



Rehumanisation and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda

*An exploration of the way in which rehumanisation was a part of
reconciliation projects in post-genocide Rwanda*

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Abstract

In the summer of 1994, the world was shook by the Rwandan genocide. This genocide was preceded by an intense process of dehumanisation. Today, however, Rwanda is praised for its seemingly extraordinary reconciliation process. As part of this process, it appears that dehumanised individuals have to become 'human' again. Yet rehumanisation, as the counterpart of dehumanisation, is a relatively understudied concept. This research has concerned itself with contributing to a better understanding of the concept of rehumanisation per se and in relation to reconciliation. To this end, an embedded case study – containing three reconciliation projects operating in Rwanda – produced an analysis of the way in which rehumanisation and reconciliation (and relating concepts healing and forgiveness) are approached in practice.

Rehumanisation indeed appears to be an indispensable element in reconciliation projects in post-genocide Rwanda, for two reasons. First of all, enabling an open dialogue between people and fostering the emergence of social connections turned out to be highly relevant dimensions of both rehumanisation and reconciliation, thereby linking the two concepts together. Secondly, it has become clear that rehumanisation can bridge the gap between superficial and deep reconciliation and therefore is (or should be) an indispensable dimension of reconciliation.

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1. Introduction

In the academic literature on conflict studies, much attention has been paid to (the construction of) antagonistic identities and the development of negative, dehumanised stereotypes preceding a violent conflict (e.g. Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Kelman, 1973; Schröder & Schmidt, 2001; Sen, 2006; Staub, 2000, 2013). The creation of 'the other' seems a precondition to get people to use violence against a certain group. The group of 'others' is demonised: only negative characteristics are ascribed to them and these characteristics are categorical, they apply to all members of the group. What the others actually do or say is irrelevant, for their negative characteristics are inherent to the fact that they are different (De Swaan, 2014). At the same time, certain aspects of the own group are emphasized in its collective memory, for the purpose of creating a collective identity and a resulting feeling of 'us versus them' or moral versus immoral (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001; Staub, 2000, 2013). Through repetition, these descriptions of the own group and the other are normalised and internalised. In this way, a negative stereotype of a dehumanised other is created and violence against the other becomes increasingly legitimized (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001; Staub, 2000, 2013; Steuter & Wills, 2009).

As Bauman (1989) rightly points out, we often associate dehumanisation with horrifying practices in concentration camps, with individuals stripped from all symbols of human dignity and recognizable human likeliness. These associations relate only to the most extreme manifestations of dehumanisation. Preceding these extremes are more subtle practices of dehumanisation that are far more common and therefore potentially more dangerous (Bauman, 1989). Dehumanisation starts when individuals are reduced to a set of quantitative measures or to the group they supposedly belong to, stripping them of any individual qualities. The latter often goes hand in hand with metaphors of animals, insects or diseases. For example, in Rwanda the Tutsis were labelled cockroaches. This reference to vermin easily evokes the response of extermination. The genocide in Rwanda is an example of the potential dangers of dehumanisation. Through wide-scale propaganda negative stereotypes of the other as non-human were normalised and internalised by a large share of the population. Eventually, together with many other factors, this process led to a genocide of the Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

In post-conflict or post-genocide situations, as part of the reconciliation process, people have to become 'human' again, in order to enable different groups to live together again. When dehumanised stereotypes remain and are not addressed after the conflict, the chances of renewed conflict are

considerable (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008; Staub, 2000, 2013). One might even question to what extent we can speak about 'post-conflict' when people still do not see the other group as human even after large-scale physical violence has stopped (Muggah, 2005). How to conceptualize 'post-conflict' would be an interesting inquiry for another research. In this thesis, however, post-conflict is conceptualised as post-physical-violence and rehumanisation as a part of the post-violence reconciliation process.

This research focuses on rehumanisation processes and their place within reconciliation efforts. This means a considerable focus is placed on the psychological elements of reconciliation. This choice of focus is not to say that the political context in which these processes take place is of minor importance. On the contrary, political processes and psychological processes mutually influence each other. The researcher therefore has tried to refer to relevant political elements and developments where needed. However, for purposes of demarcation and considering the scope of the thesis format, the main focus is on the psychological dimensions of reconciliation, specifically rehumanisation.

An emphasis is placed on post-genocide, rather than post-conflict situations, because the processes leading up to genocide seem unique in their level of dehumanisation and are therefore not comparable to other conflict situations. An enemy image that emerges during a war can still be human or human-like, whereas a 'the other' in a genocide usually loses all humanness. Kelman (1973, p. 49-50) explains the unique nature of dehumanisation preceding mass killing or genocide (which corresponds to what he labels as sanctioned massacres):

"Dehumanization of the enemy is a common phenomenon in any war situation. Sanctioned massacres, however, presuppose a degree of dehumanization that is considerably more extreme. People may fear and hate an enemy; they may be sufficiently angered, provoked, or threatened by him to be prepared to take his life. They may still be reacting to him, however, as a human being. [...] By contrast, in sanctioned massacres as I have characterized them the killing is not in response to the target's threats or provocations. It is not what he has done that marks him for death, but what he is – the category to which he happens to belong."

1.1 Research objective and research questions

The research is shaped as practice-oriented research (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). It seeks to contribute to a better understanding of past reconciliation processes in post-genocide situations, and the role that rehumanisation plays in these processes, so as to help improve such processes in the future.

Since reconciliation processes encompass a wide variety of actors, initiatives, policies and practices, this research was not able to address the reconciliation process in Rwanda as a whole. Therefore, three projects were chosen that have been actively involved in the reconciliation process after the end of the genocidal violence. The way in which they operationalise reconciliation and rehumanisation, as well as related concepts, is subjected to analysis. The importance and role that was allocated to rehumanisation in relation to the other project dimensions is the main focus of the research. In addition, the three projects are compared to each other. More on the selection of the initiatives and the points of comparison is written in chapter three. It is important to note that this is not a description of how the reconciliation process in Rwanda took place. Rather, by talking to these practitioner experts from the projects, it is examined how they perceive processes of reconciliation and rehumanisation and how they feel these are best approached.

Following from the above, the research objective of this research is *to contribute to a better understanding of reconciliation processes in post-genocide situations, by analysing the role of rehumanisation as part of the reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda.*

To develop an understanding of the relationship between rehumanisation and reconciliation, we first need to understand the individual concepts. While a lot is already known about reconciliation, rehumanisation is relatively understudied (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). Yet, it is clear from the literature that rehumanisation is an important element of reconciliation. Therefore, to better understand the relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation, this research first aims to create a better understanding of the concept of rehumanisation, before moving to the relationship between rehumanisation and reconciliation. This leads to the following research question:

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|--|
| <p><i>To what extent and in what way was rehumanisation a part of reconciliation projects in post-genocide Rwanda?</i></p> |
|--|

To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions are addressed.

1. How was reconciliation approached in the three projects?
 - a. To what extent and in what way was healing approached?
 - b. To what extent and in what way was forgiveness approached?
2. How was rehumanisation approached in the projects?
3. How did the approaches to reconciliation and rehumanisation vary?
 - a. Within-case analysis: across project phases
 - b. Between-case analysis: across projects
4. How did rehumanisation relate to reconciliation in the projects?

1.2 Research design

This research has a qualitative and constructivist character and is shaped as an embedded single case study. Rwanda was chosen as the main research unit, the sub-units are projects that have been actively involved in the reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda. The – implications of the – choice of methods are discussed in chapter three.

1.3 Scientific relevance

The research addresses the issue of post-conflict reconciliation, specifically processes of rehumanisation. While much research has been dedicated to dehumanisation, little attention has been paid to the reverse process (Bandura, 1999; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). This is problematic because in post-conflict situations the process of rehumanisation, making people human again, is expected to be highly relevant (Staub, 2000). This is endorsed by Gobodo-Madikizela (2002, p. 20), who believes that “seeing the other as a human being [...] is probably the most crucial starting point in the encounter between victims and perpetrators of evil”.

According to Bandura (1999), the [re]humanisation of others has a strong self-restraining effect and can thereby curb violent actions, yet emphasis is often placed on people’s inhumanities to one another. “Psychological theorizing and research tends to emphasize how easy it is to bring out the worst in people through dehumanization and other self-exonerative means. The sensational negative findings receive the greatest attention” (Bandura, 1999, p. 202). He illustrates this with an example: what many of us know about Milgram’s research on obedient aggression is that ordinary people can be pushed to perform evil actions. What is not as well-known, is that “most people refuse to behave cruelly, even under

unrelenting authoritarian commands, if the situation is personalized [...] those exercising that power cannot get themselves to behave punitively toward humanized individuals” (Bandura, 1999, p. 202).

Kelman (1973, p. 48), in addition, explains that “the inhibitions against murdering fellow human beings are generally so strong that the victims must be deprived of their human status if systematic killing is to proceed in a smooth and orderly fashion”. The above shows the importance of rehumanisation in preventing violence and conflict. Simultaneously, the example of Bandura (1999) shows that emphasis is often placed on dehumanisation, rather than rehumanisation.

Aside from this focus on dehumanisation, reconciliation literature and initiatives often emphasize rule of law, state-building, community development, legal and electoral reform and economic development (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008). In contrast, the linkages between psychology or emotions and reconciliation have not received as much consideration (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008). Unfortunately, this does not do justice to the importance of emotions in shaping community and collective memory, especially after traumatic events such as war or genocide. In cases of genocide in particular suffering and violence may have come from the hands of neighbours, friends or family (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). The resulting trauma, therefore, necessarily encompasses a highly emotional aspect. Emotions thus play an important role in individual and social healing processes. According to Hutchison and Bleiker (2008, p. 397) “emotions that isolate or incite disingenuous perceptions of others need to be worked through, collectively, if societies are to re-establish the hope and trust that are needed to approach political reconciliation”. They believe that institutionalized models of reconciliation are insufficient. What is important is to “return humanity to those from whom categorization has removed all individual attributes” (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004, p. 567).

These two arguments justify the emphasis on rehumanisation in this thesis: firstly, the overrepresentation of dehumanisation in academic research as opposed to rehumanisation and, secondly, the envisaged importance of psychological aspects of reconciliation, such as rehumanisation, in preventing violence and positively transforming post-conflict situations. However, it remains unclear how rehumanisation should be advanced. This thesis will therefore shed more light on this.

1.4 Societal relevance

“Reconciliation is more than coexistence, that is, formerly hostile groups living near each other [...]. Reconciliation requires that members of the two groups come to see the humanity of one another. It means coming to accept each other and to develop mutual trust” (Staub, 2000, p. 376-377).

Continued fear or resentment of an outside group will likely result in new forms of conflict. Successful reconciliation is, therefore, essential in preventing renewed violence (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008; Staub, 2013). Coexistence without humane connections appears to be superficial and fragile, according to a Bosnian woman quoted by Halpern and Weinstein (2004, p. 570): “We are all pretending to be nice and to love each other. But, be it known that I hate them and that they hate me”. The research showed that despite contact between people, simple coexistence did not resolve on-going suspicion and resentment. Similar statements are found in Rwanda: “[A] survivor questioned about how he manages to live alongside neighbours released from prison who had been the killers of his family members says that, in fact, he is not managing at all, he just pretends to get along” (Ingelaere, 2010, p. 44).

An important assumption in the research is therefore that the causes of conflict cannot be addressed unless their emotional and psychological facets are recognised and dealt with (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008), and that without addressing these psychological facets reconciliation remains fragile. The insights generated from this research aim to offer a concrete understanding of how rehumanisation and reconciliation work and are related, thereby contributing to ‘deeper’ or more genuine paths towards reconciliation. It might thus be practically applied by relevant stakeholders in the reconciliation process, such as NGOs, (local) governments, external governments and donors.

1.5 Thesis structure

The remainder of the thesis consists of the following sections. In chapter two the processes leading up to genocide are discussed, followed by a discussion of the main concepts: reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and rehumanisation. In chapter three I discuss the research design and the main methods of data collection and analysis, along with the selected cases and additional discussions of evaluation criteria and ethical considerations. In the subsequent chapter, a case description provides the reader with the necessary context of the Rwandan genocide. Chapter five contains the main analysis of the research, that of the selected cases and their approaches towards reconciliation and rehumanisation. The thesis ends with a concluding chapter.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

In this chapter, the theoretical concepts that form the theoretical framework for this research are discussed. Starting with dehumanisation and genocide, we will then focus on reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and rehumanisation, as well as their mutual relations.

It should be noted beforehand that the concepts that are central to this research are quite ambiguous. There is no clear (agreement on a) conceptual definition of concepts such as healing and forgiveness. Moreover, relationships between concepts are vague and work in multiple ways. For this reason, the theoretical analysis is an incomplete simplification that inevitably does not do justice to reality, nor to the theoretical complexity of the concepts. To some extent this conceptual ambiguity is inevitable and a limitation of this research. Simultaneously, however, it is an opportunity. This research tries to take a step forward in exploring these topics and their mutual relations, by complementing theoretical insights with experiences and interpretations from respondents. I thereby hope to shed light on the real-life interpretations and manifestations of these concepts – which is relevant exactly because of the ambiguous nature of these concepts.

To guide the reader through the current and subsequent chapters, an overview of the main concepts and their definitions and dimensions is provided below. Relationships between the concepts are left out of the overview, since these are contested and my reflection on them constitutes a contribution to theory that will be provided after the empirical analysis.

For now, the main concepts of this chapter are interpreted as follows. Events such as genocide result in traumatic feelings for all people involved. In order to prevent renewed violence, antagonistic groups have to be *reconciled* (to reconcile is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust). This means that individuals and communities have to *heal* from the experienced trauma and might *forgive* each other. For reasons of clarity I roughly distinguish between the latter two concepts as healing being directed both inwards (one's own emotions and traumatic experiences) and outwards (meeting the other's emotions and stories with empathy), while forgiveness is predominantly directed outwards, towards one's victim or victimizer. Reconciliation, healing and forgiveness are mutually influencing: forgiving a person who wronged you, for example, might help you in your own healing process, while on the other hand being healed to a certain extent might empower you to forgive.

Rehumanisation, which is defined as to include a person in one's moral universe and thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community, is expected to play a positive and important role in these processes, but the exact relationship between rehumanisation and the other concepts is unclear. The thesis' aim is to empirically identify and theorize this relation between rehumanisation and reconciliation. This chapter, therefore, will primarily attempt to shed light on the meaning of rehumanisation and situate rehumanisation in the process of reconciliation. Subsequently, we explore to what extent this conceptualisation might resonate with the empirical findings.

Table 1: Overview main concepts and dimensions

| GENOCIDE ↓ TRAUMA ↓ | |
|---|---|
| RECONCILIATION | |
| To (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared view of history - Acknowledgement of grievances - Truth-telling - Justice and security - Cooperation and meaningful contact |
| HEALING | FORGIVENESS |
| <p>To (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with positive/constructive emotions - Open dialogue - Feeling empathy for the other | <p>To transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledgement of grievances - Truth-telling - Remorse/regret, apology - Empathy for and recognition of other |
| REHUMANISATION | |
| To include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community | <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique individual/distinguishable from others - Capable of making choices (according to one's own values) <p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion in a network of human beings - Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect) |

2.1 Psychological and institutional reconciliation

Within reconciliation studies scholars distinguish between two schools of thought (Auerbach, 2009; Gardner-Feldman in Ross, 2004), here described as psychological and institutional reconciliation. The former sees reconciliation as a matter of the heart and emphasizes emotions, empathy, healing and forgiveness. The latter seek to address reconciliation in a predominantly political context, stripped from sentiments (Auerbach, 2009). Both processes influence each other and, in some cases, overlap or can be used jointly in reconciliation initiatives (Ross, 2004).

The institutional aspects of reconciliation have received much attention in conflict studies literature and for good reason. A conflict does not only evolve from antagonistic emotions between groups. Generally, a grievance or greed motive (Collier, 2000; Cramer, 2003; Langer & Steward, 2014), power asymmetry or relevant global or regional process (Devetak, 2008; Kaldor, 2001) accompanies this antagonism. Therefore, reconciliation requires more than engagement with emotions. When perceived injustices, inequalities or grievances are not addressed, reconciliation is unlikely to occur or to be long-lasting.

Institutional facets of reconciliation are undoubtedly important. Muggah (2005), for example, provides us with a critical view on DDR by showing that its success in advancing reconciliation is not irrefutable. Johnson (2008) and Sambanis (2000) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of partition in preventing renewed violence after conflict. Different types of transitional justice, such as retributive, restorative, distributive and procedural justice are discussed by Millar (2011). Other scholars discuss the different bodies that can deliver justice: domestic courts, international tribunals or hybrid courts (Brown & Sriram, 2012; Clark, 2008; Dougherty, 2004). Furthermore, attention is paid to Western humanitarian aid and UN (peacekeeping) interventions (Abiew, 2012; Autesserre, 2017; Beardsley, 2012; Belloni, 2001; Mac Ginty, 2008; Paris, 2010). All these dimensions of reconciliation, and many more, are extensively discussed elsewhere. Therefore, the main focus of this research lies instead on psychological reconciliation.

The inclusion of psychology in conflict study debates is not self-evident. Usually, anthropology, political science and sociology are examples of disciplines that are called upon instead. Nevertheless, conflict studies do touch upon psychology every once in a while. For example by Slim (2008) and De Swaan (2015), who examine individual characteristics and mental features of individuals engaging in violence, and Humphreys and Weinstein (2006) who discuss the role of group dynamics in violent behaviour. For this thesis, a combination of fields – among which are psychology and sociology – are considered relevant.

2.2 Dehumanisation and genocide

According to Staub (2000, p. 368), genocide can be defined as “an attempt to eliminate, directly by killing them or indirectly by creating conditions (e.g., starvation) that lead to their death, a whole group of people”. How does genocide come about? In an extremely simplified summary, the process leading to genocide can be explained as follows.

Stanton (1998) distinguishes between eight causal stages of genocide. The first stage is *classification*, which points at in-group-out-group distinctions based on, for example, ethnicity, religion or nationality. The second stage is *symbolisation*: names or labels are attached to the classifications, possibly reinforced by material symbols, like the yellow star for Jews in Nazi Germany. Yet this can be as subtle as describing people with a number. Whereas the first two stages are universally present (in varying degrees), the third stage, *dehumanisation*, is more alarming (although dehumanisation is also widely present, as we discussed in the introduction). What follows is the *organisation* of genocide, usually by state or military elites. These organisers drive groups apart, for example through propaganda, which makes *polarisation* the fifth stage of genocide. The sixth and seventh stage are the execution of the genocide, respectively by concrete *preparations* (identifying victims, drawing up death lists, moving them to concentration camps, etc.) and by physical killing in the sense of *extermination*. The final stage of genocide is *denial*. Blame for the crimes committed is often placed upon the victims and any personal responsibility by perpetrators is denied (Stanton, 1998).

In many instances where the first three stages are present, the fourth stage – the actual organisation of mass violence – is never reached. However, certain conditions can contribute to an evolution of violence and eventually lead to the fulfilment of the last four stages.

Social identity theory proposes that all individuals place themselves in a social framework (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004), which necessarily includes identifying a group of ‘others’ that do not fit in the same category as oneself. In cases of social breakdown (e.g. regime transition, conflict, crises) people may look to satisfy psychological needs such as support from or connection to a group and thus experience a shift from individual identity to collective identity (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Staub, 2013). One’s own group becomes elevated, whereas the out-group becomes a scapegoat for problems in society, or even comes to be seen as a threat or an enemy. Whether this threat or conflict is real or imagined is not as important as how it is experienced (Staub, 2013). According to Pieterse (1997) this is often the result of competition

between elites. “The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage” (Brass in Pieterse, 1997, p. 367).

This process is enhanced when the antagonistic groups have a history of conflict, including dehumanised images of the other that are already strongly internalised and describe the other group as, for example, deceitful and aggressive (Montville, 1993; Staub, 2000, 2013). Past victimisation and grievances, resulting from previous conflicts or perceived injustices, can also lead to increased antagonism. Finally, the process leading up to genocide is influenced by the level of respect for authority one can traditionally find in a society. Accustomed to obedience, one is more likely to follow leaders and their direct orders, even if those orders ask for violence (Staub, 2000).

Staub (2000, p. 370) explains the slippery-slope-like process that follows like this:

“The group and its individual members change as they engage in harmful actions against the other group. They devalue the other group more and exclude its members from the moral universe. The standards of group behaviour change [...] the evolution of increasing violence can end in mass killing or genocide”.

Through this slippery slope, both violent ideologies and actual violence intensify. The belief system demanding the destruction of the other group becomes so strong and totalitarian that people might not even be aware of wrongdoing (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Staub, 2000). In addition, political and societal conditions are shaped in a way to encourage violence, by urging silence and obedience, institutionalising differences and providing rewards and punishments (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). “One’s moral obligations are divided in terms of “us and them,” and the images of “them” are such that *they* exist only as objectified others” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 23). Objects require no moral consideration.

This objectification is inherent in the process of dehumanisation, which, as we have seen, is one of the stages leading to genocide. Resulting from dehumanisation, the enemy is stereotyped, which means the individuality of group members is lost (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). The out-group in its entirety becomes demonised in the sense that they are attributed only negative characteristics (De Swaan, 2014). The categorical exclusion of a certain group of people from the moral universe makes their pain and suffering irrelevant. In some cases, perpetrators might even think killing members of the other group is the right thing to do, exactly because of their subhuman nature (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Kelman, 1973; Staub, 2013). In other cases, however, perpetrators have to push away their own humanity in order to deal with their actions. To shield themselves from feelings of guilt, compassion or empathy,

they keep holding on to their violent ideology, they blame their victims and stop to feel (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Kelman, 1973; Staub, 2005). It now becomes clear that dehumanisation can take on two forms: dehumanisation of victims and dehumanisation of perpetrators. The difference in the extent to which a perpetrator might enjoy or detest the killing or sees it as a moral obligation, can be the result of individual characteristics and societal circumstances (e.g. Slim, 2008; De Swaan, 2015), group dynamics (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2006) or cultural understandings (Whitehead, 2007).

We come back to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of dehumanisation in paragraph 2.6.

Trauma

Experiencing a genocide – as victim, perpetrator or bystander – is highly traumatic. Trauma occurs after one encounters an event or series of events so shocking that it is beyond one's understanding of how the world works. "Traumatic events shatter expectations and defy meaning in part because their impact is of an inherently emotional nature. Our bodies and minds clash with phenomena that defy our capacity to reason" (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008, p. 388). Trauma alters one's sense of self, as well as one's link to community. Social exclusions can be created in the form of a safe inside and threatening outside, possibly leading to new sources of hate (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008). This can lead the traumatised community to bind together around a culture of resentment and anxiety, thereby establishing new patterns of intolerance, hatred and possibly violence (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008; Staub, 2005). This perception of the outside as 'dangerous' can create a focus on self-defence within the community. The group becomes especially sensitive to threats, and insensitive to the needs of others, and may perceive a need to strike out in self-defence, thereby turning trauma victims into perpetrators (Staub, Pearlman, Gubin & Hagengimana, 2005).

However, rather than to focus on fear and anger, traumas can also be dealt with in a manner that emphasizes compassion and empathy, in order to create an encompassing and inclusive conception of the collective. This is what reconciliation processes (should) aim for. The sense of contingency and insecurity that results from trauma makes room for social and political change (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008). According to Hutchison and Bleiker (2008, p. 390) this means "the period after a traumatic event is not only highly emotional, but also of great political significance". The manner in which traumas are dealt with in public, often by (political) elites, come to define the collective. Whether the resulting change is constructive or destructive is up to the people, communities and social structures involved in the reconciliation process.

2.3 Reconciliation

The goal of reconciliation is to enable formerly antagonistic groups to live together for a long time, in a way that goes beyond coexistence and towards a more or less friendly relationship (Auerbach, 2009; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). This is supported by Staub et al. (2005, p. 301), who state that “structures and institutions that promote and serve reconciliation are important, but reconciliation must include a changed psychological orientation toward the other”, otherwise described as “a healing process between [...] peoples in a conflict” (Montville, 1993, p. 112) or a “[change] in the relationship between parties [...] in a more positive direction so that each can more easily envision a joint future” (Ross, 2004, p. 200).

