

Altruism” And “Strategic Game” In Post-Genocide Interpersonal Reconciliation

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Abstract:

Rwanda is the only country in the world where genocide survivors and perpetrators have continued to live in the same villages after the crimes committed were revealed publically by Gacaca courts. Such a context offers an original empirical basis for investigating interpersonal relationships “re-established” between survivors and perpetrators living close to each other. Drawing on the results of the final evaluation of the “Community Healing and Reconciliation Programme” initiated by the Catholic Church and Catholic Relief Services, this article analyses the different behaviours adopted by these key actors in interpersonal reconciliation processes and discusses the implication of different scenarios observed on the sustainability of the recovered social relationships.

Key words: empathy-altruism, strategic game, post-genocide reconciliation.

1. Introduction

Despite the fact that all genocides display almost the same phases of preparation (Lecomte, 2001; Stanton, 2009) and are organised under the same wicked spirit that is total negation of humanity leading to the annihilation of all members of the targeted group, the Tutsi genocide presents atypical characteristics that differentiate it from other genocides of the twentieth century. Our comparisons will focus more specifically on the Jewish genocide in Occupied Europe during the Second World War.

While in Europe, the Germans and Jews assumed their “differences” in terms of origin, traditions and religious beliefs and in terms of their “perceived” national identity, the situation was different in Rwanda where all citizens felt at home, shared the same language and the same myths and traditions. Thus, the first specific characteristic of the 1994 genocide is related to the mechanisms used by genocide propagandists in their attempt to create total difference through “fixed” Hutu and Tutsi “identities”.

In a society of deep social and cultural symbiosis, to be able to impose the view that all Tutsis including children and women are total enemies to be wiped out, genocide propagandists needed to show first of all that they are totally different and that no genuine Hutu had common ground with Tutsis. In order to enforce such a useful but artificial view, they called into question all cultural and social references shared by

Rwandans for centuries. Dismantling Rwandans' shared past was taken to extremes by dismissing the myth of Rwanda's creation. As far as the conception of a nation is concerned, this myth is fundamental not for its historical veracity but for its symbolic significance as it considers Gahutu, Gatwa and Gatutsi as sons of the same father Gihanga (the creator) and therefore does not establish any other external origin for all Rwandan citizens.

The second specificity that is closely correlated to this strategy of creating differences between Hutu and Tutsi "identities" by all means is the nature of "strangeness" attributed to the targeted identity. While in occupied Europe, Nazis propagandists revived a "dormant psychological trait" in the collective consciousness associating, of course abusively, Jews to sorts of "traditional strangers" in Christian Europe, whereas in traditional Rwanda Hutu, Tutsi and Twa felt at home. Even though they could find some differences among them, they neither asked each other where they came from outside Rwanda nor under what conditions they became neighbours sharing citizenship of the same kingdom.

Therefore, the "strangeness" of Tutsis in Rwanda presented a more artificial character and did not have any cultural roots in the collective consciousness as no ghetto had ever been created either for Hutus, Tutsis or Twas in the history of Rwanda as had been the case for Jews in many European countries for centuries. To overcome the feeling of "sameness" among neighbours that could hamper the implication of masses in the genocide, Hutu propagandists deployed a strategy aiming at demonising all characteristics that could be attributed really or abusively to Tutsis.

For example, in extremist media like RTLM and Kangura, the so-called Tutsi intelligence was referred to as a sort of snake's ruse waiting for an opportunity to bite and kill Hutus at any time. Therefore, all Hutus were called upon to always be vigilant towards Tutsis who were now referred to as traditional enemies. Likewise, the so-called Tutsi women's beauty was referred to as a snare to be avoided at all costs so that Hutus could preserve their exclusive identity (Chretien, 1995; 1997).

The third characteristic, which is also the most tragic, is related to the "nearness" and intra-familial character of the last genocide of the twentieth century. While in occupied Europe, Jews were exterminated by anonymous SS and soldiers acting as "cogs" of a terrible bureaucratic machine of annihilation, in Rwanda many people were betrayed and killed by simple neighbours. Many victims and perpetrators knew each other and shared the same villages for long time.

