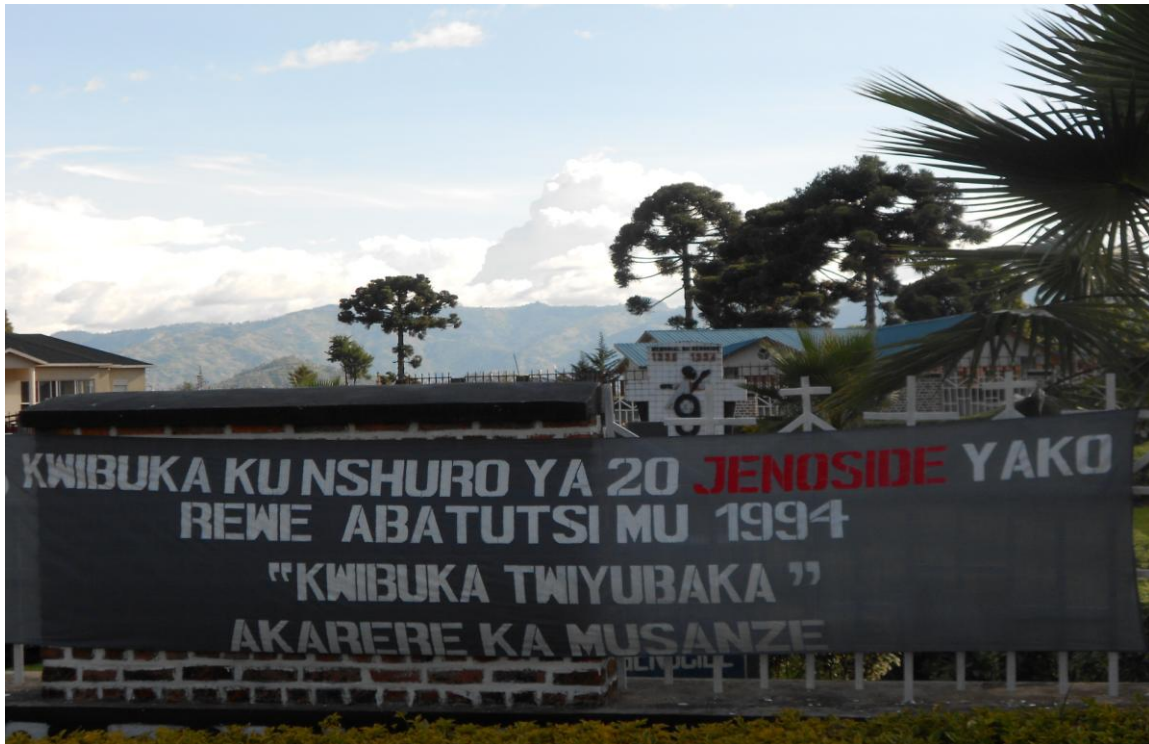

Finding the only possible truth

A study into the genocidal narratives that Rwandan students encounter and the way Rwandan students weave their own single narrative and corresponding truths about the genocide



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1. Introduction

In April this year the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan genocide took place and the nation's newspapers, radio channels and the lives of the Rwandans were fully dedicated to the Kwibuka remembrance slogan 'Remember, Unite, Renew'. All Rwandans, young and old, participated in events of remembrance. After 20 years, an entire new generation exists which did not experience the genocide directly. What these young people know is what they have learned from people who did experience the genocide: transmitted knowledge. This knowledge can be transmitted by family members, the media, schools, etcetera, and helps the young people to paint a picture of the causes, events and aftermath of genocide.

In the academic world multiple articles and books are written about the transmission of war knowledge. However, these articles and books focus often on the transmission of trauma or the role of history textbooks. Little is written on the multiple transmission sources and the impact of these sources on the truths that the new generation owns, and this is exactly the theoretical gap this research aims to fill. Argenti and Schramm (2010) included anthropological perspectives on intergenerational transmission in their book. One case is a comparative study about the children of the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide survivors. The children often declare to know little about their parents Holocaustic or genocidal past (Argenti and Schramm, 2010). Their parents did not like to elaborate extensively on their experiences. However, most of the children explained that their parents told them the same story over and over again. Similarly, in the PhD research of Sánchez Meertens (2013) on the transmission of knowledge and war history in Eastern Sri Lanka, the family members mainly transmitted knowledge on incidents of violence 'meant to convey the history of a feeling' (Sánchez Meertens, 2013). Even though these fragments are not always situated in a wider historical narrative, they do frame the descendant's world-view (Argenti and Schramm, 2010).

In this research I will explore whether this is also the case in Rwanda: I will look at the stories the Rwandan parents transmit to their children and the impact of these narratives on the students' beliefs. However, since parents are not the only important information source in the life of students, I will as well look at the role of the school and the media in this formation of truths. The influence of the school and media might be different from the influence of the parents. After the genocide the Rwandan government created a historical narrative about the genocide which is still taught. This government, which is still ruling, consists mainly of people who belong to the political party Rwandan Patriotic Front (hereafter referred to as RPF) (Freedman et al., 2008). This party was created by Tutsi diasporas and took control of the country and ended the genocide in 1994. Therefore, they have different ideas about the history than the perpetrator group, the Hutus (Freedman et al., 2008), and therefore Hutu parents. Besides, the narrative propagated by the government is a de-ethnicized one, not focusing on the Hutu versus Tutsi categories. Yet, a great part of the Rwandan people does believe that ethnicity exists and played a role in the genocide (Buckley-Zistel, 2009). The narratives the students learn from their parents and in school or from the media might hence clash.

The aim of this research is therefore to examine what narratives about the genocide the Rwandan students encounter and how the Rwandan students weave their own single narrative and corresponding truths about the genocide despite the multiple possible interpretations. This case can be situated in the academic debate about history versus memory. It contributes to the formation of knowledge regarding the importance of memory and plain history on the attitudes and beliefs of people. Whereas some authors see a clear distinction and a difference in importance between the concepts history and memory, others see them as overlapping (Cappalletto, 2003). Cole (2001, in Argenti and Schramm) argues that historical facts influence memories and vice versa. This history

versus memory debate is also present in the process of designing curriculum after conflict, for example in the question whether memory should be included in the curriculum. This research will show what the consequences are when the decision is made to indeed teach violent history, in a manner in which history and memory are combined. Finally, whereas it is commonplace to say that 'history is written by victors', a quote often attributed to Winston Churchill, but of unknown origin, this is not applicable to Rwanda. In Rwanda, history is written by survivors, and this research will show what happens to history when this is the case.

1.1 The case of Rwanda

1.1.1 Historical background

"Rwandan history is dangerous. Like all of history, it is a record of successive struggles for power, and to a very large extent power consists in the ability to make others inhabit your story of their reality – even, as is so often the case, when that story is written in their blood" (Gourevitch, 1998, p.48).

In order to explore the historical narratives that the Rwandan students encounter and the narrative that they consider to be 'true', it is useful to explore what narrative is prevalent in the scientific world. In this way it can be seen whether the stories that the students encounter, or the ones they believe in, place an emphasis on certain facts or events.

The pre-colonial history of Rwanda is difficult to determine since stories were not written down but only transmitted by word of mouth. Furthermore, the Rwandan society was hierarchical, so the stories that were told were mostly told by those who held power, either through the state or in opposition to the state (Gourevitch, 1998). What is fairly agreed upon is that the names Hutu and Tutsi already existed in those days, though they could not be seen as distinct ethnic groups (Gourevitch, 1998). Scientist do not agree on where those names relate to, often used is the word 'class'. Before colonial times Rwanda was ruled by kings and most kings were Tutsi, just like other higher occupations were often occupied by Tutsis (Gourevitch, 1998). However, the lines between the groups were porous. A Hutu could become a Tutsi, for example through marriage or social advancement (Gourevitch, 1998), though some researchers argue that this had become an abnormality since the early 1900's (Newbury, 1998). Furthermore, the distinctions of Hutu and Tutsi were not very significant in the time before colonization (Newbury, 1998). During colonial times the Belgian colonialist retained and exacerbated the societal divides of Hutu and Tutsi and favored the Tutsis for jobs within their colonial administration (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, hereafter referred to as UCDP, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). They wanted to build a traditional feudal system, standardize heterogeneous social relations and reinforce the powers of the "natural rulers" (Newbury, 1998). To simplify this they introduced ID-cards, with classifications which influenced people's chances in life. Newbury (1998) states that the ideology in which Tutsi were superior was a "collaborative enterprise" between colonialists and the Tutsi power holders.

The academic world largely agrees on the course of conflict and genocide that followed. Tensions increased when the Belgian administration started to replace the Tutsi elite with Hutu representatives in an attempt to democratize the society (UCDP, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). In November 1959 a Hutu uprising took place in which hundreds of Tutsi were killed and thousands of Tutsi fled to neighboring countries (United Nations, hereafter referred to as UN, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). This was the start of the Hutu Peasant Revolution, which would last until 1961. By 1962, when Rwanda became independent, more than 10.000 Tutsis had fled the country

and the authority was mainly in hands of the Hutus (UN, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). Small groups of exiled Tutsis started to attack the government in an attempt to gain back power. In 1988 they organized and formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and invaded Rwanda from Uganda in 1990. They did not succeed in overthrowing the government and the signing of the Arusha peace agreements ended the conflict temporarily (UN, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). On the 6th of April 1994 Habyarimana, the Rwandan president, died in a plane crash. After this, massacres against Tutsis and moderate Hutus started to take place, and within 100 days an estimated million people died. On the 4th of July the RPF overthrew the Rwandan government and thereby ended the genocide (UN, n.d., retrieved in June 2014). The conflict did not end here though, scientists argue, since the former Hutu militia reorganized in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and organized an armed struggle from the border of the DRC into Rwanda. The RPF attacked those militia and a significant amount of Hutu militia died (UCDP, n.d., retrieved in June 2014).

1.1.2 Contemporary situation

The past 20 years Rwanda and international actors have been working on reconstructing and developing the country. Economically, Rwanda has made a lot of progress. “Although 7 million people, close to two-thirds of the country's population, live below the poverty line, more than 1 million have crossed this threshold in recent years” (Howard, 2014). Rwanda has also made great improvement considering the access to education: 97% of the Rwandan children attend primary school, which is the highest rate in Africa (Howard, 2014). All the schools are public, thus they all have the same curriculum and use the same schoolbooks. This means that the students that are approached for this research will have had a fairly similar education with regard to the country's history.

The head of the current government of Rwanda is Paul Kagame, who was the RPF leader during the revolution in 1994. Though his government contributed to the developments in Rwanda, human rights activists are not very positive about Kagame and his policies. The chapter about Rwanda in the World Report 2013 of the Human Rights Watch starts with: “Rwanda has made important economic and development gains, but the government has continued to impose tight restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Opposition parties are unable to operate. Two opposition party leaders remain in prison and other members of their parties have been threatened” (Human Rights Watch, 2013, p.147). This shows that it is difficult for people to transmit a narrative to the public that is not in line with the governmental views. The influence of this governmental power on the historical narratives will be discussed in chapter four. The historical narratives of Rwanda can be analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis in combination with Discourse Historical Approach. The details of these approaches will be discussed below.

