



HOW CAN IT BE POSSIBLE? PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF RECONCILIATION AFTER THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

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Casi 25 años después de la extrema crueldad y violencia que hubo en Ruanda durante el genocidio de 1994, agresores y agredidos vuelven a convivir como vecinos. La psicología tiene un valor extraordinario para explicar tanto el horror como la superación del mismo. No podemos explicar los procesos de la reconciliación interpersonal o nacional sin antes entender las dinámicas del conflicto en general, y del conflicto de Ruanda en particular. Tanto antes, como durante, como después, tienen lugar procesos emocionales, cognitivos y conductuales, que afectan a los implicados y les hacen capaces de lo mejor y de lo peor. Este es el propósito de este artículo: comprender los procesos psicológicos que llevan al conflicto violento y desarrollar las condiciones para la reconstrucción y la reconciliación personal y social, todo ello ilustrado con el caso de Ruanda, uno de los más privilegiados escenarios para estudiar la violencia y su superación.

Palabras clave: Reconciliación, Ruanda, Conflicto violento.

Almost 25 years after the extreme cruelty and violence that occurred in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994, the perpetrators and victims live together as neighbors. Psychology is of extraordinary value in explaining both the horror and its overcoming. We cannot explain the processes of interpersonal or national reconciliation without first understanding the dynamics of conflict in general, and of the Rwandan conflict in particular. Before, during and after any violent conflict, emotional, cognitive and behavioral processes take place, affecting those involved and making them capable of the best and the worst. This is the objective of this article: to understand the psychological processes that lead to violent conflict and to analyze the conditions for reconstruction, and personal and social reconciliation, focused on the case of Rwanda, one of the most relevant scenarios for studying violence and the overcoming of it.

Key words: Reconciliation, Rwanda, Violent conflict.

“ How can it be possible? Psychological processes of reconciliation after the genocide in Rwanda”

How can it be possible? This is what anyone asks when, hearing of the extreme cruelty and violence that occurred in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994, they learn that aggressors and victims live together once more as neighbors 25 years later. Psychology is of extraordinary value in explaining both the horror and the overcoming of it.

We cannot explain the processes of interpersonal or national reconciliation without first understanding the dynamics of the conflict in general, and of the Rwandan conflict in particular. Before, during and afterwards, emotional, cognitive and behavioral processes take place, which affect those involved and make them capable of the best and the worst. This is the purpose of this article: to understand the psychological processes that lead to violent conflict and to develop the conditions for reconstruction and personal and social reconciliation, all illustrated with the case of Rwanda, one of the most relevant scenarios for studying violence and the overcoming of it.

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PRE-CONFLICT PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES: THE INCUBATION OF HATRED AND FEAR

The mobilization of the processes of conflict begins with the frustration of basic psychological needs, such as safety, control, identity, well-being or connection with other people. Group identification can satisfy these psychological needs. Every group constructs a vision of itself and its history, “collective narratives” (Auerbach, 2009) that contain an explanation and a certain sense of coherence and consistency. They refer to five components: who the heroes of the story are, what happened, and when, where and why it happened. The narratives are not merely neutral descriptions nor do they represent real events; they constitute stories of the past, present and future, implying values, meanings, beliefs and sociocultural frameworks. All of this psychological repertoire can be incorporated into socialization processes since childhood (Villa, 2016).

Metanarratives, sometimes called *shared visions*, place narratives in a broader context and represent a source of identity and national legitimacy. They are abstract, intangible schemes, from which reality is interpreted and they incorporate the basic symbols, values, beliefs and codes of conduct of a group (Auerbach, 2009). Narratives and meta-narratives build *collective identity*. Attempts to modify meta-narratives are perceived as direct attacks on one’s own values or symbols.

Once this collective identity is constructed, threats to the safety



or social identity of the group create *collective anguish* (Wohl & Branscombe, 2009), an emotional reaction to the belief that the future existence of the group is being threatened in some way. The narratives of the group then begin to emphasize certain contents.