As evidenced by the Gacaca courts, many victims and perpetrators had strong family or friendship ties. In Rwanda, sons-in-law betrayed their fathers or mothers-in-law, husbands killed their spouses' brothers or raped their spouse's sisters and friends who came to seek refuge. Some of them even betrayed their own spouses and children. Such tragic intra-familial cases can be counted in hundreds in Rwanda and be observed in

all corners of the country. This did not occur in the Jewish genocide (at least not on a large scale, as was the case in Rwanda).

The last specific characteristic of the Tutsi genocide is that in Rwanda, people who appeared before Gacaca courts and whose responsibilities in the atrocities have been established continue to live in the same villages with their victims. Therefore, to the “nearness” and “intra-familial” character of atrocities committed in 1994 one can further add the proximity that involves unavoidable interactions between the families of perpetrators, survivors and witnesses living close to each other. What is the nature of social relations re-established between these key actors after the truth was revealed by a competent judiciary body? This is the question that guided the empirical investigations in this study.

Based on the live interpersonal reconciliation process involving genocide survivors and perpetrators living in the same villages under the “Community Healing and Reconciliation Programme” initiated by the Catholic Church in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services, this research is based on thirty cases studies. Each case was formed by a duo of one genocide survivor and one perpetrator who know each other, appeared in the same Gacaca trials and accepted afterwards to be involved in an interpersonal reconciliation process with the assistance of justice and peace workers and Catholic clergy members. The analysis of the results was guided by a new model developed recently following the principles of the grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) from empirical findings obtained from a public programme (Kamuzinzi, 2015).

2. Theoretical context

From a theoretical perspective, our area of research is new as Rwanda is the only country in the world where survivors and perpetrators continued to live in the same villages and share important spheres of social life. As such an atypical context could not easily be captured by external models on post-conflict reconciliation; this study was guided by a new model developed recently from three empirical studies conducted in Rwanda (see Kamuzinzi, 2008, 2010; CCM, 2011) under the principles of the grounded theory developed by Strauss & Corbin (1998).

The first research was conducted as a baseline study of the “community healing and reconciliation programme” launched by the Catholic Church and Catholic Relief Services in 2008 (Kamuzinzi, 2008). The main finding of this first study was that survivors and perpetrators displayed two dominant postures in the post-genocide interpersonal reconciliation process: altruistic empathy and the strategic game.

Through this study, it was found that in a reconciliation process dominated by a strategic game, the driving force motivating the mutual rapprochement is the necessity to protect one’s own interests. Most people who adopted this posture were keen to show their own progress in the reconciliation process and waited to see if the interlocutor considered

implicitly as an “opponent party” would take the same steps before s/he could envisage new progression. Thus, a reconciliation process guided by a strategic game could be conceived as a sort of “reciprocal exchange of favours” where each party receives the equivalent of what it provides. Therefore, such reconciliation process is no longer different from a political negotiation, where each party appreciates the results attained on the basis of its gains and losses.

Further, it was observed through this study that people guided by altruism valued the progress made by their interlocutors implicitly considered as “partners” and tried their best to adapt their own behaviours to the interlocutors’ supposed expectations. In this perspective, the sensitivity to the distress and frustration of others constituted the founding basis of newly developed interpersonal relations.

The second research was conducted in 2010 as a mid-term evaluation of the programme (Kamuzinzi, 2010). As this programme had run its activities for two years, the aim of this new study was to investigate whether the two concepts identified in the first study were still operating in live interpersonal reconciliation cases. As the key concepts were now known, the interviews were more structured and targeted duos of survivors and perpetrators who appeared in Gacaca courts for the same cases.

The first key finding was that when the responses from the same duos were associated, they displayed four dominant reconciliation scenarios. Either the reconciliation behaviours were guided by altruism on both sides, by a strategic game on both sides, by altruism on the survivor’s side and a strategic game on the perpetrator’s side or finally by altruism

on the perpetrator’s side and a strategic game on the survivor’s side. The second key finding was that these scenarios could be linked by an intermediate concept, which is “shared inter-subjectivity”. These scenarios were finally synthesised in a theoretical analysis model designed as follows:

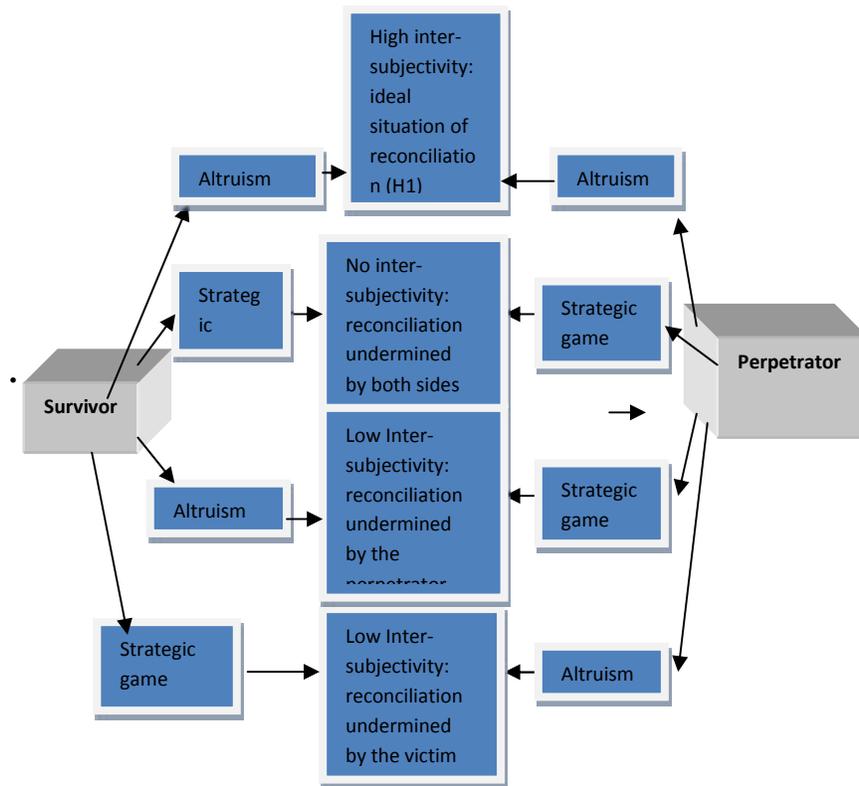


Figure 1: Theoretical model of the post-Gacaca reconciliation process (source: Kamuzinzi, 2015)

As it appears in this model, the first scenario (hypothesis 1) represents the ideal situation of interpersonal reconciliation, which is characterised by a high degree of inter-subjectivity, where both survivors and released perpetrators' interpersonal reconciliation initiatives are driven by sincere and reciprocal altruism that takes into account the suffering and distress of each other. For both sides, the reconciliation process functions as a continuous adjustment to the expectations of the interlocutor, the intersection of these adjustments being the recovery of unsuspecting social relations.

The second scenario (hypothesis 2) represents the opposite side of the situation described above. It is characterised by the lack of shared inter-subjectivity. As in a chess game, this situation occurs when each side does its best to outdo the interlocutor by advancing carefully its pieces to secure personal gains. In this perspective, the reconciliation process is no longer a constructive dialogue aiming at finding a common ground of mutual understanding. Rather, it is conceived as an arena where each actor deploys its winning strategies to gain more advantages in the reconciliation process!

The third and fourth scenarios are intermediate situations characterised by low inter-subjectivity. This situation can occur, either because the perpetrator deploys a strategic game in an interpersonal reconciliation process while his interlocutor (the survivor) is still driven by altruism (hypothesis 3), or when the survivor deploys a strategic game while the perpetrator is really driven by sincere altruism (hypothesis 4). These hypotheses were investigated for the first time in a study on the Gacaca courts (for more details see Kamuzinzi, 2015).

It was discovered in the above study that all these scenarios were empirically operating, but that survivors and perpetrators did not adopt the strategic game for the same reasons. On the one hand, by telling the truth and admitting publicly their guilt, perpetrators guided by a strategic game expected a reduction of the punishment or a release from prison. On the other hand, survivors who entered the interpersonal reconciliation process by adopting a strategic game sought to survive in a hostile environment as the refusal to forgive could result in social marginalisation from hostile neighbours, especially from those who had family ties with perpetrators. Most of them were elderly and vulnerable widows living lonely and surrounded by family members of the perpetrators with whom they appeared in Gacaca courts. Others accepted to be involved in the reconciliation process without real conviction simply because they feared to be considered as putting a brake on a national reconciliation process encouraged by the government. As this new model was investigated using results from a public programme, in this new study, we were curious to know if these tendencies can be validated, challenged or nuanced by findings from a church-based reconciliation initiative.

3. Methods and Materials

After the model was fully investigated through reconciliation cases drawn from the evaluation of Gacaca courts, a new occasion of validating or challenging the four hypotheses was offered by the final evaluation of “the community healing and reconciliation programme”. Sixty participants in this Catholic programme forming thirty duos were selected using a convenience sampling method (Marshall, 1996). As in the previous study, three criteria were applied in the selection of new respondents to be included in the sample. Each duo was constituted by a survivor and a perpetrator (1) who knew each other; (2) lived in the same village, and (3) were involved in a interpersonal reconciliation process, mostly with the facilitation of justice and peace animators or members of the Catholic clergy.

Data collection was centred on the following research themes: 1) the background of each member of the sample, with a particular focus on the personal and family history; 2) the description of life during the genocide and how they got involved in atrocities as victims or perpetrators; 3) their life after the genocide, with a request for details on how they got involved in a face-to-face reconciliation process with the facilitation of

the justice and peace animators or Catholic clergy members; 4) and finally the interpretation of the progress made by themselves and by their interlocutors in the reconciliation process.

Data analysis was executed in reference to the thematic analysis method as proposed by Bardin (1988). Specifically, to be considered as altruist, the interviewee's reconciliation behaviours had to satisfy the four criteria defined by Piliavin and Charng (1990) on altruism: (1) being motivated by the need to respond to the interlocutor's expectations and not by one's own gains; (2) being motivated by one's own willingness and not by external pressures or constraints; (3) being involved in a conscious approach towards a known interlocutor and not guided by an intuitive and unconscious move towards all other people; and (4) being involved in the reconciliation process should be an end in itself and not motivated by a psychological, social, economic, political or moral gain.

Similarly, the interviewee approach was characterised as dominated by the strategic game way if: (1) his/her behaviours were clearly governed by personal gain and not by the presupposed expectations of the interlocutor; (2) by being involved in the reconciliation process, he/she sought to seize an identifiable opportunity (for example being included in an association of survivors and perpetrators financially supported by the Church or by its external partners) or to avoid an externally constraining event (for example being considered as a non repentant Christian); (3) his/her behaviours displayed an evident strategic calculation aiming at maximizing his/her own benefits and not to relieve his/her interlocutor from distress; (4) and finally, if he/she expected an identifiable psychological, social, economic, political or moral gratification from his/her "reconciliation behaviours".

Once the analysis of all interviews completed, the criteria for interpreting the results were inspired by Krebs and van Hesteren's theoretical categories on altruism and the strategic game (Krebs & van Hesteren, 1992), completed by Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Oliner and al (2009). These categories were put in the Rwandan context and readapted to the post-Gacaca reconciliation process.

Thus, the concept of altruism was "operationalised" in three dimensions: altruism centred on individual responsibility towards a known "other"; altruism centred on social responsibility towards known and unknown members of one's own society or nation and, finally, altruism centred on universal responsibility towards humankind. Similarly, the concept of strategic game was "operationalised" in three dimensions: the egoistic, instrumental, and mutual strategic game.

In the perspective of Krebs and van Hesteren (1992); Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Oliner and al (2009), people guided by an egoistic strategic game embrace the reconciliation process in order to be relieved from an internal psychological discomfort. Those guided by an instrumental strategic game "give in order to get back an anticipated counterpart", meaning that they reconcile behaviours aimed at gaining a rationally

identified benefit such as the reduction of punishment discussed in the previous study on reconciliation in the Gacaca context (Kamuzinzi, 2015). Finally, people who enter the reconciliation process through a mutual strategic game most need to be thought of as good fellows. Thus, those who accepted to be involved in the reconciliation initiatives through this programme in order to be considered as good Christians can be categorised in this dimension. In the following section, these different theoretical dimensions are confronted with empirical evidence.

4. Results

The comparison of reconciliation behaviours displayed by interviewees shows that only 23.3% of respondents (seven duos out of the thirty retained as a sample) displayed reconciliation behaviours guided by altruism on both sides. In nine cases (30%), members of the duos displayed reconciliation behaviours guided by a strategic game on both sides. Among the fourteen remaining cases (46.7%), the reconciliation behaviours were guided by opposed postures. Among these last cases, survivors' reconciliation behaviours were guided by altruism while their counterparts' were clearly guided by strategic game ten duos (33.3%). Finally, perpetrators were guided by altruism while survivors were guided by a strategic game in the remaining four duos (13,3%).

As in the previous study where this model was confronted to empirical data from the evaluation of Gacaca courts (Kamuzinzi, 2015), most perpetrators who adopted a strategic game attempted to use the guilty plea as a tool that could help them to gain personal advantages from the interpersonal reconciliation process. As this study was conducted while trials on killings were completed, those who adopted this strategy mostly sought to be pardoned or at least to obtain the reduction of the cost of properties stolen or destroyed during the genocide. In this case, calling in animators of justice and peace was a calculated strategy to increase their credibility.

Why did some survivors adopt a strategic game (even though they are few as they do not exceed 13.3%) while perpetrators involved in the same interpersonal reconciliation process were really repentant and did all they could to satisfy what they considered to be their interlocutors' expectations. The atrocities committed, especially by well known neighbours without any criminal background, placed these survivors in a sort of persisting doubt about the sincerity of the perpetrators' repentance. But at the same time, they thought that they had no other alternative than to forgive them, as they were condemned to live surrounded by perpetrators' family members and friends while theirs were exterminated during the genocide. Therefore, they could not afford to refuse to forgive if they wanted to live in peace with neighbours.

When analysed separately, these results show that 17/30 (56.7%) of survivors were guided by altruistic behaviours while 13/30 (43.3%) of perpetrators interviewed were guided by the same mechanism. With

some small nuances, these tendencies point in the same direction as those observed in the previous study, where the same number of thirty duos was selected from a large sample of respondents investigated in the evaluation of Gacaca courts and interviewed on the same reconciliation themes. In the previous study, only 30% of interviewed perpetrators could be categorized as guided by altruistic empathy, while 50% of survivors adopted this mechanism.

In our understanding, the evolution of the statistics for survivors and more importantly for perpetrators embracing altruism, respectively from 30% to 43.3% for the perpetrators and from 50% to 56.7% for the survivors can be explained by the mediation of the religious factor. All interviewees in the current study were committed Christians who participated voluntarily in the “community healing and reconciliation programme” with close support from animators of justice and peace and members of the Catholic clergy, while in the previous study they were simply selected among ordinary citizens who participated in the final evaluation of the Gacaca courts in 2010 (see CCM, 2011).

Once survivors and perpetrators’ interpersonal reconciliation behaviours were categorised according to the analysis model, we went further and wished to know if the theoretical dimensions of altruism and strategic game inspired by the works of Krebs and van Hesteren (1992), Oliner and Oliner (1988) and Oliner and al (2009) had an empirical basis in the Rwandan context.

With regard to altruism, five key finds on how “individualistic”, “social” and “universalistic” dimensions of altruism operate in the post-Gacaca context are discussed and illustrated by empirical evidence from the field. Similarly, five pieces of empirical evidence on how “egoistic”, “instrumental” and “mutual” strategic game work in the post-Gacaca interpersonal reconciliation process are discussed in this article.

For altruism, the first observation was that at the starting point of interpersonal reconciliation, perpetrators were the ones who expressed the desire for reconciliation and sought to meet the survivors. But once this first contact was successfully established, most of them were reticent to start the second step, which was the examination of their personal responsibility in the genocide. Yet it is this psychological consciousness of one’s own guilt that opens the door to altruism!

Apart from the fact that in all cultures most perpetrators are emotionally and morally immature (Baum, 2008), the low percentage of interviewees (43.3%) from this category who adopted altruism can be explained by this lack of psychological energy to condemn their own morally reprehensible behaviours. On the other hand, the relatively high percentage (56.7%) of survivors who adopted altruism can be explained by the fact that initially they were reticent regarding a rapprochement as they feared psychological manipulations from the perpetrators. They accepted to be involved in reconciliation initiatives once they thought that their interlocutors and the mediators were serious enough to be

considered as credible partners in the reconciliation process. In addition, there was no need for them to embrace a strategic game as they had no moral debt to repay through interpersonal reconciliation.

The second observation was that all perpetrators who embraced altruism did not go beyond the first level of altruism centred on individual responsibility towards a known interlocutor. Most of them saw the reconciliation process as limited to the victim of their own acts and did not think about what they could do for other victims or for society to recover from the consequences of the genocide.

On the contrary, only reconciliation behaviours of 4 survivors out of the 17 who adopted altruism could be categorized as guided by an individualistic altruism towards a known perpetrator. The majority of them (10 out of 17) were guided by an altruism centred on social responsibility towards known and unknown members of the Rwandan society or nation.

Most of the survivors who espoused altruism centred to social responsibility thought that no recovery of positive social relations could be attained without deep sacrifice and accepted to forgive for this purpose. The three remaining survivors who embraced altruism went beyond and thought that participating in the construction of a humanistic world where genocide and crimes against humanity have no place is part of their fundamental responsibility as survivors. Thus, forgiving even if perpetrators did not ask for pardon was what they could offer to contribute to the advent of such a desired and humanistic world.

The third observation was that it is only in this altruistic category that people took the first initiative to embark in the post-Gacaca reconciliation process. Once released, three perpetrators immediately tried to contact the surviving victims of their atrocities via a respected mediator and this first initiative was appreciated by survivors as a good starting point. Surprisingly, all the three survivors categorized as guided by a “universalistic altruism” took the lead and sent messengers to inform the released prisoners that they had been forgiven before they could ask for pardon and invited them for a meeting. One of the three survivors justified his behaviour by invoking Christians beliefs, where pardon is considered as a free gift and not as a result of rational transactions, while others cited the necessity to contribute to the construction of a new world characterised by tolerance and mutual acceptance at any cost.

The fourth observation was that altruistic survivors and perpetrators considered being involved in the post-Gacaca reconciliation process very seriously and took time to work on their own affects before they could meet their interlocutors. It is this deep reflection on their own emotions and sentiments which rendered them sensitive to the distress of their partners. For perpetrators, this preliminary work on themselves convinced them that continuing to deny the crimes committed was no help if they needed to recover and enjoy real peace. In other words, many

of them who embraced altruism decided to testify about all the atrocities they committed and about other facts they knew on genocide, while most of those who adopted a strategic game attempted to hide some compromising facts that could reduce the chance to gain the expected advantages.

The last observation on altruism was that embracing altruism was much easier for survivors as they had no responsibility and guilt about what happened in 1994. But despite the difficulty to tell publically their own reprehensible behaviours and to beg forgiveness, perpetrators who overcame this barrier testified having felt a sort of psychological release from an indescribable burden due to permanent guilt once they had revealed what they had committed and knew about genocide. In addition, the adoption of an altruistic posture towards survivors constituted a solid basis to a sincere interpersonal reconciliation and consequently paved the way for the recovery of healthy social relations.

As a reminder, the concept of strategic game was “operationalised” in three dimensions: “egoistic”, “instrumental” and “mutual” strategic games. People guided by an “egoistic” strategy embark in reconciliation to relieve themselves from an internal psychological discomfort; those guided by an “instrumental” strategic game rationally target an identifiable gain, while those guided by a “mutual” strategic game seek to display a positive image of themselves and expect to be considered once again as good people. The general observation from this study was that these reconciliation postures were all operating in real reconciliation process, but are expressed differently in survivors’ and perpetrators’ behaviours. Five keys findings on the strategic game were revealed in this study.

The first key finding was that survivors who adopted an “egoistic strategic game” did so to protect themselves against permanent anger towards perpetrators. Most of them feared that living permanently with resentment against perpetrators could negatively impact their mental health and it is mainly for this reason that they accepted the proposition of animators of justice and peace to be involved in the “community healing and reconciliation programme”. For the thirteen survivors who were identified as guided by a strategic game, five of them adopted an “egoistic strategic game”.

The second finding was that perpetrators who adopted an egoistic strategic game did so to relieve themselves from the psychological discomfort due to permanent guilt for having participated in atrocities and being catalogued as genocide perpetrators. But surprisingly, very few perpetrators (2 out of 17) manifested signs of permanent anguish due to their participation in the genocide. As stated by Kamuzinzi (2015), this could be explained by the massive participation of ordinary citizens in killings, which could have resulted in a sort of “dilution” of personal responsibility in the collective one.

Seemingly, massive participation of ordinary citizens in the genocide could have created a psychological feeling that crimes related to genocide had become commonplace in Rwanda and therefore, no reason for alarm since being a criminal was no longer an exception! To avoid personal guilt a perpetrator could think: "I'm not the only criminal in my village and in my community!" But with Gacaca trials being conducted where crimes were committed, things had become clear. As far as personal responsibility is concerned, nowadays, members of the same village know who were rescuers, bystanders or perpetrators.

The third finding was that survivors who adopted the "instrumental" strategic game did so to protect themselves against manipulation from presumed non-repentant perpetrators. Among the thirteen survivors who were guided by a strategic game, six adopted this strategy. Among them, four were sceptical about the sincerity of perpetrators who asked to meet them, while the two others thought that real criminals were not able to repent totally.

To justify their hesitation to embark on a deep reconciliation process most of them evoked the superficiality of perpetrators' repentant behaviours. They thought that perpetrators sought rapprochement under the facilitation of justice and peace animators just to appear as good Christians before priests and other parishioners. One of these survivors expressed his expectations in this way: *"If, they want us to reconcile with them, they should prove to us that they have changed. Reconciliation is not just a matter of appearing as good guys before priests!"* Even if this caution is morally understandable in the post-genocide context, it constituted a barrier to true interpersonal reconciliation and thus contributed to maintain a suspicious atmosphere among some survivors and perpetrators living close to each other.

The fourth finding was that most perpetrators who were guided by a strategic game fell in this subcategory as ten out of seventeen adopted an instrumental strategy. They thought of reconciliation as a kind of political negotiation where each party does its best to secure its own advantages but finally agrees to give up some of its interests in order to reach a reasonable agreement. In the previous study that investigated this model on the basis of data collected from Gacaca courts (Kamuzinzi,2015) it was observed that most perpetrators who were guided by an instrumental strategy considered revealing the truth in a Gacaca as an asset that could help them to gain forgiveness. This is because they knew that survivors were impatient to know about the tragic fate of their members during the genocide and sought to bury them in dignity.

As this study was conducted after trials on killings were completed by Gacaca courts, it was observed that most perpetrators who used this strategy expected forgiveness or at least a reduction of the cost of properties stolen or destroyed during the genocide. Some perpetrators were really disappointed when some vulnerable survivors forgave the

killings but urged them to pay stolen properties that could help them to survive. Others evoked being very disappointed by the fact that they did not receive pardon while they did all they could to seek forgiveness. In general, those who did not gain the expected advantages regretted having participated in this programme.

The fifth finding was that a “mutual” strategic game was more operational among members of the same associations of unity and reconciliation supported by the Catholic Church. Most of the survivors and perpetrators who adopted this strategy sought to display an image of themselves as good and worthy persons in the community and among other members of their associations, while they were not really convinced about the sincerity of their interlocutors.

In this study, two survivors among the thirteen who were guided by a strategic game and five perpetrators among the seventeen who adopted this strategy were preoccupied by this issue of displaying a good image of themselves. All of them mostly feared being catalogued as extremists and this was the driving force that maintained them in the same associations and encouraged them to accept the invitation of justice and peace workers to embark on an interpersonal reconciliation process.

5. Discussion

The results accumulated during the successive studies on the interpersonal reconciliation process raised two fruitful concepts: altruism and strategic game. In reference to the existing literature on approaching others in a conflicting context (Baum, 2008; Fogelman, 1995; Piliavin & Charng, 1990; Monroe, 2004; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Oliner and al, 2009), each of these concepts was “operationalised” in three dimensions. The concept of altruism was “operationalised” in altruism centred on individual responsibility towards a known interlocutor, altruism centred on social responsibility towards known and unknown members of the society or nation and altruism centred on universal responsibility towards all humankind. Depending on the nature of the gain expected from the reconciliation process, the concept of strategic game was also “operationalised” in the egoistic strategic game, instrumental strategic game and mutual strategic game.

Afterwards, these dimensions were interrelated in an analysis model through an intermediate concept: shared “inter-subjectivity”. Even if the concepts and dimensions mobilised in this model were drawn from authors working on psychological traits of rescuers, bystanders and perpetrators, they proved to be very fruitful when applied to public initiatives like the Gacaca courts (see Kamuzinzi, 2015) and currently to Church-based initiatives like the “community healing and reconciliation programme”.

In practice, this model explains most live reconciliation behaviours occurring between survivors and perpetrators living nearby. It shows clearly that interpersonal reconciliation works as a mutual adjustment of

sentiments where altruism or selflessness on both sides improves the chance to re-establish positive interpersonal relations, while selfishness on both sides worsens the situation. Intermediate situations can also occur, for example when the perpetrator seeks to secure some personal advantages from the reconciliation process while the survivor is animated by empathic altruism or when the survivor seeks to protect himself/herself from presumed manipulation and engages in the reconciliation process by adopting a strategic game while the perpetrator is really repentant.

Beyond these general tendencies, some subtle differences can be observed regarding the way survivors and perpetrators embrace altruism or strategic behaviours in Church-based programmes. Even if theoretically, altruism consists in taking into account the suffering of the interlocutor, this study showed that in the post-genocide context its magnitude is very open and very rich in the survivors' behaviours. While most altruism in the perpetrators' behaviours was limited to its first dimension, that is altruism towards a known interlocutor (mostly the victim of their own atrocities), there is empirical evidence on all dimensions of altruism in survivors' reconciliation behaviours.

Some empathic behaviours were adopted towards known perpetrators in order to relieve them from permanent guilt, others forgave in order to contribute to the advent of a new Rwandan society based on mutual acceptance, while others went further and conceived post-genocide reconciliation as a contribution to a more humanistic world without genocide and crimes against humanity. In our understanding, this openness to national and universalistic reconciliation values is due to victim's moral superiority forged from their suffering as observed by Koethler (1945) about the victims of totalitarianism.

Similarly, all scenarios recorded in the analysis model about the strategic game were operating in this new study. Theoretically, people adopting this strategy are guided by selfishness and aim to secure personal gain from an interpersonal reconciliation process. But, beyond this general observation, this study showed that survivors and perpetrators adopted its dimensions for different reasons. As far as the first dimension is concerned, people adopt an egoistic strategic game to relieve themselves from internal psychological discomfort, but this strategy can be reinterpreted differently by protagonists. For example, perpetrators adopted an egoistic strategic game to relieve themselves from psychological discomfort due to guilt while survivors adopted the same strategy to protect themselves from the consequences of permanent anger and resentment against perpetrators.

In the same way, adopting an instrumental strategic game aimed to secure a rationally calculated gain. But this was displayed differently in perpetrators' and survivors' strategies. In the previous study that "tested" this model from data collected from the Gacaca programme, perpetrators who adopted an instrumental strategic game expected that

telling the truth in Gacaca courts would contribute to reducing the punishment, while survivors who adopted the same mechanism sought to protect themselves against presumed manipulation from non-repentant perpetrators who could attempt to repent just to obtain pardon about their involvement in killings. In this study, perpetrators who used this strategy sought forgiveness or a reduction of the cost of stolen and destroyed properties. They took this Church-based programme as an opportunity to put Christian survivors before a fait accompli as no genuine follower of Jesus could afford to refuse pardon to a repentant sinner!

Finally, people adopted a mutual strategic game in order to be considered as good people. In the post-genocide context, they mostly feared being considered as extremists and therefore engaged symbolically in an interpersonal reconciliation process in order to display an image of a good Christian. In this study, such preoccupation was mostly observed among members sharing the same associations of unity and reconciliation supported by the parish. For those who did not embrace altruism, membership functioned as a sort of “constraining factor” to reconcile.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed clearly that despite the atrocities committed in 1994, sincere and profound interpersonal reconciliation is possible on condition that both sides are guided by altruism. Another important observation is that in a reconciliation process guided by altruism, the main efforts come from real protagonists, i.e. from survivors and from truly repentant perpetrators, while in a reconciliation process guided by a strategic game, the main efforts come from mediators. In other words, an altruistic reconciliation is fundamentally guided by personal motivation while a reconciliation process guided by a strategic game is generally shaped by external forces. In other words, when these external actors become involved in other issues, the reconciliation process loses its driving force as protagonists are not able to own the reconciliation process. Therefore, peace workers should concentrate their efforts on enhancing altruism and doing their best to discourage or if possible transform selfish “strategic” behaviours into altruistic conducts.

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