Duture Neza, Duture Heza[1]: Planning and Building a "Liberal Peace"

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Cultural and Social Geography, Jamie Winders and Ishan Ashutosh, eds. (New York: Wiley Blackwell, forthcoming 2022): 13 pages.

Delia Duong Ba Wendel
Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA
wendel@mit.edu

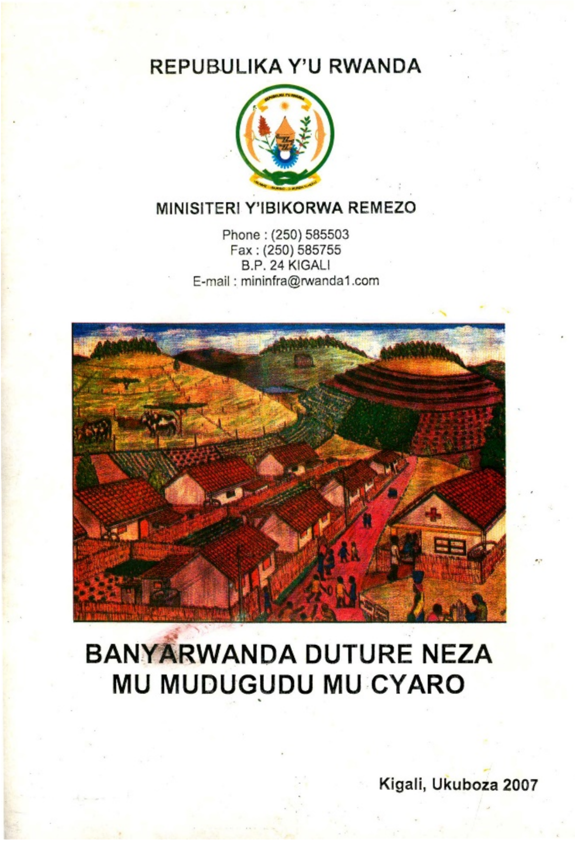
In Rwanda today, the memories and legacies of the 1994 genocide and reprisal attacks continue to burden communities throughout the country. To respond to the scale and extent of that violence, the post-genocide government employed architecture and urban planning to "build" peace. Villagisation, the relocation of scattered rural homes into planned settlements, was the first, most widespread, and enduring of those initiatives. Over the last three decades, the government has progressively moved residents into tens of thousands of such sites. In my research in 36 villages throughout the country, resident perspectives reveal disconnects between how peace has been planned and experienced in the country. Mandatory cohabitation and the unequal distribution of new housing and infrastructure have produced uneven social effects: generally complicating distrust and conflicts and sometimes structuring coexistence and sociability. The epistemic lens afforded by rural villages locates the everyday conditions and challenges of peacebuilding in Rwanda.

The interface of architectural history and cultural geography grounds my research of peace and conflict in situated and lived experiences. As a result, I am wary of the violence peacebuilding can do and seek improvements to policy and practice. My research employs a range of critical qualitative methods that include ethnography, visual and spatial analysis, oral history, and archival research. I work in an urban studies and planning department, often feeling like a disciplinary interloper who claims my training in cultural geography as an important signal. For me, the field communicates radical interdisciplinarity and a capaciousness for social theory that is grounded in a careful understanding of place and people. Cultural geography facilitates an important pause for analysis, questioning received categories of social life and the places and spatial distributions of capital, power, and social difference.

At the same time, architecture and urban planning compel actionable engagements with actually existing communities who articulate challenges to and aspirations for change. Ethical practice within those fields emphasizes the importance of lived and affective experiences and cares for communities impacted by planned abandonment. My work connects with both critical race (Kobayashi, 2013; McKittrick and Woods, 2007; Pulido, 2015 and 2016) and feminist (Rose, 1993; Pratt and Hanson, 1994; Oberhauser et. al, 2018) geography in its attentiveness to identity, alterity, resistance, and the values that undervalued individuals associate with their life-worlds. Operating from these fields inspires the opportunity, following Ruth Wilson Gilmore, to write and to do; to "intervene in a particular historical-geographical moment by changing not only what people do but also how all of us think about ourselves and our time and place, by opening the world we make" (2008: p. 56).

---

[1] "Duture neza kandi heza" is a Kinyarwanda phrase that translates, "Let's (all) live well and in a beautiful (and good) place." It was commonly used by the pre-genocide government to refer to the role that rural citizens had in contributing to the economic and social progress of the nation (Habyarimana, 16 Nov 1988: p. 200, trans. from Kinyarwanda by D.W.). The phrase was also typically used to describe the social and economic repair anticipated in the post-genocide government's *imidugudu* or villagisation strategy (e.g. GOR, 2007).



REPUBULIKA Y'U RWANDA

MINISITERI Y'IBIKORWA REMEZO

Phone : (250) 585503
Fax : (250) 585755
B.P. 24 KIGALI
E-mail : mininfra@rwanda1.com

BANYARWANDA DUTURE NEZA
MU MUDUGUDU MU CYARO

Kigali, Ukuboza 2007

Figure 1. The cover of a 2007 pamphlet, *Banyarwanda Duture Neza Mu Midugudu Mu Cyaro*—Rwandans Live Well in Rural Villages. The booklet describes the logics and impacts of villagisation, the government's planning for peace strategy. Though it has a specific pre-genocide history, the phrase "duture neza kandi heza" was redeployed after 1994 to describe the social and economic repair anticipated through villagisation (GOR, 2007).