Firstly, the narratives begin to indicate that there is an 'other'/enemy that destroys their own identity, lifestyle, values, traditions, and that therefore must be eliminated (Villa, 2016). The sense of belonging to the group is reinforced as opposed to that of the other/enemy, with whom it is not possible to establish a dialogue. Each party considers themselves the *good* group and lives embodying virtues: peace lovers, upright, honest and, above all, victims of the *other*, which is experienced as a collective, without distinguishing individualities, and embodies all of the defects. Sometimes the group believes that it has been chosen, which gives it an extraordinary sense of moral rectitude or superiority (Auerbach, 2009). This type of narrative builds a worldview that generates opposing identities (Villa, 2016): an ingroup (us), which opposes the outgroup (them). *Polarization* begins, defined by Ignacio Martín-Baró as the process by which postures and perceptions of a given problem tend to be reduced more and more to two opposing and exclusive schemes (Moyano & Trujillo, 2015). Conflict between groups typically promotes a greater demand of conformity to the groups, and individuals may be rejected if they do not share the negative attitudes towards the members of the other group.

Secondly, *narratives* of victimhood begin, which oversimplify the facts and create founding myths (Villa, 2016). Thus, for example, it is common to find what Staub (2013) calls "*chosen trauma*", an unresolved or unhealed group trauma, especially due to past victimization, which becomes an important component of the identity and strengthens the idea that they are the only victims and the others the only aggressors. The history of victimization leads people to feel vulnerable and to see the world as dangerous, and to react intensely to any perceived threat. Beliefs such as *competitive victimization* (Auerbach, 2009) appear, in which an asymmetric evaluation of suffering is observed: the conviction that one's own group has suffered more than the other, and that one's suffering is more unjust.

In addition, conflicting intergroup relations are usually accompanied by *social prejudices*, negative attitudes of the members of one group towards those of another with a high emotional charge (Moyano & Trujillo, 2015). The prejudice is constituted, at the cognitive level, by beliefs about the traits of the enemy group members, beliefs that conform the stereotype (agreement about the normative features of a category of people or of the members of another group). The truthfulness of these beliefs is usually reduced, or they can even be completely false. Intergroup conflict may be the seed of all the dynamics of prejudice and polarization, but at the same time it may be a consequence of them.

In addition to cognitive processes, there are also emotional processes involved in the genesis of collective violence. The negative evaluation that is made about the enemy group and its members has a high emotional charge, with emotions of hostility, dislike, aversion, hatred, anger, and tension (Moyano & Trujillo, 2015). As the social learning theory notes, when one

person identifies with another, the act of observing intense emotions in the other also generates emotion in the person observing, which facilitates the contagion of emotions among the members of a group.

All these psychological processes occur in combination with certain political and cultural characteristics; for example, the political legitimation of narratives that encourage the maintenance of differences, the construction and exacerbation of hatred or the legitimization of violence as a way of responding to the actions of the other (Villa, 2016), distrust in the legal system or a high distorted perception of injustice (Moyano & Trujillo, 2015). In addition, the media can be powerful discourse builders, making an asymmetric assessment of suffering or fostering competitive victimization.

Pre-conflict psychological processes in the case of Rwanda

Now we have reviewed the processes in pre-conflict situations, we will identify them in the situation of Rwanda prior to the genocide, in order to better understand the context in which the violence was generated.

Three ethnic groups coexisted in Rwanda: the Hutu (85%), the Tutsi (14%) and the Twa (1%). The Hutu were mainly farmers and, the Tutsi, were traditionally pastoralists and nomads. It seems that, perhaps, the Tutsi tend to be taller, the Twa, shorter and the Hutu of an intermediate stature, although currently the phenotypic differences between them are minimal. The main differences were in their names and surnames (associated with the place of origin), in the distribution of rights and duties, and in the positions of power they assumed. Historically, the Tutsi had more rights than the Hutu, in addition to a certain pre-eminence at the political level. The enmity between the two main ethnic groups goes back to the sixteenth century, during certain military expeditions carried out by the Tutsi with which they asserted their power to subdue their Hutu subjects. After the First World War, the Rwandan administration came under the umbrella of Belgium, which enhanced the power of the Tutsi in the country and fed the hypothesis of the genetic superiority of the Tutsis. The supremacist ideological discourse culminated in the creation of an identification document at a national level that stated the specific ethnic group to which the person belonged. The mere possession of this ethnic card guaranteed a system in which the Tutsi benefited from privileges, increasing the Hutu's perception of injustice. At that time, both groups could already identify elements of reality that they incorporated into their narrative of a chosen people, morally superior, as opposed to the other, the enemy and a threat. The Belgian maneuvers increased the fear that had been established historically and learned for generations.

