

Fragmented Lives:
Reconstructing Rural Livelihoods in
Post-Genocide Rwanda

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Post-Genocide Rwanda

Marian Koster

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List of Acronyms

ADP	Evangelical Protestant church
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AVEGA	A non-profit organisation created by 50 widows who are genocide survivors
CARE	Global confederation of 12 national member organisations working together to end poverty
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBPP	Contagious Borne Peri-Premonia
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMS	Anglican Church Missionary Society
CPE	Complex Political Emergencies
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Democratic Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDR	Effective Dependency Ratio
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FARG	Fund for Survivors of Genocide
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GFR	General Fertility Rate
GNP	Gross National Product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HiCN	Household in Conflict Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IRST	L'Institut de Recherche Scientifique et Technologique
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources, and Forestry
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MSL	Material Standard of Living
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ONAPO	Office National de la Population
OVAPAM	A parastatal organisation that managed the first agricultural development project in Umutara in the 1970s
PIP	Policies, Institutions, and Processes
RISD	Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development

ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RWF	Rwandan franc
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TRAFIPRO	Large consumption and commercialisation cooperative
TLU	Total Livestock Unit
UNAIDS	United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Glossary

<i>Abagererwa</i>	Plural of <i>umugererwa</i>
<i>Abakonde</i>	Powerful landowners who attracted land clients (<i>abagererwa</i>)
<i>Abatware</i>	Plural of <i>umutware</i>
<i>Abazukufa</i>	Literally: 'the reawakened'
<i>Abunzi</i>	Members of a mediation committee
<i>Balokole</i>	Born-again Christians
<i>Bapfumu</i>	Diviners
<i>Barozi</i>	Sorcerers
<i>Bavubui</i>	Rainmakers
<i>Bavuzi</i>	Healers
<i>Bazimu</i>	Spirits of the dead
<i>Bazungu</i>	Pural of <i>muzungu</i>
<i>Boda-boda</i>	Bicycle taxi
<i>Cell</i>	One of the lowest administrative groupings in Rwanda
<i>Évolués</i>	Term used to denote urban, educated, modern and developed people
<i>Gacaca</i>	A traditional institution that was set up to resolve village or familial disputes. The institution has been reinstalled after the genocide to deal with the large numbers of prisoners accused of genocide.
<i>Gakwege</i>	Name of a countrywide famine (1924)
<i>Genocidair</i>	Someone who has participated in genocide killings
<i>Gukuna imishino</i>	Stretching of the labia minora
<i>Ibikingi</i>	Plural of <i>igikingi</i>
<i>Icihuture</i>	A term used to describe the process of Hutu upward social mobility
<i>Icyi</i>	Short dry seasob
<i>Igikingi</i>	Domain consisting of pasturage and agricultural land, granted by a political authority/royal order; property rights were vested in individuals
<i>Igishyimbo</i>	American bean
<i>Ikijumba</i>	Sweet potato
<i>Imaana</i>	A conscious volitional entity, Divinity
<i>Imidugudu</i>	Grouped settlements organized by the government after 1996
<i>Imiryango</i>	Plural of <i>umuryango</i>
<i>Impeshyi</i>	Long dry season
<i>Indushi</i>	Name for a troubled daughter (for example, as a result of divorce or spousal death)
<i>Ingaligali</i>	Temporary gifts of land or cattle given to daughters rejected by their husbands or by his family and to daughters who never remarried and did not bear children
<i>Ingaragaza</i>	Same as <i>Ingaligali</i>
<i>Ingo</i>	Plural of <i>ruko</i>
<i>Ingobyi</i>	Small portion of land held by a cattle-owner under the <i>isambu</i> land tenure system
<i>Interahamwe</i>	Hutu extremist militia
<i>Inturire</i>	Sorghum liquor

<i>Inzu</i>	“The house/hut”; the term is also commonly used to designate a branch of a lineage. The <i>inzu</i> is the smallest and most basic kinship unit, consisting of a group of people with a common agnatic ancestor going back up to six generations, after which point it tended to break up. The <i>inzu</i> was the basic unit for social solidarity.
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> L.	Sweet potato, locally known as <i>ikijumba</i>
<i>Isambu</i>	Agricultural land held by individuals rather than by lineages
<i>Isogo</i>	Spinach-like vegetable
<i>Itorero</i>	Cadet corps or training schools, founded by local chiefs during the pre-colonial period, providing formal, informal and practical training for political life
<i>Itumba</i>	Long rainy season
<i>Mandazi</i>	Doughnuts
<i>Matoke</i>	Food prepared from cooking bananas, particularly popular in Uganda
<i>Muzungu</i>	Term to denote ‘white’ people, especially people from Europe and the United States of America (pl. <i>bazungu</i>)
<i>Mwami</i>	King
<i>Nyumbakumi</i>	In Rwanda, the administrative system consists of province, sector and cell. Each cell has several <i>nyumbakumi</i> , the administrator of ten houses
<i>Paysannat</i>	A program that involved the distribution of plots in densely populated regions and uninhabited tracts of land to nuclear families, especially popular during the last ten years of the Belgian administration
<i>Phaseolus</i>	American bean, locally known as <i>igishyimbo</i>
<i>Posho</i>	A thick porridge or bread made of maize
<i>Rugo</i>	Family enclosure or compound, the basic living unit of peasants
<i>Rumanura</i>	Name of a regional famine (1920)
<i>Ruyaga</i>	Name of a regional famine (1902-1903)
<i>Ruzagayura</i>	Name of a countrywide famine (1942-1944)
<i>Tronc Commun</i>	First three years of secondary school
<i>Ubuhake</i>	Institution of vassalage, form of clientship
<i>Ubukonde</i>	Land held through right of occupation, not granted by a chief. Property rights were vested in the lineage.
<i>Ubureetwa</i>	Form of clientship involving manual labour, imposed by chiefs on farmers and not herders
<i>Uburozi</i>	Poisoning
<i>Ubwoko</i>	Patrilineal clans formed through alliances of <i>imiryango</i> on the basis of putative agnatic descent from an eponymous ancestor. Clans include members from all three ethnic groups in Rwanda.
<i>Ugali</i>	A thick porridge or bread made of cassava
<i>Umuganda</i>	Unpaid collective work, imposed by local administrators.
<i>Umugererwa</i>	Land-tenure clients
<i>Umuhindo</i>	Short rainy season
<i>Umukwege</i>	Iron wire
<i>Umusozi</i>	A hill; the dispersed homesteads on a hill traditionally forming small political units
<i>Umutware</i>	Chief
<i>Umuryango</i>	Lineage or group who can trace agnatic descent ties to a common ancestor who is recognized as the founder of the group. An intermediate social unit, larger than the <i>inzu</i> but smaller than the <i>ubwoko</i>
<i>Umuvanzu</i>	Literally: a woman who has left the house. The term is used for a divorced woman
<i>Vigna sinensis</i> Endl.	A type of beans

1

Introduction

“Excluding independence wars, nearly 20 African countries have experienced at least one period of civil strife since 1960. This unfortunate legacy has huge direct costs [...] and incalculable indirect costs, including the destruction of physical infrastructure, loss of institutional capacity and social capital, and flight of financial and human capital. Civil war lowers per capita GDP by 2.2 percentage points a year. Moreover, dynamic sectors that use or supply capital and transact intensively—manufacturing, construction, transport, distribution, finance—suffer disproportionate losses (Collier, Hoeffler, and Pattillo 1999). Civil wars also leave a social and political legacy that can affect development for decades.”

(World Bank 2000: 57)

Background

This study concerns how Rwandans have recovered from the genocide that was perpetrated in their country in 1994. Over a three-month period, close to one million people were murdered and hundreds of thousands more were displaced. In the years after the genocide, however, millions of refugees took the opportunity to return to their homeland (cf. African Rights 1994, Prunier 1994, Des Forges 1999, Byrne *et al.* 2000, Douma 2000). In this study, I look specifically at the impact of the genocide on rural household structures, on household livelihood strategies, and on livelihood outcomes.

The genocide of 1994 followed a turbulent period of economic crisis, civil war, internal displacement, mass emigration, and political transition. All Rwandans were affected by at least one of these events (Verwimp and Bavel 2005). During the genocide, people were raped, savagely beaten, and murdered, often at the hands of their own neighbours, friends, or relatives. Others were displaced, forced to flee to neighbouring countries. Property was lost or destroyed, human dignity was disregarded entirely, and entire communities were drastically reshaped. It goes without saying that these events have had an enormous impact on Rwanda’s social structure. The country’s resource base was largely destroyed, and it has been estimated that had the genocide of 1994 not taken place, Rwanda’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2001 might have been 25 to 30 percent higher

(Lopez and Wodon 2005). As a result of the genocide, social capital was seriously undermined, and mistrust and social divisions put an enormous strain on community cohesion and solidarity. Dramatic shifts in demographic composition, due among other things to male mortality, the increasing occurrence of HIV/AIDS, massive migration movements, and the imprisonment of suspected 'genocidaires', have resulted in a considerable increase in female-headed households. In short, the rural and demographic landscape of Rwanda has changed dramatically over the last 15 years.

The genocide of 1994 should not be viewed as an isolated event but as part of an extremely complex process. The genocide was preceded by a long period of military conflicts between the Hutu-led Habyarimana regime and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-led rebel movement operating from neighbouring Uganda. From 1990 onwards, the RPF regularly invaded the country from its base in Uganda and this marked the beginning of a civil war. During the same period, hard-line Hutu factions within the Habyarimana regime began to organise for a genocidal campaign against the Tutsi and for the physical extermination of moderate Hutu politicians and intellectuals. The shooting down of the presidential plane of President Habyarimana on April 6, 1994, marked the start of the execution of these plans. Within a period of three months, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were slaughtered. It soon became clear that not only had Tutsi been murdered but many moderate Hutu had been killed as well. Moreover, once the RPF was able to take control of the country, numerous acts of revenge were committed against the Hutu population. The RPF were involved in a number of these (cf. Prunier 1994, reprint 2001, Des Forges 1999, Verwimp 2003).

This study examines the events leading up to the genocide and its impact on the lives of ordinary people. This is not a study about ethnicity. The aim is not to show how ethnic divisions have been shaped over time, how particular ethnic groups gained power over other groups, why people felt justified in exterminating one ethnic group, or what role the government and international community played in aiding the development of ethnic rivalry, although these issues will be touched upon in the historical chapter that follows. Other excellent studies have already been written on this subject (cf. Newbury 1988, Prunier 1994, reprint 2001, Uvin 1998, Des Forges 1999, Verwimp 2003). Moreover, this study is not about the role of *gacaca*, a traditional institution set up to resolve conflicts, which has been reinstalled to deal with the large numbers of prisoners accused of genocide and awaiting trial. Rather, it is about the impact of the genocide on the livelihoods of ordinary people. It looks at the ways in which Rwandans have reconstructed their livelihoods and it assesses the extent to which these attempts have succeeded.

For more than fifteen years after the genocide, the population of Rwanda – including the internally displaced, old and new caseload refugees¹, and the more

¹ The term 'new caseload refugees' refers to the large flow of refugees who crossed the borders to neighbouring countries in 1994 to escape the genocide and massacres that followed. The term 'old caseload refugees' refers to refugees who, during the same period, returned to Rwanda. This latter group of refugees consisted mainly of Tutsi, many of whom fled the country to escape ethnic strife in the late 1950s and 1960s. Most

recent refugee influx² – has been attempting to rebuild a secure livelihood. However, they are hampered by a multitude of structural constraints, not all of them directly related to the events of 1994. Population pressure has resulted in a dramatic decrease in farmland size, and unequal land distribution and insecure land rights have led to further land fragmentation and to an increasing number of landless people. The majority of the population lives in the rural areas and depends on agricultural subsistence production. Market prices for major cash crops, such as coffee and tea, are volatile. As well as an insufficiency of off-farm and non-farm income-generating opportunities, the lack of capital is another major constraint and is aptly reflected in the size of the population living below the poverty line, estimated at 57 percent (Republic of Rwanda 2006)³. Other constraints relate to decreasing soil fertility, de-stocking of livestock, poor infrastructure, cyclical droughts, and decreasing levels of social capital.

The events of 1994 not only worsened many of these constraints but caused their own specific problems as well. The demographic structure of the entire population has changed, not least since some 800,000 people (many of whom were prime-age adults) were executed in 1994 within a three-month period (Douma 2000), while two to three million people ended up in refugee camps (Byrne *et al.* 1995). Not long after the genocide, it was estimated that in some parts of the country as much as 80 percent of the population was female (El-Bushra and Mukarubuga 1995). As a result of exile, imprisonment, and death⁴, a male deficit still exists. More than one-third of households are headed by women, many of whom are widows (Donovan *et al.* 2003a, République du Rwanda 2005a). According to a World Bank report, 85,000 households in Rwanda are headed by children, and orphanhood is widespread (World Bank 2004). And the number of child-headed households is likely to increase as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Child and maternal mortality are high and malnutrition among children is common. The health system is recovering slowly from the shocks of 1994, and new health centres and hospitals need to be built. As a result of death and of healthcare personnel fleeing, new medical personnel need to be trained. The

of these people have lived in exile in Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zaire for most of their lives, while others were born there and returned to a motherland they had not previously known (cf. Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999).

- ² In 1996, close to 1.2 million (new caseload) refugees returned from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) to Rwanda in 1996. Among those returning were thousands of Hutu, including many extremists, who had fled the country in 1994 in fear of the RPF. The return of Hutu extremists led to new fights in the northwest of Rwanda, creating a new and large flow of refugees.
- ³ In 2001, 60 percent of the total population lived below the poverty line. In the rural areas, where most people live, this percentage was as high as 66 percent (Banque Mondiale 2005). Despite the fact that the percentage of poor has fallen since 2001, the total number of Rwandans living in poverty is estimated to have increased from 4.8 million in 2001 to 5.4 million in 2006 (Republic of Rwanda 2006).
- ⁴ On the national level, there are 91 males to 100 females - ranging from 86.9 males in the province of Kibuye to 120.7 males to 100 women in the capital city of Kigali (Republic of Rwanda 2003).

death and illness of thousands of Rwandans, many of prime age, add to the problems that households face and have a lasting effect on their ability to cope.

The structural constraints and more recent dramatic demographic shifts have resulted in people developing strategies to cope with their new reality. As a result, human capabilities, entitlements and access to resources, perception of needs, and subsequent activities and outcomes have all been subject to change.

The Research Problem

There exists a considerable body of literature on livelihood generation and coping strategies in the wake of natural hazards such as droughts, floods, or volcanic eruptions (Anderson and Woodrow 1989, Bankoff 2001, Bankoff *et al.* 2004). One of the most important insights gained from this literature is that a distinction needs to be made between the strategies people develop in response to exposure to re-occurring risks, like seasonal droughts, and those they develop in order to cope with unusually severe or unexpected threats to their livelihood security, like prolonged droughts or adverse price movements. In contrast, complex man-made disasters or violent conflicts are only moderately dealt with in the literature (Bouta 1998). Violent conflicts can be distinguished from natural disasters by their distinctly political character. Livelihoods are threatened as the result of deliberate attacks on groups of people and their institutions, and more often than not violent conflicts are prolonged, as they bring important economic gains to particular groups in society. Of course, natural disasters have political and anthropogenic components as well, but always include a natural hazard. Violent conflicts, however, are the direct result of power struggles.

Early studies on violent conflict focused on terminology, typologies of conflict situations, and factors that explain conflicts, like the nature of the state or the nature of the war economy (cf. El-Bushra and Lopez 1994). Part of the research focused on refugees or the numbers of men, women, and children who were affected by conflicts (cf. Forbes Martin 1991). Issues of international politics and law, protection, and logistics also received ample attention (cf. Ferris 1993). Others explored the evolution of aid practices, paying particular attention to the 'relief-to-development continuum' (cf. Frerks 1995 and 1999, Macrae *et al.* 1997), and concepts such as 'developmental relief' (cf. White and Cliffe 2000) or 'supporting livelihoods' (cf. Macrae *et al.* 1997) increasingly emerged in the debate. Other issues that received attention included the effects of voluntary resettlement and repatriation schemes (cf. Allen and Morsink 1994, Allen 1996, van Uffelen 2006), the reintegration of ex-combatants (cf. Peters 2006), and the issue of conflict reduction and peace building (cf. Lijn 2006). An important development in the field of disaster studies has been the emergence of the notion of vulnerability (Alexander 1997) and the associated shift of seeing disasters "as an event caused by an external agent to a more sociologically oriented interpretation of disaster as a complex, socially (as well as politically, environmentally and economically) constructed process" (Frerks 2007: 3).

The relationship between violent conflict and poverty has become an important theme in peace and conflict studies, as the two appear closely related (Goodhand 2001, Versteegen 2001). Generally, there is consensus around the proposition that conflict causes poverty, although it is understood that the impact of conflicts are likely to vary “according to the nature, duration and phase of the conflict and the background economic and social conditions” (Goodhand 2001: 13). Moreover, the impacts of a conflict are not evenly distributed among social groups. Hence, in order to understand the differential impact of conflicts, sub-national as well as community- and household-level analysis is called for. Rather than assuming a unidirectional or monocausal relationship between poverty and conflict, it is increasingly recognised that the relationship is in fact bidirectional. Thus, whereas conflict may lead to poverty, poverty may also lead to, or at least exacerbate, conflict:

“Broadly, it is argued that uneven development processes lead to inequality, exclusion and poverty. This contributes to growing *grievances* particularly when poverty coincides with ethnic, religious, language or regional boundaries. These underlying grievances may explode into open conflict when triggered by external shocks (such as a sudden change in terms of trade) or mobilised by conflict entrepreneurs.”

(Goodhand 2001: 24, italics in original)

Civil war and political violence affect the wellbeing of populations, and research on the impact of conflict on this wellbeing has become increasingly popular, especially among development economists (Berlage *et al.* 2003). There is ample evidence of the destruction of private and communal physical property as a result of war and violence. Economic activities tend to come to a halt, crop failures regularly occur, and GDP decreases. Death, migration, famines, and malfunctioning health systems lead to a loss of human capital. Social networks tend to break down and impunity and the breakdown of the rule of law further undermine the cohesion of society. Nevertheless, it is important to realise that post-conflict transition periods offer new opportunities as well. Bouta *et al.* (2005: 77) argue that conflict societies “often have an opportunity to undergo a transformation in the security, political, and socioeconomic realms that is usually accompanied by constitutional and legal reforms”. For example, post-conflict transition periods offer the opportunity to rewrite and gender sensitise a country’s legal framework.

Gender analysis has, however, only recently been introduced into the conflict discourse (Goodhand and Hulme 1999) by authors such as Byrne (1996) and El-Bushra and Lopez (1994). The work of these authors has clearly shown how men and women are caught up in conflict situations and how these may alter gender relations. Women are not passive bystanders to conflicts. Apart from women’s engagement in conflicts as active participants, violence against women is often a deeply embedded pattern, as happened in Rwanda where rape by HIV/AIDS-infected men was used as a weapon of war (Human Rights Watch 2004). Conflicts may also result in, or further, the feminisation of poverty. Conflicts

usually also offer the opportunity for transformative processes in which gender stereotypes shift and gender roles and identities can be renegotiated (cf. Meintjes *et al.* 2001). Moreover, conflicts offer the opportunity to empower women by involving them in community development efforts and in decision-making structures and processes.

Most conflict impact studies have a national or at best regional focus. They usually rely on large datasets – such as national census data or demographic and health surveys – and are predominantly quantitative in nature. Rarely, however, are insights documented with micro-level evidence concerning the behaviour of households in times of conflict (Berlage *et al.* 2003, Brück 2004). Moreover, how households respond to processes of transformation in the reconstruction phase of disasters, with its longer-term implications for intra- and inter-household relations, is largely neglected (Enarson and Morrow 1998). Nevertheless, post-conflict societies are places “whose ongoing political, social, and economic dynamics merit in-depth research” (Uvin 2001b: 99). As Uvin (2001b) argues, most scholarships seem interested either in understanding how conflicts could occur or in determining their macro-level impacts. Few look further ahead and study the phenomenal challenges faced by governments and inhabitants. Neither micro-level evidence on individual and household livelihood portfolios and coping strategies in times of war and shortly after, nor the outcome of such strategies, are given the attention they deserve. We seldom learn about ordinary people’s insights and perceptions or the meanings that people attribute to events, institutions, or policies (cf. Richards 1996, 2005). However, as Richards (2005) argues, wars are inescapably sociological. Wars do not just happen, but are the work of specific groups in society. It is the task of analysts to understand “the character, organization and beliefs of these groups, and their impact on other groups supporting, resisting or victimised by their activities” (Richards 2005: 4). Richards calls for an ethnography of war, in which war is not distinctly different from peace but in which war and peace form a continuum. In such an approach, conflicts should be understood in relation to broader patterns of violence that are embedded within society. This can be achieved by analysing what people do and how they act at different moments within the peace-war continuum.

Recently, a number of conflict impact studies have appeared that focus on the Rwandan case. These include a political analysis of the genocide (Verwimp 2003) and of the relation between the war and genocide and child survival and the fertility of refugees (Verwimp and Bavel 2005). Under the umbrella of the Household in Conflict Network (HiCN), a number of economic studies have been published, among which a study on the causal relation between poverty and conflict (Justino and Verwimp 2006), a study on the relation between Rwanda’s civil war and the health status of young children (Akresh and Verwimp 2006), a study on the role of social capital in relation to the genocide (Pinchotti and Verwimp 2007), and a study on the relation between displacement and agricultural outputs (Kondylis 2007). In addition, the World Bank has published a number of studies analysing the impact of the genocide on the educational and health system (World Bank 2004, Banque Mondiale 2005). Other useful sources of information

about the impact of the genocide include the results of the national census that was held in August 2002 (cf. Republic of Rwanda 2005).

However, like most other conflict impact studies, most of the above are based on quantitative analysis, using large household datasets and focusing on national or regional developments. One of the problems with the use of household survey data is that “because of the generally unstable institutional framework, migration, and the interruption of administration and record keeping during conflict, household data collected in conflict-affected countries is generally of worse quality than data collected in times of peace” (Schindler and Brück 2007: 6). Considering these difficulties, one would expect to find micro-level and disaggregated evidence of the impacts of conflict on Rwandan households that rely on qualitative research techniques. However, this literature is largely absent. This thesis is intended to address this lacuna in knowledge by examining both the question of what households own and what they do in rural conflict-affected environments and the results of their activities and strategies.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study, then, is about the way people in rural areas implement their livelihoods once violent conflicts have ended and social reconstruction is underway. More than anything, it aims to understand how different groups within society are affected by violent conflicts and by the responses they develop in order to recover from the effects of such conflicts. The effects of and responses to violent conflicts will vary greatly between people of different social economic backgrounds, gender, age, and ethnicity. The duration of stay in a community will also have an effect.

Central to this thesis is the notion that the household takes a central place in the process of social adaptation and the rebuilding of livelihood security. Moreover, household responses are seen to evolve over time and to be guided by personal preferences, influenced by institutions, and shaped within structural boundaries. This thesis searches for ways to deal with the diversity of household responses to processes of transformation after large-scale conflicts have subsided, and aims at integration between the strategic, institutional, and structural conditions that influence the success or failure of securing a new livelihood. It is proposed that a livelihoods approach forms a useful entry point for such an investigation.

Ultimately, knowledge gained by this study is meant to improve policies and development interventions by national and international NGOs and government bodies in such a way as to strengthen people’s own attempts to rebuild livelihoods, especially those of vulnerable groups.

With this in mind, the following research questions have been formulated:

What are the wider social, economic, and political processes affecting rural household livelihoods in post-conflict Rwanda?

Any study on household livelihoods in post-conflict Rwanda must be considered in relation to the complex set of factors behind the genocide of 1994, particularly in terms of its timing and duration, its pervasiveness and reach, and its impact on different groups within society. Rather than investigating livelihood strategies as stemming from one root cause – the genocide as a single factor causing poverty and vulnerability, or alternatively, richness and opportunity – it is more useful to try to understand these issues from a more holistic standpoint. The genocide can be described in terms of key actors and stakeholders, winners and losers. Moreover, development aid and the relief industry have not been neutral; some people have gained more than others. Taking a contextual standpoint entails that household livelihood strategies are considered in relation to the nature of the enabling or disabling environment in which these strategies are given shape. A comparison between household livelihoods prior to and after the genocide needs to be accompanied by a longer historical perspective, for livelihood systems are not static but develop over time. Social, economic, and political change are often inextricably woven together.

To answer the above research question, several methodological issues need to be addressed. Firstly, longer-term processes not directly related to the genocide, such as changes in world prices, trade patterns, and marketing opportunities, have had a profound impact on livelihoods in Rwanda. There is thus a need to distinguish between the effects of the genocide on rural household livelihoods and the wider on-going dynamics of change. Secondly, there is a need to differentiate between the impact of the genocide and shifts that have taken place within individual lives as a result of normal life cycles, such as birth, marriage, and death.

Other questions need to be addressed as well. For example, the extent to which the asset bases of households and their individual members have been affected by the genocide. For this, a description of changes in people's assets is needed, such as household composition, educational achievements, health, land, livestock, and employment. As well as mere changes to people's asset base, it is also important to look into the issue of access. Has the set of social relations that determine whether someone has access to a particular set of assets changed over time? Did the genocide have a discernable impact on these relations?

Which strategies do households and their individual members use to provide for their future needs and what is the result of these strategies?

That people have access to a particular set of assets tells us nothing about how people cope in practice. For this we need to look at the strategies that people use in everyday life, or at the way they opt to combine specific sets of assets in order to achieve desired livelihood outcomes. Again, there is a need to compare current livelihood strategies with those before 1994 in order to see what the impact of the genocide has been on the choices people are willing and able to make. How did social relations change as a result of the events of 1994? Have entitlements and decision-making powers within and between households and other social groups

shifted? In what way have relationships of trust been affected and to what extent have new bonds of trust been established or re-established?

Which groups of households have been left particularly vulnerable after the genocide?

One of the aims of this research is to look at the differential impact of the genocide on particular groups of people. Just as there were winners and losers in the process leading up to and during the genocide, so there are winners and losers as a result of the genocide. ‘Vulnerable groups’ are conceptualised by the government of Rwanda as consisting of female or child-headed households, genocide survivors, and demobilised or resettled households (Government of Rwanda 2002). However:

“This interpretation, based on gender or war-related identities, is very restrictive and disregards the multi-dimensionality of vulnerability in the rural context. As a result, there is no effort to identify other vulnerable groups (e.g. nearly landless peasants), their current challenges and needs, and how rural development strategy might impact or improve their living conditions.”

(Ansoms 2007: 18)

This study seeks to answer the question of whether female-headed households, including a substantial number of widow-headed households, are left poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households. However, the high proportion of female-headed households in Rwanda should not obscure the search for other vulnerable groups. Considering the country’s history of ethnic exclusion, it is also important to see whether particular ethnic groups have benefited from the developments that have taken place since the genocide. Other vulnerable groups, such as the near landless peasants suggested by Ansoms, also need to be identified.

Importance of the Study

The government of Rwanda has developed a framework, called Vision 2020, that presents guiding tools for Rwanda’s future development (Republic of Rwanda 2000). The aim of the government is to develop realistic and sound agricultural policies, poverty-reduction strategies, and food-security programmes that take into account local, national, and external resources. It is recognised that to vanquish poverty, all Rwandans need to be offered the chance to gain from new economic opportunities; hence, there is a need to overcome ethnic divisions.

Vision 2020 is built around six pillars: good governance and a capable state; human resource development and a knowledge-based economy; a private sector-led economy; development of infrastructure; productive and market oriented agriculture; and regional and international economic integration. Interwoven with these six pillars are three cross-cutting issues: gender equality; protection of the

environment and sustainable natural resource management; and science and technology (Republic of Rwanda 2000). The problem is that the government lacks reliable statistics, is confronted with incomplete data, and faces problems of accessing and diffusing information. The government is looking for data on and knowledge of rural areas and has suggested that the availability of agricultural data may lead to an evaluation and reorientation of poverty alleviation and food-security programmes (Republic of Rwanda 2007).

Development interventions are faced with several problems. Apart from a general lack of data, they are often based on assumptions that are not necessarily supported by the reality at ground level. For example, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has developed several projects in Rwanda, one of which concerns the Integrated Rural Development Project of Murambi, located in the northeast of the country. Women form one of the project's most important target groups. ADRA assumes that women in the project area need to be empowered and that this can be achieved through educational programs, provision of health care, creation of farmer groups, and so on. However, as the country director explained, ADRA is not sure whether their project indeed addresses the needs of women in the project area. Moreover, it is not clear how large the impact of the project actually is, and whether other programmes need to be developed⁵.

This study may fill in part of the knowledge gap by examining a defined local community in northeast Rwanda, a region about which relatively little has been written.

However, it does more than that. Between 1990 and 1999, nearly two billion people were affected by disasters globally (Walker and Walter 2000). After WWII, approximately 230 armed conflicts have been recorded in some 150 countries (Eriksson and Wallensteen 2004). While the number of armed conflicts has been declining since 2000 (Ploughshares Monitor 2005), billions of people have had to live under conditions of armed conflict and it is to be expected that increasingly more people will be confronted with the emergence of new or renewed violence (UNDP 2005). Most of the world's conflicts take place in Africa. By the end of the 1990s, more people were being killed in wars in sub-Saharan Africa than in the rest of the world put together (Human Security Report Project 2005). The biggest death toll, however, does not result from actual fighting but from indirect causes, such as war-exacerbated disease and malnutrition. In a world where millions of people live under permanent circumstances of emergency and stress as a result of violence, the distinction between coping with 'normal' daily life and coping with disasters is becoming smaller.

Violent conflicts put processes of change, or transformation, in motion, which results in changes in people's resource base, in livelihood strategies, and in desired outcomes in post-conflict transition periods. Such changes and processes have a differential impact between and within households. Hence, this study is meant to analyse the impact of violent conflict on poverty and on the social

⁵ Personal communication with Nagi Khalil, former country director ADRA-Rwanda, Kigali, August 2002.

exclusion of households and their individual members. It also looks at the coping mechanisms that individuals and households develop to deal with insecurity caused by violent conflict. Within this study, micro-level processes are linked to policy-relevant outcomes.

Local ramifications of the genocide in Rwanda are examined by linking material processes and wider local dynamics to larger issues such as politics, gender, class relations, culture, and conflict. Importantly, people are not treated as an undifferentiated mass. This study shows how people in rural northeast Rwanda have been affected differentially by politics, policies, and environmental stress. It reveals the diverse strategies of people attempting to recover from the genocide, trying to sustain culturally prescribed obligations, to produce enough food, and to ensure the wellbeing of their families. As such, this study highlights the resilience of the rural population in finding new ways to give meaning to their lives.

There are a number of obstacles to analysing situations of chronic conflict (Schafer 2002), as there is a lack of understanding of how economies function in unstable situations. Moreover, whereas models have been developed to identify gainers and losers in conflict situations, these are not sufficiently well developed analytically and cannot easily be implemented. A related problem is that many interventions seek to promote self-reliance but do not take sufficient account of structural constraints. Approaches based on geographical or even geopolitical divisions do not take sufficient account of interconnected patterns of livelihood strategies and the relationships between the political economies of different geographical areas. In addition, gender issues are not integrated well enough. Finally, macro-level issues tend not to be addressed by programmes focusing on livelihoods.

This study will address a number of these problems and suggest ways to proceed. It is suggested that the livelihood framework can be applied in situations of chronic conflict and their aftermath and that livelihood approaches are able to incorporate strategies of adaptation, power relations, and dynamic change. In order to better understand the logic of household livelihood activities and outcomes in Rwanda, it is suggested that a clear analysis of concrete historical processes is needed. Such an analysis needs to focus on the different assets to which people have access and how these assets fit within people's livelihood strategies and the wider context of social, economic, political, and environmental factors that affect and interact with local livelihoods. A full analysis is needed on how violence shapes household access and influences social relations, how households adapt their livelihood strategies to accommodate and manage risks and vulnerabilities generated by violence, and how livelihood outcomes are interpreted in the context of violence (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2003, 2006). The approach of this study is to link insights from peace and conflict studies with those originating from the field of anthropology, sociology, demography, gender studies, environmental studies, and studies on HIV/AIDS⁶.

⁶ Studies on the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS and conflict studies focusing on livelihood reconstruction share a number of interests. Foremost is the effect of adult mortality and the absence of adults on overall household wellbeing. Since one of the

Thesis Structure

To understand rural household livelihoods in post-conflict Rwanda, it is necessary to look at the nature of the conflict itself. As previously stated, the genocide of 1994 was preceded by a long period of military conflicts between the Habyarimana regime and the RPF, who from the 1990s onwards regularly invaded Rwanda from their base in Uganda. However, to fully understand what happened in the 1990s and during the genocide, it is necessary to look back even further. In Chapter 2, the reader is taken back to the mythical origins of the kingdom. It is shown that territorial expansion, social transformations, and numerous disputes among the country's nobility resulted in succession crises, civil wars, famines, and epidemics. With the arrival of the Europeans, social transformations continued to occur. Moreover, social stratification became rigidified and 'fixed' into ethnic stratification. Under a system of multiple exclusions, traditional support systems eroded rapidly and conditions in the rural areas worsened considerably. Conditions improved only marginally after independence in 1962. In addition, as land pressure increased, land became increasingly scarce and land inequality rose rapidly. Outbursts of ethnic violence occurred regularly and ethnic tensions were exploited by the government. Hard-line Hutu factions in the Habyarimana government began to prepare for the removal of Tutsi and moderate Hutu, and when the President's plane was shot down on April 6, 1994, the country witnessed one of the most brutal periods in its history.

Chapter 2 is intended to provide insights into the poverty and vulnerability status of households before 1994. However, it also looks at policies, institutions, and processes that continue to influence that status. Social and ethnic stratifications have not remained constant. Demographic processes that were set in motion before the genocide, such as the increasing importance of the conjugal family over the extended family, have taken on new forms. Activities that were possible before 1994 are not always feasible at present. The genocide has had its winners and losers. Some people have been able to emerge from poverty or take advantage of new opportunities, while others have not. Moreover, the government has taken pains to transform one of the most important sectors of the Rwandan economy: the agricultural sector. It has introduced a number of new laws and policies that provide new opportunities and limitations. In order to understand rural household livelihoods in the northeast of Rwanda, it is necessary to learn more about such institutional changes and processes.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the theoretical framework of this study. The livelihood approach is taken to guide analysis and to assist the reader of this study. Livelihood approaches take as the point of departure what people have. In this study, I do so by looking at the assets that households have at their disposal, such as health and education, land and livestock, or interpersonal networks.

results of the events of 1994 has been a high rate of mortality, accompanied by high levels of mobility as a result of flight, exile, and imprisonment (hence the interest for migration studies), it is interesting to see how the removal of labour resources of especially young productive adults has affected household livelihoods. I believe that insights gained from HIV/AIDS studies provide important clues in this respect.

Household assets are employed to develop livelihood strategies, and these are influenced not only by households' respective asset bases but also by the vulnerability context and processes, policies, and institutions (as described in Chapter 2) with which households have to deal.

Different units of analysis are possible in livelihood approaches. For this study, the household has been taken as the unit of analysis and its choice is justified in Chapter 3. Moreover, livelihood approaches have been developed to use in situations of political stability. I therefore discuss how a livelihood approach may be used to study situations of conflict. Finally, as I acknowledge that livelihoods develop over time, I argue that it is important that livelihood approaches include a time perspective.

In the next chapter, I discuss the research process and explain the choice for the data collection site. I also discuss the research design by looking at the research strategy, the importance of triangulation, and the feminist perspective to which I adhere in this research. I discuss how I have categorised households at the data collection site so as to make statistical comparison possible. I then move to discuss the methods used to collect data, which include among others a household survey, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. Finally, I take a closer look at some of the problems I encountered during data collection.

In Chapter 5, I turn back to Rwanda. In the first section of this chapter I describe some of the characteristics of the country, such as its climate and topography, demographic characteristics, and recent migration patterns. The focus then moves to the northeast of the country and ends at the research area. To be able to place the research findings in a wider setting, I describe how and when people arrived in the research area, what the ethnic affiliation currently looks like, and how sex and age are distributed. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on the marital relationships that are common in the research area.

It is often assumed that female-headed households are poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households. Moreover, when Rwandans speak of female-headed households, they generally refer to widow-headed households (or, more specifically, to Tutsi genocide survivors). To be able to prove or disprove this assumption, I make a distinction between male- and female-headed households in Chapter 6, which will guide further analysis. Moreover, as female-headed households do not form a uniform category, I further subdivide female-headed households into those headed by widows or by divorced or separated women. In this chapter, I make a first differentiation analysis between the three types of households, based on household size and dependency ratio.

In Chapter 7, I look at two of the most important assets that people may have at their disposition: educational achievements and good health. In the first part of the chapter, health and fertility trends are discussed. I show how high fertility is consciously used as a livelihood strategy, in particular with regard to old-age security. However, high fertility has negative side effects as well, and the physical cost of having children is discussed in terms of women's health and the nutritional status of children. Another important asset is educational achievement. I describe the educational system in Rwanda and the educational infrastructure in the research area. Literacy forms an important measure of the quality of life.

Hence, to understand whether some groups are more likely to access this important asset than others, literacy levels are differentiated by age, gender, and different types of households.

The focus then moves to one of the most important income-generating assets of rural households: land. Like elsewhere in the country, land inequality is rampant in the research area and large sections of the population should be considered as landless or almost landless. In Chapter 8, I take a closer look at land acquisition in the research area, in terms of who have been able to access land and who have not. The purchase of land and the redistribution of land through grants by local governments and NGOs form the two most important means by which households have been able to acquire land. However, large differences exist between different types of households, not only with regard to the way in which access to land is achieved but also to the amount of land that households have been able to access. As well as the amount of land that households have access to and the tenure security rights to this land, its quality is also an important factor that determines the potential of land for household livelihoods. Issues of this nature are also discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 9, I look at household income-earning strategies and labour portfolios. I first discuss farm production in the research area, which consists of crop and livestock production. Again, analysis shows that large differences exist between different types of households. However, few, if any, households in the research area depend entirely on agricultural production. A general tendency is for households to diversify their income-generating activities. Unfortunately, the research area is characterised by the underdevelopment of the non-agricultural sector and not all households are able to supplement the income gained from agricultural production with other sources of income. Agricultural wage labour is most readily available in the research area, but is not undertaken by everyone. Migration forms another important household strategy. A considerable number of households are involved in beer brewing, while remittances, mostly sent by children, form another important source of income. Again, I look at differentials between different types of households throughout the chapter. The chapter concludes by discussing how households manage their labour portfolios. I argue that while proactively managing household labour portfolios may serve to increase or diversify household income in the short and medium term, changes may also have unintended consequences that result in increased household vulnerability in the long term.

In Chapter 10, I take a closer look at the interlocking networks between individuals and households: networks that are often a necessary precondition to access important resources such as land or credit. In the first section of this chapter, I look at the interpersonal networks among relatives, friends, and neighbours. Next, the importance of membership in voluntary associations and professional groups is discussed. Among respondents, farmer groups were considered to be the most important type of group in the research area. Membership in farmer groups provides an opportunity to access land. However, not all households have been able to join farmer groups. Moreover, farmer groups have been criticised for having very low cooperation levels between members. One

explanation for this is the generally low level of trust between people in the research area. In other words, the social cohesion in the research area appears limited. There are, however, groups that appear to strengthen social cohesion: one example is the Pentecostal movement. The chapter concludes by discussing the reasons behind the rapid growth of the Pentecostal movement in the research area.

Livelihood strategies of households are thus shown to depend not only on the external environment in which households have to operate but also on their asset base and the networks of which they are member. In Chapter 11, I look at the outcome of household livelihood strategies and the differences that exist among different types of households. Firstly, the material standard of living of households is taken as an indicator of livelihood outcomes. Secondly, food security is another important indicator. A third is the perceived quality of life: a subjective notion of livelihood outcomes.

In the concluding chapter, I return to the research questions as put forward in this chapter. After summarising the answers to each of the three research questions, I make recommendations for further research and discuss the implications of this study for policy.

2

From Kigwa to Kagame: A Short History of Rwanda

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a comprehensive account of the history of Rwanda. Moreover, many authors have already provided us with a detailed treatment of Rwanda's history; these include the excellent works by Newbury (1988), Prunier (1994), Des Forges (1999), Pottier (2002), and Vansina (2004). In this chapter, I merely present a summary of Rwanda's history in order to set the stage for a better understanding of the effects of recent events in Rwanda on current livelihoods.

In particular, the aim of this chapter is to take a bird's eye view of how Rwanda's rural landscape has changed over the centuries. The focus will be primarily on rural policies adopted by the central court (in the pre-colonial period), the Belgian administration (during the colonial period), the first two Rwandan presidents (after independence), and the current (post-genocide) government. As I will show, increasing population pressure, land shortage, and land inequality have resulted in rural conditions becoming increasingly harsh. Subsequent governments have responded by developing a range of policies, including agricultural policies. However, in many instances these have only resulted in a further squeezing of the rural populace. Many of the policies currently adopted by the government have their roots in the past. Nevertheless, as many of the old structural constraints are still in place, it remains questionable whether the proposed measures will indeed ease the plight of the impoverished rural masses in Rwanda.

This chapter also briefly outlines how the concepts of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa have evolved over time. As will become clear, ethnic identities only rigidified under colonial rule, with the result that upward social mobility became increasingly difficult. Livelihood opportunities came progressively to be determined by one's ethnic identity rather than one's merits. Moreover, subsequent political elites grossly misused ethnic identities to protect their own positions of power. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the genocide at length. For general accounts of the genocide and the events that led up to it, I again refer to other studies, including those mentioned above. Of interest for this particular study, however, is to examine whether ethnic categories have been redefined following the genocide and how livelihood opportunities in post-conflict

Rwanda have been determined by current ethnic identities. These are the types of questions that this chapter explores.

The Pre-Colonial Period

This section draws heavily on Vansina's (2004) critical and excellent account of the history of central Rwanda before 1900. In his book, Vansina describes and interconnects territorial expansion, social transformations, and the rise of conflicts among the nobility in an era characterised by crises of succession, civil wars, famines, and epidemics. I refer here to this work for a summarised description of the early history of Rwanda.

The Foundation of Rwanda

Oral traditions tell of the first king Kigwa ("fallen"), who:

"... descended from heaven and organized the aristocracy. They [i.e. oral traditions] continue by giving a series of names of successors that stops at Gihanga ("creator"), the cultural hero who founded the first empire, which he left to his children, one of whom was Kanyarwanda, an eponym for the country."

(Vansina 2004: 10)

Archaeological data support the view that the first known settlement in Rwanda is at least tens of thousands of years old, but that denser patterns of settlement were created by farmers during the first millennium BC. Around the 13th century AD, a new group of people arrived in the region, possibly having come from western Uganda. It is likely that among them were herders⁷. In addition to farmers and herders, the country was inhabited by a third group of people; these were small bands of nomadic foragers who lived in the forests and marshes along main rivers. Tales recount how leaders in those mythical days:

"... held ritual powers and had a modest personal following of warriors. They did not just rustle cattle but quarrelled over effective control of hill after hill within a small territory. Some forged temporary alliances with neighbours against third parties. A more stable form of alliance resulted from the more powerful lord delegating the ritual powers to his weaker associate. Thus emerged the first ritualist kings and their territories ... Over time one group gained the upper hand over the others."

(Vansina 2004: 219)

⁷ Some scholars are of the opinion that this must indicate the arrival of Tutsi in the region (Taylor 1988, Uvin 1998). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, herders regularly moved from one region to the other as a result of political or environmental pressures. But, as shown below, the label Tutsi is not without problems (Vansina 2004).

These ‘ritualist kings’ had no kingdom. While they “claimed to possess supernatural and ritual powers enabling them to ensure the prosperity of their lands, their cattle and subjects” (Vansina 2004: 220), their realm comprised only a couple of hills. The foundation of an embryonic kingdom is ascribed to Ruganzu Bwimba, who “lived on the hill of Gasabo and ruled over several adjacent hills, as well over the historic provinces of Buganza⁸, south of lake Muhazi” (Vansina 2004: 217). During the years that followed, Bwimba’s kingdom of Gasabo grew through the acquisition of lands, ultimately encompassing most of central Rwanda. However, after his death the country was torn apart by a civil war and the land was conquered by other rulers.

During these early times, people were organised in small groups “based on lineage or on loyalty to an outstanding leader” (Des Forges 1999: 31). Small political units were formed by the dispersed *ingo* (denoting the family enclosure or compound) on a hill (*umusozi*).

A true kingdom, known as the Nyiginya kingdom, was first founded in central Rwanda around 1650 AD by Ruganzu Ndori. The period that followed was characterised by regular coups d’état and dynastic shifts (Vansina 2004). Ndori is thought to have been Hima. He came to Rwanda from Karagwe-Ndorwa, today part of eastern Tanzania and south-western Uganda (Taylor 2004, Vansina 2004), bringing large herds with him. He divided his herds among local herders, providing them with rights of usufruct over his cattle. He also offered them protection against cattle raids, which occurred regularly, and was thus able to create political alliances with local herders. Similar relations evolved among herders of unequal power and eventually also among herders, farmers, and foragers.

To protect his own interests and those of his close followers, Ndori also developed an army consisting mostly of herders and later also included foragers, and he appointed generals to command it. Ndori was able to regain the territory of the old kingdom and added new territory, and expansion continued after his death. Thus, nearly a century after Ndori’s rule, the territory of the kingdom was again greatly expanded. By 1895, the country included the whole of present-day Rwanda but also parts that today belong to Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo⁹.

Under Ndori, a centralised military structure was created and a unified state evolved. Over the centuries, different types of patron-client ties evolved, among which were direct clientships to the king as well as clientships involving cattle or land. Some clientships involved individuals, others lineages (cf. Newbury 1988). In the central kingdom, all lines of power converged on the king, either directly or

⁸ This study’s research area is located on the borders of what used to be Buganza. For more information, see Chapter 5.

⁹ Nevertheless, some regions remained outside the control of the central kingdom, including regions in the southwest, north and northwest, and east. The autonomous political organisations that were found in these regions were only subjugated to the central kingdom’s power under colonial rule.

indirectly. The king had officials, among whom were his wives¹⁰, who were accountable to him and who reported on disloyalty and the self-serving activities of his appointed chiefs. Nevertheless, the degree of centralisation should not be overestimated, “for there was little in the way of orderly hierarchical levels of information, decision and command that went from the greatest to the least” (Codere 1973: 380). Lines of communication involved a lot of disinformation. This, “plus the brief tenure of officeholders, again at all levels, meant for less administrative continuity and certainty of control than would be the case in a firmly centralized regime” (Codere 1973: 380). Hence, while the political structure was hierarchical in nature, a great deal of autonomy could be found at the local level¹¹.

Land Tenure Systems in the Nyiginya Kingdom

The basic social unit in pre-colonial Rwanda was the *inzu* (‘the house’). The *inzu* consisted of three generations: grandparents, their married sons, and their grandchildren. The *inzu* was a localised and exogamic patrilineal group, and the *inzu* lineage, also called *umuryango* (‘gate to the compound’, Vansina 2004), grew as new generations were added. By growing in size, lineages were better able to protect their members from outsiders and to gain political power. When lineages became too large or disagreement arose among their members, certain members would leave and form new *inzu* lineages. Over time, several *imiryango* formed alliances, thus creating even larger social groups called *ubwoko* (‘patriclans¹²’). Clans thus did not have a single ancestor, could consist of farmers and herders alike, and members were dispersed over the kingdom (d’Hertefelt 1971). Moreover, affiliation with a particular clan was not necessarily for life (Vansina 2004). Clans were religious and political units.

In the early days of the Rwandan kingdom, several types of land tenure existed. In one system, it rested on rights stemming from clearing forests (rights referred to as *ubukonde*). Clearing of land was normally undertaken by *inzu* lineages. Property rights were vested in the corporate group, not in individuals.

¹⁰ Apparently, women could traditionally hold positions of considerable power. This may explain the cultural acceptance of large numbers of elected female parliamentarians at present, which is in fact the highest percentage in the world.

¹¹ This has in fact been the case throughout the history of Rwanda and is still the case today.

¹² A patriclan is a group that claims common descent through the male line from a common male ancestor but cannot prove the lineage or trace the descent. Rwanda knows about 18 agnatic patriclans (D’Hertefelt 1971). Agnatic (or patrilineal) descent is established by tracing descent exclusively through males from a founding male ancestor. Exogamous marriage was the norm, except for the king. There existed four matrilineal clans (Eega, Kono, Ha, and Gesera), known under the group name of *Ibibanda*, which were entitled to supply royal wives (D’Hertefelt 1971).

Immigrants or members of other lineages could be granted land by these first settlers or their descendants, thus becoming land-tenure clients (*abagererwa*) of a particular *inzu* lineage. In exchange for the right to cultivate, land-tenure clients paid tribute to their patron, mostly in the form of hoes and beer. Labour prestations are likely to have been present but were not onerous (Pottier 2002). In the same publication, Pottier argues that rights to land in the *ubukonde* system could be reclaimed by the lineage without, however, reducing the land-tenure client's annual prestation. The *inzu* lineages that first cleared the land came to form small independent political entities. Over time, and with the size of a lineage growing, new lineages were formed by splitting old ones, which could then attract their own followers. Prestations to the former lineage would at this time be stopped (Pottier 2002).

This type of land tenure was found all over the country, but with the increasing power of the central kingdom this system was in many regions supplanted by what became known as the *igikingi* land tenure system. The *ubukonde* land tenure system remained common in sparsely populated areas, such as in the western and north-western forests, which, in later times, were in fact among the most populated areas of the country. In these areas, the *ubukonde* chiefs continued to form small independent political entities.

The second type of land tenure, *igikingi*, evolved among herders. Unlike the *ubukonde* system, *igikingi* land tenure rights were granted to individual *inzu* and not to the *inzu* lineage. In central and east Rwanda, the heart of the Nyiginya kingdom, where the climate was more favourable to herding, herders forcefully occupied new territory and settled there with their cattle. The new territory was then divided among territorial chiefs (*abatware*), who were usually war heroes or other individuals commanding respect (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003) and whose power rested on the presence of a military force. The holders of *igikingi* land claimed full ownership over it. They could partition it and allow others to cultivate certain plots. In exchange for tribute, in the form of payments and corvee labour, the political leaders regularly reassigned tracts of land (*ingobyi*) among farmers and herders. Part of the territory was kept aside, however, creating collective pastures for local herders (Vansina 2001, 2004). Thus, *igikingi* included both pasturage and agricultural land; the latter type of land is also referred to as *isambu* (Newbury 1983).

In pre-colonial Rwanda, cattle raids were common. Herders at risk of losing their cattle either had the opportunity to flee their territory, joining other herders elsewhere, or to accept the protection of someone more powerful. Many herders chose the second option, resulting in *igikingi* leaders accepting the king as their ultimate patron, whose military power was stronger than that of most herders. Increasingly, the central court came to decide how *igikingi* land should be distributed. This formed another break with the *ubukonde* land tenure system, since in that system land could not be alienated from the lineage head. In return for accepting the king as their ultimate patron, sons of the new territorial chiefs were enrolled in the royal army, and some were able to marry into the royal family.

Summarising, one could say that there were three main differences between the *ubukonde* and the *igikingi* land tenure system. Firstly, unlike holders of *ubukonde*

land, chiefs holding *igikingi* land were not linked by kinship to their subjects, who consisted of farmers and politically less successful herders. Secondly, while *ubukonde* rights were vested in *inzu* lineages, land tenure rights in the *igikingi* system were granted to individual *inzu* and not the *inzu* lineage. Thirdly, under the *igikingi* system, and especially among farmers on *isambu* land, labour formed an important prestation (Pottier 2002).

Expansion of the Kingdom and System of Exploitation

While farmers and herders both kept cattle, herders maintained larger herds. These were at times kept jointly with other herds but normally were managed separately. Herders lived a life of transhumance, migrating from pasture to pasture and from highlands to marshes between seasons. The agricultural and herding communities were interwoven but not integrated. Agreements between farmers and herders had to be reached with regard to rights of passage for cattle and access to meadows and water points. Moreover, in order to feed their cattle during the dry season, herders returned from the hills to the marshes. The marshes, however, were also crucial to farmers, as they could cultivate crops there that would help them overcome the dry season. The outcome of such agreements largely depended on the political power of those concerned, which in itself depended on clan membership, lineage size, and relation to the royal court.

While cattle were of central importance in the pre-colonial system, they did not have an intrinsic utility. Rather, cattle formed an indirect means, like money, to command goods, labour, and alliances. Others have argued that cattle had no economic value in pre-colonial Rwanda and that the transfer of cattle between various actors should be seen as a mechanism for recording relationships:

“But contrary to what is generally believed, it was not the gift of a cow that determined the nature of the relationship, it was the relationship (or the relative status) between donor and recipient that determined the nature of the gift. In other words, the transfer of a cow did not create the relationship but recorded it.”

(Gravel 1967: 325-326; italics original)

It was not out of need that one individual asked another for a cow. Rather, the transfer of a cow was an acknowledgement of someone's weak or strong position vis-à-vis another person. In ways similar to the transfer of cows, other patron-client relationships were recorded, or confirmed, through the transfer of hoes or banana plantations (Gravel 1967).

Since milk production was poor and few cattle were slaughtered for consumption, agriculture was no doubt more important than livestock breeding to the majority of people. However, those with enough cattle were able to command goods and services from those without cattle (Codere 1973), enabling the former to avoid socially despised labour in the fields. Rather, cattle owners supervised cultivation.

Cattle represented an important means of overcoming periods of difficulty. In pre-colonial Rwanda, droughts were common. In addition, the many military campaigns, some of which were no more than large-scale cattle raids, prevented farmers from cultivating. Moreover, the passing through of armies often led to the destruction or looting of crops. The result was the widespread occurrence of famines, becoming more numerous from about 1850 onwards, at the time when the occurrence of civil war had greatly increased. Herders usually had fewer problems recovering from such disasters, as they were more mobile than farmers. In addition, restocking of herds was achieved much faster than harvesting new crops. However, examples are known where herders were forced to cultivate for survival, as happened after severe outbreaks of rinderpest (Reisdorff 1952, cited in Pottier 1986)¹³.

As a result of climatic, environmental, or political pressures, mobility among people – especially herders and the elite – was high. Some people moved on a more or less permanent basis. Farmers were less mobile, due to the long time needed to harvest the fruits of their labour. Many only left their settlements temporarily in order to escape famines or large conflicts over land. With the population rapidly increasing, as the result, among others, of the introduction of new crops and cultivation techniques, it became even more difficult to migrate to other unoccupied lands. This situation was aggravated by the introduction of reserved herding domains, also referred to as *igikingi*¹⁴, such as the eastern savannahs, which were reserved as pastures for the king (Newbury 1988)¹⁵. Subsequently, plots became increasingly smaller, affecting both farmers and herders.

The expansion of the Nyiginya kingdom revolved around the strength of the royal armies. Its soldiers were recruited by hereditary conscription (Taylor 2004), new to this region of the world, and seized herds constituted the wealth and power of the army chiefs. To create new herds under the control of the king, cattle raids were regularly undertaken in neighbouring kingdoms. Even within the borders of the kingdom, among herders with large numbers of ‘private’ cattle, raids were common; hence the need for protection. Cattle rustled by the army was presented at the court and divided among the king, the armies, the army commanders, and other individuals important to the king. Over time, a form of clientship evolved – the institution of *ubuhake* – in which the king retained ultimate ownership over all cattle. The king gave subsidiary usufruct rights over his cattle to some of his close followers, including the commanders of his armies. These usufruct rights could be revoked in the event that the caretaker fell from grace (Codere 1973). The increase

¹³ For an idea about the severity of rinderpest outbreaks, see Botte (1985a, 1985b).

¹⁴ According to Prunier (1994), *igikingi* type of landholdings included land given and held in freehold or as undivided property in the way *ubukonde* land was held. Theoretically, *igikingi* land was for grazing but in reality the land was often used agriculturally, leading to *igikingi* land tenure contracts between patron and client.

¹⁵ The eastern savannah opened up for migration only after independence in 1962 (Olson 1994).

in the king's herds implied that his following increased, as more people were able to benefit from the wealth thus accumulated.

Careers could be made by being awarded usufruct rights over large herds or by being appointed command of an army, which gave commanders not only rights over the hers appointed to them personally by the king but over all the herds belonging to soldiers within their unit. Influential persons used their cattle to create their own network of *ubuhake*-clients. With the expansion of the institution of *ubuhake*, progressively more cattle were needed to co-opt influential people and to work towards a centralised organisation of society. Independent herders with large numbers of cattle in or near the kingdom were increasingly at risk of being looted or expropriated and had limited opportunities to remain with their cattle. Either they could decide to be satisfied with usufruct rights over a herd, in which case they became clients to the king and could hope to share in his wealth and affluence, or they could flee the kingdom.

As *ubuhake* gained ground, the need for even more cattle arose, since wars and cattle raids were no longer sufficient to supply the necessary 'capital'. Subsequently, other types of patron-client relationships, in which not cattle but land was central, increased in importance. Cattle no longer constituted the only or main source of wealth in the central kingdom. In the eighteenth century, royal authority was further established through the acquisition of pasture land, including the hills on which they were located. Control over these lands was granted to a few of the king's faithful clients. The expansion of the kingdom meant that a portion of the *ubukonde* land was forcefully supplanted by the *isambu* land tenure system. The power of local landowning lineages was increasingly broken and, in many places, ownership of land came to be regulated through the same practice as rights to cattle. Farmers on *isambu* land were required to pay a tithe on the production of their crops to their patron and were required to perform demanding corvees. The labour power of those subjugated was thus appropriated by the king and his elites.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, under king Rwabugiri, the process through which land and power were centralised into the hands of a small group of elite intensified. Rwabugiri:

"... rejected the principle that land could be collectively exploited under arrangements that honoured the rights of the first occupier. He broke the power of the landholding lineage heads, then enhanced the state's extractive capacity by appointing land chiefs who were given the means to requisition *uburetwa* labour."

(Pottier 2002: 183, italics mine)

Ubureetwa entailed a form of clientship that involved demeaning manual labour. It was imposed by chiefs on farmers and herders, but the labour extracted from farmers was much higher and more demeaning. Under *ubureetwa*, each man was obliged to work in the service of the chief, without any form of payment, in order to gain access to land. Non-compliance could provoke the loss of one's land. *Ubureetwa* became increasingly humiliating to the majority of farmers and the

demands were so high that it prevented them from working sufficiently and regularly on their own land.

By the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of increasing population pressure and progressively harsh rural conditions, farmers without land began to appear; these included young men awaiting their inheritance but also people with no hope at all of gaining access to land. The lack of land strengthened the position of patrons, enabling them to exploit the masses further. At some point, in addition to a portion of a family's crop yield, four days out of the Rwandan week (comprising only five days) were spent in service to the chief. All the exploited classes could hope for was to gain protection of their patrons against raids and natural calamities.

The combination of ever smaller plots, increasingly exploitative *ubuhake* contracts, and demeaning *ubureetwa* requirements resulted in the impoverishment of the general population, farmers and herders alike. It is not surprising then to find that large numbers of people, among them many herders, moved to Uganda and the Belgian Congo after large-scale famines, such as the famines referred to as *Rwakayihura* (1928-29)¹⁶ and *Ruzagajura* (1943), or after major political upheavals, such as happened when king *Rwabugiri* expanded his kingdom in the nineteenth century and imposed the heavy (*ubureetwa*) taxation system (Pottier 2002). Here, the migrants joined even earlier Rwandan settlers who had left the country to look for pastures and agricultural land in neighbouring regions.

Social Transformation and Stratification

Land and cattle clients were increasingly expected to pay tribute in the form of tithes and corvee to their chiefs and the king. Initially, they could escape such demands by migrating to other areas and clearing new lands or settling under the protection of another patron. With increasing population density, this option became less realistic and over time the tributes to be paid became highly exploitative. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the number of political posts remained quite limited in relationship to the growing numbers of candidates (Codere 1973). New posts were created by means of territorial expansion, by multiplying existing positions, by internal rivalries at the court and among chiefs, and "by dividing domains while increasing exploitation of subjects to make up for smaller size" (Vansina 2004: 126). An era of terror began, which engulfed the whole country. One of the effects of this process of social transformation was the birth of stratified social categories: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.

Some authors argue that the ethnic groups in Rwanda can be linked directly to geographical descent. For example, Codere (1973) argues that the Tutsi are of Ethiopoid origin. Others have argued that Hutu are of Negroid and Twa of Pygmoid origin. Desmedt (1991, cited in Vansina 2004) argues that the Tutsi are descendents of Nilotic Bito. Apparently, Nilotic Bito, herders from the east of Lake

¹⁶ This famine was named thus because it began in the *Rukiga* of Chief *Kayihura* (Botte 1985b).

Victoria, descended southwards at some point into what is now known as Rwanda. However, such views are contested and numerous authors argue that there are few linguistic, phenotypical, or social differences between Hutu and Tutsi (Waters 1995). What they call for is in fact a social-constructivist view on the notions of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.

Vansina (2004) argues that farming was perceived as the normal livelihood of people in the early days of the Nyiginya kingdom. Already in the seventeenth century, farmers were referred to as Hutu and were distinguished from those who practised different ways of life. The label Twa was reserved for the small groups of foragers that inhabited the kingdom. The Twa are likely to have been the first group in Rwanda to suffer social exclusion and were discriminated against by both farmers and herders, who considered them not fully human (Taylor 2004). They were considered 'court jesters' and 'irresponsible scamps and buffoons' (Codere 1973). At the same time, the Twa were feared for their military prowess. Incorporated in the kingdom's armies, they were thus able to successfully ally with the Tutsi elite and the central court (Vansina 2004). However, they were never taken on as clients (Taylor 2004), and as a result the Twa were able to shift their alliances as they saw fit, thus securing their physical wellbeing and political and economic security.

The labels Hima and Tutsi applied to herders. Initially, 'Hima' referred to herders from the north and Tutsi to herders from the south. Later, 'Tutsi' referred to herders who came to form the ruling political elite while 'Hima' referred to common herders. Over time, the ruling class, largely consisting of herders, ended up labelling all herders 'Tutsi'. Tutsi, and specifically herders of Tutsi nobility, were juxtaposed against farmers, or Hutu, who were looked down upon because of the menial work they performed. The label Hutu was also applied to all foreigners (Vansina 2004).

The three stratified groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) were characterised by occupational specialisation and cultural differences, expressed in different diets, habits, and life opportunities (Codere 1973). Many people, especially the Twa and the Tutsi elite (Vansina 2001), practiced extensive occupational endogamy, which over time created a shared gene pool within each group (Des Forges 1999, Taylor 2004). Nevertheless, intermarriages were common (Waters 1995), mostly in the form of Hutu men marrying Tutsi women¹⁷.

In pre- and early colonial Rwanda, there were marked differences in consumption patterns among Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa (Maquet 1961, Codere 1973, Taylor 2004). Tutsi relied largely on milk products¹⁸. To be seen with solid foods was considered a taboo, as this suggested that menial work had been performed. To avoid the social stigma of eating solid foods, a good deal of nourishment was taken in the form of beer and liquor. Solid foods were eaten only after one had

¹⁷ Intermarriages declined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the gap between the Tutsi elite and Hutu commoners widened, but rose again after the 1959 revolution (Des Forges 1999, Taylor 2004).

¹⁸ Note, however, that Gravel (1967) argues that milk production was too low for most individuals, let alone whole families, to survive on milk only.

reached puberty, and then only once a day, at night in the privacy of the home; the preparation and consumption of solid foods was cloaked in secrecy. Hutu, because of occupational specialisation, had more access to products from the land and relied less, if at all, on milk products, since they had fewer or no cows to look after. Nevertheless, Hutu also appreciated the various types of local brews and consumed these when they could. The Twa, however, appear to have had no food taboos.

The following myth, recounted to me by one of my respondents, helps explain food taboos among Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa:

The mythical king Gihanga sent his sons Gatutsi, Gahutu, and Gatwa out to bring him a special item [the woman telling this story had forgotten what this item was]. The three brothers went out to fulfil their task. For days they walked through forests, but they could not find the item as requested by their father Gihanga. The three brothers were getting tired and hungry. Gahutu and Gatwa wanted to rest. They stopped and looked for food [At this point the narrator realised she was unsure what it was that Gahutu found to eat]. Gatwa looked around and found the placenta of an elephant, which he decided to eat. Gatutsi decided to continue without eating or resting, finding his mission more important than the feeling of hunger. For this reason, up until today, Tutsi are thin people. Moreover, as Gatwa decided to eat polluted food, neither Hutu nor Tutsi are able to share food with the Twa.

(Ruth¹⁹, 4 October 2003)

Food taboos persist to this day. For example, in the research area I found that many Tutsi prefer not to carry food products from the market to their homes. If they are not able to hire carriers, they hide products from view. Food is generally prepared and consumed in the privacy of homes. The widespread fear of poisoning was cited as the main reason for the secrecy around food preparation and consumption. Unlike the milk of cows, goat's milk is widely available in the research area. Moreover, most people were aware that goat's milk is a nutritious product. However, few admitted to drinking it, as the goat is generally considered a dirty animal. Goat's meat, however, is widely consumed by all groups (personal observation). In contrast, the slaughtering and consumption of sheep is associated with the Twa (Berlage *et al.* 2003).

Whereas Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa formed stratified groups in earlier times, with the development of the army the first systematic differentiation between Tutsi and Hutu evolved. The armies consisted largely of herders who needed to be fed during expeditions and whose herds needed to be tended to. Combatants and rustlers were mostly referred to as Tutsi and the servants needed to supply them were referred to as Hutu (which in practice included farmers as well as herders). Only under king Rwabugiri (second half of the nineteenth century) did the

¹⁹ Names of respondents are fictionalised throughout this study.

stratified social categories of Hutu and Tutsi as we know them today evolve. This latest stratification followed after the king introduced the institution of *ubureetwa*, enabling those in charge of land to impose even more obligations on farmers, but not on herders. Through *ubureetwa*, mobility between social and ethnic categories came to be severely curtailed (Pottier 2002).

Earlier, social mobility among 'Hutu' farmers and 'Tutsi' herders had occurred. Among Twa, the possibility for upward mobility was much more limited, although examples are known of Twa families having been accorded Tutsi status by the king (Taylor 2004). With increasing systematic differentiation between the stratified social groups, intermarriage and commensality diminished (Taylor 2004) and opportunities for social mobility became exceedingly rare (Newbury 1988). Nevertheless, even then individual Hutu could be ennobled and made Tutsi by royal decree (Codere 1973)²⁰. Downward social mobility also occurred. For example, impoverished herders who were not able to recover from stock-depleting epizootic diseases became Hutu farmers (Vansina 2004). To belong to a particular social category was thus less a function of descent but of wealth, particularly in the form of cattle, and power (Newbury 1988). With the institutionalisation of these new social categorisations in a period of tremendous upheaval, social and ethnic divisions began to crystallise (Pottier 2002). Rebellion among the exploited classes soon evolved into 'ethnic' animosities between Hutu and Tutsi. Hutu and Tutsi became political labels that increasingly determined a person's life chances and relations with the authorities (Newbury 1988). Under these conditions, the current ethnic identifications became prominent.

It was this reality that the Europeans encountered on their arrival in Rwanda. Europeans did not invent Rwanda's ethnic groups. Or, as Newbury and Newbury (2000: 840) argue: "The social groups did not 'arrive' as corporate groups, or with their current labels; instead, more recent social identities emerged as part of the large processes of social flux, individual action and political power". However, Europeans did exacerbate the existing situation by adding to it the ideology of biological determinism (Taylor 1999), nurturing Tutsi self-awareness by contributing an explanation of physical difference and racial superiority. In the opinion of the Europeans, Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa formed three distinct, long-existent, and internally homogeneous people who were representative of Ethiopid, Bantu, and Pygmoid population groups (Des Forges 1999). The popular Hamitic myth circulating among the Europeans held that Tutsi were a branch of the Caucasian race (Des Forges 1999) and should be differentiated from other races, to which Hutu and Twa belonged: races considered less intelligent than the 'superior' herders.

In the 1930s, the Belgian administration introduced identity cards, 'fixing' the supposed hierarchy they had encountered in the field by registering ethnicity on those cards (Pottier 2002). The creation of schools for training Tutsi in administration further contributed to the process of nurturing Tutsi self-awareness. Moreover, the Belgian administration enabled the king to increase his legitimacy in

²⁰ Longman (1997) uses the term '*icihuture*' to describe the process of Hutu upward social mobility.

regions over which he traditionally held only nominal control, such as in the north and northwest, where farming lineages – consisting primarily of Hutu – had long been able to withstand the rule of the central court. The Belgian administration, supported by the Catholic Church, thus embarked on a ‘tutsification’ policy (Reyntjens 1996).

Colonialism and the Erosion of Traditional Systems

The British explorer Hanning Speke was the first European to visit the area (1858), followed by von Götzen (1894), who was the first European to reach the Rwandan court, and then von Ramsay (1897) (Newbury 1988, Vansina 2004). As early as 1890, Rwanda, including the north and northeast region, became part of German East Africa. Meanwhile, in the southwest of the country, Belgian officers set up camp in an attempt to establish Belgian claims on the area between Congo Free State (which became a colony of Belgium in 1908) and German interests further east²¹. From 1898, German colonial military rule was established. After an agreement in 1910 on colonial boundaries, negotiated by Belgium, Germany, and Britain, the Germans also gained control over the south-western regions (Newbury 1988).

The Germans did not interfere in the internal affairs of the country. They supported the court and the traditional authorities, establishing a form of indirect rule with the aim of building an economically solvent colonial state. Between 1894 and 1916, the Germans “engaged in a series of military actions which secured the boundaries of Rwanda, solidified the formerly shaky control of the northern section, and suppressed two serious revolts as well as other actions against the power of the *Mwami*” (Codere 1973: 326, italics mine). This enabled the various factions of Tutsi ruling groups to continue their rule of terror, judiciary violence, exploitation, and humiliation of the general population.

In 1900, the first missionaries were granted permission to settle in the region. These missionaries belonged to the Society of Our Lady of Africa, and are commonly referred to as the White Fathers (Longman 1997). They were placed in regions distant from the central court. While the aim of the king was to reduce any meaningful involvement of the missionaries in the activities of the court, the Europeans benefitted from the missionary placements, as they “provided many benefits the incoming administration lacked: personnel, familiarity with the languages, cultures and histories of the different regions, and strategic spread” (Newbury and Newbury 2000: 846). The Catholic Church was able to gain the most influence, fending off as many Protestant missionaries (initially mainly German) as

²¹ Belgium had no real interest in the region but claimed the territory to the east of the Congo, including Rwanda and Burundi, as compensation for their efforts during the First World War as allies of the British against the Germans. Belgium felt that the territory might be of use when discussing the border lineation of the Congo River near Angola with the Portuguese during the Peace conference in 1919. However, it did not succeed in doing so (Vijgen 2005).

possible. Despite the Church's efforts, however, Protestant mission posts were established from 1907 onwards (Vijgen 2005, Spijker 2005)²².

In 1916, Belgian forces occupied Rwanda. In 1917, the German forces in Africa were defeated in World War I, after which Belgian administration was introduced. In 1924, Belgium was granted the League of Nations mandate to govern Ruanda-Urundi (Vijgen 2005). In 1946, Ruanda-Urundi became UN trust territory, governed by Belgium (Vansina 2004, Newbury 1988). The Belgian administration continued the pattern of indirect rule, further protecting the indigenous regime from external and internal threats. The administration recognised that the strengthening of native rule did not curb the abuses against the rural masses and there followed a period during which:

“... the Belgian administration constantly added to a series of laws diminishing the powers and rights of the Tutsi rulers while they continued to act much as they always had, until the Belgians took the drastic step of deposing and exiling the *Mwami* Musinga in 1931 and making Mutara his successor. After the dramatic proof of the finality and extent of Belgian authority, laws such as those depriving the *Mwami* of the power of life and death over his subjects, and prohibiting all other native authorities from using any but non-capital punishments in their chiefdoms or fiefs, began to have full effect.”

(Codere 1973: 326-327, italics mine)

While the Europeans initially assisted the king in extending his power over territories over which the central court traditionally had little influence, such as the northwest region²³ (Newbury 1988, Pottier 2002, Vansina 2004), the court was nevertheless suspicious of the new administration. By installing Belgian residents, the administration restricted the king's power over life and death and reduced his power over his people. The Belgians changed the administrative structure of the country, proposing measures to centralise the chiefs' offices of power, so as to keep a strong hold on the region. In 1926, they regrouped and consolidated administrative units throughout the country, creating larger and more unified regional units. The king was still to appoint the chiefs, albeit with the consent of the Belgian administration, but European territorial administrators and clerks were also installed. Moreover, sons of the chiefs were to attend Europeanised schools, at that time a monopoly held by the church (Prunier 1994), where they received administrative training (Newbury 1988) and where many converted to

²² During the First World War, Protestant evangelism was seriously disrupted and new large-scale Protestant missionary efforts only began again after the 1930s (Longman 1997, Vijgen 2005). The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) established its first mission station at Ruhengeri in 1930 (Cantrell 2007).

²³ This enabled the king, among others, to officially replace the *ubukonde* system of the northwest by the *igikingi* system (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003).

Catholicism. Uneducated sub-chiefs were slowly replaced by the newly educated elite.

King Musinga was suspicious of the Belgian authorities. According to Vijgen (2005), this suspicion was partly the result of the problems surrounding Gisaka. Britain sought to annex the areas west of the Kagera river, including Gisaka in the southeast of the country (Vijgen wrongly situates Gisaka in the northeast), as they intended to construct a railway from Cape Town to Cairo. Initially, Belgium agreed to hand the territory over, a decision that was turned back in 1923. Vijgen does not explain the importance of this region to the king and of the troubles the loss of this territory brought with it, straining the relations between the court and the Belgian administration. In all likelihood, the king had reserved domains (*igikingi*) just east of the Kagera River, the loss of which directly affected his position and weakened his base of power.

As Longman (1997) contends, Musinga also resented the power of the missionaries, as they used their influence to advance pro-Catholic elements in their struggles for power within the Rwandan court. Musinga refused to conform to their new traditions, religion, and habits, as these undermined his ritual authority over his people. However, the missionaries maintained excellent relations with the colonial authorities and actively interceded with them to remove Musinga from power. In 1931, Musinga was eventually disposed of by the Belgian administration and replaced by his son Mutara, who had earlier received European schooling and had converted to Christianity (Codere 1973, Newbury 1988).

The result of these reforms was that the chiefs augmented their power at the cost of the central court. Those who were willing to collaborate with the Europeans saw their power and wealth increase at the cost of the rest of the population, who were even more heavily taxed²⁴ and forced to work on communal projects and to cultivate what was prescribed by the authorities. By eliminating the multiple hierarchies that had existed in pre-colonial Rwanda²⁵, the introduced centralisation led to a diminishing of channels of appeal. This enabled the power of the chiefs to increase excessively, since the colonial administration relied on the chiefs to execute their new policies and demands. Political office increasingly offered the opportunity for personal aggrandisement by extracting surplus from the common people, who had little choice but to comply with the demands of the chiefs if they were not to lose access to their land (Newbury 1988). Clientships tended to become more pressing and extractive, especially in regions where land pressure was severe. Moreover, with the Hamitic myth strongly in place, the reforms meant that Hutu chiefs were increasingly replaced by Tutsi chiefs.

The power of corporate groups such as lineages and clans weakened during the colonial administration. By 1960, with the exception of supernatural specialities such as rainmaking and sorcery, occupations were no longer determined by

²⁴ Taxes are levied for the first time from the entire territory in 1914 (Botte 1985b).

²⁵ The high competition for power and supporters between chiefs at all levels of the hierarchy, which had existed in pre-colonial Rwanda, had given peasants at least some room to escape oppressive conditions and appeal for protection from another chief (Meeren 1996).

kinship but by other factors, such as level of education. As members of a lineage became clients to different patrons, the political role of the legitimate lineage heads diminished further. Moreover, under European rule, cattle clientships and land prestations were slowly replaced by taxes, corvees, and other exactions, such as coerced labour (obligatory cultivation, road construction, work on plantations or in mines, or work for the local authorities). These demands were no longer imposed on lineages, as had been done in the earlier days, but on individual adult men, further weakening lineage and clan institutions (Newbury 1988).

With the increasing importance of the monetised economy, cattle slowly lost much of their social, political, and economic value, thus also reducing their use as a means to command goods and services. Cattle became an economic asset and the raising of cattle was increasingly seen as a commercial enterprise (Codere 1973). As the value of cattle had greatly diminished, the institution of *ubuhake* eroded between 1900 and 1960, and the institution lost its economic capacity to direct the distribution of goods and services. Moreover, by the 1930s a greater number of people were able to escape *ubuhake's* unattractive Byzantine features by allying with the Europeans. Even if chiefs opposed, new prospects loomed for the common people, who could gain Belgian administrative and financial support, enabling them to launch modern entrepreneurial careers (Codere 1973). The colonial administration did not only offer new livelihood opportunities, however; it also restricted others. Thus, in the 1920s and 1930s the Belgian administration restricted the possibility to change one's residence by prohibiting new settlement in the forests (Des Forges 1999). Moreover, the new colonial administration increasingly enabled *uburetwa* to become more exploitative, as this institution was used to extract labour and taxes (Newbury 1988, Pottier 2002, Vansina 2004).

In order to escape oppressive conditions prevailing in Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers migrated to neighbouring countries (Richards 1954), such as Uganda, Tanzania, and eastern Congo (including Kivu and Katanga). People migrated for a number of reasons. One involved famines, when demands for labour supplies increased (Povesland 1954); another had to do with periods when the franc was depreciated in relation to the East African Shilling or when coffee harvests were particularly low (Leurquin 1963). The latter is a clear indication that migration was the result of heavy tax demands. People also 'migrated' after the deposition of king Musinga, when a great number of Tutsi nobles fled the country (Codere 1973). However, most migratory movements in this period consisted of Hutu (Richards 1954), who sought labour contracts in mines, industries, and on plantations.

To give an indication of the size of these migratory movements, I refer to the work of Richards, who found that the number of annual migrants from Belgian territories (including Rwanda and Burundi) to Uganda increased from 46,000 people in the late 1920s to over 100,000 in the 1930s. In addition to these 'voluntary' migratory movements, more people were later 'assisted' to migrate to eastern Congo, especially between 1937 and 1955, when people were selected by the colonial administration to work on the plantations. During that period, some 85,000 people moved from Rwanda to North Kivu alone (Pottier 2002). Migration

was considered not only a useful tool to supply the colony with food but a suitable means to decongest Rwanda of excess cattle (Newbury 1988, Pottier 2002).

Among those who stayed behind, a number were able to gain access to Western Education (mission schools²⁶), sometimes enabling them to find employment outside the agricultural sector and to obtain a measure of autonomy from local structures. Nevertheless, as the Belgians reserved education and jobs in the administration almost exclusively for the Tutsi²⁷, social relationships became increasingly uniform, rigid, unequal, and exploitative, with an ideology of Tutsi racial superiority underlying this system of inequality (Prunier 1994).

In an earlier attempt to provide plots to cultivators with insufficient land, the *igikingi* domains were abolished by the colonial administration between 1926 and 1929 (Newbury 1988). The result was that herders lost access to former pastures, especially in regions of high population density. This increased the need for *ubuhake* land clientships – which were highly exploitive – among herders, as these ties became crucial for obtaining access to pasturage. By 1934, all prestations in kind, with the exception of *ubureetwa*, were replaced by money payments in the form of a tax levied on each adult male in Rwanda²⁸. The abolition of *ubuhake* was in part the result of the emancipating force of Christianity (Codere 1973). The colonial administration, however, resisted transforming *ubureetwa*, as this institution offered a mechanism to force farmers to cultivate coffee and other marketable crops for export, and to plant trees to fight erosion. Nevertheless, from 1939 onwards groups of people, such as contract workers, were allowed to substitute *ubureetwa* with money payments. In 1949, *ubureetwa* was completely replaced by mandatory money payment (Newbury 1988).

While these new forms of taxation were supposed to be levied among all adult males, local chiefs decided who actually had to pay and to participate in corvees, resulting in Hutu farmers bearing the brunt of these taxations. Thus, while the old institutions, the most evident symbols of Tutsi exploitation, were slowly dismantled, essential structures of Tutsi exploitation remained intact. Moreover, new forms of Tutsi control had been incorporated, including over labour, land, and opportunities for education and employment. The introduction of identity cards, which registered ‘ethnicity’ in the 1930s (Pottier 2002), facilitated this control.

By the mid 1950s, the occurrence of sleeping sickness had increased in the east and northeast, forcing stock raisers with their remaining cattle to look for more healthy regions (Leurquin 1963), often outside the borders of Rwanda. The

²⁶ Although the Catholic schools, the largest educational system during the colonial period, favoured Tutsi over Hutu, increasing numbers of Hutu were able to receive education in Christian seminaries. The Seventh Day Adventists were especially willing to accept Hutu students. The Adventists had gained ground in Rwanda when king Musinga sought their help fending off the role of the Catholic mission posts in Rwanda’s politics (Vijgen 2005).

²⁷ In the process, they also removed women from positions of power (Des Forges 1999).

²⁸ Nevertheless, only in 1954 was a decree issued “providing for the dissolution of *ubuhake* ties and distribution of cows to former clients” (Newbury 1988: 145). In practice, this made little difference, since the decree did not affect *ubuhake* land clientship. *Ubuhake* ties were still crucial for obtaining access to pasturage.

more fertile spots left behind were occupied by cultivators, a process of migration that was encouraged by the Belgian administration. During the last ten years of Belgian administration, numerous *paysannats*²⁹ were created (Leurquin 1963), as happened in Bugesera, in an attempt to alleviate the situation of land clients who had no security of tenure over the land they cultivated (Musahara 2001). A mass exodus from western provinces (Gikongoro, Gisenyi, Kubuye, and Ruhengeri) to the eastern and central parts of Rwanda was the result (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003).

Rural conditions became exceedingly harsh, famines and cattle diseases followed one after another, and land scarcity increased, forcing people to cultivate on steeper hills, which in turn aggravated erosion. Peasants were increasingly squeezed and greater numbers of men decided to migrate in search of better livelihood opportunities or to earn cash income through labour contracts, even though wages were low and employment insecure. Women started to feel the brunt of the newly imposed taxations. The various forms of male labour requisitions had already added to women's burdens, as they were forced to take on full responsibility for agricultural work for domestic production. The result of male out-migration was that in some regions the number of young men leaving was so high that women were no longer able to marry (Newbury 1988). The effect was an accelerated growth in social inequality between Hutu and Tutsi.

It is interesting in this respect to note that different accounts of the origin of the ethnic groups circulated. In one, the mythical king Gihanga supposedly had several sons, among whom were Gatutsi, Gahutu, and Gatwa. One day:

“Gihanga gave each of the brothers a pot of milk and told him to guard it during the night. But Gatwa became thirsty and drank his pot of milk. Gahutu became drowsy and in dozing off, spilled some of the contents of his pot. Only Gatutsi succeeded in keeping a full pot of milk until the next morning. For this reason, Gihanga decreed that Gatutsi should possess cattle and enjoy the right to rule. Gahutu would only be able to procure cattle by the work and services he performed for his brother, Gatutsi. As for Gatwa, he would never possess cattle; alternative periods of gluttony and starvation were to be his lot.”

(Smith 1975: 39 cited in Taylor 2004, Taylor 1988: 1345)³⁰

This myth about the origin of Rwanda's three ethnic groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) is still widely recounted. While in the past it may have served the Tutsi well to justify their dominant social position, the essentially racist ideology that was based on this myth is no longer, nor is it likely that it ever was, accepted by many Tutsi, let alone by Hutu and Twa. In 1957, the Bahutu Manifesto was

²⁹ The *paysannat* system involved the distribution of plots in densely populated regions and uninhabited tracts of land to nuclear families (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003), in a process resembling villagisation.

³⁰ This myth has been recounted to me in almost the exact same wording by several of the respondents.

presented. Written by a small group of Hutu intellectuals, the document called for the emancipation of the Hutu. The authors proposed a series of specific reforms to break the Tutsi monopoly of high and well-paid positions in government and elsewhere, so as to improve conditions for Hutu and to give them a voice commensurate with their numbers³¹ (Codere 1973). The Bahutu Manifesto was written in a period when European clergy, influenced by the anti-racist ideological perceptions that emerged in Europe after World War II, became increasingly sympathetic to the plight of Hutu (Mushemeza 2007).

In response, “The Letter of the Twelve Great Servants of the Courts” was published. In this document the supernatural origins of the Tutsi dynasty are reviewed and a new myth is created. This new myth about the origin of social relations between Hutu and Tutsi was being invoked as the possible validity of the myth of the three brothers was denied by the Bahutu Manifesto. The authors of “The Letter of the Twelve Great Servants of the Courts” argue that Kigwa, the first king, when descending from heaven, found the Hutu already present but lacking major agricultural implements. When they realised that Kigwa had brought them superior culture and knowledge, Hutu were ready to serve him as vassals (Codere 1973). The new myth about Kigwa was one that justified the separate but interdependent roles and statuses of the three social groups in a unified Rwanda.

The ideology behind these kinds of myths became increasingly contested. As progressively more men participated in wage labour, migrated to other regions within and across borders, and slowly gained access to the educational system, an awareness of ideological alternatives to the Rwandan system arose, particularly among Hutu and impoverished Tutsi. The political consciousness that developed led to major political and economic transformation in the second half of the twentieth century. Political parties, following ethnic divides, were established and elections were held in 1956. However, following those elections, the Belgian government and Tutsi authorities failed to introduce reforms. This led to an outbreak of protest among Hutu and poor Tutsi, and positions became increasingly polarised (Newbury 1988).

In 1959, king Mutara Rudahigwa died and was replaced by king Kigeri V, “who appeared to be heavily influenced by the most conservative Tutsi group” (Des Forges 1999: 38). From that moment onwards, Rwanda was a simmering cauldron, and demands for social justice and redistribution of power escalated. The call for democracy, which was central to the Hutu revolution (1959-1962), was characterised by important cross-ethnic solidarity (Pottier 2002). However, when Tutsi attacked a Hutu sub-chief in the vicinity of Kabgayi Mission (south of the capital city Kigali) in November of that same year, inter-ethnic violence soon spread across the country. Eventually, the king was forced into exile in Uganda. In his wake, tens of thousands of Tutsi fled, among them many Tutsi chiefs and sub-chiefs (Newbury 1988). Others were relocated in *paysannats* (Newbury 2005). The Belgian administration responded by replacing half the Tutsi local authorities by Hutu (Des Forges 1999). During the Hutu revolution, sporadic violent incidents

³¹ In 1956, Hutu formed nearly 83 percent of the total population, Tutsi just over 16 percent, and Twa less than 1 percent (Codere 1973).

continued. More Tutsi were killed and others fled the country. During the legislative elections in 1961, Parmehutu, a radically anti-Tutsi party, won an overwhelming majority of votes, leading to a drastic alteration in the ethnic composition of the ruling group. By referendum, the monarchy was then rejected by 95 percent of the registered electorate (Codere 1973). These events prompted more Tutsi to flee, and between 1959 and 1963 an estimated 120,000 Rwandan Tutsi became refugees in neighbouring countries (Meeren 1996). On July 1, 1962, Rwanda regained formal independence from European rule, by which time more than half of Rwanda's Tutsi had been killed or had fled the country (Uvin 1998).

Independence

Gregoire Kayibanda was installed as the first president of Rwanda. A Hutu from Gitarama, in the centre of the country, he had received his education in missionary schools. After his installment, periodical new outbursts of ethnic violence erupted, as happened in 1963 when some 20,000 Tutsi were killed following an incursion by Tutsi rebels based in Burundi. Some of the earlier Tutsi refugees attempted to return to Rwanda by force, launching small guerrilla assaults from Burundi and Uganda. While these assaults were easily deflected, they resulted in regular and organised mass killings of Tutsi within Rwanda (Uvin 1998), "regardless of their political position within the former monarchical regime" (Newbury 2005: 272). Many opposition Hutu politicians who did not join Parmehutu were killed as well (Uvin 1998).

Under Kayibanda, the mass exodus from western provinces to previously unoccupied areas, which had commenced in the 1950s and mostly involved former pasture lands and wetlands that had been used for dry-season pasture by herders in the eastern provinces, culminated in a large government-sponsored resettlement program (Clay and Lewis 1990, Olson 1994, Uvin 1998, Verwimp 2003). Massive migration of Hutu farmers into these regions followed. Nevertheless, discontent with Rwanda's first president soon arose, as Kayibanda did little to advance Hutu representation in education and government employment and favoured the south over other regions of the country.

The late 1960s were marred by terror, discord, and corruption (Pottier 2002). In 1973, Kayibanda was ousted in a military coup led by Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu from Gisenyi, in the northeast of the country. Once more, an exodus of Tutsi took place. Habyarimana was able to call the anti-Tutsi 'pogroms' to a halt and his rule ensured inter-ethnic stability until the late 1980s. In 1975, Habyarimana abolished all political parties and made all Rwandans members of his Republican Movement for Development (MRND). In 1978 he was elected president.

Habyarimana enjoyed massive popular support, which rested largely on high world market prices for the crops that farmers were required to grow, such as coffee. Popular support was no doubt further increased by the fact that Rwanda became one of the most aided countries in the world, with development aid being vastly greater than private investment and commercial exports combined. Moreover, the amount of development aid grew over time, primarily due to a large

increase in structural adjustment-related programme aid and later emergency aid (Uvin 1998, Verwimp 2003, Verwimp and Bavel 2005). Under Habyarimana, mortality rates went down, educational standards rose, and medical and health care indicators improved (Prunier 1994).

Despite such developments, however, Habyarimana's rule amounted to a dictatorship with a poor human rights record (Verwimp 2003). Many power holders under the Kayibanda regime, including Kayibanda himself, were killed and "internal security kept a tight lid on any opposition or dissension for almost two decades. The legal system was independent in name only, and impunity was the norm" (Uvin 1998: 23). The ambition of the new political Hutu elite was to restore pre-colonial land tenure systems, with powerful landowners (*abakonde*) attracting clients (*abagererwa*) through land (Pottier 1993). Assisted in its endeavours by the Catholic Church and the international community, the state controlled almost all avenues for enrichment and upward social mobility by installing a quota system whereby access to higher education and state jobs was proportionally limited to the size of ethnic groups (Uvin 1998). As a result, Tutsi, but also Hutu from the south, were restricted in their livelihood opportunities.

While rural incomes were practically the same for Hutu and Tutsi, jobs in the public sector became increasingly reserved for Hutu; allocation of jobs was made not on the basis of competency but on connections (Uvin 1998). Verwimp concludes that:

"... under the Habyarimana regime, a sizeable number of Tutsi tried to obtain a Hutu identity card³². This is an economic strategy and a strong indication that the Hutu identity was valued more than the Tutsi identity. Most importantly, a Hutu identity card gave access to government jobs. The second indicator (equally powerful) is the fact that interethnic marriage was occurring more frequently after the 1959 Revolution than before. This is also an economic strategy, to put it in another way, it paid more to be a Hutu (or to be married into a Hutu family) than to be a Tutsi in the Habyarimana regime."

(Verwimp 2003: 25)

Habyarimana continued to struggle with an ongoing increase in land scarcity. As well as clearing forests and draining marshes to free more land, the government continued to stimulate out-migration of farmers from areas of high population density to land in the east of the country (Kigali-Ngali, Byumba and Kibungo)³³. These lands in the east, less fertile than those elsewhere, had previously been used for pastoral activities. The new government policy consisted of giving 2 hectares of indivisible land to a household willing to live in a *paysannat*, under the condition that the household would engage in the cultivation of coffee

³² This automatically has implications for the reliability of statistics during this period.

³³ Olson (1995: 218) points out: "Most people who now live in the East, therefore, originate from various locations in the West and often maintain their identities from Butare, Ruhengeri, etc."

on about one-third of the allocated fields (Verwimp 2003). By the time the programme ended in the late 1970s, over 80,000 people had moved into previously unoccupied areas (Clay and Lewis 1990). Nevertheless, the programme failed. It was not accompanied by real land reform that redistributed land to the poor, but instead it benefited the political elite. In addition, farmers refused to adopt the technologies offered to them, as these did not fit their demands (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). Despite the failure of the programme, however, spontaneous movement of people to the less fertile southeast continued in the 1980s (Olson 1994).

Under Habyarimana, the number of cattle in the country decreased (Verwimp 2003). While this can in part be explained by Tutsi refugees taking their herds with them, it is also an indication that the old way of living was becoming much less viable. Specialisation in either agriculture or cattle breeding became less common. As the number of cattle decreased, the area under crop cultivation increased. The mean average area per holding decreased considerably, however, from 1.6 hectares in 1983 (May 1995) to 1.2 in 1984 and 0.9 hectare per household in 1990 (Verwimp 2003). This implies that many households had less than the 0.7 hectare generally accepted to be the minimum size needed to feed the average household (Uvin 1998).

The lack of land led to increased poverty. One of the results was that many people were unable to afford marriage (Olson 1995) because, according to custom, a man can only take a wife if he has land for cultivation or cattle. The incidence of cohabitation and children born out of wedlock rose (Des Forges 1999). Problems were compounded by the absence of sufficient off-farm income-generating opportunities³⁴. Households with small landholdings increasingly started to work off the family farm as agricultural wage labourers, while members of larger landholdings were more likely to hold jobs in the public sector and commerce.

Land inequality was rising rapidly. Poorer families, constituting 43 percent of the population, owned only 15 percent of cultivated lands, with an average farm landholding area of between less than 0.25 and 0.75 hectares. About 50 percent of rural families had to hire land in order to produce enough for their basic subsistence needs. However, 16 percent of land-rich families owned 43 percent of cultivated lands, the average farm landholding area being more than 1 hectare (Gasana 2002). Land scarcity was a problem for both Hutu and Tutsi; it was not divided along ethnic lines (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002).

Distress sales of land by very poor farmers witnessed a steep increase (Pottier 2002) and a large group of landless and nearly landless peasants emerged. Among other reasons, land was also regularly expropriated by the state to create large state-owned coffee and tea plantations and parastatal marshland projects (Uvin 1998, Pottier 2002). Wealthy off-farm income earners, many of whom earned their income in administration, were able to purchase land from the poor (André and Platteau 1998, Uvin 1998), despite the policy that the purchase of land by those

³⁴ By the end of the 1980s, rural unemployment among adults had reached 30 percent (Gasana 2002). Rural unemployment was especially high among women, as off-farm income opportunities in the 1980s were mostly in the hands of male farmers (Pottier 2002).

with 3 or more hectares of land was forbidden and the requirement that all land sales had to be authorised by the government. Long-term leases and black market sales increased rapidly. The exploitation of underutilised lands, such as marshes and valley bottoms, became increasingly regulated on a collective basis, through membership to cooperatives (Pottier 2002).

Livelihood opportunities were limited. The government hampered people's mobility and initiative by introducing numerous measures, including "residence permits, zoning regulations, restrictive labour practices, copious taxes, and police harassment" (Uvin 1998: 115). As had happened during the colonial period, farmers were told to increase their productivity, in particular of export crops such as coffee and tea. As the area under coffee cultivation continued to grow, the area for banana cultivation, an important subsistence crop for farmers, was increasingly reduced. Despite the penalties, farmers uprooted their coffee plants in order to grow other crops (Uvin 1998, Verwimp 2003). In 1974, a form of forced labour, or indirect tax, was once again installed. It was called *umuganda* and it closely resembled the earlier and much loathed institution of *ubureetwa*. Every week, one adult male per family had to participate in unpaid community labour on projects chosen by the state: construction of schools, roads, markets, health centres, and anti-erosion structures. *Umuganda* was not popular among the population and by the mid-1990s, when the power of Habyarimana had decreased considerably, the institution was abandoned (Uvin 1998, Verwimp 2003)³⁵.

The government stressed food self-sufficiency³⁶ (Robins 1990) and rural development as its central goals (Verwimp 2003). In reality, "only between 4 and 6 percent of current expenditures was devoted to rural development, with more than half of that going to salaries" (Uvin 1998: 149). More than two-thirds of rural

³⁵ During fieldwork (2002-2007) I noticed that the institution of *umuganda* is once again in use. People are expected to work on road ditches and in communal nurseries. Not every household supplies the requested labour, however, which regularly leads to conflicts with the local authorities, although I have heard of no cases where sanctions such as fines or imprisonment were imposed. A common strategy used by people is to stay indoors during *umuganda* days. If one is 'caught' by the authorities, which can easily happen, since even cars are pulled over and drivers or passengers must be able to prove that their presence is required elsewhere. If unable to do so, they are forced to start working then and there. In general, well-educated people from the city are able to escape *umuganda* altogether, leaving peasants and the poor to perform most of the obligatory work. A common complaint is that not everyone is aware of when *umuganda* is scheduled and that other equally labour-demanding institutions such as tree planting days are also scheduled at times that are not always clear.

³⁶ Food self-sufficiency implies that international trade is not needed in meeting basic national nutritional needs. Food self-reliance, however, implies that a nation, by means of production and international trade, is able to meet basic national nutritional needs (Loveridge 1991). Loveridge (1991: 96) argues that under Habyarimana little was done "to restrict domestic and cross-border food marketing ... In practice agricultural products move freely between Rwanda and neighbouring countries". This suggests that food self-reliance rather than food self-sufficiency was promoted.

savings in the Banques Populaires du Rwanda went to the cities in the forms of credit (Uvin 1998). The lack of government funding in the agricultural sector was partly compensated for by compulsory community labour (*umuganda*) and foreign aid. The measures proposed by the government did little to improve the position of the rural population and favoured foremost importers and wholesale traders as well as construction and state-owned companies (Verwimp 2003). Opportunities for social mobility (by means of education, health care, small enterprise, and commerce) were highest in urban areas where the regime's elite was housed, further contributing to the exclusion of the majority of Rwandans.

The agricultural sector was promoted as a matter of policy, while the development of rural and urban industry and regional agricultural specialisation was slow (Uvin 1998). The agricultural sector under Habyarimana was characterised by high population growth and declining land productivity. Moreover, little or no attention was paid to technological innovations, fertiliser use³⁷, and credit and market developments (Verwimp 2003). To make matters worse, the agricultural sector entered a profound crisis from the middle of the 1980s, when world market prices started to decline, negatively affecting almost all social groups (Uvin 1998). The country entered a period of economic decline, aggravated by unfavourable weather conditions leading to crop failures³⁸ and by unsolved refugee problems.

Rwandan refugees who had fled the country during and after the late 1950s had initially settled near borders in anticipation of a quick repatriation. The authorities, however, paid scant attention to this desire and many refugees were relocated to other parts of the host country, far from the border as was demanded by the UNHCR (Mushemeza 2007). The largest group of refugees were brought to western Uganda (Newbury 2005). The Ugandan authorities welcomed the refugees, for reasons that included their historical connection with the Bahima royal family of Uganda. The politics that Rwandan refugees encountered in Uganda more or less reflected those of Rwanda during the colonial administration: the ruling clan of the Bahima was a close ally of the colonial authorities. An alliance between Rwandan refugees, mostly of Tutsi origin, and the Bahima was easily forged: "because of similar interests (monarchical leadership), similarity of fears, and close social ties, especially through intermarriage" (Mushemeza 2007: 68).

³⁷ The non-availability of fertilisers was a constraint to agricultural productivity and continued to be so between 1990 and 2000. For example, during this period the proportion of farmers using chemical fertilisers of lime fell from only 7 percent to an even lower 5 percent (Government of Rwanda 2002).

³⁸ During the five year period of drought that started in 1984, the government hampered cross-border trade and imposed food import restrictions (Verwimp 2003). The country relied heavily on food aid during this period. One of the reasons for this response was that the south of Rwanda, a region that had never been in Habyarimana's favour, was hit particularly badly by the famine. Moreover, it was a region where many Tutsi lived (Verwimp 2003). The famine caused the emigration of ten thousands of Rwandans to Burundi and Tanzania.

For reasons not outlined further here, the Ugandan Bahima had joined the Democratic Party (DP), the principle political alternative to Uganda People's Congress (UPC) under President Milton Obote. Many of the Rwandan refugees joined the DP and close ties were forged between Rwandan refugees and Idi Amin, a member of the DP. Amin seized power from Obote in 1971, and in the years that followed, Rwandan refugees generally fared well under the regime of Amin. However, in 1980 Amin was ousted by Obote, and the position of Rwandan refugees deteriorated quickly (Newbury 2005, Mushemeza 2007). When Yoweri Museveni, who was of Hima origin, organised a movement against Obote, Rwandan refugees joined his struggle. Obote responded by evicting tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees in the early 1980s. Many of these refugees returned to Rwanda, where they settled in the extreme northeast of the country. Habyarimana had no choice but to address the refugee question:

“They [the refugees that were evicted by Obote] established a refugee camp in Rwanda that immediately became the third largest city in that country... The indications were that many more such immigrants would follow... and that addressing this issue would continue to demand considerable funding from the impecunious Rwandan administration. Therefore, on 1 November 1982 the Rwandan government closed the border, in the process trapping some 4.000 people on the Ugandan side, where they were to remain for several years... This situation was instrumental in consolidating a firm opposition to the Obote regime on the part of the Rwandan community in Uganda; and from 1981, some Rwandan individuals became prominent in the National Resistance Movement, under Yoweri Museveni, serving in fighting units which were eventually to overthrow Obote by force in January 1986. From this experience there emerged the organizational structures that were to lead to the formation of the Rwandese Patriotic Front.”

(Newbury 2005: 275)

By the end of the 1980s, about 480,000 refugees (almost 7 percent of the population and almost half the entire Tutsi population) wanted to return to Rwanda (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). While Habyarimana argued that there was not enough land to enable the return of Tutsi refugees (Verwimp 2003), in 1988 he did allow some 50,000 Hutu refugees escaping the ethnic violence in neighbouring Burundi to enter Rwanda; the shortage of land was apparently no longer an issue.

Due to high international coffee prices and an extensive agricultural policy (increased areas of land made available for cultivation), GDP and GDP per capita increased in the early years of Habyarimana's regime. In the mid-1980s, when all land had been brought under cultivation, GDP per capita began to decline. Other indicators also show that the country showed signs of recess (as can be seen in Table 2.1 and 2.2).

Table 2.1: *Macro-economic indicators of Rwanda (1970-1993)*

	1970-1980	1981-1986	1987-1990	1991-1993
Population				
Growth of population (%)	3.6	3.1	2.9	2.9
Area cult. land/ household (ha)	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.8
Production				
Growth of real GDP (%)	5.0	3.5	-0.4	-0.2
Agriculture	6.3	1.2	0.1	
Industry	3.5	-0.9	-0.6	
Services	5.7	1.4	-2.6	
Growth of real GDP / capita	1.7	0.4	-2.6	-0.8
Consumer Price Index	11.6	5.2	3.0	10.0

Source: *Verwimp 2003*

Table 2.2: *Socio-economic indicators of Rwanda (1973-1993)*

	1973	1981	1987	1991	1993
Population					
Population (in million)	4.0	5.2	6.4	7.1	7.4
Nominal GDP (billion US\$)	0.41	1.1	2.1	1.8	
GDP per capita (US\$ 2003)	130	200	300		259
Labour force and education					
% population in agriculture	95.0	94.0	92.8	90.0	
% of relevant age group in primary school			65.0	70.0	
% of relevant age group in secondary school				7.0	7.0
Human Development Indicator	0.323	0.368	0.411	0.321	0.274

Source: *Verwimp 2003*

Between 1960 and the middle of the 1990s, food production had greatly increased (Uvin 1998). However, yields of all major crops declined dramatically between 1984 and 1991, with the decline in tubers being particularly strong (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996, Verwimp 2003, Akresh and Verwimp 2006). Per capita food production dropped by 25 percent (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996, Akresh and Verwimp 2006) and kilocalories production per farmer fell from 2,055 to 1,509 per day (Musahara 2001). This implies that much of the production increase was the result of expansion of cultivated areas rather than increased

productivity. However, whereas “the area of arable land increased only by 10%, agricultural households increased by 100% during the same period’ (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). Food production over this period also increased as a result of double and triple cropping, of putting marginal lands into production, of year-round cultivation of marshes, and of shifting production from grains to tubers (Robin 1990). Food production was, however, not the result of increased yields.

Between 1960 and the 1990s, the purchasing power of most rural households declined greatly. Food imports were not enough to make up for the loss in production levels. Instead, Habyarimana responded by pointing out the need to work longer and harder to achieve increased agricultural production. Extreme poverty in Rwanda increased substantially, from 40 percent in 1985 to 53 percent in 1992 (Uvin 1998). To make matters worse, by the late 1980s, after a long respite, famines made a worrisome reappearance in some parts of the country (André and Platteau 1998).

While at no point implying that peasants should be considered victims of state power (for they resisted many policies and institutions), it is clear that the external environment in which they lived increasingly curtailed livelihood opportunities for the majority of them. Poverty and inequality rose dramatically from the mid-1980s onwards. The gap between the well-off and the poor became increasingly larger, not so much as a result of differences in natural resource endowments but rather as a result of a socio-political system based on multiple exclusions (Uvin 1998), leading to an increase in socio-economic vulnerability. Household strategies among the poor were restricted and distress sales increased, while the political elite became increasingly richer. The ability of poor households to cope with shocks declined rapidly, and the adoption of a growing number of policies under the structural adjustment programme (SAP)³⁹ exacerbated the already severe pressure on most farm households.

The War and Genocide

Habyarimana’s policies formed an important part of a process that eventually led to genocide. His policies led to political unrest, with opposition taking place along regional lines that came mostly from the south and from the centre of the country. Political unrest was further aggravated by Habyarimana’s increasing use of ethnic radicalisation to maintain his power base. While the view on Hutu-Tutsi relationships had no doubt rigidified before and during the colonial period, ethnic qualities remained situational and elastic (Newbury 1988)⁴⁰. As ethnic identities were malleable, Habyarimana was able to ‘reconstruct’ them according to his views. He manipulated and polarised ethnic differentials to the extreme in an

³⁹ These included raising users’ fees in the health sector and with regard to water supply (Uvin 1998).

⁴⁰ Descriptions of ethnicity are social constructs that change consistently, as becomes clear in the work of Pottier (2002) when he describes the use of the ethnic terms Hutu and Tutsi in the events that have unfolded in the recent history of eastern Congo.

ultimate attempt to remain in power. Tutsi were increasingly depicted as interlopers and usurpers, the main cause of the shortage of land among Hutu.

Under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, there had been a steady increase in refugees, among whom were many Tutsi and some moderate Hutu, referred to as old caseload refugees. The Tutsi rebel invasion of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which, from 1990 onwards, regularly invaded Rwanda from its base in Uganda and controlled small but varying parts of the northeast, further aggravated political unrest. The invasions of the RPF led to more than 100,000 people being killed (Gasana 2002) and resulted in large population displacements from major food-producing regions. This further aggravated the economic crisis in Rwanda. By 1992, one-tenth of the population had been displaced and agricultural activities widely disrupted (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). By February 1993, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) and Hutu refugees from Burundi – many of them forced to live in displacement camps – had reached 1,350,000 altogether (Gasana 2002).

During the civil war (1990-1993), frequent massacres of Tutsi were committed by local authorities, the police, and the army, resulting in the deaths of some 2,000 Tutsi (Uvin 1998, Verwimp and Bavel 2005). A reign of terror was launched by the highest levels of the Habyarimana regime against Tutsi; it included murder, rape, harassment, and imprisonment, and was accompanied by widespread racist and genocidal discourses, causing more Tutsi to flee the country (Uvin 1998). As a result of death and flight, but also of attempts by Tutsi to obtain Hutu identity cards, the percentage of Tutsi in the Rwandan population declined sharply, from about 17.5 percent of the population in 1952 to only 8.4 percent in 1991 (Des Forges 1999).

In 1993, Habyarimana signed a power-sharing agreement with the RPF in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, ostensibly signalling the end of the civil war. A decision was reached that included a major democratisation of Rwandese society, but which in fact threatened the power base of the Habyarimana regime. The Arusha Agreement also discussed the return of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of refugees. As Mushemeza (2007: 123) argues: “[if] repatriation succeeded, particularly in a new democratic environment supported by the West, the RPF would have lost ... [an important] grievance, namely there could be no peace in Rwanda while more than two million Banyarwanda were outside the country as refugees”. At the same time, the international community was unwilling to authorise an effective UN peacekeeping operation. Military and diplomatic support to the Habyarimana regime continued or, in the case of France, increased, enabling the Habyarimana regime to further prepare for the genocide that was soon to be unleashed (Uvin 1998). The processes that led to the genocide were thus multiple and complex, and included:

“... extreme pauperization and reduction of “life chances” for a majority of the poor; an uninformed and uneducated peasant mass treated in an oppressive, authoritarian, and condescending manner; a history of impunity, human rights violations, corruption, and abuse of power; a deep-felt frustration and cynicism by many poor people; growing individual, ethnic and regional inequality; the political strategies employed by elites in

search of protection against the internal and external pressures of democratization and discontent; the existence of past and current acts of violence, including the 1990 RPF invasion; and a history of institutionalized, state-sponsored racism.”

(Uvin 1998: 3)

On 6 April 1994, Habyarimana’s plane was shot down over Kigali. Habyarimana, who was accompanied by the newly elected Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira, was killed instantly, as was Ntaryamira. Within a few moments, Habyarimana’s presidential guard began the systematic massacre of Tutsi. Extremist Hutu militia (*interahamwe*), trained by the national army, joined in the massacre. Within 100 days some 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were murdered. Immediately after Habyarimana’s death, the RPF launched a major offensive, killing many Hutu civilians in Byumba, Kibungo, and Kigali-Ngali. Certain scholars are of the opinion that Rwanda faced a double genocide (Hutu killing Tutsi and Tutsi, organised in the RPF, killing Hutu). Others believe that this is not the case, since a sizeable number of RPF killings can be categorised as revenge killings (Verwimp 2003). I concur with this latter position. Be that as it may, in regions where the RPF assumed control at an early stage, relatively fewer Tutsi and more Hutu died violently. Moreover, according to some accounts up to 100,000 Hutu were caught up in the RPF reprisals (Des Forges 1999)⁴¹.

André and Platteau (1998) argue that the genocide offered a unique opportunity to settle old scores. As for the victims, in general “older people, men, Tutsi and *land-rich* people had a higher probability to die violently compared to young people, women, Hutu or *land-poor* people” (Verwimp 2003: 190-191, italics mine). However, this does not automatically imply that the killings were committed by the land-poor or that there was a direct relationship between land ownership or poverty and participation in the killings. In fact, Verwimp (2003) found that peasants with small and unproductive landholdings were not more active in the genocide than peasants with small and productive land or with relatively large landholdings. Moreover, a high number of genocide perpetrators were found among the land-renting farmers. This suggests that land tenure status, rather than poverty status, was an important factor with regard to people who participated in the genocide. Verwimp (2003) also found that participation was higher among households with one or more members earning an income in non-agricultural off-farm activities and among female-headed households. These findings are as yet little understood and more research into these issues is needed.

Three main paradigms are currently used to explain the genocide. They focus respectively on (1) political leaders and macro-level political trends (‘elite manipulation’ paradigm), (2) macro-level ecological and demographic trends (‘ecological resource scarcity’ paradigm), or (3) macro-level socio-cultural features

⁴¹ Excellent accounts have been written on how the genocide was planned and executed; see for example the work of African Rights 1994, Prunier 1994, Reyntjens 1996, Des Forges 1999, and Mamdani 2001. For those interested in a more detailed account of the war and the genocide, I refer to these works.

of Rwandan society ('socio-psychological features of the perpetrators' paradigm) (Uvin 2001b).

The first paradigm (elite manipulation) holds that the genocide was the result of the desire of Rwanda's elite to stay in power. Proponents of this paradigm argue that the different political and economic developments, such as the Arusha Agreement and declining world market prices for coffee, threatened the power and privileges of the elite. In response, the elite devised strategies to deflect those threats, which resulted in genocide. However, as Uvin (2001b) correctly points out, such an explanation is of limited use; while it explains the role of elites, it does not explain why so many ordinary people were involved in the killings.

The second paradigm (ecological resource scarcity) offers an alternative explanation of why the genocide occurred. This paradigm really consists of two alternatives. The first assumes a direct relation between social conflict and ecological resource scarcity (cf. Percival and Homer-Dixon 1995): namely, Malthusian entrapment. Famine, social conflict, and communal violence are seen as the unavoidable result of overpopulation and ecological resource scarcity. A focus on the factors and processes, such as "traditions of social cooperation, patterns of innovation, legitimacy and accountability of the state, networks of economic exchange" (Uvin 1998: 182) that mediate between resource scarcity and communal violence sometimes forms part of this argument. Thus, one could argue that the population density in Rwanda was so high that young men without access to land became increasingly violent. Habyarimana's regime, whether inherently evil or itself the outcome of diverse factors and processes, merely exploited the situation.

The second line of reasoning is anti-Malthusian. Here, the mediating factors and processes of the Malthusian (entrapment) argument are treated as independent variables (Olson 1995). In this line of thought, "the character and impact of ecological resource scarcity in Rwanda are not dictated by nature but are the result of historical, political, and economic processes" (Uvin 1998: 183). In other words, ecological resource scarcity is the result of human agency. Land scarcity only becomes a problem when peasants are refused access to or are hindered in their attempts to gather more knowledge, implement technical innovations, engage in economic activities, and better organise themselves; in short, when livelihood opportunities are limited and restricted by social, economic, and political developments. Hence, it is argued, while resource scarcity did play a role in the processes that led to the genocide, "this role was not fixed and cannot be understood without considering political processes" (Uvin 2001b: 83). In the anti-Malthusian line of reasoning, the correlation between natural resource dependency and conflict is thus not direct (cf. Ballantine 2004). Rather, resource scarcity should be seen as "an intervening variable between poverty and poor governance on the one hand and conflict on the other" (Gleditsch 2001: 64) and can be offset by the adaptive capacity of actors and institutions (Ohlsson 1999).

Finally, the third paradigm (socio-psychological features of perpetrators) looks at the socio-psychological and cultural dynamics in Rwanda. It suggests that Rwandans are obedient by nature and mindlessly follow orders given by those in authority. This position, however, is problematic:

“... there is no denying that the specific form the violence often took during the genocide was deeply grounded culturally, and that it can be intellectually useful to understand this intellectual grounding. Yet these forms or rituals of violence, and the culture in which they are embedded, are not the cause of the genocide”.

Uvin (2001b: 85)

Rwandan peasants are not passive recipients of elite or state power. Throughout history they have refused to take orders. For example, when world market prices for coffee dropped, farmers uprooted what was an obligatory crop. Many Rwandans refused to partake in obligatory works such as *ubureetwa* or *umuganda*. Others have migrated in large numbers to escape obligatory programmes and tax demands. As these examples show, Rwandans are active agents, and “if they chose to follow orders to kill – deeply dramatic orders – and not others, it needs more explanation than their supposedly obedient nature” (Uvin 2001b: 84).

This thesis follows the anti-Malthusian argument. While acknowledging the fact that Rwanda’s population is relatively large and that land seems to be in short supply, I am of the opinion that this in itself is insufficient reason to assume that social violence was or is inescapable. Intensification and diversification of the agricultural sector, access to education, and the development of the private and public sector can make up for limited access to landed property, as has been the case in other parts of the world. However, this obviously requires the political will to invest in the development of different sectors as well as to allow and to enable people to gain adequate knowledge and to be able to follow the livelihood path best suited to their individual characteristics.

The argument that the Hutu majority hated the Tutsi minority, and that killing began spontaneously after the president’s plane was shot down, is considered little more than propaganda spread by supporters of the Habyarimana regime and its militias in an attempt to legitimise that regime’s acute and brutal violence. As has been widely documented, the violence that followed the death of Habyarimana was neither spontaneous nor inevitable but highly organised and orchestrated (Reyntjens 1996). Instead, I hold that the genocide was facilitated by the steady deterioration of the economic situation and the growing inequalities from the mid-1980s onwards, the increasing demographic pressure and scarcity of land, and the development of a genocidal discourse. Like others, I consider that the genocide was used by a small group of political leaders as a means to remain in power (Des Forges 1999). It functioned as a double cornerstone, buying the loyalty of one group (Hutu) by allowing it to exterminate the other, in this case the Tutsi (Verwimp 2003). Longstanding dynamics of exclusion, marginalisation, inequality, and racism resulted in a regime that was characterised by ‘inherent structural violence’ (Uvin 1998). This fuelled acute violence in the form of genocide.

Aftermath of the Genocide

The genocide ended when the RPF captured Kigali and assumed control of the country in July 1994 and formed a “government of national unity” (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). The RPF installed Faustin Twagiramungu (Hutu) as Prime Minister and Pasteur Bizimungu (Hutu) as president, as was agreed under the Arusha Accords (1993). However, in violation of the Arusha Peace Agreement, a new position was also created: that of Vice-President (Pottier 2002). This position was taken by Paul Kagame, the leading Tutsi commander of the RPF, who had led the invasions from Uganda.

While the RPF strengthened its control over the population, the number of disappearances and executions increased and Rwanda’s civil administration and justice system were ‘infiltrated’ by the army and the Ministry of Defence, which was at that time also led by Kagame (Pottier 2002). Twagiramungu resigned in 1995⁴², Bizimungu in 2000⁴³, after differences regarding the composition of a new cabinet and after accusing parliament of targeting Hutu politicians in anti-corruption investigations. Paul Kagame, then Vice-President and minister of defence, was subsequently elected by parliament and ministers as Rwanda’s new president. By 2002, “the RPF’s initial embrace of ethnic and political plurality in government was a façade: Kagame’s government has since stifled political opposition and governs as a virtual dictatorship, unopposed by the Rwandan church community or any other civic body” (Cantrell 2007: 351). In 2003, during the first presidential elections since the 1994 genocide, Kagame was re-elected as president and the RPF won absolute majority during the first multi-party parliamentary elections that same year.

The new government expressed a commitment to transcend ethnic distinctions. The registration of ethnicity on identity cards was abolished and public discussion of ethnicity discouraged. There is, however, a general fear that the country is once again undergoing a rapid ‘tutsification process’, since local and national government and judicial power, the army, the police and security services, and teaching staff and students are largely concentrated in the hands of Tutsi RPF sympathisers (Reyntjens 1996, Uvin 2001a). Moreover, as Pottier (2002) convincingly shows, the government has tried to rewrite Rwanda’s history in an attempt to justify a system of leadership by Tutsi minority rule by simplification and omission of historical facts. It remains to be seen whether this process of ‘tutsification’ will continue in the near future. The fact that the government discourages any discourse referring to ethnicity, while understandable in light of the recent events, makes it extremely hard to study the existence of any such

⁴² He returned to the political scene during the presidential elections of 2003, where he became second after Kagame.

⁴³ Bizimungu belonged to the family of Habyarimana but joined the RPF after his brother, a colonel in the Rwandan army, was killed. After he was forced to resign, he started a new radical Hutu political party, which was banned in 2002. Bizimungu was later arrested on charges of illegal political activity, inciting violence, associating with criminals (forming a threat to state security), and embezzlement. He was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment but was released in 2007.

processes; this issue warrants attention, since ethnicity is still in the minds of all Rwandans. I consider that if the government is not able to undermine even the slightest suspicion of 'tutsification', it runs the risk of increasing rather than diminishing the risk of more 'ethnic'-based violence.

When the RPF gained control over Rwanda in 1994, some 800,000 Rwandan (old caseload) refugees started to return (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1998). Many of them settled in the east of the country, in regions such as Umutara and Bugesera, which had been earmarked by the RPF for old caseload refugees and their cattle (Pottier 1996, Human Rights Watch 2001). At the same time, around two million refugees, among whom many Hutu and in their wake also Hutu militias, opted to flee the country, thus escaping the conditions of war. Many of these people (labelled 'new caseload refugees') ended up in refugee camps in Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo), Uganda, and Tanzania.

Conditions in these camps were extremely harsh and many people died as a result of malnutrition and diseases such as cholera. Increasingly, the camps fell under the control of the Hutu militias responsible for the genocide in Rwanda. In Zaire, Hutu militias were able to form alliances with government forces, attacking local Zairian (Banyamulenge) Tutsi in Zaire⁴⁴. The Banyamulenge, who had themselves formed alliances with the reigning political powers, were in turn supported by the new Rwandan regime (Pottier 2002) and responded by attacking the refugee camps. By 1996, most refugee camps had been closed and massive numbers of new caseload refugees were forced back into Rwanda⁴⁵. A number of militias fled into the forests and mountains, and border conflicts between Zaire and Rwanda continued in the following years⁴⁶. From 1996 to 1999 there was an insurgency in the northwest of Rwanda, which resulted in many deaths and in more people being displaced⁴⁷. New caseload refugees who returned were expected to follow a programme of re-education that was to extend in later years, albeit in adapted form, to all public university students. Only a small portion of the two million refugees had actively participated in the genocide, but "in the eyes of many all these refugees were collectively held responsible partly through the assumption of "corporate ethnicity"" (Newbury 2005: 279).

