of the genocide. Leading on from this, I will attempt to answer the following question: How does the suspension of history teaching impact the manner in which a society deals with the past? How does it influence a post-conflict society's desire to achieve a more cohesive, democratic environment? Finally, I will focus on the Ingando Camps. These Camps were designed by the Rwandan President Paul Kagame's government to help former Hutu rebels with their transition into society after their release from prison for the human rights violations and crimes they had committed during the genocide; and aid the integration of those Tutsis, who had fled the country, for the most part in 1959, and who returned to the country in the wake of the genocide. Part of this reintegration process included the teaching of history. I will analyze how history was taught in these Ingando Camps.

It is important to note here that my findings for this Chapter are based on readings and other individuals' research as I was unable to obtain the curriculum used in the Ingando Solidarity Camps. The syllabus is not available online nor is it accessible on the website of the National Curriculum Development Centre. I also contacted the National Curriculum Development Centre, as well as authors who have written about the topic. They were unable to assist.

Placing a moratorium on the history curriculum

The Rwandan genocide came to an end on July 15, 1994 when Paul Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) gained control of the capital, Kigali. The RPF is the Tutsi rebel movement created by Paul Kagame during his exile in Uganda. The RPF fought against the Hutus and the Interahamwe (Hutu militia) throughout the genocide. The conflict was brought to an abrupt end in abnormal circumstances. This is key to understanding why the Tutsi government chose to place a moratorium on the teaching of history in the aftermath of the genocide. Unlike most conflicts or outbreaks of violence, the genocide did not end because of a peace agreement, nor was a ceasefire agreement signed between the two opposing factions. It came to an end as a result of a military victory. It is important to note here that it is the minority, the Tutsi, who won over the majority, the Hutu. This fact has important implications on the power relations which exist between the ethnic groups. Quoted by Wedlon, Mamdani describes this situation: "The victory of a minority over a majority is a victory that does not allow for vigilance to be relaxed" (Wedlon, 2009: 182). In the case of Rwanda, this means that the minority Tutsi ethnic group, who gained power in the wake of the genocide, must remain attentive and alert with regard to the majority Hutu ethnic group. However, this "military victory enables the imposition of education policies, including a new national narrative, without negotiation with those who represent the defeated" (Wedlon, 2009: 182).

Paul Kagame's government therefore embarked on reforming the entire national curriculum, with the goal of ensuring the 'so-called' misconceptions about the past would not be repeated "and training people free of ethnic, regional, national and

religious prejudices, conscious of human rights and responsibilities” (Weldon, 2009: 182).

At a conference held in Kigali in 1994, entitled ‘La politique et la planification de l’éducation au Rwanda’, a decision was taken to place a moratorium on teaching history until recommendations were given on how to teach this subject (Buckly-Zistel, 2009: 42). This decision was taken for a number of reasons. Jill Salmon (2004) simply describes the teaching of history in Rwanda as very contentious and debatable. The Tutsi led government was unwilling and/or unable “to devise acceptable approaches to teaching this controversial subject” (Cole and Barsalou, 2006: 2). The members of the government needed to first be in agreement on how to depict the events which occurred prior to, during, and in the aftermath of the genocide. Furthermore, it should concur on how to approach the future of the country and all its different branches (Weldon, 2009: 184). The subject needed to be accommodated to suit the needs and view of young children, as it is a very sensitive topic. Teachers need to feel comfortable and at ease when giving these history lessons. Therefore, one may understand that the government required a necessary amount of time to consider how to teach history after the genocide, and what to include within the syllabus. However, placing a complete moratorium on history teaching may have dramatic consequences on a country’s post-conflict phase.

The importance of teaching history

There are a number of barriers to the potential positive impact which the teaching of history can have on a transitional justice phase, “to contribute to such *desiderata* as accountability, the rule of law, truth, repair, reconciliation between deeply estranged

groups, democracy and, ultimately, to greater respect for human rights” (Cole, 2007: 116). Some of these barriers have been described above. Notwithstanding these, the teaching of history is essential to ensuring a country has a successful transitional justice phase. Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barasalou explain why a history curriculum must be included in the national syllabus to positively contribute to the transitional justice phase: “Without meaningful educational reform, the work of the other transitional justice mechanisms is likely to be ‘top-down’ and have limited impact” (Cole and Barsalou, 2006: 4).

The reasons why the teaching of the genocide, and more generally the history of Rwanda, is of paramount importance are numerous. Not teaching this history will have dramatic effects in dealing with the past, and on creating a more cohesive, democratic society. Firstly, if students are able to learn about Rwanda’s past conflicts and as a result, develop peaceful methods to deal with problems they may confront later on in life, these students, according to Seth Motel will be “more equipped to confront threats in the real world” (Mothel: 3).

Secondly, Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barasalou state: “Teaching history can help students become engaged, responsible citizens, even in societies where ethnic divisions, poverty, mistrust, and low-level violence remain endemic” (Cole and Barsalou, 2006: 4).