The Hutu identity, constructed through narrations about their own values as opposed to those of the Tutsi, as a people unjustly treated for centuries, caused the Hutu, especially in their most radical wing, to perceive every event during the Belgian colonization of the twentieth century as a threat to their survival. In the years that preceded the genocide, the Akazu clan, the most radical wing of the Hutu, occupied a large part of the positions of power and had among its ranks the scientists and intellectuals who enunciated the ideology that was later used to



justify the genocide. Their privileged position in Rwandan society allowed them to disseminate ethnic hatred and feed the idea that the Tutsi should be eradicated. According to their ideology, the Tutsi belonged to a different and strange race, and their arrival in Rwanda had meant the beginning of the slavery and exploitation to which the Hutu had been subjected for centuries; not only had it conditioned the loss of their wealth and power, but it had forced them to live in constant humiliation and poverty, even corrupting them inside. The Akazu fed among the Hutu this idea that putting an end to the Tutsi was the only way to recover their authentic identity and dignity, their freedom and their security, unjustly taken away so many centuries ago (Rodríguez Vázquez, 2017).

After Rwanda became independent from Belgium, the Hutu came to power for the first time in 1961. During those 30 years of government prior to the genocide, the historical fear of their previous oppressor became clear. The Hutu narrative regarding the Tutsi was embodied in "The Ten Hutu Commandments", published in *Kangura* ("the hate newspaper") at the end of 1990 (Annex 1). All of these centuries of historical conflict crystallized in the civil war of 1990, the prelude to the 1994 genocide. The genocide was triggered by the death in an air attack of the Hutu president Habyarimana on April 7, 1994, immediately attributed to the Tutsis. The genocide was the vehement and intense response of anger, hatred and collective Hutu anguish towards the Tutsis.

These psychological processes converged with certain sociopolitical characteristics: the legitimization of the supremacist narrative and the legitimization of violence. The media fueled the terror for years and shaped the image of the Tutsi population as a threat; the Thousand Hills Radio, to the cry of *inyenzi* (cockroaches), continued to dehumanize the image of the Tutsi, contributing to the contempt and rejection towards this group. In the press and propaganda, the Tutsi were portrayed as collaborators of the Belgians that needed to be eradicated. Sometimes these speeches appealed to the moral superiority of the Hutu, making them understand that putting an end to the Tutsi was only their obligation to ensure the good of their people. The militias of the Hutu radical wing called themselves *Interahamwe* (those who kill together), and used the radio broadcasts to provoke the Hutu uprising on the day that the genocide began: the Hutus were directed to the collective slaughter or "final solution", "work" that was necessary for a greater good: their survival.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES DURING THE CONFLICT: THE MORAL DISCONNECTION

In the same way that there are processes that facilitate the beginning of conflict, there are also processes that allow it to last and prolong over time, or even worsen.

The most relevant are the *moral disengagement mechanisms* (Bandura, 2002). According to Bandura, when people follow their moral standards they feel satisfaction and well-being, while breaking them involves self-censorship, self-punishment and distress. Extreme violence directed toward others can be very threatening to the moral identity of the individual, so it requires very powerful mechanisms of moral disengagement.

There are four ways to disconnect the internal moral control from incorrect behavior:

- ✓ *Redefining* the behavior, for example, comparing it with other worse behaviors or using euphemistic language.
- ✓ *Justifying* it, by means of three mechanisms: *the diffusion of responsibility* (acting on behalf of a group diminishes the perception of responsibility and facilitates disinhibition), *the displacement of responsibility* (the person transfers his/her moral towards an external authority that he/she considers legitimate) or justifying the aggression under principles of *superior moral order*.
- ✓ *Minimizing* the harmful consequences of the action itself: both by focusing only on the possible benefits, as well as by the habituation to the unpleasantness of its consequences, as a result of the repetition of the violent acts.
- ✓ *Defiling* the victim through guilt or devaluation. Every group attributes responsibility externally, so that the enemy is the main cause of the situation (Sabucedo, Blanco & De la Corte, 2003), and can maintain a discourse of victimization in which they are the real victims, making it difficult to sympathize with other victims because of their own traumas; focusing the attention on one's own suffering facilitates the distraction from the aggressive act committed. However, violent action is sometimes difficult to justify, such as violence towards innocent victims; then the *delegitimization* and *depersonalization* of the victim is used, through which it is possible not to see others as people, but as subhuman objects, which facilitates a lack of moral control over our behavior. For this, the opponent is delegitimized, associating him/her with other groups valued negatively, defining him/her with "inhuman" characteristics or even using comparisons with animals, or through demonization.

Along with these mechanisms of moral disengagement, there are also external conditions that facilitate the development of violence, such as the *passivity of witnesses*, both on a personal level and as groups or nations (Staub, 2013). Witnesses may not act because they trust that each injury inflicted by their group will be the last, or because they trust the criteria of their leaders, or they believe that they cannot influence a social process, or they do not know how to connect with other people to achieve it.

The moral disengagement in the case of Rwanda

In the case of Rwanda, we can observe all the moral disengagement mechanisms. The violence during those days came to be seen as correct, redefining the murders as necessary work that would allow them to achieve a greater good: to guarantee the security and the freedom of the Hutu and to obtain a future of peace in which they would not have to go back to competing for their rights. Calling it the "final solution" implied that all previous solutions had been insufficient and, therefore, this was the only alternative.

The massacres were often perpetrated as a group, which facilitated the benefit from the support and sense of belonging to the group and the dilution of the responsibility for individual acts. In addition, the majority responded to the orders of a superior, shifting the responsibility towards the extremist wing of



the Hutu government that ordered the attacks. Added to this was the threat of death towards those who did not want to participate in the massacres.

Finally, the narrative of the Tutsi as guilty allowed genocide to fit in as a self-defense action. The main psychological mechanism in the murder of innocent victims was devaluation; it was easier if they were not seen as people but as *inyenzi* (cockroaches), animals that did not deserve to be treated with dignity. There were specific cases of aggressors during the genocide who had never committed a crime before, but who managed to distance themselves emotionally so much that their victims became mere numbers.

In addition to these mechanisms, there were external conditions that permitted the extreme violence. The international organizations previously present in the country, the United Nations blue helmets peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), among others, withdrew during the conflict, the embassies closed, the Western presence left the country and many Church members observed passively or withdrew (and some even participated in the genocide). The inaction of so many powerful actors who remained impassive in the face of the massacres was another way the violence was legitimized.

POST-CONFLICT PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES: RECONCILIATION

It is not easy to consider reconciliation immediately after a conflict. Violence has devastating effects on the victims, perpetrators and the community; it destroys moral values, disrupts identities (of the self and of others), and generates negative emotions, such as distrust, fear and insecurity, the desire for revenge, hatred, and all those contained in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In this context, reconciliation is more than problem solving, mediation or negotiation. The restoration of relationships involves both cognitive and emotional psychological processes. In especially traumatic situations, reconciliation is not just a technical intervention, but a profound change of attitude.

Reconciliation involves the reconstruction of relationships destroyed in the context of violence, to ensure that individuals and societies can define a common future and move towards it (Abello, 2006). It is a process of consolidating positive and constructive notions of peace and creating safe spaces. A reconciliation process assumes that the social order post-conflict is not only imposed by the authorities, but built by the society, based on the protection of rights and the creation of spaces for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In order to enable any process of reconciliation, there are two indispensable elements: truth and justice. Through truth, society recognizes the magnitude and dimension of what happened, identifies those responsible and shows what violence has caused to individuals and communities (Abello, 2006). Establishing who did what and why is essential for justice and so that group narratives can move towards a shared history (Staub, 2013). In order to satisfy the need for truth, special committees or tribunals have been established that facilitate social recognition of the history of violence and its effects.