To advance psychological reconciliation, antagonistic groups need to be brought together in a social environment that enables an open dialogue in which feelings of injustice can be worked through in a joint manner (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008), for example the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South-Africa (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Norval, 1998). Inclusion, trust and mutual acceptance need to be advanced, as well as institutions that promote them. Groups of people that were previously placed outside one’s moral universe need to become acknowledged, and the devaluation of the out-group has to stop being a key element of the in-group’s common identity (Kelman, 2004). As we have seen in paragraph 1.4, getting antagonistic groups to live together might not be the hardest part. Achieving actual reconciliation – not coexistence, but an inclusive and warm relationship – is a major challenge.

[Working definition]

To reconcile is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust.

Dimensions of reconciliation

Reconciliation after a traumatic event requires a combination of individual and structural efforts, as well as psychological and institutional approaches to reconciliation. Due to the close proximity between victim and perpetrator in certain conflicts (e.g., family, neighbours), reconciliation can be highly intimate and personal, which makes initiatives at the individual level crucial to success. Simultaneously, however, collective reconciliation needs to take place (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Staub 2013). In order to clarify, Lederach distinguishes between top-down, bottom-up, and mid-level influences, the latter for example being church leaders or media figures (Lederach in Staub, 2013). I would propose to add international

influences to this distinction. Halpern and Weinstein (2004) find that interventions which take place at multiple levels will have the greatest likelihood of success. However, Ross (2004) rightly points to the fact that conflicts dynamics are often different in each community, implying that the timing of acts of reconciliation should also be different. Bottom-up initiatives have the advantage that they can respond to community developments in a way that top-down or international initiatives probably cannot.

A number of dimensions appear to be relevant to (psychological) reconciliation. These dimensions of reconciliation can be seen as steps towards what seems to be the end goal of reconciliation: establishing warm and friendly relationships between formerly antagonistic groups. These are not sequential steps but rather iterative and simultaneous. Kriesberg (2004) distinguishes between four dimensions of reconciliation: regard, truth, justice and security. I would add two more that appear in academic literature: history and cooperation.

To start with history, many authors mention the importance of establishing a *shared view of history* after conflict (e.g., Kelman, 2004; Montville, 1993; Staub, 2013). This does not mean that parties need to come to a consensus about historical facts, but rather that parties listen to, acknowledge and legitimise the other's historical narrative and move away from blame, revenge and victimhood.

A logical next step is to *acknowledge one's own role in past grievances* from the other group. This is related to Kriesberg's (2004) dimension of regard, which he describes as including demonstrations of recognition of the other. Montville gives an example of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis, in which the Palestinian group stated the following: "If you Israelis would only acknowledge that you have wronged us, that you have taken away our homes and our land – if you did that, we would be able to proceed without insisting, without needing to get them back" (Montville, 1993, p. 119). In order to move forward, it appears important to acknowledge past grievances and accept responsibility in a way that is perceived genuine by the other side (Montville, 1993).

Closely related to acknowledgement is *truth-telling*. This entails sharing beliefs and knowledge about what happened in the past, as well as what is currently happening (Kriesberg, 2004). The goal of truth-telling is not to create consensus, but to give victims and perpetrators a chance to come forward, tell their story and search for justice (Norval, 1998). A participant of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa described it by saying that "it does not bring the dead back to life, but it brings them out from silence" (Norval, 1998, p. 258). In a way, all three dimensions of reconciliation that have been discussed so far – history, acknowledgement and truth – are closely related to each other.

The next dimension of reconciliation, *justice and security*, is twofold. First of all, justice can take on many forms. It might mean that perpetrators are punished (retributive justice), that victims are compensated for their losses (restorative justice), or that discriminatory or oppressive state conditions are reformed (procedural justice). This in turn enhances feelings of security, showing that people don't 'get away' with certain kinds of behaviour and that some actions are unacceptable (Kriesberg, 2004; Staub, 2000, 2013).

Finally, positive *cooperation* between groups can generate working trust, which could gradually turn into personal trust (Kelman, 2004). Working for shared goals, whether it is on state-level or in schools, can overcome prejudice and hostility (Staub, 2005). However, Valentine (2008) adds a critical note to this dimension. According to her, "in the context of negative encounters minority individuals are perceived to represent members of a wider social group, but in positive encounters minority individuals tend to be read only as individuals" (Valentine, 2008, p. 332). This means that it is relatively hard to create trust through positive cooperation, since the positive encounter is usually not generalized from the individual or group to the community he, she or they represent. Nevertheless, *meaningful contact* – contact that changes values and attitudes (Valentine, 2008) – can help in (re)building relationships between groups and thereby foster reconciliation.

2.4 Healing

Staub et al. (2005, p. 302) argue that "the beginning of healing would enhance the possibility of reconciliation, while the beginning of reconciliation would further the possibility of healing". According to them, healing from the wounds of past victimization leads to reduced pain and suffering, and in addition makes it less likely that victims engage in renewed violence. Without healing, the victimised group will continue to perceive the world as dangerous, accompanied by feeling the need for self-defence, thus keeping the circle of violence alive (Staub, 2000). Yet simultaneously, for traumatised individuals to start healing they need to have a feeling of – psychological – security (Staub et al., 2005).

Where people as a group have suffered, as is the case in war or genocide, people need to heal as a group, in addition to individual healing (Staub, 2013). Especially when people continue to live together, healing is and should be part of the reconciliation process (Staub et al., 2005). Hutchison and Bleiker (2008, p. 395) describe this process of (social) healing as "to acknowledge and work through not only the various emotions associated with first-hand experiences of trauma, but also the collective forms of emotions that feed into or fuel disingenuous perceptions of others". This involves not only the traumatised victim – assuming a general agreement can be reached about who is the victim and who is

the perpetrator – it also involves perpetrators and bystanders. Feelings of pain, regret and other emotions related to past grievances (Staub et al., 2005), as well as remorse “become incorporated into the perpetrator’s self and produce the paradoxical experience of the perpetrator as a wounded self” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 21). Everyone needs to heal, even though wounds might be different (Staub, 2013).

[Working definition]

To heal is to (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering.

Dimensions of healing

Three dimensions seem especially important in this healing process: working with positive or constructive emotions, enabling open dialogue and promoting feelings of empathy. Based on these three dimensions, healing might be described as being directed both inwards (one’s own emotions and traumatic experiences) and outwards (meeting the other’s emotions and stories with empathy).

First of all, Hutchison and Bleiker (2008) argue that healing requires an *engagement with positive or constructive emotions*. When emotions of fear or anger are worked with instead, the consequences can lead to more violence, as was explained above. This does not mean there is no place for those kinds of emotions entirely. Fear and anger need to be acknowledged and transformed into more constructive emotions. Not addressing them at all can easily create underlying resentments (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008). “If emotions do indeed play a significant role in constituting identities and political communities, then emotions can and must be seen as central to how conflicts are generated, viewed and solved” (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2008, p. 394).

Secondly, Staub et al. (2005) describe a number of elements that they find to be contributing to healing. In this thesis, these elements are grouped under the dimension *open dialogue*. First of all, enabling an open dialogue means creating an empathic and safe environment in which people can share their painful experiences. Open dialogue also entails instructing people about the roots of violence and genocide, as well as the effects of trauma and victimization.

“coming to see commonalities in the roots of such violence can help people see their common humanity with others and mitigate the negative attitude toward themselves. Coming to see and understand the influences that led to the perpetrators’ actions, however horrible those actions, and to the bystanders’ passivity, can also lead survivors of violence to be more open to reconciliation with the perpetrator group” (Staub et al., 2005, p. 304).

Staub et al. (2005, p. 304) explain that “when others have acted in a profoundly evil manner toward oneself and one’s group, people tend to blame themselves, and self-worth is diminished”. Similarly, understanding that the grief, stress and other trauma symptoms they experience are normal consequences of their traumatic experiences, helps ease distress and offers a framework for recovery, returning hope to the victimized individual (Staub et al., 2005).

How, then, can engagement with emotions and sharing stories contribute to constructive reconciliation processes? *Empathy* plays an important role in this respect and is therefore considered the third dimension of healing. According to Gobodo-Madikizela (2002), empathy involves feeling and identifying with the pain of the other and responding to this pain, which makes this definition of empathy a bilateral emotional process. To empathize with someone means trying to understand the other’s view of the world, even – or especially – if one might not share it. It involves seeing the other as a complex individual and showing an interest in the perspectives of the other (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). This way, empathy lies at the basis of rehumanisation. Individual characteristics, perceptions and feelings are acknowledged, thereby countering the exact processes that lead to dehumanisation.

It should be noted that empathy can also be a cause for or amplifier of violence. This is the case when empathy is exclusively directed at one’s own group. Cikara, Bruneau and Saxe (2011) explain this in- and outgroup dynamic of empathy. Usually, the suffering of someone else leads us to recognise emotions and feel the pain of that other. In some cases, however, we feel no pain or sadness in response of suffering. Cikara et al. (2011) call this ‘failures of empathy’. These failures of empathy are most likely when the sufferer is a member of an outgroup. This can result in feeling nothing or even in feelings of pleasure in response to the sufferer’s pain. This phenomenon is especially prominent when groups are in competition with each other and ingroup cohesion is emphasized at the expense of the outgroup. Interventions – such as positive intergroup contact – can aim at transforming ingroup empathy at the expense of the outgroup, into intergroup empathy. Increased empathy for the outgroup can in turn facilitate, for example, forgiveness for past atrocities (Cikara et al., 2011).

2.5 The (im)possibility of forgiveness

While some authors are of the opinion that reconciliation results in healing and forgiveness, others argue that forgiveness leads to or is necessary for reconciliation (Auerbach, 2004). “Healing from the trauma created by victimization is an important avenue to forgiveness. Forgiveness, in turn, may promote healing” (Staub, 2005, p. 449). Armour and Umbreit (2005) agree that forgiveness contributes to mutual healing and reconciliation. On the other hand, Montville (1993, p. 112) assumes that “healing and reconciliation in violent ethnic and religious conflicts depend on a process of transactional contrition and forgiveness”. Staub et al. (2005) agree that reconciliation involves a certain level of forgiveness. Since these statements do not provide us with much clarity, the empirical part of the research aims to shed light on the causality between the different concepts.

As unclear as the place of forgiveness within the reconciliation framework might be, its contents are somewhat easier to grasp. Forgiveness is directed outwards, towards one’s victim or victimizer, and usually encompasses the acknowledgement of grievances and an apology from the victimizer, as well as a possible feeling of empathy from the side of the victim. Forgiveness thus means taking a step away from negative emotions such as anger, hatred and resentment directed at someone who carried out an evil or unjust act, towards emotions such as empathy and acceptance (Auerbach, 2004; Staub, 2005). If remorse and forgiveness are felt genuinely, both parties in the process may start to recognise the other’s humanity. Constructive forgiveness makes victims feel safe, reaffirms their moral worth and opens the possibility for a (renewed) symmetrical relationship with the victimizer (Staub, 2005). Since it is the victim who is in charge of granting forgiveness or not, this process helps to re-establish the victim’s self-respect and feelings of dignity and being in control (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Staub, 2005). Forgiveness also offers the perpetrator an opportunity to change and to “re-join the world of moral humanity” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 18).

According to critics, forgiving is to let go of an important part of a person’s, group’s or country’s history. Also, some crimes are considered too evil to be forgiven and to forgive easily would lead to the continuance or intensification of evil. However, in line with South African Archbishop Tutu, forgiving and forgetting are not the same: “in forgiving people are not being asked to forget. On the contrary it is important to remember” (Tutu in Auerbach, 2004, p. 156). Furthermore, to forgive is not the same as to condone (Auerbach, 2004) and to say that evil deeds are simply unforgivable “does not capture the complexity of the social contexts within which gross human rights abuses are committed” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 19). To refuse forgiveness in some way is to eliminate the possibility of

transformation of the victimizer, saying any positive change in him will not come about (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). On the other hand, should one feel obliged to forgive, this act of forgiveness becomes meaningless and possibly even painful for the victim (Armour & Umbreit, 2005).

[Working definition]

To forgive is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer.

Dimensions of forgiveness

A distinction can be made between constructive and harmful forgiveness. Forgiveness may be perceived as harmful and/or is less likely to occur when truth is withheld, apologies are insincere or expressed without remorse, or when apologetic words are not followed by corresponding emotions (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Staub, 2005; Staub et al., 2005). The same occurs when victims are expected by their community, religion or their surroundings to grant forgiveness and feel somewhat obliged to do so, thereby turning a possibly healing process into something mechanical and offensive (Armour & Umbreit, 2005; Staub, 2005).

Constructive forgiveness, in contrast, is most likely to occur when a number of conditions are met and are perceived to be genuine. First of all, forgiveness is encouraged by an *acknowledgement* on the side of the victimizer that their actions have caused pain and damage to others (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Staub, 2005). *Telling the truth* about these actions is closely related to this. When the victimizer assumes responsibility for his actions and feels genuine *remorse* for these actions, an apology may be offered to the victim. If the victim indeed believes this to be sincere, this might evoke a response of *empathy and recognition* (Auerbach, 2004; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Ross, 2004; Staub, 2005).

It should be noted that in long-term conflicts it is often difficult to come to a shared understanding of victim and perpetrator, since both groups perceive themselves to be the victim and therefore the acknowledgement of grievances and feelings of remorse are rarely shown by victimizer groups (Ross, 2004; Staub, 2005).

2.6 Rehumanisation

Halpern and Weinstein (2004) discuss actions that are important for the rehumanisation of an 'other'. These are, for example, being curious about another's perspective, recognising the other's individual qualities, seeing the other as a complex and emotional individual, being interested in the needs of another, feeling sympathy or empathy towards another, etc. In this outline, however, they do not provide a clear definition of what rehumanisation actually is. They mention many 'steps toward rehumanisation', however, where all these steps are leading to ultimately remains to the reader to puzzle together.

Bauman (1989) brings us closer to an understanding of the concept by describing what constitutes the difference between a stereotype and a person or individual. Personal images or individuals are in one's mind separated from abstract categories by a 'thick moral wall'. Whereas the former belongs within the moral universe, the stereotype does not (Bauman, 1989). It seems that the moral universe – "the realm of people to whom moral values and standards apply" (Staub, 2012, p. 828) or the universe of good and evil (Bauman, 1989) – is the place where 'humans' reside and whereto they have to be returned when they have been dehumanised.

[Preliminary working definition]

To rehumanise is to include a person in one's moral universe.

Dimensions of rehumanisation

What it means to include a person in one's moral universe becomes more concrete when reading Kelman (1973, p. 48-49), who argues that to see others as human is to ascribe them with identity and community.

"To accord a person identity is to perceive him as an individual, independent and distinguishable from others, capable of making choices, and entitled to his own life on the basis of his own goals and values. To accord a person community is to perceive him – along with one's self – as part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other, who recognize each other's individuality and who respect each other's rights. These two features together constitute the basis for individual worth [...] Individual worth, of necessity, has both a personal and a social referent; it implies that the individual has value and that he is valued by others".

According to Kelman it appears that rehumanisation is both directed inwards (the victim has to recover his own personal value) and outwards (bystanders or perpetrators have to recognise the value of the victim). From now on we will call this (self-)worth.

[Working definition and dimensions]

To rehumanise is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community.

- *Identity:*
 - *Unique individual/distinguishable from others*
 - *Capable of making choices (according to one's own values)*
- *Community:*
 - *Inclusion in a network of human beings*
 - *Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect)*

This distinction between according someone identity and community is useful, yet the contents of the two categories could use some more attention. What does it mean exactly to ascribe someone with identity? To create a more encompassing understanding of rehumanisation it might be useful to mirror it to what it is not: dehumanisation. By way of contradicting the dimensions and indicators of dehumanisation, we can fill in the blanks on those of rehumanisation. Important to note is that dehumanisation and rehumanisation are not static concepts, but two extremes of a wide spectrum.

Before we continue our discussion of the indicators of dehumanisation and rehumanisation, one important side note deserves attention: even in the most peaceful societies, the level of humanisation that is meant here – to perceive each person as a distinct individual, to renounce stereotypes and to approach all others with care, recognition and respect – seems unattainable. We have discussed Bauman (1989) in the introduction of the thesis, who explains that the subtlest practices of dehumanisation are in fact very common. It starts even with simple things as linking students to a student number. However innocent this might be, a human being is reduced to a set of numbers. Perhaps we could say, therefore, that total humanisation is the utopia that should be aspired, while simultaneously realising that this presumably will never be achieved on the scale of a whole society.

Indicators of dehumanisation

Dehumanisation leads to individuals being deprived of their individuality. We have seen in the introduction and in paragraph 2.2 that this results in the quantification or objectification of humans, along with stereotypes that group together an entire group of people as indistinguishable from each other. These stereotypes are negative and absolute, and internalised until they seem like an objective truth. Often these stereotypes are accompanied by metaphors that refer to objects, animals or diseases (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Steuter & Willis, 2009; De Swaan, 2014).

This way, people are placed outside of the moral universe as described above, which means they are deprived of what Kelman (1973) has defined identity and community. No longer being accorded with identity means to be indistinguishable from the group one supposedly belongs to, thereby losing all individual qualities, such as goals, values and the capacity of making choices. Being deprived of community means to be excluded from the network of humans to whom moral considerations such as caring, recognition and respect apply. Individuals have no right to moral demands and no interests that need to be considered (Bauman, 1989). This opens the way for violence and often leads to a loss of the individual's own sense of self-worth (Kelman, 1973; Staub, 2005; Staub et al., 2005).

The *dehumanisation of victims* can lead to violence in a number of ways. First of all, while hurting or killing a human being is considered morally unjust, killing an insect or destroying an object triggers an entirely different response. Especially when one kills vermin, which is almost encouraged (Kelman, 1973; Schröder & Schmidt, 2001; Staub, 2000, 2013; Steuter & Wills, 2009). This results in the *justification of killing* because of the absolute, negative and symbolised perception of the other. The perpetrator is now involved in a struggle to rise above and defeat the obstacle that is his victim, which demands courage and commitment. This way, rehumanisation and positive moral self-evaluation reinforce each other (Bauman, 1989). What might be even more dangerous than the courageous eradicator of the threat that is the other, however, is the perpetrator that behaves in a bureaucratic manner. The real danger, according to Bauman (1989), is not the perpetrator who kills with pleasure, but the perpetrator who kills without feeling any emotion at all. Being the victim of dehumanising actions often strongly *diminishes one's feeling of self-worth*, to the point that one places blame on oneself and does not feel worthy of any moral consideration (Staub et al., 2005). The dehumanisation of victims thereby not only comes from the direction of the perpetrator, but eventually also from within.

This brings us to the *dehumanisation of perpetrators*, which also works in two directions: by their victims and by themselves. First, perpetrators can come to *represent inherent and pure evil* in the eyes of their victims, rather than a human being with bad qualities, doing bad things or making wrong choices. By labelling someone as ‘pure evil’, any further discussion is made unnecessary. A perpetrator’s inherent evil is beyond humanness, and thus relieves us from the task of trying to understand individual and structural influences that drove a perpetrator to certain evil actions (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). While it is comforting to believe that perpetrators are not human to begin with and are therefore very different than you and I, this is however not supported by evidence (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). Secondly, the perpetrator is dehumanised by the process of dehumanising his victims. According to Kelman (1973, p. 50-51) “the process of dehumanisation feeds on itself [...] as the victimizer becomes increasingly dehumanized through the enactment of his role”. Nearly all human beings (initially) have inhibitions against murdering other humans. Eventually, however, by dehumanisation, authorization, routinisation and escalation of violence, the perpetrator loses his capacity to care or feel empathy and eventually develops a state of psychic numbing and *detachment of feelings and reality* (Kelman, 1973), which makes the perpetrator himself in a way dehumanised.

Table 2: Operationalisation of concept 'dehumanisation'

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Definition and dimensions of dehumanisation | Exclusion from moral universe, meaning being denied (or denying oneself) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity: indistinguishable from group, losing individual qualities such as goals, values, capacity of making choices - Community: exclusion from network of human beings to whom moral considerations apply (care, recognition, respect) | | |
| Indicators of dehumanisation | Dehumanisation <i>of</i> victim | | Dehumanisation <i>of</i> perpetrator |
| | Dehumanisation <i>by</i> victim | Diminished sense of self-worth | Perpetrator represents inherent and pure evil (is incapable of change and makes circumstances irrelevant) |
| | Dehumanisation <i>by</i> perpetrator | Killing is justified because of the absolute, negative and symbolised perception of the other (followed by positive moral self-evaluation or bureaucratic indifference) | Detachment of feelings and reality |

Indicators of rehumanisation

We can now continue our discussion of rehumanisation which is broadly understood as to accord someone with identity and community, thereby readmitting a person into one's moral universe. We have seen that the moral universe is to be re-joined both by victims and by perpetrators.

The *rehumanisation of a victim* in the eyes of perpetrators or bystanders, means *killing is morally unjust*. Now that the other has entered the moral universe – thereby regaining individuality and being included in a network of human beings – moral considerations apply to him and these moral considerations tell us not to kill. The victim can also *regain a sense of self-worth* and as a consequence accord oneself with identity and community, meaning for example that one feels worthy of being treated with respect.

We now turn to the *rehumanisation of perpetrators*. Perpetrators have to move from being pure evil to being a human being who has committed evil acts (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). *These acts do not define the perpetrator*, which means he is capable of change and can be met with empathy. Finally, perpetrators have to recover their own humanity. During a conversation with De Kock, a high-placed official in the apartheid government of South Africa who was described by some as 'Prime Evil', Gobodo-Madikizela (2002, p. 28) describes how "he had to prove to himself that he was not a monster after all. [...] crying out to be recognized as a human being capable of humane emotion". The rehumanisation of the perpetrator himself entails the victimizer's *capability of feeling remorse and empathy*: remorse for the actions he has carried out or participated in and empathy for the pain these actions caused. To feel remorse, according to Gobodo-Madikizela (2002), is a sign that a perpetrator is still part of the moral universe. Furthermore, by feeling remorse, the perpetrator comes to see that victims feel and bleed just as others and that they were humans – not objects – after all (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002).

Table 3: Operationalisation of concept 'rehumanisation'

| | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Definition and dimensions of rehumanisation | Inclusion in moral universe, meaning to accord someone (or oneself) with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity: distinguishable from others as a unique individual, capable of making choices according to one's own values - Community: inclusion in the network of human beings to whom moral considerations apply, such as care, recognition, respect | | |
| Indicators of rehumanisation | Dehumanisation <i>of</i> victim | | Dehumanisation <i>of</i> perpetrator |
| | Dehumanisation <i>by</i> victim | Regaining a sense of self-worth | Perpetrator's evil acts do not define him (is capable of change and can be met with empathy) |
| | Dehumanisation <i>by</i> perpetrator | Killing is (morally) unjustified | Capable of feeling remorse for past actions and empathy for victims |

Please note that this research does not address the perspective of victims and perpetrators, but rather the perspective of the actors that are working with them. Nevertheless, a distinction between rehumanisation of victims and rehumanisation of perpetrators is relevant because both require a slightly different approach. Whether one works with victims or perpetrators, influences the approach towards rehumanisation.

Is rehumanisation necessary for successful reconciliation?

The exact relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation is still unclear – is rehumanisation a dimension of reconciliation, is there a causal relationship or are the concepts mutually influencing? An attempt to answer this question is made in the analytic part of the research. For now, we stick to a theoretical expectation.

We have established that reconciliation is more than simple coexistence. Yet, even if all previously discussed dimensions of reconciliation are addressed, this does not necessarily lead to the kind of 'warm' reconciliation that is aimed at. As long as groups place each other outside of their moral universe – even when formally cooperating at the moment – true and long-lasting reconciliation seems out of sight. It might be that to fully reconcile means to let the other enter one's moral universe and to accord him with identity and community as described above. For now, we will assume rehumanisation is therefore a necessary step towards successful reconciliation.