Thirdly, preventing students from having access to the teaching of history deprives them from learning about cultural norms, religions and economic procedures (Buckley-

Zistel, 2009: 42). Salmon also believes that history teaching is indispensable for better understanding and cooperation amongst the different ethnic groups (Salmon, 2004: 84).

Finally, and most importantly, the Rwandan population needs to understand the genocide, its origins and why it took place, to be able to explain it to themselves, and ultimately to prevent another genocide from occurring (Obura, 2003: 99).

Ingando Solidarity Camps

Ingando Solidarity Camps were designed in 1996 by the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. The reason for their creation, and their ultimate goal, is a source of contention among authors and historians. Chi Mgbako (2005) maintains the Ingando Solidarity Camps were established to ensure “the integration of Tutsi returnees who had been separated from their homeland for years by events beyond their control” (Mgbako, 2005: 209). The Tutsi refugees, mentioned here, for the most part fled the country in 1959 when violence between the two ethnic groups broke out. A revolution ensued. Roughly 336,000 Tutsis left the country, most sought refuge in neighboring Uganda. The Camps were initiated so that the Tutsi ethnic group regained a sense of pride and nationalism after living in neighboring states, often characterized by different cultures and languages, for many years.

On the other hand, Susanne Buckley-Zistel (2009) asserts the Camps were put in place by Paul Kagame’s government not only to reintegrate returning Tutsi refugees, but also to guarantee integration of Hutu ex-combatants and ex-insurgents. Consequently, one can agree that integration and reintegration were the main purposes

of the Ingando Solidarity Camps. Susanne Buckley-Zistel notes that the scope of those who attended the Ingando Camps has been expanded over the years. Firstly, students from secondary schools and universities began participating in the Camps. This became a very widespread type of Ingando Camp. In general, those students finished secondary school and wanted to continue their studies on a university level, would have to attend the Ingando Solidarity Camps to be accepted into any university (Mgbako, 2005: 217). Secondly, “from 2002 onwards, [...] ingandos became a compulsory stopover for released prisoners before returning to their home communities” (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 43). One can therefore conclude that a vast majority of the Rwandan society has attended these education Camps.

Individuals can attend these Camps for a varying amount of time, from a few days to several months. The length of time is dependent upon which ethnic group you belong to, whether or not you supported the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Forces’ cause, or if you participated in the killing of individuals throughout the genocide. As a result, the lessons taught are incumbent on the ethnicity of the individuals. The lessons given at the Ingando Solidarity Camps touch upon five broad topics: “Analysis of Rwanda’s problems; history of Rwanda; political and socio-economic issues in Rwanda and Africa; rights, obligations and duties; and leadership” (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 44). Despite the formal moratorium placed by the Tutsi government on history teaching in the wake of the genocide, the teaching of the history of Rwanda is still being carried out in the Ingando Camps.

The international non-governmental organization Penal Reform International (PRI), which assisted the national government in the creation of the education Camps,

describes the historical narrative implemented in these Camps as follows: “The teaching is based on the argument that unity existed prior to the arrival of colonial powers and that division between ethnic identities was a result of colonial practices” (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 44).

Authors and historians share a similar perspective on the narrative utilized in the Ingando Camps to describe the history of Rwanda. Gail Weldon (2009) believes that, although the stated goal of the Camps is social re-integration, the narrative used in the Camps, which has the stated aim of achieving reconciliation, promulgates a pro RPF ideology through propaganda which can be described as political (Weldon, 2009: 183). Therefore, the historical narrative taught in Ingando Camps is described as an RPF version of the past. Gail Weldon demonstrates her viewpoint by quoting Mgbako who says: “They learn about the Rwandan ‘nation’ before colonialism, the damaging effects of colonialism, and the creation of ‘myths of difference” (Weldon, 2009: 183). Chi Mgbako himself portrays Ingando Solidarity Camps as “RPF political ideology and indoctrination” (Mgbako, 2005: 201). The national government utilizes these Camps to spread their ideology and consolidate their place in power by ensuring individuals are only aware of one specific narrative in relation to pre-colonial Rwanda, the colonial era, post-independence and the 1994 genocide. The government safeguards that it, as well as the RPF and the Tutsi ethnic group, are always seen as indisputable, whereas the Hutus and their supporters are always portrayed negatively.

The narrative employed, in the Ingando Solidarity Camps, to describe the genocide demonstrates this point. The portrayal fails to mention the moderate Hutus who either did not or refused to partake in the genocide, as well as those Hutu individuals who

rescued Tutsis from the genocidal killers. As a result, the collective responsibility of the Hutu ethnic group is stressed. The failure to recognize individual responsibility in the genocide will negatively impact the relationship between the Hutus and the government, and the Hutus and the Tutsi population at large. This presents a grave barrier to the country achieving unity and reconciliation. Furthermore, if the aim of the Ingando Solidarity Camps is to achieve reconciliation and unity through integration and reintegration, then one can assume the time spent in an Ingando Camp is not sufficient to be able to have long-term effects on those who participated in them (Mgbako, 2005: 224).