1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis combined with Discourse Historical Approach

The analytical frame that will be used to look at the phenomenon of historical narratives and truths in Rwanda is that of discourse. The discursive approach focuses on the importance of the use of language and therefore also on narratives. Since this research concerns the historical narratives taught and told, the discursive approach is a fitting framework. Furthermore, the discursive approach is known to combine structure and agency. Whereas structures can account for what a student learns in history classes, for example, I believe that students still have the agency to weave their own narrative.

Peter Tamas (2014) has argued that the analytical framework of discourse can be approached

through six main components: truths, rules, roles, power, knowledge and artefacts. All the concepts interact with each other and influence discourse while the concepts are also being influenced by discourse (Tamas, 2014). A main approach within Discourse Analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter referred to as CDA). CDA focuses especially on the 'discursive conditions, components and consequences of power abuse by dominant (elite) groups and institutions' (Van Dijk, 1995, p.24). The concept of power is extremely useful for this research, since this can be related to the role of the Rwandan government in for example history education or the creation of rules. CDA looks at the ways inequality, abuse, power and domination are reproduced or resisted against through the use of language. Within CDA, discourse is seen as a form of social practice (Van Dijk, 1995). By seeing it as such, CDA implies that a dialectical relationship exists between discursive events and the different elements of the situations, institutions and structures which frame them (Fairclough, 1992). This can be used to analyze the role of institutions, such as the school and government, in Rwanda.

However, CDA is still leaning towards the structure ontology, which caused academics to start a new approach. The Discourse Historical Approach (hereafter referred to as DHA) is a sub-approach of CDA but states that it is not merely the social structures interacting with the discourse (Glynos et al., 2009). According to DHA there exists a cognitive and subjective component between the social structures and the discourse: "it is not objective social situations (determined by social structures) that influence language variation but rather it is the "subjective definitions of the relevant properties of these communicative situations that influence talk and text," (Wodak and Meyer, 2009 as cited in: Glynos et al., 2009, p.18). The memory of people needs to be taken into account since it contributes to the way they understand things (Glynos et al., 2009). DHA could therefore help explain the influence of the Rwandan parents' memories on the truths of the students.

1.3 Methodological discussion

As previously stated, the aim of this research is to describe and explain, using a theoretical and empirical foundation, how Rwandan students use the different sources of knowledge transmission in the process of weaving a single narrative about the 1994 genocide. Different methodological steps are involved in this. First, the theoretical and empirical context were explored. A literature review revealed the theoretical context. The empirical context was explored by having conversations with people in Rwanda about the subject, in particular with the people from the NGO where I did my internship, prior to conducting interviews. This NGO, Radio La Benevolencija, works in the field of reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and could therefore provide me with useful knowledge concerning the post-genocide context. The second step was defining the sample and collecting the data. The sample was defined as Rwandan youth living in Kigali who are between 18 and 25 years old and who are in secondary school or have finished secondary school. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, since I wanted to gain knowledge about the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of students and I believed this was the most effective method to gather this kind of rich data. In this way there was a topic list, used during the interviews as a guiding tool, but there also remained space for participants to bring up information they considered as relevant. Ten interviews were conducted with a length between 26 and 88 minutes. Most interviews were conducted in the cafeteria of the Kigali National Library. It is rare for a foreigner to enter someone's private home in Rwanda. The library was a therefore a good alternative, since it is a very accessible and relatively quiet place. I once interviewed a duo, all the other interviews were with one participant. Six males and five females were interviewed. Though they were never asked about their ethnical background, it could be often deduced from their stories. I reckon therefore very carefully

that six out of the eleven students could be ethnically categorized as 'Tutsi'. More information about the participants can be found in appendix one. In addition, schoolbooks and newspapers were gathered to examine these sources of genocide knowledge transmission. The final step was to analyze the data. The interviews were transcribed and coded, while the schoolbooks and newspapers were marked for relevant information.

1.4 Challenges and limitations

I faced multiple challenges while conducting this research. First of all, the government makes it very difficult for foreign researchers to do research in Rwanda, especially when the research touches upon the subject of genocide. It was therefore impossible for me to obtain research visa and therefore to gain access to schools. Besides, if people in Rwanda do not trust the researcher they often ask for the permit. They have learned from the district officers that this is obligatory. This meant that participants had to be found informally through people I knew in Rwanda, so that the initial mistrust from participant to researcher could be taken away by our mutual friend. Since I was only in Rwanda for three months, this did result in a relatively small amount of interviews. This is a limitation of this research, since a bigger amount of participants could have made it easier to make statements about this case. However, since this research is qualitative in nature, the amount of data is less important than the quality and 'thickness' of the data, and in my opinion the data provided me with enough insights to analyze this case. However, I do believe that less socially acceptable answers and more true insights could have been found when the field research covered a longer period, allowing me to gain more trust of the participants.

The benefit of this method of recruiting people was that they might have been more open and trusted me more since I was a friend of one of their friends. I tried to gain their trust by first talking casually to them for about half an hour and by showing empathy when they told me about terrible things they or their family had been through. However, since the government is very strict and controlling, it is very well possible that socially acceptable answers were still given. Another challenge was that the genocide is still a very sensitive subject. It is still difficult for some people to talk about the genocide. Some people did not want to participate because they were 'not ready to talk about it'. Others participated, but gave very short answers when asked about their family members. Every time I noticed that a participant felt uncomfortable I switched to questions about positive or easy subjects for a while, before trying to return to the difficult subject. Overall, I considered the interaction between me and the students as easy and good. Jokes were made before and after the interview, sometimes even during the interview, and the students felt free to ask me questions as well. In my opinion it was helpful that I was of their age, which made it easier for me to relate to them and the other way around.

A final challenge was the language. Though my research population consisted of students, who all speak English since it is the main teaching language since 2008, their vocabulary was sometimes limited. Once I had to use an interpreter, most other times I succeeded with using synonyms or I used examples to clarify the question. A limitation is the fact that most of the students who participated were part of the same master's programme. This shows that they are from higher class families since university fees are around 10.000 UDS per programme (National University of Rwanda, hereafter referred to as NUR, n.d., retrieved in July 2014). Furthermore, it shows that the students are in a high intellectual class. This causes the research sample to be very unilateral.

1.5 Outline

To investigate what narratives about the genocide the Rwandan students encounter and how the Rwandan students weave their own single narrative and corresponding truths about the genocide despite the multiple possible interpretations, I will use three major themes. The second chapter of this thesis will cover the relationship between the students' own narrative and the historical truths and knowledge taught in school. The own narrative of the students will be discussed and the knowledge and truths that are transmitted in school will be analyzed. The chapter will be concluded with an analysis of the similarities between the narratives the students own and the narratives they have learned in school. Tamas' (2014) concepts of knowledge and truth will be central in this chapter. The third chapter will discuss whether the family and media are able to nuance the story the students adopt from school. This will be analyzed using the concept of access to discourse and the influence of roles (Van Dijk,1993; Tamas, 2014). The fourth chapter will discuss the role of the government in the existence of narratives and the ability of students to weave their own. The concepts of power and rules will be used to clarify the role of the government (Tamas, 2014). As can be seen, three actors, important sources of transmitted knowledge, and five of Tamas' (2014) concepts will be used to guide this thesis and answer the research question. Finally, the thesis will be concluded with a summary and discussion.

2. Relation own narrative and knowledge and truths taught in school

As a study concerning history teaching and reconciliation in Northern Ireland states, pupils between the age of eleven and fourteen draw often selectively from the official school curriculum, being the official historical narrative, to support the perspective of their own tradition (Cole, 2007). The narrative the students learn in school is therefore mainly used as an example of and in addition to the narrative of their tradition, being protestant or catholic. Transferred to Rwanda, one could therefore expect that the students use the narrative they learn in school in addition to the narrative of their ethnic tradition, being Hutu or Tutsi. This chapter will start setting out the elements of the students' own narratives to be able to see the influence of the school's historical knowledge and truths on them. Thereafter the truths that are transmitted to the students specifically in schools will be discussed. Within this, I will take a look into the content of the schoolbooks and the role of the teacher. According to Tamas (2014), the content of the schoolbooks can be seen as knowledge. He argues that the persons who speak out knowledge are very important since they are able to transform knowledge into truths. When knowledge is formed and spoken out by the teachers during classes it becomes a truth, since teachers are legitimate subjects in the right circumstances to form the knowledge properly (Tamas, 2014).

2.1 Own narrative and truths

Before inquiring what the students had learned in school and from their parents, I asked them the question what they thought had caused the 1994 genocide and what happened during that genocide. In this way, I was able to learn about their own beliefs, their internalized truths. When this question was posed, the majority of the students did not hesitate and shared their opinion immediately. They did not seem to find this a difficult or sensitive question, since none of the students behaved like they felt uncomfortable. The students mentioned a multitude of causal factors. The factors will be discussed in chronological order, since this will make it easier to compare the answers of the students to the official narrative. First of all, all but one student argued that Rwanda was united before the colonial period. The categories of 'Hutu', 'Tutsi' and 'Twa' did exist before the colonization, though they had a different meaning, the students all argued. Whereas in academic sources this different meaning is ill defined, the students usually defined it as 'social class'. Bonheur, one of the students, knew to explain this concept clearly:

"There were not really differences. There were social classes. Social classes could change at any time. It was actually depending on what you do and how one side was like.. Let me go straight to the society of Rwanda. It was Tutsis and Hutus and Twa which were living together, depending on what you do. Tutsis were more wealthy than any other class because they were cattle holders and a cow was considered as something very honorary at that time. Cows were used in business, it was really wealthy to have it. Hutus were farmers. It was a society which had very unifying features. It is the only society in Africa that had only one language, which is a very tremendous thing. If you speak one language, it is really .. you know, you can interact, you can talk to each other very simply, they had one culture. We had one religion. Society was monotheistic, believing in one god" (Bonheur, personal communication, 25 March 2014).

The students argued that Hutus and Tutsis were friends and social classes were not important at all during the pre-colonial period. People could change their social class, for example if a Hutu became rich he could become a Tutsi. All but one student believed that this all changed when the Belgian

colonialists came. According to the students they started to give the categories a different meaning and started separating Rwandans. Some students argued that this was part of colonial strategies, to 'divide and rule'. The colonialists started to spread the idea that the groups were different and multiple actions through which they separated the people were mentioned by the students. According to them, the Belgians started giving origins to the social classes, measured the nose and other body parts and introduced the ID card. The students argued that the colonialists favored the Hutus and some of them stated that the Belgians told the Hutus it was their time to reign, since the Tutsis reigned them for a long time already. The idea that Hutus and Tutsis were different and the ideology of Hutus as 'better people' was sustained after Rwanda gained independence. This was caused by another big actor in the lead up to the genocide: the government. Bad governance was a factor that was mentioned by almost all the students as a cause of the genocide. The former government is known by the students as the actor who proclaimed that Tutsis should leave Rwanda since they do not belong there and the country is too small to inhabit them as well. Some students added that the government did this because they wanted to reign the country themselves.

"The president Habyarimana said that the glass was full of water, no one could come. It means that no one can enter the country, because there are many people in the country. If you have small land, how can you live with other people. They were too many people he said. It was just politically, in that time there was enough land for living. Because the government did not want to share with people, they did that. People had to go away" (Emmanuel, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

The students were never visibly angry when they discussed the influence and actions of the Belgians or the former government. None of the students cursed at them or made a direct negative value judgment against them, such as 'the stupid government.'. They told very factually about these actors.