Effects of the genocide are still felt by the government and people of Rwanda. At present, the country is characterised by a high number of female-

⁴⁴ The Banyamulenge are Rwandans who settled between Mulenge and the upper Sange River before Rwanda's independence. Many of them migrated during the second half of the 19th century, escaping king Rwabugiri's administrative/military campaigns and *ubureetwa*. The group consisted largely of Tutsi but also included Hutu (Pottier 2002).

⁴⁵ In December 1996, the Tanzanian government decided to close the Rwandan refugee camps, which resulted in another wave of returning refugees (Newbury and Baldwin 2000).

⁴⁶ While Rwanda cited the presence and threat of Hutu militia as the main reason for invasions in Zaire, political and economic interests no doubt played a role. The illegal exploitation of eastern Zaire's natural resource base led to the enrichment of individual Rwandans as well as of the army and the government. See Pottier (2002) for an extensive analysis of Rwanda's role in the Zairian civil war.

⁴⁷ For an extensive discussion on the insurgency, see African Rights (1999).

headed households, forming approximately 34 percent of all households. Widow-headed households account for the majority of these (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). The figure may in fact be much higher, as the 34 percent figure is based on a 1996 socio-demographic study by ONAPO (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). Since then, many new caseload refugees have returned, among them many widows. Moreover, the insurgency in the northwest has resulted in a higher number of female-headed households, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic is also contributing to a further rise in child- and female-headed households⁴⁸. In addition to the high proportion of female-headed households, the war and genocide have resulted in some 270,000 orphans (Rose 2005) and some 85,000 child-headed households (World Bank 2004)⁴⁹. In 2000, approximately 100,000 prisoners were currently awaiting trial for genocide-related crimes (Des Forges 1999)⁵⁰; among them, at least in the first few years after 1994, are “innocent victims of disputes over property or attempts to acquire property by unlawful means” (Pottier 2002: 164). HIV prevalence has increased dramatically, in part as a consequence of large-scale population movements and the use of rape as a weapon, leaving 11.2 percent of people infected nationwide (Government of Rwanda 2002).

The Rwandan economy is still predominantly agricultural and mostly consists of labour-intensive subsistence agricultural production on small holdings. High population pressure and the tradition of sharing landed property among male heirs have led to extensive land fragmentation. The low per capita income (US\$ 250) leaves little to spare for investments in this or in any other sector. This problem is aggravated by the fact that the financial sector has shown little interest in the rural sector. Moreover, the secondary and tertiary sectors are extremely underdeveloped and generally limited to the urban areas, mostly in and around the capital city Kigali.

Lopez and Wodon (2005) estimate that Rwanda’s per capita GDP in 2001 could have been between 25 and 30 percent higher if the genocide had not taken place. They argue that the genocide has resulted in a loss of stock variables, without changes in the returns to these stock variables. Put differently, their results:

“... are consistent with a view according to which the human, physical and social capital of the country was reduced so that GDP per capita was

⁴⁸ However, in a recent report by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (Republic of Rwanda 2007) it is mentioned that the proportion of female-headed households dropped to 28 percent in 2006.

⁴⁹ Rose (2005) arrives at a much lower figure of 45,000 households headed by orphaned children.

⁵⁰ Others have estimated that by mid-1996, 80,000 people had been arrested, increasing to 120,000 people by the end of 1997 and 140,000 by 1998. Of these, some 20 percent are likely to have been falsely accused (Uvin 2001a, Longman 2006). In February 2003, about 20,000 prisoners were released within the framework of the *gacaca* trials (Berlage *et al.* 2003). Since then, more prisoners have been released.

‘permanently’ lower after the genocide in comparison to the level that could have been reached without the genocide. But while the genocide reduced the assets of the country and did lead to lasting lower incomes, we did not find evidence of behavioural changes that could have affected the returns to the remaining assets.”

(Lopez and Wodon 2005: 598)

Moreover, inequality is high and continues to increase. Whereas the Gini-coefficient was 0.289 in the mid 1980s, it reached 0.451 in 2001 and further increased to 0.51 in 2006 (Jayne et al. 2003, Republic of Rwanda 2006, Ansoms 2007). Disparities widened foremost in the rural areas. And despite the fact that the incidence of poverty declined from 60.3 percent to 51.8 percent between 2001 and 2006, the absolute number of people living in poverty has increased from 4.8 to 5.4 million people (Republic of Rwanda 2006).

The country continues to be characterised by structural economic problems, such as low agricultural productivity, low human resource development (especially in literacy and skills development), limited employment opportunities (oversupply of unskilled workers), high population density and growth, high transport costs (land-locked position of Rwanda), and environmental degradation (chronic decline in soil fertility, poor water management, and deforestation) (Government of Rwanda 2002).

Land

To rebuild the country after the war and the genocide and massacres of 1994, the government envisions a thorough transformation of the rural economy. To that end it has come up with long-term development plans (referred to as Vision 2020) that include good political and economic governance, rural economic transformation, development of services and manufacturing, human resource development (increased educational attainment at all levels, better health care), development and promotion of the private sector, regional and international economic integration, and poverty reduction (through reduction of inequality, like that based on gender and age).

Land is Rwanda’s primary resource. Yet the country has a legacy of disputed land rights, arising partly from the lack of legal status for land titles and partly from the confusion arising from settling old and new caseload refugees whose land has been occupied by others (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). Despite the fact that Rwandans feel they own the land they use, with the exception of a few tracts of land leased to selected owners (prominent individuals, religious orders, and scientific associations), all land in Rwanda has in fact belonged to the government since colonial days (Pottier 2002, 2006, Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). The state has granted land access on a usufruct basis (Rose 2005). From 1976 to 1994, land ownership, access, and use were regulated by Decree No. 09/76 of 1976, which was, however, rarely implemented

(Pottier 2002 and 2006)⁵¹. Ever since independence, local authorities “have had a virtual monopoly in decisions regarding who could cultivate where” (Pottier 2006: 515).

The history of Rwanda is replete with examples of peasants being expelled from their land: for example, by the central court, by chiefs, the state, or the elite⁵². Even today, local authorities take charge of all land transactions, especially with regard to vacant or deserted lands and valleys (Pottier 2006). Ownership and access to land for the majority of people thus remains insecure. Such a lack of tenure security is generally considered detrimental to rural productivity⁵³. Moreover, wealthier Rwandans familiar with statutory laws and the court system can exploit this situation and take land away from someone who has only a customary claim (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003).

Pottier (2002) argues that the initial government response after the genocide was to dismiss the problem of farms and property repossession by returning refugees. They expected that, in addition to the high number of deaths, a number of refugees would opt not to return to the country, while a large group of old caseload refugees was likely to consist of non-farmers. Moreover, extensive marshlands and formerly state-controlled zones, such as those which existed in Umutara, Kibungo, Bugesera, Mayaga, and Gisenyi (including pasture lands, presidential hunting domains, large parts of the Akagera National Park and Gishwati Mountain Forest Reserve, and former *paysannats*), were identified as suitable for re-settlement. In Umutara, Kibungo, and Kigali-Ngali, many family plots were divided and re-distributed between owners and returning (old caseload) refugees.

It was envisaged that returnees could settle upon temporarily unoccupied land or on land whose proprietor had died during the events of the 1990s. Many of the old caseload refugees settled in Rwanda’s two main cities, Butare and the capital city Kigali. Others settled in areas in the east like Kibungo, Byumba, and Umutara, where they occupied temporarily vacant houses (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). However, the Arusha Peace Agreement (1993) stated that no refugee who had spent more than ten years outside Rwanda could lay claim to land. This had

⁵¹ Thus, it was stated that land below the critical size of 2 hectares was not permitted to be alienated, subdivided, or fragmented. In reality, this rule was hardly ever enforced, enabling the more wealthy (political elite) to benefit from the rising number of distress sales.

⁵² In this respect it is interesting to note that the new political elite is currently acquiring land in much the same way as before 1994: not so much for agricultural production but for the purpose of speculation (Hoyweghen 1999, Pottier 2006).

⁵³ Nevertheless, Place and Migot-Adholla (1998) find that land registration and titling in Kenya had only a weak impact on perceived land rights of farmers, credit use, crop yields, or concentration of land holdings. They conclude that there is no evidence that land registration or titles deeds are related to land productivity as measured by crop yields. Whereas title deeds enhance security of rights, especially among more marginally productive peasants, other factors, such as providing better infrastructure and market opportunities, may be more in place to enhance productivity.

major repercussions for old caseload refugees, as many of them had been absent for over a decade. According to the Arusha Accord, they were merely allowed to cultivate land on a temporary basis. Initially, this problem was put aside:

“Reclaiming property momentarily unoccupied would be allowed according to the following logic: first, that land ultimately belongs to the state (it still did); second, that the state would provide alternative accommodation when the ‘new caseload’ refugees returned; third, that the purpose of land is to put it to use. In a country facing economic uncertainty and food shortages, this third principle promised to be effective where repatriates made claims not in the spirit of the Arusha.”

(Pottier 2002: 188)

Problems arose as new caseload refugees returned en masse to the country. Many found their farms occupied by earlier returnees, who had worked the land in the absence of former farm holders and were reluctant to leave the property they had occupied with the approval of the government. That there had been so many unauthorised land sales in the later years of Habyarimana’s regime, combined with the fact that many commune records were destroyed during the war, seemed to work in favour of those who would normally be disqualified under the Arusha Accord. The fact that many of the new local leaders were old caseload refugees themselves also aggravated the situation.

At this point it is interesting to refer to a remark in the work of Pottier (2002). In a footnote, Pottier argues that, as victims of genocide, old caseload refugees had not only a moral claim on land but a psychological advantage over new caseload refugees, in the form of fear of ancestral revenge. Ancestral revenge had long played a pivotal role in Rwandan cosmology (Vansina 2004). Traditionally, Rwanda’s dead were buried in mature banana groves⁵⁴. In addition to any other number of crops, most farms in Rwanda had at least one or more banana groves. Fear of ancestral revenge, especially seen in the light of genocide and post-genocide killings, might have induced some latecomers not to push too hard to reclaim their former properties. Moreover, as Hutu were held collectively responsible for the genocide, new caseload refugees (among whom were many Hutu) feared the repercussions if they tried to regain their former property. Surprisingly enough, new caseload refugees nevertheless reclaimed land successfully (Pottier 2002).

In addition to the repossession of land by old and new caseload refugees, Rwanda faced another challenge in the form of land tenure rights of women and orphaned children. According to customary land tenure systems, only men had rights of access to land, and land was divided among male heirs. Women enjoyed

⁵⁴ Around the time of the Second World War, the Belgian colonial administration insisted on, and strictly enforced, the use of cemeteries for reasons of hygiene. After 1973, people were allowed to bury their dead according to their own practice and belief. This meant that, increasingly, the dead were buried on people’s own land, within courtyards, and even within the house of the deceased (Spijker 2005).

rights over land as well, but these rights were indirect and severely circumscribed (Codere 1973). While widows and their female children were in principle not allowed to inherit land, they could be allowed to continue to work on the land controlled by the male relatives of their deceased husbands (Brown and Uvuza 2006). However, their usufruct rights “were conditional on a widow’s ‘good conduct’: that is to say, they lasted as long as she remained faithful to her husband’s lineage either through sexual abstinence or through levirate marriage” (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 188).

Traditionally, there were three ways for women to claim access to land. Women who had neither male children nor living male relatives through her deceased husband could inherit land (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). A woman could also receive gifts of land from her father. Land could, for example, be given to married women, newlyweds, or at the birth of a newborn child, although this practice seems to have been restricted to the northwest of the country (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). In both cases, land thus received remained a woman’s own property and was inherited by her sons. Women could, however, also gain access to land in the form of temporary user rights. Temporary gifts of land could be given to daughters rejected by their husbands or by his family and to daughters who never married and did not bear children (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). This kind of land, also known as *ingaligali* or *ingaragaza*:

“... is usually set aside for emergencies, at the time a family farm is divided up among the male children. A troubled daughter (*indushi*) will be given such land and will have access to it for as long as she is deemed in need, if necessary for life⁵⁵.”

(Pottier and Nkundabashaka 1992: 165)

After her death, this type of land would be claimed by her late husband’s nearest patrikin. It is also plausible that, as argued by Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003), such land would revert to a woman’s brothers when she was no longer in need of it: for example, if she was reconciled with her husband or his family or if she remarried. As some of my informants indicated, *ingaligali* land was usually very small in size and less fertile than the land given to a woman’s brothers. This is confirmed by Brown and Uvuza (2006). As happened before 1994 as well, women are now often pressured by their brothers into relinquishing *ingaligali* and other gifts of land. Moreover, informants indicated that after the introduction of the new inheritance law (see below), gifts of *ingaligali* have ceased to exist.

Under the *igikingi* land tenure system, which had gained increasing prominence in most of Rwanda, land was only awarded to heroes, “defined either

⁵⁵ Informants for this study pointed out that among the Tutsi *ingaligali* consisted of cows and not land. It is likely that *ingaligali* in the form of land predominated among landowners in the northwest and in the form of cattle among cattle raisers in the northeast of the country.

by heroism in battle or by political preference” (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 205). While there have been occasional female ‘heroes’ (Codere 1973), patriarchal ideology generally overlooked this possibility. Men were and are generally of the opinion that it is unfair for women to claim two different shares of land: one from their parents and one through their husbands (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). In the face of progressive land scarcity, women have become increasingly barred from exercising their land inheritance rights (Pottier 2002). To add to these problems, the events of the 1990s resulted in many widows and female orphans. When women were left with no grown-up sons able to claim their inheritance, their claims to land were weak at best, if not entirely void.

Women have devised many strategies to increase their access to land. Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003) find that some female genocide survivors have returned to their families, where they feel safer and where their brothers can protect them. This strategy works well for those with few family members left, as there will be a relative abundance of land. Where families remain large, however, women’s claims to land often remain very weak. Other strategies referred to by Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003) include women joining farm cooperatives or women’s associations. Many of these cooperatives and associations have been allocated state-owned land, while others are able to rent land with contribution and membership dues.

Problems of women’s land tenure rights are not only related to the loss of a husband but also to the status of the marriage and children (Brown and Uvuza 2006). Rwandan marriages are of different types: customary marriages where bridewealth has been paid, civil marriages, and religious marriages. Currently, Rwandan law does not protect women’s rights if they have no legally accepted (i.e. civil) marriage. However, few Rwandan couples are legally married. Civil marriages not only require the traditional bridewealth to be paid but also entail costs for marriage certificates and other identity papers (if not the cost of an additional marriage ceremonial party). Civil marriages are simply too expensive for many young couples. This means that the majority of women and children do not qualify for the legal protection offered under civil marriage, leaving them vulnerable to the goodwill of their husbands and their husbands’ families to ensure them access to land (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003).

The government has introduced several measures to promote gender equality (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). A Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs has been established and gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes is actively promoted. Restrictions in the labour code and legislation on women’s ability to work and own property have been removed. Also, the matrimonial code was revised in 1999 (the ‘Matrimonial Regimes, Liberties and Succession Law’), now offering couples a choice of property regimes and – at least theoretically – extending the inheritance rights of women and girls to property within their families of birth.

Before 1999, all property was held as joint property within the marriage. Under the new matrimonial code, three different property regimes have been established: community property, separation of property, and limited community property:

“In a community property, all property of either spouse becomes the community property of the household. In separation of property, each spouse manages his or her property separately and contributes to the household proportionally according to his or her means. In the limited community property regime, each spouse inventories his or her contribution to the community property of the marriage. This community property falls under the laws for community property regime, while other assets remain as individual property adjudicated according to the laws for separation of property.”

(Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 195)

In practice, this means that:

“... according to the English version of the Inheritance and Marital Property Law, widows have varying rights to property in the case of marital community property, but generally would be legally entitled to become owners of half of the property. They have virtually no rights to their husband’s property if they had a separate property marital property regime. In this case, the deceased husband’s separate property devolves first to his children, and then to his parents and other lineage relations. There is no provision for inheritance of the separate property by his widow unless all of her deceased husband’s lineage relatives are dead.”

(Brown and Uvuza 2006: 10)

However, the matrimonial code does not explicitly refer to landed property⁵⁶. Moreover, as the majority of unions in Rwanda are common-law unions, which are not legally registered, children, especially girls, are easily labelled illegitimate. This disqualifies them from legally protected inheritance rights (Burnet and Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2001). Other problems with the new code include the fact that it cannot be applied retrospectively (thus offering no assistance to the many daughters and wives of men who died in the genocide), and that the family council, often led by men, is to determine whether a woman is eligible for inheritance (Pottier 2006).

⁵⁶ “In fact, the ‘Matrimonial Regimes, Liberties and Succession Law’ specifically mentions land in only two articles: Article 90, which specifies that land within an estate is subject to land regulations, and Article 91, which specifies that land within an estate comprising less than 1 hectare must not be subdivided among the heirs (Rose 2005).

Governmental Programmes and Policies Affecting Access to Land

The National Habitat Policy

The government decided to reorganise the country's rural space and to do away with dispersed settlements and farm fragmentation. To this end, the government introduced a National Habitat Policy in 1996, calling for full-scale villagisation. The *imidugudu* sites, which were to be created under the programme, loosely resembled the earlier *paysannats*. The government prohibited the new construction of houses in rural areas outside the designated sites, even when it was clear that ongoing housing repair programmes could have provided housing relatively rapidly and cheaply (Human Rights Watch 2001). The first and most rigorous efforts of villagisation took place in the east and southeast regions of Rwanda (Umutara, Kibungo and Kigali-Ngali).

Imidugudu, initially constructed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), were meant to serve as a temporary solution to shelter refugees while holding to the long-term promise to release land and to form new production and tenure relations (Musahara 2001), thus encouraging a shift towards large landholdings and commercial agriculture (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). The central tenet of the programme was that "the socio-economic pressure could be resolved through better land use planning, better settlement patterns, and economic growth outside agriculture" (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999:14). *Imidugudu* were thought to result in 'proper' land utilisation (less fragmented and with houses built on poor-quality land, leaving fertile land for cultivation). However, as yet no conclusive proof of enhanced productivity has been offered (Pottier 2006).

Imidugudu were also meant to facilitate the provision of basic services, such as schools, health centres, and markets, and to increase security and national reconciliation (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). While *imidugudu* indeed facilitated the provision of basic services, many people complained that their fields were located too far from such settlements. Female-headed households have been included in the programme without discrimination, although there were complains that many did not have the means to construct adequate housing and that not enough assistance was provided (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). Some *imidugudu* were set up entirely for widows, who were generally considered to be among the most vulnerable groups in Rwanda and in need of extra protection. However, many such villages suffered from a lack of adult men, which in fact increased rather than reduced women's vulnerability (personal communication with widows living in *imidugudu*, July to September 2002). Security failed in other respects as well. As many *imidugudu* are inhabited by old caseload refugees (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999), they were more susceptible to attacks because they were easily identified as Tutsi villages (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002).

The National Habitat Policy has been criticised for other reasons as well⁵⁷. First soundings suggest that old caseload refugees were better able than others to exploit loopholes in the *imidigudu* programme (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999), in part because policy prescriptions were characterised by a strong moral discourse (Pottier 2002), in which ‘victims of genocide’ were at an advantage. There is also evidence that “some powerful individuals among the returnees got larger shares of land than others” (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 186)⁵⁸. Land pressure was not reduced; hence, due to signs of dissent, implementation of the *imidigudu* programme slowed down in 2000. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of people had moved to the settlements, with tens of thousands of them having done so against their will (Human Rights Watch 2001).

The New Land Law and Policy

A new land law, supported by a new land policy, was passed in 2005 and is now awaiting wide-scale implementation (Brown and Uvuza 2006)⁵⁹. Land consolidation and land registration (land titles based on long-term leases of 99 years) are central to the proposed new tenure regime and are expected to result in “... better soil management and productivity, reduce the prevalence of land disputes and bring social stability” (Pottier 2006: 511). As some authors have argued, however, land rights in the past were not a significant factor “in determining investments in land improvements, use of inputs, access to credit, or the productivity of land” (Place and Hazell 1993: 10). They suggest that there are other, more binding constraints on agricultural productivity, such as lack of improved technologies or inadequate access to credit. Such constraints are still in place today. Moreover, farmers continue to hold several plots, often at different altitudes. This is a conscious strategy to spread risk as well as labour over the years (Blarel *et al.* 1992), although of course the small size of farms poses an income problem.

The government wants to break with ‘the logic of subsistence farming’ and adopt a market-oriented approach, which in real terms means investing in large landowners through extending agricultural credits (Pottier 1996). However, if the aim of the New Land Law and Policy are to increase economic growth, this approach is questionable; in Rwanda, smaller farms are found to produce more yields per hectare than larger farms (Clay *et al.* 1990). Likewise, Byiringiro and Reardon (1996) find that the smallest farms in Rwanda have land yields three times higher in value terms than the larger farms (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996). Ansoms (2007) also argues that small-scale farmers in Rwanda are more productive in

⁵⁷ The problems and controversies of the *imidigudu* policy are well documented elsewhere (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999, Human Rights Watch 2001).

⁵⁸ See also Human Rights Watch 2001.

⁵⁹ The Organic Law determining the use and management of land in Rwanda (No. 08/2005 of 14/07/2005).

terms of output when compared to larger farms, and shows that this is even recognised by the government. Hence, the idea that large landholdings and commercial agriculture will increase agricultural production and increase economic growth is highly controversial.

The new Land Law and Policy have been criticised for other reasons as well. For example, land registration and titling programmes are called for, but such programmes entail great risks for the poor and for women (Brown and Uvuza 2006). The poor who own less than 1 hectare of land risk being barred from registering their land, as it is too small and the cost of registration is too high. In addition, the poor risk having their land confiscated by the authorities. This danger is especially imminent in the event that farmers fail to exploit their landholdings 'diligently' and 'efficiently' (Land Law Articles 62-65). This will be assessed by local authorities and agricultural extension workers (Pottier 2006).

Considering the moral claim to land held by old caseload refugees ('worthy farmers' in the eyes of the government), it remains to be seen which groups will suffer most under the new Land Law and Policy. Moreover, it is still unclear how farmers will be compensated for the loss of their land. It is also worrying that in principle all land belongs to the state and compensation is only required for the loss of dwellings, not of the land itself. This could mean that farmers will receive merely a token compensation or none at all if their land is indeed confiscated. In the absence of sufficient off-farm and non-farm income opportunities, the future of small landholders seems very bleak.

Women face risks, since in many land registration and titling programmes the traditional household heads become the registered holders of land. In Rwanda, men are traditionally considered to be heads of households (see also Chapters 5 and 6); hence, women risk losing access to land that they currently have under their control. Nevertheless, under the new Land Law all Rwandans enjoy the same rights of access to land, implying no discrimination against women. Unfortunately, while reference is made to the matrimonial code (1999), the new Land Law and accompanying Policy contain no further reflection on women's rights to landed property (Brown and Uvuza 2006); thus, they do not offer them "any relief or reassurance in this matter, and may in fact be making them once again more invisible" (Pottier 2006: 533).

While the new Land Law and Policy are meant to improve land management and confer security onto the existing occupants of the land, current reforms do not redistribute additional land to poor peasants. At present, about 85 percent of rural households own land. Of these, 95 percent of households farm less than 2 hectares, with an average landholding of 0.71 hectare. This indicates that the country has a high proportion of near landless (Government of Rwanda 2002). In the draft of the Land Policy it was mentioned that there would be a ceiling of 50 hectares for individual land owners (Government of Rwanda 2002), but this upper ceiling is not mentioned in the final approved version of the Land Law (Ansoms 2007).

The new law favours large commercial farmers over the large mass of small-scale farmers. This entails a risk that some possibly politically connected individuals will be able to acquire large landholdings, further reducing the land

available to poor farmers. Moreover, the proportion of landless and near landless households is likely to increase. Already there are strong indications that disparities in land access and control have worsened since 1994, “with newcomers reclaiming land and members of the political elite (often backed by the army in various subtle ways) reportedly taking over large tracts in the east to be used for cattle ranches” (Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 7). The government hopes that land fragmentation as a kind of insurance strategy by small-scale farmers will reduce when they are able to diversify their income. It is to be expected that the land tenure security of small landholdings will come under increasing stress.

As far as rural economic transformation is concerned, the government seeks to increase agricultural production through intensification, diversification, institutional development, and commoditisation:

“Agricultural policy orientation will have to be overhauled, promoting intensification so as to increase productivity and achieve growth rates of 4.5% to 5% per year. This can only happen through the production of high value crops and modern livestock management. The vision [Vision 2020] aims to replace subsistence farming by a fully monetized, commercial agricultural sector by 2020.”

(Republic of Rwanda 2000: 20, Vision 2020)

Input and technological development are identified as means to intensify agricultural production. Increased output is expected to come from increased use of traditional and modern inputs, such as manure, compost, or chemical fertilizer. The problem is that half of the households do not have livestock and a third of the households do not use manure (Government of Rwanda 2002). Moreover, the use of fertilisers is not influenced only by issues of availability and accessibility but also by the fact that manure or compost is needed to prepare the soil for effective use (Jones and Egli 1984). Restocking the country with livestock (diversification) is thus considered crucial.

Expansion of cash crops (commoditisation) is also considered crucial to increase agricultural production and is meant to be accompanied by institutional development (marketing and extension). In addition to the traditional cash crops of tea and coffee, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources, and Forestry (MINAGRI) has identified five more major crops that will be targeted for expansion: rice, maize, potatoes, soy, and beans (Government of Rwanda 2002). Commoditisation and modernisation of the agricultural sector is further promoted by a policy of regional crop specialisation:

“The goal would be for each region to specialize in certain specific crops based on agro-bio-climatic conditions in accordance with market needs. The local authorities, in the name of the local peasants, will determine which crop(s) the region has a comparative advantage in.”

(Ansoms 2007: 21-22)

As Ansoms (2007) argues, it appears that the participation of peasants in the choice of those crops is limited. Moreover:

“The strategy of specialization could however indeed result in economies of scale in terms of production and could increase the commercial bargaining position of local farmers on regional markets. On the other hand, the strategy should regard possible variations in soil types and climatic conditions within a local setting(s). Forcefully restricting farmers to a few crops at an aggregate scale might thus make little sense. An additional concern is whether small-scale, non-commercial peasants will be able to confine themselves (even partly) to the prescribed crops, as they usually adopt for a diversification in crop types based on risk-averse considerations. If the new policy does not offer them any additional risk-insurance, they will not be inclined to go for crop specialization.”

(Ansons 2007: 22)

At this point it is important to note that the policy not only refrains from offering any additional risk-insurance, it in fact adds additional elements of risk to small-scale farming households. The policy undermines traditional risk-insurance strategies, such as the cultivation of multiple crops. Moreover, as several informants of this study have pointed out, local officials have warned them that if they do not cultivate the required crops, they will come back to uproot other crops. Ansoms (2007) also mentions such practices.

The standardisation and rationalisation of the agricultural sector is not a new concept. In pre-genocide Rwanda as well, the government prescribed the cultivation of specific crops, such as coffee and tea, in a top-down approach. In the late 1970s, there were plans for a regionalisation of food crops, with the explicit aim to increase productivity, “limiting crop selection to those areas best suited to particular varieties” (Van Hoyweghen 1999: 360). Writing about these agricultural policies, Van Hoyweghen (1999: 361) concludes that such policies “targeted the most resilient aspect of Rwandan agriculture, namely, the maintenance of biogenetic diversity and inter-cropping, adapted to local micro-conditions”. However, it was realised that a policy of regional crop specialisation would only succeed if good internal trade structures were developed and if peasants had access to off-farm income, in order to be able to buy food at the market. The latter criterion is certainly not being met in Rwanda at present. Moreover, as Van Hoyweghen points out, such a programme insufficiently acknowledges local farmers’ rationale for farming systems.

In conclusion, the rural transformation as envisaged by the government appears to offer top-down, inadequate technical solutions to social and political problems. The approach offers opportunities to large-scale commercial farmers but endangers the livelihoods of the mass of small-scale peasants.

3

Of House and Hearth: Theoretical Background to the Research

In this chapter, the theoretical framework used for the study is outlined. After the theoretical foundations of the livelihood concept have been established, DFID's livelihood framework is presented. The separate elements of this framework (consisting of assets, access, mediating factors and processes, livelihood strategies, and outcomes) are clarified and, where needed, adapted for applicability in the current study. It is argued that although the livelihood approach as presented can be useful for the study of household strategies in Rwanda, several issues need to be addressed.

The first issue concerns the unit of analysis. In this study, the household has been chosen. However, the use of this unit is not without problems, as definitions of what constitutes a household are many and varied. Taking the household as a unit of analysis also necessitates a discussion on household headship and intra- and inter-household relations. The second issue concerns the fact that the concept of livelihood has been developed for application in situations of political stability. I argue that a livelihood framework can also be applied in situations of political instability or violent conflicts, although certain issues need to be taken into consideration. The third issue relates to the fact that livelihoods are not static but evolve over time. The approach presented at the beginning of this chapter is, however, static in nature and not entirely suitable to describe change. The question is whether and how livelihood approaches can be adapted to include a temporal perspective.

Early Livelihood Studies

Chambers and Conway gave one of the earliest and most frequently cited definitions of the concept of livelihood:

“... a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living.”

(Chambers and Conway 1992: 6)⁶⁰

This definition of livelihood immediately clarifies that the concept of livelihood is not synonymous with income. Rather, the concept directs attention to the process by which people obtain a living, and to the links existing between people's assets and capabilities, which in turn influence the activities undertaken by them. Livelihood approaches are holistic and try to form a bridge between the more materialist notions of poverty and livelihood and more actor-centred notions (Chambers 1987). The first measure poverty in terms of expenditure, income, or other quantitatively defined indicators. The latter look at poverty through the eyes of the poor and argue that subjective experience is as important as objective dimensions (cf. Chambers 1987). Approaches to livelihood are far from uniform and are constantly evolving and developing. The diversity in livelihood approaches allows for adaptations to local or specific circumstances. However, it also makes it difficult to grasp the concept adequately, because of vagueness⁶¹ or because of different definitions being given in different contexts.

After the Second World War, development theory focused on the strategies for economies at the national state level. However, from the mid-1980s onwards, the idea of a national development strategy was challenged. It was argued that such strategies tended to fail because of the inadequacies of the state itself (Schafer 2002). Alternative approaches to the development crisis were considered. One approach accused the market rather than the state of creating development problems. Another approach was to question the entire notion of a universal theory of development and pointed out the need to look at the 'people below', assuming that the rural poor would know best about their problems and the ways to tackle them. Chambers was one of the advocates of this latter approach, stating that development policy should start with “the priorities and strategies of rural poor themselves” (Chambers 1983: 140). The idea that reality is too varied and social relations too complex and locally specific to make universal generalisations useful became prominent in development studies and challenged theoretical over-simplifications of earlier development theories. It is in this context that livelihood approaches came to the fore.

⁶⁰ In its simplest form, a livelihood can be seen to refer to 'a means of gaining a living' (Chambers Conway 1992: 5).

⁶¹ For example, Niehof and Price (2001) have argued that important dimensions (such as ownership of assets, activities processes, and outcomes) can all be found in the concept of livelihood but are sometimes not clearly distinguished.

Early actor-centred studies on livelihood⁶² were developed within wider studies on famine and vulnerability. For some time, our understanding of food insecurity was based on a pure production-oriented perspective, in which famine vulnerability is seen as the result of uncertain production. Over time, the production-based view was extended to include an exchange-based view⁶³, in which famine vulnerability is seen as caused by an exchange rate failure, primarily in relation to the wage labour market and commodity markets for agricultural and pastoral products. In his work on famine and vulnerability, Swift (1989) argues that an analysis of famine vulnerability should also include an asset-based view, in which famine vulnerability is seen to result from the process in which community and household assets are cashed in during crisis situations. He considers especially important the sequence in which assets are called in at different levels of crisis, as:

“It gives a clearer idea of the way famine is generated, who suffers most, the chronology of economic and social collapse, and the thresholds at which different groups become utterly destitute. It explains why war and civil unrest, the most obvious break in the moral economy and abrogation of claims by government, are a crucial cause of vulnerability. It also explains more about household and community strategies to avoid famine and rebuild a life afterwards.”

(Swift 1989: 14)

In the 1980s, especially in the aftermath of the famines in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, an understanding of the complexity of vulnerable people’s responses to drought improved. Although responses to famines were seen to vary from place to place, some typical patterns in these responses were observed. Subsequently, models of sequential uptake of coping strategies were developed. For example, Corbett (1988) identifies four distinct stages in the way households respond to famines. During the first stage, people dispose of assets held as stores of value or insurance, like small stock and jewellery, while preserving key productive assets, like land. In the second stage, people may be forced to dispose of these key productive assets, leading to an increase in distress sales. At the same time, people may be involuntarily stripped of other assets: for example, livestock dying as a result of prolonged drought. Once the ability to generate sufficient income for survival is severely diminished, a third stage is reached. This stage is characterised

⁶² As Whitehead (2002) contends, many livelihood approaches conceptualise livelihoods by making use of ideas originating in the field of anthropology, sociology, and political economy. This is often done by using the language of economics (by applying concepts such as bargaining, exchange, capitals, and assets, which carry a strong economic connotation).

⁶³ In relation to famine vulnerability, Sen (1981) is considered one of the most important contributors to the exchange-based view. One of his most important contributions to the debate on famine vulnerability concerned the notion of food entitlements.

by destitution and distress migration in search of relief. To these three stages a fourth may be added: post-crisis recovery for those who survive.

Models of sequential uptake of coping strategies were controversial, however, especially as predictive indicators of food stress and the vulnerability of livelihood systems. According to (Davies 1993), one of the main problems is that the mere use of a particular strategy, or sequence of strategies, does not necessarily reflect food stress. In response to the seasonal options available to households, people continuously juggle different activities, with some using particular strategies all the time and others doing so for part of the year. Intra-community variation is also easily overlooked, since a particular coping strategy may be used by one person in response to a specific situation of stress and by another as part of a normal livelihood strategy⁶⁴. Moreover, models of sequential uptake of coping strategies often fail to account for changes over time. Thus, the reasons to use particular strategies depend on the mix of strategies available to particular people or communities. This mix is likely to change over time, depending on the impact of particular strategies on the livelihood system. Davies argues that coping strategies, as indicators of food insecurity, need to be better understood before they can be simplified for policy-making, planning, and implementation. This can be achieved by gaining more insight into how poor people themselves view coping and adaptation.

The choice for a particular mix of livelihood strategies, and adjustments made to this mix, depends partly on external factors such as seasonality, location, and labour demand and supply. However, internal traits such as age, gender, educational level, stage in a household's life course, and time constraints imposed by other activities play an equally important role. Livelihood approaches in gender analyses have made considerable contributions to understanding the rationale behind individual decisions and activities. They have also contributed to a fuller understanding of the productive and reproductive activities of individuals and households, and to permitting distinctions between the circumstances, goals, and outcomes that characterise different poverty groups (Grown and Sebstad 1989). By studying how people move between different goals, such as survival, stabilisation, or growth in relation to external conditions and internal constraints imposed by the division of labour, the basis for individual choices for particular activities becomes clear. Three key distinctions are considered important in this respect.

The first distinction is the initial composition of people's asset base. For example, those owning livestock and land whilst also having access to employment are likely to undertake activities different from those chosen by people without land or livestock, and who need to depend completely on wage labour to secure their wellbeing. In many societies, ownership of resources is constricted to men, leaving women less room for a choice of activity. Similarly, men in general earn a higher income and are also likely to have more decision-making power with regard to how this income is spent. The second distinction is

⁶⁴ This recognises the difference between 'normal' and 'crisis' strategies, which is often very small in developing countries.

the time needed to mobilise assets as well as their convertibility. While women may maintain larger social networks to fall back on in times of need, money is much more easily converted into other resources. To convert social relations into a more tangible form of asset takes more time. In situations of crisis, there is often an immediate need for particular resources and activities, again leaving women more vulnerable. The third distinction is that the degree of diversity in people's portfolio of activities needs to be considered. Diversity is often equated with the spreading of risks, and people with the lowest or most limited asset base, where resources are not easily converted into other resources, are likely to be among the most vulnerable, especially in times of stress (cf. Niehof 2004b on livelihood diversification and gender).

Although the above studies all have a rural focus, attempts were also made to extend livelihood analysis to urban areas⁶⁵. Moser (1998) tries to relate urban vulnerability to the ownership of assets and the capacity to manage them. She does so by categorising people's assets in terms of a fivefold 'asset vulnerability framework'. This framework consists, on the one hand, of tangible assets, such as labour, human capital, and productive assets like housing, and, on the other hand, of intangible assets, such as household relations and social capital. Analysing trend data from Zambia, Ecuador, the Philippines, and Hungary, Moser finds that urban communities from these four countries show significant differences in the strategies they adopt in response to an economic crisis. Important differences are also found within communities between households, depending on the particular constraints they are facing. Moreover, some strategies do not have the intended effect, and have a negative impact on equality within households, family integration, and social cohesion. By highlighting the obstacles and opportunities people face and by relating these to their portfolio management strategies, an analysis of household vulnerability and poverty moves beyond static measures and descriptions of poverty. Moreover, Moser argues that to determine strategy sequencing is highly problematic, not only because of the reasons brought forward earlier by Davies (1993) but also because of the interrelationships between different assets. Rather, analysis should focus on highlighting the particular mix of assets that people command and on looking at whether this mix increases their capacity to overcome shocks and long-term trends.

All of the above studies have one thing in common: they look at what the poor have, rather than at what they do not have. They try to understand the options available to actors, some by focusing directly on people's own perceptions and on the strategies they adopt to overcome adverse trends and events. However, by looking at what people have rather than what they do not have, livelihood studies risk an inherent positive bias; the risk is that it may lead to overlooking possible negative outcomes. Moreover, by focusing on opportunities, livelihood approaches tend to ignore the constraints people face. For example, power

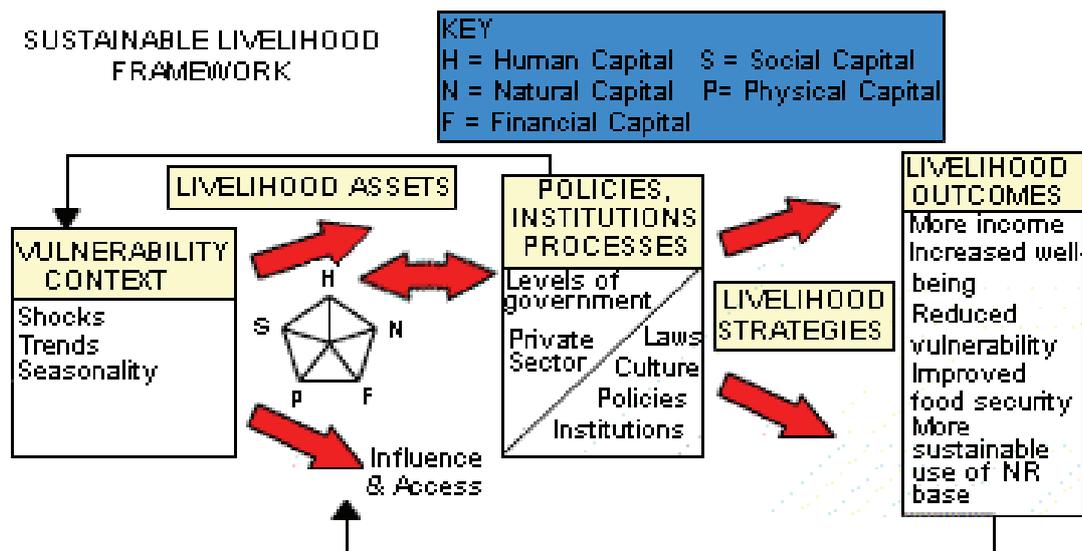
⁶⁵ The distinction between urban and rural livelihoods is artificial, since both are clearly intertwined.

differentials, including gender inequalities, may restrict the potential opportunities open to people.

A Livelihood Approach

In order to capture the main elements of people’s complex livelihoods at a given time, and ideally the trajectory and dynamics of change in livelihoods as well, several livelihood frameworks were developed by, among others, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex and the Department for International Development (DFID). These frameworks or models were proposed as tools for analysis, to be used for a holistic interpretation of the dynamics of development and change⁶⁶. One of the best known and most comprehensive models is DFID’s sustainable livelihood framework (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: DFID’s sustainable livelihood framework



Source: www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_rtf?sect2.rtf (consulted on May 26, 2006)⁶⁷

The central elements of this livelihood framework are:

- *Livelihood assets*, also referred to as resources or capitals, or ‘what people have’;

⁶⁶ Already in 1989, Anderson and Woodrow argued that it is essential to acknowledge the vulnerabilities and capabilities of affected populations when designing and implementing humanitarian responses that are to have developmental impacts following a disaster. Davis (2004) presents an interesting overview of the progress that has been made in vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCAs) since the 1990s.

⁶⁷ Although all arrows imply a certain level of influence, none imply direct causality.

- *The vulnerability context;*
- *Transforming structures and processes*, also referred to as PIP: policies, institutions, and processes;
- *Livelihood strategies*, which refers to the activities generating the means of household survival and long-term wellbeing: for example, agriculture, wage labour, and migration;
- *Livelihood outcomes or goals*, which refers to the living resulting from livelihood strategies pursued.

By disaggregating the concept of livelihood into a series of elements and matching indicators that are researched in relation to each other, people's life pathways can be made more explicit. Unfortunately, none of the above-mentioned elements are straightforward. All need further clarification and even adaptation.

This study relies heavily on DFID's sustainable livelihood framework. The rationale behind the choice for this particular framework is that DFID was one of the first proponents of the sustainable livelihood approaches. Moreover, the approach is widely used by multilateral agencies and NGOs and is referred to by many scholars. This framework of choice enables me to build on insights developed prior to this study and to facilitate comparison between this and other studies.

Assets

Assets, also referred to as resources that have been accessed (Bebbington 1999)⁶⁸, form the starting point of the framework (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; Ellis 2000). Assets are the basic building blocks that can be used by households to generate their means of survival, wellbeing, and future security. Assets are not composed only of 'things' (such as land, money, or relationships):

“... they are also the basis of agents' power to act and reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources.”

(Bebbington 1999: 2022)

Livelihood assets are generally considered of central importance to the livelihood framework. Which types or categories of assets to include, however, remains subject to ongoing debate. Corbett (1988) distinguishes two broad categories of assets. The first consists of those acquired as savings or insurance during better years, including small stock or jewellery. These can be drawn upon in times of crisis and contrast with key productive assets, such as land or houses, whose primary function is to generate income rather than to be held as a form of savings. Swift (1989) distinguishes three categories of assets: investments, stores,

⁶⁸ Drawing on an economic metaphor, assets are also referred to as capitals.

and claims. Investments include human, individual productive, and collective assets. Stores include food stores, items of value, and money or bank accounts. Claims include reciprocal claims on other households, communities, the government, and the international community. Grown and Sebstad (1989) make a distinction between resources and opportunities. The former consists of physical assets such as property, human assets such as time and skills, social assets, and collective assets, such as common property or public sectors entitlements. Opportunities consist of kin and friendship networks, institutional mechanisms, organisational and group membership, and partnership relations. Chambers and Conway (1992) divide assets into two groups: the first consists of tangible assets, including resources and stores; the second consists of intangible assets, including claims and access. Like Chambers and Conway, Moser (1998) distinguishes between tangible and intangible assets. However, she groups labour, human capital, and less familiar productive assets, such as housing, under tangible assets and household relations and social capital under intangible assets. Scoones (1998) identifies four types of assets or capitals: natural capital (the natural resource stocks and environmental services), economic or financial capital, human capital (including skills, knowledge, labour, health, and physical ability), and social capital. Bebbington (1999) differentiates between produced, human, natural, social, and cultural capital; the last refers to the reproduction of cultural practices. Rakodi (1999) adds another capital: namely, political capital. In a slightly different vein, Ellis (2000) differentiates between material and social assets.

Despite these different categorisations, all authors seem to agree that people require a range of assets to achieve specific outcomes. To this end, people try to access and expand, combine and transform, and exchange the different assets they have access to, resulting in constantly changing asset endowments. This does not automatically mean that to have more assets is to become less vulnerable or that household asset management determines vulnerability to adverse events (Moser 1998, Ellis 2000). In principal, vulnerability can be reduced when people have access to a range of different resources which, more importantly, can also be mobilised in order to form different asset combinations. Social capital plays a special and important role in this respect, as it can be used to access other resources (Niehof 2004b). The 'right' combination of assets depends of course on the circumstances people find themselves in and is largely determined by the local cultural repertoire. Moreover, outcomes will not always be as anticipated. New conditions, such as the outbreak of war or violence, may interfere negatively with livelihood strategies.

When analysing livelihoods, it is necessary to gather information on current asset availability as well as on trends. In addition, people possess a differential ability to own, control, or make use of different types, combinations, and quantities of livelihood assets, necessitating a socially differentiated view on livelihoods. Central in such an analysis are questions about which groups are accumulating assets, which ones are losing, and for what reason. It is also necessary to acknowledge the artificial nature of the difference between assets as input to livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes as output of those same strategies.

Niehof (2004b) draws attention to the fact that livelihood generation in fact follows a cyclical mode. Bebbington (1999) rightly observes that the environment that a livelihood strategy helps build or destroy, and the assets⁶⁹ it helps create or weaken, in turn affect any subsequent activity.

Livelihood analysis is also made more difficult by the fact that assets are not only in a constant state of flux but also clearly interact with each other. Interactions take place within each type of asset, but those of one type also interact with other types. It is not always made clear how such interaction or crossover takes place. A single asset can generate multiple benefits, making it difficult to link a particular livelihood outcome to a specific asset. It is not always apparent, however, whether particular assets can be substituted for others or whether specific assets or combinations thereof are needed in order to successfully pursue specific livelihood strategies. For example, one might argue that accessibility to social capital enables women to access land, but how and under what conditions social capital is able to do so is often left unanswered.

In many cases, questions on the cost or effect of using particular assets remain unanswered as well. For example, widows who make use of their formal and legal rights to land often do so at the risk of losing familial support in times of economic hardship (Koster 1998). In addition, it is important to realise that a particular asset is often valued by different parties: for instance, the owner or producer of that particular asset, as well as outsiders who believe they have a moral claim to that same asset⁷⁰. Valuation is likely to differ among these different actors, which makes that particular asset the object of contestation. For example, informants in Rwanda mention that one of the problems faced by widows is property grabbing by relatives (kinship-based claims to land).

For the purpose of this study, five⁷¹ categories of assets (capitals) are discerned: natural, physical, human, financial, and social⁷². *Natural capital* refers to

⁶⁹ Bebbington (1999) refers to social networks only. However, the same could be said for any of the livelihood assets at people's disposal.

⁷⁰ Note that according to Swift (1989), having a claim is also an asset.

⁷¹ The number of assets differs among authors and organisations. For example, CARE removes natural resources and infrastructure from the list, locating these elements as part of the context instead. UNDP, however, adds a sixth asset to the five mentioned here: political capital, as determined by connections to power. Bebbington (1999) also adds another asset: cultural capital, which refers to the set of cultural practices made possible or constrained by patterns of co-residence and absence. Such practices not only give meaning to livelihood strategies but they also empower and enable forms of action and resistance, which the other types of capital do not make possible. For this study, the capitals as presented by the DFID framework are seen as analytically useful components of the resource base of people in Rwanda. Political and cultural capital are not included as separate assets in this study; rather, power relations and cultural practices are treated as an integral part of the other types of assets mentioned here, as well as of the other elements in the livelihood framework.

the natural resource base (land, water, and biological resources such as trees) or to agro-biodiversity. People use their surrounding agro-biodiversity to generate means of survival. Its use is not restricted to gathering activities, but may include all types of commercial extraction or cultivation techniques, depending of course on the rights of access. Natural capital is not static, and its composition is likely to be altered by bringing it under human control. Some resources will be enhanced, as may be the case with mountainous cultivation coupled with terrace building. Others will be depleted: for example, by processes of erosion or declining soil fertility. Moreover, some resources are renewable, such as trees, while others are non-renewable, like metals and minerals.

Physical capital refers to fixed assets brought into existence by economic production processes, including tools, machines, houses, irrigation canals, electricity supply, and roads⁷³. Some of these are individually produced or owned, while others qualify as public works. This distinction is important, as both the origin and ownership of physical capital can have a major impact on the opportunities open to individuals. The supply of electricity makes it possible for manufacturing industries to develop. Similarly, roads make international trade possible, and the availability of drinking water reduces the occurrence of certain diseases. While public goods are not under direct control of individuals, they do have an enormous impact on the diversity and viability of potential livelihood activities.

Human capital, also known as livelihood capabilities (Chambers and Conway 1992), refers to the quantity and quality of labour available to the household, including educational level, knowledge and skills, and health status⁷⁴ (Carney 1998). Human capital is an important asset, as it is needed to make use of other types of assets. The difficulty with this capital is that it is under constant flux as a result of internal group dynamics and external pressures. For example, in an attempt to overcome declining income and deteriorating economic contexts, households are likely to respond by mobilising additional labour, often in the form of women and sometimes children (Moser 1998). Moreover, human capital can be increased by macro policies, such as public education and health services.

Sen is the best-known proponent of the notion of 'capabilities' (cf. Sen 1983, 1997). Dreze and Sen use the concept to refer to the set of alternative beings and doings that a person can achieve with his or her economic, social, and personal characteristics (Dreze and Sen 1989). Human capital and human capability are strongly related (Sen 1997). Human capital can, by means of people's agency, augment production possibilities. Thus seen, human capital, on the one hand, is

⁷² Reference to capitals in the discussion to follow does not imply that the non-commoditised, non-material, and cultural part of life can be ignored or deserves less attention. Rather, values and meaning are central to understanding the choices that people make.

⁷³ Infrastructure is only an asset insofar as it facilitates an improved provision of services to people.

⁷⁴ In fact, knowledge is an asset, while labour is a resource.

normally defined in terms of indirect value: for example, by being able to command a price in the market or, to put it differently, in bringing about economic change. The more inclusive concept of human capability, on the other hand, also focuses on the ability of people to live meaningful and worthwhile lives, and can thus be defined both indirectly and directly: for example, by people being healthy or well-nourished. Ellis (2000) finds the use of the concept capabilities to describe human capital problematic, since its meaning overlaps means and ends. As Sen (1997: 1960) puts it: "... human beings are not merely means of production (even though they excel in that capacity), but also the end of the exercise". The usefulness of the notion of capability lies in the fact that it serves as the means of both economic as well as social change.

Financial capital denotes the monetary resources people have access to and includes stocks of money, like savings, access to credit facilities, and flows of money, such as remittances and wages. Capital types other than money also form part of this category. In countries with a high inflation rate, livestock or jewellery often play a critical role. As well as forming a store of wealth in financial terms, livestock often plays an important symbolic function. For example, large numbers of livestock may increase the owner's status. Two fundamental characteristics of this capital are its liquidity – how readily resources can be turned into cash – and its fungibility (Ellis 2000), meaning that, more than any other category of capital, its use can easily be switched.

It is beyond the scope of this publication to discuss all capitals of relevance to the people under investigation in this study. Instead, several assets have been selected that are of obvious importance in Rwanda's post-conflict situation. Thus, in Chapter 7 I look at two proxy variables for human capital: health (including issues of fertility and nutritional status) and education. Land, the most important productive resource in Rwanda, can be seen as a proxy variable for both natural and financial capital. In Chapter 8, I look at land primarily as natural capital. In Chapter 9 land, and in particular the use of land, is analysed in terms of financial capital. Income and savings are of course logical proxy variables for financial capital. However, respondents in this study were reluctant to discuss these matters openly. This has forced me to look for other proxy variables for financial capital, such as the importance of crop and livestock production and off- and non-farm employment for different types of households. Physical capital, in the form of construction material for houses, luxury household items (bicycle, radio, and cassette player), furniture, and agricultural tools are discussed in Chapter 11. These items have been chosen, as they can be used to assess households' overall material standard of living. Throughout these chapters, the focus is on the historical relations in the external environment, which have shaped the access of different groups of people to these resources, and on the meaning people themselves attach to these assets.

Social Capital

The category of *social capital* is perhaps the most debated of the five mentioned here and is the most difficult to define. The concept can be traced back to the Scottish Enlightenment, but its current use was developed by sociologists, foremost Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, and can be seen to refer to the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inherent to an actor's social networks, which, if one is able to mobilise these networks, facilitate mutually beneficial collective action (Woolcock 1998). The importance of social capital in building and maintaining the trust necessary for social cohesion and change has long been recognised by anthropologists. Economists, however, recognise the importance of social capital as a determinant of the feasibility and productivity of economic activity (Moser 1998).

Since the 1990s, social capital has become a key concept in poverty and development studies, and has been adopted by sociologists, economists, practitioners, and governments (Harriss and de Renzio 1997). Some equate social capital with personalised networks and connections (for instance, based on age or kinship groups) and relations of trust and mutual support within and beyond the local community. Seen this way, social capital is located in the structure of relations between and among individuals and is not as such found within individuals or artefacts (Coleman 1988, 1990). Others propose a link with more formal manifestations of community organisations, such as cooperatives, farmer associations, and village committees, or even equating social capital with the entire institutional framework of a society (Putnam 1993a, Portes 1995).

Woolcock (1998) proposes a model of social capital that incorporates four dimensions. Firstly, he discerns strong ties between primary groups, such as family members and neighbours. These relations are predominantly of a traditional, ascriptive, and informal character and are usually based on kinship, ethnicity, and religion. They function in the same way as what Putnam (1993b) has called 'bonding social capital'. Strong ties are often able to survive conflict, or are even reinforced by conflict, and as such they form a first safety net for basic survival (Harvey 1997). Secondly, Woolcock discerns weak ties with the outside community and between communities. He considers weak ties to be more networked and associational, bringing people together and connecting those who would normally not interact. Weak ties often bridge differences in kinship, ethnicity and religion – Putnam (1993b) referred to 'bridging social capital – and give people the strategic advantage to move ahead. Woolcock's first two dimensions, consisting of strong and weak ties, relate to what Putnam (1993a) has called 'horizontal ties' and contrast with 'vertical ties'. Woolcock's third dimension is expressed in more vertical, formal institutions at the macro level, encompassing "state institutions and their effectiveness and ability to function, as well as the legal environment and social norms" (Colletta and Cullen 2000: 7). Vertical ties are characterised by hierarchy and unequal power distribution among members. In Woolcock's fourth dimension, state-community interactions reflect how and to what extent state institutions interact with the community.

Social capital can be obtained in different ways. Part of one's social capital is inherited, part is assigned according to one's position in society, and part has to be created through deliberate efforts. Access to other key resources can be obtained through social capital (Niehof 2004b), and bonds of friendship and moral support can be created. This means that social capital, like human capital, has not only an instrumental but also an intrinsic value. Moreover, social capital is a productive resource that, contrary to most other capitals, increases through its use. Finally, social capital is a relational concept, since it is embedded in societal structures and norms (Narayan 1997, Portes 1998). Social capital is not generated by individual actors acting on their own but by actors acting together; it is created from the myriad of everyday interactions between people. In other words, social capital inheres in the structure of people's relationships (Portes 1998). Because of this, social capital is not a gender-neutral concept (cf. Ali and Niehof 2007).

In rural Africa, households devote considerable time and money to personalised networks, entailing complex systems of rights and obligations, most often informal in nature (Berry 1989). Potentially, these networks are critical in accessing other types of capital, such as natural (land), financial (credit), and human (labour), thus offering spatially diverse livelihood opportunities and support. Similarly, access to regional and national organisations and networks can facilitate access to other types of capital, prevent other actors from expropriating resources, and provide the opportunity to partake in wider decision-making processes (Bebbington 1999).

However, the enabling potential of social capital comes at a cost, since networks need to be nurtured and investments must be made to guarantee support. At the same time, high levels of social capital are likely to result in high particularistic demands, thereby restricting the potential use of social capital according to individual needs and desires. Thus, one can actually possess too little or too much social capital, both of which impede economic performance (Woolcock 1998). Moreover, there is no guarantee that investments made in the past will bear fruit in the future. For example, Nombo (2007) argues that the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS in Tanzania limits the support of neighbours, friends, and the wider community. Moreover, she found that as a consequence of widespread poverty, families are often too burdened with their own problems to be able to help out kin. Interpersonal social networks were no longer able to provide sufficient support to buffer the HIV/AIDS crisis. As a result, Nombo argues, investing in social relationships becomes difficult to the extent that people may actually become excluded from informal support mechanisms. Indeed, as livelihood conditions change over time, participants in relationships in which people have invested in the past are not able or willing to reciprocate in the future. Due to structural and cultural barriers in the community, investors may find themselves unable to exploit their potential. Consolidation of social capital cannot always prevent its erosion under difficult economic conditions, political instability, environmental disasters, or violent conflicts. Covariant shocks form a particular risk to social capital; when everyone is suffering from the same problem, it becomes more difficult for people to assist one another (Carter and Maluccio 2003).

The concept of social capital has been used by many, often without properly being defined within the context of its particular use: "Social capital, while not all things to all people, is many things to many people" (Narayan and Pritchett 1996: 871). The indiscriminate application of social capital has resulted in a number of problems and weaknesses⁷⁵. One of the main problems is the relation between social capital and political, social, and economic change: in other words, the unresolved tension between action and structure. This tension becomes clear in the work of Putnam (1993a), when he discusses the constructability of social capital in circumstances where it has been missing historically. According to Putnam, the construction of social capital is best served by the creation of horizontal ties: social organisations such as networks, found within the community and regulated by trust and norms. However, it appears from his work that even if different actors are able to make such choices so as to increase connections between them, structure seems to determine eventually whether these connections will lead to social and economic development. A major criticism with regard to Putnam's theory is that he makes no differentiation between different types of organisations (for example, farmer's associations versus choirs or sports clubs) or different types of social capital. Moreover, social differentiation and power relations are not taken into account, although it seems clear that access to and the effects of social capital will depend crucially on these factors. Communities are characterised by power relations, hierarchies, and conflicts (Molyneux 2002). People do not acquire social capital on the basis of individual choice. Rather, mutual reciprocity and the opportunity to participate in networks depend on one's position in the prevailing power structures of a community (Rankin 2002).

Potentially, social capital facilitates greater cooperation or forms of action that enhance people's ability to access and defend resources, and to transform them into specific livelihood outcomes. At the same time, they also provide access to mediating processes and structures, which in itself enhances or constrains people's ability to access resources. Nevertheless, despite the fact that there seems to be a strong correlation between social capital and political, social, and economic change, surprisingly little is known about the actual causal mechanisms at work and the exact impact of different types, levels, and dimensions of social capital. We also do not know how different combinations of these dimensions result in positive or negative performance outcomes, or how the external environment in which social capital operates supports or weakens particular combinations (Woolcock

⁷⁵ The first problem of the indiscriminate application of social capital is that the concept is used to explain too much and has in fact become non-falsifiable. The second is that it is often unclear whether the concept refers to the 'infrastructure' or 'content' of social relations. Also, little distinction is made between the 'source' and the 'benefits' of social capital. The third is that there is confusion about state-society relations. The fourth is that in most discussions social capital is treated as an unqualified good that can be maximised. However, different types of social capital exist and the need for optimisation may be more acute than the need for maximisation (Woolcock 1998). It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss these problems at length.

1998; Bebbington 1999). However, a degree of evidence on the causal relationship between social capital and livelihood outcomes is available. Portes (1995) demonstrates how certain community-level relationships can play an important role in facilitating access to local resources other than social capital. He explains this by pointing out that these relationships are often based on shared cultural identity, interactions with other groups, shared experience of discrimination, and strong intra-group communication (cf. Bebbington 1999). Social capital by itself, without other resources, is, however, unlikely to lead to change or development.

Narayan and Pritchett (1999) mention several mechanisms to show how social capital affects livelihood outcomes at the village level, in particular with regard to income. The first is based on Putnam's conclusion (1993) that regions in Italy with a greater degree of horizontal connections had more efficacious governments. Narayan and Pritchett explain this finding by posing that social capital facilitates the monitoring of the government, either directly, if government officials themselves are embedded in these horizontal connections, or indirectly, since this monitoring is a public good. Another mechanism at play is the role of group or community cooperative action in solving problems involving common property. Social capital facilitates the provision of services benefiting the entire group, thereby possibly reducing purely individualistic behaviour and stressing the benefits of cooperative action. The third mechanism they refer to is the diffusion of innovations that is likely to be facilitated by more linkages between people. These linkages also lead to a greater range of market transactions, including those involving some uncertainty about compliance, such as credit. Similarly, linkages between people contribute to risk sharing among households and provide some sort of safety net, which in turn allows people to participate in more risky activities and transactions.

Another problem with social capital is that much of it is latent, only emerging during a crisis, and thus only to be discovered by time-consuming anthropological research. How social capital is destroyed and how individuals or groups are socially excluded⁷⁶ becomes clearer as a result of such research. However, the processes through which social capital is constructed and trust and norms of reciprocity are created are complex, difficult to unravel, and still little understood. Putnam is of the opinion that 'weak' horizontal ties produce good governance because of their inherent sanctions against defection, provision of information creating trustworthiness, and possibilities for future collaboration (cf. Harris and de Renzio 1998). However, others are not convinced that this is enough to promote large-scale development (Levi 1996). Trust is as likely to be produced

⁷⁶ Simply put, social capital can have a positive as well as a negative aspect. An example of the first is access to wider social networks that can enhance access to resources. An example of the latter is that some people are excluded from specific networks. The claim on social capital by some individuals comes at the expense of others, but this negative aspect of social capital is often neglected. However, the issue is of central importance because attempts to increase social capital for development do not involve a distribution-neutral process.

outside of 'weak' horizontal ties, and can emerge in response to overall experiences and interactions among different groups. What matters is not so much the specific form of social capital but how it is scaled up or down through relationships between different ties, arrangements, and organisations (cf. Nombo 2007).

As becomes clear from the above discussion, social capital is the least tangible of the five assets mentioned here. Since it is very difficult to find appropriate indicators for norms such as trust⁷⁷, social capital is often inferred on the basis of organisations and groups. Thus, Putnam, one of the most influential proponents of the concept, measures social capital primarily by counting civic organisations (Putnam 1993a)⁷⁸, while Narayan and Pritchett (1999) look primarily at the quantity and quality of associational life. Others consider trust to be derived from social ties as well as reciprocity, essential preconditions for successful claims (Moser 1998). The World Bank has tried to extend the narrower conceptualisation of social capital by measuring notions such as 'trust', attempting to link resulting data to economic growth (cf. Grootaert et al. 2004).

Social capital, perhaps more than any other type, is vitally important for determining access to resources (Berry 1989), since it enhances access to other actors governed by the logics of state, market, and civil society. Perhaps social capital is best conceptualised as asset, access, *and* outcome of social relations between actors (people, organisations, and institutions). As such, social capital assumes an ambiguous position in the livelihood framework as presented here.

In this study, social capital is measured at different levels. On the one hand, membership of voluntary associations and groups as well as interpersonal networks (of family, friends and neighbours) is used as a proxy variable capturing structural social capital (such as density and diversity of networks). On the other hand, trust is used as a proxy variable for cognitive social capital (subjective notions about and experiences with behaviour requiring trust). Moreover, the costs and benefits of social capital will be described and mechanisms that create, nurture, and sustain different types and combinations of social relations will be identified. The insight thus gained will be integrated into the wider livelihood framework by analysing the relations identified in light of the external environment that has shaped them.

The Notion of Access

Within communities, individuals and groups of actors have different levels of access to resources, leading to the development of alternative activities and outcomes. In the sustainable livelihood framework, the notion of access is not

⁷⁷ Indicators of norms are largely surrogate and indirect.

⁷⁸ This is surprising, since Putnam defines social capital as the informal and organised reciprocal networks of trust and norms embedded in the social organisation of communities. One would expect measures of social capital to reflect notions of reciprocity and trust as much as the quantitative presences of institutions as such.

mentioned as a separate element but is seen as inherent to assets. According to Chambers and Conway (1992), claims and access form social capital. They define access as ‘the opportunity in practice to use a resource, store or service or to obtain information, material, technology, employment, food or income’ (Chambers and Conway 1992: 8), and thus consider access to be an integral part of assets. As access is obviously of central importance to people’s ability to develop livelihood activities and safeguard required outcomes, rather than including the concept as an implicit part of assets, it would be better to de-link and explicitly analyse the notion of access (Niehof and Price 2001).

There is a need to understand the conditions under which people are able to enhance their access to assets and the way in which mediating factors influence this process. For access is to a large extent enabled or restricted by institutional arrangements, organisational issues, power, and politics (Scoones 1998, Brons *et al.* 2007). While one could argue that the distribution of material resources will determine how the state and market function, and thus how questions of access are resolved, this is only part of the answer. According to Bebbington, access to other actors is:

“... conceptually prior to access to material resources in the determination of livelihood strategies, for such relationships become almost *sine qua non* mechanisms through which resources are distributed and claimed, and through which the broader social, political and market logics governing the control, use and transformation of resources are either reproduced or changed”

(Bebbington 1999: 2023, italics original)

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that access to other actors is dependent on processes of social exclusion, where groups:

“... try to monopolize specific opportunities to their own advantage. They use property relations or certain social or physical characteristics such as race, gender, language, ethnicity, origin or religion to legitimize this fencing-in of opportunities. Social exclusion and poverty are then the consequences of social closure, a form of collective social action which gives rise to social categories of eligibles and ineligibles”.

(de Haan and Zoomers 2005: 33-34)

Since processes of social inclusion or exclusion are directly linked to the notion of access, the analysis of livelihood generation ought to include an analysis of power relations.

To better understand how decisions concerning livelihood strategies are made, I suggest taking a close look at intra-household dynamics. There are different theoretical notions that may help explain intra-household dynamics, such as the notion of a bargaining household, the transactions framework, or the

bargaining approach. In the bargaining household, members formally contend and exchange assets to gain their individual goals (Manser and Brown 1979). The transactions framework (Ben-Porath 1980), which views the household as being composed of contracts between individuals of different generations or between conjugal pairs, forms another example. The bargaining approach forms a bridge between intra-household bargaining and transaction. Originally developed in the field of economic theory, the bargaining approach looks at households from a 'collective models' approach. It holds that those who are in a stronger fallback position in the event that cooperation breaks down are in a better position to realise their own preferences than those with weaker fallback positions.

The bargaining approach assumes that individuals possess different needs and preferences. It also assumes that individuals within the household are aware that cooperation rather than conflict will often yield higher results to each member. To find a balance between self-interest and cooperation, individuals have to negotiate about desired outcomes and the pathways that are expected to lead to these outcomes. However, as Sen (1985, 1990) rightly points out in his discussion on cooperative conflict, in many cases individuals cannot 'bargain' with each other. Individual utilities may overlap in some areas. In addition, perceptions of self-interest and self-worth are not clearly defined, creating inequalities in the bargaining process. The outcome of a bargaining process depends on several factors: the breakdown wellbeing response, also known as the fall-back position, the perceived interest response, and the perceived contribution response (Sen 1990).

The breakdown wellbeing response is related to the strength of individuals in the bargaining process. It deals with an individual's fall-back position in the event that cooperation ceases or fails. The stronger this fall-back position, the higher the ability of the individual to secure a favourable outcome. For example, women who earn their own income are often in a better position to make decisions on their own, or to contest those of other household members, than are women who depend on the income of their relatives. Agarwal (1994) mentions five interrelated factors that may influence a person's fall-back position in relation to subsistence needs like food and health care, both within and outside the household. These are private ownership and control over assets, access to employment and other income-earning means, access to communal resources, access to traditional external social support systems, and access to support from the state or NGOs. As different household members will have varying degrees of access to each of the factors mentioned, some will be in a stronger fall-back position than others, and thus possess more bargaining power. Differences in access to any of these are the result of organising principles in society, such as gender, class, or ethnicity.

Sen (1990) assigns perception a central role in the bargaining process and argues that if a woman undervalues herself, her bargaining position will be weaker and she is likely to accept inferior conditions. He subdivides the notion of perception into two separate factors. By the perceived interest response, it is meant in whose interest the bargaining takes place. If perceived interest does not take into

account an individual's own wellbeing, he or she may end up in a situation worse than before entering into the bargaining process. By increasing someone's perceived interest, his or her bargaining power will likewise increase. Women are often assumed to be giving priority to the interests of their children, while not considering their own wellbeing or by placing a lower value on it. For example, rather than investing in their own education or health, resources are used to increase the educational level of and subsequent opportunities for their children.

However, the assumption that many women consider others' wellbeing above their own is debatable (Agarwal 1994). That many women appear to conform to this assumption at first glance does not necessarily imply that they really do so. To determine whether this is the case, more attention needs to be paid to the forms of covert and overt resistance that women employ in everyday life. Even when women put the interests of others above their own, it still remains questionable whether this is not also in their own best interest. In a study on land inheritance rights of women in northeast India (Koster 1998), I found that women are not only likely to outlive their husbands but that they remain highly dependent on their in-laws, brothers, and sons during widowhood. Ensuring that the interests of the in-laws, brothers, and sons are satisfactorily dealt with during earlier years, women may benefit from their support at a time when they most need this support. A similar conclusion is reached by Ali (2005).

Finally, there is the perceived contribution response. Women contribute a great deal to the household by looking after children, cleaning, cultivating, collecting firewood and water, cooking, and so on. However, this is not to say that women, or others for that matter, recognise these activities as substantially contributing to overall household welfare. Women's work is often undervalued or ignored, especially so when work is not rewarded in monetary terms. Moreover, men and women generally have incomplete information about each other's earnings. Husbands frequently minimise their wives' income and women find it difficult to specify their own income because of the irregularity and the form. Women are often unaware of their husbands' earning and spending and are often kept deliberately uninformed (Safilios-Rothschild 1987). By increasing someone's perceived contributions, bargaining power will increase as well. However, Agarwal (1994) makes a convincing case when she states that it might not be sufficient simply to look at perceived contributions in relation to the legitimacy of women's claims in the bargaining process. She feels that the perceived needs of women should be considered simultaneously. Where women's needs are considered less important than those of other household members, it may negatively influence their relative strength in the bargaining process.

The outcome of a bargaining process can then be predicted as follows:

"The outcome would be less favourable to a person (a) the less value s/he attaches to her/his own well-being relative to the well-being of others (perceived interest response), and (b) the smaller her/his contribution to the household economy is perceived to be (perceived contribution response). Sen argues that both types of perceptions are usually biased in women's

disfavour, although these biases operate in varying degrees in different societies...”

(Agarwal 1994:56)

Agarwal extends Sen’s analysis of the effect that gender differentials in bargaining power may have on the outcomes to what is actually being bargained about. Not all issues are accepted as legitimate ones to be bargained over. It is interesting in this respect to refer to Bourdieu (1995), who has written extensively on the notions of *doxa*, that which is taken for granted, and *heterodoxy*, opinions different or opposed to the ruling opinion within the universe of discourse or argument. It would be in the best interest of the dominant group to keep the *doxa* intact, to limit the legitimate issues to what they feel is appropriate to be bargained about. However, those dominated would want to subject *doxa* to challenge and to change. This can be done by material means or symbolically, exposing the arbitrariness of what is taken for granted. Gender differentials in bargaining power are thus not only visible in the outcomes of specific processes but also in the issues that are actually being bargained about.

Bruce (1989) raises another interesting point. Intra-household bargaining dynamics, as well as those outside the household, may be strained severely by poverty. If the goal of livelihood activities is merely to survive, to feed one’s children, or to overcome sudden shocks such as diseases, then there may not be any opportunity to bargain about other utilities, such as satisfaction or pleasure. Moreover, the division of labour results in increasing segmentation of experience, not only between the sexes but also among generations. Individual household members are therefore likely to take on different responsibilities, which, in turn, are likely to result in daily spatial separation or, in the case of temporary migration, even long-term spatial separation. What may thus appear as a set of household survival strategies may in fact be little more than ‘the uneasy aggregate of individual survival strategies’ (Schmink 1984, Bruce 1989).

A major problem with the bargaining theory, as with other collective models, is that it treats bargaining rules as fixed. In reality, social norms and rules adapt and change in response to evolving circumstances. Individuals are continuously confronted with this flux and are themselves, consciously or not, part of the process in which social norms are renegotiated and redefined. Moreover, as Jaspars and Shoham (2002) point out, some transfers, especially in situations of chronic conflict and political instability, are illegal acts that are not easily accommodated by the bargaining approach. Another problem is that ‘bargaining’ is an economic concept, while many of the decisions taken by people are not economic in nature.

The bargaining approach is not only useful to examine intra-household relationships, but it may also be used to examine inter-household relationships and communities. When used to examine household livelihood organisation, the approach has the advantage that it focuses on conflicting interests, values, and claims, and it shows how this ‘political arena of livelihood’ (de Haan and Zoomers 2005) can be analysed.

Policies, Institutions, and Processes (PIP), and the Vulnerability Context

Access to assets, and the conversion of a set of assets into a livelihood strategy, is mediated by a number of factors and processes: some exogenous, others endogenous to the social norms and structures of which households are part (Ellis 2000, Brons *et al.* 2007). In the DFID livelihood framework as presented above, two mediating processes are considered. A distinction is made between the vulnerability context (over which people have little control) and policies, institutions, and processes (PIP). The latter are the result of historical processes in which people participate. Not only do the vulnerability context and PIPs interact with people's asset base but they also interact with each other⁷⁹.

PIPs describe the governance environment in which livelihoods are constructed, and comprise a highly diverse and complex range of issues associated with policies (on a local, national, and international level and including, for example, conservation policies and subsidies), social relations (based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion), institutions (government and civic organisations, churches, private sector, marriage), and processes (law, land tenure arrangements, foreign investment and aid, culture, and rituals). In addition, PIPs deal with issues of power, authority, and participation (Ellis 2000). PIPs can be formal or informal in character, are continuously shaped and reshaped, and are subject to multiple interpretations by different groups of people. They operate at all levels (from household to the international arena) and in all spheres (private to public). PIPs can inhibit and facilitate the ability of people to achieve desired outcomes, and can affect the attractiveness of particular livelihood strategies by influencing access to various types of assets, the terms of exchange between different assets, and possible returns. In turn, the choices people make and act upon also have a direct impact on PIPs (Brons *et al.* 2007). Rules and social norms are likely to change over time, leading to the demise, alteration, or development of new institutions and organisations. Understanding PIPs allows the identification of restrictions and opportunities that mediate access to livelihood resources and the composition of livelihood portfolios. PIPs as such contain the macro-micro linkages and the relationships between the state, the private sector, civil society and individuals.

Access to assets, and the conversion of a set of assets into a livelihood strategy, is also influenced by the vulnerability context or the living environment. The vulnerability context can be divided analytically into fortuitous or adverse *trends* (such as climatic changes, demographic changes, migration, technological changes, price fluctuations, macro policies, and national and world economic trends) and *shocks* (such as droughts, floods, pests, diseases, death, and violence or civil unrest). Trends are phenomena that are typically predictable and variously continuous or cyclical, while shocks are impacts that are typically sudden, unpredictable, and quite often traumatic. Seasonality thus forms an integral part of the vulnerability context. It is important to realise that the vulnerability context

⁷⁹ According to de Haan and Zoomers (2005), there is a tendency to downplay these structural features in livelihood studies, as the focus tends to be on capitals and activities.

directly affects the asset base and options open to people to pursue specific livelihood outcomes. However, even though their control over this environment may seem limited, people also affect the vulnerability context, directly or indirectly, by changing the PIP environment, which in turn can influence the vulnerability context.

Livelihood Strategies

The asset base of households is facilitated or constrained by policies, institutions, and processes within a certain vulnerability context. The particular denomination following from this interaction results in individuals planning and adopting a mix of responses that together form one or more livelihood strategies. These livelihood strategies are not stable but highly dynamic. How choices are made, and which ones are preferred, varies over time (across seasons and years, but also during one's lifetime or domestic cycles). What may seem like a sustainable strategy at one point may not be the preferred strategy at other times. Thus, significant variation is likely to be found in responses between different crisis situations, at different points in time and within the same area. How livelihood strategy choices are made depends on the constraints under which decisions are being made, the power relations at play, and the way livelihood, poverty, and development is experienced (Bebbington 1999).

A key step in the analysis of people's livelihoods is to identify which livelihood resources, or combination of resources, are required for different livelihood strategies. For the purpose of this research, it may therefore be useful to classify livelihood strategies into broad types. For example, Corbett (1988) refers to coping strategies as the ones people might adopt in response to drought or economic disasters, encompassing both insurance and crisis strategies. The latter can be detrimental to livelihoods and are usually only adopted in response to a prolonged crisis, as such crisis strategies are likely to involve the erosion of essential assets and could over time even lead to destitution. As the main aim under these circumstances becomes survival, such crisis strategies are referred to by others as survival strategies (Devereux 1999).

Davies (1993) differentiates between four different types of strategies. Under normal circumstances, insurance strategies are undertaken to minimise the risk of production failure. In contrast, coping strategies are short-term responses to immediate and inhabitual crises, and adaptive strategies are long-term responses to adverse events, cycles, and trends. Where coping strategies are normally proactive, reversible and sustainable in nature, adaptive strategies are reactive, reflecting a mutation of livelihoods and the moral economy in which these operate, and possibly causing permanent damage to livelihoods. In addition to these three, Davies discerns a fourth type: recovery strategies. These are designed to facilitate bouncebackability: the return from experienced crisis to a state of normalcy.

Jaspars and Shoham (2002) find that crisis strategies or survival strategies under politically stable conditions (such as migration, collection of wild foods, and

reduction of food intake) differ from strategies adopted in response to conflicts. Strategies during conflicts may include any of the strategies applied during times of political stability but are also likely to include other activities such as subsistence activities, engagement in the parallel or informal economy, violent or illegal acts, and morally degrading activities.

Whereas the identification of strategy types by both Corbett and Davies seems to point to a sequence of strategies⁸⁰, Scoones (1998) categorises livelihood strategies differently. He identifies three strategy types: agricultural intensification or extensification where land is the key asset, livelihood diversification into non-farm activities, and migration (resulting in remittances). Depending on people's resource endowments and the risk they are willing or able to take, a range of options exist: accumulation of resources, spreading of resources over space and time, changing the mix of activities, pooling of resources, and enhancing overall resilience of the livelihood system. In a study on urban vulnerability, Moser (1998) distinguishes income-raising strategies from consumption-modifying strategies. Where the first aim at acquiring food, the latter aim at restraining the depletion of food and non-food resources. Ellis (2000) divides livelihood strategies into natural resource-based activities, such as collection and cultivation of food and non-food items, livestock production, non-farm activities like brick making or weaving, and non-natural resource-based activities such as trade, services, manufacture, remittances, and pensions.

Households vary with respect to the assets that they possess or are able to gain access to. They also vary in their ability to substitute one asset for the other, both within and between different categories of assets. Likewise, resource endowments of individual household members vary. Individual members adopt different livelihood strategies, often combining activities so as to meet various household needs over time. For most rural households, farming alone does not provide sufficient means of survival. Reardon (1997) argues that in African countries between 22 to 93 percent of total rural household income (cash and in-kind income) originates from the non-farm sector. People come to depend increasingly on the market for part of their necessities (including items like soap and clothing and specific food items such as sugar or vegetables), while other arenas of their lives require payment in cash (for instance, school fees). The sale of surplus production, if there is any to sell in the first place, often provides the household with insufficient income to satisfy all the demands of its members. For this reason, households, perhaps with the exception of those relying purely on subsistence farming, develop a 'portfolio of activities and income sources' (Ellis 2000), or 'livelihood portfolio' (Scoones 1998; Niehof 2004b). Farming can be combined with livestock, off-farm, or non-farm production.

Adjustments to the composition of the asset base, or asset substitution, are made so as to reduce vulnerability to trends and shocks. In general, the higher the asset substitutability of an individual or group of individuals, the more options are

⁸⁰ It needs to be stressed that sequential uptake is not the aim of the categorisation as presented by these authors.

available for livelihood generation. However, it is important to realise that asset substitution does not always have the expected result; it may jeopardise survival in the long run and may aggravate unequal burdens for women, which leave them dependent on male support in the future. Where successful, households improve their capacity to overcome shocks or adapt to stress without compromising future survival.

It is important to realise that decisions concerning livelihood strategies are not always made consciously. Individual and group behaviour is characterised by strategic and unintentional behaviour (de Haan and Zoomers 2005). For example, Rugalema (2000) argues that people facing HIV/AIDS in Africa merely react to whatever demand is placed upon them. The notion of 'saving life' is at times more accurate than the notion of livelihood strategies aimed at maximising or optimising assets. Rather than using the notion of livelihood strategy, it may therefore be more prudent to use the notion of livelihood pathways:

"A livelihood pathway can be seen as the result of a series of livelihood choices that have emerged over time. This may have been the consequence of a set of conscious and planned choices or the result of the unintended consequences of other actions."

(Scoones 1998: 18)

In a sense, a livelihood pathway constitutes a pattern of livelihood activities (de Haan and Zoomers 2005). However, as de Bruijn and van Dijk (2004: 346) argue, a livelihood pathway is not the same as a livelihood strategy:

"... because a pathway is not designed to attain a pre-set goal after a process of conscious and rational weighing-up of the actor's preferences. Instead it arises out of an iterative process in which goals, preferences, resources and means are constantly reassessed in view of new (unstable) conditions with which the decision-maker is confronted. In this process a wide range of past experiences are at the basis of decisions rather than a sharp vision of the future, while these recollections of the past depend to a great extent on the intellectual concerns of present recollections (Ortiz 1980: 80). Knowledge of these unstable conditions and how to deal with them is gathered in an incremental learning process".

Because it involves an iterative process, a livelihood pathway does not necessarily have an intrinsically planned or rational character. Pathways do not necessarily evolve out of deliberate or conscious decisions, but may also be the result of unintentional behaviour (de Bruijn and van Dijk 2004, de Haan and Zoomers 2005).

The notion of livelihood pathways points out several important issues. Firstly, the fact that pathways evolve over time necessitates an historical approach to livelihoods. Secondly, since livelihood pathways emerge over time, they can only be properly understood after having occurred. While the direction taken by

livelihood pathways can provide insight into how people respond to changes and how their responses might change over time, such pathways cannot be used as easily for the purpose of development planning. Thirdly, decisions concerning livelihood activities are not always strategic. For example, people may act on impulse, out of habit, tradition, or curiosity, or simply because they lack options to choose from. This does not automatically imply that such actions are the result of unconscious decision-making. Rather, behaviour is not always deliberate or conscious (de Haan and Zoomers 2005) and may simply not be under complete behavioural control (Pennartz and Niehof 1999). This is an important point, for if decisions are not always made deliberately, it is very difficult to change the direction of people's choices, as is the intention of many development projects. Some decisions are the result of doxa (Bourdieu 1995). Doxa – that which is taken for granted – relates to a cultural reality that in turn is composed of constraining and enabling dimensions. The cultural reality determines the rules of conduct within society, including what are considered appropriate gender roles. A society's rules of conduct can at times be quite cruel to some of its members, resulting in unequal or exploitative relations between specific groups. Because the rules of conduct are taken for granted, however, they are not easily contested (cf. Iversen 2003).

Thus, in order to understand why some people with sufficient resources at their disposal are not able to employ these resources, a number of issues need to be taken into consideration. The livelihood framework points to the need to analyse the composition of a person's asset base and access to resources, as well as policies, institutions and processes, and vulnerability context (Ellis 2000). However, the notion of livelihood pathways points to the need to analyse the cultural reality in which people live and the changes in livelihood choices over time. Only by placing livelihoods in a historical and cultural context can we learn more about how decisions are being made within and among groups of individuals with regard to their ability to substitute one asset for the other.

Livelihood Outcomes

To summarise, access to assets is modified by a particular context of policies, institutions and processes, and a given vulnerability context; this results in the adoption of specific livelihood strategies meant to lead to desired outcomes. These outcomes are required for meeting and securing actual and future basic needs. Livelihood outcomes do not stand on their own, but directly influence people's assets base and access to resources (Bebbington 1999, Niehof and Price 2001). Outcomes are related to security, including the level and stability of income and degree of risk, and to environmental sustainability, including soil quality and biodiversity (Ellis 2000).

It is important to stress that the concept of livelihood does not correspond with the traditional economic focus on development in income and employment, as these cannot accurately capture the elements upon which poor people build

their lives. However, to date, one of the most used indicators of the livelihood process is individual or household income, despite the fact that income or production-based measures of poverty suffer from two major problems. The first is that income or production alone does not indicate whether people are able to secure a livelihood and achieve their goals. This point is well illustrated by Sen (1981), who shows that it is a lack of entitlements rather than an insufficient quantity of food that leads to famines. The second problem is that income is not always at the top of the list of priorities cited by poor people themselves as the goal of their livelihood activities. People have reason to value other things, such as quality of life and wellbeing (Nussbaum and Sen 1993, Schafer 2002).

The DFID sustainable livelihood framework attempts to overcome the problems associated with the traditional economic focus by taking the actual livelihood strategies of people as its starting point and introducing the much broader notion of 'livelihood outcomes'. In general terms, positive livelihood outcomes include more income, increased wellbeing, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, and more sustainable use of the natural resource base. Other outcomes could be included as well, or replace some of those mentioned here, depending on the goals that people themselves are trying to achieve through their livelihood pursuits.

If one of the objectives of the livelihood approach is to allow people to define 'development', or their own desired livelihood outcomes upon which they base their choice of particular livelihood activities, then another important objective is that of sustainability. The concept of sustainability is intended to capture the way in which current livelihoods affect future livelihoods. It is not enough simply to look at what each individual is doing to gain a livelihood; attention should equally be directed at how individual livelihoods and livelihoods in the aggregate affect the ability of other people to achieve their own livelihoods, both now and in the future. Sustainable livelihood is a concept that is seen nowadays as a core objective for development (Schafer 2002). A sustainable livelihood is defined as one:

"... which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term."

(Chambers and Conway 1992: 6)

In this sense, sustainability can refer to either environmental sustainability – the preservation or enhancement of the productive resource base and intangible assets – or social sustainability – the ability of an individual or group of individuals to gain and maintain a decent livelihood. However, sustainability can also refer to economic or institutional sustainability. For adequate predictions to be made about the sustainability of livelihoods, it is not enough to describe the static level of a particular asset or asset base. What is needed is to look at the direction in which

the asset base as a whole plus aggregate livelihood strategies are moving in the wake of particular trends and shocks. However, the use of the notion of sustainability, as referring to resilience, is somewhat problematic. Conclusions on whether a particular livelihood is sustainable depend not only on the type of sustainability one is referring to but equally on the level at which it is analysed. While an individual's livelihood may be sustainable, one may find that community-level or state-level sustainability is endangered. Thus, one could argue that extensive farming in its own right can be sustainable. However, one may find that land pressure in neighbouring areas is much higher: for example, due to refugee flows. This leads to more exploitative land use systems, thus reducing overall sustainability levels when assessing such levels not at household level but at provincial level. While acknowledging the importance of the notion of sustainability, I would argue that sustainability is an inappropriate concept in the context of conflict situations, and that other notions, such as dependency, self-reliance, survival, or vulnerability, deserve more consideration. I will return to this point later.

The Livelihood Approach

To use the aforementioned framework for an analysis of livelihood systems and changes therein is an extremely complicated and time-consuming activity. Nonetheless, the framework offers an intriguing way of looking at people and their activities, stressing their agency while explicitly acknowledging the fact that people move within certain structures, some of which they are able to influence directly, while others are much more fixed and impossible to circumvent⁸¹. The framework offers insight into the tradeoffs that people have to make in order to reach livelihood security as well as the reasons that make them move in and out of poverty. If development, as measured by livelihood outcomes, is seen as a function of the use of a particular combination of assets within a particular environmental context, then the livelihood approach opens up new ways of thinking about poverty and development. The approach is an intrinsically better way of addressing development processes because people are allowed to define their own idea of livelihood security, although measured by indicators that are most likely based on the etic view of the researcher.

Based on the foregoing, a further developed definition of livelihood is provided by Ellis (2000: 10):

“A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by

⁸¹ As such, the livelihood framework has its roots in the actor-oriented approach as advanced by Long and Long (1992) and Long (2001), and by Giddens' theory of structuration (Giddens 1979, 1987).

institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household”.

However, despite the fact that this definition is an improvement on earlier ones, substantial difficulties remain to be solved. Three problems in particular stand out: determining the most appropriate level and unit of analysis, making livelihood models and approaches suitable for application in post-conflict situations, and ensuring that changes over time are adequately taken into account and described.

Households

What is the most appropriate level of analysis in livelihood studies, and for this study in particular? Ideally, any study dealing with the effects of conflict on local livelihoods should focus on a mix of local, national, and international levels and the linkages that exist among them, for livelihoods are closely intertwined with policies and practices at different and higher levels. Leaving other considerations aside, the level of analysis should be as broad as possible in order to understand how institutions and structures relate to conflict dynamics. This is not easy to realise in practice, as most, if not all researchers are faced by time and financial constraints. Moreover, the livelihood approach itself seems most suitable for micro-level analysis, even though it does question meso- and macro-level impacts on local level livelihood strategies. Due to these considerations, the focus of this study is therefore on micro-level developments. However, where possible, links with other levels have been made: for example, by discussing rural-urban linkages and links to former host countries, including transfers of money, goods, and individuals.

In many livelihood studies, the household is taken as the unit of analysis. However, as the following discussion will show, households are not homogenous social entities in which all members share the same concerns, goals, or visions with regard to appropriate livelihood pathways. Both intra- and inter-household relationships are differentiated by their asset base, their ability to access, defend, and sustain these assets, and their ability to transform assets into required livelihood outcomes. Moreover, by taking the household as the unit of analysis, constraints imposed by structural macro-factors (vulnerability context and PIP) are easily underestimated and the importance of fluid geographical boundaries underexposed. Care must be taken to overcome this problem.

In this study, the household is taken as the unit of analysis. In the next section, the concept of the household is theoretically problematised. In Chapter 4 I will present the operationalisation of this concept within this study.

Defining the Household

This study focuses on the strategies individuals use to provide for their daily basic needs. However, individual experiences and practices are socially bound. Households can be seen as the most basic unit of human social organisation (Hammel *et al.* 1984) and can be considered mediating agencies, forming a bridge between structure and actor (Davidson 1991, Pennartz and Niehof 1999).

The concept of household is understood in various ways. Definitions seem to centre on spatial or housing units, cooking units, kinship ties, or economic production systems. However, as Davidson (1991: 13) argues:

“... it is not necessary to establish a rigid, all-purpose definition of household, merely that we can agree on a ‘working’ definition that takes into consideration its dynamic and fluid nature ... After all, household as an entity represents but a moment in the dynamic process of its continual formation and reformation”.

One of the most widely used ‘working’ definitions of households comes from Rudie (1995: 228, *italics mine*). She defines the household as a “co-residential unit, usually *family-based* in some way, which takes care of *resource management* and primary needs of its members”. Households take a central place in the generation and regeneration of livelihoods all over the world. It is a place where intense social and economic interdependencies occur and as such it represents ‘the arena of everyday life’ to the world’s people (Clay and Schwarzweller 1991). Activities to provide for people’s basic needs are undertaken within the household and resources are managed jointly to this end (Niehof and Price 2001, Niehof 2004b).

The household displays characteristics of a social system. Consisting of social relations between individuals, the household uses inputs (in the sense of resources and assets) and then processes these inputs through management and decision-making processes, and delivers outputs which form the provision for basic needs and care (Engberg 1990; Niehof and Price 2001). It is important to acknowledge, however, that livelihood generation also depends on the efforts of those living beyond the spatially defined household, making them part of other, larger systems. Households are embedded within, interface with, and are shaped by other systems (such as the state, markets, farming systems, and community) and networks (such as kinship networks, friends, and neighbours). The household is in fact both the outcome of and the channel for broader social processes (Guyer and Peters 1988).

Despite their universal occurrence, households are variable in form and function (Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984), over time and across cultural and social geography (Guyer and Peters 1988)⁸². The household is a dynamic unit and

⁸² “Households must be conceptualized as an arbitrary grouping of people who come together to share, minimally, accommodation, including cooking facilities. What else

its social boundaries seem “ceaselessly elastic and permeable” (Russell 1993: 757). Discontinuities in household composition are a normal response to the household or family life course (Pennartz and Niehof 1999), including birth, death, marriage, illness and old age, and external circumstances, such as changes in employment opportunities, climatic conditions, or war. In times of change and economical hardship, households act as critical safety nets, often in the absence of or long before outside assistance is provided. Thus, the household needs to be seen as an infinitely variable social arena, which accounts for the difficulties in defining the concept properly and across cultures (Crehan 1992, cited in Ellis 2000).

The Household as the Unit of Analysis in Livelihood Research

The household is often used as the unit of analysis in livelihood research. It is a place where individuals cooperate to achieve certain outcomes but also to compete for resources, and where norms, values, and power relations are continuously produced and reproduced. The household does not constitute a unified economy (Bruce 1989), and it is not a unitary social actor, a corporate social unit (Wilk 1989), or a monolithic institution (Safilios-Rothschild 1990) in which all members agree upon means and ends. The wellbeing of one household member does not necessarily reflect the wellbeing of other members. Instead, the household is the site of separable, often competing, interests, rights, and responsibilities (Moser 1993). Pure altruism as a behavioural trait cannot be found within the home (Ellis 1993), and benevolent dictators or single overriding decision-makers are assumed for the ease of analysis, rather than representing reality. People hold different positions with respect to access to resources, entitlements, and power, both inside and outside the household. Thus, intra-household relations may be better characterised by ‘the household contract’ (Rogers 1990) or ‘cooperative conflicts’ (Sen 1990, 1985). According to Sen:

“... the members of the household face two different types of problems simultaneously, one involving cooperation (adding to total availabilities) and the other conflict (dividing the total availabilities among the members of the household). Social arrangements regarding who does what, who gets to consume what, and who takes what decisions can be seen as responses to this combined problem of cooperation and conflict. The sexual division of labor is part of such a social arrangement, and it is important to see it in the context of the entire arrangement.”

(Sen 1990:129)

The balance of rights and obligations among household members is reflected in distributions, or allocative rules, which can have critical effects on the

they share ... and for how long, will vary from culture to culture, from class to class, from place to place, from time to time” (Russell 1993: 779).

relative welfare of individual household members (Folbre 1986, Guyer and Peters 1987, Bruce 1989). This balance is among others related to alternatives available to each household member, to principles of extended entitlements, to relative power relations within the household, and to family ideology, social norms, and legal sanctions (Rogers 1990, Kabeer 1991). Gender and age are important differentiating variables (Niehof and Price 2001). Household livelihood strategies in reality consist of an aggregate of individual (household member) livelihood strategies. This underscores the fact that in order to understand household livelihood strategies, we need to comprehend intra- and inter-household power relations.

Household Headship

There is a need, both in general and for this research in particular, to develop elaborate and comprehensive household typologies. This need flows from methodological considerations. There is a need to encompass in greater detail inter- and intra-household flows of economic and social support as well as to better understand the capabilities and vulnerabilities of different types of households.

Determining the head of households can form the basis for identifying categories of household units. However, to define the concept of headship is not an easy task. As Chant (1997) asserts, what household heads actually do or represent in any given society is rarely held up to scrutiny by either outsiders or insiders. The concept of headship seems to carry a number of assumptions, among which that the head of the household is the most important economic provider and vested with varying measures of control over and responsibility for other household members. Moreover, the head of the household is often considered to reflect the characteristics of the household as a whole. However, these assumptions obscure the activities, needs, and contributions of other household members in relation to household livelihood management; they obscure the nature and the extent of cooperative conflict within the household.

Chant (1997) provides an idea of the diversity and dynamics of female household headship⁸³ in developing countries while disentangling some of the stereotypes that surround this phenomenon. In doing so, she discerns seven types of female-headed households:

⁸³ At first glance, Chant seems to base her typology of female-headed households on headship. However, I would argue that she in fact emphasises household composition rather than headship. Take the example of a lone-mother household: if a male relative (let's say a brother or nephew) temporarily moves into a lone-mother household, this household becomes a different type (it could become a female-headed extended household).

- *Lone-mother households*, comprised of a mother and her children;
- *Female-headed extended households*, in which female heads (women without a partner and with or without children) have other relatives living in their homes;
- *Lone female households*, comprised of women living alone without a partner or children;
- *Single-sex female-only households*, comprised of two women (related or not) living together without men;
- *Female-predominant households*, where adult women (related or not) reside with one another and constitute the majority sex in the household;
- *Grandmother-headed households*, comprised of a woman and her grandchildren (and possibly other relatives as well), but not the grandchildren's parents;
- *Embedded female-headed units*, consisting of younger mothers without partners who reside in other people's homes⁸⁴.

Likewise, a categorisation can be made for households headed by men or, for that matter, even child-headed households.

It is generally accepted that an important distinction is that between *de facto* and *de jure* female-headed households. *De facto* female-headed households are ones in which the male spouse is absent but alive (for example, as a result of temporary migration or polygamous relationships where the male spouse rotates between the households of his wives). *De jure* female-headed households are households in which there is no male spouse present (for example, as a result of death or divorce). Categorisations such as the one suggested above can shed light on intra-household relationships in relation to whatever aspect of social reality one is interested in studying: in this particular case, the effects of the war and genocide on household livelihood security in Rwanda. It can also assist in pointing out the capabilities and vulnerabilities within and between each type of household.

Chant's work not only shows clearly the diversity and dynamics of headship, it also points to the diversity and dynamics of household composition. Indeed, male- and female-headed households are diverse, and while the analytical division of these two categories is helpful to look at general differences between male- and female-headed households, it obscures differences found within each category.

As well as such theoretical considerations, there remains a methodological problem in defining the head of the household, as it is unclear what criteria are best used to determine headship. Self or proxy reporting can be problematic, especially in countries where women are considered dependent on men, as is the case in Rwandan society. Strong patriarchal traditions coupled with such reporting may create a situation in which women are less likely to report themselves as the

⁸⁴ To this list I would like to add one more type of household: the *female child-headed household*, where a female minor lives on her own and takes responsibility for herself and other minor relatives.

head of the household. Defining headship becomes even more difficult when taking into account situations of polygamous households, migration, imprisonment of adult male household members, and forced co-habitation as a result of the lack of housing. What is needed, therefore, is a definition of headship that is vested with as few inherent assumptions as possible and which allows for varying degrees of headship within the household. Empirical data, including extensive knowledge on the emic perspective⁸⁵, is needed in order to define such a culturally appropriate definition of the concept of head of the household.

In this study, the core female adult of each household was asked to report the head of her household. For this study, however, headship is considered less important than the presence or absence of a core adult male (spouse) who is able to partake in important household decisions. Household composition (again determined on the basis of self-report by the core female adult) formed the primary consideration for the categorisation of households in this study (see Chapter 4).

Household versus Homestead

Like the extended family or community, the household cannot function in isolation from other social units. As Russell (1993: 760) argues:

“... the assumption of discrete households is particularly inappropriate wherever we find migrant labour, for by definition, migrant labourers live separated from significant kin, to whose support they are important contributors. The ‘households’ of such workers, like those of their dependents, are not discrete at all, but interdependent parts of an inclusive structure.”

Actors beyond the residential unit are likely to be part of household networks that are nurtured for livelihood security purposes. These may include migrant workers but also other actors, such as children who live in boarding schools or relatives who remain behind in the host country. As the relations between individuals in Russell’s ‘inclusive structure’ transcend geographical boundaries (for example, between urban and rural environments or even national boundaries), it is necessary to come to a more spatially extended understanding of the household.

In this respect it is useful to consider the work of Baber, who utilises a concept of the household in which four social units are seen to overlap (Baber 1998,

⁸⁵ “Emic statements refer to logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions ... are built up out of contrasts and distinctions ... regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves ... Etic statements depend on phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers” (Harris 1971: 571 and 575). Emic analysis is usually emphasised by inquirers who try to avoid preconceived “Western” notions (Feleppa 1986).

cited in Ellis 2000: 20). The first and broadest unit is that of the homestead, including all individuals based at a particular homestead and participating as full members in that unit. This unit includes absent members: for example, migrants who can call on the assistance of those living in the homestead. The resident membership of the homestead is in a continuous state of flux, as homesteads expand to accommodate new residents and as old residents move out. Nevertheless: “[although] the homestead is not a residential group, there is a legitimate expectation that it will if necessary make space for all members to live there” (Russell 1993: 762). The second social unit is composed of family groups, which are considered sub-units of the homestead. Individuals in this unit are held together by bonds stronger than those with other, non-related people living in the homestead. The third unit consists of all the people living in the homestead on a daily basis and is called the co-resident unit. It resembles the first unit, with the exception that it includes only those physically living at the homestead, thus excluding migrants, boarding children, and the like. The last unit is the mutual support unit, consisting of the co-resident unit and migrants regularly sending remittances. In some cases, one or more units will overlap, as it does, for example, in many Western countries where the nuclear family and co-resident unit overlap⁸⁶.

Where household composition is more complex, as is the case in Rwanda, the division proposed by Baber facilitates livelihood analysis, since homestead composition can be mapped against the spatial nature of its livelihood sources. This yields four main combinations (see Figure 3.2), which are labelled simple-resident, extended-resident, simple-dispersed, and extended-dispersed. Thus, the simple-resident homestead consists of one family group, such as the nuclear family. When members of the family group are absent, the group is referred to as a simple-dispersed homestead. The extended-resident group consists of more than one family group, such as the extended family. Members of the extended-resident group are eligible to eat together but may also choose to eat separately. When one or more of the extended-resident group are absent, the group is referred to as an extended-dispersed homestead.

⁸⁶ The work of Baber shows considerable overlap with that of Rudie (1995). In her work, Rudie shows how Malay households in Kelantan consist of several units: *the house unit* (the group sharing a dwelling at any point in time – Baber’s co-resident unit), *the food unit*, and *the family* (Baber’s family groups). Rudie’s food unit contains one or more other units, which can be called *units of support* (Baber’s unit of mutual support). In contrast to the other units in which relationships between members are negotiable, the unit of support is formed by relationships that are “balanced around conditional practical relationships of cooperation, and unconditional moral relationships of support” (Rudie 1995: 234).

Figure 3.2: Homestead composition

Family groups:	Mutual support units:	
	No migrants	Migrants
One family group	Simple-resident	Simple-dispersed
Multiple family groups	Extended-resident	Extended-dispersed

After: Baber 1998, in Ellis 2000

Baber's scheme enables livelihood analysis to move beyond the mere individual level and may form a first step in better understanding intra- and inter-household dynamics. Each combination (one versus multiple family groups and migrants versus no migrants) will have different livelihood sources at its disposal, which in turn is likely to lead to different rights and obligations, access to, and control over assets and activities, both for the homestead as a whole and for the individuals belonging to a particular homestead.

Conflict Situations and the Livelihood Framework

The concept of livelihood has been developed for application in situations of political stability (Jaspars and Shoham 2002, Schafer 2002). Livelihood strategies are generally understood as the strategies that people normally use in peaceful and stable times in order to meet their basic needs and future wellbeing. Livelihood approaches are, however, increasingly applied in situations of complex political emergencies (CPE)⁸⁷. As such, they add new insights into the more traditional perceptions of humanitarian support (Young *et al.* 2002).

Schafer (2002) suggests that when using livelihood approaches in situations of conflict, certain issues need to be taken into consideration. Among these are the relation between institutions and structures and conflict dynamics, and the problematic notion of sustainability. Moreover, a livelihood approach needs to be integrated with a political economy analysis, as such an integrative approach is likely to better address the links between micro and macro levels. It also improves

⁸⁷ As Goodhand and Hulme (1999: 16) argue: "The term complex political emergencies (CPE) is not an analytical tool but a descriptive category which provides a shorthand expression for many, often dissimilar, conflicts."

our understanding of the origins of vulnerability, which is to a large extent determined by social and political status rather than by poverty alone⁸⁸.

CPEs usually have multiple causes (including political breakdown, exploitation, and exclusion with regard to access to scarce resources), are normally accompanied by military or paramilitary offensives, and are further complicated by the role of external forces (cf. Duffield 1994). CPEs result in the destruction or erosion of people's asset base and changes in economic opportunities. Such emergencies often exacerbate differences between groups of people: for example, by politicising ethnicity (Jaspars and Shoham 2002). As a result, individuals are forced to change their 'normal' or usual behavior. Whereas people confronted by CPEs may react by first changing their strategies in order to protect their livelihoods, at a later stage they may find themselves merely trying to ensure survival. Once a CPE comes to an end, one may find that people are no longer able or willing to rebuild their former livelihoods.

Within the livelihood framework as presented above, the vulnerability context forms one of the central elements. It is seen as external to livelihood strategies and outcomes (Schafer 2002). The violence that occurs in CPEs would thus be modeled as an exogenous factor. However, violence is often willingly and consciously applied by specific groups in society and is overwhelmingly targeted at civilians and their livelihood systems (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2003, 2006). Risks are likely to be engendered by conflict itself (Brons *et al.* 2007). It is this latter dimension of risk, the nature of external shocks, that is given relatively less importance in livelihood approaches. This is not to ignore the fact that an analysis of the vulnerability context can assist in providing important clues on livelihood vulnerability, even though the external living environment should not be confused with vulnerability of individuals or aggregate livelihood systems. However, by focusing on the issue of resilience or a household's ability to manage risk, as is usually done, the sustainable livelihoods approach runs the risk of underexposing and underestimating the nature of the external shock and the risk involved (Young *et al.* 2002).

Rather than accepting the notion of vulnerability as the outcome of external factors only, new ways of incorporating the components and dynamics of vulnerability should be identified, locating vulnerability as an integral part of each element in the framework (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2003, 2006). It is important to realise that assets do not only vary in quality and quantity but can also be turned into liabilities as a consequence of the particular nature of violence in CPEs. Rwanda exemplifies this. As a result of historical processes, ethnicity facilitated or inhibited access to power. Tutsi were seen as superior to Hutu and were given

⁸⁸ Jaspars and Shoham (2002) also come to the conclusion that the causes of political vulnerability need to be examined: "This includes an examination of war strategies, the political economy of war, and the accountability of states and non-state actors and institutions. More attention also needs to be focussed on understanding the governance environment, and particularly how this environment relates to vulnerability and changing livelihood strategies" (Jaspars and Shoham 2002: 33).

powerful positions by the Belgian colonisers. After independence and the publication of the Hutu manifest, ethnicity became a serious liability to Tutsi. It is also important to realise that institutions can be vulnerable in times of disasters. Moreover, prolonged and organised violence creates new processes, institutions, and policies (take for example the rise of youth militia, also known as the *interahamwe*). Initially, such processes may take place without compromising people's normal routines. With time, however, new social and political identities are likely to surface and livelihood strategies are adapted accordingly (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2003, 2006). Finally, Duffield (1994) refers to the 'myth of modernization': the belief that livelihood outcomes or civic conditions will improve over time. It is, however, not difficult to see that whereas this myth might not hold true under normal circumstances, it is even more unlikely to do so under situations of violence. Death, starvation, and displacement are perhaps more likely livelihood outcomes than increased wellbeing, improved food security, and so on.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability has been defined as:

“... the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard”.

(Wisner *et al.* 2004: 11)

This definition can be extended to cover man-made disasters as well. Vulnerability is not the same as poverty and the poor are not necessarily the most vulnerable. Vulnerability of a person or group depends on external factors, such as the environmental context in which people live. It also depends on the specific characteristics of the person or group (Chambers 1989), such as age, sex, marital status, and employment status. This internal dimension of vulnerability (Brons *et al.* 2007) is a result of entitlement failures and lack of access to specific capitals.

The notion of recovery is closely related to that of sustainability. The emphasis on sustainability might, however, be inappropriate in conflict situations. For example, it is not difficult to see that the objective of economic sustainability might be subject to compromise in situations of conflict, given that debt recovery is virtually impossible in most such situations. Also, sustainability is not likely to be a priority for people facing violence and political instability. Furthermore, consensus on what constitutes relevant sustainability is unlikely to exist. Is economic sustainability more important than social or environmental sustainability? And is economic sustainability at all possible without institutional sustainability (or at a minimum, recovery)? Moreover, even if consensus exists, it is likely that a sustainable livelihood for some will make it more difficult for others to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Worse, in many violent conflicts, the livelihood strategies of some may actually hinder viable livelihood strategies of others. This is not to

argue that we should dispense with the notion of sustainability altogether, or ignore the notion within this research. On the contrary, it is important to realise that the notion of sustainability is fraught with difficulties that should be highlighted and analysed in order to deepen our understanding of livelihood dynamics (Scoones 1998, Schafer 2002).

Young *et al.* (2002: 11) define livelihoods as comprising: “the ways in which people access and mobilize resources that enable them to pursue goals necessary for their survival and longer-term well-being, and thereby reduce the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict”. In this definition, the notion of sustainability is given less prominence, while the importance of the notions of survival and longer-term wellbeing are stressed and the concept of vulnerability is introduced.

Vulnerability refers to the lack of ability to cope with stress and shocks and thus denotes more than an area’s predisposition to hazard or disasters. Disasters are the result of the wider historical and social dimensions of hazards and thus cannot only be attributed to natural forces (Bankoff 2001, 2004). The concept of vulnerability increases in popularity when a disaster is no longer seen as “an event caused by an external agent” but as the result of “a complex socially (as well as politically, environmentally, and economically) constructed process” (Frerks and Bender 2004: 194). This also means, as Anderson and Woodrow (1989) correctly argue, that vulnerable people are not ‘helpless victims’. People always have resources at their disposal, even in times of emergency and crisis situations. These resources can be mobilised and managed in response to changing circumstances⁸⁹, which means that vulnerability is closely linked to asset ownership, including the notion of access, and the capacity to manage assets. As such, vulnerability is closely connected to variables such as age, class, ethnicity, gender, endowments, and entitlements. Vulnerability is not a given property but rather an outcome of social relations (Hilhorst and Bankoff 2004).

Vulnerability is composed of two dimensions: resilience and sensitivity (Davies 1993). Where resilience refers to ‘bouncebackability’, or the ease and rapidity of a return to a normal state after a crisis, sensitivity refers to the magnitude of a system’s response to an external event or the intensity with which shocks are experienced (Davies 1993; Moser 1998). Bouncebackability is contingent upon having coping strategies that are reserved for periods of unusual stress. The presence of community-level trust and collaboration, as well as social cohesion embedded in household and intra-household relations, is extremely important in this respect, as coping strategies normally depend on gaining access to scarce resources. Where sensitivity is high, however, such coping strategies are often not available to cushion the shock (since it is likely that many people suffer from the same shock), and adaptive strategies are more likely to be found.

⁸⁹ For example, Mula (1999) finds that households in the Philippines responded to the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 in diverse ways: household membership became very loose, social networks were tapped, and household production management was adapted. Rather than relying on external support, households were found to depend on their own capabilities and resources, exploring new coping strategies.

It is important to study the wider historical, socio-economic, political, and environmental dimensions of hazards, rather than merely assume that disasters form a departure from a state of normalcy to which a society returns on recovery (Bankoff 2001⁹⁰). Wisner *et al.* (2004: 52) argue that: “The explanation of vulnerability has three sets of links that connect the disaster to processes that are located at decreasing levels of specificity from the people impacted upon by a disaster”. In this respect, the authors refer to ‘the progression of vulnerability’. Firstly, there are root causes, “which are an interrelated set of widespread and general processes within a society and the world economy” (*ibid*: 52). Most importantly, root causes refer to wider economic, demographic, and political processes. Secondly, there are dynamic pressures, “which are processes and activities that ‘translate’ the effects of root causes both temporally and spatially into unsafe conditions” (*ibid*: 53). Examples include the lack of local markets or institutions but also macro-forces such as rapid urbanisation and deforestation. Thirdly, unsafe conditions: “are the specific forms in which the vulnerability of a population is expressed in time and space” (*ibid*: 55). The physical environment in which people live, the local economy, social relations, and public actions and institutions may all result in unsafe environments.

Vulnerability changes over time (Wisner *et al.* 2004). What is thus called for is a historical analysis of vulnerability, where past losses, future susceptibility and ability to overcome shocks, and social exclusion as determined by characteristics such as class, gender, age and ethnicity are analysed in relation to an individual’s or group’s command of resources and services. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that “Vulnerability, by definition, is a forward-looking concept, relating to the potential to suffer harm. Thus, vulnerability cannot be predicated solely on the basis of the impact of past events” (Benson 2004: 166). Prevailing socio-economic and political factors should therefore also be taken into consideration.

It is often not so much a shortage of resources that causes vulnerability but rather an exchange rate failure (Swift 1989, Sen 1981), itself closely related to the notion of fallback position discussed earlier. It is important to study the historical development of an exchange rate failure among and within different social groups. A gendered analysis of vulnerability, highlighting not only vulnerabilities but also capacities among and within social categories, is called for (Fordham 2004).

Vulnerability is, however, not always the result of poverty or exchange rate failures. It can also be caused by other factors, such as an asset breakdown as a result of a violent conflict. A key characteristic of most CPEs is that the basis of livelihood sustainability comes directly under attack. The asset base of people is often deliberately destroyed, and the social and economic interdependencies that create social networks are likely to be severely disrupted, which could even result in a collapse of the moral economy. Moreover, CPEs are often characterised by the deliberate exploitation of civilians, in the sense that the undermining of self-

⁹⁰ Bankoff (2001) discusses natural hazards, but his analysis can easily be extended to cover man-made disasters as well.

sufficiency and productivity are often the intended consequence of violent conflicts, and not merely a by-product (Lautze 1997, cited in Young *et al.* 2002). Where assets normally create a buffer between production, exchange, and consumption, the reduction of assets generally makes individuals more vulnerable. If support systems have broken down as well, which is often the case in CPEs, this automatically has a negative impact on access to other assets. The problem is that susceptibility to vulnerability is not always recognised in time, for many assets are intangible and the effect of their omission in the livelihood portfolio is likely to become visible only over time.

As Hilhorst and Bankoff (2004: 2) point out: “Not all poor people are vulnerable to disasters, nor are the poor all vulnerable in the same way, and some people who are poor are also vulnerable”. Vulnerability increases when the livelihoods of particular populations are deliberately blocked or undermined, as has happened in Rwanda where ethnicity became highly politicised and Tutsi and moderate Hutu were targeted during the genocide. It is important to understand that vulnerability is as much an effect of powerlessness, or of political or social status, as it is of poverty. The degree of risk varies according to the dynamics of each particular conflict. In fact, in many violent conflicts, people who are better off may find themselves at more risk than the poor: for instance, with regard to looting or predation. However, the same people may find it easier to overcome food shortages by making changes in their livelihood portfolio, or escape violence by moving temporarily to another area⁹¹. The opposite could, however, also be true. The development and relief industry (de Waal 1997) often aims to reach the poor, generally believed to consist of women and children. However, by doing so, development and aid interventions may create a situation in which the not-so-poor have fewer assets at their disposal than the poor, making the poor in fact less vulnerable than those who are somewhat better off.

Thus, what someone is vulnerable to must be carefully defined, as must the potential for an individual or group to cope with that risk (Chambers 1989). Livelihoods should be placed in a broader political perspective, combining the focus on social and cultural processes central to livelihood studies with a focus on structures of power and inequality (Schafer 2002). Doing so would enable us to address the strategies that people adopt in conflict situations, while questioning who gains and who loses, as well as to address how some are able to benefit from such situations or how vulnerabilities develop or deepen.

⁹¹ However, displacement of people automatically separates them from their means of livelihood. How people are able to overcome this separation – their resilience – is a matter for investigation.

Time Perspective and Household Life Cycles

The construction of a livelihood is an ongoing process, and the notion of strategy incorporates a time perspective. Decision-making processes evolve over time, in response to ever-changing circumstances, within a certain historical context and in anticipation of future developments. In addition, outcomes of previous livelihood strategies influence present and future decision-making (Pennartz and Niehof 1999). To capture dynamics of change, trends, and directions of movements, livelihood analysis must incorporate a temporal dimension (Ali 2005, Ali and Niehof 2007). The concept of livelihood pathways, referred to earlier in this chapter, may be particularly useful in this respect.

This work emphasises the importance of household demography in the study of livelihood reconstruction. It incorporates the temporal dimension by looking at different dimensions of time, acknowledging the fact that people do not only move through their own lives but also through household and historical time (Pennartz and Niehof 1999). In other words, individual behaviour depends not only on individual interests, freedom, and options but is also influenced by the household life cycle stage and by wider historical processes.

The family or household life cycle stage is a concept that was used by sociologists during the late 1930s and gained prominence among marketing researchers in the early 1950s. The basic assumption of the family or household life cycle approach is that “most households pass through an orderly progression of stages, each with its own characteristic financial situation and purchasing patterns” (Derrick and Leheld 1980: 214). For example, Chayanov (1986) argued that households pass through regular and predictable domestic cycles, from formation and expansion to fragmentation and dissolution. Through marriage, households are formed; as a result of birth, households expand; when children move out, households fragment; and when parents die, households dissolve.

The concept of the life cycle has been widely criticised. For instance, Pennartz and Niehof (1999: 158) argue that a normative bias is inherent “for it [the concept] presupposes an unwritten blueprint of the temporal patterning of the life of an individual, in which the various stages, their sequence and duration, and the transitions from one stage to another are given”. The approach has also been criticised for excluding most non-family households⁹² (such as people who remain single when others of their age are usually married or living together with someone of the opposite sex) as well as non-traditional households (such as never-married singles or single-parent households) (Wilkes 1995). In response, modernised conceptualisations of the household life cycle have been proposed, such as the life-cycle path. Another limitation of the household life cycle approach is that “life cycle is a multidimensional concept that subsumes several variables” (Wilkes 1995: 28). The heterogeneity of households tends to be masked when households are categorised into ‘stages’ or categories. Moreover:

⁹² The problem of the exclusion of non-family household is a reason that the concept of the household life cycle is preferred over the family life cycle.

“A faulty emphasis has often been placed on explaining what is going to happen over time as the family unit moves from one stage to another, even though the estimation has been based on cross-sectional data⁹³. Certainly the underlying assumptions are changing with variations in birth rate, age of marriage, and family size.”

(Derrick and Lehfeld 1980: 215)

External shocks in historical time may also affect household life cycles in ways not anticipated by Chayanov. For example, in his study on the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Tanzania, Rugalema (1999) shows that AIDS mortality generates new forms of households with fates significantly different from those of households dissolved or fragmented at the end of the domestic cycle:

“With AIDS mortality the household demographic cycle is disrupted resulting in i) households inhabited by a lone survivor, ii) merged households of widows, iii) households of elderly grandparents living with fostered-in orphans, iv) households of elderly grandparents living with a widow and orphans, v) young and middle-aged households with fostered-in orphans, vi) households of widows with some or all of her children fostered out, vii) households of elderly parents with widowed children, viii) households of widowers who have remarried, ix) households that have taken in elderly ‘orphans’, x) households inhabited by orphans without adults.”

(Rugalema 1999: 195)

Rugalema argues that the breakdown of the household life cycle – or, as he calls it, ‘the demographic cycle’ – of traditional households results in more complex forms of households than Chayanov had foreseen.

Similarly, in Rwanda the traditional household life cycle is likely to have changed drastically as a result of the war and genocide. Conflict-related morbidity and mortality as well as migration, displacement, and imprisonment are household life-cycle effects enforced by violent conflict (Brück 2004) and not foreseen by Chayanov. At the household level, such internal life cycle factors affect the structure and composition of households in ways similar to descriptions by Rugalema. Such changes in household life cycles can affect the ability of households to respond to external changes (Evans 1989). For example, the new household forms and life cycles that have evolved as a result of the war and genocide have an impact on inter- and intra-household relations. Old asymmetries in rights and obligations, based on social characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, or marital status, are replaced by new asymmetries. These translate into a new constellation of household ability to cope with household livelihood insecurity.

⁹³ The problem of interpretation of time is addressed in Chapter 4.

Thus, it is important to realise that resource allocation by households not only changes in response to transitions from one stage of the life cycle to another but also in response to changing circumstances. Moreover, life cycle changes may exhibit important temporal aspects: specific activities and strategies during the early period of change or transition may differ after a period of stability. This poses a serious problem in conflict impact studies, as it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish household strategies that are developed in response to conflict from those developed in response to transition in the household life cycle. In fact, for the people involved, these problems present themselves as one complex and indivisible situation to which they have to find a solution.

Instead of household life cycle, other concepts seem more promising with respect to studying the temporal dimension of household livelihoods. Pennartz and Niehof (1999) have suggested the concept of life course, in which an actor approach rather than a structural approach is given priority. The concept of livelihood pathways, referred to earlier in this chapter, also looks promising. However, the problem with these two concepts is their documentation in cross-sectional research. As I will argue in the next chapter, the collection of qualitative data offers a solution to this problem.

Application of Concepts in this Study

A livelihood comprises the assets and the ways in which these are accessed and mobilised within a particular context that consists of exogenous and endogenous factors and historical processes. These assets enable individuals to pursue goals necessary for their survival and longer-term wellbeing. Assets are employed to reduce vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, rebuild, maintain, or enhance its assets base and opportunities for access and mobilisation of assets, contributing net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term.

