

# Konflikt, Trauma und Versöhnung

Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven der  
Konflikt-, Trauma- und  
Versöhnungsforschung

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# Lektüre

zur Sitzung am 27.06.2023  
nachgeholte Diskussion

- Breann Fallon: Violence of Mind, Body, and Spirit: Spiritual and Religious Responses Triggered by Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide, in: Rape Culture, Gender Violence, and Religion. Biblical Perspectives, ed. by Caroline Blyth, Emily Colgan and Katie Edwards, Palgrave Macmillan 2018, S. 71-86.

#### Ergänzend:

(zu Trauma, Traumatheorie, dem neurologischen Konzept Trauma u.a.):

- Andreas Maercker: Posttraumatische Belastungsstörungen, Heidelberg: Springer 2009 (3. vollst. neu bearb. und erw. Aufl.).

#### Erweiternd:

Lamb, Christina: Unsere Körper sind eure Schlachtfelder. Frauen. Krieg und Gewalt, München 2020.

Louise du Toit: An African Feminist Approach to Forgiveness: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela Considered, in: Conflict and Resolution: The Ethics of Forgiveness, Revenge, and Punishment, ed. by Paula Satne and Krisanna M. Scheiter, Cham: Springer Nature 2022, S. 239-264.

## S. 72

My discussion is divided into three sections: I first provide a brief historical account of the Rwandan genocide.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, I consider the ways that genocidal sexual violence appears to have caused *injury* to survivors' faith, and then turn to explore the testimonies of women who attest that such violence has served to *affirm* their faith. I thus intend to display the varying spiritual and religious responses to genocidal sexual violence, arguing that such violence affects not only the mind, body, and community, but also the spirit.

## S. 73 f.

Throughout those 100 days, sexual violence was regularly employed as a weapon by the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*, to the extent that “rape was the rule and its absence the exception” (Rene Degni-Segu, cited in de Brouwer and Chu 2009, p. 11). Indeed, a conservative estimate suggests that 200,000–300,000 women experienced rape during the genocide (Morris 2016, p. 38). Sexual violence was employed as a means of “slow, inexorable death” (Drumbl 2012, p. 574), which included sexual mutilation, reproductive destruction, and a means of spreading HIV. Further, Zraly and Nyirazinyoye suggest that the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* focused particularly on the rape of unmarried women and girls, because this “disrupted the normative cultural pattern of gender identity by forcing girls into a painful social space” (2010, p. 1659). That is, the women and girls who survived sexual violence within the Rwandan genocidal context often became constant reminders to their communities of individual and communal trauma at the hands of the enemy; many were subsequently expelled from their communities due to their perceived “pollution” (Rittner and Roth 2012, p. 88). Indeed, some women who managed to survive the sexual violence perpetrated against them were told by their rapists that they were only being allowed to live so that they would “die of sadness” as rejected and tainted members of their community (Human Rights Watch 1996).

## Genocidal gender-based violence | Sexual violence

Welche Unterschiede / Besonderheiten sollten berücksichtigt werden?

*(gemeinsame Diskussion)*

## Genocidal gender-based violence | Sexual violence

Welche Unterschiede / Besonderheiten sollten berücksichtigt werden?

*(kp)*

- Die Gewalt im Rahmen des Genozids ist öffentlich, vor aller Augen.
- Die gender-basierte Gewalt ist nicht persönlich; Opfer und Täter sind sich selten vorher bekannt (obwohl dies in Rwanda schon der Fall war).
- Ziel der Gewalt ist nicht sexualisierte Macht, sondern Zerstörung der Frau und des Weiblichen in Kultur und Gesellschaft.
- Verarbeitung ist schwieriger, weil die Gewalt im Genozid eine Verneinung des Selbst als Frau, Mutter, Person in der sozialen Rolle, der sozialen Zukunft und des persönlichen Ichs bedeutete.