Half of the students mentioned the year 1959 as the year when the government started killing the Tutsis. It is known by these students that a lot of people fled into the neighboring countries around that time. In 1990, they formed a front and wanted to come back. According to the students, they proposed to the president to sign consent upon this in Tanzania, the Arusha Accords. Two students (Eraste, personal communication, 9 May 2014; Emmanuel, personal communication, 24 April 2014) argued that the president was planning to sign these Arusha Accords and that this intention was the reason his plane was shut down, since other Hutus did not want to share power with the Tutsis. All students agree that the plane crash was not a cause in itself, but argued that the genocide had been planned years before that.

Besides the colonialists and the government, several social factors were mentioned which, according to the students, contributed to the emergence of the genocide. The fact that people were not very educated and illiteracy levels were high was mentioned by half of the students. Since Rwandans at that time were not educated, they were easy to manipulate, the students argued. Other students mentioned factors such as the church, the media and poverty.

When the students were asked about what exactly happened in 1994, they all answered the same: there was a genocide against Tutsi and (more than) a million people were killed. Maybe a few Hutus were killed but the main victims were the Tutsis. Whereas the students started to elaborate on the causes immediately, practically none of the students explained in more than one sentence what happened in 1994. When the question was posed, the students were surprised about my 'ignorance'. Hereafter, a short answer was given, after which they waited for me to pose the next question. It seemed that this question was more sensitive to them than the question concerning the causes.

Remarkably, almost all the students were able to tell the historical narrative step by step, covering what Rwanda looked like before the colonial period, what happened during the colonial period and after. There was only one student who could not explain very well what the causes of the genocide were and what happened between the colonial period and the actual genocide (Lidie, personal communication, 15 May 2014). Furthermore, the narratives the students told were extremely similar. Some students brought up causes that others did not mention, but overall the narratives included the same main aspects: before the colonial times Rwandans were unified, then the Belgians came who separated them. From 1959 on the Tutsis were chased from time to time and this did not stop after independence since the government continued separating Rwandans. Then, in 1994, a genocide took place in which more than one million people, mainly Tutsis, were killed. This was the basic knowledge that every student owns, though some were able to elaborate more on these aspects than others. Interestingly, there are no differences between the narratives told by students who I reckon to be part of the 'Tutsi' ethnic category and the students who are most likely not children of genocide survivors.

Since almost all the students could tell me the steps that led to genocide and they almost always referred to the same steps and causes it is possible that there is a very dominant discourse with a very solid 'truth' present in Rwanda. This could explain why all the students have the same knowledge which they internalized as their truth. Discourse determines the way that is talked about certain subjects (Hall, 1997), and it can be said that the power of the dominant discourse is significant when the way that is talked about certain subjects is very similar. There are always power relations involved in discourse, since it defines the subjects that are talked about, and the way that is talked about certain subjects. Furthermore, it influences the practices and conducts of people. Institutional settings can therefore have power in determining knowledge and influence conducts of people by determining and contributing to the dominant discourse (Hall, 1997). One of the possible institutional settings that determines knowledge is the school. In the following paragraph it will be discussed how knowledge and truths are transmitted to the students in schools.

2.2 Process of knowledge transmission in schools

"It is a true story we learn in school of what was happening here in Rwanda. It was written, we learn it in history class. You have to keep it the way they gave it to you" (Eraste, personal communication, 6 May 2014).

The official historical narrative provided by the government of Rwanda can be summarized by the often repeated slogan: "We are all one Rwanda" (Freedman et al., 2008). In this narrative, the Belgian colonialists are being blamed for spreading the, according to the government, false idea that the different ethnic groups came in separate migration waves to Rwanda. First the Twa arrived, then the Hutus and finally the Tutsis conquered the other groups. The official narrative argues that this is not true as before colonization Rwandans were unified and social lines were not drawn through ethnic frames. The ethnic categories are invented by the Belgians, the government argues (Buckley-Zistel, 2009). The official narrative states furthermore that these false teachings were a first step towards the genocide since they made the Hutus believe that the Tutsis were invaders. The history provided by the government is, as can be noted above, a de-ethnicized one and based on a civic identity (Buckley-Zistel, 2006). The government's official narrative is also used in the history classes.

It is even the only narrative that is permitted to be taught (Freedman et al., 2008). In this paragraph it will be shown what is transmitted in schools and how the knowledge and truths are transmitted.

2.2.1 The moment of narrative transmission in schools

The Rwandan government has mandated nine years of education for children: six years in primary school and three years in ordinary level in secondary school (The World Bank, 2011). Parents do not have to pay school fees for the mandatory schooling and books are provided by the government for free as well. After these nine years of mandatory education, children can continue in secondary school for three years in advanced level, and when they completed this they can attend university (The World Bank, 2011). However, this is not available for all Rwandan students, since in these levels school fees and books need to be paid. The first three years of primary school are taught in Kinyarwanda, after those years the teaching language is English (The World Bank, 2011).

All students have learned about the genocide in school, though some more than others. Most students started learning about the genocide in primary school, only two students stated that they did not learn anything about the genocide in primary school (Claudine, personal communication, 24 April 2014; Lidie, personal communication, 15 May 2014). All the other students indicated that they had learned the history in primary year four or five. The history of Rwanda is therefore transmitted in English, since this is the teaching language from primary year four on. All students have learned about the genocide in secondary school. Some students said the history lessons started discussing the genocide in secondary year one, others argued that this started in year three. The secondary schoolbooks in the library are ordered by year, and taking a look into those books showed that, though it is mentioned briefly in history year one, the full narrative is taught in year three. If the students continued secondary school on advanced level, they had the option to pick history as an elective. In this way, some students learned more about the genocide in their final years of secondary school. In general, all students learned about the genocide in school around the same years and encountered therefore the official narrative around the same age.

2.2.2 Oral and textual transmission

History was conveyed to the students in multiple ways. First of all, it was conveyed through the use of textbooks. In primary school, the history of Rwanda was discussed in the textbook “Social Studies” whereas in secondary school it was part of the course History 3. One student did not remember whether he learned it from books (Alexandre, personal communication, 17 April 2014). A few other students were sure that the teachers did not use books to convey this narrative. I have visited one boarding school in Kigali and attended a history lesson given to students in secondary year three. The students did not have their own history books. Instead, the teacher had a book and wrote the most important aspects from the texts on the chalkboard and explained it to the students when he or she finished writing. Most students learned the official narrative through as well oral as textual transmission. The teacher was not the only person in school transmitting the narrative. Sometimes other persons came to the school to teach the children about the genocide:

“Yeah, it was told by our teacher, or other people like the district officers, the majors, and people came teach us how they participated in finishing that genocide” (Alexandre, personal communication, 17 April 2014).

“Sometimes people from the district office came to talk about the genocide and about the new programs that are coming up for the youth, for example the ‘I am Rwandan’ program now” (Christine, personal communication, 15 May 2014).

Apparently the government considers it important to provide the students with additional or extra-curricular knowledge. The district officers tell stories about the RPF’s involvement in the termination of the genocide and glorify the current government. Furthermore, they serve as a promotion action for events concerning unity and reconciliation. These stories of the district officers fit perfectly in the main narrative, since in this discourse unity is promoted as well (Freedman et al., 2008). The visits of the district officers therefore serve most likely to reinforce the narratives the students learn from their history schoolbooks, but also serve to mobilize the students for actions which suit this narrative of unity.

As can be seen, the way that the narrative is transmitted in schools is similar and most students learned the history using (the same) textbooks. This could help explain why the students hold the same truths. When some students would have encountered the official narrative in primary one, while others encountered it in secondary six, the impact of the narrative would most likely differ. The students who would have encountered the narrative in primary one would have less knowledge about the subject on forehand, but also understand the story less than students who start learning the narrative in secondary six. Furthermore, since there is only one set of history schoolbooks allowed in Rwanda (Freedman et al., 2008) and all students learn the history (indirectly) from those schoolbooks, the students will learn the same aspects. Which aspects of the Rwandan history are exactly part of the curriculum will be discussed in the next paragraph.

2.3 What is transmitted: texts and stories

The history textbooks that are used in schools are provided by the government, as stated before. The textbook distribution is depending on the amount of funds the government gets, and therefore unpredictable (The World Bank, 2011). Besides, the distribution among schools is inequitable, on average there are two schoolbooks for every three children. If the school gets enough textbooks they often lack storage possibilities, causing attrition to the books (The World Bank, 2011). Despite the lack of an sufficient amount of history schoolbooks, the books do play an important role in transmitting the historical narrative.

2.3.1 Intertextuality

Texts and textbooks can be seen as the most important artefacts in discourse analysis (Tamas, 2014). Of all possible artefacts, texts influence discourse the most and are influenced the most by discourse as well. The concept of a ‘text’ should be understood in a broad sense. Fairclough (1992) argues that it does not only apply to texts in textbooks, but also to transcripts or policy documents, basically anything that is written down. According to Fairclough (1992), texts are always subject to change. Texts always exist of pieces of other texts or conventions and additions to those pieces. The new text might contradict the earlier written text or it might assimilate with it. Texts can be seen as historically transforming the past into the present, and this is called intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992). Texts respond to past texts, they rework past texts and in this way contribute to processes of change. One of these processes of change can be discursive change. By changing the historical texts, the new texts contribute to a new discourse. However, not everybody who writes a new text is contributing to a

new discourse, power relations are involved in this as well (Fairclough, 1992). A school book will have a bigger impact on the discourse than a personal diary for example.

The schoolbooks that are used in history classes are also responses to past texts. Not only are the textbooks rewritten every ten years, as a woman in the school library told me, and therefore responses to the previous editions, they are also responses to policy documents and probably newspapers etcetera. Unfortunately, the schoolbooks do not have references written in them, which makes it difficult to explore the texts that have influenced the writers of the books at that time. Furthermore, the secondary schoolbook does not have a production date written in it. Though the texts in the schoolbooks do not include references, it is very likely that they are partly based on the policy documents of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC, n.d., retrieved in July 2014). This commission was established in 1999 and has as function to educate and sensitize the Rwandan population about national unity and reconciliation (NURC, n.d., retrieved in July 2014). On their website, different documents can be found that cover the history of Rwanda. The content is similar to the texts in the schoolbooks, though the schoolbooks have simplified the content. The influence of the commission on the content of the schoolbooks can be found not only in the focus on bad governance and the colonization, but above all in the focus on unity and reconciliation (NURC, n.d., retrieved in July 2014). I will elaborate on the schoolbooks' focus on bad governance and colonization as main causes and the focus on unity and reconciliation in the next paragraphs.