In this study, the different assets of the livelihood framework are discussed in terms of the following proxy variables:

- Health and education - human capital (Chapter 7);
- Land - natural and financial capital (Chapters 8 and 9);
- Crop and livestock production, and off- and non-farm employment – financial capital (Chapter 9);
- Construction material of houses, luxury household items, furniture and agricultural tools – physical capital (Chapter 11);
- Membership of voluntary organizations and groups, interpersonal networks, and trust – social capital (Chapter 10).

Livelihoods are analysed at the level of the household, or more accurately, the homestead. The household is defined a spatially extended co-residential unit with permeable boundaries, in which members jointly take care of livelihood strategies in order to provide for the basic needs of its individual members. The number and location of households in the research area has been determined on basis of village maps, and consultation with the local authorities. In each household included in the sample of this study (for the sampling procedure, see Chapter 4), the core female adult was asked to report all household members. She was also asked to report their sex, age, marital status, and type of relationship (for example, husband, child, grandchild, unrelated). In addition, she was asked about the current place of residence and activity (employment, education or otherwise) of all household members. If applicable, she was asked about the duration of their absence. This has been done in order to differentiate between household members who have been absent for only a short period of time (for example, because they are visiting relatives), and those who spend prolonged periods of time away from home (for example, because of work or schooling elsewhere). On the basis of this information, households were categorised into male- or female-headed households. The distinction between male- and female-headed households does, however, not imply anything about household headship. To determine household headship, separate questions were asked. Thus, rather than headship, household composition formed the primary consideration for the categorisation of households in this study (see Chapter 4 for a further discussion on the motivation of this procedure).

4

Research Process

“The unique case can contribute no more to knowledge of a given people than can a thousand instances of the universal human condition. Such particulars cannot be identified directly, although sometimes it seems reasonable certain that a given situation is one of a kind. The test is whether the problem recurs in other accounts or whether it really is the important fact or situation of any of these lives.”

(Codere 1973: 308)

This chapter provides a detailed account of how the study was conducted. It describes the rationale behind the choice of a data collection site, followed by a discussion on the research design, on the methods of data collection, and on the analysis. Important methodological issues relating to validity and reliability are discussed, as are problems encountered in collecting data.

Choice of Data Collection Site

The research area was purposively selected on the basis of a three-month reconnaissance visit in 2002. The choice of the area was contingent upon the following criteria:

- Area with diverse types of households (excluding, for example, *imidugudu* built for widows);
- Presence of diverse household livelihood portfolios (for example, agricultural and livestock production, non-farm activities, labour migration);
- Area where old and new caseload refugees live together with the indigenous population;
- Local authorities willing to facilitate the research;
- Suitable housing arrangement for myself and team of assistants (electricity, water supply);
- Availability of secondary information.

The choice to include only one village in this study was based on the need to gain in-depth knowledge of the processes and strategies through which individuals and households generate livelihood portfolios in a wider constellation of social, economic, political, and environmental factors. The nature of this research was such that it required gaining an insight into the sphere of private relations between individuals. These relations were likely to be under severe stress as a result of events that occurred in the 1990s. In a society where many people have been left traumatised, it was expected that it would take considerable time to build confidence between the researcher and community members. To win the trust of respondents and to facilitate close and regular contacts with community members, a long period of immersion in people's daily lives was deemed necessary, as was having a base in one location.

While different regions in the country could have fulfilled the above criteria, practical considerations were important in the final selection of a suitable village. Immigration policies were complex and confusing, and my status as an independent researcher, not affiliated with any local or international NGO, university, or research institute, further complicated matters. It soon became apparent that data collection in the field would only be possible if reasonable contacts with local authorities could be established. My contacts with several local and international NGOs, including the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD), Réseau des Femmes Œuvrant pour le Développement Rural, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) were critical in this respect. These organisations shared with me intimate knowledge regarding their fields of operation and were also willing to support my research in other ways: for example, by introducing me and my work to local authorities.

Housing arrangements were difficult to secure in the rural areas, as guest houses are absent in most locations. While theoretically it would have been possible to rent a room with a family, such conditions were often unsuitable for data collection. Safety concerns, while important, formed the least imminent obstacle in this matter. While overall security was generally fine, few houses were safe enough to store computers and other research material. Access to clean drinking water, a market to purchase food, and sufficient space to house a group of research assistants formed other important considerations.

Contacts made during the reconnaissance period with ADRA proved to be a determining factor in the final choice of a suitable village for data collection. ADRA, while active in different provinces, has focused many of its activities in the northeast of Rwanda. Their relationships with local authorities were generally good. Moreover, ADRA was willing to support my research and to facilitate relationships with the local authorities if I were to decide to work in 'their' territory. When discussing my research and the search for a suitable village, they pointed out the village of Rwagitima as an interesting possibility. Moreover, one of their employees was willing to assist me in locating a suitable house.

One of the ADRA offices is located close to Rwagitima, which enabled me to make use of certain facilities, like printers and copying machines. It also enabled me to discuss some of my research findings with knowledgeable experts in the field. Because ADRA has been working in the area for a long time, they could

provide me with important secondary information on the area. They also introduced me to important key informants, including district leaders, cell leaders, and members of local development organisations, cooperatives, and associations.

Research Design

This section discusses the research strategy, the importance of triangulation, and the feminist perspective taken in this study.

Research Strategy

The research serves three purposes, having an exploratory, a descriptive, and an explanatory function. The exploratory function is important, since I am studying a phenomenon (local responses to the events of the 1990s in Rwanda) that has until now received scant attention, in a geographical area that is also under-researched (the northeast of Rwanda).

As indicated in Chapter 3, households continuously adapt their activities and strategies to changing circumstances. A longitudinal approach (where household livelihoods before, during, and after the genocide are compared) would have been ideal for this research. One of the important attributions of a longitudinal approach is that it adds the dimension of time to the analysis of household livelihood strategies (Pennartz and Niehof 1999)⁹⁴. However, practical limitations made such a longitudinal study design impossible. Fieldwork for this study took place several years after the end of the genocide, making pre- and post-genocide data collection a priori impossible. While it would have been possible to locate respondents of surveys held before 1994 and then to compare the former livelihoods of these respondents with present livelihoods, it did not seem a suitable strategy for this particular study. Financial and time constraints made it difficult to first track earlier respondents and then to commence with an in-depth study. The more so, since, as noted above, the nature of this research required prolonged periods of time at one data collection site. Since millions of Rwandans have been on the move, and many have settled and resettled in areas other than their places of origin, locating respondents of earlier surveys would surely have meant that several data collection sites would have to be visited. This would have undermined the opportunities for in-depth research, unless the number of respondents had been severely limited, which would have had consequences for data analysis and statistical inference.

However, a temporal perspective has been incorporated into the study design in other ways. The historical overview as presented in Chapter 2 is used to assess whether rural household livelihoods at present fall in line with a 'normal'

⁹⁴ Even though it is important to realise that the mere description of two or more successive stages of the social order will in itself not tell us how they came to differ in scientific rather than historical terms (Codere 1973).

progression as was already set in motion before 1994 or whether the war and the genocide have set more haphazard changes in motion. For example, in Chapter 2 I have indicated that migration has traditionally formed an important household livelihood strategy. If migration no longer forms an important household strategy, this clearly forms a break with the past. I have also shown in Chapter 2 how the nuclear family slowly gained prominence over the extended family. Looking at household composition at present may indicate whether the trend of individualisation continues or whether the genocide has resulted in new forms of households. A temporal perspective has also been obtained by taking a household life course perspective. Respondents were asked retrospective questions about their responses to past events. Moreover, the collection of life histories facilitated the study of change, dynamics, and problems of coping with insecurities in daily life. The insights that these life histories have provided have been placed in a wider setting, by studying already existing historical data on the research area as well as other areas of importance to respondents. Thus, whereas cross-sectional data limits inferences of causality, the collection of qualitative results increases in-depth understanding and adds a temporal perspective.

In order to study the diversity of household responses to the processes of transformation in Rwanda and to capture people's perspectives on the relation between recent events and current livelihood strategies, a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, was called for. Data collection began with a qualitative study (August 2003 to March 2004). In this stage, use was made of participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and life histories. These methods provided the opportunity to explore the local situation and individual livelihoods in depth, including the important time component. However, while enabling a thorough understanding of local phenomena from an emic point of view, thus increasing the validity of the research, qualitative methods generally fail to indicate the extent of such phenomena. While qualitative methods enable one to question the characteristics, causes, and dynamics of phenomena, they do not answer questions about generalisability or broader trends. For this, quantitative methods are important.

A second fieldwork period (October 2005 to January 2006) employed quantitative methods in the form of a household survey. The survey covered three neighbouring localities (or *cells*, one of the lowest administrative groupings in Rwanda) and included 136 households. The survey allowed for the collection of empirical data on specific household and livelihood variables, contributing to more general insights into livelihood systems in the research area. Moreover, the survey findings were used to place the in-depth findings in a broader perspective. Suitable survey questions could be constructed on the basis of knowledge gained by means of qualitative data-gathering methods. The survey, then, enables one to assess the statistical reliability of phenomena encountered, though it is not suitable to study the meanings behind those phenomena.

In a final fieldwork period (December 2007 to January 2008), some of the findings of the survey were discussed with selected key informants and respondents. More qualitative data were also collected in order to explain survey findings.

Triangulation

By combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, it was possible to study information on actual and reported behaviours, the meanings behind those behaviours, and the processes around them. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as data from multiple sources at different times, enabled causal analysis. Thus used, qualitative and quantitative methods are mutually dependent and complement each other, while optimising both reliability and validity (Scrimshaw 1990, Trotter and Schensul 1998). In this sense, and with the aim of comparing diverse aspects of the same phenomenon, methods in this research have been triangulated (Pelto and Pelto 1978).

However, triangulation was not only restricted to 'method triangulation'. Other forms were also applied. Data was triangulated by gathering the same information from various individuals and historical sources. Linking the information gained through different methods and from different sources greatly assisted in explaining the phenomena under study, while at the same time bringing to the surface inconsistencies, irregularities, taboos, and knowledge gaps. Moreover, theory was triangulated in the sense that more than one theoretical scheme was used when interpreting the phenomena studied. Linking knowledge gained from theory to methods and data enabled the researcher to look for explanations not offered by informants. This made it possible to discuss the validity of such explanations with different sources and enabled the construction of new or alternative questions to be asked in the field. Thus, by combining multiple theories, methods, and empirical materials (informants and secondary literature) the validity and reliability of information was greatly enhanced.

Feminist Perspective

I am a feminist. I am preoccupied with material social inequalities between men and women, and among men and women. I am also preoccupied with inequalities between and among other social groups, such as those deriving from race, ethnicity, or religious background. I try to understand these inequalities by locating them in their social and historical context. This by no means implies that I reduce the material to capitalist economic relations. Instead, as Jackson (2001: 284) has so aptly stated: "I want to argue for a version of materialist feminism that foregrounds the social – social structures, relations, and practices – but that does not reduce all structures, relations and practices to capitalism". In fact, the social structure is as material as capitalist structures, relations, and practices. As my focus is on the everyday, localised context in which people live, my work does not produce "grand theories" that are applicable to or across entire societies. Instead, I offer grounded generalisations. As a materialist feminist, I am able to analyse the everyday, localised experiences of a given people, and the meanings they attach to these experiences, "without losing sight of structural patterns of dominance and subordination" (Jackson 2001: 286).

How does feminist research differ from other types of social research? As Spender (1985: 5-6) argued:

“... at the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge. This insight is as applicable to feminist knowledge as it is to patriarchal knowledge, but there is a significant difference between the two: feminist knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of all human beings is valid and must not be excluded from our understandings, whereas patriarchal knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of only half the human population needs to be taken into account and the resulting version can be imposed on the other hand. This is why patriarchal knowledge and the methods of producing it are a fundamental part of women’s oppression, and why patriarchal knowledge must be challenged – and overruled”.

It is beyond the scope of this section to discuss extensively feminist methodology and perspectives in social research⁹⁵. Suffice it to say that the methods of feminist research are no different from those of other methods in the social sciences. Rather, what is distinctive about feminist research is the way in which theory and method are related: “[t]he bridges between the two are ontology (the set of assumptions that underlies one’s research design) and epistemology (how one knows what one thinks one knows, the basis for knowledge claims)” (Gailey 1998: 204).

In general terms, a feminist perspective can be characterised in a number of ways. It holds that all knowledge is partial and situated, that power relations shape our knowledge of the world, that objectivity is not possible, and that bias can be avoided by self-reflection and intellectual forthrightness. Standpoint epistemology emphasises that all knowledge is situated. It is a social construct rather than an absolute truth. This implies that knowledge is by nature partial and not politically neutral: it is a stance or standpoint (Harding 1987). Knowledge is socially produced. It is created through the interaction between actors: for example, between researcher and those researched. Therefore, power relations shape our knowledge of the social reality in which we and others live.

Feminist standpoint scholars acknowledge that universal claims are countered by positionality and that objectivity is therefore impossible. In fact, “what passes as objective, neutral, and universal knowledge is not” (McCorkel and Myers 2003: 201). In fact, many of the so-called objective findings in the social sciences are based on false neutrality, not on universality. As McCorkel states:

“During a job interview, I was asked whether or not another researcher going into the same prison⁹⁶ [where she conducted her research] would have made the same discoveries as I had. I answered no. It was not the answer the inquirer was looking for. If my observations and conclusions could not

⁹⁵ I refer to the work of Rheinharz (1992), Haraway (1988, 1991), and Harding (1986, 1987, and 1991).

⁹⁶ McCorkel worked on an ethnography of a drug treatment programme within a prison for women.

be replicated in another study, how could they be considered “science” rather than “mere journalism”? My findings are unique because they are ultimately based on a standpoint that was multilayered and a set of relations that were complex, shifting and dynamic.”

(McCorkel and Myers 2003: 223)

The fact that objectivity is not possible does not mean that feminist research is by nature biased or subjective. On the contrary, as researchers are required to “specify the location and contexts in which their knowledge is produced” (McCorkel and Myers 2003: 202), bias and subjectivity are avoided. Self-reflection and intellectual forthrightness (positionality) “helps the audience situate and evaluate claims within a wider field of argument” (Gailey 1998: 206). By providing the context for yourself as a researcher and the researched subjects, reflexivity and positionality allow the audience to determine whether the produced results are justified or distorted. Hence, positionality reduces bias and subjectivity, whereas the avoidance of positionality – as is so often done in positivist science – results in false neutrality and universality.

The type of self-reflexivity that is called for demands that the researcher disclose the methods and procedures through which hypothesis are tested. It also demands that researchers disclose their personal background (like gender, age, marital status) and institutional positionality or privileges. Disclosing personal background and institutional positionality is, however, not enough. It is also necessary to elicit how either of these factors has shaped research questions, data collection, analysis, and conclusions. Or, in the words of McCorkel and Myers (2003: 205): “a standpoint epistemology requires that the researcher put her taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and stereotypes on the table for dissection”. In Appendix A, I attempt to situate myself as an agent of knowledge.

Another implication is that this research moves away from grand theory towards empirically grounded work on the specifics of a given social context, with its own particular institutions and relationships. Such a focus offers “grounded generalisations rather than universalistic, totalising models of entire societies; the emphasis is on theorising, rather than producing “Theory” with a capital “T” (Jackson 2001: 286).

Apart from claims of universality, how does a feminist perspective change our insights? A feminist perspective can uncover male bias. For example, many studies and surveys target the head of household as respondent. It is now generally accepted that this is not without difficulties, for questioning men only renders women invisible. Moreover, by excluding women’s voices, important information about women’s experiences, opinions, and suggested solutions to problems are overlooked. In a feminist perspective, the experiences of women are given central importance, as well as the meanings and interpretations women attach to these experiences.

Although I am certainly not arguing that it is more important to research women’s experiences and perspectives than men’s, I do suggest that it is important to understand the social realities of those who are often rendered invisible in research: namely, women. In a feminist perspective, “women’s experiences, ideas

and needs (different and differing as they may be) are valid in their own right, and androcentricity – man as the norm – stops being the only frame of reference for human beings” (Duelli-Klein 1986: 89). The desire to rectify research tainted by male bias (male-dominant theorising and targeting of male respondents, whether conscious or unconscious), made me decide to focus primarily on women’s lived reality. In practice, this meant that while the respondents for the present study included both men and women, the emphasis was placed on the experiences, ideas, and needs of women. This is most evident when considering the targeted respondents for the household survey: the core female adult in a household.

Women, however, are not treated as a homogenous group. In fact, a feminist perspective complicates women’s identities. It is actually incorrect to speak of ‘women’s experiences’, because differences in ethnicity, class, age, marital status, as well as different life experiences, result in women forming an extremely heterogeneous group. Subsequently, the differences between individual women may actually be larger than the similarities between them. A feminist perspective acknowledges these differences. The question is thus not whether and how women differ from men but rather how gender differences relate to other socio-economic differences (Niehof 2007). Or, as Moore (1993: 195) puts it: “whether or not gender differences should be privileged over all other forms of difference”. In this study, I look at the differences between male- and female-headed households, but I also search explicitly for the differences within female-headed households⁹⁷.

Apart from such ontological considerations, it is also argued that, in contrast to dominant groups, marginalised or invisible groups are more likely to be aware of both the constructed account of the world (the world as presented by the dominant group) as well as the deconstructed account (as experienced in everyday interactions and material experience) (Fordham 2004). Women’s experiences, while varied, generally tend to reflect those of marginalised and vulnerable groups. As such, their experiences offer an excellent starting point for questioning assumptions about the experience of violent conflict.

The Household as Unit of Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the household (or more accurately, the homestead) is taken as the primary unit of analysis. It is defined as a spatially extended co-residential unit with permeable social boundaries, in which members jointly take care of resource management in order to provide for the basic needs of its individual members. This definition encompasses five important dimensions: namely, residency, spatiality, boundaries, resource management, and individual needs. While it resembles Rudie’s definition of households, the definition

⁹⁷ I fully acknowledge that large differences within male-headed households are also likely to exist. However, one of the aims of this study was to assess the validity of the claim that female-headed households are among the poorest and most vulnerable in Rwanda. I therefore focused on the differences within female-headed households rather than on the differences within male-headed households.

presented here better fits Rwandan household organisation. Many Rwandan households include non-relatives (like orphans, domestic workers, or agricultural wage labourers). A considerable number of households are characterised by absentees (labour migrants or boarding children), who are nevertheless considered household members. Household membership is regularly manipulated as a means of coping with uncertainty. Moreover, individual contributions to household decisions are given explicit recognition in the above definition. This nevertheless leaves us with an important theoretical question: what criteria should be used to determine household membership?

For this study, household membership has been based on self-report by respondents. This has resulted in people being included as household members who did not actually reside in the household or who were absent for long periods of time. Such 'members' do not reside in the same house or eat from the same pot as other household members, nor can they be assumed to be involved in day-to-day decision making. One could therefore argue that they should not be included as household members. Yet, respondents were clear in their opinion that these absent household members should be registered as belonging to their households. In the case of absent (school-going) children, people argued that major household decisions were taken in such a way so as not to harm the future of these children. The emotional connection between parents and these children – and the moral implications of such a connection – results in absent children being included as household members in this study. Additionally, husbands who have migrated temporarily are included as household members. While they are also not involved in day-to-day decision making, they are involved in major household decisions (such as the sale or purchase of land, decisions regarding settlement and housing, or marriage and marriage dissolution arrangements).

Whereas the self-reported household size is used throughout this study, it becomes problematic when relating household size to particular variables such as care or food security. For example, care for ill household members can only be provided by those physically present, although remittances sent by absent household members may of course enable the purchase of medicines or finance other aspects of care arrangements. Similarly, food security, or to be more precise, food shortages are experienced foremost by household members who are actually present. In Chapter 11, I look at food security as an outcome of household livelihood strategies. In this chapter, I will therefore not only relate food security to the self-reported household size but will also consider food security in relation to those physically present.

Having determined household membership on the basis of self-report, I then proceed to distinguish analytically between different types of households. One of the study's research questions involves seeing whether particular groups of people have been affected more than others by the events of the 1990s. Considering the large number of female-headed households in Rwanda, as well as the widely held assumption (in the literature as well as by key informants of this study) that female-headed households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households, I decided to differentiate between male- and female-headed

households so as to enable the testing of this hypothesis. In the research area, I was able to distinguish between the following:

- Households where both spouses are present;
- Households in which men live without a female spouse, including single unmarried men, widowers, and men separated from their spouses;
- Households in which women live without a male spouse, who is, however, alive, including households where the male has migrated temporarily and polygamous households where the male does not reside with the female;
- Households of widows; and
- Household of separated or divorced women separated from their spouses⁹⁸.

Male-headed households are generally assumed to consist of a male head of household with or without spouse(s), together with children and related or unrelated members. These households may thus include single and married men, as well as divorced or separated men, and widowers. *De facto* female-headed households consist of a female head of household, with or without children and related or unrelated members, whose spouse is absent (for example, as a result of employment elsewhere or imprisonment). *De jure* female-headed households, however, consist of a female head of household, with children and related or unrelated members with no spouse at all. *De jure* female-headed households may thus include single, divorced, separated, or widowed women.

To distinguish between male- and female-headed households does not necessarily imply that household headship automatically applies to men in male-headed households or women in female-headed household. For example, the head of the household in *de facto* female-headed households is often still the absent male spouse, since important decisions cannot be made without his consent and he may (or may not) contribute to the household in other respects. Moreover, there are examples of *de jure* female-headed households, with no male spouse present at all, that still claim the deceased or absent husband to be the head of the household⁹⁹.

For this study, however, factual headship is considered less important than the presence or absence of a core adult male (spouse) who is able to partake in

⁹⁸ Initially, I had made a further distinction into households with or without children. However, given the size of my sample, this impeded the possibility of making meaningful statistical inferences. I therefore decided to work with the above categorisation.

⁹⁹ A good example can be found in Jefremovas (1991), who writes about Devota, the widow of a man who formerly held an important political post. Despite the fact that Devota was legally the head of her household, by characterising her household as *de facto* female-headed she was able to maintain some of his connections and status, claim her right to administer a brick business and use the profits of this enterprise, use her husband's land and resources, and establish her claims as a good wife and mother. What is all the more interesting in this example is that not only did Devota claim to merely lead a *de facto* female-headed household but her workers also considered her deceased husband to be the head and owner of her enterprise.

important household decisions. For, even if male spouses are absent, their reported household membership, as indicated by female respondents, plays an important role with regard to women's status in the community. Male household membership is therefore likely to have an impact on women's ability to access resources and social networks, even if men's role in this is indirect. It is for this reason that the four *de facto* female-headed households in this study (constituting only 2.9 percent of all households in the sample) were included within the category of male-headed households.

The differentiation between male- and female-headed households offers only a crude categorisation of the types of households found in the research area. It is therefore important to look into issues of regional distribution (since the war and genocide took on different forms in different regions of the country), marital status of the household head, *de jure* or *de facto* status, ethnicity, class, sources of income and other forms of support, and so on, for each type of household (Chant 1997). Failing to do so might result in finding variation *among* the household categories defined for this study without, however, being able to tell which households are most able or vulnerable *within* each category. For example, do households headed by mothers differ from those headed by grandmothers or childless women? Are there differences between households with or without related or unrelated members, or between single-sex or predominant male or female households? Such differentiation is important to keep in mind, for large differences exist within categories of households.

Data Collection

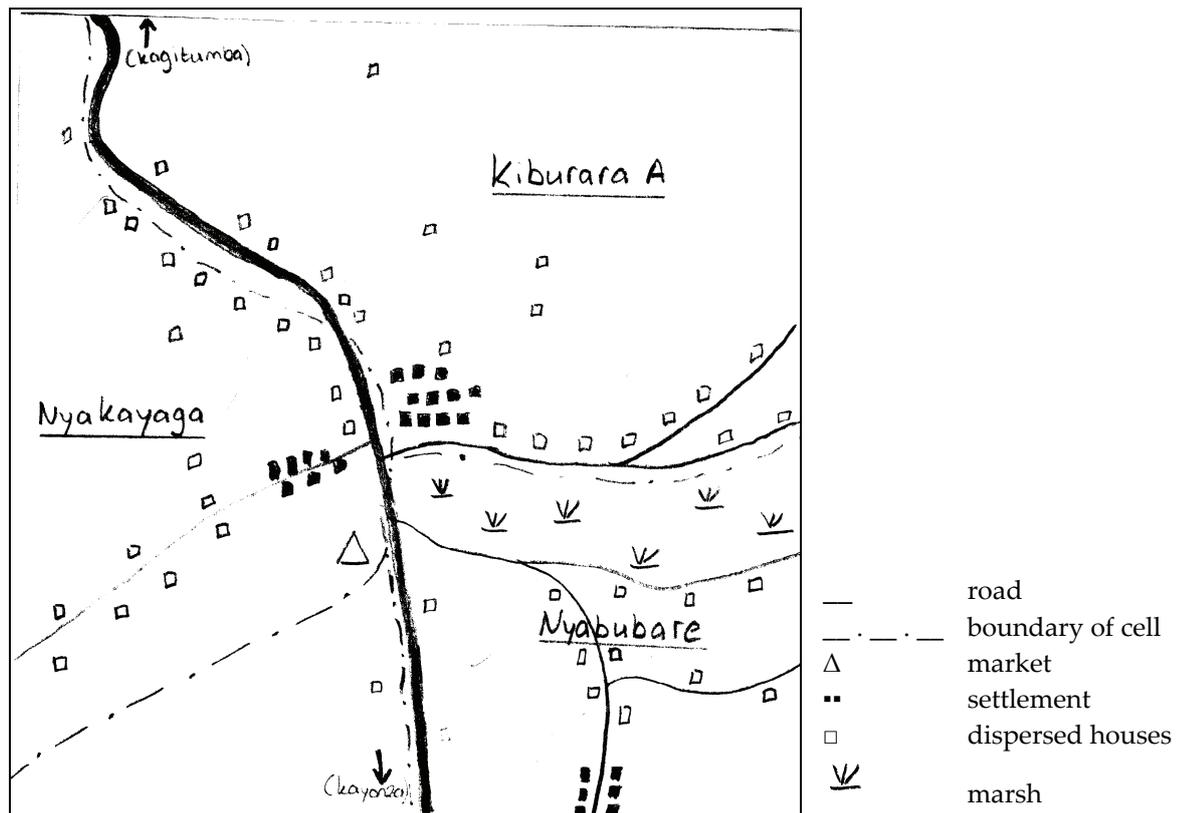
After approval of the research proposal, I returned to Rwanda in August 2003. Data were collected after an orientation phase, which lasted approximately four weeks. During the data collection period, which consisted of three separate periods (period 1: September 2003 to March 2004; period 2: October 2005 to January 2006; and period 3: December 2007 to January 2008), a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection was used.

In the first period, qualitative research methods were employed, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and the collection of life histories. No sampling of households took place in this period. Apart from the planned interviews with key informants, most other interviews took place spontaneously: for instance, during walks through the village, visits through the marsh, fields and banana groves, after invitations by locals, or at the weekly market. I made efforts to talk to as many people as possible in Rwagitima, and I also visited some villages located further away. These visits were meant to assess whether Rwagitima possessed any noticeable features that would have set it apart from other communities.

In the second period, I continued with semi-structured interviewing of respondents and key informants. The main focus of this period was formed, however, by a quantitative household survey. The population from which the survey sample was taken (area-probability sampling) included all households in

the village of Rwagitima (see Figure 4.1). While it is difficult to delimit the exact boundaries of this village, as it not always clear where one community ends and another begins, cells that depend on some of the village's most important social-economic properties (like the rice fields, schools, and shops) were included in the main sample population.

Figure 4.1: Rwagitima



During the time of the survey (2005-2006), Rwagitima fell under the responsibility of three different districts, each of which was further subdivided into sectors and cells¹⁰⁰. Thus, not only did Rwagitima belong to three different districts but it also covered a number of sectors and cells. To complicate matters further, the

¹⁰⁰ In Rwanda, the administrative system consists of province, district, sector, and cell. Each cell has several *nyumbakumi* (administrator of ten houses and as such the smallest administrative grouping). In 2002 and 2006, major administrative reforms took place. Before 2002, Rwagitima belonged to the province of Byumba and covered two districts, multiple sectors, and cells. Between 2002 and 2006, which formed the main data collection period, it belonged to the newly created province of Umutara. It covered the districts of Gabiro, Murambi, and Kahi (which together included 26 sectors and numerous cells). After 2006, it came to belong to the Eastern Province. Rwagitima now belongs to the Gatsibo district. The name of the district comes from the commercial town of Gatsibo, which was once a settlement formed by Arab and Indian traders.

village boundaries did not coincide with the boundaries of the sectors. In fact, the boundaries of the three different sectors move beyond the boundaries of the village, thus effectively placing different villages within one sector. The boundaries of the different cells within each sector were clearer and could more easily be demarcated. This led me to choose three different cells to be included in the survey sample, with each cell belonging to a different sector and district and each having its own particular characteristics. These three cells were thus purposively selected in an attempt to tap socioeconomic diversity at the data collection site.

The first cell selected was located in the heart of the village (Kiburara A). During the time of the survey it included approximately 500 households. Before the genocide, this part of the village belonged to Akagera Park and was uninhabited. After the genocide, it became populated by the indigenous Hutu population and old Tutsi caseload returnees. Most of the old caseload refugees arrived shortly after the RPF took control of the country in 1994. The returnees who chose to settle at Rwagitima during this period settled near the main road and the market. This meant that they had easy access to fertile areas of land in the valley, which at that time were mostly used for vegetable gardening. These vegetable plots were later assigned to ADRA and transformed into rice fields. Those with access to vegetable plots prior to this project were among the primary beneficiaries of ADRA's rice project.

The second cell selected (Nyabubare) covered approximately 665 households. It is located at the rear of the village, a few kilometres from the main road and the market, and it had been populated before the genocide as well. Key informants claimed that this area's population is characterised by a large proportion of households composed of the elderly. The explanation given was that most of these elderly people arrived in the region somewhat later than those living in the centre of the village. As the centre of the village had already been inhabited, those that arrived somewhat later (including both old and new caseload refugees and, at an even later stage, migrants from other parts of the country) were thus forced to move to the periphery of the village. This location almost forms a different community, yet the inhabitants depend largely upon the facilities of the main village. In this cell, one finds many poor households, some of which are clearly on the brink of destitution. Other distinct groups include households of migrants and indigenous people.

The third cell (Nyakayaga), covering approximately 450 households, is one of the most recently inhabited parts of the village. Before the genocide, the district to which this cell belonged was also partly the property of Akagera Park, while other parts formed a Hunting Zone. The cell included in the survey sample, however, had been populated before the genocide, albeit sparsely. Key informants revealed that most of its current inhabitants arrived at the same time as, or shortly after, the wave of new caseload refugees that settled in the region, but before most of the migrants arrived. New arrivals had been promised access to land in *imidugudu* elsewhere in the region. However, that particular *imidugudu* project never took off, forcing people to look elsewhere for land and housing. Some ended up living in Rwagitima village. Among those who settled in this particular cell, a number were able to gain access to the rice fields, while others were forced to seek

land further uphill and are now farming under difficult circumstances (steeper slopes, erosion, and large distance from the homestead).

To capture variation in the wider population, a random sample was taken from each of these three cells. Selection of households depended upon knowledge of the number of households in each cell. This was made possible with the assistance of the sector and cell leaders, who were willing to share village maps and lists of community residents. After ensuring that the maps and lists reflected the present layout and composition of the cells targeted for the survey, a selection interval was determined. A starting point was determined on the map, after which every fifth household was targeted for interviewing. This culminated in a sample of 136 households (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Survey sample

	Total no. of households	Selected households	Selected households as percentage of total
Kiburara A	500	44	8.8
Nyabubare	665	57	8.6
Nyakayaga	450	35	7.8
Total	1615	136	8.4

Source: Household survey 2005

In the third fieldwork period, I discussed some of the results of the household survey with respondents (those from whom I had collected life histories in the first fieldwork period) and key informants. I also collected further details on selected life histories (as collected during the first fieldwork period).

Combining different research methods enabled me to bring out the temporal perspective. In the household survey, most questions related to the present situation of households. Some retrospective questions were asked so as to be able to relate the present to the past. The survey was used to create context and to look at current patterns. In contrast, interviews and life histories enabled the placing of household experiences through time. Data were collected by myself (first and third period, with the assistance of a translator) and a core team of research assistants (second period). The research assistants were selected from a large group of candidates on the basis of several criteria, which included:

- Good working knowledge of English;
- At least 20 years old;
- Experience in interviewing;
- Willing to visit both Hutu and Tutsi households, and
- Not living in the research area (to ensure the privacy of informants).

Two translators were employed to assist in the collection of qualitative data, and five research assistants (among whom one of the translators) assisted with the household survey. All research assistants and translators had graduated from secondary school. With the exception of two research assistants, all were enrolled in Rwandan universities (Social Sciences and Management) and all had prior experience in data collection, mostly in the form of administering survey questionnaires. In addition, one personal assistant proved indispensable and taught me about local customs, communication forms, and language¹⁰¹: properties without which it would have been impossible to gain the trust of informants. Finally, one bachelor student from Hogeschool Van Hall (part of Wageningen University and Research Centre) was involved in the research. This student, Ms. S. Bos, worked on the rice project of ADRA. Her findings are referred to in this study.

Prior to data collection, all research assistants followed a two-day training programme, which conveyed the purpose of the research and was meant to refresh the assistants' knowledge of interview techniques. Survey research questions, written down in English, were carefully translated into Kinyarwanda and all assistants used the agreed upon translation.

Orientation Phase

During the orientation phase (August to September 2003), the required documents for data collection were gathered, contacts with ADRA and their project officer at the research area were intensified, housing arrangements were made, and secondary information about the research area was assembled. Meetings with district and village leaders were held in order to explain the purpose of the study, to request further local permission to work in Rwagitima, and to obtain general

¹⁰¹ The importance of this assistance cannot be overemphasised. Through this assistant I soon learned that it made little sense to try to make appointments in the afternoons, as few informants would show up at the appointed hour. Afternoons were dedicated to visiting relatives and friends; unexpected guests or unexpected social obligations (deaths, illnesses, or wedding arrangements) nearly always interfered with interviews. Women would be occupied with caring for guests, while men would often have drunk too much to be able to concentrate. This made interviewing difficult, since in the mornings most people would be working their fields and unable to answer any questions either. Only by perseverance (by visiting households two, three, four times or more) did we manage to interview selected respondents for the household survey. To further complicate matters, village standards (as is the case elsewhere in Rwanda) are such that one avoids making direct statements. The ability to use language is highly appreciated by Rwandans and direct statements are subject to negative interpretation. As Gravel (1965: 329) said long ago, "it was a culturally determined fact that one NEVER spoke directly what was on one's mind". It took me considerable time to learn to 'read' what was said and left unsaid, and without the patient assistance of my personal assistant, it would surely have taken me much more time, effort, and frustration to learn to cope with village life and with forms of appropriate communication.

information about the village. Considerable effort was also put into finding suitable research assistants.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was one of the main tools used throughout the study. Despite possible cultural distortions and biases on the part of the researcher, participant observation was essential for understanding tacit aspects of respondents' decisions concerning their own and their household's livelihoods. The method was used to collect data on what people actually do and how they interact with others. Observations centred on changes in household composition, engagement in livelihood activities, division of labour by gender and age, participation in groups and associations, interaction with other villagers, extension officers and local leaders, and dynamics of informal social arrangements.

When combined with other research methods, the knowledge gained through participant observation is useful in identifying gaps in observed and reported behaviour. Such gaps can point to taboos, ideology, norms, and doxa not easily identified by means of interviews or informal conversations. The use of participant observation provided the opportunity to develop interview questions and other research tools. Moreover, the knowledge gained through participant observation was used to evaluate data gathered through other research methods.

Semi-Structured Interviews with Key Informants

Key informants consisted of persons in positions of leadership, influence, and authority. These included ADRA project staff, local government officials (at district, sector and cell level), leaders of Community Based Organisations (CBOs), leaders of local cooperatives and associations, and opinion leaders within the community (village elders, local church leaders, shopkeepers, and teachers).

This method was used to learn about the 'expert' knowledge of individuals grounded in the local community. Information was gathered on the research area (history of the village, administrative and leadership structures, migration waves and former places and countries of residence), on people living in the research area, on livelihood systems (agricultural production, livestock production, and mixed-farming), and on socio-economic conditions (opportunities for education and work, health facilities). Information was also gathered on the impact of the events of the 1990s on the research area (tension between groups of people, lack of trust, social relations and communal activities, rebuilding of physical infrastructure).

The interviews were conducted using broad guidelines that, for different types of key informants, varied in content. Questions were open-ended, with ample opportunity for the key informant to direct the discussion to issues deemed important by him or her.

Life Histories

Life histories were collected from persons with whom an especially good rapport was built during the fieldwork periods. The method was used to highlight emic and temporal perspectives. Extensive material about five female and two male respondents was collected. These seven respondents included:

- *Joy*, a widow heading the largest household at the data collection site. Joy was born in Uganda, to which her parents had fled in 1959. In 1982, the family decided to come back to Rwanda. Her father did not want to return to his natal village in Kibuye, as too many people had died or had moved away. Instead, he decided to try his luck at Rwagitima, where he bought a considerable amount of land. By 1990, the *interahamwe* made life very difficult and the family decided to leave once more for Uganda. After the genocide they all returned to Rwagitima, where the government was just dividing the land among the population who had remained behind during the genocide and the refugees who had returned from exile. By chance, Joy and her husband as well as her father were each given one-fifth of the land that her father had bought in the 1980s.

In the early 2000s, Joy's father moved to another region, further north. He sold his land at Rwagitima. Joy, by then a widow, purchased some of his land and thus extended her own farm holding. However, as her household no longer included any adult members, she was unable to cultivate all of the land herself. She therefore employed migrant labourers to assist her with agricultural activities.

When I first arrived at the data collection site, Joy was considered a 'role model farmer' by the local authorities. She was a respected member of the community and praised by other villagers for her hard work and religious zeal. While she was certainly not a rich woman, Joy managed well. During the time that I spend on fieldwork, Joy met with a lot of hardship. One of her children was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Joy became active in one of the area's AIDS organisations, but was asked to leave when other members realised that her daughter, not Joy herself, suffered from AIDS. Around the same time, I noticed that Joy had lost a lot of respect in the community, the reason for which was never made explicit by her former friends.

When Joy herself fell seriously ill in 2007, she had to sell part of her land to pay medical bills. Her decision to do so was criticised by other villagers, who felt that she should have done everything in her power to hold on to her land, even if this included begging. At the same time, Joy was scorned for having had a relationship with her brother-in-law during the time that he came to live in her house to look after her and her children during her illness. By 2008, Joy was forced to move to a smaller house. She had built this house during happier times, with the idea of beginning a small shop. Because of her illness, her last harvest had been very poor and the next harvest was expected to fail as well, as she had not been able to do much work in the fields and had lacked the money to hire agricultural wage

labourers. She had also been unable to open her shop, as all of her money had been used to pay her medical bills and to buy food.

- *Jacqueline*, a widow whose husband died before 1994. When still a young girl, Jacqueline moved with her parents to Tanzania. Here, she married and had children. In 1994, she decided to return to Rwanda. She travelled to Kigali, where she moved in with a close relative. A little later, she moved to Kigali-Ngali, to the village where her sister lived, where she purchased a small plot of land. Yields were unfortunately very low. When she learned from a male relative in the research area about the opportunity of acquiring land at Rwagitima, she decided to move once again. She sold her land at her sister's village and bought a small house and some land at Rwagitima. The local authorities also granted her land in the rice fields. Soon afterwards, she began to rent another plot of land in order to cultivate vegetables. Jacqueline was assisted in her agricultural activities by a young, non-related male household member. Occasionally, she also hired agricultural wage labourers to assist with the work in the rice fields. None of her children were interested in becoming farmers.

Jacqueline's youngest children lived at an orphanage, where they also received their education. They only returned home during the holidays. During my fieldwork period, Jacqueline's oldest daughter moved out of the house to work in Kigali. Another daughter moved out when she decided, un-expectantly, to marry an older man in the village. Most of the time, Jacqueline lived in the house with only her oldest son and the young, non-related boy.

To secure enough income, Jacqueline has tried to supplement her earnings derived from agricultural production with other sources of income. She tried several times, though unsuccessfully, to open a small restaurant at the weekly market. She also tried to open a small restaurant near her house, but this effort failed as well. When I visited Jacqueline at the end of 2007, she had become a member of a formal credit association. With the money, she had managed to open up a small roadside shop where she sold some of her agricultural surplus. Her oldest son assisted her by purchasing the surplus of other farmers, which his mother could then sell in her shop. Jacqueline also managed to sell a small amount of rice at the weekly market. While she considered herself a poor woman, Jacqueline hoped that she would soon have enough savings to repair her old house.

- *Hope*, Jacqueline's daughter, who was born and raised in Tanzania. When her mother returned to Rwanda in 1994, Hope stayed behind in Tanzania to finish her education in a school run by Catholic nuns. On returning to Rwanda several years later, with the intent of applying for a passport in order to join the nuns on their travels, she found her mother ill. She decided to look after her mother and thus lost the opportunity to leave the continent.

Hope struggled to finish her secondary education. She passed her final exams, but her grades were too low to receive a government scholarship that could have enabled her to pursue higher education. She occasionally assisted her mother in the rice fields, but she desperately wanted to leave the village, as she had no intention of becoming a farmer, or of marrying one. Hope found employment in a nearby town, but when she realised she was being exploited (by being underpaid) she left the job and returned to her mother. Later she moved to Kigali, where she had several jobs. When she found a sponsor, she left her last job to pursue a professional education.

- *Josephine* was born in Uganda, where she lived in an official refugee settlement.

In 1994, Josephine returned with her parents to Rwanda by truck. The family had no idea to which place they were being brought and simply got off the truck when they were told to do so. Nine other families got off the truck with them. The local authorities told them to look for empty houses, and when Josephine's family located one, they found dead bodies still scattered on the floor and bloody machetes still leaning against the wall. After burying the dead, Josephine's parents began to cultivate a piece of land that was assigned to them by the local authorities. Later, they were required to share this land with new caseload refugees who poured into the area, although they were allowed to keep the house in which they had lived since their arrival.

Josephine did not stay in the village but moved to Kigali to continue her secondary education. However, when there was not enough money to continue, she began work as a domestic worker. Around this time, she met her husband. When she was in the seventh month of her first pregnancy, her husband joined the army to fight in the DRC. Josephine returned to the village of her parents, where she delivered her first child, and then sent the baby to her mother-in-law to look after. Six months later, her husband, whom everyone had presumed to be dead, suddenly returned. The couple started living together at Rwagitima and Josephine began to rent a plot of land for cultivation. Her husband decided that he preferred to work in the city. Every month or so, he would join his wife for a few days, after which he would return to his job in the city. Josephine gave birth to six children altogether.

To supplement her household income, Josephine opened up a restaurant at the weekly market. As this venture fared well, she also tried to open a restaurant in the village. However, she was unable to attract sufficient customers and soon abandoned this project. By 2005, Josephine's husband had returned to his wife, as he had lost his job in the city. In the village he had no work, and he had no interest in agricultural production. Hence, Josephine was the sole wage earner. By 2007, with her earnings, Josephine was able to build a new house near the market. In the meantime, Josephine's cooking skills and business mentality had not escaped the attention of other villagers, and she was regularly asked to assist in the organisation of large

festivities and ceremonies. By the end of 2007, Josephine was also allowed to open a small shop on the campus of the village's secondary school.

- *Kaytes*i was among the oldest of informants for this study. She was born in the 1930s and had married a man who worked at the Protestant missionary post in Gahini, a nearby district. While Kaytes*i* never openly referred to her ethnic background, she did not hesitate to speak about her upbringing in a wealthy cattle-owning family with ties to the royal court. Kaytes*i* and her husband fled to Uganda in the late 1950s. In 1994, she returned to Gahini with her husband and two of her children. Some of her other children, who had gotten married and had found employment, remained behind in Uganda. On the family's arrival in Gahini they found the corpses of genocide victims still filling the streets. Kaytes*i* was unable to live in a community that had killed so many of her relatives and old friends, so she moved to Rwagitima, where she and her husband occupied an empty house. The family was allocated land near this house by the local authorities. Several years later, the owner of the house and land returned and claimed his property. Kaytes*i* and her family constructed a simple house, just a few metres away from the house where they had settled years earlier. The land was divided among the original owner and Kaytes*i* and her husband.

By the time I arrived in Rwagitima, all of Kaytes*i*'s children had moved out of the house. Apart from an older son, who lived in a nearby district, all of her other children lived in Uganda. Occasionally they would visit their mother and bring her money and clothes. Kaytes*i* looked after some of her grandchildren, who came to live with her after their mother had died of AIDS. Her husband, by then very ill, was clearly not going to live much longer; he had been sent back home by the hospital 'as they could do nothing more for him'. Kaytes*i* prepared herself for widowhood and lamented the fact that soon she would have no-one to discuss her problems with. An old woman herself, she still did most of the farm work, assisted by one of her male neighbours, whom she paid in kind.

In 2005, Kaytes*i* became a widow. When I last visited her in 2007, she still worked on her land, but her failing health was regularly leaving her too weak to work. Her dependence on her neighbour, the man who had assisted her with her farm work, had increased. She still looked after her grandchildren, but feared what would become of them after her own death. She rarely heard from her daughters in Uganda and did not know how to get in touch with them.

- *Donald*, a young man whose parents had died. Donald came to Rwanda in 1994, together with his mother and sister. His father had already died, and another sister remained in Uganda. The family moved to Rwagitima and occupied an empty house, which was reclaimed by the rightful owner in 2001. By this time, Donald's mother had also passed

away and his sister had gotten married and moved out. Donald then built himself a simple house. Other relatives live nearby as well.

During my first fieldwork period, Donald lived together with a younger relative. He rented land where he cultivated cash crops and was active in the Pentecostal Church. During my second fieldwork period, Donald was able to find work in construction, while he continued to rent land for cultivation. He remained active in the church. By the time of my last field visit, Donald had married and was the father of a small baby. He had been able to construct a new house, larger and of better quality than the one in which he had lived as a single man. He had also become a pastor and now led his own Pentecostal church.

- *Sam* was in his thirties when I first met him. Sam was the pastor of a Pentecostal Church in Rwagitima, and was married and had two children. His wife worked as a secretary in a nearby town. The house in which they lived was rented, though Sam owned two plots of land, which, however, he did not cultivate himself. Rather, his wife and her niece (also residing with them) looked after the land. One of these plots he had inherited from his parents, the other he had bought from neighbours several years earlier. Sam also owned cattle, but these he kept elsewhere. Sam was loved by his followers and most of them presented him with tithes (one-tenth of their agricultural yields and/or one-tenth of their cash income). Sam did not consider himself a rich man, nor did others. It was said that he had to spend a lot of money on the many visitors that came to see him. He did not sell any of his agricultural surplus either. Over time, he had been able to put aside some money, which he used to build a large house of good quality.

Then disaster struck. Sam's wife died shortly after giving birth to their third child. Not long thereafter, the baby died as well. Some months later, his second-born died of malaria. At the time of my last visit, Sam had moved to his new house, taking his oldest child with him. He explained that he was no longer a pastor (his church had been taken over by Donald). Many rumours circulated, none of which have been substantiated.

Less detailed life histories were collected from three more women: the village midwife (born and raised in the village), the wife of a local government official, and a successful female shop owner (and a relative of ADRA's rice project manager).

At no point do I suggest that the lives of these women and men are representative for people living in the research area. However, as Pelto and Pelto (1978: 75) argue: "In spite of this fact, the richness and personalized nature of life histories afford a vividness and integration of cultural information that are of great value for understanding particular lifeways". The extrapolation from the typicality of the separate life histories to wider inferences is based on the validity of the analysis rather than on the representativeness of the separate cases. It is the

validity of the analysis which contributes to explanatory power. The objective of the analysis of life histories then, was to treat them as “a window into human experience” (Bernard and Ryan 1998) rather than to treat the documented life histories in the form of texts as the object of analysis themselves¹⁰².

Household Survey

This method allowed for the collection of empirical data on specific variables. Variables explored in the survey include:

- Household characteristics (sex, age, education, marital status, place of birth, relation to head of household, occupation, current place of residence, number of children born of all household members);
- Household head characteristics;
- Household health characteristics (illnesses, handicaps, deaths);
- Farm characteristics (size of land, number of parcels, location of parcels, manner of obtainment, crops grown, output, livestock and small stock);
- Financial characteristics of households (use of credit, savings, remittances, sources of income);
- Housing characteristics (housing arrangements, equipment and tools, transport facilities);
- Social capital (location and assistance given by extended family, friends, and neighbours, membership of formal and informal organizations, labour sharing arrangements, level of trust);
- Food security strategies in times of shortage.

A World Bank questionnaire was used as reference point for the development of this study’s household survey questionnaire (Grootaert *et al.* 2004). The survey questionnaire was pre-tested in a small town near Rwagitima to make sure that survey questions were clearly formulated and culturally appropriate. As a result, some questions were adjusted, others deleted or added. After adjustments were made, another round of pre-testing was conducted, this time among

¹⁰² In life history studies, one can discern two distinct traditions. The linguistic tradition treats texts that describe a life history as the object of analysis. It thus becomes important to know how and by whom texts were collected and how these can be reproduced. Actual analysis focuses on patterns, structures, and styles, and facilitates comparisons between texts. The sociological tradition treats life histories as a window into human experience. Texts that describe a life history are seen as one of the tools to gain insight into how people deal with all the information surrounding them, as a way to bring us closer to the informants’ experiences, for identifying themes and subsequently building models and theory. In this study, the collected life histories do not form the core of the research but instead are intended to explore, exemplify, or confirm other ideas and theories. Hence, as applied in this study, life histories were used according to the sociological tradition.

informants whose life histories had been collected during the first fieldwork period. As extensive information about informants' lives had already been collected, this procedure formed a check to see whether the survey was able to recover 'correct' information. After the informants were interviewed by my research assistants, I discussed the proceedings and content of the questionnaire separately with both assistants and informants. This enabled me to ensure that the questions were well understood and that the way in which informants were approached and questioned by my assistants was clear and socially acceptable.

For the survey, the targeted respondent was identified as the core female adult of the household. If such a woman did not live in the sampled household, as was for example the case in households formed by unmarried men, the core male adult of that household was interviewed. If multiple core female adults lived within a particular household, preference was given to the female spouse, or if no female spouse was present, to the woman taking primary responsibility regarding household decisions. In two cases, the targeted female respondent was not allowed or refused to answer the survey questions on her own¹⁰³, in which case she was interviewed in the presence of her husband. If respondents from selected households were absent during the first visit, up to three subsequent attempts were made to interview the selected respondent. If the selected respondent refused to cooperate (which happened only once¹⁰⁴), his or her direct neighbours were interviewed, after which the fourth household on the map was approached.

The survey questionnaire was administered in Kinyarwanda and face-to-face. Answers were written down in English directly on the interview schedule or were translated into English immediately after conclusion of the interview. The assistants were told to approach households and to take their time to explain the research; households were assured that the survey was being done only for scientific reasons and that none of us was affiliated with the Rwandan government, local authorities, or any NGO. Checking of the completed questionnaires was done in the field after completion of the interview. In the event that entries were missing or unclear, assistants were asked to return to the household to collect the required information.

An important question with regard to the household survey is whether such an instrument is appropriate for data collection in post-conflict situations. It is

¹⁰³ One case concerned a recently remarried woman who claimed to know too little of the household in which she had come to live. She asked her husband to be present during the interview. The other case involved a husband who did not want his wife to be interviewed in his absence.

¹⁰⁴ The fact that so few households refused to be interviewed was no doubt related to the fact that our research team had been given the opportunity to present our work during *gacaca* meetings. While it had merely been our intention to explain the purpose of the survey to people, the local authorities that were present during these meetings urged villagers to answer all of our questions if we were to select their household. During the communal gathering as well as at the moment of household visit, we took considerable care to point out that people were free to decline and that this would have no consequences. It remains likely, however, that some of the households might not have accepted our questioning them if the authorities had not asked them to do so.

difficult to answer concisely. During the first fieldwork period, several people protested against my taking notes of our conversation. After probing, some revealed that they feared these notes would become public and would somehow be used to harm them. When I noticed such hesitation on the side of my respondents, I would normally put my pen and paper in my bag and continue the conversation without taking notes. I have to admit that I would try to recall these conversations in the evenings, in the seclusion of my own house, and would attempt to write them down (taking care to use codenames rather than real names). It was even more difficult to tape conversations, as people feared that I might broadcast the tapes on national radio.

The fear of having conversations documented could take extreme forms. Thus, while I noticed that people generally felt secure enough to talk to me in the confines of their own homes, or in their fields, when they came to visit me at my house the conversation usually lapsed. We sipped drinks and smiled at each other, but few words were uttered. It took me some time to realise that conversations inside my own house were rare. Once I did notice, I asked some of my visitors about it. It turned out that they were afraid I had hidden a microphone somewhere in the house, out of sight, so I could tape our conversations and then make them public. Only with time, by respecting the wishes of respondents to abstain from taking notes, did they begin to trust my intentions. As our unrecorded conversations became more intimate, sometimes covering politically sensitive or emotionally charged issues, people came to learn that I was not talking to the local authorities about what had been discussed. Subsequently, I was increasingly allowed to take notes, although the use of a tape recorder was rarely approved of.

Considering these facts, I have my reservations with regard to the use of a survey questionnaire: not only during post-conflict situations, when suspicion and distrust often reign, but also in situations of political stability. Most surveys, such as the government's general census of population and housing held in 2002, are conducted without much introduction, sometimes by people unfamiliar in the community in which they have come to collect data. Enumerators come for the day and leave in the evening. I doubt whether the relationships of trust between these enumerators and the people they have come to interview are strong enough to result in reliable data. I certainly know that not all of my survey questions resulted in reliable data. I realised this when the survey questionnaire was pre-tested among respondents with whom I had built an extremely good rapport. In particular with regard to questions on household composition (especially questions on the exact relation between household members) and cattle, responses to survey questions did not always result in 'correct' information. In other words, there was a discrepancy between the information that I had been able to obtain through informal and semi-structured interviewing during my first fieldwork period and the data that were collected by means of the survey questionnaire¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ For example, during the collection of life histories one woman told me that her household included a boy from Burundi. This boy had lost both his parents during the war. He was welcomed (informally adopted) into the house of this particular woman and ever since has been regarded as a full member of the household, also by her other

The respondents with whom I discussed the survey questionnaire after pre-testing explained to me that they were uncomfortable disclosing certain types of information to people they did not know very well (i.e. my assistants). Moreover, they had been deterred by the interview schedule and the notes that had been taken by my assistants. They had wanted to 'hide' or somehow alter the information that was requested from them.

Despite my reservations with regard to the data collected by means of the household survey, I have nevertheless included this data in my analysis. However, I feel that the outcomes of these analyses should be treated with care. And whereas I may be somewhat sceptical about the reliability of certain outcomes (such as those on the number of cattle), I have nevertheless included this information as well. I would like to suggest that the quantitative data should not be treated as absolute outcomes but rather as indicative. Only by means of triangulation it is possible to assess the reliability of these analyses. In the following, I will therefore present the outcomes of analysis based on survey data in the light of other findings, based on qualitative methods.

Secondary Data

A profile of the study area was obtained through the collection of secondary data. This included historical 'facts', such as the development from restricted pasturage to intensive agriculture, baseline information on general demographic characteristics and social structures, changes in intra- and inter-household relations, livelihood activities, temporary migration, and importance of linkages with other countries. Data thus collected were used to place the primary data in a more historical and regional perspective, enabling generalisations not so much to a larger population but to theoretical propositions that might be applicable to wider populations.

Secondary data were obtained from different local and national government offices and national and international NGOs, and included government central statistics, community development reports, district ethnographic studies and development plans, baseline surveys, participatory rural appraisal reports from

children. During the pre-testing of the household survey, this woman nevertheless made no mention of the boy, despite the fact that my assistants had been instructed to enquire explicitly after possible cases of adoption. I later asked this woman why she had not mentioned this 'adopted' son to my assistants. She replied that she did not want outsiders to know that this boy was not her real son. As she was sure that my research assistants did not know of his existence (he was at the time studying in another region), she decided to not make any mention of him at all. Another example relates to the ownership of cows. My neighbour had once told me he owned a considerable number of cows. This was later confirmed by his wife. However, during the survey interview he downplayed the number of cows in his possession. I was later told that Rwandans do not like to disclose information about their cattle.

CBOs, and project reports. Other sources included reports written by the World Bank, FAO, UNAIDS, USAID, WFP, and WHO.

It is important to note that sometimes it has been very difficult, if not impossible, to compare different sources of secondary data, due to the administrative reforms in 2002 and 2006. Boundaries of the province of Byumba are not the same as those of Umutara or of the Eastern Province. Moreover, differences within what used to be Umutara are considerable. For example, the north of Umutara is characterised by cattle production, while the south is characterised by an entire different farm system, i.e. crop production. Environmental, climatic, socio-economic, and cultural differences between the north and south are considerable. Most secondary data presented aggregated data that covered both north and south Umutara, and at times other regions as well. This makes it extremely difficult to extract the information needed for this particular study.

Problems with Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

This section consists of three parts. In the first, I discuss the issue of trust, self-disclosure, and protection of informants. In the second, I discuss the issue of ethnicity. In the third, I discuss incentives used to ensure the participation of respondents.

Trust, Self-Disclosure, and Protection of Informants

Initially, one of the most important problems was a lack of trust on the part of informants. Because of my frequent contacts with ADRA's rice project officer, people suspected me of working for this particular NGO. Other concerns were that I would share 'secret' information with other villagers or the local authorities. Some informants were afraid that I would contact newspapers and radio stations and by these means spread whatever information they gave me. Such fears made me decide to dedicate my first few months of fieldwork to learning about more 'neutral' topics, such as village organisation and types of crops grown in the research area¹⁰⁶.

During these first months, I gave villagers ample opportunity to question me about my research, and – perhaps even more importantly – about my personal background. Self-disclosure is a feminist practice (Rheinharz 1992), which can be used to initiate dialogue by allowing informants to become researchers themselves. When asked, I shared information about my own family, the problems I have

¹⁰⁶ The fact that I struggled to differentiate between young sprouts of beans and sweet potatoes was hilarious to most villagers, and they soon resorted to teaching me about crop determination; this then enabled me to learn more about cultivation techniques, decisions about which crops to grow, and the labour division of agricultural work.

encountered in the relationship with my husband, friends, and neighbours. I talked about my wish not to have children and the type of contraceptives I have used. I was asked to disclose how intimate relationships between men and women and between same-sex couples function in the Netherlands. I discussed my view on the role of the international community in the genocide of 1994. To all questions asked, I answered honestly and extensively. Self-disclosure made me vulnerable, but also reassured villagers about my intentions and the motivation behind those intentions. My integrity was tested, and informants watched how I resolved problems encountered at the data collection site¹⁰⁷. Over time, a relationship of trust evolved between my informants and me.

Nevertheless, although trust was growing over the months, few informants agreed to have their conversations audio-recorded, again out of fear that I would send the tapes to radio stations to be broadcast. This forced me to record all conversations manually. Since my knowledge of Kinyarwanda was insufficient to conduct interviews without the assistance of a translator, it meant that conversations could not be transcribed verbatim. To add to this problem, translating posed its own difficulties. The Kinyarwanda spoken by different groups of people, while generally understandable to all, differs substantially: thus, confusion could sometimes arise between those people who had lived in Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, DRC, or Rwanda.

To ensure the anonymity of my informants, all real names in this study have been changed. Moreover, circumstantial detail is held back if there is a danger of it leading to an easy identification of informants.

Ethnicity

Another major problem concerned the ethnic background of my research assistants. All of my assistants turned out to be Tutsi, most having been born in exile (Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi) and only having returned to Rwanda in 1994. While I had intended to employ both Hutu and Tutsi assistants, I had limited

¹⁰⁷ A good example of the latter is the incident when the son of my female landlord returned home for the school holidays and insisted that I vacate the property, which he considered his and not his mother's. My first reaction was to send him off, having made clear arrangements with his mother for leasing the property for a specified period of time. However, I realised that the son was of the opinion that his mother did not have the right to lease the property without his consent. I felt that, according to customary rules, he might have good arguments to believe so. The woman who had rented the house to me in fact turned out to be the boy's stepmother. The house that I rented had been built before his (now deceased) father had remarried this woman. The boy felt that the house was part of his inheritance and that his stepmother only had usufruct rights over the property. I resolved the problem by allowing the boy to move in temporarily. Talking to him, to the neighbors, and to the local authorities, I then tried to make it clear that these new living arrangements were extremely difficult for me and my research assistants, as we now did not have enough space to live and to work. Together, we agreed that the boy would move in with one of his uncles, who also lived in the village.

opportunities to learn the ethnic background of potential assistants, as the discussion of ethnicity is currently a highly sensitive issue in Rwanda and is not something one can openly ask about during first meetings. The fact that I insisted on a good working knowledge of English probably resulted in my ending up with Tutsi research assistants, because most Hutu have studied under a francophone educational system.

To work exclusively with Tutsi research assistants is likely to have had an influence on the data collection. While ethnicity is no longer openly discussed, ethnic tensions are all too real and pervasive. It is possible that some of my Hutu informants were reluctant to freely express themselves in front of my Tutsi research assistants, although I found no evidence of open hostility. However, some of my research assistants occasionally expressed fear of having to conduct an interview with someone they considered a *génocidaire*, especially if it was known that family members were currently in prison. If such a situation occurred, I asked if one of my other research assistants was willing to conduct that particular interview, or I would attend the interview session to ensure my assistants' feelings of security. In the end, no households were excluded from the research for reasons of ethnicity. I do feel, however, that fear and anxiety on the part of my research assistants is likely to have been sensed by some of my respondents.

Ethnicity formed the most important obstacle to this research. It has become such an emotionally charged concept in present-day Rwanda that it needed to be avoided in most interviews. If informants felt that their ethnic affiliation was scrutinised, especially that of those informants with whom infrequent contact was maintained, suspicion generally arose. Informants suspected that we worked for the Ministry of Justice or conveyed our findings to the *gacaca* tribunals. Moreover, even if villagers had been willing to discuss their ethnic background, my research assistants made it very clear to me that they felt extremely uncomfortable questioning informants on this issue¹⁰⁸. In a country where people can be arrested for inciting 'divisionism', as is regularly proclaimed by those in power as well as by journalists, I felt I had to respect my assistants' point of view in this matter.

However, it is clear that ethnicity was the most important determinant during the 1994 genocide and had been an important factor influencing people's livelihood strategies for many decades previously. While ethnicity is not used in official parlance, it is omnipresent in everyday life. The current government has declared that ethnicity should no longer divide the people of Rwanda and any mention of ethnicity is considered an act of renewed divisionism. In practice, this means that in census and surveys no information is being gathered on the ethnicity of household members. While understandable in the context of post-genocide Rwanda, one must be aware that by ignoring the issue of ethnicity it becomes impossible to determine whether and how the events of the 1990s have impacted household composition, inter- and intra-household relations, and household livelihood strategies. There is good reason to assume that there has been a

¹⁰⁸ Rose (2005) also mentions that her Rwandan assistants were reluctant to enquire after people's ethnic affiliation. This indicates that the refusal of my assistants to ask about ethnic affiliation is based on wider sentiments in Rwandan society.

differential impact and that it has consequences for current livelihood strategies used by households to provide for their daily needs. For example, it is likely that more Hutu than Tutsi women are faced with the imprisonment of male household members and with the stigma entailed. Several programmes exist to assist female survivors of genocide, in practice meaning Tutsi women. There are indications, although no hard proof, that the number and percentage of Tutsi in higher levels of education far exceed those of Hutu. Access to local government positions seems equally skewed, although again no hard data exists to confirm this. All in all, it is highly probable that livelihood opportunities for Hutu and Tutsi differ substantially.

Thus, one of the main shortcomings of this study is that differences in living conditions and livelihood opportunities between Hutu and Tutsi (or Twa for that matter) were difficult to determine. Nevertheless, this compels me to consider the following questions (cf. Rose 2005). Is the government of Rwanda not interested in politically sensitive data or does the government in fact prevent researchers from registering such data? And is it acceptable that researchers avoid asking questions about ethnic affiliation when these are essential to an in-depth study of the population at hand? Whatever the answer to the first question, the Rwandan government must realise that if it indeed considers that ethnic differences need to be overcome, “ignoring” ethnicity may in fact have the opposite effect. If discrimination based on ethnic affiliation is even merely suspected by Rwanda’s population, this may incite more violence in the future. If researchers are able, or perhaps even encouraged, to ask questions about ethnic affiliation, their research may weaken such suspicions. In my opinion, the fact that the government looks extremely unfavourably upon ethnic research only fuels the suspicion that they have something to hide. As for the second question, the answer is a downright ‘no’. It is not acceptable that researchers avoid asking questions about ethnic affiliation when such questions are essential to learn more about ongoing historical and political processes in Rwanda, when they are essential to learn more about the livelihood opportunities of ordinary Rwandans. Nevertheless, one must also acknowledge the severe limitations that researchers face when attempting to study ethnicity or ethnically related problems and opportunities.

For this research, I did attempt to divide households into ethnic groups. To be able to do so, I first had to assume that all members of the household share the same ethnic affiliation. This is not entirely in accordance with reality, as intermarriages between ethnic groups were common before 1994. Unfortunately, there is no data on the occurrence of intermarriage at present. But if the lives of some of the youngsters in the research area can be taken as representative for Rwanda at large, then it seems that inter-ethnic relationships – even while being looked down on, disapproved of, and mistrusted by many – currently take place as well.

In the survey questionnaire, I included questions on place of birth, last place of residence, and place of residence of currently absent household members and extended family members. I also included questions on marital status, the year of death of deceased household members, and how access to landed property has been gained. I believed that such questions would, among other things, enable me

to assess people's ethnic affiliation. I did not ask questions about whether people conceive of themselves as old or new caseload refugees or indigenous population, as I felt that such questions could have prompted the suspicion that I was asking about ethnicity; this would surely have undermined trust. Moreover, refugee categories do not imply much about ethnic affiliation. For example, while it is generally agreed that Tutsi form the largest group of old caseload refugees, many moderate Hutu also fled the country from the late 1950s onwards. And among new caseload refugees there are surely Tutsi who also fled in fear of war violence. Finally, there are Tutsi who did not flee the country at all, yet were able to survive the horrors of the genocide.

When analysing the data collected through the survey, I found it was extremely difficult to assess people's (or household) ethnic affiliation¹⁰⁹. Comparing the information gained through life histories, where I was able to learn about informants' ethnic background, and the answers of those same informants to the survey questionnaire, I realised too late that the survey questionnaire left too much room for differential interpretation. Being restricted in the type of questions I could ask in the survey questionnaire, I was unable to find more accurate ways to assess ethnic affiliation. This meant that while I was able to determine household ethnicity with a certain level of certainty for about three-quarters of the households interviewed, I could not do so for the remaining households. Moreover, considering that intermarriages do occur, this presents a methodological weakness. Thus, while I do present ethnic-based data, I use these data with caution. My conclusions are not 'proof' of ethnic differentials, but I do feel they present tentative findings that warrant further research.

Incentives to Participate

One of the most frequently heard questions during fieldwork involved how the research was going to benefit informants. This was not the first study done in the research area. In fact, villagers are regularly asked to comply with studies undertaken by local authorities, agronomists, health workers, and local and international NGOs. However, it was generally felt that none of these studies have resulted in tangible benefits to those who cooperated. When confronted with these sentiments, I answered truthfully that I did not expect this research to lead to direct and tangible results. I added that some organisations active in the area were nevertheless interested to learn more about village life and politics, about the motivations of people behind livelihood portfolio decisions, and that we could only hope that an ethnographic description of the research area would enable those

¹⁰⁹ In a few cases, my research assistants were able to assess respondent's ethnic affiliation effortlessly, since respondents mentioned it without any probing by my assistants. Such information was then either written down on the survey questionnaire or conveyed to me orally by the end of the day. However, in most cases no such information was available.

organisations to better plan their activities, ensuring that they would fit the people's demands.

Initially, some informants tried to obtain monetary incentives before being willing to cooperate. However, at no point did I agree to this. All informants and respondents cooperated voluntarily, without any pressure or monetary incentive from my side. Several informants told me that they were willing to do so, since they appreciated the fact that, unlike many before me, I was willing to live among them for prolonged periods, and demonstrated a sincere wish to learn more about the problems they faced in their daily lives.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data and information were initially registered as manual field notes. On the same day they were taken, these notes would be entered into the computer, using MS Word. They were then organised according to different themes related to the research questions. Analysis was based on eliciting sub-themes from within each theme, and then detecting comparative or contrasting processes and mechanisms. The information thus gained was then compared to what had been observed in the field, to what other respondents had indicated during informal interviews, to the results of the household survey, and to secondary data.

A preliminary analysis of participant observation, informal interviews, life histories, and semi-structured interviews with key informants was used to fine-tune definitions of concepts based on the emic perspective. Insights thus gained were then used to formulate the questions in the household survey. The categorised information generated by analysis was also used as data for the subject discussions in the text and to enrich the discussions based upon the results of the statistical analysis of the household survey. In most cases, this resulted in data and in the outcome of various methods being combined.

The quantitative data obtained through the household survey was processed through manual editing and coding. The data was then entered into SPSS and analysed by means of the same programme. Using the SPSS statistical package, cross tabulations, bivariate and regression analyses, and non-parametric tests were performed to provide descriptive statistics and associations among variables.

5

Setting the Stage

In this chapter, I move from the macro to the micro level. In the first section, I describe the climate and topography at different levels of analysis (Rwanda, Umutara, and Rwagitima). Other topics include migration processes, social organisation of the population, and farming systems. In the second section, the focus is entirely on Rwagitima. To provide the reader with a useful insight into the particular context of this study, I describe when and why people came to Rwagitima, the ethnic composition of the area, and how sex and age are distributed. The section concludes with a short discussion on marriage practices because of their implications for women's access to land.

Rwanda

Climate and Topography

Rwanda is a landlocked country, bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Uganda in the north, Tanzania in the east and Burundi in the south. The country occupies an area of 26,338 sq km, of which 5.3 percent is composed of water. Arable land constitutes 45.2 percent of the total land area.

The country can be divided roughly into three ecological zones (Codere 1973, Uvin 1998, Vansina 2004). The first zone is the central plateau, consisting of hills ranging from about 1500 to 2000 metres high, with an average temperature of 20°C and an average rainfall between 99 and 125 centimetres. The region, which formed the heart of the Nyiginya kingdom, is characterised by wooded savannahs and is highly suitable for human habitation, cattle breeding, and horticulture. The second zone, located in the west of Rwanda, is a mountainous region (the Zaire-Nile crest), between 2000 and 4000 metres high. The climate is much cooler and wetter than on the central plateau, with an average temperature of 15°C and an average annual rainfall exceeding 117 centimetres. Except for foragers, this region was uninhabited before 1600, when it was covered with rainforests. From the seventeenth century onwards, forests were cleared when farmers and herders settled in the region. The third zone is located in the east of the country, and is a relatively flat region, less than 1500 metres, and characterised by swamps, lakes, and the Kagera marshes. The savannahs here are less fertile and less well-watered

than those of the central plateau, while temperatures are higher and rainfall lower, at 79-100 centimetres per year.

Overall, the climate in Rwanda is temperate with little annual variation or change between day and night. Four seasons can be discerned, although these differ somewhat between different ecological zones; generally speaking, rainfall increases from East to West. Between February and May, the long rainy season (*itumba*) takes place with thunder showers all over the country. A second, shorter rainy season (*umuhindo*), from September to November, also brings showers but these are localised and less intense. Between the two rainy seasons are the dry seasons: the short dry season (*icyi*) lasts from December to January and the long dry season (*impeshyi*), characterised by the highest temperatures, from June to September. The country's bimodal rainfall pattern allows for two main growing seasons. Only 0.4 percent of cropland is irrigated, and the rainfall is generally sufficient for cultivation. However, rainfall is characterised by annual variability and Rwanda has had its share of droughts, late rainy seasons, and inundations severe enough to trigger a famine. Moreover, micro-climates, heavy soil-erosion, and run-offs account for conditions being varied throughout the country.

Throughout the country's history, periodic famines have occurred, with seventeen years of famine between 1900 and 1950 (Paarlberg 1999). However, there were famines more recently as well, some being regional, others occurring countrywide. Many famines were given names, such as the regional famine of 1902-1903 (*Ruyaga*), the regional famine of 1920 which was caused by rain (*Rumanura*), the countrywide famine of 1924 (*Gakwege*¹¹⁰), and the countrywide famine of 1942-1944 (*Ruzagayura*)¹¹¹. Several famines were the result of droughts or locusts but many others were caused by military expeditions or political upheavals, as in 1959, 1963, 1982, and the early 1990s (Musahara 2001)¹¹². Given that the south and east of the country normally experience lower annual rainfall, the risk of famines is greater there than in the north and west¹¹³.

Most of the country's soil cover is made up of ancient, decomposed metamorphic rock, mostly granites, schists and gneisses. The western Highlands

¹¹⁰ The name came from voyagers who sold iron wire to make bracelets [iron wire=*umukwege*] (Codere 1973).

¹¹¹ The famine of 1942-1944 was followed by a terrible earthquake in 1945. The famine is believed to have claimed half the population (Musahara 2001). Earthquakes are common. In 2002, the large earthquake in Goma was felt throughout Rwanda. Other, smaller earthquakes occur regularly, especially forming a danger for the communities living in the volcanic regions in the northwest of the country.

¹¹² The drought in the early 1990s led to a limited famine in the southern part of the country (May 1995). This famine resulted from an accumulation of factors, such as weather conditions and the occurrence of pests and diseases. An aggravating factor, however, was population pressure that forced greater agricultural activity on fragile lands of marginal productive value, such as those in the southeastern highlands of Rwanda (Schnepf 1992). Active warfare with Uganda along the northeastern frontier further worsened the situation.

¹¹³ This explains why traditional rainmakers were farmers from the mountainous areas in the northwest (Codere 1973).

are covered with volcanic lava and ashes, as well as basalt (Jones and Egli 1984). In general, the physical properties of the soil cover are good, although there is a great deal of local variation. However, while soil drainage gives little cause for concern, the country's soil cover is affected by chemicals:

“Availability of plant nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorus and potash plus trace elements, is the lesser of the two constellations of soil-chemistry problems¹¹⁴ [...] The other constellation of soil-chemistry problems concerns acidity and aluminium toxicity. Indirectly, these affect nutrient-availability as well [...] Soil exposure results in leaching and erosion as a result of direct exposure to raindrops, and in higher soil temperatures as a result of direct exposure to the sun [...] Not only does aluminium start being toxic to many plants at levels that have already been exceeded in the more densely settled parts of the [region]. But also, increasing acidity decreases the availability of other nutrients. In the long run, the process leads to typical, tropical bauxite and lateritic iron mines, but not to soils good for farming and grazing.”

(Jones and Egli 1984: 18-20)

Social Organisation

During pre-colonial days, people lived scattered over hills. The hill formed the fundamental unit of settlement, setting ‘communities’ apart from other communities (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003, Vansina 2004). Communities were not villages in the conventional sense. Basically, they were mere administrative units “imposed upon a landscape marked by scattered homesteads” (Pottier 2006: 515). In this respect, the introduction of *paysannats* and, more recently *imidugudu*, forms a break with the past. Today, many villages can be found, often consisting of long rows of similar looking houses along the road.

Traditionally, farm holdings consisted of several plots scattered over the hill. This formed an important farm security system, since “each hill aligns several natural environments forming not only a catena from its summit to its base, but laterally as well, since the different folds of its slopes contain in their concavities and convexities different soils that also greatly differ in fertility” (Vansina 2004: 15). In this sense then, *imidugudu* also form a break with the past, as one of the central goals of the *imidugudu* policy is to concentrate farm holdings so as to make farming more efficient. However, this is likely to occur at the great expense of household livelihood security.

Where kinship relations beyond the conjugal family played an important role in pre-colonial Rwanda, they are no longer as determining in the present socio-cultural system, although they still are important (Codere 1973). The conjugal family has gained significance. Most households are made up of three to six members (62.4 percent), although small-size households (one to two persons,

¹¹⁴ However, the authors do notice that on annual cropped land at least one nitrogen-fixing legume crop is grown every year, which has helped sustain soil-nutrient fertility.

forming 19.6 percent of all households) are relatively common as well. Households with more than ten members are few (less than 3 percent) (Republic of Rwanda 2005). The average household size in Rwanda has not changed much since the late 1970s. Whereas household size increased slightly in the years before the war and genocide, from 4.5 to 4.7 persons, it diminished again to earlier levels in the 1990s. In 2002, the average household size in Rwanda was 4.53 people per household (Republic of Rwanda 2005).

Households are normally considered to consist of a male head and his spouse, with or without children, and possibly some other related or unrelated members. According to the prevalent ideology in Rwanda, women can only be the head of household if they live without adult men, either because they are single (unmarried) or because their relationship with their partner has been disrupted (widowhood, divorce, and separation). It is generally assumed that instances where married women have attained the status of head of household are confined to polygamous relations or households without men, due to migration or imprisonment of the husbands. In the age range of 20-40 years, male headship rates increase considerably and at a faster rate than female headship rates as a result of marriage or cohabitation and the general patriarchal ideology. According to the 2002 census, women attain the status of household head relatively late (the rate increasing from 40 years onwards) and often when they are already old and no longer married because of divorce, separation, or the death of their spouses¹¹⁵. In fact, the 2002 census finds that of all the socio-demographic characteristics of heads of households in Rwanda, it is their marital status that is most sensitive to the sex of the household head (Republic of Rwanda 2005).

The war and genocide have had a significant effect on the dependency ratio. Dependency analysis is normally based on the number of people supposedly too young (<15 years old) or too old (>65 years old) to work in relation to the economically active (15-65 years old), here referred to as the demographic dependency ratio. I redefined this ratio by looking at the different role of sex and age categories in support of dependants. In this respect, de Waal and Whiteside (2003) refer to the concept of 'dependency separation'. The demographic dependency ratio at the national level is 87.4. This means that theoretically every 100 persons of economically active age are expected to take charge of 87 people, of whom 82 are youths and 5 are elderly (see Table 5.1). In rural Rwanda, the dependency ratio is somewhat higher at 93.3, meaning that generally speaking 100 persons of economically active age are expected to take charge of a larger number of dependants. As is evident from Table 5.1, dependency ratios are usually higher for men than for women, signifying that theoretically male heads of households are expected to take charge of more dependants – youths specifically – than are female heads of households.

¹¹⁵ The average age of the head of household is 44 years. Male heads of household are generally younger than female head of households: 41 and 50 years, respectively (Republic of Rwanda 2007).

Table 5.1: *Dependency ratios by place of residence and by sex of head of household*

Dependency Ratios			
	Demographic dependency	Youth dependency	Elderly dependency
Rwanda	87.4	82.0	5.4
Male	91.8	86.8	5.0
Female	83.7	77.9	5.8
Rural Rwanda	93.3	87.4	5.9
Male	102.6	97.0	5.6
Female	85.9	79.8	6.1

Source: *Republic of Rwanda (2005), République du Rwanda (2005b)*

Note, however, that the demographic dependency ratio conceals important issues. First of all, the war and genocide have had an especially detrimental effect on the economically active male population. The demographic dependency ratio does not take into account such exceptional circumstances. Moreover, as a result of the war and genocide, as well as the effects of HIV/AIDS, many elderly are forced to once again become the supporters of dependants, often their own grandchildren. The demographic dependency ratio does not take into account that the elderly are not always dependent¹¹⁶.

Marriage¹¹⁷ is considered a prerequisite in Rwanda and few people remain single throughout their lives. Women tend to marry at a somewhat younger age than men: 24 and 26 years in the rural areas, respectively (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Child marriages, as reported by Codere (1973), are no longer socially approved of and are illegal. Most marriages are monogamous, although traditionally polygamous marriages were common and can still be found throughout the country. Marriage is between individuals usually not related in any way, although Vansina (2001) mentions that cross-cousin marriages were common in pre-colonial Rwanda. According to one of the respondents for this study, cross-cousin marriages and even parallel cousin marriages occur at present, although only in rare circumstances. As in patrilineal societies there often rests a taboo of incest on marriages between parallel cousins (Lévi-Strauss 1969), one would not expect to find such marriages in Rwanda. Nevertheless, Taylor (1992) mentions that his informants told him that patrilineal parallel cousin marriages among the Tutsi nobility were not uncommon in the past.

Marriage transactions included the payment of bridewealth. Such transactions were often so expensive that they necessitated the sale of land. Increasing land pressure led to intergenerational conflicts, as parents were

¹¹⁶ In Chapter 6, I will continue the discussion on dependency ratios.

¹¹⁷ Unless specified differently, when I speak about marriage in this section I also refer to traditional, religious, and consensual relationships.

unwilling to sell their property to raise bridewealth for their children. As a result, non-customary 'marriages' (i.e. relationships where bridewealth has not been paid) became more common¹¹⁸ and the occurrence of elopement of young couples also increased (Pottier 1997)¹¹⁹. Traditionally, newlyweds would set up their new household near the husband's parents, preferably in the same *ruغو*, or near a brother or brother-in-law of the wife. More recently, young couples have begun to set up more independent households. Migration processes have resulted in many such households being located far from the parental household.

Conjugal separation as a result of divorce or death is common and has also been noted for pre-colonial Rwanda. More women than men find themselves in this situation. Conjugal separation occurs most notably between the ages of 25 and 65 for women and between 55 and 75 for men (République du Rwanda 2005b). Remarriages are quite common, although men are more likely to remarry than women. The literature also provides examples of wife inheritance practices (Codere 1973)¹²⁰ and levirate marriages (Newbury and Baldwin 2000), although I have found no reference to the extent of such practices or to whether they have survived to the present. Levirate marriages may be, or may have been, more common among young women, as is suggested by the work of Codere (1973). During fieldwork, one such relationship has been documented and involved a woman in her thirties¹²¹. It is less likely that older women, reaching menopause, would have been considered suitable candidates for levirate marriage, since marriage is generally seen as a means to have (more) children.

Between 1978 and 1991, the proportion of female-headed households was relatively constant but it increased considerably between 1991 and 2002, from 25.0 percent to 35.2 percent (Republic of Rwanda 2005). In the province of Umutara, male-headed households accounted for 69.2 percent of all households: after the city of Kigali and the province of Byumba, the highest proportion of male-headed households in the country. The provinces of Butare, Gitarama, Kibuye, and Kigali-Ngali, where the genocide was especially fierce, exhibit the highest proportions of female-headed households (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Female-headed households

¹¹⁸ As Pottier (1997) argues, a relationship where bridewealth has not been paid undermines women's and children's entitlements to land.

¹¹⁹ Key informants for this study indicated that kidnapping of girls also occurs, especially in the northeast of the country. Young girls of marriageable age are ambushed and taken to the house of the boy's parents, where they are hidden for days, weeks, or months until they have been impregnated by their 'future' husbands. The family of the 'husband' then approaches the family of the girl. After compensation has been paid for having taken the girl by force, bridewealth is paid and the marriage between boy and girl is a fact. Few parents would oppose such marriage arrangements, as pre-marital pregnancies are unheard of in Rwanda.

¹²⁰ Thus, Codere (1973) relates how a man whose wife and several of his children had died was allowed to take the wife of his own father.

¹²¹ It needs to be noted that this relationship did not last long, as the woman found it difficult to explain to her children that she was now involved in a relationship with their uncle.

in Rwanda are generally smaller than those headed by men, constituting 4.0 people against 4.8 people in male-headed households (Republic of Rwanda 2005).

Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa have been known to intermarry. Codere (1973) argues that under colonial rule, intermarriages between Hutu men and Tutsi women were most common. She considers the social elevation of Hutu under colonial rule, as a result of decreased economic differentials between Hutu and Tutsi, of importance in this respect. Indeed, most of the Hutu men whom she lists as having married Tutsi women were wealthy men holding important occupations or positions. Intermarriages between Tutsi men and Hutu women apparently occurred less often. On the basis of her findings, Codere concludes that social separation and caste endogamy persisted in the early 1900s, as reflected in the extreme rarity of marriages of Tutsi men with Hutu women and the requirement of wealth and status for Hutu men wanting to marry Tutsi women. Moreover, she notes that most mixed marriages concerned Tutsi women of low social status or 'femmes libres'¹²². Considering the widespread mistrust among Hutu and Tutsi as a result of the ethnic conflicts, it is unlikely that mixed marriages are currently widespread. Indeed, I have found no evidence of post-genocide mixed marriages although informants did mention that inter-ethnic friendships were quite common. However, they also indicated that it was almost unimaginable that these friendships would lead to marriage.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. It is also one of the poorest, with a GNP per capita of 230 US\$. In the list of the UNDP Development Index, Rwanda ranks 158 out of 177 countries (Human Development Report 2006). As noted in Chapter 2, Rwanda's population can be divided into three 'ethnic' groups: Hutu (84 percent), Tutsi (15 percent), and Twa (1 percent). These three groups share the same language and largely share the same culture. The official languages are Kinyarwanda, French, and English, though Kiswahili is regularly used in commercial centres. The majority of the population is Roman Catholic (56.5 percent), followed by Protestant denominations (37.1 percent), Muslims (4.6 percent), and indigenous beliefs (0.1 percent). A small minority of the population has no religion (1.7 percent).

¹²² Codere (1973) uses the notion of 'femmes libres' to refer to concubines, roving girls, and prostitutes. These women strike up relationships with men in socially disapproved ways. Society in general did tolerate this behaviour, however, as these women lacked family protection after the death of parents or the absence of brothers. Today, having the reputation of being a 'femme libre' seriously undermines marriage chances. Young unmarried women avoid being perceived as promiscuous; religious zeal and being accompanied by a chaperone when interacting with young men are two commonly observed ways to secure a girl's reputation. As well as young unmarried women, widows and divorced women are also regularly accused of being 'femme libres'.

In July 2006, the population was estimated at 8,648,248, of which the large majority (93.4 percent) lives in the rural areas (CIA 2007). Population density is extremely high and has grown rapidly since independence, at a rate above 3 percent annually, from 106 persons per square kilometre in 1960, to 280 by 1992 (Uvin 1998) and 321 to 378 in 2002, depending on the physical or physiological density¹²³ (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Currently, the population growth rate is 2.4 percent (CIA 2007).

Looking at Table 5.2, it is clear that the population grew rapidly until the 1990s, after which the rate of growth slowed down. Overall, population growth has remained positive. It is not surprising to find that the pace of population growth decreased during the 1990s, for the country was already facing a huge internal conflict and many people (among whom a large group of Tutsi) had fled the country. However, it is striking that although nearly a million people were killed during the genocide, the net population after those events is considerably higher than before. The explanation lies in the large number of refugees returning to the country after 1994.

Table 5.2: General characteristics of the population between 1959 and 2020

	1959	1965	1978	1987	'90/91	2002	2005	2010	2020
Demographic characteristics:									
Population size (mil.)	2.5	3.2	4.8		7.2	8.1	8.7	9.9	12.9
Crude birth rate (per 1000)		51.8		54.0	44.4	41.2			
Crude death rate (per 1000)		21.1		17.0	29.7	15.4			
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 births)						2300	1400	600	200
Population growth (% per year)		3.1		3.7	-2.82	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.3
Life expectancy at birth (years)				49		51.2			55
Socio-economic characteristics:									
GNP per capita (\$)					270.0		231.4	336.5	875.1
Adult literacy (%)					50	59			
Households below poverty line (%)	*				47.5	60.3		40.0	30.0

Sources: Codere (1973), World Bank (1992), May (1995), United Nations (1999), Republic of Rwanda (2000), Government of Rwanda (2002), UNFPA (2002, 2005), Republic of Rwanda (2005)

* Poverty line is defined as less than 1 US\$.

¹²³ Physical density refers to the total number of inhabitants divided by the total surface area, while physiological density refers to the total number of inhabitants divided by the habitable portion of the same unit. In the rest of the text I will only refer to the physiological density.

While the overall population size has increased, the rate of population growth in the various provinces has been quite unequal. Some provinces, like Kigali-Ngali, Byumba, and Butare, have experienced declining population growth rates between 1991 and 2002, which is mainly the result of administrative reforms and not of the war or genocide. Kigali City has experienced an annual population growth rate of 9 percent over the same period. While this can be explained in part by administrative reform, coupled with a redefinition of city boundaries, it is also the result of the massive influx of migrants and refugees during and after 1994 (Republic of Rwanda 2005).

Umutara

The province of Umutara was created in 1995, covering the eastern part of the province of Byumba and the northern part of the province of Kibungo. It was dissolved in 2006, when it came under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Province. The provincial capital of Umutara was located in Nyagatare, in the far northeast near the Ugandan border. In 2001, further administrative reforms were introduced and eight districts were created in Umutara (see Figure 5.1): Gabiro, Kahi, Bugaragara, Kabare, Rukara, Murambi, and Muvumba. The city of Nyagatare, also known as 'Ville d'Umutara, formed a district as well.

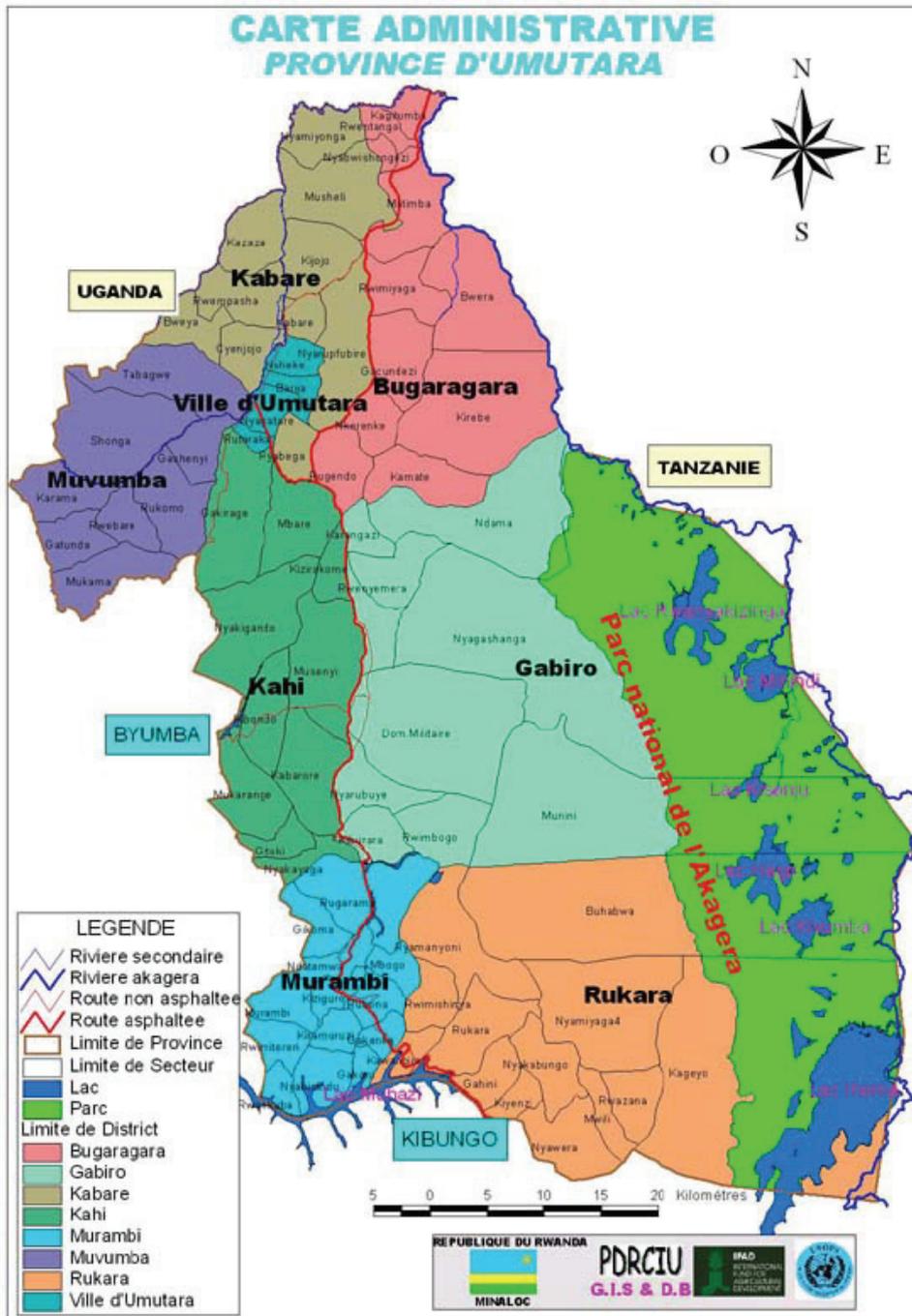
Migration to and from Umutara

As indicated in Chapter 2, migration processes have been a common characteristic of Rwandan society. According to the traditional cultural system, each son should inherit an equal portion of land from his father. With a limited land base and a rapidly increasing population, this soon led to decreasing landholdings. Moreover, land was unequally distributed, both among different social groups – access to land was controlled by the cattle-owners (Newbury 1988) – and regionally – most of the eastern savannah was reserved as pasture for Tutsi cattle.

The shortage of land, combined with the numerous and strenuous corvees and taxes imposed by Tutsi overlords and colonial administration, resulted in a process of out-migration. People began to leave the country, mostly for neighbouring Uganda, Tanganyika (Tanzania), and Kivu (Zaire). Employment was readily available in neighbouring countries, and the conditions were often better than in Rwanda (higher wages, less taxation, exemption from *umuganda*). This type of migration was mostly of a temporary nature and involved predominantly men, who looked for better livelihood opportunities across borders, leaving their families behind to continue cultivation and to maintain a direct link with the land (Richards 1954). Under colonial rule, the opportunities to migrate became more restricted and in the later half of the twentieth century employment opportunities also became less favourable. The result was an increase in internal migration. Olson (1994) argues that from 1945 onwards internal migration mostly took the form of relocation over short distances: from the densely populated highlands to

the nearby foothills (from Ruhengeri to Byumba and from Gikongoro to Gitarama and Butare). At this time, however, the far eastern regions were still off-limits and reserved as pasture.

Figure 5.1: Districts of Umutara province



Source: IFAD's UCRIDP-PDRCIU. Map available at: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/PF/rwanda/pdrclu/map/pages/carte%20administrative%20de%20la%20province%20d'umutara.htm> (accessed on April 9, 2008)

The independence of 1962 radically altered power relations. This eventually led to previously inaccessible tracts of land being opened for settlement by farmers, which resulted in large numbers of internal migrants. Short-distance migration was slowly replaced by long-distance migration. Population movements into the east and northeast gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. A large number of these migrants were settled in *paysannats*, primarily in Kigali-Ngali. Once these were filled, migrants started to settle in the surrounding areas. From the 1970s onward, migration into the far eastern regions became more common, culminating in considerable migration rates during the 1980s, despite the low agricultural potential of these regions (suggesting that people had little choice but to settle here). Over time, the borders of the Akagera Park, created in 1935, were adjusted, allowing more farmers to settle in what had previously been nature and forest reserves.

As late as 1974, the first agricultural development project was started in Umutara, and it foresaw the installation of 7000 families in *paysannats* (Uvin 1998). Farmers and pastoralists were given fixed quantities of land on the condition of engaging in certain agricultural practices. OVAPAM, a parastatal organisation, was created to manage the project. However, the project was a complete failure. No social infrastructure for the population was built, a water supply scheme was dropped when budgets were exceeded, and farmers and herders refused to adopt the proposed techniques. Moreover, rules on land distribution had been violated, because the project favoured people from the president's region in the northwest. Pastoralists from the region feared the project and the intentions behind it and left for Uganda. A second phase was proposed, and though the water supply system was finally built in 1986, most farmers and pastoralists kept refusing to adopt the technical extension package offered to them (Uvin 1998).

Hence, migration to the eastern parts of the country, including the province of Umutara, is a recent development. The high levels of population influx led to environmental pressure and declining soil fertility. In-migration was soon followed by out-migration, as people started to search elsewhere for better livelihood opportunities. Migration to neighbouring countries had been restricted, as the governments of Tanzania and Uganda, themselves increasingly faced with land shortages, were no longer willing to accommodate large numbers of Rwandan farmers or refugees on their territory. Migration towards Kigali and farther east along the Akagera Park boundary formed two of the best options. Rural-urban migration of mainly more highly educated young men gained importance from 1972 onward, but eventually slowed down due to the slow growth of the urban-based economy, followed by restrictive anti-migrant policies in the 1990s. Voluntary migration came to a halt after October 1990, when the war began and the RPF began to attack the country from its base in Uganda. Many people, especially those living in the north and northeastern regions, were displaced during this period and forced to live in camps north of Kigali. At the same time, the government encouraged those without a work permit to leave the city and return home (Olson 1994).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, short-term migration mostly took the form of men seeking agricultural labouring jobs in Bugesera (Kigali-Ngali), at large

commercial farms specialising in sorghum and beans. Others went to work in the far southeast of the country, working at commercial farms that specialised in bananas (Olson 1994). Other opportunities existed at the commercial tea and coffee plantations in Byumba and Cyangugu. These population movements during the 20th century resulted in the population today being evenly distributed across the country. Few areas are available for new rural resettlement, apart from some marshes, forests, and parks that have not yet been brought under cultivation.

Despite such large population movements, up to 80 percent of the Rwandese population has never migrated (Republic of Rwanda 2005). This seems to be a large proportion of the population, considering the enormous forced migration processes that took place around 1994. However, one should take into account that children (0-14 years) constitute almost half of the population, and they were born after the genocide. While Rwanda has seen many waves of forced migration, many people have not been able or willing to migrate in search of better livelihood opportunities. While the small size of landholdings might induce people to migrate, the shortage of land all over the country keeps many from doing so. Many people feel strongly bound to their land either because of the intensive agricultural practices and investments made or because their ancestors are buried there. Moreover, abandoning land usually results in it being occupied by someone else and difficult to reclaim.

Umutara stands out for having a large proportion of persons born outside the region. Of all immigrants born in Uganda, 66.7 percent now resides in Umutara¹²⁴, while 59.6 percent of migrants born in the province of Byumba¹²⁵ and a quarter of those born in the provinces of Ruhengeri and Kibungo have settled here (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Whereas Ugandan migrants have moved to Rwanda as a return to the 'home' country, internal migrants usually come from very populated areas or areas that were struck by prolonged droughts and famines. Most of the recent migrants have come to Umutara in search of land and as agricultural labourers seeking off-farm employment opportunities. Of those who recently migrated from Umutara to other provinces, 30.9 percent left for the province of Byumba, 26.2 percent for the province of Kibungo, and 23.8 percent for Kigali City. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to locate these people, so I am not able to say what motivated their move. Possible motives include marriage and employment opportunities in the private or public sector. It is less likely that people left the area in search of arable land, for population pressure is considered higher outside the province of Umutara, making it difficult for newcomers to obtain agricultural land.

¹²⁴ Of the districts included in the sample, the district of Gabiro, has a very large proportion of people who previously lived abroad: more than eight out of ten persons are recent migrants. The district of Kahi has a somewhat smaller proportion (64.8 percent), followed by the district of Murambi (33.4 percent) (République du Rwanda 2005b). Most of these migrants come from Uganda.

¹²⁵ However, as mentioned above, figures for Kibungo, Byumba, and Umutara are difficult to interpret due to recent administrative reforms

Climate and Topography

The climate of Umutara is tropical and is characterised by high temperatures, dryness, insufficient rain, and savannah vegetation. Historically, the province was susceptible to famines and food insecurity (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). The relief is monotonous and the average altitude is 1700 m (Republic of Rwanda 2005b). The area has a bimodal rainfall pattern with an annual average of 800-1000mm.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

In the period 1995-2000, the poverty incidence¹²⁶ in Umutara was 50.5 percent and was considerably lower than the national poverty incidence of 60.3 percent (see Table 5.3). By 2005, the poverty incidence had fallen to 45.5 percent as opposed to an incidence of 56.9 percent nationally. Nevertheless, the number of poor has increased from 3.7 percent in 2000 to 4.7 percent in 2005 (Republic of Rwanda 2006). The percentage of farmers with no or very limited land is lower than elsewhere in the country, making it a favourite destination for internal migration, despite the fact that the accessibility of potable water is more restricted in Umutara than in other parts of the country. Moreover, Umutara is characterised by poor infrastructure as well as by having the lowest rate of urbanisation in the country: only two percent, against 16.9 percent at the national level (République du Rwanda 2005b).

Table 5.3: Socio-economic characteristics of the population of Umutara and Rwanda, selected indicators (2000)

	Umutara	Rwanda
Without land (in %)	4.8	11.5
<0.2 hectares of land (in %)	8.5	28.9
Distance from potable water source (in m.)	871	703
Sick/injured in 2 weeks proceeding survey (in %)	27.5	25.5
Incidence of food poverty (in %)	62.2	67.8
Incidence of extreme poverty (in %)	32.8	41.6
Incidence of poverty (in %)	50.5	60.3
Gini coefficient	0.392	0.451

Sources: Government of Rwanda (2002), Banque Mondiale (2005)

¹²⁶ A poverty line of RWF 64,000 per adult per year was used in January 2001 prices, representing the level of expenditure (including purchases of food and the value of food consumed from own production) needed to obtain a basket of food commodities sufficient to provide 2500 kcal per adult and to meet basic non-food requirements. An extreme poverty line of RWF 45,000 per adult was also used, representing the level of expenditure needed to obtain the basic food basket (Republic of Rwanda 2006).

In 2002, Umutara counted 421,623 inhabitants or 5.2 percent of the total Rwandan population (Republic of Rwanda 2005). The population density ranged from 100 to 134 inhabitants per square kilometre, depending on the physical or physiological density. At first glance, Umutara seemed the most sparsely inhabited province in the country; the physical density at the national level being 378 people per square kilometre¹²⁷. However, given the population density in relation to arable land, Umutara was not as sparsely populated as the above figures seem to suggest, for large tracts of land were not inhabited and cultivation was prohibited (like the Akagera National Park). In 2002 the district of Murambi had a population density of 337 inhabitants per square kilometre, which was even above the national average.

Farming Systems

Population density is not equally distributed throughout the province, and this is reflected in land use patterns. The former northern districts (Kabare, Muvumba, Bugaragara, and parts of Kahi and Gabiro) are characterised by savannah-like vegetation. Here, herders predominate over farmers. The former southern districts (Murambi, Rukara, and the southern parts of Kahi and Gabiro) are much more suitable for agriculture and are more densely populated. Mixed farming, consisting of crop and livestock production, forms the main livelihood activity for most households, as is the case in other parts of the country.

The region's farming system is diversified, with topographical differences responsible for significant variations in geographic characteristics. Before 1994, the principle crops were coffee, bananas, cassava, beans, sorghum, corn, and sweet potatoes (Randolph and Sanders 1992), as well as peanuts and rice (Olson 1994b). The per capita production of bananas in Umutara (at 40.6 kg) was the highest after the province of Kibungo (at 102.1 kg) (Olson 1994b). In addition to agricultural activities, many households currently also hold livestock and small livestock, such as goats, chickens, and rabbits. Much of the farm labour is drawn from family members; one or both spouses as well as children are likely to work on the farm. In the district of Murambi, only 5 percent of the households depend on hired labour (Omosa 2002).

As previously indicated, Umutara has been a region of in-migration from an early period (1962-1976) (cf. Olson 1994b). Still, landholdings prior to 1994 were relatively large (2 ha.) and cropping intensities lower than in other parts of the country (Gillespie 1989). In the south, many marshes had been developed for dry season cultivation of primarily beans and sweet potatoes (Jones and Egli 1984), and they have been used intensively. In the north, marshlands were not developed on a large scale (Gillespie 1989), although recently marshes in Murambi and Muvumba have been made suitable for rice cultivation.

¹²⁷ In 1959, the average population density was only 241 per square mile. No more than one percent of the population lived in towns (Codere 1973).

Rwagitima

Climate and Topography

Rwagitima lies on the border between agricultural and pastoralist territories, at the junction of two agro-ecological zones, labelled the High Plateau and the Kagera Piedmont (Jones and Egli 1984). The area is characterised by xero-ferralsols on slopes and vertisols in valleys (Olson 1994b). The Kagera Piedmont, found mostly north of Rwagitima, has an altitude of below 1400 m and an annual rainfall ranging from 850 mm to 1000 mm. Pastoral activities are the dominant farming system activity in this semi-arid region, although there is some agriculture (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). The High Plateau, with an altitude between 1550 and 1800 metres, is somewhat less dry than the Kagera Piedmont, and receives 1000 mm to 1200 mm of rainfall annually. Crop cultivation is the main farming activity.

Rwagitima and the Nyiginya Kingdom

It is not entirely clear when Rwagitima was conquered and came to belong to the Nyiginya kingdom of central Rwanda. Buganza, a kingdom on the eastern shores of Lake Muhazi, located near Rwagitima, was conquered by the end of the eighteenth century. Subsequently, its earlier inhabitants (Hima herders) fled and were slowly replaced by newcomers from the central kingdom¹²⁸ (Vansina 2004). By the end of the eighteenth century, Ndorwa, a kingdom to the north-northeast of central Rwanda, was occupied but not conquered. After the death of the Nyiginya king Ndabarasa (somewhere between 1786 and 1796), his troops again evacuated Ndorwa. Only under the rule of king Rwogera (1845-1867) were further expeditions, often no more than large-scale cattle raids, undertaken in Ndorwa. At the time of Rwogera's death in 1867, though incorporated in the Rwandan kingdom, enclaves in Ndorwa still did not recognise Rwandan rule (Vansina 2004).

In 1860-1867, under the rule of king Rwogera, expeditions into Gisaka, in the far southeast, were also undertaken and the Gisaka kingdom subdued. In 1878-1879, under the rule of king Rwabugiri, the 'expedition of the waters' took place. This expedition was fought in or near Mutara, to the northeast of central Rwanda. However, heavy rainfall at the time made it difficult to cross the rivers, resulting in the defeat of the Rwandan army. In 1879-1880, the 'Bumpaka expeditions' took place, during which time the whole of Nkore, a kingdom to the north of central Rwanda, was raided (Vansina 2004).

The location of Rwagitima seems to correspond most closely to the position of Buganza. In fact, one key informant was confident that the northern border of Buganza was located in Kabarore, a small town located 10 kilometres north of Rwagitima. It seems likely therefore that Rwagitima was incorporated into the

¹²⁸ Buganza is considered the cradle of the kingdom. Seen in this light, the recent construction of a private farm on the shores of Lake Muhazi by the current president Paul Kagame seems a symbolic gesture.

central Nyiginya kingdom by the end of the eighteenth century, although it is conceivable that central Rwandan rule was not recognised until the late nineteenth century.

Population

Key respondents have indicated that the data collection site is a spontaneously formed settlement, part of neither any *paysannats* nor *imidigudu* program. Some of the older inhabitants who were born and raised in this settlement told me that it was already of considerable size early in the twentieth century. By the 1980s, under President Habyarimana, people were arriving from northern Ruhengeri, a province that was at that time characterised by considerable land shortages. A state revenue authority was located in the heart of the village. Although the agency was relocated years ago, the location is still referred to as 'Finance', and is known as such even as far away as Kigali. After the genocide, the buildings of the state revenue authority were used to distribute food to the many refugees that arrived in the region. Today, these buildings are private property, housing small shops, bars, a laboratory, and (since 2005) a small office belonging to a credit bank¹²⁹.

According to Gasana (2002), the research area accommodated a significant Tutsi population. However, this view is contested, as others have argued that in 1990 the district of Murambi was composed of 96.3 percent Hutu and only 3.4 percent Tutsi (Republique Rwandaise 1990). Key informants and respondents in this study indicated that most Tutsi left the area in the early years of the war. Of those that remained, most were killed during the genocide. The main road from Kigali runs right through Rwagitima to Kagitumba, at the border with Uganda. Killings were fiercer on one side of this road than on the other side. Gatete, mayor of the Murambi district (at that time including Kiburara A and Nyabubare, see Chapter 4, Figure 4.1), was reportedly extremely active during the genocide¹³⁰. Nyakayaga, the third cell included in the sample of this study, fell under the responsibility of a different mayor, who was able to maintain the peace for a relatively long period during the genocide¹³¹.

Today, the Rwagitima area is home to a large number of old caseload refugees from Uganda. Under the National Habitat Policy (1996), which was implemented at an early stage in Umutara and which was strongly adhered to by the local authorities (Human Rights Watch 2001), land has been redistributed

¹²⁹ The local department of the Ongera Credit Bank, which arrived at Rwagitima in 2005, was no longer in place by 2007. Apparently, the bank had been unable to pay people. Since then, however, new credit facilities have emerged.

¹³⁰ Personal communication with Annie Kairaba of the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development, August 31, 2003.

¹³¹ During the *gacaca* trials that were held in Rwagitima from 2005 onwards, 348 prisoners appeared before the court. Most of these prisoners used to live in Nyakayaga and were accused of looting rather than of murder or physical abuse (personal communication with one of the local *gacaca* judges, December 2007).

among refugees and the original population. However, land distribution was chaotic, resulting in large inequalities (cf. Republic of Rwanda 2003 and confirmed by several key informants). Moreover, “land belonging to influential people in the Rwandan government was not tampered with and some powerful individuals among the returnees got larger shares of land than others” (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 186).

A number of the younger respondents in this study mentioned how the elders had always promised them that Rwanda was such a wonderful place to live: full of honey and green pastures. The promise did not hold for everyone. Some of the younger respondents said that circumstances had been much better in Uganda, where many lived in good quality houses, with access to education and employment, and where others had been able to access large tracts of land to graze their cattle (cf. Mushemeza 2007). They mentioned that on their return ‘home’, large herds of cattle that they had brought back with them died as a result of cattle diseases. Moreover, few people possessed the knowledge required for cultivation. In fact, some of the respondents indicated that they were considering a return to Uganda, where others had already preceded them¹³².

Service Centres

Rwagitima now accommodates an important educational centre (primary and secondary school) and a large regional market. Several dispensaries and health centres are located in or near the village (two important health centres are located at Kabarore and Rukurama, both approximately 6 kilometres from the centre of the village). Hospitals (located in Kiziguro, Gahini and Nyagatare) are easily accessible by public transport, although transport is extremely expensive for the majority of inhabitants. The village is also situated near town of Kabarore¹³³, an important administrative centre, and lies on the main route linking Kigali and Uganda.

Several towns are of importance to the inhabitants of the village. Gabiro, to the north of Rwagitima, harbours an important and very large military training camp. In Kiziguro (to the south of Rwagitima) the first Catholic mission post of the region was founded in the late 1920s. Currently, a secondary school and hospital are located near the church buildings. Kiramuruzi (also to the south) is a dynamic town of considerable size. It harbours an important bi-weekly regional market, a large orphanage, and several schools. Gahini (also to the south) became an important centre after the foundation of a Protestant mission post in the 1930s and

¹³² As other authors have noted, the perception of the ‘homeland’ has the tendency to change during exile. Often there is no ‘home’ to return to, as the social landscape has changed during people’s absence and has become unfamiliar. The ‘homeland’ is often no more than an imagined and idealised place (cf. Newbury 2005). Malkki (1995) has written an excellent account of how the concept of the ‘homeland’ has the tendency to intensify through exile.

¹³³ Before the latest reforms (2006), Kabarore accommodated the district office of Gabiro. At present, Kabarore houses the district office of Gatsibo district.

is now known for its secondary school and large hospital. Finally, Kagitumba, which lies at the border with Uganda, is of importance to Rwagitima, as this is where most people cross the border to Uganda for business purposes.

Livelihood Opportunities

Agriculture forms the mainstay of economic activities in Rwagitima, with cultivation oriented primarily towards subsistence. Like elsewhere in Rwanda, agricultural techniques remain rudimentary (André and Platteau 1998). Several cash crops are grown, with the most important being beer bananas and rice. Most households are not able to meet food requirements through agricultural production alone, but depend on the weekly market to buy those items that are not, or insufficiently, produced at the farm. To be able to purchase food items and other household necessities such as soap, candles, and oil, households are compelled to look for alternative income-earning opportunities. The sale of alcoholic drinks (mostly beer made from bananas and sorghum) and goat kebab is a common activity. Some people are fortunate enough to possess a bicycle or moped, enabling them to be in the transport business. Others operate as porters, carrying goods on their heads or shoulders. Basketry, mat making, pottery, construction activities, masonry, and water and firewood collection form other commonly found income-earning opportunities. There are a few shops and bars in Rwagitima, most of them family-run. Other than that, most income-earning opportunities are restricted to off-farm agricultural activities, in particular, agricultural wage labour.

Before 1994, the research area was characterised by common pastures. With the influx of large numbers of mainly old caseload refugees, many of these have been appropriated and distributed by the local authorities to those in need of land and have thus been converted into agricultural land. For lack of grazing land, cattle has practically disappeared from Rwagitima, although large herds are kept just across the hills or some kilometres farther north, where land is less suitable for agricultural production. Few households keep cattle at the homestead, since fodder is hard to come by in the village itself. Small livestock is regularly found. Meat is not often consumed, but animal products such as eggs and hides form an important source of income for many households.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Sample

Migration and Arrival in Rwagitima

More than 75 percent of all people in the sample were born in Rwanda. This means that one-fourth of all people were born abroad, the majority (87.5 percent) having been born in Uganda¹³⁴. Those born in Uganda are mostly the offspring of old

¹³⁴ Another 11 percent were born in Tanzania, most of them in the Kagera region. This region was one of the places where new caseload refugees sought refuge. They were

caseload refugees who fled the country long before 1994, as was confirmed by key informants. Almost half of the population sample was born in or 'near' Rwagitima (including the provinces of Umutara, Byumba, and Kibungo)¹³⁵. Nearly half of these were born after 1994. The remaining proportion has arrived from other provinces in Rwanda, particularly from Kigali-Ngali. In Rwagitima, one can also find people who were born in Gitarama, Ruhengeri, Kigali, Butare, and Gikongoro, though most of these migrants arrived at a later date than the refugees who lived in Uganda.

Key informants indicated that the influx of people from Kigali-Ngali (more specifically from the Bugesera region) had increased considerably in the preceding few years. The first migrants from Kigali-Ngali (currently still living in Rwagitima) arrived in the late 1970s. This is somewhat later than one would expect on the basis of research done by Olson (1994a, 1994b, 1995), referred to in Chapter 2. Some arrived in Rwagitima in the early 1990s and others after the genocide. However, my survey data shows that the number of migrants from Kigali-Ngali has increased considerably since 2000¹³⁶, and was especially high in 2004, during a period when Kigali-Ngali suffered from prolonged periods of drought. Key informants also indicated that many people had recently come from Ruhengeri, though not all of these migrants stayed in Rwagitima. By 2007 many of the Bugesera migrants were said to have returned 'home'.

Rwagitima is therefore characterised by considerable in- and out-migration. The latter can be explained by the fact that a large proportion of the migrants are transitory. Those who returned from exile (old and new caseload refugees) might first have settled in Rwagitima or elsewhere but later have moved to other parts of the country. Such 'stopovers' are common among the research population. Diverse arguments have been presented by informants to explain such behaviour. For example, Kaytesi explained how she and her husband first returned to their former residence in Gahini, where they lived before fleeing to Uganda in 1959. After arriving back in Gahini, however, she found corpses still lying in the streets and fields, among whom were some of her relatives and old friends; she realised that the stress of having to live near people whom she suspected to have been involved in the killings was just too much to bear. They then decided to move to Rwagitima, where they were able to find an empty house and abandoned fields for cultivation. Other women have recounted how they, upon arrival in the country, joined surviving family members. Thus, Jacqueline explained that she initially joined

forced to return to Rwanda by late 1996 (Anacleti 1996). Only a handful of people were born in the DRC or Burundi. Whereas most returnees from Uganda arrived in Rwagitima as a family, those returning from Tanzania mostly arrived on their own.

¹³⁵ Unfortunately, I do not know how many of those born in Byumba and Kibungo (n=66 persons) were born in what has later become the province of Umutara. Since the three provinces adjoin, I have opted to include those born in Byumba and Kibungo in the population born in or near the province of Umutara. If they were left out, the proportion would drop to 37 percent.

¹³⁶ Like many other recent migrants, most of them have settled in cells on the outskirts of the village (pers. com. with Nyabubare cell leader), as land in the valley bottoms had already been taken for cultivation by earlier arrivals.

relatives in Kigali but that housing arrangements were very cramped. She therefore moved to a rural area, to live near her sister. Other informants related how they tried to live with family members on their return to Rwanda as well. In many of these stories one can find that disputes over land or housing conditions were common. Jacqueline, on learning that land was available in Rwagitima, decided to leave her sister and set up her own independent household.

Disputes over land were common after the war. On their return to Rwanda, many old caseload refugees found their property had been confiscated by former neighbours. Joy and her father arrived in Rwagitima at a time when the local authorities were distributing land among the returnees. Only by chance did they happen to receive back part of what used to be the property of Joy's father. New caseload refugees would also find their property occupied by old caseload refugees. Thus, one day Kaytesi and her husband realised that the former owner of their house and fields had returned. They were pressed to leave the property, and had to build a new house and divide the land between them. Women often found themselves in a disadvantaged position compared to men (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). Newbury and Baldwin (2000) describe some of the challenges that genocide widows faced in accessing land in a society that hands inheritance along the patriline. Still, not all women were at a disadvantage vis-à-vis men. Especially in the early 2000s, when the marsh near Rwagitima was made suitable for rice cultivation, many women profited from the land distributions as efforts were made to guarantee women's access to the new rice fields (cf. Chapter 8).

Ethnic Affiliation

In the survey, no questions were asked about the respondent's ethnicity. However, in order to gain a rough idea of the ethnic composition of the sample, I have attempted to group people on the basis of several characteristics, among which were place of birth, place of residence before, during, and after 1994, marital status, number of relatives currently residing in neighbouring countries, and number of children that died in 1994. Moreover, I assume that every member in the household shares the same ethnicity. For a discussion on the motives and methodological limitations of this approach, I refer to the discussion in Chapter 4.

The population in Rwagitima is ethnically heterogeneous. Roughly speaking, almost 60 percent of the sample population appear to be Tutsi. This seems to fit the picture as presented by several key informants. However, in some parts of the village Hutu predominate. For example, discussions with ADRA's project officer revealed that according to a report written by the German development organisation GTZ (which unfortunately I could not gain access to myself), Nyabubare, both before and after the genocide, is characterised by having a large Hutu population. This information was confirmed by the cell leader of Nyabubare. Indeed, my own data suggests that Nyabubare has a high proportion of Hutu. The proportion of Hutu in Nyabubare appears higher than in the other

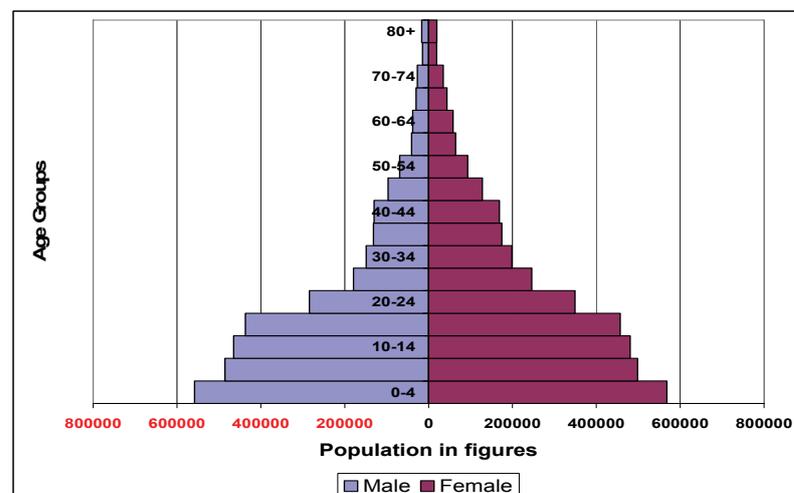
two localities, although the difference is not statistically significant. A few Twa also live in Rwagitima.

Distribution According to Sex and Age

Shortly after the genocide, it was estimated that in some parts of the country as much as 80 percent of the population was female (El-Bushra and Mukarubuga 1995). During the last decade, the sex ratio has slowly become less skewed, foremost as a result of new births. Thus, in the early 2000s, women formed about 53 percent of the total population (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001, Republic of Rwanda 2005), although processes affecting the demographic composition of the country have not been uniform across regions. The proportion of women in the province of Umutara is 51.7 percent. In the sample, the proportion of women is somewhat higher than that at the national or provincial level: 54.4 percent.

The eldest people in the sample are 83 years old. The median age in the sample is 15.00, the mean age is 20.57. This indicates that the sample is characterised by a relatively young population, as is the case elsewhere in Rwanda. The population can be divided into three broad categories: the economically active (aged 15 to 64), the young (aged 0 to 14), and the elderly (aged 65 and above). The latter two categories are, at least for the time being, considered to be economically inactive. Nationally, the potentially active (15 to 64 years) comprise the largest proportion of the population, constituting almost 52 percent of the total population. The economically inactive age categories (0-14 and 65+) constitute roughly 45 percent, while the proportion of elderly represents 3 percent of the total population (Republic of Rwanda 2005). These figures suggest that both fertility and adult mortality are high in Rwanda. Note as well that whereas women outnumber men in most age categories, this is not the case in the youngest age category, where the percentage of boys is higher than that of girls (see Figure 5.2 and Table 5.4).