Imidugudu

Studying *imidugudu,* the Kinyarwanda term for the Rwanda's government-planned villages, opens worlds created in service of state sovereignty and autocracy and those shaped by related challenges to living together after mass violence. Before 1994, most of Rwanda's rural residents lived in homes that were located on family farming lands (Figure 02). Villages were not common. Consolidating houses around roads and other infrastructure forced undesirable distances between an extended family's dwelling and the means for their subsistence. However, during and after the genocide (1994-1998), a severe housing shortage, disputes regarding land ownership, and the mass exodus and return of over 2.7 million people accelerated government efforts to reform land use, governance, and social relations by redesigning rural environments. A country-wide *imidugudu* policy was introduced in 1993 during peace negotiations related to the civil war (National Authorities, 1993: Article 28). It was formalized as a compulsory state policy in 1996 (GOR, June 1996). Thereafter, villages became the only permissible form of residence.

From the start, villagisation combined modernization and peacebuilding mandates. A 1997 government policy document asserted that *imidugudu* would: "1) assure efficient and appropriate land-use for the Rwandan population. [and] 2) promote national reconciliation and restore peace and unity among the Rwandan people" (GOR, August 1997: p. 4). Villages do so with a particular aesthetic (Figure 03). Under the program, identical houses are built in equally spaced, gridded plots, representing unity as uniformity and peace as order. Reconciliation is, by extension, approximated through cohabitation. Sites provide infrastructure and social services, modernize homes and agricultural production, and order social life. After 2001, Rwanda shifted to a decentralized form of national governance. As the smallest unit in the country's sociopolitical organization, villages served to promote "a culture of peace, transparency, and participation" at the community scale (GOR, April 2008: p.19).

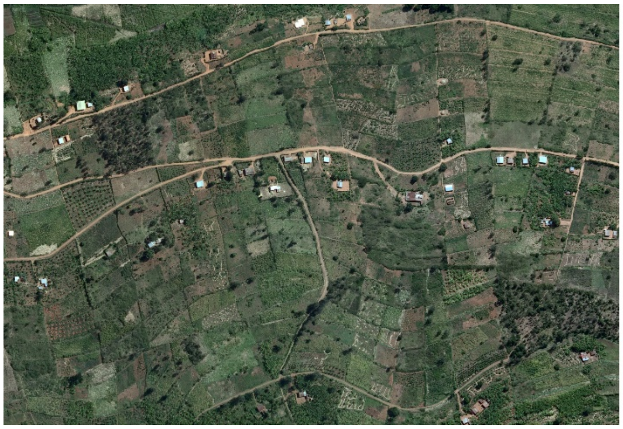
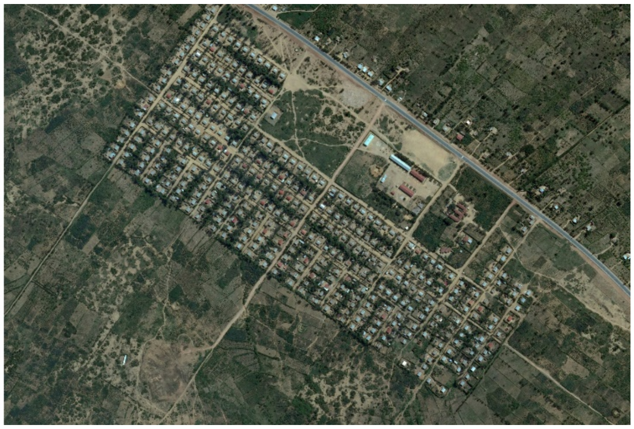



Figure 2 (left). Pre-1994 typical habitat pattern, with homes loosely oriented to a dirt access road. Figure 3 (right). Post-1994 village settlements, with houses uniformly spaced in grid plans. Source: Ministry of Local Government

There are significant mismatches in the program's intentions, implementation, and effects.[2] *Imidugudu* bring together diverse residents including former perpetrators, genocide survivors, and returnees from long-term exile. The afterlives of mass violence are entangled with uneven relationships of land tenure, farmland leases, and development assistance. In many cases, villagisation has burdened social cohesion, negatively affected livelihoods, and reinforced restrictions on free speech. Amid these complex living conditions, residents feel protected from the recurrence of mass violence by the government's enforcement of security. But many are still fearful of neighborly rancor and state retribution, indicated by rocks thrown against houses' metal roofs in the night and government punishment for voicing unauthorized narratives.[3] In newly planned villages, peaceful coexistence balances precariously on continued distrust, inequality, and past harms that still require repair.

In 2013, I asked the same question of every rural resident in Rwanda that I met: "If you were to visit another village, how would you know if peace was there?"[4] I was asking individuals if peace was recognizable—if it was visible or spatial—or perhaps could be experienced. I was asking if peace was more than an ideal. Ultimately, I was inquiring into the everyday conditions for and barriers to peace after the 1994 genocide.

---

[2] Based on a summary of my research in 36 villages throughout the country from 2011-2018. Over the last three decades, these issues have been well-documented: Ansoms, 2009; Des Forges, 2006; Havugimana, 2009; Hilhorst and van Leeuwen, 1999; Human Rights Watch, 2001; van Hoyweghen, 2000; Imbs, 2000; Newbury, 2011.

[3] See the recent example of gospel singer Kizito Mihigo's alleged suicide while detained by the government (BBC, 29 Feb 2020; Mwambari, 2019).