2.3.2 Primary school

In the book "Social Studies" for primary schoolchildren in Rwanda, the genocide is briefly discussed. Of the in total 195 pages, 7 pages are devoted to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. On the first page covering the genocide, a definition of genocide is given and it is added that it is one of the worst crimes against humanity (Ajuru et al., 2010). The first thing that is stated about the genocide in Rwanda is: "The genocide which took place in Rwanda in 1994, involved much killing of the Tutsis and the Hutus who did not support the genocide. About one million Tutsis and small number of Hutus were killed. Men, women, young people and civil servants participated in the killings" (Ajuru et al., 2010, p.71). Though the ethnic categories "Tutsi" and "Hutu" are mentioned, it is nowhere literally mentioned in the textbook that it were the ethnic categorized Hutus who killed Tutsis. It is written down that the Tutsis are the main victims but the main perpetrators are not specified. Under the heading 'causes of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda' two causes are mentioned: bad governance and the impact of colonialism. It is stated that the system during the two republics promoted hatred against the Tutsis and that 'the murderers of Tutsis' were appointed to high political positions (Ajuru et al., 2010). Furthermore, it says that before colonization Rwandans were one people, united in 'a well organized society'. The German and Belgian colonizers introduced the idea of different ethnic groups, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, and promoted divisions. It is told that the Belgians gave privilege to the Tutsis and introduced ID cards (Ajuru et al., 2010). Towards the end of the colonial period the Belgians sensitized the Hutus that they had been oppressed by the Tutsis for years and started mobilizing and supporting Hutu actions against the Tutsis (Ajuru et al., 2010). This hatred continued in the post colonial period. After this, the history book jumps to 1990, when the RPF attacked the government because they blamed the government for failing to democratize and to resolve the problem of the Rwandan refugees who wanted to return. According to the book (Ajuru et al., 2010), this invasion was seen by the government as an attempt to bring the Tutsi ethnic group to power again. Finally, the book discusses that in 1993 the Arusha Peace Accord was signed between the government and the RPF fighters (Ajuru et al., 2010). They agreed that they would share power and

that the UN forces should maintain security under the coalition government. The next heading is 'The 1994 genocide'. Below this heading it is only stated: "The 1994 genocide against Tutsi was sparked off by the assassination of President Habyarimana on the 6th of April 1994 when the plane he was travelling in, together with President Cyprian Ntaryamira of Burundi, was shot down while preparing to land on Kigali International Airport" (Ajuru et al., 2010, p.74). Hereafter the consequences of the genocide and the reconciliation process are discussed in six pages. It is notable that there is very little told about what actually happened in 1994. The focus of the narrative is on the lead up to the genocide and the aftermath.

2.3.3 Secondary School

In the secondary history schoolbook the genocide is discussed more extensively. It has 135 pages, of which 30 are devoted to the 1990-1994 liberation war and the Tutsi genocide. The Rwandan history part of the book starts in the year 1962, so the pre-colonial and colonial period are not discussed in this book. However, the influence of the colonialists is discussed extensively. It is for example stated that: 'The main preoccupation of the PARMEHUTU administration was to finish the work started by the colonial authorities of harassing the Tutsi' (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014, p.79). Furthermore, it states that the violence against Tutsis started in 1959. The chapter on the liberation war and genocide starts with an explanation about the RPF. It can be seen very clearly in this paragraph that it is written from a governmental and therefore RPF perspective:

"..Their (RPF) fundamental rights to live in their lovely country had been denied them for over thirty years. The tyrant regime in Kigali was unwilling to let them return and this remained an international problem which the UN and other powerful Western countries had failed to resolve. As a legitimate political authority, the RPF possessed both the moral and the international right to repatriate the refugees who had been denied their natural right to live in their country" (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014, p.97).

Again, though the regime in Kigali is criticized heavily, it is not said that this was a Hutu regime. Just like in the primary schoolbook, it is not mentioned that the perpetrators belonged to the so-called Hutu ethnic group. In the pages that follow, the RPF is put forward as a great front which tried to start democratization in Rwanda, whereas the former regime is criticized a lot. The Arusha agreement is mentioned as 'a tragic example of a negotiated agreement failing miserably in its implementation' (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014, p.110). The government started to violate what was agreed upon and an end to the war was not in sight since 'the Kigali regime was busy beating the drums of war' (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d. retrieved in May 2014, p.111). Also in the secondary schoolbook little is stated under the heading 'The 1994 Tutsi genocide'. It is said that Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed, but not by who or how.

The impact of the colonization and the bad governance during the Republics are very extensively discussed in about 40 pages. It is not literally stated that these are the main factors that caused the genocide but as the examples in this paragraph so far show, it becomes clear to the reader that this is the case. The book continues on explaining other factors that contributed to the genocide:

"..the following share responsibility of the 1994 Tutsi genocide: Genocidaires, the French government, the USA, Britain, Belgium, the UN Security Council, the Roman Catholic Church, the International

community and the local media" (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014, p.112).

In the paragraph which discusses the genocidaires, the fact that these extremists and peasants were from the Hutu ethnic category is mentioned. The peasants are not discussed in a hateful way, since 'they just had been taught that it was alright to eliminate certain people by the extremists' (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014, p.113). Though the relation between the Hutu ethnic category and perpetrators finally becomes more clear, it is still nowhere stated literally that 'the Hutus' or 'the Hutu extremist' have killed the Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The other actors mentioned as responsible for the genocide are mainly blamed for their failure to react to what was happening or for encouraging what was happening. The chapter ends with ten pages about the consequences of the genocide, focused mainly on the unity and reconciliation process.

There is a lot of attention paid to the causes and the lead up to the genocide in both schoolbooks. Very little is on the other hand said about the genocide itself, after which the books continue to discuss the aftermath. In this it could be seen that teaching history in Rwanda is used to prevent new violence, by teaching what caused the genocide, and to promote the current government by talking positively about the RPF and the current government in contrast to the former government. Furthermore it is discussed how well Rwanda developed after the genocide, which can also be seen as a promotion for the current government. An interesting aspect of the narrative concerns the explanation that Belgians invented the ethnic groups and the statement that Rwandans were one people before the colonial times. By moving away from ethnicity as something that is primordial towards ethnicity as a social construct, the 'self' and the 'enemy' become changeable factors (Papadakis, 2008). This can take away blame and calls for retribution, since it eliminates claims such as "We were here first" (Papadakis, 2008). In this way, the narrative created by the government also contributes to preventing new violence. The government has the opportunity to create the story they want people to believe by controlling the history books. CDA implies that there exists a dialectical relationship between discursive events and the different elements of the situations, institutions and structures which frame them (Fairclough, 1992). In this example the dialectical relationship can also be seen. The government has the opportunity to influence discourse by creating the historical narrative they want people to believe and by making it part of the curriculum. However, the government and its narrative are also influenced by the current discourse. It is therefore a dialectical relationship since the government influences discourse but is also influenced by discourse.

Though the historical narrative that is transmitted to the students in classes is very alike due to the use of a single history book throughout the country, nuances could be made by teachers when they would share their own personal experience. This will be discussed in the next paragraph.

2.3.4 Personal stories teacher

On the question whether the teachers shared their personal stories with the students, most of the students answered positively. Some students said that their teacher did not share a personal story because he or she was not in the country during the genocide. The stories the teachers tell are often about incidents, things they saw during the genocide, used to help the students towards a better understanding of what happened. They are never used to replace the books, but serve as examples next to the books. They do however, provide a one-sided story:

“The ones that would tell about their experiences are the survivors, they would tell. I had a teacher, she was abused in genocide and also her husband was burned alive. She would tell us and she would share with us about the genocide experience. All the experiences that our teachers told us came from the survivors. But the others couldn’t. For the Hutus, they cannot say; I had this, my father killed this, it is a shame. That’s the problem: we only hear from one side. From the side who suffered” (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014).

The fact that most of the students did have teachers that shared their stories and that some others had teachers who lived outside the country during the genocide, shows that most of their teachers are survivors. This is not very surprising, since the government has a tight grip on education by using the MINEDUC ministry (Freedman et al., 2008). Since the government mainly consist of survivors, it is possible they mainly hire teachers that are also survivors to transfer the history to children. In this way, it might be more easy for the government to transfer the official narrative and determine the main discourse without many counter-voices. In this way, the students learn a very one-sided history in school, since the survivors are setting the dominant discourse and control it strictly. What the students learn in school is based on books, written from a survivor perspective, and the stories of their teachers and district officers, also often survivors. This causes the students to learn a subjective history and does not teach them to think critically since no counter-ideas are discussed. In my opinion this is worrying, since the lack of capacity to think critically is seen as one of the factors that contributed to the outbreak of genocide (Freedman et al., 2008). Most students do not seem to find the one-sidedness objectionable, since it is not mentioned by them when asked whether they thought they had learned enough and a complete narrative in school. For the students, it seems to be more important whether a teacher was in the country during the genocide or not, than whether they belong to the survivor side:

“Those people tell the true story because people saw what happened. But you cannot believe the teacher who is from Uganda and Kenya. Because they tell the story from the book, but others tell us the true story. The teacher cannot explain very well” (Girl, personal communication, 25 April 2014).

The stories of the teachers add an element of personal history to the narrative that is part of the curriculum, but do not present counter-ideas. Their ideas always match to the main narrative. Next to the fact that this may be because the teachers’ narratives as well as the government’s narrative are written or told from a survivor’s point of view, this may also be caused by the fact that they are mutually influencing each other. Bloch (Cappelletto, 2003) argues that there is basically no difference between representations of autobiographical memory and representations of historical accounts. He argues that these concepts of memory and history should be taken together, since they influence each other and are fluid (Cappelletto, 2003). Not only do private representations influence public representations, the public presentations also influence what people believe and remember (Cappelletto, 2003). The teachers’ stories may therefore be influenced by the narrative of the government and the other way around. Besides their personal stories, some teachers also share a ‘personal message’. Those messages are addressed to the youth specifically:

“They told us, even though that happened, until now, of course you are different, but not different like difference. Even though you came from different families, still you are Rwandans. So that’s why you cannot be accused for your parents crime. And also you, Tutsi, don’t blame your friend or colleagues for the parents crime. You are still young, you have to build a new country, a new nation, you have to

build a better future for your country. Genocide.. reconciliation” (Chris, personal communication, 4 April 2014).

These messages fit perfectly in the strategy of the government to focus on reconciliation and unity. It could be that the teachers believe in this governmental policy and add this ‘personal message’ because they agree with it. However, it is so similar to the “We are all Rwandans” governmental project that the speculation they have been instructed by the government to tell this in class is not implausible.

2.4 One truth and the school as transmitter of the dominant narrative

As shown in the first paragraph of this chapter, the truths that the students own about the genocide and therefore their own historical narratives are very similar. Every student but one believes that Rwandans were unified before colonization. All the students believed that the categories ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ did exist, but argued that they were not very important and referred to social status instead of ethnic differences. As main causes, bad governance and the impact of colonization are mentioned by the students. Furthermore, all students agree upon what happened in 1994: (more than) one million Tutsis were killed. Maybe a few Hutus got killed, but the students agreed that those numbers are little and the main victims were the Tutsis. Finally, half of the students mentioned the year 1959 as the year that the government started killing Tutsis and the first Tutsis fled to neighboring countries.

The fact that all the students own the same truth about the genocide could be seen as an indicator that there is a very dominant discourse with a corresponding dominant narrative. Unfortunately, due to the relatively small amount of interviews no hard claims can be made. However, if there would have been counter-discourses producing other narratives which also would be quite powerful, probably not every of the eleven students would have answered exactly the same. There would have been more space for other knowledge and truths in case there was a strong counter-discourse, but as the interviews show there are very little deviations from the main accepted truth. How then, is it possible that all the students know this main truth and its main aspects so well? It is most likely because they internalized the history they learned at school as their own. When Alexandre was asked what he had learned in school about the genocide, he answered:

“All of this. Everything I just told you (own narrative) is what I learned in school” (Alexandre, personal communication, 17 April 2014).