Chapter 5: Current history curriculum

The Rwandan national government lifted the moratorium on the teaching of history in 2006, 12 years after the genocide ended. Pressured by a number of national and international organizations, the Tutsi government came to the realization that the teaching of the country's history, and more importantly its recent past, were essential if the government of Paul Kagame wanted to achieve unity and national reconciliation. Studies have shown that individuals need to be conscious and aware of their country's history and the mistakes which have been committed, in order for the nation and its population to be able to move forward in a constructive manner, and to ensure that the same errors are not repeated. Furthermore, these steps are essential to achieving unity and reconciliation between ethnic groups which were once fighting against each other, as it allows them to connect and unite over their respective pasts and understand the choices that were made. This has been clearly stated by the national government and the message is present throughout the newly created national history curriculum.

The modeling of this curriculum is based on the idea that, in the wake of the 1994 genocide, a common national identity needed to be formulated within Rwandan society. The first section of this Chapter will focus on the creation of the history curriculum, as well as its aims and goals. The second part addresses how the curriculum teaches pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda. Then, I will turn my attention to the teaching of the post-independence period (1962-1990). Finally, how the curriculum teaches the war of 1990 and the 1994 genocide will be discussed. In all of these scenarios, I will look at the history curriculum taught in three different levels: the reference book for secondary school teachers entitled "The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach", the ordinary level curriculum (referred to as ordinary level in this Chapter),

taught in Junior Secondary school and the advanced level curriculum (referred to as advanced level in this Chapter), taught in Senior Secondary school.

Creating a new history curriculum

A substantial number of countries which are traversing a post-conflict stage receive not only aid from foreign governments and regional and international organizations, but also guidance and counseling on the steps they should take to ensure that their post-conflict phase is a successful one. Rwanda was one of these countries. The country received a substantially larger amount of aid and support in comparison to other post-conflict countries because of the lack of response of the international community during the genocide. The aid, however, was not directed towards the education sector and its necessary rebuilding in the aftermath of the genocide. Nonetheless, these outside actors “played a catalytic role in encouraging the education ministry to begin reforming the history curriculum” (Cole and Barsalou, 2006: 7). These organizations included the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, and many non-governmental organizations and their representatives, including the organization ‘Facing History and Ourselves’. Along with Rwandan academics, who were working on behalf of the Rwandan Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research (MINEDUC), these organizations “compiled a comprehensive reference book for secondary school teachers entitled *The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach* designed to serve as a manual for history teaching” (Buckley-Zistel, 2009: 42). This reference book was also heavily influenced by the National Unit and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), who, according to Gail Weldon, promulgated “a new national narrative that allows only one version of Rwanda’s past”

(Weldon, 2009: 177). This fact is corroborated by the Rwandan national government which maintains that the aim of the new history curriculum is to ensure nation-building and unity. There is a need to create a common national identity to ensure that these goals are achieved in the long-term.

In the wake of the genocide, the Ministry of Education released a policy paper at an event held in April 1995 entitled ‘Conference on Policy and planning of education in Rwanda’, stating the new direction it wanted education to take. The national government wanted those individuals who attended school to be “free of ethnic, regional, national and religious prejudices; and committed to human rights and to their obligations to society” (Obura, 2003: 93). The education sector helps to achieve these goals by “creating a culture of peace, emphasizing positive, non-violent national values; and promoting the universal values of justice, peace, tolerance, respect for others, solidarity and democracy” (Obura, 2003: 93). Furthermore, by ensuring that both positive and negative forms of discriminations were eradicated. The next Chapter will address these goals in more detail and determine whether they are respected and put in place in the current history curriculum.

The teaching of pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda

The teaching of pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda, which incorporates the teaching of the different ethnic groups and their origins, is undertaken by a number of different class levels, among them secondary school, ordinary level and advanced level. Teaching of this issue will be addressed at these three levels.

➤ Secondary school

According to the general introduction of the history curriculum of secondary schools, this specific section of the history curriculum was written according to the “Facing History and Ourselves Foundation” methodology which “encourages the participation of the researcher or student in the personalized development of interpretation judged as the most appropriate in relationship to the reality and the truth of facts in order to find their causes and consequences” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 6). The curriculum is divided into four sections: pre-colonial Rwanda, colonial Rwanda, post-colonial Rwanda (1962-1990) and post-colonial Rwanda (1990-1994). Each section has a particular focus area, with the module on pre-colonial Rwanda concentrating on the theme of clans.