## S. 74 und 77

Some Rwandan rape survivors also encountered an assault on their sense of spiritual self-worth due to the perceived pollution of their body. This in turn resulted in an injury to their relationship with their deity due to feelings of lessened spiritual self-worth (Gingerich and Leaning 2004, p. 2). For others, the experience of sexual violence was felt as a direct assault on their soul, leaving them with doubts about their soteriological status (are they worthy of being “saved” spiritually?). Further, as Ritter

(...)

From these testimonies of Hyacinthia, Marie, and Olga, it is evident that genocidal sexual violence has the power to injure survivors’ personal relationship with their faith due to their feelings of spiritual degradation.

(...)

Thus, as these testimonies attest, some rape survivors of the Rwandan genocide did experience a loss of or damage to their faith as the result of the violence they endured. Post-attack, they were left battling with and grieving for the faith they thought would protect and nurture them. As such, these women have experienced a terrible violence, not only to their bodies, but also to their spiritual and religious identity.

## S. 79

Building upon the suggestions of Mukamana and Collins (2006), Zraly and Nyirazinyoye's 2010 study directly examines the usefulness of faith as a tool of resilience among genocidal rape survivors. Here, the resilience methods employed by Rwandan survivors of sexual violence are explored, with faith being identified as a central tool of coping and resilience for this cohort. Zraly and Nyirazinyoye interviewed 44 female survivors, all of whom were affiliated with a religious community: 75 per cent were Catholic, 18 per cent were Protestant, and 7 per cent were Muslim (2010, p. 1659). From these interviews, three cultural-linguistic concepts of resilience arose; *kwihangana*, *kwongera kubaho*, and *gukomeza ubuzima* (p. 1660). *Kwihangana* implies "to strengthen oneself, to forbid suffering from becoming overwhelming" (ibid.). It focuses on the "force within," the term *kwihangana* meaning "to withstand something you have experienced that has hurt your heart" (ibid.). The second tool of this cultural-linguistic resilience is *kwongera kubaho*, "the reaffirmation of life after death" (ibid.). Here, "death" refers to survivors' own notions of their obliterated social, physical, and spiritual self-worth following their attack. Finally, *gukomeza ubuzima* builds directly upon *kwihangana* and *kwongera kubaho*. This term conveys a sense of willingness, effort making, or participation in one's own life (ibid.). *Gukomeza ubuzima* is to "accept your everyday problems and not to despair as if you were no longer alive; you rather believe that you [are] still on your way forward" (ibid.).

## S. 80 f.

For survivors of sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide, connection to God also played a pivotal role in their acceptance of children born as the result of rape. As mentioned previously, rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing and genocide is used to traumatize both the individual and the community. Once penetrated, the victim has been “tainted” by “the enemy”; a child born of rape is thus generally considered an enemy of the victimized community (Reid-Cunningham 2008, p. 281). Both the pregnancies and children that result from these rapes are therefore a constant reminder of individual and collective trauma (p. 288). One such example

of this process is related by Chloe (Zraly et al. 2013). A Tutsi survivor who gave birth after being subjected to multiple rapes during the genocide, Chloe also contracted HIV as the result of these attacks. Her child was also born HIV-positive. A devout Catholic prior to the genocide, Chloe subsequently struggled with her faith. She felt a sense of abandonment by her deity and confusion surrounding her understanding of her baby as an “enemy” of her community. Upon returning to her church, however, she found the community accepted her and her child regardless of her status as a woman with HIV, who had survived genocidal sexual violence and given birth to a child of “the enemy.” Moreover, the church helped her connect with her daughter; the healing she received through her faith enabled her to accept and love the child:

I have begun to love that child of mine now since I have known God, normally I didn't love her because I knew that, I felt she is a Hutu indeed, thus a killer, I feel that God gave her to me ... now I finally love her. Then in this loving her when I think that she will not live, I'm grieved more. (Zraly et al. 2013, p. 429)

Noch ergänzend

kp

## Gender-basierte Gewalt in Krieg und Genozid

- Weder Aspekte struktureller Verletzbarkeit („Vulnerabilität“) noch struktureller Macht („hegemoniale Männlichkeit“) können die Kohärenz gender-basierter Gewalt in Krieg, Verfolgung und Genozid vollständig erklären.
- Das Verständnis von Gewalt als „männlich“ spielt im Rahmen gender-basierter Gewalt eine Rolle, nicht, weil jeder Mann potentiell zum Täter werden kann, sondern weil in der Gewalt Figurationen von Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit rekonstruiert werden, und es diese Figurationen sind, die zur Basis von Mobilisierungen und Legitimationen werden.