It is also visible when the main aspects from the students their own stories, mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph, are compared to the texts from the history books. The students mention exactly the same aspects as written in the schoolbooks. In the history books it is also stated that Rwandans were unified before colonial times. As main causes are the impact of colonization and bad governance literally mentioned in the primary school book, whereas in the secondary schoolbook it is more implicit but most pages about the lead up to genocide are spent on these factors. Besides, the introduction of the ID cards, the start of the violence in 1959 and the Arusha Peace Accords are all factors that are mentioned by the students and are prevalent issues in the schoolbooks as well. Also the fact that students answer very shortly that (more than) a million Tutsis were killed without linking it directly to a perpetrator on the question what happened in 1994 matches to what is taught in school.

As can be seen, Rwandan students do not use the historical narrative they learn in school the

way pupils in Northern Ireland did. Whereas the pupils in Northern Ireland draw selectively from the official school narrative to support the perspective of their own tradition (Cole, 2007), the Rwandan students seem to use the school narrative as the basis for their own narrative. Ethnic origins do not appear to make a difference, since all the students seem to adopt the narrative taught in school. This is remarkable, since in Rwanda history is written by survivors. The texts in the history books used in school are clearly written from a survivor perspective, hailing the current government and criticizing the former one, therefore one would expect that students who can be framed as Hutus disagree with certain aspects of this narrative. The fact that this is not the case could be explained by the discursive power of the school.

2.5 The discursive power of the school

It can be said that there is a very dominant historical discourse present in Rwanda among the students. Discourse defines the subjects that are talked about, the way that is talked about certain subjects and therefore influences the practices and conducts of others. In this way there are always power relations involved in discourse. Institutional settings can therefore have power in determining knowledge and influence conducts of others (Hall, 1997). The fact that almost all the students are able to retell the main aspects of the historical narrative without many additions or changes shows that school as an institution is very powerful in transmitting the dominant narrative to the students. According to Tamas (2014), an institution has power when it exerts domination and discipline. Domination entails that a party, in this case the students, does or believes what the other party wishes. In this case the school, and therefore the government, makes the students believe what they want them to believe about the genocide. Furthermore, the students are disciplined, they conform to the norms and expectations of the school. They repeat the historical narrative as taught in school and argue not to feel hateful, just like their teachers told them. It appears to be unquestioned knowledge, it is natural for the students to believe and behave like that. Fairclough (1992) argues that this naturalized knowledge embedded in practices is most effective in producing, reproducing or transforming relations of domination of power. He argues that 'ideologies', which are according to him 'significations or constructions of reality', are powerful when they achieve the status of 'common sense' (Fairclough, 1992). This appears to be exactly the case in Rwanda: the narrative about the genocide that the students learn in school has become common sense: everyone knows it and appears to believe it. If the minds of people who are 'dominated' are influenced in such a way that they accept the dominance and act the way the powerful want out of their own free will, it is called hegemony (Van Dijk, 1995). However, in the case of Rwanda it is difficult to identify whether the students act fully out of their own will or that the power relations and the dominance are accompanied with fear. It is possible that the students who can be ethnically framed as Hutus do not agree at all with this narrative, but comply with it out of fear. More about the relation between power and fear will be discussed in chapter four.

3. Nuances and roles

Discursive theories argue that the existence of a certain dominant discourse is likely to produce counter-discourses. The other discourses can disempower the main discourse and make it less dominant (Clingendael Institute, 2005; Fairclough, 1992). However, as Van Dijk (1993) argues, the access to discourse is a crucial condition when wanting to produce a counter-discourse. It is more easy and possible for a certain group to exert power over the discourse than it is for others (Van Dijk, 1993). In this paragraph I will show the (small) differences and similarities between the narrative the students have learned in school and what they have learned from family and the media. It will be discussed whether the stories from the students' parents and the media influence the students' perception of the truth. Tamas (2014) argues that not only the concepts of access and power are relevant when looking at who is able to influence the students' truths, but also the concept of roles. In this case, the importance a student ascribes to 'being a good student', 'being a good son or daughter' or 'being a good citizen' might determine whether the student is influenced by the school, his or her parents or the media. Another element that could influence the students is the role of memory. The Discourse Historical Approach states that memory needs to be taken into account since it influences the way people think and do. It is the "subjective definitions of the relevant properties of these communicative situations that influence talk and text" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009 as cited in: Glynos et al., 2009). The memory of the students' parents, who lived through the genocide, can influence the students' subjective understanding of the genocide. In the next paragraphs the influence of the parents on the students' truths will be discussed.

3.1 Family

Kidron (in Cole, 2007) conducted a comparative research on Cambodian Canadian and Israeli Holocaust descendants and the intergenerational trauma transmission. Both Israeli and Cambodian descendants described parental silence concerning the genocidal pasts. No complete stories about the genocides were shared with the children (Cole, 2007). Whereas the Cambodian children also know very little about their parents' experiences, the children of Holocaust survivors at least often know where their parents stayed during the genocide and what family members they had lost. Furthermore, their parents tell them fragments, for example about how they survived. These tales are often repeated, while little other information is shared (Cole, 2007). Also the research of Sánchez Meertens (2013) on the transmission of knowledge and war history in Eastern Sri Lanka shows that the family members mainly transmit knowledge on incidents of violence 'meant to convey the history of a feeling' (Sánchez Meertens, 2013). Even though these fragments are not always situated in a wider historical narrative, they do frame the descendant's world-view (Argenti and Schramm, 2010). In this paragraph it will be analyzed whether the Rwandan parents also only transmit fragments and what the influence of the stories they tell on the students' truth is.

3.1.1 What is told at the kitchen table

All the students but one discussed the subject of genocide with family members, though some more than others. The parents of the students mainly told them stories about incidents that happened: they told stories about how they saw somebody getting killed, how they fled, etcetera. Just as in the Holocaust and Sri Lanka cases, the parents transmit fragments instead of complete chronological narratives. This can be called the transmission of episodic memory, which entails descriptions of events (Cappelletto, 2003). The students reported that the stories from their parents match with the ones they learned at school. They discuss the same issues, but in a different way:

I: "And does your mother tell you stories about it?"

R: "Yeah. Our parents used to tell us what they were seeing because they were there."

I: "Did they have additional information for you?"

R: "Yeah, somehow they clarify what we learned in school, but they are similar, only a clarification. More examples."

I: "And did their personal stories differ from the books?"

R: "A lot of similarities because the curriculum in the book is that they tell you what was happening, but in general. When they gave us their stories, they told us what they really saw, where they were living, what happened, some of them were being chased" (Eraste, personal communication, 6 May 2014).

Some students also discussed the causes of the genocide with their parents. According to the students, their parents mentioned bad governance, the misunderstanding of people, the 'white men' and ignorance as factors that contributed to the lead up to the genocide. These factors again fit within the dominant discourse and therefore do not produce any counter-ideas. A difference with the narrative the students learn in school is that most parents focus on what happened during 1994, whereas the history classes go back to colonial times and provide the students with a historical overview. Furthermore, the parents can provide information and answer questions that teachers at school cannot. Chris (personal communication, 4 April 2014) for example argued that whereas the schoolbooks are not specific on who committed the genocide, his parents named the perpetrators. Ines (personal communication, 24 April 2014) pointed out that she can ask her parents questions such as 'Well, if I am a Tutsi..', while it is not permitted to refer to ethnic terms at school.

These results confirm what Sánchez Meertens (2013) and Kidron (in: Cole, 2007) found in their researches into intergenerational transmission of war knowledge: parents tell their children little general information or complete background stories. Instead most parents transmit their episodic memories: they share information about incidents, things they saw personally.

3.1.2 How are the stories transmitted

The way the historical knowledge transmission from parent to child takes place differs. Some of the parents talk a lot about it, whereas other parents almost never mention the subject. Some children feel free to ask questions and start conversations, whereas others do not dare to ask their parents about the genocide. Some parents only talk about it during the commemoration period, others avoid the subject during the commemoration because it is too sensitive around that time. Though there are a lot of differences, each parent has told their child stories about incidents, something they saw. Most of the conversations took place when there was a family gathering, for example during dinner or during the Christian holidays when the entire family comes together. The conversations were sometimes started by one of the children, who asked a question such as: 'How come I don't know my grandmother?' and other times the parents took the initiative to tell their children about the genocide. Most parents started telling their children about the genocide when they were about 10 years old. Before that age, parents only told something about the genocide when their child asked something, and they did not go in deep with their answers. However, even though the parents might not tell their children a lot about the genocide when they are young, some children do already develop a negative attitude towards the other ethnic group when they are young. Some students reported examples of children who went to school and carried out this negative attitude:

"Some kids have been threatening others, saying they would go and kill them again. Because they are

kids, so you see that they are learning from their families. From the school it is very fine, they do it in a good way. But in families, you don't know what happened behind closed doors. I think there is no parent who can teach a child and see go and hate this and that, but from the conversation, they are doing it. Children learn from their parents, from their actions, I think that's what caused kids threatening other kids at the boarding school" (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014).

However, the students argued, the children's negative attitudes are changed into positive attitudes in schools. The history taught in school is a 'positive' one that causes students not to hate each other.

"Because the students at their homes, there are some people who have that ideology of the genocide. The students hear from their parents stories, like don't do this and don't do that. Then in school, the teacher tells good information. The teacher needs to have more information to teach the students not to follow their parents' ideology" (Emmanuel, personal communication, 24 April, 2014).

Before the students learn the historical narrative at school, the stories their parents tell them and the things that are indirectly transmitted to the children are the most important factors in the children's understanding of the genocidal history. In this case, memory has an important role, since the stories of the parents and their perceptions influence the child's process of creating a narrative. However, when they are introduced to the main narrative, the role of memory becomes less important: it serves a more emotional role and is used as clarification.

3.1.3 Influence on truths of students

The influence of the stories of the parents on the narrative and truths of the students is not very significant. Before the students are taught the official narrative, the narrative of their parents is important and determines the students' truths and behavior. However, when they have learned the official narrative at school the students use their parents' stories as examples to clarify what they have learned in school. Besides, they can ask their parents questions that refer to ethnic classifications. Furthermore the students state that the stories of their parents give them a stronger idea that genocide should never happen again and makes them alter their thoughts and behavior in a more peaceful way. The role of memory is therefore more an emotional one than an informative one. It transfers the feelings of the parents to their children, just as shown in the researches of Sánchez Meertens (2013) and Kidron (in: Cole, 2007), whereas the narrative taught at school is serving a more informative role. The only clear influence of the parents on the students' own narrative is the naming of the perpetrators. Though most students did not name the perpetrators when asked what happened during 1994, they did mention the ethnic category of 'Hutu' when explaining more about the causes of the genocide.

All together, the influence of the narrative taught in school appears to be bigger on the students' own truth than the stories of the students' parents. This could be explained by the fact that parents have less access to determine the discourse than the government, and therefore the school, has (Van Dijk, 1993). Van Dijk (1993) sees the concept of access as the idea that some language users have more freedom in the use of discourse genres and can participate in more communicative events and contexts than others. Van Dijk (1993) continues arguing that most ordinary people only have access to conversations with family members, friends or colleagues. People within the government can reach the entire population with speech acts, and can determine what is said in history books or newspapers. In this way, they can participate in more communicative events than parents of students can, which makes it easier for the government to determine the discourse.

A point of discussion can be found in the theory of Tamas (2014). He argues that roles, in the sense of wanting to be a good student or wanting to be a good son or daughter, influence people's truths (Tamas, 2014). This would mean that being a good student is more important than being a good son or daughter in this case. However, I doubt whether this is the case. From the observations made in the classroom it did not appear that students wanted to impress their teacher and be a good student. Most of them were not paying attention to what the teacher told them and some of them were even sleeping. However, family hierarchy is still present in Rwanda. Students told me about their parents and grandparents with great respect. The fact that the narrative taught in school is determining the students' own truths more extensively, can be explained by various other reasons. First of all, the narratives told by the parents do not offer the students a complete story, whereas the one taught in school does. Secondly, it is possible that the students do not adapt their attitudes and truths in school because they believe in what they learn, but because they feel obliged to comply with the official narrative. I will elaborate on this possibility in chapter four.

Concluding, the narratives transmitted by parents do not apply many nuances to the students' own narrative. In the next paragraph it will be analyzed whether the media are able to do so.

3.2 The media as discursive institution

As stated in the World Report 2013 of Human Rights watch, the government of Rwanda still imposes tight restrictions on freedom of expression. The report gives an example of two journalists who have been convicted to four years imprisonment, only because they wrote articles which were perceived as critical of the government (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Another example covers a radio announcer, who was arrested for genocide ideology when he mixed up words when referring to survivors of the genocide. The report states that he had spent three months in prison before he was acquitted. The state prosecutor appealed against his acquittal (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Since the media appears to be under strict control of the government, one could expect to find little deviations with the main narrative in the media. This paragraph will analyze whether this is indeed the case.

3.2.1 Counter-narratives

Outside the commemoration period the genocide is not often discussed on the radio or in the newspapers according to the students. The songs are mostly about love and the focus is on the present and the future. However, since the genocide is not forgotten, the subject is still sometimes present in the media. Interestingly, in the media not only the dominant narrative is transmitted, but also counter-narratives:

R: "That I listen on radio and on TV someone who said that it was not a genocide. But I don't give shit. They say it, they are not in Rwanda. Many people who say that, if they say it they can have nationality of the hosting country."

I: "So if they deny it they can become citizen of the country?"

R: "Yeah, because we know that they cannot accept that it was genocide because they were involved in the genocide. Like France. They think that it will be a shame on them" (Alexandre, personal communication, 17 April 2014).

On the radio sometimes narratives are spread in which the genocide is being denied or which claim that there were two genocides: first one against the Tutsis, and later, in July 1994, one against the Hutus. This is one of the few real counter-narratives and therefore counter-discourses the students

encounter. The students all reject the counter-narratives and label them as untrue. The counter-narratives therefore do not appear to make the dominant discourse less powerful. On the contrary, Alexandre (personal communication, 17 April 2014), for example, tries to fit the counter-narrative in the main narrative. He does not just argue that the story is not true, he also argues that people tell stories that are not true because they contributed to the genocide and feel ashamed, like France. In this way, the counter-narrative that is spread fits in the main discourse.

3.2.2 Commemoration

During the commemoration period, the focus of the media is clearly on the genocide. During the first week of the commemoration period, the articles in the newspapers and the broadcastings on radio and TV are only discussing the subjects of genocide and commemoration. Unfortunately, the biggest part of the radio and TV broadcasts are in Kinyarwanda, so I will focus on the newspapers. I collected two newspapers in the first week of commemoration. One is The New Times from the 7th of April. The New Times is the biggest national newspaper, written in English. Human Rights Watch accused the newspaper in 2009 of being state-owned and not neutral (Human Rights Watch, 2009). The other newspaper is called The Rwanda Focus, which is also written in English. It is a smaller and weekly newspaper. Both the newspapers published stories about what happened in 1994, what is happening during the commemoration period and stories about reconciliation and the future. The different kinds of stories will be analyzed separately.

First, the stories about what happened in 1994 and the lead up to genocide will be discussed. In some articles, the causes or actors who contributed to the genocide are mentioned. One article is all about the media and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. It is an interview with a lecturer from Yale and Harvard who worked at the ICTR and ICC. It is said that the media were used by the genocidaires to dehumanize the Tutsis and make the Hutus believe that the Tutsis were less human (Mwah, 2014). Another thing mentioned in the newspaper is the influence of the Belgian colonizers and the bad governance. It is stated 'In 1994, Rwanda died. The country succumbed to a deadly ideology that was tragically sown by the Belgian colonialists and ruthlessly nurtured by successive fascist regimes over a period spanning well over 30 years' ("Twenty years later, Rwanda is a proud nation", 2014). In different articles it is mentioned how the Rwandans got 'betrayed' by their own leaders and how the leaders kept the ideology alive to tighten their grip on power (Umuhiza, 2014; Munyaneza, 2014). Also the Belgian colonialists are mentioned multiple times as a root cause of the genocide (Ndahiro, 2014; "Twenty years later, Rwanda is a proud nation", 2014). Another article is about the UN, who did not intervene but only discussed about the right terminology for the events (Mugisha, 2014). Also France is mentioned several times. The French are blamed for abandoning the Rwandans while, according to the New Times, they saw what was happening (Kwibuka, 2014). While all these causes are briefly mentioned in the articles, there is one big article in The New Times (Ndahiro, 2014) that sums up the history. It starts with stating that before 'the white men' came, Rwanda was a centralized and organized monarchy. It continues by recounting that the Belgians transplanted the ethnic division to Rwanda and introduced identity cards (Ndahiro, 2014). PARMEHUTU was created and the newspaper states that they were supported by priests who were part of the White Fathers: 'Muhanga, home of the Church and PARMEHUTU, became a bastion of Hutu radicalism' (Ndahiro, 2014). In 1959 the first Tutsis were hunted down and killed. After independence, PARMEHUTU gained power and attacks against Tutsis continued. Rwanda closed its borders for the refugees, claiming that the country was too small. In 1993, Habyarimana was

'reluctantly dragged to the negotiating table in Arusha, but he also had macabre plans on the table' (Ndahiro, 2014). Finally, the genocide took place.

Articles written about recent events were mainly about commemoration events and what is said during these events, such as 'Ban Ki-moon lauds Rwandan leadership' (Mugisha, 2014). One interesting article is titled 'France's pullout from commemoration events out of guilt' (Karuhanga, 2014). In the article it is stated that genocide survivors believe that France has pulled out the events because they are ashamed. In the Dutch newspaper it is stated that France was excluded from the event by Rwanda ("Rwanda herdenkt genocide met week van rouw", 2014).

Finally, a very big part of the newspapers is dedicated to the progress that Rwanda has made and the bright future the country faces (De la Croix, 2014; Munyaneza, 2014). The front page of The New Times (2014) is titled "We're united – as nation looks to socio-economic prosperity". Lots of stories of people who forgave others and are reconciled are published, just as stories of Rwandans who argue that Rwanda is doing really well socio-economically and politically. Moreover, the government is directly and indirectly hailed for rebuilding Rwanda and uniting its population (De la Croix, 2014; Fidele, 2014).

The newspaper articles show a lot of similarities with the stories in the history schoolbooks. The same main points are mentioned in the articles as in the history books and the stories of the students. They are focused on the unity that was present in Rwanda before colonization and is again present now, and criticize the former government and the colonizers while glorifying the current government. The stories in the newspaper are however (even) more dramatic than the narrative written in the history books. The stories are made more lively. Furthermore, they seem to be amplified sometimes, for instance when a case which appears to be an extraordinary one is highlighted. Moreover, the newspapers provide less the overall picture than the schoolbooks but present many personal stories of people. They do however provide a more general story than the parents of the students do. It can therefore be said that the newspapers not only try to transmit knowledge, which can be seen in the many references made to past events, but also emotion, which can be seen in the dramatizations. It makes the reader feel glad that these horrible events are over and delighted by all the progress that Rwanda has made and the unity that is currently present, according to the newspapers. This feeling is most likely exactly what the government tries to achieve with setting the discourse of unity.

3.2.3 Influence on truths of students

The influence of the counter-narratives, broadcasted occasionally on the radio, on the truths of the students appears to be minimal. They reject the counter-narratives fully. People who are able to speak on the radio do have more access to determine the discourse and therefore have the opportunity to make people believe what they want them to believe (Van Dijk, 1993). The people who speak on the radio reach a lot of people with their speech acts and have the freedom and possibility to participate in a big 'communicative event' (Van Dijk, 1993). However, their impact on the students is little. This could be explained by the fact that people do not believe everything that is said on the radio anymore, since everybody knows what role the radio played in the lead up to genocide in 1994. People may be more reluctant to perceive what is said on the radio as true. Another possible explanation is that the students perceive the people who spread the counter-narratives as not legitimate. For knowledge to become truth, it has to be told by the right person (Tamas, 2014), and the person on the radio is in this case not perceived as the right person to make such claims. As some of the students said, the persons who spread the counter-narratives are people

who live outside the country and contributed to the genocide. These people are therefore not seen as trustworthy and credible when making statements. The narratives presented on the radio are not seen as truths by the students and therefore do not influence their own truths.

The history presented in the newspapers matches the main discourse perfectly. This therefore only reinforces the discourse that is dominant and the truths that the students own. Even the articles about recent events are adjusted, allowing them to fit in the main narrative. This can be seen in the article that states that France pulled out the commemoration events out of guilt. If the Rwandan newspaper would have stated that France was blocked from the commemoration events by the current government, the truths that the government tries to spread would be challenged. The way it is formulated now, fits perfectly in the 'France is bad and the current government is good' truth. In the newspapers, the ethnic category 'Hutu' is mentioned. However, just as in the secondary schoolbooks, it is never literally mentioned that the Hutus killed the Tutsis, and the main blame is put on other actors, such as the former government and the colonialists.

4. The government of Rwanda: designer of the main discourse

It has been argued that an institutional setting, such as a school, can have power in determining truths and influencing conducts of students (Hall, 1997). The media reinforce the process of determining the truth. Since schoolbooks need to be approved by the government before they can be used in schools and the main newspaper appears to be state owned, the way that Rwandan students form their own narrative about the genocide is influenced by the biggest institutional setting: the Rwandan government. The Rwandan government is able to make others inhabit their story of the reality and therefore has a lot of power (Gourevitch, 1998). The knowledge they spread is seen as truth and has even become common sense. Fairclough (1992) argues that this is the most powerful form of constructions of reality: when the constructions are known and approved by everyone. In this chapter I will discuss to what extent the overall message of the discourse of the government is influencing also the conduct of students. The concept of hegemony could be applicable on the government as reasoned before, since it appears that the minds of the students are influenced in such a way that they accept the dominance of the government and say what the government wants out of their free will (Van Dijk, 1993). The question remains whether the students truly act out of their own free will, or that other factors such as fear are influencing their conduct.