2.7 Operationalisation of key concepts

In the previous paragraphs the key concepts of the research were discussed. In this paragraph the reader is provided with a complete overview of the main concepts and their dimensions. The exact causality of the relations between the concepts remain somewhat unclear, therefore a conceptual model is not included. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, this causality is examined in the analysis.

Table 4: Operationalisation of key concepts

| Working definition | Dimensions |
|--|---|
| Reconciliation | |
| To (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared view of history Acknowledgement of grievances Truth-telling Justice and security Cooperation and meaningful contact |
| Healing | |
| To (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with positive/constructive emotions Open dialogue Feeling empathy for the other |
| Forgiveness | |
| To transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of grievances Truth-telling Remorse/regret, apology Empathy for and recognition of other |
| Rehumanisation | |
| To include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community | <p>Identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique individual/distinguishable from others - Capable of making choices (according to one's own values) <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion in a network of human beings - Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect) |
| (Indicators of rehumanisation) | |
| Rehumanisation of victim | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By perpetrator: killing is (morally) unjustified - By victim: regaining a sense of self-worth | |
| Rehumanisation of perpetrator | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By victim: perpetrator's evil acts do not define him (is capable of change and can be met with empathy) - By perpetrator: capable of feeling remorse for past actions and empathy for victims | |

3. Methodology

In this section, the choice of methods, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis are discussed. Each method has advantages and limitations that have been considered. This chapter ends with an elaboration of evaluation criteria considered in the research and a brief discussion of relevant ethical reflections.

3.1 Research design – single case study research

The research focuses on three reconciliation projects that have been that have been actively involved in the reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda. The role that was allocated to rehumanisation and related concepts in these projects was analysed within and among the different projects. To do this, a qualitative research design was chosen. Rehumanisation and reconciliation are not easily identifiable and measurable phenomena and thus not suited for quantitative research methods. Instead, it seems an in-depth and holistic understanding of the concepts provides the most valuable insights. For the same reason, a choice was made for a constructivist focus. This paradigm proposes that truth is relative and dependent on how people interpret and attribute meaning to their surroundings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Creswell (2007, p. 20) describes social constructivism as follows:

“In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation”.

This is combined with additional in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, as is the general practice in case studies (Creswell, 2007). According to Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545) a case study should be considered as a design when four conditions are present: the research question is a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question, the behaviour of the studied objects cannot be manipulated, the context of the case is believed to be highly relevant and the boundaries between the studied object and its context are not clear. Both the main question and sub-questions consist mainly of ‘how’ questions and the people involved in the research unit cannot be manipulated. Most importantly, however, the context is believed to be of major importance and interwoven with the research unit. This justifies a choice for a constructivist case study approach.

A case study is especially useful in practice-oriented research since it offers the possibility to develop a general and complete image of the research object, while allowing for a variety of perspectives and understandings of the studied object. It also gives the researcher much flexibility, since it is not as pre-structured as other methods (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). This is especially valuable in a sensitive and complex context like Rwanda. A disadvantage of case studies is that their external validity is limited, since one focuses on a small number or – in this case – a single research object, making generalization less reliable (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Generalization, however, was not the main goal of this research. Nevertheless, to counter this disadvantage to some extent and to offer the reader a general idea of the generalizability of the case, this is discussed in paragraph 3.2.

Since this research includes three reconciliation initiatives, it is a single case study with embedded units. As is noted by Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 550):

“The ability to look at sub-units that are situated within a larger case is powerful when you consider that data can be analysed within the subunits separately (within case analysis), between the different subunits (between case analysis), or across all of the subunits (cross-case analysis)”.

The choice for an embedded single case study method has a practical reason. A comparison of multiple genocide cases is likely infeasible or necessarily becomes superficial since this would require three contexts to be considered instead of one and the scope of this research simply does not allow this. On the other hand, a holistic single case study – in this research that would mean just one project – would result in a lower credibility and transferability of the research, since the one case might very well be quite unique and not representative for reconciliation processes in post-genocide Rwanda.

Research unit: post-genocide Rwanda

As noted in chapter one, the choice for Rwanda as the object of this research stemmed from the fact that it is a profound example of a country that has not remained broken after conflict, but instead has worked with relative success towards stability and reconciliation. The following is said in The Guardian: “Though there have been criticisms of the government on several issues [...] the progress has been extraordinary” (Blair, 2014). A similar tone is found in an article by Al Jazeera: “When Paul Kagame became Rwanda’s president in 2000, he inherited a country that had been torn apart by genocide [...]. But 19 years later, the country is stable, prosperous, unified and, in large part, reconciled” (Ruhumaliza, 2019).

Of course, there are many well-founded criticisms that relativize the ‘success story’ of Kagame, but nevertheless, the contrast between genocide and Rwanda being a ‘beacon of hope’ (Blair, 2014), is without a doubt incredibly interesting when exploring reconciliation and rehumanisation processes. It is especially interesting to investigate whether the reconciliation process in Rwanda has led to warm and friendly relationships or co-existence, a distinction we have discussed in the previous chapter.

Sub-units: reconciliation projects

As was mentioned before, the research consists of three sub-units: three reconciliation projects that have been actively involved in the reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda. To demarcate the range of possible initiatives, I tried to focus on local actors. However, due to global developments during the research (covid-19) it remained unclear whether or not it was possible to visit projects on the ground. Therefore, projects with a Dutch (or Belgian) donor/sponsor were chosen instead. This way, a part of the interviews could be held ‘at home’, thus avoiding too many delays or setbacks from travel restrictions.

Additional respondents, such as academic experts, experts on the reconciliation process in Rwanda or employees of international organisations that have been active in Rwanda during the chosen time-period were approached for interviews where possible and relevant, and asked to elaborate on their personal expertise and experiences. By this variance in respondents a micro perspective on the project settings from the project respondents and a macro perspective on reconciliation in Rwanda from the additional respondents, have complemented each other.

The three initiatives were chosen according to the following criteria.

- *Who*: grass-roots projects with connections to Dutch or Belgian organisations. Rehumanisation and psychological reconciliation as described in the literature seem community-level projects, rather than nationally or internationally driven. Furthermore, the government of Rwanda has been described as rather authoritarian (Loyle, 2016), especially when it comes to critical voices related to the genocide or ethnic division. It could be expected that a government narrative on reconciliation and rehumanisation, therefore, would provide an unrealistically positive image. From grass-roots and international actors this is expected to a lesser extent. To investigate an initiative with an international link seemed inevitable due to global developments related to the covid-19 pandemic, which made the possibility of fieldwork in Rwanda uncertain.

- *What*: the focus lies on initiatives that aim or have aimed to contribute to the reconciliation process and that have paid some level of attention to rehumanisation, healing and/or forgiveness.
- *Where*: since traveling to Rwanda was no longer possible, the initial preference for projects based close to the capital Kigali (considering travel time between projects) was no longer valid, because of a shift to online interviews. Since rural settings in Rwanda are under-researched, this made the possibility of including a rural project especially interesting (Ingelaere, 2010).
- *When*: in order to be able to analyse a development of reconciliation practice over time, the aim was to find initiatives that varied in their time of implementation. Again, due to the limits that were placed on the research as a consequence of the covid-19 pandemic, this criterion was eased somewhat, since it became unclear how many projects could be reached.

Projects were selected when they matched the criteria above. This resulted in a final selection of three initiatives, which will remain anonymous as was agreed upon with the specific organisations. To increase the impact of this research, its results are shared with the participating projects. Since the projects work in the same field, it is important to make sure anonymity is safeguarded. Consequently, project descriptions might be vague or incomplete at times.

To provide the reader with a general idea of the projects, we briefly reflect on how they relate to the selection criteria presented above. A more extensive and in-depth discussion of project objectives, approaches and instruments can be found in the analysis of the projects in chapter five.

The selection criteria were the following: we wanted to find grass-roots projects with connections to Dutch or Belgian organisations that, in one way or another, have aimed to contribute to the reconciliation process in Rwanda. It was preferred to have at least one rural project. Finally, the projects preferably started at different times. The first criterion was met by all projects, since they all are active locally and – to varying degrees – supported by a Dutch or Belgian organisation. All projects contribute to the reconciliation process in Rwanda (second criterion). This is, however, mainly the case for projects 1 and 3 and more implicitly so for project 2, for which reconciliation is not the main focus but rather a by-product of other activities. All projects are active in multiple locations, both rural and urban. Finally, the time of implementation ranged from around five years after the genocide (project 3), to between five and ten years (project 2) and roughly ten years after (project 1).

3.2 Generalisability of the Rwandan genocide

This research uses the case of Rwanda, a well-known and well-documented case of genocide in recent history. Since the concept of rehumanisation is relatively under-researched, a deliberate choice was made for an extensively researched case. Please note that this discussion of generalizability is not meant to claim that the findings of the research apply to all other cases of post-genocide reconciliation. Rather, it might enable future researchers to determine which elements of the Rwandan genocide are unique and which are recognisable in other contexts. Subsequently, they can determine which lessons might be of use in similar situations.

In order to determine the generalizability of the Rwandan genocide as a case, we first turn to Scherrer (1999), who identifies four cases of full-scale genocide in the 20th century: the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, The Khmer Rouge and the Rwandan genocide. Other cases are categorised as partial genocides or mass murders. In all four of these full-scale genocide cases violence was directed at a domestic group, state machinery was actively and intensively used and the perpetrator was the state (Scherrer, 1999). Dadrian (2004) has devoted an article to the comparison of three of these four full-scale genocide cases, in which he first compares the Jewish and Armenian genocides to the case of Rwanda. Some of his most significant findings are the following.

When we look at the developments leading up to the genocides, we see that in all three cases the ruling political party was “the architect and executioner” of the genocide, and consisted of a small group of elite decision makers (Dadrian, 2004, p. 513). In each case, this political elite actively used segregating, dehumanising and demonising propaganda (Loyle, 2009; Dadrian, 2004), often using references to animals, vermin or diseases (Dadrian, 2004). In line with the Armenian genocide, Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda know a history of episodic killings and massacres. In contrast, there have been no examples of large-scale violence against Jews in modern Germany, prior to the Holocaust (there are however examples of large-scale violence against Jews in other states, for example Russia) (Dadrian, 2004). What makes the origins of the Rwandan genocide unique in comparison to the Armenian and Jewish cases is the power structure between the victim and perpetrator group. Whereas the Jews and Armenians have a long history of being victim populations, the Tutsis, despite their numerical minority, historically were the dominant group (Dadrian, 2004).

The processes during the execution of the genocide in Rwanda were similar to the other two in the sense that the military played a crucial role (Dadrian, 2004). In Rwanda we see this in active military

participation in the killings. The Rwandan militias (*Interahamwe*), who are responsible for a large share of the killings, often received military training (Loyle, 2009; Prunier, 1995). The Armenian and Rwandan cases are similar in their primitive execution of the murders. The most common weapon used in Rwanda was the machete, which made the killings very physical and thus required a large number of perpetrators (Dadrian, 2004). This is different from the almost industrialized practices in the Nazi concentration camps. Another element in which the Armenian and Rwandan cases are different from the Holocaust is the involvement of external actors. French has long been the dominant language in Rwanda, giving the French considerable political influence. However, many Tutsis who fled to Uganda in earlier centuries had become Anglophone. In order to maintain influence in Rwanda, the French provided the Hutu government with aid and military assistance. This is similar to the German support of the Armenian genocide (Dadrian, 2004). A unique characteristic of the Rwandan genocide is that it did not happen during an international war, as is the case for the Armenian genocide (WWI) and the Holocaust (WWII). Dadrian (2004, p. 510) concludes that “external powers capable of interceding and stopping the evolving mass murder, consciously avoided getting involved”, instead of being consumed with fighting their own wars. Another unique element in the Rwandan genocide is that “there were no treks of deportation, no pretence of relocation, no concentration camps arrangements. The engine of extermination, aiming at total genocide, was put to work with an immediacy unparalleled in the annals of contemporary genocide” (Dadrian, 2004, p. 511).

When looking at the aftermath of all three genocides, we see that both after the Rwandan genocide and after the Holocaust, the dominant group apologised, payed compensations to its victims and made attempts to reconcile. The Armenian genocide, however, is still being denied by considerable segments of the perpetrator group (Dadrian, 2004). In contrast to the Armenian and Jewish cases, in Rwanda the genocide was eventually stopped by segments of the victim population (the RPF), rather than by outside powers (Dadrian, 2004).

In conclusion, the generalizability of the case of Rwanda is high when it comes to propaganda and dehumanisation of the victim group and the involvement of the state and military. It is, however, limited in the sense of external involvement, a history of killings and the physical character of the genocidal violence. Finally, the case of Rwanda is unique when considering historical power dynamics between the groups, the visibility of the killings, the absence of international warfare and the eventual victory by the victim group.

3.3 Data collection

The research has used semi-structured interviews with key informants as primary data source, complemented with secondary material that was found in relevant project documents.

There might be cases in which interviews are not the desired option. For example, in cases that are highly controversial or painful. Other cases are likely to generate highly subjective answers from respondents (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Both risks were present in the case of post-genocide Rwanda. Past events are incredibly painful and traumatic and likely difficult to talk about. Nevertheless, in the selection of respondents, I looked for actors who are professionally involved in the reconciliation process. It is likely that some of these actors themselves experienced the genocide, but this was not the focus of the interviews. Secondly, there is the risk of subjective answering. However, considering the constructivist focus of the research, the subjective experiences and interpretations of respondents are exactly what one hopes to find. Rather, it could be a risk that respondents give socially desirable answers. By conducting multiple interviews, a number of which with non-Rwandans who therefore might feel more at ease to express critical opinions, an attempt was made to get a nuanced image of the case.

Respondents of the interviews conducted for this research have acted both as respondents, by sharing their own experiences and opinions related to the projects, as well as experts, by sharing knowledge about certain issues and processes related to the research (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). This means respondent data is not exclusively related to the projects, but also entails information on reconciliation processes in Rwanda in general, as well as personal experiences and opinions obtained by the respondents aside from the projects. Where possible, this distinction between project-related data and broader or personal data is pointed out.

Respondents

In the selection of respondents, a distinction was made between three roles the respondents could fulfil. Elbeshausen, Mandl and Womser-Hacker (2019) distinguish between social roles, action roles and thinking roles. Social roles are described as mainly having a supporting and teambuilding function. Elbeshausen et al. (2019) label this type of actor a *facilitator*. In action roles, they differentiate between three types of actors: pathfinders, compilers and implementers. For the sake of clarity, I will only use *implementer* to describe all action roles. Finally, the thinking roles are described as reviewing, monitoring and analysing from a relative distance, rather than being directly involved in a team or process. Therefore, this type of actor is called *observer/editor* (Elbeshausen et al., 2019).

For each of the selected initiatives, two people were approached for interviews: one facilitator and one implementer. The facilitators all resided in either The Netherlands or Belgium (because of interview possibilities), whereas the implementers preferably were Rwandese. Initially, the aim was to interview one facilitator and two implementers for each project. Unfortunately, it appeared impossible to travel to Rwanda, meaning all interviews had to be conducted online. It turned out that online interviews were a barrier for some respondents, which made it difficult to reach enough people.

Additional respondents were chosen when they had extensive knowledge about the case of post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda. These respondents proved highly valuable for giving extra depth and a macro perspective to the research, compared to the predominantly micro perspective of the project respondents. This category of respondents therefore matched the observer/editor role.

All but one respondent have requested to remain anonymous. Therefore, it was decided to give each respondent a label, so that anonymity would be guaranteed for all. First of all, codes were linked to roles: facilitators (FAC), implementers (IMP) and observer/editors (OBS). The first two were then given a number to relate them to the projects, for example FAC2 for the respondent that facilitated project 2. For project 1 there were two implementers, IMP1a and IMP1b. For project three no implementer was found, therefore the label IMP3 does not exist. One of the respondents was interviewed in the capacity of observer/editor, even though this respondent is also linked to a project. Since this project was not one of the three under examination, this respondent is referred to as OBS2 (here the number does not represent a project, but the amount of observer/editors that were interviewed: OBS1 and OBS2).

Interview strategy

Because of the constructivist nature of the research, in which respondents' subjective views of events, processes and concepts are central, questions were left as open as possible. Respondents were asked to share their experiences from the projects, related to the theoretical concepts of this research. A number of open introductory questions were formulated, as well as back-up questions in case a subject would not come up by itself. In addition, to have some guidance, a checklist containing broad theoretical concepts and dimensions was brought to the interview, to make sure all topics were addressed at some point. See appendix B for the topic lists. With permission of the respondents, all interviews have been recorded. After the interview, these recordings were transcribed and coded according to the procedures described in paragraph 3.4.

For each of the three projects I started with planning an interview with the Dutch/Belgian facilitator. This first interview was used to gather knowledge about the project and the rationale and motivations behind it. Following this, the concepts that are central to this research were discussed more in-depth.

The original plan was then to interview the implementers of the three projects on the ground, in Rwanda. The goal was to have two interviews with each implementer: first, a relatively short interview to get familiar with the daily practices of the initiative and the role of the implementer. Implicitly, this first interview would work as to 'getting to know' each other and take a first step towards building a minimal level of familiarity and trust. This is especially relevant in Rwanda, where researchers often find a 'rehearsed consensus' or a dominant discourse among their respondents (Ingelaere, 2010). After this first meeting, a second interview was supposed to be used as an opportunity to dive deeper into the concepts that are central to this research and to discuss them on a more personal, emotional level. Unfortunately, the value of this strategy diminished when it became clear interviews had to be conducted online. Most importantly, building familiarity and trust online seemed more difficult and therefore less relevant. Practical considerations also played a role, such as the difficulty of scheduling online appointments. Therefore, the number of interviews with each implementer was reduced to one.

Observer/editors, like the project facilitators, were interviewed only once. The content of the interview varied for each observer/editor, following his or her professional focus.

Should the opportunity have presented itself, I would have attempted to spend a day at the projects as an observer. This was not intended to be a research method in itself but rather a means of triangulation used to paint a more complete picture of the projects. This could have helped to form a more complete understanding of the collected data – opinions, views and interpretations of respondents – by placing them in their daily context. This possibility was eliminated for the same reasons as described above, the impossibility of traveling to Rwanda. However, by gathering secondary material, an attempt was made to create a general idea of daily practices in the projects.

3.4 Coding procedure

The coding procedure has taken an iterative approach by combining inductive and deductive coding. First, through deductive coding, concepts from the theoretical framework were used to analyse the interview transcripts. Afterwards, by moving to an inductive coding approach, it was explored where the interviews provided new or divergent information compared to the first round of coding. In this phase, the researcher tried to take an open stance towards possible theoretical directions and insights coming

from the data, by staying close to the language and experiences of the respondents. Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010) distinguish between open-, axial- and selective coding. Consequently, the coding procedure consisted of four steps:

1. *Open, deductive coding*: to link the interview transcripts with theoretical concepts as operationalised in chapter two, segments of data were given labels.
2. *Open, inductive coding*: to find interpretations, understandings and experiences in the interview transcripts that supplement, support or are in contrast to the theoretical concepts, transcripts were coded again. This time I started from the data, rather than from the theoretical framework.
3. *Axial coding*: an effort was made to link the allocated codes to categories and to define relationships between those categories.
4. *Selective coding*: by determining key concepts and organising codes and categories into a coherent story or theoretical model, the essence of the (relationships between the) concepts was formulated into a theoretical proposition (Creswell, 2007; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010).

The collected data was coded using ATLAS.ti. After the first two rounds of coding, codes with less than five quotations were deleted and the quotations were placed under a different code where possible. This was the case for two codes, containing respectively two and one quotations. In the end five categories and 23 codes were established. For each code, data segments were compiled into a new document. These segments were then structured by giving them colours. For each code or concept, all dimensions or indicators as operationalised in table 4 were attached a colour.

Table 5: Codes and categories

| Category | Code name | Comment |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1. Theoretical framework | 1. Reconciliation | As operationalised in table 4 |
| | 2. Healing | |
| | 3. Forgiveness | |
| | 4. Rehumanisation | |
| | 5. Empathy | Included as a useful link between healing, forgiveness and rehumanisation |
| | 6. Trauma | Included because it precedes the processes of reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and rehumanisation |

| 2. Additional theory | 7. Caring | Result of inductive coding |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | 8. Dignity | |
| | 9. Future perspective | |
| | 10. Reconciliation addition | Information not related to the dimensions of reconciliation as formulated in table 4 |
| 3. Research object | 11. Rehumanisation addition | |
| | 12. Perpetrator | Applied in addition to codes 1-11, to distinguish between target groups |
| | 13. Victim | |
| | 14. 2nd generation | |
| 4. Rwanda (case) | 15. Context | To indicate contextual factors that influence relevant processes |
| | 16. Public discourse | To indicate government influences on public discourse that influence relevant processes |
| | 17. Personal experience | To indicate personal experiences of respondents |
| 5. Projects (case) | 18. Observer/editor | Applied in addition to codes 1-14, to distinguish between respondent categories |
| | 19. Facilitator | |
| | 20. Implementer | |
| | 21. Project 1 | Applied in addition to codes 1-14, to distinguish between projects or to indicate project characteristics |
| | 22. Project 2 | |
| | 23. Project 3 | |

3.5 Data analysis

The analysis of collected and coded data has focused on the interpretations of relevant theoretical concepts by respondents and the way in which these concepts were incorporated in the projects. Also, a comparison was made within the projects over time (within case analysis) and across the projects (cross case analysis). Where a between case analysis compares different subunits, a cross case analyses makes this comparison across all of the subunits (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Since the total number of subunits was three, a cross case analysis seemed to suffice.

Additionally, existing conceptualisations that stemmed from deductive coding were compared to the inductive codes, to see to what extent they differed from each other and if or where the inductive coding provided contributions to the existing operationalisation. The subject of the comparison was focussed around the way the concepts are defined, which dimensions were addressed in the projects and which dimensions were overlooked or deliberately not taken up. I also looked at how the concepts were expected to relate to each other and finally, how useful or valuable the respondents perceived the element of rehumanisation to be in the broader reconciliation process.

3.6 Evaluation criteria

The usual criteria for evaluating research are internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. However, these are often linked to positivist or quantitative research (Creswell, 2007). Since this research is both qualitative and constructivist, these evaluation criteria did not seem fitting. Creswell (2007, p. 202-204) describes an alternative set of five criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba: “to establish the ‘trustworthiness’ of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) use unique terms, such as ‘credibility,’ ‘authenticity,’ ‘transferability,’ ‘dependability,’ and ‘confirmability,’ as ‘the naturalist’s equivalents’ for ‘internal validation,’ ‘external validation,’ ‘reliability,’ and ‘objectivity’”.

The *credibility* criterion relates to the believability of the findings. Credibility is increased, amongst others, by triangulation of methods and data sources (Creswell, 2007). As described above, I have incorporated the latter into the research process. For example, by investigating three projects, three types of respondents, multiple respondents for each project and by using multiple sources of secondary material in addition to the interviews. Observation of the projects was intended to be another source of material, yet this was not realised. The intention was to interview three people for each category of respondents: one facilitator and one implementer for each project and three observer/editors. In the end, only two observer/editors were interviewed and for project 3 no implementer could be found. For project 1, two implementers were interviewed. I discuss the reason for this difficulty in paragraph 3.8. Consequently, the representation of the projects is somewhat unbalanced. Nevertheless, the number of respondents – in total and for each project – proved to be sufficient for an interesting analysis.

Second, *dependability* concerns the consistency of the findings and the possibility of auditing the research process (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Through thorough documentation and reflection on choices made, as well as reflection on how the process differed from the original research plan, readers might retrace steps taken during the research process. This is brought to attention in the current

chapter as much as possible, especially related to the impact of covid-19 on the research. Additionally, dependability is advanced by providing the reader with the topic lists (appendix b) and codebook (paragraph 3.4), thereby providing clarity about the process of data collection and analysis.