Figure 5.2: Age pyramid of the rural population in Rwanda 2002



Source: Republic of Rwanda (2005)

The age structure in the province of Umutara resembles that of the country as a whole (Republic of Rwanda 2005b), as does the age structure in the sample (see Table 5.4). Moreover, differences between the three localities Kiburara A, Nyabubare, and Nyakayaga in terms of age and sex are not statistically significant.

Table 5.4: Proportions (%) of the population by age and by sex according to place of residence

	Rwanda (rural)			Umutara			Sample		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14	47.9	42.9	45.2	47.2	44.2	45.6	49.1	45.7	47.3
15-64	49.4	53.8	51.7	50.1	53.0	51.5	47.7	50.9	49.4
65+	2.8	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.7	3.2	3.4	3.3

Source: Republic of Rwanda (2005), République du Rwanda (2005b) and Household survey 2005

Several key informants stated that Nyabubare is characterised by a large proportion of elderly people, arguing that many of the elderly came to settle in the research area much later than other age groups. As a consequence, they found most houses and agricultural land near the road already occupied (i.e. in Kiburara A and Nyakayaga), forcing them to settle farther away (in Nyabubare). However, my survey data shows that the proportion of elderly people in Nyabubare does not differ significantly from that in the other two localities.

As previously indicated, there are more women than men in Rwanda. The overall sex ratio (the percentage of men to women) for Rwanda as a whole is 91.3, against 87.5 for the rural areas only (see Table 5.5), and is observed in every age group (Republic of Rwanda 2005). The overall sex ratio for the province of Umutara is 93.3 (Republic of Rwanda 2005b), against 93.0 for the rural areas (Republic of Rwanda 2005)¹³⁷. Differentiated within the province of Umutara, Gabiro is the only district where men outnumber women (sex ratio of 109.6) (Republic of Rwanda 2005b). It is possible that other districts have witnessed a more substantial male death rate during the years of war and genocide. This is not unlikely, since the district of Gabiro was largely uninhabited before 1994, as it belonged to the National Park of Akagera. Another possible explanation is the presence of military barracks in Gabiro. The soldiers in these barracks, mostly male, account for nearly 4 percent of the total population of Gabiro district. Of all

¹³⁷ The duration of the genocide was much shorter in the province of Umutara than in other provinces. The province formed the entry point for the RPF and as such came under their control very early. As a result, one would expect the number of male deaths to be much lower than in other parts of the country and the sex ratio of the province of Umutara thus less skewed than that of other provinces. This is, however, not the case. Moreover, the early advance of the RPF does not explain why the sex ratio in Rwagitima is more skewed than in other parts of the province.

the districts in Umutara, Murambi has the most skewed sex ratio, with only 85.4 men to 100 women (Republic of Rwanda 2005b). This finding substantiates the assumption that the war and genocide are indeed a decisive factor in the sex ratio, as key informants reported that Murambi, although for a relatively short period, was substantially affected by the genocide.

Table 5.5: Sex ratio in (rural) Rwanda, Umutara, and Rwagitima

	Sex ratio		Sex ratio
Rwanda	91.3		
Rural Rwanda	87.5		
Umutara	93.3	Sample	83.7
Gabirol	109.6	Kiburara A	78.1
Murambi	85.4	Nyabubare	94.4
Kahi	93.3	Nyakayaga	75.2

Source: Republic of Rwanda (2005), République du Rwanda (2005b), Household survey (2005)

The sex ratio in Rwagitima (83.7) is lower than the sex ratio for the province of Umutara, signalling a considerable surplus of women. When data for Rwagitima are studied in detail, I find that the sex ratio of Nyabubare (which used to belong to the district of Murambi) is not nearly as skewed as in the other localities. It is even less skewed than the sex ratio at the national level, especially when we look at the national sex ratio for the rural areas only¹³⁸. The sex ratio for Kiburara A (which used to belong to the district of Gabirol) and Nyakayaga (which used to belong to the district of Kahi) are extremely skewed, with 78.1 and 75.2 men to 100 women, respectively. A number of explanations can be proposed. For example, there may be more female-headed households in the latter two cells than in Nyabubare. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether this is the result of the differential impact of the war and genocide. Another possibility could be that households in Kiburara A and Nyakayaga have more female dependents, either in absolute or in relative numbers. It is possible that more men out-migrate in search of jobs or higher education in these two cells.

The sex ratio differs considerably among different age groups. Generally speaking, I have found more men than women in the youngest age category, while women outnumber men in the two other age categories. Men outnumber women in the youngest age category in every locality but Nyakayaga, while the opposite is true for the age category of 15 to 64 years. In this age group, women outnumber

¹³⁸ In this case, it makes more sense to take the sex ratio for the rural areas, rather than the overall sex ratio for the country, since the national figure is to a large extent distorted by the sex ratio of the city of Kigali (117.5); a number that is influenced by the high number of men seeking employment in the city.

men in every locality except Nyakayaga. Since it is unlikely that women in Nyakayaga statistically give birth to more girls than boys, a different explanation is called for. It could be that more males survive than females. Possibly, more boys in Nyakayaga attend boarding schools or have been sent to live with relatives. I found no indication of boys being favoured over girls, such as better nutrition or provision of health care. That we find proportionally more women in the higher age categories is not surprising, since the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men (CIA 2007), and men were explicitly targeted during the genocide. In the age category of 65 and above, the sex ratios become more extreme: high numbers of men in Kiburara A and very few in Nyabubare. However, the number of elderly people is very small (n=25), making it difficult to draw any statistically valid conclusions.

Marriage

The majority of the sample population (68.6 percent) is single and unmarried, which is not surprising considering the large proportion of young people in Rwagitima. When taking into account the marital status of people of 15 and above, 40.6 percent of the population (47.2 percent men and 35.4 percent women) is still single, indicating that women engage in relationships at an earlier age than men.

Of those aged 15 years or older, 43.9 percent are married or living in a consensual relationship. Of these, only one-third are legally married. According to the 2002 census, the young are proportionally over-represented in informal marriages (République du Rwanda 2005b), though I have found no evidence for this in my own data. It shows that the vast majority of consensual relationships are monogamous, although polygamous relationships can be found in the research area as well. Monogamy has been the only legally recognised form of marriage since 1962, although polygamous marriages entered into before that time remain legal. Religious and traditional marriages entered into before 1978, even when not officially registered, remain legal as well (Brown and Uvuza 2006).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, large numbers of common-law unions were been formally registered, since young men lacked the financial means to pay bridewealth and other costs associated with the formal registration of marriages (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). The lack of legal recognition weakened women's protection and access to landed property in the event of divorce or the death of a spouse. In response to the new matrimonial code implemented in 1999, a new policy was introduced, inducing couples to formally register their relationship. One of the incentives was to lower registration costs by legally marrying a number of people on the same day (République du Rwanda 2005b). During fieldwork, I learned of one such occasion at the district office in Kabarore. Josephine and her husband were among those who attended the ceremony in order to legalise their marriage. However, I have not heard of any other people in Rwagitima doing this, which raises doubts about the success of the policy.

It is assumed that women's claims to land can be strengthened by offering couples a choice of property regimes when formally registering their relations.

However, Brown and Uvuza (2006) note that it is unclear whether the different marital property regimes are explained to couples, and thus whether the policy is effective. Other evidence suggests that the policy may not have the desired effect. In this respect it is interesting to refer to Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003: 192), who found that several returnees in Kahi district said that “going to the commune and ‘swearing on the national flag’ did not have any relevance to marriage”. The authors mention that in Uganda, where the vast majority of their respondents come from, both common-law and traditional marriages are officially recognised. They argue that the formal registration of marriages, as promoted in Rwanda, is not considered to offer any advantages and that more effort needs to be made to explain its importance to women.

It has also been noted that women are concerned that the pressure to marry legally will “negatively impact older women in relationships with men who have multiple partners” (Brown and Uvuza 2006: 12). This concern makes sense when one reflects that polygamous relationships entered into after 1962 are not considered legal, implying that all additional wives remain in informal marriage arrangements that are not legally recognised. In the case of a divorce or the death of a spouse, the legal position of additional wives is very weak:

“The only legal recourse in this instance is for the children of additional wives to secure legal recognition of their paternity. The new inheritance law has complicated this issue, because the legal wife must also agree to the paternity of those children. Even if these ‘illegitimate children’ of polygamous marriages manage to secure legal paternity ties with their fathers, their claims to his property in inheritance disputes are much more limited than the children of legally recognised marriages.”

(Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003: 193)

According to informants for this study, polygamy occurs mainly in the northern provinces of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Byumba. Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003) also argue that the northwest is known for its acceptance of polygamy¹³⁹, although they do acknowledge that polygamous relations can also be found in other parts of the country. My own data indicate that polygamy is common in Rwagitima, constituting just under one-tenth of all relationships¹⁴⁰. However, polygamy is becoming less common all over the country and has been declining rapidly under the influence of Christianity. Whereas in the late 1970s more than 12 percent of the men aged 12 years and above were in polygamous unions, this proportion dropped to 6 percent in the early

¹³⁹ These authors argue that there is a relationship between the intensive cultivation of the fertile soils in the northwest and the occurrence of polygamy.

¹⁴⁰ Elsewhere it has been found that in the province of Umutara, the district of Muvumba and Kahi have the highest proportion of women living in polygamous marriages (République du Rwanda 2005b).

1990s¹⁴¹, and to 4.5 percent in 2002 (Republic of Rwanda 2005). However, it is well possible that the number of women involved in polygamous relations has increased after the genocide, given the considerable surplus of women of marriageable age after 1994. Indeed, Newbury and Baldwin (2000) find that, as a result of the war and genocide, young women are now in competition with each other for a limited number of marriageable men. By the end of 2007, Hope (see Chapter 4), who initially opposed polygamous unions, was seriously considering entering into one, as she feared becoming an 'old maid'.

Unfortunately, little data is available on this issue, but it warrants further study for a number of reasons. As shown above, polygamous relations have an impact on women's legal position, which is especially important with regard to access to landed property after divorce or the death of a spouse. Moreover, the competition for marriageable men, especially in a society where patriarchal norms are strong, may result in reinforcing the subordination of women in other respects. My data show that young females in Rwagitima have already noted the need for strict adherence to good behaviour and have expressed their fear of being labelled a 'femme libre', which would undermine their marriage prospects.

In pre-colonial Rwanda, conjugal relations were frequently dissolved, either by divorce or by the death of a spouse (Codere 1973, André and Platteau 1998). Divorces still occur, although the influence of Christianity has rendered them less acceptable. My data shows that nearly 3 percent of men and women older than 15 years are divorced (excluding those who have remarried). Barrenness is held to be a culturally acceptable ground for divorce, since to die without children is considered intolerable. If they produce only daughters, women can also be divorced by their husbands. Alternatively, a man may take a concubine. Traditionally, upon being divorced a woman would return to her parents' house, where she would be given cattle or a piece of land to cultivate (*ingaligali*). Respondents indicated that, at present, women only return to their parents if they have no other option (see Box 5.1). Those who are able to purchase or rent land and secure access to housing prefer to remain on their own. Others try to remarry, though the marriage is often with a much older man who has divorced or become a widower himself.

Box 5.1: Espérance's plight

Espérance has been married to Bosco for many years. They have raised a family and, while certainly not rich, they have had enough to eat. The family owned a large banana plantation and Bosco had also been able to find land uphill, where he grew additional food crops.

When Bosco learned that one of his friends had been denied bank credit for lack of collateral, he decided to help him by becoming his guarantor. What Bosco did not foresee was that his friend would abscond with the money, leaving him in debt to the bank. When

¹⁴¹ Note that Clay and van der Haar (1993) find that 18 percent of marriages were polygamous just prior to the events of 1994.

the bank came to collect, Bosco did not have the immediate cash to repay them. The police were then called in, and Bosco's land on the hill was confiscated when authorities discovered that he had been cultivating there illegally. His banana grove was confiscated as well, but it was too small to repay the bank debt. When it became clear that Bosco could not find the necessary money, he was put into prison.

Espérance and her children were left alone in the house. When she learned that the conditions in Bosco's prison were exceedingly poor and that he even lacked sufficient food, she made a long and expensive journey to the prison every week in order to bring her husband whatever she could manage to find. However, with no land at her disposal, she had no means of earning an income. Espérance therefore considered returning to her parents.

6

Diversity of Households and Dynamics of Household Composition

In this chapter, I will discuss the different types of households found in the research area. An analytical distinction is made between male- and female-headed households, the latter further subdivided into widow- and divorcée-headed households. It is argued that the relationship between types of households and headship is complex and cannot be assumed a priori. Moreover, within each category of household there is considerable diversity. After a discussion of the different types of households found in the research area, the focus is shifted towards household composition, which is analysed in terms of household size and dependency ratios. It is argued that household composition not only sheds light on the viability of household livelihood strategies but it should also be considered a strategy in its own right. I will start this chapter, however, by discussing the importance of the nuclear family vis-à-vis the extended family.

Nuclear Families

As indicated in Chapter 2, the lineage and clan formed important indigenous customary institutions during the pre-colonial period. Social status within these institutions was determined by age and gender. Only older, married men whose parents were deceased were really independent. Women's social status was complex and variable. Women could not hold claims over land but had the right to own cattle. The status of female farmers and women married to herders largely depended on their fathers, husbands, and children. Patrilineal inheritance rules, in which landed property is passed from father to son, reinforced virilocal rules of residence. Thus, women upon their marriage would normally move to the house of their husband and his parents or grandparents. The couple would stay here until the birth of a son. After this, married women could set up their own households in which they exercised considerable decision-making power over household matters and over other household members, including their own spouses (Vansina 2004).

It is no longer common practice in the research area for the young couple to reside with the parents of the husband. Young couples normally leave their

respective parental households at marriage (whether this is a registered or unregistered relationship, or monogamous or polygamous in nature) and form their own independent households. While virilocal rules of residence are still preferred, the reality is that population growth has forced many young couples to migrate to other regions in search of land or alternative employment opportunities (Clay and Vander Haar 1993). Nevertheless, Clay and Vander Haar find that before 1994, 67 percent of children who were living away from the parental household still resided in the same commune as their parents, or in a neighbouring commune. While I have not collected data on the distance between the households of children and their parents, it is not unlikely that many young couples now find themselves geographically cut off from family members: for example, as a result of displacement and large population movements. Moreover, some of my informants have indicated that several of their family members have remained behind in the host country, while others have returned to Rwanda. The war and genocide have also resulted in people losing access to land and housing. For example, new caseload refugees often found their property had been taken by old caseload refugees.

Apart from apparent changes in the rules of residence, households in Rwanda have undergone other changes. Thus, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, the importance of the lineage and clan has diminished as the result of a complex set of historical processes. Increasingly, the nuclear family (consisting of father and mother, their unmarried children, and possibly grandparents) gained prominence (cf. Donovan *et al.* 2003a). The declining importance of the lineage and clan implies that social relations between members of the same family also have altered radically:

“The essence of nuclear families is not their small size. This is an incidental and variable feature. What matters is the structuring of the relationships in which the various members are embedded. In nuclear family households, relationships between parents, and between parents and their immature children, are invested with paramount importance. Duty is in the first instance to other members of this nuclear family”.

(Russell 1993: 774)

Since the late 1970s, the average household size in Rwanda has changed little and the nuclear family has remained the primary social institution after the war and genocide. Not surprisingly then, small-sized (one or two persons) and medium-sized households (three to six persons) form the largest proportion of households in Rwanda (constituting 19.6 percent and 62.4 percent, respectively). Households with more than ten members are very few (less than 3 percent) (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Most households consist of two to three prime-age adults and two to four children (Donovan *et al.* 2003b).

Diversity of Households in the Research Area

The survey sample for this study included a total of 136 households. The majority of these are male-headed, which account for 68.4 percent of households (n=93)¹⁴². Female-headed households thus constitute 31.6 percent of those in the sample (n=43). Female-headed households in the research area are of two types: those headed by widows and those headed by divorced or separated women. I have found no evidence of households headed by young, single women. In the sample, widow-headed households (n=29) are most common, accounting for 21.3 percent of all households, followed by divorcee-headed households (n=14), accounting for 10.3 percent.

The proportion of female-headed households in the sample is slightly higher than that of female-headed households in Umutara, at 30.8 percent (République du Rwanda 2005b). However, large differences are found in Umutara. Thus, the district of Murambi, known for the many killings during the genocide, has a considerably higher percentage of female-headed households (41.2 percent of all households in the district of Murambi are female-headed). The districts of Gabiro and Kahi, on the other hand, have a lower proportion of female-headed households: 25.9 and 27.5 percent, respectively (République du Rwanda 2005b). As the reader may recall, these two districts were largely uninhabited before the events of 1994, and it is highly possible that female-headed households in these two districts are the result of normal household life courses rather than the effect of the war and genocide.

Male-headed households form the majority of households in all three cells (see Table 6.1). Whereas Kiburara A proportionally has more female-headed households than the other two locations, the difference between the three locations is not statistically significant. Also, when differentiating widow-headed from divorcee-headed households, no statistical significant difference is found between locations.

Table 6.1: *Type of household by location*

	Male-headed (n=93)		Female-headed (n=43)		Total (n=136)	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Kiburara A	26	59.1	18	40.1	44	100.0
Nyabubare	41	71.9	16	28.1	57	100.0
Nyakayaga	26	74.3	9	25.7	35	100.0

Source: Household survey 2005
(Mann-Whitney Test)

¹⁴² As explained in Chapter 4, this includes four *de facto* female-headed households, constituting 2.9 percent of the sample.

Parental households consist of a man with his spouse, together with their children and possibly other related or unrelated household members. Most households in Umutara are parental households. Single-parent households (irrespective of the marital status of the single parent) are much rarer, although their proportion has increased as a direct result of the war and genocide. This is largely the effect of an increase in female-headed households (Republic of Rwanda 2005). As in Umutara, the large majority of households in the sample consist of husband and wife (61.2 percent). Single-parent households (either male or female) form the second largest category (32.8 percent), followed by households of adults without children (6.0 percent).

In the sample, persons residing in the household but not belonging to the nuclear family unit constitute 15.7 percent. Grandchildren form the largest category. Among residing grandchildren, I found more girls than boys. Among orphans unrelated to the head of household (or to his or her spouse) boys are more numerous¹⁴³. Apparently, girls are more likely than boys to be living with relatives other than their parents. Alternatively, boys are either less likely to live with other relatives or are more likely to leave the household altogether (for example, in search of employment or by setting up their own households, before or after marriage). Respondents in this study indicated that boys are more likely than girls to live apart from their own relatives, as they are more difficult to discipline than girls. Girls are considered more docile and caring than boys, and are therefore more likely to remain at home until marriage. Boys are considered wilder than girls, more interested in mischief, more easily bored. Respondents were of the opinion that boys are therefore more likely to leave their homes in search of work, and are more likely to leave their new place of residence if they find new challenges or face too much hardship. Moreover, there is widespread fear that girls are more susceptible to sexual harassment, although the extended family is generally considered relatively safe. It is probable that worries over girls' safety influence their movement to other households.

I have also found evidence of households that include the mother of the respondent (or his or her spouse). I did not find any evidence of fathers having moved in with one of their children. One of the reasons elderly women are more likely to live with their married children is because they generally live longer than men and are thus more likely to reach a stage in life in which they depend on other people's assistance for survival. Another reason may be that customary land rights dictate that land passes from father to son(s). Elderly women may thus find their access to land curtailed after the death of their husbands, since landed property is likely to have already been passed on to sons, necessitating residence with one of the children.

¹⁴³ Here, the difference between grandchild and orphan is that a grandchild (who may be an orphan) is living with his relatives, while the orphan is residing with non-relatives.

Male-Headed Households

The sample included 93 male-headed households, including four households that are actually *de facto* female-headed and one male child-headed household. In Chapter 4, I have already introduced two male-headed households: namely, that of Sam and of Donald. Below are other examples of male-headed households in the research area:

- Verena (50) and John (55) are married. Together they have six children, two daughters and four sons, who are between 15 and 27 years of age. Verena's stepdaughter (13) also lives at the house, as does Verena's niece (15). With the exception of two children, all go to school. Verena's eldest son works in the private sector; her eldest daughter works for the local government. While he does come home every day, John, a district official, spends most of his time at the district office in a nearby town. Verena works on the family's two plots of land, and the family is able to sell surplus food and cash crops, like rice, maize, and sorghum. Occasionally they sell milk, meat, and eggs from their livestock and small stock. Verena also brews sorghum beer, which she sells from a room adjoining her house. Her children occasionally send home money and gifts (Hh#88, parental male-headed household).
- Beatrice (20) has recently started living with Nestore (21). Though they are not officially married, their respective families approve of the relationship. As yet, the couple have no children, and no other relatives or unrelated people live at their house. Together they work on a plot of land given to Nestore by his father in 1998. Nestore's brother, however, is claiming part of that land, although his claims have not yet been successful. Beatrice and Nestore produce little surplus, but are occasionally able to sell a few beans, tomatoes, and sorghum at the local market. They used to have a pig with two piglets, but they gave these to a friend to look after, since they had insufficient land to house the pigs (Hh#24, male-headed household, formed by a young couple without children).
- Antoinette (48) lives together with Sibomana (54). They are not officially married but their respective families approve of the relationship. They live in a house together with two daughters (5 and 14) and Antoinette's niece (11). Antoinette has a stepson (18)¹⁴⁴, but she is not aware of his whereabouts. Her eldest son (24) has finished higher education and now works in Kigali as a government employee. Another son (17) and a daughter (22) live in Kigali where they attend secondary school. A young girl (5), no relative of Antoinette, is also considered a household member, even though the girl is currently not residing at Antoinette's house but attending

¹⁴⁴ The fact that Antoinette mentions this stepson implies that she or her husband had been married before entering into this relationship, or that her husband is or was involved in an extra-marital relationship.

kindergarten in Murambi. Antoinette's husband works in Kigali as a driver and spends most of his time away from home. Despite his absence, Antoinette considers him the head of her household. The family owns three plots of land, which Antoinette cultivates. She sells cash crops (such as maize, potato, and sorghum) and surplus food crops (such as cooking bananas) at the local market. Her husband owns a few cattle, but the family does not sell any milk or meat. Some three times a year, Antoinette receives money from her husband, which she uses for the education of her children (Hh#79, parental male-headed household, possibly remarriage).

Each of the above households is considered male-headed, but they differ considerably. Most male-headed households are formed by couples, others by single parents. I have also found evidence of households consisting of unmarried men or men who are no longer married. Some households consist of only one person, others of several related or unrelated persons. Some include children or grandchildren, others do not. While most household members are relatives of one another, some households also include non-relatives. Some households receive remittances, either from people who are considered household members (unmarried children, spouse) or from relatives living elsewhere (cousins, but also married children, brothers and sisters, and other relatives).

Household members constitute part of a household's asset base. They are part of its human capital, among which household size and individual characteristics of household members (e.g. their health, educational level, and employment status) form important aspects. Together, they determine the quantity and quality of labour available to a household. Household composition therefore is an important consideration in determining possible household livelihood portfolios. The number of adults and children in a household directly relates to the labour pool potential of households. Higher numbers of economically active people in a household are likely to have a positive impact on household income, since more people are available for cultivation or other income-earning opportunities. Household members may also decide on a division of labour that is assumed to lead to more effective and efficient outcomes. Moreover, care for young children or other dependents, including the elderly and ill household members, can be divided among adults. The presence of children in a household, like the presence of any other household member, can be considered an asset as well as a liability, although children are rarely considered a liability. In the research area, a man with children is considered to be rich. Children can assist with domestic chores and work in the fields. They are also expected to look after parents in their old-age. But children also need to be looked after, fed and clothed, and sent to school. This implies that initial investments have to be made in children: investments that may prove to result in higher livelihood security in the future.

Among male-headed households in the research area, there are two types of households where the head (with or without spouse) lives without biological children: one group is formed by couples (n=10) without children, the other by men living without a spouse (n=2). As for the first group (households formed by a couple who reside without children), four households consist of couples older than

65 years. These four couples all have surviving children who are living elsewhere. All four couples look after one or more grandchildren. Only one of these four couples also looks after non-relative household members. In this particular case, the elderly couple looks after a grandchild (15 years) as well as an unrelated boy (18 years). The boy assists the couple with work in the fields. Nevertheless, he is not considered a resident worker, but rather a member of the family. Most of the grandchildren are still of school age, but they are expected to assist their grandparents with domestic chores. If they do not already do so, they are expected to assist with farm work in the future, or to contribute to the household of their caretakers in other ways (for example, by sending remittances). Similar considerations can be made for another household that belongs to a middle-aged couple (40 and 50 years old) whose only child died. The couple now looks after a young nephew, who is considered a permanent resident and member of the family. Like other children, he is expected to contribute to the wellbeing of his caretakers at some point in his life.

Another five households consist of couples younger than 30 years. None of the women have so far been pregnant and no other related or unrelated dependents reside in these households. These couples have in fact just recently set up their own households and are therefore at the beginning of a household life course. While possibly spending money on non-household members (for example, by sending remittances to their own parents), these households do not have to spend time or other resources on children or other dependents. This allows the newlywed couples to invest in things such as housing, equipment, and land.

Apart from couples, there are a few other male-headed households without children or other young dependents. One of these belongs to a male orphan of marriageable age, who decided that, rather than living with relatives, he would set up his own household. The other belongs to a middle-aged man, separated from his wife. Where the first seemed very able to provide for himself, the latter faced more difficulties despite the fact that he is the father of several children. Since separating from his wife, he had not seen or heard from his children and did not even know whether they were still alive. This man owned no land and had few possessions, unlike the orphan, who had been able to secure access to land and was known as a hard-working and god-fearing man, which earned him considerable respect and goodwill in the community.

While young children need to be looked after (thus reducing the time available for other, more productive or income-earning activities), they also increase a household's future labour pool. In those cases where one of the spouses is absent or missing, the remaining parent has to juggle between income-earning activities, domestic chores, and childcare, which may present difficulties during a child's early youth. Child-headed households face similar problems, but also have to deal with additional difficulties. Children often lack the skills and knowledge of older generations, and they are more likely to have restricted access to important assets, such as land and credit. In part, this is the result of their weak legal position, making it difficult for them, for instance, to defend successfully against property grabbing by relatives or neighbours.

Female-Headed Households

Bruce (1989) discerns four trends that are likely to increase the number of women who are the primary or sole maintainers of households: continuing differentials in spousal age at marriage, marital disruption, national and international migration, and unpartnered adolescent fertility. In addition, HIV/AIDS forms a fifth, and more recent trend (cf. Karuhanga 2008). In Rwanda, women heading households are likely to have attained such status either as a result of the death of the spouse, of divorce or separation, of imprisonment or exile of the spouse, or of temporary migration of the spouse.

The sample for this study included 43 female-headed households. Of these, 29 are headed by widows and 14 are headed by divorced or separated women. In Chapter 4, I have already introduced a couple of female-headed households. Below are other examples:

- Consolata is a widow (62). She lives together with her son (18) and three granddaughters (3, 5 and 7 years old). Next door, one of her older sons lives together with his family. Consolata also has a daughter who is rumoured to be suffering from HIV/AIDS. While the daughter stays with her mother regularly, Consolata has not included her as a member of her household, possibly because her daughter still attends boarding school. In 1997, Consolata inherited one plot of land from her parents, which she cultivates herself. She is able to sell some surplus, including beans, cassava, rice, and cooking bananas. She also has goats and rabbits, the offspring of which she occasionally sells. In addition, Consolata works as the local midwife, which earns her extra income (both in cash and kind) (Hh#38, single-parent, widow-headed household).
- Jane (26) is a divorced woman, living together with her son (3) and daughter (1). She has recently begun to rent a small plot of land from one of her neighbours and is awaiting her first harvest. At the local market she buys cassava and sweet potatoes to feed herself and her children. To do so, she works as an agricultural labourer (Hh#2, single-parent, divorcee-headed household).
- Claudine is a 62-year-old widow who lives by herself. Of the seven children she has given birth to, only two are still alive. Her other children died during infancy or early childhood, long before the events of 1994. Claudine inherited one plot of land from her parents, which she cultivates herself. She produces only food crops and is not able to sell any surplus. She owns no animals and receives no remittances, although occasionally her daughter assists her on the land or looks after her when she is ill. In order to supplement her income and buy household items she is not able to produce herself, she makes handicrafts that she tries to sell at her house or at the local market (Hh#1, widow-headed household without children).

Like male-headed households, the composition of female-headed households in the research area is diverse. There are several female-headed households (n=6) in the research area, where the women live without their biological children. Five belong to women older than 62 and one to a middle-aged woman of 46. One of these women is separated, all others are widows. Half of these women look after one or more grandchildren, but none of them have unrelated dependents living in their household. The one thing that all of these women have in common is that while they have given birth to children who are still alive, their own children are no longer residing with them; this is most probably because they have married and started their own households. While the elderly, and especially elderly single women, often face a dire situation, children, even if not living in the same place of residence, provide support for single elderly mothers. I will come back to this in Chapter 7.

A Closer Look at Female-Headed Households

Female-headed households, of whatever composition, are often equated with poor households. Chant (2004), referring to Moghadam's (1997) review of the 'feminisation of poverty', identifies three main reasons that appear to make female-headed households poorer than male-headed households:

"These are first, women's disadvantage in respect of poverty-inducing entitlements and capabilities; second, their heavier work burdens and lower earnings and third, constraints on socio-economic mobility due to cultural, legal and labour market burdens".

(Chant 2004: 20)

However, as Chant makes clear, it is a misconception to assume that women's individual disadvantages translate directly into household poverty. Moreover, the risk of poverty is not automatically overcome by women living in male-headed households. The equation of female-headed households with poverty can be a grave misconception (cf. Moser 1998, Mula 1999, Mtshali 2002), and "given the widespread economic inequalities between women and men, it is perhaps more important to ask how substantial numbers of female heads succeed in *evading* the status of "poorest of the poor" (Chant 2004: 21, italics in original).

A household's poverty status is likely to be the result of factors other than the mere absence of a male core adult. In fact, the question of whether female-headed households are disadvantaged in comparison to other types of households should form a hypothesis and not an assumption (Meinzen-Dick *et al.* 1997, van Vuuren 2003). There may be large differences among female-headed households: for example, between *de jure* and *de facto* female-headed households, between households headed by widows or divorced women, or, for that matter, any other type of household. Moreover, even if female-headed households are poorer than those headed by men, this tells us nothing about the causes of their poverty. An additional problem is that poverty can be measured in different ways (cf. Fukuda-

Parr 1999). For example, a focus on income may lead to different conclusions about poverty than will a focus on human poverty (Fukuda-Parr 1999). Human poverty refers to the denial of choices and opportunities most basic to human life – a denial of a person’s human capabilities – and is thus distinct from income poverty. A focus on human poverty may be especially important when analysing intra- and inter-household differences, as income poverty is an insufficient measure of the presupposed ‘feminisation of poverty’. For example, it is important to realize that:

“Exclusion from participation in decision-making is not dependent on income levels. Participation in decision-making is related to freedom and to the respect of others in the community. Unequal opportunity in schooling for girls and boys restricts choices not only in employment but also for a creative life.”

(Fukuda-Parr 1999: 101)

Poverty is multi-causal and multidimensional, and this may well explain why some female heads are more vulnerable to poverty than others¹⁴⁵. In fact, female household headship may be experienced as positive and empowering, having freed the women from dependence and male domination. Hence, “even if women are poorer in income terms as heads of their own household, they may feel they are better off and, importantly, less vulnerable” (Chant 2003: 25).

As mentioned before, after the genocide, in some parts of the country, as much as 80 percent of the population was female (El-Bushra and Mukarubuga 1995). It is therefore likely the proportion of female-headed households has increased as a result of the genocide. Between 1978 and 1991, the proportion of female-headed households in Rwanda was relatively constant (Republic of Rwanda 2005). In 1984, 22 percent of households were headed by women (Minagri 1985, cited in Donovan *et al.* 2003a); by 1991 this figure had increased slightly to 25 percent (Republic of Rwanda 2005). After the genocide, women headed 34 to 36 percent of all households (Donovan *et al.* 2003a, République du Rwanda 2005a). The majority of these, 60 percent according to Newbury and Baldwin (2000), are widow-headed households (Republic of Rwanda 2000). Moreover, Newbury and Baldwin argue that the post-genocide figure of 34 percent is likely to be an underestimation, “because of the reluctance on the part of those surveyed to claim that status” (Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 6). For example, wives of male prisoners may feel reluctant to admit belonging to the category of female-headed households, because of the stigma involved in being the wife of a suspected *génocidair*. As previously mentioned, Jefremovas (1991) speaks about a widow who characterised her household as merely *de facto* female-headed, designating her deceased husband as head of household. Newbury and Baldwin also stress that the 34 percent figure is based on those of 1996, and “the 1996 figure does not include

¹⁴⁵ It is important to realise that poverty cannot be equated to vulnerability. It is equally important to realise that whereas poverty and female headship cannot be equated, “social relations of gender predict greater vulnerability among women” (Moghadam 1997: 41, cited in Chant 2004: 25).

the large numbers of refugees who returned in November and December 1996" (Newbury and Baldwin 2000: 6). Indeed, Berlage *et al.* (2003) find that the percentage of female-headed households in Gitarama and Gikongoro reached 43 percent in 2002.

The highest proportion of female-headed households is found in the former provinces of Butare (42.1 percent) and Gitarama (38.8 percent). This is not surprising, since the war and genocide are known to have been particularly intense in these provinces. The lowest proportion of female-headed households is found in the former provinces of Byumba (29.9 percent) and Umutara (30.8 percent) (République du Rwanda 2005a). A possible explanation for this low proportion of female-headed households is that both border with Uganda (and also with Tanzania, in the case of the province of Umutara), implying that more people were able to escape the events of 1994. Also, some parts of Umutara were only sparsely inhabited before 1994 and many old caseload refugees and their offspring settled in the area after the genocide, together with their families.

It is striking to note that female-headed households in other African countries also constitute more than 30 percent of all households (Bruce 1989, Adepoju and Mbugua 1997, Oppong 1997, van Vuuren 2003). In some communities, the validated figure is even as high as 50 percent (Bruce 1989). A FAO report shows that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, 31 percent of all rural households in Africa were female-headed, ranging from 10 percent in Niger to 46 percent in Botswana and 72 percent in Lesotho (FAO n.d.). According to the 1991 census in Namibia, 42.9 percent of all rural households were female-headed, mostly due to male out-migration (FAO 1997). None of the aforementioned countries had faced large-scale violent conflicts in the years prior to these publications. Nevertheless, the proportion of female-headed households in Rwanda is not substantially higher than that found elsewhere in the region, which is surprising. As will become clear, it is not merely the proportion of female-headed households in relation to male-headed households that is important to consider. One should also examine the question of how female-headed households were formed to begin with, for the cause of formation could differ across and within regions. It is also possible that the composition of female-headed households across regions differs substantially, or that their vulnerability significantly varies. Moreover, little is known about the distribution of widow or divorcee-headed households. It is likely that in Rwanda, as a result of the genocide, the proportion of widow-headed households is higher compared to other types of female-headed households in other countries.

I examined the different proportions of male and female-headed households in the research area after 1994, across ethnic groups. One would assume the proportion of female-headed households to be considerably higher among Tutsi than among Hutu. Table 6.2 corroborates this assumption. The differences are statistically significant.

Table 6.2: *Type of household by assumed ethnicity*

	Male-headed		Female-headed		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Hutu	34	77.3	10	22.7	44	100.0
Tutsi	35	57.4	26	42.6**	61	100.0
Total	69	65.7	36	34.3	105	100.0

Source: household survey 2005

** significant at 5% level (Pearson Chi-square test)

Note: Thirty-one households have been excluded from this analysis, as their ethnic background could not be determined (see Chapter 4).

Widow-Headed Households

Thirty-nine widows and two widowers were included in the sample. The mean age of these people is 51. The youngest is only 23 years old (widow) and the eldest is 79 (also a widow). The widowers are 33 and 74 years old, respectively. While the two widowers are both heads of their households, not all the widows are. Four widows (mean age 33 years) live in their parents' households, while five widows (mean age 74) live in the household of one of their adult children. Except for these nine women, all other widows head their own households.

More women than men are widowed. This could be the direct result of the war and genocide, since men were targeted more than women. However, the proportion of widowed men is likely to be underrepresented, as men are likely to remarry. Women find it difficult to remarry once they are older than 40 (nearing menopause), and almost impossible once they are older than 50 and beyond childbearing age (République du Rwanda 2005a). In addition, the occurrence of polygamy presents a problem. If the husband in a polygamous union dies, the woman is registered as a widow (in fact, more than one widow is left behind), while if the woman dies, the husband is not automatically registered as a widower.

As indicated, four widows live in the houses of their parents. These four women are still relatively young. This implies that young widowed women have difficulty maintaining a secure livelihood after the death of their spouses. Indeed, the widows who are currently living with their parents have no land, neither owned nor rented. While stories of property grabbing by widows' relatives are common in Rwanda, I have found no evidence that this is what has in fact happened to these four particular women. However, in-depth interviews with widows did highlight the fact that widows generally lack labour to cultivate their fields and that income earned is too little to maintain the household. Widows also complained that they have too little time for the care of children and that the absence of a father is feared to have a negative impact on the children.

As for the five elderly widows, each of whom lived in the household of one of their children, three have no land. While these women may have encountered the same kind of problems as mentioned above, for them the reason for having no land could be that they have already passed on some or all of their landed property to their children. The three elderly, landless widows could have transferred to their children whatever claim they had to land, possibly in return for old-age care. The two other elderly widows do possess land. Each lives in the household of a daughter, one daughter also being a widow, the other being separated.

A common strategy of widows (as well as of separated or divorced women) is to form households with other widowed or separated relatives. Thus, of 43 households with female heads who were no longer married, ten are formed by one or more widowed or separated relatives (Hh# 50, 53, 72, 84, 97, 112, 117, 118, 120, 122). Of these, seven are headed by widowed women, the other three by separated women. In four households, widows look after their elderly and widowed mothers. These arrangements might be seen as old-age security arrangements. In five households, one or more daughters or sons (who themselves have become widowed or divorced) have moved back into the household of their widowed mothers. It is likely that these younger relatives have found it increasingly difficult to maintain their and their children's livelihoods, necessitating a return to the parental house. In one household, a separated woman looks after a sister who is also separated, as well as her widowed mother. In another household, a separated woman has taken in her somewhat younger separated brother.

This last arrangement seems surprising, considering the culturally common types of household. Unfortunately, I have limited information on this household. I know that the widow has one more sister who lives nearby. She herself had been living in Kigali before coming to the research area in 2003. Her brother moved to her household in the same year, but he had been living in Ruhengeri and not Kigali. Their parents had by then passed away and the siblings had no other paternal relatives. One can only hypothesise that the brother probably did not have access to land in Ruhengeri (as land pressure is very high there), but why and how brother and sister were able to obtain housing in the research area remains unclear, as does the reason that the sister is considered head of the household. A possible explanation is the fact that the sister has children, unlike her brother.

Widows are often considered among the poorest and most vulnerable. Schindler and Brück (2007) present a list of reasons that may explain the poverty and vulnerability status of women and in particular of widows. Thus, they mention the limited capital endowments of widows and the difficulties they face in accessing their husband's capital endowments: for example, as a result of inheritance practices. Widows also face constraints in earning a livelihood, as cultural taboos may inhibit them from performing particular productive tasks, such as land preparation. Widows may also lack knowledge about production technologies and may have difficulty accessing output markets, especially when these are traditionally male-dominated. Moreover, widows tend to be socially marginalised and considered a symbol of disorder. This has the result that they are excluded from different types of networks: ones that are important for accessing all types of productive assets and resources.

Likewise, in Rwanda there is a strong tendency to consider widows, and especially Tutsi widows, as the poorest and most vulnerable group in the country. Special organisations (such as AVEGA) and programmes (like the distribution of goats among widows, organised by the district authorities) exist to assist this group of women and their children. Also, after 1994, with the introduction of *imidugudu*, entire villages were created to house genocide widows. While security eventually turned out to be a problem, it was originally thought that grouping these women would make supporting them much easier (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999). In the research area, many people complain that programmes targeting widows reach only, or mostly, Tutsi women. As I have shown, there are indeed more Tutsi widows living in the research area than Hutu widows, which may give the impression that Tutsi widows are favoured over other groups. However, I have found no hard evidence proving that Hutu widows are being discriminated against in the research area. A programme such as the distribution of goats is based on women's marital status and not on their ethnic background. Also, the international NGO active in the research area (ADRA) – which attempts to increase access of female-headed households to the project's rice fields – did not target any particular ethnic group. If such programmes reach more Tutsi than Hutu, it is most probably due to the simple fact that there are more Tutsi than Hutu widows in the research area.

As Tutsi men were especially targeted during the genocide, a commonly held assumption is that the proportion of widow-headed households among Tutsi is higher than among Hutu (Verwimp 2003¹⁴⁶). The proportion of widow-headed households among Hutu is generally assumed to be lower than among Tutsi, even though moderate Hutu were also targeted during the genocide and during the acts of revenge that took place after the RPF took control. Moreover, the effects of the insurgency (1996-1999) might also be felt by the Hutu population and may be reflected in household composition and household life courses. But is the proportion of widow-headed households indeed larger among Tutsi than among Hutu? In the sample, not only in absolute numbers but also proportionally, the number of female-headed households among Tutsi is larger than among Hutu (n=16 and n=7, respectively). However, the proportion of widow-headed compared to divorcee-headed households (see Table 6.3) does not differ significantly between these groups¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁶ Verwimp (2003) talks about female-headed households in general and not about widow-headed households in particular, but the argument can easily be extended.

¹⁴⁷ Also, rather than looking at households headed by widows or divorcees, I have looked at a possible statistical significant relationship between ethnic background and widows/widowers or divorcees as such (irrespective of whether they head a household, n=62). No such significance has been found. I have also found no statistically significant difference across locations.

Table 6.3: *Type of female-headed household by assumed ethnicity*

	Widow-headed		Divorcee-headed		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Hutu	7	70.0	3	30.0	10	100.0
Tutsi	16	61.5	10	38.5	26	100.0
Total	23	63.9	13	36.1	36	100.0

Source: Household survey 2005

(Pearson Chi-square test)

Note: Seven households have been excluded from this analysis as their ethnic backgrounds could not be determined (see Chapter 4).

The fact that no statistically significant difference has been found among Hutu and Tutsi in relation to widow-headed households seems to indicate that in the research area Hutu and Tutsi have run similar risks of becoming widowed. This seems surprising, considering that Tutsi were especially targeted during the genocide. However, one needs to remember that most of the research area has only recently become densely populated and that the majority of people born before 1994 were born outside the research area. Only after 1994 did large numbers of old caseload refugees return, as did the children of these refugees. These children are likely to have had normal household life courses themselves. The fact that the sex ratio in the province of Umutara, with its high level of returnees among the population, is least skewed of all provinces in the country seems to substantiate this assumption.

It is also important to realise that it is likely that more than a decade after the events of 1994 a considerable number of widows and widowers have remarried¹⁴⁸. It can safely be assumed that among the group of Tutsi currently found in Umutara, the number of genocide-related widows is much lower than among the group of Tutsi who were not able to leave Rwanda before the onset of the genocide. Widowhood in the research area therefore is likely to be the result of other factors, such as death among men because of old age, illnesses, or accidents. The fact that the mean age of both Hutu and Tutsi women is nearly the same (51.22 and 51.54 years, respectively) seems to substantiate this assumption.

Divorcee-Headed Households

In the sample, there are 21 divorced/separated persons, of whom five are male. The youngest is 18; the eldest is 72 (the range for men is 27 to 43 years). The mean age of divorced/separated people is 38, making it considerably lower than the mean age of widows and widowers. In total, 16 households are headed by divorced or

¹⁴⁸ However, as said above, while remarriage is not uncommon among men, it is less likely to occur among women (own observation).

separated men or women, of which 14 households can be considered female-headed. The households of two of the separated men are included as male-headed. Two other separated men live with their elderly mothers (of whom one is separated and the other widowed), and one separated man lives with his separated sister (see above). While the proportion of divorced heads of households is higher among Tutsi than among Hutu (see Table 6.3), the difference is not statistically significant.

In the literature on Rwanda, scant attention is paid to separated or divorced women. There is a general lack of information on households headed by separated or divorced women in Rwanda, before or after 1994. Traditionally, de Smedt (1998) argues, divorces were easy and accepted for both sexes. Citing Gravel (1968: 131-2), de Smedt argues that the infertility of one of the partners or incompatibility of character could be a reason for divorce. Moreover, apparently it was not uncommon for both men and women to go through several marriages in their lifetime. Codere (1973) also refers to the commonality of divorce in pre-colonial times, as well as to the commonality of remarriage, serial monogamy, polygyny, and extra-marital affairs¹⁴⁹. The attitude towards divorce or separation seems to have changed over time. Under the influence of the colonial regime and the Catholic Church, divorce became less common (de Smedt 1998).

While remaining childless after a few years of marriage is still considered a legitimate ground for divorce, the status of divorced women seems to have changed. A divorced woman is now called '*umuvanzu*' (a woman who has left the house) and many divorcees are considered 'loose women' or prostitutes. While women striking up relationships with men in any number of socially disapproved ways was tolerated by society in earlier days (Codere 1973), sex role restrictions have recently become stricter. Sex restrictions were formerly limited to unmarried youngsters, which resulted in early marriages. Today norms and attitudes towards sex have become more Victorian; respectable men and women need to be 'protected against temptation and loose morals'. To be called a loose woman nowadays is not only an insult but many 'loose women' (including unmarried mothers) also face problems of poverty, insecurity, and lack of acceptance. For many of them, prostitution is in fact the only way to survive.

Generally speaking, divorce is impossible to obtain for legally married women. Once divorced, children normally remain under the custody of the husband, unless they are very small. Moreover, most women are financially dependent upon their male partners (Straten *et al.* 1998). Considering these circumstances, women find it more difficult to leave their male partner than the other way around, also when they are abused. In addition, divorced or separated women may find it more difficult than men to find another partner. Divorced or

¹⁴⁹ An old man in the research area once told me that the stick with which he walked around used to have multiple functions. It could serve to keep cattle at a safe distance, but it could also be used when visiting a married woman. In those cases, the stick would be put upright in the soil in front her door so that if her husband were to come back before the visitor had left, the husband was aware of the nature of the visit and could take a walk before entering his house after the stick had been removed.

separated women face an enormous stigma, as they are, unlike widows, considered trouble-makers and women of easy virtue (see Box 6.1).

Box 6.1: Divorce

Mimi was divorced by her first husband when she failed to become pregnant by him. Several years later, Mimi remarried: her new husband is an old man with grown-up children. Everyone knew this was not a love-marriage but a marriage of convenience. Mimi was tired of being labelled a loose woman and longed to have a child. Her husband needed someone to look after him in his old age. With her new husband, Mimi soon fell pregnant. The problem was that Mimi's stepchildren did not like her and regularly scolded and abused her. When her husband fell ill, they even began to accuse Mimi of witchcraft. At this point, Mimi decided to leave her husband, as she was afraid they would accuse her of murder once her much older husband had died. Instead of returning to her parents, as she had done after her first separation, Mimi moved to a nearby locality. She rents land there, and with the income she is able to sustain herself and her young baby.

The example of Mimi shows that even when a divorced woman is able to remarry, it does not automatically improve her position in the community. While she had less fear of being labelled a loose woman, her stepchildren made her life difficult. It is well possible that they disliked Mimi because she was legally able to make claims on their father's capital endowments, thus weakening their own claims. In this respect it is interesting to see that once Mimi was pregnant (thus strengthening her and her child's claims to her husband's capital endowments), her stepchildren also began to accuse her of witchcraft. These accusations make Mimi's life unbearable and lead her to decide to leave her husband, which weakens the claim to her husband's property. As far as I know, since leaving her husband, Mimi has not been accused of witchcraft. It is also telling that Mimi did not return to her parents after her second divorce. It appears that her pregnancy has given her a status that she lacked after her first divorce, making it easier for her to live on her own. This status does not only refer to the possible stigma that divorced women face. Several respondents in this study have commented that divorced women with children have an easier life than widowed women, as the husband usually continues to care for his children, thus providing the divorced woman with financial resource that a widow lacks.

Before 1994, marriages between Hutu and Tutsi existed, albeit mostly in the form of Hutu men marrying Tutsi women (see for example Codere 1973). One might assume that the genocide led to an increase in divorces among mixed marriages (as a result of the breakdown in trust among married partners, but also as a result of community pressure). However, it is also possible that the occurrence of ruptured relationships is somehow related to pre-genocide mixed marriages. Whereas Tutsi men were explicitly targeted during the genocide, and were thus likely to leave behind a Hutu widow, Hutu men, as well as (albeit to a much lesser extent) Tutsi women had a higher chance of survival. Is it possible that these mixed relationships, where both partners survived the genocide, dissolved after 1994? It

does seem possible, but unfortunately I have insufficient data to test this hypothesis.

Single Unmarried Women

Female-headed households might of course also consist of single unmarried women. However, in the research area I have found no such households. Single unmarried women do not appear to set up their own households, as they are expected to remain with their family until marriage, and it appears that they behave according to this norm.

Household Size

Respondents were asked to identify all household members. While none of the respondents included married children who were living elsewhere, household members did include persons not living in the same residence or even the same area as the respondents. Thus, several spouses and unmarried children working and living elsewhere were considered household members, as were many children living in boarding schools or even orphanages. While absent spouses are often still actively involved in major household decisions, such as the purchase or sale of land or marriage arrangements of children, absent children do not play such an active role in household decision-making processes. Moreover, they rarely provide labour or money to the household. Nevertheless, their household membership is considered very real. This is understandable, since children are not only connected to their parents through symbolic and emotional bonds but major household decisions also have to take into account the future of children. For example, the purchase of land or improvements in housing may not be attainable because school fees for children have to be paid.

Depending on whether to include absent household members, the average household size of the sample is between 4.8 and 5.6 people per household. The smallest household in the sample consists of only one person, the largest has sixteen persons: both are headed by widows. As elsewhere in Rwanda (see Chapter 5), households of three to six members are common (forming 57.3 percent of all households). Small-size households form 11 percent of the sample population. In the sample, the proportion of households made up of seven to nine members (26.5 percent), and large households of ten people or more (5.1 percent), is much higher than at the national level. The difference may reflect divergent definitions of household rather than a real difference in average household size, as will be discussed below.

The average household size in Rwanda (see Chapter 5) is 4.5 persons (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Earlier, Clay and Vander Haar (1993) found an average household size of 5.5 persons. It is difficult to assess whether differences in household size have indeed changed over time, since the difference in household size is likely to be caused by a difference in the criteria household membership. While fertility patterns suggest that household size may indeed have declined

recently (see Chapter 7), the effects of events in the 1990s (among which an increase in the number of orphans, of whom many have been adopted by relatives or unrelated persons) may have offset any effects that decreased fertility may have had.

Female-headed households are generally smaller than those headed by males (see Table 6.4), although the difference is not statistically significant. This is to be expected, since the majority of male-headed households consist of parental households, which include both spouses, while the male spouse is absent in female-headed households. As for differences among female-headed households, one can see that divorcee-headed households are generally smaller than those headed by widows, although again the difference is not statistically significant¹⁵⁰. As indicated in Chapter 5, smaller household sizes could indicate that households have fewer dependents to look after but also that their potential labour pool is more limited. Below, I will address the issue of whether widow- or divorcee-headed households indeed face labour pool shortages.

Table 6.4: *Household size (emic) by type of household*

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Mean	5.67	5.30	5.55	5.52	4.86
(s.d.)	(2.37)	(2.71)	(2.48)	(2.87)	(2.38)

Source: Household survey 2005

(Mann-Whitney Test)

Note: s.d. denotes the standard deviation

Although the number of single male-headed and child-headed households in the sample is very low, qualitative evidence seems to suggest that these types of households are generally quite small. Not surprisingly, parental households (head of household with spouse, children, with or without related or unrelated members) are larger than any other type (average self-reported household size of 6.2), closely followed by female single-parent (6.0) and male single-parent households (5.0). The smallest households are those formed by newlyweds without children and male- and female-headed households where no children of the head of household reside (either because they have set up their own households or because they have died; average household size respectively 1.8 and 1.5).

It needs to be noted, however, that the concept of average household size, albeit often used, is highly problematic. First of all, the definition of what constitutes a household is not always made explicit. As we have seen in Chapter 3,

¹⁵⁰ The difference between divorcee-headed and male-headed households is also not significant, nor is the difference between widow-headed and male-headed households.

a universal definition of 'the household' does not exist, making comparison between different research outcomes extremely difficult. Thus, the Rwandan census of 2002 takes the household as being made up "of a single individual or by a group of related or unrelated persons who share the same living premises and resources including expenditure, take their meals together and recognize the authority of one individual called <<head of household>>" (Republic of Rwanda 2005). This is an etic definition. Emic and etic criteria of household membership lead to different household sizes.

Using this etic definition, the mean household size in the sample is only 4.8, which comes much closer to the general household size in Rwanda (at 4.5) than does the self-reported household size in the research area (5.6). However, two categories of people are excluded from the first figure: firstly, household members who are absent for a prolonged period of time (e.g. due to schooling or temporary migration) but who nevertheless play an important role in important household livelihood decisions and secondly, household members absent for only a short time (e.g. due to short family visits). It is debatable whether to include one or both groups of absentees. For this study, I have opted to use the emic definition and adhere to the self-reported household size. This implies that even absent household members should be considered members.

Mean household size is often based on a conceptualisation of the household in terms of the cooking unit or the hearth (Goody 1990). However, different hearths may exist within a household. Problems also exist in polygamous relationships and those living arrangements where members of the unit eat from different pots on different occasions. Moreover, both concepts are likely to be embedded in wider groupings, such as the farming group or extended family, which means that activities undertaken within the unit are likely to extend beyond the boundaries of that unit. Take, for example, the 'household' or 'hearth' of the next family: a separated mother, her two daughters (one of whom is separated and one widowed) and their five children (Hh# 50). This family owns two houses and, as far as sleeping arrangements are concerned, members of this particular family unit rotate between houses. On occasion, the adult women sleep separately from the children. Sometimes the oldest woman sleeps in the same house as her grandchildren, while at other times one of the women sleeps with one or more of the children. Such arrangements make it very difficult to decide on household size. Does this family belong to one household, as the women all agree on? Or do we in fact see several independent but embedded households? Looking at cooking units rather than the household does not really provide us with a clear answer either. This family often cooks and enjoys its meals together, but again other arrangements are reported on a regular but highly erratic basis. This shows that the measure of 'average household size', whether based on the notion of the household or hearth, cannot take such dynamics into account. Worse, it obscures household dynamics and presents us with a static image that does not always do justice to reality.

Whereas average household size provides a first indication of the number of dependents in a household, it is simply too static a measure to capture the dynamics taking place within this unit. While underexposing extra-boundary links

to other units, it also tells us nothing about the stability of the household composition. In order to capture such dynamics, other indicators are needed (see below). It is necessary to look further into this matter, as more in-depth qualitative research suggests that the composition of households in the research area is highly flexible and fluid (see Box 6.2). People are constantly on the move, in search of better living circumstances, education, and so on.

Box 6.2: Household-size dynamics

When I first met Jacqueline in 2003, she was living with her two eldest daughters, her eldest son, and a young male orphan from Kigali-Ngali¹⁵¹. Jacqueline's own mother, whom everyone still considered to be part of the household, had left the year before. This woman had intended to pay a visit to her other daughter, Jacqueline's sister, who lived near the main road close to Rwamagana (Kigali-Ngali), but had since refused to return 'home'. Over a period of nearly nine months, Jacqueline's eldest daughter (Hope) was able to find employment elsewhere, during which time she moved out of her mother's house. After some time, three younger children returned home for several months from the orphanage at which they normally reside, due to the holidays. Despite the prolonged absence of her daughters, Jacqueline confided that she still considers all of them to be her household members.

At one point and totally unexpected, the male orphan disappeared; he had apparently decided to move back to his natal village. During my stay in Rwanda from August 2003 to March 2004, Jacqueline opened her doors to a woman with a baby. The woman was an immigrant from Kigali-Ngali, looking for work in Umutara after the drought and bad harvests in her home village in 2002. When I first met this woman, her husband was still in Kigali-Ngali, but later on he also decided to come to Rwagitma. Before moving in with Jacqueline, this woman had lived at the house belonging to Joy, one of Jacqueline's female friends and fellow churchgoers. It has never become clear to me why the woman could no longer stay at Joy's place, but one day I suddenly found she had moved in with Jacqueline. The two women shared their meals, slept under the same roof, looked after each other's children, and worked together in Jacqueline's fields. However, when questioned, Jacqueline told me that she did not consider this woman to be one of her household members. This was the situation when I left the family in March 2004.

When I returned to the research area in October 2005, the woman with the child had left and had formed her own household, just a few metres from Jacqueline's house. The two women did seem to have remained very close; she was the only adult woman I ever saw walk into Jacqueline's house at any time of the day without knocking first, and who could linger in the kitchen and sometimes even help out with the preparation of food. After the woman with the child had left, Jacqueline took in another male orphan, this time from Kibungo. The boy, previously unknown to the family, had been looking for work in the village, and as Jacqueline could use someone to help her in her rice fields and around

¹⁵¹ While not related to Jacqueline, the young orphan was well known to her relatives living in Kigali-Ngali.

the house (fetching water) she decided to take the boy in¹⁵². Jacqueline made it clear to me on more than one occasion that the boy was not her houseboy but should be considered one of her children and one of her household members.

During my absence, her youngest 'visiting' children had returned to the orphanage, but when I returned to the research area in October 2005, these children had all been back at her house again for some time. Meanwhile, Hope, who had returned home after losing her job, had once more left her mother's house after having found a job in a nearby town. However, she was mistreated and exploited by her boss, and after three months she returned again to her mother. Jacqueline's mother was still living near Rwamagana.

I was told that Jacqueline's second daughter had left the house several months before my return. She had eloped with a man she had met during her long walks to school in a nearby village. It had always puzzled me that this girl went to school in that particular village, as the school was located much farther away than the school in Rwagitima. The family didn't understand either, but could not convince the girl to do otherwise. In fact, the family was glad the girl went to school at all, and did not dare protest too much out of fear that she would drop out altogether. Looking back, the family realised that all along the girl might have had her eyes on the man with whom she eventually eloped. During my absence, the daughter had set up an independent household in a nearby locality and after some time had given birth to a baby boy. However, the relationship with her husband was problematic. Her husband often took off for long periods of time, leaving her with no money to feed herself and the baby. The girl had thought of opening a small shop in order to earn money herself, but her husband did not allow her to work, as he considered it the man's responsibility to look after his family. When the girl learned that her husband had disappeared again and planned to stay for a long time (if not permanently) in Uganda, she decided to return to her mother's house with her baby. Here she stayed for several months, until her family-in-law finally reconciled her with her husband. She then returned to her own house and started a small shop, but regularly returned to her mother for several days or even weeks at a time, telling her about the hardships she was still facing in her marriage. Everyone expected this daughter to return permanently to Jacqueline in the near future.

The above example demonstrates the dynamics of household composition. At the minimum, Jacqueline's household was composed of only two people (Jacqueline herself and her eldest son); at the maximum it consisted of more than ten people. The exact household composition changed not only according to the season (like her youngest children returning from the orphanage during the summer months) but also because of passers-by seeking shelter and Jacqueline's need for assistance in her fields. The example also highlights the instability of marital relationships.

¹⁵² It is tempting to think that the acceptance of this boy is directly related to the moving out of the woman with the baby, as Jacqueline is likely to have missed her assistance in and around the house. However, Jacqueline has always denied that this was the reason for allowing the orphan to stay with her; instead, she stresses her love of God as an explanation.

Dependency

While household *size* can be used as an indicator of the size of a household's potential labour pool, household *composition* can tell us more about the quality of that labour pool by assessing dependency ratios. The demographic dependency ratio is equal to the number of individuals aged below 15 or above 64 divided by the number of individuals aged 15 to 64, and is expressed as a percentage (see Chapter 5). As Table 6.5 shows, the demographic dependency ratio in the sample is 1.3, implying that every 100 persons of economically active age are theoretically expected to look after 130 dependents, of whom children by far form the largest group.

Table 6.5: Mean demographic dependency ratio (s.d.)

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=40)	Total (n=133)	Widow-headed (n=27)	Divorcee-headed (n=13)
Mean (s.d.)	1.26 (0.86)	1.33 (1.27)	1.28 (1.06)	0.99 (0.95)	2.03* (2.03)

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Note: Three households have been excluded from the analysis. These households (two widow-headed and one divorcee-headed) consisted of elderly people (aged 65 or more) who lived without economically productive household members. This would make the demographic dependency ratio ∞ .

Differences between male- and female-headed households are not statistically significant. However, when disaggregating the figures for female-headed households, I find that the mean dependency ratio of divorcee-headed households is considerably larger than that of widow-headed households, although the difference appears only marginally significant.

Of course, thus calculated, true dependency is somewhat distorted, because in reality not all elderly people and children can be considered dependents. A good example is that of child-headed households where children, after the death of their parents, become heads of households at a very young age, taking responsibility for even younger siblings without the assistance of older relatives. Moreover, not all adults should be considered productive agents (de Waal and Whiteside 2003). In reality, adults may be dependent on other household members: for example, as a result of chronic illnesses, handicaps, or mental disorders. Evidence of such cases was found in the research area. Also, there are elderly people living alone or looking after young grandchildren. It is generally assumed that this last category of households has in fact increased over recent years as a result of HIV/AIDS. Such elderly people, mostly women, can hardly be considered 'dependents', for they are

the prime or sole person responsible for livelihood activities and household decision-making. In fact, the sample included 22 households with members of 65 years or older. Half of these households consist of the elderly looking after younger dependents. The other half consist of married elderly couples and the elderly who are being looked after by one of their children.

In order to capture the effects of inclusion of sick adults in the denominator of the dependency ratio, de Waal and Whiteside introduce the concept of 'effective dependency ratio' (EDR). Its denominator includes the usual categories of supposedly unproductive (the young and the elderly) members as well as adults in their productive years, who are not able to work. People who were ill at the time of the survey, but not chronically ill, are considered healthy individuals, as they are expected to be dependent on other household members only for a very short period. Not surprisingly, the effective dependency ratio is higher than the demographic dependency ratio (see Table 6.6). Analysis shows that the difference between male-headed and female-headed households is not significant. The difference between widow-headed and divorcee-headed households is marginally significant. Moreover, divorcee-headed households have a significantly higher effective dependency ratio than do male-headed households.

Table 6.6: Mean effective dependency ratio (EDR) by type of household (s.d.)

	Male-headed (n=92)	Female-headed (n=38)	Total (n=130)	Widow-headed (n=25)	Divorcee-headed (n=13)
Mean EDR	1.78	2.18	1.89	1.79	2.92*/**
(s.d.)	(1.49)	(1.81)	(1.59)	(1.61)	(2.01)

Source: household survey 2005

* implies that the difference between divorcee-headed and widow-headed households is significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

** implies that the difference between divorcee-headed and male-headed households is significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Note: Six households have been excluded from the analysis. These (one male-headed, four widow-headed, and one divorcee-headed) consisted of households without economically productive household members (i.e. members assumed to be able to work and not be dependent upon others), which would make the EDR ∞.

In part, this finding can be explained by the fact that male-headed households generally consist of both spouses, while divorcee-headed households lack at least one adult household member. Moreover, while the mean age of male and divorcee heads of households is similar (43), the mean age of widow heads of households is significantly higher (49). Thus, while female heads of households lack one adult (spouse), it is likely that widows' children are somewhat older than

those found in either male- or female-headed households, and thus no longer fall in the young dependents category (0-14).

The fact that the dependency ratio for divorcee-headed households is higher than for any other type of household implies that, especially as long as children are young, divorced women are likely to face more time and labour constraints than adults in other households. Unlike older women (among whom are many widows) whose children may be able to contribute to household livelihoods in the form of labour, money, or other gifts, divorced women do not get such support from their children. They are also less likely to be able to share their work with other adult household members. Thus, at least during the time when children are young, divorcee-headed households are very likely to be more vulnerable to shocks.

Household Composition

On average, households include two to three children (range 0-8), defined here as 0 to 14 years old. The proportion of children (i.e. the number of children in relation to the overall number of household members, expressed as a percentage) in female-headed households is somewhat lower than in male-headed households (see Table 6.7). The difference, however, is not significant. Disaggregating the data for female-headed households, one can see that divorcee-headed households consist of a significantly higher proportion of children than widow-headed households. This implies that in divorcee-headed households, each adult (those aged 15 or more) has considerably more dependents to look after than adults living in widow-headed households. This obviously has consequences for the amount of time divorced women have at their disposal, as they need to spend more time on childcare and thus have less to spend on other tasks.

Table 6.7: Mean (s.d.) proportion of children by type of household

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Proportion of children 0-14	0.45 (0.23)	0.40 (0.43)	0.43 (0.24)	0.35 (0.24)	0.51* (0.27)

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

This finding becomes all the more significant when we consider only the proportion of very young children (aged 0 to 5 years of age), as it is this group of children who demand the most care. In fact, somewhat older children are often an

asset to a household's labour pool, as they can assist with fetching water, cleaning the house or cooking, or even light agricultural tasks. The very young, on the other hand, are carried on their mother's backs, hampering their movements. Moreover, the very young need to be breastfed and must be protected from the sun, the rain, or possible sources of infections. As one can tell from Table 6.8, male-headed households consist of significantly more young dependents than do female-headed households. The difference is likely to be explained by the fact that male-headed households include a considerable number of parental households that have only recently been formed, while female-headed households include widow-headed households in which the age of the head of household is higher than the average age in male-headed households. Hence, even where widow heads of households look after dependents, these dependents are likely to be of an older age. Indeed, disaggregating the data for female-headed households, I found that divorcee-headed households consist of a significantly higher proportion of young dependents than in widow-headed households. This implies that widow-headed households tend to have a less fragile household labour pool compared to either male- or divorcee-headed households.

Table 6.8: Mean (s.d.) proportion of children (0-5 years old) by type of household

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Proportion of children (0-5 years old)	0.20* (0.18)	0.14 (0.18)	0.18 (0.18)	0.10 (0.15)	0.22* (0.22)

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Looking at the proportion of elderly members (see Table 6.9), I found that female-headed households consist of a significantly higher proportion of the elderly than do male-headed households. Further analysis shows that the difference is mostly accounted for by widow-headed households (the average age of household heads in widow-headed households being higher than in other types of households), although the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is not statistically significant.

Table 6.9: Mean (s.d.) proportion of the elderly by type of household

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Proportion of elderly (65+)	0.04 (0.12)	0.12* (0.27)	0.06 (0.18)	0.13 (0.28)	0.09 (0.27)

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

There is also a strong relationship between the proportion of ill household members and type of household (see Table 6.10). The data reveals that the proportion of ill persons in female-headed households is significantly higher than in male-headed households. It is also clear that widow-headed households consist of significantly more ill members than do divorcee-headed households. While illness can have a number of reasons, it is likely that with old age the risk of chronic illness increases. The higher age of the household head in widow-headed households is therefore likely to explain the higher occurrence of chronic illness found in this type of household.

Table 6.10: Mean (s.d.) proportion of ill members by type of household

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Proportion of ill	0.05 (0.10)	0.14** (0.21)	0.08 (0.15)	0.17** (0.22)	0.07 (0.18)

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Discussion

As a result of historical processes (see Chapter 2), the importance of households has changed considerably over the years. Whereas the clan and lineage formed important institutions for livelihood generation in the pre-colonial period, the nuclear family is now the most important institution. The nuclear family gained even more importance during the colonial and post-colonial period as a result of processes of land pressure, migration, and conflict-induced displacement.

In Rwagitima, one can find a range of households that are all somehow based on the nuclear family unit. For analytical purposes I have categorised these

into male-headed (including *de facto* female-headed households) and female-headed households. Female-headed households constitute approximately one-third of all households in the research area. When compared to other African countries, it appears that this is not an exceptionally high figure. However, few studies look into the reasons for households to have become female-headed or have distinguished types of female-headed households according to the marital status of the household head. In the sample of this study, two-thirds of female-headed households are headed by widows, while the remaining one-third is headed by divorced women.

Whereas households are central institutions in livelihood generation and management, household members with their specific socio-demographic characteristics form part of the household's asset base. As I have shown in this chapter, the composition of households is in constant flux. This flux may be the result of the normal household life course (marriage, birth, death) or of external pressures such as the genocide, which left thousands of widows behind, as well as orphans and elderly people without children. Other factors also play a role, such as the availability and accessibility of contraceptives and health care (see Chapter 7). The way in which households are structured forms part of a household's human capital. Two aspects are of prime importance: the quantity and the 'quality' of the individual members. The first relates to the size of the household, the second to individual characteristics of household members. I suggest that the composition of households and the changes therein form an important means to analyse a household's poverty and vulnerability status.

The average household size in the research area is 5.6 people, including people who do not actually live in the household but are nevertheless considered to be members. Examples of absent household members include men who have temporarily migrated in search of work, children at boarding schools, and household members visiting other relatives for shorter or longer periods. My data shows that female-headed households are generally smaller than male-headed households, and that the smallest households tend to be those of divorced women. However, the difference in household size among the different types of households is not significant, although the size of households does tell us a little about its labour potential. The composition of households is likely to provide us with more insight into this matter.

My data shows that female-headed households in the research area consist of considerably more dependents than do male-headed households. In particular, divorcee-headed households can be characterised to consist of a high effective dependency ratio. This means that divorcee-headed households tend to have not only the smallest households (implying a limited labour pool) but also to have the smallest effective labour pool (consisting of economically active persons able to contribute to livelihood generation). The number of dependents in a household has a direct impact on the resources available for livelihood generation and the scope of potential activities. While children may eventually contribute to household income, investments first need to be made in order to raise them to become healthy, knowledgeable, and able human beings. Moreover, the ill and the elderly

are a strain on household resources, in the form of medical treatment, care, and the overall reduction in a household's labour pool.

The composition and structure of households determines its ability to mobilise additional resources (e.g. monetary income) or to convert one resource into another (e.g. sale of agricultural surplus). While a large household size increases household labour availability, other factors may in fact undermine this potential labour pool. Young children are not able to work and need to be looked after, thus forming more of an economic liability than an asset. The elderly and the ill also have to be looked after. Both drain household resources. Nevertheless, young children grow up and may assist in household chores, in care arrangements, or in work in the fields. The initial investments in health and education of household members may in the long run increase a household's human capital. The composition of households is thus directly related to potential future livelihood options. The presence of household members and their individual characteristics are directly related to the activities that households can undertake and to the feasibility of livelihood strategies. Changing a household's composition can be a conscious decision to increase household income, overcome labour shortages, and provide for old-age security. However, while restructuring households may reduce the vulnerability of household members in the short term, vulnerability may be a long-term risk, depending on the assets and liabilities that new household members bring with them or on assets lost with the departure of others. For example, new household members may become ill or decide to migrate to the city rather than look after the elderly in the rural areas.

On its own, the effective dependency ratio, while widely used for analysis, seems an inappropriate measure to assess a household's poverty and vulnerability status. Children, usually considered economically inactive in the calculation of the dependency ratio, may in fact contribute to a household's labour pool or even take full responsibility for household welfare (for example, in child-headed households). Similarly, the elderly, usually also considered to be economically inactive in the calculation of the dependency ratio, may have to take full responsibility for the generation of a household's livelihood. Perhaps a more suitable way to assess a household's potential labour pool is to look at the proportion of very young children and household members who are ill.

My data show that overall the difference between male- and female-headed households in terms of the proportion of children is not large. However, it emerges that divorcee-headed households consist of a much higher proportion of children than do either male- or widow-headed households. While young children may eventually contribute to household security, initially they reduce the time other household members may spend on tasks other than childcare (economists call this the opportunity costs). This is especially relevant in the case of divorcee-headed households, which, as I have indicated, have a very high effective dependency ratio. This ratio implies that such households consist of few economically active members who have to juggle their time between childcare productive work. Male-headed households, which also tend to consist of a relatively large proportion of children, might find it easier to combine these tasks, as they tend to have a lower dependency ratio. This implies that in male-headed households there are more

economically active household members among whom tasks can be divided. My data thus suggest that divorcee-headed households are particularly vulnerable during the period when young children are being raised.

I have also indicated that female-headed households tend to have a higher proportion of elderly and ill members (the two might in fact partially overlap) than do male-headed households. Again, this has implications for the number of people and the amount of time household members may spend on livelihood generation. Widow-headed households appear particularly affected by the limitations that old-age and illness bring. In part this is explained by the higher mean age of widow heads of households compared to male or divorced female heads of households. This implies that while widow-headed households proportionally have fewer young dependents, theoretically enlarging the quality of their household's labour pool, they have more ill persons to look after, thus undermining the quality of their labour pool. Male- and divorcee-headed households, while proportionally having more children to look after, have fewer ill persons to take care of. Moreover, these children gradually grow up and are able to perform more domestic and agricultural tasks, thus increasing the quality of a household's labour pool. However, the quality of the labour pool of widow-headed households is likely to deteriorate over time, when the elderly become less able to perform demanding tasks themselves and there are few other household members to take over their duties.

Thus, while all three types of households are confronted with constraining care arrangements, the nature of care differs between different types of households. While care for the very young may be as constraining for a household's labour pool as care for the elderly or the ill, the young will grow up and be able to contribute to household welfare at a later stage of a household's life cycle. The vulnerability of widow-headed households does not only lie in the immediate care that needs to be provided to the old and the ill. There is also the inherent risk that remaining household members face when the elderly or the ill pass away. This is especially a risk when these heads of households have taken on the responsibility for grandchildren or young, unrelated children.

In short, households and their individual members form part of a household's asset base and are also key to understanding livelihood activities and strategies. At the same time, household composition should be considered the outcome of a livelihood strategy. Such an outcome is reflected in changes in household membership and in the actual presence or absence of members, as well as in their individual characteristics. The following chapters will further exemplify these and other issues.

7

Human Capital and Capabilities

As I have shown in Chapter 6, households form the central institution of livelihood generation and management in Rwanda. Household members with their specific socio-economic characteristics form part of a household's capital. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at the human capital of households, addressing two aspects in particular: physical ability and intellectual capability. The physical ability of people is discussed in terms of women's health, fertility, and nutritional status. The intellectual capability is discussed in terms of educational achievement.

Physical Ability

"The health system in Rwanda is among the worst in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This situation that resulted from the combination of high levels of infanto-juvenile and maternal mortality, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS prevalence, explain the persisting consequences of the war and genocide of 1994 in Rwanda. If significant progress has been made in terms of infanto-juvenile and maternal mortality since 1995, Rwanda has not yet been able to reach levels of children's survival and maternal health prior to the genocide."

(Banque Mondiale 2005: 15)

Health Risks in the Past

In earlier times, the occurrence of many fatal epidemic diseases, such as pneumonia, malaria, gastro-enteritis, bacillary dysentery, measles, whooping-cough, smallpox¹⁵³, chickenpox, and tuberculosis, threatened people's physical survival. Hookworm and other worm diseases, amoebic dysentery, yaws, and tropical ulcer were endemic, as were malaria and tuberculosis (Codere 1973). Colonial conquest led to the unprecedented growth of a certain number of imported diseases (Botte 1985a, 1985b), such as cerebrospinal meningitis and the Spanish flu. Later on, large-scale migration to surrounding countries contributed to the rapid diffusion of illnesses.

People had to work hard in order to produce enough food to sustain their families, while their time and energy to work in their own fields were reduced due

¹⁵³ There has been no smallpox outbreak since 1920 (Codere 1973).

to enforced *corvée* labour and obligations towards one's overlord. Despite the hard work, nutritional levels were generally low (Codere 1973), making people susceptible to disease. People also faced other threats to their health, such as wars, assassinations, punishments by overlords, and feuds. Other major health risks were caused by regularly occurring natural disasters, such as famines, droughts, and periods of erratic rainfall.

Powerful individuals, like the Tutsi nobility, were especially at risk due to hazards of political struggles, while poor farmers were more likely to face malnutrition, making them more susceptible to outbreaks of diseases. While natural disasters affected everyone in the country, it is likely that for Hutu it was most difficult to cope with their adverse effects (Codere 1973). Tutsi had cattle they could slaughter or exchange for food and they often possessed multiple large landholdings, worked by Hutu vassals, that could provide enough food to sustain their families in times of need. They also had the possibility to move to other areas, either to one of their other landholdings or as vassal to another important overlord. Twa were mobile and easily engaged in new vassalage arrangements with Tutsi overlords. Hutu could not move to other areas, since the population density was already high elsewhere and land was in short supply; they were bound to their land and overlords. Gathering and producing more food were ways to try to overcome difficult times, as were begging and relying on assistance by Tutsi overlords, but such measures were not always likely to be sufficient. Wealthier Hutu, those who had cattle or goats themselves, could of course consume the milk or exchange the animals for food. However, as a group it seems Hutu were much more vulnerable than either Tutsi or Twa.

Before the nineteenth century, the balance of food was disrupted at least once or twice per century (Botte 1985a, 1985b). However, outbreaks of local famine generally did not become generalised until the period of colonial conquest, at which time military expeditions increased in number, large-scale population movements occurred more often, and the rural population became increasingly pressured as the traditional system of production collapsed. By the end of the nineteenth century, the country was regularly afflicted by epizootics, epidemics, and famines (Botte 1985a, 1985b).

Some health risks diminished during colonial administration. Wars were curtailed by the colonial regime and the risk of a violent death decreased. Moreover markets, money, roads, imports, and agricultural programmes (often carried out by means of mandatory labour contributions) helped reduce the impact of natural disasters. Those who had entered the monetised economy were able to buy sufficient amounts of food and to use modern methods of medical treatment. As a result, living opportunities and the problems of existence and survival became more equally distributed among different social categories, and life expectancy began to rise. Nevertheless, as we have seen in Chapter 2, many colonial and post-colonial policies had a negative impact on the food situation.

Traditionally, diseases were thought to be the result of 'the presumed generational solidarity in affliction' or the result of 'vengeance or malevolence' of either the dead or the living (Botte 1985a, 1985b). The fear of spells and sorcery was, and still is, always present. To overcome illness, people consulted specialists

who divined the supernatural cause of the disease. As ancestors needed to be appeased and sorceries made undone, multiple visits were often needed. The fee charged by these specialists was accordingly high (Codere 1973), making it difficult for the poor to seek treatment. Since about 1920, health risks were brought under increasingly effective control by new methods of medical treatment (Codere 1973), including new types of medicine, surgery, and childbirth practices. These new health practices and treatments were often, albeit not always, more effective than the traditional ones, and available at a more reasonable cost. In this respect it is interesting to note that currently people are once again resorting to traditional healers, especially with regard to children's illnesses. Their bouts of diarrhoea or fever were and still are regularly attributed to sorcery, hence needing a traditional specialist. However, some people admitted that they simply could not afford modern health care and that traditional healers were not only cheaper but also accepted partial payment in kind and in instalments. Hence, traditional health specialists continue to practice in Rwanda (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1: Traditional health specialists

Kayteshi is an old woman in her seventies. Together with her husband, she left for Uganda in the late 1950s because of the ethnic strife she witnessed around her. In Uganda, Kayteshi made new friends, among whom were Ugandans. One of her new friends was a female traditional healer. According to Kayteshi, many traditional healers could still be found to practice in Uganda, unlike in Rwanda at that time or at present. As the women became friends, Kayteshi was initiated and learned about medical ailments and the medicinal use of different plant species. Over time, she was able to put her newly acquired knowledge to use. For example, she recounts how she was able to "cure" children born with both male and female genitals, without having to fall back on surgical measures.

Kayteshi told me that she feels sad about not being able to pass on her knowledge of traditional medicine to her children, most of whom live too far away (in Uganda), or grandchildren (some of whom live in her household), who are still too young. She does not want to teach anyone outside her direct family, as she is afraid they might report her to the authorities. According to Kayteshi, the authorities do not look favourably upon traditional healers and she fears being fined or worse if found practicing¹⁵⁴. Occasionally, she treats some of her neighbours.

Although many traditional healers are still practising today, it seems that the importance of traditional healers declined during the twentieth century, possibly due to the rise of Christianity.

Around 1930, life expectancy was approximately forty years or less (Vansina 2004). While life expectancy increased from forty-nine years in 1985 (May *et al.* 1990) to fifty years in 1990, by 1999 this had declined to merely forty-three years –

¹⁵⁴ In fact, the Ministry of Health and 'L'Institut de Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (IRST)' attempt to organise traditional healers in associations to better supervise them (Banque Mondiale 2005).

much lower than the average life expectancy for Sub-Saharan Africa during the 1990-1996 period, which stands at fifty-two years (Banque Mondiale 2005). The war and genocide resulted in many deaths during the 1990s, and HIV/AIDS¹⁵⁵ and malaria¹⁵⁶ are currently the main causes of death. While HIV/AIDS used to be primarily an urban phenomenon, the events of the 1990s have made it a rural problem as well, as a result of large population movements and the use of rape as a weapon of war during the genocide.

Health Conditions at Present

Unhygienic practices and unsafe environments, such as the use of 'unprotected' water, lack of water, or lack of access to improved latrines, put people's health at risk. A report from the World Bank argues that almost half of the Rwandan population spends a minimum of one hour a day looking for water and less than one-fourth spends less than half an hour a day (Banque Mondiale 2005). Long distances to potable water sources represent a significant time-consuming burden, especially for women and girls. For the elderly, the search for water is often too physically exhausting. Since the collection of water is such a strenuous task, it is not easy to find neighbours or friends willing to collect enough water for themselves as well as for others, and many elderly have to resort to paid labourers, which places a burden on their household resources. Moreover, the fact that women and girls are primarily responsible for fetching water means that this activity has implications for their access to education and their economic productivity.

Apart from the inadequate accessibility of water sources, especially acute in Kibungo, Kigali-Ngali, Umutara, and Butare, where the distance to a water source exceeds more than 800 metres (Government of Rwanda 2002), these 'protected' sources of water are less than perfect. Drainage for excess water is poor, attracting mosquitoes and other insects, the boreholes are the favourite playground of children, and animals are often seen drinking there. Moreover, it is believed that nationwide the proportion of households using safe water sources decreased from 79 percent in 1995 to 67 percent in 2001 (Government of Rwanda 2002).

The number of protected water sources in Rwagitima is limited. There are only three, which cater to hundreds of households, and for some households, especially those located higher up on the hills, collecting water is an exceedingly time-consuming activity. In this respect it is important to note that nearly a quarter of households in this study collect drinking water from the nearby swamp, while another 15 percent depend on water catchments or wells near their homes. This suggests that only 60 percent of households use clean water from protected

¹⁵⁵ The rape of women by HIV/AIDS-infected "soldiers" was used as a weapon during the genocide of 1994.

¹⁵⁶ Increased use of marshes and swamps for cultivation is likely to increase the rate of malaria, as seems to be confirmed by respondents in Rwagitima, who mention that the occurrence of malaria increased considerably after they started working in the rice swamp.

sources. In addition to water-related problems, less than one-fifth of households in the sample have a private latrine. Some households use common facilities, while others resort to the fields and bushes around dwellings. Very few households have improved latrines; the most common type of latrine consists of a partially covered dugout with wooden beams to stand on.

Poverty and poor health are interrelated. Poor health contributes to poverty, due to the damaging effects of morbidity on production and of the death of adults on the welfare of surviving household members. Causes of ill health include poor diet, poor access to clean water and sanitation, and limited access to health services. For many people, access to health services is limited because of financial constraints (consultations, treatment, drug prices)¹⁵⁷ and the limited availability of health services. The latter refers not only to the distance to the nearest health centre but also to the fact that it is not always possible to find transportation or to pay such additional costs. If health services are consulted, public hospitals are the most frequently used (33.6 percent), followed by pharmacies (29.2 percent), health centres (12.0 percent), and traditional healers (11.4 percent) (Government of Rwanda 2002). Respondents in this study generally agree that traditional healers are most often visited with regard to childhood diseases¹⁵⁸.

Prior to the outbreak of the civil war (1990-1994), health facilities in Rwanda were concentrated in major towns and administrative centres. The northwest of the country was best served, while isolated areas and the east had fewer facilities than would be justified by the population density (Campbell and Hu 1994). As Campbell and Hu argue, this reflects the fact that under the Habyarimana regime most government investments were directed at Kigali and the president's region of origin. Accessibility in terms of distance, however, also reflects settlement patterns. In regions that have been settled for a long time (like the highlands and central Rwanda), accessibility was higher than in areas that were more recently occupied (including the eastern regions). During the civil war and genocide, many health facilities were looted and buildings ruined. Health workers were killed or fled the country. In short, in 1994 the health system was in ruins and had to be rebuilt.

Today, there are two health care centres in the research area (located in Kabarore and Rugarama), ten and five kilometres from the centre of Rwagitima, respectively. The health care centre in Rugarama is relatively new, constructed after the genocide by the international NGO ADRA. There are also a number of hospitals near the research area, including those in Nyagatare (the capital of the

¹⁵⁷ Omosa (2002), who conducted a baseline survey in a district close to Rwagitima, finds that only about 20 percent of her respondents are able to pay for medical care, while almost one-fourth of the people stay home without seeking treatment. One-fifth of the people were reported by her to resort to traditional medicines, 18 percent buy medicines from chemists or illegal dealers. To be able to purchase medicines, 19 percent of the people try to borrow money from friends and relatives and 14 percent sell household assets. There is no reason to assume that her findings are not applicable to the research area of this study.

¹⁵⁸ Common childhood illnesses include acute respiratory infections, fever (a possible sign of malaria), and diarrhoea (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001, Direction de la Statistique 2005).

province of Umutara), Gahini (the location of a Protestant mission post), and Kiziguro (the location of a Catholic mission post). All three hospitals lie at much greater distance from Rwagitima and are more expensive than the health centres. Nevertheless, respondents for this study are generally of the opinion that service in public hospitals is much faster, that more specialists are available, and that the attending personnel has a better knowledge of diagnosis and treatment of illnesses. Thus, while health care centres are more easily accessible than hospitals, people usually prefer to visit a public hospital even though the costs entailed may be higher.

While the environmental conditions under which the poorest live are worse than for the less poor in the area, all households are easily exposed to diarrheic diseases, bacillary dysenteries, and epidemic typhus. Fever and malaria account for the great majority of illnesses (Government of Rwanda 2002). Other illnesses frequently encountered include intestinal parasitosis, respiratory illnesses, skin diseases, physical trauma, dental problems, and gyno-obstetric conditions. Large-scale vaccination programmes have combated tuberculosis, meningitis, typhus, whooping-cough, diphtheria, and poliomyelitis. Yellow fever and incidences of leprosy, yaws, and sleeping sickness have been reduced through treatment and preventive measures (Codere 1973). At present, free vaccination programmes against meningitis and other diseases are widespread. For example, during fieldwork in 2005, people in Rwagitima were informed through the media (especially radio) and by local authorities about the possibility to receive free vaccinations. Nationwide, more than three-quarters of children aged twelve to twenty-three have received full vaccination, whereas 2 percent of children have received none. The proportion of fully vaccinated children has, however, declined since 1992, when 87 percent of children were fully vaccinated (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001, Direction de la Statistique 2005). Despite such programmes, diseases and injuries are common.

During the month prior to this study's household survey, nearly 17 percent of respondents and their household members had been sick or injured¹⁵⁹. More than one-tenth of the sample reported being chronically ill (including people suffering from ulcers or epilepsy), while 2 percent reported being handicapped (including handicaps such as amputated limbs and blindness). Principal diseases in the research area include malaria, typhoid, intestinal worms, tuberculosis, respiratory diseases, and HIV/AIDS (BEAH 2003). As I have shown in Chapter 6, the proportion of chronically ill is especially high in widow-headed households, and is likely to be related to the higher mean age of heads of widow-headed households compared to those in male- and divorcee-headed households.

Table 7.1 presents some health indicators for Rwanda from 1988 onwards. Looking at the figures in this table, it becomes clear that both infant, infanto-

¹⁵⁹ This figure is surprisingly lower than that found in a report by the Government of Rwanda (2002), where it was noted that in the two weeks preceding the national census, 27.5 percent of people in Umutara had reported being sick or injured (25.5 percent nationally). During this period, people reported sick for approximately 7.4 days.

juvenile, and maternal mortality rates increased during the years of war and genocide (1990-1994) and that the country is only slowly recovering from this. Figure 7.1 also clearly shows that child mortality has declined since 1994 but that at present these rates are still higher than at the outset of the genocide¹⁶⁰. Rwanda's child mortality rate is worse than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (Government of Rwanda 2002, UNFPA 2002, 2005). While child mortality rates have fallen since 1975, currently one in every five children in Rwanda dies before reaching its fifth birthday. The high rates of infant and maternal mortality are caused not only by unhygienic and unsafe environments but also by other health-related behaviours, such as birth spacing, breastfeeding, and weaning practices.

Table 7.1: Infant and mortality indicators, Rwanda 1988-2000

	1988-1992 ¹⁶¹	1992-1994	1995-1997	1999	1998-2000
Infant mortality (per 1000 living births)	85	137	105	107	104
Infant-juvenile mortality (per 1000 living births)	150	247	205	198	178
Maternal mortality (per 100,000 living births)	611	1611		1071	

Source: adapted from Banque Mondiale (2005)

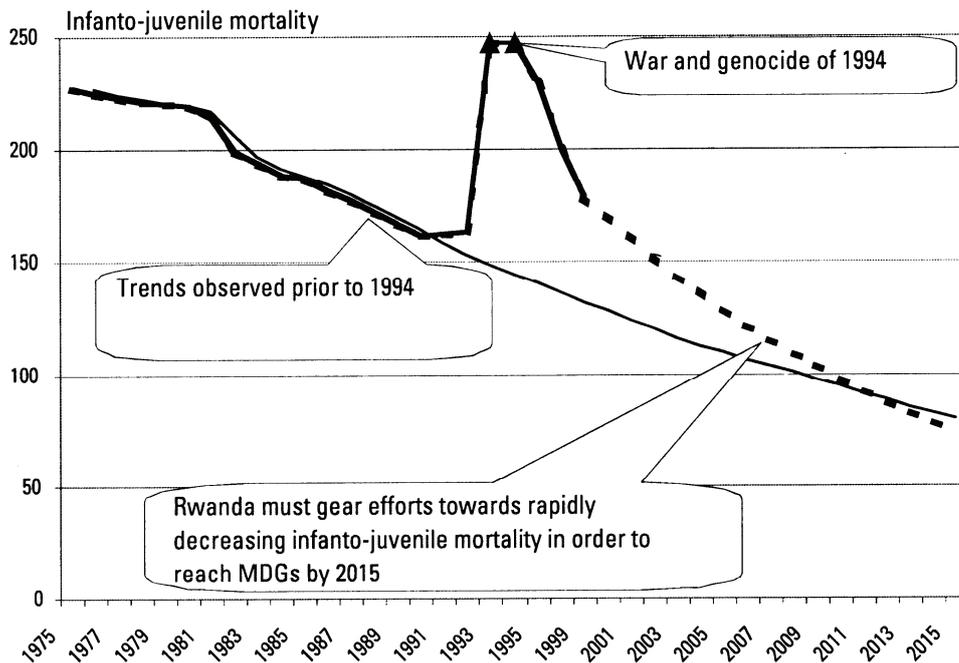
Despite progress made in the health sector since 1994¹⁶², a recent World Bank publication finds that inequalities in terms of health care have grown in comparison to the era prior to the war (Banque Mondiale 2005). People in southern parts of the country are more likely to live farther away from health care centres than are people in the northern parts; health care facilities are of a higher quality in urban centres than in rural areas; and the health status of the poor is much worse than for the rich. Likewise, Donovan and Bailey (2005) find that households in central and eastern zones tend to have a higher prevalence of illness but lower death rates than households in western zones. The authors can offer no explanation for this.

¹⁶⁰ Note that these figures are normally based on answers from surviving mothers, thus omitting most of the cases of mortality directly attributable to the genocide.

¹⁶¹ In 1983, the infant mortality rate was 120 per 1000 births and the juvenile probability of dying was 115 per 1000 children who reached their first birthday (May et al. 1990). For earlier dates, Codere (1973) finds that in 1930 infant mortality was very high (50 percent of children died), and was especially high among Tutsi.

¹⁶² In 2005, mortality rates were back at the level of 1992 (Direction de la Statistique 2005).

Figure 7.1: *Infanto-juvenile mortality trends, 1975-2015*



Source: Banque Mondiale (2005: 34)

Note: There are eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG): eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. The goal is to reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

Fertility and Old-Age security

The birth of a child is seen as bringing happiness and wealth to a household¹⁶³. Not surprisingly, the ideal number of children is high, up to five children or even more (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001). Little disagreement exists between women and men about the desirable number of children (or about the desirable numbers of each sex), although the reasons behind their choices are likely to differ (Mason and Taj 1987). The conditions of childbirth are not always good. According to a World Bank report, three out of four women give birth without any professional

¹⁶³ Social norms dictate that marriage is a requirement for childbirth. The fate of women bearing children out of wedlock is not considered a happy one. Codere (1973) mentions that in pre-colonial Rwanda women who became pregnant before marriage were killed. Regardless of whether this really happened, such stories function as a powerful sanction against premarital pregnancy. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s, 22 percent of births in Butare occurred among unmarried women (May *et al.* 1990).

assistance¹⁶⁴ (Banque Mondiale 2005). And with health care facilities often located at quite a distance – making it difficult to find appropriate assistance in the event of complications – it is not surprising that maternal mortality rates are high.

Fertility rates in Rwanda are among the highest in the world (Clay and Vander Haar 1993)¹⁶⁵. In 2006, the estimated total fertility rate (TFR)¹⁶⁶ in Rwanda was 5.43 children born per woman (CIA 2007). Total fertility rates in the northern provinces of Rwanda are higher than elsewhere in the country. With a total fertility rate (TFR) of 6.7, a crude birth rate (CBR) of 47.2, and a general fertility rate (GFR) of 193 in 2002, the province of Umutara exhibits the highest fertility in the country¹⁶⁷ (République du Rwanda 2005a). The total fertility rate (TFR) of this study's sample was 5.10 (measured in 2005-2006), ranging from 0 to 11 children born to one woman. The TFR in the research area is thus lower than that for Umutara. This can have various explanations. The TFR rate in the sample may simply be a sign of further decreasing fertility. While this is plausible, interregional differences between fertility rates in the province of Umutara also need to be taken into account. The small sample size of this study may also be a factor.

Rwanda's high fertility rates are the result of long-standing pro-natalist social norms and attitudes, strongly influenced by the Catholic Church and for a long time supported by the state¹⁶⁸. For example, President Habyarimana (1973-1994) was never an advocate of a family planning ideology. It is considered a woman's duty and joy to transmit life and to give birth to children (May *et al.* 1990). Having many children not only provides the family with old-age security but is also considered to give honour and prestige to the family (Verwimp and Bavel 2005). Childless couples, and especially women without children, are pitied. This is reflected in the fact that in Umutara only 1.7 percent of the women aged forty-five-to forty-nine years have not given birth to any children (République du

¹⁶⁴ As far as could be assessed, Rwagitima only accommodated one traditional midwife (TBA), with the nearest health care facilities located some five kilometres away and open only during the daytime.

¹⁶⁵ Most births occur within recognised unions. Nevertheless, nationally 3.6 percent of adolescent girls (3.5 percent in the rural areas) aged twelve to nineteen years have already given birth (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Considering the mean age at marriage, it is likely that unwanted pregnancies do occur regularly. Several informants pointed out that if a family finds a single daughter pregnant, marriage arrangements (with the family of the father) are quickly made.

¹⁶⁶ A distinction is made between crude birth rate (CBR, or the number of childbirths per 1000 persons per year), general fertility rate (GFR, or the number of births per 1000 women aged 15-45), and total fertility rate (TFR, or the average number of children born to each woman over the course of her life). The CBR is sensitive to the age-sex structure. The TFR is generally considered a better indication of fertility rates because it is not affected by the age distribution of the population.

¹⁶⁷ Only the provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri have higher TFR's (6.8), but their GFR is lower than that for the province of Umutara.

¹⁶⁸ Although at present the Catholic Church acknowledges the population problem, it still discourages the use of contraceptives and promotes periodic abstinence methods instead.

Rwanda 2005a). Interviews with female respondents revealed that none of them would consider remaining childless voluntarily.

The fear of growing old without children able to assist in old age, as well as various cultural norms and beliefs, reinforces high fertility rates. Respondents for this study, women and men alike, stress that daughters and sons are equally welcomed. Nevertheless, several respondents have indicated that in those instances where only daughters are born, women feel the need to become pregnant again in order to ensure the birth of at least one if not two sons, to ensure that at least one son will survive in the years to follow. One of the most frequently cited reasons for continuing to bear children is that daughters upon their marriage tend to move far away (virilocal rule of residence), while sons bring new people to the household of their parents. Moreover, whereas in the old days sons were important because they played a crucial role in ancestor worship and the creation of political strength (by enlarging the lineage), they are still considered important today for continuing the family's bloodline. In addition, sons have a special importance to women. While women can now inherit land, traditional custom still adheres to patrilineal ideals in which land is passed on to sons. Widows' claims to landed property are still weak, and in order to ensure access to land after the death of their husbands, women therefore rely on their sons. Women also regularly stress that having children gives them a stronger claim to their husband's loyalty, reducing the risk of separation or divorce. Finally, having children increases women's prestige and self-respect, both in the family and in the wider community.

Despite the high overall fertility rates and the importance attached to children, the demographic profile of Rwandan women changed considerably between 1980 and 2007 (see Table 7.2). Total fertility rates (TFR) declined since 1980, from 8.5 in 1980 to 6.6 in 1995 (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001). The decline in fertility rates during the 1980s was also noted by Olson (1994a), who associates this decline with worsening circumstances in the country. She also notes that the decline in birth rate was regionally concentrated. Another report notes that the average rate of fertility for women between fifteen and forty-nine years had fallen slightly since the early 1990s, but that it had not fallen for women between twenty and twenty-four years (Government of Rwanda 2002). In this report it is argued that the drop in fertility may be the result of the fact that in the 1990s so many women were without partners, rather than the planning of smaller families. As elsewhere, an association between level of education and fertility has also been determined. Women with no or little education are found to have 1.2 children more than women with secondary education or higher (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001).

Table 7.2: *Demographic profile of Rwandan women aged 15-49 years*

Demographic indicator	1992	2000
Percentage of women with no education	38.0	29.4
Total fertility rate	6.2	5.8
Median age at first marriage	20.0	20.7
Median age at first birth	21.5	22.0
Mean ideal number of children	4.2	4.9
Percent of women who want no more children	36.0	33.0
Median breastfeeding duration (months)	27.9	30.6
Infant mortality rate (per thousand)*	85.0	107.4
Under-five mortality rate (per thousand)*	150.8	196.2

Source: *Verwimp and Bavel (2005)*

* *Fertility rates declined after the 1980s (partly as a result of later age at first marriage and subsequent later age at first birth), as did infant and child mortality rates. However, the latter went up during the 1990s; this is likely to be a temporary development due to the genocide, civil war, and mass migration (Verwimp and van Bavel 2005).*

In 2002, the TFR for Rwanda was 5.9, against 6.2 children in the rural areas (Republic of Rwanda 2005). TFR decreased further after that time, reaching 5.45 in 2005 (UNFPA 2005) and 5.43 in 2006 (CIA 2007). On average, a woman now gives birth to three children fewer than in 1980. Nevertheless, Rwanda's crude birth rate is still very high. Adolescent fertility rates have also declined compared to those in 1991 (Republic of Rwanda 2005). The fact that fertility rates are still high in Rwanda is related to the better health and nutrition status of women over time, the reduction in breastfeeding practices, and a traditionally very short period of postpartum abstinence (May *et al.* 1990). Intercourse is in fact resumed on the eighth day postpartum. Male semen is thought to be blood in a purified form, so the semen of a husband is said to aid in healing any lesions that the woman may have sustained during parturition. Moreover, semen is said to aid in the procurement of suitable lactation, in part because intercourse develops a feeling of warmth in a woman, which is said "to encourage the fat in the breasts to melt and turn into maternal milk" (Taylor 1988: 1346).

Several explanations can be given for the declining fertility rates. Fertility rates are generally believed to decline as a result of improved socio-economic circumstances. However, as indicated in Chapter 2, such conditions were not met in Rwanda before the genocide. Other explanations involve changes in the perception of old-age security as well as in the existing age-sex structure and in community values and norms such as the preferred age of marriage or weaning practices, and in increased literacy rates among men and women. They also

include the use of modern contraceptives, decreasing infant mortality rates, and public action to support family planning¹⁶⁹.

Olson (1994a, 1995) links Rwanda's declining fertility rates to poverty and access to land. She also shows how the decline in birth rate was regionally concentrated in the southwestern provinces of Kibuye and Gikongoro and the northwestern provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, regions characterised by land shortages (Olson 1994a). In Rwanda, access to land is usually a precondition for marriage. Traditionally, sons would be given land to cultivate upon marriage. Olson argues that deteriorating economic circumstances for farmers (land shortage in combination with limited non- or off-farm labour opportunities) made it increasingly difficult for young people to marry, since many young men did not gain access to land until the death of their parents. Increased poverty also had the effect that many young people were unable to afford marriage, as it involved paying bridewealth. Both trends led to the postponement of marriages, thus increasing the average age at marriage. They also led to rising numbers of unmarried people of both sexes. Delayed marriages influence the age at which the first child is born and reduce the total number of children born to a woman. Moreover, in the absence of employment opportunities, more men started to migrate to other rural areas, cities, or across borders. Subsequently, more women were left to head households, further increasing the likelihood of fewer children being born to them¹⁷⁰. Unlike in the northwestern and southwestern provinces, the eastern provinces of Byumba, Umutara, and Kibungo were characterised by relatively large farms, less land scarcity, and more wealthy families, suggesting that the need for declining fertility rates was felt less in those regions. The fact that the fertility rate of women in Umutara is the highest in the country substantiates this finding¹⁷¹.

Risk-insurance or old-age security theories emphasise the insurance role of children in conditions of economic insecurity. It is argued that children contribute to the economic welfare and social wellbeing of parents in old age (Nugent 1985). One line of theory argues that, in the absence of formal social security systems, fertility increases under conditions of generalised, long-term economic insecurity, in response to lower child survival rates. The opposite view is, however, also plausible; namely, fertility rates will fall as an outcome of political and economic turmoil, as couples will delay births in response to the stress and insecurities generated by such events.

¹⁶⁹ The National Office of Population (ONAPO) was created in 1981. In the 1980s, the focus was on family planning. In the 1990s, a national population policy was adopted, with the aim of creating a stronger demand for lower fertility (May 1995).

¹⁷⁰ This argument is strengthened by the finding that the fecundity of women aged twenty to twenty-four years has in fact not declined, but that it is the shortage of men that contributed to the lowering of the fecundity of women in the older age categories (Government of Rwanda 2002).

¹⁷¹ So too does the argument presented below, that the fertility of women born abroad, many of whom are daughters of old caseload refugees, is higher than that of women who never migrated.

Several studies support the assumed importance of children in Rwanda for the wellbeing of their parents, the more so in the absence of a formal system of social security. Having more children, or increasing fertility, may under such circumstances become a strategy for survival in the long term. Clay and Johnson (1992) found that the size of landholdings had a positive influence on human reproduction. In other words, larger farms made it possible to afford a higher supply of children, at least prior to 1994. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the labour supplied by children can provide families with greater income and livelihood security, as do other forms of assistance provided by children: for example, assistance provided in the form of money or gifts in kind. Finally, while Nugent asserts that the loyalty of children depends on the amount of wealth they will inherit or those forms of wealth to which children are strong complements, Clay and Johnson found no evidence of this in their study.

In another study, Clay and Vander Haar (1993) look at lineal (intergenerational) support in Rwanda and conclude that children hold considerable economic value in terms of the support they provide to their parents once they leave the house. The number of children living within and outside the household, the distance between parents' and children's households as well as individual characteristics of parents and children influence the importance and degree of support. While support of children to parents is seen to increase when parents grow older, the authors find that the most important determinant of support is the successful rearing of more children. Moreover, having more children does not appear to influence the amount of assistance provided by each child. These findings support the validity of the old-age security approach in Rwanda during normal daily life before 1994.

My data show that children still form an important old-age security strategy. Initially, large investments are made in their education, in the expectation that when they grow up they will contribute to household livelihood security. Indeed, remittances sent by children, either in kind or in cash, form an important source of household income, especially for older women. I will elaborate on this issue in Chapter 9. My data also show that grandchildren form important assets as well (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2: Intergenerational support

After the RPF took control of Rwanda in 1994, Kaytesi decided to return 'home'. She was accompanied by her husband, son, and youngest daughter. Two other daughters remained behind in Uganda. These daughters had lived most of their lives in Uganda, had both married, had children who went to school in Uganda, and had secured employment in the public sector. These two daughters felt that they were much better off in Uganda than in Rwanda. The son, while married, opted to accompany his parents. The youngest daughter was unmarried and unemployed. However, once her parents settled in Rwagitima, she decided to return to Uganda, as she felt that educational opportunities were much better in her former place of residence. Kaytesi's son found land in a nearby village and settled there with his wife and children.

Over time, Kaytesí's husband's health deteriorated. Already in her eighties, Kaytesí had difficulty managing the farm. Her son, while living nearby, turned out to be of little help and Kaytesí regularly accused him of being a drunk with no sense of responsibility. Once every few months, her youngest daughter would return home for a few weeks, bringing gifts from her older sisters who had remained behind in Uganda. These gifts consisted mainly of money and items of clothing. The money was used to pay for medical treatment and medication for Kaytesí's husband as well as the wage labourers working in the fields. The youngest daughter herself did not tend the fields but she did take care of household tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, and attending to her sick father (thereby temporarily relieving some of Kaytesí's workload). The daughter also looked for means to continue her father's treatment, involving regular trips to other family members to beg for their financial assistance. For this purpose, she made several trips to Kigali, where her uncle (father's brother) lived. This uncle was eventually willing to pay some of the hospital bills.

Although Kaytesí depended strongly on her daughter's assistance, her daughter had no intention of remaining at her mother's house. Unmarried, unemployed, and in search of ways to continue her education, the daughter felt that her chances of a better future were greater in Uganda than in Rwanda, if only because her two older sisters regularly helped her through difficult times by sheltering her or giving her financial assistance. Whenever she was in Rwanda, the daughter complained that village life was too hard for her, that she was bored, and that life held no promise for her. Returning to Uganda, however, was never easy. During the stay with her mother, she always had to part with her money, not being able to refuse her mother or father the means to at least obtain a minimum standard of living, or survival for that matter. She thus had to look for means to pay for her transport back to Uganda.

While Kaytesí's son offered little assistance to his mother, her daughters regularly provided her with much needed support. However, during the long months in which all her daughters were in Uganda, Kaytesí was expected to look after herself. She was fortunate enough to have sufficient land and yields high enough to overcome these months without assistance, but she worried continuously about what would happen to her once she could no longer work in the fields herself. It is in this respect that the importance of the two grandchildren in her household becomes apparent. Currently, these grandchildren, born to one of Kaytesí's daughters who had died of HIV/AIDS, only strain household resources, as they are still too young to work. At the same time, they need to be fed, clothed, and sent to school. While Kaytesí stresses the fact that she has taken on the care of these children out of love, other motives might play a role as well. With her own children living either far away or being of little use to her, the assistance provided, however crucial, is sporadic at best. By investing in the upbringing of her grandchildren, Kaytesí is attempting to secure another form of future intergenerational support: one closer to home and all the more important as she grows older.

The above example clearly demonstrates the importance of intergenerational support. Kaytesí depends on the contributions her daughters make. Without their assistance, she might for example not have been able to send her husband for treatment. The example also shows how population displacement and HIV/AIDS mortality have a direct impact on intergenerational forms of

support. However, such processes may reduce access to sources of support. The investments that Kaytesi has made in her daughters' and son's upbringing are not necessarily paying out during her old age. While Kaytesi has found another source of future support in the form of her grandchildren, she again has to invest in their upbringing. Moreover, she has explained that it is not easy for an old woman to assume again the responsibility for young children. And of course, it remains to be seen whether her grandchildren will be able to look after their grandmother if the need arises.

An important question pertains to the impact of conflict and forced migration on reproductive health. On the one hand, it is conceivable that fertility rises. For example, women may want to 'replace' those who died – such as soldiers and children – during conflicts. Fertility rates may also increase as a result of reduced access to contraceptives. On the other hand, it is possible that fertility rates fall because of the uncertain living conditions during emergencies. Psychological stress, forced migration, separation of couples for prolonged periods of time, and the increased prevalence of spontaneous and induced abortions are some of the factors that may lead to a decline in fertility.

McGinn (2000) looked at fertility patterns among refugees throughout the world and concluded that there is no common pattern. However, Verwimp and Bavel (2005) argue that under circumstances of violent conflict and forced migration in Rwanda:

“... physical capital (fixed assets which have to be abandoned during refuge), such as the size of a household's farm, may play a less important role in reproductive behaviour compared to the social capital, education and relationship of status of the mother, among other variables. On top of this, traditional methods of birth control used by Rwandans, such as birth spacing, may be more difficult to practice in stressful, unhealthy and coercive situations refugees are living in.”

(Verwimp and Bavel 2005: 274)

Verwimp and Bavel looked at the impact of the events of 1994 in Rwanda by studying the fertility of refugee women, and find that these have had a clear impact on the reproductive behaviour of affected populations (those who never migrated, old caseload refugees, new caseload refugees, and those who had not lived in Rwanda before 1994) as well as on the survival of children (Verwimp and Bavel 2005). They find that the demographic history of two groups stands out: new caseload refugees (among whom many Hutu who left the country after the RPF took control) and those that had not lived in Rwanda before 1994 (mostly children of old caseload refugees).

As for the first group, many of whom lived under extremely harsh conditions in Zairian refugee camps¹⁷², women were found to have had higher fertility rates than non-refugees (the reference group for this study). At the same time, child mortality was high. This finding seems to support the old-age security

¹⁷² The Goma Epidemiology Group (1995) estimated that 6-10 percent of all refugees died within the first month of their arrival in Zaire.

theory, since new caseload refugees can be seen to compensate the loss of children by having more children¹⁷³. Women who had not lived in Rwanda before 1994, many of whom were daughters of old caseload refugees, were found to have higher fertility rates than non-refugee women. Also, infant and child mortality rates were lower, as these women came to live in circumstances less adverse than those of people in Rwanda. As a result they were likely to keep more of their children alive. Thus, for this group of women the old-age security theory does not seem to hold. The latter finding of Verwimp and Bavel is substantiated by my own data. Many of the younger women in Rwagitima commented that life in the host country was much better than in Rwanda, with better educational and employment opportunities and less fear of structural violence.

However, I have difficulty accepting the first argument of Verwimp and Bavel: that new caseload refugees tried to compensate the loss of children by having more of them. The argument seems too simplistic, since one could also argue that the same reason holds for Tutsi women in general: they tried to compensate the loss of thousands of Tutsi, attempting to ensure the survival of the ethnic group. While such motives no doubt played a role in fertility decisions among some Rwandans, an article by de Smedt (1998) points to another possible reason for the increase in fertility among new caseload refugees. De Smedt found that the age of marriage after 1994 in refugee camps in Tanzania, which harboured many new caseload refugees, no longer reflected marriage patterns found in Rwandan society before the genocide. Whereas the age at marriage for girls was twenty to twenty-five and for boys twenty-five to thirty before the genocide, de Smedt found that in Tanzanian refugee camps that housed Rwandan refugees marriages involving very young adolescents (girls as young as thirteen, boys as young as fourteen) were common. I would like to argue that this young age at marriage, coupled with sexual activity and the absence of or reluctance to use contraceptives, automatically leads to higher fertility. One can also infer from the work of de Smedt that the reason for such early marriages was less related to old-age security motives than to survival strategies of adolescents in the refugee camps. According to de Smedt, adolescents were bored in the camps, with little activity to keep them occupied and few employment opportunities. At the same time, many girls, especially those who had lost contact with their relatives, sought protection from the dangers encountered in refugee camps. Marriage provided a solution.

It appears that the genocide, and the processes preceding it, affected the short-term response of specific groups of refugees. Nevertheless, one should remember that differences in fertility may also be due to cohort changes in women's background characteristics (such as different age at marriage, changes in child birth spacing and educational level, or rural or urban residence) rather than to the effects of violent conflicts and forced migration. Moreover, the long-term fertility response remains unknown. It is not unlikely that differences in fertility

¹⁷³ Verwimp and Bavel (2005) also find that the survival chances of daughters was lower than that of sons, suggesting that parents may have been investing more in boys than in girls.

rates among different groups of refugees and non-refugees are in fact attributable to the availability and use of health care and family planning services, rather than to refugee status as such. This could explain why the fertility and mortality rate for new caseload refugees is found to be higher than for non-migrants and old caseload refugees, and for lower child mortality rates among (Tutsi) women born abroad, since health care services in the refugee camps for new caseload refugees were deplorable. In addition, it is important to realise that crisis-induced changes in fertility rates are usually followed by a rebound as conditions return to 'normal' (Lindstrom and Berhanu 1999).

My own data (see Table 7.3) show that Tutsi women in the sample have given birth to significantly more children than have Hutu women. There may be a number of reasons for this finding. For example, many of the Tutsi included in the sample have lived in Uganda in conditions which, according to them, were better than those found in Rwanda. This may especially have been the case during the civil war in the 1990s. It is conceivable that women in Rwanda felt the conditions were not suitable to bear children. However, it is also possible that Tutsi women somehow felt inclined to bear more children so as to strengthen their ethnic group or to replace the many dead that resulted from the ethnic violence and war. My data also show that among Tutsi women, significantly more children have died than among Hutu women. It is likely that one is looking here at the direct impact of the genocide. Note also that the average number of surviving children that women in the sample have does not differ significantly¹⁷⁴. This could imply that the choice for having more children has less to do with options that are related to violent conflict or forced migration but rather depend upon the culturally determined ideal number of children. Let us say that four children is the ideal number of children for Rwandan women. Considering the higher risks of death among Tutsi children, it makes sense to increase fertility during conditions in which more children are likely to die. While I acknowledge that my data is not able to support this hypothesis fully, it would nevertheless be worthwhile to consider this possibility.

My data also show that the support of children remains important to parents in old age after the war and genocide. However, violent conflict and forced migration have altered the extent and form of this support, as shown in the above-mentioned example of Kayteshi. While investments in children never secured actual support at a later time, perceived benefits were large enough for parents to feel secure. The events that unfolded in the recent history of Rwanda have had a serious impact on perceived benefits and actual support. With increased education, children leave the farm in search of non-farm employment, move to urban areas, or remain behind in host countries. It becomes increasingly difficult to maintain family obligations and support mechanisms under such circumstances. My data also suggest that the lineal (intergenerational) support system, while still important, is often accompanied by lateral support systems, without which many households would have difficulties to survive. The increasing importance of lateral

¹⁷⁴ However, this does not suggest that there may not be large differences between Hutu and Tutsi with respect to age composition and cohort sizes.

support systems seems to contradict the findings of Clay and Vander Haar (1993) and suggests that this is a trend that can possibly be attributed to the events of 1994.

Table 7.3: Children, by ethnic group

	Hutu (n=42)	Tutsi (n=59)	Total (n=101) ¹
Mean number of children born (s.d.)	5.00 (2.53)	5.95* (2.66)	5.55 (2.63)
Mean number of children still alive (s.d.)	3.98 (2.08)	4.36 (1.96)	4.20 (2.01)
Mean number of children who died (s.d.)	1.02 (1.24)	1.61** (1.53)	1.37 (1.44)

Source: Household survey 2005

**, ** significant at 10% and 5% respectively (Mann-Whitney Test)*

¹ *Note that only 101 out of 105 possible respondents have been included. Four respondents were unwilling to disclose how many of their children remain alive.*

It appears that the long-term fertility response of Rwandans is influenced by social and demographic factors that are not directly related to the war and genocide, such as age, socio-economic status, education of the mother, and place of residence. Although obviously the events have had an impact on social and demographic factors, their effect on fertility responses is likely to be indirect. Moreover, as McGinn (2000: 175) argues: “achieving desired fertility is a function of several factors, including use of effective contraceptives, which is in part a function of the availability of services”. While accessibility to health care services was highly restricted during the 1990s as a result of the civil war and genocide, access to such services has of late improved.

Women’s Health

High fertility rates are not only of interest in relation to old-age security. Mason and Taj (1987: 613) argue that “because of their reproductive physiology, women face a unique cost in having children, including the pain, exhaustion, and elevated risks of morbidity and mortality associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding”. Childbearing and rearing is an important determinant of women’s life course (Bruce 1989) and forms an important aspect of women’s as well as of children’s health. It is generally established that maternal and infant mortality risks increase with the growth of fertility rates (May *et al.* 1990). Considering the physical labour that women carry out, the number of pregnancies and the spacing

of births¹⁷⁵ and lactation have a clear impact on the risk of morbidity and mortality. It also affects child survival rates and the nutritional health status of young children. Moreover, high fertility suggests regular sexual intercourse, which has its own inherent risks.

While Rwandan fertility rates have dropped since the 1980s, the use of contraceptives remains low. This suggests that a higher age at marriage (and subsequent higher age at first birth) as well as birth spacing strategies¹⁷⁶ are important facets of decreased fertility rates. In 1988, the rate of modern contraceptive prevalence was only 3 to 4 percent, despite the fact that one-fourth to one-third of women at risk of becoming pregnant expressed the desire for effective contraception (May *et al.* 1990). In 1992, a figure of 13 to 14 percent was reported (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001). It is not entirely clear why the prevalence of contraceptives is so low, though it may be the result of poor family planning services (May *et al.* 1990). McGinn (2000) finds that in the mid-1990s the demand for family planning services among Rwandan new caseload refugees was strong, suggesting that in response to the emergency women wanted to decrease fertility. Verwimp and Bavel (2005) found that the fertility of new caseload refugees was in fact higher than for other groups of non-refugees. Hence, looking at the prevalence rate of contraceptive use among Rwandan refugees in Goma (2 percent), it is likely that there was a serious supply constraint rather than a lack of demand (McGinn 2000).

Despite the increase in health care facilities and family planning services in recent years, the use of modern contraceptives remains low – at 13 percent in 2000 (World Bank 2000) – although the prevalence rate has increased since 2000 (Direction de la Statistique 2005). Moreover, there is evidence that the use of traditional methods has not substantially increased or has even declined (May *et al.* 1990). Apparently, limited access to and availability of family planning services is not the only factor at play. The low demand for contraceptives also needs to be considered. There may be cultural barriers, family planning services may be too costly, or women may exert limited control over the relevant decision. Considering the strong pro-natalist sentiments among Rwandans, it can be argued that women are not always interested in birth control methods as such, but rather in methods to better space births¹⁷⁷. In fact, the use of birth control methods as a means to increase the length of birth intervals appears to be an African pattern (Caldwell *et al.* 1992).

Female respondents in this study suggested that, while condoms are now widely available over the counter in most shops in Rwagitima, they remain costly. Moreover, women commented that it is difficult to suggest the use of condoms or other types of contraceptives to their husbands for fear of being accused of extra-

¹⁷⁵ A short time span between two successive births impairs the survival chances of the previously born child. Early weaning is an example, as it increases the risk of illness, malnutrition, and psychological distress (Verwimp and van Bavel 2005).

¹⁷⁶ Primarily in the form of lactational amenorrhea (May *et al.* 1990).

¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the number of women wanting to space their next pregnancy has decreased since 2000, from 45 to 39 percent (Direction de la Statistique 2005).

marital affairs, or for seeming to not trust their male partners, suggesting that it is they who might have extra-marital affairs. Finally, there is widespread fear of the side effects of contraceptives, particularly condoms. Several women stated that they do not wish to use condoms, as they fear it has already been used by someone else – hence the slipperiness of the condom. The pill is suspected to cause cancer. Elsewhere it has also been argued that women fear that a condom might remain locked in the vagina after intercourse (Taylor 1990). This is problematic, for in the Rwandese cosmological system pathological states are provoked and characterised by abnormalities in bodily fluid movements. A condom is seen as interfering with the desirable exchange of bodily fluids, including vaginal discharges, during sexual intercourse¹⁷⁸. The curtailing of the exchange of bodily fluids by condoms may thus at least partly explain the low use of condoms in Rwanda (cf. Taylor 1990).

Low condom use increases the risk of infection with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)¹⁷⁹. This is a serious health risk, reflected in the fact that in the 1980s some 20 percent of (sub-) urban women were infected with chlamydia and some 10 percent with gonorrhoeal infections (May *et al.* 1990). Moreover, McGinn (2000) reports that 60 percent of women examined in refugee camps in Tanzania had some form of reproductive tract infection (including candidiasis, bacterial vaginosis, and trichomoniasis), 3 percent suffered from gonorrhoea and 2 percent from syphilis.