- Gender-basierter Gewalt ist kein Ausdruck von Krieg, Verfolgung oder Genozid, keine Reaktion, kein Ausdruck von Eskalationsverhältnissen.
- Gender-basierte Gewalt stabilisiert Krieg, Verfolgung oder Genozid und macht politische Gewalt durchführbar.
- Gender-basierte Gewalt ist ein Mobilisierungsfaktor.
- Gender-basierte Gewalt wird zur Legitimation politischer Gewalt eingesetzt.

Sexualisierte Gewalt	Gender-basierte Gewalt
<p>Im juristischen Bereich als Sammelbegriff für Straftaten mit Sexualbezug und Gewalttaten sexueller Natur</p>	<p>Im internationalen rechtlichen Bereich als Form politischer Gewalt, die sich gegen das soziale Geschlecht richtet.</p>
<p><b>ICC Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes, June 2014:</b>  An act of a sexual nature is not limited to physical violence, and may even not involve any physical contact — forced nudity is an example of the latter.  Sexual crimes, therefore, cover both physical and non-physical acts directed at a person's sexual characteristics.</p>	<p><b>ICC: Policy Paper on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes, June 2014:</b>  "Gender-based crimes" are those committed against persons, whether male or female, because of their sex and/or socially constructed gender roles. Gender-based crimes are not always manifested as a form of sexual violence. They may include non-sexual attacks on women and girls, and men and boys, because of their gender.</p>

## Sexualisierte Gewalt

„Gender“ wird sichtbar als soziale Kategorie.

Zur Analyse gehen wir aus von geschlechtlich konstruierten Gesellschaftsverhältnissen, in denen eine geschlechtliche Gewaltstruktur Aspekte direkter physischer, struktureller und kultureller Gewalt in sich vereint – wodurch die Gesellschaftsverhältnisse selbst stabilisiert werden.

Gewalt wird als soziale Praxis deutlich.

In der Gewalt kann potentiell jeder Mann zum Täter, jede Frau zum Opfer werden.

## Gender-basierte Gewalt im Krieg, politischer Verfolgung und Genozid

„Gender“ wird sichtbar als kulturelle und politische Kategorie.

Es ist notwendig, die Motivationen und Legitimationen der jeweiligen Gewalt zu untersuchen.

Die Gewalt wird als politische Gewalt verwirklicht, die sich gezielt gegen geschlechtlich bestimmte Opfergruppen richtet, um durch die Verletzung und Zerstörung privater, sozialer und kultureller Bereiche in besonderer Weise gegen die identifikative, kulturelle und politische Kohärenz der Opfergruppe zu wenden.



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# Lektüre

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- Marie Grace Kagoyire, Jeannette Kangabe, Marie Chantal Ingabire et al. "A calf cannot fail to pick a color from its mother: Intergenerational transmission of trauma and its effect on reconciliation among post-genocide Rwandan youth", 09 May 2022, PREPRINT (Version 1) available at Research Square <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1604980/v1>
- Puljek-Shank, Amela. „Trauma and Reconciliation.“, in: Helena Rill, Tamara Smidling & Ana Bitoljanu, eds.: 20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change. Peacebuilding in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia.



Preprints are preliminary reports that have not undergone peer review.  
They should not be considered conclusive, used to inform clinical practice,  
or referenced by the media as validated information.