Next, *confirmability* concerns itself with the objectivity – to the extent possible in interpretive research – of the findings. Researchers should strive to not let their own biases and preconceptions influence the research. Conclusions should be based on an accurate study of data and an impartial interpretation thereof (Creswell, 2007). Nevertheless, when it comes to Rwanda, opinions are highly polarised and even some of the peer-reviewed literature shows a clear underlying opinion of the current regime. One side sees the government as authoritarian, intolerant of divergency, pressuring its people to reconcile and allowing only one-sided healing by maintaining the victim (Tutsi) and perpetrator (Hutu) dichotomy and by silencing critical voices. The other side praises the capacity of forgiveness of the Rwandan people, the way the government has approached healing and reconciliation and the degree of development the country has experienced recently. The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle, but these divergent standpoints sometimes made it difficult to not hold any preconceptions at all. Trying to manage this polarized environment was difficult yet also highly interesting. During some of the interviews, when the respondent seemed open too it, I did not shy away from asking critical questions, yet I also did not dismiss the amazing stories the respondents shared about reconciliation.

The fourth criteria of Lincoln and Guba, *transferability*, relates to the generalizability of the research. Generalizability in this context does not mean transferable to larger, practical settings, but rather transferable to specific contexts with similar characteristics or theoretical generalizability. The former was advanced by providing clear descriptions of the case in chapter four and by explicitly addressing the commonalities and differences of the Rwandan genocide compared to two other genocide cases in paragraph 3.2. This enables readers to determine the transferability to varying contexts (Creswell, 2007). Theoretical generalizability was realised by repeatedly comparing analytic insights in chapter five with the theoretical framework as established in chapter two, thereby critically reflecting on both.

Finally, *authenticity* is interpreted here as providing the reader with a sincere and nuanced view of issues under discussion, being sensitive to individual circumstances of respondents and the motivations behind their perspectives, giving room to different views and putting personal opinions aside as much as possible. This was realised to the best capabilities of the researcher, however, a personal touch seems inevitable. Controversial subjects have only been discussed once respondents brought up the subject or when the researcher felt it would not be too sensitive.

3.7 Ethical considerations

When thinking of ethical considerations, one can think for example of “informed consent procedures; deception or covert activities; confidentiality toward participants, sponsors and colleagues; benefits of research to participants over risks” (Creswell, 2007, p. 141). While opinions about the success or failure of post-conflict developments in Rwanda are highly divergent, there is a growing consensus that Rwanda has characteristics of both a democracy and an autocracy, and is therefore a hybrid regime (Loyle, 2016). This requires some extra ethical reflections, especially concerning transparency of activities and confidentiality toward participants.

In Rwanda, certain topics are preferably not discussed or even prohibited completely. Ethnicity is an example of such a topic (Loyle, 2016). Discussing genocide-related topics is a grey area. According to Loyle (2016), who has experience with doing research in Rwanda, this sometimes requires being flexible with how one asks questions, which words one does and does not use and which indicators are chosen. However, this research discussed post-genocide reconciliation and has not a priori contradicted government narratives concerning the genocide. Also, by guaranteeing full anonymity, it became easier for respondents to speak more openly, since comments cannot be traced back to them. Still, keeping in mind the sensitivity of the topics, the participants’ comfort level received higher priority than obtaining data. This meant for example that no follow up questions were asked when the participant was visibly distressed by the direction of the conversation.

As far as respondents are concerned, participant selection has followed a snowball approach. Dutch or Belgian facilitators were interviewed first and then asked for implementers from their projects that might be willing to participate. Therefore, people who were uncomfortable with participating in the research could either be assured by the facilitators own interview experience or decline and simply not be suggested by the facilitator as a possible respondent.

The researcher has informed all respondents about the objectives and details of the research and has provided them with full disclosure about what was expected of them (an interview about their professional experiences related to the project and theoretical concepts linked to reconciliation) prior to their involvement. This way, informed consent was realised. Participant data was stored anonymously. In the names of recordings and in the transcripts, respondents are referred to as respondent 1, 2, etc., in the thesis they are assigned a label (FAC1, OBS1, etc.). Recordings are not used for any other purpose than this research. Upon request, both persons and organisations were anonymized.

The benefits of participation in relation to the risks are difficult to establish. Therefore, by providing the participants with full disclosure about the research, they have been able to address personal benefits and risks for themselves. Participating in genocide-related research, even if the focus is on the post-conflict period, is not without risks for people living in a hybrid regime such as Rwanda (Loyle, 2016). This risk applies especially to respondents that openly deviate from the government narrative. However, by assuring full anonymity, a deviation from the government narrative cannot be traced back to a particular respondent. Furthermore, because of the snowball selection of respondents, facilitators could determine which possible implementers face a higher risk than others. Because of their knowledge of the people working in the projects they were more capable to determine this than the researcher would be.

Finally, the researcher has tried to 'give back' and increase impact through a partnership with an NGO which is active in Rwanda. The results of this research are shared with this NGO, as well as with the participating projects. Through them, hopefully, some of the research is left behind in the communities where it might benefit other people and projects.

3.8 Obstacles and limitations

A number of factors were especially challenging during the research process. First of all, as we have discussed in chapter two, it appeared difficult to establish theoretical clarity about the exact definitions of and relationships between the different concepts. Either academics contradicted each other in the causality of concepts, or they recognised that the concepts were in fact mutually influencing and causality was unclear. This theoretical ambiguity certainly did not make the research process any easier. At the same time, however, it turned out to be an opportunity for this research to shed a bit more light on the concepts, thereby hopefully benefitting future research projects.

Another challenge turned out to be the covid-19 pandemic. While the original plan was to visit the projects in Rwanda, this was no longer a possibility. A visit to Rwanda was expected to have a number of advantages. One of these advantages was the possibility of an additional data source. The projects could have been visited in order to get an idea of general daily practice. Through observation, the researcher for example could have gotten an idea of the degree to which rehumanisation, as well as healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, were (explicitly or implicitly) present in the everyday practices. By only relying on the interviews and secondary material, inevitably some information is lost. This limitation was not countered and remains highly regrettable. Unfortunately, these external factors were outside of the influence of the researcher.

The results of the comparison between the projects are affected by the number of respondents that could be reached. Again, not being present 'on the ground' influenced the research process, since it might have been easier to speak to employees or volunteers directly in the projects. Interviewing online came with a difficulty of reaching respondents (through email or phone contact, rather than approaching someone directly), a difficulty to plan interviews (in some cases they were postponed last-minute or cancelled completely) and scaring off some respondents who otherwise might have agreed to a face-to-face meeting. As a result, the number of respondents is lower than what was aimed at. However, the variance between the respondents and their considerable expertise – in the opinion of the researcher – still enabled valuable insights to emerge from their contributions. Among the respondents are a former Dutch government official that was involved in the reconciliation process, an academic, a Rwandan NGO employee, a Dutch NGO employee and a Belgian NGO employee. At least one of the Rwandan respondents has personally experienced the genocide. I have found this to be an interesting mixture of micro and macro perspectives, practical and theoretical insights and local and Western interpretations.

Finally, one other limitation of the research needs to be acknowledged. An important characteristic of dehumanisation is labelling people and thereby robbing them from their individual characteristics. Throughout the research I have made myself guilty of dehumanisation, by using the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' or 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi'. For the purpose of clarity, however, it was not possible to place nuances on these labels each and every time. It would have made any discussion on, for example, the rehumanisation of victims and perpetrators incredibly complex and lengthy. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of how easy it is to dehumanise, by something as simple as labelling someone according to their presumed 'ethnicity'.

4. Case description

According to Creswell (2007, p. 163) a case study “analysis consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting”. What happened in Rwanda? What are the basic social processes before, during and after the genocide? What psychological processes are related to this? How have participants’ actions constructed them? I have tried to answer as much of these questions as possible in this chapter, in order to provide the reader with an idea of the context behind the genocide in Rwanda. Necessarily, this is highly simplified and does not do justice to the complex political and social processes of the time. This case description focuses on the particular subjects that are most relevant in light of the concepts under discussion, meaning that topics such as ethnicity have received more attention than economic factors.

4.1 Colonialism and independence

Historically, the population of Rwanda was made up of three groups: Hutus (about 85%), Tutsis (about 14%), and Twa (about 1%) (Staub et al., 2005). Although these groups are usually referred to as ethnicities, it is likely that differences between the groups were predominantly socio-economic (Al Jazeera World, 2015). In the 1920s and 1930s the Belgian colonisers tried to systematically determine ethnicities by measuring physical features, such as nose width and height. These ethnic categories were formalised and documented in identity papers (Davenport & Stam, 2009; Uvin, 1999). Under colonial rule Tutsis ruled over Hutus and Twa by way of indirect rule. The struggle for independence, therefore, unsurprisingly also became an ethnic struggle against the Tutsi elite (Uvin, 1999).

Shortly before Rwandan independence in 1962, the coloniser shifted its support to the Hutu population. Around that same time, Hutu rebels overthrew the monarchy and held elections that resulted in the election of a radically anti-Tutsi party (Staub et al., 2005; Uvin, 1999). Many Tutsis fled the country due to violence, discrimination and killings. Repeated instances of mass killings continued during the 1960s and 1970s, urging more Tutsis to flee to neighbouring countries. Eventually, in 1990 a group consisting predominantly of (children of) these Tutsi refugees – the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) – invaded Rwanda from Uganda, starting a civil war (Staub et al., 2005; Uvin, 1999).

4.2 Civil war

Around the time of the RPF invasion, politics in Rwanda were dominated by Hutus under President Habyarimana. An idea of ‘Hutu Power’ had emerged and was actively promoted by certain elements of Habyarimana’s government. Hutu Power propaganda through radio (Radio Libre des Mille Collines) and newspapers (Kangura) generalized the RPF threat to all Tutsis, portrayed them as dangerous,



Figure 1: Kangura newspaper cover

dehumanised them by referring to them as snakes or cockroaches and incited the Hutu public to kill them. It became the job of a Hutu to eliminate the Tutsi threat (Loyle, 2009; Staub et al., 2005; Uvin, 1999). Looking at figure 1, the vertical text next to the knife roughly translates into ‘which weapons are we going to use to beat the cockroaches for good’ (Wikipedia, n.d.).

The civil war formally ended in 1992 with the signing of the Arusha Accords, which contained agreements on a coalition government and the integration of the RPF into the Rwandan

army (Loyle, 2009; Uvin, 1999). However, propaganda only increased, arms were imported and distributed amongst militias and Tutsis were victim to frequent massacres, often directed by local authorities (Uvin, 1999). Uvin (1999, p. 260-261) explains that “these actions routinized violence and, together with the radical rhetoric, further dehumanised the Tutsi and legitimised violence. These processes were not only tolerated but supported morally and financially by people at the highest levels of government and the military”. This routinization and legitimisation of violence corresponds to the slippery slope Staub (2000) describes in paragraph 2.2. Mass killings of Hutus by Tutsis in neighbouring Burundi likely was another motivation for Hutu leadership in Rwanda to target Rwandese Tutsis (Staub, 2000).

During this time a stereotype of ‘the Tutsi’ was created that overruled personal experiences people might have had with their Tutsi neighbours, colleagues or acquaintances. Continuing propaganda encouraged Hutus to overcome internal differences and mobilise in order to combat the Tutsi threat. By installing fear and increasingly violent rhetoric, “‘the Tutsi’ as a collective, *all* Tutsi, were systematically demonized and presented as the categorical enemy of *all* Hutu” (Hilker, 2009, p. 94). Hilker (2009, p. 95) quotes one of her respondents who states the following:

“We knew our Tutsi neighbours were not to blame for any wrongdoing, but we thought that all the Tutsis were responsible for our eternal woes. We no longer saw them as individuals, we didn’t linger to recognize what they had been – even our colleagues. [...] That’s how we reasoned and that’s how we killed at that time”.

In their research on female participation in the Rwandan genocide Adler, Loyle and Globerman (2007) come to interesting insights about changing perceptions of Tutsis before and during the genocide. The female respondents describe close relations and cooperation between Hutus and Tutsis in their neighbourhoods, however, “after the Inkotanyi [the RPF] invaded the country, Tutsis were no longer respected as people who had rights as citizens” (Adler et al., 2007, p. 217). This narrative changes even more drastically when the women are asked about their experiences during the genocide. A respondent explains how “people said they were killing *inyenzi* [cockroaches], as if they were not killing human beings, and that to kill Tutsis was like self defence, because people were saying that Tutsis were about to kill Hutus” (Adler et al., 2007, p. 218).

Multiple elements of dehumanisation as described in chapter two are present here: Hutu power ideology consisted of a clear in- and outgroup, enhanced by a history of conflict. The outgroup was portrayed as aggressive and dangerous, and dehumanised using references to animals and vermin (which calls for extermination). Internalisation of these stereotypes was advanced through wide-scale propaganda, together with the belief that overcoming the Tutsi threat demanded courage and commitment (resulting in positive moral self-evaluation). Through routinization and legitimisation of violence, the killing of Tutsis became increasingly normalised.

4.3 The genocide

On April 6, 1994 a plane carrying President Habyarimana crashed. This event signalled the start of one hundred days of extreme violence and killing (Loyle, 2009; Urvin, 1999). That same night, presidential guards and militias started these killings (Prunier, 1995; Urvin, 1999). The militias – *Interahamwe* – were trained and their numbers reached about 50,000, which was approximately the strength of the regular armed forces (Rwandan Armed Forces, FAR). The *Interahamwe* manned roadblocks, performed door-to-door searches and acted as executioners (Loyle, 2009; Prunier, 1995). However, in addition to the government forces and militias, many of the perpetrators of the genocide were ordinary civilians (Prunier, 1995; Staub 2005; Staub et al., 2005).

Why did these ordinary men and women kill their neighbours? A number of motivations is described here, though this is not exhaustive. Historically, Rwandan society knows a tradition of respect for and obedience to authority. Even if this authority urged you to use violence. In addition, there was a fear of punishment in case of non-compliance, either by the authorities or by Hutu extremists (Loyle, 2009; Prunier, 1995). According to Loyle (2009, p. 33), “participants used their actions to distinguish

themselves as active supporters”. This fear was accompanied by a fear of the RPF and Tutsis in general. Both the civil war and the government propaganda had turned the RPF and Tutsis into a threat. This was strengthened by a history of violence and by similar interethnic violence in neighbouring Burundi (Loyle, 2009). There appears to be great variation in the level of participation and violence between regions, which indicates that local authorities played a major role in either motivating the killers or trying to pacify them (Davenport & Stam, 2009; Loyle, 2009). Furthermore, there was a material incentive for participation. Apart from the killings, cattle were slaughtered, houses were looted and land was taken. At the time, Rwanda was going through an economic crisis and land has always been a scarcity (Hilker, 2009; Prunier, 1995). This was amplified by a state of lawlessness in which these crimes went unpunished. The same state of lawlessness made way for revenge killings and sexual assault unrelated to the genocide (Loyle, 2009). Finally, an important addition is what Adler, Loyle, Globerman and Larson (2008) refer to as the ‘tsunami effect’. Being caught up in the momentum of the time, individuals were no longer certain of right and wrong and did not stop to reflect on this (Loyle, 2009), but rather got pulled into this surreal, irrational and emotional rollercoaster.

During the course of one hundred days, about 800,000 to one million people got killed. Another two million Rwandans became external refugees and around one million became internal refugees (Davenport & Stam, 2009). Prunier (1995, p. 257) writes the following:

“The genocide phenomenon placed people in incredibly complex moral and social situations. While some could be denounced and sent to their death by neighbours whom they had known all their lives, others could – incredibly – be saved by a kind-hearted Interahamwe! Some people were denounced by their colleagues who wanted their jobs or killed by people who wanted their property, while others were saved by unknown Hutu disgusted by the violence”.

A highly controversial research project by Davenport and Stam (2009) – which resulted in them being threatened both by members of the Rwandan government and individuals around the world – challenges common beliefs about the Rwandan genocide and cannot be left unmentioned in this thesis. Opinions on the credibility of the findings are highly divergent. However, other researchers have referred to findings similar to those of Davenport and Stam, although they do not contain the same quantities (e.g. Prunier, 1995; Zorbas, 2004).

The findings of Davenport and Stam (2009) indicate that, based on a mapping of territories controlled by the FAR and RPF and the number of deaths in those areas at those times, the majority of the killings has indeed been executed by the FAR, Interahamwe and civilians. However, they also found that “the RPF

was clearly responsible for another significant portion of the killings” (Davenport & Stam, 2009). Another finding emerged from a comparison of the number of Tutsis that were estimated to be in the country before the genocide (roughly 600,000) and the number of survivors afterwards (roughly 300,000). If these numbers are indeed correct, simple mathematics tell us that it is impossible that almost one million Tutsis died during the genocide. A large number of them had to be Hutu (Davenport & Stam, 2009).

The authors conclude that there indeed was a genocide of the Tutsi, but that this event went alongside a continuation of the civil war, which made victims on both sides, and random killings due to the general lawlessness of the situation (Davenport & Stam, 2009). These findings have serious implications, since they challenge the government narrative of a ‘genocide against Tutsis’ (RGB, 2017a). It is likely that a significant share of the population, victimized by events in 1994, is not acknowledged as such because it contradicts the narrative of Hutus as perpetrators and Tutsis as victims.

4.4 After the genocide: unity and reconciliation

The genocide ended when the RPF defeated government forces in July 1994 (Staub et al., 2005). The new Tutsi government has since then worked hard to create a safe environment (Staub et al., 2005). It has also aimed at bringing about reconciliation. In this section we briefly touch upon some of the relevant institutional aspects of reconciliation advanced by the government.

After the genocide, the whole society – including the juridical system – had to be built up from scratch. It is estimated that no more than ten Rwandan lawyers were left in the country after the genocide (Zorbas, 2004). An incredibly sizable number of people accused of participation in the genocide had to be brought to justice and were – or still are – imprisoned in prisons that were at the time overcrowded and could not provide all prisoners with food (Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot & Yzerbyt, 2007; Zorbas, 2004). It was not possible to bring everyone to justice in court. The government did not have the means to sustain these large numbers of prisoners and the trials would have taken decades, alleged perpetrators would have died of old age before getting a chance to appear in court (Zorbas, 2004).

Therefore, the government developed the Gacaca system as an addition to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (which could only prosecute a handful of high-ranking individuals; Zorbas, 2004). In this system in which once a week the courts gathered in villages across the country, the accused were brought before a local tribunal composed of elected judges (BBC, 2012). There, survivors could give their testimony and accused perpetrators could share their side of the story, after which the judges decided

on compensations to be paid to the victims, prison time and possible sentence reduction because of a sign of remorse and apology (Kanyangara et al., 2007). In 2012 the Gacaca courts closed, after having tried about two million people (BBC, 2012). However, it appears that Gacaca did not fully succeed in its goal of healing and reconciliation. In fact, many who participated in the Gacaca courts experienced it as re-traumatising (Kanyangara et al., 2007).

Another reconciliation effort is *umuganda*, which can be translated into ‘coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome’ (RGB, 2017b). *Umuganda* is a government programme in which the whole population carries out community work once a month. This community work might consist of repairing the house of a widow, cultivating a piece of land or helping the poor (RGB, 2017b). These government initiatives advance reconciliation in different, but mutually enhancing ways. Where the Gacaca system was meant to advance reconciliation by acknowledgement of grievances, truth telling, justice, healing and possibly forgiveness, *umuganda* advances reconciliation in a more practical, cooperative manner.

Today, the Rwandan government is praised for its outstanding socioeconomic recovery and development. At the same time, however, the Rwandan government has been described as increasingly authoritarian and its socioeconomic progress as window dressing (Ingelaere, 2010). It is likely that both are partly true. The Rwandan government actively promotes unity, thereby removing ethnicity from the conversation. Everyone is now – exclusively – Rwandan (Hilker, 2009; Staub, 2005, 2013). Mentioning ethnicity (Hutu or Tutsi) can lead to accusations of ‘divisionism’ (Staub, 2013).

4.5 Public discourse

So far, we have touched upon the role of the Rwandan government a couple of times. We will discuss this more in depth. Note that this section (as an exception) is mainly based on respondent data, instead of academic literature.

First of all, it is likely that a discussion on reconciliation in the next chapter only applies to a certain part of the Rwandese society. In the previous sections we have seen that it is probable that a considerable share of the victims of the genocide was Hutu, either because they were moderates and were killed by Hutu extremists, because they were the victims of random violence, or because they were killed by the RPF. Nevertheless, even by calling it the ‘genocide against Tutsis’ the government excludes Hutus as victims (FAC2; IMP1a; OBS1). Their cases were not handled by the Gacaca courts (OBS1) and reconciliation projects cannot – explicitly – focus on this target group without risking repercussions from

the government (FAC3). There is a considerable amount of grief, trauma and pain that is not – and cannot be – talked about (FAC2; FAC3; OBS1). One might expect all these unaddressed wounds and frustrations to place a strain on the reconciliation process (FAC3).

Even sticking to victim-perpetrator language (as I do in this thesis, I reflect on this in chapter three) in fact leaves out much needed nuance. With victims, it is not meant ‘Tutsi’, nor does perpetrator mean ‘Hutu’. There are individuals who killed others during the genocide but also saved people, there are victims of violence who turned in others, and there are people that fit neither category, such as bystanders, people in hiding and refugees (OBS2).

Related to this is the exclusion of ethnicity in public dialogue. Rather than being Hutu or Tutsi, people are now exclusively Rwandan. Yet, by calling the genocide a ‘genocide against the Tutsi’, the government itself still uses ethnic labels (OBS1). This attempt to de-ethnicise seems not to be working out all too well. Hilker (2009, p. 92) summarizes her findings related to experienced ethnicity among Rwandan youth:

“Firstly, young people themselves believe that ethnic identity is still an important factor in Rwanda politics and society—influencing the way people interact, what they talk about, the levels of trust they feel and the intimacy of the relationships they form. Secondly, young Rwandans demonstrate a persistent need to determine the ethnic identity of those with whom they regularly interact and to categorize them on an ongoing basis. Thirdly, there are powerful collective stereotypes about the physical attributes, behaviour, political views and experiences of the Tutsi and the Hutu”.

Clearly ethnicity still plays a significant role in day to day practice. People still know who is who (FAC2; IMP1a; OBS1) and it still matters ‘what’ you are. “Sometimes it totally doesn’t matter. And sometimes it’s all that matters” (OBS2). During the interview OBS2 starts to speak more quietly when we reach these topics, the information is clearly delicate.

“When you have a conversation as a Rwandan with someone in Rwanda, there’s a ton of under the table effort that’s put into like, who am I? Who are you? What is our dynamic around this? And therefore, how will I express myself or what will I say?” (OBS2).

IMP1a shares how a colleague explained that before and during the genocide ethnic labels naturally became highly loaded with meanings. By banning ethnicity from the conversation for the purpose of unity and reconciliation, people have not gotten the chance to transform these meanings. Instead, the meanings of these labels are now frozen in the minds of people: “these two ethnic groups have received so much weight, because we have not been able to rehumanise them [own translation]” (IMP1a).

5. Analysis

In this chapter the project approaches towards healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and rehumanisation are discussed. The three projects are presented separately. Each project discussion starts with a general description of the project, followed by an individual discussion of each of the four main concepts. The discussion of the concepts contains a brief statement about if or how that concept is said to be present in the project, according to project documentation. Afterwards, an overview of the definition and dimensions of the concept (as operationalised in chapter two) is provided to guide the reader through the subsequent discussion of how the concepts and their dimensions are interpreted by project respondents (where relevant supported by project documents). The discussion of the projects ends with a brief within case analysis where the main developments in the project approach over time are pointed out. Finally, paragraph 5.4 contains a cross case analysis in which the projects are compared to each other and to the theoretical chapter.

It should be noted beforehand that the amount of information available for each of the projects was highly divergent. Therefore, the discussions of the projects are not the same in terms of depth and clarity. This is especially relevant for project 1, for which a large amount of project documents was available, and for project 3, for which it was not possible to interview an implementer of the project. Furthermore, when individual respondents are cited, their insights might not necessarily be directly linked to the project, but can also come from additional professional or personal experiences with reconciliation processes.