[4] For 21 months during 2011-2013, I conducted a study of peacebuilding in Rwanda employing a combination of ethnographic, spatial, survey, oral history, and archival research. I asked this question of 614 people in 36 villages. Fieldwork was generously supported by the Social Science Research Council's International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Harvard Sheldon Traveling Fellowship, and Harvard University research grants from the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the Harvard Humanitarian Institute, and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

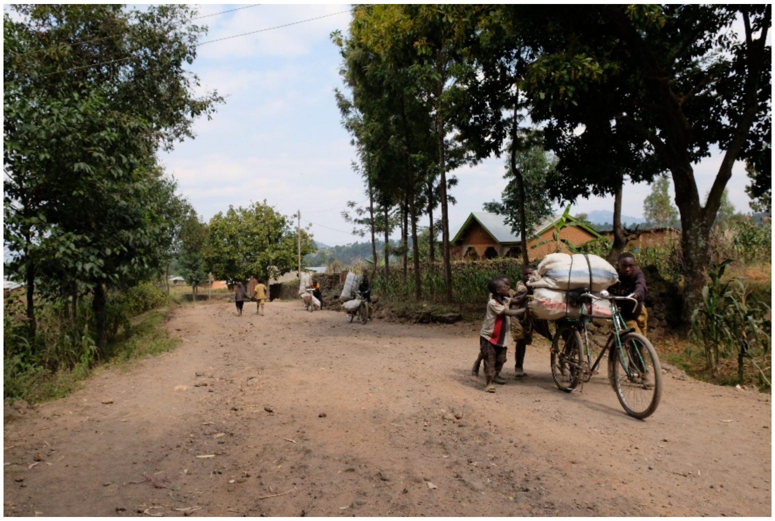


Figure 4. Young boys push potatoes, beans, and other harvests on bicycles to and from the market on the road near Christine's home (not pictured), 2018. Source: Delia Wendel

A primary school teacher living in a village in northern Rwanda answered my question with a comparison. Christine was 30 years old at the time and taught in the nearby town. She and her husband owned land on the site where the government constructed the new village (Figure 04). They were better off than most: able to build a modest house with their own means and rent a portion of their farming lands to those who were resettled nearby. Responding to my question, Christine said:

> People can live in villages with houses in rows, places to meet, and good roads, and not have peace. Let me give you an example from *Musekeweya*. In that radio drama, you see characters fight often. […] But someone who is not from that village would never know that. People in another village could have all of these things and by looking with your eyes you could say that the village is fine. But really, hatred is there.
>
> *Abantu bashobora guturana mu midugudu n'amazu aringaniye, ahantu hazwi abantu bahurira, imihanda myiza—bashobora kuba batuye gutyo ariko wenda nta mahoro bafite. Ngiye kuguha urugero muri Musekeweya. Muri icyo ikinamico, urabona ko abantu bakunda gutongana. […] Ariko umuntu utari uwo muri uwo mudugudu, ntashobora kumenya ngo hari icyo bapfa. Huum, no mu mudugudu rero ibyo bishobora kuba birimo, ukarebesha amaso ngo umudugudu umeze neza. Ariko, inzangano ari zo zirimo*.[5]

For Christine, the villages that the government developed after the genocide only offer the appearance of peace in Rwanda. By contrast, she compared Rwanda's new villages with a popular radio drama's fictional hill communities. Christine's most ready example of prolonged hatred (*inzangano*) and the prevalence of fighting (*gutongana*) were located in the world created by the fictional soap opera. It is not that conflicts do not exist between neighbors in Rwanda. Rather, in terms of what is permitted to be spoken, fiction represents reality more freely and accurately. Christine's reflections provide a sense of what it is like to live peace in the country.

---

[5] 130805_12-00: 16-17, trans. by D.W. Christine is a pseudonym. The format of this source indicates a discrete interview that has been anonymized. All interviews are noted by the date (130805) and start time (12-00), followed by the transcript page (16-17) from which a quotation is taken and the initials of the person who translated from Kinyarwanda (D.W.).

Inquiring into the geography of peace in Rwanda has basis in the government's effort to spatialize peace in architectural, planning, and environmental programs. Those projects reveal the interface of peace as a state goal with its experience in living communities. Listening to the views of those affected by changes to civic places, landscapes, and settlements furthermore challenge the prevailing view, both national and foreign, that Rwanda is a peaceful nation. Peace research pioneer Johan Galtung coined the term "negative peace" to refer to the absence of mass violence or warfare (Galtung, 1969). However, Galtung also intended the concept as a critique of assumptions that conflate negative peace with actually existing peace. Claims that negative peace has been achieved in Rwanda tend to close off references that rural residents make to the conflicts, inequalities, and structural violence that persist. As a result, the absence of violence tells us little about the quality of peace or what power imbalances and psycho-social strategies peacebuilding demands from communities.

Rwanda's villagisation policy represents the contemporary international and paradigmatic turn to development as means to build peace.[6] Strategies deployed through the policy derive from "liberal peace" orthodoxy, which asserts that political and economic liberalization resulting in impartial democratic institutions and a free market economy produce stability and peace. Villagisation models these goals at the local scale to generate conditions for peaceful coexistence and national development. However, rarely are such projects, institutions, or markets actually impartial (or indeed perceived as such) in post-conflict contexts—villagisation is no exception. Moreover, critics of liberal peace claim that isomorphic institutional and economic reforms are focused more on nation building than peacebuilding (Duffield, 2001; Paris, 2004; Richmond and Franks, 2009; see also Doyle, 2012). As a result, programs tend to privilege elite or foreign political and economic interests and poorly address local specificities, underlying causes of conflicts, or the concerns of citizens on the margins. Such a view would see villagisation primarily as a development program that focuses on national indicators of progress rather than civil rights and community challenges to living together after mass violence.