The introduction of the pre-colonial module states: “Rwanda existed long before European colonization. It had its political and socio-economic organization, its culture and customs. It was a sovereign nation” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 8). Clans played a very important role within this structure because they “constituted important links in the commanding chain of that time” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 8). The curriculum defines the term clan in the following manner: “A group of people who claim a common mythical ancestor. It is a legendary group or a fabulous ascendancy to which a group of people are attached” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 14). These clans were mainly used as a form of identification amongst the people of Rwanda, prior to the arrival of the colonial powers. The curriculum notes that “the widest clans are represented in the three Rwandan social

categories (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa)” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 14). An individual could change his or her social class, but belonged to the same clan for life. It is therefore important to note here that today’s ethnic groups, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, were considered to represent social classes in pre-colonial Rwanda. Hence, the curriculum emphasizes that “before the introduction of the new Hutu-Tutsi-Twa identities, which were imposed and circulated by the colonial and postcolonial bureaucracy, at the beginning of the 1930s, clans were being used as identification elements and were commonly used by the people of Rwanda” (The Teaching of History of Rwanda – A Participatory Approach, 2006: 8).

➤ **Ordinary level**

In Chapter 3 of the first section of the History Program for Ordinary Level, entitled “Origin, Formation and Expansion of the Kingdom of Rwanda until the 19th Century”, one of the principal objectives is to describe and demonstrate that Rwanda was characterized by social cohesion before becoming a colonized country. According to Gail Weldon (2003), “the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front simplify and romanticize the pre-colonial past and deny post-independence academic research” (Weldon, 2003: 63). The social cohesion of the Rwandan society was founded on a number of elements, including the shared common history of the population, the utilization of the same language, similar values and cultural norms, as well as the belief in one common religion. This profound unity was destroyed by the German and Belgian colonial powers, according to the historical narrative employed by the current national government: “The colonizers started sowing the bad seed of sectarianism ... which

gnawed little by little the unity of Rwandans until it was destroyed” (Buckely-Zistel, 2009: 35).

In Chapter 1 of the second section of the curriculum, entitled “Rwanda During German Colonization (1897-1916)”, there is a strong emphasis on the role religion had on the Rwandan population with a section named: “Describe how Christian churches were built in Rwanda and how they helped change the lives of the people, economy and morals of the Banyarwanda” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 38).

Finally, Chapter 2 of this section, “Rwanda under Belgian Colonization 1916-1962” describes the policies used to bring an end to the ‘so-called’ unity that was emphasized in Chapter 3 of the first section of the syllabus. The program notes: “Describe in groups on the politics of dividing people so that they can rule them easily showing some of the good things that were done by the colonialists but favoring some groups more than the others; this laid a basis for the genocide of Rwanda” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 41).

➤ **Advanced level**

In the History Program for Advanced Level, Chapter 5 focuses on Rwanda during the 19th century. This Chapter lays down a number of teaching objectives which need to be attained. These include an explanation and description of the rise and expansion of the Rwandan Kingdom; the political, social and economic organization of the Rwandan Kingdom in the pre-colonial period as well as the different political and social relations which existed (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 21).

Chapter 6, “Rwanda under German Colonial Rule (1897-1916)”, explains, “the reasons for the coming of missionaries in Rwanda and shows the methods used to convert people into Christianity” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 40). The Chapter recounts the impact and consequences that the missionaries had on social, economic and cultural life in Rwanda. There is a strong emphasis on the role and place of missionaries within the Rwandan society as they played a very important role in disseminating their historical narrative throughout the schools that they set up across the nation.

Chapter 7, “Rwanda under Belgian Colonial Rule (1916-1962)”, discusses the events of November 1959 which are described as a crisis where thousands of Tutsis were forced to leave Rwanda for neighboring countries, with a large contingent fleeing to Uganda. Teachers are asked to discuss the causes of this crisis, which include “political factors, ethnic factor, PARMEHUTU (Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement) ideology and colonial manipulation” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 53-54). The reference to colonial manipulation in this context denotes the political stance of the Belgian colonial power which changed in the final years of colonization. Thus, in 1959, the colonizers began drastically favoring the Hutu ethnic group in all different sectors of life. This is, in part, what led to thousands of Tutsis leaving Rwanda. Another defining factor, described in this Chapter, was the massacre of Tutsis.

The teaching of post-colonial Rwanda (1962-1990)

The historical narrative put forward to describe post-colonial Rwanda (1962-1990), which incorporates the teaching of the two Republics and the crises which occurred in each, is undertaken by a number of different class levels, among them ordinary level and advanced level. The teaching of this issue will be addressed in these two levels.

➤ **Ordinary level**

Chapter 1 of the third section of the History Program for Ordinary Level entitled “The First Republic (1962-1973)” focuses on the political changes which occurred during this time period, including the country becoming a one-party state. One objective of this Chapter is to “show the consequences of exclusion on the regional and ethnic basis” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 64). The growth of ethnicism and the question of refugees are also topics that are addressed in this Chapter. However, the focal point of the Chapter is the 1973 crisis, where the causes and consequences of it are explained.