The rape of women by HIV/AIDS-infected men was used as a weapon of war during the genocide. At least 250,000 Hutu and Tutsi women were sexually violated during the genocide (Human Rights Watch 2004). Newbury and Baldwin (2000) argue that up to 5000 children were born as a result of this manner of rape. Other women were forced to work for soldiers or were sexually mutilated. Fear of infection with STDs or HIV/AIDS is not the only problem rape victims face. In Rwanda, great shame is associated with being raped. Women who were raped during the genocide but survived the atrocities are often “perceived as collaborators with the enemy, women who traded sex for their lives while their families were murdered” (Whitman 2005: 97). Post-war rates of HIV-prevalence (11 percent) are high compared to pre-war prevalence rates (1 percent). At the same time, seroprevalence among Rwandan refugees who lived in camps in Tanzania or Zaire increased six- to eightfold, and was even higher for Rwandans who were displaced within their own country during the conflict years. McGinn (2000) reports that of the women raped in these camps, 17 percent were found to be HIV-positive. In addition, many women report sexual coercion and physical violence by

¹⁷⁸ In Rwanda, women stretch their labia minora, a practice known locally as *gukuna imishino*. This is begun before menarche and continues up to marriage. The reason for this practice is that it is believed to facilitate female ejaculation. Most likely, the elongated labia minora swell during sexual arousal, also swelling inwards, thus stimulating the tissue surrounding the urethra and the para-urethral glands – the filling of which is considered to result in female ejaculation. For a further discussion on the practice of labia elongation, see Koster and Price (2008).

¹⁷⁹ Rwanda’s approach to combating HIV/AIDS is through the ABC-method: Abstinence, Be Faithful, and Condoms.

their male partners, increasing the risk of infection with STDs (Straten *et al.* 1998)¹⁸⁰. In their study among a cohort of 921 women with steady partners in Kigali, Straten *et al.* (1998) find that one-third of women reported sexual coercion by their male partner, while 21 percent mentioned physical violence perpetrated by their male partners. Independent predictors of sexual coercion and physical violence included the woman being HIV-positive, refusal to have sex, condom negotiation, financial inequality, and the men's alcohol abuse, thus reflecting financial and sexual gender power differentials. Needless to say, women's health is a public health issue¹⁸¹.

While the rate of infection with STDs is generally lower in the rural areas, rural women are at risk as well, especially when one takes into account the frequently occurring temporary migration of males to the cities. Some estimated the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (among adults aged fifteen to forty-nine years) at 11.2 percent in 2000 (The World Bank Group 2002) and 13.7 percent in 2002 (Banque Mondiale 2005). Others refer to a rate of 7.3 percent in urban areas and 2.2 percent in rural areas (Direction de la Statistique 2005). While not as high as in other African countries, these figures are alarming, the more so since there is evidence that the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS has risen dramatically since the mid 1990s, partly because of the war and genocide (Government of Rwanda 2002).

Considering the known demand for effective contraceptives and the importance of these in further reducing overall fertility rates and health risks, there is a need to develop more appropriate birth-control methods: ones that are able to overcome cultural barriers to their use. It is also important to increase women's access to contraceptives and to medical assistance in the event of complications. Moreover, Straten *et al.* (1998) argue that there is a strong association between economic dependence and sexual coercion and violence. If public health is to be improved through improvements in women's health, there is thus a need to address wider gender inequities that exist within society. Or as Straten *et al.* (1998: 71) put it: "Changing divorce, child custody, property, and inheritance laws are examples of structural interventions that may promote greater self-reliance for women and increase their ability to control their lives and leave abusive relationships"¹⁸². What is in fact called for is the empowerment of women.

¹⁸⁰ Population movements, the presence of the military and paramilitary forces, and the conscious use of rape by HIV/AIDS infected men as a way to commit genocide are some of the critical factors in the increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Other elements are likely to include limited options for legal redress, disturbance of cultural norms, and changes in household composition (protection).

¹⁸¹ There is evidence that many young people in Rwanda engage in multiple sexual relations, without using condoms, and that the tendency for female youth to be sexually active is greater than for male youth (Babalola 2004).

¹⁸² Some changes have in fact been made since the study by Straten *et al.* (1998) was undertaken. However, I am not aware of any study that examines the impact of these changes on women's or public health.

Nutritional Status

A government report argues that food availability per capita has been declining since 1990 (Republic of Rwanda 2007). In 1990, food availability was 886 kg per person per year. Since then, it has steadily declined to only 424 kg per capita in 2006. In contrast, the FAO reports that dietary energy consumption (kcal/person/day) and dietary protein consumption (g/person/day) in 2001-2003 was higher than in 1990-1992, while dietary fat consumption (g/person/day) was found to be lower (FAOSTAT 2006). The FAO also notes that the absolute number of undernourished has increased from 2.8 million in 1990-1992 to 3.0 million in 2001-2003 while the proportion of undernourished has in fact declined from 43 to 36 percent.

It is generally accepted that the nutritional status of pre-school children can be used as a proxy for the family's nutritional wellbeing, since it is assumed that young children show nutritional stress earlier than other family members. Malnutrition can exist in several forms:

“Chronic malnutrition is manifested in the form of “stunting” (measured by height-for-age), and is indicative of long-term, habitual calorie inadequacy and exposure to infectious diseases. Acute malnutrition or “wasting” (measured by weight-for-height or arm circumference) represents near term nutritional problems resulting from either recent bouts of illness or lack of sufficient calories. Underweight status (measured by weight-for-age) represents a combination of chronic and acute malnutrition and as such is generally a more difficult indicator to interpret.”

(Schnepf 1992: 4)

Nutritional vulnerability changes with age, principally as a result of weaning behaviour and exposure to the external environment and related disease vectors. The malnutritional status of children forms a reflection of different health problems (Schnepf 1992). While malnutrition during the first month of life reflects the mother's health and nutritional status during pregnancy, malnutrition during the first year reflects a combination of fetal, natal, and postnatal influences, such as breastfeeding practices and the introduction of solid foods. Moreover, malnutrition from age one to five reflects the interaction between food intake, diseases, and the socioeconomic environment.

Around 53 percent of the approximately 10 million child deaths worldwide each year can be attributed to malnutrition (Moser 1998). Malnutrition (in quality or quantity) of children younger than five years confers an additional risk of mortality from infectious diseases, such as diarrhoea, measles, and pneumonia, but also from malaria (Black *et al.* 2003). The prevalence of chronic malnutrition and underweight children in Rwanda is extremely high compared to other African countries. In 1976, 33 percent of children younger than five years of age were stunted, another 39 percent were underweight, and 6 percent were wasted (Meheus *et al.* 1977, Schnepf 1992). In the 1980s and 1990s, the rate of malnutrition among children increased, due, among other reasons, to the economic downturn

and civil war. In 1992, nearly 53 percent of rural children younger than six were found to be chronically malnourished, of whom 5 percent were found acutely malnourished, and nearly 30 percent were found to be underweight (Schnepf 1992). The World Bank also reports high levels of malnutrition (weight for age): 29 percent in 1990, 27 percent in 1995, 24 percent in 2000, and 23 percent in 2005 (The World Bank Group 2002, World Development Indicators Database, April 2007). The Government of Rwanda (2002) finds 6.7 percent of children are wasted and 42.7 percent are stunted. Moreover, in the same report it is concluded that in comparison to other African countries, child mortality is higher than one would expect given these rates of malnutrition. This suggests that the management of childhood diseases is a serious problem in Rwanda¹⁸³. In 2005, 45 percent of children were found to be chronically malnourished, 19 percent severely, while 4 percent of children were emaciated and 22 percent had a weight for age that was too low (Direction de la Statistique 2005). Moreover, between 2000 and 2005, no significant improvements were made in the nutritional status of children (Direction de la Statistique 2005).

When looking at such figures, it is important to realise that the prevalence of malnutrition is likely to be underestimated, and the recovery of malnutrition overestimated, due to high infant mortality and child mortality rates. Or, to put it more bluntly: “the ranks of the severely malnourished are depleted by death” (Schnepf 1992: 40). Infant mortality between 2000 and 2005 was 118, while mortality among children under five years in the same period amounted to 203. It is important to note that infant and under-five mortality rates rose drastically in the early 1990s, culminating in 1995 to rates of 124 and 209, respectively. The current mortality rates, despite having decreased, are still higher than the rates for 1990, at 103 and 173, respectively. This implies that the current state of malnutrition is in fact much worse than presented by these figures. Also, a false impression is given that children recover from high levels of malnutrition associated with the weaning period¹⁸⁴. Moreover, if one accepts that the nutritional status of children is an indicator of the health status of the population, there is ample reason to worry.

The nutritional status of children is a function of household food security. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the northwestern, north central, and eastern regions were characterised by high calorie production and availability, at least relative to other regions. Thus, Olson (1994b) finds a 115.25 percent caloric need met by production in Byumba (which at that time also included large parts of Umutara). After Kibungo (121.94 percent caloric need met by production), this was the highest figure of the country, substantially higher than the national average (at 95.03 percent). This could be related in part to relatively larger landholdings

¹⁸³ In fact, chronic diarrhoea is a common childhood disease that can result from malnutrition.

¹⁸⁴ Nutritional vulnerability increases during the 6-24-month “weaning” period. This is to be expected, since the mobility of children increases during this time and as children are introduced to supplementary foods, which are often of low nutritional value and prepared under unsanitary conditions (Schnepf 1992, Direction de la Statistique 2005).

compared to other regions, resulting in higher household subsistence production levels in terms of calories¹⁸⁵. Nevertheless, the prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight in children was higher than in food deficit regions (Schnepf 1992). Obviously, as well as calorie availability other determinants are of importance to children's nutritional status, such as intra-household food distribution, the risk of and susceptibility to diseases, infections and parasitic infestations, morbidity, household fertility and birth spacing, childcare habits, and availability of and access to health facilities.

Shortly after the genocide, 21 percent of women in Umutara were undernourished; a figure more than 1.5 times higher than the national average (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). The finding of Newbury and Baldwin is somewhat surprising, since respondents for my own study indicated that upon arrival in Rwagitima they found the food conditions much better than they had expected. In fact, one respondent recounted that when she left Uganda she had taken great care to bring sufficient food with her that would last until the next harvest. When she arrived in Rwagitima she found that the locally available quantity of food was much higher than she had anticipated. The supply of food was such that she even threw away the food that she had brought with her from Uganda. The lack of fit between the findings of Newbury and Baldwin and the experiences of respondents in my own study suggest that the food situation varied across Umutara. At present, 13 percent of women in Umutara suffer from chronic energy deficiencies (with a body mass less than 18.5 kg/m²), after Butare the highest rates found in Rwanda (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001). In the sample, only 46.2 percent of households indicated that they were able to meet household food demands.

Schnepf (1992) found no evidence for a nutrition-related gender bias for children, suggesting that girls were not at a relative nutritional disadvantage in pre-genocide Rwanda. Moreover, he also found no difference in child nutritional status related to the gender of the head of the household. However, Akresh and Verwimp (2006) find that crop failure and civil conflict impact children's health negatively and that gender impacts differ between these two types of shocks:

“With respect to crop failure, girls, from poor households in particular, are severely negatively impacted, but boys (in either poor or rich households) do not experience any negative effects on their height for age z-scores. However, for children that experience a civil conflict, the health status of both boys and girls in rich and poor households are negatively impacted, although the estimates for boys and by wealth levels are not precisely measured.”

(Akresh and Verwimp 2006: 3)

Whereas girls are usually more likely than boys to survive infancy in Africa, Verwimp and Bavel (2005) argue that this sex differential in child survival changes under severe living conditions. For example, among Rwandan refugees in the

¹⁸⁵ Robins (1990), referring to a study by Loveridge *et al.* (1988), argues that larger parcels are positively associated with increased sales of food. Larger parcels do not appear to be clearly linked to increased per capita caloric consumption or better nutritional status.

Zairian camps, more boys survived than girls. The authors argue that given severe camp conditions and the prevalent customary inheritance norms, the survival of at least one son was considered a priority. Schnepf's view that nutritional disadvantage is not influenced by gender is thus contested.

Other mechanisms also influence child nutritional levels. For example, Horton (1998) finds that birth order has an impact on long-term nutritional status for children in the Philippines. Horton suggests that parents do not discriminate among children of different ages, but that increasing numbers of children strain household resources, among which financial resources but more importantly parental time and attention. This strain on household resources subsequently leads to the degradation in child nutritional status. In a similar vein, Schnepf (1992) finds that the larger the number of older household members, the poorer a child's relative bargaining position with respect to household calorie distribution. Nevertheless, the number of adults in a household shows a positive association with child nutritional status, as more labour power represents potentially greater earning power, thus increasing purchasing power as well as creating more time available for children, which in turn relates positively to child nutritional status. Such mechanisms provide a clue as to why child nutritional status in Rwanda declined so much in the 1990s. As I have shown, male rural-urban migration increased considerably during this period, together with the effects of the civil war and genocide, which left many women fully in charge of agricultural production. As a consequence, women were left with very little "leisure time" in which to look after their children; instead, they had to rely on older children to look after younger siblings.

Schnepf also finds a positive correlation between household income and calorie acquisition on child nutritional status, as increased income enables investments in, for example, health care and sanitation. He argues that "family planning activities to reduce household size could benefit both household food consumption behavior (directly) and child nutritional status (both directly via lower child intrahousehold orderings and indirectly via improved household food consumption behaviour)" (Schnepf 1992: xi). Moreover, poor nutritional levels impair health outcomes, which are likely to reduce labour productivity and, thus, household income. It is also important to note that this process may at some point become a downward spiral, since lower household income is likely to reduce calorie intake as well as opportunities to access health care facilities in times of ill health. This also means that if morbidity is reduced and the accessibility of health care facilities is improved – both in terms of distance and costs – child nutrition is likely to be positively affected.

Summary

In this section, I have described some of the factors that affect people's physical ability and have shown how some health risks of the pre-colonial era have been curtailed: for example, by the introduction of widespread vaccination programs. Nevertheless, diseases such as malaria, typhoid, intestinal worms, tuberculosis,

respiratory diseases, and HIV/AIDS remain endemic. Other problems, such as access to clean drinking water and safe latrines, also continue to exert a negative pressure on people's health. The war and genocide undermined many of the health improvements that had been made prior to the event. Poverty, crop failures during the war, widespread occurrence of rape during the genocide, destruction of health care facilities, and death of health care personnel have all had a negative impact. And while health indicators are improving in recent years, recovery remains slow. Moreover, the absolute levels are a matter of great concern. One out of ten children does not reach the age of one, and one-fifth of children never reach the age of five. Also, severe under-nutrition is an enormous problem in Rwanda and is an indication of household food security (for a further discussion of household food security, see Chapter 11). Almost half of Rwanda's children are chronically malnourished. More importantly, the nutritional status of children has not improved since 2002. Respondents have indicated that access to modern health care is limited and is related foremost to their lack of income. Subsequently, reliance on traditional healers remains high.

Before the war and genocide, high fertility was an important form of old-age security. It still is at present. Yet violent conflict, displacement, migration, and HIV/AIDS have affected the form and functioning of this security system. On the one hand, many parents have lost one or more children. On the other hand, many children lost their parents and rely increasingly on their grandparents for support. Surviving children may live too far away to assist their parents on a regular basis. The distance between children and parents also has an impact on the type of assistance provided to parents. Physical assistance appears to have become less common, and remittances are often an important source of income for the elderly.

Migration and violent conflict have also had a clear impact on fertility patterns in Rwanda. Some suggest that particular groups, such as new caseload refugees or the children of old caseload refugees (who were born outside Rwanda), have been affected differently. While not contesting this view, I argue that it is important to realise that other factors, such as social-cultural or demographic, may also have exerted an influence. Overall, fertility rates have declined in the last decennia but they nevertheless remain high. This poses serious health risks. Maternal mortality rates are very high; close to 1100 women die per 100,000 living births. Moreover, high fertility rates pose a serious health risk to children as well, as large families tend to undermine the nutritional status of the youngest members of households.

Intellectual Capability

Education is both an indicator of development and a means to achieve sustainable development, thereby forming an important aspect of human capital. The Government of Rwanda considers its people to be country's most important resource. Education, including vocational training, is seen as a significant means to develop human capital and to stimulate the country's further socio-economic development. At present, a large majority of self-employed persons, wage-earners,

and unpaid family workers have never been to school or have not studied beyond primary level. However, more than half of the workers with regular salaries in the public and formal private sector have at least attained secondary school level (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Parents are conscious of these trends, and many feel that schooling can ensure access to this type of employment, thus securing the family's overall livelihood security. Education, especially at higher levels, is seen as a way out of poverty, since higher levels of education are believed to guarantee access to non-farm employment, in particular jobs in the public sector. Most parents I spoke to acknowledge the importance of education and many strive to enrol their children in vocational training or secondary and higher education. Children are also fully aware of the opportunities that come with increased education. Many make considerable effort to continue with their schooling.

Box 7.3: Problems with education

Hope was born in Tanzania, where she also attended primary school. After completion of primary school, it was uncertain whether she could continue her education, as her father had passed away when she was only fifteen and her mother (Jacqueline) had difficulty raising the school fees. But Hope was lucky. As she was sponsored by one of the teachers, a nun with whom she was friends, she was able to start secondary school at the Catholic mission post. While she was attending primary school, the genocide in Rwanda came to an end and Hope's mother, Jacqueline, decided to return 'home'. Not wanting to endanger Hope's educational opportunities, Jacqueline decided to leave Hope at the mission post and to return 'home' with her other children.

Meanwhile, the nuns were impressed by Hope's educational performance and religious zeal, and they invited her to come with them to Canada. Hope was thrilled, but first had to return to Rwanda in order to obtain a passport. On arrival, she found her mother very ill and she used the money that she had been given for her passport to pay for medical treatment for her mother. When the nuns contacted her, Hope told them that she felt she had to stay in Rwanda in order to be able to look after her mother.

Hope remained at home for one year. She had only been able to finish the second year of secondary school and desperately wanted to continue with her education, but there was no money to do so. One day, while listening to the radio, Hope learned about a programme in which orphaned students were given financial assistance. Hope applied for aid and was granted money to continue her education. She registered at a school in Kigali. There was, however, a problem, as the school's courses were given in French, a language unfamiliar to Hope. Nevertheless, she was able to finish her third year of secondary school. For her fourth year, Hope was transferred to a school in Gahini (some thirty kilometres from Rwagitima, where her mother had settled in the meantime). Problems continued, however, as the financial assistance was withheld from her when the organisation that provided it realised that Hope was not a genocide orphan. Undaunted, Hope did not give up, and in order to pay her school fees she started a small shop on campus, selling items such as soap, toothpaste, and sanitary pads. She also became friends with some of the teachers, which enabled her to gain access to more nutritious food. One of the teachers even assisted Hope by paying her school fees during her sixth and last year of secondary school.

Unfortunately, in her last year Hope fell ill and her grades plummeted. Though she passed her final exams, her marks were not high enough for her to qualify for a government scholarship that would have allowed her to attend a public university. Around this time, Hope was asked by suitors to marry, but she turned them down because she did not want to marry before finishing her education. Instead, after finding a new sponsor, she decided to retake her final exams and returned to her former secondary school. However, that school year was particularly difficult for students, as the water supply at the facility had broken down and students were required to walk long distances (up and down the hill) to Lake Muhazi in order to fetch drinking water and to wash their clothes. No longer able to run the school shop, which had already been taken over by another student, Hope's only source of nourishment was beans and maize, which did not agree with her. She had difficulty concentrating in class, often fell asleep, and was convinced that she had been put under a black magic spell. Her health deteriorated rapidly, and after a few months she decided to leave the school and return home. She did not give up, however, but decided to take the open national exams in Nyagatare. She did, but only to learn that her grades were even lower than they had been the first time.

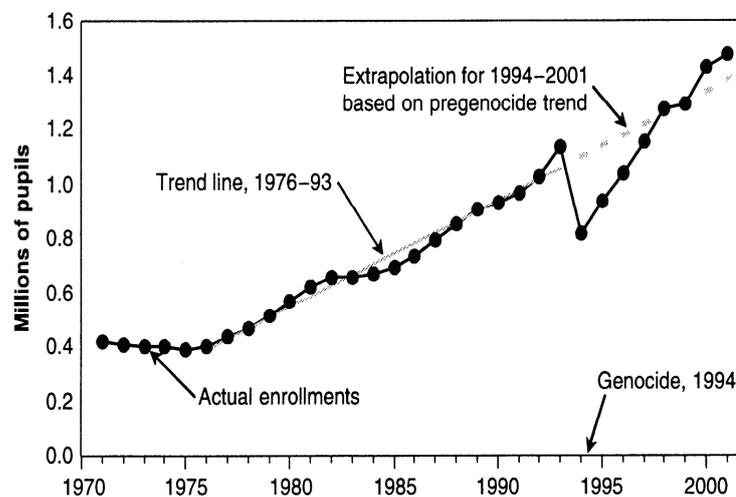
While awaiting the opportunity to raise enough money to start professional education at a private school, Hope opened a small restaurant near her mother's house. The restaurant did not earn enough money, however, and she decided to try her luck in Kigali. She moved in with her cousin and soon found employment as a waitress in a small restaurant. Later, she found another job in a local milk factory. Hope tried to save her money while she continued to look for a sponsor. When she finally found one, she quit her job. She now attends catering school in the hope that this will improve her employment opportunities and enable her to spend her life in Kigali.

Investments made in children's education indeed seem to pay off in the long run. Barrett *et al.* (2001) find that educational attainment is one of the most important determinants of non-farm earning in rural Africa, especially in more remunerative salaried and skilled employment. Lassibille and Tan (2005) demonstrate convincingly that the economic returns to education in Rwanda rise with the level of education and exceptionally so for higher education. Those with higher education find it easier to find employment in the public sector. Moreover, due to the enormous loss of life in 1994, there is a considerable demand for highly educated workers, who are generally better paid than workers in the formal and informal private sector. The returns to education in the informal sector are also found to be high, possibly since education equips people with "the skills to process information, identify economic opportunities and take advantage of them" (Lassibille and Tan 2005: 107). Even before the war and genocide, gaining an education was important for securing off-farm employment, and "nearly a third of all such employment [was] held by the 17.4% of individuals who have managed to complete primary school" (Clay, Kampayana et al. 1990: 11).

The war and genocide have had an enormous impact on the educational system, not only resulting in the deaths of many students and teachers, and causing many others to flee to neighbouring countries, but also leading to the destruction of school buildings, school equipment, and archives. Between April 1994 and September 1995, the schooling of children came to a complete stop. When

school activities were resumed in 1995, the educational system had to deal with a pupil population composed of local children, children born abroad (often speaking a different language), and children from refugee camps, as well as a severe shortage of teachers. Only five years after the end of the genocide, however, the gross primary school enrolment rate (GER)¹⁸⁶ had rebounded to the pre-genocide long-term trend-line (see Figure 7-2). Compared to 1996, the number of students in secondary school had almost tripled (World Bank 2004). The ratio in higher education had also tripled since the early 1990s (Lassibille and Tan 2005). Apparently, basic education recovered remarkably quickly, although it has to be noted that part of this recovery is simply due to the new generation of children born and entering the education system.

Figure 7.2: *Enrolment trends in primary schooling, Rwanda 1971-2001*



Source: World Bank (2004)

While substantial progress has been achieved in the field of education after the genocide, the educational system continues to struggle with its impacts. Although nearly 99 percent of all children attended the first year of primary school in 2001-2002 (République du Rwanda 2005c), many of them were not able to continue their education at a later age or at a higher level. Many school buildings are still under-equipped and there continues to be a general shortage of didactic materials. Moreover, there are too few teachers for too many pupils and too many teachers with low educational qualifications. Therefore, many schools need to resort to hiring foreign personnel (among whom are teachers from Uganda and VSO volunteers). In order to facilitate the integration of students who were previously taught under different educational systems, secondary and university programmes were harmonised in 1996 (République du Rwanda 2005c). At primary and secondary level, both public and private schools now follow the same official

¹⁸⁶ The gross enrolment rate is calculated by dividing the total number of students enrolled at a given level of education by the population in the official age range for that level.

programme and fall under the state inspectorate of education. The state is also responsible for entry exams at these levels and for certificates and diplomas. Whereas in the past, access to secondary and higher education was based on discriminatory rules (especially with regard to ethnicity and geographical locality), after 1994 admission became based on scholarly results only, to which end a National Centre for Exams was created (République du Rwanda 2005c).

There remains a chronic capacity shortage that has led to the rise of private secondary schools and universities all over the country. Currently, about twenty institutes of higher education exist, most of which were created after 1994. The majority of these are private institutions, many of which are parochial. Despite the increase in the number of educational institutions: "The private sector share of enrolments has remained unchanged during the 1990s: less than 1% in primary education, more than 40% at the secondary level and nearly 40% in higher education" (Lassibille and Tan 2005: 94). Moreover, not all of the private institutions have met the conditions required by the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, students continue to register at them (Rwanda Development Gateway n.d.), indicating a demand for more educational facilities. Recently, several Night School Universities have also been established, in the province of Kibungo and elsewhere, in order to spread university access.

History of the Educational System

Prior to 1900, education in Rwanda was mostly delivered through the family and through *itorero* (cadet corps or training schools). A varied education was offered, not only including dance training but also "the acquisition of military skills, knowledge of the country, elegant and proper manners, knowledge of poetry and panegyrics, and art in the use of words" (Codere 1973: 22). The *itorero*, founded by local chiefs, provided formal, informal, and practical training for political life. By taking responsibility for the training of young cadets, local chiefs invested in the cadets' future loyalty. Moreover, as cadet corps moved through different parts of the country in order to distribute the burden of contributing to their support over different localities, alliances with other chiefs were strengthened. Almost all Tutsi and Twa men were taken into various *itorero*, while few Hutu were. Moreover, those Hutu who did have the opportunity to attend *itorero* were segregated from the Tutsi (Codere (1973). In this way, social differentiation was strengthened not only by ideology – the myth of the origin of the ethnic groups – but also by the educational system, offering opportunities of knowledge accumulation and widespread acquaintanceships to Tutsi and Twa but not to Hutu.

The Belgians introduced a new element to the *itorero* by adding European schooling to the curriculum. In the hope of exerting an acculturative influence upon the Tutsi elite, special privilege was given to them, as the colonial administration considered them to be more intelligent than Hutu. Over time, European education became a prerequisite for any administrative job or Europeanised occupation, and slowly the European educational system replaced the *itorero*. The adapted *itorero* in effect became an institution of indirect rule.

In the early days of European education, it was regarded in the setting of the traditional competition among Tutsi for positions of power and wealth. Since Tutsi were given access more easily to the new educational system than were Hutu, they also gained a disproportionate number of well-rewarded white-collar jobs, creating additional tensions between the two ethnic groups. However, over time more Hutu entered the educational system. Since the Catholics had established close ties with the colonial administration, Protestant missions, including the Seventh Day Adventists, opted to attract socially marginalised or discontented individuals who saw these missions as an alternative to the status quo (Longman 1997). One way to attract such groups was by giving them access to education and employment. The Adventists had Hutu monitors teaching Tutsi long before Catholic schools and missions. The fact that Hutu not only entered the educational system but even came to teach Tutsi met with resistance, but was a process that could not be stopped. The educational emancipation of Hutu had become a fact. With time, education and the new standard of achievement slowly replaced kinship membership as the determining factor binding Tutsi society, determining the country's political structure and undermining the old ethnic-based determination of opportunities, life chances, and social worth (Codere 1973).

After independence and the publication of the Hutu manifest (see Chapter 2), the educational system experienced a revolution of its own. A quota system was introduced which, theoretically at least, meant that fewer Tutsi could attend school, since they formed a minority in the country. Many Tutsi children were not allowed to study beyond primary level, although private schools continued to offer opportunities for all ethnic groups. Moreover, in 1964 the majority of secondary school teachers were still Tutsi (Dorsinville 1964:7, cited in Codere 1973: 44).

After the genocide, the school system changed again radically, with acceptance into public schools no longer being based on ethnic background but on school performance. This makes the educational system potentially more equal. However, little is known about the performance of different ethnic groups in the educational system, making it difficult to assess whether Hutu and Tutsi indeed have equal opportunities for education. A recent parliamentary probe has revealed that a 'genocide ideology' among students, teachers, and school administrators is found in many secondary schools around the country (Buyinza 2007). According to Buyinza, the parliamentary report mentions the occurrence of ethnic divisions, genocide-fuelling letters, and explicit targeting of genocide survivor students¹⁸⁷. However, unlike other students, genocide survivors are regularly sponsored by churches and organisations like the Fund for Survivors of Genocide (FARG).

Organisation of the Educational System

The Rwandese schooling system is organised according to a 6-3-3-4 structure. After kindergarten, which is still a rare educational institute mainly found in the cities,

¹⁸⁷ In some cases, genocide survivor students are required to wear uniforms different from those of other students. There have also been reports of stoning of survivor students and of their personal belongings being destroyed (Buyinza 2007).

children attend primary school for six years. Secondary education consists of two levels. The general O-level, or '*Tronc Commun*', takes three years, after which the pupil has to sit for exams. Depending on the results of this exam, the pupil then commences with another three years on the general A-level, specialising in four best subjects, or three years of vocational training either in public or private schools. At the end of the three years of A-level, another exam follows, determining whether the student is eligible for one of the public institutes of higher education, which are sponsored by the government, meaning that the student is eligible for a government scholarship. If the student's grades are not high enough, the student may pursue higher education at one of the private institutes (some of which enjoy state subsidies), at his or her own cost.

At the public institutes of higher education, an introductory year is obligatory in which the francophone student is taught English and the Anglophone student French: in theory, making the student bilingual by the time he or she commences his actual studies. Students are also required to attend a 'solidarity camp' or 'Protocol Course', with classes concerning the history of the country and reconciliation and a three-month military training. After four years, a Bachelors degree is obtained and for some specialities, such as medicine, it is possible to continue studies up to a Masters degree.

Kinyarwanda is one of the obligatory courses given at primary level and is also the main language of instruction¹⁸⁸. Before 1994, French was a common teaching language at school. Currently, from the fourth to the sixth year of primary education, the language of instruction is supposed to be either English or French. However, during my stay in the country I heard of several primary schools teaching in Kinyarwanda. I expect this is done on a large scale, considering the shortage of qualified teachers able to speak English or French fluently enough to teach in either of those languages. Classes at secondary schools and institutions for higher education can be followed in either French or English or a mixture of these languages, depending upon the background of the teachers.

¹⁸⁸ Almost the entire population of Rwanda speaks Kinyarwanda (in the province of Umutara 99.7 percent do so). Unlike most other provinces, English is the second most commonly spoken language in Umutara (spoken by only 3 percent of the population), followed by French (2.4 percent) and Swahili (2 percent). Before 1994, French was the country's second official language. The fact that French comes after English in the province of Umutara is related to the fact that large numbers of refugees have settled in this region, most from Uganda, where English is spoken and taught in schools. Men are more likely than women to speak a foreign language. Foreign languages are most likely to be learned either at school – especially so at the higher levels of education – or in the urban environment. In both cases, men have an advantage over women (République du Rwanda 2005b).

Educational Infrastructure in Rwagitima

In Rwagitima, as in many other areas of the country, educational facilities are in a deplorable state and learning conditions are not much better. Children and teachers complain about the conditions of boarding schools. Pupils lament the sleeping arrangements, where numerous students sleep together in a room or hall, some even having to share a single bed. Meals normally consist of *posho* (maize bread) or rice with beans only, leading to malnourishment, which in turn has a negative impact on learning ability. Sanitary conditions are substandard and clean drinking water is not readily available on the premises. There is a lack of study areas, or if these are provided, an erratic supply of electricity, making it difficult to do homework at night. Teachers complain about the lack of teaching materials, underpayment, lethargic students, and oversized classes.

Since independence in 1962, primary education is obligatory for all children from the age of seven. Nevertheless, parents have to carry other expenses, such as the purchase of school materials and uniforms. For many parents, these costs are difficult to bear. Moreover, school-going children cannot contribute to the household's labour pool, though their contribution can in fact be necessary to help sustain household income. The age of school entry is seven, although sometimes children six years of age are permitted to begin primary school, depending upon their intellectual capabilities and the ability of schools to take in additional students.

Nationwide, the number of primary schools has risen from 1882 before the genocide to 2142 in 2000-2001, while in the same period the number of secondary schools has increased from 280 to 378. The number of teachers has increased considerably as well: from 16,285 at primary level before the genocide to 28,698 in 2000-2001 and at secondary level from 3886 to 6499 during the same period (Government of Rwanda 2002). In 2002, of the entire population in Umutara, 15.1 percent was attending primary school, while 1.1 percent was attending secondary school (République du Rwanda 2005c). Nevertheless, key informant interviews in this study have indicated that there is a considerable shortage of qualified teachers and several schools in and near Rwagitima had to resort to hiring Ugandan personnel or teachers provided by the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). I have also found ample evidence of secondary school graduates teaching at the schools that they had attended themselves until just several months before.

In Rwagitima, there is one primary school and a secondary school. There are other schools in the vicinity, including another primary school (located approximately ten kilometres away) and three other secondary schools (located in Kabarore and Gahini, ten and thirty kilometres away, respectively). The distance to the nearest primary school varies from sector to sector, as was confirmed by a study conducted in the district of Murambi by Omosa (2002). Since there is a primary school in the centre of the town, the distance to this school for children in

Rwagitima is less than five kilometres¹⁸⁹. Children living in Nyabubare, one of the localities included for this study, have to travel the farthest.

At the time of the household survey (2005), a number of students (n=44) were not residing at home. Half of them attend school elsewhere in Umutara (n=22, of whom 16 study in the vicinity of Rwagitima but who stay in boarding schools). A considerable number of students attend school in Kigali (n=10), while a few study in the provinces of Byumba (n=3), Ruhengeri (n=2), Kigali-Ngali (n=1), Butare (n=1) and Gisenyi (n=1). Another ten students currently study in Uganda. Finally, ten students attend boarding schools, but were at home at the time of the survey. I do not have data on the location of their boarding schools. Both girls and boys attend boarding schools. As for differences between the three localities included in this study's sample design, children from Kiburara A are less likely to attend boarding school than are children in Nyabubare or Nyakayaga. The fact that the primary and secondary school in Rwagitima is located in Kiburara A may explain this.

Literacy

In Umutara, approximately six out of every ten people can read and write, ranking it the fifth most literate province in the country after Kigali City¹⁹⁰, and the provinces of Gitarama, Kigali-Ngali and Cyangugu. The district of Murambi has the highest literacy rate among those aged fifteen or above (65.7 percent), while the lowest literacy rate is found in the district of Kahi (53.7 percent). Moreover, the district of Kahi is the only district where the literacy rate of women aged fifteen or older is less than 50 percent (République du Rwanda 2005c). These figures are perhaps not surprising if one considers that the district of Murambi is more densely populated and harbours an important town¹⁹¹, and it has also been the location of several religious mission posts¹⁹². The district of Kahi, however, is a sparsely populated area and a cattle-rearing region. According to key informants, the education of girls is not valued as highly in this region as elsewhere in Umutara. Unfortunately, I have no further data to substantiate their view.

In Rwagitima, almost 64 percent of the entire population has followed some form of formal education¹⁹³ (see Table 7.4). Looking only at those aged fifteen and

¹⁸⁹ However, this primary school also attracts children from outside Rwagitima and it is therefore likely that at least some of the pupils have to travel more than five kilometres in order to reach primary school.

¹⁹⁰ People coming to the capital tend to be employees and their families, students (who tend to remain in town after graduation), and those looking for employment. Many of these have had some years of schooling, explaining why the literacy rate of Kigali City is the highest in the country.

¹⁹¹ Literacy rates among urban people are generally higher than among rural people.

¹⁹² These mission posts have been in the research area since colonialism. As well as evangelisation, mission posts were concerned with alphabetisation of the population.

¹⁹³ There are 26 people in the sample attending or having attended kindergarten, which is striking, considering that kindergartens are few in Rwanda and are primarily located in

above, almost 80 percent have had some form of formal education. This seems to be a large proportion, considering that in Umutara, among those aged six or older, only 63 percent of the people are literate (République du Rwanda 2005c). It makes sense when one considers that a large proportion of the adult population in Rwagitima has previously lived abroad (mostly in Uganda), many of whom attended school during their years of exile. Moreover, the relaunching of academic activities in 1995 occurred at a varied pace in different parts of the country, and activities and facilities were much better in Rwagitima than in other parts of the province (République du Rwanda 2005b).

Table 7.4: Distribution of educational attainment in sample, by age

	0-14 (n=353)		15-64 (n=367)		65+ (n=25)		Total (n=745 ¹)	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
No formal education	190	53.8	69	18.7	10	40.0	269	36.1
Primary, first half	125	35.4	66	17.9	6	24.0	197	26.4
Primary, second half	36	10.2	147	39.8	7	28.0	190	25.5
Secondary, O-level	2	0.6	48	13.0	2	8.0	52	7.0
Secondary, A-level	-	-	23	6.2	-	-	23	3.1
Higher education	-	-	14	3.8	-	-	14	1.9

Source: Household survey 2005

¹ Ten people have been excluded from this analysis, as their educational achievements are unknown.

Despite the high number of adults who have had some form of education, few have gone beyond primary level, as is the case in other parts of the country. Like many other regions in the country, and probably also in those regions where refugees settled earlier, there is a shortage of secondary schools in the research area, and the existing ones cope with limited funds. As a result, many children are and were forced to terminate their studies while still at primary school. In fact, while the number of children starting school and eventually making it to grade 6 has risen nationwide in ten years, from 44 to 73 percent in 2001, repetition rates have also increased, from 11 percent in 1990-1991 to 34 percent in 2000-2001. The survival rate in secondary education has remained stable at around 60 percent during that same period. The survival rate in public higher education is generally weak: between 11 and 50 percent graduation rates among final year students and 53 to 76 percent for overall survival rates (Lassibille and Tan 2005). During 2001-2002, only 26 percent of candidates could be admitted to secondary schools, 37 percent were able to pass from O- to A-level, and less than 12 percent were

the cities. In Rwagitima there is one kindergarten. However, since it is assumed that few children are literate before commencing primary school, those people whose highest or current educational attainment is nursery school are included in the proportion of people with no formal education.

admitted to public institutes of higher education (République du Rwanda 2005c). Moreover, Newbury and Baldwin (2000) find that only 16 percent of students who passed the final year exam of primary school were qualified for admittance to a state or state-subsidised school, while another 10 percent was able to attend private secondary schools. The latter group, it must be noted, attends school at great cost to their family.

Many households in Rwagitima have more than one child attending school. Some parents, especially among the poor, are forced to choose between their primary and secondary school-going children¹⁹⁴. Elsewhere it has been found that parents tend to give preference to secondary education (Omosa 2002), which seems to make sense, as employment opportunities increase with increased educational levels (Lassibille and Tan 2005). Rather than having many children with lower education, the progressive education of one child may provide the household with improved future prospects and serve as a better safety net. In the sample in this study, only fourteen persons (1.9 percent), of whom only four are women, have attained higher educational levels.

Nationwide, the proportion of illiterate people increases progressively from about 35 years and above, reaching approximately 70 percent at the age of sixty-five and 86.4 percent for those aged eighty-five and older. Here it needs to be noted that the rate of illiteracy increases more rapidly among women than among men (République du Rwanda 2005c). However, looking at the data I collected, one can also see that the proportion of people who have had no formal education decreased considerably over the years; among those aged sixty-five and older, 40 percent never had any education, against approximately 19 percent in the age group of fifteen to sixty-four years. Considering the importance attached to formal education at present, the level of illiteracy can be expected to decrease even further in the near future. This assumption is corroborated by other findings that show that between 1978 and 1991 the literacy rate increased by about 13 percent and continued to do so between 1991 and 2002, albeit at a slower rate¹⁹⁵.

Gender Inequalities in Education

The level of literacy among women and men is about equal until the age of twenty-four, after which the level of illiteracy increases more rapidly among women. Moreover, for people aged fifty, half of the men are literate against only one out of five women (République du Rwanda 2005c), reflecting the fact that schools during the colonial administration were fewer in number and the education of girls was considered less important (for this last point also see also Codere 1973). In Umutara, the proportion of literate men aged fifteen or above is higher than the

¹⁹⁴ Lassibille and Tan (2005) find that 26 percent of total household spending is on primary education, while the share for secondary education is 62 percent (many private schools at this level account for higher household spending) and for higher education 12 percent.

¹⁹⁵ This is possibly the result of population movements and the destruction of buildings during this time.

proportion of literate women in the same age category, at 66.9 and 53.1 percent, respectively (République du Rwanda 2005c)¹⁹⁶.

Respondents for this study were asked about the highest attained educational level of children aged between zero and fourteen, rather than whether they were literate. I found that the proportion of girls with some form of education is higher than the proportion of boys, although the difference is not statistically significant, as is the case for those aged between fifteen and sixty-four. However, more men than women go on to higher education. The World Bank finds that differences between boys and girls in educational access and survival rates only emerge in higher education; in 2000 the GER (see footnote 34) for women was only 0.44 times that for men¹⁹⁷. At the primary level, however, overall GER rose from 74 percent in 1992 to 108 percent in 2000 and GERs for girls and boys were practically the same (World Bank 2004). During the same period, the disparity between boys and girls narrowed at the secondary level to the point where the ratio was about the same for both groups (World Bank 2004). While this is an improvement over recent years, gender-based disparities in higher education seem difficult to overcome despite the fact that the government of Rwanda has adopted the principle “Educating a girl is educating the entire nation” (Rwanda Development Gateway, accessed 31-1-2007).

The GER for primary education in Umutara in 2002 was just over 101 percent (102.6 for boys and 100.5 for girls). However, the net enrolment rate (NER)¹⁹⁸ for rural areas in Umutara was less than 60 percent and as such is one of the lowest in the country. While enrolment rates in Umutara resemble the national trend, it is nevertheless striking to see that NERs for secondary education in Umutara are highest after the city of Kigali (République du Rwanda 2005c).

It has been argued that marriage results in fewer women than men attaining higher levels of education (République du Rwanda 2005c). Another explanation is perhaps more likely. Structurally, girls are found to perform worse than boys (Government of Rwanda 2002), especially during primary and the first three years of secondary school, making it more difficult for them to compete for the highly coveted places in public higher education (World Bank 2004)¹⁹⁹. Perhaps those girls who marry do so because they see their educational opportunities curtailed by the system (and might, so to speak, just as well get married and start a family; see the story of Hope in Box 7.3). If the government of Rwanda is indeed of the opinion

¹⁹⁶ Looking at literacy rates in the rural areas of Rwanda as a whole, one finds that considerably more women than men are illiterate, respectively 46.2 percent and 39.1 percent of people aged six and older, respectively (République du Rwanda 2005c).

¹⁹⁷ During the 2004-2005 academic year, only 39 percent of students enrolled at higher educational institutes were female (Rwanda Development Gateway, accessed 31-1-2007).

¹⁹⁸ The net enrolment rate is defined as the percentage of children of primary school age actually attending primary school.

¹⁹⁹ This obviously becomes all the more problematic for girls coming from poor households. It is not difficult to imagine that opportunities for poor girls to enter more expensive private institutions is more limited than for girls coming from wealthier families.

that the education of women is important, more research needs to be done on why girls perform structurally worse than boys, and any gender imbalances in the system need to be addressed. Also, the manner in which the assignment of scholarships is arranged needs to be more closely examined in order to see how more girls can be better educated.

When comparing the highest attained educational level of women in this study's sample to that of rural women in Rwanda (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001), the percentage of women with no formal education in the sample is seen to be slightly lower than that at the national level (35.1 and 37.8 percent, respectively). Compared to rural women in general, considerably more women in Rwagitima have been able to finish secondary school (9.0 percent in the sample against 3.1 percent of all rural women in Rwanda) and higher educational levels (1.0 and 0.0 percent, respectively). A possible reason women in Rwagitima are better educated is that they might have had better access to educational facilities, especially relevant for old caseload refugees. Indeed, several respondents indicated that they had been to school in Uganda or Tanzania. Since Rwagitima is characterised by a high proportion of old caseload refugees, this could explain why so many women in Rwagitima are literate. Additionally, nearly 25 percent of the research population was born in one of the surrounding countries, mainly in Uganda. Many others were not born abroad but lived in neighbouring countries during or shortly after 1994, and can be assumed to have had access to educational facilities there.

As in other rural areas, school entry of many children in Rwagitima is often delayed. Whereas children in the urban areas enter school around the age of five to seven, a considerable number of children aged six to seven have never been to school (Republic of Rwanda 2005). I have found evidence of children aged fifteen or above who were still attending primary school, a situation to which the events in the 1990s have no doubt contributed²⁰⁰. The fact that many children commence school when they are over-age is also related to the fact that many of them have to travel long distances to get to school (likely to increase after primary school). While more girls than boys never attend school at all, it is striking to find that relatively speaking more girls aged eight or below enter school than do boys of the same age (République du Rwanda 2005c). A problem related to late entry into school is that biological maturity, especially of girls, occurs when pupils have not advanced as much in their schooling as would have been possible had they started attending at a younger age. A number of girls in Rwagitima have in fact commented that their maturity made them drop out of school, either because they felt ashamed (they felt they looked too old to still be at a school level normally associated with younger children), because of the risks involved in travelling (assaults, rape), or because of premature pregnancies²⁰¹ or the risk thereof. Another disadvantage of entering the

²⁰⁰ Alternatively, it is also possible that children, especially those coming from poor families, are expected to perform domestic chores or some other type of work and thus have no time to attend school.

²⁰¹ Findings from the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) show that the reason 1 percent of school-age girls have dropped out could be ascribed to pregnancies. It is suggested that more girls than boys are found in private secondary schools because of

school system at a later age is that older children are often needed to provide support to the household, which prevents them from completing their level and proceeding to a higher level of education.

As well as in survival rates in education, gender disparities also exist when it comes to school attendance. At present, most Rwandan children attend school at some point in their lives. However, a baseline study covering three sectors in the district of Murambi showed that over three-quarters of the households indicated that there are days when their children are unable to attend school due to illness, lack of school fees²⁰² and school equipment, or a combination of factors including the need for children to attend to household chores (Omosa 2002). School attendance is more or less equal for boys and girls younger than thirteen, a finding that is substantiated by the baseline survey of the district of Murambi. However, the disparity of school attendance between boys and girls becomes larger with advancing age (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001), and becomes especially pronounced from the age of sixteen onwards (République du Rwanda 2005b). Thus, even if girls attend secondary school or follow higher education, they are not found as often in the classroom as boys of the same age, which is likely to hamper their academic achievements²⁰³.

Despite all of the above-mentioned gender disparities, many parents in Rwagitima felt that both boys and girls face similar educational challenges, among which the most significant are poor learning conditions. However, it is important to emphasise that the burden of these challenges is not the same for girls and boys. As well as practical measures needed to guarantee that girls receive the same educational opportunities as boys, it is equally necessary to sensitise parents to the need to support and motivate their daughters to continue their education.

Literacy by Type of Household

The World Bank finds that while social disparities of GER at the base of the educational pyramid are narrower in Rwanda than in other countries, the risk of

the practice of boarding in public schools and sexual harassment by staff (Government of Rwanda 2002). Taken together, the higher cost of education, late entry age and biological maturity, the practice of boarding, and sexual harassment all work against women's vis-à-vis men's continued education.

²⁰² School fees used to be RWF 100. According to key informants, primary school and the first three years of secondary school are supposed to be free of cost. In reality, school fees for primary education amount to RWF 300-600 in the rural areas. Fees for students in public secondary schools or government-assisted schools are about RWF 21,000 per pupil per year. Officially, it is not allowed to deny children access to primary school when they do not pay the school fees (Berlage *et al.* 2003). In some areas, incentives such as oil and free lunches are provided to invite parents to send their children, especially daughters, to school.

²⁰³ Moreover, girls are underrepresented in scientific, technological, and agricultural subjects and are overrepresented in arts, social sciences, and secretarial studies (République du Rwanda 2005a).

non-participation and low survival rates remains high for the most vulnerable children, among whom are those who have lost both parents, those who live away from their parents, rural children, and those who are from poor families (World Bank 2004). The disparity between income groups at the primary level narrowed between 1992 and 2000. The GER at the secondary level fell for all groups but more so for the lower income groups, meaning that access to secondary education and higher education are more accessible for the more economically privileged segments of society²⁰⁴. Children from poorer households enter primary school somewhat less frequently than do richer children, and they drop out more often. The result is a gap in secondary school participation: only 52 percent of children in the poorest households commence secondary school as opposed to 89 percent of children in the richer households (World Bank 2004). The wealth of the household, however, has little impact on gender disparities. While boys are somewhat higher educated, the chances for education are almost similar when compared among different wealth categories (République du Rwanda 2005c).

In Rwanda, the rate of children gaining a primary education between the age of eight to thirteen is higher for children whose parents are both still alive than for children who have lost both parents (70.4 and 64.5 percent, respectively). Children who lost only one of their parents perform somewhat better than 'double orphans' (i.e. children who lost both parents). Orphans whose mother is still alive perform better than orphans whose father is alive (68.3 and 62.9 percent, respectively) (République du Rwanda 2005c). Others have argued that orphans who lost their mother were most at risk of not attending school (World Bank 2004). Apparently, women attach more importance to the education of their children than do men, or they succeed better in motivating their children to study.

Apart from the fact that children from female-headed households are more likely to attend school and perform better than children whose mothers have died, there is also a gender discrepancy in school participation rates for orphans. The participation rate for orphaned boys was less than one percentage point lower than for non-orphaned boys, while for orphaned girls this rate was more than five percentage points (World Bank 2004). Looking at the age range of children aged eight to fourteen, girls are more likely to attend school than boys. This situation is, however, reversed after the age of fifteen (République du Rwanda 2005c). Finally, it is interesting to note that at secondary level the number of orphans increases (World Bank 2004). The assistance provided to genocide orphans by the Fund for Survivors of Genocide (FARG) may explain this finding.

In the sample, only 77 percent of children aged between six and fourteen years of age (who in this study are theoretically considered to go to school) in fact go to school (see Table 7.5). Children from female-headed households are significantly more likely to go to school than children from male-headed households. The rate of children attending school is particularly high among widow-headed households: 93 percent of children aged six to fourteen in widow-

²⁰⁴ In the first quintile (poorest 20 percent of the population), 15 percent of people completed primary school, whereas 53 percent of people in the fifth quintile did so (Government of Rwanda 2002).

headed households go to school. In this respect it is important to stress that widow-headed households, unlike male- and divorcee-headed households, not only have relatively fewer children (see Chapter 6) but are also more likely to obtain assistance for the education of their children, especially at higher levels of education. While the differences between male-headed and divorcee-headed households are not significant, it is important to bear in mind that the dependency ratio of divorcee-headed households is in fact much higher than for male-headed households. The potential labour pool in divorcee-headed households – and most likely household income – is thus more limited than in male-headed households. Nevertheless, 88 percent of children aged six to fourteen in divorcee-headed households are sent to school, indicating the importance attached by divorced women to the education of their children.

Table 7.5: Net enrolment rate (NER) of children aged 6-14, by type of household

	Male-headed n=148	Female-headed n=66	Total n=214	Widow-headed n=41	Divorcee-headed n=25
NER	0.71	0.91***	0.77	0.93	0.88

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 1% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

One-fourth of children who are supposed to attend school do not. That is, they either have not started attending school (late entry) or have already dropped out. Taking a closer look at this group of children, I find that only seven of them are older than eight years. This implies that it is the somewhat late age at school entry rather than discontinued attendance that accounts for children currently not at school. Moreover, there is no significant difference between male-headed and female-headed households, suggesting that the age of school entry for children in different types of households is roughly the same.

My data also show that Tutsi children aged six to fourteen are significantly more likely to go to school than Hutu children of the same age (see Table 7.6). Thus, the process of 'tutsification' (described in Chapter 2) already appears to be in motion at lower levels of education.

Table 7.6: Net enrolment rate (NER) of children aged 6-14, by ethnicity

	Hutu n=68	Tutsi n=114	Total n=182
NER	0.72	0.84**	0.80

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Note that as far as the educational level of heads of households is concerned, no significant difference is found between types of households.

Conclusion

In this section, I have indicated that education increases employment opportunities and economic security. I have also shown that while literacy levels are low in Rwagitima, as they are elsewhere in Rwanda, levels are increasing. Respondents for this study perceive education as an important means of escaping future poverty and vulnerability. Moreover, considering the significance attached by the government to education, it can only be expected that literacy rates will continue to increase in the near future. However, there are a number of bottlenecks that hamper the educational achievements of children.

Firstly, there is a shortage of qualified personnel, materials, and even of school buildings. If the government is able to make sufficiently large investments, this problem may be overcome in due course. Strengthening the school educational system will enhance educational opportunities, which is likely to increase future household livelihood security. A study has found that completing primary education may increase income by about 40 percent (Government of Rwanda 2002). The same study also concluded that primary education has a positive impact on health outcomes. Considering that a large section of the population (including the economically active) is illiterate, investments should also be made in adult education.

Secondly, a serious problem is poverty among the general population. Even if school fees are kept at a minimum, parents need to pay other costs, such as for uniforms, paper, and pens. These costs can add up and inhibit parents from sending all of their children to school. My data show that children whose both parents are still alive (i.e. children from male-headed households) are not more likely to attend school than children whose father has died or who has separated from his wife. I argue that financial assistance for the schooling of widows' children and the importance attached to the education of children in female-headed households explains this finding. However, what is also important is that my study results show that nearly one-fourth of children aged six to fourteen – and theoretically expected to go to school – do not. The problem appears to be one of late entry rather than that children drop out.

Thirdly, the educational system in Rwanda is characterised by gender inequalities, especially at secondary and higher levels. While the percentage of women who obtained higher education in the sample is in fact higher than the national figure for rural women (hence, enrolment rates for women are lower), gender disparities in the educational system exist and increase with a student's age. Overall, girls are less likely to attend school, and they perform worse than boys. However, this situation is the result of the fact that girls are more likely than boys to do household chores. Late age at school entry also has a negative impact on girls' educational achievements, as girls are more likely to drop out of school when they reach physical maturity, which may be well before they have reached their

full educational potential. However, it could also be the result of problems in the educational curriculum or the way in which girls' achievements are valued by their teachers. Whatever the reason, the fact that girls do not perform well at primary school has important consequences for their future educational opportunities. Many parents can only send their children to secondary school or higher if they receive financial assistance. In the case of government scholarships, this assistance is coupled with school performance. Girls are therefore less likely than boys to attain secondary or higher levels of education.

Finally, it is possible that ethnic inequalities exist in the educational system. My data show that Hutu children are less likely to be enrolled at school than are Tutsi children. This may be a direct result of the fact that Tutsi orphans (i.e. children who have lost one or both parents) are at an advantage, as there are organisations that provide these children with financial assistance, enabling them to pursue their studies. I also found that in the research area, a large number of teachers had been born or raised in Uganda. It is therefore likely that many teachers are of Tutsi-descent, an assumption that is supported by Reyntjens (1996). Whereas Buyinza (2007) has suggested there are indications that Tutsi children are discriminated against, considering the strong moral discourse in which Hutu as a 'corporate' ethnic group (Newbury 2005) are accused of participation in the genocide, it is not inconceivable that Hutu children are discriminated against as well, and possibly on a much larger scale.

8

Land Acquisition, Distribution, and Quality

The Rwandan landscape is dotted with *rugos*. As a result of the National Habitat Policy (see Chapter 2), these *rugos* form village-like settlements in the research area. Whereas in the past the *rugo* was surrounded on all sides by fields (Codere 1973), small patchy fields now lie dispersed across the landscape. Some of a household's fields are located on or near the *rugo* enclosure, while others are located at farther distances.

As the non-agricultural sector is underdeveloped in the research area, land is the most important productive asset for households, and farming is the most important income-generating livelihood strategy. Farming and other income-generating activities will form the focus of Chapter 9. In the present chapter, I will look at land as a household's natural capital. The majority of landholdings in the research area are owner-operated, although land renting does occur. I will show that, unlike in other parts of the country, most people did not acquire land through inheritance. Instead, purchases and grants are the two most important ways in which households have been able to access land. I will also demonstrate that land distribution in the research area is highly unequal and I will indicate which households suffer most from the existing land inequalities. Finally, I will discuss the quality of agricultural land in the research area and look at how households attempt to ameliorate the quality of their land.

Land acquisition

As shown in Chapter 2, land ownership was historically divided along 'ethnic' lines. Under the increasingly centralised Nyiginya kingdom, land came to form an important political and economic asset that was controlled by the elite, primarily Tutsi, while agricultural labour was provided by Hutu and poor Tutsi tenants. Chiefs could distribute rights in land, against a tribute. Other ways to obtain rights to land included patrilineal inheritance and the clearance of land to which no chief had laid claim, as had happened in the northwest before the Nyiginya kingdom came to control this region.

During Belgian rule, land rights became more individualised (as opposed to common lands, such as under the *ubukonde* system), property rights for the missions were introduced, and land sales and purchases increased (André 2002).

After the Hutu revolution (1959-1962), traditional land tenure systems were dismantled further (Clay *et al.* 1990). In 1962, under President Kayibanda (1962-1973), a new constitution was adopted, which recognized Belgian land tenure regulations as binding (art. 108). This implied that lands occupied by the original owners were to remain in their possession, that all unoccupied lands came to belong to the state, that all sales or gifts of land had to be approved of by the Minister of Agriculture, and that land belonging to anyone other than the original inhabitants had to be registered (Musahara 2001). While the land tenure regulations as set out in the Constitution were meant to guarantee farmers a minimum of cultivable land by restricting the sale and purchase of land, the new tenure regulations in fact resulted in a dual pattern of land legislation; rural lands were governed by local and customary practices, and urban lands were subject to written legislation recognising the right to private property (André 2002).

Under President Kayibanda, a large land redistribution scheme was installed, in which land belonging formerly to Tutsi chiefs was given to peasants for cultivation (Verwimp 2003). Due to rapid population growth, land scarcity became a problem and it continued to be so under President Habyarimana (1973-1994). In 1976, Habyarimana amended the land tenure regulations as set out in the Constitution of 1962. From that moment onwards:

- “(i) all lands not appropriated according to written law belong to the state;
- (ii) lands subject to customary law, or rights of occupation granted legally, cannot be sold without prior permission from the Minister responsible for lands and after the communal council has expressed an opinion on the transaction;
- (iii) the Minister can only grant such authorisation when (a) the seller has at least 2 ha remaining, (b) the buyer does not possess more than 2 ha;
- (iv) Contravention of the above provisions are punishable by a fine of 500-2000 francs and the loss of customary rights or rights of occupation of the land.”

(Musahara 2001: 13)

In a study of the relation between indigenous land rights systems and agricultural productivity in Ghana, Kenya, and Rwanda, Place and Hazell (1993) found that by the end of the 1980s the majority of land parcels in Rwanda were acquired through non-market channels, such as inheritance (the most common method of land acquisition), gifts, government allocation, and appropriation or clearing of land: the latter becoming increasingly rare, as unused common land became scarce. They also found that land purchases were much less common than acquisition through non-market channels, accounting for less than 18 percent of operated parcels, and that markets for leaseholds (including fixed rentals, sharecropping arrangements, and pledges) were relatively weak in all regions except Butare.

According to André (2002), the 1976 statutory was, however, not respected in the rural areas, and land sales increased over the years, resulting in a rapid increase of distress sales from the beginning of the 1990s. A new land law and land policy was passed in 2005 (see Chapter 2), which is intended to confer security on the existing occupants of the land. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, it is unlikely that the new law and policy will benefit poor farmers. For example, under the new land law those owning less than 1 hectare risk being barred from registering their land. They also risk having their land confiscated by the local authorities, if these authorities are of the opinion that the land is not exploited 'diligently or efficiently' (Land Law Articles 62-65). As for Rwagitima, nearly 85 percent of households run this risk. In addition, the land law and policy are not likely to counter distress sales. Moreover, since the upper ceiling of 50 hectares for individual landowners (as proposed in the draft of the land policy) is not mentioned in the final approved version of the land law (Ansoms 2007), it is possible that large commercial landholders will be able to acquire land at the expense of the poor. Some informants suggested that these large landholders utilised political connections to achieve this.

In Rwanda, the vast majority of households own the land they farm (Akresh and Verwimp 2006), although rental agreements have become increasingly common (Clay *et al.* 1990). In the sample, 92.1 percent own the land they cultivate. In fact, of the 221 fields counted during the household survey (2005), 82.3 percent are owner-operated. My data also show the existence of land renting, share cropping, and lending/borrowing of land.

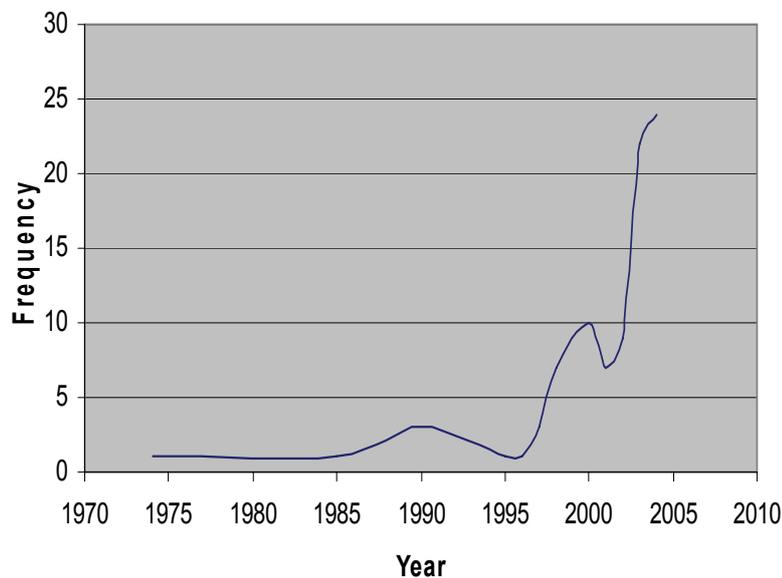
Ownership of land is obtained in a variety of ways. The most common manner cited by respondents was by purchase. Half of the households in the sample purchased land at some point. Purchased fields constitute 44 percent of all fields included in the sample (and nearly 54 percent of all owner-operated fields). Apparently there is a considerable land market operating in the research area, despite limitations in law and regulations. Minecofin (2002) argues that across Rwanda, only 6.4 percent of the households had purchased agricultural land within the previous year (the percentage of purchase increasing with the quintiles). Another government report argues that 23.3 percent of land in rural Rwanda has been acquired through purchase, against 30.4 percent in Umutara (Republic of Rwanda 2007). In fact, the same source argues that after Ruhengeri, most purchases are found in Umutara. Takeuchi and Marara (2007) find that in 2003, 28 percent of land in the east of the country was purchased.

My own data show that the purchase of land has increased exponentially since the second half of the 1990s (see Figure 8.1). More importantly, of all land purchased, 37.8 percent was purchased between January 2004 and October 2005²⁰⁵. It thus appears that land sales continue to increase. The fact that purchases in Rwagitima are much higher than suggested by either Minecofin (2002) or Republic

²⁰⁵ Note that this only includes data from 1974 to 2004. Data from 2005 have not been included, as the survey was conducted before the end of that year. Therefore, the exact results for 2005 are not known, i.e. not all land purchases for 2005 could be assessed accurately.

of Rwanda (2007) is likely to be related to the large influx of refugees and internal migrants in the research area at that time. Moreover, it is highly possible that large differences exist within Rwanda. Unfortunately, I have no data to support this.

Figure 8.1: Purchase of land in the sample



Source: Household survey 2005

Which households have sold or purchased land? Nationwide, 2.9 percent of households have purchased land in the last 12 months; the differences between the quintiles is low (Minecofin 2002). My own data show that 50 percent of households have bought the land they currently cultivate (see Table 8.1, column 2). In absolute terms, small landowners were most likely to have bought their land. However, relatively speaking, the likelihood of land purchases increases with a larger size landholding. For example, whereas 42.4 percent of households in the smallest farm size category have bought land, in the largest farm size category this increases to 61.9 percent.

Table 8.1: Incidence of land transactions per the current landownership position of sampled households

Farm size (in ha.)	Number of households	Households that bought land		Households that sold land		Households that bought and sold land		House-holds that sold land and did not buy any		Land bought as a % of land owned
(1)	(2) Freq	(3) Freq %		(4) Freq %		(5) Freq %		(6) Freq %		(7) %
0.00-0.25	59	25	42.4	3	5.1	1	1.7	2	3.4	42.4
0.26-0.50	24	12	50.0	3	12.5	2	8.3	1	4.2	50.0
0.51-0.75	13	7	53.9	3	23.1	1	7.7	2	15.4	53.9
0.76-1.00	19	11	57.9	4	21.1	3	15.8	1	5.3	57.9
>1.00	21	13	61.9	1	4.8	1	4.8	-	-	61.9
Total	136	68	50.0	14	10.3	8	5.9	6	16.7	50.0

Source: Household survey 2005

The data show a significant association between ethnicity and the purchase of land (see Table 8.2). Based on the odds ratio, Hutu were 3.6 times more likely than Tutsi to have purchased land. This finding is an indication of the purchasing power of Hutu in the research area. However, it is also possible that Hutu have few other means of obtaining land. I will come back to this issue below.

Table 8.2: Purchase of land by ethnic group

	Hutu (n=44)		Tutsi (n=59)		All (n=103)	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Purchase	32	72.7***	25	42.4	57	55.3

Source: Household Survey 2005

*** significant at the 1% level (Pearson Chi Square)

Male-headed households are more likely to have purchased land in Rwagitima than female-headed households (see Table 8.3). Note that whereas households headed by widows are more likely to have bought land than those headed by divorcees, the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 8.3: Purchase of land by type of household (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Purchase	57.1**	37.2	50.8	41.4	28.6

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 5% level (Pearson Chi Square)*

Instead of simply looking at whether households have purchased land, I also looked at the average number of plots purchased (see Table 8.4). It appears that male-headed households were not only more likely than female-headed households to have bought land but were also more likely to have bought more plots. This finding is important for two reasons. Firstly, access to and ownership of different plots of land forms a very important risk-minimising strategy in Rwagitima, as it does in other parts of the country (cf. Robin 1990). The fact that male-headed households appear to own more dispersed fields is thus an indication of their ability to minimise risk. Secondly, the difference between male- and female-headed households could well be related to differences in the purchasing ability of women vis-à-vis men. Female respondents have indicated that it is very difficult for them to obtain credit. Hence, it is also problematic for women to purchase land. In this respect it is important to note that according to customary law, a divorced woman loses access to the land of her husband. Likewise, a widow only has usufruct rights to land and her rights can easily be contested by her husband's relatives. Women's purchases of land should thus be viewed as a conscious strategy meant to guarantee their access rights to land. This strategy becomes extremely important to women, especially in the absence of off-farm and non-farm employment. Purchases of land are an important means of securing their own and their children's livelihood. It is therefore important that women's rights to land are covered under the new land law and policy, which is, unfortunately, not yet the case (see Chapter 2).

Table 8.4: Mean number of purchased plots by type of household (s.d.)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Number of plots	0.87** (0.97)	0.44 (0.67)	0.73 (0.90)	0.48 (0.69)	0.36 (0.63)

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

In Rwagitima, sales transactions of agricultural land occur much less often than purchases. In the sample, only 10 percent of households sold land during the 12 months prior to the survey (although this figure is likely to be underestimated, as households that had dissolved or migrated after the sale of land were not included in the sample). Reasons cited by respondents for selling land include (in order of decreasing importance): need to buy household necessities, medical expenses, construction of a new house, purchase of land elsewhere, and lack of labour (i.e. need for monetary income). It is clear that many of the land sales in Rwagitima are distress sales. Male-headed households proved to be more likely to have sold land than female-headed households, although the difference is not significant. Within the category of female-headed households, I found that all sales were conducted by widows.

The average size of land sold is 0.3 hectare (with a range of 0.003 to 1.0 ha). Considering the small landholdings of the majority of farmers, it is not surprising to find that if land is sold, it involves only small parcels. Respondents indicated that the sale of land is often a last resort (unless the aim is to settle elsewhere, in which case all land is sold). In the event of having to raise cash, respondents indicated that renting out land is preferred to selling land (see Box 8.1)

Box 8.1: Strategies to raise money

In 2005, Jacqueline had a problem raising enough money to pay her children's school fees, and so decided to rent out some of her rice fields. She had already sown the rice and done most of the weeding. In fact, the rice was almost ready to be harvested. One of Jacqueline's neighbours was interested in renting Jacqueline's rice fields. After agreeing on a price, her neighbour took over the work and harvested the produce. Once the harvest was concluded, the fields were returned to Jacqueline and she once again began to prepare the land for a new season of rice cultivation.

In Rwagitima, the second most common way to obtain land is through grants. Here, grants refer to land given to people by the local authorities or by NGOs. Grants by the local authorities are most common, and were especially so in the first years after the genocide. Most of these grants in fact consisted of land-sharing arrangements between former owners of the land and newcomers (as happened for example with the land of Joy and Kaytesi, see Chapter 4). In the post-genocide period, the primary beneficiaries of land distribution programmes have been returning refugees and landless people (Bigagaza *et al.* 2002). The land grants by NGOs mainly consisted of land in the former swamp, where rice is currently grown. However, the importance of land grants has declined over the years, as there is no additional land available for distribution.

The proportion of land obtained through grants (24.9 percent) is higher in Umutara²⁰⁶ than the national average (22.9 percent) (Republic of Rwanda 2007). This is largely the result of the National Habitat Policy, which was first introduced

²⁰⁶ For the year 2003, Takeuchi and Marara (2007) find that 37 percent of land in the east of Rwanda had been obtained by means of grants.

and most widely implemented in the eastern regions (Umutara and Kibungo). In the sample used in this study, over one-third of households were granted one or more of the fields they currently cultivate (Table 8.5). Whereas the difference between male- and female-headed households is not statistically significant, the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is. Over 41 percent of widow-headed households have benefited from land grants against only 37 percent of male-headed households and 14 percent of divorcee-headed households.

Table 8.5: Grants of land by type of household (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Grants	37.4	32.6	35.8	41.4*	14.3

Source: Household survey 2005

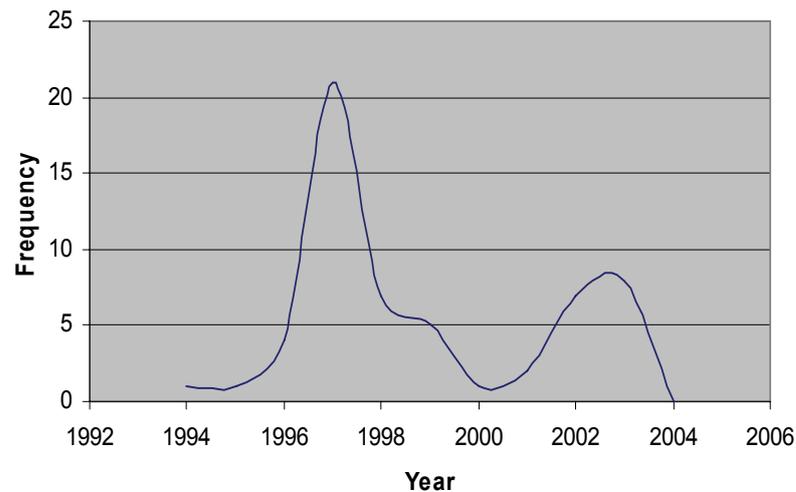
* significant at the 10% level (Pearson Chi Square)

As is exemplified in Figure 8.2, among the current inhabitants of Rwagitima, grants of land only became common after 1997, which corresponds to the time when the National Habitat Policy was most rigorously implemented. Another peak can be discerned around 2002-2003. This period corresponds to that in which the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) started to redistribute rice fields in the former swamp and relatively large numbers of migrants from Kigali-Ngali and Ruhengeri arrived. The distribution of land by ADRA could also explain why relatively many widow-headed households benefited from land grants, since it has been ADRA's explicit aim to ensure women's access to the rice fields²⁰⁷.

In Chapter 2, I have indicated that some authors suggested that old caseload refugees (among whom many Tutsi) were better able to exploit the loopholes in the National Habitat Policy (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999) and that victims of genocide (in particular genocide widows) were at an advantage (Pottier 2002). There are indeed strong indications that widows in Rwagitima benefited from land grants. To test the first hypothesis, I tried to find an association between land grants and ethnicity (see Table 8.6). Since a large portion of the population in the research area is Tutsi, it is no surprise to find that many Tutsi households have indeed benefited from land grants. However, it is important to stress that Tutsi households were significantly more likely to benefit from such grants than were Hutu. Based on the odds ratio, Tutsi were in fact 4.7 more likely than Hutu to have obtained land through grants. The implicit assumption of Hilhorst and van Leeuwen (1999) and Pottier (2002) that Tutsi benefit from land distribution and redistribution schemes more than Hutu is thus supported by evidence in this study.

²⁰⁷ Personal communication with the country director of ADRA-Rwanda, August 2002.

Figure 8.2: Land grants



Source: Household survey 2005

Table 8.6: Land grants by ethnicity

	Hutu (n=44)		Tutsi (n=59)		All (n=103)	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Grants	7	15.91	28	47.5***	35	34.0

Source: Household Survey 2005

*** significant at the 1% level (Pearson Chi Square)

During fieldwork, it became clear that rights to granted land, especially rights to land distributed by ADRA, are exceedingly insecure. Indeed, while I was collecting data in Rwagitima in 2003-2004 it was brought to my attention that several farmers had stopped cultivating their rice fields because they were sure that I had come to take their land for some kind of *muzungu* business. This is a clear example of a fear of expropriation.

A third means of acquiring land is through inheritance. Only 10.4 percent of parcels in the sample have been inherited (constituting 12.6 percent of owner-operated fields). Nationally, land obtained through inheritance accounts for 35.2 percent, and in Umutara for 23.6 percent (Republic of Rwanda 2007)²⁰⁸. In Rwagitima, inheritance is of less important as a means to acquire land; only 17 percent of households have gained access to land this way (see Table 8.7). This has to do with the fact that most of the inhabitants in the research area have only recently settled here. Thus, it is likely that the importance of inheritance will increase over the next years. Historically, patrilineal inheritance was the

²⁰⁸ Takeuchi and Marara (2007) argue that 19 percent of land in the east has been obtained through inheritance.

predominant mode of land acquisition, but as the above figures suggest, other ways of obtaining land have increased in importance over the years. In fact, in Rwagitima it appears that land ownership position depends more on the ability to access monetary incomes and government or NGO programmes than on wealth transmitted through inheritance.

Table 8.7: Inheritance by type of household (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Inheritance	17.6	16.3	17.2	24.1**	-

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 5% level (Pearson Chi Square)

Inheritance of land was found both among male- and female-headed households. However, not all female-headed households in the sample have benefited from land inheritance. Whereas for widows the inheritance of land is an important means of gaining ownership of land, the same cannot be said for divorced or separated women. In fact, none of the divorcee-headed households in Rwagitima had inherited land. My data also show that with the exception of one parcel, all land inherited by widows was inherited after 1994.

Brown and Uvuza (2006) argue that women are generally able to inherit land they have purchased with their husbands during marriage. However, only one woman in the sample inherited land from her husband after his death; this could indicate that either few women in the research area buy land together with their husbands or that after the death of the spouse the land reverts to someone else. Another woman explained that she had inherited land from her husband's parents. This is quite exceptional, especially since at least one of her late husband's brothers was still alive. However, most women inherit their land from their own parents, upon their fathers' death. In three cases, women who had inherited land from their parents had no surviving brothers or other close male relatives. In two other cases, one or more brothers were still alive, as were other male relatives. It thus appears that the reformed inheritance law (1999) has had a positive impact on women's inheritance rights in the research area.

Regarding differences of inheritance practices between Hutu and Tutsi, key informants suggested that many of the Hutu in Rwagitima had already lived there before 1994. If this is the case, one might expect inheritance practices to be more common among Hutu than among Tutsi. My data shows that Hutu are more likely to have inherited land than are Tutsi (15.9 percent and 11.9 percent of households, respectively). However, this difference is not significant.

A fourth means of acquiring land in Rwagitima is through clearance. In the sample, only two plots were cleared, with permission of the local authorities. Both plots belong to male-headed households.

Land-tenure relations are generally identified as one of the key constraints of agricultural development. A common conclusion is that “where individuals do not have exclusive rights of both access and control, there will be little if any incentive to invest” (Okali 1989: 58-59). Land tenure arrangements are to a certain extent determined by social ties between individuals and groups and by capital to invest in such ties. Virilocal residence implies that women move to their husband’s village upon marriage and thus have shorter opportunities to invest in social ties. It therefore appears that women in Rwanda are particularly disadvantaged. As a result of a shorter duration of stay in the village of their husbands, they not only have to overcome patrilineal rules of inheritance but also to struggle to gain access to land.

Of all plots counted during the household survey (2005), 17.7 percent were not owner-operated²⁰⁹. Of these, nearly 90 percent were rented. Respondents indicated that most rental arrangements last one year, although some last longer. The longest rental arrangement I encountered in the field dates back to 1994. Bigagaza *et al.* (2002) have argued that rental arrangements are becoming less common in Rwanda owing to the decreasing availability of land for cultivation. Others have argued that of all provinces, rent practices are least common in Umutara and that only 2.8 percent of households in Umutara are involved in renting of land (Minecofin 2002). However, whereas Clay and Reardon (1998) found that only 8 percent of landholdings are rented, my data show that 22 percent of households (n=30) have access to one or more rented fields. This would imply that the importance of renting has considerably increased over the last few years or that Rwagitima is somewhat atypical. Unfortunately, I have no further data to support either position.

In the sample, only two households depend entirely on rented land: a divorcee-headed household (having arrived at Rwagitima in 1997) and a male-headed household (having arrived in 2003). Other households that rent land also have one or more owner-operated fields. Female-headed households are more likely to rent land than are male-headed households, although the difference is not significant (see Table 8.8). Disaggregating the data for female-headed households, I find that divorcee-headed households are more likely to rent land than are widow-headed households, although again the difference is not significant.

Table 8.8: *Rent by type of household (in %)*

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Rent	20.9	25.6	22.4	20.7	35.7

Source: Household survey 2005
(Pearson Chi Square)

²⁰⁹ Takeuchi and Marara (2007) found that in 2003, 16 percent of households in the east had access to non-owner operated fields.

When looking at differences between Hutu and Tutsi with respect to rental arrangements, my data show that 27.3 percent of Hutu rent land against 20.3 percent of Tutsi. This difference is not significant.

Sharecropping arrangements are relatively uncommon in Rwagitima. In fact, only two households in the sample are involved in such an arrangement, comprising three fields in total. Bigagaza *et al.* (2002) find that, owing to growing land scarcity, donation of land is a practice that is becoming less common in Rwanda. Indeed, only one respondent mentioned having been given land as a gift free of cost (moreover, this concerned a temporary arrangement).

In summary, I found that the most important ways to gain access to land in Rwagitima are by means of purchase, grants, and renting arrangements. However, large differences exist between different types of households and ethnic groups. Thus, whereas Hutu are significantly more likely to depend on purchases of land, in the recent past Tutsi were significantly more likely to have benefited from land grants. Differences between male- and female-headed households are most significant with respect to purchase of land. However, like purchase of land, male-headed households also tend to have obtained access to land by means of grants and inheritance. Rental arrangements are more common among female-headed households. Differences between widow- and divorcee-headed households are also pronounced. Widow-headed households were more likely to obtain land through grants and inheritance than were divorcee-headed households. The latter tend to rely foremost on rental arrangements.

These outcomes beg attention for several reasons. Firstly, the term 'grant' is largely a euphemism. Many of the so-called land grants were in fact no more than land redistribution among Hutu and Tutsi. As I have indicated in Chapter 4, on arrival in Rwagitima, Kaytesi and her family occupied the house and land of a man who had fled during, or shortly after the genocide. After his return, Kaytesi was required to share the land with its former owner. Whereas Kaytesi has indicated that this land was granted to her by the authorities, the former owner is likely to see things differently, as it was his land that was to be divided. Thus, it is important to realise that it is not just that Hutu were less likely to benefit from land grants but that in the process many in fact lost rights to their landed property. Ignoring ethnicity is to ignore important ethnic differentials with regard to access to land. Moreover, in a society where ethnic tensions thrive, advantages given to one ethnic group are likely to fuel further tensions and rivalries, especially if the population is given no means to vent these emotions.

Secondly, my data show that female-headed households in Rwagitima, divorcee-headed households in particular, have fewer options of gaining access to land than do male-headed households. Inheritance of land, while found to be of importance among widow-headed households, does not seem to occur among divorcee-headed households. Also important to note is that renting arrangements are the primary means through which divorcee-headed households gain access to land. Such arrangements appear of less importance to male- and widow-headed households. This implies that access to land is less secure for divorcee-headed households than for other types of households. It also implies that whereas a considerable proportion of male- and widow-headed households have been able to

gain access to land by means of non-economical exchanges (i.e. through grants or by means of inheritance, clearance or temporary gifts, or usufruct rights), few divorcee-headed households have been this fortunate. In fact, grants are the only way through which divorcee-headed households appear to gain access to land without payment. Nevertheless, few divorcee-headed households have been able to benefit from land grants.

Economic Stratification

Takeuchi and Marara (2007) suggest that land size in Rwanda can be taken as an indicator of economic stratification. In their article, the authors divide their sample into four economically stratified groups and then compare the composition of land acquisition by each group. They find that for their site in the east of the country:

“... purchased lands mainly appear among group of households with large areas of exploited lands. We can thus consider that the land purchases were mainly carried out by members of an economic upper class with extensive managed lands. In contrast, the proportion of borrowed land is important not only in small land-size groups, but also in the largest land-size group... It shows that upper class farmers accumulated lands by purchasing as well as by borrowing”.

Takeuchi and Marara (2007: 119-120)

Following Takeuchi and Marara, I have divided the sample of this study into four quartiles (the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles). The first group consists of 36 households with a landholding ranging from 0 to 1125 m². The second group consists of 34 households with a landholding ranging from 1126 to 3600 m². The third group comprises 33 households with a landholding between 3601 and 9500 m². The last group consists of 31 households with a landholding of 9501 m² or higher. For each group, I assessed the means by which land has been acquired. The results are displayed in Table 8.9.

My data show that purchased lands appear in all four groups of households and not primarily among households with large areas of exploited land, as suggested by Takeuchi and Marara (2007). If land size is equated with economic class, this implies that land purchases have not only been carried out by members of an economic upper class with extensive managed lands but also by members of the lowest economic class. In contrast, the importance of land grants increases significantly with the size of landholdings. There is thus strong evidence that wealthier farmers have benefited from land redistribution schemes more than have poor farmers. Inheritance of land is important in small as well as in the largest land size groups. The importance of renting decreases with land size, although the difference between the lower and upper quarter of households is not statistically significant.

Table 8.9: Composition of land by economically stratified groups (in %, n=134)

	Lower ¼ (n=36)	Low (n=34)	High (n=33)	Upper ¼ (n=31)
Purchase	36.1	45.7	38.8	33.3
Grant***	13.9	19.6	28.6	44.4
Inheritance	16.7	10.9	14.3	11.1
Clearance	5.6	-	2.0	2.2
Rent	27.8	21.7	14.3	6.7
Sharecropping	-	2.2	-	2.2
Borrowing	-	-	2.0	-
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0	99.9

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 1% level (One-way Independent Anova)

The above analysis shows that acquisition of land between lower- and upper-class households differs considerably. While purchases are important across economically stratified groups, lower-class households rely on rent, while upper-class households have been able to accumulate land by means of grants.

Land Inequality

Considering the underdevelopment of the non-agricultural sector, farming forms the main source of income for most households. Land therefore constitutes an asset of primary importance for a Rwandan. While only 79.4 percent of households in Rwanda own farmland, in Umurataza the figure is 90.9 percent (Minecofin 2002). Almost all the people interviewed for this study (94.8 percent) indicated that they have access to land, ranging from 0.02 to 5.0 hectares. Most households in Rwagitima practice subsistence production, with many of them forced to look for additional sources of income, as the size of their landholding is too small to produce enough to meet all household needs. The fact that some households in Rwagitima have no access to land at all is an important indication of their level of poverty and vulnerability.

In 1983, the mean average area per holding in Rwanda was just below 1.6 hectares. Regional differences were, however, considerable. The mean average area per holding was especially low in Gisenyi and Cyangugu, with average holdings of less than 1 hectare. In Byumba, the mean size of holdings was 1.4 hectares (May 1995). Clay and vander Haar (1993) found that the average operational farm size was 1.20 hectares; a figure later confirmed by Clay *et al.* (1990). According to Randolph and Sanders (1992), in 1985 the average farm in Ruhengeri consisted of only 1 hectare. Nearly two decades later, Akresh and Verwimp (2006) find that households cultivate only 0.89 hectares of land. A government report mentions

that in 2006, households possessed an average of only 0.72 hectares (Republic of Rwanda 2007). This shows the decreasing trend of the size of landholdings since the 1980s.

While I have already indicated that population density in Umutara is comparable to other regions in the country, key informants nevertheless agree that the province is characterised by a relative abundance of land. In a discussion with recently arrived migrants, this is also cited as the main reason for moving to the research area. Olson (1994b) likewise seems of the opinion that, at least until recently, agricultural holdings in Umutara were relatively large compared to other provinces, with the notable exception of Kibungo. Indeed, a recent report indicated that Umutara is characterised by the largest landholdings in the country, with an average size of 1.14 hectares (Republic of Rwanda 2007). It is, however, important to keep in mind that Umutara is characterised by large regional differences. Just north of Rwagitima, herders are relatively well represented, while to the south, farmers form the main occupational group. It is therefore likely that landholdings in the north are significantly larger than those in the south.

At 0.59 hectares, the average size of holdings in the sample is below the national average (see Table 8.12, column 5). It appears that whereas proportionally more people have access to land than elsewhere in the country, the mean size of landholdings is in fact smaller. Moreover, as Table 8.10 shows, the distribution of land in Rwagitima is highly unequal.

Table 8.10: Distribution of farm land per class size

Farm size class (ha)	Number of households	Percentage of households	Percentage of land area	Mean size per household (ha)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<0.25	59	43.4	6.8	0.10
0.26-0.50	24	17.6	12.1	0.39
0.51-0.75	13	9.6	10.4	0.61
0.76-1.00	19	14.0	23.0	0.93
1.01-2.00	16	11.8	28.6	1.38
2.01-3.00	4	2.9	12.6	2.42
3.01>	1	0.7	6.5	5.00
Total	136	100.0	100.0	0.59

Source: Household survey 2005

Land inequality is a problem for the country as a whole, and continues to increase. In 1990, the Gini inequality rate (calculated as land per capita) was 0.43. By 2000, this rate had increased to 0.54 (Ansoms 2007). A government report finds that by 2002 the Gini coefficient for land ownership had further increased to 0.594 (Minecofin 2002). The size of land increases significantly when moving from the

lowest to the highest quintile, from 0.55 to 0.85 hectare, respectively (Minecofin 2001, cited in Musahara 2001; Minecofin 2002). The proportion of micro-farmers increased considerably between 1984 and 2001 (Musahara 2001). Whereas holdings of less than 0.5 hectares roughly constituted one-fourth of all holdings in 1984, by 2001 this proportion had risen to almost 60 percent (see Table 8.11). This implies that the proportion of vulnerable households has increased considerably since the 1980s. At the same time it is important to realise that between 1990 and 2000 only the richest quartile achieved an increase in its average landholdings (Jayne et al. 2003). Again, this is a clear indication that land is shifted from the poor (distress sales) to the rich. Note that Takeuchi and Marara (2007) find that there is relative equality of landholdings between old and new caseload refugees. They argue that this is a direct result of the redistribution of land under the National Habitat Policy.

Table 8.11: Size of farm holdings between 1984 and 2001

	1984		2001
	% of holdings	% of cultivated land	% of agricultural holdings
<0.5 ha	26.4	6.9	58.6
0.5 ha-1.0 ha	30.3	18.4	19.0
1.0-1.5 ha	15.6	15.7	10.6
1.5-2.0 ha	11.1	16.1	5.8
>2.0 ha	16.4	42.9	6.0
Total	99.8	100.0	100.0

Source: Musahara (2001), Minecofin (2001), Kairaba (2002)

In the last few decennia, the proportion of landless has been increasing rapidly. Whereas André (2002) found that the proportion of landless and near landless households rose from 29 percent in 1988 to 37 percent in 1993, Berlage *et al.* (2003) found that the proportion of households owning less than 0.7 hectares increased from 53 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2002.

In my sample, 5.2 percent of households do not own any land. The vast majority of households (43.3 percent) have access to less than 0.25 hectares of land. Together, these households cultivate less than 7 percent of the total cultivated area. The government of Rwanda is aware that farms of this size are not likely to provide adequate support for a household, the more so when this land is of poor quality (Minecofin 2002). Given the underdevelopment of off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities in the research area, it is obvious that members of such micro-farms barely survive and belong to the most vulnerable households in the area. Holdings consisting of less than 0.5 hectares – elsewhere denoted as ‘poor peasants’ (Verwimp 2003) or ‘home gardeners’ (Uvin 1998) but here labelled micro-farmers – constitute almost two-thirds of all households, having access to

less than one-fifth of the total cultivated area. In Chapter 2, I have indicated that 0.7 hectares is generally accepted as the minimum size of land needed to sustain a family. This implies that 68.7 percent of the households in the sample fall below that minimum. Small farmers (owning between 0.5 and 1.0 hectares) constitute almost one-fourth of the sample, and have access to one-fourth of the cultivated land. Farmers with more than 1 hectare of land constitute only 15.4 percent of all households in the sample. However, they have access to almost half of the cultivated land.

The question of which households have access to large tracts of land demands further investigation. André and Platteau (1998) found a positive relationship between off-farm incomes and landholdings. They argue that households with a history of regular off-farm income possess larger landholdings than do those without such a history. My data also show that households with off-farm income possess significantly larger farm holdings than do those without access to off-farm income.

It is generally assumed that women face more constraints with regard to access to land than do men, and thus have less land than men (Wanitzek 1994). In Rwagitima, the mean size of male-headed farm holdings is 0.60 hectares, while the mean size of female-headed farm holdings is 0.56 hectares: a difference that is not significant (see Table 8.12). However, when further disaggregating the data, I found that the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is significant, implying that widow-headed households tend to have much larger landholdings than do divorcee-headed households. The difference between male- and divorcee-headed households is also significant, suggesting that divorcee-headed households tend to have significantly smaller landholdings than do all other types of households.

Table 8.12: Mean (s.d.) size of landholdings (in ha) by different types of households

	Male-headed (n=89)	Female-headed (n=42)	Total (n=131)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=13)
Land size	0.60 (0.60)	0.56 (0.87)	0.59 (0.69)	0.72** (0.99)	0.22 (0.30)
Household size	5.67 (2.37)	5.30 (2.71)	5.55 (2.48)	5.52 (2.87)	4.86 (2.38)
Size/person	0.13 (0.16)	0.13 (0.22)	0.13 (0.18)	0.16** (0.25)	0.05 (0.05)

Source: Household Survey 2005

*** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Small landholdings in themselves are not necessarily problematic. Difficulties arise when there are few other income-raising opportunities and households depend upon income gained by farming. When the average size of land per person is high, the small size of landholdings is not necessarily a problem. In the next chapter, I will analyse sources of income by type of household. Here I look at how much land per person is available in different types of household. Table 8.12 shows that the average size per person does not differ between male- and female-headed households. However, widow-headed households have significantly more land per person than do divorcee-headed households.

Another way of looking at land inequalities among different types of households is to assess the proportion of households within each category by land-size categories (see Table 8.13). My data show that female-headed households are overrepresented in all land-size categories under 0.75 hectares, though not significantly so. The data also indicate that grouping households headed by women into one category hides real and significant differences within the category. These differences are especially pronounced among landless households. Whereas none of the widow-headed households are landless, almost one-third of divorcee-headed households are. But also among the near landless (holdings with less than 0.25 hectares) the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is significant. In the higher land-size categories, widow-headed households continue to score better, yet the difference between them and divorcee-headed households is no longer significant. The fact that I found no widow-headed households among the landless, and relatively few among the near landless, is surprising. As I have already indicated, it is often assumed that widows experience difficulties in accessing land. For example, customary law tends to restrict their inheritance rights. Widows' rights to land normally consist of usufruct rights, and examples of property grabbing by relatives are many. My study results, however, indicate that widows in Rwagitima appear to have little difficulty accessing land. Thus, with respect to land, widows do not appear to belong to the poorest or most vulnerable households in Rwagitima.

Table 8.13: Proportion of households belonging to different land size categories

	Male-headed (n=89)	Female-headed (n=42)	Total (n=131)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=13)
Landless	4.5	9.5	6.1	-	30.8***
<0.25	38.2	47.6	41.2	37.9	69.2*
<0.75	66.3	76.2	69.5	69.0	92.3
>0.75	33.7	23.8	30.5	31.0	7.7

Source: Household Survey 2005

, * significant at the 10% and 1% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Land consolidation is a central aim of the new land law and is accompanied by investments in large landholdings (see Chapter 2). Compared to the largest farms in Rwanda, the smallest farms use four times more labour per hectare (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996). At the same time, smaller farms have greater average and marginal land productivity than larger farms, as they are farmed more intensely (with fewer fallows). Byiringiro and Reardon found no difference between small and large landholdings with respect to the use of non-labour inputs or cash perennials. The authors argue that this implies that labour is being bottled up on smaller farms, i.e. smaller farms have an excessive labour pool. They point out that a reform of land markets is needed, especially in the case of unequal land distribution and small farm sizes. Moreover, in the absence of employment opportunities (as is the case in Rwanda), ways need to be found to increase small farmers' access to the labour market so as to "employ 'surplus' household labour while providing more income to the poor" (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996: 135). Rather than improving productivity, the new land law and policy thus seem to undermine the opportunities of small farmers. My data suggest that divorcee-headed households will be hardest hit by land consolidation.

Considering the apparent differentials among ethnic groups in acquisition of land, I also decided to determine whether inequalities exist between Hutu and Tutsi with respect to land size (see Table 8.14). My data show that Tutsi are overrepresented among the land poor (having less than 0.75 hectares of land), although the difference with regard to Hutu is not significant.

Table 8.14: Proportion of households belonging to different land size categories, by ethnic group

	Hutu (n=44)	Tutsi (n=61)	Total (n=105)
Landless	2.4	8.6	6.0
<0.25	33.3	44.8	40.0
<0.75	66.7	70.1	69.0
>0.75	33.3	29.3	31.0

Source: Household Survey 2005
(Mann-Whitney Test)

Determinants of Land Size

I sought the linear combination of independent variables that correlate maximally with the dependent variable, size of land. For this I made use of multiple hierarchical regression. The regression analysis is based on the following principle:

$$Y_i = (b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + B_nX_n) + \epsilon_i,$$

in which Y is the dependent variable, b_0 is the intercept, b_1 is the coefficient of the first independent variable (X_1), B_n is the coefficient of the n th independent variable (X_n), and ϵ_i is the difference between the predicted and the observed value for Y for the i th participant.

Earlier, Clay and vander Haar (1993) found that landholdings tend to increase with the age of the holder, peaking at 1.61 hectares for those aged 50 to 59 years. After that age, the amount of cultivated land decreases slightly. A plausible reason for the latter trend is pre-mortem distribution of land among sons. The authors also found that operational holdings tend to be larger among more educated heads of households. The explanation they offer is that higher education secures non-farm employment, which has higher returns to labour, thus enabling the purchase of land. Finally, they find that the number of children increases with the amount of cultivated land: an average of 3.7 children among those with less than 0.5 hectares, 5.8 among those with more than 2.0 hectares²¹⁰. They suggest that larger landholdings consist of more children because these holdings are able to employ family labour (see Chapter 7).

Because Clay and vander Haar had found a non-linear relationship between age and the size of landholdings, I decided to enter age square as a variable in the regression analysis. I also entered the variable literacy, which has been coded as follows: 0 is no literacy, 1 is literate. Rather than taking the number of children, I opted to include two other variables: household size (including one or both spouses, children and other related or unrelated household members) and effective dependency ratio (EDR).

Other variables are also likely to be of influence with regard to land size. One of these is ethnicity: firstly, because Tutsi were traditionally more likely to own large numbers of cattle, and secondly, because just north of Rwagitima the mixed farming system is supplanted by one in which herding plays an important role. Herders generally have access to more land than farmers, as cattle are in need of extended areas for grazing. Moreover, it is argued that Tutsi have better access to higher levels of education, are more likely to obtain non-farm employment (for example, as civil servants), and might have benefited from land grants after they returned to the country in 1994.

I also decided to see whether ownership of cattle influences the size of landholdings. While I am uncertain about the causality between land size and number of livestock, I believe that there is a relationship between the two. Either those with large holdings are able to purchase and hold more livestock (gaining sufficient income from their land to be able to purchase livestock and/or sufficient fodder) or large numbers of livestock enable the procurement of more land: for example, by the sale of livestock or livestock products, which increases household income to be invested in land.

Another variable that I introduced into the model is whether households are members of organisations (0=no membership, 1=membership). Here, membership is taken as a proxy for social capital, with the assumption that more social capital is

²¹⁰ For a further discussion on the relationship between farm size and fertility, see Clay and Johnson (1992).

likely to lead to more land. Indeed, most of the plots registered during the household survey have been purchased, inherited, or rented from parents, friends, or neighbours. Moreover, some plots have been obtained through religious institutions (grants by mosques and churches to the destitute), and access to the rice fields can officially only be obtained if one is a member of a farmers' organisation.

The year of arrival in Rwagitima also seems to be of importance. Byiringiro and Reardon (1996) find that the smallest landholdings have farmed the holding for fewer years than have the largest farms. It could be hypothesised that the longer one has resided in an area, the more opportunities might have existed to obtain tracts of land, either through inheritance or purchase. Those returning to the research area after the genocide and war were asked to share land with the original owners or were granted land by the authorities. However, those who have arrived recently, the economic migrants looking for land, have often not been in a position to do so yet and mostly depend on agricultural wage labour to meet basic household needs. I therefore assume that the longer people have resided in the research area, the more land they are likely to have.

Finally, I entered two dummy variables in the model (widow and divorcee) to determine whether the size of landholdings is significantly related to the type of household. Differences in access to land among male-, widow- and divorcee-headed households can be ascribed to several mechanisms. The first is the customary rule of inheritance, where land is generally inherited by sons and not by daughters. The custom of virilocal residence of women may also influence their access to land (van Vuuren 2003). Their generally shorter duration of stay at a particular location means that there is less time to acquire land.

The outcome of the regression analysis as presented in Table 8.15 shows that, first of all, none of the variables as proposed by Clay and vander Haar (1993) are found to be significant. There can be several reasons for this. Firstly, as explained above, the authors do not assume a linear relationship between age and land size. This is why I opted to include age square. However, it is well possible that even this adjustment is insufficient to make the relationship between the two variables clear.

By introducing only the variables age, educational level of head of household, household size, and effective dependency ratio, I find a weak significance for educational level (10 percent level). However, this significance disappears when other variables are introduced into the model, implying that the relationship between education and land size is influenced by other variables and is less straightforward than it may appear.

Secondly, the strongest relationship is found between total livestock unit and size of landholdings. Those with more livestock have more land, although I want to stress again that the causal relationship is unclear. Moreover, as expected, membership of organisations positively influences the amount of land households possess. Finally, the duration of stay in Rwagitima influences the amount of land people possess; those who have lived in Rwagitima for more years are found to have more land than those who have recently settled. This implies that new caseload refugees tend to have less land than old caseload refugees, and that

economic migrants have less land than the indigenous or former refugee population. Indeed, the correlation between duration of stay in Rwagitima and size of landholdings is significant ($r_s=0.19$, $p<0.05$).

Table 8.15: Multiple regression output for size of holdings (n=83)

	b	SE b	β
Constant	4412.77	3916.77	
Age HH head ²	0.23	0.69	.04
Literacy HH head (0-1)	262.42	1775.85	.02
Household size	-315.43	346.50	-.10
Effective dependency ratio	-287.89	467.34	-.07
Tutsi (0-1)	-172.10	1833.56	-.01
Duration of stay	261.74*	143.19	.21
Widow (0-1)	-424.01	2067.16	-.02
Divorcee (0-1)	-3752.49	2707.37	-.15
Membership of organisations	3175.77*	1715.31	.20
TLU ²¹¹	115.00***	36.45	.33
Agricultural wage labour (0-1)	495.10	1736.98	

Source: Household survey 2005

Note: *, *** significant at the 10% and 1% level

$R^2= 0.3$ (listwise)

Finally, the relationship between divorced or separated people and the size of landholdings (as discussed earlier) is lost when other variables are introduced. The relationship between these two variables is thus less straightforward than might be expected. The point is that female heads of households are not necessarily among the most vulnerable categories: that is, land poverty is not directly related to marital status but to other variables (TLU, membership of organisations and duration of stay). Other vulnerable groups, such as the landless or relatively new arrivals, also deserve attention as they struggle to access land.

²¹¹ TLU stands for Total Livestock Unit. Verwimp (2003) calculates TLU as follows: cattle = 1, pigs = 0.25, goat = 0.17 and sheep = 0.17 (other types of animals, such as poultry and rabbits are excluded from his analysis). In general, 1 TLU roughly equals 250 kg of animal. However, as indicated by a government report (Republic of Rwanda 2007) cows in Rwanda weigh approximately 150 kg, goats 20 kg, pigs 60 kg, and chickens and rabbits 1.5 kg. I have adhered to these latter indicators. I have also introduced a measure for other poultry (mostly in the form of turkeys) at 6 kg.

Land Fragmentation

Traditionally, farms in Rwanda are not only relatively small but also highly fragmented. Households typically have access to several non-contiguous plots and each plot typically contains several fields on which different crops are grown or where mixed or intercropping of specific crops is undertaken (Mpyisi 2002). To a certain extent, fragmentation has been the unintended consequence of inheritance practices. But the cultivation of multiple plots by one household should also be seen in a different light. It is a strategic choice meant to spread risk. This strategy makes sense, since individual plots are usually located in different micro-ecological zones. Farm fragmentation allows for the cultivation of different crops: for example, vegetables in the marshes and bananas uphill, which enhances food security. Moreover, it reduces the effects of environmental risks such as local droughts or pests, since their impact is normally not the same across different micro-ecological zones. The fragmentation of Rwandan farm holdings is thus a means to grow sufficient quantities of food in the face of climatic and environmental stress.

As to the extent of fragmentation, one study found that before the war and genocide, 40 percent of farmers had eight or more parcels of land (Blarel *et al.* 1992). Randolph and Sanders (1992) found that the average farm contained approximately 5.2 plots, which could be further subdivided into 13.4 fields. May (1995) found that holdings were made up of at least three plots, the size of which correlated to the mean areas of holdings (i.e. the smaller the holding, the smaller the plots). Byiringiro and Reardon (1996) found a similar relationship. However, they also argued that the smallest farms were more fragmented than the largest farms, having four times the number of plots per hectare. They also found that the smallest farms had plots clustered closer to the domicile. Robin (1990) found that the average landholding consisted of 14 fields, divided into five blocks, which were distributed across one or more hillsides.

My data show that the mean number of plots per household is 1.7 (see Table 8.16). It thus appears that the number of plots per landholding has decreased considerably since the 1990s, which is in line with the general decrease in land size during the same period. As I have shown above, relatively few households have gained access to land through inheritance. Fragmentation of landholdings is thus likely to be the result of other factors and it is probable that fragmentation is indeed a risk-spreading strategy of households. Table 8.16 also indicates that the mean number of plots is particularly low among households with less than 0.25 hectares. This suggests that these holdings are more vulnerable to climatic and environmental shocks. Nevertheless, the fact that even among these small landholdings the mean number of plots ranges from one to four suggests that even for poor farmers, fragmentation remains an important risk-reducing strategy. As for the location of plots, my data show that among households with less than 1 hectare of land, nearly one-third of their plots is located near the homestead. Among landholdings with more than 1 hectare, only one-fifth of the plots are located near the homestead.

Table 8.16: *Distribution of farm land per class size*

Farm size class (ha)	Mean number of plots per household
<0.25	1.4
0.26-0.50	1.7
0.51-0.75	2.3
0.76-1.00	1.7
1.01-2.00	2.1
2.01-3.00	3.0
3.01>	2.0
Total	1.7

Source: Household survey 2005

Quality of land

Of sub-Saharan Africa, Rwanda ranks last in the use of irrigation (Minecofin 2002). Nationwide only 9.8 percent of households have one or more irrigated plots (increasing with higher quintiles). In Umutara, 5.0 percent of households have some irrigated plots (Minecofin 2002). According to a recent government report, irrigation is even less common: only 3 percent of the land is under irrigation or drainage nationwide against only 2.7 percent of land in Umutara (Republic of Rwanda 2007). This implies that irrigation has decreased over the last few years despite government efforts to promote such land improvements. My own findings suggest that in Rwagitima only rice fields are irrigated, although crops cultivated in the lower parts of the valleys do benefit from the relatively high water level and the small river that crosses part of the village.

One of the main projects of ADRA, the Canadian NGO active in Rwagitima, was to transform a considerable portion of the marshes located near Rwagitima into fields suitable for rice cultivation²¹². The construction of irrigation canals was one measure taken by ADRA. Until recently, ADRA remained actively involved in the management of the project, but it has recently turned over responsibility to a

²¹² Before being able to do so, herders were refused access to parts of the marsh, and farmers growing vegetables in the marshes were evicted from their fields. The authorities felt they could do so without providing compensation, as the marshes were considered to belong to the state in the first place. After the project was finalised, the vegetable farmers were given access to the rice fields, on condition that they organised themselves into farmers' associations (which would be regulated by a rice cooperative). Other rice fields were distributed by ADRA among the general population. Care was taken to ensure that women would be given priority. Despite the fact that many of the respondents for this study have been able to gain access to the rice fields (and commented that they have seen their income increase), many indicated that they were not content with how the project was set up (also see Chapter 10).

water committee. The water committee now falls under the responsibility of the rice cooperative (which also regulates access to rice fields and to seeds and fertilisers, and which assists farmers in the sale of produce). However, not everyone is satisfied with the arrangement. Some respondents complained that the rice fields next to theirs have not been well maintained and that this endangers the allocation of water to their own rice fields. Moreover, some respondents indicated that neighbours consciously tried to undermine water flows if relationships between the owners of adjoining rice fields were strained. The cleaning of irrigation canals, which is the responsibility of individual rice field owners, is not always undertaken as vigorously as would be required and canals tend to fill up with weeds. ADRA's rice project officer has explained the benefits of irrigation to villagers on several occasions and suggested that other crops might benefit from irrigation as well. However, hardly anyone seems willing to undertake any such land improvements. Those interested point to the difficulties of having to cooperate with owners of adjoining fields with whom cooperation is not always easy. This may well have to do with issues of trust and cooperation, as I will elaborate upon in Chapter 10.

Not only are few fields irrigated, other measures to improve the quality of land and productivity remain limited as well²¹³. Nationwide, only 6.9 percent of farming households report using purchased agricultural inputs, with the use of inputs increasing from lower to higher quintiles. In Umutara, only 1.7 percent of households use purchased inputs on any of their plots. After Kibuye (1.5 percent) and Kibungo (1.8 percent), this is the lowest reported use of inputs in the country (Minecofin 2002). Moreover, while 47.3 percent of households nationwide use chemical fertilisers or pesticides, only 5.0 percent do so in Umutara, by far the lowest percentage of all provinces (Minecofin 2002). As for insecticides, at the country level only 10.9 percent of households purchase insecticides, with the lower quintiles using few insecticides compared to the higher quintiles. Interestingly enough, households in Umutara use insecticides relatively often; 21.4 percent of households do so (Minecofin 2002), which constitutes the highest proportion of insecticide use after Gisyenyi.

It is not entirely clear which households use the most chemical fertiliser. Some argue that the lower quintiles use less (Minecofin 2002), while others argue that the smallest and largest farms use the same amount of chemical fertiliser (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996). Umutara records one of the lowest uses of fertiliser (Minecofin 2002). According to a government report, the proportion of farmers using chemical fertilisers or lime (an organic fertiliser) fell from 7 percent to 5 percent between 1990 and 2000 (Government of Rwanda 2002). However, the authors of the report continue by saying that recent information suggests that fertiliser use is on the rise, and to strengthen their argument they refer to the increase in recent imports of fertiliser. Indeed, imports of fertiliser have increased during the last few years. Yet it is important to realise that almost half of the imported fertiliser is applied to tea, a crop grown on large commercial estates in

²¹³ It thus appears that decreasing land size does not automatically spur agricultural innovation, as was suggested by Boserup (1965).

the north (Byumba) and southeast (Cyangugu). For small farmers, chemical fertiliser remains too expensive and difficult to obtain.

The use of organic fertiliser is low everywhere in the country (Minecofin 2002). More organic inputs are used by households with “(1) more noncropping income, (2) smaller farms, (3) more livestock (source of manure), and (4) greater knowledge of sustainable production practices learned from the extension services” (Clay and Reardon 1998: 370). Manure from livestock is one possible source of organic fertiliser. However, few farmers own livestock. It is likely that the progressive conversion of pastureland into cropland (for example, the marshland being converted into rice fields) has caused a reduction in livestock and thus also in the amount of manure available for improving soil fertility (Clay and Reardon 1998). Moreover, several respondents pointed out that in the last few years the region has suffered several outbreaks of livestock diseases, further reducing the number of cattle or forcing cattle owners to bring their livestock to Uganda, where conditions were considered to be more favourable to cattle breeding.

In Rwagitima, those with more than one or two head of cattle kept their cattle elsewhere: across the hills or farther north. Respondents indicated that in these areas grazing conditions are more suitable than in Rwagitima itself. At the same time, those with only one or two cows also experience difficulties when it comes to collecting cow dung. For example, one respondent explained that while she keeps her two cows at or near the homestead during the night, she has someone walk her cows around the research area to let them graze near roads, one of the few communal grazing areas left to livestock owners. Such arrangements are not unusual. Every morning I could see an old man walking other people’s cows to the lower slopes of a nearby hill, to return the animals to their owners in the evening. When cattle are kept this way, the collection of manure is very labour intensive. Other farmers are of the opinion that they have no need for an organic fertiliser, such as cow dung. One respondent stated that her lands were fertile enough to be worked without the application of fertiliser. However, when asked about any changes in land productivity over the last decade, she told me that her yields have been decreasing considerably. Nevertheless, while it appears that the soil is becoming exhausted by continuous cultivation, this did not make her change her opinion about the fertility of her fields.

Soil conservation and declining soil fertility have long been and still are the most pressing agricultural problems for the country as a whole (Randolph and Sanders 1992, Clay and Reardon 1998). As early as 1937, reforestation programmes were already being supplemented by an anti-erosion programme (Newbury 1988). Theoretically, farmers with a high income have the financial ability to invest in soil fertility and conservation. However, smaller farms do not have more eroded soils than larger farms, despite the fact that smaller farms are worked more intensively (Byringiro and Reardon 1996) and keep very little land under fallow (Clay and Reardon 1998). Byringiro and Reardon (1996) also found that smaller farms invest twice as much in soil conservation per hectare than do larger farms.

Although soil fertility does not appear high on the list of farmers’ priorities in Rwagitima, they do protect their fields. Land conservation measures such as grass strips, anti-erosion ditches, and hedgerows are common. Moreover, the

planting and maintaining of perennials is an important measure of soil conservation. Perennials, such as bananas, provide good protection against erosion, while tubers provide modest protection. Annual food crops, such as potatoes, beans, maize, and rice only minimally protect against erosion. The allocation of land to protective perennials grew massively between 1984 and 1990. For example, land planted with bananas and coffee expanded by one-fourth (Clay and Reardon 1998). However, between 1990 and 2001 there was a significant decrease in the production of bananas and coffee, while the production of potatoes, cassava, rice, wheat and millet, and peanuts, mostly annual food crops, increased significantly (Donovan *et al.* 2002).

Decreased reliance on protective perennials, among which many important traditional cash crops, may be the result of lower world market prices or restricted opportunities for marketing. However, it may also be the result of insecure war situations, and I would argue that under such conditions the reliance on traditional food crops – especially annual crops – is likely to increase. This has severe consequences for the sustainability of the agricultural system and increases the need for substantial capital investments to maintain the fertility of fields and to prevent further erosion.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have taken a closer look at the most important productive asset of households in Rwagitima: land. There are strong indications that the quality of land is low and is deteriorating due to cultivation practices and the lack of measures to improve the quality of land, such as fertilisers and irrigation. As a means to spread risk, households tend to cultivate multiple plots. Land fragmentation reduces the negative impact of climatic and environmental shocks due to the different micro-climatic conditions in the valleys, marshes, and on the hills. I have also shown that land distribution is considerably skewed in Rwagitima. Large landowners with more than 1 hectare constitute only 15 percent of the population, yet they have access to almost half of the cultivated land. Small landowners, on the other hand, consisting of farmers with less than 0.7 hectares of land, form nearly 70 percent of the population but have access to only one-fourth of the cultivated land.

Large differences with regard to land exist among different groups of households in Rwagitima. Three issues stand out in this respect. The first is related to the duration of stay in Rwagitima. Larger landholdings tend to be found among households that have lived in Rwagitima for longer periods, while smaller landholdings predominate among recently settled households. This finding is clearly linked to larger processes of land redistribution. Under the National Habitat Policy, land was redistributed among newcomers and the original population. This redistribution of land, which was at its height around 1997-1998, did not benefit later arrivals, among whom were many new caseload refugees and economic migrants from Kigali-Ngali. Around 2002, more land was redistributed. This time it concerned former pastures and vegetable gardens located in the

marshes. This land was made suitable for rice cultivation and then returned to cultivators, on the condition they would organise themselves into farmers' groups. Again, few of the later arrivals, predominantly migrants from Kigali-Ngali, profited from this programme.

The second issue concerns the differences between male- and female-headed households. At first glance, male- and female-headed households do not appear to differ much with respect to the size of their landholdings. However, further analysis reveals that large differentials exist within the category of female-headed households. Divorcee-headed households predominate among the landless and near-landless, both with respect to the size of their landholdings and to the size of land per household member. Moreover, looking at how households have acquired their land, I also found significant differences. Among male- and widow-headed households, purchases and grants have formed the primary means of land acquisition. These are much less common among divorcee-headed households. Instead, rental of land tends to form the most important means of land acquisition by this household group.

The third issue concerns differentials with respect to ethnicity. Whereas Tutsi are overrepresented among the smaller landholdings, the difference between them and Hutu is not significant. However, I did find that Hutu and Tutsi acquired their lands in somewhat different ways. Purchases of land have been very important among Hutu, while a considerable number of Tutsi have been able to benefit from the land redistribution programmes in the research area. These latter programmes not only allowed Tutsi to access land but also allowed them to do so free of cost.

In addition to the above three issues, other factors may of course also influence the distribution and size of landholdings. In a multiple regression analysis, I introduced ten variables that are likely to affect land size: age and education of the head of household, household size, effective dependency ratio, ethnicity, duration of stay, household headship, membership of organisations, presence of livestock, and occurrence of off-farm employment. The findings of this analysis indicate that three variables are of major importance: duration of stay, membership in organisations, and presence of livestock. In this chapter, I have discussed the importance of duration of stay. In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at income-generating livelihood strategies, including livestock production. In Chapter 10, I will return to the issue of membership in organisations.

9

Income-Generating Livelihood Strategies

In this chapter, I will discuss income-generating livelihood strategies. Farming in the form of crop and livestock production is the most important income-generating strategy applied by households in the research area. However, despite the underdevelopment of the non-agricultural sector, farming is not the only source of income. Households depend on a range of activities and household labour portfolios are proactively managed in an attempt to increase household income. In this chapter, I will first describe sources of income and livelihood strategies implemented in the past. Subsequently, I will turn to household labour portfolios in the research area at present, discussing some of the most important livelihood-related activities, including crop and livestock production, agricultural wage labour, non-farm labour, and migration. I will also look at other ways in which households in the research area try to supplement household income, such as beer brewing and reliance on remittances. Finally, I will discuss how households manage their labour portfolios.

Farming System

Subsistence farming forms the predominant type of farming in the research area. As shown in Chapter 8, security (including food security) is enhanced by cultivating on multiple plots, some of which are located in the valleys and others on the slopes of the hills surrounding the settlement. Farming is labour intensive. Mechanised cultivation and animal traction are nonexistent, and hoes and machetes are the most important farm implements. In response to land scarcity, fields are used intensively and crops are intermixed. Beans, cassava, bananas, maize, peanuts, and peppers are grown on the lower slopes of the hill. Sweet potatoes and rice are grown in the marshes. Although the research area is characterised by banana fields, Umutara has in fact not specialised in banana production as much as Kibungo to the south of the research area. Kibungo was able to develop a profitable commercial banana base, as migrants arrived relatively late, in the late 1970s and 1980s (Olson 1994), which allowed for relatively large landholdings. Moreover, in Kibungo a highly organised commercial network developed for the transportation of bananas and banana beer to Kigali (Olson 1994b). The smaller landholdings in Umutara, the result of earlier in-migration

(1962-1976), depend on a variety of cash and subsistence crops rather than on a single-crop, commercially based farming system.

While most households in the research area practice subsistence farming, the production levels are generally not sufficient to meet all basic household needs. Some households sell part of their harvests in order to obtain the cash needed to purchase basic household necessities other than food. However, not all households are able to do so, simply because their plots are too small or their yields too low. In order to supplement household income, households therefore undertake a range of other income-generating livelihood activities. Among them is the rearing of livestock. The roadsides, the outer boundaries of the marshes, and the higher slopes of the hill are used to graze cattle and goats, while chickens are kept near the *rugo*. Livestock and livestock products are either consumed directly by the household or are sold at the weekly market. Livestock products are sometimes also used to enhance the fertility of the land. Mixed farming (a combination of crop and livestock production) is not the only source of income available to households. Other sources include off-farm and non-farm employment, such as agricultural wage labour and non-farm labour. Given the lack of such employment opportunities in the research area, for many households migration is a prerequisite to access such opportunities. Households also pursue non-wage sources of income, such as the sale of beer or handicrafts. Finally, households rely on remittances sent to them by relatives or friends.

Considering the lack of off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities in the research area in combination with the fact that few households are food self-sufficient, households must manage their household labour portfolios proactively and look continuously for new income-raising opportunities. For some this means that long-term wellbeing considerations have to be put aside for ones that are short, as becomes clear when looking at the occurrence of child labour in the research area.

Sources of Income and Livelihood Strategies in the Past

Inter-household division of labour in pre-colonial Rwanda was based on differences in wealth, social position, and political power (Codere 1973). Generally speaking, Hutu worked for the traditional chiefs as cultivators and were burdened with innumerable corvées. Their lives were characterised by a sole occupational possibility: cultivation. In pre-colonial Rwanda, the only way to obtain anything not produced on personal land involved vassalage to a Tutsi overlord²¹⁴. In contrast, Tutsi lives were characterised by diversified occupational opportunities. Because of the severe social stigma that was attached to demeaning work, Tutsi tried to avoid the hard physical labour associated with cultivation (Codere 1973).

²¹⁴ An exception consisted of the supernatural specialists (diviners, sorcerers, healers, and rainmakers). Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa could enter such occupations through hereditary claims and kinship instruction (Codere 1973).

In pre-colonial Rwanda, wealthy Tutsi women acted as managers of their husbands' business during the men's regular and prolonged absences (for example, as a result of more or less mandatory visits to the court or of polygamous relations, wherein each wife was set up with her own household). During their husband's absences, these women could administer land, wage war, and even hold court (Codere 1973). Wealthy Tutsi women remained exempt from hard physical work, even when widowed or divorced. They contributed to the support of their households in other ways, however, such as by brewing hydromel and sorgho liquor (*inturire*), which could be used effectively to get work done in their fields (Codere 1973)²¹⁵. Later, with differences between Hutu and Tutsi becoming ever smaller, differences between Hutu and Tutsi women also decreased. Young children were assigned tasks, with little distinction between boys and girls. However, a gendered division of labour commenced from age six onwards. Boys then started to carry out energy-demanding tasks and look after livestock (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003). Girls, especially those nearing puberty, were instructed in household work, including tasks such as fetching water. In preparation for marriage, girls would also occupy themselves with basketry²¹⁶.

With the arrival of foreign powers, a fundamental change in the social, economic, and political system took place. Whereas in pre-colonial times Tutsi held the most important social positions and were the sole possessors of political power, they were gradually being disposed of by the Belgians, who gained ascendancy and control over Tutsi and left them in a weakened middle position. Codere (1973) argues that during Belgian administration the economic differentials within and among Tutsi and Hutu widened and the differences between the two groups became blurred. In earlier times, few Tutsi, not even the poor, earned their subsistence by cultivating the land themselves. However, during colonial times a new class of Tutsi emerged: 'the rural Tutsi' (Leurquin 1957, cited in Codere 1973). This consisted of a group that was caught in the subsistence economy and that did not enter the monetised sector. The rural Tutsi were unable to make use of the new opportunities and advantages offered under colonial administration and were also no longer in a position to fall back on the strong Tutsi group solidarity that had existed in the old days, where a living could be earned as a vassal of a richer Tutsi.