Critical Peace Epistemologies

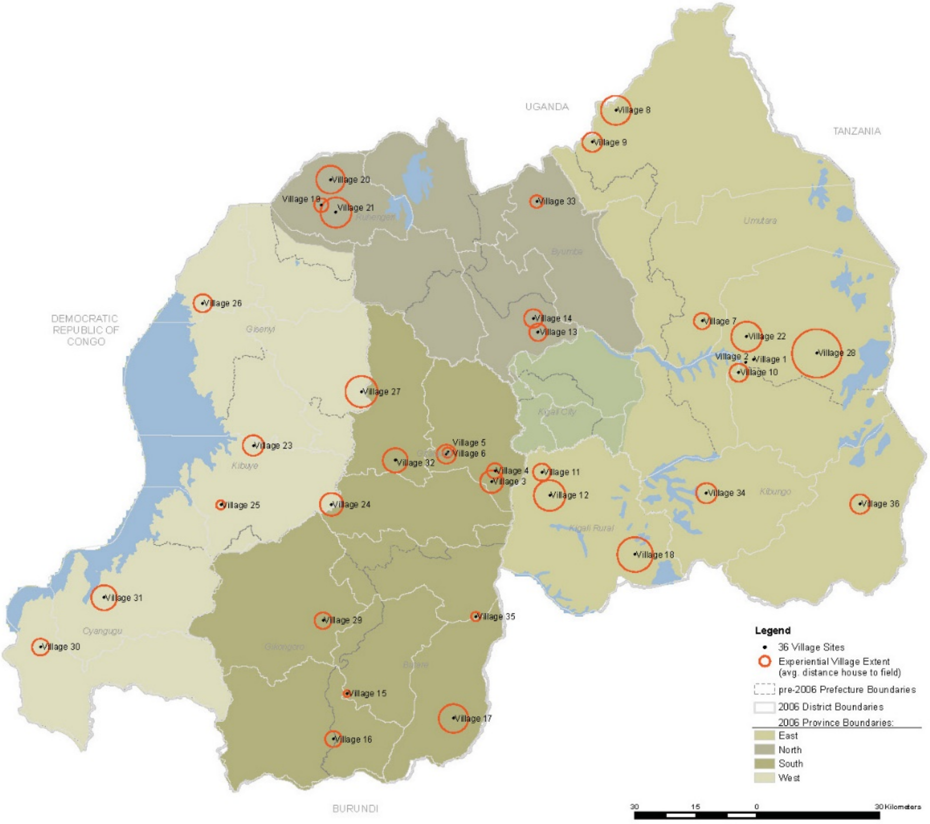
Christine's view from northern Rwanda troubles conventional understandings of peace and opens questions of epistemology. In this context, the question of how one knows peace is further tempered by who. Critical peace studies, of which my research in Rwanda is a part, is an interdisciplinary effort to explore the quality, nature, and challenges of peace. It sees peace in dynamic relationship to conflict; not as a hard break from war, as if the afterlives of violence could be left firmly in the past. Peace is as much process as outcome. It is sensitive to the existence of a range of types of disputes and forms of structural and direct violence. My approach to this field of study grounds knowledge and analyses in place and spatial relationships of belonging, power, and difference. Doing so privileges a view of place as culturally specific context for those relationships and constitutive of how belonging, power, and difference are constructed.

In Rwanda, I follow four peacebuilding programs enacted through built and imagined environments that traverse the terrains of domestic life, sites of memory, grouped settlement, and the aforementioned fictional communities narrated in a radio soap opera.[7] My research explores the intentions of those peace strategies and their impacts on rural residents. Both historical and ethnographic, a large part of my research took place in 36 villages distributed across the country's 30 districts in interviews and oral histories with over 600 people (Figure 05). I also conducted ethnographic research within the state ministries and institutions that administer projects on genocide memory, infrastructure, villagisation, and environmental remediation. I interviewed civil servants that directed those projects and had rare access to state archives and document repositories at each. Both scales—those of national policy and local experience—are critical to defining *what* and *where* peace is in Rwanda.

---

[6] Villagisation is also historically rooted in a set of colonial policies to domesticate and control native populations. It furthermore comprises a host of postcolonial strategies that attempted to reimagine the future of African nations while simultaneously mobilizing architecture and planning as forms of state control and economic modernization, which were undertaken through forced resettlement in the case of Tanzania and, in the case of Mozambique, military reterritorialization (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992; Hyden, April 1975; van Leeuwen, 2001; Lunstrum, 2009.

[7] The four spatialized peacebuilding projects that guided my research include: new rural villages, genocide memorials, a roof modernization program, and a radio drama's fictional communities. Each of these were state


UGANDA
TANZANIA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
BURUNDI
Village 8
Village 9
Village 20
Village 19
Village 21
Ruhengeri
Village 33
Umutara
Byumba
Village 26
Gisenyi
Village 14
Village 13
Village 7
Village 22
Village 2
Village 1
Village 10
Village 28
Village 27
Kigali City
Village 23
Kibuye
Village 5
Village 6
Village 32
Village 4
Village 3
Village 11
Village 12
Village 34
Kibungo
Village 36
Village 25
Village 24
Kigali Rural
Village 18
Village 31
Village 29
Village 35
Cyangugu
Village 30
Gikongoro
Butare
Village 15
Village 17
Village 16
Legend
36 Village Sites
Experiential Village Extent (avg. distance house to field)
pre-2006 Prefecture Boundaries
2006 District Boundaries
2006 Province Boundaries:
East
North
South
West
30
15
0
30 Kilometers