Chapter 2, “The Second Republic (1973-1994)”, also concentrates on the crisis of 1973 and the coup d’état which took place. The Chapter sets out a chronological timeline of the political evolution which occurred between 1973 and 1990. Finally, the Chapter concludes by setting out the achievements and failures of the Second Republic.

➤ **Advanced level**

In the advanced level history curriculum, Chapter 7 “The First Republic (1962-1973)” puts an emphasis on the immediate problems which the country faced in the

aftermath of gaining independence, these include “discriminatory ideology, lack of financial institutions, the refugee problem and the failures to resolve it” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 55). The Chapter also enunciates the failures of the First Republic, encompassing the “abolition of multiparty system, organize (sic) Tutsi massacres after Inyenzi attacks, massacres and exclusion of Tutsi during and after 1973 events, and globalization of the ‘Tutsi supremacy and the Hutu marginalization’” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 56).

Chapter 8 is dedicated to the “The Second Republic (1973-1994). The first objective of the Chapter is to “analyze the changes introduced by President Habyarimana and strategies used to consolidate his power” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 56). The description of the coup of 1973 focuses on the massacres and exclusions based on ethnical identity, the elimination of all opposing political parties and the creation of the Habyarimana dictatorship. Similarly to the Chapter dedicated to the Second Republic in the ordinary level history curriculum, this Chapter also clearly notes the failures of this Republic, including the “increase of refugee problems; the social and political discrimination; the ethnic discrimination in all domains: political, economic and social; and regional imbalances” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 57).

The teaching of the war of 1990 and the 1994 genocide

The historical narrative put forward to describe post-colonial Rwanda (1990-1994), which incorporates the teaching of the 1990 war and the 1994 genocide, is undertaken by a number of different class levels, among them ordinary level and advanced level. The teaching of this issue at these two levels is addressed below.

➤ **Ordinary level**

In Chapter 3 of the History Program for Ordinary Level, the first important fact to note is the title of the Chapter itself: “The War of 1990-1994 and the Genocide of Tutsi”. By defining the genocide as the genocide of the Tutsi, the curriculum is characterizing the genocide, and eliminating the possibility that the Hutu ethnic group was also impacted by the genocide in a negative way. One of the objectives of this Chapter is to “Explain why the press of all tendencies developed rapidly during the years before the Genocide” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 70). The press played an extremely important role in propagating the historical narrative put in place by the Habyarimana government, especially the radio which was the main form of communicating information. The syllabus notes the “hardening of the dictatorship with its propaganda (ibyibutso)” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 70). Furthermore, the Chapter focuses on the steps taken by the Habyarimana dictatorship to ensure that the Arusha Peace Accords were not respected. These notably include, according to the curriculum, the massacres of Bigogwe, Ngororero and Bugesera (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 71).

The second section of the Chapter focuses exclusively on the 1994 genocide. The objectives of this section are to define the term ‘genocide’ and explain how the government developed a genocide ideology: “Show and explain how ideology of Genocide was prepared and executed” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 72). In addition, this section also refers to the role of national and international institutions in the development of the genocide. Finally, students are taught about the “political,

economic and socio-cultural consequences of the Tutsi Genocide” (History Program for Ordinary Level, 2008: 72).

➤ **Advanced level**

Chapter 9 of the advanced level history curriculum is entitled “The Liberation War of 1990 and the Tutsi Genocide of 1994”. In the same way as the History Program for Ordinary Level, this Chapter characterizes the war of 1990-1994 and the genocide. This war many not be seen as a “liberation war” by some ethnic groups. The first objective of this Chapter is to “explain the causes and the effects of liberation 1990” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 58). The causes of the war enumerated by the Chapter are: “Refusal of return of refugees, hard life in exile, increased dictatorship in Rwanda, and social discrimination” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 58). The curriculum then describes the 1994 genocide and its consequences, which are political, economic, social and cultural. Finally, this Chapter describes the Government of National Unity put in place by Paul Kagame in the aftermath of the genocide. It puts forward the “background, objectives, achievements and challenges” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 59) of this Government.

Chapter 6: How does the current history curriculum affect a child's right to education?

The creation of a new updated history curriculum by the Kagame government in the wake of the 1994 genocide was welcomed by the Rwandan population, national and international organizations, as well as civil society organizations. This was viewed as a positive, essential step taken by the national government in order to ensure a constructive and effective transitional justice phase. There are certain elements of the syllabus, however, which have been described by authors, historians and others as biased and subjective.

This penultimate Chapter will therefore attempt to answer the following question: how does the current history curriculum affect a child's right to education? To demonstrate how the rights of the child are impacted by the current syllabus I will utilize the Rwandan Constitution (2003) and two regional and international Conventions, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These were signed and ratified by the Rwandan government, respectively in 2001 and 1991.