Another essential element for reconciliation is *justice*, which

involves recognizing the responsibility of those who used violence and the compensation that victims of the violence deserve (Abello, 2006). Every unpunished crime is a source of further crimes. Victims must occupy a preferential position throughout the reconciliation process; it is important to consider all the victims, whoever their aggressors might have been: the victims are the heritage of all (Aguirre, 1999). Effective justice processes recognize the suffering of individuals, increase feelings of security and recreate a balance in the relations between the two groups.

Tasks for reconciliation

After truth and justice, for conflicts to be transformed into a lasting peace based on a change of mind and heart, profound and prolonged processes are required. According to Auerbach (2009) reconciliation between two parties in identity conflicts requires the dismantling and incorporation of their conflicting narratives to the public discourse of both parties. To do this, Auerbach suggests a series of steps or stages, which she calls "the reconciliation pyramid," a descriptive, non-prescriptive proposal of the reconciliation process (described in Prieto, 2015). As we will see, the first two tasks are actually requirements, and correspond to establishing the truth that we mentioned before:

1. Knowledge of conflicting narratives. When conflicts are prolonged, the hurt and fear are so strong that they lead each party to focus on their own situation, and in the end, they are not only unfamiliar with each other's narrative, but they are unable to critically review their own narrative and to admit the possibility that there are inaccuracies in their version of the truth.
2. Recognition of the other's narratives, without necessarily accepting them as true. It is important to distinguish between knowledge (previous step) and recognition: admitting that the other's version has some validity, understanding it and recognizing it as legitimized.
3. Expression of empathy towards the situation of the other. Empathy is the ability to consider the perspective of the other, and can refer to feeling what the other feels (emotional empathy) or understanding the other's feelings (cognitive empathy). This is a difficult step, which may even be interpreted as a lack of fidelity towards the ingroup. Empathic exchanges are more likely at personal levels, for example, between parents of both parties who have lost sons or daughters.
4. Responsibility. Each party assumes at least some partial responsibility for the suffering of the other party; it seems that guilt facilitates the assumption of responsibility, the expression of repentance, the apology and the reparation, both at the personal level (Prieto & Echegoyen, 2015) and at the group level (Páez, Valencia, Etxebarria, Bilbao, & Zubietta, 2011), while shame hinders these.
5. Expressing a disposition for the restitution or reparation of the damage, on the personal-group level or as a political act by the decision-makers. Reparation implies that the aggressor group admits responsibility, expresses a desire to improve the relationship with the other group and indicates that the



damage will not be repeated in the future. Acts of reparation facilitate positive communication between victims and aggressors, by the victims overcoming their anger and their feeling of helplessness (Wohl & Branscombe, 2009).

6. Apologizing and asking forgiveness for past mistakes. As Aguirre (1999) points out, it is only after speaking about truth and justice that it is appropriate to speak about forgiveness. Forgiveness must be considered based on respect for the victims. When apology and repentance are perceived as authentic, the offender's negative characteristics are attenuated. The willingness to forgive reconstructs the person, by releasing him or her from the hatred and the desire for revenge, and enables society to get out of the spiral of revenge. Forgiveness can be expressed personally, or in the legal sphere, through an amnesty, pardon or reduction of sentence (remembering that measures that involve impunity hinder the reconciliation process). Legally articulated measures of pardon must be applied with two preconditions (Aguirre, 1999): that the rights of the victims have been claimed, they have been surrounded by solidarity, and justice has been done; and that the aggressors have recognized, in some way, the injustice committed and offered guarantees of modifying their previous trajectory.
7. The incorporation of opposing narratives into a common discourse of the past, acceptable to both parties. In other words, the construction of a shared narrative that incorporates the perspectives of both parties in the conflict. Sometimes it is enough that they are mutually tolerant of the other interpretations of the facts regarding the conflict.

We would add one final task in order to consider the reconciliation process complete and ensure its sustainability: contact between the two parties. Allport (as cited in Moyano & Trujillo, 2015), in his *contact hypothesis*, argued that prejudice could be reduced through positive intergroup contact, for which a set of conditions should be met: (1) equal group status among those making contact; (2) pursuit of common objectives, shared by the members of the groups separately; (3) authorization and legitimation of social institutions; and (4) expectations of positive results. Positive contact would allow us to see the humanity of the other, rethink our own identity and build a common identity (Staub, 2013).