# "A calf cannot fail to pick a color from its mother: Intergenerational transmission of trauma and its effect on reconciliation among post-genocide Rwandan youth"

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Research Article

**Keywords:** Intergenerational transmission of trauma, Reconciliation, Genocide, Youth, Rwanda

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## S. 2

**Methods:** A qualitative study was conducted in Rwanda among youth born after the genocide from genocide survivor parents, parents who survived the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis and mental health and peace-building professionals. Nineteen individual interviews (IDIs) with post-genocide descendants of survivors, ten IDIs with mental health and peacebuilding professionals, and six focus group discussions (FGDs) with genocide survivor parents were conducted in Eastern Province and Kigali city of Rwanda. Respondents were recruited through five local organisations that work closely with survivors and their descendants. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data.

**Results:** Findings from our study suggest that the trauma experienced by genocide survivor parents is perceived to be transmitted through various pathways including biological means, silence and disclosure of genocide experiences, and everyday contact with a traumatized parent. Life at home as well as the recurrent genocide commemoration period, during which remembrance events such as re-burial of genocide victims, testimonies of survivors and commemoration rituals that refresh the memories of the past, appear to potentiate this phenomenon. Additionally, such trauma transmitted to survivor descendants (descendants of genocide survivors) is understood to negatively affect their psychological well-being which can limit their involvement in reconciliation process out of fear of re-traumatizing their parents, due to mistrust towards families of perpetrators and parents' reconciliation involvement including its potentially traumatic impacts on them.

## S. 3

Specifically, it is our interest to respond to two main research questions: 1) What are the possible mechanisms through which the trauma that is found among post-genocide Rwandan youth gets transmitted to them? What are the effects of intergenerational trauma among these youth may have on reconciliation processes? Study findings suggest mechanisms of and interlinkage between intergenerational trauma and reconciliation among youth who did not experience the genocide in real time. This study is relevant in the context of Rwanda, because intergenerational transmission is at the front of contemporary mass violence research given how powerful trauma has become as a driver in political violence globally. Additionally, it may complements previous studies that used other methods than qualitative ones to contribute to trauma debates (37) and other researchers who included youth with almost similar characteristics, but which did not explore intergenerational transmission of trauma from one generation to another nor the effects of the latter on reconciliation processes [5–7].

## S. 3

Trauma has been widely understood as the collective imprint left by a horrific past traumatic experiences that may have happened years or generations ago [8]. Local trauma counsellors who were firstly called to intervene and accompany trauma victims soon after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda have expanded on this definition and defined it as a normal response to an abnormal situation by normal people or a range of changes in a person's beliefs, way of thinking, behaving, interacting with others and performing daily activities due to the threatening events witnessed, heard or otherwise experienced that are beyond an individual's coping capacity with unusual problems. In the understanding of local people trauma is conceptualized as *lhungabana* or *lhahamuka*. *lhungabana* is understood as a milder form of distress that one lives with as a result of a troubling past [9]. *lhahamuka*, which is also referred to as trauma crisis, is partly explained as the manifestation of PTSD or sometimes confounded with panic attack accompanied with fear and shortness of breath [10]. Rwandan victims of *lhahamuka* may make noises, run away as if they are dangerously attacked, see things that other people surrounding them do not see at that moment and act out as if they are not in their own body [11]. In this article, we shall use the definition of trauma provided by ARCT-Ruhuka, 2011, and that of *lhahamuka* as trauma crisis [12].

## S. 3

For the sociocultural and socialization dimension, trauma is transmitted through parenting and modelling. This transmission can be both conscious and direct through a social learning process. Such a process involves the way human cognitive and emotional development over the life course shape and are shaped by embodied interactions with others and within the world surrounding us [16]. Previous studies for example have argued that through bonding or social interactions, descendants can sense threats and harm that are present in the everyday life of the body of the violence victims [17].



## S. 4

Reconciliation is understood as the development of trust, change or re-establishment of relationship between groups of people, communities and societies with the end of addressing the needs of partnership between conflicting parties based on reciprocity and mutual responsiveness [21]. Trust-building, has been recognized as crucial for promoting reconciliation in this process because, at the interpersonal level, safe relationships or at least co-existence between the victims and their perpetrators matter. Furthermore, there is evidence from African contexts that rebuilding relationships as well as lives between former enemies in order to live peacefully with one another depends on three important things: both perpetrators and victims should physically meet; perpetrators should seek pardon and, ideally, be forgiven by the victims; and perpetrators should acknowledge their wrongdoings, whereas survivors also need to reconcile with their past traumatic experience [22,23].