2013 Provinces	West		North			Kigali		South			East	
Villages surveyed	7		6			0		10			13	
2010 Province Stats												
Total no. of villages in country	3617		2474			549		3200			3609	
Province area	5,883 sq km		3,276 sq km			730 sq km		5,963 sq km			9,813 sq km	
Total livable area	5,083 sq km		3,023 sq km			730 sq km		5,763 sq km			8,580 sq km	
Villages / sqkm	.45 / sqkm		.79 / sqkm			.44 / sqkm		.58 / sqkm			.43 / sqkm	
pre-2006 Prefectures	Kibuye	Cyangugu	Gisenyi	Ruhengeri	Byumba	Kigali	Kigali Rural	Gitarama	Butare	Gikongoro	Kibungo	Umutara
Villages surveyed	3	2	2	3	1	0	5	5	3	2	3	7

Figure 5. Map of the 36 rural village sites where interviews with 614 residents were conducted in 2013, overlaid on top of the shifting sub-national territorial boundaries (pre- and post- 2006). The sizes of the orange circles represent the experiential extent of the village, defined as the average distance from residents' homes in the grouped site to farming fields. Source: Delia Wendel

---

policies with the exception of the radio drama, which is a nongovernmental project that has independent control over its content. However, separation from the state is not absolute: the program is sanctioned by the government and runs on the state radio station.

Throughout the country, public discourse on the genocide is regulated by the government.[8] To navigate the silences induced by state epistemologies of peace, I privileged ordinary people and places as critical sources of knowledge. My conversations with individuals were sensitive to opportunities to reveal opinions less directly. In each village, individuals regularly referred to landscapes and living conditions as proxies for critical views of neighbors and state policies. In these ways, spaces present strategic entry into politicized topics.

My research engaged oral and spatial histories to try to understand the legacies of violence in everyday practices and challenges to peaceful coexistence. The result is an intimate historiography (Hartman, 2019): one that starts from individual experiences and aspirations as lenses onto three decades of state policies and structural forces involved in post-genocide repair. At the same time, my socio-spatial methodology resists the notion that spaces are mere containers for social life (Low, 2016; Massey, 1997 and 1999). Both are inextricably bound in and constitutive of the other. An intimate historiography also attends to landscapes of violent memory and homes hospitable to neighborliness. Histories of built environments fill many silences that individuals do not feel comfortable lifting. More than context, spatial histories reveal the forces behind uneven development, coax stories from place, and weave more-than-human temporalities together with those of families and generations.

Conflict Geographies

Residents of Ingurunguru Village, where Christine lives, note that most conflicts today arise over land rights, perceived inequalities, and in disputes between and within families.[9] Because the genocide and subsequent reprisal attacks have unresolved legacies, those seemingly mundane reasons for conflict are still tethered, albeit in sometimes subtle ways, to the violence of the 1990s. Alphonse, a young man who lives in the same village as Christine, illustrated those imbrications.

Alphonse lives in a house two rows back from the village's new access road (Figure 06). Most houses in Ingurunguru are of the same, uniform design: rectangular 18 by 24 foot structures constructed from mud bricks and covered with metal shed roofs, located within a larger, quasi-private area designated for domestic work (*urugo*). On fields adjacent to homes, the dark soil characteristic of this region is periodically tilled and piled high over rows of potato plants (Figure 07). Stacks of rough, porous rocks trace the edges of house and farming plots. Volcanic rocks are plentiful near the Virunga Mountains and are widely used as boundary, regional identity, and social status markers. When I first visited in 2013, the crops and houses were all new. A few years prior, the flat and wide hilltop was cleared of its trees, measured and parceled by local government authorities, and resettled by area residents who were relocated to the site. When I asked if and how residents received assistance to build and move to his village, Alphonse responded with a more general reflection on how the process unfolded in the country:

---

[8] In 2008, the Rwandan government formalized Law 08/2008 on the punishment of "genocide ideology." The language describing the crime of "genocide ideology" was so wide—including Article 3-1 "threatening, intimidating, degrading through defamatory speeches, documents or actions which aim at propounding wickedness or inciting hatred"—that it was used to police free speech and state dissent. The law was revised in 2013: descriptions of related crimes were further specified, prosecutors were required to prove intent behind the crime, and the maximum punishment reduced from 25 to 9 years.

[9] Based on interviews with 17 individuals. "Ingurunguru" Village is an anonymized place name that serves to protect residents from state punishment and withholding of development assistance.