5.1 Project 1

This project's approach is based on an already existing practice, customized to fit Rwandan conditions. The project was brought to Rwanda roughly ten years after the genocide and taken over by local actors shortly after implementation (FAC1). The project approach is designed as consisting of multiple group sessions, led by members who come from the same (geographical) community as the participants (FAC1; IMP1b; report a project 1, 2008¹). These group leaders receive training to enable them to guide the groups. The primary target group consists of people who have been affected by the genocide, like perpetrators, victims, local leaders, refugees and youth (report c project 1, 2017²). Main goals of the approach are to foster feelings trust, safety and dignity in their participants and in the groups (report a

¹ Report a project 1, 2008, publicly available, 17 pages, in possession of author.

² Report c project 1, 2017, publicly available, 13 pages, in possession of author.

project 1, 2008; report c project 1, 2017), in order to work through personal and social trauma's and to encourage sustainable peace (report c project 1, 2017). Initially, the approach was also a reaction to the re-traumatisation in the Gacaca courts (IMP1b; report a project 1, 2008).

In the beginning of the group sessions, emphasis is placed on developing safety and trust. This is important, because it sometimes occurs that victims and perpetrators meet each other in the groups. There are cases in which people could not handle being around members of the other group and have left the project (report c project 1, 2017). Other important project elements are, for example, respect, future perspective and caring (report c project 1, 2017). The project grew rapidly over the years and is now active in multiple districts and social settings (report b project 1, 2010³; report c project 1, 2017). It has been praised by the community members leading the groups, the people participating in the groups and their families, as well as by local leaders and international sponsors (report a project 1, 2008; report c project 1, 2017). Especially for the way in which the approach has managed to provide care and support for a large number of people within a limited amount of time. The lessons people picked up during the sessions were often brought back home with the participants, thereby influencing their family members and direct contacts as well (IMP1a; report a project 1, 2008).

5.1.1 Reconciliation

It appears from project documents that reconciliation initially was not the primary concern of project 1. Over time, reconciliation between antagonistic parties received increasing attention, in addition to the initial focus on trust, safety and dignity, and the reduction of trauma (report c project 1, 2017). The box below contains the working definition and dimensions of reconciliation, as formulated in chapter two. We will discuss these here.

*To **reconcile** is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust. Dimensions of reconciliation are:*

- *Shared view of history*
- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Justice and security*
- *Cooperation and meaningful contact*

³ Report b project 1, 2010, publicly available, 9 pages, in possession of author.

Participants from project 1 have described reconciliation as the reparation of relationships (report c project 1, 2017). However, they also mention reconciliation in Rwanda to be a government policy that requires people to reconcile while in reality feelings of mistrust towards the other remain, thus making it something superficial and temporary (report c project 1, 2017). OBS1 nuances this by explaining that after decades of inter-ethnic violence and conflict, certain measures might be required in order to ‘move forward’. Rather than imposed, one might call this guided reconciliation (OBS1)⁴.

FAC1 describes the reconciliation process as a way to rebuild things together, develop mutual trust and regain a lust for life (see the section on healing). According to this respondent, emotions play an important role in this process, by enabling ‘deeper’ or ‘thick’ reconciliation, rather than superficial reconciliation. IMP1a touches on a related element of reconciliation by saying that, in order to move past superficial reconciliation towards deeper reconciliation, a person needs to be reconciled with himself, before being able to truly reconcile with others. In the preceding part of the thesis we have not always consequently distinguished between different levels of reconciliation. Yet, following FAC1, it seems valuable to keep this distinction between superficial and deep reconciliation.

The approach of project 1 assumes that healing and reconciliation are intertwined, although they do not recognise a clear or unilateral causal relationship between the two (report b project 1, 2010).

Dimensions of reconciliation

A number of dimensions of reconciliation seem incorporated in the project approach, but establishing a *shared view of history* is not. Rather, an emphasis is placed on individual trauma and subjective experiences (report c project 1, 2017).

The *acknowledgement of grievances* seems to be advanced implicitly, in the sense that participants are asked to share stories about their past, which likely involves to some extent the acknowledgement of their wrongdoings and the grievances they have caused (report c project 1, 2017).

Subsequently, *truth-telling*, interpreted as an open dialogue is an important element of the projects’ approach. By discussing the past, certain interpretations might turn out to be wrong, thereby making way for new interpretations of past events. This is for example the case when perpetrators look at their past actions differently as a result of hearing stories about how their victims continuously suffered, even

⁴ OBS1 discusses general insights about Rwandan society when asked about whether or not reconciliation in Rwanda is imposed on its citizens. This comment is therefore not specifically related to project 1.

long after the genocide (IMP1b). This hearing and telling the truth about past events, as well as hearing each other's life stories, often is a way of dealing with trauma in itself (FAC1; OBS1), and thereby contributes to healing, in addition to reconciliation.

The fourth dimension, *justice and security*, is described in chapter two as bringing perpetrators to justice. This contributes to a feeling of security among people. In project 1, however, security refers instead to a safe environment. Justice is not present in the project at all, though this is unsurprising since justice usually is a government responsibility. A safe environment seems to encompass both a (physical) security aspect and an aspect of interpersonal trust. Interpersonal trust concerns the perceptions that individuals have of the other. IMP1a explains how fear of a perpetrator is, of course, based on very real experiences. However, an image that is shaped in one's mind might over time no longer correspond to reality, either because the image became bigger and more dangerous or because the image remained the same but the perpetrator changed in a positive way. In both cases, the image that a person has of another needs changing, in order for fear to diminish and feelings of interpersonal safety and trust to emerge (IMP1a). A safe environment ultimately makes individuals feel comfortable and thereby enables and encourages them to open up about their past, their problems and their feelings (FAC1; IMP1a). Following the logic of project 1, it would thus seem more fitting to change this dimension of reconciliation from 'justice and security' into 'safe environment' and make it the first dimension of reconciliation.

Finally, in chapter two we found *cooperation and meaningful contact* to be an important dimension of reconciliation. The respondents from project 1 seem to agree. IMP1b describes that "the social element is so important, that is what I have seen, that is what I have learnt. To live with others, to have connections with others, it is so important". When dealing with traumas from the genocide, individuals might see experts to help them, but once they return in their communities the situation there is still the same (IMP1b). According to IMP1b, it is therefore much better to work in and with communities and community members, to build social connections and social cohesion. "I realise that to live better, I need my neighbour" (IMP1b). In addition, (economic) cooperation has the benefits of facilitating contact, enhancing a persons' economic situation and also impacting one's emotional status (FAC1). Project practice has shown that after the formal end of the group sessions, it often appears to be difficult for participants and group leaders to separate. Informal follow-up meetings are sometimes organised, other groups start joint economic activities or collectively support one of their members (report a project 1, 2008; report c project 1, 2017), thereby maintaining this meaningful contact after sessions have ended.

We might conclude that reconciliation in project 1 is operationalised as the rebuilding of relationships (as well as reconciling with yourself) and developing trust and a future perspective. Dimensions that are in particular important in this respect are truth-telling (interpreted as open dialogue), justice and security (interpreted as a safe environment) and cooperation and meaningful contact. Acknowledgement of grievances seems implicitly addressed.

5.1.2 Healing

We have seen that in project documentation healing and reconciliation are considered to be intertwined (report b project 1, 2010). The approach also focuses on trauma healing (report c project 1, 2017).

*To **heal** is to (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering. Dimensions of healing are:*

- *Working with positive/constructive emotions*
- *Open dialogue*
- *Feeling empathy for the other*

First of all, the project approach is clearly sensitive to trauma. FAC1 describes how traumatised people often cut off social relations and become isolated. Therefore, an important part of the project's approach is to bring people back together and give them back a grip on their daily lives (FAC1). Rebuilding these social connections not only reduces trauma symptoms and starts a process of healing (report b project 1, 2010), it also positively influences a feeling of self-worth (report a project 1, 2008) and generates a safety net that people can rely upon when they encounter problems in their daily lives (IMP1b).

Dimensions of healing

The first dimension of healing, *working with positive or constructive emotions*, seems important in project 1. In the discussion of reconciliation we have already seen how FAC1 describes emotions to be important in bringing about deep reconciliation. FAC1 explains that the emotions related to trauma will likely always remain, since they are connected to the memories people have. The difference is that people can learn not to get overwhelmed by their emotions, so that they no longer dominate all aspects of life (FAC1). Therefore, during the projects' sessions the participants learn to give words to their feelings and to engage with their emotions without being dominated and controlled by them (FAC1). This can eventually even result in participants being able to laugh and play together (IMP1a). The dialogues in the sessions are highly valued by participants for these reasons (report c project 1, 2017). We can link learning to control emotions as we see in project 1, to working with constructive emotions.

The second dimension of healing is *open dialogue*. It was found that reliving experiences from the genocide could be highly re-traumatising for people (FAC1). Therefore, the project is designed in a way that puts the participants in charge of which topics are discussed (IMP1b). This often starts small and superficial, like expressing worries that due to rain shortages one fears crops are not growing right (IMP1b). Only when a certain level of safety and trust is established, traumatised individuals can start finding words for their deeper feelings (FAC1). The issues that participants bring to the group become more personal. Frequently discussed issues are for example concerns about the future, self-harm, land- or social conflicts, Gacaca or the genocide (report a project 1, 2008). IMP1a describes this process as ‘finding one’s voice’. This includes the feeling that it is alright to share one’s story, which is especially challenging for perpetrators since their stories are often very sensitive to the other group (IMP1a).

Finally, we expect healing to be based on *feeling empathy for others*. The projects’ sessions result in participants realising that other people in the group suffer just like they do themselves, that others need to be cared for just like they want to be cared for and that they deserve being cared for by others (IMP1a; report b project 1, 2010; report c project 1, 2017). Being cared for, experiencing that others are willing to do something for your wellbeing and that you are worthy of receiving their care, is a turning point in the sessions, according to IMP1a. Though *caring* is not the same as feeling empathy, the two are to some extent related, since both involve recognising the other’s needs and feelings. Caring for others and having others care for you, has a positive impact on people (FAC1). IMP1a finds that caring is one of the most valued aspects of the project by participants, since being cared for by others raises a feeling of worthiness (FAC1; IMP1a).

Another dimension that is mentioned by the project respondents is regaining a ‘lust for life’ (FAC1). We already mentioned this in relation to reconciliation. Closely related to this, is the concept of imagined future (IMP1a). Who do you want to be in the future? This is a question that traumatised people often find difficult to answer, because it is hard for them to look ahead. Healing enables people to do this. We shall call this regaining the ability of taking on a *future perspective*.

We conclude that healing in project 1 is operationalised as reducing trauma symptoms by bringing people together, thereby contributing to participants’ feeling self-worth and the emergence of social connections. The first two dimensions of healing – working with positive or constructive emotions and open dialogue – seem especially important. Empathy is roughly related to caring. Finally, future perspective seems a valuable addition to the existing dimensions.

5.1.3 Forgiveness

Project 1 does not incorporate forgiveness into its approach (report b project 1, 2010). However, implicitly it might be a result of other project elements.

*To **forgive** is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer. Dimensions of forgiveness are:*

- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Remorse/regret, apology*
- *Empathy for and recognition of other*

FAC1 emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between different kinds of forgiveness. To forgive or not to forgive is too black and white. FAC1 and IMP1b seem to agree that forgiveness based on true remorse and genuine empathy seems to hold the greatest value. IMP1b even goes as far as to say that “true forgiveness is reconciliation [... and] if there is no reconciliation, there is no true forgiveness. For this respondent, the two concepts are one.

IMP1b points out the many examples in which perpetrators “request, again, forgiveness, because they realize that forgiveness requested during [...Gacaca] was for getting the benefit of reducing punishment”. The same happens for the victims: “they say that, I was asked for forgiveness in the public and I couldn’t refuse. But now, they say, I now understand and now I forgive” (IMP1b). In the theoretical chapter we have described forgiveness without empathy or remorse as harmful forgiveness. IMP1a recognizes this to some extent in Rwandan daily practice and feels that forgiveness and reconciliation are concepts that can be imposed on people sometimes, either by the government or by religion. IMP1a often heard participants say that “In Gacaca I forgave with my mouth, but I didn’t forgive with my heart”, and feels that there should also be room for people not to forgive. This might be an explanation for why the project does not actively concern itself with forgiveness.

Dimensions of forgiveness

Over the course of the sessions, perpetrators are invited to discuss their past wrongdoings and victims often respond with empathy because of the stories they have exchanged (report c project 1, 2017). Sometimes these stories are accompanied by the acknowledgement of grievances and perhaps requests for forgiveness. This is, however, not actively encouraged by the project leaders (report b project 1, 2010). Implicitly, all elements of forgiveness are present in the project approach. Yet, they can all be

linked to the previous concepts: acknowledgement of grievances and truth-telling are linked to the corresponding dimensions of reconciliation, truth telling can also be linked to open dialogue (healing) and empathy resembles another dimension of healing.

Forgiveness, while not explicitly integrated in the project approach, seems to be interpreted by the respondents of project 1 as being the result of true remorse and empathy. While dimensions of forgiveness are present, they can be ascribed to reconciliation and healing.

5.1.4 Rehumanisation

When looking into rehumanisation, we find dimensions and indicators of the concept present in the project's approach, although linked to different theoretical concepts. The word rehumanisation is not used in project documents, yet there are references to 'mutual recognition of humanity', 'web of human relationships' and 'loss of humanity' (report b project 1, 2010).

*To **rehumanise** is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community. Dimensions of rehumanisation are:*

- *Identity:*
 - *Unique individual/distinguishable from others*
 - *Capable of making choices (according to one's own values)*
- *Community:*
 - *Inclusion in a network of human beings*
 - *Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect)*

Indicators of rehumanisation are:

- *Rehumanisation of victim*
 - *By perpetrator: killing is (morally) unjustified*
 - *By victim: regaining a sense of self-worth*
- *Rehumanisation of perpetrator*
 - *By victim: perpetrator's evil acts do not define him (is capable of change and can be met with empathy)*
 - *By perpetrator: capable of feeling remorse for past actions and empathy for victims*

Rehumanisation is interpreted by the respondents from project 1 as to go beyond simple stereotypes that people have of others, towards more comprehensive identities (IMP1a; IMP1b). IMP1b perceives rehumanisation as vital to reconciliation: "when I feel, first of all, human again to myself, I value myself, it is when I will start to think about others and feel the needs of others, and then I can try to cooperate with them". In this line of reasoning, it seems that if you don't see yourself as human, there is no relationship with others, and if there is no relationship with others there can be no reconciliation.

The respondents also relate the concept of rehumanisation to similar theoretical concepts. First, IMP1b distinguishes between rehumanisation and rebirth. According to this respondent, rehumanisation starts from the feeling that one knows he is alive, but does not feel human, perhaps more like an animal. Rebirth, on the other hand, starts from the feeling that one does not exist at all. That person is 'standing dead' (IMP1b). Respondent FAC1 supports this conceptualisation of rehumanisation by IMP1b: "they often say 'I have become an animal' [...] I have heard that a lot from both sides [own translation]" (FAC1). Victims for example stop taking care of their kids and themselves, and wander around aimlessly without coming home (FAC1). IMP1b touches on something similar when describing how victims, when living isolated in their community, don't take care of themselves in the sense of washing, doing ordinary work, and so on. This neglect and isolation confirms they need to be rehumanised not only by perpetrators or by their communities, but also by themselves.

Additionally, FAC1 and IMP1a associate rehumanisation with dignity. FAC1 sees regaining dignity as one of the most important consequences of project 1. When IMP1a is asked what rehumanisation means for her, she answers the following:

"Regaining dignity. So, yes, that you can see yourself as a full-fledged individual again. But also the other. So that again you can, yes, actually have some kind of empathy for the other and you can somewhat, to whatever extent that is possible, you can put yourself in the situation of another and thus reconnect with the other. I think that would mean rehumanisation for me [own translation]" (IMP1a).

It seems that in a process of regaining dignity, one has to become fully human again and redevelop feelings of empathy for the other. These interpretations correspond to our operationalisation of rehumanisation. No distinction is made here between perpetrators and victims. In addition, people have to step out of isolation (resulting from dehumanisation) as described above and make social connections.

Dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation

Because the indicators of rehumanisation are more easily identifiable in practice, we will discuss these first and then use them to point out the dimensions of rehumanisation.

The *rehumanisation of victims by their perpetrators* has much to do with countering stereotypes, for example bringing about the realisation that someone is not a cockroach (FAC1). Seeing the other as an individual rather than a depiction of a stereotype or a threat that needs to be eliminated, can be the result of repeated interactions between them (IMP1b). When a level of interpersonal trust is established,

people start to share stories. Some of these stories might be about the stereotypes they previously had of the other. When both parties share these stories, this leads to the understanding that the stereotypes they had in mind might have been wrong, or that they have many things in common with the other party without ever having realised it (IMP1b). FAC1 describes this as to care for someone, as well as to really see someone. Perpetrators come to realise the amount of suffering their victims have felt – and still feel – because of their actions during the genocide (IMP1b). As we have seen in the theoretical chapter, letting go of stereotypes and feeling the pain one has caused another, are inhibitions against killing that individual. The other is perceived as unique and distinguishable individual (according identity) and worthy of moral considerations (according community) – which tell us not to kill. Yet, we might better understand this indicator by adjusting it somewhat. Project 1 seems to interpret the rehumanisation of victims by perpetrators – as well as the rehumanisation of perpetrators by victims – as *changing the perceptions one has of the other through dialogue*.

Rehumanisation of victims by themselves means the victim feels he is worth it to be treated with respect and to be cared for (IMP1a), which we have described as moral considerations that apply to humans when they are accorded with community and is closely related to regaining dignity. These elements all contribute to or are similar to regaining a sense of self-worth.

The *rehumanisation of perpetrators by victims* concerns the realisation that perpetrators are not defined by their actions. According to FAC1 and IMP1a there are many examples of people who killed during the genocide, yet at the same time saved or protected others. IMP1a gives an example of one of the leaders of a local killing group, who had a mother that was Tutsi and who he was trying to protect. This nuance in the perception one has of another person is often brought about in through dialogue, as we have seen above. “By survivors hearing how they [perpetrators] also suffer from what they did, they become to sympathize with them” (IMP1b), and survivors might find that a certain perpetrator is not the ‘pure evil’ that they thought. As a result, they can start to feel empathy for the other (IMP1b). They might even realise that the perpetrator was a victim in one way or another as well (FAC1). This process of rehumanisation of the perpetrator in the eyes of victims is often helped by practical actions. When the perpetrator does something to help, in the neighbourhood or directly for the victim, this can bring about the realisation that the perpetrator is capable of good actions (FAC1). Again, we can recognise the two dimensions of rehumanisation here: the perpetrator is seen as a distinguishable individual dealing with his own unique circumstances (according identity), can therefore be included in the network of human beings and can be met with care and recognition (according community).

As we have seen, also *perpetrators have to rehumanise themselves*. When perpetrators have served their sentence, they often come back in the same communities in which they have made victims. This might evoke a feeling of unworthiness, not deserving to live in this community or to be around these people (IMP1b). IMP1b explains: “I have examples of perpetrators who are saying that it would have been better to remain in the prison or to have died, because that’s what I deserved compared to what I did”. Another example is the following: an ex-prisoner reflects on his life after being released from prison and expresses how hard it was, not in the least because everyone looked down on him. However, during the sessions people look at him as a valued human being (report a project 1, 2008). The perpetrator is included in the group’s network of human beings. The perpetrators in these examples seem to have lost their sense of self-worth. Regaining a sense of self-worth was scaled under the rehumanisation of victims, but – following the examples of the respondents – seems applicable to perpetrators as well.

Even though project practices might not be directly aimed at bringing about rehumanisation, we have seen that all indicators point at the rehumanising effect of the sessions in project 1. Furthermore, regaining dignity is an explicit aim of the project and we have seen this is operationalised partly as feeling empathy for others (regardless of victim-perpetrator categories). In the previous section we also discussed the importance of overcoming isolation by making *social connections*. This, therefore, seems a valuable additional indicator of rehumanisation.

We can conclude that rehumanisation in project 1 is operationalised as perceiving the other as a comprehensive individual, combined with regaining a feeling of dignity and making social connections. All indicators of rehumanisation are identifiable in daily practice, although respondents might link them to dignity rather than to rehumanisation. It seems that changing one’s perceptions of others through dialogue better describes the first indicator and is applicable to both victims and perpetrators. The same appears to be true for feeling empathy for others and regaining a sense of self-worth. From the indicators, we have been able to deduct both dimensions of rehumanisation (according identity and community) and we have added two indicators: feeling empathy (both victim and perpetrator) and making social connections.

Table 6: Operationalisation outline project 1

| | <i>Commonalities with theory</i> | <i>Additions to theory</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Reconciliation | Shared view of history | □ |
| | Acknowledgement of grievances | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | = <i>Open dialogue</i> X |
| | Justice and security | = <i>Safe environment</i> X |
| | Cooperation and meaningful contact | X |
| Healing | Working with positive/constructive emotions | X |
| | Open dialogue | X |
| | Feeling empathy | = <i>Caring</i> X |
| | | + <i>Future perspective</i> X |
| Forgiveness | Acknowledgement of grievances | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | (X) |
| | Remorse/regret, apology | (X) |
| | Empathy/recognition of other | (X) |
| Rehumanisation | Dimensions | |
| | Identity | X |
| | Community | X |
| | Indicators | |
| | Killing is morally unjust | = <i>Changing perceptions through dialogue (victim/perpetrator)</i> X |
| | Regaining a sense of self-worth | = <i>Victim/perpetrator</i> X |
| | Killers acts do not define him | X |
| | Feeling remorse and empathy | = <i>Victim/perpetrator</i> X |
| | | + <i>Social connections</i> X |

Please note that the table above is not (meant to be) exhaustive, but merely serves to provide the reader with an overview of the dimensions that we established in the theoretical chapter and to indicate the ones that stand out most for this project. Also included are additional theoretical insights stemming from the project approaches.

5.1.5 Within case analysis

As was mentioned before, respondent IMP1b found that the topics that people bring to the table usually changed during the course of the sessions, moving from small and safe issues to deeper and emotional ones. Furthermore, security is an element that is especially important in the beginning of the sessions. Later this shifts to caring and dignity.

Looking at the long-term developments of project 1, FAC1 notices that reconciliation came more into the picture over time, although it is not explicated what this means exactly. Likely, the focus initially was on events and experiences during the genocide and less on the reconciliation process that comes after.

Another change in the project resulted from a problem that many of the participants experienced. This problem related to the children of the participants. People experienced difficulties in making contact, parenting and communicating with their children, and some children showed behavioural problems. As a result, these issues became incorporated into the project (FAC1). Other changes in the project relate to the scope of the project, which has over the years expanded in terms of the number of groups and participants, and expanded to other regions and social settings.

5.2 Project 2

Project 2 is supported by a Dutch/Belgian Christian organisation working with local partners. This cooperation started between five and ten years after the genocide (webpage b project 2, n.d.⁵). However, their current project started only recently, roughly five years ago (FAC2). They currently target a specific group: youth. After local churches failed to be a safe haven during the genocide, the church now wants to be inclusive and wants to invest in its youth (FAC2). With young people making up about 76 percent of the population nowadays, this is a considerable target group (webpage b project 2, n.d.). A problem in many congregations was that young people are not visible in the church and do not participate in its activities (IMP2). Among the project's activities are leadership development, personal and spiritual development, Sunday schools and social- and economic development such as outreach activities to the needy (IMP2; report a project 2, n.d.⁶; webpage d project 2, n.d.⁷). The reach of the project is expanding. Multiple districts and pastors, and a large number of teachers and children have positively evaluated the projects' activities (IMP2; report a project 2, n.d.; report b project 2, 2018⁸).

5.2.1 Reconciliation

Project documents for project 2, as far as available to the researcher, do not contain an explicit reference to reconciliation. In our discussion of reconciliation below we investigate whether or not its dimensions are implicitly present in project practices.

⁵ Webpage b project 2, n.d., publicly available.

⁶ Report a project 2, n.d., not publicly available, 2 pages, in possession of author.

⁷ Webpage d project 2, n.d., publicly available.

⁸ Report b project 2, n.d., not publicly available, 18 pages, in possession of author.