Writing on the period between 1900 and 1960, in particular since 1931, Codere (1973) comments:

"The major changes to be found in the recent period are that there are Tutsi as well as Hutu who must gain their sustenance by their own physical labors and there are Hutu who need no longer do so for themselves any more than

²¹⁵ Under the monetised economy that developed under colonial rule, these drinks were later sold by women in order to augment household income (Codere 1973).

²¹⁶ Hutu women, like Tutsi women, learned basketry at a young age. In the monetised economy, baskets could be sold by women who had no other means of supporting themselves. During my own fieldwork, I noticed that basketry and embroidery were still appreciated by most women. Poor women tried to sell their products at the weekly market.

they are obliged to perform *corvée* labor for Tutsi in vassalage to them. This dramatic reversal which means that the Hutu no longer support both themselves and the Tutsi by their own direct production, and, therefore, have more time and energy for work in their own behalf, is the product of other changes almost as dramatic in improving the sustenance possibilities for the majority of the population. Among the most important of these changes are additional new sources of food through the use of cash income from coffee, wages and salaries, and income in kind from European emergency aid, the ration system in some European employment, and labor-barter arrangements with other Rwandans.”

(Codere 1973: 322)

These changes in the division of labour between ethnic groups continued to change after 1960, after Hutu emancipation, and after the war and genocide of 1994.

During the colonial administration, there were two means of entering the monetised economy: education and enterprise. Rwandans were encouraged to do both. To stimulate native trade, a network of ‘Centres de Négoce’ – secondary market sites in the countryside – was established (Codere 1973, Pottier 1986). However, in order to start an enterprise, permission of the Resident was in order (Codere 1973). Moreover, the laws on commerce stated that women could not engage in commercial activities or in paid labour, nor were they to enter into a contract without the express consent of their spouses (Article 4 of Law No. 2/08/1913) (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003)²¹⁷, thus theoretically curtailing women’s economical activities. That this is indeed what happened is substantiated by Leurquin (1960), who denies that women had any place in pre- and early colonial commerce.

Since Tutsi entered the educational system much earlier than Hutu, it is not surprising to find that they held most of the salaried jobs under colonial administration, many of a civil service character. In 1964, two years after Belgium granted Rwanda independence, Tutsi held some 45 percent of all Rwanda’s administrative services (Dorsinville 1964:7 in Codere 1973: 44). Where Tutsi men of all ranks grasped the opportunities offered under colonial administration, Tutsi women – especially those of the nobility – seem to have adhered to their traditions much longer than men, attempting to protect their power, wealth, and social status. Tutsi women of lower ranks, with corresponding lower levels of affluence and social position, were apparently more open to acculturative influences, possibly because they were not involved in politics as were Tutsi

²¹⁷ Only in 1998 was this law slightly modified (N°42/1998) to allow women to open a bank account without their husband’s consent. However, women still did not have the right to enter into a contractual agreement or work without their husband’s permission. The 1999 inheritance law technically eliminated limitations to women’s rights to own property or control financial resources (Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development 2003).

women of nobility. Nevertheless, women's acculturative experience was secondary and derivative from men, whether Hutu or Tutsi (Codere 1973).

Hutu men, experiencing more difficulty in the educational system, pursued a career in wage labour and enterprise as a means of earning money, among which were the production and sale or trading of cash crops. The success of Hutu enterprises further diminished the economic differentials that traditionally existed between Hutu and Tutsi. The increased wealth of Hutu enhanced their social status as well, as the former importance of connections to Tutsi nobility were slowly replaced by a system in which social worth became identified with Europeanisation and wealth²¹⁸. In turn, Tutsi saw their political power decrease even further, as they lacked the economical leverage to make either effective threats or the promises needed to maintain their political power. While pursuing a career in enterprising, many Hutu kept a landholding "as a permanent family residence and source of income in kind" (Codere 1973: 207). Hutu wives, as well as rural Tutsi wives, kept horticultural production going in the absence of their husbands and sometimes sold a part of their produce or even their labour as cultivators.

Traditional Hutu kinship structure revolved around the conjugal family. Apart from links with her family of origin, her husband (and his family of origin), and her children, a Hutu woman had few people to fall back upon in times of hardship (Codere 1973). Hutu girls and women sometimes performed household chores at the home of a Tutsi family. For some this might have been a fortunate opportunity, but others were compelled to do so, jeopardising their family's welfare unless they complied. Serving at the house of a Tutsi family could delay a Hutu girl's marriage. Because of her low social status, she had other difficulties to overcome as well, including possible sexual harassment by the head of the household, his sons, and male servants (Codere 1973). After marriage, a Hutu woman could sometimes lessen her burdens by working with her husband as part of a corporate unit at the household of his parents, especially during the first few years after her marriage. Nevertheless, a Hutu woman was frequently forced to be self-dependent, as were poorer Tutsi women. Women looked after production while their husbands carried out duties for the overlord or were required to do *corvées* for various civil and military authorities.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the rural population had become even more impoverished. Increasing numbers of peasants had to sell their labour in order to make ends meet and to fulfil the many requirements put forward by the chiefs and the demands made by the colonial administration. Men's labour was increasingly appropriated by the elite and the state. For the great majority of Rwandans, it was women's labour and activities that maintained and reproduced the household (Jefremovas 1991). Today's division of labour reflects this history: "Women are still responsible for daily subsistence and still do most of the heavy labour of Rwandan agriculture" (Jefremovas 1991: 382).

²¹⁸ The social status of Hutu was further increased because of the democratic and equalitarian themes in Europe/Belgium, and brought to Rwanda by Belgian missionaries.

In Rwanda, women are involved in all food-related tasks and spend more time than men in both agriculture and domestic work (Gillespie 1989)²¹⁹. Their farm responsibilities include tilling, planting, weeding, and harvesting (Randolph and Sanders 1992). Whereas certain agricultural tasks such as ploughing, cultivation of cash crops, and animal husbandry are primarily the responsibility of men, women bear the responsibility for food crops (Gillespie 1989). While I have not systematically observed the division of labour in the field, my impression is nevertheless that such a strict division of labour is not found in the research area. Moreover, several respondents have indicated that men and women now share agricultural responsibilities. Indeed, I observed that – unless the male spouse performs off-farm or non-farm labour – couples work together in their agricultural fields, both with regard to cash and food crop production. Care of large livestock (cattle) appears primarily the responsibility of men; women and children look after small livestock (like goats, chickens, and rabbits).

Women continue to spend more time on agricultural and domestic tasks combined. Agricultural tasks are predominantly performed during the morning. After returning home, women, aided by one or more children, start to cook, clean, and take care of other chores, such as gathering firewood, collecting water, tending to children, and dealing with other family-related tasks. In the afternoon, men visit other households. This leaves the impression that while women are extremely busy, a large number of men have time to visit friends or relatives or one of the many local bars, to share a beer and learn the latest gossips and news.

Household Labour Portfolios

More than 95 percent of economically active and employed people in Rwanda's rural areas are either self-employed or are unpaid family workers working on family farms and in businesses. Salaried workers make up only 4 to 6 percent of the labour force (Republic of Rwanda 2005). A study by Lassibille and Tan (2005) shows that:

“... all else being the same, age increases the probability that an individual works in the public and formal private sectors and reduces the probability that he or she works in the informal sector; men are more likely than women to work as paid employees or in self-employment, while the opposite is true with regard to unpaid family work. Educational attainment exerts a powerful influence in an individual's sector of employment. Relative to workers with no schooling, those with a primary or secondary education are less likely to work in the informal private sector and more likely to do so in the public or formal private sectors. Workers with higher education have a predicted probability of working in the public sector that exceeds by about 70% their probability of working in the formal private sector. Marital status

²¹⁹ According to Randolph and Sanders (1992), women in Ruhengeri spend 15 hours a day on such tasks.

affects a person's sector of employment in that, all else being equal, married persons have a smaller probability than single individuals of working in the informal private sector or of being unemployed. As expected, family income correlates negatively with labour force participation while the dependency ratio correlates positively with it. Finally, individuals in urban areas are more likely to be employed in a paid job (mostly in the informal private sector), while rural residents are more likely to work as unpaid family workers."

(Lassibille and Tan 2005: 103)

Households in Rwagitima derive their income from a variety of sources²²⁰. Almost all households in the research area are engaged in crop and sometimes also livestock production. Even in those rare cases where farming is not the main household activity, there is normally at least one household member active in agricultural production. This is largely the result of the underdevelopment of the non-agricultural sector.

My data show that there are considerably more female than male farmers. Of all women fifteen years or older and employed (n= 160), 93.8 percent are farmers against only 78.7 percent of men (n=122). Apparently, few women are able to find employment outside the agricultural sector²²¹. This is likely to be the result of the generally lower educational attainment of women (see Chapter 7), making it more difficult for them to find work. Moreover, norms dictate that a woman should look after her children and husband. This means, among other things, that she is responsible for cooking and washing. Such tasks are extremely time-consuming, making it more difficult for women to leave the homestead. Since most of the non-agricultural work is found outside the research area, in practice this means that few women are able and willing to look for such employment.

While the majority of people are working in the agricultural sector, farming does not come easily to everyone (see Box 9.1). Apart from problems such as shortage of land and small landholdings, soil erosion, shortage of inputs like fertilisers and pesticides, and regularly occurring droughts, several respondents have indicated another problem. While some of the old caseload refugees certainly did work in the agricultural sector of their host country, either as landowners or renters or as agricultural wage labourers, many of them found employment in the private and public sector. Others relied entirely on livestock production. Some of the respondents noted that on their return to Rwanda they found opportunities for

²²⁰ Verwimp (2003) argues that in 1990, peasant households earned 55.945 RWF (approximately 700 US\$) per year. The monetary income formed about 39 percent of the total gross income. By 2002, the yearly household income in Rwanda was estimated at approximately 138.636 RWF (which by then roughly equalled 230 US\$) (Berlage *et al.* 2003). This is a clear indication that household income has declined over the last two decennia.

²²¹ Equal access to jobs and equal pay without any sex discrimination are guaranteed by article 12 of the investment code. However, as most economically active women are working in the rural sector on family plots as unpaid labour force, few women benefit from this provision.

non-farm labour more limited than during their years of exile. Moreover, while families were in exile, children were born and raised, went to school in the host country, and looked for employment afterwards. In fact, many of these children had not worked as farmers at all. Yet for most returnees, the only way to survive in Rwanda was to gain access to agricultural land and to begin cultivation.

Box 9.1: Unfamiliarity with farming

Josephine was born in Uganda, where she finished primary school. In 1994, when she was seventeen, her parents decided to return to Rwanda, where they settled in the research area and started cultivation. After dropping out of school, Josephine was able to find work as a domestic worker in Kigali. After being maltreated by her employer, she tried to find other work. This turned out to be very difficult and, after falling in love with her future husband, she decided to return to her parents' house. In the research area there were very few non-farm labour opportunities, and after her marriage Josephine had to find a way to earn a living for herself and her family. Her husband returned to Kigali, where his parents were also living, in search of work as a mechanic. Josephine then decided to rent a plot of land, as the money her husband sent was irregular and too little to sustain her and her children.

Josephine had never cultivated before and she struggled to produce food. As her parents lived some kilometres away, she copied the behaviour of her neighbours. Whenever they went to sow, she went to sow. Whenever they went to weed, she went to weed. Whenever they went to harvest, she went to harvest. Nevertheless, yields were low in the first couple of seasons and only with time did Josephine learn to make decisions regarding what, when, and how to plant. Over time her yields increased, reaching a point where she could sell some of her surplus produce from the side of her house. Still, Josephine cannot get used to the backbreaking work entailed in cultivation. It has been one of the reasons she started a restaurant at the weekly market, in an attempt to earn enough to buy her own plot of land and hire labourers to cultivate it.

Crop Production

Umutara is considered to be food self-sufficient, with food production that equals the national level (République du Rwanda 2005b). The year-round mild temperature and fairly adequate and well-distributed seasonal rainfall allow for three main cropping seasons. In the main season, from October to January, beans, soy beans, and vegetables are grown. From February to May, maize, sorghum, and vegetables are cultivated. Tomatoes and vegetables also form the main crops in the third season, which lasts from June to September. In addition, rice is grown in two cycles: from July to December and from January to July.

Rice and bananas are typical staple crops in the research area. Beans, sweet potatoes, maize, cassava, and potatoes form other important components in people's diet. Agricultural production relies almost exclusively on manual labour, and farmers depend on simple tools such as hoes and machetes. Mechanisation of

farm work is hindered by the small plot size, the hilly terrain, and the lack of cash²²². Few farmers use fertilisers or pesticides, and access to credit is restricted. In 2005, the first credit bank opened in Rwagitima, but people complained that credit was only given to the wealthy. By 2007, the bank had been closed. Apart from this credit bank, I have found evidence of several ROSCAs²²³, whose members come from Rwagitima and far beyond.

Farm production in the research area is predominantly subsistence oriented. According to Akresh and Verwimp (2006), the average household derives almost 60 percent of its income from subsistence crop production; the other 40 percent is earned through the sale of beer, crops and livestock, or off-farm employment. Berlage *et al.* (2003) argue that in Gitarama and Gikongoro 'cultivation for auto-consumption' makes up only 50 percent of household income. Interesting to note is that in the latter publication a decline in the contribution of cultivation for auto-consumption is reported: from more than 60 percent in 1990 to 50 percent in 2002. Farming is important to the national economy as well, which is reflected in the fact that it accounts for 46 percent of GDP (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Production for the market is mostly of secondary importance. Obviously, households can only engage in subsistence production if they have access to land. Subsistence farming is just one way to meet basic household requirements such as adequate food, education, and health, and households employ a variety of strategies to increase household income (see below).

Respondents were asked which crops they grow on their farms. Beans, maize, bananas, and cassava constitute major crops (see Table 9.1)²²⁴, and the choice of crops is determined primarily by household-level food needs and soil-type requirements. Several respondents indicated that they would like to grow crops that generate a combination of cash income and food such as tomatoes and other vegetables like cabbages, carrots, onions, and bell peppers. However, they pointed out that they lacked the starting capital needed to buy seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides.

²²² During my stay in the research area, I was told about a farmer living some distance from where I was conducting research. This farmer supposedly used several horses to facilitate farm work. In reality, the horses turned out to be donkeys and the farmer primarily used them for transportation purposes. Nevertheless, his arrival at Rwagitima would usually stir things up, as villagers were fascinated by his animals.

²²³ ROSCAs are informal rotating credit associations; each member contributes a weekly or monthly sum of money and receives a lump sum once per cycle.

²²⁴ Note that sorghum, an important crop in the research area, is missing from this list. This has to do with the fact that the household survey was conducted in the main cultivation season (October to January). Sorghum is grown in another season (between February and May). Sorghum is an important crop because of its drought-resistant characteristics, an important quality in Umutara, and because it is used to produce beer. Respondents indicated that the sale of sorghum beer is more profitable than the sale of banana beer.

Table 9.1: Crops cultivated by households (n=132)²²⁵

	Freq	%		Freq	%
Beans	129	97.8	Yellow bananas	23	17.4
Maize	108	81.8	Millet	17	12.9
Cooking bananas	84	63.6	Peanuts	12	9.1
Cassava	78	59.1	Vegetables	11	8.3
Sweet potatoes	61	46.2	Tomatoes	8	6.1
Potatoes	50	37.9	Greens	8	6.1
Rice	33	25.0	Fruits	4	3.0
Beer bananas	30	22.7	Tobacco	2	1.5

Source: Household survey 2005

I have already indicated in Chapter 8 that fragmentation of plots is an important risk-reducing strategy applied by farmers in the research area. The simultaneous cultivation of multiple crops forms another such strategy. On average, landholdings cultivated 4.9 crops during the time of the household survey (see Table 9.2). Male-headed households tend to cultivate more crops than do female-headed households but the difference is not significant. However, the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is striking, as widow-headed households cultivate significantly more different crops than do divorcee-headed households.

Table 9.2: Mean number of crops, by type of household

	Male-headed (n=85)	Female-headed (n=36)	Total (n=121)	Widow-headed (n=24)	Divorcee-headed (n=12)
Crops	5.01	4.67	4.91	5.42**	3.17

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

It is likely that the difference is related to the different size of landholdings. I have shown in Chapter 8 that divorcee-headed households own significantly less land than do widow-headed households. This finding is important for two

²²⁵ Coffee, while an important cash crop for the country as a whole, is not grown by any of the respondents. However, coffee is found in the nearby districts of Rukura and Murambi (République du Rwanda 2005b). Donovan *et al.* (2002) find that the production of coffee in the eastern provinces (Umutara, Kibungo, and Byumba) has fallen by 73-89 percent. They argue that due to low international coffee prices, low quality of output, and poor processing, increasing numbers of farmers are removing coffee trees.

reasons. Firstly, smaller landholdings are likely to experience more difficulty in producing enough food and/or cash crops to meet all household needs. Secondly, the risk of harvest failures is higher when households produce fewer crops. Hence, this finding indicates once more the vulnerable position of divorcee-headed households in the research area. I also found a marginally significant difference between Hutu and Tutsi. Whereas, Hutu cultivated an average of 5.5 crops, Tutsi cultivated an average of only 4.6 crops. Again, the difference is likely to be explained by the size of landholdings.

At first glance, there appears to be no significant difference between male- and female-headed households with regard to choice of crops (see Table 9.3). When the data for female-headed households is disaggregated, however, differences become more pronounced. Widow-headed households are significantly more likely to grow beans, maize, and potatoes (beans and maize are usually intercropped) than are divorcee-headed households. In fact, among divorcee-headed households the tendency to grow pulses and grains is much lower than for other types of households, while pulses and grains not only form important cash crops but are also important high-protein staple crops. It appears that divorcee-headed households thus lack an important source of income and may experience inadequate food intake at the household level. My data also show that none of the divorcee-headed households grow tomatoes, fruit bananas, or other types of fruits such as avocado, guava, and papaya, which are common in the research area. This again suggests that divorcee-headed households may experience problems with the quality of their food intake. I will come back to this issue in Chapter 11.

Table 9.3: Cultivation of selected crops, by different types of households (%)

	Male-headed (n=90)	Female-headed (n=40)	Total (n=130)	Widow-headed (n=27)	Divorcee-headed (n=13)
Beans	0.98	0.95	0.97	1.00**	0.85
Maize	0.84	0.82	0.84	0.93*	0.58
Cooking bananas ¹	0.70	0.56	0.66	0.65	0.36
Cassava	0.63	0.49	0.58	0.55	0.36
Sweet potatoes	0.43	0.38	0.42	0.43	0.29
Potatoes	0.37	0.41	0.38	0.52*	0.15
Rice	0.26	0.23	0.25	0.26	0.15
Beer bananas	0.23	0.26	0.24	0.34	0.07
Yellow bananas	0.20	0.26	0.17	0.17	0.00
Tomatoes	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.00
Fruits	0.01	0.07	0.03	0.10	0.00

Source: Household survey 2005

**, ** significant at the 10% and 5% level, respectively (Pearson Chi Square)*

¹*Note that whereas the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is not significant, the difference between male- and divorcee-headed households is significant at the 5 percent level (Pearson Chi Square).*

In pre-colonial days, the main crops were sorghum, finger millet, a type of beans (*Vigna sinensis* Endl.), taro, water yam and African yam, gourds, and calabashes (Leurquin 1963, Vansina 2004), many of which are still grown today. In addition, spinach-like vegetables like *isogi* were found. Long before the arrival of the Europeans, many new crops were imported, some from Asia, others from the New World²²⁶; others were introduced during German and Belgian colonial administration. Bananas were most likely introduced in the seventeenth century; a new type of bean (the American bean *Phaseolus*, locally known as *igishyimbo*) was introduced in the eighteenth century, followed by other crops such as sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas* L, locally known as *ikijumba*), peas, and maize (Leurquin 1963, Vansina 2004). Potatoes were first introduced in the late nineteenth century, although official introduction followed only in 1933 (Potts 1988). In an attempt to diversify and increase agricultural output, the colonial administration experimented with cotton, flax, robusta coffee, mulberry trees, rice, buckwheat, and sisal, while Catholic and Protestant missionaries introduced wheat, citrus fruits, and Arabica coffee (Leurquin 1963). Rice is a fairly recent crop (République du Rwanda 2005b).

In response to the many famines in the country, the Belgian colonial administration introduced a series of programmes to make the population less vulnerable and to protect them against future famines. These included the imposition of compulsory cultivation of food crops such as potatoes and cassava. Farmers were also required to produce cash crops (Leurquin 1963) such as coffee and tea, as these would enable them to pay their taxes²²⁷ (Newbury 1988). Moreover, extension services insisted that marshes, hitherto reserved for cattle grazing in the dry season, be reclaimed to provide additional land for cultivation (Newbury 1988)²²⁸ and that sweet potatoes be grown in them (Leurquin 1963). At the same time, road networks and modern transport led to greater mobility of the population and facilitated the swifter distribution of food supplies (Codere 1973).

At present, households rely on a mix of crops; monoculture is not found in the research area. Relying on a diversified crop pattern is an important strategy to guarantee a minimum level of household food security. Beans and maize are normally intercropped, and vegetables are grown in or near the marshes as are rice and sweet potatoes. Bananas are grown on the slopes of hills. Regular rotation of crops and fields is meant to assure high yields, and the different growing times and seasons ensure a constant flow of produce.

²²⁶ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the population rose rapidly, partly as a result of the adoption of new crops.

²²⁷ Of course, as Newbury (1988) rightly points out, the compulsory cultivation of particular crops also provided the Europeans with local products at low prices, which they could sell at a profit on the world market or use as cheap supplies for their enterprises in Rwanda and eastern Congo.

²²⁸ Around the same time, M. Voisin, the governor of Ruanda-Urundi, announced that the number of cattle had to be reduced and that systematic reforestation was needed. These policies, together with the compulsory growing of crops such as cassava and sweet potato, were maintained until the end of the Belgian trusteeship (Leurquin 1963).

Beans form an important crop and 80 percent of households in Rwanda produce them. Despite the long time it takes to cook beans, which means that much wood is needed, it is an important high-protein staple crop (Clay *et al.* 1990, Donovan *et al.* 2002), accounting for almost 20 percent of total calorie production in 1986 (Loveridge 1991) and 37.7 percent of nutritional requirements in 2006 (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Beans are generally considered a woman's crop, since women do most of the processing after harvest. Beans are grown by nearly all households in the research area, although divorcee-headed households are less likely to grow beans than are other types of households. They are a relatively labour-intensive crop. The high effective dependency rate of divorcee-headed households suggests that these households experience labour shortages. This could well explain why divorcee-headed households are less likely than other types of households to cultivate beans. Unless the reduced production of beans is compensated with purchased beans or other protein-rich foods, divorcee-headed households are likely to have a less healthy diet than other types of households. However, with reduced access to cash, the purchase of beans or other protein-rich foods does not seem feasible. I will return to this point below.

Whereas nearly all households produce beans, a large proportion of households in the sample (30.3 percent) also purchased beans during the month prior to the survey. Loveridge (1991) argues that the majority of rural households in Rwanda are net bean buyers, and that net purchasers of beans tend to have smaller farms than do net sellers. The fact that a large proportion of households qualifies as buyers of beans implies that beans are not only an important food crop but also an important cash crop (Olson 1994b), enjoying a high demand on domestic markets (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Compared to other cash crops in the research area, like bananas, beans have the advantage of being easily stored and transported. However, bean production requires a higher labour input than bananas (Olson 1994b). An increasing number of farmers grow soybeans, which are sometimes grown instead of beans, since soybeans are less sensitive to rainfall fluctuations (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Soybeans are also grown by a number of farmers instead of rice, and are often found growing next to beans. Soybeans can be processed into soy milk, tofu, and flour, some of which are normally sold at the weekly market and directly transported out of the research area. I have not observed any households in the research area processing or consuming soybeans themselves.

Bananas form another important crop in the research area. In Rwanda, three types of bananas are found: (1) beer bananas, which account for 63.9 percent of banana production in the country, (2) cooking bananas, which account for 29.5 percent of production, and (3) yellow fruit bananas, also known as apple bananas, which account for 6.3 percent of production (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Nearly all households in the research area grow bananas, either in the form of cooking bananas, fruit bananas, or bananas suitable for beer brewing. Jones and Egli (1984) argue that beer bananas form 90 percent of all bananas. However, key respondents for this study pointed out that the production of beer bananas has rapidly declined since 1994 and that the production of cooking bananas has increased. They argue that cooking bananas are now worth eight to ten times more on the market than

beer bananas. Moreover, in Uganda cooking bananas are highly valued as a staple food (*matoke*). Repatriates from Uganda appear to have replaced the beer banana groves with groves of cooking bananas.

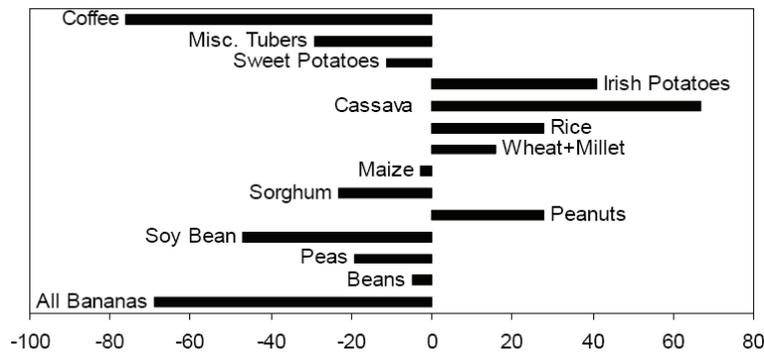
In 1991-1992, the smallest farms had about the same share of land under highly valued crops such as bananas as did the largest farms (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996). Bananas are an important food crop, as the leaves are used for cooking or the steaming of food, and traditionally bananas (and more particularly banana beer) have always played an important role in social life²²⁹. Bananas are also one of the most important sources of cash income for rural Rwandan households (Kangasniemi 1998), and they provide a source of income all year round. Bananas show a flat labour curve and require relatively little labour input. At the same time, they produce a high yield per hectare and have a large domestic market. Walking through the research area, I could often find small bunches of cooking bananas being sold near the homestead, and at the weekly market bananas were bought by middlemen and transported directly to Kigali.

A variety of bananas is grown in the research area. Almost two-thirds of households grow cooking bananas and nearly one-fourth grow beer bananas. In absolute terms, beer bananas outnumber other types of bananas. In fact, every two out of three bananas grown in the research area are beer bananas. Banana beer is a popular drink, and fresh beer can be found nearly every day at different locations in the research area; it is normally sold in the sitting room of private homes. In the process of making banana beer, some 41 percent of the calories are lost. Nevertheless, the consumption of banana beer forms an important local source of food energy (Jones and Egli 1984). In addition, beer sales are an important source of cash income, representing on average 10 to 13 percent of gross household income (Verwimp 2003).

Bananas are also valued because they provide good soil protection: they retain soil and the leaves can be used to cover the soil (Byiringiro and Reardon 1996). Between 1990 and 2002, however, the eastern regions (Umutara, Kibungo and Byumba) experienced a substantial decline in banana output of 54-72 percent (see Figure 9.1), as well as declines in the proportion of households harvesting the crop (Donovan *et al.* 2002). Banana (wilt) diseases, old cones in need of replacement, drought and theft, political turmoil, lack of maintenance, reduced government investment in bananas, and reduced use of manure as fertiliser all contributed to the decline in banana output (Donovan *et al.* 2002, Republic of Rwanda 2007). The decreased cultivation of bananas could have deleterious effects on the region's soil fertility, especially if the bananas are replaced with other crops, such as cassava, which do not provide good soil protection. This is indeed what seems to be happening. The production of cassava in the eastern provinces surged between 1990 and 2001 (Donovan *et al.* 2002). These deleterious effects are compounded by the decline in fallow fields and the low use of fertilisers, including the loss of manure due to reduced livestock inventories (Donovan *et al.* 2002).

²²⁹ Jones and Egli (1984) argue that beer bananas were strictly a secondary crop before 1900.

Figure 9.1: Production change in Rwanda 1990-2001 (in %)



Source: Donovan *et al.* (2002)

The main root and tuber crops in Rwanda are sweet potatoes, cassava, and potatoes, together accounting for 56 percent of the total production of food crops in 2001 and occupying 34 percent of the total cultivated area (Mpyisi 2002). Tubers form the main source of calories for poor households (Akresh and Verwimp 2006), accounting for 34.1 percent of nutritional requirements (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Root and tuber crops are relatively labour-extensive.

Sweet potatoes form an important aspect of the diet in the research area. Almost half of the households in the sample grow sweet potatoes and more than half purchase them on the market. Labour demands for sweet potatoes are flexible, as the vegetable can be planted outside the main planting period and harvesting can take place over time. Compared to bananas, the cultivation of sweet potatoes is even less labour-intensive and it is less demanding of soil quality and moisture (Clay *et al.* 1995). In fact, sweet potatoes “have a higher caloric value than other crops grown on degraded land” (Marysse, de Herdt and Ndayambaje 1995: 51, cited in Uvin 1998: 193). This makes sweet potatoes an important food security crop (Donovan and Bailey 2005). Donovan *et al.* (2002) argue that due to poor rainfall in 1997, 1998, and 2000, lack of planting material, disease and caterpillars, and the decreased number of households producing sweet potatoes, the national production of sweet potatoes fell by over 10 percent between 1990 and 2001 while the proportion of households producing sweet potatoes also diminished. Sweet potatoes seem to have been replaced by cassava. My data indicate that in the marshlands, sweet potatoes are being increasingly replaced by rice. Since the cultivation of rice is mandatory in certain areas of the research area, it is likely that sweet potato production has declined in this area over the last few years. This can have serious consequences for the total caloric availability for farmers in the research area, especially if the money generated by rice is not invested in the purchase of food items. There is indeed evidence that this is the case. For example, several respondents have indicated that they use the income generated by rice to pay for school fees, set up small businesses, or repay debts.

Potatoes are generally grown in the highlands (in Ruhengeri one can see endless bags of potatoes by the roadside, awaiting transport), and quite a number of households in the research area grow them as well. The potato is a relatively new crop in Rwanda. Most accounts trace introduction of the crop to the arrival of

German missionaries in the late nineteenth century (Scott 1988). Cassava is another important crop, and the production of potatoes and cassava surged between 1990 and 2001. The eastern provinces (Umutara, Kibungo and Byumba) have experienced an increase in potato production of 116 percent or more, while the proportion of households producing potatoes has hardly changed. The increase is due to more technical support from NGOs, higher availability of inputs, and more involvement of larger scale farmers. The eastern provinces also experienced a production increase of 101 to 179 percent in cassava. The output in cassava has more than doubled, despite the fact that the proportion of households producing cassava has declined. Factors contributing to the increased output of cassava are the fact that cuttings have been distributed in drought years (1997, 1998 and 2000), their drought and flood resistance, and an increased demand for and prices of cassava products (Donovan *et al.* 2002). Nevertheless, cassava is facing a virus problem that has led more recently to declining production levels (Republic of Rwanda 2007). Cassava flour is currently being exported to Europe. Mosaic virus is a major constraint in the south and east of the country, however, and limits further export, and, perhaps even more importantly, local consumption (Republic of Rwanda 2007).

Over 80 percent of households in the research area grow maize. The government of Rwanda wants to boost maize production, as this could both reduce maize imports from Uganda and satisfy the demands of the private maize flour processing factory, a company called Minimex, which is in need of more maize to meet its processing capacity (Republic of Rwanda 2007). As for flour, some people prefer cassava flour or a mix of cassava and maize flour, while others, mostly those who spent time in Uganda, prefer maize flour. In the refugee camps, people received yellow maize, both in grain and flour form, even though people preferred white maize because it was easier to pound by hand (Pottier 2002). Even today, *posho*²³⁰, a thick porridge or bread made of maize and eaten with vegetables, meat, or a simple sauce, is considered a famine food by over half of the respondents. *Ugali*, a similar kind of food but made of cassava, is considered a famine food by less than a quarter of the respondents. Even though maize is not a preferred food for many, it is an important cash crop. Over one-third of households producing maize sell part of their produce at the weekly market. In other parts of the country, children roast fresh maize and sell it to people in passing cars and buses. In the research area, this is not done, which is yet another indication that maize is not a preferred food. People nevertheless do consider roasted maize a treat; once it has been harvested, the smell of roasted maize is everywhere in the village.

Rice is a fairly recent crop in Rwanda, grown mostly in Butare and Cyangugu (Republic of Rwanda 2007). In Umutara rice is also grown, foremost in the northwest of Umutara, in the district of Muvumba. Near Rwagitima, a relatively large marsh was recently converted into rice fields by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Before the conversion into rice fields,

²³⁰ As one respondent indicated, the name *posho* comes from the word portion. In the refugee camps, people were given a 'portion' of food, primarily in the form of maize flour.

part of the marsh had been used for cattle grazing in the dry season, while other parts had been used by farmers to grow vegetables and crops such as sweet potatoes. A few people also cultivated rice in the marshes. Since completion of the project, rice has been the only crop officially allowed to be grown in the project area. For a large group of farmers this has created problems, for nearly 60 percent of those respondents cultivating rice have never cultivated that crop before. Likewise, Omosa (2002) found that 79 percent of the farmers she interviewed, and who had access to the same rice fields, had no practical experience in swampland cultivation. Since her report was written at the request of ADRA, it can safely be assumed that Omosa refers to rice cultivation, rather than to, for example, vegetable cultivation.

During the start-up phase of the project, experimentation plots were maintained by ADRA. Three varieties of rice were introduced, of which two appeared highly successful. However, in subsequent seasons, the yields of these two varieties only declined. A project officer was found in the rice fields nearly every day²³¹ and a rice cooperative assisted with seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, and the marketing of produce. ADRA also assisted with the purchase of a mill, which was put under the responsibility of the rice cooperative. When the mill broke down shortly after installation, farmers were forced to process their rice at a mill less suited to deal with that item; this led to substantial losses, as the grains were easily broken. Many respondents complained that ADRA pulled out of the project too soon, leaving them with the cultivation of an unfamiliar crop, with irrigation canals that were not well maintained and which in some cases eroded large parts of farmers' fields, and mills that did not function. Although ADRA has built several large storage rooms and farmers have agreed that rice, in theory, could be a very profitable crop, several respondents complained that they have not been allowed to grow the vegetables they used to grow – for at least they knew how to cultivate these. During the years after the conversion of the marsh into rice fields, increasingly more plots have been abandoned or neglected. According to ADRA's former project officer as well as some of the local sector officials, these plots belong to well-to-do farmers who are not interested in the cultivation of rice but are equally unwilling to part with the land. However, I have also found evidence of poor people neglecting their rice fields. For example, one woman ceased cultivation of her rice fields when she fell seriously ill, though she continued the cultivation of other crops. She indicated that work in the rice fields was much more demanding.

Sale of Produce

Most households in the research area engage in the production of crops for subsistence. Production for the market is mostly of secondary importance.

²³¹ In 2005, this project officer was replaced. Respondents indicated that the new project officer hardly ever visited the fields. It was rumoured that he was more interested in attending meetings and workshops in Kigali than in mingling with farmers.

Nevertheless, two-thirds of households in the sample engage in the sale of crops in order to raise cash needed to meet household demands. It is important to note that households do not always sell at a profit. Some households sell out of an immediate need: for instance, to pay medical expenses, school fees or for a range of other household needs. Crop sales normally take place immediately after harvesting, when prices are low.

In 1990, the sale of crops comprised 8.6 percent of gross household income (Verwimp 2003). This contribution increased to more than 20 percent in 2002 (Berlage *et al.* 2003). Whereas it appears that the contribution of crop sales to overall household income is substantial, real differences are masked by the fact that harvests in 1990 were extremely poor, while harvests in 2002 were especially good, "making crops available not only for auto-consumption but also for market sales" (Berlage *et al.* 2003: 18). Nevertheless, the authors argue that at least "a part of Rwandan households have stopped cultivating "everything" for auto-consumption and rely more on market mechanisms than they used to do" (Berlage *et al.* 2003: 2).

Whereas tubers and vegetables are usually sold in small quantities, products such as beans and rice are generally sold in larger quantities. Produce is mostly sold at the weekly market. While there are several large markets linking the interior of the province with other provinces, such as those in nearby Kiramuruzi or in Rukomo and Gatsibo, I learned of only one respondent who sold his produce at a market other than the one in Rwagitima. Market participation is normally done on an individual basis and is basically in the form of small-scale economic exchange with the aim of generating enough income to obtain farm materials and supplement goods required for household consumption. Some crops, such as beans and bananas, are bought by middlemen and transported to Kigali. Rice is either sold by the cultivators on the weekly market or purchased by the rice cooperative and then sold to institutions such as boarding schools or the army barracks further north. If the amounts of produce to be sold are small or if the produce spoils easily (for example, tomatoes), people may decide to offer their produce for sale in front of their own houses.

Of all crops, beans are sold by the largest percentage of households (see Table 9.4), followed by maize, rice, cooking bananas, beer bananas, and cassava²³². I have already shown that beans are grown by almost 97 percent of households and that divorcee-headed households are less likely to grow beans than are male- or widow-headed households. As can be seen from Table 9.4, just over half of the households growing beans also sell beans. Moreover, only 27.3 percent of the divorcee-headed households cultivating beans sell part of their bean harvest. In contrast, 55.7 percent of male- and 48.1 percent of widow-headed households sell part of their bean harvest.

²³² Other crops, such as tomatoes, potatoes, yellow bananas, vegetables, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and fruits are also sold, but the percentage of households involved in such sales is very low (6.0 percent or less).

Table 9.4: Households that sell cultivated crops (%)

	Male-headed	Female-headed	Total	Widow-headed	Divorcee-headed
Beans	55.7	42.1	51.6	48.2	27.3
Maize	39.5	40.6	39.8	36.0	57.1
Cooking bananas	27.0	33.3	28.4	42.1*	-
Cassava	14.0	19.1	15.4	18.8	20.0
Rice	83.3	77.8	81.8	100.0***	-
Beer bananas	38.1	54.6	43.8	60.0	-

Source: Household Survey 2005

*, *** significant at the 10% and 1% level, respectively (Pearson Chi Square)

Several things can be deduced from Table 9.4. In the research area a variety of crops is found that, besides catering to household food needs, can also be sold in order to raise cash income. Differences between male- and female-headed households with regard to the percentage of households cultivating and selling particular crops are relatively small. However, among female-headed households the differences are significant. As indicated above, divorcee-headed households are less likely than either male- or widow-headed households to cultivate the crops mentioned above. Moreover, with the exception of maize, divorcee-headed households are also less likely to sell their produce and they sell a smaller variety of crops than either male- or widow-headed households. This is related to the fact that divorcee-headed households generally have less land than either male- or widow-headed households. This not only makes it more difficult to grow a large variety of crops but also means that production levels are generally insufficient to produce a surplus. Relatively few divorcee-headed households produce bananas or rice. It is important to note that the fields to which divorcee-headed households have access are mostly located at or near the homestead. Perhaps the agricultural activities of divorcee-headed households would be best described as home-gardening. They not only have access to little land – which affects absolute production levels – but the quality of land is such that not all crops can be grown. Bananas are generally grown on the lower slopes of hills, while rice is grown in marshes; however, most of the households are located in-between these fields. Observation in the village reveals that maize, beans, and cassava are most regularly grown near the homestead, which corroborates the above findings.

At the same time, it is important to realise that access to rice fields is normally regulated through membership of farmer organisations. Such membership not only necessitates being on good terms with other potential members but also entails the payment of a membership fee. Membership fees are likely to pose insurmountable problems to poor households. Moreover, overcoming initial entry costs may become even more problematic if household members are unfamiliar with the cultivation of rice, which occurs regularly even among those already cultivating this crop. It is possible that divorcee-headed

households are among those most affected by the entry costs of rice production. I will return to this point later.

Livestock Production

Mixed farming occurred in Rwanda, at least since the seventeenth century. Many cultivating families also owned several heads of domestic stock, mostly in the form of goats and cattle (Vansina 2004). At present, livestock husbandry is still an integral part of the Rwandan farming system. Progressive conversion of pasture into cropland in recent decades has caused a reduction in livestock production (Clay and Reardon 1998), and the war and genocide have resulted in a further loss of livestock. Berlage *et al.* (2003) report a loss of fifty percent in cattle stock and note a slow recovery from 1995 onwards. Donovan *et al.* (2002) argue that all categories of smallholder livestock inventories declined between 1990 and 2001, the decline being particularly strong in poultry and goats. Only pigs showed a modest increase. Reduced animal inventories may exacerbate a loss of cash resources, which may translate into reduced access to market goods.

In earlier days, cattle served as a source of wealth, a symbol of prestige, and a mechanism to record relationships and establish alliances that could be obtained through *ubuhake* clientship, purchases, or raids (Newbury 1988). At present, owning livestock is an asset and a sign of wealth. Due to land shortages and lack of employment opportunities, livestock forms the main form of capital accumulation in the research area. Because land shortages have increased throughout the country, and also in the research area, it is likely that the contribution of livestock to household income has increased over the years. This assumption is corroborated by Verpoorten and Berlage (2004), who argue that the contribution of livestock to income increased from 8 to 10 percent between 1990 and 2002. Verwimp (2003) argues that in 1990, household consumption of livestock and livestock products formed only 3.4 percent of gross household income, while the sale of livestock and livestock products such as eggs, milk, and honey comprised 5.1 percent.

Livestock is an important asset that helps protect the consumption possibilities of poor people, even though few people in the research area keep livestock for home consumption. My data show that few people in the research area eat animal products. Most meat that is consumed is bought in the form of goat kebabs at one of the local bars. This is mostly done by project and extension officers, local government officials, a few wealthy inhabitants or passers-by, and the occasional *bazungu* and her assistants who long for a kebab after a long and hot day of conducting fieldwork. Respondents have indicated that home-produced meat, eggs, or milk are too valuable to be eaten and that the sale of livestock or animal products (including hides) forms a valuable contribution to household cash income (see Box 9.2).

Box 9.2: Use of livestock income

Not all income earned through the sale of animals is utilised to increase household consumption. For example, take Jacques, Jacqueline's eldest son. Jacqueline asked her son to contribute to his own school fees, as he was already in his twenties and not excelling at school (implying that he has little chance of ever obtaining a scholarship). To be able to do so, Jacques asked one of his friends to lend him some of his turkeys. The man was willing to do so, on condition that Jacques would pay for their food and that they would share any offspring. Jacques agreed, and together with the assistance of his mother, who was actually the one to pay for the turkeys' food, he raised a number of turkeys – and they reached impressive sizes. His intention was to sell them just before Christmas. However, two weeks before Christmas, he woke up to find all his turkeys stolen and his investment (or rather that of his mother) lost.

Verpoorten and Berlage (2004) found that both in 1990 and in 2002, 60 percent of households possessed livestock (cattle and small livestock), while 31 percent possessed cattle only. My data show that 57.1 percent of households possess livestock (see Table 9.5). Goats and chickens are most commonly found in the research area (44 and 23 percent of households, respectively). One-fifth of households were found to own cattle.

Table 9.5: Households with livestock (n=133)

	No		Yes		Full ownership	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Cattle	107	80.5	26	19.5	20	76.9
Goats	75	56.4	58	43.6	48	82.8
Pigs	127	95.5	6	4.5	5	83.3
Chickens	102	76.7	31	23.3	29	93.5
Other poultry	127	95.5	6	4.5	5	83.3
Rabbits	128	96.2	5	3.8	5	100.0
Livestock	57	42.9	76	57.1		

Source: Household Survey 2005

My data show that 19.5 percent of households possess cattle. Considering the fact that Umutara was once characterised by communal pastures and herding communities – in 2006, 24.7 percent of all cows in Rwanda could be found Umutara (Republic of Rwanda 2007) – plus the fact that much of the current population has only settled here relatively recently, this percentage is much lower than one might expect on the basis of findings of Verpoorten and Berlage (2004). Several respondents have indicated that over the last few years several bovine

epizootics have occurred, decimating their herds. It is thus possible that the difference between the findings of Verpoorten and Berlage and my own are smaller than they seem.

Although I have no data to indicate that death rates for cattle have increased over the last few years, I am aware of several outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in or near the research area, one of which took place in 2003 in Gabiro district. According to (MINAGRI 2006), there were other outbreaks of FMD in 2001, 2002, and 2005. Moreover, in December 2007, a new cattle virus was detected: Contagious Borne Peri-Premonia (CBPP), which spread from the Karagwe region in Tanzania and put livestock in the research area at high risk. The economic costs of cattle diseases such as FMD and CBPP are severe, as the movement of animals (dead or alive) is restricted, milk can no longer be sold, and cattle markets close. As a result, cattle prices rise. It has been argued that this leads to an increase in cattle theft from the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and Uganda (Ntagungira 2007).

Nevertheless, it is likely that the number of households with cattle will increase over the next few years. Whereas in the past goats were distributed by the local authorities to poor families, there is now a policy that is referred to by respondents as a 'one house, one cow policy'. If households build a cowshed near their homestead and agree to cultivate fodder on their land, they are eligible for a free cow. Several respondents pointed out that this policy, unlike the free distribution of goats, only benefits the wealthier households. They argue that poor households have neither sufficient funds nor land to construct a shed, nor are they in a position to reduce the cultivation of food and cash crops in order to cultivate fodder. One Tutsi respondent even argued that the world has been turned upside down, as the new policy primarily benefits Hutu households. She was convinced that Hutu tend to own more land than Tutsi, although my data do not support her view (see Chapter 8).

In the early twentieth century, pigs were introduced into Rwanda by the Catholic and Protestant missions (Leurquin 1963). While a government report argues that pigs are popular in Rwanda because of their high fertility rate (Republic of Rwanda 2007), they are not at all popular in the research area. To the Muslim community, as well as to the Adventist and Pentecostal community, raising pigs is a taboo, as the pig is considered to be unclean. Berlage *et al.* (2003) even argue that these communities traditionally considered pigs to be eaters of humans. However, other Christians in the research area also fear pigs, as became clear one day when a man died while slaughtering a pig close to my house. Bystanders who had watched him kill the animal recounted how, at the moment the screaming pig died, it looked his butcher in the eyes and let its spirit float into the man. The man immediately died of a heart attack, as his body and mind were, or so it was suggested, not able to accommodate the pig's spirit. No one dared to touch either the pig or the man, and only after several days was the corpse collected by attendants from the morgue at Nyagatare, where they conducted post-mortem research.

Not all livestock is owned. Of the 26 households possessing cattle, 23.1 percent (five male- and one female-headed household) indicated that they did not own these animals but merely looked after them in what can best be described as a

sharing arrangement. These arrangements generally entail that the caretaker is allowed to use the dung to fertilise his fields and to keep the milk, while being responsible for feeding the animal and looking after its health; once the animal is sold, the caretaker is entitled to half or less of the proceeds. In the case of other livestock, share arrangements are somewhat different and normally consist of dividing offspring between owner and caretaker or sharing the money after sale of the animals. None of the respondents admitted to consuming goat's milk, even though they realise that this product is quite nutritious. Some of the Tutsi respondents told me that Hutu do drink goat's milk. It is unclear, however, whether this is a reflection of real practice or merely an idea of 'the other' transgressing particular food taboos.

The three most common types of livestock in the area are cattle, goats, and chickens. Whereas female-headed households are less likely to own cattle or chickens than are male-headed households, the difference is not significant (see Table 9.6). Differences among female-headed households are more pronounced. In comparison to widow-headed households, few divorcee-headed households have cattle, goats, or chickens. In fact, none of the divorcee-headed households have cattle. The fact that divorcee-headed households are less likely to have cattle or goats is likely to be related to their relatively small holdings. They have little room available to house larger animals, and it is difficult for them to grow enough fodder. Whereas chickens are more easily kept than is larger livestock, it is striking to find that few divorcee-headed households (7 percent only) own any of these.

Table 9.6: Households with livestock, by type of household (%)

	Male-headed (n=90)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=133)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Cattle	0.23	0.12	0.20	0.17	-
Goats	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.52*	0.21
Chickens	0.24	0.14	0.21	0.17	0.07

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Pearson Chi Square)

Another explanation for the difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households and owning goats is that local authorities have been distributing goats among the poor and vulnerable. Goats are generally considered a welcome addition to household assets, since they require low initial capital investments, are partly resistant to disease, and can be fed exclusively with grass. Moreover, there is a domestic market for goats as well as an export market (DRC), which means that people are able to sell their goats on the regional market in order to raise cash. In the eyes of many district officials, widows are among the poorest and most vulnerable, which is why they were explicitly targeted. Indeed, as Table

9.6 shows, widow-headed households are significantly more likely to have goats than are divorcee-headed households.

Considering the above findings, it is not surprising to see that the Total Livestock Unit²³³ of divorcee-headed households is considerably lower than that of widow- or male-headed households (see Table 9.7). The mean TLU across all households is 2.47, implying that households possess about 2.5 cows or the equivalent of cows. Excluding households without livestock, the mean TLU increases to 4.32. However, both figures mask true livestock possession in the research area, as the figures are highly inflated by three particular households that own 20, 30, and 200 heads of cattle. If these three households are excluded from the analysis²³⁴, TLU across types of households is only 0.60. Also in this case, divorcee-headed households have significantly less livestock than do other types of households.

Table 9.7: Mean (s.d.) Total Livestock Unit (TLU), by type of household

	Male-headed (n=90)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=133)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
TLU	1.01 (3.41)	5.51 (30.53)	2.47 (17.57)	8.12** (37.10)	0.11 (0.25)
TLU (if cattle < 20)	0.69 (1.44) n=89	0.41 (0.89) n=41	0.60 (1.30) n=130	0.57* (1.06) n=27	0.11 (0.25) n=14

Source: Household survey 2005

*, ** significant at the 10% and 5% level, respectively (Mann-Whitney Test)

The data show that, with the exception of goats, differences between Hutu and Tutsi are not significant (see Tables 9.8 and 9.9). Hutu households are more likely to have goats than Tutsi, despite the distribution of goats among poor and vulnerable households that are often equated with genocide survivors: namely, Tutsi. In Chapter 2, I indicated that some of my Tutsi respondents believe that Hutu consume goat's milk. Although I have found no evidence for this, it is clear that goats are more important to Hutu households than they are to Tutsi households. Whereas Tutsi households are more likely to have cattle than are Hutu

²³³ See footnote 211 in Chapter 8.

²³⁴ Two of these households belong to widows. The other is a *de facto* female-headed household. The two widows receive remittances from siblings. All three households arrived in the research area in 1994, belong to Tutsi, are single-parent households, own relatively large tracts of land (2.0, 2.7 and 5.0 ha), and have a variety of sources of income (among which the sale of crops, animal products, firewood, beers and sodas, and simple food) to fall back on.

households, as one might expect on basis of traditional livestock production systems (see Chapter 2), the difference is not significant.

Table 9.8: Households with livestock, by ethnicity (%)

	Hutu (n=44)	Tutsi (n=58)	Total (n=102)
Cattle	0.14	0.26	0.21
Goats	0.52**	0.31	0.40
Chickens	0.25	0.15	0.19

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 5% level (Pearson Chi Square)*

Table 9.9: Mean (s.d.) Total Livestock Unit (TLU), by ethnicity (%)

	Hutu (n=44)	Tutsi (n=58)	Total (n=102)
TLU	0.70 (1.81)	4.91 (26.49)	3.09 (20.04)
TLU (if cattle<20)	0.70 (1.81)	0.63 (1.06)	0.66 (1.44)

Source: Household survey 2005

(Mann-Whitney Test)

Off-Farm and Non-Farm Employment

Off-farm and non-farm employment are other important sources of income, even though it is hard to come by in the research area. As farm output is often insufficient to meet all household needs, household members engage in off- and non-farm employment (cf. Reardon 1997). In the research area, as in other parts of the country, a lack of land is an important incentive to allocate part of a household's labour pool to sectors outside the agricultural sector. Other important determinants include a failure of the credit market, a large household labour supply, and the educational level or skills of individual household members.

In 1990, off-farm income (including income derived from skilled and unskilled off-farm work and from business activities other than beer sales) formed a considerable portion (14.7 percent) of total household income (Verwimp 2003). Verpoorten and Berlage (2004) also argue that earnings from off-farm labour (including agricultural wage labour, low-skilled non-farm labour such as construction work, and high-skilled non-farm labour such as public service jobs) amount to a considerable portion of total income. Moreover, they argue that its

importance increased between 1990 and 2002, having risen from 19 to 25 percent of total income. Clay and Reardon (1998) estimate that non-farm income (wages derived from agricultural and non-agricultural work and income earned from own businesses) constitutes about one-third of total household income in Rwanda and that about two-thirds of households earn some non-farm income.

Agricultural Wage Labour

In the research area, quite a number of people perform agricultural wage labour for other households. Of all people in the sample aged fifteen and above, around one fifth do so. Some perform agricultural wage labour occasionally, when in acute need of money. Others do so on a more regular basis, as a main source of income. Off-farm agricultural labour is mostly performed by recently arrived migrants or by members of poor local households. Very few (n=2) see agricultural wage labour as their main occupation. Both men and women perform this kind of work but men somewhat more than women; of all men aged fifteen and above, over 21 percent perform agricultural wage labour against just under 18 percent of women in the same age category.

Work can most easily be found with rice field-owning farmers. Some respondents have indicated that they face considerable labour shortages during peak seasons (during transplanting of rice) and rely on wage labourers to finish the work in time. Arrangements are also regularly made with elderly widowed and divorced women, or with elderly couples. Donald (see Chapter 4) explained that he hired a wage labourer to assist him with the cultivation of groundnuts. As he had never cultivated this crop before, he needed someone to teach him.

Most arrangements are of short duration and employment opportunities are seasonal. Payments are generally low; the average daily payment seldom exceeding RWF 300 (~ 0.5 USD) per day²³⁵. One respondent, a male migrant from Byumba, indicated that wages in the research area are higher than in his village in Byumba. At home, he is paid only 150 RWF per day. He explained that when paid in kind, earnings are also less, as yields in Byumba tend to be lower than in the research area. Respondents indicated that men and women are paid equally. This was also noted by Berlage *et al.* (2003). These authors, however, do suggest that women are more likely than men to be paid in kind.

Many agricultural labourers seek additional sources of income. Whenever possible they attempt to grow at least a few crops around their houses. However, not all of them are able to do so due to poor housing arrangements and the small size of their gardens. Off-farm agricultural labour is generally considered by respondents to be demeaning work. This might also explain why few people admit to depending on off-farm agricultural labour as their main occupation.

²³⁵ A government report mentions that the average minimum cost of agricultural labour is about 150 to 400 Rwandese francs per day for temporary work, and this is either paid in cash or in kind (Republic of Rwanda 2007).

Non-Farm Labour

Non-farm employment opportunities are extremely difficult to find in the research area. There are several shops, but most depend on family labour only. For others, the best chance of finding employment is during market days, when there is a need for bicycle repairmen, traders, butchers, salesmen of clothes and shoes, restaurant keepers and liquor sellers, bus drivers, luggage carriers, and so on. Although some people depend on this type of work as their main source of income, for most the market days only present an opportunity to earn a little additional income; the profits are too small and the opportunities too erratic for people to consider this type of work their main or even important source of income.

For this study, I have differentiated between formal and informal employment. Formal employment refers to jobs formally taxed, such as for restaurant holders, shopkeepers, masons, government officials, soldiers, traders, schoolteachers, hospital workers, and pharmacists. Informal employment refers to all other types of work, including employment as domestic workers, agricultural wage labourers, herders, and traditional birth attendants. According to Newbury and Baldwin (2000), women did not work as day labourers on construction sites before the war and genocide, although they can now be seen doing so in Kigali. During fieldwork, I have seen women involved in the construction of new school buildings, yet I was unable to determine whether they were doing work similar to men and whether they were being paid equally.

For convenience, it is assumed that people with formal types of employment are generally more secure, since they are more likely to work under contract. Moreover, they are likely to earn higher wages than those informally employed. My data show that 13.2 percent of households have one or more members employed in the formal sector (see Table 9.10), while 7.4 percent of households have one or more members working in the informal sector. Female-headed households are less likely to be engaged in the formal employment sector than are male-headed households, although the difference is not significant. Widow-headed households tend to perform better in this aspect than do divorcee-headed households. In contrast, female-headed households tend to be more regularly engaged in the non-formal sector. Especially among divorcee-headed households, engagement in the non-formal employment sector is high, although again, the difference from other types of households is not significant. Note that household involvement in off-farm and non-farm labour does not automatically indicate anything about male and female involvement. In fact, my data suggest that women are less likely than men to be involved in off-farm and non-farm jobs. This is confirmed by other research (Berlage *et al.* 2003).

Table 9.10: *Employment, by type of household (in %)*

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Formal	15.1	9.3	13.2	10.3	7.1
Informal	6.5	9.3	7.4	6.9	14.3

*Source: Household survey 2005
(Pearson Chi Square)*

Migration

Not all households involved in non-agricultural employment are able to work in the research area. My data indicate that in more than one-tenth (11 percent) of households one or more members were absent due to work elsewhere. There appear to be no significant differences in terms of different types of household. Household migrants comprise both men and women, although significantly more men than women have migrated in search of work. Most migrants are still young (80 percent of women and 57 percent of men are twenty-five years old or less; 80 percent of men are younger than thirty-five) and unmarried. Circular migration is common, whereby people are absent for several months, returning home because their contracts have ended or in order to visit their families and assist with farm work. Migrants in the sample work as civil servants, domestic workers, or in garages.

Migration, forced or voluntary, has always been an important livelihood strategy in Rwanda (see Chapter 2). At present, the preferred migration pattern is rural-urban. The city of Kigali forms the most important destination. Those who have been able to acquire jobs in the cities are considered highly successful and their households benefit from increased status. However, due to limited employment opportunities in the cities, rural-rural migration is also practised. Common destinations of household members in the research area include other districts in Umutara and the provinces of Kibungo and Kigali-Ngali.

International migration is not common in the research area, although some respondents have indicated that members of the extended family are currently living abroad (mostly in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya and occasionally in Europe or the USA). Several old caseload refugees indicated that a conscious household strategy has been to return to Rwanda, leaving several family members behind in the host country. While 'scouts' were sent to Rwanda shortly after the genocide in order to see whether it was safe for families to return, others remained in the host country even when conditions were considered suitable for returning to Rwanda. Sometimes parents or grandparents have remained behind, sometimes one or more siblings. In addition, families have opted to leave one or more of their children with those willing to remain in the host country. At times this was merely done for educational purposes because opportunities were better in the host country, but

respondents also pointed out that having one or more relatives in the former host country has been beneficial in other ways. As a result of better educational and employment opportunities, families now have access to regular remittances. Moreover, some families have opted to return to Rwanda without their cattle, finding conditions to rear cattle more favourable in the host country (more pasture available, fewer cattle diseases). Finally, having close relatives remain behind in the host country is believed to ease a possible return to the host country if living conditions in Rwanda turn out to be too difficult and there is little hope for improvement.

Most people carry out subsistence farming on family plots. In order to supplement household income, some households are involved in off-farm agricultural labour. Non-farm employment opportunities are scarce and some people migrate to cities or to other rural areas to find employment. However, compared to other provinces, Umutara is characterised by relatively large farm holdings and, unlike in other regions, agricultural land is still available. The incentive for people to leave the research area is therefore limited and is mostly restricted to young unmarried persons who may not yet have access to agricultural land. Verpoorten and Berlage (2004) argue that migration of household members is related to average upward income mobility. However, they warn that the causality of this relation is not clear: "migration may be a successful coping strategy leading to upward mobility but upward mobility may also produce the necessary means for migration" (Verpoorten and Berlage 2004: 17).

Other Sources of Income

Whereas subsistence production forms the main source of income for the majority of households in the research area, the sale of crops, livestock, and livestock products offers opportunities to earn cash income, as do agricultural wage labour and non-farm employment. However, there are a number of other ways by which households can increase household income. The sale of beer and soda, the preparation and sale of food (excluding small restaurants, as these have already been included under the heading of formal employment), the sale of firewood or charcoal, the sale of handicrafts such as mats, the letting of rooms or houses, and the rental of land are some of the examples found in the research area. Moreover, a considerable number of households receive remittances, some even depending entirely upon this source of income.

Beer Brewing

Beer brewing is an important source of income in the research area. Beer is normally made out of bananas or sorghum, and home-produced beer is partly consumed by household members or is offered to guests. It is also presented as a gift on special occasions such as betrothals. Sales of beer in the research area are particularly high on Wednesdays (market day) and on Thursdays, when local bars

overflow with men spending the money they earned at the market the previous day. Despite the fact that beer is a common drink, not all respondents approve of its consumption (see Box 9.3).

Box 9.3: Consumption of beer

The pastor of one of the Pentecostal churches warned his followers against the consumption of alcohol. He considered drinking a vice. Nevertheless, people could regularly be found drinking sorghum beer in his courtyard, and in large quantities as well. One day I asked him about the discrepancy between what he preached and what he practised. He responded by saying that the beer he offered, and which was prepared by some of his most faithful female followers, was prepared without adding any alcohol, unlike, he was sure, other people's brew. His visitors, those consuming the beer, were among the most pious people in the village. They agreed with the pastor that drinking alcohol is a vice but that the beer they drank was entirely alcohol free.

Beer is normally prepared in large quantities and stored in large jerry cans. And while it may have a very low alcohol percentage on the day of preparation, fermentation soon follows. This results in an increase in alcoholic content on each successive day. Some of the pastor's visitors eagerly admitted that the drink tasted much better when it was several days old. They loved drinking it because it made them feel happy and joyful. They refused to admit that by this time the drink was in fact alcoholic. To admit this would automatically mean that they could no longer drink their favourite beverage.

Beer sales form a considerable portion of household income. Verpoorten and Berlage (2004) argue that it forms about 7 percent of total household income, its importance having remained constant between 1990 and 2002. According to Verwimp (2003), the sale of locally brewed beer forms an even more important source of household income (10.4 percent).

Whereas the cultivation of bananas is labour-extensive, beer bananas require labour-intensive processing, including mashing and fermentation. Donovan and Bailey (2005) suggest that the processing of banana beer is generally undertaken by women. Walking through the research area, however, I did notice men processing beer bananas, whereas I have never seen women do so²³⁶. Moreover, of the 16 households that indicated that the sale of beer forms an important source of household income, only three belong to female heads of households (one divorcee and two widow-headed households).

I have argued earlier that female-headed households are as likely as male-headed households to produce beer bananas and that widow heads of households are more likely to grow this crop than are divorced or separated heads of household (see Table 9.3). Berlage *et al.* (2003) find that female-headed households are less likely to brew beer than are male-headed households (46 compared to 59 percent of households, respectively). Moreover, they find that female-headed households generally produce smaller quantities of beer than do male-headed

²³⁶ I did witness the production of sorghum beer by women.

households. The authors also find that female-headed households are more inclined to brew beer primarily for purposes of sale, while male-headed households are inclined to produce more for personal consumption.

My data indicate that just over 12 percent of households in the sample sell beer. Female heads of households are less likely to sell beer than are male-headed households, at 7.1 percent and 14.6 percent, respectively, although the difference is not significant. Moreover, it appears that not all widow-headed households that grow beer bananas end up selling banana beer. Of course, it is possible that women are reluctant to admit to selling banana beer. Indeed, both the sale of beer and the breakdown of their marital status are looked upon negatively by society, both easily being equated with prostitution²³⁷. Not all women brew banana beer themselves, but rather sell the unprocessed bananas. As beer brewing is labour-intensive, it is possible that older women in particular refrain from doing so. As bananas are a high yielding crop, requiring relatively little labour input, they can also be exchanged for other food crops on the market. Finally, women produce banana beer but instead of using it for sale they use it as a means of exchange for labourers. Note that none of the divorcee-headed households in the sample sold unprocessed beer bananas. This implies that divorcee-headed households either prepare beer banana for personal consumption or sale, or that beer bananas are put to different use. One informant said that during prolonged periods of food shortages, people actually resort to eating beer bananas, which are not considered suitable for regular consumption.

Berlage *et al.* (2003) find that the largest landowners brew banana beer themselves, while small landowners are more inclined to sell their bananas. I would like to argue that this may be connected to the costs entailed in brewing beer, such as the purchase of wood, or the high labour input needed for the preparation. My own data show that the size of landholdings of households selling beer is significantly different from those not selling beer, at 0.82 and 0.57 hectares, respectively.

Remittances

Remittances form another source of income. They include gifts in kind or in cash received from relatives, and occasionally from good friends, which do not have to be repaid. Some households in the research area depend on remittances for their survival, as their only or main source of income. For instance, this is the case with some of the widow-headed households, or those consisting of elderly couples or chronically ill people.

Estimating the value of remittances is problematic for a number of reasons (Ahmad 2000). As indicated, remittances are not always sent in cash but can also take the form of clothing, medicines, or the covering of certain costs such as school fees. Moreover, remittances can be transferred through different channels. They can be brought by relatives or friends of relatives when they visit, they can be

²³⁷ Nombo (2007) and Karuhanga (2008) also find that the selling of beer (in Tanzania and Uganda, respectively) often leads to suspicions of prostitution.

transferred directly to the receiving party or transferred indirectly as payment for expenses without the receiving party handling the remittances at all. Finally, remittance flows show great variation, not only seasonally (after harvests more money is available and at the end of the month salaries are paid) but also over larger periods of time, depending upon special occasions that may occur in the receiving household, such as births, marriages, or deaths. Moreover, it is important to realise that remittances often come with a variety of other assets that migrants may gain during their absence, “from skills and entrepreneurial attitudes (“human capital”) to extensive networks of friendship and contacts in the home, destination and other countries (“social capital”)” (Cotula and Toulmin 2004: 13).

Despite the difficulties in estimating the value of remittances, it is nevertheless clear that they form a significant source of income. Clay and vander Haar (1993) reported that 60 percent of households in Rwanda received some form of support from family members living outside the household, while 73 percent gave some form of assistance to their parents living elsewhere. They found that lineal (intergenerational) support, mostly from children to parents, was predominant. Most support from children was provided in the form of labour contributions; however, gifts of kind and money also formed important means of assistance given by children to parents.

My own data demonstrate that one-fourth of all households receive remittances (see Table 9.11, this excludes support in the form of labour contributions). As households headed by women are generally perceived to be poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households, and therefore in greater need of assistance, I would expect that female-headed households are more likely to receive remittances than are male-headed households. Indeed, my data support this hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is surprising to find that there is no significant difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households, while one would expect widowed heads of households, who tend to have a significantly higher mean age than male or divorced heads of households (see Chapter 6), to be more likely to receive remittances than divorcee-headed households. Moreover, because of their generally older age, children in households headed by widows also tend to be older and thus more likely to have an income from which to send remittances. However, my data do not support this hypothesis. I will come back to this issue below.

Table 9.11: Remittances by type of household (in %)

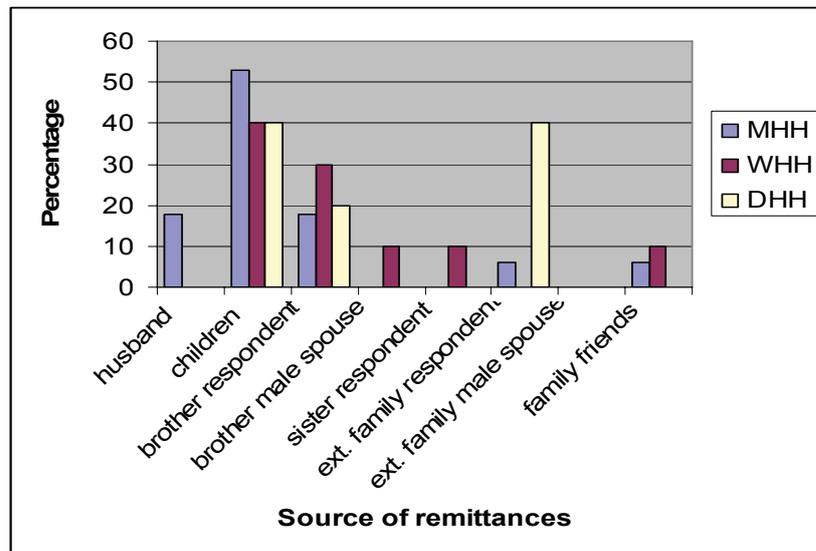
	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Remittances	0.19	0.37**	0.25	0.38	0.36

Source: Household Survey 2005

** significant at the 5% level (Pearson Chi Square)

Remittances are mostly sent in the form of cash (59.4 percent). Remittance in kind (like clothes or medicines) is sent in only 15.5 percent of cases; 25.1 percent of remittances are sent as a combination of cash and kind. As Figure 9.2 clearly indicates, remittances are most often sent by children (46.9 percent), followed by the brother of the female spouse (21.9 percent), and the husband (9.4 percent). Other senders of remittances include other members of the extended family of the female spouse and family friends (both 6.3 percent), the sister of the female spouse, the brother of the male spouse, and other members of the male spouse's extended family (all 3.1 percent).

Figure 9.2: Remittances by type of household



Source: Household survey 2005

Legend: MHH = male-headed households, WHH = widow-headed households, DHH = divorcee-headed households

Divorcee-headed households receive remittances from considerably fewer sources than do male- or widow-headed households. Moreover, my data clearly show the importance of the extended family for divorcee-headed households. It also shows that whereas widow- and divorcee-headed households are almost equally likely to receive remittances, the source of such assistance varies. Whereas children and brothers form the primary source of remittances among widow-headed households, brothers and other members of the extended family (rather than children) are important to divorcee-headed households. Also note that assistance by the wider extended family is only given to divorced heads of households and not to widows or couples.

The high occurrence of remittances points to the perceived vulnerability of female-headed households. However, during a public meeting at the data collection site, where I was given the opportunity to explain the how and why of the household survey, several people pointed out that single men are also perceived to be highly vulnerable and in need of assistance (see Box 9.4).

Box: 9.4: Vulnerability of single men

At one point, the cell leader of Nyabubare invited me to address the inhabitants of this cell to explain my research and the importance of the survey. I gladly accepted the invitation, because addressing the population in his presence was likely to increase the willingness of people to answer my questions. At the meeting, I explained that I was interested to see whether female-headed households are generally poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households, as is often proclaimed by policy makers and scholars. No sooner had I stopped speaking when a man got up to ask me a question. He wanted to know why I focused on female-headed households and why I showed no interest in households headed by single men, for he was convinced the latter were considerably worse off than female-headed households. He continued by explaining that single men have no-one to fall back on, do not receive any outside assistance, and are expected to fend for themselves. The man stressed repeatedly how difficult his and other single men's fate was and how isolated they felt in their struggle to survive. While he was speaking, a general affirmative sentiment could be felt, and both men and women nodded in agreement.

Remittances are used for a variety of purposes, although most households in the research area appear to use them to meet their basic needs: food, clothing, health care, and education. This is also reflected by the fact that respondents regularly indicated that remittances had been received in the form of clothing or the coverage of medical costs. Studies show that purchases of agricultural land constitute a frequent form of remittance use (Cotula and Toulmin 2004), although my data do not support this view. While households receiving remittances generally have access to more land (average of 0.76 hectares) than households that do not receive remittances (average of 0.54 hectares), this difference is not significant. Moreover, when just looking at whether households with remittances are more likely to have purchased land, no significance is found either.

Managing Household Labour Portfolios

One of the problems with a cross-sectional household survey is that it does not reveal dynamics. In the survey, I asked whether people were employed during the time of the survey and, if so, what type of employment they were involved in. If involved in more than one activity, they were asked to stipulate the employment most important to them. However, this meant that it was not possible to register people who undertook more than one type of employment, which in fact turned out to be quite common in the research area. Nor was it possible to see for how long any particular employment was undertaken, or during which season. Reardon (1997) argues that rural non-farm activities in Africa seem to be concentrated in the dry season, after harvests and before the next farm production season. While questions concerning choices with regard to work and how these choices fit within the overall household strategy are important ones, these issues remain underexposed.

The stories of Jacqueline and Josephine confirm the importance of these questions (see Box 9.5).

Box 9.5: Employment dynamics: Jacqueline and Josephine

During the survey interview, Jacqueline registered as a farmer. Indeed, that is what she is. However, Jacqueline does much more than just farm work. Shortly before I first arrived at the research area (August 2003), she had worked at the weekly market, where she sold *mandazi* and goat 'kebab'. She was assisted by a village boy who took care of the slaughter of goats and the charcoal stove on which the meat was roasted. When this boy no longer wanted to work for Jacqueline after finding employment in a nearby restaurant, she had to resort to selling *mandazi* alone and subsequently found her income very low. She decided to abandon her market activities and focus on her farm instead. During the slack agricultural season, Jacqueline started a small restaurant at her house, selling tea and bread. She thought about returning to the market with *mandazi* but decided against it, since she still considered the potential income too small in relation to the labour input required. Because she needed extra income, she began to sell firewood at her house, believing this would earn her more money than the small restaurant. She continued this work for several months, but found the competition was stiff and the profits marginal, so she again abandoned her non-farm activities. When her daughter returned home after several months' absence, Jacqueline tried to assist her in setting up a small restaurant around the corner of her house, again selling tea and bread. The restaurant did well this time, especially on market days, since it was situated on one of the main access roads to the market. Jacqueline then considered opening a bigger restaurant at the market itself. When her second daughter married and moved to a house right next to the market, Jacqueline decided to rent a shack there. She spent whole days cooking, leaving all of the farm work to the boy who had come to live with her the year before. Not long afterwards, she abandoned the restaurant again, as she was not able to pay the required taxes. She is now once more a fulltime farmer.

Josephine runs a successful restaurant at the weekly market. On Tuesdays she travels to the nearest town to buy chickens, meat, and vegetables and takes these to her restaurant. In the afternoon and evening she starts to cook and then spends the night at the restaurant to guard against theft. On Wednesdays, she continues to cook and sells meals and drinks. Late at night, she returns home. As her market restaurant was doing so well, Josephine decided to open another restaurant at the village centre, which would be in service throughout the week. She found a location and started her new business but soon found the competition too heavy. Few customers visited her restaurant at the centre. After several weeks, Josephine stopped working at her new restaurant and now works at her market restaurant for a maximum of two days per week. On the other days, she cultivates her plots. Nevertheless, when asked about her profession, Josephine says she is registered as a trader/vendor and not as a farmer.

The fact that Josephine does not own any land but rents it could have made her decide to register as a trader/vendor. Jacqueline, however, though spending a considerable amount of time on non-farm activities, registered as a farmer. I would like to argue that Jacqueline realises that it is her agricultural activities that provide her with a stable and secure income to fall back on in the event her non-farm activities fail. Alternatively, by defining her profession as 'farmer', a profession considered appropriate for women historically, Jacqueline establishes herself as a virtuous woman. This is important, because widows like her are at risk of being falsely accused of being a 'femme libre'. To be thus accused could jeopardise her rights to land and claims to assistance in times of need. Josephine, on the other hand, is a married woman whose husband, at the time the questionnaire was administered, had been able to secure non-farm work in Kigali. While conducting a risky business, one that easily leads to accusations of adultery, her marriage to a 'successful' – meaning more status than income – man protects her against malicious gossip.

In an environment where labour-intensive subsistence agriculture on small family holdings in the absence of non-farm employment is the norm, household asset portfolios increasingly depend on multiple earners. Labour is regularly re-allocated among individual household members and between activities, depending on factors such as seasonality, availability of workers, or level of competition. Asset substitution in the form of re-allocation of labour between activities often entails a re-allocation between domestic and earning activities as well.

In the research area, male involvement in domestic duties is low, and the re-allocation of labour between domestic and outside earning activities is subject to well-known gender constraints (Moser 1998). Domestic activities are considered a woman's duty. In contrast, farm work is considered a shared responsibility. In most cases where women are involved in outside earning activities or decide to start their own enterprises, their work burden increases considerably. In some cases, domestic tasks are re-allocated to other household members, often daughters. If children are still too young to perform such domestic tasks or are absent or otherwise unable to assist, other people are asked to take over some of the domestic work. For example, grandparents can be asked to look after grandchildren or relatives are asked to move in with the family and assist with domestic work. Proactively managing household labour portfolios – for example, by increasing the number of working household members or by re-allocating labour over activities – serves to increase or diversify household income and thus reduces household vulnerability. A side-effect is that women earning an income may see their status and decision-making power within the household increase. However, to increase household income by proactively managing labour portfolios comes at a cost. Respondents indicated that women face additional work burdens, children are brought up without parental guidance because they are looked after by siblings, and investments in complex family reciprocity networks are required if appeals to family networks need to be made.

Educational achievements are important when managing household labour portfolios, as education greatly influences success in finding off- and non-farm

employment (see Table 9.12). Of 81 individuals aged fifteen years or older who have had no education, 85.2 percent are currently working on the household farm holding, 27.2 percent are working as agricultural wage labourers, and 2.7 percent are working in the informal sector. Often, people are engaged in more than one type of employment. For instance, those working on the household farm holding may also work as agricultural wage labourers. The proportion of farmers decreases rapidly with increased educational achievement, such that among individuals aged fifteen years or older with higher education only 14 percent are farming. A similar trend can be found with respect to the proportion of individuals working as agricultural wage labourers. At the same time, the proportion of individuals who have succeeded in obtaining formal employment increases with educational attainment. It is no surprise that households invest in the education of their children, considering the general shortage of land, especially acute among divorcee-headed households but a problem for the large majority of households, in relation to increased non-farm employment opportunities for those with higher levels of education. Education is thus an important income-generating strategy.

Table 9.12: Type of employment by educational attainment (of people aged 15 or above)

Educational attainment	Number observations	Proportion involved in:			
		Farming	Agricultural wage labour	Informal employment	Formal employment
None	81	85.2	27.2	3.7	-
Primary	226	70.8	21.2	2.7	4.4
Secondary	72	19.4	9.7	2.7	12.5
Higher	14	14.3	7.1	-	28.6

Source: Household Survey 2005

Note: This table includes people who are still at school or university.

Proactively managing household labour portfolios may also mean that children are expected to work (see Box 9.6).

Box 9.6: Peanuts

During my first fieldwork period (2003-04), I was often visited by Thierry, a boy of about twelve. Every day he came to my house to sell small packages of peanuts. The boy explained that his family was very poor and owned no land, and that his parents had difficulties securing sufficient employment to feed everyone. In order to supplement the household's income, the boy would take his small bags of peanuts and try to sell as many as possible after school. After several months, he no longer came to my house and I was told that he had found employment in the rice fields. When I looked him up there, he told me that he had dropped out of school and now worked as a labourer. He expressed a

wish to return to school in the slack season, as he realised that his employment opportunities would increase if he were to finish at least primary school, but preferably also secondary school.

Whereas child labour is present in the research area, it turned out to be difficult to measure. This is partly the result of the stigma attached to keeping children out of schools. When children attend school and also perform labour, occasionally or seasonally, they are likely to be registered as students, thus underestimating the occurrence of child labour. Nevertheless, a large number of children are engaged in agriculture. Clay and vander Haar (1993) argue that the figure is 80 percent. The problem is that child labour is not always clearly visible and is especially difficult to show for girls who assist with, or are responsible for, household work like cooking, cleaning, fetching water, washing, and looking after siblings.

My sample counts 357 children younger than fifteen. Of these, only fifteen (4.2 percent) are registered as being economically active²³⁸. Most work on the family farm, while others are domestic workers. According to my data, more boys than girls are economically active: 4.8 percent of all boys in this age category against 3.6 percent of all girls. What the survey was not able to capture but that became painfully clear in the field is that many girls do in fact work in their own or relatives' house, without, however, being acknowledged as economically active. Instead, girls are registered by respondents as being students or as being still too young to work. It is possible that respondents only considered their children economically active if they were able to earn income through work. However, this obscures the fact that many girls do perform essential work within and outside the household. Moreover, those girls performing unrecognised work are not able to attend school as frequently as their brothers.

Observations indicated that most of the work performed by children in the research area is seasonal, coinciding with the agricultural peak season (labour peaks). They mostly assist on the farm, but occasionally also work in the informal sector. Many children assist in weeding and harvesting. Fetching water for household use is also normally done by children. Selling water to other households is not considered a child's task and is most often undertaken by much older boys and men²³⁹. Due to the nature of child labour, many children are able to combine their work with school. Others drop out at more or less regular intervals, when their labour is required in the household's fields or when parents fall ill (cf. Moser 1998). However, parents do feel this comes at a cost. Respondents indicated that

²³⁸ The figure of 4.2 percent is much lower than the figure for the province of Umutara, where nearly 10 percent of children below fifteen were found to be economically active (Republic of Rwanda 2005b).

²³⁹ As to the distribution of farm responsibilities in Ruhengeri, Randolph and Sanders (1992) found that women contribute the highest percentage of labour and men the lowest. Men's greatest contribution is found in land cultivation. Children, contributing higher percentages of labour than adult males, are active in almost all aspects of crop and livestock-related tasks, except for land preparation.

their children are not performing very well at school; their grades are low and the children are repeatedly required to repeat classes.

Making children work is a household strategy, the rationale for which differs among households. Sometimes children are asked to take over some of the work that is normally done by others: for example, due to illness of one or more of the adult household members. At other times, children are asked to assist during periods of acute household labour shortages, such as during specific periods in the agricultural season, especially weeding and harvesting. Again others are pulled out of school because their performance is below what could be expected and the cost to keep them in school is simply too high. To put these children to work seems logical, at least among the poor. However, children's performances might have been better if they had not been required to work in the first place. Forcing children to work may result in a household's income being complemented, and in the short run this is likely to decrease household vulnerability. However, this does not mean that poor households with working children will be able to move out of poverty (Moser 1998). In fact, longer-term vulnerability of such households is likely to increase, for child labour impedes the development of human capabilities. Educational opportunities are reduced, which compromises the child's future employment prospects, and thus also its future income-earning capacity.

Discussion

Farming constitutes the most important form of income in the research area. Few households depend entirely on farming, however, and try to diversify their sources of income. As well as forming additional sources of income, diversification also reduces household vulnerability in times of agricultural crises such as climatic or environmental problems, crop or plant diseases, and social upheavals.

It is clear that substantial differences exist between various types of households. Land forms the primary asset of households in the research area and income-earning activities other than farming are limited. However, not everyone in the research area is able to access land. Differences in land access are most pronounced between widow- and divorcee-headed households. The landless obviously rely on other sources of income to meet basic household demands. This not only has a direct effect on subsistence production but also affects the possibility to earn income through the sale of harvest, livestock, or livestock products.

Whereas differences between male- and widow-headed households generally appear small, divorcee-headed households experience more difficulties in obtaining an income through mixed farming. This is related to the fact that the proportion of landless among divorcee-headed households is considerably higher than among male- and widow-headed households. Unless other sources of regular and sufficient income are found, the lack of land is likely to have negative results for the nutritional and health status of household members. Considering the general lack of employment opportunities in the research area, it appears that divorcee-headed households are among the poorest and most vulnerable households. Additionally, divorcee-headed households that have been able to

access land have generally not been able to access as much land as other types of households. They also grow a smaller variety of crops. Not surprisingly therefore, divorcee-headed households are less likely to sell crops: an important source of cash income in the research area. Moreover, divorcee-headed households are less likely to possess livestock, and thus also less likely to earn an income through the sale of livestock and livestock products.

As I have shown, income derived from land, including both crop and livestock production, is not the only source of income. Other sources can be obtained through off-farm and non-farm employment, sometimes necessitating migration by one or more household members or even the entire household. Other households engage in the sale of drinks, food, or a number of other items, some of which are collected, others home-produced, or in the rental of land or houses.

Differences between types of households with regard to most sources of income, with the exception of remittances, are not significant. However, it is also clear that divorcee-headed households generally have fewer sources of non-farming related income than do male- or widow-headed households. In fact, none of the divorcee-headed households in the sample are engaged in the sale of food or handicrafts, nor do they rent out rooms or land. This once more underscores their more vulnerable position vis-à-vis male- and widow-headed households. Declining or low involvement in income-generating activities may translate into reduced access to market goods, including improved inputs, without which production levels are likely to drop, leading to less income, and so on. This leads to a potential vicious circle.

Differences between types of households with respect to labour strategies are likely to be related to intra-household differences. While the size of households does not differ substantially among male-, widow-, and divorcee-headed households, the composition of households does differ, as shown in Chapter 6. Female-headed households, and in particular divorcee-headed households, have significantly more dependents to look after than do male-headed households; or to put it differently, they have fewer household members that can be put to work and contribute to overall household income. Moreover, female-headed households are likely to have fewer economically active male members than male-headed households, if only because of the absence of a male spouse. As I have shown, men are more likely than women to be involved in off- and non-farm labour. In addition, women are more often paid in kind than are men. This is likely to have a large impact on household labour portfolios and income.

Of course, diversification of assets and sources of income does not necessarily lead to higher household incomes. Diversification may also indicate poverty, as poverty tends to induce the poor to intensify ways of generating income (de Haan and Zoomers 2005). The poor tend to be engaged in multiple and complex income-generating activities (Ellis 2000). For many, diversification is merely a survival strategy and should not automatically be assumed to lead to significantly higher incomes (Niehof 2004b).

At first glance, my data do not suggest any major differences in the livelihood portfolios of Hutu and Tutsi households. In Chapter 8, I have indicated that the size of land does not differ significantly among these households. In fact,

the only significant difference I was able to find is that Hutu households are more likely to own goats than are Tutsi households. Factors that do appear to influence livelihood portfolios in the research area are the duration of stay and membership of organisations. Those who have stayed in the research area for longer periods are more likely to own more land and livestock; hence, they are theoretically more likely to earn a higher income from crop and surplus livestock production. As I have also indicated in Chapter 5, old caseloads refugees, which include many Tutsi households, settled in the research area before new caseload refugees, among whom were many Hutu. This implies that ethnicity does have an impact on livelihood portfolios, albeit in an indirect way. In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at the relationship between membership of organisations and livelihood portfolios.

I have also shown that over time, livelihood portfolios have undergone considerable change. Whereas cattle production was traditionally a Tutsi occupation and crop production traditionally a Hutu occupation, this is no longer the case. This is not a recent phenomenon, because even in pre-colonial Rwanda Hutu were engaged in cattle production and Tutsi, especially poor Tutsi, were engaged in crop production (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, some respondents have indicated that in post-genocide Rwanda the livelihood portfolios of both Hutu and Tutsi have undergone a radical change. For example, respondents have indicated that Hutu are now more likely to own cattle than are Tutsi, especially since the introduction of the new 'one house, one cow policy'. Cows are distributed, free of cost, among households that have sufficient land to build a shed and cultivate fodder. Several respondents were of the opinion that Hutu are more likely to meet these conditions, although I have found no evidence to support this view. Nevertheless, the perception among some of my respondents is that Hutu are now engaged in traditional Tutsi occupations, while Tutsi are increasingly engaged in traditional Hutu occupations.

However, I would argue that the largest change in livelihood portfolios over time has been the necessity of poor households to engage in diverse livelihood activities. Again, this is not a new trend but is the result of increasing land pressure and land inequality. Livelihood diversification, or more specifically, regular shifts from one set of activities to another set of activities, is thus an indicator of poverty and vulnerability.

Since much of the farm labour is drawn from family members, farming is also an important source of employment, both for immediate family members and hired labour. In the absence of non-farm employment opportunities, it makes sense to attempt to raise the unit output, making farming a more dependable source of income. However, it is important to ensure that in the process school-going children are not withheld from school in order to provide farm labour, as this will jeopardise a household's human capital formation and livelihood security for the future.

Households respond to adverse economic circumstances by adjusting household labour and the division of labour within the household. Thus, there is a close link between labour and household relations. While households can provide security for their members, the division of tasks can also be a potential source of

conflict. Adjustments made in order to diversify sources of income often result in an increased workload for women. Moreover, respondents complain that due to labour requirements they are not able to spend sufficient time with their children. Many are afraid that this will jeopardise their children's future. There is a general fear among respondents of children loitering about, not learning to behave appropriately (considered especially important for daughters and related to the fear of unwanted pregnancies), and alcohol abuse. Respondents who have admitted to putting their children to work realise that this will come at a cost as well, as their children are more likely to fail at school, thus jeopardising their future opportunities.

The fact that most people are farmers by occupation suggests that improvement in the agricultural sector is likely to have an impact on many people's lives. For this to happen, challenges in the agricultural sector must be identified and addressed. One of these challenges relates to the fact that the private sector is underdeveloped. Existing potential must be identified in order to open up other income-generating avenues outside of agriculture.

Families with sufficiently large landholdings and with one or more household members working in the non-farm sector (notably as domestic workers, civil servants, school teachers, artisans, and entrepreneurs) are in a good position to obtain higher incomes and accumulate wealth, through saving and access to credit facilities. However, this picture applies to only a few in the research area. For many families, land size is a limiting factor. While production on small landholdings may be efficient, the income derived is often small compared to that of larger landholdings. As I have indicated in Chapter 7, parents' income influences children's educational status. I have also shown that lower educational status makes it more difficult to find employment in the public and private sector. Moreover, there is a relation between the size of landholdings and the type of off-farm employment. Households with small landholdings are more likely to engage in agricultural wage labour and those with larger landholdings are more likely to hold jobs in the public sector, which usually pays better and where income is more secure (Clay *et al.* 1990)²⁴⁰.

Even if parents with small landholdings are able to make ends meet, they fear that their children will not all be able to continue farming and produce enough food or cash crops to survive on. Off-farm and non-farm opportunities need to be improved. Labour endowments may permit small landholding families to escape poverty. However, opportunities for agricultural wage labour are limited. Few farmers in the research area are entrepreneurs in the sense that they rely upon agricultural wage labour. In addition, there are no commercial farming enterprises in the research area (like the coffee or tea plantations in other regions of the country). Many people are looking for work (problem of demand-supply) to

²⁴⁰ The explanation could be that larger landholdings normally achieve a higher income than those with small landholdings, enabling them to better educate their children. Higher education increases the chances of finding employment in the better paying public and private sector.

supplement the income derived from their own farms, and the work offered is often temporary (including hire for tilling and weeding).

The development of the rural non-farm sector, such as small and micro enterprises and appropriate marketing channels, needs explicit attention. Or, as Clay *et al.* (1990: 18) state: “the premiere challenge facing parents, communities and government officials today will be to overcome inequalities rooted in the distribution of landholdings by providing the nation’s less endowed young men and women with the skills, access to credit, guidance and employment opportunities necessary to build a future beyond the encroaching hedgerows of their families inheritance”. The development of the non-farm sector is likely to have a positive effect on the off-farm sector as well, by draining some of the excess labour pool to the non-farm sector and thus possibly boosting agricultural wages.

Again, care must be taken to guarantee equal access to off-farm and non-farm employment. It has been found that when households seek employment off the farm, it is most often done by only one person, often the head of the household or one of the adult children still living at home (Clay *et al.* 1990). One of the reasons could be that women, especially those older than thirty, are generally less educated than men, making it more difficult to compete for non-farm employment. Moreover, women are assigned many household responsibilities and their absence from the household tends to create conflict among household members, due to the dominant ideology that a woman is supposed to look after children, prepare meals, and look after everyone’s wellbeing.

Non-farm work by women is mostly limited to basket and mat weaving, tailoring, and embroidery. This type of work requires little initial capital and is flexible. However, potential profits from such types of employment are often relatively small, and where more women are involved in such activities, as is the case in the research area, marketing becomes an issue: supply is too high for demand, indicating the need to find other markets. The type of work normally performed by men, such as brick making, carpentry, and masonry, usually earns more than women’s non-farm labour activities. Moreover, the demand for artisans is high and work is not restricted to the home or even to the village. In addition, off-farm employment is likely to be undertaken by workers in their twenties and thirties (Clay *et al.* 1990)²⁴¹. Differential employment opportunities between men and women of different ages are therefore likely to have an impact on intra-household relations.

I would like to end this chapter with a final note on the government’s current agricultural policy. As I have argued, crop diversification is an important household strategy based on risk-averse considerations. The same can be said with respect to household strategies to cultivate several plots, located in different micro-ecological zones. I consider that top-down government attempts to reduce land fragmentation, to encourage monoculture, and to replace high-calorie crops such as tubers with cash crops such as rice, seriously undermine household strategies to

²⁴¹ Among the reasons given by these authors is the fact that the educational achievement of this group often exceeds that of the parents, making easier the access to jobs in the non-farm sector, which require higher levels of training (Clay *et al.* 1990).

reduce risk. These attempts will also aggravate food security risks. In the absence of sufficient off-farm and non-farm employment, this will have a negative impact on poor rural households.

10

Social Capital and the Pentecostal Explosion

“The necessity to ‘be seen’ determined much of the life pattern of the community. It can be said to have permeated relationships to such an extent that the entire afternoon of each day was dedicated to visiting. Work in the fields stopped about midday. The men brought the tools home, picked up their individual wine calabash, and left again to visit their lord-chieftlet, various overlords or their neighbours.”

(Gravel 1965: 324)

Access to key resources is often obtained by means of social capital. The permanence of social capital can, however, not be taken for granted (Moser 1998). When household assets are depleted or destroyed, households are less likely to be able to support others, because they lack the ability or the will to invest in social networks. Extreme poverty may lead to restricted social interaction, intensified self-interest, and heightened distrust²⁴² towards strangers (cf. Nombo 2007). In this sense, poverty undermines collective action and in combination with perpetual uncertainty, stress and risk, a vicious circle is established (Woolcock 1998). In post-genocide Rwanda, the development and relief industry played an important role in rebuilding household and community assets. NGOs have played an instrumental role in the reconstruction of houses, schools, and health centres that were destroyed during the genocide. Some NGOs provided legal assistance to widowed women who had lost access to land or whose land had been grabbed by their own or their spouse’s relatives. Government agency projects with income components, such as the distribution of goats among poor women, have also been important in assisting people in regenerating household resources that, theoretically, might then be applied to create social capital. Thurman *et al.* (2008) argue that interventions by local authorities or NGOs may affect the willingness of communities to offer support. Indeed, in this study I have found evidence that supports their argument. For example, Jacqueline has decided to leave her youngest children at an orphanage, as she feels that the orphanage is better able to provide care and education to her children. In fact, several respondents have indicated that local authorities and NGOs are responsible for the care of orphans.

²⁴² Trust between people arises when they expect that other members of their community will behave in a regular, honest, and cooperative way and will comply with commonly shared norms (Fukuyama 1995).

It is important to realise that the war and genocide eroded long-held reciprocal trust among relatives, friends, and neighbours as a result of death, flight, migration, exile, and imprisonment. In short, as the social fabric of society was shredded, feelings of trust were replaced by those of insecurity, fear, anger, hatred, and “social dislocation” (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). In such circumstances, domestic relations were the only or the most accessible forms of networks available to people, or the only ones on which they dared to fall back on. Reliance on inter-ethnic networks became rare. As I have indicated, there is evidence that the occurrence of interethnic marriages has decreased if not ceased altogether since the genocide. Moreover, the loss of human capital has resulted in a loss of knowledge and organisational capacity of groups and social networks that have survived or have been rebuilt since²⁴³.

The reconstruction of social capital is an important aspect of rebuilding post-conflict societies (cf. Bouta *et al.* 2005). In Rwanda, much attention has been given to the reconstruction of social capital (including reciprocal trust), among others by the many NGOs that have been or are still operating in Rwanda, such as CARE, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and ZOA Refugee Care. Projects in which people are required to form groups in order to access assistance are common. One example is the rice project by ADRA, which required farmers to join farmers’ groups in order to be allowed access to the rice fields. As the large population movements of the 1990s appear a thing of the past - apart from some internal migration movements, which seem a continuation of past trends - the majority of Rwandans have now settled down. People have become permanent rather than temporary members of their communities, have had the time to rebuild interpersonal networks, and have become members of voluntary associations and groups. Without a doubt, the reconstruction of social capital is well underway.

In this chapter, I will look at different aspects of household social capital²⁴⁴. Firstly, I will discuss the quantity and quality of structural social capital. Structural social capital involves various forms of social organisation, including roles, rules and procedures as well as a variety of networks that contribute to cooperation. In this chapter I will concentrate on ‘horizontal ties’ (see Chapter 3) - membership in voluntary organisations and interpersonal networks of relatives, friends and neighbours²⁴⁵. Structural social capital forms only one aspect of social capital and is complemented by cognitive aspects (Uphoff 2000). Cognitive social capital refers to

²⁴³ It is important to realise that the war and genocide in Rwanda did not only lead to the destruction of social capital. While bridging social relations between Hutu and Tutsi progressively weakened, bonding social relations among Hutu became much stronger. Moreover, the state increasingly penetrated communal affairs, thus strengthening vertical ties of social capital (Colletta and Cullen 2000).

²⁴⁴ In a series of publications, the World Bank has made suggestions for measuring and analysing different aspects and levels of social capital. In both the construction of my survey questionnaire and the analysis of my data, I relied on the World Bank’s suggestions as proposed by Grootaert *et al.* (2004).

²⁴⁵ The socio-political environment that shapes norms and social structures - ‘vertical ties’ - has, albeit indirectly, been discussed in Chapter 2.

more subjective notions such as attitudes, norms of behaviour, shared values, reciprocity, and trust. It forms the 'driving force' behind visible aspects of social capital. The second part of this chapter will discuss cognitive social capital by analysing the level of trust towards specific social groups and the occurrence of conflicts in the research area. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the important role of the Pentecostal movement in the growth of social capital.

Structural Social Capital

As Ben-Porath (1980) argued, the family usually plays an important role in the allocation and distribution of resources. Several characteristics of the family connection are important in this respect, among which the fact that these types of connections usually extend over long periods of time, encompass a large variety of activities, and generally require no explicit balancing of the individual exchange, while large outstanding balances are generally tolerated. Moreover, family connections create a collective identity that affects the interactions and transactions involving people outside the family. In general, the family connection is specific, non-negotiable, and non-transferable (Ben-Porath 1980).

To varying degrees, the characteristics of the family connection also apply to the connections between friends and neighbours. Family, friends, and neighbours form some of the most accessible sources of social capital (see Box 10.1). They not only provide emotional support but are also an important means of gaining access to productive resources such as land. However, relatives, friends, and neighbours can also form a liability. For a variety of reasons, they may decide to withhold their support. Perhaps even worse, gossip and rumours may hamper access to important resources and have a detrimental effect on people's emotional wellbeing. Apart from interpersonal networks, people may also be member of voluntary associations or formal groups. Access to these networks is usually restricted to people who are able to pay entry fees. Hence, these networks are sometimes difficult to join, especially for the poor.

Box 10.1: The importance of horizontal ties: Jacqueline and Joy

Jacqueline was born in Gitarama in 1954. Long before the genocide, she left for Karagwe, Tanzania. There she married and raised a family. During one of his travels, her husband died suddenly. In 1994, shortly after the genocide came to a halt, Jacqueline decided to return 'home', as did many of her relatives who had also been living in exile in Tanzania. On arrival in Rwanda, Jacqueline moved in with a relative who had been allocated a vacated house in Kigali. Other relatives settled in Kibungo, Kigali-Ngali, and Gitarama. When disputes arose about her living arrangements in Kigali, Jacqueline decided to settle in Kigali-Ngali, near one of her sisters. However, land was scarce and Jacqueline had difficulty meeting her own basic needs and those of her children. She was hesitant to ask for help from her relatives, as she knew they were having their own problems as well. Instead, she tried to find a solution on her own.

When she visited a male relative in the research area and learned that it would be possible to acquire land here, she decided to move once more. In 2000, Jacqueline arrived in Rwagitima. With the money she had earned through the sale of her land in Kigali-Ngali, she was able to purchase a small house. She was then able to access a plot of land in the marshes behind her house, where she grew tubers. In 2001, she was able to purchase a small plot of land from one of her neighbours. When she learned about the rice project, she joined forces with another neighbour, a woman whom she considered her friend, and formed a farmers' group. Thus, in 2003 she succeeded in gaining access to land in the rice fields. One year later, she also decided to rent a small plot of land. Again, neighbours were instrumental in this respect.

Since her arrival in the village, Jacqueline has made several good friends. Some of these are her direct neighbours, while others are people she has met through the Pentecostal church. Jacqueline is a well-known figure and is widely known for her willingness to help others. For example, she has provided shelter to several migrants who wanted to settle in the village but were still looking for accommodation. She is considered a very pious woman, honest and with a sharp business instinct. Jacqueline regularly assists her friends, mostly by looking after their children during their absence and by giving them food. Out of moral obligation, she also occasionally gives money or clothes to beggars²⁴⁶. Her eldest daughter, Hope (also known for her religious zeal and honesty), is likewise known for her willingness to assist others and Jacqueline is often praised for having raised such a virtuous daughter. The goodwill Jacqueline has thus accumulated in the community enables her to request assistance from her friends (mostly in the form of small loans) when she is in need herself. Recently, Jacqueline was allowed to become a member of a small credit association, where other group members act as guarantors. She has also been invited to join the *Abunzi*²⁴⁷, a village-based arbitration committee with recognised judicial power.

Joy was born in Uganda in 1970. In 1982, the family returned to Rwanda, where her father bought land in Rwagitima. By 1990, ethnic strife had forced the family to live in exile once again. After the genocide, Joy returned to Rwanda with her husband, her parents, and younger brother and sisters. Joy and her father were both given back part of Joy's father's property. Joy's father later moved to Kagitumba. He put his land in Rwagitima up for sale, and Joy was able to purchase a considerable amount of it. In 2002, the local authorities urged her to divide the land in half. Joy was 'granted' half of the land, while the other half was given to a family that had recently settled in the area. No compensation was offered²⁴⁸.

In Rwagitima, Joy, who had been raised a Muslim, joined the Pentecostal church. She became very involved in church matters and could be found nearly every day at the house

²⁴⁶ Beggars are a common sight in the research area. Most appear to come from Bugesera (Kigali-Ngali). Beggars roam from village to village in search of food and land. Few actually settle indeterminately.

²⁴⁷ The *Abunzi* deal foremost with marital disputes and problems between herders and farmers (e.g. destruction of crops by cattle). Other disputes that have appeared before the committee include those over land borders and witchcraft accusations. According to some of my respondents, the verdict of the *Abunzi* is legally binding. It is only when the *Abunzi* fail that disputes can be brought before ordinary courts.

²⁴⁸ Other informants referred to such practices of 'land sharing' as well.

of the pastor. When I first arrived in the research area (August 2003), she was a very popular woman who was praised for her religious zeal, good conduct, honesty, and willingness to assist others. Not only did she look after her own children and her younger brother, she also looked after two of her nieces and several unrelated orphans. People also praised her for the fact that she sheltered a family of migrants who had just arrived from Kigali-Ngali but were still looking for a place to live. Moreover, when the migrant woman experienced difficulties with her pregnancy, Joy went from door to door collecting money for hospital treatment. Joy was also known for her good farming skills and was selected on more than one occasion by the local authorities to participate in farm courses in the province's capital city Nyagatare.

However, when I returned to Rwagitima in 2005, Joy's position in the community had changed radically. She no longer visited the pastor at home, although she continued to attend church services. Her former friends no longer wanted to comment on Joy's whereabouts and activities and suddenly appeared not to know how she was doing. Whereas earlier she had been praised for assisting newcomers, people now commented that she sheltered too many people in her house and that she was unable to maintain cleanliness. There were rumours that she was not a widow after all and that she engaged in sexual relations with men. It was also rumoured that her eldest daughter suffered from AIDS.

It was difficult to talk to Joy directly. She was always busy and appointments were not kept. When we finally met, she did not comment on her treatment by the other villagers. She did, however, confirm her daughter's illness. She also mentioned that she was leading one of the local AIDS associations. She regularly attended meetings, not only in Rwagitima but also in neighbouring villages and towns and in locations as far away as Kigali. However, when I returned to Rwagitima in 2007, Joy told me that she had been asked to leave the AIDS association when members learned that she herself was not suffering from AIDS. This deprived her of important resources such as credit facilities and cheap medication for her daughter. Joy no longer lived in her old house but had moved to a much smaller one. As she had become seriously ill, she was forced to sell her old house and part of her land. While this had enabled her to pay for her medical expenses, the sale of her land was looked upon negatively by her neighbours and former friends. They felt that she had, once more, made a wrong decision. They argued that it would have been much better for Joy to have begged for assistance rather than sell such an important asset. Moreover, the fact that Joy had been assisted by her brother-in-law during her illness and had become pregnant resulted in more malicious gossip. Joy was accused of being a 'femme libre', a prostitute, and was now shunned by other community members.

The stories of Jacqueline and Joy exemplify several issues. On returning to the 'home country', both women initially settled near relatives. Neither woman remained with these relatives for long, although for different reasons. With respect to accessing land, both women relied on their network of kin relations. Jacqueline initially went to live near her sister and learned about the opportunity to access land in the research area through a male relative who had already settled there. Joy's parents enabled her to purchase their landed property. Both women were able to access considerable tracts of land in the research area. However, whereas Jacqueline initially started with a small piece of land and was eventually able to

increase the size of her holding by, among other things, joining a farmers' group active in rice cultivation, Joy's large holding was reduced considerably when the authorities started to divide land between old and new caseload refugees. Moreover, out of necessity, Joy was forced to sell part of her landed property to pay for her medical expenses.

Initially, both women were able to create strong social networks. Membership of a religious institution played an important role in this respect. Both women invested considerable time and energy in these networks, hoping that these investments would result in future support in times of need. Jacqueline appears to have been highly successful in her attempts. Joy's story, however, indicates that investments in social networks can turn sour as well. In times when she needed help most, people turned away from her. Gossip about her conduct, lack of cleanliness, and inability to hold on to the most precious asset, land, affected the willingness of people to assist her. However, Joy was able to compensate the loss of one social network by creating another. By becoming the leader of a local AIDS association, she was not only able to access health care for her daughter but also education and credit. Moreover, she could extend her network far beyond the local community. Nevertheless, this new social network proved unreliable. When Joy lost her membership in the AIDS association, her network crumbled. Moreover, her parents, who had been an important source of emotional support, had moved out of the area, her former friends and neighbours shunned her, and she was no longer allowed to join any village-based association. Whereas the support she received from her brother-in-law was welcome at the time of her illness, his support resulted in a further breakdown of her social network.

Membership of different types of groups and networks forms an indicator of the magnitude of social capital (Narayan and Pritchett 1999). While the conjugal family in Rwanda plays a role more important than in many other African societies, kin groups nevertheless remain an important source of social capital. Moreover, it could be argued that the lack of trust between people – a direct outcome of the war and genocide – has increased reliance on such strong horizontal ties. As I have shown in Chapter 9, most remittances are sent by children and brothers of the female spouse, although other extended family members may also send remittances occasionally. Employment in the formal and informal sector is often found with the assistance of kin. School fees are paid by parents or older siblings and temporary shelter, for example with relatives in the city, is normally guaranteed, thus providing a solution when distant places are visited in search of health care or employment. The kin group plays an important role in accessing financial and physical capital, and inheritance practices are central in the acquisition land. However, kin not only form an important potential economic source, they also enhance human capital by providing family members with a sense of belonging and support. To many, this is in fact one of the more important functions of kin groups, which is not surprising when one considers the enormous loss of human lives in the war and genocide and the general distrust among people who are not closely related.

Social capital is of course not restricted to membership of kin groups. People maintain relationships with friends and neighbours, and a variety of groups and organisations can be found in the research area. Many an afternoon is spent visiting friends and neighbours, much in the same manner as described by Gravel at the beginning of this chapter. Moreover, over half of the respondents indicated that they, or other household members, were members of one or more groups or organisations. This may seem like a small proportion, but it is important to realise that membership in voluntary organisations is costly. For some, entry fees and regular membership fees need to be paid, as is the case with farmers' groups and credit associations. However, even if such contributions are not demanded, membership requires attendance and not every household is able to spend time and energy on activities that do not raise income directly.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the connections evolving out of group or network membership do not only yield benefits. In fact, institutionalised connections tend to result in demands for reciprocity. For example, network members may ask other members for a loan, for assistance with work, or to look after one's children. While reciprocity can increase the social capital between the individuals concerned, for those with insufficient funds, time or energy, such demands pose a considerable risk. In addition, one must be aware that, as Sahlins (1972) has argued, reciprocity can take several forms. Thus, generalised reciprocity is a form of solidarity with no clear expectation of returns, at least not in the near future. Balanced reciprocity, however, is a form of solidarity wherein expectations of equal return in the short or medium term do exist. Negative reciprocity also exists. Here, reciprocity is not returned, constituting an interaction in which each party seeks to maximise utility at the cost of the other. Sahlins suggests that reciprocity is closely linked to kinship distance. Thus, generalised reciprocity is usually found among close kin. The further the distance from close kin, the larger the likelihood of balanced or even negative reciprocity²⁴⁹.

Networks of Relatives, Friends, and Neighbours

Long before the war and genocide, land shortages resulted in families being dispersed over the country (see Chapter 2). As a result of death and large-scale population movements in the 1990s, more people have been uprooted from their natal villages. Moreover, virilocal residency patterns imply that upon marriage women generally leave their natal villages to live with their husbands. Of course, migration in search of better livelihood opportunities, as witnessed in the research area in the form of incoming migrants, also means that people leave the communities they are familiar with. Such population movements result in fragmented communities and tear social networks apart (cf. Nombo 2007).

In light of the above, it is surprising to find that nearly 65 percent of the respondents live near one or more relatives, here defined as relatives living in Umutara. Even when only taking into account relatives that live within walking

²⁴⁹ In addition to kinship distance, Sahlins argues that other factors such as social rank, wealth and need, and type of goods involved also play an important role.

distance, my data show that 33.8 percent of respondents have one or more relatives living close by. Divorcees are most likely to live near relatives, while widows are least likely, although the difference is not significant. The fact that divorcees are most likely to live near relatives may well have to do with their vulnerability. As I have indicated in Chapter 6, women whose marital status breaks down prefer to remain at the location to which they moved to upon their marriage. They only move back to their relatives if they are unable to meet household demands. Moreover, in Chapter 9 I have indicated that divorcees tend to rely on the assistance of relatives more than widows do. It is thus likely that, in order to access the assistance of relatives, divorcees are forced to relocate. Note that in this regard my data indicate there is no significant difference between Hutu and Tutsi households.

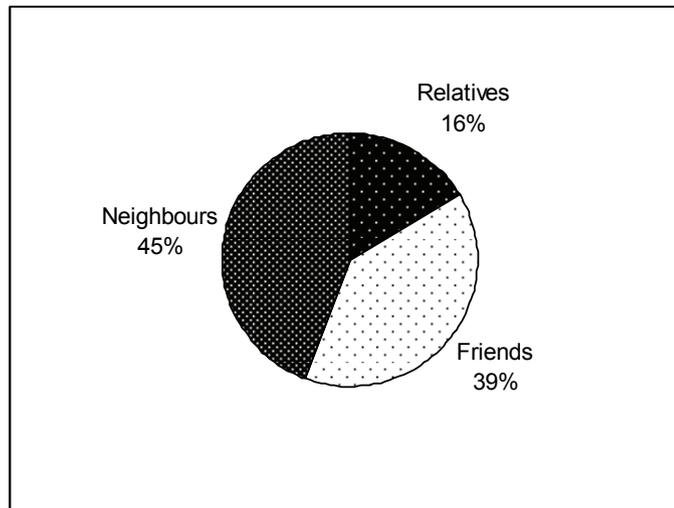
Friends form an important aspect of social capital, as they are the people one can feel at ease with, with whom one can talk about one's fears, hopes, and plans, and whose assistance might be called upon in difficult circumstances. The size of this network, its internal diversity, and the extent to which the network provides assistance in cases of need are some of the criteria that determine the strength of this form of social capital (Grootaert *et al.* 2004). My data demonstrate that respondents have around five close friends, although not all of these friends live nearby. In fact, on average only half of these live within walking distance. The distance of friends is a relevant aspect of this type of social capital, for the assistance of friends who live a greater distance away can only be accessed at extra cost, such as for transportation or the time involved in visiting. Respondents from widow-headed households were found to have most friends (seven), while respondents from divorcee-headed households had the fewest (three). As for the number of friends living within walking distance, no difference among the different types of households was found. The fact that divorcees tend to have fewer friends could be related to several factors. One is that divorcees tend to be younger than widows and thus have had less time to form close friendships. It is also possible that divorcees have less time to maintain friendships. Indeed, as I have shown in Chapter 5, divorcee-headed households have a high effective dependency ratio and this is likely to influence their time availability. It is also possible that a shortage of income affects the creation and maintenance of networks, as the poor have little to offer their guests. Finally, divorcees tend to suffer from stigmatisation.

My data show that the duration of stay does not show a significant relation with the number of friends. They also indicate that Hutu have significantly more friends than do Tutsi. It is possible that Tutsi have fewer friends as a result of death, loss of faith, mistrust, or outright fear. However, some of the questions in the survey dealt with respondents' general feeling of safety and the number of times they, or their household members, have been the victim of crime or burglary. No significant differences were found.

Networks are regularly turned to for assistance. Thus, in the two months prior to the survey almost 20 percent of the respondents had requested assistance from relatives, friends, or neighbours. Neighbours are most easily asked for assistance (see Figure 10.1), most likely because of their close proximity. In

contrast, relatives are least often asked for assistance. Again, this is likely to be related to the proximity of these relatives, for few are found to live in the same cell or even sector, making it more difficult and often more expensive to visit them and ask for their help.

Figure 10.1: *Source of assistance*



Source: *Household survey 2005*

As one can see in Table 10.1, assistance is most often requested in the form of money or food, although a considerable number of respondents have also asked others to look after their children on occasion. Requests for money and food are most likely asked of relatives or friends. Several respondents indicated that they do not like to ask for money from neighbours, since asking for assistance implies that a relationship of debt is incurred. Neighbours, who are approached most easily for assistance, are mostly asked to look after children. Almost half of the respondents indicated that if they asked their neighbours to look after their children, they definitely would do so. Only 15 percent of the respondents were unsure that their neighbours would provide this kind of assistance. My data show that when children need to be looked after for relatively long periods (for example, for one or more days), people are inclined to ask relatives rather than neighbours to help them out. Interestingly enough, respondents have indicated that personal problems are not easily discussed with others, not even with good friends or close relatives. It is expected that one keeps problems to oneself. Only the spouse is considered appropriate to discuss such issues with.

Table 10.1: Type of assistance received from interpersonal networks (%)

	Relatives	Friends	Neighbours	Total
Labour	4.5	7.0	8.9	7.3
Food	27.3	39.5	28.9	32.7
Money	45.5	46.5	15.6	33.6
Clothing	4.5	-	4.4	2.7
Looking after children	18.2	7.0	40.0	22.7
Looking after property	-	-	2.2	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9

Source: Household Survey 2005 (ANOVA)

It also becomes clear from Tables 10.1 and 10.2 that there is a discrepancy between the assistance extended by respondents to their interpersonal network and the assistance provided by that network to the respondent. For example, almost 34 percent of respondents indicated that they occasionally ask for and receive money from relatives, friends, or neighbours. However, only 19 percent of respondents indicated that they have given other members of the interpersonal network assistance in the form of money. Several respondents have argued that they believe their relatives, neighbours, and even friends to be dishonest. They fear that if they lend them money, it will not be repaid. Other forms of assistance, like labour or food, are extended to the network more often than they are received. This discrepancy is possibly related to the fact that assistance in the form of money and clothes incurs a relationship of debt, while assistance in the form of labour or food is considered a gift.

Table 10.2: Type of assistance extended to interpersonal networks (%)

	Relatives	Friends	Neighbours	Total
Labour	14.3	17.9	11.9	14.7
Food	35.7	38.5	38.1	37.9
Money	35.7	30.8	2.4	19.0
Clothing	7.1	-	2.4	2.1
Looking after children	7.1	12.8	45.2	26.3
Looking after property	-	-	-	-
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Household Survey 2005 (ANOVA)

I have also asked people whether they perceive any difference in the assistance given in the last few years by relatives, friends, and neighbours. The response was highly mixed. Just over half of the respondents felt that it had become easier to turn to these networks, while around 45 percent of the respondents disagreed with this view. According to this latter group, the break-up of family ties and increased individualism, poverty, and dishonesty have all reduced the willingness to ask for assistance and the likelihood of receiving it.

Divorcee-headed households were less likely to ask for assistance (11 percent) than either male-headed (23 percent) or widow-headed households (12 percent). However, these differences are not statistically significant. Whether people ask others for assistance is, of course, related to the perceived success of such requests. Respondents from divorcee-headed households, more than from other types of households, were of the opinion that few people were *willing* to assist them, either by lending them money or by providing assistance in times of emergency, such as the death of a household member. Divorcee-headed households were also of the opinion that few people would be *able* to assist them in such matters, even if they had wanted to. In contrast, male-headed households are most confident in the ability of their networks to assist them in times of need. This implies that respondents from divorcee-headed households generally perceive their social networks to be smaller than those of other types of households. Moreover, respondents from divorcee-headed households seem less sure about the support potential of their networks. In other words, the quality of social networks is perceived to be relatively low by divorcees.

Voluntary Associations and Group Membership

A number of community-based groups and associations operate in the research area (see Table 10.3). Some of these were created out of government or NGO initiatives, as is the case with many of the farmers' groups, the majority of which operate in the rice fields. Others emerged from informal networks, as is the case with several of the credit associations. Some associations are part of larger groups, like many of the religious groups that normally fall under the responsibility of the local church and its leaders. There are also examples of groups that seek support from other organisations. For example, I learned of a group of youths who regularly come together to perform plays to inform other youths about the risks of HIV/AIDS or the importance of voting. They obtain support from local authorities and NGOs, as well as from church leaders and schools.

Over half of the respondents (51.5 percent) indicated that they or other household members are members of one or more community-based associations. Of those that are members of one or more groups, most households belong to just one (17.6 percent) or two (21.3 percent) associations, although some subscribe to up to eight associations. The most popular types of groups in terms of membership consist of farmers' groups (foremost active in the rice fields), health groups (such as AIDS associations), credit associations (for instance, ROSCAs), and religious groups (including choirs). The most important groups in terms of results consist of farmers' groups, credit associations, health groups, and village committees.

Table 10.3: Household group membership (n=136)

	Number of households with members	Percentage of households	Proportion of households ranking group as most important
Farmers' group	34	25.0	43.3
Health groups	23	16.9	13.4
Credit association	21	15.4	14.9
Religious group	21	15.4	6.0
Village committee	15	11.0	10.4
Traders association	7	5.1	4.5
Cultural group	7	5.1	-
Burial society	5	3.7	-
Parent-school association	5	3.7	3.0
Water group	3	2.2	-
Youth group	3	2.2	3.0
Women's group	1	0.7	1.5
Old people group	1	0.7	-

Source: Household survey 2005

Rwanda's first cooperative, a milk cooperative in Nyanza, was created in 1943. During the colonial period, cooperatives were promoted to facilitate the production and commercialisation of export products. At the time of independence, the country boasted eight cooperatives, linked to either the church or specific state offices. Apart from one, TRAFIPRO, a large consumption and commercialisation cooperative, all dwindled away after independence. Under President Habyarimana (1973-1994), cooperatives were once again promoted and from 1975 onwards the number of cooperatives greatly increased (Uvin 1998).

The first formal farmers' organisation²⁵⁰ was introduced in the 1960s (Berlage *et al.* 2003). Formal farmers' organisations are also referred to as pre-cooperatives, as they are essentially a less formal and smaller version of cooperatives (Uvin 1998). Nearly all farmer organisations were linked to the state and to NGOs, which usually also formed the basis of their creation (Uvin 1998). In the 1980s, formal farmers' groups witnessed an accelerated growth due to a government policy that prohibited the access of individual farmers to marshland; access to marshland was only given to farmers' groups. At the same time, NGOs

²⁵⁰ Formal farmers' organisations should be distinguished from informal ones, which have existed for much longer in the form of labour sharing arrangements, informal saving groups, and so on. These informal organisations are usually much smaller, function on a more temporary basis and do not receive external financial or organisational support, and are often related to traditional mechanisms for mutual assistance. In the 1980s, the number of informal organisations increased rapidly, as did other forms. Uvin (1998: 166) argues that this was "primarily the result of economic distress and the simultaneous decrease in state-provided services".

increasingly used farmers' groups for the execution of their own development projects²⁵¹ (Berlage *et al.* 2003). After the war and genocide, the number of NGOs in Rwanda (active in the fields of emergency, reconstruction and later in rehabilitation) rapidly increased, as did the number of farmer groups.

My data show that only one-fourth of households are members of a farmers' group (see Table 10.3). Most farmers' groups are active in rice cultivation, the fields of which are located in the former marshes. Access to these rice fields is restricted to members of farmers' groups. This begs the question of why more households are not members. It is possible to distinguish several constraints. Firstly, while respondents generally agree that rice cultivation is a profitable farming strategy, they also feel that this is only the case if one is familiar with the cultivation of rice. In fact, many farmers are not (see Chapter 9). Secondly, forming new farmers' groups requires members to know and to trust each other, thus strengthening social cohesion. Without trust, the well-known free-rider problem is likely to prevail. Thirdly, to join a farmers' group costs money. Normally an entry fee has to be paid, which prevents non-members from joining an already existing group. Regular contributions are also very common. For example, as well as the contributions they are obliged to make to the rice cooperative in exchange for continued access to rice fields (and which are also used to cover the costs of the rice cooperative), rice farmers in the research area were also required to contribute money for the purchase of a rice mill. While everyone, group member or not, is free to process their rice at this mill, group members can do so at a reduced price, although only after they have paid the initial contribution²⁵². Finally, joining a farmers' group takes time.