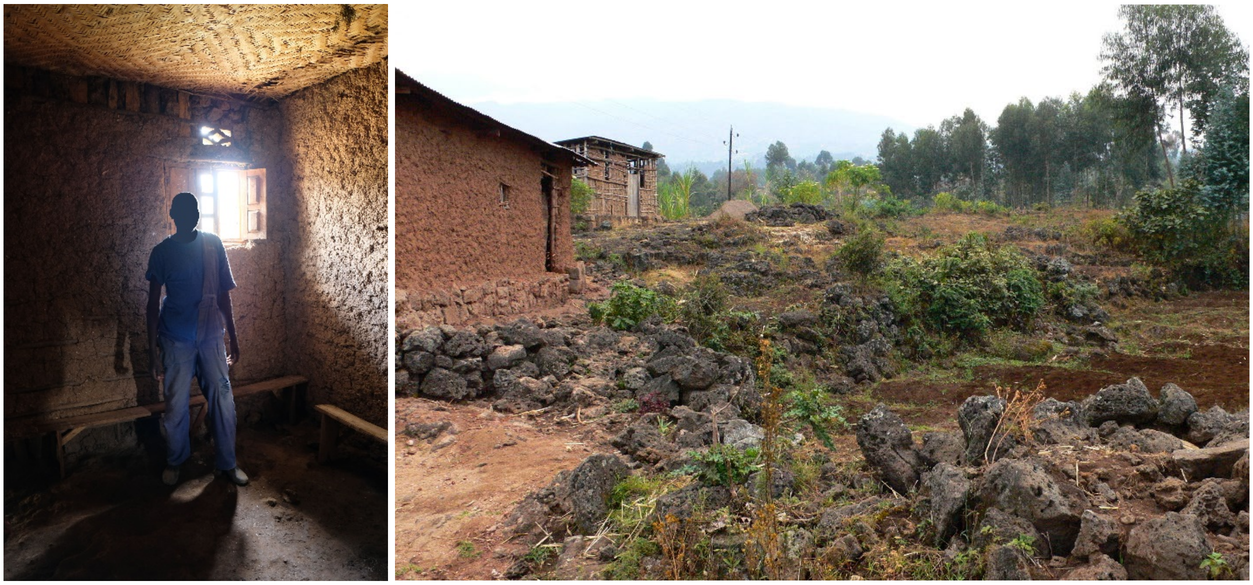


Figure 6 (left). Anonymized photograph of Alphonse in his home, 2018. Figure 7 (right). Houses under construction in "Ingurunguru" in a landscape of volcanic rock border walls and potato mounds, 2013. Source: Delia Wendel

> The government supported everyone without singling them out. Yes, and it said, "there, those houses are destroyed—they suffered," so they helped them. If your house wasn't destroyed, you cannot ask them [the government] to help you. Also, with your friend, whom they helped: you cannot be jealous of him because he faced actual problems.
>
> *Ni ukuvuga ngo leta yabafashije nta kureba ku butoni. Nta kurobanura. Yee, ngo ivuge ngo "uriya ni iki, yabonye yuko basenyewe, bakorewe ibiki byose," irabafasha. Ntago waba wowe utarasenyewe, ngo maze ngo uvuge ngo bagufashe. Kandi noneho uwo bafashije mugenzi wawe ntugomba kumugirira ishyari yuko bamufashije. Kandi yarahuye n'ikibazo nyine.*[10]

Rather than refer to ethnic identity, which is excluded from public discourse in Rwanda, Alphonse narrates social identity through house damages during the genocide. Those whose houses were destroyed, implicitly Tutsi genocide survivors, are recognized by the government for reconstruction assistance. Alphonse and others throughout the country consistently claimed that all citizens received equal opportunity for this aid. However, a strong caveat was also often repeated, as above, regarding what was considered a permissible social expectation for assistance. It is understood that those whose houses were not targeted by the genocide, implicitly the majority Hutu population, cannot ask the government for help nor express discontent because they do not face "actual problems".

Before the genocide, Ruhengeri Prefecture, where Ingunguru village is located, had a majority Hutu population (Republique Rwandaise, 1994: p.124).[11] Residents of the village noted that as a consequence, there were few Tutsi killings in the area during the genocide. There were, however, incidents of other crimes including property looting in 1994 and Hutu-targeted state reprisal killings in 1996-98.[12] Alphonse's mother and father were killed in attacks on the local market in 1997; a place that today bears no mark of past violence.[13] Because most area residents are Hutu, there are few officially designated "genocide survivors" living in the district, which along with the larger region's history of political separatism,[14] suggested to most of the village residents that I spoke with that they should not expect to be fully included in post-genocide development. One of the older women living in Ingunguru stated this view succinctly, repeating a common reflection among village residents: "we thought the President would only help [genocide] survivors, but he didn't leave any of us behind".[15]

---

[10] 130805_13-16: 44-45, trans. by D.W. Alphonse is a pseudonym.

[11] The Hutu population in Ruhengeri Prefecture was approximately 760,660 (99.2% of a total of 766,795 people), and only .5% Tutsi. However, there is some reason for caution regarding the accuracy of the census, which researchers question on the basis of government inflation and strategic misreporting on the part of residents (i.e. Tutsi reported themselves as Hutu to avail themselves of the latter's socioeconomic and political benefits). In 2005 the Prefecture's boundaries were redrawn as Musanze District.

The complexities embedded in Alphonse's reflection extend further. When Ingurunguru Village was developed in 2010, it was chosen to be built as a model village (GOR, 7-10 June 2010: p. 5). Model villages are idealized government experiments in rural settlement planning. They are pilot sites that are exemplary in the ways they materialize state objectives for the nation's future. However, Ingurunguru residents do not refer to their community as a model village. They do not employ terms such as *agasozi ndatwa* (a "praised hill") or *intangarugero* (an exemplary settlement) to describe their community. These are colloquial terms for model villages that individuals living elsewhere in the country use to opportunistically identify themselves with the impending prestige and progress to which this title and investment refers. Ingunguru Village is different. Residents living there did not see themselves as model village dwellers.

As I document elsewhere, residents of Ingurunguru Village, cognizant of their particular cultural-political history and concerned by whether they would benefit from development assistance, employed strategies of ordinariness to appear similar to the "rest" of Rwanda (Wendel, 2018). The non-acknowledgment of Ingurunguru's exceptional model village status was one such practice. The lack of public complaint for their undercompensated high-intensity labor in service of environmental remediation—including land terracing, road building, and tree planting—signaled residents' compliance and acquiescence to state objectives. Another was the perplexing frequency by which different residents, including Christine and Alphonse, either individually (and falsely) assumed the roles of genocide perpetrators or projected the terms by which genocide survivors could forgive them. Strategies of ordinariness were furthermore evident in the repeated phrase *tuvuga ururimi rumwe*—we speak one language—which was used to indicate agreement with the government's view that Kinyarwanda, the language spoken by all Rwandans, provided the cultural basis for Rwandan unity and post-genocide repair.