4.1 Unity versus division

“I think the unity programs are good, mostly. Because it brings all the knowledge that the younger generation needs to listen to. It also brings a sense of patriotism again. Because when there is a lack of patriotism then there comes divisionism. Also the fact that we don’t need to cover up what happened, we are putting it out in the open so people can learn from it. That is something that is positive. Students being taught about it is something that is great” (Christine, personal communication, 15 May 2014).

Christine hails the government for its unity programs and the way it deals with the knowledge shared concerning the genocide. Besides the specific unity programs, the emphasis the government puts on unity can be seen in the dominant discourse. In this paragraph it will be shown to what extent the current discourse really promotes unity and whether the students and Rwandan inhabitants feel and act united.

4.1.1 Governmental narrative of unity

The truths and narratives that the government spread include an overall moral message of reconciliation. It can therefore be said that the government tries to promote a discourse of unity. This can be seen in the content of the history that is presented and in the ratio of stories about the history to stories concerning the future and reconciliation in the schoolbooks and newspapers.

First of all, the content of the history that is presented. As noted before, in the schoolbooks it is scarcely mentioned that people from the ethnic category ‘Hutu’ were the perpetrators. The newspapers mentioned this sometimes, but the blame was taken away by arguing that it were the colonialists who set up the Hutus against the Tutsis. In the texts the Hutu category is therefore barely blamed. Furthermore, the history books and newspapers stated that in pre-colonial times Rwandans were united, while it could be argued differently as well. Some authors state that conflicts were not uncommon in pre-colonial Rwanda (Newbury, 1998). Tensions between Hutus and Tutsis already existed according to Catherine Newbury and other anthropologists (Buckley-Zistel, 2009). People

could indeed move from one ethnic group to another but this had become very scarce from the 20th century onwards. The government chose to not show this side of the historical narrative, but chose to argue that Rwandans were one. Most of the blame is in this way put on the Belgian colonialists, which contributes to the goal of unifying Rwandans.

Secondly, the ratio of stories about the history to stories about the future and reconciliation is leaning towards the latter. In the book of social studies an equal amount of pages are dedicated to the consequences and reconciliation process after the genocide as to the history preceding the genocide and the genocide itself. In the secondary schoolbook 12 pages are about reconciliation while 30 pages cover the period between 1990 and 1994 (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014). This is a substantial amount considering the ratio. This shows that the government considers it very important to discuss the reconciliation and unity process, which followed the genocide, extensively. Moreover, during the commemoration period, the media paid most attention to reconciliation and progress. The newspapers published many stories of people who forgave the murderer of their family members or stories about the progress Rwanda made due to Rwandans working together and the current government (De la Croix, 2014; Fidele, 2014). When asked about the “We are all Rwandans” slogan that was on the cover of the newspaper, a student told me:

R: “It is a new policy of a government program who teach about how, even though we are different, we are Rwandans. By everything, we are Rwandans.”

I: “What do you think of that program?”

R: “It's good for me because it helps me to see.. see you like Rwandese, like you are my brother. I see you as my brother before I see you as strange and I put on a way, some differences, but I consider the similarities before I consider the differences” (Chris, personal communication, 4 April 2014).

The discourse of unity is therefore not only transmitted indirectly, but also literally. Though the discourse of unity is visible in Rwanda in various discursive events, there is one discursive event that does not match this discourse very well. The government changed the name of the genocide into ‘Genocide against Tutsi’ several years ago. Though most victims belonged to the ethnic Tutsi group, they were not the only victims. An unknown amount of Hutus also died while trying to protect Tutsis or shortly after the genocide (Gourevitch, 1998). The name ‘Genocide against Tutsi’ does not seem to contribute to the discourse of unity since it leaves out other possible victims and could therefore create resistance. When the students were asked whether they thought this is a good name they argued:

“I wouldn’t say it was also a genocide against Hutus because of the classification as the cause. Like, what was the main aim for this wars. Was it eradication of a human group or was it to gain identity or to gain nationality again? It mostly depends on the cause” (Christine, personal communication, 15 May 2014).

“Before, they only called it the genocide, after that they emphasized and they would say genocide against Tutsi. I asked about the reason and they say the plan wasn’t to kill Hutus, the plan was to kill the Tutsis. Genocide is always targeted at a group and they were the ones that were targeted. Only if you would go against the plans they would kill you as a Hutu but if you would do anything they would not kill you as Hutu. So now I understand” (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014).

Whether this name creates a breach in the discourse of unity is difficult to say. The name does not seem to upset or divide the students. Moreover, in the schoolbooks and newspapers it is stated that the main victims were the Tutsis. It therefore does fit in the governments' official narrative. It is possible that the government considers taking the blame of 'the Hutus' as more important to accomplish unity, than leaving out the ethnic identity of the victim group. In the next paragraph it will be discussed whether the discourse of unity is causing the students to act united.

4.1.2 The conduct and beliefs of the students and the society

It is apparent that the government has power in determining the discourse and determining the truths that students own. However, discursive power entails that the government is able to influence not only the beliefs, but also the conducts of the students. This would mean that the students act according to the discourse of unity and feel united. Though the question whether the students feel united themselves was not a part of the topic list, an image can be derived from the interviews. Two students that I interviewed considered each other as their best friend, while one of them is part of the survivor group and the other is considered to be a part of the Hutu ethnic category. Also some other students said that they have friends from the other 'ethnic group'. However, one student argues that, while it is not a problem for him anymore and he does not need to know whether a person is considered Hutu or Tutsi when becoming friends with that person, forgiving is another story (Bonheur, personal communication, 25 March 2014). He argues that he is feeling peaceful, but cannot fully forgive since he has lost almost his entire family. He can therefore become friends with somebody of his age, but will not forgive the elder people who killed his family (Bonheur, personal communication, 25 March 2014). Another student said:

"I have friends and they try to hide it, they are not open, they don't tell me what happened. If your father has killed or uncles who have killed and you don't tell me, I don't like it because I always want to know your opinion about what happened. If you know everybody's opinion it is easy to communicate because you know you can talk about everything. But when you don't know someone's opinion, also close friends, you know that you have discussion and in discussion they are limited, there is a part you can't say because you don't know that persons position. You don't know if they supported it or not. You don't like to have a fake friend like that (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014).

It can be argued that most students are unified in the sense that they are able to be friends with somebody from the other ethnic category. However, this friendship can include several conditions, such as being open about your views and opinion concerning the genocide.

The students thought that about 80% of the inhabitants of Rwanda are united. They argued that there are still people who find it difficult to reconcile or feel united because they have lived through the eras of genocidal ideology. Some of the elderly have difficulties changing their mindset into one of unity. However, since it has been 20 years, the students argued that this is diminishing. According to the students, the only problem could be that the elder people transfer their mindset to their children, but the students are confident that the school will change this negative mindset into a positive one. However, the question is how the students define unity. During the interviews they narrated many examples of people who still find it difficult to live with people from the other ethnic group. A few students told me that their parents are still angry. The students see that their parents still hate certain people or own the genocide ideology, in this case meaning that they still believe in the superiority of one ethnic group. Also the examples of the kids who have negative attitudes show

that there are still people who own this genocide ideology. One of the students said that her uncles told her she could do anything but to get married to a Hutu. She then continues with a story about one of her cousins who got married to a Hutu and some family members did not show up at the ceremony (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014). She stated that trust is also still a big issue. King, who works at Radio La Benevolencija, said that trust is one of the biggest challenges Rwandans face right now. People from the different ethnic groups can live and work together, but form no deep connections because of their lack of trust towards each other.

Seeing these examples, one could argue that it is unlikely that unity is reached for 80% of the inhabitants. However, most examples cover elderly people: parents or other family members. In Rwanda, half of the inhabitants are below the age of 20 and three-quarter of the inhabitants is below the age of 30 (Kagame, 2014). Since the students who participated in this research have little problems being friends with people from the other ethnic group, it is likely that they feel unified. The percentage of 80% unification could therefore be quite accurate. It seems that the discourse of unity is mainly internalized by young people, who did not know the genocidal discourse extensively. The government is able to influence their attitudes and behaviors, but has less influence on the attitudes and behavior of elder people. The discursive power of the government is therefore mainly focused on young people. The elder people may share the same historical narrative but do not agree with its overall message of unity. In their case, the role of memory is very important in determining their attitudes. Even though the genocidal discourse is not propagated anymore, people's memory of the events and the genocidal discourse keeps some of the genocidal attitudes alive.

4.2 Rules and power

In discourse theory, rules are about what is and what is not permissible to talk about (Tamas, 2014). Therefore, rules are always about inclusion and exclusion, since they make some subjects impossible to discuss whereas other subjects remain possible, or even desirable (Tamas, 2014). In this paragraph it will be shown which direct and indirect rules surround the historical narrative about the genocide. Furthermore, a consequence of not following rules is often a punishment, which can be a fine or imprisonment, but can also be of a social kind, such as social exclusion. Rules therefore can be related to a fear for punishment, which also influences conduct. This paragraph will therefore discuss the role of fear in the beliefs and conduct of students.

4.2.1 Direct and indirect rules

Concerning the genocide, the government of Rwanda is the actor that creates most of the discursive rules. Some of these rules are direct and official, such as rules that are part of the law. Other rules are more indirect and unofficial, but do determine what is and what is not permissible to talk about. First the official rules will be discussed. The Rwandan law prohibits actions that are characterized by a genocide ideology. Genocide ideology is defined as:

“An aggregate of thoughts characterized by conduct, speeches, documents and other acts aiming at exterminating or inciting others to exterminate people basing (sic) on ethnic group, origin, nationality, region, color, physical appearance, sex, language, religion or political opinion, committed in normal periods or during war” (Nishimwe, 2013).

Article 3 describes the characteristics of the crime of genocide ideology:

“The crime of genocide ideology is characterized in any behavior manifested by acts aimed at dehumanizing (sic) a person or a group of persons with the same characteristics in the following manner:

- 1. Threatening, intimidating, degrading through defamatory (sic) speeches, documents or actions which aim at propounding wickedness or inciting hatred;*
- 2. Marginalizing, laughing at one’s misfortune, defaming, mocking, boasting, despising, degrading, creating (sic) confusion aiming at negating the genocide which occurred, stirring (sic) up ill feelings, taking revenge, altering testimony or evidence for the genocide which occurred;*
- 3. Killing, planning to kill or attempting to kill someone for purposes of furthering genocide ideology”* (Nishimwe, 2013).

Not obeying these rules can lead to punishments varying from a fine of 100.000 Rwandan Francs to nine years imprisonment (Nishimwe, 2013). These rules and their related consequences determine what is permissible to talk about in a very specific way. One can for example not say that they do not believe a genocide took place. Furthermore, inciting hatred is a very broad category that could include talking negatively in a lot of different ways about the other ethnic group. The rules therefore shape the dominant discourse and may limit the power of the counter-discourses. Due to this rules, the students will never say publicly that they agree with the counter-discourse they have heard on the radio, since it could lead to imprisonment.

However, the government also controls in a ‘softer’ manner what is talked about: the government approves the history books used in schools and employs the teachers. According to Human Rights Watch (2009), the government is also controlling the newspapers and creates the content for the memorial ceremonies. In this way, the government controls another part of the concept of ‘rules’ as well: the formation of knowledge (Tamas, 2014). Since it controls most of the information sources, there is little space for other narratives. The government therefore controls what is talked about by dominating the information flows and thus by blocking alternative information. Another part of these more unofficial rules are restrictions made by parents or teachers. One of the students stated that he openly disagreed with the history teacher once, saying his narrative lacked information about the perpetrators of the genocide (Chris, personal communication, 4 April 2014). He was then taken apart and was told that it was not good of him to say that. In this way he learned the indirect rule to not publicly disagree with the official narrative. He therefore learned the norms, to which he will most likely adapt the way he talks about the genocide.

4.2.2 Power and fear

As it could be seen the government has power in the sense that it dominates the discourse. The government disciplines her inhabitants: the power of the government keeps them in their role of good citizens and it pressures them to conform to norms. The knowledge that the government has spread about the genocide has become the truth of the students themselves and it even has become ‘common sense’. If the minds of people who are ‘dominated’ are influenced in such a way that they accept the dominance and act the way the powerful want out of their own free will, it is called hegemony. (Van Dijk, 1993).

However, it is difficult to determine whether the students willingly believe in the norms and narratives, or that they follow them out of fear for the government and the consequences of not following the rules and norms. Though the students will never admit publicly that they do not agree with the dominant narrative, some implicit answers were given during the interviews that can help

analyzing this case. One of the students said for example that it might be possible that the negative attitudes of people did not change, but that people do not express them anymore because they know it is dangerous (Ines, personal communication, 24 April 2014). Another student argued that people still have a mind of classifying people. When they are out of the house they state that they are unified, but according to him it is really not the case (Claude, personal communication, 5 April 2014). It is therefore very well possible that some of the students are not agreeing on the dominant narrative but that they did not express it in the interviews because they know it could be dangerous. It is rare for a foreigner to enter someone's private home in Rwanda, therefore most of the interviews were conducted in the cafeteria of the public library. Though it was not a very crowded place, there were always some other Rwandans working or studying there. This might have influenced the answers of the students. Moreover, King from La Benevolencija said that Rwandans often have difficulties with trusting 'white people' as well. Therefore, even without the other Rwandans working there, I might not have gotten the true answers from the students. On the other hand, some of the students that participated stated to be friends with persons from the other ethnic category, therefore it seems that at least the overall message of unity is accepted by the students. It is also possible that the students who participated are the ones that agree upon the governmental truths and norms and feel therefore comfortable enough to participate. Four students declined participating in the research, possibly because they do not feel free to express their true opinion. However, this remains a speculation, just as it can only be speculated to what extent the students agree with the governmental truths and norms.

5. Conclusion

In this conclusion a summary of the main results will be given. Hereafter, this research will be situated in the academic memory versus history debate and in the agency versus structure debate. Finally, academic and policy suggestions will be given.

5.1 Summary of results

The aim of this research was to analyze what narratives about the genocide the Rwandan students encounter and how they weave their own single narrative and truths about the genocide despite the multiple possible interpretations.

The Rwandan students do not encounter a great number of different narratives. The dominant discourse leaves little space for counter-narratives, and most of the narratives the students encounter fit therefore in this dominant discourse of unity. The most complete narrative that the students encounter is the historical narrative they learn in school. This narrative explains from pre-colonial times till the actual genocide and the reconciliation process that started after this event what happened in Rwanda. This narrative puts the colonialists and the bad government forward as the main causes for the genocide. It pays attention to the unity that existed before the colonization and that is returning now, and does not explain very specific what happened exactly during the genocide and does not state that it were Hutus who killed Tutsis. The stories told by teachers only affirm this narrative. The students internalize these truths transmitted by the school as their own truth, regardless their ethnic background. The narratives told by parents are a helpful addition to this dominant narrative and the students use them to clarify what they have learned in school. The stories of the parents include their episodic memories, but provide less background information. This can explain why the students change from their parents as main provider of their historical truths to the school as soon as they are taught the official narrative: this dominant narrative is more complete. Another explanation can be found in the fact that parents have less access to the discourse than the government. Some students do argue that their parents provide them with information that is not transmitted in school, mainly about the ethnic categories. The dominant discourse is also present and reproduced in the media. The stories in the newspapers about what happened are the same as the narrative the students encounter in school. The stories about the present and the future can be related to this narrative and the unity discourse the government tries to spread. Only the radio sporadically broadcasts counter-narratives. However, these are generally rejected and put in a dominant discourse frame by the students.

The students weave their single narrative therefore by using the knowledge and truths they learned in school as their fundamental narrative and complete it with the examples their parents give them. However, whereas the question posed in the beginning of this thesis includes how the students weave a single narrative 'despite the multiple possible interpretations', it remains questionable how possible these other interpretations are. The discourse of unity that is present is very dominant. The government has an incredible amount of power in determining what is talked about by dominating the information sources and by creating and controlling rules that influence what is permissible to talk about. It is possible that the students do own other possible interpretations of the historical narrative, but that they do not dare to predicate these views. The government also has power in determining the conduct of the students, though it is yet unknown whether this is in a positive or negative way. The students appear to feel unified and some of them have friends from different ethnic groups. It is difficult to determine whether this is how they really all feel. If some of the students just say and act up to the expectations of the government out of fear,

the government still has power in determining conduct although it would not be authentic behavior. Therefore, it remains unknown whether the concept of hegemony is applicable to Rwanda, since for a true hegemony to exist, students do not only need to accept the dominance, but also need to act the way the government wants out of their free will. The second part of the research question concerning the way students weave their own single narrative can therefore be answered two sided: they weave it based on fear or they weave it based on full agreement. A final possibility is the influence of both fear and agreement on the formation of the students' narrative.

5.2 Academic discussion

As stated in the introduction, this research fits in the academic debate about history versus memory. In this debate, some authors see a clear distinction between the concepts of history and memory and give different values to these concepts. Others, such as Cole (2001, in: Argenti and Schramm, 2010), argue that history influences memories and vice versa. Regarding this research, I would argue that it is very possible that historical facts influence memories and vice versa. This could explain why parents or teachers share little counter-ideas with the students, since it might be the case that their memories are influenced by the big amount of 'historical facts' that are transmitted to them through the media, causing the disappearance of real counter-ideas. Their memories might be adapted, allowing them to fit in the official narrative. Furthermore, memories have most likely also influenced the history, most certainly the history presented in the books and media. In Rwanda, the history is written based on the memories of the survivors which is clearly visible in the texts, for example in the secondary history schoolbook in which is stated that 'the tyrant regime in Kigali was unwilling to let the RPF live in their lovely country' (Bamusananire and Ntege, n.d., retrieved in May 2014). I therefore agree with Cole her statement that history influences memories and vice versa.

This research also contributes to the debate of history versus memory relating to the curriculum design. A question in this debate is whether violent history needs to be taught, considering that it might exacerbate social tensions by repeating and teaching the problems of the past (Cole, 2007). In Rwanda, this problem is avoided by blaming the colonialists and the former government and not 'the Hutus'. The main instigators of the genocide are removed from public consciousness and tensions concerning these factors are therefore eliminated. Furthermore, ethnicity is seen as a social construct, which also contributes to eliminating calls for retribution (Papadakis, 2008). Another question in this debate is whether memory should be included in the curriculum. In Rwanda, memory appears to be interwoven with historical facts as argued above. Though I believe that it is difficult to separate historical facts from memory since, as argued above, I believe they influence each other, I think it would be completely impossible to do so in the case of Rwanda. In the past of Rwanda, especially before the colonial times, little was written down. Memory had to be used to construct history. The question whether memory should be included in the curriculum is therefore less applicable to the case of Rwanda. I do nevertheless argue that the memory included in the schoolbooks is too one-sided and therefore unable to paint a historical valid picture.

A final academic discussion is the ontological structure versus agency debate. As argued in the introduction, the analytical frame of discourse analysis was chosen for this research partly because it combines structure and agency. In this research, it was nevertheless difficult to find the role of agency in the formation of the students' own narrative. Whereas Critical Discourse Analysis could be used extensively to analyze the discursive power the Rwanda government has, the Discourse Historical Approach was barely applicable to analyze the role of memory. Memory is

present in the historical narratives, but only the memory of the powerful which is almost transformed into knowledge. Subjective memories of people, in this case parents, are overruled in the students' process of weaving a single narrative by the dominant powerful discourse provided by the government. It could be questioned whether the students even have some agency in weaving their own historical truths, since the truths are imposed by the structure. The exact role of agency remains unknown nonetheless, since it might be possible that the narrative the students told during the interviews is not their true narrative and does not correspond with their real truths.

5.3 Recommendations

As a further result of this thesis, several recommendations can be formed. First of all, suggestions for further research can be made. An interesting follow-up study could be conducted in which the research population and sample consists of students whose education stopped after secondary school and therefore did not attend university. Almost all the students that participated in this research were in university, which shows that their family is quite wealthy and that they are quite smart. It is very well possible that students from wealthy families and who are fairly intellectual have different attitudes or are differently influenced by the government than students from less wealthy families or who have less intellectual capacity. The fact that the students that participated have quite rich families shows for example that their families did not lose all of their capital during the genocide, which may cause less grievances and therefore less negative attitudes among their parents. This could make it easier for them to articulate the stories of their parents with the official governmental ones. However, this remains a speculation, further research is necessary to determine this. Another possible follow-up study could try to discover to what extent the students actually believe the narrative that the government transmits. It would be very interesting to know whether the students agree on the government's truths and norms, or own completely different beliefs. Though it would not be easy to conduct this research, I believe that it is not impossible either. The researcher would need to invest a lot of time and effort in gaining trust to be able to get to know the students' true beliefs.

Secondly, a suggestion for the government of Rwanda concerning their policy can be made. In my opinion, counter-narratives and counter-ideas should be discussed in schools. In this way, students learn to think critically, which helps them to protect themselves against possible new forms of hate speech. When they learn the ability of critical thinking, they will not believe just anything that is said by government officials or radio announcers. This compliance was in my opinion one of the causes of the genocide, thus teaching the students to think critically could help prevent new violence. Furthermore, it is better to discuss counter-narratives in school where the teacher can help to nuance them, than to keep the counter-narratives and negative attitudes locked in people's houses, where nobody will notice them until the bomb filled with grievances and pent-up emotions bursts.

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7. Appendix

7.1 List of participants

Alexandre, interviewed on 17 April 2014 in Kigali. Male, 24 years old.

Bonheur, interviewed on 25 March 2014 in Kigali. Male, 26 years old.

Emmanuel, interviewed on 24 April 2014 in Kigali. Male, 24 years old.

Claudine, interviewed on 24 April 2014 in Kigali. Female, 23 years old.

Chris, interviewed on 4 April 2014 in Kigali. Male, 24 years old.

Christine, interviewed on 15 May 2014 in Kigali. Female, 23 years old.

Claude, interviewed on 5 April 2014 in Kigali. Male, 22 years old.

Eraste, interviewed on 6 May 2014 in Kigali. Male, 26 years old.

Ines, interviewed on 24 April 2014 in Kigali. Female, 22 years old.

Lidie, interviewed on 15 May 2014 in Kigali. Female, 21 years old.

Girl, interviewed on 25 April 2014 in Kigali. Female, 20 years old.