The first part of this Chapter will focus on article 4 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which outlines the best interests of the child. Secondly, I will concentrate on those articles present within the Rwandan Constitution, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child that stress the need to ensure the freedom of expression. I will then highlight those articles which center around the freedom of thought, conscience and

religion defined within the Rwandan Constitution, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally, I will pinpoint those articles within the Rwandan Constitution, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child that refer to the right to education.

Best Interests of the Child

Article 4(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states: “In all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority *the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration*” (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child).

The obligations of the state in relation to this article are therefore to ensure that the best interests of the child are the first priority when the state itself is taking actions which will affect children. These interests should be given due weight and serious consideration in any situation. The best interests of the child should be the primary concern of any state as these children represent the future generation of a country.

The historical narrative included in the secondary school syllabus, as well as the ordinary level and advanced level curricula violates article 4(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in the following ways. In the three curricula described in Chapter 5, a child’s rights are not considered adequately as his/her best interests are not put first, nor seen as a priority. They are not the “primary consideration” (Article 4(1), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child)

of the government. It is the best interests of the state, the national government and the Tutsi ethnic group that are considered to be the priority within these syllabi. For example, Chapter 9 of the History Program for Advanced Level is titled “The Liberation War of 1990 and the Tutsi genocide of 1994” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 58). This title demonstrates that the interests of the national government, and therefore the minority Tutsi ethnic group, are put before the best interests of the child as this title can be described as biased and untruthful. Firstly, the war of 1990 is described as a ‘liberation war’. Rwandan individuals may not have seen this war as a form of liberation in 1990, and may not see it in that manner either today. The goal of the invasion of Paul Kagame’s Tutsi militants from Uganda was to liberate their people from the hands of the Hutu government. Secondly, the 1994 genocide is depicted as a ‘Tutsi genocide’. To describe the genocide as solely the killing and violation and abuse of the human rights of Tutsi individuals is an historical inaccuracy. Thousands of moderate Hutus were also killed by the Interahamwe, the Hutu militia, generally for refusing to partake in the genocide. Furthermore, Paul Kagame and his Rwandan Patriotic Forces also undertook killings of Hutu individuals.

Therefore, this historical narrative employed by the national government encompasses historical inaccuracies, which solely benefit the government itself. The history curriculum distorts history and thus infringes the ‘best interests’ of the child because these are not seen as the first priority within the narrative employed by the curriculum, and the manner in which it is taught as children are unable to express their point of view and teachers themselves are constrained to telling one side of the story.

In conclusion, one can see that with the evidence put forward above, the best interests of the child are not observed and respected. The State's interests override those of the child within the national history curriculum. This will negatively impact Rwanda in the future. Respecting the best interests of the child ensures he/she will become a conscious and informed citizen, who has for instance, the right to vote. Preventing children from having access to the necessary education which guarantees their best interest will therefore hamper a child's ability to contribute positively and effectively to the country's future economic, political and social growth.

Freedom of Expression

Article 12(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states the following: "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming *his or her own views* the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Article 13(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states: "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include *freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds*, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice" (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

These articles mandate states to ensure that every child has the right to freedom of expression. This ensures that each child can form and convey his or her ideas in both

public and private spheres. However, a child's ideas should be treated in accordance with his or her age and sense of maturity. Furthermore, children also have the right to share information, through any form of communication.

The historical narrative put forward in the three curricula described in the previous Chapter violates the two articles quoted above: articles 12(1) and 13(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These two articles emphasize that children have the right to express their own views in different matters. The Rwandan national government, the teaching methods and the syllabus in place prevent children from having the ability to do this. Children are unable to convey their own points of view with regard, notably, to the genocide and to the topic of ethnicity. They are taught a specific history and must learn and accept this narrative. They are only able to express their opinion in a private sphere. Furthermore, article 13(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that children have the right to 'seek and receive information'. The current Rwandan history curriculum only allows children to seek and receive a specific narrative and prevents them from obtaining diversified information in relation to different topics. Therefore, this taught curriculum violates the freedom of expression of children, as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as it prevents them from being exposed to divergent views, and expressing their own viewpoints, in relation to the current historical narrative, and to alternative narratives.

Furthermore, teachers are not able to divert from the government's national curriculum. Even if there is a desire to do so, teachers run the risk of being accused of subscribing to genocide ideology. Genocide ideology is defined in article 2 of Rwandan 'Law 18/2008 of 23/07/2008 relating to the punishment of the crime of genocide

ideology' as "an aggregate of thoughts characterized by conduct, speeches, documents and other acts aiming at exterminating or inciting others to exterminate people based on ethnic group, origin, nationality, region, color, physical appearance, sex, language, religion or political opinion, committed in normal periods or during war" (Law 18/2008 of 23/07/2008 relating to the punishment of the crime of genocide ideology: 1). Genocide ideology is punishable by imprisonment.