*To **reconcile** is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust. Dimensions of reconciliation are:*

- *Shared view of history*
- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Justice and security*
- *Cooperation and meaningful contact*

IMP2 reflects on the importance of social connections by saying that when people are together, they can learn from each other. “As part of humanity, we are created to be social beings” (IMP2). In a practical manner, mutual trust emerges out of continued positive cooperation (FAC2). Building trust, facilitating cooperation and creating a positive future perspective are characterisations that seem to stand out in the project, IMP2 agrees. Implicitly, it appears reconciliation is happening as a result. IMP2 confirms this: “the idea was not just reconciliation and healing, but in the background it was happening”. There is no model for reconciliation (FAC2), but FAC2 agrees with IMP2 that it was happening implicitly.

Dimensions of reconciliation

As part of their activities, the project sometimes organises visits to genocide memorial sites, for example to learn from history and to hear stories of people who experienced the genocide (IMP2). This is not the same as establishing a *shared view of history*, yet since the project targets young people (who have not experienced the genocide themselves) this seems like a way to engage with and learn from this established view of history.

Mostly, however, the activities of project 2 are focused not on the past but on the present. According to OBS2⁹ this has everything to do with the way Rwandan youth experiences reconciliation. OBS2 describes this as follows: whereas the older generation connects reconciliation much with memory and commemoration, the younger generation “they don’t want to be defined by it. And yes, it affects lots of aspects of their identity and their society [...] but they don’t see it the same way the older generation does”. This makes the subsequent three dimensions of reconciliation – acknowledgement of grievances, truth-telling and justice and security – less relevant for this specific project, since these are predominantly directed at people who have been directly involved in the genocide.

⁹ OBS2 discusses general developments in Rwandan society and notices how the youth differs from the prior generation in how they experience and approach reconciliation. This comment is therefore not specifically related to project 2.

This leaves us with the final dimension of reconciliation: *cooperation and meaningful contact*. This dimension is most clearly most present in the project approach. Part of the project approach is to organise work for the needy, such as building a house for someone who is homeless or raising school fees for the child of a perpetrator whose parents are in prison and therefore can't afford education (IMP2). Not only does this help the person who receives the support, the young people participating meet regularly, practice their own skills, work together and experience recurring meaningful contact with others (IMP2). This way, (economic) cooperation has the benefits of facilitating contact, enhancing a persons' economic situation and also positively impacting one's emotional status (IMP2).

It is difficult to extract an operationalisation of reconciliation from the above, yet it becomes clear that social connections, cooperation and trust are elements that most likely belong in this operationalisation. The most important dimension of reconciliation that we find in the project approach is cooperation and meaningful contact, although a shared view of history also seems incorporated to a certain extent.

5.2.2 Healing

While documents from project 2 do not explicitly mention healing in project practices, there is attention for trauma among youth. Young people know the stories of the genocide, see the traumas of their relatives and have grown up in broken families or as orphans (webpage a project 2, n.d.¹⁰; webpage c project 2, 2019¹¹). Even though they have not experienced the genocide, they are scarred by it.

*To **heal** is to (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering. Dimensions of healing are:*

- *Working with positive/constructive emotions*
- *Open dialogue*
- *Feeling empathy for the other*

FAC2 finds that in general, with the passing of time, people start to heal and it becomes easier for them to talk about their experiences, although naturally emotions still run very high when it comes to genocide-related traumas. For young people, who have not experienced the genocide, different dynamics are at play. IMP2 describes this as second level trauma. According to IMP2, this generation also needs healing, "because they reproach themselves for something they didn't, they didn't do". How healing is operationalised exactly, does not become clear. Yet, this can be explained by the fact that healing is not an explicit goal of the project.

¹⁰ Webpage a project 2, n.d., publicly available.

¹¹ Webpage c project 2, n.d., publicly available.

Dimensions of healing

The dimensions of healing that were established in the theoretical chapter, are not explicitly incorporated in project practice. However, we may assume the project is concerned with *working with positive or constructive emotions*, by providing people in the project with self-esteem, a feeling of belonging and ownership or a say in daily practices. This also contributes to a feeling of confidence and self-worth. In addition, we might deduct from previously described practices, such as work for the needy and supporting the child of a genocide perpetrator, that *empathy for others* is an important value.

In our discussion of project 1, we added the dimension *future perspective* to healing. This is supported by FAC2, who finds that the process of healing enables people to start looking ahead and start making plans for the future. The possibility of taking on a future perspective means no longer being controlled by fear, trauma and grief. Thereby, healing not only enables a future perspective, but in turn this also advances healing (FAC2). Additionally, this future perspective can mean that people start talking – to the younger generation, or to their peers – about their coping strategies. How did they manage to work through their traumas and build a life for themselves? This way, their future orientation can be informative and inspiring for others (IMP2).

In addition, FAC2 emphasizes the importance of *social connections* in healing processes. When a community in its totality is healing, this can positively influence the healing of the individuals in that community (FAC2). Even just being part of a community can have this positive effect. IMP2 shares a personal experience in this respect:

“We saw a lot, we were almost killed different times, we had to flee, then we were hiding [...] so it was really difficult. I felt betrayed, betrayed, I felt really... and I couldn’t trust either side, basically. And soon I started developing headaches, you know, I couldn’t talk.”

It seems that IMP2 was suffering from trauma symptoms that required healing. After the genocide, IMP2 started participating in church activities:

“I was playing keyboard, I was singing in the choir [...] that really helped me, that was a turning point for me, that people could believe in me, allow me to play a role in the society, where I felt I was loved.”

Apparently social connections do indeed contribute to healing and might thus be a valuable addition to the previously established dimensions of healing.

A clear operationalisation of healing does not emerge from the discussion above, yet it seems a definition of healing would include emotions and would incorporate second level trauma healing. The dimensions of healing were not clearly advanced in the project, yet working with positive or constructive emotions and feeling empathy for the other seemed implicitly addressed. Instead, a future perspective and social connections turned out to be important dimensions.

5.2.3 Forgiveness

Project documents of project 2 do not mention forgiveness.

*To **forgive** is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer. Dimensions of forgiveness are:*

- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Remorse/regret, apology*
- *Empathy for and recognition of other*

IMP2 feels that when seeing demonstrations of forgiveness and reconciliation, for example by visiting memorial sites or hearing stories of survivors, this seems to benefit the second generation:

“Young people can watch it, and they can learn about forgiveness I think. They can learn about asking for forgiveness, they can learn about the consequences of doing something wrong. But they can also learn that after the shock in life, life can continue. And life will never be the same, of course. But life can be good” (IMP2).

Dimensions of forgiveness

Unfortunately, due to a lack of relevant data, our discussion of forgiveness for project 2 is limited to the above. We will not discuss the separate dimensions of forgiveness, since the collected data does not indicate any of the four dimensions to be advanced in the project.

It is unclear how forgiveness would be operationalised in project 2. The four dimensions of forgiveness appear to be insignificant to the project approach.

5.2.4 Rehumanisation

Project documents do not contain an explicit reference to rehumanisation, nor do they mention related terms such as, for example, humanity.

*To **rehumanise** is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community. Dimensions of rehumanisation are:*

- *Identity:*
 - *Unique individual/distinguishable from others*
 - *Capable of making choices (according to one's own values)*
- *Community:*
 - *Inclusion in a network of human beings*
 - *Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect)*

Indicators of rehumanisation are:

- *Rehumanisation of victim*
 - *By perpetrator: killing is (morally) unjustified*
 - *By victim: regaining a sense of self-worth*
- *Rehumanisation of perpetrator*
 - *By victim: perpetrator's evil acts do not define him (is capable of change and can be met with empathy)*
 - *By perpetrator: capable of feeling remorse for past actions and empathy for victims*

The respondents of project 2 did have ideas about the meaning of rehumanisation. In the case of FAC2 this remained rather abstract: “letting them be human again [own translation]”. According to this respondent, rehumanisation means realising that you are not just a victim of circumstances. You can have meaning for others, for society and for the church and you are not defined by your past (FAC2). In addition, IMP2 described rehumanisation as making someone holistic, to treat others and be treated with respect, to belong to a community and to have hope for the future (IMP2). We also find a reference to recognition (an example of moral considerations) with IMP2, who instead uses the word affirmation: “those people who had those wounds, and as much as rehumanisation is concerned, all of these people needed a lot of affirmation, needed a lot of hope, needed a lot of purpose”.

Dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation

Before we start our discussion of the indicators of rehumanisation, it should be noted again that the people in the project have not experienced the genocide themselves. In the target group, there are no victims and perpetrators of the genocide. To feel remorse for past actions, for example, does not apply for this group. Other indicators, like the realisation that the killer's acts do not define him, can be used when nuanced somewhat (for example, a person in general is not defined by one evil act).

We start with the *rehumanisation of victims by perpetrators*. Similar to project 1, we find here that countering stereotypes and instead perceiving others as distinct and unique individuals is considered an important avenue towards rehumanisation. By sharing stories and engaging with each other, people are given more substance. Instead of being reduced to a minimal amount of group-related characteristics, they become holistic individuals who experienced certain things and who had or still have certain feelings that actually can be familiar to the other side (IMP2). We have seen that to make a person holistic usually results in treating them with moral considerations. This operationalisation seems in line with our adjustments made in the discussion of rehumanisation in project 1: changing the indicator into *changing perceptions through dialogue*.

The *rehumanisation of the victim himself* is recognised as important by IMP2: “I feel like there are sort of shocks and social problems that let you lose the values that are ascribed to you, as human being. Your rights. [...] to the extent sometimes that you feel you don’t even want them” (IMP2). Rehumanisation from the inside is to regain a sense of self-worth, to feel like you belong and you have a future (IMP2).

The *rehumanisation of perpetrators in the eyes of victims* was not discussed explicitly. However, it seems that to make people holistic again, to change perceptions through dialogue and to recognize or emphasize with their feelings works both ways and positively affects how both victims and perpetrators view the other.

This leaves us with the *rehumanisation of perpetrators by themselves*, which is described as feeling remorse for past actions. We noted above that this indicator is irrelevant due to the fact that there are no perpetrators (or victims) in the groups.

Additionally, IMP2 emphasizes the importance of *social connections*, “to fight loneliness. Because, you know this quote, they say that an idle mind is the workshop of the devil” (IMP2). He gives an example of sports activities, which IMP2 finds crucial because the longer people stay together, the more they start forgetting about their differences and start finding out the good things about the other. They start to hear each other’s stories and become part of a family (IMP2). The project contributes to a feeling of belonging to society, being valuable to that society and using the society to support and learn from each other. On rehumanisation specifically, IMP2 says the following: “they lost a family, but through the [project] they found friends who are much more than friends, who they can call brothers and sisters. So, I feel like that’s humanity”. It seems that this is not only a reference to the dimension community, but also illustrates the importance of social connections as an indicator (similar to project 1).

We might conclude that rehumanisation in project 2 is operationalised as making a person holistic, resulting in recognition, respectful treatment and belonging in a community. The indicators seemed largely present, except for perpetrators feeling remorse for past actions. An additional indicator was identified, being social connections. Based on the indicators and additional respondent statements, we have been able to identify both dimensions of reconciliation (identity and community).

Table 7: Operationalisation outline project 2

| | <i>Commonalities with theory</i> | <i>Additions to theory</i> |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Reconciliation | Shared view of history Acknowledgement of grievances Truth-telling Justice and security Cooperation and meaningful contact | (X) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> X |
| Healing | Working with positive/constructive emotions Open dialogue Feeling empathy | (X) <input type="checkbox"/> (X) + <i>Future perspective</i> X + <i>Social connections</i> X |
| Forgiveness | Acknowledgement of grievances Truth-telling Remorse/regret, apology Empathy/recognition of other | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rehumanisation | Dimensions Identity Community Indicators Killing is morally unjust Regaining a sense of self-worth Killers acts do not define him Feeling remorse and empathy | X X = <i>Changing perceptions through dialogue (victim/perpetrator)</i> X X (X) <input type="checkbox"/> + <i>Social connections</i> X |

5.2.5 Within case analysis

For project 2 an analysis over time is difficult. Whereas the cooperation between the Rwandan local actors and the Dutch/Belgian facilitators started earlier, their current project has only started roughly five years ago. In that time, they have experienced the usual project phases, in the sense that they first started identifying the needs of the target population, while simultaneously attempting to realise a

change in the behaviour of relevant stakeholders, after which practical activities were implemented and the project could grow (IMP2). In this short period of time, as far as the researcher is aware, no significant changes in the project's philosophies occurred. What has changed is the attitude of the stakeholders in the project. The project involves church pastors and other church actors and tries to convince them to give the youth in their congregations more attention and priority. This seems to be working and pastors seem to recognise the value of incorporating youth into their church activities (report b project 2, 2018).

5.3 Project 3

Again supported by a Dutch/Belgian Christian organisation, project 3 started its work already before the genocide, in an attempt to reduce tensions in the community (FAC3). About five years after the genocide, however, the project officially started (webpage d project 3, n.d.¹²). Their initial target group was people who became vulnerable as a consequence of the genocide, such as ex-prisoners, victims of the genocide, people with traumas related to the genocide and the communities in which these groups lived. This target group has expanded to other vulnerable groups, such as victims of domestic violence (FAC3; webpage a project 3, n.d.¹³). The goal of the project is to help these groups to create social connections and an economic network. Objectives of the project are, among others, to facilitate and stimulate cooperation and solidarity, to stimulate non-violent conflict resolution, to reduce trauma and promote healing and to contribute to the socio-economic development of vulnerable people (webpage b project 3, n.d.¹⁴). They do this by facilitating dialogue in individual and group sessions, arbitrating in conflicts and promoting (economic) cooperation (FAC3; webpage a project 3, n.d.; webpage c project 3, n.d.¹⁵). The project and its approach are valued both by its participants and by local governments (FAC3; webpage a project 3, n.d.). After the project formally ends, groups often stay together to work on economic- or community projects (webpage a project 3, n.d.).

The collected data for project 3 is especially limited, because of two reasons. First, only one respondent related to this project was interviewed (FAC3), unfortunately no implementers were found willing or able to participate. Secondly, all relevant project documents known to the researcher were available only in French. This made translations more difficult and made 'reading between the lines' especially hard.

¹² Webpage d project 3, n.d., publicly available.

¹³ Webpage a project 3, n.d., publicly available.

¹⁴ Webpage b project 3, n.d., publicly available.

¹⁵ Webpage c project 3, n.d., publicly available.

5.3.1 Reconciliation

Project documentation of project 3 contains explicit and implicit references to reconciliation, such as reconciliation groups, cooperation, solidarity and social change (webpage a project 3, n.d.; webpage b project 3, n.d.). We can therefore assume that reconciliation is actively addressed in daily practice.

*To **reconcile** is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust. Dimensions of reconciliation are:*

- *Shared view of history*
- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Justice and security*
- *Cooperation and meaningful contact*

When FAC3 was asked how reconciliation is approached in project 3, this was described as helping vulnerable groups (among which are groups that have become vulnerable as a result of the genocide, such as victims and perpetrators) to develop a social and economic network in their communities (FAC3). Unfortunately it was not possible to compare this interpretation of reconciliation by FAC3 to implementers of project 3.

Dimensions of reconciliation

Part of the project approach to reconciliation are reconciliation groups, in which antagonistic groups are brought together. In these groups, victims and perpetrators together search for ways to live together again. Initially, this is advanced by discussing past events and people's perceptions of those events. To a certain extent we can therefore conclude that the first dimension of reconciliation, establishing a *shared view of history*, is approached in project 3 by discussing the past in these reconciliation groups.

Acknowledgement of grievances happens as a result of the above. During conversations about concrete events in the past, people sometimes make "a confession of bad things that happened, in case that was not yet established [own translation]" (FAC3).

The third dimension of reconciliation, *truth-telling*, is also related to the above. By specifically targeting vulnerable groups such as victims and perpetrators of the genocide, the antagonism between the groups often is very strong (FAC3). Therefore, in general the approach starts with individual therapy sessions, after which antagonistic groups are brought together in reconciliation groups (FAC3; webpage a project 3, n.d.). Through constructive communication, the groups come to recognise each other's fears and start

to build trust (webpage a project 3, n.d.; webpage e project 3, n.d.¹⁶). This brings about the realisation among participants that there is more that binds them than there is that separates them (FAC3). If we interpret truth-telling as open dialogue, as we did for project 1, this dimension certainly plays an important role in the project.

Justice and security are not advanced in the way that was described in chapter two. Instead, similar to project 1, it seems this dimension is interpreted as establishing a safe environment in which the participants feel comfortable to share their stories (FAC3). In paragraph 5.1.1 this safe environment was described as consisting of a (physical) security aspect and an interpersonal trust aspect. Project documentation from project 3 confirms that a level of trust between the participants is crucial and considered an absolute necessity for reconciliation (webpage a project 3, n.d.).

Most emphasis is placed on the last dimension of reconciliation, *cooperation and meaningful contact*. According to FAC3, project practice has shown that after an initial ‘therapeutic’ process of two to three years, a sufficient level of reconciliation (without adhering to an exact specification of this level) is established to move towards long-lasting ways of cooperating and joint activities that benefit the community and simultaneously gives people a chance to show their good intentions through concrete actions (FAC3). Often the participants from the reconciliation groups stay together after the formal ending of the project and for example take up farming activities together. In this way, the reconciliation process continues by itself, without it still being actively pursued in the project (FAC3).

We might conclude that reconciliation in project 3 is operationalised as developing a social and economic network. All dimensions of reconciliation are implicitly or explicitly addressed in the project approach, although truth-telling seems to be interpreted as open dialogue, and justice and security resembles a safe environment (see project 1). The most emphasis is placed on cooperation and meaningful contact.

5.3.2 Healing

In project documents it is stated that the project pays specific attention to the individual or communal healing of trauma’s (webpage c project 3, n.d.) and the healing of wounded hearts (webpage b project 3, n.d.). Healing, therefore, seems a major concern of project 3.

¹⁶ Webpage e project 3, n.d., publicly available.

*To **heal** is to (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering. Dimensions of healing are:*

- *Working with positive/constructive emotions*
- *Open dialogue*
- *Feeling empathy for the other*

How the healing of wounded hearts is interpreted exactly in project 3 unfortunately does not become clear during the interview. What does become somewhat clear is how it is advanced. Through different methods, from individual therapy to group sessions and social therapy, people are invited to share stories and feelings related to traumatic experiences (FAC3). Especially during the commemoration period people seem to experience resurging traumas, to which project 3 has responded by deploying community counsellors that give extra guidance to their communities at those times (FAC3).

Dimensions of healing

The first dimension of healing, *working with positive or constructive emotions*, is expected to be connected to or addressed during the therapy sessions, but is not found explicitly stated in project documents, nor by FAC3.

The project approach assumes that wounds can only heal when they are made discussable (webpage a project 3, n.d.). Through a process of dialogue, first individually and then in a social therapy setting, participants are encouraged to share their stories. This dialogue happens in a safe setting (FAC3). *Open dialogue* is therefore clearly incorporated and highly valued in the project practices. We discussed the importance of open dialogue in relation to reconciliation as well.

Following the emphasis on bringing people together through dialogue that we see in project 3, we might assume that this incorporates *feelings of empathy for the other*. This was not explicitly stated, however, by FAC3 or in project documentation (keep in mind the language barrier that resulted in a limited understanding of these documents).

The healing of wounded hearts is said to be advanced through a community approach (webpage b project 3, n.d.). We have mentioned the different avenues to healing, among which are group sessions and social therapy. The importance of community also becomes clear in other project documents which state that groups learn to solve their differences together and in constructive ways. After the therapy sessions groups often remain in touch on a friendly basis, doing work for their community (webpage a

project 3, n.d.; webpage b project 3, n.d.). This results in the assumption that the (re-)building of *social connections* is an additional dimension that is considered to contribute to the individual and communal healing process.

It is difficult to establish how healing in project 3 is operationalised, but a definition would likely include (individual and community level) dialogue. The three dimensions of healing all seem addressed in the project, however only open dialogue explicitly stands out. In addition, the project seems to value the (re-)building of social connections to facilitate healing.

5.3.3 Forgiveness

Project documents did not appear to contain explicit references to forgiveness, except for once in an example of an encounter between two participants in the project (report a project 3, 2019¹⁷). This results in the assumption that, similar to the previous two projects, forgiveness is not actively pursued here.

*To **forgive** is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer. Dimensions of forgiveness are:*

- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Truth-telling*
- *Remorse/regret, apology*
- *Empathy for and recognition of other*

In contrast, FAC3 states that forgiveness is an important part of reconciliation, especially in Rwandan culture and religion. In our discussion of forgiveness in project 1, we noted that forgiveness can often be (experienced as) imposed. When asked about this, FAC3 provides us with an interesting relativization (based on his own ideas, rather than project assumptions): “surely you have, how do I say this, false reconciliation. But in communities where people have to live together day in and day out, it is not evident to fake this [own translation]” (FAC3). He continues to say that aside from how authentic forgiveness might be experienced by everyone, which is likely quite divergent, it might in a way be an action people can undertake to contribute to collective reconciliation.

“That is something you can do, you know. There are not, not a hundred ways to smooth things out. But that is a familiar way for everybody. If you do this, more or less sincere, this is accepted by the rest [own translation]” (FAC3).

¹⁷ Report a project 3, 2019, publicly available, 24 pages, in possession of author.

When seen this way, forgiveness might be more than simply imposed or genuine, it might be that a kind of 'ritual of forgiveness' is a contribution to collective healing and reconciliation, even if the individual cases of forgiveness might have been insincere sometimes. In a case like the Rwandan genocide, where the number of individuals is exceptionally high, a ritual of forgiveness might be a necessity.

In daily project practices, FAC3 has noticed that during the group therapy sessions, in which antagonistic groups are brought together, perpetrators sometimes ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness seems to be best received when it is paired with good actions, that demonstrate the good will of the perpetrator (FAC3).

Dimensions of forgiveness

The data on forgiveness in project 3 is mostly limited to the section above. A discussion of the individual dimensions, therefore, seems unnecessary. The acknowledgement of grievances and truth-telling (open dialogue) are dimensions of both reconciliation and forgiveness and we have seen that these were part of project practices in relation to reconciliation. Therefore, even though forgiveness is not actively pursued, we can consider these dimensions to be at least implicitly addressed.

We might conclude that it remains unclear how forgiveness in project 3 is operationalised, yet dialogue and good actions are expected to advance this process.

5.3.4 Rehumanisation

While there are no explicit references to rehumanisation in project documents, there is mentioning of 'ubuntu', a concept that contains references to 'common humanity' amongst others (webpage c project 3, n.d.; Nussbaum, 2003).

To **rehumanise** is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community. Dimensions of rehumanisation are:

- *Identity:*
 - *Unique individual/distinguishable from others*
 - *Capable of making choices (according to one's own values)*
- *Community:*
 - *Inclusion in a network of human beings*
 - *Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect)*

Indicators of rehumanisation are:

- *Rehumanisation of victim*
 - *By perpetrator: killing is (morally) unjustified*
 - *By victim: regaining a sense of self-worth*
- *Rehumanisation of perpetrator*
 - *By victim: perpetrator's evil acts do not define him (is capable of change and can be met with empathy)*
 - *By perpetrator: capable of feeling remorse for past actions and empathy for victims*

It seems project 3 explicitly puts rehumanisation at the centre of their philosophy. Although they link it to a self-developed concept, the interpretation of this concept to a large extent corresponds to the interpretation of rehumanisation in this thesis. In their approach they have established a conceptual framework around this central concept¹⁸. This concept is explained by FAC3 as being fully human or restoring this humanity, as well as being 'good'. This is approached in three steps, which are not necessarily advanced in causal order. For one, a feeling of security needs to be established. Security here, seems to be interpreted in line with a safe environment. Then, a lust for life, or the power to live and deal with life's ups and downs comes second. Finally, social connections and the admittance of others into one's life are emphasized. The recovery of these three components should contribute to restoring one's full humanity (FAC3; webpage c project 3, n.d.). We will come back to these three steps in our discussion of the dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation.