## **S. 9 - 13**

### **Mechanisms of trauma transmission**

#### **Transmission through biological means**

**Transmission of trauma through silence of (parental) genocide experiences**

**Transmission of trauma through disclosure of genocide-related stories, experiences and testimonies**

**Transmission through everyday contact with (a) traumatized parent (s)**

## S. 15

### Discussion

This study explored the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of trauma among young Rwandans whose parents survived the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis and effects of this trauma on reconciliation from the Rwandan context. Our findings suggest that trauma of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis extends its effects on post-genocide descendants of survivors. Our results are similar to prior studies [21] and they suggest that such descendants of survivors inherit trauma of their parents through various mechanisms, with most symptoms of trauma that to some extent can be similar to those of the survivors in general.

The transmission of trauma takes place mostly within the family environment, mostly during the genocide commemoration events and associated rituals. These findings are in line with literature indicating that beyond affecting the primary victims or individuals, past stressful events may also have long-term and deep intergenerational effects on those who did not go through these events [65,66]. The trauma transmitted to young descendants has also implications on reconciliation between young descendants of survivors and families of genocide perpetrators, including their descendants as well.

## S. 16 f.

A poor family environment where silence and social as well as emotional withdrawal are dominant fosters intergenerational transmission of parental trauma as opposed to an improved family environment which encourages more adaptive coping patterns such as perseverance and self-esteem/confidence among children [75]. Additionally, some factors foster the transmission process: growing up in an environment where parents are vulnerable due to trauma, where survivors live next to their offenders, the annual commemoration events/rituals, parenting style and communication of overwhelming stories to children, mostly by family members and neighbours. There is a strong relationship between intergenerational trauma transmitted within families, the impacts of reconciliation processes such as issues that were not solved by Gacaca courts, memorialization rituals and events and education interventions that have implications both for

trauma and for its intergenerational aspect, since the next generation members are included within these settings and the parents' trauma is also affected in various ways by them.

## Studie 2

# Trauma and Reconciliation

Amela Puljek-Shank

### Introduction

I cannot sleep. I see things all the time in front of my eyes – the fighting, blood, the peoples' faces. I am scared. It is this fear that lingers in my head and my mind and I just cannot shake it. The war ended eleven years ago but I am basically still at war.

I have lost eleven family members in the war and I cannot stand or talk to people from the enemy side – I truly and fully hate them. I do not know if I will feel happy again.

I had to learn how to survive and to listen very carefully where the shells are going to land. I needed to *fight for water and food on top of* trying to stay alive. This state of total tension lasted for four long years and living in fear and rage at the same time destroyed my soul and my heart. I really became like an animal. All of my thinking and reactions were decreased to the simple command – to survive. Finally, when the war was over, I felt so empty, so hollow that I wanted to die. Twelve years after the war I am still trying to find the meaning in life. It is better than in the first years after the war but I am working very hard in trying to stay normal and sane.





Figure 1: Seven Steps to Revenge – Source: Botcharova (2001)

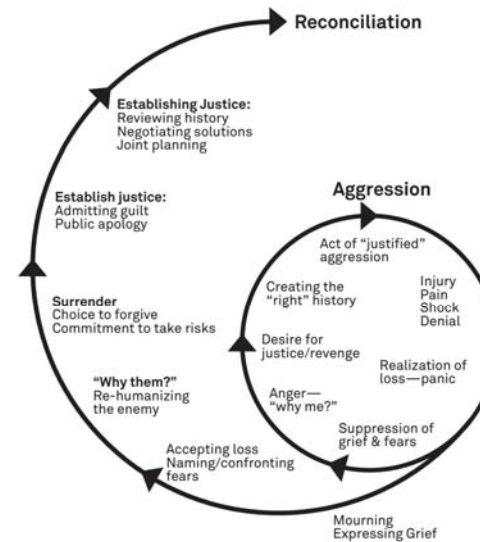


Figure 2: Seven Steps to Forgiveness (Botcharova, 2001)

## S. 190 f.

### The cycle of victim and perpetrator

This chart very clearly outlines how each side – the victim and the perpetrator can get stuck in their cycles and also how each of them can become a victim or perpetrator. This chart has been helpful for me to understand how people are capable of committing such horrors and are still able to continue believing that what they have done essentially has been for the best of them as an individual or as a group. This chart also helped me in better understanding how somebody can become a perpetrator and that there is potential in each one of us to

become one. The danger is when we are not aware of this potential and let life circumstances make decisions for us. The cycle of the victim and perpetrator is simplified here, even though it is complex in itself in this chart. There are numerous other factors that contribute to our being stuck in one cycle or the other or in both (moving from one to the other at different times in life). Some of the factors are our family upbringing (what stories we have been told about the other – about the enemy), our social context where we group up, our belief system, our emotional and spiritual self-awareness, development and maturity.

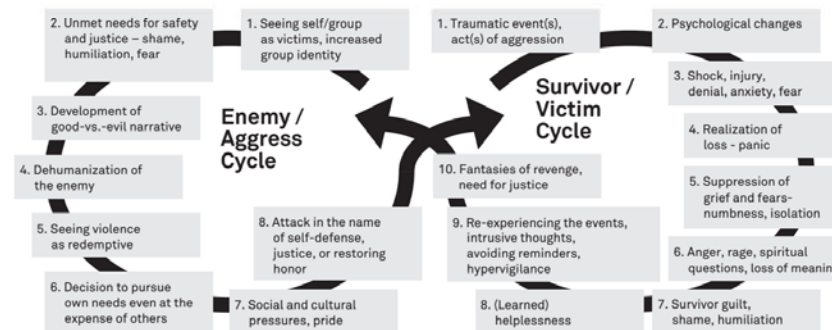


Figure 3: Enemy/Aggressor & Survivor/Victim Cycle (Yoder, 2005)

## S. 191 f.

### **The acceptance of traumatic experience**

Accepting the traumatic experience does not mean that we are forgetting it. It is the acknowledgment of its existence and horridness that we cannot forget – and we should not forget, but what we are doing in this process is choosing how are we going to remember it and what are we going to do with this life experiences. Many people have the notion that if we accept and make peace with the traumatic experience that we decided to forget. We can only forget our trauma if we get amnesia – which happens to some victims since traumatic experience has been so horrific that in order to survive, the brain totally shuts down and victims do not remember at all their trauma and are not able to talk about it. It takes a lot of work and time with victims to be able to recall the

experience without going crazy. However, most of us remember what happened to us and the memory of it is not going to disappear, but our thinking about it and understanding of it will change.



## S. 193

The healing that has taken place does not happen only on a psychological level, but on a biological and spiritual level as well. The process of healing does not mean that we heal only our heart and mind but we need to heal our souls as well. All three areas need to embark on the journey of healing in order for a person to be healed. It is not possible to heal one area without the other two and achieve the complete healing. This is why the healing journey is very difficult and sometimes is a life-long commitment and process. In this process support of family and friends is essential as well as peoples' faith in God, or for those who do not believe in God, belief in love, or a better tomorrow, better something that gives hope and meaning. All of us believe in something and all of us deeply believe that we all deserve to live in peace. Traumatic experience at first becomes the curse but after the healing takes place it becomes a gift that teaches us how to live our life, how to love and care for others – even for our enemies. Once we come to this stage in our healing process we have gone full-circle. We have been *victimized* and after telling our stories we have moved to become *survivors* that are integrating our trauma into our life where we have acquired the knowledge and are embarking into the stage of *wounded healer* (Bartsch, 1996)". This is the moment when we have empowered ourselves and have taken control over our life and our traumatic experience. We have taken the power away from the perpetrator the moment when we have decided to heal our trauma regardless of the presence or absence of the perpetrator's apology. This is the moment when we have come out of the cycle of victim and are ready to ask ourselves the question "What next?".