The vast majority of respondents have become members of a group for their own personal benefit. Only 3 percent of respondents indicated that their group membership benefits the wider community. This leaves one to question one of the assumed advantages of group membership: the enhancement of social cohesion. Rather, respondents highlighted personal or household benefits, as was also noted by Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003).

Most groups and associations in the research area are engaged in activities that cater to people's immediate needs. Over 60 percent of the respondents indicated that membership of organisations increased their access to credit, agricultural extension services, agricultural inputs and irrigation, and health services. One-fourth of the respondents indicated that groups are an important means of overcoming future emergencies; in this respect ROSCAs and health organisations were mentioned most regularly. Only 7.5 percent of respondents indicated that they, or other household members, had joined a group for purposes of recreation, spiritual enlightenment, or to increase self-esteem. Finally, one respondent indicated that membership in groups increased children's discipline.

²⁵¹ The prime impact of which, according to Uvin (1998: 143), was "to create jobs for the lucky few who manage to obtain them".

²⁵² After a considerable financial contribution by ADRA, the rice mill was installed in 2005. Unfortunately, it broke down after only a few months and was still awaiting repair when I visited the research area in 2005-2006.

Respondents were asked to compare their current level of group membership to that of five years ago. Only 5.1 percent of respondents noted a decline in household group membership, while 40.5 percent of respondents indicated that their group membership had remained constant. The majority of respondents stated that their group membership had increased. If group membership is taken as an indicator of the magnitude of social capital (Narayan and Pritchett 1999), this implies that social capital has increased over the last few years. However, a note of caution is warranted. Omosa (2002) argues that some of the main achievements of associations in an area near Rwagitima include being able to meet one's financial needs, to acquire additional assets, to access new ideas and ways of acting (especially in farming), and to acquire the ability to offer services to people; 25 percent of her respondents felt that the associations of which they were members had in fact achieved nothing. One must be careful not to confuse the quantity of associational life, such as the increase or decrease in group memberships, with quality. If people have no faith in groups or associations, their faith must be restored before social capital can increase (see Box 10.2).

Box 10.2: Farmers' groups

ADRA-Rwanda was established in 1978, and the NGO has implemented a large variety of relief and development programmes nationwide. After the war and genocide, ADRA has focused its attention primarily on infrastructural projects, among which the construction and reconstruction of shelters, water systems, and schools. At present, ADRA concentrates its activities on education, agricultural development, reproductive health, support to orphans, and trauma counselling. The rice swamp development programme in Murambi district (benefiting farmers in Rugarama, Kahi, and Gabiro district) is one of the activities currently supported by ADRA²⁵³. Between 2001 and 2003, 160 hectares of swamp area were made suitable for rice cultivation, and the project was expected to reach 2200 or more farmers. With an average household size estimated by ADRA at five, this implies that the project was expected to benefit around 11,000 people. The rice swamp development programme serves several purposes. On the one hand, it is intended to improve yields in the swamps by taking maximum advantage of available water resources. On the other hand, the formation of farmers' groups is expected to assist farmers with production for and competition on the national market.

The swamp had been cultivated before the rice swamp development programme was undertaken (ADRA 2001). However, once the swamp was made suitable for rice cultivation, former swamp cultivators were given first priority access to the rice fields. Those with adjoining plots were required to form a farmers' group. New cultivators first had to join a farmers' group to be allowed access to the swamp. Each farmers' group was given 1 hectare, to be divided among the individual members. In order to become a member of a farmers' group, people have to buy a share by depositing money in the group's bank account. In addition, after each harvest 200 kg of rice must be handed over to the cooperative. The remaining rice can be sold by the farmer. Farmers' groups are to

²⁵³ See Bos (2006) for an extensive discussion of ADRA's rice development programme in Murambi district.

consist of 10 to 20 people who cultivate adjoining plots, and each group is expected to choose a president. These presidents communicate with 'zone' leaders who, in turn, communicate with the newly formed rice cooperative ('Corporiz Ntende'). The rice cooperative coordinates the project, markets the rice, and provides the farmers' groups with advice concerning cultivation. The 'zone' leaders are to supervise the project and communicate the advice of the rice cooperative to the presidents of the farmers' group. Each zone also has a facilitator, who is responsible for maintaining lines of communication between ADRA's project manager, the project's agronomist, and the farmers.

The project faces several problems. A number of respondents have indicated that the irrigation canals have been badly constructed and that water erosion is severe, ever reducing the size of their plots. Whereas one section of the swamp is well irrigated, others suffer from severe water shortages. As a result, yields in the dry parts of the swamp are extremely low and hardly enough to pay off the cooperative. Another problem is that the project was initiated in a top-down manner. The result is that farmers do not feel responsible for the maintenance of irrigation channels, which regularly become clogged. Several respondents clearly stated that ADRA is responsible for the maintenance of the project's infrastructure. Moreover, while overall rice yields were high during the first year of the project, they have been falling ever since. In addition, farmers have not received any money from the rice sold by the cooperative. According to Bos (2006), the cooperative claims that the price of rice was lower than expected and that they "lost the money". The programme's complicated organisational structure also hinders the effective diffusion of information. Farmers find it difficult to discuss their problems with the agronomist: on the one hand because the agronomist rarely visits the rice fields (thus making direct communication impossible) and on the other hand because the agronomist seldom attends meetings organised by the cooperative (thus also not communicating with facilitators and zone leaders who are expected to form a link between the agronomist and the farmers). In practice, this means that solutions to farmers' problems come late, if at all. In addition, whereas ADRA has developed several rules and penalties meant to prevent the misuse of resources, the rice cooperative does not impose them.

One of the rules of ADRA is that a member of a farmers' group is entitled access to one rice field: namely, a portion of the 1 hectare provided to a farmers' group. However, as Bos (2006) argues, some people – foremost local leaders, cell leaders, and members of the local defence force - have been able to acquire several plots. Worse, not all of these plots are adequately maintained. Likewise, I have found several examples of people who admitted that they never liked the idea of having to form groups with 10 to 20 other people, and who have found ways to circumvent ADRA's regulations. For example, one woman has joined forces with her neighbour, who is also a good friend. Together they have registered as a farmers' group so as to be able to access land. In order to meet the required number of group members, they have registered all of their children, while in fact none of these children work in the rice fields (although they do benefit from the proceeds), as some are mere infants, others reside in boarding schools in other communities, and some have migrated in search of employment elsewhere²⁵⁴. This woman

²⁵⁴ The connection between these two women has become stronger as a result of their scheme. The strength of their network has grown and this makes it more likely that they can fall back upon one another in times of need, even if only out of fear of being

indicated that while she is able to cultivate a larger number of plots compared to other farmers in the project, the disadvantage is that she has to keep a low profile. If she does not act upon the wishes of other farmers, she runs the risk of being expelled from the land.

It is questionable whether the setup of the project enhances social cohesion. Farmers regularly accuse each other of not being cooperative. One of the zone leaders argued that the lack of cooperation (or accusation thereof) is because of people's diverse backgrounds. Having lived in different countries, everyone has his or her own ideas, principles, and ways of cultivating. While ADRA trains the presidents of farmers' groups, farmers complain that few presidents are willing to pass their knowledge on to others. Fear of repercussions also plays a role. As one farmer stated: "Once we cleaned the water channels of [the fields of a local defence leader] to reduce the risk of pests and diseases in our own fields. The next week we were beaten up, because of our interferences" (Bos 2006: 36).

The formation of farmers' groups is, at least theoretically, an important means of enhancing social cohesion and creating more social capital in the community. However, as the example of the rice development programme makes clear, while farmers' groups may appear to constitute social networks, the level of cooperation is often so low that one can question the connectiveness found in such groups. Moreover, the abuse of rules and regulations and the problematic diffusion of information lead to resentment and distrust, which can hardly be seen to contribute to an increase in social capital. The strength of farmers' groups, and thus of social networks, might well be overestimated.

On average, households are a member of 1.1 groups. Widow-headed households are members of the highest number of groups (1.2), followed by male-headed households (1.1) and divorcee-headed households (0.8). However, this difference is not significant, as is the relation between the age of the head of the household and group membership. Moreover, whereas education appears to exert some influence on group membership (the average group membership increasing from 1.0 among households where the head has had no education to 2.5 where the head of households has followed higher education), the difference is again not significant. Tutsi have a higher group membership (1.2) than Hutu (0.9), but this difference is also not significant. Households in Kiburara A and Nyakayaga are members of 1.3 groups, against only 0.9 groups in Nyabubare. As I have indicated in Chapter 5, Nyabubare is situated farther away from the main road, the rice fields, the market, and the schools, which may account for the lower household participation rate. Again, the difference is not significant. The duration of stay also appears unrelated to group membership. Among those who arrived in the research area in or prior to 1994 (including the indigenous population and old caseload refugees), the average group membership per household is 1.3, the same as among those who arrived between 1995 and 2000, among whom were a considerable number of new caseload refugees. Group membership of households that have been created or have settled in the research area after 2000 is, however, lower

exposed. However, in no way does the list of group members they have given to ADRA represent an increase in the connectiveness between people.

(although not significantly), at 0.8. In fact, the only significant relationships that I was able to determine are those between land ownership or total livestock unit (TLU) and group membership (see Chapters 8 and 9). On the one hand, group membership facilitates access to land and livestock. On the other hand, if land size or the number of cattle is taken as an indicator of economic prosperity, one might also conclude that economic prosperity allows people to become a member of one or more groups, by enabling household members to pay entry fees or other types of costs. Indeed, as Burnett and the Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (2003) have argued for poor women, membership is limited, as they have difficulty raising membership fees. Moreover, many groups were unable to raise the required registration fees to pay at the commune office. A lack of registration is a considerable disadvantage, as unregistered groups are usually denied access to communal lands. Moreover, agricultural inputs, extension services, and credit facilities are often channelled to registered groups only.

Since social capital is embedded in the prevailing power structures of a community or household, obligations and opportunities to participate in groups and networks is related to one's position in that community or household. Social capital is not gender-neutral (Molyneux 2002). It is generally assumed that women bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of interpersonal networks, consisting of strong horizontal ties, while men are more active in maintaining intermediary levels of social capital, such as those found in weak vertical ties²⁵⁵. My data show, however, that women are more likely than men to be members of a group or association. In total, 89 women and 60 men were registered as being members of one or more groups²⁵⁶. The fact that relatively many women are active in maintaining intermediary levels of social capital may well have to do with the bias of donor aid in favour of women. For example, the country director of ADRA told me that it was the specific aim of ADRA to target women for access to the rice fields²⁵⁷.

Despite the fact that more women are members of groups and associations than men, women's membership of groups appears less geared than men's towards immediate access to services and inputs. For my data show that farmers' groups are most popular among men, followed by credit associations, health organisations, and village committees. Among women, health organisations rank first, followed by religious organisations, farmers' groups, and credit associations (see Table 10.4). Women's membership appears to be characterised by the creation of bonds of friendship, personal (emotional and spiritual) fulfilment, and

²⁵⁵ In this respect it is interesting to note that Rwanda's parliament boasts the highest percentage of female representatives in the world.

²⁵⁶ In 1993, nearly one-third of farmers' groups consisted of women (Gakwandi 1993, cited in Berlage *et al.* 2003). Interestingly enough, while the percentage of women in farmers' groups in Byumba (33.9 percent) resembled the national average, the percentage of women in Kibungo was much lower (17.0 percent). The low participation rate of women in farmers' groups is not explained by Berlage *et al.* Unfortunately I did not have access to Gakwandi's publication to see whether an explanation is offered in the original text.

²⁵⁷ Personal communication with Mr. Nagi, July 2002.

amelioration of the wider social climate. Of course, the connections that develop between members of the same group may also function as a means to access services outside the scope of the group itself and may serve as a fallback mechanism in the event of future emergencies.

Table 10.4: Group membership, by sex

Male	Male		Female	Female	
	Freq	%		Freq	%
Farmers' groups	18	30.0	Health organisations	19	21.3
Credit associations	10	16.7	Religious organisations	15	16.9
Health organisations	10	16.7	Farmer groups	15	16.9
Village committee	8	13.3	Credit associations	12	13.5
Trader organisations	5	8.3	Village committees	7	7.9
Religious organisations	4	6.7	Cultural groups	6	6.7
Parent-school groups	2	3.3	Burial societies	5	5.6
Water groups	1	1.7	Parent-school groups	3	3.4
Youth groups	1	1.7	Water groups	2	2.2
Old people groups	1	1.7	Youth groups	2	2.2
			Trader organisations	2	2.2
			Women's groups	1	1
Total	60	100.1		89	99.9

Source: Household Survey 2005

One of the main differences between men and women with regard to group membership is that considerably more women than men are members of religious groups. In fact, during church services I have observed the large number of women and children present, many of whom were also active in choirs or other church activities. Membership in cultural groups and burial societies appears to be restricted to women only. This may well have to do with the gender division of labour in the research area. For example, whereas men are responsible for burial rituals, women take full responsibility for the preparation of meals to feed the mourners. It is this latter activity that involves cooperation and organisation.

My data show that groups in the research area are generally quite heterogeneous, comprised of members of different families, age, income groups, educational levels, religious backgrounds, sex, and occupations (see Table 10.5). Most groups appear ethnically mixed as well. Nevertheless, in some cases, people's past experiences do play a role (see Box 10.3).

Table 10.5: *Group characteristics*

	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Kin heterogeneity	63	96.9	2	3.1
Age heterogeneity	62	95.4	3	4.6
Income heterogeneity	61	93.8	4	6.2
Educational heterogeneity	61	93.8	4	6.2
Religious heterogeneity	57	87.7	8	12.3
Gender heterogeneity	56	86.2	9	13.8
Occupational heterogeneity	40	61.5	25	38.5

Source: Household survey 2005

Box 10.3: *Josephine's restaurant*

Besides being a farmer, Josephine runs a restaurant at the weekly market. Every Wednesday she fries sweet potatoes, cooks beans, chickens and veal, and sells a homemade juice made of passion fruit, water and sugar. Her restaurant always attracts a lot of customers, as do the other restaurants at the market. Josephine, a Muslim, is usually assisted by a female friend, also a Muslim. One of the people who usually visits Josephine's restaurant is ADRA's rice project officer. While he often refrains from eating, he normally comes in to talk for a few minutes. His visits to Josephine surprised me, since Josephine is not cultivating rice. I asked her about her relationship with ADRA's rice project officer and she replied that they both used to live in the same Ugandan refugee camp. Her reply made me wonder whether all or most of her customers had lived in Uganda. This would have made sense to me, especially considering the general fear of poisoning in the research area. It appeared to me that eating at the restaurant of someone 'close' would be considered safer than eating at the restaurant of an 'outsider'. Indeed, Josephine revealed that most of her customers used to live in Uganda. In fact, many of them used to live in Toro, the region where Josephine also lived before returning to Rwanda.

It is not immediately obvious whether a high degree of internal group diversity should be considered a positive or negative trait of social capital:

"One could argue, on the one hand, that an internally homogeneous association would make it easier for members to trust each other, to share information, and to reach decisions. On the other hand, these members may also have similar information so that less would be gained from exchanging information. Furthermore, the coexistence of a series of associations that are each internally homogeneous but along different criteria could render the decision making process at the community level more difficult."

(Grootaert *et al.* 2004: 11)

As indicated above, most groups in the research area consist of members with different socio-economic backgrounds. Institutionalised and regulated interaction between people of different socio-economic backgrounds results in the strengthening of horizontal ties. By means of group interactions (the more so when household members participate in several groups), community cohesiveness is likely to be enhanced. However, the mere existence of such ties does not automatically reflect the internal cohesiveness of the community, nor do such ties automatically lead to social or economic development. For example, as I have indicated above, members of the same farmers' group may not even know each other by name, and cooperation within the group may be absent. Thus, one has to be careful not to overestimate the interactions and connectiveness between people within groups.

Information and Communication

In order to assess the relative importance of groups and networks as sources of important information, questions were asked about sources of specific kinds of information: government activities and markets. Grootaert *et al.* (2004) suggest that these questions make it possible to compare the importance of personal sources of information, such as voluntary organisations and networks, to "impersonal" sources, such as newspapers and television. Moreover, they suggest that information on government activities and markets "is directly relevant for the generation of income and/or for non-monetary aspects of well-being" (Grootaert *et al.* 2004: 13).

Respondents in this study were asked about the three most important sources of information with regard to government activities and markets. All sources were given equal weight. As Table 10.6 shows, both personal and impersonal sources are important with regard to obtaining information on government activities. The radio is clearly the single most important source; 82.4 percent of households rely on the radio for information. Community leaders form another important source of information, as do interpersonal networks of relatives, friends, and neighbours. Interestingly enough, groups and associations play no role in the dissemination of government-related information. Apparently, politics are not discussed among group members. Since few people have access to television, it is not surprising to find that it plays no role in the dissemination of information on government activities. Differences between types of households are generally small. Nevertheless, two issues become clear from Table 10.6. Firstly, interactions at the market form an important source of information for female-headed households, particularly for those headed by divorced women. Secondly, whereas the difference between male- and widow-headed households with respect to newspapers is not significant, the difference among female-headed households is. In fact, none of the divorcee-headed households appear to have access to newspapers.

Table 10.6: Sources of information about government activities (%)

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Personal sources:					
Groups & associations	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal networks	60.2	53.5	58.1	55.2	50.0
Community leaders	68.8	58.1	65.4	58.6	57.1
Market visits	12.9	25.6*	16.9	17.2	42.9*
Impersonal sources:					
Newspapers	12.9	14.0	13.2	20.7*	-
Radio	85.0	76.7	82.4	75.9	78.6
Television	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

With regard to information on markets (see Table 10.7), personal sources appear to be more important than impersonal sources. This is not surprising, since most impersonal sources deal with national and occasionally regional news while most respondents are more interested in the local situation. The most important source of information on markets is to be found at the market itself. Again, little information appears to be shared in groups and organisations. Differences between types of households are generally small, suggesting that all types of households appear to be able to gain the same level of information on markets²⁵⁸.

Comparing the level of information in 2005 with that of five years earlier, 80.9 percent of the respondents indicated a change for the better. This has important consequences for household livelihood generation, as higher levels of information are likely to have a positive impact on the generation of income and other, non-monetary aspects of wellbeing (Grootaert *et al.* 2004). In contrast, only 13.7 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the level of information had worsened over these five years. No significant differences were found between the different types of households.

²⁵⁸Note that whereas nationally, 39 percent of women listen to the radio at least once a week, two-thirds of rural women have access to neither radio, television, nor newspapers (Ministère de la Santé Rwanda 2001).

Table 10.7: Sources of information about market activities (%)

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Personal sources:					
Groups & associations	2.2	2.3	2.2	3.5	-
Interpersonal networks	53.8	44.2	50.7	44.8	42.9
Community leaders	4.3	9.3	5.9	10.3	7.1
Market visits	92.5	88.4	91.2	90.0	85.7
Impersonal sources:					
Newspapers	1.1	2.3	1.5	3.5	-
Radio	57.0	55.8	56.6	55.2	57.1
Television	2.2	-	1.5	-	-

Source: Household survey 2005

(Mann-Whitney Test)

Trust

The war and genocide have resulted in the destruction of available community and traditional kinship networks, of feelings of social cohesion, and of belonging. Few Rwandans, if any at all, are able to understand how it was possible that their fellow countrymen, their colleagues, their friends, and even their close relatives had set out on a murder campaign, starting in the late 1950s and culminating in the genocide of 1994. In the process, families were broken up and people went into exile or were imprisoned. At present, people continue to live among those who murdered, or are suspected of having murdered their relatives and friends. Hutu, as a corporate group are held responsible for the genocide and are distrusted and feared by Tutsi. However, as Newbury (2005) aptly put, Hutu had reason to fear and distrust others as well:

“Suspicion, fear, and anxiety were pervasive [among new caseload refugees who returned to Rwanda]. Frayed personal ties and frayed personalities were everywhere. Friendships were sometimes difficult and dangerous – for one could easily be judged by association, and if one’s friends were accused one’s own position was precarious. Arbitrary actions – removals, arrests, and disappearances – were commonplace events”.

(Newbury 2005: 282)

In addition to distrusting their own neighbours, and sometimes even relatives, many people have lost faith in political and church leaders. Political leaders inciting ethnic hatred were supported by the Catholic and Protestant churches in Rwanda, whose access to power in the colonial period largely depended on intimate ties with the Tutsi and in the post-colonial era with the Hutu regime. These ties resulted in the churches’ active practice of ethnic discrimination

(Longman 1997), even though by the early 1990s some of the strongest voices in favour of social and political change came from these same churches (Uvin 1998). As Gifford (1998: 54) argued: "In Rwanda everyone was 'wading in mythology', and the church was crucial in both creating the myths and preserving them". During the genocide, many laymen and clergy of Christian institutions were guilty of sins of omission (silence and denial) or even sins of commission (active participation in killings) (Waller 2007). Longman (1997) argued that it is very likely that more people were killed in church buildings than anywhere else in Rwanda.

In an attempt to search for local processes of reconciliation, to meet the population's desire for justice, and to try those accused of participation in the genocide, on January 15, 2005, the government officially launched what are termed *gacacas* (Longman 2006). The institution of *gacaca* dates back to pre-colonial times. *Gacacas* used to be public gatherings of respected community elders, the purpose of which was to adjudicate disputes, often involving land and other property, between or within families. This institution survived into the post-colonial era. Despite the fact that the genocide-*gacacas* are widely criticised by the international community for a variety of reasons (for an overview see Longman 2006), there appears a general consensus that the idea of "bringing justice to the people, of involving the population in the process of determining what happened in Rwanda in 1994 and who should be held accountable, is laudable" (Longman 2006: 40). For many Rwandans, especially for Tutsi, *gacacas* are instrumental in restoring an element of trust and respect, which in itself is a precondition of restoring social cohesion.

Interviews with respondents indicated that despite the *gacaca's*, fear and hatred remain. To maintain conflict-avoiding behaviour (which is an important survival strategy in situations of violence-related insecurity), emotions are generally kept in check. Talking about issues of trust is not easy in Rwanda, for the expression of emotions is culturally inappropriate. Only the mad and the possessed are able to express themselves freely. This also means that it is difficult for people to talk about their past experiences and thus to share their emotional burdens.

According to Grootaert *et al.* (2004), trust and solidarity are important aspects of social capital, forming its cognitive dimension. In order to measure the cognitive aspects of social capital in the research area, respondents in the household survey were asked about their expectations and experiences with behaviour requiring trust. A distinction was made between more generalised forms of trust (the extent to which one trusts people overall) and the extent to which particular people or groups of people are trusted. Moreover, questions were asked about trust in the context of specific transactions, such as borrowing money or asking neighbours to look after one's children. In a first set of questions, respondents were asked their opinion on four propositions:

- People in this community can be trusted;
- People in this community are likely to take advantage of you;
- People in this community are willing to assist in times of need;
- People in this community cannot be trusted in matters of money.

Each question could be answered with: disagree strongly, disagree, neutral, agree, and agree strongly. I then appointed the value 1 to those answers where people expressed having a complete lack of trust and 5 if they expressed complete trust. An overall “trust score” was calculated by adding the outcomes of each question. The possible outcome for the “trust score” thus falls between a score of 0 (no trust in those living in the same cell) and 20 (trusting them completely).

On average, respondents scored 13.6 points on the “trust score”, implying a small but positive level of generalised trust in people living around them (see Table 10.8). What is interesting to see is that there is almost no difference among the different types of households. I also found no significant differences among different ethnic groups (either with regard to the overall trust score or to the four sub scores).

Table 10.8: Mean (s.d.) trust score by type of household

	Male-headed (n=93)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=136)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Trust	3.70 (1.06)	3.61 (1.07)	3.67 (1.06)	3.59 (1.12)	3.64 (1.01)
Advantage	3.16 (1.14)	3.19 (1.18)	3.17 (1.15)	3.31 (1.20)	2.93 (1.14)
Assistance	3.74 (1.16)	3.65 (1.15)	3.71 (1.15)	3.62 (1.24)	3.71 (0.99)
Money	3.03 (1.13)	3.14 (1.08)	3.07 (1.21)	3.03 (1.12)	3.36 (1.01)
Total	13.63 (2.64)	13.58 (2.44)	13.62 (2.57)	13.55 (2.45)	13.64 (2.50)

Source: Household survey 2005

Looking at the extent of trust in specific types of people, I again found no significant differences among different types of households or ethnic groups. In a procedure similar to the one described above, I asked people how much they trusted the following types of people:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Shopkeepers | Police |
| Teachers | Migrants |
| Nurses and doctors | Strangers |
| Extension officers | Indigenous population |
| Local government officials | Old caseload refugees |
| National government officials | New caseload refugees |

For each type of people, respondents could give a number of 1 (very low level of trust) to 5 (high level of trust). As for the overall score, a total of 60 (12 x 5) could be obtained; the higher the number, the higher the extent of trust. The average number of points scored was 48.66; ranging from 46.78 points among divorcee-headed households to 47.37 points among widow-headed households and 48.00 points among male-headed households (the difference not being significant). This implies a general positive level of trust towards other social groups. Overall, police and national government officials were given the highest vote of confidence by respondents, receiving respectively 4.55 and 4.37 points out of the possible 5 points (see Table 10.9). Traditionally, Rwandans have been taught obedience to state authorities, by the churches, among others (Longman 1997). At present, and perhaps despite the well-known involvement of state authorities in the war and genocide, state authorities, especially those active in the local area, are among the social groups most widely trusted.

Table 10.9: Ranking of social groups according to perceived trustworthiness

Ranking position			
1	Police	7	Nurses and doctors
2	National government officials	8	Strangers
3	Old caseload refugees	9	Teachers
4	New caseload refugees	10	Extension officers
5	Local government officials	11	Migrants
6	Indigenous population	12	Shopkeepers

Source: Household survey 2005

Nurses and doctors (3.93), teachers (3.76), and extension officers (3.62) receive a much smaller vote of confidence, although they are still positively assessed. This outcome is cause for concern, for these social groups are important actors when it comes to the exchange of information and communication. Higher education, better health, and increased crop and livestock productivity are important means of enhancing household livelihood security, yet it appears that those who are responsible for bringing this message are treated with a certain measure of scepticism. One reason for this may be that people experience a large “us-them” divide: the urban, educated, modern, and developed people (also called *évolués*) versus the rural, illiterate, traditional, and underdeveloped ones. Doctors, teachers, and extension officers, if at all willing to live in the rural areas, generally live in high-quality housing arrangements. They are regularly away on business in Kigali or elsewhere and often look down upon poor farmers. This is not a new phenomenon. Also before the war and genocide, “the poor were considered backward, ignorant, and passive – almost subhuman – and were treated in a condescending, paternalistic and humiliating manner” (Uvin 1998: 128).

Shopkeepers are trusted least of all; even migrants and strangers are trusted more than shopkeepers. Indeed, one can often hear people complain about being charged too much. Many complain that the produce they received was of low quality or that they had been given less than they should have been. No doubt the mistrust is compounded by the fact that a considerable number of people are illiterate and unable to add up the price of the articles they want to purchase. Moreover, shopkeepers are generally surrounded by people looking for a free drink or meal or youngsters who play loud music and who shout about their latest success (in seducing girls, drinking, making good business deals). The hustle and bustle around most shops, the air of excitement that lingers, the smell of meat and alcohol: all of these factors are in sharp contrast to the atmosphere in the rest of the village. These circumstances make people apprehensive, which may explain why shopkeepers do not inspire trustworthiness.

With the exception of the extent of trust towards extension officers, no significant difference among types of households was discerned. Divorcee-headed households were less likely to trust extension officers than were the other types of households. This might be because extension officers are foremost active in the rice fields. As I have indicated, relatively few divorcee-headed households have access to rice fields, while for many the only land they are able to cultivate is located directly around the homestead.

Finally, it is important to note that 63.9 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the level of generalised trust has increased over the last five years. In contrast, only 11.3 percent of the respondents have witnessed a decline. No significant difference was found among the different types of households.

Another indicator of the lack of trust - or the lack of appropriate structural social capital to resolve conflicts - is the occurrence of conflict in a community (Grootaert *et al.* 2004). ADRA's rice project officer pointed out that farmers and herders on the borders of the marshes continue to quarrel over access to land for farming and/or grazing. The war and genocide have left many people suspicious and angry, aggravated by the fact that the survivors were required to live among the persecutors. The parliamentary and presidential elections of 2004, the new Constitution, and the commencement local *gacaca* tribunals could possibly add to existing tensions and result in open conflict. Respondents in the household survey were asked about the most pressing problems in their community. They were given a list of potential difficulties but were also given the opportunity to add any other problem they considered important. In order of decreasing importance, respondents mentioned the following: unequal landholdings (i.e. land inequality), differences in wealth of material possessions, use of alcohol, religious differences, gender differences, differences between the indigenous population and returnees, differences in social status, differences between farmers and herders, and political differences.

In Chapter 8, I have commented on the issue of land inequality. In Chapter 11, I will take a closer look at differences in wealth. With respect to religious differences, respondents have indicated that these do not so much cause problems between people of different households but rather between members of the same household or members of the same family. Whereas most household members

share the same religion, I have also encountered many examples of conversion to a different religion by one or several household members. The problems that respondents refer to are often the result of strong convictions with regard to prescribed moral standards and patterns of living that people, if not outright trying to enforce them on others, are at least commenting upon regularly. Moreover, different times for prayer and/or church activities may create labour problems within households. The use of alcohol is a frequently reported problem, especially among respondents living in male-headed households. Drunkenness, the spending of money on non-essential consumption goods, behaviour towards spouse and children, and the bad example set for the young in general are the most negative aspects mentioned in this respect.

The internal divisiveness experienced by respondents does not necessarily lead to outbreaks of violence. Only one-fourth of respondents indicated that the problems they mentioned would, on occasion, lead to violence. This appears to happen foremost when issues are involved relating to landholdings, followed by problems related to wealth and material possessions. Gender-based violence or violence resulting from the use of alcohol were mentioned less often, as were problems resulting from differences in social status. Only three respondents said that violence had occurred as a result of political or religious differences or as a result of differences between the indigenous population, returnees, and/or migrants. Feelings of insecurity stemming from fear of crime and violence appear limited; 96 percent of the respondents feel safe from crime and violence when at home. Ninety-three percent feel safe even when walking the streets alone after dark. There is no significant difference according to type of household.

To match perceptions of security with fact, I also asked two questions about recent experiences of crime. Of all respondents, only 4.4 percent (n=6) indicated that they or another household member had experienced a violent crime such as an assault or mugging during the 12 months prior to the survey. Respondents from divorcee-headed households were most likely to have been the victim of a crime (7.1 percent), while those from widow-headed households were least likely (3.5 percent); the difference is not significant. Tutsi were more likely to have been the victim of crime (4.9 percent) than Hutu (2.3 percent), although again the difference is not significant. Experience with burglaries or vandalism is more common. Of all respondents, 16.2 percent of the respondents (n=22) indicated having experienced this type of violence. Widow-headed households appear particularly affected by burglaries: 27.6 percent have experienced burglaries against 15.1 percent of respondents in male-headed households. Interestingly enough, none of the respondents from divorcee-headed households had been victims of burglaries in the 12 months prior to the survey (the difference with widow-headed households being significant at the 5 percent level). It is possible that divorcees are less confronted with burglaries, as they have fewer possessions. Finally, whereas Tutsi have suffered more burglaries than Hutu (19.7 and 13.6 percent, respectively), the difference is not significant. Hence, there is no indication that Hutu or Tutsi are explicitly targeted members of the community.

The Pentecostal Explosion²⁵⁹

As I have indicated above, Rwanda's civic organisations have only fairly recently been created. Only after 1975 did they gain ground, rapidly increasing in number in the 1980s and increasing even further after the war and genocide. Many civic organisations in Rwanda are externally funded and religiously oriented. In this sense, churches, in particular the Catholic and the Anglican Church, have become Rwanda's largest non-state actors (Uvin 1998), well connected with European aid agencies and political ideology. Before the genocide, the church, and in particular the Catholic Church, was the biggest economic force after the state (van Hoyweghen 1996). The Church was an instrumental factor in organising education²⁶⁰, health, spiritual wellbeing, and community development programmes. However, like political authority, religious authority has been affected by the war and genocide.

Religion forms an integral part of everyday life in the research area, as in most parts of the country, and lives are characterised by many religious elements. Religious beliefs not only contribute to personal and psychological security but the churches also represent a form of entertainment. For example, numerous choirs, from different churches and from different church groups, are active. For many people, church services pose an opportunity to dance, play music, sing, or laugh.

Religion gives meaning to people's lives. However, religious life also requires input in the form of solidarity. To be able to live according to the faith, small communities are needed. Participation in such religious communities consequently gives individuals a feeling of belonging, of strength, and of worth. It is in this respect that religion forms an important aspect of social capital²⁶¹: religion creates social capital and can only exist because of it. Thus, apart from the discussion about the role of the Catholic and Protestant Churches during the genocide, and to a lesser extent that of Islam, it is surprising to find so little information on the role of religion in the reconstruction of Rwandan livelihoods. While it could be argued that churches are instrumental in promoting reconciliation, little is known about the wider impact of religion on people's livelihoods.

Before the genocide, Rwanda was one of the most Christianised countries in Africa. Evangelical and charismatic persuasions were popular in Rwanda after the East African Revival in the 1930s²⁶² and further increased in popularity as a result

²⁵⁹ The term 'Pentecostal Explosion' has been suggested by Gifford (1994).

²⁶⁰ To give an idea about the extent of their influence, even the Protestant churches, only a minority in Rwanda, owned more than 300 primary school centres (Uvin 1998).

²⁶¹ Note that where most household members share the same religious beliefs, I have also found evidence of members of the same household belonging to different churches. Of course, this increases the possibility for networks between people.

²⁶² According to van Hoyweghen (1996: 385): "the Rwandese Catholic Church was a very liturgical church, concentrating on individual salvation. This attitude has undoubtedly encouraged the development of a charismatic movement within the Church." Another reason that a charismatic movement was able to develop within its rank is the fact that

of the “movement of the Holy Spirit” in many Catholic Churches in the 1970s (Waller 2007). Under Habyarimana, around 62 percent of the population was Roman Catholic and another 18 percent belonged to various Protestant churches, including the Anglican, the Baptist and the Presbyterian Church (Des Forges 1999). After the war and genocide, the Roman Catholic Church lost a substantial portion of its followers to other religious groups, foremost among which are Protestant denominations (National Census Service 2004).

My own data show that for the people currently living in Rwagitima and older than fifteen years, 61.7 percent adhered to the Roman Catholic faith before 1994. Protestant denominations followed with 33.2 percent. By 2005, this situation had changed dramatically: only 32.8 percent of the sample population considered themselves to be Roman Catholic, while 60.7 percent adhered to one of the Protestant denominations. Pentecostal movements in particular have witnessed a huge increase in popularity, from 13.9 percent before 1994 to 36.1 percent in 2005. Islam turns out to be a more stable religion, with 2.5 percent before 1994 and 2.6 percent of the sample population in 2005.

In the early twentieth century, two Christian mission posts were established near the research area. As early as 1920, Anglican protestant missionaries arrived in Gahini²⁶³ (approximately 30 kilometres from Rwagitima) and set up a church, and in 1930 a Catholic church was founded in Kiziguro (approximately 12 kilometres away). In the wake of these, churches were constructed throughout the region. The first mosque in Rwagitima was only constructed in the 1970s, with support from Saudi-Arabia, although the Muslim community in the region dates back much further. One key informant argued that the Muslim community in Kiramuruzi, a town at approximately 15 kilometres from Rwagitima, predates the large communities at Rwamagana (in Kigali-Ngali) and Kigali²⁶⁴. It is not entirely clear when the Pentecostal movement became active in the research area. Tankink (2007), writing about the therapeutic functions of the Pentecostal and the Charismatic movements in southwest Uganda, mentions that the Pentecostal movement became active in the middle of the twentieth century. Gifford (1998) argues that the *balokole* movement, a revival movement of the ‘saved’, began in Rwanda in the 1930s and then spread throughout East Africa in waves: “It was essentially a lay community of prayer and fellowship, very unclericalised, uncompromisingly rejecting any assimilation between the church and the world, and between Christianity and African custom, which it deemed to be happening among the mass of lukewarm Christians” (Gifford 1998: 97). In the years that followed, some schisms appeared in the *balokole* movement, such as the one

the Church had assumed a politically passive role in that sacramental and spiritual issues have always taken precedence over social ones.

²⁶³ In Uganda, Anglican missionaries of the Church Missionary Society arrived in 1877. Two years later, the Catholic White Fathers followed (Gifford 1998).

²⁶⁴ The proportion of Muslims in Umutara has always been relatively high compared to other regions in the country and is explained by the fact that Umutara formed a privileged zone that was penetrated long ago by traders of Arabic and Indo-Pakistani origin (République du Rwanda 2005b).

initiated in the 1960s by the *Abazukufa* (the 'reawakened'), who accused the saved in the *balokole* movement of laxity. Whereas the current Pentecostal movement has arisen independently of the *balokole* movement, the two are nevertheless closely linked (Gifford 1998).

During fieldwork, I became acquainted with one particular Pentecostal Church in Rwagitima: *l'église vivante*²⁶⁵. This church is closely related to the Assembly of God and the ADP, both of which have been in Rwanda for much longer and can also be found in Kigali. The current pastor of *l'église vivante* explained that his church was founded by people from Burundi. From the outset, the church was very successful, attracting a large group of strongly committed 'born-again' Christians. Attending the services of this Pentecostal church, I noticed that the large majority of followers consist of fairly young women and children. Men form a minority. Many of them are recent converts. Currently, they rigorously follow the moral standards and living patterns as dictated by the pastor, such as no consumption of alcohol or tobacco and no premarital sex or extramarital relationships. Like elsewhere in Rwanda, the Pentecostal movement in the research area appears to be attracting ever increasing numbers of people. But what has made this movement so popular?

Unfortunately, the census of 2002 does not explicitly refer to the Pentecostal movement²⁶⁶. Instead, a distinction is made between Catholics, Protestants, Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses, adherents of 'other' Christian religions (with no further specifications), Muslims, and Traditionalists/animists (Republic of Rwanda 2005). Pentecostalism is not explicitly mentioned. Assuming that the Pentecostal movement falls under the 'other' Christians category, the census shows that the percentage of adherents is much higher in Umutara than in other provinces. Since Umutara also has a high proportion of residents who were either born in Uganda, or who have lived there, it appears that the rise of the Pentecostal movement is closely related to the return of the Diaspora after the genocide. This makes sense, because the Pentecostal movement was very important in Uganda long before its expansion into Rwanda.

In 1892, a war broke out between the Catholics and the Anglicans in Uganda. The British administration sided with the Anglicans, as these were British, whereas the White Fathers were French. The English intervention ensured victory for the Anglicans, even though Catholics outnumbered Anglicans. In the following years, the Anglicans gained influence in the British Protectorate, which covered large parts of Uganda, including those areas where in later years many Rwandan refugees would settle. The Anglican missions exerted an enormous influence in

²⁶⁵ Currently, there are around 18 churches of this type in Umutara.

²⁶⁶ The development of African Christianity in the 1980s is poorly documented. What is clear, however, is that new churches, including Pentecostal Churches, have mushroomed since the 1980s. The matter is complicated by the fact that some of the churches that existed before the 1980s, such as the African Independent Churches, have taken on a new life during this expansion of African Christianity. Evangelical Protestant mainline churches are increasingly Pentecostal as well. This makes it very difficult to adequately categorise African Christian churches (Gifford 1994).

this region. For example, as Gifford (1998) notes, until the 1950s all education was in their hands. When Rwandan refugees arrived in Uganda in the late 1950s, many of them joined the Democratic Party (DP), which was linked to the Ugandan Catholic Church and the principle political alternative to the party of President Obote, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). In Chapter 2, I have mentioned the (at best) strained relationship that existed between Obote and the Rwandan refugees. I have also shown that many Rwandans joined Museveni's National Resistance Army, which was eventually able to oust Obote from power in 1985.

According to Gifford (1998), in his young years Museveni belonged to the Anglican revival movement (the *balakole* movement), although he apparently left this movement as a schoolboy. Museveni can, however, be considered to have strong ties to the 'born-again' Christians; not only because of his religious upbringing or because his wife is 'born-again' but also because the 'born-again' movement has become part of Museveni's movement of reconstruction and he surrounds himself with 'born-again's'. Under his rule, many new revivalist and Pentecostal movements have arrived in Uganda. Considering the intimate ties between Museveni and the Rwandan refugee population, and the popularity of evangelical and charismatic persuasions in Rwanda, it is understandable that the Pentecostal movement gained prominence among Rwandan refugees in Uganda²⁶⁷. Pentecostalism has become a way of 'opting in', of joining the religiously and politically powerful, born out of "the desire for the respectability conferred by government recognition, and for the material rewards a well-disposed president can dispense" (Gifford 1994: 530). The return of this group of Rwandans in 1994 is likely to have had an impact on the religious constellation in the home country as well. In this respect it is important to note that on its return to the 'motherland' the RPF displayed a hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church. There are clear signs that they wanted to reduce the role of the Church drastically. For example, van Hoyweghen (1996) argues that the Catholic Church was *de facto* beheaded by the RPF when they killed three Rwandese bishops and several priests in early June 1995. Moreover, many missionaries and religious congregations were refused re-entry into the country after the genocide. The hostile attitude towards the Rwandan Catholic Church may simply have been a reaction to their role in the genocide. However, the fact that many of those in the RPF had become 'born-again's' is a factor that deserves further consideration.

It would, however, be too great a simplification to assume that the rise of the Pentecostal movement can be entirely attributed to the experiences of Rwandan refugees in Uganda, or that Pentecostalism is mainly popular among Tutsi. Van Hoyweghen has argued that the refugee camps in Zaire (where hundreds of thousands of Hutu were forced to live) were "full of sects which have broken away from the rigid Church institutions. Religion is practiced more freely than ever" (van Hoyweghen 1996: 397). This forms a strong indication that sects and charismatic movements in the refugee camps thrived. It is perhaps no surprise that the Pentecostal movement in post-genocide Rwanda was not only popular

²⁶⁷ In this respect it is important to note that all Ugandan heads of government (except Amin) have an Anglican (or even revival movement) background (Gifford 1998).

among repatriates from Uganda but also among the wider population, of whom hundreds of thousands stayed in refugee camps across the border with Zaire. What does become clear is that the increasing popularity of Pentecostalism is closely linked to the experience of exile.

But there are other possible explanations for the apparent Pentecostal explosion. Poblete and Odea (1960) discuss the rising popularity of the Pentecostal movement among Puerto Rican immigrants in New York. They argue that the Pentecostal Church represents a response to a condition of what Durkheim has called anomie:

“For Durkheim anomie was characterized by two interrelated elements. First of all there is a breakdown of those social structures in which the individual found the psychological support and nurture requisite to personal and psychological security. Secondly, there is a loss of consensus or general agreement upon the standards and norms that previously provided the normative orientations and existential definitions in terms of which individual and group life was meaningful. Talcott Parsons has shown that the prevalence of anomie was positively related to rapid social change which brought about social differentiation and the upsetting of old standards and relationships in a changing situation, which prevents the crystallization of new attitudinal and social structures.”

(Poblete and Odea 1960: 25)

Poblete and Odea argue that the rising popularity of the Pentecostal movement among Puerto Ricans in New York should be viewed as a direct response to a situation of anomie. By moving to New York, Puerto Rican migrants on the one hand lost access to traditional social structures while, on the other hand, they had to find a way to settle down in their new surroundings. Religious organisation formed an important means to do so. In this context, Pentecostalism represented a positive quest for community.

Like the Puerto Rican immigrants described by Poblete and Odea, Rwandans have faced situations of anomie. Traditional networks, including ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ horizontal ties, have collapsed and new networks have had to be built. Vertical relations, such as those between communities and the state, have changed as well. Although many state institutions and structures appear to be similar to the ones existing before the war and genocide, many new rules and regulations have been installed. The former Hutu regime has been ousted and has been replaced by a predominantly Tutsi regime. In the minds of people, if not in reality, such changes form an enormous break with the recent past. The rise of the Pentecostal movement in Rwanda can be seen as a response to such conditions of social and cultural uncertainty. It should be seen as a way of how Rwandans deal with a disordered and fragmented social reality.

Other factors may help to explain the rising popularity of the Pentecostal movement. Like most Protestant denominations and charismatic movements, Pentecostal movements advocate the individual relation with and direct personal experiences of God, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Considering the far

from neutral role of mainline churches in pre-genocide Rwanda and the involvement of many church officials in the genocide, it is no surprise that religions in which the personal relation with God is central are more popular than those in which official intermediaries play an essential role.

Another reason the Pentecostal movement has become so popular is that it encourages people to deliver public testimonies in which they talk about their past sins, their struggles with evil, and their conversion to the 'true faith'. Even though the pastor of the *l'église vivante* in Rwagitima said that no testimonies regarding behaviour during the genocide are made, I noticed during my visits to some of the services that people expressed their emotions in a way normally prohibited by cultural norms. People were dancing, singing, shouting, speaking in tongues, and rhythmically hitting their heads against the wall. They were talking about their fears, their anger, and their illnesses. In this way, testimonies form an important outlet for personal fear, anxiety, frustration, and desperation²⁶⁸. As such, they act as an emotional and psychological valve. In addition, testimonies function as a way to ask for support and to strengthen group cohesion. This is especially important in situations where traditionally people are expected to remain silent or where relatives would normally have been approached with requests of support but they are no longer alive. Church members listen to testimonies and regularly organise prayer meetings (sometimes lasting all through the night) where they ask God for guidance. This creates "an intense feeling of acceptance, relatedness, and reciprocity – in short, a feeling of being part of a social community" (Tankink 2007: 215). These bonds are so strong that people refer to each other as brothers and sisters. Converts in the research area typically emphasise their former experiences of sinfulness, their experience of being possessed by the Spirit, and the subsequent feeling of rebirth. I would like to argue that this shared feeling of rebirth contributes to a further feeling of group solidarity. Moreover, the high level of activity expected from followers (in the form of choir attendance, bible readings, special services in response to perceived dangers or needs) translates into a feeling of belonging and of being needed. Gifford (1994) has argued that the time demands that new Christian Pentecostal movements place on their members implies that these movements can easily become surrogate clans or families.

Also important is the fact that the Pentecostal movement encourages ecstatic phenomena, such as prophecies, speaking in tongues, healing, and exorcism. Such phenomena form a reflection of other, more traditional forms of religious experiences. Before the advent of Christianity, Rwandan cosmological thought centred on a belief in *imaana* and *bazimu*²⁶⁹. According to d'Herefelt and Coupez (1964), the term *imaana* refers to a powerful quality, sometimes conceived of as a

²⁶⁸ Note that there is a strong policy encouraging confessions to gain necessary testimony for *gacaca*. Longman (2006) argues that thousands have complied, many inspired by the Born Again Christian revival movements that have swept through the country, including the prisons. Moreover, my data show that several of the *gacaca* judges working in the research area are themselves Born Again Christians.

²⁶⁹ Different cults, a series of additional beliefs and practices rather than alternative religions, existed as well, like the Cult of Ryangombe.

conscious volitional entity that could perhaps be labelled 'Divinity'. *Imaana* does not refer primarily to a personal being that must be honoured but rather to a diffuse, fecundating fluid, associated with a vast category of persons and objects (including diviners, ritual specialists, ancestral spirits, certain trees and plants, animals, and protective talismans) that must be captured. The supreme possessor of *imaana* was the king. Liquids such as rain, milk and beer, but also blood, semen, and saliva were especially favoured vehicles of *imaana* (Taylor 1992). *Bazimu* refers to the spirits of the dead. Rwandans believed that a man is part spirit, which at death leaves the human body to go on inflicting good or evil on the living. Out of envy, *bazimu* were believed to concentrate upon the living the cumulated spite and malice of their lives. Moreover, *bazimu* were believed to react violently to any violations of social propriety. In such cases, specific rites needed to be performed to appease the *bazimu* (Codere 1973).

Specialists in the supernatural were both numerous and important. Diviners (*bapfumu*), sorcerers (*barozi*), healers (*bavuzi*), and rainmakers (*bavubui*) were drawn from different social groups: Hutu as well as Tutsi, and sometimes Twa (Codere 1973). Practitioners were usually not clearly divided along lines of good or evil 'witchcraft'²⁷⁰, although sorcerers were generally identified with the latter. My data show that most of these specialists can still be found today. The only specialists I did not encounter are rainmakers. Nevertheless, Codere argues that the decline in number and importance of these specialists had been marked in the decades after the deposition of Musinga and the installation of the first Christian king (see Chapter 2). This decline is argued to have come about:

"... as a result of a host of interconnected conditions ranging from the missionaries' direct attack on the arcane arts and the supernatural ideas on which they were based to the substitution of Western medicine for the old curing practices which by 1960 were widely regarded as worthless and outrageously expensive ... The addition of many new occupational opportunities also robbed these specialties of some important particular attractions they once held for both their practitioners and possible recruits to their ranks. In old time Rwanda the successful practice of one of the supernatural specialties was almost the only road to high status, prosperity and influence for a Hutu except royal rewards and preferment occasionally granted to those who had shown conspicuous skill in archery or bravery in battle."

(Codere 1973: 202)

Stories about sorcerers²⁷¹ abound in the research area and are related by the old as well as the young, women as well as men, illiterate people as well as the educated, Christians as well as Muslims (see Box 10.4). Witchcraft beliefs form an

²⁷⁰ In this study, witchcraft refers to all types of occult forces.

²⁷¹ Respondents indicated that Rwandan sorcerers were either born in Kibungo (southeast of Rwanda), Uganda or the Democratic Republic of Congo.

integral part of people's lives²⁷². Sorcerers are found both in the immediate environment (kin, neighbours, and friends) and among strangers. They are said to act out of jealousy or spite and can strike anyone at any time. Witchcraft beliefs in the research area are mostly conceived of as immediate, physical threats. Poisoning (*uburozi*) appears to be the most important danger, although I have also heard examples of heads spinning around on torsos, possessions and curses, and flying carpets. Healers are regularly visited, especially by parents whose children are suspected to have fallen victim to the evil-doing of sorcerers. Despite the widespread belief in witchcraft, most people consider themselves faithful Christians²⁷³.

Box 10.4: Curses

After several months of fieldwork, I was suddenly paid a visit by a man I had never seen before. He seemed friendly at first, but when he entered my house and insisted I give him milk and let him sleep in my bed, I started to feel uncomfortable and asked him to leave. When he refused, I asked my neighbour, the former pastor of the *l'église vivante*, to help me get rid of the man. After a long discussion, my 'visitor' finally left. The next day he came back, however, and once again demanded milk and the use of my bed to rest. I once again refused, standing in the doorway to bar his entry. The man became angry and tried to gain entry by using force. I told him that if he did not leave I would be forced to hit him. On hearing this, he picked up a large rock and threatened to throw it at me. The pastor, who had heard us quarrelling, tried to intervene, but to no avail. He sent one of his visitors to fetch the sector leader, who lived only a few doors away. The sector leader succeeded in convincing the man to leave. Though the man never returned to my house again, I did encounter him one day when I was walking through the research area with one of my assistants. During that encounter, he told me "to come home" and when I did not respond, he threatened to beat me and my assistant. On returning to our own house, we told the sector leader what had happened and he told us not to worry, as he would "take care of things".

Of course, these events occupied my mind. While I was afraid of the man and was glad to find the pastor and sector leader coming to my aid, I worried about what would happen to him. Would he be beaten by the local defence force, or worse? Would he come back to my house to take revenge? I discussed these questions with my neighbours and friends. It was then that I was told this man's story. I was told that the man had been cursed by his own father. The father had requested his son to bring the bridewealth of his sister (cows) to his house. Instead, the man brought the cows to the house of his mother, who was living elsewhere. The father became so angry about his son's betrayal that he

²⁷² Witchcraft beliefs in the research area are closely linked to beliefs in Satan, demons, and zombies. Moreover, whereas ancestors were regarded as a positive force before the advent of Christianity, today ancestors are considered to form a particular category of demons.

²⁷³ According to Codere (1973), more Tutsi than Hutu parents opposed the Christianisation of their sons, as they opposed the Christian idea that all men are equal in the eyes of God. This was widely interpreted as implying social and political equality as well.

cursed him. Not long afterwards, the man's wife left him. Ever since, the man had behaved as though he were mentally disturbed, a condition that was generally seen as proof of his bewitchment. According to my informants, the man had most likely mistaken me for his wife and had only attempted to mend 'our' break-up²⁷⁴.

While I have no hard evidence indicating that the war and genocide have led to increased beliefs in witchcraft, they nevertheless constitute a reality for many of the people to whom I spoke within and beyond the research community²⁷⁵. Mitchell (2001: 2) is of the opinion that the perception of excessive social and economic change may lead to "a kind of moralising against excess that establishes a boundary within which people are censured to remain, but in turn creates a proliferation of images of transgression, and of the consequences of transgression". Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering argue that interest in evil and witchcraft is emblematic of societies undergoing rapid change. They argue that rapid socio-economic change "breeds confusion, moral uncertainty, unrest" and that "these sentiments in their turn appear to activate Devil, witch and demon beliefs" (Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering 2001: 17). The fear of rapid or excessive change encourages people to find a way to control and understand the social and economic processes over which they seem to have no control (cf. Nombo 2007).

Witchcraft beliefs serve several functions (O'Dea 1966, Mitchell 2001, Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering 2001). They contribute to human morale, as the 'agency' of supernatural powers may incite hope that the frustrating conditions in which people live, and which they appear unable to alter, can be changed after all. At the same time, witchcraft beliefs regulate social relations. On the one hand, witchcraft beliefs encompass a levelling mechanism, discouraging people from transgressing moral boundaries or from over-accumulating and thus preventing social inequalities. According to Mitchell (2001: 2): "Accusing somebody who appears to be over-accumulating – and is therefore guilty of excess – of entering into Devil pacts, or of being a witch, is seen as a way of ensuring an equal distribution of resources and discouraging economic inequality". In this sense,

²⁷⁴ Not long thereafter, the man was sent to a mental institution near Kigali. When he returned home several months later, he appeared 'normal' again. Informants explained to me that his father had supposedly taken pity on him and removed the curse.

²⁷⁵ In an interesting study on the role of gossip and rumour in witchcraft beliefs, Stewart and Strathern (2004) argue that witches are regularly thought to act out of resentment over the sharing of meat. They refer to the classic work of Victor Turner on the Ndembu. As the size of Ndembu matrilineages grew, it became increasingly difficult to distribute meat among the lineage members. This is believed to have spurred witchcraft beliefs. Note the similarities with Rwanda: the genocide has caused many sudden and inexplicable deaths as well as the depletion of livestock. Stewart and Strathern also argue that witchcraft accusations generally follow an inexplicable death in the community. In a similar vein, Nombo (2007) links witchcraft beliefs to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

witchcraft beliefs may act as a coercive mechanism to keep people from transgressing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. On the other hand, witchcraft beliefs serve as an accumulation mechanism (Geschiere 1997). They form an outlet for activities usually prohibited by society: witchcraft beliefs actually reinforce the accumulation of wealth and power and allow people to act out aggressions and to inflict injury upon others. As such, witchcraft beliefs help people to cope with disappointment, deprivation, frustration, illness, and death (O’Dea 1966). It is important to realise that witchcraft beliefs do not necessarily entail a traditional barrier to change. Rather, they reflect a struggle to gain access to new forms of wealth (Geschiere 1997).

Whereas the newer churches in Rwanda, among which the Pentecostal movement, are harshly negative towards much of the traditional culture (like the veneration of ancestors), they maintain a preoccupation with spirits. Unlike the mainline churches, the Pentecostal movement actively appropriates witchcraft beliefs and places these at the centre of its Christian belief system (Meyer 2001). For example, the pastor and church members of the *l’ église vivante* in Rwagitima consider gods, spirits, and supernatural phenomena to be agents or reflections of the works of the Devil (Satan). Ephesians 6:12 is referred to as proof of the existence of the malevolence of the spiritual world:

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rules, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil²⁷⁶ in the heavenly realms.”

(www. BibleGateway.com)

As Newell (2007) suggests, even though it is not theologically syncretic, Pentecostalism is in itself an alternative form of witchcraft discourse. Through testimonies, church members are encouraged to talk about their encounters with the Devil or his servants, their struggles with evil, and the way in which God has helped them conquer it. Meyer (2001) argues that one of the main attractions of the Pentecostal movement may in fact be its capacity to let people face the Devil and its agents in order to then defeat them. By doing so, Pentecostal churches incorporate and supercede earlier belief systems. As such, Pentecostal churches form an important bridge between the past and the present. They help explain the unexplainable – such as how Rwandans were able to kill other Rwandans on such a massive scale during the genocide – and enable people to confront their personal demons.

Another reason for the popularity of the Pentecostal movement is that it is not opposed to materialism and thus offers a safe way to accumulate and consume wealth (Mitchell 2001). As Newell (2007: 479) argues, “Pentecostal churches are often linked to a gospel of prosperity suggesting that faith in the Lord is directly linked to financial success, while a tendency to sin correlates with illness, poverty and other forms of misfortune”. During my stay at Rwagitima, regular prayer

²⁷⁶ One respondent argued that *Nyabingi* (Lucifer) stands at the head of ‘spiritual wickedness’. *Nyabingi* is aided by *Abarangi* (demons) and ancestor spirits.

meetings were organised to pray for personal benefits, such as a mobile phone. Choir members were regularly given gifts during services so as to motivate them to sing even better next time. Pentecostalism offers scope to combine material prosperity, or a materialist morality, with religious beliefs. As such, it permits transgression into the realm of abundance and excess. While advocating constraint, Pentecostalism nevertheless assures people that it is possible to acquire wealth without having to submit to satanic powers. It does so by means of ritual purification. According to Meyer (2001: 128): "It is this doubleness which accounts for the tremendous attraction of Pentecostalism, whose power stems from the capacity to mediate between order and destruction, rules and transgressions, repression and list, control and temptation, that is, between God and the Devil and hence the dazzling contradictions imbued in modern life without, however, ceasing to assert that Satan will eventually be defeated".

Furthermore, the Pentecostal movement is characterised by a high ratio of lay leadership. This holds within it a promise for future prosperity. Those promoted to the intimate circle of the church's leader have the opportunity to follow courses (financed by sister churches in Uganda, Europe, the United States of America, and Canada), receive diplomas (which, like education in general, increases the likelihood of obtaining non-farm employment), or even start their own church at a later date (as is exemplified by the case of Donald; see Chapter 4)²⁷⁷. The latter is not without economic gain, for tithing is a common practice and followers regularly provide their pastor with money, beer, food, childcare, and a range of other services²⁷⁸.

Considering all of the above, it is easy to see why Pentecostalism in Rwanda is gaining in popularity. Rwanda's recent history, perhaps starting with the arrival of the first Germans at the end of the nineteenth century, is characterised by enormous and rapidly evolving social and economic changes resulting in inequality, exclusion, and eventually the war and genocide. Under such circumstances, Pentecostalism offers scope for creating and re-creating of a sense of community, of belonging. It suggests a break with the past while simultaneously incorporating traditional beliefs and practices. It strengthens group cohesion and it encourages its members to strive for personal enrichment. In times when the majority of people suffer economic hardship and social exclusion, and only the lucky few appear able to escape these oppressive conditions, these characteristics

²⁷⁷ There is also some hope among the faithful of being sent to Europe, the United States of America, or Canada. A persistent rumour is that these regions suffer from an acute shortage of ministers and that many Africans are now invited to preach the true faith.

²⁷⁸ Note that also before the genocide churches controlled significant financial and human resources in the form of centres for spiritual needs, primary social centres, healthcare, education, assistance in developing economic alternatives, charity, and work, as a result of which patrimonial networks developed within churches resembling the patrimonial networks that state officers used to organise their own support (Longman 1997). Prunier (1994:34) even writes that "the reasons for converting to Christianity were fundamentally social and political" and that the church "was a legitimizing factor, a banner, a source of profit, a way of becoming educated, a club, a matrimonial agency and even at times a religion".

may prove highly attractive, if not irresistible. Finally, while not a state religion, Pentecostalism is popular among the current regime. Joining the Pentecostal movement may be a way to opt in, to join those in power.

The rise of the Pentecostal movement in conditions of anomie seems a sign that social capital, in 'the form of the recrystallization of attitudes' and 'the reformation of solidarity' (Poblete and Odea 1960), is replacing old forms of social capital with new ones. It is an attempt to redevelop a community. The rise of the Pentecostal movement can therefore be directly linked to a quest for the re-creation of social capital. However, it remains uncertain whether the construction of this type of social capital extends beyond the church's members. Converts and born-again Christians in particular make a strict distinction between "us" (the born-again Christians) and "them" (other members of the community). They consider conversion to their religion the solution for:

"... restoring ... social cohesion in the broader society. Having the same religion, however, does not automatically mean that there is a social cohesion on all levels of society. But, for the individual born-again who suffered devastatingly during the wars, these churches offer a kind of counselling that is very helpful and supportive, and gives them the possibility to restore their lives."

(Tankink 2007: 228)

Whereas the Pentecostal movement forms an important instrument for the creation of social cohesion, it must also be borne in mind that it inherently entails the dilemma of exclusion. The new kinship relations that are formed by 'born-again' transcends individual churches. Yet, at the same time, members exhibit an enormous intolerance to outsiders. As Gifford (1998: 121) argues, "others come to be seen not as different groups with their own interests, which call for compromise and negotiation, but as agents of Satan to be vanquished, eradicated and even annihilated". The dilemma of exclusion is not only of relevance to those not born again, but may also be a problem for Hutu. Cantrell (2007) suggests that virtually all pastors and key figures in the Anglican Church were raised in Uganda and consist of Tutsi returnees. My own observations suggest that the same can be said of the Pentecostal movements in the research area. The prevalence of English in church functions forms a perpetual reminder that the Anglican Church and the Pentecostal movement are basically Tutsi organisations. Many poor Hutu "continue to see the ruling elites, in both church and state, as Tutsi" (Cantrell 2007: 340). This presents a severe barrier to these churches being effective in bringing about social cohesion.

Despite this dilemma of exclusion, the Pentecostal movement offers many new opportunities to its members:

"The emphasis on personal decision certainly serves to develop the notion of individualism, without which it is impossible for a middle class to emerge. It is almost the same thing to say that these churches tend to break down the notion of the extended family. They provide alternative structures

to oversee courtship and arrange marriage, taking these tasks away from traditional agents ... they often provide scope for youth, in a culture traditionally dominated by elders; it can be said that they re-order society for the benefit of youth. The position of women too has been altered by these churches; they can assume leadership roles, determine policies as equals on committees, meet new people in institutions totally unrelated to kinship ... The Faith Gospel serves to legitimise the accumulation of wealth as something willed by God. In new churches deliverance easily restores to the community those who in other conditions may have been subjected to witch-finding ordeals. Pentecostalism can even open up or revitalise whole areas of cultural expression [as, for example, in Ghana] in the area of gospel music."

(Gifford 1998: 347)

Perhaps even more importantly in post-genocide Rwanda, Pentecostalism may play a role in reconciliation. By stressing the individual relation with and direct personal experience with God, and reverting to Rwanda's traditional belief system, the movement may be able to reach beyond its Tutsi identity, thus overcoming deep ethnic divisions and enabling unity and reconciliation. The born-again identity may prove to be so strong as to transcend other identities.

Discussion

During the war and genocide, social capital at all levels - namely, the macro (country), meso (community), and micro (household) level as well as individual attitudinal or psychological levels (Islam *et al.* 2006) - was undermined. However, like other assets and resources, social capital is essential to social and economic growth (Grootaert *et al.* 2004). Relations of trust and solidarity mitigate the need to monitor and enforce social arrangements. In this sense, social capital can help build human capital and access other forms of capital and thus contribute to household welfare (Narayan and Pritchett 1999). However, investments in social capital at the local level can be constrained by several factors:

"First, individuals may lack the time or resources to invest in social relationships. As Kabeer (1994: 127-30) and Berry (1989: 49-51) argue, deepening economic poverty can in fact perpetuate social withdrawal, depleting any and all of the social resources that individuals have at their disposal. Second, investors may lack access to or knowledge about the groups from which they would seek support (which can create principal-agent dilemmas). Finally, assuming that social investments entail economic and political costs, social membership constitutes a significant public goods dilemma. As Berry (1989: 48) argues, "if resources are fixed, increased membership implies less for each and may reduce the fortunes of all.""

(Johnson 1997: 22-23)

Considering the importance of social capital for accessing and strengthening other capitals, there is a dire need to rebuild and create it in post-genocide Rwanda. The problem is that there are “different types, levels or dimensions of social capital, different performance outcomes associated with different combinations of these dimensions, and different sets of conditions that support or weaken favorable combinations. Unravelling and resolving these issues requires a more dynamic than static understanding of social capital” (Woolcock 1998: 159).

To some, “creating social organisations is equal to creating social capital” (Cernea 1993: 24). Putnam (1993a) suggested that the construction of social capital is best served by the creation of weak horizontal ties, such as membership in voluntary organisations, rather than strong horizontal ties, like kinship relations and friendships. However, the presence of a civil society alone is an insufficient condition for the creation of social capital. In this respect it is important to stress that Rwanda’s civil society is not only of fairly recent creation but is also largely externally driven, clientelistic in character and, at least prior to 1990, mainly offering room to voices of radicalism and ethnic division (Uvin 1998). Social capital is not immune to power relations. As a result, some community or household members are excluded from resources controlled by network members. In addition, excess claims are sometimes made on fellow members (for example, noticeable in free-rider problems), or members are restricted in their personal freedom. An example of the latter is the prayer meeting that was organised by some of members of the Pentecostal Church, who were concerned about the conduct of one of their female followers, an unmarried girl in her early twenties. The girl was rumoured to have engaged in pre-marital sex and during the prayer meeting, which lasted all night, church members pressured the girl to give up her inappropriate conduct and return to the strict rules of conduct set out by the church.

Despite such possible negative consequences of social capital, the research area at present is characterised by a fairly diverse civil society, in which over half of the households appear to participate. However, as Omosa (2002) indicated, a considerable number of people she interviewed (near this study’s research area) are of the opinion that the organisations they are members of have in fact achieved nothing. One must therefore be careful not to confuse the quantity of associational life with quality. The mere presence of a civil society does not automatically result in more social capital. Explicit efforts have to be undertaken to do so, and few organisations in the research area appear to overcome communal divisions explicitly. The genocide-*gacacas* and religious institutions, including the Pentecostal movement, seem to be an exception to this rule. These two forms of organisation have in common that they provide an outlet for people to talk about their past experiences, to express their fear and anger, thus providing the opportunity to ask for assistance. In this way, they offer channels to express emotions that are normally not readily shown in public. This is important because these emotions, which enable better understanding, communication, and discussion, are likely to have a positive impact on the creation of trust. Trust is thus both an indicator and an outcome of social capital.

Cognitive social capital, perhaps even more than structural social capital, has been seriously undermined by the war and genocide. Widely held norms have been grossly overstepped. In a situation where victims, survivors, and perpetrators of the war and genocide are asked to live together, this is certainly not an easy task, as people lack trust and experience outright fear and hatred. Moreover, communities consisting of people from different socio-economic backgrounds as a result of exile face additional problems of communication. People who have lived in exile in other countries have grown up in different social environments and have to develop strategies to deal with their new political and social situations. They are often unfamiliar with the natural terrain, making the adoption of appropriate cultivation techniques difficult. Even language turns out to be a problem: in my attempts to learn Kinyarwanda, I was regularly astonished by the complete lack of agreement among Rwandans on the correct pronunciation, or even translation, of simple words. Living with others who have grown up in different environments creates difficulties and sometimes even tensions.

Despite the difficulty of measuring cognitive aspects of social capital, there is evidence that new values and norms are being constructed. For example, where village elders in the past were consulted in case of disputes, I now find evidence of their authority being questioned by the younger generations. While *gacacas*, or public gatherings organised to adjudicate disputes (often involving land and other property, between or within families) were traditionally led by respected community elders, during fieldwork I noticed that a considerable portion of the *gacaca* committees (gatherings meant to try those accused of genocide; see below) consisted of relatively young villagers. In fact, some of the committee members were unmarried, which traditionally would have placed them in the category of youngsters, a group formally considered too young and too inapt to adjudicate conjugal or communal disputes. These same 'youngsters' are now considered to be trustworthy judges because they have clean hands. They are too young to have been involved in the war and genocide and are relatively unspoiled by all the hatred that ensued.

Relations of trust and mutual understanding can have a positive impact on the economic development of households and communities but are difficult to measure. One particular concern is that ethnic lines need to be crossed, which is particularly difficult in a society that has experienced extreme polarisation along ethnic lines (Berlage *et al.* 2003). The government appears to do so by insisting that people no longer think in terms of ethnicity, and by arresting people for inciting divisionism. Indeed, few respondents were willing to openly discuss problems that may exist between ethnic groups or between individuals of different ethnicity. Only after the genocide-*gacacas* commenced in the research area did I hear people refer openly to their own and someone else's ethnicity. Despite the government's appeal to not think along ethnic lines, public discourse still tends to label all Hutu as *génocidaires*. In this respect it was telling to find that some of my research assistants openly admitted that they did not trust Hutu and sometimes even feared entering their houses. This public discourse leads to social stigmatisation, which in itself is detrimental to the creation of relationships of trust. Moreover, it may lead to economic destitution, and destitution hampers the creation of structural social

capital. At best, the government appears unconscious of this. At worst, it is aware of the fact that silencing the ethnic argument results in the stigmatisation of Hutu as a corporate group.

Rather than simply creating more social capital, such as by the creation of voluntary groups, weak or missing dimensions of social capital need to be strengthened (Woolcock 1998). Like Putnam (2000), I would like to argue that in order to improve development outcomes, investments need to be made in 'bridging' social capital. In contrast to bonding social capital, which can be created by membership in homogeneous groups like primary groups such as kin groups, bridging social capital can be created through people's membership in heterogeneous groups and networks that extend beyond people's own environment and where people from different socio-economic backgrounds, gender, ethnicity, and so on come together. In this manner, experiences may be shared, social connections broadened, and new norms constructed. Whereas I have shown in this chapter that farmers' groups do not appear to meet the conditions for bridging social capital (primarily because of the top-down manner in which they were formed), institutions such as churches, despite their role in the war and genocide, may play an important role in this respect. At the same time it is important to realise that the strengthening of social capital always entails a risk of exclusion (Adler and Kwon 1999). This implies that explicit targeting of vulnerable groups is necessary. For example, as indicated in this chapter, the land poor are significantly less likely than the land rich to belong to an organisation such as farmers' groups or credit associations. Explicit efforts thus need to be made to ensure that the land poor are able to benefit from the creation of social capital by means of simply strengthening civic society.

The government of Rwanda acknowledges that the reconstitution of damaged social capital is a fundamental aspect of the country's recovery (Government of Rwanda 2002). The reintegration of isolated groups, such as returning refugees or women and orphans, a population policy to avoid regional concentration of the most disadvantaged groups, and a strengthening of rural-urban links is instrumental to increasing social cohesion. Reconciliation is considered to be of central importance to the reconstitution of social capital, and a functioning and fair justice system is considered a precondition for reconciliation to take place. Other policy measures to strengthen the process of reconciliation include the omission of ethnicity from identity cards, equality educational opportunities, repatriation of refugees, the *gacaca* process, gender equality, the return of property to rightful owners, and the reintegration of orphans into volunteer host families and of soldiers and 'genocidaires' into their former communities.

One of the most important things to keep in mind is that resentment will inhibit the reconstruction of social capital because it undermines trust. In order to avoid resentment, Carbonnier (1998) argues that external assistance should be granted to the whole community. In Rwanda's case, this implies that explicit efforts need to be made to counterbalance any feelings of exclusion based on group membership, foremost with respect to ethnicity but also with respect to gender or age. If people wonder whether projects distributing goats are only or mainly

targeting Tutsi widows, if people see that land is being expropriated by a few wealthy individuals, or if the promise of equal access to educational institutions is not kept (for example, by extending financial support to genocide orphans or providing scholarships primarily to male students), suspicion and resentment may easily take root. Potentially, these feelings may escalate to renewed conflict and violence. As Berlage *et al.* (2003: 12) contend: "In order to limit the deepening of the divide in Rwandan society these kind of compensation mechanisms or means of assistance should be studied very carefully. Households who do not get the benefits of such assistance will feel deprived, whatever the objective arguments of the initial assistance may be."

11

Household Livelihood Outcomes

In the foregoing chapters, I have shown how households in the research area try to access, expand, combine, transform, and exchange assets. This is a continuous process that has obviously been influenced by the war and genocide. Since 1994, new opportunities have been created, enabling people to 'work' with their asset endowments. For example, NGOs have provided material support for the construction and reconstruction of houses; the distribution of goats among the poor has enabled them to diversify their income-generating activities; and the rice project has enabled some farmers to gain access to more land. Certain organisations have explicitly targeted women, thus expanding their livelihood opportunities. At the same time, however, other opportunities have been curtailed. Improved border controls, for example, have made it more difficult to smuggle consumer goods into the country, reducing income opportunities for women selling clothing at markets.

I have also shown that while asset endowments vary between households, it appears that important differences exist between different types of households. It is often heard that women, for a variety of reasons, are poorer than men, and that female-headed households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households (Kabeer 1997, Chant 1997, 2003, 2004, Niehof 2004b). For some time, female-headed households were considered to be among the 'poorest of the poor' (Tinker 1990). Aside from intra-household distributional factors, the reasons are sought in women being disadvantaged with respect to "either assets or activities, or some combination of both, linked to inequalities of access to resources and income generating opportunities" (Ellis 2000: 141). There is, however, conflicting evidence from a number of studies concerning the relative poverty and vulnerability status of female-headed households. For example, Mtshali (2002) argues that the general assumption that female-headed households are more vulnerable than those headed by males is of limited validity in a context of shared community poverty and vulnerability, as was the case in her research area in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In fact, she found that under such circumstances male-headed households are more vulnerable than are female-headed households. Her explanation is that female-headed households tend to diversify their income-generating activities more than do male-headed households. The fact that men tend to spend money on personal luxury items and restrict women's movements to eke out a living were found to be important in this respect.

My own data also suggest that while differences in asset endowments between male- and female-headed households may not appear large at first glance, it is important to deconstruct household categories. I have shown that the differences between male- and female-headed households generally appear smaller than those among female-headed households. While widow-headed households in Rwanda are considered to be among the poorest and most vulnerable, my data indicate that in Rwagitima these households in fact appear to do better than other types of households. Divorcee-headed households, however, seem to have relatively few asset endowments. This, together with the stigma of divorce, also appears to curtail the income-generating opportunities of such households.

In this chapter, I want to take a closer look at the outcomes of household livelihood strategies in the research area. In the first section, I will look at a common measure to assess households' poverty status: income. In the second section, I will analyse the material standard of living of households by looking at four groups of household assets: quality of houses, luxury items, furniture items, and agricultural tools. I will also determine which household characteristics correspond to a high or low material standard of living. In the third section, I will take a closer look at household food security. Food security is measured by means of subjective measures (i.e. respondents' experience of food insecurity). I will also show which household characteristics are correlated to food insecurity and discuss household strategies during periods of food shortages. In the fourth section, I will continue to look at subjective measures, this time analysing respondents' perceived quality of life. In the fifth and final section, I will present the discussion.

Income

Wealth in the research area is defined by respondents as having access to one or more of the following: 1) non-farm employment, as this provides the household with a relatively high and secure income. Moreover, in light of the underdevelopment of non-farm employment opportunities in the research area, to have found such employment confers status; 2) wealth in terms of children. Children are valued in their own right, but they are also important because they may potentially contribute to household income. Nevertheless, people are more and more aware that to have too many children may actually undermine household wealth, as large investments need to be made in their education and health. For some, these investments are just too expensive; 3) one's own land and livestock; 4) a good house, which is an important sign of wealth.

Despite the fact that income is not always at the top of the list of people's priorities and that income or production alone do not indicate whether people are able to secure a livelihood and achieve their goals, one of the most used indicators of the livelihood process is individual or household income. As shown in Chapters 2 and 8, income inequality has been a permanent feature of Rwandan society, having increased rather than decreased over time. These findings are confirmed by André and Platteau (1998), who have documented that the Gini-coefficient for land

(an indicator of income) increased from 0.41 in 1988 to 0.44 in the early 1990s. Berlage *et al.* (2003) find that the Gini-coefficient increased even further, to 0.51 in 2002, and that the Gini-coefficient for income inequality increased dramatically from 0.41 in 1990 to 0.58 in 2002. In their study, Berlage *et al.* (2003) find that income mobility (measured as the difference in income between 1990 and 2002) in Gitarama and Gikongoro has been negative for all types of female-headed households and positive for nearly all types of male-headed households²⁷⁹. The authors indicate that while their data are not representative, they nevertheless feel confident that their findings are indicative of the vulnerability of female-headed households. Negative income mobility is associated with instability at the household level: “Households who were refugees after 1994, households who saw their house destroyed, households who moved after 1994 and households with one or more members in prison experienced on average negative income mobility” (Berlage *et al.* 2003: 83).

Omosa (2002) argues that household incomes in Murambi district are generally low and skewed. The average monthly income equals 3000 RWF. However, over 75 percent of household heads interviewed by Omosa indicated that they earn a monthly income of only 50-2000 RWF. Moreover, the majority of household heads earn only 1000 RWF per month. Omosa also finds that 88 percent of household heads describe their sources of income as insecure or just reasonably secure (10 percent). Only 21 percent of her respondents had access to additional sources of income, which earned them an average of 2468 RWF per month. However, most of these people earned only 1000 RWF per month from their second source of income. Unfortunately, Omosa does not further disaggregate her income data. Thus, it is unknown to what extent differences between different types of households exist or whether and how income mobility has taken place over the last few years.

Unfortunately, collecting data on financial resources of households in the research area turned out to be very difficult. People tend to be secretive about money matters. Writing on the changes in Rwandan society between 1900 and 1960, Codere (1973) found that in earlier times people were willing and even proud to disclose these details. This might be because during the period she writes about monetary income was considered a measure of success, indicating integration into the new Rwandan society and forming a break with the old non-monetary *ubuhake* system. Today, money appears foremost a source of envy and conflict. The poor are ashamed of having so little, while the better-off want to downplay their monetary income so as not to miss out on external support (such as land redistribution schemes or the distribution of goats meant to reach the poor, or the potential support that may be received from a *muzungu* such as myself), and to avoid claims from relatives, friends, neighbours, or local tax officials. Neither rich nor poor were willing to disclose exact information on income, whether in cash or kind, savings or remittances.

Questions on income, more qualitative than quantitative in nature, have nevertheless been included in the survey questionnaire. During the pre-testing of

²⁷⁹ The exception was one divorced man.

the questionnaire, however, it became evident that respondents remained reluctant to reveal information about their income or expenditures. Even if people appeared willing to answer such questions, serious doubts about the accuracy and reliability of their answers arose. For example, some respondents indicated that while they worked as government employees they earned less than the average agricultural wage labourer, which is highly unlikely. Moreover, attempting to assess other indicators of household income (for example, information on the quantity of crops harvested and sold) was also difficult. While more or less reliable data could be obtained about some crops (such as beans or rice, crops that are harvested all at once), data about other crops (such as tubers, which are harvested throughout the year) was less reliable. Many respondents were unsure about their exact levels of production. Moreover, a range of measures were used. Thus, one respondent might refer to the number of bags he or she had taken to the market, while others referred to the number of basins. To complicate matters even further, such bags and basins are not necessarily of the same size. Another problem with regard to the collection of data about income or expenditure is that capital flows in the research area are highly variable and unpredictable. Few people are regularly employed and most households depend on short-term and irregular employment arrangements. This means that people may earn an income in kind at one moment, earn cash at another moment, or none at all at yet another moment. Moreover, the willingness to provide labour free of cost may create goodwill and opportunities that are likely to enable them to access more tangible source of income in the near future.

Taking all of these limitations into account, I decided that there were too many uncertainties with regard to production levels and sale of produce to take these as an accurate measure or as an indicator of household income or wealth. Nevertheless, if access to land and/or the ownership of livestock are taken as an indicator, large differentials exist between types of households (see Chapters 8 and 9). Thus seen, divorcee-headed households appear to be among the poorest and most vulnerable in the research area.

Material Standard of Living

In a study of female-headed households in Tanzania, van Vuuren (2003) constructed a score for material possession to estimate differences in income and assets among households. She calculated this score on the basis of four different types of items of relevance in her study area: luxury items (bicycle, radio, torch, and watch), furniture items (bed, chair, mattress, and mosquito net), garment items (sweater and pair of shoes), and house items (one house, metal roof, cement floor, and separate kitchen). The minimum score that each household could obtain was zero, implying that they owned none of the above items, and the maximum score was 12, implying that they owned all of the above. After calculating the score for

each set of items, van Vuuren then looked at the differentiation between households for each particular set as well as for the overall score²⁸⁰.

After pre-testing the suitability of van Vuuren's original list of items, which initially seemed appropriate for application in my research area, I learnt that a number of people were reluctant to answer questions about the ownership of items. They felt that the lack of specific items highlighted their poverty and this made them feel ashamed. After probing some of my key informants about this issue, they revealed that the difficulty was especially related to questions about the ownership of garments. In fact, less than one-fourth of all respondents indicated that they were able to meet the clothing needs of their households. Instead of van Vuuren's garment items, I decided to use the ownership of agricultural tools in this exercise. These types of questions were culturally less sensitive but still revealed important information about the ability to purchase, own, and maintain household items. Furthermore, I decided to award as a score for each category a possible minimum of zero and a possible maximum of three points.

I included the following items in the calculation of the possession score:

<i>Luxury score:</i>		<i>House score:</i>	
1	Bicycle	7	Metal roof
2	Radio	8	Brick walls
3	Cassette player	9	Private toilet
<i>Furniture score:</i>		<i>Agricultural tools score:</i>	
4	Mattress	10	Machete
5	Mosquito net	11	Axe
6	Chair	12	Pruning knife

In calculating the material standard of living scores, households were assigned a maximum score of 12 (i.e. three points per type of score)²⁸¹.

The Luxury Score

The maximum number of points that could be scored on the luxury score is three. Of all households, only 5.2 percent achieved this score (see Table 11.1), which means that these households possess all items included in this score: bicycle, radio, and cassette player. In contrast, nearly one-third of households scored zero, which implies that they own no luxury items at all. We can tell from Table 11.1 that the differences between male- and female-headed households are generally small. However, the maximum score has only been obtained by male-headed households. Note that half of the divorcee-headed households own no luxury items at all. Moreover, none of the divorcee-headed households own more than one luxury

²⁸⁰ Somewhat similarly, Thurman *et al.* (2008) use a household asset index as a proxy for socio-economic status.

²⁸¹ Note that I do not consider the condition of the items, even though this is obviously of some relevance.

item. Whereas female-headed households have a lower luxury score than male-headed households, this difference is not significant. However, divorcee-headed households score significantly lower on this score than do widow-headed households.

Table 11.1: Luxury scores for households (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
0 items	31.9	34.9	32.8	27.6	50.0
1 item	37.4	44.2	39.6	41.4	50.0
2 items	23.1	20.9	22.4	31.0**	-
3 items	7.7*	-	5.2	-	-
Average luxury score	1.06	0.86	1.00	1.03**	0.50

Source: Household survey 2005

**, ** significant at the 10% and 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

In order to understand these differences, I have conducted a more detailed analysis of the luxury possession score (see Table 11.2). Approximately one-fourth of all households possess a bicycle. Male-headed households are significantly more likely to possess a bicycle than are female-headed households. The difference is even more pronounced within female-headed households. Whereas almost one-fourth of widow-headed households possess a bicycle, none of the divorcee-headed households own one. Bicycles form an important asset in the research area and are mostly used to generate income, either by transporting people or by transporting goods from or to the market. Bicycles are normally bought and operated by men; in the research area women are never seen to cycle.

Table 11.2: Possession of luxury items by type of household (%)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Bicycle	31.9*	16.3	26.9	24.1**	-
Radio	60.4	65.1	61.9	72.4	50.0
Cassette player	14.3	4.7	11.2	6.9	-

Source: Household survey 2005

**, ** significant at the 10% and 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Table 11.2 shows that whereas all types of households own radios, divorcee-headed households are less likely to do so. Widow-headed households are most likely to have a radio at home, although the difference with regard to other types of households is not significant. As indicated in Chapter 10, radios form an important source of information, especially in the absence of newspapers. Cassette players are relatively rare in the research area. They are considered a status symbol, for they not only require batteries (as do radios) but also imply that the owner is able to buy cassettes. Divorcee-headed households, while able or willing to invest in radios, appear less likely to invest in luxury items such as cassette players, although again, the difference with regard to cassette players by type of household is not significant.

I also looked at the difference between Hutu and Tutsi households and found that Tutsi households tend to have a higher luxury score (1.09, n=59) than Hutu households (0.93, n=44), though this difference is not significant.

The Furniture Score

The maximum number of points that could be gained on the furniture score is three. Nearly one-third of households achieve this score (see Table 11.3), implying that they possess all items included in this score: chair, mattress, and mosquito net. Only 12.7 percent of households own none of the items included in the furniture score. This suggests that furniture is either easier to come by than luxury items, is cheaper, or is considered more important to purchase.

Table 11.3: Furniture scores for households (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
0 items	12.1	14.0	12.7	13.8	14.3
1 item	30.8	23.3	28.4	17.2	35.7
2 items	27.5	27.9	27.6	37.9**	7.1
3 items	29.7	34.9	31.3	31.0	42.9
Average furniture score	1.75	1.84	1.78	1.86	1.79

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Differences between types of household are less pronounced than for the luxury score. It is noteworthy, however, that the proportion of households owning the maximum of three items is largest among divorcee-headed households.

Looking at the average furniture score (1.78), one can tell from Table 11.3 that male-headed households have the lowest score, although the difference with regard to other types of households is not significant.

Again, I have conducted a more detailed analysis of the furniture possession score (see Table 11.4). Female-headed households are less likely to own chairs and mosquito nets than are male-headed households, although the difference is not significant. Male-headed households are significantly less likely to possess mattresses than are female-headed households. Ordinarily, there are fewer mattresses than people to be found in a home. People usually share one. If they do not have a mattress, people sleep on a mat. I found that the number of mattresses tends to be lower among households with children at boarding schools, for these children are required to bring a mattress with them. This may also explain why male-headed households are less likely to own mattresses, for they are more likely to have one or more children at school than are the other types of households.

Table 11.4: Possession of furniture items by type of household (%)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Chairs	82.4	76.7	80.6	82.8	64.3
Mattress	46.2	67.4**	53.0	69.0	64.3
Mosquito net	46.2	39.5	44.0	34.5	50.0

Source: Household survey 2005

*** implies significance at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Divorcee-headed households are least likely to own chairs. Chairs have been differentiated from couches, a more expensive form of seating, and from stools, which are normally found in the kitchen or in the courtyard where they are used by women when washing clothes. Those who are not able to afford chairs or couches normally possess several mats for household members and visitors to sit on.

Mosquito nets are mostly found in households with small children. Children are considered to be more at risk of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases, and whenever possible care is taken to protect them during the night. The fact that less than 50 percent of households own a mosquito net thus entails a high health risk. On average, male-headed households consist of significantly more small children than do widow-headed households (1.16 and 0.62, respectively). Male-headed households also have more small children than do divorcee-headed households (0.93), but this difference is not significant. These results suggest that it is not surprising to find relatively few widow-headed households that possess mosquito nets, as they are less likely to be looking after small children.

Tutsi households tend to have a higher furniture score (2.00) than Hutu households (1.57), but, as with the luxury score, the difference is not significant.

The House Score

The maximum number of points for the house score is achieved by 17.9 percent of households (Table 11.5). Less than 5 percent received no score, which implies that these households live in a house without a metal roof, without brick walls, and lacking a private toilet. Instead, they live in houses made of mud with thatched roofs, or occasionally a roof made out of UNHCR bag material, and they share a toilet with one or more neighbours.

Table 11.5: House scores for households (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Femal-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
0 items	5.5	2.3	4.5	-	7.1
1 item	30.8	16.3	26.1	13.8	21.4
2 items	47.3	60.5	51.5	65.5	50.0
3 items	16.5	20.9	17.9	20.7	21.4
Average house score	1.74	2.00*	1.83	2.07	1.86

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Female-headed households have a significantly higher average house score than male-headed households. This implies that the quality of houses among female-headed households is generally better than among male-headed households. This is not surprising, for among male-headed households one can find a considerable number of relatively young couples who have just set up their own households and have not had much opportunity to improve their homes. The income they earn is needed to cover other costs such as the acquisition of productive assets, furniture, school fees, and so on. Another reason might be that female-headed households are willing to invest more money in the construction of good quality housing to increase their feeling of security (see Box 11.1). Widow-headed households tend to have the best quality housing. Under the National Habitat Policy, widows (in particular Tutsi genocide survivors) were supported by various agencies in the construction of their new homes (Human Rights Watch 2001). Of course, this practice may still have an influence on the condition of houses at present.

Box 11.1: Security of the home

Until she was able to build a new, high-quality house located near the market where she runs a restaurant, Josephine lived with her children in a brick house with a corrugated iron roof. It housed two families: her own and a migrant family. Josephine had no reason to fear the other family, as they had never done her any harm and they appeared friendly enough. Nevertheless, Josephine felt insecure at night, especially during the months when her husband was away working. In the evening, she locked her door. She woke up at every sound, even listening through the walls to determine whether her neighbours were roaming around or were still asleep. Despite the sand fleas, mosquitoes, and flies that she complained about, she felt reasonably secure that the construction of her house was such that it would not have been easy for outsiders to intrude and harm her or her children during the night.

Table 11.6 provides more detailed information on the quality of houses in the research area. One can see that the differences between male- and female-headed households are particularly large with regard to roofing material. In addition, male-headed households are also less likely to live in houses made of bricks, although the difference with regard to female-headed households is not significant. In contrast, divorcee-headed households are least likely to own a private toilet – the construction of which is normally undertaken by men. However, the differences between types of households are not significant except for the possession of metal roofs.

Table 11.6: Possession of house characteristics by type of households (%)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Metal roof	71.4	93.0***	78.4	96.6	85.7
Brick walls	22.0	27.9	23.9	27.6	28.6
Private toilet	81.3	79.1	80.6	82.8	71.4

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 1% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

While the quality of houses among female-headed households is generally higher than among male-headed households, the large majority of respondents from male-headed households (75.3 percent) nevertheless reported that they were able to meet household shelter demands. This falls only just below the proportion of respondents from widow-headed households who feel able to do so. The proportion of respondents from divorcee-headed households who feel able to meet shelter demands is, however, significantly lower at 35.7 percent. Elsewhere it has been noted that not everyone has been equally likely to benefit from the National Habitat Policy (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999, Human Rights Watch 2001). Thus:

“As Rwandans previously resident in their own homes were forced into imidugudu, the demand for housing far exceeded the capacity of the various agencies, which in any case focussed largely on building houses for homeless Tutsi returnees and genocide survivors. Local authorities permitted ever shoddier houses to be built. As the resources which had paid salaried workers were exhausted, the new residents – many of them Hutu – received no help and were told to build their own houses. Many lacked the time and resources to build solid, mud-brick homes and they settled instead for wood-and-mud daub structures. The weakest and poorest of the new residents could manage to build only fragile shelters of wood, leaves, and pieces of plastic”.

(Human Rights Watch 2001: Section V: Implementation)

Indeed, Tutsi households score higher on the house score (1.98) than Hutu households (1.80). Contrary to what one might expect, however, the difference is not significant.

The Agricultural Tools Score

Finally, the maximum number of points that could be gained in the agricultural tools score is three. Table 11.7 shows that male-headed households possess a significantly higher variety of agricultural tools than do female-headed households. In addition, female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to have no agricultural tools at all. Moreover, the absence of agricultural tools is especially pronounced among divorcee-headed households²⁸².

Table 11.7: Agricultural tools scores for households (in %)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
0 items	12.1	34.9***	19.4	24.1	57.1**
1 item	41.8	27.9	37.3	31.0	21.4
2 items	27.5	25.6	26.9	34.5*	7.1
3 items	18.7	11.6	16.4	10.3	14.3
Average agr. tools score	1.53**	1.14	1.40	1.31*	0.79

Source: Household survey 2005

*, **, *** significant at the 10%, 5% and 1% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

²⁸² I excluded the hoe from this analysis, as I found that, except for one household, all households in the sample own this basic agricultural tool; owning a hoe is not a distinguishing feature.

That divorcee-headed households own fewer agricultural tools is likely to be related to the fact that a considerable number of divorcee-headed households do not cultivate crops for home consumption but rely on other sources of income (see Chapter 9). Also noteworthy is that while all widow-headed households indicated they depend on subsistence cultivation, nearly one-fourth of them do not own machetes, axes, or pruning knives. This implies that they have to borrow tools or rely on the assistance (against payment or not) of others for particular kinds of agricultural work, such as the cutting of banana bunches.

As shown in Table 11.8, male-headed households are significantly more likely to possess a machete than are female-headed households. Widow-headed households are significantly more likely to possess a machete than are divorcee-headed households, which may be related to the fact that divorcee-headed households are less likely to own land, and generally own less land than other types of households (see Chapter 8). In addition it is important to bear in mind that machetes are normally used by adult men, while divorcee-headed households tend to have fewer adult male members than other types of households. Divorcee-headed households are also less likely, though not significantly, to own an axe or a pruning knife than are widow-headed households. Finally, it has to be noted that Hutu households are significantly more likely to possess machetes, axes, or pruning knives (1.64) than are Tutsi households (1.31).

Table 11.8: Possession of agricultural tools by type of household (%)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Machete	76.9**	55.8	70.2	69.0**	28.6
Axe	41.8	34.9	39.6	37.9	28.6
Pruning knife	34.1	23.3	30.1	24.1	21.4

Source: Household survey 2005

*** significant at the 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

The Overall Score

To summarise, I found that the four different scores showed significant differences among types of households. The most significant differences are found with regard to bicycles, mattresses, roofing material, and machetes. Male-headed households are more likely to possess bicycles and machetes (the use of which is indeed considered by respondents to be the domain of men). Female-headed households are more likely to possess mattresses and a roof made out of iron sheets. In addition, divorcee-headed households score much lower on the bicycle and machete items than do widow-headed households. Finally, I have shown that differences between Hutu and Tutsi households are generally negligible, with the

exception of the agricultural tools score. Here, Hutu households were found to have a higher score than Tutsi households.

After analysing the four categories of scores, I proceeded to look at the total score (see Table 11.9), here labelled the material standard of living (MSL) score. Male-headed households have a higher MSL score than female-headed households, although the difference is not significant. Overall, widow-headed households have the highest MSL score and divorcee-headed households the lowest, though the difference is not significant. However, the outcome of the different scores highlights the fact that these types of households do differ with regard to certain items. Moreover, it once more appears that divorcee-headed households belong to the poorest and most vulnerable in the research area.

Table 11.9: MSL score, by type of household (s.d.)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed n=14)
MSL Score	6.09 (2.84)	5.84 (2.28)	6.01 (2.67)	6.28 (2.25)	4.93 (2.13)

Source: Household survey 2005
(Mann-Whitney Test)

Looking at the MSL score among Hutu and Tutsi households, I found that Hutu households have a score of 5.93 (s.d. 2.51). This score is lower than that of Tutsi households. For them, the MSL score is 6.37 (s.d. 2.60). However, the difference is not significant.

I divided the households into those with a low MSL score (ranging from 0 to 4), a medium MSL score (5 to 8), and high MSL score (9 to 12). Table 11.10 presents a summary of findings. As one can see, less than 30 percent of all households fall in the lowest MSL category. Less than 18 percent of households fall in the highest MSL category. In the lowest MSL score, we find a higher percentage of male-headed households than female-headed households. Among female-headed households, we find a high percentage of divorcee-headed households. These differences, however, are not significant. In the category with the highest MSL score, we find a higher percentage of male-headed households than female-headed households. Moreover, none of the divorcee-headed households fall into this category. This is a clear indication that divorcee-headed households are among the poorest in the research area and that the differences between male- and widow-headed households are negligible. These findings once more contradict the common assumption that chronically poor households in Rwanda are more likely to be female headed, as was postulated for example by McKay (2007).

Table 11.10: Classification of MSL scores among different types of households (%)

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Low MSL score	29.7	27.9	29.1	24.1	35.7
Medium MSL score	50.6	58.1	53.0	55.2	64.3
High MSL score	19.8	14.0	17.9	20.7*	-

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

Taking the MSL score as a proxy indicator of wealth²⁸³, I looked at the characteristics of households within the different MSL categories. Table 11.11 provides an overview of household characteristics within each category. Households with a low MSL score tend to have somewhat younger heads of household than do those with a medium or high standard of living. The educational level of the head of household is low and significantly lower than the educational level of heads of household in the highest MSL group. These households are significantly smaller than households with a high MSL score, while their effective dependency ratio is higher. Landholdings are very small, just over 0.3 hectare, and on average households cultivate just over three different crops. Almost three-quarters of households depend on wage labour as a source of income. Few households are members of organisations. In addition, few receive remittances, possibly as a result of the relatively young age of the head of households or because children, the most important senders of remittances, are still living at home.

The mean age of heads of households with a medium MSL score is higher than in the two other MSL groups. The effective dependency ratio is also highest for this group. The educational level of heads of households is somewhat higher than for those in the lowest MSL group, but lower than those in the highest MSL group. Households in this category, though they have settled in the research area most recently, generally operate larger farm holdings, cultivate more different types of crops, and are less likely to engage in agricultural wage labour. They are more likely to receive remittances than those with in the lowest MSL group. They are also more likely to be a member of a group.

²⁸³ According to Verpoorten and Berlage (2004: 41), "The positive correlation between assets and income stems from two facts. First, the more physical capital the household possesses, the larger the base for income generating activities. Second, the more income the household has, the higher its capacity to invest in physical assets".

Table 11.11: Household characteristics among the different MSL categories (s.d.)

	Low (n=39)	Medium (n=71)	High (n=24)	Average (n=134)
Age (in years)	40.36 (12.57)	45.62 (15.23)	45.42 (12.91)	44.05 (14.20)
Average household size***	4.72 (2.14)	5.68 (2.55)	6.63 (2.48)	5.57 (2.49)
Effective dependency ratio	1.96 (1.82)	2.01 (1.59)	1.42 (1.23)	1.89 (1.60)
Education level*	n=37 0.67 (0.58)	n=67 0.82 (0.68)	n=24 1.17 (0.96)	n=128 0.84 (0.73)
0=no education 1=primary 2=secondary 3=higher				
Size land (ha)***	0.31 (0.37) n=36	0.55 (0.69) n=71	1.16 (0.78) n=23	0.59 (0.69) n=130
Membership in organisations*** Y/N	0.23 (0.43)	0.52 (0.50)	0.92 (0.28)	0.51 (0.50)
Remittances* Y/N	0.13 (0.34) n=38	0.27 (0.45) n=70	0.38 (0.50) n=24	0.25 (0.44) n=132
Duration stay (years)	7.95 (12.44) n=37	7.68 (6.50) n=71	12.08 (8.66) n=24	8.55 (9.01) n=132
Agricultural wage labour (Y/N)***	0.72 (0.46) n=39	0.34 (0.48) n=70	0.21 (0.42) n=24	0.43 (0.50) n=133
Number of crops***	3.32 (1.80) n=37	5.27 (2.28) n=67	6.04 (1.94) n=23	4.84 (2.31) n=127

Source: Household survey 2005

*, *** significant at the 10% and 1% level (ANOVA)

Differences with regard to households that obtained a high MSL score are even more pronounced. Whereas these households are among the largest in the sample, their effective dependency ratio is considerably lower than in the other two groups, although the difference is not significant. This implies that households with a high MSL score tend to consist of members who are able to work and earn an income. The educational level of heads of households in this category is also significantly higher. This suggests, as I have indicated in Chapters 7 and 9, that they are more likely to have access to well-paid non-farm employment. In this

group, 92 percent of households are members of an organisation²⁸⁴. Their landholdings are also significantly larger than in the other two groups, and households in this group cultivate the largest variety of crops and are least likely to depend on agricultural wage labour. Moreover, over one-third of households in this category receive remittances, which is a significantly higher proportion than among households with a low possession score. Finally, these households have been present for a considerably long period of time; the difference with regard to households with a medium MSL score were particularly and significantly marked.

In the following, I will refer to households with a low MSL score as very poor households. Considering the lack of assets, but also as a result of processes that exclude (such as low educational level, low membership in organisations, low likelihood of receiving remittances), these households may also be described as chronically poor households. Households with a medium MSL score will be referred to as the resource poor or the transitory poor. Finally, households with a high possession score will be referred to as the resource rich. Moving from the very poor, via the resource poor to the resource rich, the base of livelihood strategies tends to become wider and more solid.

Food Security

Food security is a multidimensional phenomenon and can be defined as access by all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life (Maxwell and Frankenberger 1992, Migotto *et al.* 2006). Food security needs to be distinguished from nutrition security, which can be defined as the “appropriate quantity and combination of inputs such as food, nutrition and health services, and caretaker’s time needed to ensure an active and healthy life at all times for all people” (Haddad *et al.* 1994: 329). Whereas food security is foremost related to availability and accessibility of food, nutrition security is related to availability, accessibility, quality, and consumption (intake) of food. Household food and nutrition security form preconditions for a good nutritional status – the latter defined by anthropometric indicators. However, nutritional status is also affected by other determinants, such as morbidity and lack of care (Balatibat 2004).

The food security status is used in this study as a proxy indicator for the wellbeing of households. Food security can be measured in different ways. Until recently, the concept was linked to income or expenditure, clinical definitions (anthropometric outcomes) or indicators such as calorie consumption or dietary diversity²⁸⁵. However, critics of such approaches have argued that hunger is foremost a social and not a medical problem (Devereux 2003). Currently, the

²⁸⁴ This correlates well to the findings of Berlage *et al.* (2003), who find that the wealthiest households tend to have access to formal farming groups and the wealthy to informal farming and saving groups, whereas the poorest tend to be excluded from participation in either formal or informal farming groups.

²⁸⁵ However, as becomes clear from the foregoing discussion, not all of these actually measure food security.

development and use of qualitative food security measures are gaining prominence, as these tend to be well grounded in science, quick to administer and to analyse. Moreover, they allow room for less tangible factors of food security, as the perceptions of food insecurity and hunger by those most affected are placed in the centre of analysis. Many view these subjective-qualitative aspects as more direct measures of food insecurity than other proxy measures (Kennedy 2003, Webb *et al.* 2006). Subjective measures of food security tell us something about food vulnerability, even if households are not currently undernourished. This is an important dimension of food security that is, however, often neglected (Devereux 2003).

Nevertheless, there has been some debate about the reliability of subjective measures of food security. Thus, Kennedy (2003) concludes that they do not necessarily correlate to clinical signs of malnutrition. She also notes that the correlation between subjective measures of food security and other measures such as nutritional status, while present, have mostly been undertaken in industrialised countries. It is thus not clear whether and how subjective measures of food security correlate to clinical signs of malnutrition in other parts of the world. Similarly, Migotto *et al.* (2006) argue that while measuring food security using respondents' perception of food consumption is at best poorly correlated with standard quantitative indicators (calorie consumption, dietary diversity, and anthropometry), subjective food adequacy indicators do tell us something about the vulnerability dimension of food insecurity. Moreover, perceptions of food adequacy were found to be highly correlated with perception of wealth, both in the past and in the future. The authors warn, however, that "the correlation among subjective indicators may be due also to 'attitudinal characteristics' and not to relative food insecurity and/or to vulnerability" (Migotto *et al.* 2006: 16). In addition, they warn that it is very difficult to compare findings across cultures when using subjective indicators of food security. Frongillo and Nanama (2006) nevertheless suggest that experience-based measures of household food insecurity as used in their study in Burkina Faso are valid for determining seasonal differences in household food insecurity, differences among households at a given time, and changes over time.

In the present study, respondents' perceptions of household food security are placed at the centre of analysis. Respondents were asked if they experienced food shortages in the last year and, if so, during which months. They were also asked whether their own food production, or the type of crops they buy at the market, is sufficient to meet household food demands. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate the strategies used to overcome food shortages. By use of these subjective measures of food security, more insight can be gained into how households actually experience food insecurity. Moreover, it opens new means of looking at the behaviour of households that need to cope with hunger and food insecurity.

Surplus

Food security is an essential element of overall wellbeing. Households in Rwagitima employ a range of strategies to meet household food demands. As indicated previously, most households engage in subsistence cultivation, although many are able to cultivate some cash crops. Through the sale of such crops (see Chapter 9, Table 9.4), households are able to generate the cash needed to purchase food items not self-produced or of which the yields are insufficient to feed household members. Income generated through agricultural wage labour and non-farm labour is also used to purchase food. Households in the research area generally have both direct and exchange entitlements to food.

In most cases, own food production is insufficient to meet household food demands. At the same time, the purchase and exchange of food does not make up for the low levels of crop production. This problem is not restricted to the research area. Omosa (1998) studied food security in a high-potential rural agricultural setting in Kenya (Kisii district). She shows how command over adequate food tends to vary with different socio-economic profiles of households, such as size and life cycle, size of landholdings, and types of crops grown (see also Balatibat 2004). Some households may not gain sufficient or predictable command over food sources, while others do so only at the expense of other basic needs. Omosa thus argues that gaining command over food sources not only depends on accessing specific resources such as land and cash income (one's resource endowments) but also on the ability to devise ways of meeting basic household needs other than food requirements (resource entitlements that depend on one's fallback position, social network, and ability to activate that network).

As indicated in Chapter 9, a large number of households in the research area are able to sell part of their produce. With the income thus generated, these households are able to meet other household demands or purchase additional food items not produced in sufficient abundance on the farm. The sale of produce should, however, not be confused with the sale of surplus (see Box 11.2). In fact, as I have indicated in Chapter 8, it is common to find households purchasing the same crop that they have sold earlier. For example, 40 households in the sample indicated they have sold part of their bean harvest. However, one-third of these same households also indicated they have purchased beans at the market.

Box 11.2: Sale of harvest

In 2005, Jacqueline had a very good rice harvest. She sold all of it and used the income to pay her children's school fees, to buy food items she does not cultivate herself (such as vegetables and tomatoes), and to buy other household necessities (like oil, wood, and clothing). Jacqueline and other household members consider rice a preferred food. This means that, after selling all of her rice harvest, Jacqueline regularly buys small portions of rice at the market – at a higher price than that for which she had originally sold her own rice.

As the example above shows, the decision to sell part of one's harvest (or one's entire harvest) is often related to the need for cash income to meet other household demands. If the need to meet such demands is acute, households may be forced to sell at one moment - often immediately after harvest when prices are low due to the large availability - and purchase at another moment - often during periods when prices have increased. The sale of produce rather than surplus thus indicates a cash constraint that apparently cannot be overcome by other income-generating means. As will be discussed below, nearly all households in the sample rely on purchases of food in order to meet household food demands. However, considerable differences exist between households with regard to the type of foods purchased (see Table 11.12).

Table 11.12: Proportion of households purchasing selected food items according to MSL category (s.d.)

	Very poor (n= 39)		Resource poor (n= 71)		Resource rich (n= 24)		Total (n=134)	
Beans	0.42	(0.50)	0.27	(0.45)	0.21	(0.42)	0.30	(0.46)
Cassava***	0.71	(0.46)	0.46	(0.50)	0.21	(0.42)	0.49	(0.50)
Sweet potatoes**	0.71	(0.46)	0.50	(0.50)	0.38	(0.50)	0.54	(0.50)
Rice	0.32	(0.47)	0.46	(0.50)	0.33	(0.48)	0.39	(0.49)
Potatoes**	0.29	(0.46)	0.47	(0.50)	0.21	(0.42)	0.37	(0.49)
Tomatoes	0.55	(0.50)	0.59	(0.50)	0.71	(0.46)	0.60	(0.49)
Vegetables**	0.40	(0.50)	0.47	(0.50)	0.71**	(0.46)	0.49	(0.50)
Fruits	0.13	(0.34)	0.09	(0.28)	0.29	(0.46)	0.14	(0.35)
Cooking banana	0.26	(0.45)	0.16	(0.37)	0.13	(0.34)	0.18	(0.39)

Source: Household Survey 2005

** , *** significant at the 5% and 1% level (ANOVA)

Differences between the very poor, resource poor, and resource rich are particularly pronounced with respect to the purchase of cassava, potatoes and sweet potatoes, and vegetables. In Chapter 9, I have already indicated that nearly two-thirds of households in the sample cultivate cassava. Moreover, it has been noted that the production of cassava in Umutara surged between 1990 and 2001, mostly as a result of improved techniques rather than a change in the proportion of households growing this crop. Cassava is widely known as a poor man's crop, as it is cheap to purchase at the market and is available throughout the year. Not surprisingly, the proportion of poor households purchasing the crop is significantly higher among the poor than the less poor. Apart from the relatively low price of cassava at the market, the difference is further explained when one takes a closer look at the households producing cassava. Among very poor households, 38 percent grow cassava, as opposed to 65 percent among the resource poor and 83 percent among the resource rich. It is highly likely that those

producing cassava (a cash crop for some) are less inclined to buy the crop at the market as well (unless production is insufficient to meet household food demands). Moreover, it is well possible that poor households prefer to sell more expensive food (cash) crops on the market. This would enable them to buy larger quantities of cheaper crops, such as cassava.

As is the case with cassava, very poor households are also more likely to buy sweet potatoes. Again, this is a crop that is widely available at the market at a relatively low price. Just under half of all households in the sample cultivate sweet potatoes. Again, I found that very poor households are least likely to do so (only 12 percent of very poor households grow sweet potatoes). The resource poor are most likely to grow sweet potatoes (59 percent), followed by the resource rich (45 percent).

Nearly 40 percent of households in the sample grow potatoes. Unlike the cultivation of cassava and sweet potatoes, the cultivation of potatoes across wealth categories appears less pronounced. Of very poor households, 41 percent cultivate potatoes, against 31 percent of the resource poor and 58 percent of the resource rich, which is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$). Again, I find that the category least likely to grow a particular crop is at the same time most likely to purchase that crop. Thus, the resource poor are significantly more likely to purchase potatoes at the market, although the difference with regard to the resource rich is not significant.

Finally, less than one-tenth of all households in the sample cultivate vegetables such as cabbage. None of the very poor do so. Among the resource poor, 11 percent cultivate vegetables, and among the resource rich this rises to 13 percent. The fact that very poor households do not cultivate vegetables is most likely related to the high starting capital needed to engage in such cultivation (as was indicated by several respondents, see Chapter 9). Moreover, such crops, while generally widely available at the market, are relatively expensive, especially when compared to carbohydrate-rich crops such as cassava and sweet potatoes.

On the one hand, the above findings suggest that the very poor are likely to cultivate crops that, when sold, enable them to buy other, more carbohydrate-rich crops at the market. In a sense, this is a food strategy wherein quality is traded over quantity. On the other hand, the above findings form a strong indication that the less poor are able to sell a surplus (for example, of cassava and sweet potatoes), the income of which can be used to acquire other food crops at the market.

Food Security as an Outcome of Livelihood Strategies

Food insecurity and hunger have traditionally been linked to clinical signs of malnutrition (FIVIMS 2003). Quantitative measures, such as information about malnourishment, food intake, nutrition, and access to food are regularly used to measure food security, but they do not measure the perception of food security by individuals or households. Food insecurity is not only about physical symptoms and does not necessarily have to cause health problems. Rather than viewing food insecurity as a medical problem, food insecurity informs us about the existence of a

social problem. It tells us something about the vulnerability of people. In fact, some households are food insecure but are not necessarily experiencing hunger (Webb *et al.* 2007). As such, qualitative measures of food security are justified as perceptions, and anxieties about food security cannot be estimated in terms of expenditure or quantified in anthropometric outcomes. Qualitative measures (like the World Bank's Food Security Core Module) may be considered to be more direct measures of food insecurity (FIVIMS 2003). Moreover, they usually constitute a much simpler way to obtain valuable information on household food security.

In the sample, only one household depends entirely on self-produced food, and seven depend solely on purchases (see Table 11.13). All households relying only on food purchases were found to be food deficient. All of these households are landless and apparently experience cash constraints, for food is always available for purchase at the weekly market. Their food insecurity is thus not so much a result of the non-availability of food but of constraints in accessing food. It is also important to note that food deficiency among these households generally lasts for considerable periods of time. On average, these households are food deficient for five months in the year (ranging from only one month to year-round food shortages). These findings suggest that landless households (the large majority of which are divorcee-headed) are extremely vulnerable to household food insecurity.

Table 11.13: Food security as outcome of food security strategies

	Food secure households		Food deficient households		Row total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Cultivation only	1	100.0	-	-	1	100.0
Cultivation and purchases	40	32.8	82	67.2	122	100.0
Purchases only	-	-	7	100.0	7	100.0
Column total	41	31.5	89	68.5	130	100.0

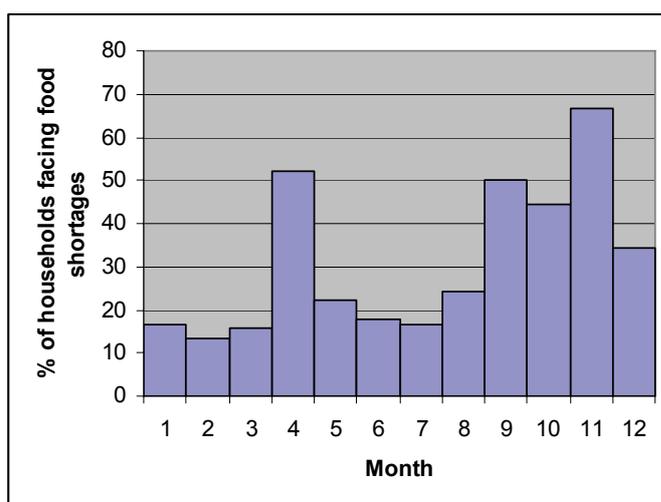
Source: Household survey 2005

The majority of households (93.1 percent) depend on a combination of cultivation and market purchases. Of these households, only 32.8 percent are able to meet household food demands, while a staggering two-thirds (n=82) are food deficient. This indicates once more that crop production in the research area is generally not sufficient to meet household food demands. On average, food deficient households face food shortages of between three to four months (ranging from one to twelve months), somewhat less than among landless households. The fact that these households lack sufficient food for several months a year is nevertheless a reason for concern.

Food shortages in the research area appear to follow a clear seasonal pattern. They are especially acute in April and between September and November

(see Figure 11.1). These two periods form ‘the hunger season’ (Frankenberger *et al.* 2000). The first hunger season, which falls in April, corresponds to the period just before the second agricultural harvest of the year, since rice, maize, sorghum, and vegetables are normally harvested in May. The second hunger season, which falls between September and November, occurs between the third harvest period (when tomatoes and other vegetables are harvested) and the next cultivation period (when the cultivation of beans, soybeans, and vegetables commences).

Figure 11.1: Food shortages



Source: Household survey 2005

The proportion of female-headed households facing food shortages (irrespective of the duration of these shortages) is higher than that of male-headed households (see Table 11.14). Thus, during the year prior to the survey, 63 percent of male-headed households faced food shortages, as opposed to 77 percent of female-headed households. Households of divorced women are most likely to have suffered from food insecurity. However, neither difference is statistically significant. Male-headed households face food shortages for approximately four months a year compared to an average of three months for female-headed households, although the difference is not significant.

Table 11.14: Food insecurity by type of household (in %)

	Male-headed (n=89)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=132)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Food insecure	0.63	0.77	0.67	0.76	0.79

Source: Household survey 2005
(Pearson Chi Square)

The very poor are overrepresented among food deficient households (Table 11.15). Thus, 82 percent of very poor households have faced food shortages, against 67 percent of the resource poor and 46 percent of the resource rich. This finding is interesting because it clearly indicates that not all poor are going hungry and not all resource rich households are able to meet household demands. It is an indication that households employ different livelihood strategies to fulfil a range of household needs, food security being just one of them.

Table 11.15: Food insecurity by MSL score (in %)

	Very poor (n= 38)	Resource poor (n= 70)	Resource rich (n= 24)	Total (n=132)
Food insecure**	0.82	0.67	0.46	0.67

Source: Household survey 2005

** significant the 5% level (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

Table 11.16 gives an overview of differences in household characteristics between food secure and food deficient households. As becomes clear, the age of the heads of household, the effective dependency ratio, the proportion of heads of households who are literate, and the proportion of households that are members of an organisation differ to some extent between food secure and food deficient households, yet these differences are not significant. In Chapter 4, I have indicated that the definition of household membership may be important when looking at food security, for those who are not actually present do not have to be fed. As is shown in Table 11.16, mean household size when absent household members are included and mean household size if only those members are included who are actually present are larger for food deficient households than for food secure households. In neither case is the difference significant. However, I did find a significant difference with regard to the proportion of households receiving remittances, the size of landholdings, and the duration of stay in the research area. That is, among the food deficient we are more likely to find households with small landholdings, who have settled in the research area more recently, and who are less likely to receive remittances.

Table 11.16: Selected household characteristics of food secure and food deficient households

	Food secure (n=41)	Food deficient (n=89)
Mean age (in years)	45.53	43.09
Mean household size if all members present	5.35 4.40	5.70 5.03
Mean Effective Dependency Ratio	1.63	2.01
Proportion literate	0.67	0.66
Mean size landholding (ha)*	0.80	0.50
Proportion receiving remittances**	37.2	19.1
Mean duration of stay (years)*	10.5	7.6
Membership in organisations	0.58	0.48

Source: Household survey 2005

**, ** significant at the 10% and 5% level (Mann-Whitney Test)*

Household Strategies to Overcome Food Shortages

An important dimension of food insecurity is how households react to food insecurity: the experiential dimension (FIVIMS 2003). This refers to the behavioural changes of individuals or households during food shortages, such as changes in food habits.

Households in the research area employ a range of tactics to overcome periods of food shortage (Table 11.17). Households resort to food or income-generating activities such as casual labour (mostly agricultural wage labour), sale of household assets, or participation in Food-For-Work (FFW) programmes (mostly involving construction of houses, schools, and health centres). The latter are not common in the research area. Moreover, people who did participate in such programmes complained that they were required to pay taxes on the little 'income' they received. Agricultural wage labour is more readily available in the research area. However, during covariant shocks, such as prolonged droughts, the supply of agricultural wage labour is likely to exceed the demand. The fact that a high proportion of households have indicated they depend on casual labour to overcome periods of food shortage (55.7 percent) points to the need to create off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities. This is especially important for the poor and near landless, whose agricultural productivity is usually below the level needed to meet household demands. In contrast to income-generating activities involving labour, the sale of household assets is usually a strategy that may result in a negative spiral in the sense that it lowers households' asset endowments, the replenishment of which may take considerable effort and time.

Table 11.17: Types of household strategies to overcome food shortages (%)

	Yes
Income-generating activities:	
Food for Work programmes	9.1
Casual labour	55.7
Sale of household assets	13.6
Social networks:	
Ask relatives for food or money	20.5
Ask friends for food or money	22.7
Borrow food or money (neighbours)	27.3
Rely on assistance provided by NGO or local government	12.5
Consumption-modifying strategies:	
Rely on less preferred food	75.8
Consume less food	50.5
Skip one meal a day	39.0
Skip all meals	18.6

Source: Household survey 2005

Social networks form an important safety net for households in the research area. During periods of food shortage, relatives, friends, and neighbours are regularly asked for assistance in the form of food or money. Networks, however, are not reliable when covariant shocks occur, since relatives, friends, and neighbours are likely to be equally affected and may thus be unable to provide the much needed assistance. Reliance on assistance provided by less personal social networks, such as local authorities or NGOs is much lower, most likely because of their shortage in the research area.

More than anything else, households appear to make use of consumption-modifying strategies to overcome periods of shortage. Thus, 75.8 percent of households indicated they change their diet from preferred foods, such as rice and beans, to less preferred foods, such as maize (*posho*²⁸⁶) and cassava flour (*ugali*), spinach-like weeds that grow in hedges and near roads, and millet and beer bananas (both normally only used for beer brewing). When such tactics fail, households revert to consuming less food or to skipping meals. A common food strategy under these circumstances is to add a lot of chillies to meals. It is said that this, on the one hand, reduces the feeling of hunger by numbing one's senses, and on the other hand, masks the taste of food that is not much liked or is badly prepared. If such strategies also fail, households may refrain from eating altogether. Nearly one out of five respondents indicated they have had to resort to

²⁸⁶ Many respondents associate *posho* with food distribution in the refugee camps, which may explain why it is generally considered to be a 'less preferred food'.

this strategy at least once during the five years prior to the survey²⁸⁷. In most instances, parents reduce their own food intake to feed their children as well as they can. These respondents argue that adults are better able to handle the feeling of hunger. Moreover, respondents indicated that their children need sufficient and good quality food in order to be able to perform well at school. A few respondents indicated they prefer to feed themselves before feeding their children. They explained their choice by suggesting that if they as adults were to go hungry, their production levels would fall and thus further endanger household food security.

With two exceptions, strategies do not differ significantly among male-headed households and those of widows and divorcees. The first exception is that divorcee-headed households are more likely to eat less preferred foods than either male- or widow-headed households. This finding is probably related to the fact that divorcee-headed households generally have little or no land. They therefore rely heavily on the market. With little income, they are also more likely to have to purchase relatively cheap food items, such as cassava or maize flour. The second exception has to do with the fact that widow-headed households are more likely than either male- or divorcee-headed households to benefit from assistance provided by the local government or by NGOs. This is not surprising, considering the general perception among government officials and NGO personnel that widow-headed households are among the most vulnerable in the country.

Perceived Quality of Life

Income and food security are not the only livelihood outcomes valued by people. One of the most important outcomes is the perceived quality of life. Changes in the quality of people's lives cannot simply be measured by income or GDP. Respondents were asked several questions to assess their perceptions of their quality of life and their ability to be 'agents of change' (Sen 1997). Questions were asked about respondents' feelings of happiness, the ability to change their lives through their own decisions, how life now compares to five years ago, expectations for the future, and changes in the position of women.

Respondents were asked how happy they generally feel (measured on a scale from 1=unhappy to 5=happy). The number of respondents who feel more or less unhappy (n= 58) outnumber those who feel more or less happy (n= 38). Respondents from male-headed households tend to feel significantly happier than those from female-headed households (Table 11.18). Among female heads of households, divorcees tend to feel less happy than widows. This difference is, however, not significant. My data also indicate that Hutu tend to feel happier than Tutsi, with a happiness score of 2.96 and 2.55, respectively (the difference being significant at the 10 percent level).

²⁸⁷ Respondents indicated that the year 2002 was especially difficult due to prolonged droughts.

Table 11.18: Feeling of happiness

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Happiness	2.84*	2.45	2.72	2.64	2.07

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

I then looked at whether the experienced feeling of happiness is correlated to specific household characteristics. The mean age of the head of household appears to have a small effect: analysis shows a small negative relationship between age and the feeling of happiness (Spearman's rho, $r_s = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that older heads of household are less likely to feel happy than are younger heads of households. Likewise, I found a small negative relationship between a household's effective dependency ratio and a respondent's feeling of happiness ($r_s = -0.19$, $p < 0.05$), implying that respondents with fewer dependants are more likely to feel happy than are respondents with more dependants. The size of landholdings, however, was positively correlated (medium effect) to a respondent's feeling of happiness ($r_s = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, respondents with larger landholdings were more likely to indicate that they generally feel happy than are respondents from smaller landholdings. In contrast, the educational level of the head of household appears unrelated to the feeling of happiness. I found a positive correlation between the MSL score and feelings of happiness ($r_s = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents with a high standard of living tend to feel happier than those with a low one. Finally, I found a negative correlation between food security and feelings of happiness ($r_s = -0.25$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the food insecure are less likely to feel happy than the food secure. When these five variables (age of head of household, effective dependency ratio, size of landholdings, MSL score, and food security) are placed in a regression model, only the age of the head of household, MSL score, and food security remain significant predictors (Table 11.19).

Table 11.19: Multiple regression output for happiness (n=121)

	B	SE B	β
Constant	2.68	0.39	
Age head of household	-0.02***	0.01	-.26
Effective dependency ratio	-0.04	0.05	-.05
Size landholding	1.643E-05	0.00	.10
MSL score	0.21***	0.04	.47
Food security	-0.45**	0.19	-.18

Source: Household survey

Note: **, *** significant at the 5% and 1% level

$R^2 = 0.36$ (Listwise)

Respondents were also asked about their ability to make decisions that would alter their lives in a positive manner (measured on a scale from 1=totally unable to 5=totally able). Grootaert *et al.* (2004: 14) suggest that such a question can be used to measure empowerment – “the ability to make decisions that affect everyday activities and may change the course of one’s life”- inherent in social capital. About one-fourth of respondents indicated they feel able to positively influence their own lives, while nearly half of the respondents indicated they feel unable to do so. The differences between and within types of households are not significant (Table 11.20), nor is the difference between Hutu and Tutsi.

Table 11.20: Ability to change one’s life positively

	Male-headed (n=91)	Female-headed (n=43)	Total (n=134)	Widow-headed (n=29)	Divorcee-headed (n=14)
Ability	2.74	2.67	2.72	2.72	2.57

Source: Household survey 2005

* significant at the 10% level (Mann-Whitney Test)

The mean age of the head of household is not significantly correlated to the perceived ability to change one’s life for the better. The educational level of those who feel empowered to make decisions that could alter their lives is higher than the educational level of those who do not feel empowered to do so, but the difference is not statistically significant. In contrast, I found a negative relationship between the effective dependency ratio and the perceived ability to make decisions that could alter one’s life; however, the effect is small ($r_s = -0.15, p < 0.1$). This implies that respondents who feel positive about their ability to change the circumstances in which they live generally have fewer dependents than do respondents who feel unable to do so. I also found a positive relationship between the size of landholdings and the perceived ability to make important decisions ($r_s = 0.23, p < 0.01$), implying that respondents with more land are more likely to feel confident about their ability to change the circumstances in which they live than are respondents with less land. The size of landholdings thus appears closely linked to respondents’ sense of empowerment. I also found a significant positive correlation between the ability to change one’s life and MSL score ($r_s = 0.23, p < 0.01$). Food security is not correlated to the perceived ability to change one’s life for the better. When put in a regression model, only the size of landholdings remains a significant predictor²⁸⁸.

²⁸⁸ The model is, however, unable to explain much of the variation in feelings of ability to change one’s life. If only effective dependency ratio, size of landholdings and MSL score are included, $R^2 = 0.11$. When other variables are included (educational level of the head of household, duration of stay, membership in groups, type of household, ethnicity, remittances, wage labour) $R^2 = 0.14$.

When comparing life with five years ago, 44.3 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that their current life circumstances have worsened²⁸⁹. Slightly fewer respondents (35.9 percent) consider that their lives have improved. Respondents from male-headed households tend to feel more positive than respondents from female-headed households. Divorcees feel most negative about the changes in their lives over the last five years, although the difference with regard to other types of households is not significant. The proportion of Hutu who felt their lives had improved (47.7 percent) was higher than the proportion of Tutsi (32.7 percent), although, once more, the difference is not significant.

The mean age of respondents who felt their lives have improved was slightly lower (42 years) than the mean age of respondents who felt the opposite (45 years). Those who noticed an improvement were found to have a lower dependency ratio (1.77) and somewhat higher educational level than those who do not (1.80). These differences are not significant. In contrast, I found a positive relationship between the size of landholdings and perceived differences with regard to five years ago ($r_s = 0.32, p < 0.0001$), implying a medium effect, where those with larger landholdings are more likely to feel positive than those with smaller ones. Respondents with a high MSL score are more likely to feel positive than respondents with a low MSL score ($r_s = 0.25, p < 0.01$), as do food secure households ($r_s = -.28, p < 0.01$).

Respondents were also asked if they expect their life circumstances to improve over the next five years. Respondents from male-headed households are more likely to expect an improvement than those from female-headed households. Divorcees are least positive about the future, although the difference with regard to other types of households is not significant. Hutu feel significantly more optimistic than Tutsi.

There is a significant relationship between the mean age of the head of household and expectations for the future ($r_s = -0.25, p < 0.01$): the mean age of those who feel confident about the future is considerably lower than the mean age of those who do not (40.95 and 48.42 years, respectively). I was not able to determine such a correlation between the effective dependency ratio and expectations for the future or between those expectations and the educational level of the head of household. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the effective dependency ratio of optimists is generally higher (2.07) than that of pessimists (1.59). People in the research area are generally of the opinion that a person's wealth is foremost determined by the presence or absence of children and of one's health. Indeed, the proportion of children in the households of optimistic respondents (46 percent) is somewhat higher than the proportion in pessimists' households (39 percent). At the same time, pessimists' households generally consist of a higher proportion of elderly members (12 percent) than those of optimists (2 percent). It thus appears that households with many children and few elderly members have higher hopes

²⁸⁹ Note that half of these respondents nevertheless expected their lives to improve over the next five years.

for the future than do those with fewer children and/or more elderly members²⁹⁰. Finally, I found a positive relationship between the size of landholdings and perspectives on the future ($r_s = 0.19, p < 0.05$), implying that those with larger landholdings are generally more inclined to feel positive about the near future than are those with smaller ones.

Finally, as indicated in Chapter 1, conflicts do not only have detrimental effects. They may also pave the way for transformative processes in which gender stereotypes shift and gender roles and identities can be renegotiated, and in which women can be empowered by being involved in community development efforts and in decision-making structures and processes. I asked respondents whether the position of women has changed since the war and genocide. The overwhelming majority of respondents (84.7 percent) consider that the lives of women have become easier and that their position in society has improved considerably. The role of the government in promoting women’s rights is most often cited (Table 11.21). Female respondents generally feel that as a result of government efforts, they are now more valued by men and are allowed to speak in public, while formerly they were not. Moreover, they mentioned that domestic violence has decreased and that women now have more decision-making power. They also indicated that women are now allowed to participate in more associations, cooperatives, and development activities (for example, programmes developed by NGOs). Access to education and increased literacy rates, access to credit, and participation in income-generating activities were also mentioned.

Table 11.21: Reasons given for the improvement in the position of women after 1994

Reason	Frequency
Government has promoted women rights	80
Associations, cooperatives, and developmental activities	22
Literacy, education	9
Credit	7
They now have money, have a source of income (trade, livestock)	5
Total	123

Source: Household survey 2005

Discussion

In the previous chapters, I have outlined how access to assets is modified by policies, institutions, and processes (PIP), and by shocks, trends, and seasonality (vulnerability context). I have shown how these circumstances have influenced the adoption of specific livelihood strategies and how these strategies differ between

²⁹⁰ While children are generally considered an asset, the elderly, while usually loved and respected, can easily become a liability (ill health, loss of labour).

and among different types of households. In this chapter, I have looked at some of the outcomes of livelihood strategies, again differentiating between and among different types of households. Livelihood outcomes do not only concern traditional economic outcomes, like income, but include others, like wellbeing and food security. Moreover, as indicated in Chapter 3, the goals that people themselves are trying to achieve through their livelihood pursuits might also be included. In the present chapter, I have therefore analysed a variety of livelihood outcomes: material standard of living, food security, and perceived quality of life. The assessments of food security and perceived quality of life have been based on subjective-qualitative measures. Such measures allow people to define their own vulnerability, both now and with regard to the future.

Looking at the material standard of living, I found no significant differences between male- and female-headed households or between widow- and divorcee-headed households. Nevertheless, my data indicate that female-headed households in general have a lower standard of living than do male-headed households. I have also shown that there are large differences between male- and female-headed households with respect to different items included in the MSL score. On the one hand, I found that male-headed households are significantly more likely to own agricultural tools. This difference is explained mainly by the ownership of machetes, an important agricultural tool that is predominantly used by men. On the other hand, the quality of housing of female-headed households is significantly higher than that of male-headed households. In part, this may reflect practices under the National Habitat Policy, where explicit efforts were made to assist female genocide survivors. However, it is also important to realise that among male-headed households we can find a considerable number of young couples who are still in the process of building a good quality house. My data also clearly show that the differences among female-headed households are substantial. In fact, widow-headed household have a considerably higher material standard of living than divorcee-headed households and score higher for each of the four scores that together form the MSL score (i.e. luxury, furniture, house, and agricultural tools score). The difference between widow- and divorcee-headed households is especially significant for the luxury and agricultural tools score.

The differences between Hutu and Tutsi households are not significant. However, my data indicate that Tutsi score higher than Hutu on three out of four scores: namely, for luxury, furniture, and the house. The differences between Hutu and Tutsi are especially significant with respect to roofing material and mattresses. Again, this may well reflect practices found at the time of the National Habitat Policy, when assistance was geared primarily towards genocide survivors. Only with respect to the ownership of agricultural tools do Hutu perform better than Tutsi. It is tempting to think that this reflects the traditional division of labour between Hutu and Tutsi. As I have shown in Chapters 8 and 9, however, the differences in livelihood strategies between Hutu and Tutsi in the research area are minimal.

My data demonstrate that the material standard of living of households in the research area is related to several household characteristics. Firstly, household size expands with improved material standard of living. One could argue that

larger households are in need of more items such as mattresses and chairs. However, this does not explain the overall higher standard of living. In fact, it is more likely that larger households consist of more members who may contribute to household income and hence increase the possibility to improve their house or to purchase luxury and furniture items or agricultural tools. The fact that the effective dependency ratio is lowest among households with a high standard of living supports this view. Secondly, the educational level of the head of household is higher among households with a high standard of living than in those with a low one. As indicated in Chapters 7 and 9, education increases the opportunity to find employment in the non-farm sector. Moreover, returns to employment in the non-farm sector are usually higher and more secure. In this respect, it is also important to see that reliance on agricultural wage labour decreases along with standard of living. Thirdly, the size of landholdings is considerably larger among households with a high material standard of living than among those with a low one. Indeed, as I have indicated in Chapters 8 and 9, land forms one of the most important productive assets in the research area and its significance is all the more clear in light of the underdevelopment of non-farm employment opportunities. Not surprisingly, the number of crops also increases and is most likely related to the larger landholdings of households with a high standard of living. Fourthly, membership in organisations is more likely to occur among households with a high standard of living than among households with a low one. The rich are more likely to be able to join groups than the poor. The poor experience difficulties in joining groups because they cannot always raise the necessary membership fees or do not have sufficient funds to register the group at the commune office:

“This lack of registration puts them at a disadvantage, because the association is then denied access to communal lands. In addition, agricultural inputs and other assistance coming from aid and credit organizations are channelled to officially registered cooperatives.”

(Burnett and the RISD 2003: 199-200)

Not being able to join groups is thus a consequence of poverty but may also further perpetuate poverty. Finally, households with a high standard of living are more likely to benefit from remittances than are those with a low living standard.

Household food security is a primary concern among people in the research area, and is reflected in the fact that more than two-thirds of households are food insecure. Analysis has shown that food insecurity is more rampant among households with a low material standard of living, among female-headed households, among the land poor, among those who receive no remittances, and among those who have recently settled in the research area. As for the variable duration of stay, this is directly linked to the issue of land ownership. As outlined in Chapter 8, those that have lived in the research area for longer periods tend to own larger landholdings. In part, this reflects the policy of land redistribution under the National Habitat Policy. Immediately after the genocide, land was distributed among the population, and Tutsi were among the prime beneficiaries of this policy. However, those arriving later found that most land was already

under cultivation, making it more difficult for them to obtain access or ownership rights. It is also important to realise that newly formed households are often just at the beginning of their land career. Young couples may possibly expand their landholdings over time, for example through purchase or rental arrangements. In addition, one must bear in mind that among the recently settled households are a number of migrant families. Not all of them are likely to stay in the research area, as became clear when I visited there in 2007 and noticed that many of the migrants from Kigali-Ngali had returned home once the periods of drought that affected this particular region had subsided.

Households have a combination of direct entitlements and exchange entitlements to food. Household food insecurity is usually not only caused by a lack of availability (insufficient subsistence production or availability of food on the market) but is also the result of obstacles to access. Households in the research area are confronted by both of these problems. On the one hand, there are simply too many landless and near landless households that are not able to produce enough food or cash crops to feed their members (see Chapter 8 on the issue of land inequality). On the other hand, even among resource rich households, food insecurity is rampant, despite the fact that food is usually plentiful at the weekly market and at markets near the research area. This is a clear indication that households lack exchange entitlements to food.

The cultivation of cash crops forms an important livelihood strategy, as it enables households to earn cash income with which to purchase food and other household necessities at the market. Poorer households are able to use the income derived from cash crop production to purchase cheaper calorie-rich food in the form of roots and tubers. However, cash crop production is difficult in the absence of sufficient land or when households simply have no money available to invest in the purchase of improved seeds, fertilisers, or other necessary inputs, as is the case among the very poor and the resource poor. Households try to access cash by, among other methods, brewing beer and by means of agricultural wage labour. Considering that a large number of households, including resource rich households, experience food shortages, there is a need to generate more income-generating opportunities. This would allow people to meet household food needs and enable them to use the surplus to make investments that could further reduce their food vulnerability. However, this is not to say that no attempts should be made to increase food productivity at the household level. Indeed, for those with land, increasing agricultural productivity is of central importance, and agricultural initiatives should be geared towards increasing household food security. In the twelfth and final chapter, I will reflect on the government's current agricultural policy in Rwanda and suggest ways to improve it.

In summary, I have argued in this chapter that issues of income, material standard of living, or food security are not the only important livelihood outcomes. I have suggested that the perceived quality of life – as expressed in feelings of happiness, the ability to change one's life, perceived improvements or deterioration of life over time, and expectations for the future – are of equal importance. Respondents from divorcee-headed households tend to feel less positive about their quality of life and less empowered to change their lives for the

better. This finding confirms earlier conclusions, in this and in previous chapters: namely, that divorcee-headed households generally perform worse than other types of households in the research area. The low perceived quality of life among divorcees and their low expectations for the future represent another indication of the future vulnerability of these households. However, to conclude on a more positive note, respondents in this study have indicated that the position of women in Rwanda has improved considerably over the last few years. Domestic violence has decreased and women are increasingly valued by men. At the same time, government efforts to improve the position of women have resulted in the opening up of opportunities, and women are steadily gaining decision-making power within and outside the household.

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Conclusions, Reflections, and Recommendations

This study has made use of the livelihood approach in discussing the effects of violent conflict on rural household livelihoods and the strategies that household members use to respond to these effects. The livelihood approach is regularly applied in situations of political stability. However, I argue that the approach can also be used in situations of violent conflict, large-scale population movements, and post-conflict development. This particular study looks at the effects of the war (1990-1994) and genocide (1994) on rural household livelihoods in the northeast of Rwanda by making use of a 'livelihood lens'.

In Chapter 2, I have analysed the historical context of the war and genocide. By describing Rwanda's history, insight is provided into the country's vulnerability context, along with some of the more important policies, institutions, and processes (PIPs), as well as changes therein. Moreover, it has become clear how the vulnerability and PIP context influence people's access to important resources, such as land and education. In Chapter 6, I have focused on the unit of analysis for this study: the household. I describe the diverse range of households found in the research area and indicate that the specific socio-economic characteristics of individual household members form part of a household's asset base. In Chapters 7 to 10, I have proceeded to describe the livelihood assets that households have access to and the activities for which these assets are employed: households' livelihood portfolios (Scoones 1998, Niehof 2004b). Throughout these three chapters, the focus is on locally important assets such as knowledge and health, land and livestock, employment and other sources of income, and interpersonal networks, associations, and trust. Finally, in Chapter 11, I have analysed the outcomes of household livelihood strategies in terms of material standard of living, food security, and perceived quality of life. Moreover, I describe some of the strategies that households employ to respond to the outcomes of earlier strategies.

By drawing on household data collected in Rwagitima village, located in the province of Umutara, I have come to the conclusion that rural households are characterised by poverty and vulnerability differentiation, with the analysis highlighting factors that make households less, or more, vulnerable. For example, widows have been able to benefit from land redistribution schemes and governmental policies with regard to the free distribution of small livestock. Resettlement often increases vulnerability because it leads to a temporary

reduction in the size and strength of interpersonal networks. The data also show that the composition of households is consciously altered in order to make optimal use of household assets.

This final chapter consists of three sections. In the first, the research questions as presented in Chapter 1 are reviewed and answered. In the second, I present recommendations for further research. In the third and final section, I discuss several of the policy implications of this study.

Conclusions

In Chapter 1, three research questions were formulated that guided this study's analysis of Rwandan rural household livelihoods. In the following section, each research question is answered separately.

Research question 1: What are the wider social, economic, and political processes affecting rural household livelihoods in post-conflict Rwanda?

Rural household livelihoods cannot be understood without reference to wider processes of transformation. In Rwanda, these processes appear to have intensified since the arrival of Europeans in the late nineteenth century. Of course, Rwandan society had witnessed many transformations before the arrival of foreign powers. During the Nyiginya reign, armies were created in which new careers could be made. Political positions and economic interests became increasingly tied to ownership of or usufruct rights over land or cattle, of which the king increasingly retained ultimate ownership. Relations of power and dependence were highly volatile as a result of the regular coups d'états and dynastic shifts. Nevertheless, since the arrival of the first Europeans, transformations in the political, economic, and social sphere followed one another rapidly, thereby altering the social fabric of Rwandan society in a fundamental manner.

During the colonial administration, new forms of patron-client relationships emerged while the strength of traditional corporate groups weakened.

In pre-colonial Rwanda, a form of clientship evolved – the institution of *ubuhake* – in which the king retained ultimate ownership of cattle, and in later years, also of land. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a new institution, *ubureetwa*, was introduced, which entailed a form of clientship that involved demeaning labour. Under the influence of the colonial administration, these institutions were transformed and eventually abolished, and were replaced by monetary taxations. This transformation had two effects. On the one hand, by increasing the chief's offices of power, the king's authority was undermined. On the other hand, the colonial administration enabled the royal court to increase its hold over regions traditionally outside the scope of the court's influence. Both tendencies affected the political strength of traditional corporate groups and enabled new forms of

relationships to emerge between individuals rather than between corporate groups such as clans and lineages.

Ethnic identities became 'fixed' and increasingly came to determine livelihood opportunities.

Under the colonial regime, patron-client relationships became more and more exploitative. The 'fixing' of ethnic identities contributed to this process, the more so when the colonial administration favoured one ethnic group, the Tutsi, over another, the Hutu. Social relations between ethnic groups became even more rigid, unequal, and exploitative as a result of the ideology of racial superiority: an ideology supported and strengthened by the church. Ethnic identity, more than traditional rights over land or cattle, came to determine livelihood opportunities. Under the colonial administration, Tutsi were given access to education and positions of power, while Hutu were required to contribute to the colonial enterprise in the form of agricultural labour.

The church created new livelihood opportunities.

Whereas the church played a central role in strengthening the ideology of racial superiority, the advent of Christian missionaries also opened up new livelihood opportunities to the rural masses. The synergy between missionaries and the colonial administration, while not always without problems, resulted in the religious institutions taking a prominent role in the field of education, health, and employment. Greater numbers of Rwandans converted to the Christian faith, thus changing the religious constellation of the country drastically. Missionaries also used their influence to advance pro-Christian elements in their struggles for power within the Rwandan court. As a result, the king's ritual authority over his people was seriously undermined; the Catholic Church even actively interceded with colonial authorities to remove one of the kings from power and replace him with a son who had converted to Christianity.

The rural population was increasingly exploited under the colonial administration.

As a result of growing land pressure, restricted opportunities to clear tracts of forests or to settle in other localities, and the expanding extraction of taxes and manual labour, conditions in the rural areas became growingly oppressive to the majority of the population. While the colonial administration played an instrumental role in squeezing the rural population, it also introduced a number of agricultural policies to combat the many famines that the country experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: some of these were successful, while others were rejected by the farmers.

Long-distance migration formed an important livelihood strategy, and as a result the nuclear family gained importance.

Long-distance migration formed an important means of escaping Rwanda's difficult rural conditions. Hundreds of thousands of male rural dwellers began to work on plantations, in mines, and in industries in Uganda, Tanzania, and Congo.

Afraid to lose access to ancestral land, men left their wives and children behind to cultivate the family land and to raise the taxes required by the colonial administration. At the same time, ever more labour obligations and tax demands were made on individual adult men, weakening clans and lineages even further. As a result, the nuclear family gained significance in expanding livelihoods. Moreover, the gender division of agricultural labour changed drastically, leaving all agricultural and domestic production to women. The strategy of long-distance migration did not form a viable alternative for long. In the second half of the twentieth century, governments of receiving countries restricted the movement of people in response to growing civil unrest, often the direct result of decreasing land availability.

Government-induced resettlement schemes were unsuccessful as a means to combat land scarcity and inequality.

By the mid 1950s, in an attempt to alleviate the plight of the rural masses, the colonial administration embarked on a policy of resettlement. Numerous *paysannats* were created in the eastern and central parts of Rwanda, where cattle keepers had been driven out by the occurrence of sleeping sickness. This resulted in considerable population movements of cultivators from the western provinces to the more fertile spots left behind by cattle keepers in central and eastern Rwanda. Resettlement schemes continued to be implemented after independence and were seen as an important means to combat ever increasing land scarcity and land fragmentation. Nevertheless, in the face of rapid population growth and in the absence of non-agricultural employment opportunities, Rwandans were forced to cultivate dwindling plots of land.

Demand for social justice and inter-ethnic violence developed side by side.

During the second half of the twentieth century, emancipatory ideas in Rwanda reflected those found in Europe. Whereas the church had traditionally favoured Tutsi, they began to offer more opportunities to Hutu. Demands for social justice and redistribution of power increased. Initially, the call for democracy was characterised by cross-ethnic solidarity. However, inter-ethnic violence soon began to spread over the country and during the Hutu revolution (1959-1962), thousands of Tutsi were murdered or forced into exile. Inter-ethnic violence continued in waves in the decades to follow. Moreover, a racial ideology remained in place after independence, now severely restricting the livelihood opportunities of Tutsi.

Vulnerability was a result of a socio-political system based on multiple exclusions.

After independence, livelihood opportunities for the majority of rural dwellers in Rwanda were limited. Farmers were confronted with land scarcity and large land inequalities, and the area for cultivation of cash crops was increased at the expense of the area available for food crops. When prices of cash crops started to fall drastically in the 1980s, household income and food security were seriously undermined. Apart from government-initiated resettlement schemes, the regime constrained people's mobility. Access to education became increasingly reserved for Hutu and employment was allocated on the basis of connections rather than

competency. The socio-political system was thus based on multiple exclusions and resulted in rising socio-economic vulnerability for an ever greater numbers of households. The policies adopted under the structural adjustment program (SAP) exacerbated the pressure on most households.

Elite power struggles and genocide preparations.

Oppressive rural conditions and the structural exclusion of large segments of the population led to civil unrest. Political opposition developed along regional lines, while ethnic radicalisation became an important instrument for those hoping to remain in power. From the 1990s onwards, Tutsi refugees invaded Rwanda from their base in Uganda, while hundreds of thousands of other Tutsi refugees awaited their return to the homeland. While Rwanda's President Habyarimana discussed a major democratisation of Rwandese society and a power-sharing agreement with the RPF, his regime, undeterred by the international community, prepared for a genocide that would leave nearly a million people dead and affect millions of other Rwandans.

In post-conflict Rwanda, social cohesion has broken down, employment opportunities are limited, and people are unfamiliar with their new living environment.

The horrors of these events continue to leave their marks. Cross-ethnic ties have been severed, although it appears that some cross-ethnic alliances, for example through marriage, are slowly re-emerging. Also, trust (in other people, in important institutions such as the church and the government, as well as in the future) has become scarce. This obviously undermines social cohesion and hampers cooperation between families, households, and localities. Moreover, despite the many deaths, the current population pressure is as high as before 1994, and is increasing. In light of the underdevelopment of non-agricultural sectors such as industries and services, non-agricultural employment opportunities are still limited. Therefore, most Rwandans have little choice but to rely on steadily smaller plots of land for their survival. To make matters even more complicated, since whole communities have been uprooted and millions of refugees (some of them born outside Rwanda) have returned, many Rwandans are now cultivating land, the properties of which are unfamiliar to them. In fact, some of Rwanda's farmers had never farmed before; they kept cattle or were employed outside agriculture in their host country, and they now struggle with their new occupation in unfamiliar territory.

The assumed positive impact of new laws and policies affecting rural livelihood opportunities is questionable.

An increase in land pressure leads to soil erosion and loss of soil fertility, making it more difficult to maintain adequate production levels. While the provision of agricultural inputs, such as seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides, has grown over the last few years, subsistence farmers – who form the majority of farmers in Rwanda – lack access and or the monetary ability to purchase these. Moreover, attempts by the government to strengthen people's access to land do not appear to work. Current land reforms do not distribute more land to poor peasants. Women's

rights to land, while in theory promoted by the government, are insufficiently supported by law and policy. Agricultural policies aim at supporting commercial farming, and so primarily benefit large-scale farmers. In the absence of non-farm employment, the majority of small-scale farmers continue to rely on low-input crops and crop diversification as a means of spreading risk. Since few or inadequate measures have been taken to protect the property rights and autonomy with regard to crop decisions, small-scale farmers run a real risk of land appropriation.

Research question 2: Which strategies do households and their individual members use to provide for their future needs, and what is the result of these strategies?

Traditionally, the agricultural system in Rwanda can best be described as subsistence agriculture. However, as a result of various economic, social, political, and environmental factors, few households are able to depend solely on subsistence agriculture. The majority of people are forced to reconsider their livelihood portfolio and to develop new strategies to provide for current and future household needs. Indeed, households in the research area have developed a range of livelihood strategies, some of which result in positive outcomes while others do not.

Strategies of extensification (area expansion)

Historically, strategies of extensification, in the form of conversion of pastures and wetlands into agricultural land and/or in the form of migration, have been most common. However, as Uvin (1998) remarks, few areas in Rwanda remain to be converted into agricultural land. Moreover, the conversion of remaining areas is often difficult and very costly. At the same time, as a result of historical processes of migration, population pressure is now evenly distributed throughout the country, as a result of which migration no longer offers the same possibilities to cope with land pressure as it did in the past.

While extensification no longer forms a viable livelihood strategy for households, the government continues to emphasise extensification strategies by converting marshes into agricultural land. This can have major consequences for people living in or near these areas, as became clear in this study. In the research area, marshes have been converted into agricultural land meant for the production of rice. This has undermined local household strategies, for the same marsh had already been in use by farmers growing vegetables and by herders as a grazing area for their cattle during the dry season. Moreover, the creation of new livelihood opportunities by the conversion of the marsh into agricultural rice land has not been without cost. Access to the rice fields is restricted to members of farmers' groups, and thus depends on the social and financial capital of households. These requirements have excluded some households from access to the marsh, while they offer others new opportunities to access land. In addition, the cultivation of rice, though initially it looked very promising, has not been successful for those who were able to acquire a plot.

Strategies of intensification to improve yields

With extensification strategies becoming increasingly difficult, households are forced to seek other agricultural strategies, among which those of intensification. Examples include double or even triple cropping and increasing (or at least maintaining) soil fertility by the use of anti-erosion measures or application of manure or fertilisers. Other households have adapted their land use patterns by experimenting with intercropping. Another important strategy is to cultivate several plots that are located in different agro-ecological micro-zones (marshland, dry valley land, land farther uphill) to minimise climatic and plant disease vulnerability.

Top-down-induced regional crop specialisation

One of the goals of the government is to promote commercial farming. Agricultural extensification is generally considered beneficial for this, as it facilitates mechanisation and provides advantages of scale, thus lowering the costs of inputs per unit. Since land is generally in short supply, advantages of scale in Rwanda are sought through means other than area extensification. A recent agricultural policy is to promote regional crop specialisation. Thus, in 2007-2008, all farmers in the north-eastern province, including the research area, were required to cultivate maize and in the second half of 2008 were required to cultivate soya beans. In other regions, farmers are required to grow different crops, such as cassava or potatoes, more suitable to these regions' environmental and soil conditions. As found in this study, people are critical if not outright sceptical about this new agricultural policy. Some fear that regional crop specialisation and increased monoculture will lead to higher household vulnerability, because the risk of environmental shocks can easily lead to crop diseases, necessitating the purchase of expensive inputs such as pesticides, or even crop failure. Others are of the opinion that the cultivation of cash crops such as maize reduces the available land for the cultivation of important household food crops or livestock fodder. The fact that respondents have reason to fear that crops other than those specified above will be uprooted by the local authorities only contributes to these worries. Moreover, people are afraid that the income derived from these cash crops will not be sufficient to purchase sufficient food crops at the market, thus resulting in increased household food insecurity.

Agricultural commercialisation and the inability to access agricultural inputs

Some households in the research area have opted to increase market-oriented production (agricultural commercialisation): for example, in the form of vegetable or rice production. However, for most of the households this is not a viable option. Agricultural inputs, such as improved seeds, fertiliser, and pesticides are scarce and expensive. Moreover, access to some of these inputs is restricted to members of farmers' groups, membership of which involves extra costs, such as fees and time. Many respondents indicated that they lack the starting capital that would enable a shift from the production of low-input crops to high input crops. Another problem is that agricultural extension officers and agronomists are not trusted. This is the result of the fact, among other reasons, that many of them are often

absent, preferring to stay in Kigali. This has important implications for the transfer of knowledge about, for example, new cultivation techniques and improved seeds. The exchange of knowledge or other forms of cooperation between and within farmers' groups is also limited, as the farmers' groups that operate in the research area primarily serve as a means to obtain access to fertile land. The limited cooperation and exchange of knowledge is likely to be the result of farmers being grouped together on the basis of the location of their land, rather than on any other mutual interest or agreement. Moreover, a general lack of trust, insufficient knowledge concerning the cultivation of obligatory crops such as rice (the cultivation of which few farmers in the research area are familiar with), and presumed mismanagement of funds all contribute to a low level of cooperation between farmers and other stakeholders.

Strategies of diversification: crop and livestock production

Despite the above strategies of extensification and intensification, agricultural activities alone do not provide enough income and food to meet all household demands. Households therefore continuously search for alternative livelihood opportunities. Diversification is an important livelihood strategy. A common diversification strategy is to supplement crop production with livestock production. More than half of the households included in this study's sample engage in livestock production. Small livestock, like goats and chickens, are most popular because they are generally easier to keep and feed than large livestock such as cattle. Goats are particularly popular in the research area. A government policy to provide poor households with a goat free of cost has no doubt contributed to this state of affairs. Recently, this 'goat policy' has been altered into a 'one house, one cow policy'. Households are eligible to receive a cow on the precondition that they use part of their land to cultivate fodder and construct an animal shelter. This new policy is likely to increase the number of cattle in the research area, which has important implications for household food and income security. Whereas goat meat is consumed in the research area, goat milk is not. In the case of cattle, no food taboos exist. Hence, cow milk and meat products can be used to supplement household members' diets or can be sold to generate cash income.

Strategies of diversification: off-farm and non-farm labour

Off-farm labour forms another diversification strategy. It is usually undertaken by those who are landless or near landless, many of whom have recently settled in the research area. However, income derived from agricultural wage labour is small and irregular. Other opportunities can sometimes be found on or near the house or farm holding. Thus, women may engage in basketry, while others sell home-produced liquors or firewood. In addition, households may sell part of their agricultural produce, either at the weekly market or in front of their houses. The proceeds of these sales are used to pay for household necessities, such as soap and kerosene, the education of children, and health care. It is important to stress that the produce thus sold does not necessarily represent surplus. In fact, in many cases the sale of produce actually leads to household food shortages, some of which last

for months. Non-farm employment and income-generating opportunities are very important for households that wish to diversify their activities. However, few households are successful in this respect, since non-farm employment opportunities in the research area are few. Moreover, as some of the case studies have shown, even when people are able to find work or engage in new enterprises, the duration of these opportunities is often extremely short. Employees are easily replaced, thus entailing an inherent high risk of exploitation, and many small businesses fail to take off, due to a lack of starting capital, a lack of clientele with sufficient purchasing power, or stiff competition.

Children as a livelihood strategy

Children form an important source of household income. In fact, wealth in the research area is primarily measured in terms of the number of surviving children. With children, households are able to diversify their sources of income, thus reducing household vulnerability to external shocks. As this study has shown, one-fourth of households receive remittances, which are mostly sent by children. Remittances are not only important for old-age security but may also enable households to pursue other income-generating activities. In order to augment children's employment opportunities and subsequently future household income security, considerable effort and investments are therefore made in their education. Since children are perceived as contributing to old-age security, high fertility can be considered an important livelihood strategy. However, over the last decennia, fertility rates have steadily declined. One of the reasons for this decline is related to the increased level of education of women, delayed age at marriage, and the availability of contraceptives.

Household composition as a livelihood strategy

This study has shown that whereas clan and lineages formed the main form of social organisation in pre-colonial Rwanda, their importance was undermined during colonial rule. As a result of governmental policies and migration processes, the nuclear family had already gained prominence over other forms of social organisation prior to the war and genocide. The importance of the nuclear family only increased further after these events, as a result not only of massive displacement and resettlement but also of the breakdown of social cohesion. The war and genocide have had a direct impact on household composition, if only because of the high number of male deaths, male imprisonment, and displacement. The extended family is likely to be dispersed and, to many, members of the nuclear family are the only people to be trusted. Household composition is, however, in a constant state of flux. On the one hand, this flux is the result of the normal household life course: a response to births, deaths, and the formation or dissolution of marriages. On the other hand, household composition has consciously altered in response to livelihood opportunities or constraints. For example, this study has shown that orphans may begin to live with their grandparents rather than their uncles or aunts, and that unrelated children may be welcomed into a household, as they may contribute to its labour pool or play an important role in old-age security.

Migration as a livelihood strategy

Migration, traditionally an important livelihood strategy, remains a significant one in the research area today. Only half of the sample population, the majority of which was born after 1994, originates from the northeastern region. As indicated, the research area was sparsely populated before the war and genocide. However, in 1994 many old caseload refugees settled here, followed by another wave of mostly new caseload refugees in 1997. A third wave of migrants followed a few years later, this time consisting mainly of migrants struck by natural disasters in their own regions (such as Kigali-Ngali) and in search of land or agricultural wage labour. In the latter case, migration mostly takes the form of short-term, circular migration, although some migrants have been able to purchase small plots of land and settle permanently in the research area. Outmigration, largely in the form of migration from the research area to Byumba, Kibungo, and Kigali also occurs. However, land shortages throughout the country make it increasingly difficult for farmers to resettle. Finally, cross-border migration has become increasingly difficult for political reasons and due to the closing of borders.

Livelihood portfolios

My data show how households move between various income-generating activities as a response to the vulnerability and institutional context and in order to protect livelihoods. According to Ellis (2000), livelihoods are more resilient (i.e. able to cope and recover from stresses and shocks) if it is possible to substitute between activities. He also argues that a diverse livelihood portfolio improves the resilience of households in the long run. My findings suggest, however, that diverse livelihood portfolios do not necessarily translate into, or reflect, resilience. On the contrary, diverse livelihood portfolios often reflect the vulnerability of households. What is important therefore is not so much the question of whether households have been able to diversify their livelihood portfolio but rather whether this diversification is the result of choice or of a lack of options (Niehof 2004b). Moreover, whether households are able to diversify, and whether the effects of diversification are positive or negative, is determined by their asset base, and in particular by their social capital.

Livelihood outcomes: material standard of living

As for the outcome of household livelihood portfolios, a complex picture emerges. In this study, the quality of houses and the possession of luxury items, furniture, and agricultural tools were taken as indicative of households' material standard of living. Ownership of different assets was combined into one material standard of living (MSL) score. The study results show how the vast majority of households included in the sample have a low to very low material standard of living, despite their often diverse livelihood portfolios. My findings show that higher standards of living are obtained by households with increased levels of education and remittances. Considering this outcome, it is understandable that parents invest in the education of their children. Higher standards of living are also obtained by households with larger landholdings and by households that have lived in the

research area for relatively long periods. Thus, it appears that new caseload refugees and recent migrants struggle to make ends meet.

Livelihood outcomes: food security

Crop production in the research area is generally insufficient to meet household demands, be it with regard to food or other demands. This study finds that a large proportion of households in the research area are food insecure. Few households rely on cultivation or purchase of food items alone. Moreover, all of those that depend entirely on food purchases (i.e. landless households) are food deficient. In addition, two-thirds of households relying on subsistence cultivation and the sale of surplus are also food deficient. Food deficiency is especially rampant among recently settled households (including migrants and newlyweds), households with small landholdings, and households without remittances to fall back upon. Important means of overcoming household food shortages consist of looking for agricultural wage labour and modifying household consumption by preparing less food and acquiring less-preferred food items that can either be purchased cheaply at the market (such as cassava or maize flour) or gathered along verges (such as certain types of greens).

Livelihood outcomes: quality of life

This study also looked at the subjective notion of quality of life. My findings show that merely one-fourth of the respondents feel able to influence their own lives in a positive manner. If this is taken as an indicative measure of empowerment, it implies that people generally feel unempowered and perceive future opportunities to be largely dependent upon external circumstances, institutions, restrictions, and regulations rather than on their own initiatives. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents considered that the quality of their lives had deteriorated over the last five years. This contrasts sharply with the more positive views of politicians and international aid workers on recent reconstruction and development processes in the country. However, the majority of respondents felt that, in the same time span, women's position had improved considerably, primarily as a result of government initiatives to promote women's rights.

Overall, the majority of respondents generally feel unhappy. Those feelings are more pronounced among the elderly, respondents with many dependents, and those with small landholdings. The educational level of respondents does not directly relate to feelings of happiness. Life is given meaning through regular interactions with close family and friends. Religion forms another important means. Before 1994, Rwanda was one of the most Christianised countries in Africa and it remains so up to the present, even though the religious constellation has changed considerably. The rise of the Pentecostal movement is particularly relevant in this respect. Religion provides spiritual wellbeing; however, church attendance is also one of the few occasions on which there are opportunities to sing and dance and forget about one's daily problems. Moreover, participation in religious communities gives people a sense of belonging, strength, and worth.

In conclusion, this study shows that, while agricultural production forms the main occupation of households in the research area, most households in fact rely on a varied portfolio of livelihood activities. Moreover, the composition of this portfolio is regularly adjusted over time, so as to make optimal use of different income-earning opportunities. Employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector are few. In addition, few activities provide a stable and sufficient income to meet household needs throughout the year. One of the most important strategies that households make use of is to invest in the education of children. While such investments may initially reduce household labour availability and hence household food and income security, education improves children's future employment opportunities. The education of children makes all the more sense in the light of severe land shortages, as is the case in the research area. Despite the diversification of household livelihood portfolios, few households in the research area are able to secure enough food or income to meet all household needs. Finally, this study shows that even though women are of the opinion that governmental policies to improve their rights have been successful, they nevertheless feel that life in general has become more difficult over the last few years.

Research question 3: Which groups of households have been left particularly vulnerable after the genocide?

There is a tendency, both among respondents in this study as well as among key informants, to view female-headed households as poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households. In the literature as well, female-headed households tend to be portrayed as such, although it is becoming clearer that the evidence concerning the relative poverty and vulnerability status of female-headed households is mixed. In Rwanda, widow-headed households, especially those that originated as a result of the genocide (i.e. Tutsi widows), are in particular seen as being poor and vulnerable. This study looked explicitly at the poverty and vulnerability status of different types of households. The conclusions of this analysis are presented below.

Female-headed households are not necessarily poorer than male-headed households

This study shows that female-headed households in the research area have a somewhat lower material standard of living than male-headed households and are somewhat more likely to be food insecure, but that these differences are not statistically significant. However, I did find a significant difference with respect to the perceived quality of life. Female respondents from male-headed households feel significantly happier than those from female-headed households. It is important to stress that this difference is explained not so much by women's marital status but is related to the age of the head of household (which is lower in male-headed households), the material standard of living, and food security (both somewhat higher in male-headed households). As for the ability to act as actors of change, the difference between male- and female-headed households is again not significant nor is the difference with respect to improvements or deterioration in the quality of life over the last five years. In both cases, however, the tendency is

for respondents from male-headed households to feel somewhat more optimistic than those from female-headed households. Thus, as far as livelihood outcomes are concerned, the differences between male- and female-headed households are varied and cannot automatically be interpreted to imply that one is poorer or more vulnerable than the other.

When looking at household assets, activities, and strategies, a clearer picture emerges. The study results show that whereas female-headed households tend to be smaller than male-headed households, they tend to have a higher effective dependency ratio, although neither difference is statistically significant. An important difference is that male-headed households tend to consist of a higher proportion of young children, who are expected to contribute to household wellbeing in the future. Female-headed households, however, tend to consist of a higher proportion of elderly and chronically ill members. Not only do they need to be looked after, thus draining household resources, but it is unlikely that these household members will be able to contribute to the overall household wellbeing in the future. In this respect, the future prospect of male-headed households appears more promising than that of female-headed households.

Male-headed households tend to have somewhat larger landholdings than do female-headed households, although again the difference is not statistically significant. However, the manner in which households were able to obtain land does differ significantly among male- and female-headed households. Most importantly, male-headed households are more likely than female-headed households to gain access to land by means of market purchases. This could imply that women from female-headed households face more difficulties than men in, for example, accessing institutionalised credit. Male-headed households also tend to cultivate a higher number of different plots than do female-headed households. This finding is significant, as the use of different micro-climatic environments forms an important risk-reducing strategy in Rwanda. The fact that female-headed households tend to cultivate fewer plots suggests that they are more vulnerable to shocks such as pests and climatic disasters. Male-headed households also tend to have a somewhat higher diversity of crops on their fields, although the difference with regard to female-headed households is not significant. I also found no meaningful difference with respect to the sale of produce, although male-headed households are more inclined to sell beans and rice, while female-headed households are more likely to sell bananas (both for cooking and making beer) and cassava.

Female-headed households appear to have a higher total livestock unit (TLU) than do male-headed households. However, the difference becomes smaller when excluding from the analysis three households that own considerably more livestock than the others. Male-headed households tend to have more cattle and chickens, female-headed households tend to have more goats. The fact that female-headed households tend to have more goats is probably related to a policy whereby poor women are eligible to receive a goat free of cost from the local authorities. These differences with respect to livestock are, however, not significant.

Also with respect to sources of non- and off-farm income, the differences between male- and female-headed households are not significant. Male-headed households tend to consist of one or more household members who are employed in the formal sector, while female-headed households tend to consist of one or more household members who are employed in the informal sector. It is important to understand that Rwandan women are less likely to be engaged in the formal sectors as a result of their lower educational level vis-à-vis men and because of gender discrimination. Women usually work for lower wages and under more insecure circumstances. Moreover, in the informal sector they are more easily replaced than those working in the formal sector, where people usually work under contract. As for other sources of income, male-headed households are more likely to earn an income through the sale of beer (although the difference with regard to female-headed households is not significant), while female-headed households are more likely to receive remittances, usually in the form of gifts from children.

Looking at each issue separately, one might conclude that the difference in poverty and vulnerability status of male- and female-headed households is minimal. However, when taken together a different picture emerges. That is, while the poverty status between male- and female-headed households is not very large (and not statistically significant), female-headed households are more vulnerable than male-headed households: female-headed households consist of more dependents who are unlikely to contribute to future household wellbeing, they have more difficulty in accessing important assets such as credit, and their lower educational status in combination with gender discrimination hampers their entry into the formal employment sector. On a more positive note, respondents in this study agreed that life for women in general has improved over the last few years, mainly as a result of government policies that promote women's rights. Women have become better educated, are more able to access institutionalised credit, and are increasingly taking positions of power, not only in associations and groups but also in politics at the local and national level. Among women in the research area, there is hope that with continuous government support, the position of women in Rwanda will further improve, opening up new livelihood opportunities and thereby also reducing the differences between male- and female-headed households.

The differences within female-headed households are more pronounced than those between male- and female-headed households

Female-headed households do not constitute a homogenous category, and treating them that way masks real and important differences among them. The study results show that widow-headed households perform much better than commonly assumed in the literature and by respondents and key informants in this study.

The size of divorcee-headed households is somewhat lower than that of female-headed households, though their effective dependency ratio is significantly higher. This implies that divorced women are expected to look after more economically unproductive household members than are widows, thus posing a considerable burden, in terms of time and money, on divorcees. Because of these

constraints, divorcees are less likely to have time to invest in income-generating activities and/or do not have sufficient means to look after their dependents. The first factor will have a direct impact on the financial resources available to these households; the second is likely to negatively influence the abilities and capabilities (i.e. human capital) of household members in future household activities. My data also demonstrate that widow-headed households tend to have a household size almost similar to male-headed households and a significantly lower dependency ratio, implying that respondents from widow-headed households actually have fewer dependents to look after than do respondents from male-headed households. This is a first indication that whereas divorcee-headed households are poorer and more vulnerable than widow- and male-headed households, widow-headed households are not necessarily poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households.

My findings show that widow-headed households have significantly larger landholdings than do divorcee-headed households. Importantly, they also have a significantly larger land size per person ratio. Whereas some of the key informants in this study have mentioned the problem of property grabbing suffered by widows, none of the widow-headed households included in this study are landless. Moreover, widow-headed households generally have larger landholdings than do male-headed households, as well as more land per household member. In the research area, many widows were able to profit from land redistribution schemes and development projects that explicitly targeted 'poor and vulnerable households': namely, widow-headed households. Fewer respondents from male- and divorcee-headed households were able to benefit from these land redistribution schemes. For divorcees, this is particularly problematic, as they are also in a less suitable position to access land by means of purchases and inheritance. Indeed, landlessness and near landlessness is most pronounced among divorcee-headed households. It is not only important to realise that divorcees have access to less land (if any at all) but that they are also more likely to rent land. This suggests that the rights over land by divorcees tend to be more insecure than rights over land by respondents from either male- or widow-headed households.

Large differences between different types of female-headed households also exist with respect to crop diversification. My data show that widow-headed households cultivate a higher diversity of crops than do divorcee- and male-headed households. In particular, they are more likely to produce important food and cash crops such as beans, maize, and potatoes. At the same time, divorcee-headed households are less likely to sell their produce, which implies that they thus lack an important source of income with which to purchase household necessities other than food (like firewood or soap) or meet other household demands (like health care and education of children).

Widow-headed households also do not appear to perform worse than male-headed households when it comes to possession of small livestock and cattle. Widows own fewer cattle than do male-headed households but they tend to have more goats. Once again, this may be the result of explicit targeting by local government officials. None of the divorcees own cattle, while they own fewer goats and chickens. It appears that divorcees are less likely to have benefited from

the free distribution of goats than are widows. Moreover, the lack of livestock among divorcee-headed households has a direct implication for the quality of their land, as they are also more likely to lack manure for fertiliser.

There are strong indications that widow-headed households are relatively successful in obtaining a monetary income. More than male- or divorcee-headed households, widow-headed households are in a position to sell part of their agricultural and livestock produce. Widow-headed households are also more likely to gain an income from the sale of food, firewood, and handicrafts. In addition, widow-headed households are more likely to receive remittances than are male-headed households. The difference with regard to divorcee-headed households is less significant with respect to remittances, although the source of remittances does differ markedly: whereas children form the main source of remittances for widows, the extended family plays an important role for divorcees.

These different sources of income, together with their relatively large landholdings and possession of small livestock and cattle, ensure that widow-headed households have the highest material standard of living in the research area. As for their food security status, food security among widows tends to be higher than among male-headed households but lower than among divorcee-headed households. These differences are, however, not statistically significant.

In light of the above, I would like to argue that widow-headed households are among the least poor and least vulnerable in the research area. The fact that they perform so well is clearly linked to the fact that they have benefited from government and development aid projects more than other types of households. It is not clear what will happen to these households if such projects cease to exist, but it is likely that widows will then face circumstances similar to those of divorcees. Whereas widow-headed households in the research area generally tend to perform above expectation, there is another group of female-headed households that performs worse. Households headed by divorcees tend to be overlooked by both researchers and policy makers. Likewise, not many projects in Rwanda target divorced women, and their plight is generally also overlooked by key informants in the research area. This study, however, has clearly shown that divorcee-headed households in the research area struggle to make ends meet and that projects targeting poor and vulnerable households should make explicit efforts to reach divorcees and the household members they look after.

At this point it is important to note that while this study has treated male-headed households as a relatively homogenous group, I acknowledge that this does not reflect reality. Like female-headed households, male-headed households should be differentiated to fully appreciate their poverty and vulnerability status. In this respect it is telling to recall that households headed by older single men are generally considered by respondents in this study to be among the poorest and most vulnerable. The category of male-headed households also includes a considerable number of newlyweds. While these households generally have access to less land than do other male-headed households and have a lower material standard of living, simply because they are still in the process of expansion and wealth accumulation, it is likely that the situation of these households will improve in the future. That is, whereas the households of newlyweds can be assumed to be

relatively poor, they are not necessarily among the most vulnerable. Similarly, among male-headed households there is a considerable number of migrant families. Some have only been in the research area for a short time, after leaving behind a house and land in their natal villages. Others have sold their belongings and are still looking for a way to earn a livelihood in the research area. Their lack of land and livestock, and their low material standard of living, coupled with food insecurity, are not necessarily signs of chronic poverty, but merely reflect a transition period.

Moreover, treating male-headed households as a homogenous group has the effect of masking the poverty and vulnerability status of women living in these households. As a result of intra-household power relations, it is well possible that women in male-headed households have access to less land, livestock, or income than do women in female-headed households. Moreover, domestic violence is unfortunately very common in Rwanda. It could be argued that women in female-headed households enjoy an autonomy and decision-making power that women in male-headed households can only hope for (cf. Mtshali 2002). Whereas this study did not look into these matters, they are nevertheless issues that should be taken into account when targeting poor and vulnerable people.

In summary, this study shows that (a) female-headed households are not necessarily poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households, (b) widow-headed households in the research area perform much better than is commonly assumed, and in some respects even better than male-headed households, and (c) divorcee-headed households are among the poorest and most vulnerable households in the research area. At the same time, this study draws attention to the fact that (d) livelihood portfolios tend to change over time and that the poverty and vulnerability status of households therefore needs to be reassessed regularly, (e) the poverty and vulnerability status of households needs to be assessed by taking into account regulations and projects that may mask vulnerabilities that are only temporarily overcome.

Landless and near landless households are among the poorest and most vulnerable households

Whereas in the aforementioned the marital status of the head of household is taken as a prime criterion to assess household poverty and vulnerability, this work also shows how other variables influences this status. One of the most important variables is whether households have access to land and livestock. Land is the most important productive resource in the research area. Access to land has the advantage that households can produce their own food, that produce can be sold to generate a cash income (with which to buy other household necessities and to pay for other household needs such as health care and education of children), and that livestock can be kept and fed. I have shown that the research area is characterised by large land inequalities. The majority of households simply have insufficient land to meet food and other household demands, and depend on other sources of income to do so. However, as employment opportunities are in short supply in the research area, not all households succeed in accessing such opportunities. As a result, household food insecurity is rampant, particularly

among the landless and near landless. Moreover, it is unlikely that many of the land poor households are able to access health care or pay for the education of children. This has major consequences for the future prospects of these households, endangering not only the wellbeing of current households but also that of their children's households.

Recently settled households are among the poorest in the research area but they are not necessarily vulnerable

Another important variable that determines the poverty and vulnerability status of households is the duration of stay in the research area. Those who have stayed for longer are more likely to have larger landholdings and more livestock, and to possess larger and more differentiated interpersonal networks. They are also more likely to have benefited from land redistribution schemes and the distribution of land in the marsh. As for those who have more recently settled in the research area, it is important to realise that these consist of different types of households, and that each group differs with respect to their poverty and vulnerability status.

On the one hand, we find migrants who came to the research area to escape climatic problems – droughts – in their natal villages. Among these migrants, we find those who have few assets in their possession, having had to dispose of their assets during times of distress (distress sales as a survival strategy); those who have sold their assets before their departure, so as to enable the purchase of new assets in the research area (such as land); and those who have temporarily left their assets behind, expecting to return to their natal villages in the near future. In the research area, these migrants usually have far less land, if any, in their possession, have little or no livestock, and lack extensive interpersonal networks – either because they did not have sufficient time to access or purchase new assets or simply because they lack the means to do so. On the other hand, we find recently married couples. The recently married generally consist of young couples, with little land or livestock in their possession. The material standard of living of this group tends to be low as well. Young couples in the research area tend to spend their income on the purchase of productive resources such as land and/or on improving their housing. The purchase of luxury items and furniture is often of secondary importance. Moreover, as the household size of recently married couples is generally lower than among older couples – since the women have not yet given birth to as many children – they also tend to possess fewer household items, such as mattresses and chairs, simply because the need for these has not yet arisen. However, those born in or near the research area are more likely to have larger interpersonal networks on which they can fall back in times of need or hardship.

Unlike divorcee-headed households, households of recently arrived migrants and young couples are more likely to escape their current difficult situation: children grow up and contribute to household wellbeing, land is bought or rented, and opportunities to find employment or generate income through small businesses improve once interpersonal networks are established or expanded.

Membership of organisations reduces poverty and vulnerability of households

Another important variable that influences the poverty and vulnerability status of households is membership in organisations. In this study I have shown that there is a positive relationship between membership in organisations and the size of landholdings and material standard of living. Moreover, membership in organisations is more common among food secure households than among those that are food deficient. Poverty hampers people in their ability to become members of an organisation, as the poor are often unable to pay entry fees and/or other costs. At the same time, not being a member of an organisation is likely to further perpetuate poverty. Poor households are thus likely to become caught in a vicious circle.

Tutsi households are not poorer than those of Hutu, but there are indications that Hutu households are more vulnerable than those of Tutsi

Finally, this study has assessed the poverty and vulnerability status of the different ethnic groups in the research area, primarily those of Hutu and Tutsi. There is no escaping the fact that, considering the horrors that Tutsi went through during and leading up to the genocide, this group is easily portrayed as the most vulnerable group in Rwanda – as is regularly done by the current government of Rwanda, the international aid industry, and the international media. In a country where open discussion of ethnicity is extremely difficult, the term ‘widow’ is often used as a euphemism for a Tutsi woman. In Chapter 4, I have outlined the methodological difficulties with respect to ascribing ethnicity to households in the research area. As a result of these difficulties, the conclusions about the poverty and vulnerability status of Tutsi and Hutu households are not conclusive but should be treated with caution.

Findings of this study suggest that in the research area there are considerably more female-headed households among Tutsi than there are among Hutu. However, the percentage of widow-headed and divorcee-headed households does not differ significantly among these two ethnic groups. Hence, the equation of ‘widow’ with ‘Tutsi’ does not reflect the reality. The study also shows that ethnicity is not a suitable criterion to assess land ownership. Thus, whereas some of the Tutsi respondents were of the opinion that the ‘one house, one cow policy’ is likely to benefit mostly Hutu (since they are believed to own sufficient land to grow fodder and construct suitable shelter), and some of the Hutu respondents were of the opinion that Tutsi have larger landholdings because they benefited from land redistribution schemes, neither view is supported by this study. Nevertheless, the fact that people feel this policy benefits Hutu more than Tutsi should be taken seriously, as it may aggravate tensions between the two. This study does indicate, however, that duration of stay forms an explanatory variable. This implies that former residents in the research area (mainly Hutu, since most Tutsi were either killed or fled to Uganda) and old caseload refugees (mostly Tutsi) are more likely to have relatively large landholdings than new caseload refugees (mainly Hutu). In turn, new caseload refugees are more likely to have larger landholdings than recently arrived migrants and newly married couples (both of which can be either Hutu or Tutsi). As a result, the manner in which these

households have been able to access land differs significantly: whereas Tutsi were more likely to benefit from redistribution schemes, Hutu largely had to depend on the purchase of land. As for the livelihood portfolio of Hutu and Tutsi in the research area, no significant differences were found. Nevertheless, as indicated in Chapter 2, there are indications that Rwandan society is undergoing a process of 'tutsification', implying that it is easier for Tutsi to access positions of power. Moreover, as indicated in the same chapter, there is evidence that Tutsi may find it easier to access off-farm and non-farm employment and that access to higher levels of education is more prominent among Tutsi than Hutu children.

Reflections

This study discusses the complex relationship between the war and the genocide in Rwanda, rural household livelihood strategies, and outcomes. In this section, I outline some of the issues that call for further research.

Poverty and vulnerability analysis: widow-, divorcee-, and single male-headed households

One of the main findings of this study is that female-headed households are not necessarily poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households. The finding is surprising. In Rwanda, female-headed households, a term usually applied to describe widow-headed households, are generally considered to belong to the poorest and most vulnerable. Therefore, programmes and interventions that are meant to reach the poorest of the poor tend to target widow-headed households. As I have shown in this work, building materials have been provided to widows under the National Habitat Policy so as to enable them to construct new houses, goats have been distributed to widows as a means to complement household income, and financial assistance has been provided to widows to enable their children to attend school.

The explicit targeting of widows helps explain why widow-headed households in this study are not poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households. It could be argued that without such assistance, these widows would indeed belong to the poorest and most vulnerable households. However, even without programme assistance, widows in the research area might have done well. As indicated in this work, a large proportion of the widows are old caseload refugees from Uganda. It is possible that their former refugee status has had a positive impact on these widows' asset base on their return to Rwanda; for example, in terms of educational achievements, skills, savings, and social capital. The evidence from this study is not conclusive in this respect and further research is needed. Questions that need to be addressed include, for instance, whether widows that have benefited from land distribution schemes, among whom many Tutsi genocide-survivors, are less poor and vulnerable than widows who did not benefit from such schemes; whether there is a significant difference in livelihood outcomes between war- or genocide-related widows and between women whose widowed status is not directly related to the war and genocide; or whether old

caseload refugee widows from Uganda generally perform better than old caseload refugees who have sought refuge elsewhere.

There are three other categories of households that warrant further research. Firstly, this study shows that households of divorced and separated women belong to the poorest and most vulnerable in the research area. A lack of land, and hence land-related sources of income, is among the primary causes of their poverty and vulnerability status. Divorced and separated women also suffer from stigmatisation and are easily and without justification referred to as 'loose women'. What impact does such stigmatisation have on their ability to access land or credit and undermine their livelihood opportunities? The topics of divorce and separation receive little attention from scholars and few, if any, intervention programmes explicitly target divorced or separated women. As a result, we know little about this group of people. For what reasons do women divorce (or, alternatively, for what reason are women abandoned)? Is such a separation usually instigated by the male spouse? If so, this is a strong indication of intra-household power differentials and gender inequality, which need to be addressed. Moreover, there is evidence that divorced or separated women sometimes remarry. Again, we know little about women's motivation to do so. Is remarriage a means of overcoming a limited asset base or of being able to access productive resources? Or is it primarily a means of avoiding loneliness or stigmatisation? How does remarriage affect women's status in the community? And what happens to women's decision-making power in a second marriage?

Secondly, a category of households that warrants further research consists of single male-headed households. In the research area, these are of different types. On the one hand, there are households formed by single unmarried men. On the other hand, there are households formed by widowed, divorced, or separated elderly men. It is this second category of single male-headed households that is portrayed as poor and vulnerable by informants in this study. Children are generally equated with wealth in the research area. The absence of an adult woman, especially in combination with the absence of children, is seen to aggravate poverty and vulnerability. However, it is not clear whether single male-headed households also lack other important assets. For instance, does the absence of an adult woman in the household affect that household's access to interpersonal networks and other forms of social capital? Moreover, most widowed, divorced, and separated men eventually remarry. Does this have a positive impact on their poverty and vulnerability status? In other words, is the poverty and vulnerability status of single unmarried man transitional or chronic in nature?

Thirdly, this study has shown that duration of stay is linked directly to livelihood security. Households that have resided longer in the research area tend to have larger landholdings and access to larger interpersonal networks. It obviously takes time to reconstruct a livelihood after moving to a new area. However, more research is needed in this area, for the variable 'duration of stay' in this study includes a large variety of households. It includes households of returnees and of migrants but also those of newlyweds and of women who have returned to their parental villages after the breakdown of their marital status. It is

not only the duration of stay that is important but also the familiarity with the terrain and the people.

Inter- and intra-household differentials

This research has looked primarily at inter-household differences. I argue that widow-headed households generally perform better than expected, whereas divorced and separated women struggle to make ends meet. This study has, however, not looked at the question of whether *de jure* female-headed households perform differently from *de facto* female-headed households. Bruce and Lloyd (1992) have argued that this may indeed be the case. They suggest that the position of *de facto* female-headed households is generally worse than that of *de jure* female-headed households and suggest that the difference may be related to women's access to land, kinship, and other support networks. This study has not looked explicitly at the position of married women. However, important questions need to be addressed. For instance, do married women have decision-making power concerning the use of important household assets? Are they allowed to decide which crops to grow or whether to sell or lease a parcel of land? What effect does marital violence have on married women's decision-making power? And how do women cope with marital violence in general? Do married women have access to more or different assets and resources, such as land and credit, than do divorced and separated women? Or are potential advantages outweighed by sources of inequality and conflict within the household?

Education

Another topic that warrants further investigation is education. As I have indicated in Chapter 7, there exist considerable gender differentials with regard to educational performance in Rwanda. The reasons for this are manifold and include the long distance to school, which may deter parents from sending their daughters to school, and the interference of domestic work, which may restrict the availability of time for girls to study. What is not known is whether the curriculum itself also influences girls performance at school or whether teachers, consciously or not, discriminate against girls. If girls are to be given the same educational opportunities as boys, such matters need to be addressed. Moreover, there is evidence that the educational system is undergoing a process of 'tutsification' (see Chapter 2). In light of this process, there is a need to analyse school performances of Hutu children and their ability to access higher levels of education. Are Hutu children discriminated against and what forms does this discrimination take? For instance, are they less likely to receive financial support? Are they structurally given lower marks? Do parents perceive education to be of lesser importance?

Ethnicity

One of the methodological limitations of this study concerns the variable of ethnicity. As a result of political pressure, ethnicity is not a variable that can be measured directly. Researchers who wish to include this variable are therefore forced to look for indirect measures or proxy indicators. To my knowledge, up until now no satisfactory measures have been developed. As outlined in Chapter 4,

the categorisation into old and new caseload refugees, into Rwandans born inside or outside of Rwanda, or into Rwandans who have not left the country or only for short periods of time is problematic, as each of these categories may include either of the Rwandan ethnic groups. The assessment of ethnicity as proposed in this research is equally problematic: on the one hand, because it rests on a considerable number of assumptions, either of which may be proven wrong; on the other hand, because I was unable to categorise all sampled households, this made statistical analysis very difficult and less reliable. There is thus a need to reflect further on ways to incorporate the variable 'ethnicity' in research into Rwandan livelihoods.

The problem of ethnicity is especially relevant with respect to quantitative methods, such as the household survey. For respondents with whom especially good rapport was established, as was the case with respondents from whom life histories have been collected, the determination of ethnicity is less of a problem. During the many conversations that evolve between researcher and subject, ethnicity is a subject that is always touched upon. In many instances, respondents bring this issue up by themselves, without probing from the side of the researcher. However, when such rapport is not built, when the relationships of trust between researcher and subject are not strong enough, as is often the case between survey enumerators and respondents, ethnicity cannot be discussed explicitly. This implies that the survey instrument is simply not suitable for the discussion of such sensitive issues (cf. Nombo 2007).

Longitudinal data

Finally, there is a dire need for longitudinal data on household livelihood strategies and outcomes. Livelihoods are formed in a historical context and they change over time. Poverty and vulnerability can be of a transient rather than a permanent nature. Those who are currently among the poorest and most vulnerable will not necessarily remain so in the near future. The history of Rwanda has made this very clear. Whereas Tutsi were given privileges under the colonial regime, Hutu were privileged in the First and Second Republic. It is well possible that the current government, consciously or not, offers livelihood opportunities to particular groups that it does not provide to others. In the absence of longitudinal data, use is normally made of cross-sectional data and recall methods. However, neither method is suitable to assess past and future livelihood developments. On the one hand, this is because no household in Rwanda has been untouched by the war and genocide. Cross-sectional data can thus not enlighten us with regard to livelihood developments. On the other hand, recall methods do not always provide us with precise and trustworthy information, as it has proven difficult for example to remember exact production or income levels. In the last few years, a few survey-based conflict impact studies on Rwanda have appeared (see Chapter 1), comparing household livelihoods before and after the genocide. While such quantitative studies are desperately needed, they do not shed light on the motivation of people to alter livelihood strategies. Moreover, they tend to exclude large sections of the population, such as recently married couples or disintegrated households, simply because no pre-genocide data on these households is available.

Implications for Policies

This study has shown how household activities and strategies are influenced by the particular socio-economic features of households concerned. As a result, the impact of the war and genocide differs among households. The particular socio-economic features of households are the result of historical processes that far precede events of the early 1990s. Hence, policies and interventions should not simply address the immediate effects of the war and genocide, for example by facilitating more schools, health centres, and markets. They should also address underlying causes of household vulnerability, for example tackling income and land inequality. In this section, I will present some policy recommendations that emerge from the conclusions of this study.

Targeting criteria should be based on a thorough poverty and vulnerability analysis

Targeting of poor and vulnerable households is not easy, as household heterogeneity precludes blueprints. In Rwanda, female-headed households are depicted as poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households. Female headship is often taken as an indicator for household poverty and vulnerability. However, this study has shown that female headship is not an adequate indicator for household poverty and vulnerability, since female-headed households are not necessarily poorer or more vulnerable than male-headed households, and differences among female-headed households are substantial. This finding suggests that a thorough poverty and vulnerability analysis should precede any targeted social protection efforts. Marital status is just one of the indicators that can be included in such an analysis. This study has pointed out some other important indicators that should be included, such as the size of landholdings and/or ownership of livestock, duration of stay, membership in organisations (as a measure of social capital), and educational achievement. Whether all of these indicators are applicable in a poverty and vulnerability analysis outside the Rwandan context depends on local circumstances. The historical and political context is of special importance. For example, duration of stay is important in the Rwandan context, as this indicator is directly linked to issues of land redistribution and quality of houses. However, in those contexts where large-scale migration and displacement processes have not taken place, this indicator may be of lesser or no importance.

Guarantee equal educational opportunities for boys and girls and for Hutu and Tutsi children

Since education not only forms the gateway to improved standards of living and reduced poverty and vulnerability but is also a means to strengthen civil society, serious efforts need to be made to further develop or enhance this particular human resource and to overcome existing disparities. Besides the construction of school buildings and the provision of educational material, the training of new teachers should form a priority. A point of concern is that a considerable number of teachers, especially at secondary levels, have come from Uganda or are of

Ugandan nationality. This affects the type of knowledge that is spread among students, for these teachers' mastery of French - one of the languages to be taught at school -, and sometimes even Kinyarwanda, is limited. Increasing the number of primary and secondary schools and institutes for higher education is equally important, the more so if the costs of attending these can be kept low for poor households, for example by the provision of scholarships based on household income rather than on students' exam results.

Care must be taken to guarantee that girls and boys as well as Hutu and Tutsi children have equal opportunities. At the moment, girls and Hutu children are underrepresented, especially at higher levels of education. Moreover, there is a need to understand why girls generally do not perform as well as boys. Measures must be taken to increase their performance at school. Thus, the curriculum needs to be looked at in detail, teachers should be trained to avoid gender and ethnic discrimination, and financial means should be made available to girls and to Hutu who wish to continue their education.

Investments in the off-farm and non-farm sector need to accompany investments in the educational system

Education raises expectations about employment opportunities. If investments in the educational system are not accompanied by investments in the creation of off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities, Rwanda runs a very real risk of creating a discontented new generation. This could easily lead to renewed violence. In light of the underdevelopment of the non-agricultural sector in Rwanda, one of the government's policies is to encourage graduates to start their own businesses. Such a policy only makes sense if youth are given training and advice on how to do so. Moreover, they will need access to financial means, in the form of credit or loans. The creation of new, or the strengthening of existing, professional organisations or unions, such as those that exist among traders or *boda-boda* drivers, should be encouraged, as these can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills.

Gender equality needs to remain on the agenda of governments and organisations

The government of Rwanda has made a considerable effort to promote gender equality and to increase women's rights. A Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion has been called into being and new laws and policies have been developed that explicitly address women's rights. These measures are successful, as was noted by most of the female respondents in this study. However, there remain too many uncertainties and loopholes in these new laws and policies, which need to be addressed. For example, the inheritance law does not include inheritance of land and there are insufficient guarantees to ensure that customary law does not undermine statutory law. Moreover, continuous efforts need to be made to ensure that women have access, financially and otherwise, to Rwanda's court system. Continued efforts must also be made to increase women's livelihood opportunities. Increasing women's access to institutionalised credit is important in this respect. Explicit efforts should also be undertaken to increase women's educational achievements and to improve their access to non-farm employment,

especially in the formal sector. Finally, efforts need to be made to reduce marital violence. This can be achieved by, among other means, sensitisation campaigns and judicial assistance to abused women.

The agrarian crisis in Rwanda has institutional as well as technical aspects and both need to be addressed

Policymakers should realise that Rwanda's agrarian crisis in the 1980s was foremost an institutional crisis wherein the rights of the political elite were overprotected and the rights of potential or perceived political opponents were underprotected. In practice, this meant that the rights of Tutsi and agrarian smallholders were insufficiently protected. Today, the agrarian crisis in Rwanda appears to be mainly of a technical nature. There is a shortage of credit, training, and inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides. Public investments are needed to overcome these technical problems. Nevertheless, this study has shown that the current agrarian crisis has important institutional components as well. The rights of agrarian wage labourers, the landless, and the near landless are insufficiently guaranteed, whereas the rights and opportunities of large-scale farmers are overprotected. Moreover, old caseload refugees and members of the political elite are taking over large tracts of land (see Chapters 2 and 8). Efforts must be made to correct this situation by adjusting existing land laws and policies. Possible avenues include:

- Explicit efforts need to be made to protect the rights of small-scale farmers, poor peasants, and women in land registration and titling programmes, including judicial and financial assistance;
- Articles 62-65 of the Land Law need to be revised, as currently these may result in the confiscation of land from the poor;
- In the event that land is confiscated from farmers by the authorities, farmers need to be compensated in accordance with prevalent market prices;
- Additional land should be distributed among poor peasants, the landless, and the near landless;
- The ceiling of 50 hectares for individual landowners, as proposed in the draft of the Land Policy, should be reinstalled.

Current agricultural policies need to be reassessed, as they do not reach poor and vulnerable households and tend to undermine their livelihood strategies

Current agricultural policies do not support the household livelihood strategies of poor and vulnerable households. For example, the 'one house, one cow policy' does not reach the poorest of the poor, as did the earlier goat policy, but rather reaches resource-rich peasants with sufficient land to grow fodder and construct animal shelter. Care must be taken to ensure the continued distribution of goats or other small livestock, such as chickens or rabbits, to poor households. Preferably, such distributional programmes should be developed together with veterinary services and efforts to increase the exchange entitlements of farmers at regional markets. Unlike the 'one house, one cow policy', which simply does not reach poor

and vulnerable households, the policy of land consolidation (defragmentation of landholdings) seriously undermines the household livelihood strategies of poor and vulnerable households. In particular, this policy affects their risk-reducing strategies. If land consolidation is to be successful – that is, strengthening rather than weakening livelihood strategies of the poor – large public investments in the agricultural sector need to be made. Here, one might think for example of large-scale irrigation schemes, expansion of rural institutional credit, and rural development.

Agricultural top-down approaches need to be replaced by participatory approaches with the aim of empowering small-scale farmers

At the moment, the government has responded to the food crisis by implementing an agricultural policy that promotes regional crop specialisation. Buyer's cooperatives have been formed at district level. Surplus production is currently bought from farmers and stored in large granaries with the aim of selling food and seeds at relatively low prices during periods of food shortage. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, it is questionable whether this policy addresses the real problem. For while regional crop specialisation could result in economies of scale in terms of production and possibly even increase the exchange entitlements of farmers on regional markets, the policy overlooks variations in soil quality and micro-climatic conditions (cf. Ansoms 2007). Moreover, the policy is based on coercive measures instead of incentives, as becomes all the more clear when considering the fact that local authorities threaten to uproot crops other than those specified and prescribed from above. Lessons from the past should warn that Rwandan farmers do not simply follow prescribed regulations, such as when farmers uprooted their coffee plants when market prices plummeted in the 1980s.

Regional crop specialisation, when implemented in a top-down manner, directly undermines the livelihood strategies of small-scale farmers. To these farmers, crop diversification is an important risk-reducing strategy that has proven its worth in the past. Moreover, farmers have not yet been given any guarantees that the buyer's cooperatives will function adequately. Most farmers have to sell their surplus directly after harvest, when prices, due to high availability, are low, as this is the only way in which these farmers are able to meet the diverse household demands, including household necessities such as sugar and kerosene but also school fees and health care. It remains questionable whether the buyer's cooperatives are willing to sell food and seeds below market prices during periods of food shortage. Moreover, other issues need to be taken into consideration as well. For example, if the price of food imports during such periods is able to compete with that of the cooperatives, there is a chance that these cooperatives will be left with stocks they are unable to sell.

Indeed, the government of Rwanda would be wise to change its agricultural policy. It should explicitly attempt to enhance production by empowering small farmers. This can be done by increasing the availability of and access to agricultural inputs like seeds and fertilisers, and by making large public investments in agriculture - for example, by developing and maintaining irrigation schemes - and rural development. In addition, increased efforts need to be made to

ensure access to institutional credit by strengthening rural branch banking. Instead of regional crop specialisation, minimum support prices are needed for all crops. Moreover, agricultural policies should be based on incentives and not on coercive measures that undermine the risk-reducing strategies of the same population that is targeted to benefit from the proposed agricultural policies. But most importantly, a successful agricultural policy should acknowledge the real problem: namely, that food security at the household level is not only the result of availability but also of access. This latter issue can only be addressed by creating more income-generating opportunities in the rural areas.

Collective action is needed to strengthen social cohesion

Collective action needs to be promoted so as to foster social relations and reduce social tension. There is a lack of cohesion in the research area community, and this is likely to occur in other communities in Rwanda as well. Community development efforts are hampered by a lack of social cohesion. Collective action cannot be achieved by the mere formation of farmers' groups. Indeed, as this study shows, cooperation among farmers and between farmers' groups is often extremely limited. This lack of cooperation is the result of a lack of cohesion and seriously hampers the dissolution of information. Hence, other means have to be conceived of to strengthen collective action among community members and between communities. Collective action needs to be fostered by working with legitimate local actors. The church is one such actor.

Efforts also need to be made to improve the relationships of trust between farmers and extension officers. As this study shows, the level of trust between the two groups leaves much to be desired. Some of the informants in this study commented that in earlier days, local farmers acted as agronomists and extension officers. Today, these have been replaced by an educated elite, and one that is often not from the area and that is accused of not really caring about the rural poor. Efforts need to be made to train locals to work in their own communities.

Inter-ethnic cooperation and reconciliation need to be strengthened

Finally, continued efforts need to be made for further reconciliation. As I have indicated more than once in this study, remaining silent about ethnicity is not likely to contribute to reconciliation, as it offers no room to prove suspicions about ethnic-based discriminatory practices wrong. Explicit efforts need to be made by the government, NGOs, and researchers to address ethnic discriminatory practices and to strengthen inter-ethnic cooperation. The latter can be achieved, for example, by stimulating interethnic dialogues on agribusiness. By focusing on traditional Christian values, the church may also play an important role in overcoming ethnic divisions and in stimulating unity and reconciliation.

Most importantly, Rwandans should be presented with a fair and accurate history of the past. The suppression of ethnic identification masks Tutsi dominance in government and society. Yet, as Lemarchand (1998: 3) argued: "There can be no reconciliation between Hutu and Tutsi without justice, and no justice without truth". To silence the discussion on ethnic differentiation – be it in the field of education, employment, health or politics – as is done by the government, is a

grave mistake. While ethnicity should not be allowed to determine people's livelihood opportunities, history has made it clear that the reality is very different. Ethnicity does matter in post-genocide Rwanda. It does influence the opportunities open to people. It is used as a political instrument, even as we speak, to silence opposition and to further the development goals of the government. The government ignores the fears of ordinary people and it undermines the opportunity to publicly combat those fears. As I have said before, by allowing researchers to study ethnic differentiation in all spheres of life, we can show whether the government is truly doing its best to assist all of its citizens equally. By not allowing this type of study, the government is losing an opportunity to silence fears, to prevent new civil unrest, and to truly develop the country into a peaceful nation.

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Appendix A:

Situating Myself as an Agent of Knowledge

After completing my undergraduate studies at Wageningen Agricultural University in 1998, I wanted to continue with graduate studies. As part of my undergraduate studies, I had conducted extensive anthropological research in the northwest of India, where I lived for one year in a small village and studied women's social support networks and access to land (cf. Koster 1998). The results were praised by my supervisors, but despite the accolades I had considerable doubts about the work and my capabilities as a researcher. The conditions under which I had conducted fieldwork had been far from optimal. I had had no translators at my disposal, and had to rely on my limited knowledge of the local language; there was no institutional backup; and I had been ill for prolonged periods of time. I wondered whether I had collected sufficient data and whether the information I had been able to collect and present in my thesis accurately represented the lives of the women I had interviewed and had come to consider as my friends. Moreover, I wondered what effect my personal background – that of a young, western woman – had on the type of data I had been able to gather. Perhaps the women I had interviewed (generally older and married) had not taken me, the young and inexperienced woman, seriously. I wondered whether it was possible they had not wanted to disclose certain information because of my background.

I had other concerns as well. I had seen how my female respondents, whom I considered to have become my friends, suffered under a system of gender inequality. I was frustrated by my inability to change the circumstances in which they lived. I witnessed how they were beaten by their husbands. I listened to their silent wailing. Yet, all I could do was ask them why they accepted the lives they lived. Why they were resigned to displaying only covert acts of resistance, and apparently refused to organise themselves. I felt that by joining forces they would have been able to protest much more effectively against their fate as repressed and battered women²⁹¹. I also felt guilty about the fact that my mere presence might show them a 'better', more emancipated world, far beyond their reach. Perhaps not knowing how things can be better is not as bad as dreaming about what is in fact unreachable. What I did not fully realise back then was that my frustrations had less to do with these women's lived experiences or their means of resistance or lack thereof, but more with my own sense of having failed as 'the perfect researcher'. In my eyes, such a researcher would have been able to make a difference. The presence, questions, and actions of the ideal researcher would have transformed the community in which she worked from being gender repressed to being gender equal.

²⁹¹ In her work on gender and land rights in South Asia, Agarwal (1994) links gender consciousness and different forms of resistance (covert, overt, collective, and individual). She argues that collective and overt action by women is needed to fundamentally alter existing structures of property rights in land.

To prove to myself that I was indeed a good researcher, I was desperate to repeat a similar project, under better circumstances, as part of a research team, supported by local organisations and authorities, with sufficient funding, and sufficient translators and research assistants at my disposal. Perhaps I was also keen to prove that I was able to make a difference in the lives of my research subjects.

Unfortunately, I was not able to find a position that interested me. I had my own notions about the type of research I wanted to conduct, and none of the graduate programmes at that time conformed with my ideas. I decided that if the graduate programmes could not offer me what I wanted, I would simply have to write my own programme and then apply for funding. In the meantime, I married and began to work for the Dutch Refugee Council and, somewhat later, for the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service. Here I felt drawn to study the lives of refugees and internally displaced people instead of 'ordinary' peasants, as I had done during my undergraduate studies. I also decided that I was more interested in shifting the focus of my research to an African country rather than returning to India. No doubt, the intellectually challenging conversations I had had with some of my African friends and my positive experiences during my holidays on the African continent had a great deal to do with this.

I had more or less decided that I wanted to go to Uganda for fieldwork, when I met a Rwandan lady at a congress in the Netherlands. I described to her my interest in Uganda, as a country recovering from the horrors committed under Presidents Obote and Amin, and during the struggles by the National Resistance Movement of Museveni. I indicated that I was less interested in learning how people had coped with periods of violence but more in how they managed subsequently to live normal lives. I wanted to examine how perpetrators and victims of violence were able to live side by side. And if, and how, the position of women had changed as a result of the country's violent history. My new Rwandan acquaintance was very interested but told me I should shift my focus from Uganda to Rwanda, as "Rwandan women are the most beautiful in the world". Her joke made me feel at ease, and we began to talk about the post-conflict situation in Rwanda. She raised my interest in this small country and made me decide to make it the focus of my graduate research.

I submitted my proposal for funding to various academic institutions, and was told repeatedly that they were not willing to award me any money. The problem, or so I was informed, was that I had no previous research experience in Africa, the political conditions in Rwanda were too uncertain, and the history of the country too complex for a novice researcher. I was even told that my new marital status posed a problem, for what was my husband to do during my months of absence doing fieldwork. Friends advised me to seek funding at development organisations, but I refused to do this in fear of having to deal with their potential hidden agendas.

During all of this, my previous doubts about my abilities as a researcher vanished. With every rejection, my confidence in my abilities increased. With every rejection, my tenacity grew. Perhaps more than anything else, I wanted to prove my critics wrong. I became convinced that I was the right person for the job.

And in my determination and naivety, I was certain that I was the appropriate person to gain the confidence of an African people left traumatised by past events. Was I not able to overcome cultural differences with my African friends? Was I not able to gain the confidence of traumatised asylum seekers in the Netherlands? Had I not shown in India that I could work under difficult circumstances? By the time I was finally granted sufficient funding to commence my graduate studies, I had become convinced that my personal background posed no problem.

Once I was in the field, this confidence had the result that I looked for similarities between myself and my research subjects more than I looked for answers to my research questions. I felt that acceptance as 'one of us' was a prerequisite, an approval I needed before commencing data collection. I tried to convince myself, and the people among whom I lived, that I was no different from them. That my skin colour and culture of origin were irrelevant, that my upbringing as a western woman did not matter, and that my social-economic position could be set aside. I swelled with pride when the villagers among whom I lived remarked that I was different from other researchers (Rwandan, African, or not) who had never made the effort to live among 'the common folk'; it gave me the feeling that it reduced the power inequalities between myself and my research subjects. Their interest in my life at home increased the feeling of equality. In a bid to further my acceptance, I stayed away from local figures of authority. I did not want to be seen with them, as I feared that this would endanger my position as 'a simple and humble woman'. In the process, I deprived myself of the institutional assistance I had longed for during my work in India.

Of course, I realised that I would never really be 'one of them'. This was most clear in relation to the issue of ethnicity. Being neither Hutu, Tutsi, nor Twa theoretically enabled me to take a neutral stance towards ethnicity. However, this neutrality did not last long. Living next to a Tutsi family, the first contacts I made were with other Tutsi families in the village, who came to visit my neighbours. Moreover, for reasons exemplified in Chapter 4, I ended up working with a research team composed of Tutsi women. I was thus seen with Tutsi more than with any other ethnic group. Moreover, my assistants were sometimes afraid to go to the house of a Hutu, and I have no doubt that the way in which they interacted with Tutsi often differed from their interactions with Hutu. Hutu as a corporate group are guilty of committing genocide. Tutsi as a corporate group share a past in exile and a suffering beyond human comprehension. The lack of 'ethnic neutrality', intentionally or not, has had a direct impact on my ability to forge relations of trust, and hence on the data I was able to collect. It is absolutely certain that I know considerably more about the reality in which my Tutsi informants live than that in which my Hutu informants live.

The differences between us also became evident in relation to our religious background. My house was located between the houses of two pastors (on one side the pastor of a Pentecostal church and on the other side a pastor of the Seventh Day Adventists) and a Pentecostal church. Most of the people I met during the early days of my fieldwork period consisted of deeply religious villagers. Of course, they were interested to learn about my religious beliefs, which in fact I do not have. When I expressed this, I was met with unbelief. People wondered how it

was possible that a white woman did not believe in God, since it had been the 'same whites' who had convinced Rwandans to 'become saved' in the first place. Through the discussions of my lack of religious convictions, it was made clear to me that I was very different from them.

Later, it also became apparent to me that my conviction that God does not exist needed further clarification. This happened when I was travelling to Kigali by local minibus. On the bus, I had a conversation with a young man who was interested to know what I had come to do in his country. The conversation soon moved to a discussion of religious beliefs. When the man learned that I was a 'non-believer', he stopped talking to me altogether. Only much later, when we had almost arrived at our destination, did he suddenly ask me if I were a Satanist. I looked at him in bewilderment and explained that if there is no God, then surely there is no Satan either. The man told me he was relieved, for although he was very sad to learn that I was not saved, he was at least glad to know that I had not submitted to evil. From that moment onwards, I took care to tell people that I did not believe in God but that I also did not believe in Satan (or ghosts, spirits, zombies, or other manifestations of the spiritual world).

Once I had been able to 'befriend' some of my research subjects, I also became painfully aware that my acceptance as 'one of them' was in fact little more than wishful thinking on my part. This became most painfully clear when I talked to some of the farmers working in the marshes. These marshes had been made suitable for rice cultivation and villagers had recently been granted plots of land by the local authorities. Walking through the rice fields, I noticed how some plots were overgrown with weeds. I asked those working in adjoining rice fields about the reason for this and was told that the owners had stopped working in their fields when they had seen me arrive in their village. I was shocked to learn that they thought I had come to take their fields, and I realised that my personal background as a white, educated, and western woman *did* make a difference to the villagers. I belonged to a group of people who had the power to take things away. My similarities to the common people and my openness or humbleness had not resulted in my being liked. Instead, I was feared because of my assumed association with or resemblance to local power holders. At this point, but now for completely different reasons, I tried to disassociate myself from those in power. I looked at local power holders differently. In my eyes, they were transformed into potential agents of evil, and better to be avoided altogether. This again had a direct impact on data collection, as the reality I tried to describe in my study relied only on the views of the villagers, neglecting the views of other stakeholders in that reality. Moreover, the avoidance of figures of local authority also deprived me of the opportunity to interview certain important key informants. While I was trying my best to represent the view of ordinary villagers, I was obscuring the stories others could have told me.

During my second fieldwork period, however, my position vis-à-vis my research subjects changed considerably. Unable to find suitable housing arrangements in the same village, I was forced to rent a house in a nearby town. The living conditions there were quite different from those in the village. The house in which I now lived was more spacious and of a better quality; the water

supply was better, I had access to a nice toilet and shower room, there were plenty of shops, restaurants and bars, and I was surrounded by educated people who all spoke English. The regular trips by bus to the research village gave me a feeling of mobility and freedom. I felt less restricted by local customs, and had the feeling that I could be myself more than I had been earlier. I realised that I would be considered 'one of the villagers' even less than the last time. I had to accept that I was different, that my personal background set me apart from my research subjects. In some way, this awareness proved liberating, and it enabled me to associate more freely with the people I had avoided earlier. I took the opportunity to speak with local figures of authority and was thus able to expand my knowledge of the research area. I no longer feared that my association with them would hamper my relations with the 'ordinary' villagers. The warm welcome they gave me on my return had convinced me that, despite our differences, they had come to trust and perhaps even to accept me. I felt that being myself actually made me more acceptable to my research subjects.

Nevertheless, I was not entirely justified in being so optimistic. During my absence, the *gacaca* trials in the village had begun. Every week, villagers would come together to discuss the crimes of convicts accused of genocide-related offences. These meetings were led by a group of elected people, and figures of local (village) authority would normally be present as well. I had come back to the village to conduct a household survey and was told at the beginning of my work that it would be wise to obtain proven permission from the local authorities to do so. I secured letters of approval, but then considered the possibility of presenting my work in the presence of the local authorities to the villagers during a *gacaca* meeting. The authorities agreed to this, and my team of assistants and I planned our presentations carefully.

I was extremely happy that I had allowed myself to interact with figures of local authority. I realised how this would benefit my work, reducing the amount of time we needed to convince each household of the permission we had to visit and interview them. Rather than explaining the purpose of the survey to each household, we could explain our work once. Moreover, this way every potential respondent would be aware that s/he would not have to fear doing something against the wishes of the authorities: a very common fear. Again, I had been too naïve. The local authorities, used to the top-down approach normally applied by government officials, urged the villagers to comply with us, as we had come to improve the living conditions in the village. They instructed the villagers not to refuse our requests for information and to answer truthfully. Hence, the unanticipated result was that participation in the survey was no longer voluntary but became almost obligatory. Fear of non-compliance, I felt sure, would increase the likelihood of socially desirable answers. The consequence was that instead of having to explain the purpose of the survey to each household (as we would have needed to do without our presentation at the *gacaca* meetings), we now had to painstakingly explain to each household that they were not obliged to participate, and that none of the information they provided with would become known to the local authorities. This latter point became all the more important when I learned that my research assistants and I were suspected of gathering evidence against the

convicts appearing before the village *gacaca* tribunal. I realised that in this instance my association with local power holders as well as the ethnic background of my researchers hampered data collection.

The question remains as to what extent my positionality has shaped my data, analysis, and conclusions. Would another researcher have made the same discoveries in the field as I have? I am sure this is not the case. Another researcher would have had another personal background. People will respond differently to another person. Another researcher would also have had another 'fictive' dimension of positionality: another set of assumptions about the relation between the knower's standpoint, the Other, and the production of knowledge. This would have influenced his or her decisions on whom to approach (and how to approach) as respondents and key informants. My own struggles to be accepted as 'one of them' made me try to renounce my privileges as a white, western woman. I did not succeed in doing so. With time and experience, I learned to accept the difference between us. I recognised how my positionality facilitated certain forms of understanding but impeded others. By revealing my positionality, I hoped to make the context of my 'discoveries' more visible. My findings cannot be considered universal claims. I believe strongly, however, that by revealing my positionality, the legitimacy of my 'scientific' claims is ascertained.

Summary

Millions of people currently live under permanent circumstances of emergency and stress as a result of war and political violence. The impact on people's livelihoods, farming systems, and food security are severe as violent conflicts put processes of transformation in motion, resulting in changes in people's resource base and livelihood strategies. Research on the impact of conflict on the wellbeing of populations has become increasingly popular. Nevertheless, there remains a large lacuna in our knowledge, particularly with regard to the gendered impact of violent conflict and the behaviour of households in times of conflict and their aftermath. However, such research is essential for the development of relevant policies and intervention programmes that aim to strengthen people's own initiatives to rebuild their livelihoods. In this study, a livelihood 'lens' has been used to investigate how rural populations recover from conflict and violence. Livelihood approaches are regularly applied in situations of political stability, but here the approach is used to analyse post-conflict development.

This study concerns how Rwandans have recovered from the genocide in their country in 1994. Its aim is to integrate the strategic, institutional, and structural conditions that influence the success or failure of securing a new livelihood by placing the meanings that people attribute to events, institutions, and policies at the centre of analysis. As the household takes a central place in the process of social adaptation and the rebuilding of livelihood security, I have looked specifically at the impact of the genocide on rural household structures and on livelihood strategies and outcomes. The study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the wider social, economic, and political processes affecting rural household livelihoods in post-genocide Rwanda?
2. Which strategies do households and their individual members use to provide for their future needs and what are the results of these strategies?
3. Which groups of households have been left particularly vulnerable after the genocide?

The study was carried out in the village of Rwagitima, located in the northeast of Rwanda. It has an exploratory, a descriptive, and an explanatory function. The exploratory function is of particular importance, since local responses to the genocide have until now received scant attention. It also concerns an under-researched geographical area. Fieldwork was conducted during the

periods August 2003-March 2004, October 2005-January 2006, and December 2007-January 2008. The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. A feminist perspective has been used to understand the material and social inequalities between different types of households. A temporal perspective was incorporated by means of an elaborated historical overview of policies, institutions, and processes in Rwanda, and by collecting life histories that facilitated the study of change, dynamics, and problems of coping with insecurities in daily life.

The study shows how traditional support systems such as lineage and clan became eroded under colonial rule and how the conjugal family has increasingly gained prominence. Whereas Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa formed stratified groups in pre-colonial times, ethnic identities only became rigidified under colonial rule. Rural conditions became increasingly difficult, and population growth exerted high pressure on the land. Peasants were squeezed by the colonial administration through taxes and forced labour, and rebellion among the exploited classes evolved into ethnic animosity between Hutu and Tutsi. This animosity was exploited by the post-independence regime, in an attempt to remain in power. Whereas ethnicity is no longer accepted in formal discourse, ethnic differentiation remains an important feature of Rwandan society at present. Ethnic identities have now become intertwined with new labels, such as old and new caseload refugees or survivors and perpetrators of genocide. Like ethnic labels did before the genocide, these new labels appear to enable or to restrict livelihood opportunities.

In post-genocide Rwanda, rural conditions remain harsh, as indicated by the fact that distress sales have become increasingly common. Population pressure on the land persists and inequality remains rampant. The Rwagitima area is home to a large number of old caseload refugees, people who lived in exile in Uganda and returned to Rwanda after the genocide in 1994. On these refugees' arrival, land was redistributed among them and the original population by the local authorities. However, disputes over land were common and the processes of land redistribution were chaotic. Several policies have been developed to improve rural conditions, such as the National Habitat Policy and the new Land Law and Policy. However, none of these have resulted in land redistribution to landless and near landless farmers. In fact, there is evidence that these measures benefit the wealthy over the poor and old caseload refugees over other groups of people. Moreover, peasants are now required to standardise and rationalise their agricultural practices. Land titling, crop and regional specialisation are promoted by the government. Findings suggest that these measures not only undermine the risk-insurance strategies of the poor (who constitute the majority of the population) but even add additional risk elements.

The main source of livelihood for the people in Rwagitima is agriculture, primarily subsistence farming. Most households do not produce enough food to meet their requirements but depend on market purchases to supplement items that are either not produced at the farm or in insufficient quantity. To provide for

current and future household needs, people are forced to reconsider their livelihood portfolio and to develop new livelihood strategies. This study discusses a range adopted by households in Rwagitima, including extensification (area expansion), intensification to improve yields, top-down-induced crop specialisation, agricultural commercialisation, diversification into crop and livestock production, and off-farm and non-farm labour. Furthermore, strategic household behaviour includes fertility- and household composition strategies, as well as migration and investments in children's education. This leads to increased diversification of livelihood portfolios that are regularly adjusted to make optimal use of different income-earning opportunities. However, this study shows that diverse livelihood portfolios do not necessarily translate into resilience but, more often, reflect vulnerability. For many households, diversification is not the result of choice but of a lack of options.

Despite their often diverse livelihood portfolios, the vast majority of households have a low to very low standard of living. This study shows that higher standards of living are obtained by those with higher levels of education, by households receiving remittances or with large landholdings, and by households that have lived in the village for a relatively long period. This study also finds that a large proportion of households are food insecure, especially recently settled households, households with small landholdings, and households without remittances to fall back on. Only one-fourth of the respondents in this study report feeling able to influence their lives by their own initiatives. The majority perceive their future to depend foremost upon external circumstances, institutions, and restrictions and regulations. Many people feel unhappy, with these feelings more pronounced among the elderly, those with many dependents, and those with small landholdings. Life is given meaning through regular interactions with relatives and close friends. Religion forms another important means. In the period since the genocide, Rwagitima has witnessed a Pentecostal explosion. Participation in religious communities provides people with a sense of spiritual wellbeing, as well as of belonging, strength, and worth.

An often heard assumption is that women, for a variety of reasons, are poorer than men, and that female-headed households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households. This study reveals that this is not necessarily the case. Close to one-third of the households in Rwagitima are headed by women, the majority of whom are widows. Differences in asset endowments between male- and female-headed households were found to be small. However, female-headed households do not constitute a homogeneous category, and treating them that way masks real and important differences among them. This study shows that widow-headed households perform much better than commonly assumed. They have significantly larger landholdings, cultivate a high diversity of crops, possess livestock, and are relatively successful in obtaining a monetary income. They have a high standard of living and belong to the most food-secure households. The fact that widow-headed households perform so well is

undoubtedly linked to the fact that they have benefited from government and development projects more than other types of households. In contrast, divorcee-headed households struggle to make ends meet. Many of these households are landless or nearly so, own few livestock, and have few sources of income. Their standard of living is low and many are food insecure. Stigmatisation adds to their burdens. Divorcees are generally overlooked by researchers and policymakers, and their plight is generally also overlooked by other villagers, who assume that divorcees are likely to perform well because of the supposed assistance offered by their former husbands to their children.

This study shows that, given the underdevelopment of off-farm and non-farm employment opportunities, the size of landholdings forms an important criterion for the poverty and vulnerability status of households; landless and near landless households were found to be among the poorest and most vulnerable households in Rwagitima. Recently settled households, consisting primarily of migrants and recently married couples, were also found to be among the poorest, but analysis has indicated that they are not necessarily the most vulnerable. This study has also shown that membership of organisations, such as farmers' organisations, reduces the poverty and vulnerability of households. At the same time, poverty hampers people in their ability to become members of an organisation, as the poor are often unable to pay entry fees and other associated costs.

This study also assessed the poverty and vulnerability status of the different ethnic groups in Rwagitima, notably Hutu and Tutsi. In post-genocide Rwanda, Tutsi are often depicted as the most vulnerable group by the government, the international aid industry, and the international media. One of the methodological limitations of this study concerns the variable 'ethnicity'. As a result of political pressure, ethnicity is not a variable that can be measured directly, especially not in a survey. The assessment of ethnicity in this study used proximate indicators. Tentative findings suggest that the equation of 'widow' with 'Tutsi' does not reflect reality and that ethnicity is not a suitable criterion to assess land ownership. At the same time, the findings indicate that the manner in which Hutu and Tutsi have been able to access land differs significantly. Whereas Tutsi were more likely to benefit from land redistribution schemes, Hutu largely had to depend on the purchase of land. Differences in the livelihood portfolios between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwagitima appear minimal. Nevertheless, there are indications that Tutsi may find it easier to access off-farm and non-farm employment, and signs of a process of 'tutsification' in the educational system.

It can be concluded that the differentiated impacts of the genocide call for different strategies and interventions for different categories of vulnerable households. Female headship is not an adequate indicator for household poverty and vulnerability, and a thorough poverty and vulnerability analysis should precede any targeted social protection efforts. This study also concludes that the agrarian crisis in Rwanda has institutional as well as technical aspects and that both need to be addressed if rural household livelihoods are to be supported.

Current agricultural policies need to be reassessed, as they do not reach poor and vulnerable households. Worse, they tend to undermine poor people's livelihood strategies. Current top-down agricultural policies need to be replaced by participatory approaches with the aim of empowering small-scale farmers, who form the large majority in Rwanda. Finally, this study concludes that social cohesion is lacking. This calls for collective action and inter-ethnic cooperation. The mere formation of farmers' groups will not lead to collective action and inter-ethnic cooperation, as collective action and cooperation among farmers and between farmers' groups is often extremely limited. Instead, collective action and inter-ethnic cooperation needs to be fostered by working with legitimate actors. This study shows that the church is one such actor. Moreover, explicit efforts need to be made to address ethnic discriminatory practices or to disprove suspicions of such practices.

Samenvatting

Miljoenen mensen hebben momenteel te maken met (burger)oorlogen en politiek geweld. Dergelijke conflicten leiden tot veranderingsprocessen met betrekking tot de bestaansmiddelen en de strategieën die huishoudens gebruiken om in hun levensonderhoud te kunnen voorzien. Er wordt steeds meer onderzoek verricht naar de effecten van geweldadige conflicten op welzijn. Onze kennis in deze vertoont niettemin grote hiaten, in het bijzonder met betrekking tot het gender-specifieke effect van hevige conflicten en het gedrag van huishoudens tijdens en kort na dergelijke conflicten. Wanneer men de initiatieven om bestaansmiddelen opnieuw op te bouwen wilt versterken door middel van beleid en interventieprogramma's, is dergelijke kennis echter essentieel. In deze studie staat de wijze centraal waarop huishoudens zich herstellen van geweldadige conflicten. Benaderingen waarin de bestaansmiddelen en de strategieën die huishoudens gebruiken om in het levensonderhoud van huishoudleden te voorzien centraal staan, worden regelmatig gebruikt in studies die plaatsvinden in een context van politieke stabiliteit. Hier wordt deze benadering echter gebruikt om ontwikkelingen na een gewelddadig conflict te analyseren.

In deze studie wordt gekeken hoe de plattelandsbevolking in het noordoosten van Rwanda zich heeft hersteld van de genocide in 1994. Het handelen van individuele actoren wordt geplaatst in een structurele en institutionele context, waar zij enerzijds afhankelijk van zijn en die zij anderzijds zelf beïnvloeden. De betekenissen die mensen aan gebeurtenissen, instellingen en beleid geven, staan centraal in de analyse. Aangezien het huishouden een belangrijke plaats inneemt in maatschappelijke aanpassingsprocessen en de wederopbouw van bestaansmiddelen, heb ik specifiek gekeken naar het effect van de genocide op huishoudens en hun strategieën om in de bestaanszekerheid van huishoudleden te voorzien. De studie ging in op de volgende vragen:

1. Welke sociale, economische en politieke processen beïnvloeden de middelen van bestaan van huishoudens in Rwanda na de genocide?
2. Welke strategieën gebruiken huishoudens en huishoudleden om in hun bestaanszekerheid te voorzien en wat is het resultaat van deze strategieën?
3. Heeft de genocide geleid tot het ontstaan van bepaalde groepen kwetsbare huishoudens?

De studie is uitgevoerd in Rwagitima, een dorp in het noordoosten van Rwanda, en heeft een oriënterende, beschrijvende en verklarende functie. De oriënterende functie is van bijzonder belang aangezien de effecten van de genocide op lokaal niveau tot nu toe karig in beeld zijn gebracht. Het betreft ook een gebied waar tot op heden weinig onderzoek naar is verricht. Het veldwerk vond plaats in de periodes augustus 2003 - maart 2004, oktober 2005 - januari 2006 en december 2007 - januari 2008. Er is gebruik gemaakt van een combinatie van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethodes. Een feministisch perspectief is toegepast om de materiële en sociale ongelijkheden tussen verschillende soorten huishoudens te begrijpen. Een historisch perspectief wordt bereikt door te kijken naar veranderingen die over tijd hebben plaatsgevonden met betrekking tot beleid, instellingen en maatschappelijke veranderingsprocessen in Rwanda. Daarnaast zijn van een aantal mensen levensgeschiedenissen verzameld om zodoende meer inzicht te krijgen in de dynamiek van deze veranderingsprocessen en de problemen en onzekerheden waar mensen dagelijks mee geconfronteerd worden.

De studie toont aan dat traditionele sociale instellingen zoals clans en grotere familieverbanden ten tijde van het koloniale bewind geërodeerd zijn en hoe het kerngezin steeds belangrijker is geworden. Terwijl in prekoloniale tijden het onderscheid tussen Hutu, Tutsi, en Twa al bestond, zijn rigide etnische identiteiten pas gemeengoed geworden tijdens het koloniale bewind. In deze periode werden de levensomstandigheden op het platteland steeds zwaarder en door een hoge bevolkingstoename nam de druk op land snel toe. Boeren werden onderdrukt door het koloniale bewind dat belastingen hief en dwangarbeid instelde. De geëxploiteerde klassen, waaronder veel Hutu, kwamen hiertegen steeds meer in opstand. Al snel evolueerde dit verzet in vijandelijkheden en haat tussen Hutu en Tutsi. Ook na de onafhankelijkheid bleef deze explosieve relatie tussen de etnische groepen bestaan; bovendien werd zij bewust gebruikt door het regime om aan de macht te blijven. Sinds de genocide is het maken van etnisch onderscheid in formele verhandelingen verboden. Niettemin blijft etnische differentiatie een belangrijk facet van de Rwandese maatschappij. Er worden nu echter ook andere etiketten aangedragen om mensen van elkaar te onderscheiden. Zo worden vluchtelingen die voor de genocide naar het buitenland zijn gevlucht onderscheiden van vluchtelingen die na de genocide naar het buitenland zijn gevlucht, en worden overlevenden onderscheiden van daders. Zoals eerder het behoren tot een bepaalde etnische groep de mogelijkheden en kansen van mensen beïnvloedde, zo zijn ook deze nieuwe etiketten van grote invloed.

Ook na de genocide zijn de levensomstandigheden op het platteland moeilijk. Meer en meer mensen zijn genoodzaakt hun land te verkopen om noodzakelijke uitgaven te kunnen bekostigen. De demografische druk op het land is hoog en de ongelijkheid tussen bevolkingsgroepen bestaat nog steeds. In en rond Rwagitima wonen veel oud-vluchtelingen die tussen eind jaren vijftig en begin jaren negentig naar Oeganda zijn gevlucht en na de genocide naar Rwanda terugkeerden. Dankzij herverdeling van land door plaatselijke autoriteiten konden zij eenvoudig in het

bezit komen van land. Dit proces van herverdeling verliep echter chaotisch en er ontstonden veel geschillen over land tussen teruggekeerde vluchtelingen en de al aanwezige bevolking. Om de omstandigheden op het platteland te verbeteren zijn nieuwe wetgeving en beleid ontwikkeld, onder meer met betrekking tot land en landbezit. Geen van de maatregelen heeft echter geleid tot het toekennen van land aan landlozen en bijna landlozen. Het lijkt er veeleer op dat deze maatregelen ten goede komen aan rijke en welgestelde boeren en dat teruggekeerde vluchtelingen meer profiteren dan andere bevolkingsgroepen. De nieuwe maatregelen houden ook in dat boeren hun landbouwpraktijken moeten standaardiseren en efficiënter maken. Het uitgeven van eigendomsakten van land wordt door de overheid bevorderd. Daarnaast worden regionale en gewasspecialisatie veelal afgedwongen. De uitkomsten van deze studie tonen aan dat deze maatregelen niet alleen de risicomijdende strategieën van arme boeren - de meerderheid van de bevolking - ondermijnen maar zelfs extra risico-elementen toevoegen.

In Rwagitima is landbouw de belangrijkste bron van inkomsten. Het gaat hier vooral om productie voor eigen consumptie. Voedsel wordt meestal in kleine hoeveelheden verkocht om met de opbrengst producten te kopen die niet of in onvoldoende mate op het eigen boerenbedrijf worden verbouwd of gemaakt. De meeste huishoudens in dit gebied produceren echter onvoldoende voedsel om de benodigde producten te kunnen aanschaffen. Om hun bestaanszekerheid veilig te stellen, worden mensen gedwongen om hun activiteiten en bestaansmiddelen te herevalueren en nieuwe strategieën te ontwikkelen. In deze studie worden de verschillende strategieën besproken die door huishoudens in Rwagitima zijn ontwikkeld. Deze strategieën omvatten ondermeer schaalvergroting van het boerenbedrijf, intensivering, gewasspecialisatie (vaak van bovenaf opgelegd), commercialisering, diversificatie in land en veeteelt, en deelname aan niet-agrarische activiteiten. Verder blijkt dat vruchtbaarheid en huishoudsamenstelling bewust worden ingezet en dat migratie en investeringen in het onderwijs van kinderen belangrijke manieren zijn om de bestaanszekerheid van huishoudens veilig te stellen. Huishoudens hanteren vaak meer dan één strategie. Strategieën worden ook regelmatig aangepast om optimaal gebruik te kunnen maken van de kansen die zich voordoen. Deze studie toont eveneens aan dat het volgen van meerdere strategieën veeleer op de kwetsbaarheid van huishoudens duidt dan op hun veerkracht. Diversificatie van activiteiten is voor veel huishoudens niet het resultaat van een bewust gemaakte keuze, maar eerder van een gebrek aan levensvatbare alternatieven.

Ondanks hun vaak diverse bestaansmiddelen en activiteiten, heeft de overgrote meerderheid van huishoudens een lage tot zeer lage levensstandaard. Deze studie toont aan dat een beduidend hogere levensstandaard samenhangt met de volgende factoren: landbezit, een langere verblijfsduur in Rwagitima, steun ontvangen van huishoudleden die momenteel elders wonen, en investeringen in de opleiding van kinderen. De studie toont ook aan dat een groot deel van de huishoudens in Rwagitima te maken heeft met voedseltekorten. Dit speelt in het

bijzonder onder huishoudens die zich pas onlangs in het gebied hebben gevestigd, huishoudens met weinig of geen land tot hun beschikking, en huishoudens die geen steun van buitenaf ontvangen. Slechts een kwart van de ondervraagden in deze studie voelt zich in staat om de eigen toekomst te beïnvloeden. Het merendeel van de ondervraagden is van mening dat hun toekomst afhangt van externe omstandigheden waar ze zelf geen invloed op uitoefenen. Veel mensen - vooral bejaarden, gezinshoofden met veel afhankelijke huishoudleden en boeren met weinig tot geen land in hun bezit - voelen zich ongelukkig. Het leven krijgt betekenis door regelmatige interactie met verwanten en goede vrienden. Godsdienst speelt hierin een belangrijke rol. De Pinkstergemeenschap verdient een speciale vermelding daar deze geloofsgemeenschap na de genocide enorm aan belang heeft gewonnen. Lidmaatschap van een religieuze gemeenschap verhoogt het spirituele welzijn, geeft mensen het gevoel dat ze ergens bij horen, en stimuleert een gevoel van kracht en waardigheid.

Een vaak gehoorde veronderstelling is dat vrouwen, om diverse redenen, slechter af zijn dan mannen en dat huishoudens geleid door vrouwen over het algemeen armer en kwetsbaarder zijn dan huishoudens geleid door mannen. Deze studie toont aan dat dit niet noodzakelijkerwijs het geval is. In Rwagitima wordt ongeveer eenderde van de huishoudens geleid door vrouwen, van wie de meerderheid weduwe is. De verschillen tussen door mannen en vrouwen geleide huishoudens met betrekking tot bestaansmiddelen blijken minimaal. Huishoudens geleid door vrouwen vormen echter geen homogene categorie; er bestaan onderling grote verschillen. Deze studie toont aan dat weduwen over het algemeen veel beter presteren dan verondersteld. Zij hebben vaak veel land in bezit, verbouwen veel verschillende gewassen, bezitten vee en zijn vaak succesvol in het verwerven van inkomen. Zij hebben een hoge levensstandaard en hebben vaak voldoende voedsel tot hun beschikking. Dat deze huishoudens zo goed presteren heeft ongetwijfeld te maken met het feit dat zij jarenlang steun hebben ontvangen van de overheid en van ontwikkelingsprojecten in het gebied. Gescheiden vrouwen hebben daarentegen veel meer moeite om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien. Zij hebben vaak geen of weinig land tot hun beschikking, bezitten geen of weinig vee en hebben ook weinig andere bestaansmiddelen tot hun beschikking. Hun levensstandaard is laag en velen kampen met voedseltekorten. Zij hebben daarnaast te maken met stigmatisering. Hun problemen worden nogal eens door onderzoekers en beleidmakers over het hoofd gezien. Ook dorpelingen zelf lijken zich vaak niet bewust van de benarde positie waarin deze vrouwen zich bevinden. Er wordt zondermeer verondersteld dat gescheiden vrouwen steun ontvangen van hun voormalige echtgenoten, hoewel daar in deze studie geen direct bewijs voor is gevonden.

Gezien de onderontwikkeling van de niet-agrarische sector in het onderzoeksgebied is de grootte van het boerenbedrijf een belangrijke factor met betrekking tot armoede en kwetsbaarheid van huishoudens. Landlozen en bijna landlozen behoren tot de armste en kwetsbaarste huishoudens in Rwagitima.

Huishoudens die zich onlangs in het gebied hebben gevestigd behoren vaak ook tot de armste. Deze huishoudens bestaan hoofdzakelijk uit migranten en recent gehuwden. Analyse toont echter aan dat deze huishoudens ondanks hun armoede niet noodzakelijkerwijs de kwetsbaarste zijn. Deze studie toont ook aan dat lidmaatschap van organisaties, zoals boerengroepen, de armoede en kwetsbaarheid van huishoudens vermindert. Het is echter ook zo dat armoede mensen belemmert om lid te worden van organisaties, daar zij de lidmaatschapkosten meestal niet kunnen opbrengen.

In deze studie is ook gekeken naar de verschillen tussen Hutu en Tutsi in Rwagitima. Zowel door de overheid, ontwikkelingsorganisaties en de media worden Tutsi sinds de genocide meestal afgeschilderd als de kwetsbaarste bevolkingsgroep in Rwanda. Een van de methodologische beperkingen van deze studie betreft de variabele 'etniciteit'. Als gevolg van politieke druk is het direct meten van deze variabele vrijwel onmogelijk, zeker als het gaat om het opnemen van deze variabele in een vragenlijst. Indeling op basis van etniciteit is in deze studie dan ook gebaseerd op indirecte indicatoren. Deze studie laat zien dat de aanname dat de meeste weduwen Tutsi zijn, niet juist is. Bovendien toont deze studie aan dat etniciteit niet geschikt is als verklarende factor voor het al dan niet bezitten van land. Wel verschilt de wijze waarop Hutu en Tutsi toegang tot land hebben gekregen. Waar veel Tutsi hebben weten te profiteren van de herverdeling van land door lokale autoriteiten, blijken Hutu afhankelijker te zijn geweest van de aankoop van land. Wat betreft de bestaansmiddelen en activiteiten die Hutu en Tutsi ondernemen om in hun levensonderhoud te kunnen voorzien, blijken de verschillen tussen deze twee groepen minimaal. Er zijn niettemin aanwijzingen dat Tutsi makkelijker werk krijgen in de niet-agrarische sector dan Hutu. Bovendien lijkt er sprake te zijn van een proces van 'tutsificering' in het onderwijssysteem.

Een van de conclusies van deze studie is dat de effecten van de genocide niet voor iedereen hetzelfde zijn geweest en hebben geresulteerd in het ontstaan van verschillende categorieën van arme en kwetsbare huishoudens. Verschillende interventies zullen moeten worden ontwikkeld om deze groepen te bereiken en te ondersteunen. Een uitgebreide analyse is nodig om arme en kwetsbare huishoudens te identificeren - de sekse van het hoofd van een huishouden vormt geen juiste indicator. Verder concludeert deze studie ook dat de agrarische crisis waar Rwanda mee te maken heeft zowel institutionele als technische aspecten omvat. Wanneer het de bedoeling is om de bestaanszekerheid van alle huishoudens veilig te stellen, zullen beide aspecten moeten worden aangepakt. Dit betekent dat het huidige landbouwbeleid moet worden herzien aangezien het op dit moment onvoldoende in staat is om arme en kwetsbare huishoudens te ondersteunen. Sterker nog, het huidige beleid lijkt de strategieën van arme en kwetsbare huishoudens om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien juist te ondermijnen. Het huidige top-down landbouwbeleid zou vervangen moeten worden door beleid dat de positie van kleinschalige boeren verbetert, daar deze boeren de overgrote meerderheid van de bevolking vormen. Tot slot wordt er in

deze studie geconcludeerd dat er een gebrek is aan sociale samenhang. Om deze te vergroten is collectieve en interetnische samenwerking nodig. Het simpelweg oprichten van boerengroepen leidt niet zondermeer tot een dergelijke samenwerking daar leden vaak weinig met elkaar gemeen hebben en elkaar niet vertrouwen. Er moet daarom gezocht worden naar andere, meer maatschappelijk ingebedde actoren zoals de kerk. Voorts moeten er expliciete inspanningen worden geleverd om discriminerende praktijken te bestrijden en zelfs verdenkingen van dergelijke praktijken te weerleggen.

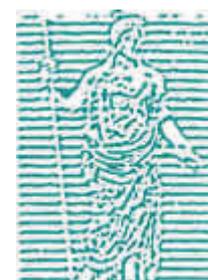
Curriculum Vitae

Marian Koster was born in Heerlen, the Netherlands, on February 1, 1972. In 1991, she started her MSc. study 'Tropical Landuse' at Wageningen Agricultural University. She conducted her thesis research in northwest India, where she studied the inheritance rights of women. In 1998, she graduated with distinction.

After graduation, Marian volunteered to work as a legal advisor for the Dutch Refugee Council (Vluchtelingenwerk). She also taught Dutch to migrant women in Rotterdam. From 2001 to 2003, she worked as a legal officer at the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).

In 2001, Marian was awarded a subsidy by Stichting Jo Kolk Studiefonds, which enabled her to make a reconnaissance visit to Rwanda. In 2002, she was awarded funding by the CERES Programme for Innovative PhD research Wageningen University (CEPIP-W) to work on a PhD research proposal. In March 2003, Marian started her PhD as an external student at Wageningen University. The CERES Programme for Innovative PhD research Wageningen University (CEPIP-W), Mansholt Graduate School of Social Sciences (MG3S) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NOW) have made her work financially possible.

During her PhD period, Marian has worked on a number of publications. These include a refereed article on the elongation of the labia minora by girls and young women in Rwanda and a booklet that discusses how the capacity of families and communities affected by HIV/AIDS can be strengthened so as to make best use of available agricultural resources. In order not to go nuts, she also worked as a volunteer in an animal shelter.



Completed Training and Supervision Plan Marian Koster

Description	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS
<i><u>I. Orientation</u></i>			
Orientation Course	CERES	2003	4
Presentation Tutorials	CERES	2003	6
<i><u>II. Research Methods and Techniques</u></i>			
Advanced course Development of Development Theory	ISS	2003	6
PhD course Gender, Food, Agriculture and Development	MGS	2003	3
PhD course Livelihood Analysis and Poverty Reduction Strategies	CERES	2003	2
PhD course Philosophy and Methodology of Social Sciences	ISS	2003	8
Video Practice in Professional Research	CERES / VISTA	2004	2
Digitale Video voor Sociale Wetenschappen (gevorderden)	CERES / VISTA	2005	3
PhD course Oral Histories and Life Stories	NOV	2005	5
PhD course Socio-Cultural Field Research Methods	CERES / MGS	2005	3
<i><u>III Seminar Presentations</u></i>			
“Re-building Rural Households’ Livelihoods and Security in a Post-Conflict Situation: A Study of Household Responses to Processes of Transformation in Rwanda”	CERES Summerschool	2003	4
“The Status of the Household in Post-Conflict Rwanda”	CERES Summerschool	2004	4
“Re-building rural household livelihood and security in post-conflict situations: a study of household responses to processes of transformation in Rwanda”	European / EAAE PhD Workshop	2005	4
<i><u>IV. Academic skills</u></i>			
PhD course Scientific Writing	MGS	2006	2
Total			56