Despite this, article 34 of the Rwandan Constitution states: "Freedom of the press and freedom of information are recognized and guaranteed by the State. Freedom of speech and freedom of information shall not prejudice public order and good morals, the right of every citizen to honor, good reputation and the privacy of personal and family life. *It is also guaranteed so long as it does not prejudice the protection of the youth and minors. The conditions for exercising such freedoms are determined by law.* There is hereby established an independent institution known as the "High Council of the Press". The law shall determine its functions, organization and operation" (Rwandan Constitution).

Article 7 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child also states: "Every child who is capable of communicating *his or her own views* shall be assured the rights to express his opinions freely in all matters and to disseminate his opinions subject to such restrictions *as are prescribed by law*" (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child). Hence, article 34 of the Rwandan Constitution and article 7 of the African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child both clearly state that the freedom of expression of an individual, and the legality of what he or she says, is dependent upon national laws. It is important to note here that national law takes

precedence over regional and international law in all scenarios. Consequently, applying Rwandan national law and the appropriate regional Convention in this case, it can be considered that the historical narrative put forward in the three different syllabi described in the previous Chapter does not violate articles 12(1) and 13(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child because the freedom of expression within the school environment may not be considered as a fundamental right. Those views that may be wished to be expressed and may be contrary to the line of thought put in place by the national government may not ‘be prescribed by law’. Furthermore, the current national government may believe that portraying an alternative historical narrative could “prejudice the protection of the youth and minors” (Article 34, Rwandan Constitution). This, therefore, may explain why the present national history curriculum and the manner in which it is taught restrain the freedom of expression.

Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

Article 9(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states: “Every child shall have the right to *freedom of thought, conscience and religion*” (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child).

Article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child reads: “States Parties shall respect the right of the child to *freedom of thought, conscience and religion*” (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The related obligations of the state in relation to these two articles are thus to ensure that every child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and to ensure that these rights are respected and implemented by all organs of the state.

This case is similar to the right described above: the freedom of expression. Children, in schools, do not have the freedom of thought or conscience as they are restricted to learning a specific version of history and are unable to manifest their own point of view with regards to this subject in a public domain. Children are only allowed to utilize their right to freedom of thought and conscience in a private sphere, in environments where there is no risk for them to express themselves freely.

The three syllabi described in the previous Chapter base their teaching methods on a unique set of ‘approved’ textbooks. Consequently, teachers are not encouraged to communicate or teach other perspectives of historical events. However, on occasions, other instruments are used, such as videos, original documents, and group projects. An example of original documents is presented in the History Program for Advanced Level: “Teacher avails UN documents and the other documents relating to genocide” (History Program for Advanced Level, 2009: 58). However, the example of utilizing UN documents to demonstrate specific facts regarding the genocide also shows the curriculum is biased as many of these UN documents demonstrate the culpability of the Habyarimana government and the Interahamwe, as well as individuals belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, in the planning and execution of the 1994 genocide. These fail to point out the role that Paul Kagame and his Rwandan Patriotic Forces played in the instigation of the genocide, and the crimes they committed throughout its unfolding.

Therefore, this curriculum violates a child's right to freedom of thought and conscience because it does not allow a child to express his or her views on all topics discussed within the syllabus. Furthermore, denying a child his/her right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion also relates to the suppression of one's cultural heritage, identity and history. In the long term, this can have a negative impact on Rwanda. The history of the Hutu ethnic group is partly being denied or inconsistently discussed. Therefore individuals of Hutu ethnicity are unable to connect with and learn about an important part of their history and their identity. This attitude will only fuel tensions between the different ethnic groups and increase Hutus' strong sense of identity.

However, article 33 of the Rwandan Constitution states: "Freedom of thought, opinion, conscience, religion, worship and the public manifestation thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with conditions *determined by law*. *Propagation of ethnic, regional, racial or discrimination or any other form of division is punishable by law*" (Rwandan Constitution). It is once again important to highlight here that national law takes precedence over regional and international norms and standards. National law, in this case, can refer to a number of documents, including the Code of Criminal Procedure, Law 13/2004; the Organizations of Prosecutions for Offences constituting the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity, Organic Law 08/96; Repressing the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes, 06/09/2003; and Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Discrimination and Sectarianism Law 47/2001.

Consequently, it can be considered that under national law and article 33 of the Rwandan Constitution, the historical narrative presented in the three syllabi described in the previous Chapter does not violate a child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion because it can be said that the historical narrative – used to characterize the genocide, pre-colonial Rwanda and the appearance of the different ethnic groups – taught in schools is presented in such a manner in order to prevent the 'propagation of ethnic, regional, racial or discrimination'. These forms of propagations are illegal in Rwanda. One can therefore assume that the national government does not want to instigate these forms of communication through a national history curriculum that is open-ended and takes into account different historical narratives. This, therefore, can explain why the curriculum is constructed in a manner which prevents children from expressing their right to freedom of thought and conscience, especially with regard to the narrative employed to describe the 1994 genocide and the history of pre-colonial Rwanda, which shaped the views of the various ethnic groups in Rwanda.

The Right to Education

There are numerous articles within the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which refer to the right to education, this thesis refers to two:

Article 11(2)(b) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states: "The education of the child shall be directed to *fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms* with particular reference to those set out in the provisions of various African instruments on human and peoples' rights and international human

rights declarations and conventions” (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child).

Article 11(2)(d) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states: “The education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, *in the spirit of understanding tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples ethnic, tribal and religious groups*” (African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child).

Many articles within the Convention on the Rights of the Child refer directly to the right to education. This thesis only refers to the following two:

Article 29(1)(b) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child reads: “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to *the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations*” (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Article 29(1)(d) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states the following: “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in free society, *in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin*” (Convention on the Rights of the Child).

These articles therefore mandate the state to ensure that the education system that is in place teaches human rights and fundamental freedoms. These rights and freedoms relate especially to the regional human rights documents, as well as the international Conventions that have been signed and ratified by the state, and the Charter of the United Nations. As a result of these teachings, children should be prepared and able to live a responsible life within society. These notions are clearly set out in article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

The four articles cited above all refer to the role that education can play in teaching children certain fundamental freedoms and human rights. These are essential to ensure economic and social success in life, to guarantee that the child will lead a responsible life. They call for a system to provide an education necessary for a child to grow, to inculcate values of economic and political empowerment, and possess critical thinking capacities. These values are inculcated through the curriculum that is taught and the manner in which it is taught by teachers. For instance, children are taught the human right to freedom of expression, within the educational environment, by having the opportunity to express their viewpoints and opinions regarding the topics they are being

taught within the safety of their classroom. These fundamental freedoms and human rights are therefore instilled in children. The historical narrative presented in Chapter 5, describing the narratives used in Rwandan secondary school, advanced level and ordinary level, and the manner in which these are taught, do not respect the principles mentioned in articles 11(2)(b) and (d) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and articles 29(1)(b) and (d). The syllabus does not allow children to express themselves freely or learn alternative versions of history. It therefore does not respect fundamental freedoms or human rights. Consequently, children are not encouraged to inherently learn and respect these freedoms and rights.

Nevertheless, article 40 of the Rwandan Constitution notably states: “*Freedom of learning and teaching shall be guaranteed in accordance with conditions determined by law*” (Rwandan Constitution). Hence, the national Rwandan government may consider that the current historical narrative used in schools, and the manner in which it is taught by teachers is the only way it can be instructed in order not to violate other national laws.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The complexity and difficulty of teaching history after a violent conflict is demonstrated by the case of Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. The Tutsi government placed a moratorium on the teaching of history for 12 years, before conceding to regional and international pressure.

A new and adapted history curriculum is now taught in secondary schools around the country. This syllabus has a strong focus on the teaching of pre-colonial Rwanda, emphasizing that the country was characterized by national unity prior to the arrival of the German and Belgian colonizers. It also addresses the 1962-1990 period when the Tutsi ethnic group suffered greatly at the hands of the Hutu led Habyarimana regime. The last section of the curriculum teaches the 1990 war and the 1994 genocide.

This syllabus is seen as depicting a one-sided story, and is described as biased and untruthful, due to the narrative it employs to describe pre-colonial Rwanda, the importance of ethnicity and the 1994 genocide. The curriculum portrays a narrative ensuring the Tutsi ethnic group is seen in a positive light, and the Hutu population is seen negatively. This therefore assists the political agenda of Paul Kagame and his government, who wish to remain in power, as they are the minority ethnic group within the country and thus remain wary of the other ethnic groups. A similar stance was employed by the Habyarimana regime. The historical curriculum was, in part, used to guarantee their place in power in Rwanda.

This thesis shows the various ways in which the right to education of a child is violated by the official history presented in the new history curriculum, particularly

with respect to: the right to freedom of expression, the right to education, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the best interests of the child. The curriculum and the manner in which it is taught fail to ensure that these rights are respected, according to a number of articles present within the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

However, the Rwandan Constitution states that these different rights are to be determined by national law. Therefore, the violation of a child's right to education is dependent upon these national laws, effectively overriding the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

While the present curriculum and teaching does not violate Rwandan law, which disregards international and African Conventions, it clearly ignores the spirit of those Conventions.

A new history curriculum is due to be released in 2016, to be implemented at the start of the new school year in September. One hopes that this new syllabus will teach the history of pre-colonial Rwanda, the different ethnic groups present within the country, and the 1994 genocide in a manner which ensures that all rights are respected. This new curriculum should also address the causes of the genocide to guarantee unity and reconciliation among the people of Rwanda.

If the national government fails to address these matters, the suppression of the history of one ethnic group will fuel tensions between the Hutus and the Tutsis.

Combined with the current uneasy political situation in Rwanda, the country is at risk of imploding once again if these issues are not addressed.

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