As "ordinary," Ingurunguru residents position themselves as dutiful citizens that pronounce their affiliation with state development policies and do not attract unfavorable attention from the government. This ordinariness is in one sense reproduced as a placelessness—a sameness that derives from the settlement's technocratic administration and uniform design. This is also a placelessness that shuns relationships between identity and region. Residents' ordinariness is actively constructed by compensating for national losses during the genocide and positioning residents as model citizens willing to apologize for the wrongs of all Hutu. Doing so seeks to demonstrate that residents are worthy of development benefits. The village reveals a case in which citizenship is not only defined by relationships of responsibilities and protection with a national government. To be a model citizen in this model village is to assume the burden of the state's expectations of a predominantly Hutu, northwestern region and to attempt to repair that image through accord and labor in service of model village construction.

---

[12] For a regionally differentiated study of the onset, causes, and dynamics of genocidal violence, see: Strauss, 2006.

[13] A story only revealed several years after my first visit, in 2018. 180718_15-05, trans. by D.W.

[14] Northwest Rwanda is historically prominent for its political autonomy from the Tutsi monarchy in the nineteenth century, and the consolidation of political and economic power in the region during the Second Republic (1973-1994), which was organized in part by membership in the former President Habyarimana's wife's clan.

[15] 130805_10-50: 21-22, trans. by D.W.

Whither Peace?

Rwanda's villagisation experiment conceives of peace as an imagined community—one that exists partly as an ideal and partly in the world. The government's version of this imagined community suggests that peace is a matter of development: of housing and rural urbanization. On this view, villages are loci of anticipated change. Village plans endeavor to suspend the afterlives of traumatic memories while imagining and enacting a new and different reality. Yet, the strength of the government's vision contrasts with the everyday experience of peacebuilding. It obscures forms of violence that are reproduced as stability, order, and economic development.

Throughout the country, residents typically claimed that new villages structure neighborliness.[16] They drew from quotidian examples, where individuals share water and land, tend kitchen fires for neighbors and watch others' children, and greet each other on paths between homes. In these ways, villagisation has had real impacts on forms of social cohesion and trust. In the three decades since the genocide, fear, distrust, and the grief of loss have had to be suspended or overcome for these everyday interactions to take place. Residents recount how daily repetition and living proximity have helped to assuage such feelings. Neighborliness is here an approximate peace, constituted by acts in place; by spaces that engender civic values. These social practices and built environments co-constitute a lived peace, even if it is not completely intact or consistently embraced.

However, and critically, there are a high proportion of residents who, three decades later, do not fully agree with the view that villages build peace.[17] They are usually, like Christine, skeptical of the mere appearance of peace and order, or are very poor and socially stigmatized. "Outsiderness" comes as a consequence of ethnic identity, familial relationships to genocide perpetrators, or as a result of being accused or convicted of genocide crimes. For many, villages are not more secure: relocating requires land exchanges that make livelihoods more precarious and brings residents closer to neighbors that regard them with suspicion. Villages reproduce existing tensions and create a more intense environment for reconciliation. And in some regions more than others, a developmentalist approach to peacebuilding profoundly recasts citizenship and reorders social life. In these ways, peace maps unevenly onto class inequality and social identity.

Accordingly, there are serious consequences to building peace without a community-scale understanding of how it is defined and experienced. Planning for complexity and alterity, designing from and for the margins, learning from local views, and addressing the structural and underlying causes of conflict—these are just some of the urgent issues that could advance equity in peace and development processes. Socio-spatial research is critical to revealing difference as a means to locate opportunities for greater inclusion (Young, 1990; Fraser, 1997 and 2000; Watson, 2006; Rankin, 2010; Umemoto, 2001; Hill Collins, 1990; Wendel, 2015). The impetus for doing so is, following legal scholar Martha Minow, the recognition that after mass violence, repair is of paramount importance (1998: p. 4). Something must be done for and with the scores of individuals affected. However, we should be equally cautious about taking peacebuilding strategies as self-evident and be attentive to the ruptures and conflicts that those projects produce.

---

[16] Tracing the social and spatial processes of villagisation across 36 sites builds a composite picture of peace in Rwanda. The timing of my research, two decades after the genocide, is critical to residents' relatively more positive view of the settlements. Research undertaken in the 1990s and early 2000s documented less favorable views because of forced relocation, differential treatment of beneficiaries, absenteeism in new houses, and poor construction.

[17] In response to my question, "Do you think reconciliation has been possible in your village?" roughly one-third (28%: 176 individuals out of 614) indicated doubt that this deeper level of interpersonal apology and forgiveness had been achieved. Most claimed that reconciliation was an incomplete or unknown condition in the village.

References

Ansoms, A. (2009). Re-Engineering Rural Society: The Visions and Ambitions of the Rwandan Elite. *African Affairs* 108, 431: 289-309.

BBC, (29 Feb 2020). Kizito Mihigo: The Rwandan gospel singer who died in a police cell. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51667168 (accessed 10 Feb 2021).

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J.C. (1992). *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination.* Oxford: Westview Press.

Des Forges, A. (2006). Land in Rwanda: Winnowing Out the Chaff. In: *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Annuaire 2005–2006: Dix Ans de Transitions Conflictuelles* (ed. F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse). Paris: L'Harmattan.

Doyle, M.W. (2012). *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays*. New York: Routledge.

Duffield, M.R. (2001). *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security.* New York: Zed Books.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research* 6, 3: 167-191.

Government of Rwanda (GOR) (June 1996). Policy for Rehabilitation and Social Integration. Kigali: MINIREISO.