During the interview with FAC3, we discussed rehumanisation as being – in a positive way – fully human, or repairing this 'fully-humanness' for people who are damaged because of conflict, indoctrination, trauma or other reasons (FAC3). Important in this process of repairing one's humanness, is a social dimension. FAC3 relates this interpretation of rehumanisation to the term Ubuntu. This concept is explained by Nussbaum (2003, p. 2):

¹⁸ Since the names of this central concept and the relating concepts could be traced back to the project, the description here remains somewhat vague in order to safeguard the anonymity of the project.

“Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining community with justice and mutual caring. Ubuntu, a Nguni word from South Africa, speaks to our interconnectedness, our common humanity and the responsibility to each other that flows from our deeply felt connection. Ubuntu is consciousness of our natural desire to affirm our fellow human beings and to work and act towards each other with the communal good in the forefront of our minds [underlining by researcher]”.

As we can see, this concept of Ubuntu, as defined by Nussbaum (2003), encompasses a number of concepts that we have discussed in this research so far: dignity and caring (project 1), compassion (which is not the same, but closely related to empathy), affirmation (similar to recognition, which is an example of moral considerations), building and maintaining community (social connections) and finally, common humanity (network of human beings).

Dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation

We begin with a discussion of the *rehumanisation of victims by perpetrators*, which we interpreted as the killing of victims becoming morally unjustified in the eyes of the perpetrator (usually because stereotypes are replaced with holistic perceptions of the other – according identity, thereby making the other worthy of moral considerations – according community). One of the steps of the project approach is to make social connections and admitting others into one’s life. While this does not contain a reference to according identity, it does directly correspond to according someone with community, thereby applying moral considerations to that other. Furthermore, because of the emphasis on dialogue in project 3, it is likely that the adjustments made to this indicator by projects 1 and 2, also apply here.

Moving to the indicator linked to the *rehumanisation of victims by themselves*, regaining a sense of self-worth, this appears not as easily linked to the project approach. One might argue that to regain a sense of self-worth is to grant oneself a future, leading to a lust for life. Yet, this link is an idea of the researcher and not deducted from project data.

Where at the time of the genocide the dehumanisation of victims by perpetrators was very severe, emphasis later moved to the dehumanisation of perpetrators by victims, who feel that “one cannot be human if one does these things [own translation]” (FAC3). This continues to be relevant today, since the people who are released from prison now, after 25 years, have committed heavy crimes (FAC3): “so [...] the antagonism is very strong, which they are confronted with. That’s why the social dimension is so important. That both victimizer and victim can readmit each other, as human [own translation]” (FAC3).

How this readmittance of the other as human – or *rehumanisation of the perpetrator by his victim* – is approached exactly, is not entirely clear.

Based on the fact that the project sees ubuntu as an important concept, elements like compassion (empathy), caring and affirmation (recognition) are presumed to be highly valued. Since both sides have to readmit each other as human, according to FAC3, empathy and recognition have to come from both perpetrators and victims. This is in line with the *rehumanisation of perpetrators by themselves*, which enables them to feel remorse and empathy.

In addition to the discussion of the indicators and dimensions of reconciliation, we have seen that one of the steps towards rehumanisation, according to the project approach, is regaining a lust for life, or the power to live. This was mentioned before, in projects 1 and 2. There, we labelled this as a *future perspective* and related it to healing. The descriptions of this dimension in project 1 and 2 largely correspond with how it seems to be interpreted in this project. This justifies placing future perspective as a dimension under healing. The same goes for safety, or a safe *environment*, which we have placed under reconciliation. The making of *social connections*, which is the third step in the project's approach, is in line with previous additions to rehumanisation by projects 1 and 2.

We can conclude that rehumanisation in project 3 is operationalised as being fully human and being good – related to the concept of ubuntu. This includes living in security, to have a lust for life and to make social connections. Of the two dimensions of rehumanisation (identity and community), we find community especially present. Social connections is considered an addition to the indicators of rehumanisation, while having a lust for life (future perspective) and security are linked to respectively healing and reconciliation.

Table 8: Operationalisation outline project 3

| | <i>Commonalities with theory</i> | <i>Additions to theory</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Reconciliation | Shared view of history | (X) |
| | Acknowledgement of grievances | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | = <i>Open dialogue</i> X |
| | Justice and security | = <i>Safe environment</i> X |
| | Cooperation and meaningful contact | X |
| Healing | Working with positive/constructive emotions | (X) |
| | Open dialogue | X |
| | Feeling empathy | (X) |
| | | + <i>Future perspective</i> ¹⁹ X |
| | | + <i>Social connections</i> X |
| Forgiveness | Acknowledgement of grievances | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | (X) |
| | Remorse/regret, apology | □ |
| | Empathy/recognition of other | □ |
| Rehumanisation | Dimensions | |
| | Identity | (X) |
| | Community | X |
| | Indicators | |
| | Killing is morally unjust | = <i>Changing perceptions through dialogue (victim/perpetrator)</i> X |
| | Regaining a sense of self-worth | (X) |
| | Killers acts do not define him | (X) |
| | Feeling remorse and empathy | = <i>Victim/perpetrator</i> X |
| | | + <i>Social connections</i> X |
| | | |

5.3.5 Within case analysis

Project 3 starts its approach with individual therapy sessions (healing), followed by group sessions, thereby promoting and facilitating dialogue. It then continues by moving towards cooperation in for example economic projects. The people running the projects found that often the groups continue cooperating even after the project has ended. Therefore, they have broadened their scope of activities by incorporating technical economic support for these economic collaborations, a task which they have now outsourced to another organisation (webpage a project 3, n.d.). The researcher has no knowledge about changes in the theoretical or philosophical base of their approach.

¹⁹ We have established a future perspective to be considered a dimension of rehumanisation in project 3. For reasons of clarity we place this dimension under healing, in line with the other two projects.

Furthermore, project 3 started by targeting people who had become vulnerable as a result of the genocide. Later they expanded to other vulnerable groups. Their target group has expanded over the years. They also have expanded their geographical reach.

5.4 Cross case analysis and comparison with theory

The main findings of the analysis of the projects are summarised in tables 9 and 10. Based on these two overviews, we will compare the projects in a cross case analysis. To avoid too much repetition, working definitions and operationalisations from chapter two have also been included in the tables, thereby enabling a simultaneous comparison of the projects with the theoretical framework. Our main points of comparison are twofold. First, we discuss the operationalisations of reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and rehumanisation for each of the concepts separately. These operationalisations are summarized in table 9. Secondly, we compare the dimensions for each concept that are assumed to be important to advance that concept, together with the additional dimensions that are believed to be valuable additions.

Table 9: Overview operationalisations

| | Operationalisations |
|-----------------------|--|
| Reconciliation | <i>Working definition: To reconcile is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust.</i> |
| | <i>P1: Reconciliation in project 1 is operationalised as the rebuilding of relationships (as well as reconciling with yourself) and developing trust and a future perspective.</i> |
| | <i>P2: It is difficult to extract an operationalisation of reconciliation from the above, yet it becomes clear that social connections, cooperation and trust are elements that most likely belong in this operationalisation.</i> |
| | <i>P3: Reconciliation in project 3 is operationalised as developing a social and economic network.</i> |
| Healing | <i>Working definition: To heal is to (individually and collectively) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in reduced pain and suffering.</i> |
| | <i>P1: Healing in project 1 is operationalised as reducing trauma symptoms by bringing people together, thereby contributing to participants' feeling self-worth and the emergence of social connections.</i> |
| | <i>P2: It seems a definition of healing would include emotions and would incorporate second level trauma healing.</i> |
| | <i>P3: It is difficult to establish how healing in project 3 is operationalised, but a definition would likely include (individual and community level) dialogue.</i> |
| Forgiveness | <i>Working definition: To forgive is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of empathy and acceptance. This may or may not be preceded by a show of remorse or apology on the side of the victimizer.</i> |
| | <i>P1: Forgiveness, while not explicitly integrated in the project approach, seems to be interpreted by the respondents of project 1 as being the result of true remorse and empathy.</i> |
| | <i>P2: It is unclear how forgiveness would be operationalised in project 2.</i> |
| | <i>P3: It remains unclear how forgiveness in project 3 is operationalised, yet dialogue and good actions are expected to advance this process.</i> |
| Rehumanisation | <i>Working definition: To rehumanise is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community.</i> |
| | <i>P1: Rehumanisation in project 1 is operationalised as perceiving the other as a comprehensive individual, combined with regaining a feeling of dignity and making social connections.</i> |
| | <i>P2: Rehumanisation in project 2 is operationalised as making a person holistic, resulting in recognition, respectful treatment and belonging in a community.</i> |
| | <i>P3: Rehumanisation in project 3 is operationalised as being fully human and being good – related to the concept of ubuntu. This includes living in security, to have a lust for life and to make social connections.</i> |

Table 10: Overview dimensions

| | <i>Commonalities with theory</i> | <i>Additions to theory</i> | <i>P1</i> | <i>P2</i> | <i>P3</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reconciliation | Shared view of history | | <input type="checkbox"/> | (X) | (X) |
| | Acknowledgement of grievances | | (X) | <input type="checkbox"/> | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | = <i>Open dialogue</i> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | X |
| | Justice and security | = <i>Safe environment</i> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | X |
| | Cooperation and meaningful contact | | X | X | X |
| Healing | Working with positive/constructive emotions | | X | (X) | (X) |
| | Open dialogue | | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | X |
| | Feeling empathy | = <i>Caring (project 1)</i> | X | (X) | (X) |
| | | + <i>Future perspective</i> | X | X | X²¹ |
| | | + <i>Social connections</i> | X²⁰ | X | X |
| Forgiveness | Acknowledgement of grievances | | (X) | <input type="checkbox"/> | (X) |
| | Truth-telling | | (X) | <input type="checkbox"/> | (X) |
| | Remorse/regret, apology | | (X) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Empathy/recognition of other | | (X) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rehumanisation | Dimensions | | | | |
| | Identity | | X | X | (X) |
| | Community | | X | X | X |
| | Indicators | | | | |
| | Killing is morally unjust | = <i>Changing perceptions through dialogue (victim/perpetrator)</i> | X | X | X |
| | Regaining a sense of self-worth | = <i>Victim/perpetrator</i> | X | X | (X) |
| | Killers acts do not define him | | X | (X) | (X) |
| | Feeling remorse and empathy | = <i>Victim/perpetrator</i> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | X |
| | | + <i>Social connections</i> | X | X | X |

²⁰ In our discussion of the dimensions of healing (project 1) we did not identify establishing social connections as a dimension of healing, because it was already present in the project's operationalisation of the concept. For reasons of clarity and because the element of social connections is clearly valued in the project approach, I have ticked the 'social connections' box for project 1 in this overview.

²¹ We have established a future perspective to be considered a dimension of rehumanisation in project 3. For reasons of clarity we place this dimension under healing, in line with the other two projects.

5.4.1 Reconciliation

In table 9 we find four operationalised definitions of reconciliation, one being the working definition established in chapter two, the other three being deducted from project data (interviews and secondary material). All of these definitions include a reference to the rebuilding of relationships or social connections. Three of the four definitions (all but project 3) also incorporate trust. Please note that this does not mean project 3 does not value trust in relation to reconciliation, it merely means it was not explicitly stated as such. Other elements that can be found in the operationalisations of reconciliation are inclusion and mutual acceptance (working definition), a future perspective (project 1), cooperation (project 2) and building an economic network (project 3).

When looking at the dimensions of reconciliation, we find that all of the projects know an explicit phase of cooperation and meaningful contact, which is the fifth element of reconciliation. Furthermore, projects 1 and 3 (actively) pursue all dimensions except for the first one – establishing a shared view of history. The way these dimensions are operationalised, however, differ from the descriptions in chapter two. Truth-telling, firstly, is interpreted mainly as open dialogue: enabling an open, constructive and truthful discussion of past events and people's interpretations of those events, as well as sharing each other's life stories in a setting characterised by safety and trust. Secondly, justice and security is, in projects 1 and 3, interpreted as a safe environment. This safe environment consists of two elements: a (physical) security aspect and an aspect of interpersonal trust. The latter concerns the perceptions one has of the other. If both are positively advanced, this results in a comfortable setting in which people can trust each other enough to share stories about past events, problems and feelings. If interpreted like this, it is more logical to place a safe environment as the first dimension of reconciliation.

5.4.2 Healing

The way healing is defined in the working definition and in the projects is quite similar. All recognise that healing follows a traumatic experience and attempts to reduce trauma symptoms. Emotions are mentioned twice (working definition and project 2), community or social connections are cited in all but one (project 2). According to project 1, healing contributes to an increased feeling of self-worth. Furthermore, project 2 suggests the importance of second level trauma healing, meaning addressing the traumas present in younger generations.

All projects implicitly or explicitly advance the healing process by working with positive or constructive emotions and feelings of empathy for others. Projects 1 and 3 in addition advance healing by enabling open dialogue. Two additional dimensions of healing are present in all three projects: a future

perspective and social connections. The former is interpreted as regaining a lust for life, making plans for the future and the power to deal with life's ups and downs. In our discussion of project 3, regaining a future perspective was related to rehumanisation. Nevertheless, placing it under healing now is in accordance with projects 1 and 2 and its operationalisation is a logical fit with healing. The latter, social connections, is interpreted as bringing people back together, thereby creating a community-wide safety net that people can rely upon. Project 1 also acknowledges caring as a dimension, possibly related to empathy, and finds that being cared for positively influences a feeling of self-worth.

5.4.3 Forgiveness

A comparison of operational definitions of forgiveness is difficult, since the projects did not explicitly state those and they were hard to deduct because of their absence in project practices. Nevertheless, in accordance with the working definition, project 1 emphasizes the importance of genuine remorse and empathy. In addition, project 3 adds the value of good actions that demonstrate sincerity.

Again, as a consequence of the fact that forgiveness was not explicitly addressed, none of its dimensions is clearly advanced in the projects. Where certain dimensions of forgiveness are advanced, this is more likely explained by linking them dimensions to reconciliation and healing.

5.4.4 Rehumanisation

Compared to the working definition in the thesis, the project operationalisations of rehumanisation – as summarised in table 9 – are quite similar. In the working definition, according a person with identity is seen as perceiving that person as a unique and distinguishable individual capable of making choices according to their own values. All three projects incorporate an aspect of this individuality into their operationalisations: perceiving the other as a comprehensive individual (project 1), making a person holistic (project 2) or – although less clear – being fully human (project 3). According a person with community, according to the working definition, means to include another into one's network of human beings, thereby deeming that person worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition and respect). We have seen references to this in project 1, where the concept of rehumanisation is linked to dignity and operationalised as being a full-fledged individual (according identity), capable of feeling empathy and making social connections. This seems related to treating others with moral considerations. In project 2 there is another reference to these moral considerations: recognition, respectful treatment and belonging in a community. Finally, project 3 refers to ubuntu, a concept that emphasizes community, common humanity, dignity, affirmation (recognition) and compassion (empathy), and is therefore closely related to the interpretations of rehumanisation above.

When we look at the dimensions of rehumanisation in table 10, both according identity and community are advanced in the projects in one way or another, although in project 3 emphasis is placed on community. Resulting from our analyses of the projects it turns out that the first indicator – killing is morally unjust – is better explained by describing it as changing perceptions of others through dialogue. This applies to both victims and perpetrators and is therefore related to the third indicator (killers acts do not define him). This changed interpretation became most clear in projects 1 and 2. Changing perceptions has much to do with the breaking down of stereotypes: stereotypes are replaced with holistic perceptions of the other (according identity). In case of the third indicator this entails breaking down the ‘pure evil’ stereotype.

Regaining a sense of self-worth was initially classified as the rehumanisation of victims by victims, but appeared to be applicable also to the rehumanisation of perpetrators by perpetrators. In other words, both sides need to regain a sense of self-worth. In our discussion we found another nuance to apply to last indicator – the perpetrators’ capacity to feel remorse and empathy. In line with projects 1 and 3, it seems both sides have to regain the ability to feel empathy for the other and this indicator therefore concerns both victims and perpetrators.

In addition, all projects pointed at the importance of one other indicator, the making of social connections. This, therefore, seems a valuable addition.

6. Conclusions

In the beginning of the thesis we discussed a number of reasons why an investigation of the concept of rehumanisation in relation to psychological reconciliation processes would hold value. One of these reasons was that rehumanisation in academic literature has so far not received the same levels of attention as its counterpart dehumanisation, even though it seems important to have extensive knowledge of both processes and rehumanisation is expected to play a major role in preventing violence (paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4). Therefore, to shed more light on the concept, we tried to give it more substance by mirroring it to dehumanisation in the theoretical chapter. This resulted in an operationalisation of the concept, which provided us with more clarity (see paragraphs 2.6). Another reason for placing the concept of rehumanisation central in this research, was that reconciliation without humane connections – rehumanisation – appeared to be superficial and fragile (paragraph 1.4). An inquiry into what makes reconciliation durable, therefore seemed highly relevant. However, before we look at these theoretical and practical contributions, we will to formulate answers to the research question and sub-questions as presented in paragraph 1.1.

6.1 Answer to the research question

In the beginning of this research the research question was formulated as follows: *to what extent and in what way was rehumanisation a part of reconciliation projects in post-genocide Rwanda?* By analysing the role of rehumanisation as part of reconciliation projects in Rwanda, an attempt was made to contribute to a better understanding of the concept of rehumanisation as well as the relationship between rehumanisation and reconciliation. Before we answer this research question, we will briefly look at the answers to the four sub-questions.

6.1.1 How were reconciliation, healing and forgiveness approached in the three projects?

The answer to this question answers the first sub-question in its entirety. We will discuss each concept separately. Since this information is extensively discussed in the previous chapter, the summaries given here will be brief.

Reconciliation

Both projects 1 and 3 to some extent mention reconciliation as an explicit goal of the project. In project 2 reconciliation is happening in the background, but not as a consequence of specific efforts.

The way reconciliation is operationalised in the projects does not substantially differ from the working definition. The most important findings related to reconciliation are that projects adhere to different interpretations of the dimensions truth-telling and justice and security, compared to what is established in the theoretical chapter. These dimensions are therefore changed into open dialogue and safe environment. Also, a safe environment is seen to facilitate the other dimensions and is therefore placed as the first dimension of reconciliation. The dimension that receives most emphasis in the projects is cooperation and meaningful contact.

Based on the above, a new operationalisation of reconciliation can be formulated as follows (changes in the operationalisation are underlined):

*To **reconcile** is to (re-)establish warm and friendly relationships (social connections) based on inclusion, mutual acceptance, trust and (economic) cooperation. Dimensions of reconciliation are:*

- *Safe environment*
- *Shared view of history*
- *Acknowledgement of grievances*
- *Open dialogue*
- *Cooperation and meaningful contact*

Healing

In the previous chapter we have seen that projects 1 and 3 explicitly address the healing of traumas. In project 2 there is some attention for trauma among youth, yet this is not as explicit as the project documentation indicates it to be for projects 1 and 3.

Again, the definitions deducted from the project data do not considerably differ from the working definition. We did find that healing is better advanced by making use of and building social connections and is expected to result in increased feelings of self-worth. Looking at the dimensions of healing, two dimensions are added to the original operationalisation: social connections and future perspective.

*To **heal** is to (individually and collectively, through social connections) acknowledge and work through emotions associated with trauma, resulting in increased feelings of self-worth, as well as reduced pain and suffering. Dimensions of healing are:*

- *Working with positive/constructive emotions*
- *Open dialogue*
- *Feeling empathy for the other (caring)*
- *Future perspective*
- *Social connections*

Forgiveness

Contradictory to what was expected after the theoretical chapter, forgiveness is not considered a primary concern in the projects. The majority of the respondents expressed the opinion that it is a highly complex and sensitive concept, which might explain why it does not receive much attention in the project approaches. However, forgiveness in practice does occur sometimes as a result of the reconciliation and healing processes between parties in the projects. Therefore, it would be better to consider forgiveness a by-product of healing, reconciliation and rehumanisation, rather than something that should be actively pursued by itself. Consequently, we limit the discussion of forgiveness to the adjusted definition below.

*To **forgive** is to transform negative emotions directed at one's victimizer into feelings of genuine empathy. This may or may not be preceded by a show of genuine remorse, apology or good actions on the side of the victimizer.*

6.1.2 How was rehumanisation approached in the projects?

In project 2 we did not find any explicit references to rehumanisation or related terms project documents. In project 1 and 3, in contrast, there are references to related concepts and dimensions such as dignity, ubuntu and common humanity or web of human relationships. One could therefore say that for project 1 and 3 rehumanisation is a primary goal, although both attach the indicators and dimensions that in this research are understood as rehumanisation, to different concepts.

We maintain our initial definition of rehumanisation in the sense that we consider rehumanisation to be the inclusion of a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community. Following from this, also the dimensions identity and community are maintained. What does change are the indicators that were initially separated along the lines of perpetrator and victim (rehumanisation of perpetrator by victim, rehumanisation of perpetrator by perpetrator, etc.). Since the majority of indicators appears to apply to victims and perpetrators simultaneously, the distinction between the two categories seems no longer valid.

As we have seen, the first indicator (killing is morally unjust) is better interpreted as changing perceptions of the other through dialogue. This is linked to the breaking down of stereotypes. The same goes for the third indicator (killers acts do not define him): the realisation that a perpetrator is not defined by his evil acts means a change in how one perceives him and is similar to breaking down the ‘pure evil’ stereotype. Changing perceptions through dialogue and the breaking down of stereotypes therefore applies to both victims and perpetrators. Also, we have seen that both victims and perpetrators have to regain a sense of self-worth. Finally, following the analyses of projects, both sides have to regain the capability of making social connections, as well as regaining the capability of feeling empathy and treating others accordingly.

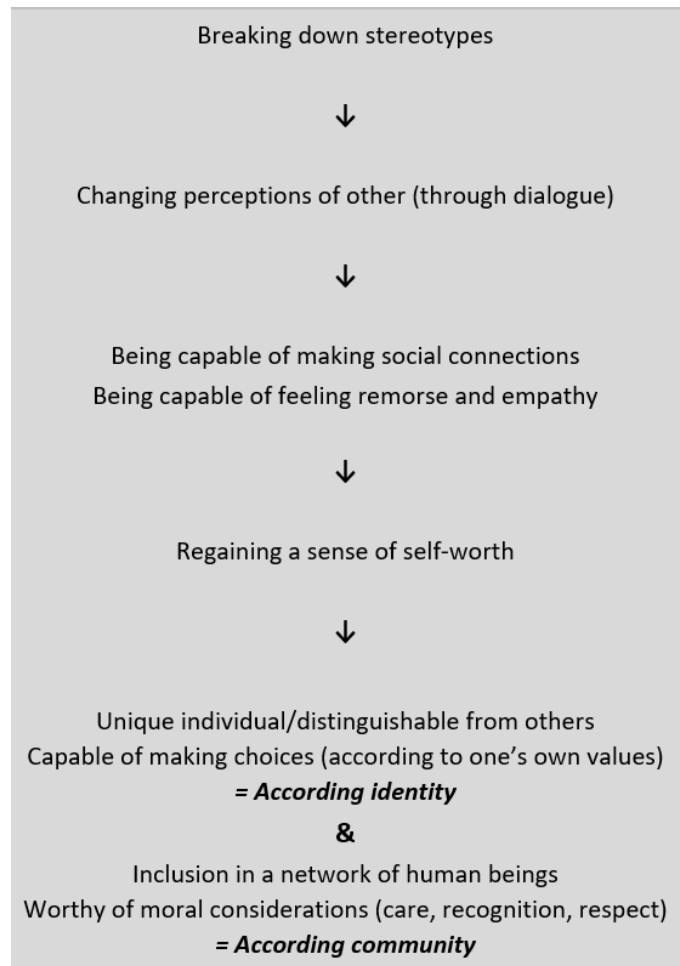


Figure 2: Dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation

Letting go of the victim-perpetrator dichotomy in the indicators and keeping in mind the other insights derived from the projects – most importantly replacing the first indicator with changing perceptions and the making of social connections as an additional indicator of rehumanisation – leads to a new overview of the dimensions and indicators of rehumanisation as depicted in figure 2. The arrows are mainly intended to bring clarity to the coherence between the indicators and dimensions, rather than to depict strict causality.