Reconciliation in Rwanda

Rwandan culture is mainly collectivist. Individual quality of life is not conceived far from or distinct from the quality of life within the community. In Rwanda, personal and community reconciliation are practically indivisible, and almost all the steps taken in these last two decades of reconstruction of the country have been directed towards the construction of the community through dialogue, with an ultimate goal of peaceful coexistence.

One thing that Rwanda has achieved remarkably is that genocide has not become a taboo subject. Every April 7 the commemoration period *Kwibuka* (remembrance) begins, signaling the beginning of 100 days of mourning in the country. During the first week there are numerous acts, memorials, vigils and testimonies to keep the memory alive of what happened. This period of mourning ends on July 4, *Kwibohora* (the day of

liberation), the anniversary of the end of the genocide.

According to Porter (in Clark, 2014), reconciliation requires a space for public discourse and debate in which the two old opponents can listen and express themselves openly. Although some authors point out that in Rwanda such a space has not existed, due to the imposition of a single narrative on the history of Rwanda (which emphasizes the historical harmony between Hutu and Tutsi and focuses the origin of the ethnic distinctions on the European colonialism that divided the country, Bilali, 2014), for others the space of public debate has been the *Gacaca* community courts (Clark, 2014), which functioned from 2001 until about two years ago, inspired by the popular tradition for conflict resolution. *Gacaca* courts were created in each community, and attendance was mandatory. A group of people that were considered neutral was chosen, whose reputation endorsed them as truthful and honest people, and these were appointed as judges. They listened to the narratives of the two parties in conflict and decided who was guilty. In addition to accelerating the criminal process at a time when the country could not assume the investigation of all cases, these courts allowed the aggressors to confess their crimes and the victims to find out the truth about what had happened to their relatives and, in general, they are positively viewed among Rwandans (Clark, 2014). However, a number of problems have been observed regarding these courts; for example, cases of missing testimonies and threats (Mukherjee, 2011), the reduction of trust and unity between groups (Rettig, 2008), or the generation of resentment among the Hutu, since the courts only judged murders and assaults against the Tutsi, but not against moderate Hutu or cases of assassinations or aggressions against Hutu by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (Clark, 2010). In addition, knowledge of the truth can reactivate negative emotions if the emotional support needed to process them is not provided (Páez et al., 2011).

In Rwanda, the need for justice after the genocide was emphasized, which led to the creation of special bodies for transitional justice. The crimes committed during the genocide did not go unpunished. In 1994, the United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for the prosecution and conviction of those who led the massacre. Furthermore, the *Gacaca* courts led to numerous aggressors, who were already serving their sentences and had confessed their crimes, being released and the prison sentence being commuted to community service. In general, the evaluation that has been made of the transitional justice processes in Rwanda has been positive (Clark, 2014), and for the victims, knowing that the perpetrators were not allowed immunity was necessary to restore the balance and the feeling of security.

Some initiatives that the government has put in place for reconciliation have been questioned, such as changing the names of towns and places, or re-education in the *Ingando Camps*. One such initiative, *Ndi Umunyarwanda* (I am Rwandan), aimed at strengthening an identity as Rwandans distinct from the ethnic sub-identities, is controversial because it generates a certain sense of "collective guilt", as it makes people who did not commit a crime (and even some that were born



after the genocide) feel guilty, or imposes a single narrative (Bilali, 2014). In some sessions, every Hutu was encouraged to apologize to his/her Tutsi compatriots; however, the expression of indiscriminate remorse has not been positive. At present, although this initiative has managed to emphasize the characteristics that unite them as a society, it is criticized for suppressing ethnic identities, which are still present today and are part of their individual identity (Thomson, 2011). Several authors consider a dual identity more positive than a single identity (Dovidio et al, 2007).

An example of the different initiatives for the construction of a common discourse in the country is the radio soap, *Musekeweya*, initiated in 2004 by Radio La Benevolencia Humanitarian Tools Foundation (Bilali, 2014), which presents a realistic portrait of the difficult path towards reconciliation between two fictional towns, pointing out their strengths in achieving it and promoting positive contact or friendship between groups. The program, based on the reconciliation studies by Staub, has had a positive effect both on the intention of Rwandans to listen to different versions of the story (to understand and recognize the narrative of the other), to show a less competitive and more inclusive victimization and on the creation of a common vision of history (Bilali, 2014).

Regarding repentance and reparation, benefits have been observed in the programs that prepare victims and aggressors to end up expressing genuine and authentic repentance towards the victims. One of the most relevant programs has spread throughout the country. "The Secret of Peace", better known by the name of the parish in which it was born, the *Mushaka Program*. In this initiative, in order to be reinserted into the parish community, once penalty has been served, the aggressors must follow a personal process that culminates in the expression of repentance to their victims in a community act.

Institutional support from the government is a key factor in guaranteeing success and lasting peace. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission supports and practically imposes contact through policies of coexistence and non-exclusion. For example, the approach to the genocide commemorations is always carried out jointly, actively involving both sides in remembrance and in the memorials (Rodríguez Vázquez, 2017). Hutus and Tutsis were forced to live together when the aggressors began to leave the prisons and returned to their communities and they share their daily lives: the continued contact is the guarantee for sustainable reconciliation in the country. In addition, the processes of personal reconciliation are often sealed by economic initiatives that link both parties to a common goal to improve their situation. An example of this are the cooperative tasks related to agriculture or livestock that allow them to work together, thus prolonging positive contact and increasing the chances of restoring trust.

CONCLUSIONS

Through a path of lights and shadows, with rights and wrongs, the Rwandans have come to live in peace. Especially in rural areas (where most Rwandans live) they have got involved in rebuilding the relationship and are witnessing genuine reconciliation. Nowadays, Hutus and Tutsis sit at the same table,

share food and drink, attend church or school together, talk, help each other in times of illness or misfortune, and marry each other in a country where marriage symbolizes a great union between families (Clark, 2014).

There is still a long way to go; reconciliation does not end in a peaceful coexistence, but in the assurance that the conflict will not be repeated in the future. And for Rwandans, it is the individual level, in the personal interaction, where it can be achieved, not trying to return to old relationships, but building new ways of relating (Clark, 2014). Unlike the government version, according to the Rwandans, it is not a matter of returning to an earlier state of lost harmony, but of learning to live in peace for good.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There is not conflict of interests

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Annex I

The ten Hutu commandments

1. Every Hutu must remember that a Tutsi woman, whoever she is, works for the interest of the Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we will consider a traitor any Hutu who:
 - ✓ Marries a Tutsi woman.
 - ✓ Keeps friendship with a Tutsi woman.
 - ✓ Employs a Tutsi as a secretary or has a Tutsi lover.
2. Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more adequate and more aware of their role as women and mothers. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?
3. Hutu women: remain vigilant and try to agree with your husbands, brothers and sons.
4. Every Hutu should know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aspiration is the supremacy of his ethnic group. Therefore, any Hutu who does the following is considered a traitor:
 - ✓ Becomes the partner of a Tutsi in business.
 - ✓ Invests his money or government money in a Tutsi company.
 - ✓ Loans or borrows money from a Tutsi.
 - ✓ Does favors for Tutsis in business (obtains import licenses, bank loans, construction sites, public markets, etc.).
5. All strategic political, administrative, economic, military and security positions must be occupied by Hutus.
6. The education sector (students, teachers) must have a Hutu majority.
7. The Rwandan Armed Forces must be composed exclusively of Hutus. The experience of the October 1990 war has taught us a lesson. No member of the Rwandan Armed Forces will marry a Tutsi woman.
8. The Hutu must stop showing mercy to the Tutsis.
9. The Hutu, wherever they are, must show unity and solidarity and be concerned about the destiny of their Hutu brothers.
 - ✓ Hutu from within and outside Rwanda must constantly seek friends and allies of the Hutu cause, starting with their Hutu brothers.
 - ✓ They must constantly counter Tutsi propaganda.
 - ✓ The Hutu must remain firm and vigilant against the common Tutsi enemy.
10. The social revolution of 1959 and the referendum of 1961, as well as the Hutu ideology, should be taught to every Hutu and at all levels. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely. Any Hutu who persecutes his brother for having read, disseminated and taught this ideology is a traitor.