GOR (August 1997). Main Orientations of the Policy of Regrouped Settlement Sites in the Rural Areas of Rwanda. Kigali: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Communal Development and Resettlement.

GOR (2007). Banyarwanda Duture Neza Mu Midugudu Mu Cyaro. Kigali: Ministry of Infrastructure.

GOR (April 2008). Community Development Policy. Kigali: MINALOC.

GOR (07-11 June 2010). MINALOC Weekly Report and Action Plan. Kigali: unpublished internal MINALOC report.

Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*. New York: Routledge.

Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review* 3: 107–20.

Habyarimana, J. (16 Nov 1988). Gufata neza ibidukikije (speech, Kigali). In: *Disikuru za Perezida wa Repubulika ategura manda ye 1989-1993.* Kigali: L'Office Rwandais d'Information.

Hartman, S. (2021). Intimate history, radical narrative. *Journal of African American History*: 127-135.

Havugimana, E. (2009). State Policies and Livelihoods: Rwandan Human Settlement Policy Case Study of Ngera and Nyagahuru Villages. PhD Dissertation, University of Gothenburg.

Hilhorst, D. and van Leeuwen, M. (1999). *Imidugudu*, Villagisation in Rwanda: A Case of Emergency Development? *Disaster Sites--Wageningen Disaster Studies* 2.

Hill Collins, P. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Human Rights Watch (2001). *Uprooting the Rural Poor.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Hyden, G. (April 1975). Ujamaa, Villagisation, and Rural Development in Tanzania. *Development Policy Review* A8, 1.

Imbs, F. (2000). La villagisation au Rwanda: Politque d'Urgence et Politique de Développement. In: *Un Géographe dans son Siècle* (ed. H. Nicolai et al.). Paris: Editions Karthala.

Kobayashi, A. (2013). Chapter 9: Critical 'Race' Approaches. In: *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography* (ed. N.C. Johnson, R.H. Schein, and J. Winders). 57-72. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Low, S. (2016). *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place.* New York: Routledge.

Lunstrum, E. (2009). Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization: Landscapes of Terror and the Unmaking of State Power in the Mozambican 'Civil' War. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, 5: 884-892.

Massey, D. (1997). Spatial disruptions. In: *The Eight Technologies of Otherness* (ed. S. Golding), 218-225. London: Routledge.

Massey, D. (1999). Philosophy and politics of spatiality: some considerations. The Hettner-Lecture in Human Geography. *Geographische Zeitschrift,* 87: 1-12.

McKittrick, K. and Woods, C. ed. (2007). *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place.* Cambridge: South End Press.

Minow, M. (1998). *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Mwambari, D. (2019). Music and the Politics of the Past: Kizito Mihigo and Music in the Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. *Memory Studies* 00, 0: 1-16.

National Authorities (4 August 1993). Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front. https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4fcc.html (accessed 27 December 2021).

Newbury, C. (2011). High Modernism at the Ground Level: The Imidugudu Policy in Rwanda. In: *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (ed. S. Straus and L. Waldorf), 223-239. Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press.

Oberhauser, A.M., Fluri, J., Whitson, R. et al. ed. (2018). *Feminist Spaces: Gender and Geography in a Global Context.* London: Routledge.

Paris, R. (2004). *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict.* Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press.

Pratt, G. and Hanson, S. (1994). Geography and the Construction of Difference. *Gender, Place, and Culture* 1, 1: 5-29.

Pulido, L. (2015). Geographies of Race and Ethnicity I: White Supremacy vs White Privilege in Environmental Racism Research. *Progress in Human Geography* 39, 6: 1-9.

Pulido, L. (2016). Geographies and Race and Ethnicity II: Environmental Racism and Racial Capitalism. *Progress in Human Geography* 41, 4: 524-533.

Rankin, K. (2010). Reflexivity and Post-Colonial Critique: Toward an Ethics of Accountability in Planning Praxis. *Planning Theory* 9, 3: 181-199.

Republique Rwandaise (April 1994). Recensement General de la Population et de L'Habitat au 15 Aout 1991—Analyse des Resultats Definitifs, Volume 1. Kigali.

Richmond, O.P. and Franks, J. (2009). *Liberal Peace Transitions: Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. Press.

Rose, G. (1993). *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Malden: Polity Press.

Straus, S. (2006). *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda.* Ithaca: Cornell U. Press.

Umemoto, K. (2005 [2001]). Walking in Another's Shoes: Epistemological Challenges in Participatory Planning. In: *Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning Vol 1* (ed. B. Stiftel and V. Watson), 180-208. London: Routledge.

van Hoyweghen, S. (2000). The Rwandan Villagisation Programme: Resettlement for Reconstruction? In *Conflict and Ethnicity in Central Africa* (ed. D. Goyvaerts). Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

van Leeuwen, M. (2001). Rwanda's Imidugudu programme and earlier experiences with villagisation and resettlement in East Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, 4: 623-644.

Watson, V. (2006). Deep Difference: Diversity, Planning and Ethics. *Planning Theory* 5, 1: 31-50.

Wendel, D. DB. (2015). Introduction: Toward a Spatial Epistemology of Politics. In: *Spatializing Politics: Essays on Power & Place* (ed. D. Wendel F. Samuels Aidoo), 1-12. Cambridge: GSD-Harvard U. Press.

Wendel, D. DB. (31 October 2018). Umudugudu w'Ingunguru: An "Ordinary" Model Village. Through Local Eyes Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Young, I.M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press.

Wilson Gilmore, R. (2008). Forgotten Places and the Seeds of Grassroots Planning. In: *Engaging Contradictions* (ed. C.R. Hale). Berkeley: U. of California Press.