*To **rehumanise** is to include a person in one's moral universe, thereby according someone (or oneself) with identity and community. Dimensions of rehumanisation are:*

- *Identity:*
 - *Unique individual/distinguishable from others*
 - *Capable of making choices (according to one's own values)*
- *Community:*
 - *Inclusion in a network of human beings*
 - *Worthy of moral considerations (care, recognition, respect)*

Indicators of rehumanisation apply to both victims and perpetrators and are:

- *Breaking down stereotypes*
- *Changing perceptions of other (through dialogue)*
- *Capable of making social connections*
- *Capable of feeling remorse and empathy*
- *Regaining a sense of self-worth*

6.1.3 How did the approaches to reconciliation and rehumanisation vary?

Each of the project discussions in the previous chapter ended with a within case analysis in which a brief description of changes in the project approaches, scope of activities and daily practices was provided (see paragraphs 5.1.5, 5.2.5 and 5.3.5). At the end of the previous chapter, a cross case analysis was included in which the operationalisations of the concepts, as well as their dimensions, were compared to the theoretical framework and to the other projects (see paragraph 5.4).

Within case analysis

We have seen that all projects decided and were able to broaden their target population and geographical target groups. This indicates some level of positive evaluation and success of the approaches. We can also see that as time passed, the focus became less on the genocide and the processing of trauma and more on the future, for example illustrated by changed topics of discussion (less past-oriented) and support for economic cooperation initiatives or joint social projects.

Partly, the limited content of the within case analysis can be ascribed to a shortcoming of the researcher. During the interviews, questions were asked about the start of the project and the motivations or assumptions on which the project idea was based. However, there was no explicit question asking about deliberate changes in the project approach over time. This is enhanced by a limited availability of in-depth secondary material discussing these changes over time, with the exception of project 1.

Cross case analysis

The findings from the cross case analysis have been discussed in the previous paragraphs, when the project approaches to the main concepts were described. To summarize them here, the main points of attention stemming from the cross case analysis are the following.

For the concept reconciliation we found that two dimensions needed adjustment: truth-telling has become open dialogue, justice and security is rephrased as safe environment and placed prior to the other dimensions. The definition of healing is refined by adding increased self-worth to it and its dimensions are complemented with future perspective and social connections. Since forgiveness turns out to be a by-product of the other concepts, rather than an important concept on its own, its dimensions are not discussed. The definition of forgiveness is complemented with good actions.

Rehumanisation, finally, underwent the most changes as a result of a comparison of the project approaches. We found that the working definition and the two dimensions (identity and community) are a good fit with the project approaches. The indicators, however, have been changed in multiple ways. First of all, the victim-perpetrator dichotomy that initially characterised the indicators turns out to be invalid, since the majority of the indicators actually is assumed to apply to both groups. Also, we have renamed and replaced some of the indicators. The first indicator, killing is morally unjust, is replaced by changing perceptions of the other through dialogue. This relates to the breaking down of stereotypes, which is therefore also included as an indicator (encompassing both victim and perpetrator stereotypes). An additional indicator is the capability of making social connections, since this is considered important in all three projects. The capability of feeling remorse and empathy, which originally focussed on the perpetrator, is broadened to encompass victims as well, similar to regaining a sense of self-worth (which originally focussed only on victims).

6.1.4 How did rehumanisation relate to reconciliation in the projects?

The answer to the question how rehumanisation relates to reconciliation in the projects, is threefold. First of all, rehumanisation is connected to reconciliation and healing through the importance ascribed to open dialogue and secondly, through the making of social connections. Thirdly, rehumanisation is connected to healing because of the emphasis on empathy. Please note that more connections are present in the project approaches, but a choice was made to only highlight the most important ones.

Open dialogue

We have seen that the truth-telling dimension of reconciliation is interpreted in the projects in line with open dialogue (healing). Under both concepts, open dialogue is highly valued by the majority of the projects. In addition to this, all projects emphasise the importance of dialogue in changing the perceptions one has of others. This is therefore considered an indicator of rehumanisation (replacing the initial indicator killing is morally unjust). Enabling an open dialogue between people thus seems to contribute to reconciliation processes, healing processes and rehumanisation processes at once. This element is a clear connection between all three concepts.

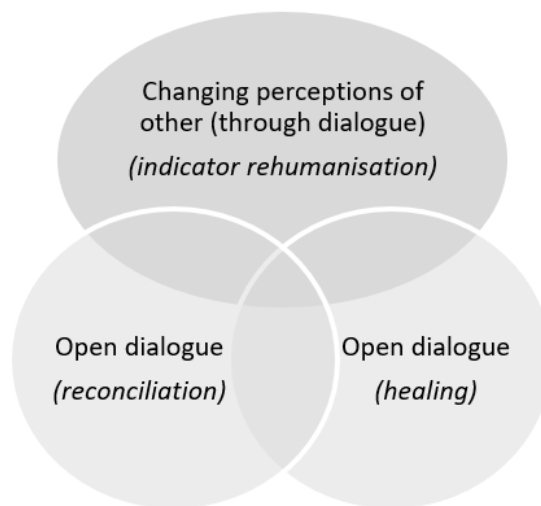


Figure 3: Open dialogue as a link between reconciliation, healing and rehumanisation

Social connections

There is another clear link between rehumanisation and reconciliation in the sense that all projects contain an element of cooperation and meaningful contact (reconciliation) and that this is considered highly important. In addition, all projects describe social connections as an important indicator of rehumanisation. Making social connections seems the same or highly similar to cooperation and meaningful contact. We can therefore conclude that it is this element that provides us with a visible connection between rehumanisation and reconciliation. In addition, making social connections is considered an important contribution to healing (again by all projects).

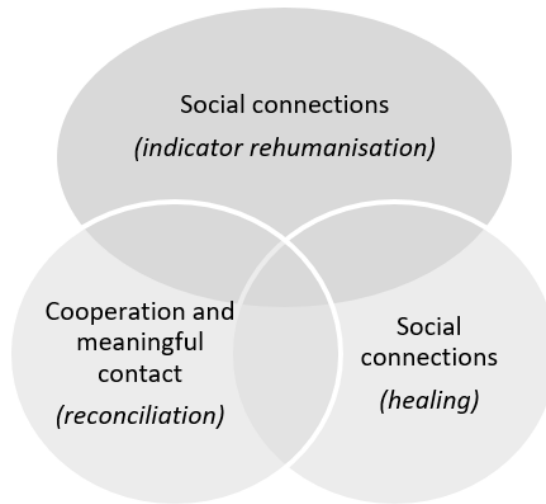


Figure 4: Social connections as a link between reconciliation, healing and rehumanisation

Empathy

In the theoretical chapter we posed empathy as an important dimension of healing. At the same time, we described that to accord someone with community (rehumanisation) means to treat someone with moral considerations such as care, recognition and respect. Moral considerations are likely to be based on or involve feelings of empathy. Similarly, part of empathic behaviour is to try and understand another's emotions and perceptions. Therefore, empathy lies at the basis of rehumanisation, since to understand a person's emotions and perceptions is to accord that person with identity.

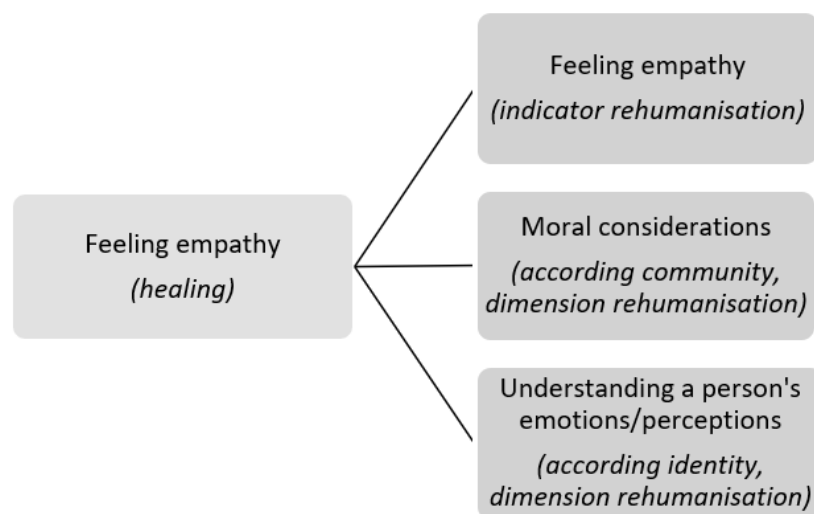


Figure 5: Empathy as a link between healing and rehumanisation

In the projects we have seen that feelings of empathy are indeed considered important for healing and that according a person with community is also perceived as highly important. In addition, changing one's perceptions of others through dialogue, which is indicated by the projects as a valuable addition to rehumanisation, likely involves an attempt to understand the other persons emotions and perceptions through dialogue. Therefore, there also seems to be a clear and useful link between healing and rehumanisation in the form of empathy.

6.1.5 To what extent and in what way was rehumanisation a part of reconciliation projects in post-genocide Rwanda?

The answer to this final question provides us with an answer to the research question. Please note that this answer is based on conclusions developed by the researcher based on insights from the analysis, rather than empirical observations within the projects.

In our discussion of project 1, the respondents pointed at different degrees of reconciliation, ranging from superficial to deep. We can assume that deep reconciliation corresponds to the working definition (warm and friendly relationships, based on inclusion, mutual acceptance and trust), since this definition is not refuted by the operationalisations of the projects. Rather, they agree reconciliation should involve aspects of inclusion, acceptance and trust.

We briefly touched upon the assumed relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation in the theoretical chapter. The impression was that to come to a warm and friendly relationship (deep reconciliation), fulfilling the established dimensions of reconciliation does not suffice. Indeed, cooperation and meaningful contact are not enough to enable us to speak of deep psychological reconciliation, since this does not necessarily include the warm and friendly relationships that we have used to define reconciliation. This already became clear in paragraph 1.4, where two examples illustrated that contact alone does not lead to deep reconciliation. Rather, this degree of reconciliation seems more in line with superficial reconciliation.

It seems that one step is missing, a step that bridges the gap between cooperation and meaningful contact (superficial reconciliation) and warm and friendly relationships based on inclusion, acceptance and trust (deep reconciliation). What I expect to bridge this gap is the admission of the other into one's moral universe.

To include a person in one's moral universe is to perceive that person as a unique and distinct individual capable of making choices (according to his own values) and to include that person in one's network of

human beings, thereby deeming him worthy of moral considerations (such as care, recognition and respect). We have seen that these moral considerations are linked to empathy and that empathy in turn involves trying to understand another person's emotions and perspectives. Both moral considerations and empathy appear to go beyond coexistence and rather contribute to the emerging of warm and friendly relationships. We have also seen that reconciliation and rehumanisation both involve open dialogue and social connections, amongst others things, and that therefore promoting either one positively influences the other: contributing to rehumanisation by facilitating dialogue simultaneously fosters reconciliation, as well as the other way around.

We might therefore conclude that rehumanisation is a valuable process on its own, but might be understood in relation to reconciliation as positively influencing in two ways: first, rehumanisation contributes to advancing at least two dimensions of reconciliation (open dialogue and social connections). Secondly, rehumanisation can be understood as the final dimension bridging the difference between superficial and deep reconciliation. Therefore, rehumanisation can rightfully be considered an indispensable element in reconciliation processes.

6.2 Scientific contributions

What do the results of this thesis mean for reconciliation and rehumanisation theory? Most importantly, I hope it has provided a bit of theoretical clarity on the concepts and their mutual relationships. Throughout the research process, the ambiguity of the concepts turned out to be an enormous challenge: how to operationalise them? Which methods are best to investigate them? Which questions do I ask respondents in order to get the required data? These questions certainly haunted me during the research process. Hopefully, future researchers can use the steps that were made in this thesis to their benefit, and can build upon them some more.

The main focus is placed on the concept of rehumanisation. Simultaneously, this is the concept that turned out to be most difficult to use. Therefore, in paragraph 2.6, I tried to bring more clarity to the concept by mirroring it to dehumanisation. This resulted in a number of indicators of rehumanisation that enabled a better use of the concept in the subsequent analysis. In turn, this analysis produced valuable additions to the initial operationalisation. In figure 2 these theoretical findings and analytical additions are integrated into one clear picture of the concept of rehumanisation. Keeping in mind the understudied nature of rehumanisation (see paragraph 1.3) this is considered an important theoretical and empirical contribution to existing theory.

When we looked at the operationalisations of the concepts in the projects, we found that all established dimensions are advanced in at least two of the three projects – except for the dimensions of forgiveness. Whereas in the theoretical chapter forgiveness was extensively discussed, this element does not explicitly return in the project approaches. For the remaining concepts, no dimension seems completely irrelevant. We did find some valuable adjustments and additions to the existing dimensions, among which are future perspective (healing), social connections (healing and rehumanisation) and open dialogue (reconciliation and rehumanisation). Not only do these insights result in a better understanding of the individual concepts, they also provided us with links between the concepts – thereby enabling us to make assumptions about their mutual relations.

Recommendations for future research

Future research could perhaps concern itself with investigating how second-generation reconciliation is different from reconciliation between victims and perpetrators who themselves experienced the conflict. It is expected that this can provide interesting insights about how reconciliation will or should change over time to fit subsequent generations. Another interesting subject of future research would be to provide further clarity on the concept of forgiveness and its role in reconciliation processes in different context, to see if the devaluation of the concept in this research was indeed justified.

6.3 Practical contributions

This thesis underlines the importance of rehumanisation for reconciliation efforts. It appears that all the projects, in one way or another, place some emphasis on rehumanisation (even if they might use a different concept to advance it). Yet to be more aware of the advantages of incorporating rehumanisation into reconciliation efforts, can only lead to more constructive and long-lasting healing and reconciliation.

Based on the insights developed in this research, I have developed a practical proposal in which the concepts and dimension that have been discussed are integrated into one all-encompassing framework. To do justice to the practice-oriented approach that has shaped this research, this proposal is written for a fictive NGO employee tasked with the responsibility of advancing psychological reconciliation in a post-genocide society resembling Rwanda. Our NGO employee will look at a number of elements, roughly in the sequence that is presented below, although it is important to note that elements will be addressed simultaneously and in an iterative manner. The steps are cumulative.

It has become clear that the first priority of our NGO employee is to establish a safe environment²² in which people can engage with each other with a certain level of trust. In this safe environment, she will invite participants to discuss past events and acknowledge each other's roles in these events²³, as well as to share stories about their past or present-day experiences and emotions²⁴. With these two steps, aspects of healing and reconciliation are addressed simultaneously. In addition, open dialogue in a safe environment enables participants to engage others with empathy and learn about the other's emotions and perceptions, which likely leads to the breaking down of previously held stereotypes and changing perceptions of that other²⁵. This in turn increases feelings of empathy and care for the others²⁶.

We move back to the dialogues and experience that, because of these empathic responses to people's stories, they develop more trust and start sharing increasingly personal and emotional stories. This way they start learning how to cope with their emotions, rather than to be controlled by them²⁷. These increasingly personal and emotional stories, combined with increased feelings of empathy and care, make the participants feel like they are a valued part of the group and thereby opens them up to making social connections – now and in the future²⁸. This feeling of belonging, combined with empathic and caring interactions, generates feelings of self-worth among the participants²⁹. Correspondingly, participants feel worthy of being treated with moral considerations and treat the others accordingly.

As relationships between the participants become more and more characterised by trust, empathy, care and increased feelings of self-worth, they regain the ability to look positively and with confidence towards the future³⁰. Our NGO employee notices that they start making plans for joint activities. Some of them, for example, agree to farm a piece of land together and share in the profits of the crops. Others decide to build a house for one of their peers. These actions provide the participants with increased feelings of belonging and self-worth, and through their actions, they see that the other is indeed capable of good things. In some cases, this leads to participants asking for or offering forgiveness, however, our NGO employee does not specifically address this.

²² Safe environment, reconciliation.

²³ Shared view of history, acknowledgement of grievances, reconciliation.

²⁴ Open dialogue, reconciliation and healing.

²⁵ Breaking down stereotypes, changing perceptions of other (through dialogue), rehumanisation.

²⁶ Feeling empathy for the other/capable of remorse and empathy, healing and rehumanisation.

²⁷ Working with positive/constructive emotions, healing.

²⁸ Social connections/cooperation and meaningful contact, reconciliation, healing and rehumanisation.

²⁹ Regaining a sense of self-worth, rehumanisation.

³⁰ Future perspective, healing.

Through this whole process – spread out over a long period of time, in which steps forward and backwards have alternated – facilitating open dialogue and enabling social connections to emerge between the participants enabled them to heal and reconcile. By empathic interactions and readmitting each other in one's moral universe, their renewed relationships becomes increasingly warm and friendly, thus resulting in a level of reconciliation between them that is deep and long-lasting.

Recommendations for practice

The main recommendation for practice is to make people aware of the importance of rehumanisation and the dangers of dehumanisation. Even more so in sensitive contexts, be it prior, during or after (violent) conflict, it is incredibly important to realise how easy it is to apply labels to a group, making them the scape-goat for problems in society and to place them outside of one's moral universe. The events that took place in the summer of 1994 in Rwanda are not unique. To recognise and know how to counter these processes, therefore, could literally save lives. The indicators of dehumanisation and rehumanisation, as described in this research can be of use in this respect.

Furthermore, I want to point at the advantages of using rehumanisation as a dimension in reconciliation processes. I also want to point at the importance of enabling an open dialogue in a safe environment and at the indispensable role of one's community (social connections) in advancing reconciliation. Hopefully, these aspects will become standard elements of reconciliation processes in the future.

As a final comment, I would like to point out the following. One could say that the concepts that we have been discussing are utopian. In peaceful and stable societies, the sum of citizens is not included into each person's moral universe. No society knows friendly and warm relationships between everyone amongst them. However, this need not be a problem. Many concepts in our academic field are in similar ways utopian. Take for example equality, safety or peace. Even in the most equal society our world knows, not everyone is totally and absolutely equal. Even the safest country on earth still knows crime and violence. And all our peaceful societies know social or structural violence, even though physical violence is largely absent. This does not mean discussions of equality, safety or peace are futile. The same goes for reconciliation and rehumanisation. Even though total reconciliation and total rehumanisation will likely never be attained, this does not relieve us of the task to strive to reach levels of both that are as high as they can possibly be.

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Appendix A: Internship

The research was supervised by an NGO that is, amongst others, active in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. The organisation has been helpful in suggesting respondents, offering substantive and valuable feedback and providing updates on the situation in Rwanda related to the covid-19 developments. Due to political sensitivities, the organisation has requested to remain anonymous.

Appendix B: Topic lists

The topic lists presented here were used as standard versions. For each respondent, the topic lists were reviewed and adjusted where necessary to match project characteristics or the background of a particular respondent. During the interviews the topic lists were not followed from beginning to end. Respondents were relatively free in discussing their insights and experiences, which sometimes meant skipping a question or coming back to it later on.

A few days before the interviews, the following information was emailed to all respondents, in order to provide transparency about the research, obtain written permission for recording and give respondents the chance to ask questions beforehand.

“The goal of the research is to contribute to a better understanding of reconciliation processes in post-genocide situations, by exploring the role of rehumanisation as part of the larger reconciliation process in post-conflict Rwanda. In order to develop a better understanding of both the concept of rehumanisation and the relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation, the concept of rehumanisation is analysed in depth. Our conversation will mostly focus on this and on your own professional experiences with rehumanisation and reconciliation in Rwanda.

I would like to ask your permission to record the interview. The recording is exclusively for my own use and will not be made public. Your contribution to the final product is also fully anonymous.

Should you have any questions, I will gladly answer them before or during our meeting.”

Facilitator interview (topic list)

Preparation

- Explain nature of research and purpose of interview
- Start recording
- Ask oral informed consent (repeat permission to record, permission to use data anonymously)
- Questions beforehand

Introduction

- Description of the project – could you tell me something about the project?
- Role of respondent – what was/is your role in the project?
- How did the idea for the project come about?
- On which motivations or assumptions is this idea based?

Theoretical

- Rehumanisation
 - o What comes to mind when thinking about the concept rehumanisation?
 - o How would you approach a process towards rehumanisation?
 - o Did you experience examples of rehumanisation?
- Relationship reconciliation-rehumanisation
 - o Is there, in your opinion, a relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation? What does it look like?
 - o Personal examples

Project experience

- To what extent have you incorporated the concept of rehumanisation explicitly or implicitly in the project? Why?
- Was it, in your opinion, a valuable addition to the project?
- Are there any concepts that have a complementing role in this relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation?

Closing

- Questions or additions?
- Describe subsequent steps of the research
- Ask for implementers/respondents
- Stop recording

Implementer interview (topic list)

Preparation

- Explain nature of research and purpose of interview
- Start recording
- Ask oral informed consent (repeat permission to record, permission to use data anonymously)
- Questions beforehand

Introduction

- Description of the project – could you tell me something about the project?
- Role of respondent – what was/is your role in the project?
- On which motivations or assumptions is the idea for the project based? Did this change throughout the years?
- What are/were the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach?

Theoretical

- Rehumanisation
 - o What comes to mind when thinking about the concept rehumanisation?
 - o How would you approach a process towards rehumanisation?
 - o Did you experience examples of rehumanisation?
- Relationship reconciliation-rehumanisation
 - o Is there, in your opinion, a relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation? What does it look like?
 - o Are there any concepts that have a complementing role in this relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation?
 - o Personal examples

Project experience

- To what extent have you incorporated the concept of rehumanisation explicitly or implicitly in the project? Why?
- Was it, in your opinion, a valuable addition to the project?

Closing

- Questions or additions?
- Describe subsequent steps of the research
- Stop recording

Observer/editor interview (topic list)

Preparation

- Explain nature of research and purpose of interview
- Start recording
- Ask oral informed consent (repeat permission to record, permission to use data anonymously)
- Questions beforehand

Introduction

- Could you tell me something about the organisation you are working for and what this organisation is doing in Rwanda?
- What is your role in the organisation/what is your field of expertise?
- What experiences do you have with reconciliation in Rwanda?

Theoretical

- Rehumanisation
 - o What comes to mind when thinking about the concept rehumanisation?
 - o How would you approach a process towards rehumanisation?
 - o Did you experience examples of rehumanisation?
- Relationship reconciliation-rehumanisation
 - o Is there, in your opinion, a relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation? What does it look like?
 - o Are there any concepts that have a complementing role in this relationship between reconciliation and rehumanisation?
 - o Personal examples

Closing

- Questions or additions?
- Describe subsequent steps of the research
- Stop recording

Checklist

This checklist was used in all of the interviews to make sure no important subjects were left out.

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Check-list (rehumanisation) | came up | asked for |
| a. Indicators | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Killing is morally unjust | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Regaining a sense of self-worth | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Perpetrators evil acts do not define him | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Feelings of remorse and/or empathy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Dimensions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Accord someone/oneself with identity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o Unique/distinguishable individual | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o Capable of making choices | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Accord someone/oneself with community | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o Inclusion in network of human beings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| o Worthy of moral considerations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Definition | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. <i>Include a person in one's moral universe</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. <i>Thereby according identity and community</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Check-list (other concepts) | came up | asked for |
| a. Reconciliation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Shared view of history | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Acknowledgement of grievances | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Truth-telling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Justice and security | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. Cooperation and meaningful contact | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi. <i>Friendly relationship</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vii. <i>Inclusive and warm relationship</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| viii. <i>Trust and mutual acceptance</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Healing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Working with positive/constructive emotions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Open dialogue | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Feeling empathy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. <i>Acknowledgement of/working with emotions</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. <i>Reduced pain and suffering</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Forgiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Acknowledgement of grievances | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Truth-telling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Remorse/regret, apology | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Empathy/recognition of other | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. <i>Transforming negative emotions</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi. <i>Empathy and acceptance (victim)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vii. <i>Remorse and/or apology (victimizer)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |