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Social Protection for Elderly People in the Context of Social Changes in Rwanda

By

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Dedication

To my parents, my wife,

and my children

Your patience has been a great encouragement to me.

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Albert Irambeshya

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Abstract

In Rwanda, formal social protection for elders in the form of retirement benefits is limited to the few who have been employed by public or large private institutions and those who worked in the informal sector must rely on their families for support. I conducted this study to explore how elders' social protection has been challenged by and responded to a wave of social changes affecting the family in Rwanda. I collected ethnographic data from selected elders in Karongi District and from their children, some living in the village and some who had migrated to the capital city of Kigali. In this study people's status as elders is defined based on chronological and social age. Moreover, I use 'social protection' and 'care' interchangeably, with both corresponding to the Kinyarwanda term *kwitaho*. My empirical data indicates that this is provided to elders by the state, their adult children, their neighbours, and faith-based organisations. Elders also take initiative and contribute somewhat actively to their own social protection as they do not want to be passive receivers of support. Furthermore, my results show that rural-urban migration, land scarcity, and changes in housing patterns influence the provision of social protection for elders in Karongi District. These changes mean that elders live far away from their children and are deprived of their proximate care, so telephone calls and mobile money transfer services are used to transfer remittances. While land is a valuable resource for livelihood in Karongi District its scarcity threatens elder care practices by forcing children to migrate elsewhere to establish homesteads and start their own families. Land is also a source of intra-family conflicts that inhibit the normal flow of care for elders and hence caring relationships among family members. The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi also has affected – and continues to affect – elders in Karongi District, as it uprooted the foundations of their care, including family members and property and their experiences also resulted in psychological insecurity. Thus, the state needed to intervene to provide health care for the most deeply affected. Finally, other crises like the COVID-19 pandemic have also changed caring positionality and (for example) intensified the use of telephones for emotional care between migrant children and their parents who remained in rural areas. In the wake of social changes, care continues to transform and adjust to new circumstances.

Zusammenfassung

In Ruanda gilt soziale Sicherung für ältere Menschen in Form von Rentenleistungen nur für eine kleine Zahl von älteren Menschen, die offiziell in öffentlichen oder privaten Einrichtungen beschäftigt sind. Ältere Menschen, die im informellen Sektor gearbeitet haben, sind auf die Unterstützung ihrer Familien angewiesen. Die Familie in Ruanda befindet sich in einem sozialen Wandel, der die Sicherung für ältere Menschen in Frage stellt. Die Studie erforscht, wie ältere Menschen im Zuge des sozialen Wandels sozial abgesichert sind. Es wurden im Distrikt Karongi in Ruanda ethnografische Daten von gezielt ausgewählten älteren Menschen im Bezirk Karongi, ihren im Dorf lebenden Kindern und den in der Stadt Kigali lebenden Migranten erhoben. In der Studie werden ältere Menschen anhand des chronologischen und sozialen Alters definiert. Die empirischen Ergebnisse zeigen, dass soziale Sicherung für ältere Menschen von verschiedenen Akteuren wie dem Staat, den Kindern, den Nachbarn und den religiösen Organisationen geleistet wird. Er kommt auch von den älteren Menschen selbst, die keine passiven Empfänger der Unterstützung sein wollen, sondern in gewisser Weise aktiv zu ihrer Sicherungbeitragen. Darüber hinaus zeigen die Ergebnisse der Studie, dass gesellschaftliche Veränderungen wie die Land-Stadt-Migration, Landknappheit und veränderte Wohnformen die Versorgung älterer Menschen im Karongi-Distrikt beeinflussen. Diese Veränderungen haben dazu geführt, dass ältere Menschen weit weg von ihren Kindern leben und keine nahe Betreuung mehr erhalten. In diesem Zusammenhang wird die Unterstützung der älteren Menschen aus der Ferne geleistet, indem Telefonanrufe und mobile Gelddienste für Überweisungen genutzt werden. Darüber hinaus ist Land eine wertvolle Ressource für den Lebensunterhalt im Bezirk Karongi. Die Landknappheit bedroht die Altenversorgung, da die Kinder auf der Suche nach Land in andere Orte abwandern, um ihre eigenen Familien zu gründen. Land ist auch eine Quelle für innerfamiliäre Konflikte, die den normalen Ablauf der Altenpflege behindern und somit die Sozialbeziehungen zwischen den Familienmitgliedern beeinträchtigen. Darüber hinaus zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass der Völkermord an den Tutsi im Jahr 1994 ältere Menschen im Karongi-Distrikt betroffen hat und immer noch betrifft, weil er ihnen die Grundlage für ihre Versorgung entzogen hat. Sie haben den Verlust von Angehörigen wie von Eigentum erlitten. Dies allein führte zu einer psychischen Verunsicherung, darüber hinaus hat das Erlebte das psychische Wohlbefinden der älteren Menschen beeinträchtigt. Diese Situation erforderte das Eingreifen des Staates, um die Gesundheitsversorgung der Betroffenen zu gewährleisten. Darüber hinaus

veränderten Krisen wie die COVID-19-Pandemie die Betreuungsposition und führten zu einer verstärkten Nutzung des Telefons für die emotionale Betreuung zwischen Migrantenkindern und ihren Eltern in ländlichen Gebieten. In der Welle des sozialen Wandels verändert sich die Pflege also ständig und passt sich den jeweiligen Umständen an.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIGSAS: Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies

CBHI: Community-based Health Insurance

DAAD: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst/German Academic Exchange Service

DASSO: District Administration Security Support Organ

DS: Direct Support

EICV: Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey)

FARG: Fond d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide (Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund)

FRW: Rwandan Franc

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GoR: Government of Rwanda

ICT: Information Communication Technology

ILO: International Labour Organization

LODA: Local Administrative Entities Development Agency

LTC: Long-Term Care

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

MIGEPROF: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

MIJESPOC: Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture

MINAGRI: Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources

MINALOC: Ministry of Local Governments

MINECOFIN: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MINERENA: Ministry of Natural Resources

MININFRA: Ministry of Infrastructure

MOH: Ministry of Health

NISR: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda

NST: National Transformation Strategy

OAG: Old-Age Grant

RAB: Rwanda Agriculture Board

RDC: Democratic Republic of Congo

RNP: Rwanda National Police

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

SACCO: Saving and Credit Cooperative

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Fund

VUP: Vision Umurenge Programme

Chapter I: General Introduction

1.1 Study Background

Social protection for elders, first envisioned as a range of public institutions, norms, and programmes to protect the working-class population from contingencies threatening their lives, was initiated in Europe as a reaction to the adverse consequences of the industrial revolution (Barrientos, 2010). The first national social insurance programme was introduced in Germany in the 1880s and included accident, sickness, disability, and old-age insurance. Since then, other countries have gradually instituted social insurance policies to protect people in old age (Culter & Johnson, 2004). However, the worldwide spread of social protection policies such as pension schemes really took off in the 1950s (Crampton, 2009). Since that period, social protection for elders has gained momentum in many countries. Over time, it has come to be seen as a tool for coping with the significant consequence of getting old.

In Europe, programmes related to the protection of elders have played an essential role in securing the right to social welfare as an aspect of a universal basic human right to live a life of dignity (ILO, 2014b). For this reason, the European Union's member states have committed to annually increasing their spending on social protection to cover elders' needs (Davies, 2014). Countries like Denmark, Sweden, France, and Finland allocate up to 20% of their gross domestic product (GDP) to social protection programmes (European Commission, 2017), which demonstrates these states' deep commitment to such policies.

Asia is also experiencing a rapid growth in its elderly population. As most elders there have no regular income, they constitute a large proportion of the poor (Handayani, 2012). Due to weak and fragmented social protection schemes, providing social security for the rapidly increasing number of elders affected by poverty remains a major challenge on that continent. Changes in economic productivity due to changes in populations' age profiles not only have implications for the increase of resources allocated to social protection programmes but also the development of the infrastructure needed to meet the needs of a growing elderly population (Asher & Zen, 2015). While some Asian countries, like Nepal, Bangladesh, India, and Thailand, have adopted social pension policies to respond to the needs of the growing

number of elders, these policies do not offer universal coverage and have thus faced challenges in selecting beneficiaries (Samson, 2012).

Williams (2003) notes that the number of older people in Africa is also growing. Despite this, formal social protection systems are limited to only the few elders who had formal careers in public or large private institutions (Che Fonchingong, 2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, however, most of the active working population is employed in the informal sector, and thus has no access to labour-related social protection systems like employment insurance and retirement benefits (Devereux & Getu, 2013). The lack of formal social protection for the growing number of elders who only worked in the informal sector is linked to the longstanding popular discourse in Africa that considered providing social protection for elders to be a responsibility of the extended family. However, the older population began to increase just as family support for elders was beginning to break down (Apt, 1996). The growing number of elders who lack access to formal social protection is an essential consideration for social protection systems in African countries, given that most of these countries are classified in the less- or least-developed categories (UN, 2009).

Despite these demographic trends in Africa, social protection of elders is not emphasised in some countries' major policy documents. This could be caused by many factors, ranging from a lack of political commitment to the financial problems these countries face. In most cases, decisions to provide social protection to elders are taken in the context of limited resources that must be allocated based on national priorities other than protecting elders (Bloom, Jimenez, & Rosenberg, 2011). Furthermore, social policies tend to focus on age groups that are considered more economically productive than elders (Sherlock, 2004). Similarly, Hoffman and Pype (2018) consider the lack of political interest in issues related to elders' well-being in sub-Saharan Africa to be a challenge and a dilemma facing the elders. This lack of investment in social protection for people in the informal sector is a challenge for elders: according to the 2020–2022 World Social Protection Report 85.8% of employed people work in the informal sector and are covered neither by contributory nor non-contributory social insurance schemes (ILO, 2022). Some countries have sought remedies, with a few adopting comprehensive social pension policies for elders (Barrientos, 2010). Others continue to rely on families as the primary source of social protection for elders. The African Union also seems aligned with this tendency to rely on the family, as it considers African traditions, values, and practices to

emphasise the provision of mutual, social and community care and support for older members of society (African Union, 2016).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social protection and the living conditions of elders are becoming policy concerns worldwide, but the weight given to this issue varies considerably. In the Global North, the social protection of elders is the responsibility of both public and private organisations (Cohen & Menken, 2006a). In the Global South, public interventions to provide social protection for the elders are limited to those who contributed to social security funds when they were employed, while others have only their families and community as a source of support (Bailey, 2004).

Social protection has been an indispensable tool for fighting poverty and vulnerability in developing countries (Barrientos & Hulme, 2008). In the 1990s, problems related to social protection were gaining momentum in Africa, which gradually attracted the attention of policymakers who were working on anti-poverty initiatives involving the African Union, development partners, and international donors and motivated them to revise their agendas to incorporate social protection programmes for elders (Ellis, Devereux, & White, 2009; Devereux & Getu, 2013). Social protection is an essential element in well designed and implemented development objectives, as well-developed social protection programmes that help the most vulnerable individuals, households, and even communities manage their social and economic risks are also crucial for poverty reduction and sustaining the well-being of vulnerable people, including elders (Holzmann, 2009). African states have committed to introducing social protection programmes to tackle multiple multi-dimensional issues of poverty and deprivation among their population, such as lack of decent work, lack of education, lack of health care, food insecurity, and income insecurity (UN, 2012). Since then, social protection programmes have been perceived as a powerful tool in the war against poverty among vulnerable groups, which require greater social protection to address their daily needs (UN, 2012). However, despite the commitment of African governments to put social protection programmes on their policy agendas, only a few countries have actually introduced comprehensive social security programmes for elders. For instance, countries like Botswana, Namibia, and Lesotho have introduced universal cash transfer benefits for all adults from the age of sixty. At the same time, Mauritius offers a basic pension and other supplementary benefits to all residents aged sixty and above (Bailey, 2004:7). Similarly, South

Africa has adopted an old-age grant (OAG) with differentiated eligibility based on gender: the minimum age was sixty for women and sixty-five for men but was revised in 2007 to equalise the age at sixty for both men and women (Zanker et al., 2011).

In the absence of state social protection programmes in many African countries, social protection for elders in Africa remains a family responsibility. The focus on the family for social protection provision resonates with socialist ideas such as *ujamaa* (familyhood), which was introduced in East Africa soon after independence and focused on the African traditional family values of respect, mutual assistance, and sharing joint production (Lal, 2015). The family, with its varying structure, has been the primary source of support for elders (Mokomana, 2013). However, researchers have indicated that a decline in family support is exposing elders to various vulnerabilities and more claims for care (Aboderin, 2006; Coe, 2018). This decline in family support for elders raises concerns about how they respond to social and economic shocks.

A body of research on ageing in Africa indicates that the shocks to which elders are vulnerable include chronic poverty, social isolation, ill health, and lack of income (Che Fonchingong, 2013, see also Williams, 2003 and Azer & Afifi, 1992). Several factors explain this vulnerability. The ability to work is significantly reduced in old age by weakened physical capacity and health problems. Even elders who are willing to work seldom earn significant wages. The lack of social protection systems with broad coverage and sufficient benefits, coupled with a lack of assets and savings, constitutes a significant challenge to elders' survival in many African countries (UN, 2015). The existing savings systems in these countries are generally insufficient to provide and guarantee the income security that elders need for the rest of their lives. This situation worsens their vulnerability by leaving them with no means to resist social and economic shocks (UN, 2015).

In the Global South, we see increased vulnerability in old age. Social protection programmes for elders are inappropriate or virtually absent, forcing most to rely solely on intergenerational family support to survive. According to the World Bank (2019), investment in human capital and health systems has significantly contributed to an increased life expectancy and hence to an increased population of elders in Rwanda (World Bank, 2019), yet only 7% of people aged sixty-five and above are covered by social pension schemes (MINECOFIN, 2009). Again, most elders have worked only in the informal sector and have no social pension scheme coverage (Uwera, 2013); only those who were employed in the formal sector and contributed to

pension schemes while working are covered (NISR, 2014a). Rwanda's fourth population and housing census indicates that, out of a total population of 10,515,973, 511,738 are aged sixty and above. This means that elders represent 4.9% of the total population.

Even though Rwanda has made progress through the social protection programmes initiated during the fight against poverty (MINALOC, 2011), no single social protection initiative specifically targets elders who worked in the informal sector. This raises the questions of how elders manage their exposure to social and economic shocks and supplement their livelihood. The cultural norm in Rwanda has been to rely on their families for support (Wheeler et al., 2018), but this norm has been challenged by social changes, including a pattern of rural-urban migration in which the younger generation migrates to the city for better opportunities and leaves elders alone in the rural areas (NISR, 2015b).

Furthermore, land scarcity in Rwanda is weakening elders' influence over their adult children (Biswas, 2002). As more than 80% of the Rwandan population depends on subsistence agriculture to survive, land has become the sole asset for the rural population that has high value and is in high demand (Mulinda & Dusengemungu, 2013). However, the average land per household has been decreasing due to subdivision: in 1960, the average land per household was 1.2 hectares; in the 1990s, it was 0.7 hectares, and by 2001 more than 60% of households had less than 0.5 hectares (Musahara & Huggins, 2005a). Because of this, a law passed in 2013 has banned subdividing agricultural parcels of less than one hectare (see Law No. 43/2013 of16/06/2013, governing land in Rwanda).

The World Bank Group (2017) indicates that the scarcity of land in rural areas is a factor motivating rural-urban migration in Rwanda. In addition, it has influenced changes in housing patterns: specifically, a shift from the informal traditional housing pattern of adult sons building houses on land near their parents' to grouped settlements on sites chosen ad hoc by local leaders. In Kinyarwanda[1], this process is called *imigudugu* (villagisation) (MININFRA, 2009).

Moreover, the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi[2] devastated all aspects of Rwandan society. More than one million people were massacred from April to July 1994 (Berry & Pott, 1999)

[1] Kinyarwanda is the national language of Rwanda and spoken by virtually all its people.

[2] Tutsi are an ethnic group in Rwanda that was targeted in the 1994 Genocide. The formulation 'Genocide Against the Tutsi' will be repeatedly used in this thesis for legal reasons: any other name is considered to be a denial of the genocide, according to Law No. 18/2008 of 23/07/2008 related to the punishment of the crime of 'genocide

see also (Chrétien, 2002), which has had numerous persistent consequences for survivors and also the broader Rwandan community. Among those most affected are elders who survived the genocide: they not only suffer from trauma but rarely have surviving family members to support them (Gahima, 2007:144). Thus, they are deprived of the intergenerational support expected for elders in Rwanda. To address this, the government has created a fund to assist genocide survivors and help the most vulnerable and needy people (see Law No. 02/98 of 22 January 1998, establishing the fund for the support and assistance to the victims of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi). Despite this support from the government, however, aged genocide survivors still suffer from isolation and lack of intergenerational support. This situation survivors raises some questions about the extent to which the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi has affected elders and their livelihoods, particularly in Karongi District as Lake Kivu formed a physical barrier to fleeing the killings.

The onset of COVID-19 created a situation of uncertainty and anxiety among people who did not know how long the pandemic would last, and the measures to curb its spread affected existing intergenerational support for elders in rural areas. Therefore, this thesis also investigates how the pandemic has affected families and elder care practices in Rwanda.

The research starts from the following main question: how are elders in Karongi District socially protected during the current social changes? To address this question, I reflect on and answer these guiding sub-questions: What social protection interventions for elders are taking place in Karongi District, alongside the current social changes? How does rural-urban migration affect intergenerational support for elders? What impact do land scarcity and changes in housing patterns have on family support to elderly support? How does the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi continue to impact the living conditions of elders in Karongi District? How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected existing processes of caregiving and receiving among family members?

ideology' in Rwanda. Furthermore, the United nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/72/L.31 in 2017, and proclaimed 7 April as the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. See https://documents-dds-ny.un.org, accessed on 16 August 2022.

1.3 Research Objectives

Social changes affect the everyday lives of elders in rural areas. In this section, I will substitute the term 'elder care' for 'social protection' to bring in additional aspects of elders' well-being. This study is mainly intended to explain how elders in Karongi District are socially protected against social and economic shocks induced by social changes. From this perspective, my research has the following specific objectives.

- To analyse the contribution of various social protection interventions to promoting the well-being of elders in Karongi District
- To identify the resources for elder care available in Karongi District and establish their interconnectedness
- To assess the caring relationships between migrants and their ageing parents who have stayed in rural areas
- To investigate the influence of past and present land holding and housing patterns on elder care in Karongi District
- To analyse the past and present impacts of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on the daily lives of elders in Karongi District
- To examine the practice of care relationships among and for family members during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their implications for their emotional well-being

1.4 Study Rationale

Research has already been conducted in the field of social protection in Rwanda. For instance, Siegel et al. (2011) focused on it in the context of managing 'shocks' such as disasters and acute hazard-related events. Gatsinzi's study (2011) emphasises its achievements, strengths, and challenges of the Vision Umurenge (VUP) social protection programme[3], while UNICEF (2014) looks at social protection in Rwanda in terms of the care provided to children. In the same perspective, Hartwig (2013) focuses his research on the role of social protection in the linkage between public works and the welfare of rural people in Rwanda. Roelen & Shelmerdine (2014) agree with UNICEF, especially in emphasising child protection in Rwanda.

[3] This is three-part social protection programme that includes public works, direct support, and financial services. An *umurenge* (sector) is an administrative subdivision. Each of the thirty districts of Rwanda is divided into sectors, with a total of 416 in the country. See the law determining the organisation and functioning of the district in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No. 08/2006 of 24.02.2006.

So far, however, there has been little research on the social protection situation of elders in Rwanda and little evidence for or deep knowledge of the nature and the dynamics of support and care to elders has been published. My research fills this gap by generating knowledge about how elders in rural areas of Rwanda are protected. Using Karongi District as a case study reveals how elders are cared for and how social changes shape their concrete situation. Moreover, the study investigates caring practices for elders from various actors using ethnographic methods that provide data explaining the phenomenon based on informants' lived experience of their social settings (Jones & Watt, 2010). Ethnographic methods allow the researcher to investigate a phenomenon through systematic observations, interviews, and recordings of what is happening in the field (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). For O'Reilly (2012), the ethnographic researcher observes social life as the outcome of the interaction of structures and agencies through the practice of everyday life. Chapter Three will discuss the methods used in detail.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the social protection of elders in Karongi District. It focuses specifically on social protection interventions for elders provided by different actors, as influenced by social changes. The study does not cover the whole district of Karongi: my fieldwork was limited to the two villages of Rubengera and Mubuga, which I chose because of their exposure to various social changes – such as rural-urban migration, land scarcity, and the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi – which have shaped practices of elder care. Furthermore, I had previously conducted fieldwork for my master's thesis in this district in 2012 and observed some social phenomena related to elder care.

As stated, I will use the concepts of care and social protection interchangeably to describe practices of the state, family, and community. In this study, an elder is not only defined by a chronological age of sixty-five years or more, but also a social age based on having passed through successive life stages to which different social roles and responsibilities are assigned.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter One is a general introduction that provides the background to the study and discusses its problem statement, research questions, objectives, rationale, and scope.

Chapter Two develops the theoretical orientation, which uses a life-course perspective to understand how life events and historical changes in individuals' life trajectories affect their old age. It clarifies concepts underpinning the case study, contextualises them within it, and gives an overview of the age structure of the population in Rwanda and its political and economic background.

Chapter Three explains the various methods used for data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four discusses the resources used to provide care for elders in Karongi District and demonstrates how individuals can rely on them to varying degrees.

Chapter Five discusses various social protection for elders in Karongi District ranging from state-based to family-, community-, and church-based social protection arrangements. The chapter also details weaknesses in the social protection provision that force elders to rely on their own agency to contribute to their social protection.

Chapter Six describes the influence of rural-urban migration on elder care. It explores various caring practices of migrants for the elderly parents they left in rural areas. Furthermore, it points to challenges migrants face when caring for their parents that make them balance this with other competing needs.

Chapter Seven analyses the influence of changes in housing patterns and land scarcity on elder care. It demonstrates how land scarcity is interlinked with housing patterns as adult children must move far away from their elderly parents to find land to build houses, which deprives elders of proximate care. Furthermore, the chapter shows how land scarcity generates conflicts among family members and disturbs caring relationships.

Chapter Eight concerns the impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on elder care. It shows how it has affected various categories of elders. Most importantly, this means survivors who have lost both their property and the family members who would have been the foundation for their later support and must thus create kinship ties with the state as their sole caring agent. However, the genocide has also affected some members of untargeted population groups who have had to make reparations for the harm caused by their family members who participated in it.

Chapter Nine explores the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on family care relationships. It describes how it reduced the migrants' ability to care to the extent that they themselves called

on their ageing parents and the state to provide them with food. It also forced some migrants who could no longer support themselves in the city to return to their villages. The chapter also describes how the pandemic created conflicts among family members that affected their caring practices.

Chapter Ten concludes the study. It summarises its findings, restates its general argument, and describes its policy implications.

Chapter II: Conceptual and Theoretical Perspective

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature on elders and social protection and elaborates the key concepts for this study. It clarifies social protection and how it is related to the emic concepts, such as social security and care, that underpin this study. Furthermore, the chapter explores the political and economic background of living through old age in Rwanda, shows how highly policymakers prioritise the social protection of elders, and examines Rwandan social protection policy through different temporalities of the country's political and economic history. On a theoretical level, the study adopts a life-course perspective to explore social protection for elders throughout their life trajectories.

2.2 Clarification of Concepts

This section clarifies the concepts of ageing, elders, social protection, and related concepts such as social security and care.

2.2.1 Conceptualising Ageing

Ageing is an almost universal human experience. It is a continuous process through which all living organisms must pass (unless they die prematurely) and includes physical, biological, psychological, and social changes (Bond & Coleman, 1990). In terms of physical appearance, ageing is the process of the decline of the visible body and the loss of adult status along the life trajectory (Featherstone & Wernick, 2003). These physical changes manifest differently in different people and partly depend on the social changes that have occurred throughout the individual's life course (Berry & Kirschner, 2013). On a biological level, ageing is a process of deterioration; on a social level, it is a period of changing roles and relationships within the family and other social networks; and on a psychological level, it can be characterised by cognitive changes affecting memory, emotions, and personality (Hooyman, Kawamoto, & Kiyak, 2015).

Gerontologists differentiate chronological ageing from biological ageing. Chronological ageing is simply the number of years that have passed since someone was born, but this measurement is accurate only when their exact date of birth was recorded. Biological ageing

manifests in the deterioration of an individual's physical body and varies significantly among individuals due to different changes over their life courses (Pankow & Solotoroff, 2007).

In societies like Rwanda, where ageing is culturally defined as a social construct or based on physical appearance, it is much more of a social construct than a chronology. A community may consider people old based on social roles that may not match their chronological age.

In this discussion of ageing, the idea of successful ageing is more prominent. On the one hand, this refers to a state of being that can be objectively measured at a particular moment, and on the other to a process of continuous adaptation to physical limitations (Von Faber et al., 2001). One of its characteristics is a life of active engagement with the community (Whitbourne & Sliwinski, 2012). Successful ageing depends on the influence of historical events and the cultural context in which an individual grew up, and also on individuals' abilities and preparedness to adapt to the problems that come with ageing. Such individuals have to make the best use of the opportunities available (P. Coleman & O'Hanlon, 2008). Achieving successful ageing goes beyond escaping disease and physical disability, as it can be achieved as long as ways to compensate for them exist (Young et al., 2009).

In Kinyarwanda, successful ageing is called *gusaza utanduranyije*, 'ageing without conflicting with others'. People achieve this by adjusting to changes and limitations throughout their life courses and accumulating resources for when care is needed. Thus, when they become frail and must depend on others, they will not be a burden as the latter will use those resources to care for them. This is also called *gusazana agaciro*, 'ageing in dignity'.

Therefore, elders need to know how to adapt to the constraints and losses of later life to achieve successful ageing. But what does it mean to be an elder? How is this concept understood in different contexts?

2.2.2 Defining Elders: From Chronological Age to Social Age

There is no unanimous definition of who are understood to be elders. Most definitions refer to the age of eligibility for state pension benefits: that is, the retirement age (in Rwanda) of sixty-five. People older than this age are referred to as 'older people', 'elderly', or 'elders'. This group is then subdivided based on chronological age, with the age group between sixty-five and seventy-four categorised as 'young old', that between seventy-five and eighty-four as 'old', and that above eighty-five as 'oldest old' (Glasgow & Berry, 2013).

Chronological age is the conventional reference point to determine the age of eligibility for national pension schemes and related benefits (Orimo & al., 2006), but it is also regarded as the break point that determines whether or not a person is old. However, some have criticised the use of chronological age in discussions of developing countries, especially in Africa, where life expectancy is still low and only a very limited number of elders are entitled to retirement benefits (Velkoff & Kowal, 2007). It is important to mention that the life stage ascribed to a certain chronological age varies from one context to another. For instance, in countries where the retirement age is fixed at sixty-five, an elder is anyone above that age, while in countries where it is sixty years, any individual above that age is considered an elder (Manful, Asamoah, & Bediako, 2015), see also (Woods & Clare, 2008).

It should be noted that the idea of defining elders by the age of retirement seems to exclude those who are not eligible for retirement benefits. Thus, defining elders based on chronological age, as is done in Western countries, may be misleading (Cain, 2009) and has limited value for identifying elders (Maddox, 1994). Hence, we should take into consideration the social and cultural context and variability in earlier life which have influenced an individual's later life (Bond & Coleman, 1990): elders are defined by the social and physical processes they have experienced during their lives (Pype, 2018). In Africa, ageing is composed of several life stages, to which specific social roles and responsibilities are assigned. Thus, an elder may be considered a mature person during the phase of parenthood, a person of advanced age in the phase of grandparenthood, or one of the most advanced age in the phase of great-grandparenthood (Apt, 1996). Furthermore, people's social ages are based on physical traits such as grey hair, wrinkles, and frailty, their reproductive history, and the roles they play or played in society and their family (Cohen & Menken 2006). Thus, social age dominates discussion about the definition of an elder in African contexts such as Rwanda.

In Rwanda, social age plays a significant role in determining who is considered an elder. When someone says *umusaza* (old man) or *umukecuru* (old woman), they are referring to social status: for example, someone in their fifties who has grandchildren is considered old. However, government institutions refer to chronological age to determine who is old and who is not. For instance, the National Institute of Statistics considers anyone who has attained sixty years to be an elder (NISR, 2014), while the Ministry of Economic Finance (MINECOFIN, 2009) determines who is an elder based on the retirement age of sixty-five. Hence, chronological age, although criticised, cannot be completely rejected. In this study, I consider both

chronological age and social age to avoid excluding any subgroup, and define elders based on a combination of social status, social age, and chronological age. The case studies presented thus include some people who are not necessarily old according to chronological age.

2.2.2.1 Understanding Elders in the Rwandan Context

As mentioned above, governmental institutions use chronological age to determine who is old. Because there is no population census based on social age, the data available for planning is based on chronological age**.** Different cut-off ages are used, depending on the purpose. While the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda uses the age of sixty years in reports on the socio-economic status of elders (NISR, 2014a), the Ministry of Finance uses the age of sixty to determine eligibility for retirement benefits (MINECOFIN, 2009), which was inspired by the Belgian colonial masters. This use of chronological age excludes some elders by not recognising aspects of social age.

In Rwanda, chronological age is not a reliable indicator on its own. Since the systematic registration of births is very recent, some elders do not know their exact age (World Bank, 2016). Some of these indicate their age by referring to a historical event that happened around the time they were born. Very often, the popular narrative does not categorise a person as old based on chronological age, but rather associates the status with body shape, facial appearance, hair colour, wisdom, and social role. For instance, when a man's hair starts turning grey, people consider him an elder, even if he otherwise still looks young. Elders are classified into three categories based on their physical appearance and ability. Men and women, respectively, may be called *igikwerere* and *ijigija*, meaning 'old but still active'. *Umusaza* and *umukecuru* mean 'old and frail', and *umusaza rukukuri* and *umukecuru rukukuri* mean 'very old and totally dependent'. This classification of elders resonates with the gerontological periodisation of ageing Coe & Alber (2018) refer to in their research on age-inscription: elders are either divided among 'young old' and 'old old, or among 'young old', 'middle old', and 'very old' or 'oldest old'.

In addition, the Rwandan society associates elders with social responsibilities such as grandparenthood. Thus, a person who has a grandchild is considered old. Here, I agree with Jacques Maquet, who indicates that grandparents are considered old and have the role of socialising their grandchildren by teaching them proverbs, legends, tales from Rwandan history, and the mythological concepts that incorporate the greater part of Rwandan

worldview (Maquet, 1954). This aspect of social responsibility is a key element of social status in Rwandan society. For instance, elders with no offspring are said to be *asaziye ubusa*, 'old for nothing', which means they are old without exercising any social responsibility in the family.

In Rwandan society, age is also associated with wisdom. When you ask someone who is the wise person in the village, they will indicate an elder. This wisdom comes along with the power to make important decisions in one's family or provide advice. The fact that elders have passed through different situations in their life course means they have the life experience to help the community deal with difficult situations (Maquet, 1954).

This consideration of elders in Rwandan society as the depository of wisdom is not a unique characteristic of the Rwandan society alone: it is also evident in Ghana. In Ghanaian society, elders are considered reservoirs of collective wisdom in all social and cultural matters. From them, younger adults seek advice and moral support. Children must gain moral and cultural values appropriate for living in their society and growing into people who contribute to their community (Apt, 1996). Wisdom is often associated with old age and being old is demonstrated by the wisdom a person passes to the young generations (Van der Geest, 2008).

The attribution of wisdom to elders is dominant in Rwandan society. Anyone who is seen as wise and has convincing ideas is called *muzehe,* which means 'old person', even those who look young, in order to show respect for their knowledge. The wisdom associated with elders is expressed in the proverb *'Igihugu kitagira abakuru kirazima*', 'A country without the wisdom of elders is doomed to disappear.' This highlights the importance of their wisdom to society.

However, the tradition of attributing wisdom to elders is now questioned by assumptions that modernisation, the advent of literacy, and modern technological advancement have rendered their wisdom obsolete. Hence, no one is willing to listen to their stories (Haber, 2006). Nevertheless, these modernist assumptions overlook the fact that modernisation does not affect elders in all settings in the same way. In Rwanda, for instance, elders contributed their wisdom to the transitional Gacaca courts,[4] which judged those who were accused of

[4] These community-based courts were charged with prosecuting and trying those accused of committing the crime of genocide or crimes against humanity between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994, or other crimes provided for in the penal code of Rwanda, but according to the declarations from the Public Prosecution or testimonies against the defendant, as well as the defendant's confessions in relation to criminal acts carried out with the intention of committing genocide or crimes against humanity. See Article One of the Organic Law No 16/2004 of 19/6/2004 establishing the organisation, competence and functioning of Gacaca courts.

participating in the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Elders who served as judges in these courts were called *inyangamugayo*, which means 'a truthful person' (Molenaar, 2005). Therefore, the status of elders in Rwanda was not eliminated by modernisation, as its supporters claimed, but is still invoked when they intervene in societal conflicts.

However, in Rwandan society elders are not only associated with positive traits but also negative ones, such as slowness, rudeness, dependence, and the power to curse.

As the above background shows, in Rwanda being old is more a matter of social status than chronological age. To understand it, one must think beyond chronological age and consider the various social roles played by elders.

2.2.2.2 Overview of Population Ageing in Rwanda

In Rwanda, as mentioned above, the available quantitative data about elders comes from the 2012 population census, which uses chronological age. Since no census has asked about social age, it is impossible to estimate the proportion of elders in the population of Rwanda based solely on governmental statistics. That said, the census enumerated 511,738 persons aged sixty years and above, 4.9 % of the total population of 10,515,973. Among these, there were 304,499 women and 207,237 men. Old age in Rwanda is mainly a rural phenomenon, with 90% living in rural areas (NISR, 2014a, Davis et al., 2019).). According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), the number of elders has more than doubled in recent decades: it grew from 231,999 in 1978 to 511,738 in 2012 (NISR, 2014) due to government investments in the health sector and a consequent increase in life expectancy (Wheeler et al., 2018).

The increased number of elders also reflects population growth in general: in 1978, the population of Rwanda was 4,831,527 with 231,999 elders and in 1991 the total population was 7,157,551 with 354, 358 elders (SNR, 1994). These proportions show that the population as a whole is not yet ageing. Nevertheless, elders are susceptible to ill health, various forms of vulnerability, and reduced productive ability (MINALOC, 2020). The last of these is cited in the fifth integrated household conditions survey (EICV5) as the main cause of vulnerability to poverty, meaning households headed by elders are more likely to become poor: as their productive ability gradually decreases, the goods and services they need to consume increases over their lifespan (NISR, 2018a).

Most elders are not covered by the formal social security system. For example, the pension scheme system in Rwanda covers only the few who had been formally employed by public or large private institutions. National social security policy documents indicate that only 7% of elders are eligible for pension scheme benefits (MINECOFIN, 2009). This low coverage is explained by the fact that most worked in the informal sector and were thus beyond the reach of the state pension scheme system. This low coverage of elders in pension schemes is not unique to Rwanda, but common in sub-Saharan Africa, where the ILO (2017) reports that a mere 17.8% of elders are covered while the majority lack formal support. Only few countries in Africa, including South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Mauritius, have introduced a universal old-age pension system (Behrendt, 2008).

One has to wonder whether Rwandan families are able to care for the majority of elders who must rely on family support given the low social security coverage in Rwanda. Van der Geest (2016) makes a similar observation about his research in Ghana, which focused on whether families would continue to care for their elders. Van der Geest's observation was that such care was in decline because the government had relegated it to the family. However, it is worth mentioning that the social-economic context of Ghana, as described by Van der Geest, differs from that in Rwanda, as the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi left many Rwandan elders childless and exposed them to various shocks (Davis et al., 2019).

As I have illustrated, Rwanda is not yet experiencing ageing as a society. However, the small proportion of elders in the population does not mean that poverty among elders is not a problem, and aspects specific to the country – like the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi – also influence their vulnerability. This situation requires interlocking forms of institutional and family care to respond to their needs.

2.2.2.3 Political and Economic Background of Living Old Age in Rwanda

Rwanda introduced various development programmes in the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Since then, the government has focused on reconstructing the country and laying a foundation for sustainable development through various investments in human capital (MINECOFIN, 2020). Its remarkable investments in human development have increased the life expectancy at birth from forty-nine years in 2000 to sixty-nine years in 2018. Progress has also been observed in education and early childhood development as a result of programmes to end malnutrition among children (GoR, 2019). However, these investments in

human capital seem to be directed at the needs of youth, whom policymakers consider the key drivers of the future development of the country, and elders have received less attention (Davis et al., 2019).

This perspective also led to the adoption of a policy to promote youth, develop their potential, and integrate them into the development process. Indeed, the Rwandan policymakers consider youth a necessary force for the country's economic transformation. This logic is based on characteristics attributed to the young, like energy, vitality, and a high level of imagination. These traits make them a distinct group with the capacity for action, and hence a major factor in socio-economic progress (MIJESPOC, 2006). The original national youth policy of 2006 was revised in 2015 to align it with existing macro-economic policies and establish a clear goal of empowering youth economically and a vision of decentralising youth through the national youth council. Similarly, a national gender policy was adopted in 2010 to empower women and promote their social, political, cultural, and economic participation in all development programmes. The Rwandan government considers gender equality and equity as a cornerstone of sustained socio-economic development (MIGEPROF, 2010).

However, no national policy to promote the welfare of elders had been introduced when I started conducting this research in 2019, and none was adopted until 2021. That policy emphasised the role of the family and society in caring for elders. This is made explicit in its main objective: to uphold the dignity and self-worth of older persons within the family, society, and nation by improving their potential to continue to play a role in national development (MINALOC, 2021). The policy focuses on raising awareness of the need to prepare for old age, improving health and quality of life for older persons, and promoting positive values regarding intergenerational relationships (MINALOC, 2021).

Before the adoption of the 2021 old age policy, another policy in Rwanda did allude to elders: the social protection policy, which aims to protect vulnerable people from falling into poverty. While this policy does not target elders specifically, its objectives include improving access to and strengthening social services for elders (MINALOC, 2020). Furthermore, the targets of the social protection strategic plan include providing pensions to all Rwandan people in old age by 2050. This income will come from either the state pension scheme or the private pension scheme (MINALOC, 2018). To achieve this target, a long-term saving scheme known as *Ejo*

Heza ('good future') – was initiated in 2018[5]. This programme encourages people in the informal sector to save for their old age. This timeline should help the generation now active, but it does not respond to the care needs of the current generation of elders.

Elders face a range of vulnerabilities. 67% of their households fall in the poorest category (though no information is available on whether these are living alone or with others). Furthermore, they experience difficulties in accessing and using core social amenities (NISR, 2018). Elders' vulnerability takes place in a context of land scarcity, as the majority of the rural population own less than 0.5 hectares of land (Musahara & Christopher, 2005). However, despite these conditions of poverty, they seem not to be a priority for policymakers.

The issue of not prioritising elders' needs in social policy is not unique to Rwanda. Evidence from Cameroon indicates that the adoption of social policy there takes place in the context of resource constraints that compel policymakers to focus their attention on youth rather than elders (Che Fonchingong, 2013). Similarly, Ghanaian policymakers' attention is directed more towards youth than elders (Coe, 2018; Van der Geest, 2016) and in East Africa (specifically Tanzania) social protection of elders is dismissed as a distant dream due to a lack of implementation of the stated government policy (Spitzer et al., 2009).

While the Rwandan government has adopted various policies to promote other categories of the population, it has reduced care for elders to a family obligation. The civil code obligates adult children to care for their old parents through the 2016 law governing persons and family that stipulates that the children must honour their parents and provide for them when they are in need[6]. This law means the state does not prioritise elder care policy, which is a problem for those who have no children or whose children are unable to care for them. Rwanda represents an especially strong case of the vulnerability of elders, as some lost all their family members during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. This category of people requires special attention.

[5] See Ministerial Order No 001/18/10/TC of 05/12/2018 Determining modalities of granting long-term savings scheme benefits, in Official Gazette No 50 of 10/12/2018.

[6] For more details see Article 255 of Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family in Rwanda, in the Official Gazette No 37 of 12/09/2016.

2.2.3 Conceptualising Social Protection

Social protection existed as a practice long before it was described by that term and was carried out by various actors including the community, the state, and philanthropic or religious organisations (Midgley, 1997). In the Global South, social protection has been evolving and has focused on the population's needs as seen by different government policies and interventions at different times. For instance, policies from the 1960s to 1970s focused on ensuring all citizens had enough food (Ellis et al., 2009). This coincided with the period of food aid transfer policies, but such subsidies soon fell out of favour as they were criticised for favouring the urban population over the rural population. By the 1980s, they had given way to 'safety net' policies that focused on identifying and protecting vulnerable people, meaning households or individuals whose living standards had deteriorated due to the increased risks (Antonopoulos, 2013). Such 'safety nets' responded to seasonal and temporary deprivation through public programmes that provided food for work, cash wages, or agricultural supplies. The safety net policy was also criticised for having failed to provide enough food to the rising population of vulnerable people. The economies of poor countries were stagnant, so hunger and poverty persisted among vulnerable people. The limitations of the safety net policy have thus served as the starting point for current debates concerning social protection about how to address the problem of risk and vulnerability of poor people in an inclusive way (Ellis et al., 2009).

In that context, two strands of thought emerged concerning what social protection should cover and attempt to accomplish. One associates risk management with economic growth and suggests that reducing risk levels or protecting the poor against income variability will enable them to get out of poverty (World Bank, 2000). However, this strand has tended to emphasise economic protection more than social protection. The other strand emphasises long-term poverty reduction. On the one hand, it establishes positive relationships between livelihood security and the reinforcement of autonomy. On the other, it promotes empowerment to create an environment that encourages the adoption of pro-poor growth and governance policies and systems of accountability. These last must be responsive to all citizens and grounded in concerns for social justice (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). The second strand seems to be more inclusive than the first, as it suggests equitable and transparent social protection to properly targeted beneficiaries and focuses on the inclusive provision of social protection, enabling beneficiaries to build their capacity to resist shocks and risks. The change

in the focus of social protection, depending on the issue to be addressed, calls for an understanding of social protection.

2.2.3.1 Defining Social Protection

Scholarship on social protection considers it a multi-disciplinary domain. This means that its definition depends on the perspective of the scholar. Defining social protection in terms of income distribution means considering the set of methods a given society uses to provide its members with income security. In this perspective, the focus is on cash transfer and other transfers with a monetary value, such as providing free health care services to family members to help them manage risks (Cichon et al., 2004). By ignoring transfers that have no monetary value, this economic definition takes a narrow view of social protection and equates income transfer with the consumption of goods and services. Income transfer is relevant when it allows the receiver to afford a certain level of consumption, which is referred to as 'entitlements' (Cichon et al., 2004), a term borrowed from Amartya Sen's book on entitlement and deprivation (Sen, 1981) which uses it to explain how people get access to basic commodities. The entitlement (or human rights) approach to social protection considers social protection an obligation of the state towards its citizens. A failure in entitlement leads to a livelihood crisis, such as the one Devereux (2006) describes in his work on the impact of drought and flood on food security and policy in Malawi.

It is obvious that social protection emphasises state policy interventions in response to various shocks that vulnerable people face. Such interventions are intended to manage either risk and vulnerability (Barrientos & Hulme, 2008) or economic and social risks caused by reduced income due to various work contingencies (Garcia & Gruat, 2003) and are classified as social insurance, social assistance, or labour market regulations. Social insurance is intended to protect people against life-course contingencies like maternity and old age and is financed by workers and their employers' contributions. Social assistance, also known as public assistance, aims at providing support to poor people and is financed by general tax revenue. Labour market regulation establishes norms to protect workers at their workplace (Garcia & Gruat, 2003). The World Bank defines social protection as an aspect of 'risk management,' viewing social protection as policies and programmes for helping the poor and vulnerable people manage their risks and vulnerability. This World Bank focus on risk and vulnerability has

motivated advocacy for a social risk management approach to social protection interventions (S. L. Jorgensen & Siegel, 2019).

In that light, defining social protection as a state intervention while neglecting other actors in social protection – especially private initiatives and informal social networks – does not appear to reflect the real economic situation in developing countries, particularly African countries in which formal social protection covers a small proportion of the population. It is thus important to take a perspective that includes both formal and informal social protection initiatives. The definition of social protection Stephen Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler provide includes various aspects of social protection:

> a set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse' (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004:9).

This broader definition of social protection makes it possible to include a range of initiatives under its heading, encompassing both state interventions and traditional support mechanisms like kinship-based and community support. Furthermore, its focus includes economic as well as social protection. It is helpful to envision social protection as a combination of formal support from the state and informal support mechanisms that include family and community support, the church, and initiatives from the people concerned. Here, I am considering the status of social protection in Rwanda because the state's interventions have been inadequate to the needs of poor and vulnerable people. Thus, drawing on the definition of social protection provided by Stephen Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, this study's working definition of social protection is that it includes intertwined interventions by different actors that respond to the risks and vulnerability of not only poor people but also other people who need support. This definition of social protection goes beyond state policies and interventions to include other mechanisms that help provide it to vulnerable people.

2.3 Debating Social Protection and Related Concepts

The concept of social protection defined above is closely related to those of care and social security: in some contexts the three are even used interchangeably. This section focuses on the relationship between these concepts, establishing first the relatedness between social security and social protection and then that between social protection and care.

2.3.1 Social Protection and Social Security

Social protection arose from debates on the kind of institutions and policies that would best address the problem of poverty and vulnerability (Barrientos, 2008). In the Global South, the policy agenda was to bring about social transformation through social protection interventions (Barrientos & Hulme, 2008). To this end, multilateral organisations, agencies, and individuals proposed different policy frameworks. The International Labour Organization (ILO) introduced the social safety net framework in 1942. This implies a human rights approach, in which social protection is understood as an entitlement to benefits that are to be provided to households and individuals through public and collective measures to protect them against declining living standards. In the 1970s, a basic human needs school of development policy was introduced based studies that identified those living on incomes below the poverty line as poor people unable to meet their own needs. However, the basic needs school did not gain widespread acceptance. The opponents of this school, who consider social protection not as a right but as a sign of human solidarity (Munro, 2008), have accused the framework of weaknesses that include lacking an analysis of chronic poverty and failing to clearly indicate where social protection should intervene.

New ways of thinking about social protection continue to emerge. In this context, the World Bank introduced a risk management policy framework focused on public interventions to help individuals and households manage their income risks (Barrientos & Hulme, 2008). As this framework was criticised for its narrow focus, Sabates-Wheeler and Stephen Devereux introduced an encompassing transformative social protection policy framework in which social protection is protective, preventive, promotive, and transformative. The protective aspect of social protection provides social assistance to those facing chronic poverty and deprivation, such as those who are unable to work, while its preventive aspect provides social insurance for those who are economically vulnerable and helps them manage their risk of poverty and avert deprivation. The promotive aspect of social protection focuses on income

and capabilities enhancement through livelihood programmes targeting households and individuals, such as microcredit projects intended to stabilise their income. Finally, the transformative aspect responds to social inequity and exclusion by introducing legal instruments to protect vulnerable groups and combat various abuses and discrimination (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). This transformative policy framework encompasses various aspects of social protection, which gives it a broader scope. It is inclusive and invites marginalised groups to claim their rights to social protection. It also includes social security (social insurance and social assistance), equality, and social justice.

The policy frameworks discussed have influenced the design of different policies to respond to the specific goals in different countries. They aim to realise the right, satisfy basic needs, manage risks, and reduce long-term poverty and have influenced the design of various policies to respond to the specific goals of different countries. For instance, the Rwandan social protection policy is inspired by the transformative model of Devereux and Sebates-Wheeler.

While social protection arose in the context of policy debate to fight against poverty, social security arose in the context of protecting workers against work related hazards. While it has ancient roots in philanthropic action for the welfare of the vulnerable (Aftyaka, 2019), the first legislation establishing a social security system was introduced by Otto von Bismarck in Germany, starting in 1883, to protect state bureaucrats against potential unrest caused by various risks faced by the population, such as sickness, accident, disability, unemployment, and poverty in old age (Lund & Srinivas, 2000). Similarly, soon after its creation in 1919 the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted a convention on social security that specifically focused on unemployment and maternity benefits (Lund & Srinivas, 2000). More generally, social security was introduced during the industrial era to create a stable labour force (Fuchs, 1988). Such systems were thus an initiative of Western industrialised countries that reached developing countries.

In Africa, social security was viewed as a function of the extended family, but in some cases this was overwhelmed by rural famines that limited the care it could provide (Ferguson, 2015). As colonial masters introduced wage labour, new social security mechanisms were gradually implemented in various parts of the continent. This was linked to a colonial ethos of turning Africans into ‘proper workers’ according to a European norm that provided social benefits to dependents of the worker (Ferguson, 2015). While this idea might sound good for the employees, it came along with the European model of the nuclear family, which did not fit the

context: in Africa, the family includes not only a husband, a wife, and children, but also uncles, nephews, cousins, in-laws, and the like.

In the beginning, social security was limited to the fraction of the population that was formally employed in the Global North. Since then, the system gradually extended the coverage to farmers and self-employed. The ILO adopted Convention No. 2, a list of benefits that social security should provide to social security recipients, at its international labour conference in 1952 (Lund & Srinivas, 2000) see also (Benda-Beckmann et al., 1988).

Thus, social security can be defined as a set of public and private interventions intended to protect individuals and families against income insecurity caused by life-cycle events like unemployment, workplace accidents, maternity, sickness, disability, old age, and death (Kumitz, 2013) by maintaining income, providing health care, and benefits to families. These interventions seem to reflect a narrow vision of social protection and consist of direct transfers to fill gaps in or losses of income caused by life contingencies. Therefore, they are associated with the developed world's social security and social assistance (Norton, Conway, & Foster, 2001). In developing countries, on the other hand, the priority for social security has been to fight absolute poverty, on which, as has been demonstrated, social security has little effect. Hence, adopting the social security model of industrialised countries was inappropriate in the context of developing countries, which needed a new approach that extended beyond state-governed social security mechanisms (Fuchs, 1988). This suggestion, which implies an interdependence of different social security initiatives from different actors, applies to Rwanda, where state social security interventions are limited to a small fraction of the population. Thus, social security there should be examined in light of the entanglement of state and non-state interventions on behalf of poor and vulnerable people. This would help shift the focus from the boundaries between formal and informal social security systems – a dichotomy that carries the risk of obscuring kinship- and village-based social security (Benda-Beckmann et al., 1988) – to their complementarity and relevance to the recipient. Thus, social security in the broad sense does not differ from social protection and researching it can capture the practices that provide social security for elders in rural areas of Rwanda where the state, the family, and the community contribute to varying degrees.

Even though social protection and social security arose from different debates, they do not differ in meaning. Both were intended to support poor and vulnerable people and use various approaches. At the local level, especially in Rwanda, the term *kwitaho*, meaning 'to provide

any kind of support', covers both social security and social protection. It simply designates any form of support that is provided to a person in need. However, since the concept of social protection is commonly used in all programmes intended to fight poverty in Rwanda, I prefer the term 'social protection' to 'social security' and understand it to include any support provided to poor and vulnerable people by various actors who intervene in the process of providing support to the poor and vulnerable people. After establishing the relatedness between social protection and social security, it is important to look at the link between care and social protection.

2.3.2 Social Protection and Care

The word 'care' has two meanings: to be worried, troubled, or anxious and to take action for the welfare of another (Reich, 1995). The second, the focus of my research, has been debated by Marxists, feminists, and scholars of disability and kinship studies.

Marxist scholars emphasise unpaid, feminised home care work, while feminist scholars relate the physical and emotional aspects of care to identity formation. Disability scholars focus on power relationships between care providers and receivers and see the latter not as passive recipients but as actors (Thelen, 2015).

In this study, I discuss care based on an anthropological perspective and view it broadly as a social and cultural practice (van Eeuwijk, 2018). This captures different aspects of care: as an activity, as a service, and as a social and emotional relationship that can be summarised as 'caring about' and 'caring for' (Alber & Drotbohm, 2015). From the same perspective, this study will explore the intersection between care and social protection by drawing on provided Sjaak Van der Geest's definition, which includes all activities that are considered as care:

> 'Care is an assemblage of emotional and practical performance relating to the manifestation of concern, dedication, and attachment on one hand, and carrying out activities for others who, for physical or emotional reasons, are unable to do so.' (Van der Geest, 2002:8).

This definition combines the ideas that caring is concern and a disposition for the well-being of others, and that it is the activity of supporting another person. Building on this definition of care, some interrogations arise about how its relationship with social protection.

A quick look at Devereaux and Sabates-Wheeler's definition of social protection indicates that the concept of care is embedded in the concept of social protection. The latter is structured as social relations and includes support to families and communities through social structures and social networks (Calder & Tanhchareun, 2014). This support is provided by kinship and communities and an important element of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa. It helps people deal with contingencies and shocks where the provision of social protection by the state is limited (Devereux & Getu, 2013).

Thus, care activities are not confined to the kinship sphere alone as the concept of care is also used when calling on the state to fill gaps in the kin-based care systems. For example, some Ghanaian elders want the state and church to compensate for the shortcomings of kinship-based care by establishing old-age homes (Coe, 2018). Such demands for support are based in the social practice perspective on care, in which it connects not only kin and friends, neighbours, and communities but also collective entities like the state and the nation (Thelen et al., 2018). Hence, care should not be analysed by marking the boundaries between the kinship and the state but should viewed from the perspective of their connectedness within a relational process (Thelen et al., 2018). Moreover, discussions of care should not be confined to kinship or small-scale social organisation: it must be viewed as an open-ended process embedded in a larger institutional framework (Thelen, 2015).

In Rwanda, the state includes elders in various programmes that provide support to poor or vulnerable people. Therefore, I argue that care is a broad concept that comprises different forms of support from various social organisations at various scales, some small like a family and some large like the state.

Moreover, the idea of emotion proves to be important to the debate on care, since the whole process is so emotional. Hochschild (1995) proposes four cultural models of care. The 'traditional' model depends on 'emotionally warm' care that is provided by women as unpaid domestic care work. The 'cold-modern' model starts from the assumption that all human beings need care and public institutions must therefore provide institutionalised forms of care, such as institutionalised childcare, long-term medical care in hospitals, professional home care in old-age, and institutionalised care for people with disabilities. The 'warm-modern' model includes both 'warm' family care and 'modern' state care, with domestic care activities shared between men and women and supplemented by public institutions to reinforce family capacity. Finally, the 'cold-postmodern' model exhibits 'extreme

individualism', which is characterised as a 'care deficit': people appear self-sufficient and rely on various technologies like monitoring devices. While her analysis introduces feminist ideas about the division of labour and emotional care, it is limited by its association of care work with 'warm' emotion, which means she distinguishes neither emotional labour from other kinds of labour nor emotional from non-emotional care work. Therefore, I argue following Tatjana Thelen that care keeps changing over time: it cannot be assigned to the spheres of warm or cold and modern or traditional but is always negotiated in the formal and informal realm.

Turning to social protection, this concept is closely related to care and some scholars use the terms interchangeably. For instance, Da Roit & Le Bihan (2010) use the concepts of formal and informal care to refer to formal and informal social protection and suggest that both must be prioritised to formulate policies that guarantee incentives for providing informal care. In this context, Austria introduced a care allowance (*Pflegegeld*) in 1993 that aimed to support people who needed continuous outside help by reinforcing access to long-term care at home (LTC), an example of what Da Roit & Le Bihan (2010) call 'long-term care policy' in European countries. However, in the Global South and especially Africa, pension schemes are limited to a small fraction of the population, and in some countries state-sponsored professional care does not exist (Häberlein, 2015). In fact, policymakers in African countries give little attention to long-term care, as public discourse associates providing this care with the family (Jaco Hoffman & Pype, 2018b). This does not mean that the state provides no care at all in African societies, but it is less visible there. Even though care is provided unevenly across societies, it remains the central factor in protecting people against risks and vulnerability and continually changes in response to social changes. Moreover, people may refer to support provided to needy people as either care or social protection.

As mentioned above, the Kinyarwanda word that expresses care is *kwitaho*, which more specifically means 'to care for' or 'to care about'. This comprises providing material, financial, and emotional support to an individual in need, whether this is done by the family, the state, faith-based organisations, or the community. People in need of care may resort to any of these, depending on the circumstances.

The concepts of social protection, social security and care come from different debates and have their own histories in policy making and anthropological debate. As the distinction between them is not significant, this study uses the concept of care to cover both social

security and social protection (although its meaning extends far beyond these two concepts) and uses the two terms interchangeably to reflect the language used by the various actors who support elders.

2.4 A Life Course Perspective on Social Protection

Life-course theory seeks to understand the social trajectories of individuals, as well as their developmental effects and personal and social-historical contexts (Glen, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). According to Mitchell (2003), the social sciences use the life-course perspective to explain the patterns of age variability and the effects of historical change on the lives of individuals. Therefore, social and historical events, along with geographical location, play a significant role in shaping individuals' developmental paths and the lives they live.

Time plays an important role in the development of an individual's life paths or life trajectories and thus represents a central element in the life-course perspective. Three systems of time are relevant here: individual time, generational time, and historical time. Individual time refers to periods of individual lives, from childhood to old age, and how they influence individuals' positions and roles in society. Generational time relates people to others who were born in the same period and are referred to as an age group, a cohort, or a grouped age. Historical time refers to social changes and historical events at a society-wide level and to their effects on individuals and families (Hareven, 1985; Mitchell, 2003). Within each of these time systems, individuals accumulate various experiences and face different types of risks.

Throughout their life stages, human beings are exposed to a range of social and economic risks and vulnerabilities. Social protection policies and programmes are designed to respond to those to which people are likely to be exposed, so an effective social protection system should address the main causes of risk and vulnerability throughout the stages of life (Garcia & Gruat, 2003). A life-course perspective on social protection helps to explore the different stages of individuals' life trajectories, which each require a specific form of social protection at a specific time to ensure their well-being. This study aims to capture life events and experiences by using such a framework to explore the various risks individuals are exposed to throughout their life span and how these risks affect their old age.

The life-course approach shows how events and experiences affect an individual's life over time in positive or negative ways. They are positive when they help an individual to weather

a risk, and they are negative when they expose an individual to a risk (De Vuijst, Van Ham, & Kleinhans, 2016).

Throughout the life course, age-related experiences are marked by particular characteristics and broad processes based on the interconnectedness of social settings – whether proximal like family, social networks, and workplace, or distal like the state and its institutions and policies (Richard & Settersten, 2006). This perspective benefits our study on the social protection of elders, which is shaped both by the proximal and distal settings. The provision of social protection by the family and community may be described as a proximal setting, while the provision of social protection by the state through its various programmes may be described as a distal setting.

The related principle of the life course highlights the interconnectedness of individuals' lives when their interdependence is materialised through social changes. In this regard, social changes occurring in one's individual's life affect others' through shared exchanges and social support (Fuller-Iglesia et al., 2009). This suggests the multidimensionality of life courses, a concept which Heinz, et al. (2009) use to indicate the interdependence between family, education, work, leisure, and retirement. Multidimensionality helps explain different events in individuals' life spans within different institutions, from micro-institutions such as the family to macro-institutions such as the society as a whole, and the different statuses that they must occupy. The life-course approach enables us to analyse the processes that produce individuals' welfare through social relationships, which are considered tools to mobilise support from others while realising their own well-being. This is what constitutes the social capital of individuals (Huinink, 2009).

As mentioned above, the main function of social protection is to help individuals manage the risks along their life span. From the same point of view, and drawing on the interlinked lives principle of the life course, there is a clear connection between the vulnerabilities of different family members. For instance, the vulnerability of breadwinners – such as a lack of income – affects their family dependents, as well their own well-being in old age. The loss of income also affects the education of children by preventing them from finding well-paid jobs and thus causing economic instability during their active age and finally poverty in old age (Garcia & Gruat, 2003). The converse also holds true: old-age pensions for women in South Africa contribute to the reduction of household poverty improving educational opportunities for female grandchildren (Burns et al., 2005). There is, indeed, a causal link between generations

in a kin group, which may have a positive or negative effect depending on the breadwinner's social and economic situation. Thus, social protection interventions regarding risks facing a family's breadwinner can change the course of events by enabling the next generation to care for their aged parents in the future. Therefore, I argue that social protection interventions through all life stages are crucial if individuals are to be able to adapt to the problems of old age and also maintain intergenerational reciprocity.

2.5 Linking Social Protection, Vulnerability, and Elders

There are closer links between vulnerability, elders, and social protection interventions. Elders experience a range of risks that make them a vulnerable group as their social, physical, and health conditions may lead to a situation that necessitates social protection interventions. The response depends on individuals' abilities (or their households') to mobilise resources to respond to the risks and access to social protection.

2.5.1 Understanding the Vulnerability of Elders

In all societies, elders face a range of risks and vulnerabilities (Bloom et al., 2011). Social protection interventions are supposed to reduce these (Handayani & Babajanian, 2012) by ensuring that they have a reliable income when they can no longer earn income from employment. Guaranteeing their income security allows them to access vital services (ILO, 2014a). Although they do not all face the same risk of income insecurity, those without income insecurity may express a need for physical care or face a health-related risk (Bloom et al., 2011). Others are exposed to multiple risks, such as lack of income, lack of access to health care, and lack of physical care. They cannot respond to all of these on their own and need protection to overcome this vulnerability.

Many factors underly the vulnerability of elders in any setting or societies. They are less likely to be employed than younger people, and those who have modest savings face the risk of losing their value to inflation. Moreover, the family support that constitutes their main source of social security can be restrictive (Bloom et al., 2011). Other factors in their vulnerability include chronic health conditions and poor access to health care, along with poverty, exclusion, homelessness, lack of social contact, lack of autonomy, and loneliness (Schröder-Buterfil & Marianti, 2006). In their research on older adults in Uganda, Golaz & Rutaremwa (2011) identify two categories of vulnerability. One of these is related to exogenous events

like natural disasters that simultaneously affect elders and other segments of the population. The second is related to endogenous events, like health issues that specifically affect elders rather than other categories of the population. However, this categorisation of vulnerabilities does not indicate whether elders are affected by exogenous events in the same way as the other population groups, and even in the case of those that specifically affect them some individuals are more vulnerable than others. Those who have an income are less vulnerable than the poor, those who do not have chronic illness are less exposed to risk than those who do, and those with kin are not vulnerable in the same way as those who lack this support (Bloom et al., 2011).

In this context, it is important to understand how the concept of vulnerability is defined and understood in the study and who is considered vulnerable, which I will clarify in the next subsection.

2.5.2 Vulnerability: A State of Exposure to Risk

The concept of vulnerability has been used in various contexts and disciplines. It originated in environmental studies that analysed the human impact of a natural disaster (Schröder-Buterfil & Marianti, 2006). In climate change research, bio-physical vulnerability refers to the amount of potential damage from a specific climate-related hazard (Brooks, 2003). Economists use the concept of economic vulnerability to refer to the exposure of a country's economic system to external shocks resulting from economic openness without control, export concentration, and import dependence (Briguglio et al., 2008). Moreover, social vulnerability exists that results not from a specific external hazard or threat, but rather from poverty, inequality, and marginalisation (Allen, 2003). This social vulnerability is the main concern of this study.

Vulnerability is understood as exposure to contingencies and stress and the inability to cope with them (Chambers, 2006). This definition emphasises three main elements of vulnerability: exposure, risk or threat, and coping ability that make a household or an individual vulnerable. To avoid this situation, Schröder-Buterfil & Marianti (2006) recommend that social protection interventions take place before a threat arises, which represents the preventive dimension of social protection advocated by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004). Furthermore, the risk or shock's magnitude plays a significant role in the vulnerability's severity. Shocks are changes that induce the risk of vulnerability and include both 'idiosyncratic changes' that affect an individual or a household and 'generalised changes' that affect an entire region or society.

There are also single and repeated changes and catastrophic and non-catastrophic changes, each associated with a level of vulnerability. The greater the magnitude of the change, the lesser the ability to cope with it (Norton, et al., 2002). To cope these changes and void vulnerability, (Chambers, 2006), suggests strategies such as personal investments – in education and capability enhancement – and social investments in things like housing and land and saving money or food stores.

The notion of risk is often associated with uncertainty. Hänsch et al., (2017) proceed the same way. They consider uncertainty an integral part of the human condition and argue that experience and human agency enable people to contain uncertainty and secure their future. In this perspective, the ability to respond to a risk is crucial in determining the level of vulnerability that an individual or a household experience. Inability to mobilise resources to respond to a risk makes an individual more vulnerable as the risk will continue. Here, I agree with that vulnerability is an outcome of distinct but connected risks, including exposure to the threat, its materialisation, and lacking means to cope with it (Schröder-Buterfil & Marianti, 2006).

An individual or a household's inability to counteract a threat's negative impact results in a short- and long-term failure to maintain its level of well-being (Allen, 2003). In this study, I thus understand vulnerability as the state of being exposed to various risks while lacking the ability to respond to them in either the short or the long term.

2.6 Social Protection in Rwanda: A Historical Overview

To understand Rwanda's current social protection system, it is important to trace it through different historical periods. This section explores social policy in Rwanda during four main periods: the pre-colonial period, the colonial period, from independence to 1994, and from 1994 to the present.

2.6.1 Pre-Colonial Social Protection

Before the colonial period, social protection in Rwanda was embedded in Rwandan culture. Society was characterised by strong kinship bonds and extended family solidarity. The weak, aged, and sick were cared for by their family members; in the absence of kin, neighbours stepped in and provided the support needed (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). During this period, health care was relegated to the family sphere. When family members became sick, their

elders within the family first treated them using various medicinal plants and those who did not recover then turned to specialists in traditional medicine. These had to treat sick people for free, and those who recovered had to bring the healer a goat or a basket of sorghum, beans, or other produce in return for the service (Maquet, 1954).

During this period, everyone could access health services and all other forms of social support through the community. This was a kinship-based society, following the argument of MacKinnon and Cannell (2013) that kinship constitutes the fundamental structure upon which social relations are organised. The state (that is, the monarchy) provided a few social services, such as educating some young boys at *itorero*[7] schools where they were taught various martial skills to spur a sense of dedication to their country and instil the cultural values of patriotism and bravery to protect the country against the invasion of enemies. These skills included war dances (*guhamiliza*), archery (*kurasa*), spear throwing (*gutera icumu*), wrestling (*gukirana*), reciting pastoral and epic poetry (*kwinikaza* and *guhiga*, respectively) and prepared to replace their fathers in the political and military exercise of power in the kingdom (Riot, Boistelle, & Bancel, 2016).

During this period, social policy revolved around family and community and social security provision materialised in their daily care practices to vulnerable people.

2.6.2 Social Protection in the Colonial Period

The German colonial authorities in place from 1894 to 1918 did little to provide social services to the Rwandan citizens, although Roman Catholic missionaries did start to provide some limited social services, such as education and healthcare (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). German officials did not support the missionaries in the provision of social services since they considered the native population inferior and undeserving of social services. Their native policy aimed to prevent the colonised people from accessing the way of life of the German colonisers (Steinmetz, 2008). During this period, traditional social support systems continued to be the main source of social security in the absence of a colonial social policy.

The Belgian colonial rule imposed in 1919 provided social services differently and ran education and healthcare in collaboration with the missionaries. Schools and health centres

[7] This name has been revived to refer to a type of civic education school established as part of the process of reconciliation.

were built, programmes to fight endemic diseases were established, and people began to use these social services (Cornet, 2009) as well as the traditional medicine practiced by elders and professional herbalists. However, the Belgian colonial education system is criticised for having been exclusive rather than inclusive. It favoured children from the elite segment of the Rwandan population, who were expected to assist the colonial masters as administrative functionaries. This discriminatory policy was based on a policy of divide-and-rule that the Belgians applied to their various colonies in central Africa and is considered the main root of the conflict among the Rwandan population (Prunier, 1995).

2.6.3 Post-Independence Rwandan Social Protection: From Welfare State to Neo-Liberal State

When Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1962, it inherited the colonial social policy. The government of the time strove to provide social services to the population to raise its living standards. International development institutions partnered with the government so it could offer most social services for free. Political leaders used social protection mechanisms as a tool of state-building and to consolidate their power (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). To ensure the provision of social services to employees in the formal sector, a decrét-loi (decree) was adopted on 22 August 1974 that regulated social security and created a National Social Security Fund. Some employees and their employers contribute a certain percentage of their salary to this fund, which covered job-related contingencies as well as retirement benefits (Uwera, 2013).

In the post-independence period, most African leaders were eager to accelerate the socio-economic development of their countries. They endeavoured to provide social services to their citizens on a much larger scale than in the colonial period in a manner resembling that of welfare states with a paternalistic approach. State intervention was evident in all domains related to people's well-being: economic and social development, agriculture, health, and education (Kumssa & Jones, 2015). The provision of social services in Rwanda during this period followed this broader philosophy of the welfare state in Africa.

However, a lack of resources due to price fluctuations on the international export market in the 1980s began to impede to the provision of social services. Prices for the main export commodities of Rwanda, such as coffee and tea, gradually declined, so the country had to borrow money to make up for lost export income (Sellström & Wohlemuth, 1995). Rwanda

thus became heavily indebted, and the World Bank required it to implement structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that included reductions to social expenditures that reduced the state's role in providing social services. It had to abandon some social services and cut the budgets for health, education, and the civil service. Unemployment also increased, due to the privatisation of state-owned enterprises (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). This shows how the provision of social services to the citizens in a highly aid-dependent state is shaped not only by that state's political commitment but also by the policies of the international development partners on which the financing of these services is mainly originated.

The provision of social services in Rwanda further degraded with the state collapse in 1994 and the Genocide Against the Tutsi, after which social protection was much more concerned with humanitarian assistance.

2.6.4 Social Protection After 1994: From Humanitarian Assistance to Social Assistance

In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, social protection was provided in the form of humanitarian assistance to help people recover, until the first comprehensive social protection policy was adopted in 2005. This policy was introduced within a framework of reducing extreme poverty and inequalities, in accordance with the first goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MINALOC, 2005). The need to respond to the emergence of new challenges has necessitated the revision of the 2005 social protection policy, both to accommodate new demands and to align it with the African Union's Agenda 2063 – which calls on states to aim for prosperity and the well-being of all – as well as global policy agendas like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to make social protection more inclusive, as dictated by the SDGs' principle of 'leaving no one behind' (MINALOC, 2020). The newly revised policy is built on four pillars: social security, social care services, short-term social assistance, and livelihood enhancement.

To ensure access to health care for all, the community-based health insurance policy known as Mutuelle de Santé was introduced in 1999. To ease its implementation, it was modified in 2010. This policy requires people who are not covered by any other form of insurance to join and to contribute part of the premium, with the other part paid by the state (MOH, 2010). The

Ministry of Health determines the rate for each Ubudehe category[8], and those classed as 'very poor and vulnerable' pay nothing: their premiums are entirely covered by the state. (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017).

While categorising people helps in gathering information about what characterises members of a given social group (Lee et al., 1995), it can also lead to stereotyping people if they are categorised without sufficient information or research about them (Macrae et al., 1994). Previous studies have indicated that there is no completely objective way to classify people into categories: the categorisation process is influenced by social position, historical perceptions, and interests (Gillespie et al., 2012). Scholars Tajfel & Wilkes, (1963) reject the idea of thinking about people in terms of the social categories they belong to on the grounds that it leads to ignoring the differences among people assigned to a given category. They instead suggest taking into consideration people's unique and individual characteristics rather than assigning them to a social category. Regarding Ubudehe categorisations in particular, Sebates-Wheeler et al. (2015) point out that those categories face the challenge of distinguishing between the poor and the poorest.

Despite these critiques of social categorisation, in the Rwandan context it remains an essential tool for determining the beneficiaries of state support. However, many people complain about being misclassified and thus denied state support. People's categorisation not only serves as the basis for community-based insurance provision but also determines eligibility for direct support and the 'One Cow per Poor Family' programme. The provision of social services to poor and vulnerable people depends on their classification, so persons assigned to the wrong category may not receive the benefits to which their real socio-economic situations entitle them to. Being misclassified may even lead to the loss of some benefits. Thus, many people have good reason to denounce the category system. Due to the obvious inadequacies of Ubudehe categorisation and the various complaints about them, the Ministry of Local Government is currently revising the system.

[8] Ubudehe categories are a social-economic classification of the Rwandan population by the Ministry of Local Government. Every Rwandan is assigned to one of four categories, ranging from 'very poor' to 'rich'. For more detail, see Ministry of Local Government. (2015). New Ubudehe Categorisation, Kigali

2.7 Situating Social Protection of Elders in Rwanda

The social protection of elders in Rwanda revolves around different initiatives from different actors who contribute to their welfare in various forms that depend on the actors involved. These include the state, the family, the community, churches, and other religious organisations.

2.7.1 State-Based Social Protection

The state's duty to support elders is set out in the Rwandan constitution of 2003, as revised in 2015, which states that the state has the duty, insofar as it is able, to undertake actions intended to improve the welfare of the indigent, elders, and other vulnerable people (GoR, 2015). Within this context, the state provides social protection to elders through the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme[9] (VUP), the country's main state-run social protection programme. VUP includes three components: direct support, public works, and financial services. The programme is sponsored by the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and managed by the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA). The 'One Cow per Poor Family' – known as *Girinka* ('may you have a cow') – is another apparently popular programme of social protection in Rwanda that provides cows to poor families (see Section 5.2.2. To enrol in such programmes, beneficiaries must be classified in the poorest Ubudehe category (as described above) and be nominated by their village's other residents deserving to benefit from the state's social protection programmes. I will discuss these programmes in greater empirical detail in Chapter IV. Given the conditions a beneficiary must meet, there is a risk that some needy elders may not be enrolled.

2.7.2 Family-Based Social Protection

Responsibility for social protection for elders in Rwanda is not limited to the state but extends to family members as well. Kin support for elders is grounded in Rwandan culture, as illustrated by the proverb '*Urukwavu rukuze rwonka abana*', which means 'An old rabbit suckles on the young.' Such support is both monetary and in kind, but cash transfers from the city to rural areas are most prominent (Sabates-Wheeler, et al. 2020). Support for those living close to or with their ageing parents is materialised in various activities ranging from domestic

[9] An *umurenge* (sector) is an administrative subdivision. Each of the thirty districts of Rwanda is divided into sectors, with a total of 416 in the country. See the law determining the organisation and functioning of the district in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No. 08/2006 of 24.02.2006.

chores to agricultural work (Pontalti, 2018). However, these cultural norms that expect adult children to care for their elderly parents are not always fully respected. Here, I agree with Sabates-Wheeler et al.'s (2020) argument that the cultural norm of intergenerational support to elders is sometimes challenged due to the economic hardships facing adult children, the younger generation's inability to sustain its own living, and the loss of children during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Despite these challenges, the family remains the main source of elder care in Rwanda and is always being reconfigured alongside other socio-economic changes occurring in society.

2.7.3 Faith-Based Social Protection

Christian organisations have long existed in Rwanda. The first Roman Catholic parish was established in 1900 and other denominations followed in the subsequent decades (Court, 2016). These organisations exist not only to conduct worship, teach their doctrines, and proselytise, but also to mobilise the church and the community for social actions that benefit the poorest (Davis et al., 2019).

Faith-based organisations are appreciated in different countries for providing social security to those in need of support. However, they are also criticised for being ideologically driven and excluding non-members from the support they provide. Research on social security within religious networks indicates that the main form of support from religious networks is spiritual and ontological security, which can simultaneously increase material vulnerability (Thelen et al., 2009). In Rwanda, religious organisations face the same criticism from a popular discourse that denounces them for focusing more on spiritual than material well-being. Furthermore, their competition to attract adherents encourages them to support their members while neglecting non-members. Despite this criticism, however, faith-based organisations in Rwanda are reported to contribute materially to the support of elders by providing housing, food, and financial support for medical costs. This material support by faith-based organisations in the Rwandan context exists alongside spiritual support and emotional support (Davis et al., 2019) and is provided by both religious institutions and their individual members. I will return to this issue of faith-based social protection of elders in Chapter IV with empirical data.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have clarified some key concepts and their use in various socio-economic contexts. These concepts, despite their different origins, do not differ in meaning. One may use the terms 'social protection', 'social security', and 'care' interchangeably. In this study, I prefer the term 'care' and use it often, since it is a broad concept that anthropologists consider an open-ended process (Thelen, 2015). The chapter has also summarised Rwandan social policy over time, observing that although elders have not been among policymakers' highest priorities, they are referred to implicitly.

Regarding the current situation of social protection of elders, the chapter has discussed various forms of social protection as provided by different actors. However, I have abstained from referring to 'formal' or 'informal' social protection, as I do not aim to dichotomise them but rather to explore their complementarity. The chapter has also indicated various actors who contribute to the provision of social protection: the state, the family, the community, churches, and the elders themselves. Neither the state nor the churches have specific programmes to support elders but include them within the general framework of support to vulnerable people and make no distinction between different societal groups in this regard. However, faith-based social protection is provided by religious institutions and their members to their coreligionists as an act of solidarity. Finally, the chapter has argued that intervention by different actors in social protection allows a complementarity among actors in applying various forms of solutions to the care needs of elders.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents my research methodology and experiences as a researcher doing fieldwork and producing empirical materials in my own cultural setting. It sets out anthropological grounds for studying one's own culture, rather than a foreign land as in classical ethnography. The chapter also discusses my process of analysing and interpreting the volume of ethnographic material collected during fieldwork in Karongi District and highlights the challenges I encountered while collecting data.

3.2 Doing Ethnography at Home

While I was applying to do my Ph.D. at BIGSAS in October 2019, one interviewer asked why I was planning to conduct research in my home country. I answered that as a Rwandan doing fieldwork in Rwanda, I could form closer connections with my informants and better understand the everyday caring practices for elders in their natural setting. This question reminded me of Russell Bernard's discussion of 'native ethnography', which emphasises that anthropologists can do ethnography at home and write about their own culture (Bernard, 2006). This 'at-home ethnography' contrasts with 'abroad ethnography'. My research on social protection of elders in Rwanda is an example of at-home ethnography. Following Murchison (2010), ethnography no longer implies travel to a remote village and there is increasing recognition that cultural and social phenomena are ripe for ethnographic study everywhere we find humans.

I start from John Brewer's definition of ethnography:

> 'A study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally' (Brewer, 2000:10).

It thus follows that members of a given community are the best interpreters of their community, culture, social organisation, and everyday routines (Caronia, 2018). I was thus in a strong position to understand practices of social protection for elders among the broader

Rwandan community. However, my at-home ethnography did not prevent me from being considered an insider and an outsider at the same time.

3.2.1 Being an Insider

'You are not like those who come to us speaking another language,**'** André, a 77-year-old elder, said to me during an interview on 19 December 2019. He informed me that people from the city speak a mixture of Kinyarwanda and foreign languages that he does not consider Kinyarwanda. This compliment from an informant reminded me that speaking only proper Kinyarwanda with elders not only allows the transfer of needed information but also elicits their trust of the researcher.

To repeat, as a Rwandan researcher in the Rwandan community, I gained the status of an insider. This was attributed to the fact that I speak the same language as my informants, which is spoken throughout Rwanda and is the primary tool for communication in in every corner of the country. Some people who have attended school code-switch between Kinyarwanda and other languages like French or English, depending on which they have studied. However, Kinyarwanda is, significantly, the only language used in everyday communication by the rural population. When communicating with elders in Karongi District, I was careful not to mix it with other languages to avoid giving them the impression that I was a snob: such a situation could have compromised my status as a researcher.

Furthermore, elders in Karongi District do not like people to communicate with them in Kinyarwanda mixed with other languages they do not understand. They consider such behaviour insulting or as representing a lack of cultural values, as the Kinyarwanda language is generally regarded as the backbone of Rwandan culture. Similarly, Cyprien (2015) considers Kinyarwanda the repository of family and community knowledge and a vehicle of beliefs, customs, perceptions of the world, and values. Therefore, the way I communicated with informants solely in Kinyarwanda meant they considered me one of them – what Zaman (2008) calls a native among the natives. However, my status as an insider in the field was not constant: it oscillated from insider to outsider and back.

3.2.2 Being an Outsider

Even though I spoke the same language as my informants and shared their culture, I was an outsider to the specific group I was observing. I remember one occasion when I was visiting

an informant at home and her neighbour came to borrow a hoe. When the neighbour found out I was researching elders' social protection in the village, she told my informant to use *ubwenge*. Literally, this means 'intelligence', but in this context it also refers to a strategic discourse limited to superficial information that reflects the shared narrative between the state apparatus and the population. This kind of information does not go deep enough to disclose information that reflects the reality of lived conditions. Murchison (2010) suggests that ethnographic researchers should not be surprised when informants consider them outsiders: instead, they should try to gain the insiders' perspective as much as possible.

Some informants also tended to think I was like a government official working to implement social protection programmes. Every elder who was not enrolled in any state social support programme expected me to advocate for them and did not believe my explanations that I was just a researcher exploring the practice of elder care in rural areas. They only started to believe me after I attended a cell (local district subdivision) meeting and saw that instead of sitting on the front bench with the local leaders I sat on the grass with the ordinary participants. (Any government official who attends a local-level public meeting is given a seat in front and delivers a speech on implementing various government development policies). Research suggests that, even when informants ascribe such roles to researchers doing fieldwork, they have to be honest and not try to play any role other than their own (Bernard, 2006). They must continuously build and maintain rapport in the field to make participants feel comfortable with their presence and not distort or withhold information (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

To build further rapport with my informants and express that I valued what they did, I also participated in elder's routine activities whenever I visited them.


Left: The researcher helps shell soya beans. Right, the researcher helps separate the beans and pods.

3.2.3 When the Researcher Becomes an Object of Observations

During my second period of fieldwork in Karongi District, from December 2020 to January 2021, I became an object of observation despite the rapport I had built with my informants previously. This was during the COVID-19 pandemic, but at a point when Rwanda had started to relax its restrictions. Travel within districts was allowed but travel between different districts or provinces required special authorisation from the National Police. I had to apply online, explain why I needed to travel, and provide supporting documents. After gaining permission to travel from Kigali to Karongi District, I again headed there to visit my informants.

This time, informants usually asked me questions related to the pandemic. Some asked about the situation in Europe and others about that in Kigali: they knew I had come from Europe and passed through Kigali on my way, and both were areas they considered ravaged by the pandemic. One day, an informant asked me whether I was bringing it to them. He said, *Aho ntutuzaniye icyo cyoroze uvanye iyo irwotamasimbi?* (Are you not bringing us the pandemic from Europe?) I explained that I had tested negative three times: just before I left Germany, on my arrival in Kigali, and when I left for Karongi District. With all those tests, he did not need to worry.

Elders in rural areas worried because they considered COVID-19 an urban disease and, even worse, a disease of those who often by air to places where it was prevalent. As someone who

had just been in Europe, they thus saw me as a typical case of a COVID-19 carrier who could infect them. In this context, they needed to know more about the pandemic, my European experience, and what effect this had on my health status so they could avoid being infected. These scenarios gave me new insights into how the pandemic transformed this period of fieldwork and made it look different from the first one.

I undertook this second phase to learn about the informants' everyday lives and how they experienced caring relationships during the pandemic. Just as I wanted to learn from them, they were also eager to learn from me about the pandemic situation where I had come from and how I had escaped infection when living in an area where the pandemic was more complex than in Rwanda. Thus, I became an object of observation. My second fieldwork experience with elders in Karongi District echoes a case Erdmute Alber describes in her book *Transfer of Belonging*, in which a student had wanted to observe children in Southern Benin, but instead it was they who stared at him. As a result, he felt as if he was being studied instead of the other way around (Alber, 2018b: 29). In my case, instead of me asking questions to elders, it was the other way around: they wanted to get deeper information from me by asking various questions.

3.3 When the Researcher Meets the Gatekeeper

Before going to the field, I had to obtain a letter of introduction from the College of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Rwanda. The next day, I went to the Karongi District headquarters to inform the local authorities that I would be conducting research in their district, as I was required to gain their authorisation before I started. I expected that my status as a lecturer at the University of Rwanda would easily satisfy them, as it was one public institution and they worked for another. But this did not happen the way I expected.

On my first visit to the Karongi District office, I went to the mayor's office to request a meeting. As she was not there that day, I was introduced to the deputy mayor for economic affairs. I explained my plans to research the social protection of elders in Karongi District. After listening, he replied, 'We don't know what you are going to ask our people.' I was a bit confused by this answer and asked what he wanted me to do. He told me to come back another day when the mayor was in.

I kept calling the secretary, and after two days was informed that the mayor was back and that I had to meet with her. When I arrived, I introduced myself and explained my intention to conduct research in Karongi District. Despite my explanations that this was for academic purposes in pursuit of a degree, she insisted that I tell her on whose behalf I was doing my research. After I gave her my letter of introduction from the University of Rwanda and my supervisor's recommendation that I carry out fieldwork in Karongi District, she told me to write her a letter requesting authorisation that listed everyone I would talk to and what questions I would ask them.

I explained that I could not determine the persons I needed to talk to without being in the field to select them and that such a list would also violate academic standards for ethics and confidentiality. I suggested the letter instead describe the main topics I would discuss with my informants, which she hesitantly agreed to. I quickly drafted the letter and submitted it to the district administration. I kept checking in with the mayor's secretary and two weeks later received a letter authorising me to conduct field research in the district with the condition that I share the results of my study with them.

When I reflect on the process that I went through to get authorisation to conduct fieldwork in Karongi District, I realise that I was facing what Murchison (2010) calls a 'gatekeeper': an individual in a position to grant or refuse access to sites or people. Bernard (2006) indicates that such gatekeepers may offer to facilitate the work of researchers if they report to them what they find out about specific informants. In the context of my research, this observation leads to think that the administrators may have feared that informants might reveal discreditable information about how they provided services to me that would later be published. Previous studies have reported conflicts between researchers and policymakers resulting from mutual misunderstanding and suspicion (Whitty, 2007), but in my case the gatekeepers were district administrators charged with *implementing* state policies. Nonetheless, authorisation from district authorities was also necessary to make informants feel comfortable when participating in the research since authorities who were aware of the researcher's presence in the area might disapprove of them taking part in unsanctioned research. Finally, a neighbourhood watch policy required residents to report intruders in the village for security reasons. Therefore, it is safest for researchers to have approval from the district authorities.

3.4 Selection of the Sites and Sampling

Before I describe the individual field sites, I will give a brief overview of Karongi District. One of thirty districts in Rwanda and seven in its Western Province, it borders Rutsiro District to the north, Ngororero, and Muhanga Districts to the northeast, Nyamagabe District to the south, Nyamasheke District to the southwest, and Ruhango District to the east. It also borders the Democratic Republic of Congo and Lake Kivu to the west (Karongi District, 2019).

I selected two villages in Karongi District, Mubuga and Rubengera, as research sites based on my previous knowledge of them from the fieldwork for my master's thesis. Also, family-based land conflicts were more common in these areas than the rest of the district.

Mubuga is an agricultural village located in the hilly rural highlands. Elders, like others in the village, live by subsistence agriculture, growing banana, coffee, maize, beans, cassava, and sweet potatoes on small plots. Animals are raised in pens and fed hay, rather than grazing in the fields. Housing is dispersed in the hills with a few nucleated settlements. The village is located on the shores of Lake Kivu, where the land is suitable for coffee growing. The Roman Catholic Church is influential, as it was the first Christian denomination to establish a parish there.

Rubengera, on the other hand, is not dominated by high hills. It is a lowland area along the Kivu Belt Road, the main paved highway linking the districts of the Western Province. The land is fertile and the agricultural productivity higher than in Mubuga, but Rubegera is also characterised by subsistence agriculture with some animal breeding. However, the dominant religious institution is the Presbyterian Church.

I mainly conducted fieldwork during two periods: from November 2019 to March 2020 and from December 2020 to March 2021, as well as on other trips to Rwanda when I also made sure to visit some of my informants. I purposively selected seventeen elders from fifteen households and twenty-one adult children living in either the village or Kigali.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

I used various methods to collect two types of data, primary data and secondary data, for this thesis.

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection Methods

Primary data has been freshly collected and is thus characterised by originality (Kothari, 2004). During my fieldwork in Karongi District, I was able to use several qualitative data collection methods to generate the primary data presented here. These included participant observation, unstructured interviews, field notes, recordings, and photography.

3.5.1.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was one method I used to collect data during my fieldwork. I participated in various activities that shaped the daily lives of elders in rural areas, accompanied them to community meetings, and attended the selection process of the beneficiaries of state support from the initial stage at the community level. I also participated in various meetings of a saving group for elders.

On market days, I accompanied elders to the nearest local market to buy items they did not have at home. (In Mubuga, markets take place every Tuesday and Thursday; in Rubengera, every Wednesday and Saturday). Whenever I visited older people who were planning to go to a market, this was an excellent opportunity to observe how they bought the products they needed. Participant observation helped me record the events as they took place and the meanings participants attached to them (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Furthermore, participant observation enhanced the quality of the field data I collected, since people like to tell their stories and share their experiences with those who show interest (Dewalt et al., 1998). This closeness to the informants and involvement in their daily activities helped to build rapport and get them to open up and tell their stories and about the events they had experienced during their life courses.

Despite these strengths of participant observation, it may also influence the daily lives of informants as people change their behaviour when under observation (Vestbro, 2005). Furthermore, participant observation risks contaminating the research with subjectivity and personal feelings, which may compromise researchers' scientific identity (Jorgensen, 1989). To overcome the challenges associated with participant observation, I tried to be as objective as possible and maintain my status as a researcher. Even though I was I was somewhat acquainted with the informants' life through participant observation, I always tried to look inside to capture the meaning they attached to the daily practice of their existence. For instance, the practice of offering home-brewed beer to a visitor from outside the region like

me is not only about sharing: it also expresses a warm welcome and tests the visitor's comfort with local customs.

3.5.1.2 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviews were another method of data collection. During these, I let informants take the lead. I listened to them carefully without interrupting them unless I wanted more clarification or to probe to get detailed information about the topic under discussion. This technique made informants feel comfortable telling their life stories and talking about their caring relationships with their children, the state, their neighbours, and the church. As Bernard (2006) indicates, it is best in unstructured interviews to get informants to a topic and let them provide the information that they think is important. The researcher only needs to know how to effectively stimulate informants to provide more information. Unstructured interviews, which are also called ethnographic interviews, are most effective when the researcher conducts long-term fieldwork and has the opportunity to interview informants on many separate occasions (Bernard, 2006).

During each period of fieldwork in Karongi District, I was able to interview all my informants at least three times. The idea was to let them speak in their own terms about their experiences with care relationships and give them time to recall the fortunate and unfortunate events that happened in their life trajectories and have influenced their current daily living conditions. Moreover, informants had to be interviewed strategically. At our first encounters, I decided to discuss topics with them that were not sensitive and that they felt comfortable talking about. For instance, I refrained from asking questions related to the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi until I was sure that I had built rapport with informants, and they were comfortable talking about any topic. Thus, being closer to informants and spending time with them helped me make them feel comfortable and willing to discuss any issues relevant to their lived experiences.

While it was possible to interview informants in rural areas many times, this was different for their adult children living in the city. Urban migrants often missed their appointments for an interview. On several occasions, migrants rescheduled interviews at the last minute. At first, I tended to interpret this as avoidance, but when I met them on other occasions, I understood that their busy schedule made them miss appointments. Although the busy workload of urban

migrants arguably made frequent interviews impossible, I did manage to interview every migrant at least once during each period of fieldwork.

I conducted all interviews in Kinyarwanda, the native language I share with the informants. Using this language facilitated our communication and eased understanding of the various topics we discussed.

3.5.1.3 Field Notes

Taking field notes was another helpful data collection method during my fieldwork. I brought my notebook and a pen to every interview to write down the key ideas that emerged and spent an hour or two each evening writing down what had happened that day and reflecting on my latest observations. This method helped me keep track of fresh ideas as they unfolded from day-to-day in the interviews, so I had to take field notes daily: if I had put off the task, I might have forgotten the main ideas. In this, I followed the advice of Bernard (2006:388), who warns ethnographic researchers against delaying writing up their fieldnotes: 'If you don't write them up every day, while they are fresh, you'll forget them.' Jorgensen similarly advises researchers to start writing notes at the very beginning of their fieldwork because human memory is unreliable (Jorgensen, 1989). Researchers cannot rely on their memory and expect to recall every detail they observed during their fieldwork; it is, rather, in writing down all the details of the daily life of the people under observation that both the strangeness and the mundaneness of social life are best captured.

I asked all my interviewees if they minded my writing down some details in my notebook. Asking for permission helped me avoid suspicion, as opening my notebook and starting to write without the informant's consent could have been negatively interpreted. To maintain their trust, I had to be as honest as possible and always inform my informant about what I wanted to do. Sometimes, I had to take additional notes soon after finishing a household visit to record details about things like their living space and the various crops they grew in the surrounding fields.

3.5.1.4 Recording

I also generated ethnographic data by making audio recordings during my fieldwork. Research indicates that recording interviews to capture as many details as possible can provide additional helpful information when reviewing the field notes (Murchison, 2010).

Before departing for my fieldwork, I bought an audio recorder that I used to record all my conversations with the informants. Every morning during my fieldwork, I had to check that both my recorder and iPhone were fully charged, as I used the latter to record conversations whenever the recorder battery was low. The recorder captured information that I could not easily record in writing, such as the change in tone of voice when elders narrated what had happened to them during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Furthermore, I could record the entire conversations, especially the informant's quite-lengthy life stories, verbatim.

However, not all informants were friendly to being recorded, and some were very reluctant even though they had given their consent to be interviewed. Therefore, it was also necessary to ask the interviewee for advance permission to record, as ethical considerations required only recording interviews with those who had specifically agreed to be recorded. Some informants refused to be recorded during the first interview and then agreed the second time. This depended on gaining informants trust and convincing them to be recorded. However, when someone refused to have their voice recorded – for example because they feared having their voices identified if someone else heard the recording – I tried to write down the main ideas of the conversation as much as possible.

Furthermore, I did not record informal conversations when I did not get a chance to set up the recorder before they happened. Moreover, recording such conversations, especially those that took place in public, could have attracted other people's attention, and make the informant feel uncomfortable. Thus, after any informal conversation I tried to write down as much of it as I could remember as soon as possible. I used one format for the field notes I took at the same time as the event or conversation and another for field notes recorded soon after they took place, especially informal conversations with informants on the way to the market or at a community meeting. These two types of field notes are referred to respectively as outline format and prose style field notes (Murchison, 2010).

3.5.1.5 Photography

During my fieldwork, I used photos to capture a particular situation at a precise time and place. My camera helped me take various pictures of informants doing various everyday activities. Photography has the merit, in ethnographic research, of capturing objective evidence of the representation of individuals, objects, and events as they happened in the fieldwork (Carson et al., 2005).

Just as with audio recordings, some informants did not want me to photograph them. Before using a camera, I had to ask for permission to take pictures and use them in my research reports. Some accepted this and others did not, so I only took photos of those informants who allowed me to do so. I observed that migrants in the city were more reluctant to be photographed than their elderly parents in rural areas. This might be because people in urban areas are more cautious about their privacy and suspicious of strangers than those in rural areas, where the inhabitants know each other and share a lot in their everyday lives.

One of my informants in Kigali also explained that urban dwellers do not like to have their photos taken because the further use of the picture might harm the interest of the person photographed. He told me a history of a man who had been photographed where the photo was subsequently misused to libel him. The story goes as follows:

Box 1: The Story of a Man Whose Photo was Misused.

In 1994, during the Genocide Against the Tutsi, a man was walking toward his house carrying a machete. When he arrived at the asphalt road, he found journalists and soldiers, who asked him if they could take his photo with the machete in his hand. He agreed. When the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) stopped the Genocide Against the Tutsi, the soldiers used this photo as an example of a genocide perpetrator who had used his machete to kill Tutsi. His picture was displayed in a genocide memorial to illustrate the killers (*interahamwe*). The man did not know how his photo had been used until people told him his picture was displayed in the genocide memorial as one of an infamous killer. This has seriously tarnished his image and destroyed his reputation and the trust people had in him. (Interview with Daniel, 12 February 2020, Kigali).

When I heard this story, I asked my informant whether it was factual or made up. He told me that the local media had reported the news that the concerned man had been demanding the restoration of his rights, since his picture had been improperly used. I was curious and asked him to which media outlet had published that information, but he could not remember the specific source and told me to search the internet. Later, I found the same story, in detail, on a Rwandan news website. My intention was not to verify the story but rather, it was to gain insight into its context and reach an understanding of what made people refuse to be photographed by a researcher. This story leads me to believe that the knowledge that other photos have been misused may discourage informants from allowing that. However, this need not be interpreted as indicating a desire to hide information: rather, it is a way of preventing past mishaps from recurring.

3.5.1.6 Extended Case Study Method

The extended case study method focuses on describing and understanding how individuals interact with each other and acknowledging them as full agents who both respond to and change the nature of the environment in which they find themselves (Wadham & Warren, 2014). Burawoy (1998) further indicates that the method represents a way of locating everyday life in its extra-local and historical contexts. I have used this method to connect with adult offspring living in the city. Rather than limit my observations to a Karongi District, I extended them to the urban areas where the elders I was interviewing had adult children. So, I could contact these, I asked the elders for the names of their children living in the city, as well as their locations and mobile phone numbers and compiled them into a list. Some elders did not know their children's telephone numbers by heart, but had them written down, so they could easily give me the piece of paper for me to copy the number into my notebook. Sometimes, elders referred me to neighbours who helped them call their children: even those who had no mobile telephone had neighbours who would call their children for them and knew their phone numbers.

After I completed the list of adult children living in the city, the next step was to make individual appointments for interviews. I called them one by one, introduced myself and told them who had given me their numbers and what I needed from them. Some accepted my request, while others said they had no time for an interview. Some invited me to meet them at their workplace; others allowed me to visit them at home. These interviews with migrants specifically focused on their daily life in the city, their caring relationships with their ageing parents back in the village, and the challenges they encountered when giving and receiving care. Extending my observations to these adult children living in the city helped me to understand how they experienced and shaped such caring practices in an environment of social change, in particular the rural-urban migration that had taken them away from their parents. Furthermore, the extended case study method helped me capture the perceptions both elders and the adult children had towards giving and receiving care in a society experiencing various social changes.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

It is worth mentioning that I collected not only primary but also secondary data, which I used to supplement the primary data. While primary data is collected first-hand, secondary data

has been collected and used previously by someone else who obtained it first-hand (Kothari, 2004). I collected secondary data from various sources, most importantly reports from various institutions in Rwanda concerned with the design, implementation, and evaluation of government policies on social protection. These reports included information on how these state institutions interact with and complement each other in supporting elders. This meant looking at various sources, as Kothari (2004) suggests: a researcher who uses secondary data must consult multiple sources to obtain the data needed.

Additional secondary data was obtained from publications held by Bayreuth University's central library. During the first few semesters while I was writing this thesis, I spent nearly every day in the library reading books and articles to learn what other researchers had written about my research topic and understand how other scholars have defined and contextualised the concepts related to my research. This reading helped me understand the concept of social protection and care and how they interconnect in the context of elder care in Rwanda.

Finally, I used electronic resources to obtain additional information on ageing and elder care. These include online journals, books, and other resources I found through internet search engines. These were especially important during at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when libraries were closed, and only online resources were available.

3.6 Data Analysis

The next step was to analyse and find larger patterns in the ethnographic data that has been collected from various sources (Murchison, 2010), but to do this I first had to transcribe the interviews, translate them from Kinyarwanda to English, and save them as Microsoft Word files. During transcription, I also compared the recordings and field notes to make sure that all information obtained from the fieldwork was included in these documents.

Although I am a native speaker of Kinyarwanda, translating the interviews into English, especially those with elders, required care as they were full of metaphors, *imigani* (proverbs), and *amarenga* (coded language). For instance, one informant asked me for *amata y'isuka*, which literally means 'the milk of a hoe'. However, he did not mean he wanted actual milk – which would be *amata y'inka* (milk from a cow) – but a beer, which is called this because Rwandan traditional beer is brewed from bananas (*urwangwa)* or sorghum (*ikigage*) that have

been cultivated with a hoe. Therefore, the translation of interviews had to take the cultural as well as literal meanings of the words into account to capture people's intent.

After transcribing and translating all the interviews, I applied the content analysis method to the data by systematically classifying and coding it and identifying the themes or patterns that emerged from the ethnographic record. Then, I identified the references related to each in the transcribed interviews, as (Murchison, 2010) recommends. This helped identify themes that different informants referred to repeatedly across interviews. The data analysis process required thinking about different themes from the data, relating them to the critical literature, and interpreting my findings using illustrative case studies and direct quotes from respondents. Concerning case studies in content analysis, Bernard (2006) suggests that the researcher focus on extreme and/or typical cases of a phenomenon under study. Thus, I used typical case studies to emphasise how the ethnographic record speaks to the phenomenon of elder care in Karongi District. During data analysis, I combined reading and writing with reviewing the ethnographic record created in light of the themes and their relation to the central research question. I have used the themes arising from the data as the heading of the sections and sub-sections of this thesis.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

There is no ethical imperative in social research more important than for researchers to ensure that they do not harm innocent people who have provided them with information in good faith (Bernard, 2006:223). To this end, I assured all my informants that any information they provided would serve the purely academic purpose of writing a doctoral thesis. Furthermore, I had to guarantee to them that the personal information they provided would not be disclosed to anyone else and that I would be the only one who spoke with them about the project during fieldwork or handled the ethnographic data I collected.

Moreover, anonymity and confidentiality were preserved to protect informants from any harm. The informants' real names were kept secret, and they were assigned anonymous identifiers at the beginning of data collection. This reflects the imperative for researchers to protect their informants from becoming emotionally burdened by having talked to them (Bernard, 2006).

All informants gave oral informed consent to participate in the research, and those who did not consent were not included. During my fieldwork, I abstained from any activity that my informants did not wish me to do. For instance, I always requested permission before recording an interview or taking a photo. As mentioned earlier, some informants did not want me to photograph them, and I respected their decisions. The subjects of all the photos included in this thesis also authorised me to use them. Any activity that went against the will of my informants could have compromised their trust or raised suspicions. Remember, at first my informants thought I was a government employee working on social protection programmes, so I had to behave in a way that confirmed not this image but rather my actual role as a researcher.

3.8 Challenges Encountered

Among the challenges I encountered during the fieldwork were the bureaucratic procedures for obtaining the required authorisation to conduct fieldwork in Karongi District. It took several days at the district office to explain my research to the deputy mayors and then the district mayor. As I waited, I worried about the limited time I had to complete fieldwork before my doctoral support ran out. Any unexpected delay would be a blow to my study plans.

Another challenge was the role the informants ascribed to me. At first, they thought I was a state employee with control over the implementation of social protection programmes in Karongi District. Based on this assumption, those who were not enrolled in any state support programme asked me to advocate for their inclusion. Meanwhile, those already included in wanted me to advocate for allocating more support, especially in the form of cash transfers. Consequently, they provided me with information appropriate for someone in this role that they had ascribed to me and that would support the advocacy they expected me to undertake. This necessitated getting closer to the informants so they would change their perception of me.

Conducting fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic was another significant challenge, as the pandemic disturbed social relations among individuals in both urban and rural areas. Rural informants were especially suspicious since I had been in from places where they believed the disease to be prevalent and I had to reassure them that I was unlikely to infect them with COVID-19. In addition, movement was restricted during the pandemic and a pass from the Rwanda National Police was required to travel from Kigali to the field sites in Karongi District.

Finally, meeting with urban migrant informants was a challenge. Due to their busy work schedules, they often missed appointments or rescheduled at the last minute. I thus had to be patient and wait until each informant had time to meet me and talk.

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter presented the methods I used to collect data for this thesis. They varied depending on the type of data I wanted to generate. Although I was conducting ethnography in my home country, I still met gatekeepers who delayed my access to the field. Rwanda's political history had created a climate of suspicion that made informants withhold some information. I thus had to build rapport with the informants until they trusted me enough to share that information. Otherness exists not only in societies far away from the researcher's home but also within the researcher's own society: the home is a place of differences (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997).

In addition, there are always surprises in the field. My expectations while planning my fieldwork differ significantly from what I found there. Once I arrived, I was not only there to observe the everyday lives of the informants but also to be observed by them. They wanted to know all about me, especially my experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, fieldwork constitutes a flow of relational actions where the researcher and informants are observers and objects of observation at the same time.

Reflecting on my experiences, I would say that how smoothly fieldwork goes is influenced greatly by informants' perceptions of researchers and their role, gatekeepers' decisions, and the environment (for example, the pandemic) in which it takes place. It is, therefore, a result of constant negotiations between researchers and gatekeepers, as well as between researchers and informants.

Chapter IV: Resources for Elder Care in Karongi District

4.1 Introduction

Elder care practices in rural Rwanda and Karongi District draw on a variety of significant resources. This chapter focuses on each of those resources to explore its role in processes of caring for elders and in their everyday lives in rural Rwanda. The way these resources are accessed and employed varies among households. Empirical evidence from Karongi District indicates that elders rely on different resources, which constitute an essential element in their care arrangements and may include human, natural, financial, physical, social, and religious and emotional resources. In this chapter, I understand a resource to be any source of support that elders in Karongi District can draw upon when in need of care. Sources of support includes individuals, institutions, and tangible and intangible objects.

4.2 Human Resources

Human resources play a vital role in the elder care landscape and fulfil multiple roles in everyday care practices for elders. They are of primary importance as a source of material, financial, and emotional resources in the process of giving and receiving care. This section focuses on spouses and children, the primary source of various types of care for elders in Karongi District.

4.2.1 Spouses: A Resource for Elder Care

Spouses are a vital resource for elder care in Karongi District. The various activities through which one spouse cares for the other in their household constitute an essential element of elder care. In Rwanda, the institution of marriage links spouses and makes them a source of care for each other. Ntampaka (1995) defines marriage as an alliance between two families to create a productive and reproductive unit, and it is through exercising those productive and reproductive functions that spouses become an essential resource in elder care arrangements. The case study below is an example of how spouses constitute a resource for elder care in Karongi District.

Box 2: The Case of Anastase

Anastase was eighty-two years old at the time of my fieldwork in November 2019. Born in 1937 into a family of farmers, he was the second of nine children. In 1956, he married Alphonsine, who was born in 1942 and was seventy-seven years old at the time of my

fieldwork. They had six children, of whom three died. Those still living include two sons and a daughter, who are all married and live in Kigali, the capital.
Anastase and Alphonsine live alone with each other in the village of Mubuga in Karongi District. They keep each other company, talk to each other, and exchange advice. They each have defined household responsibilities. Alphonsine prepared the lunch and dinner every day. On various days, I saw her wash, peel, and boil a basket of sweet potatoes from the field or peel bananas and mix them with vegetables from her garden for the evening meal. In addition to cooking, she is responsible for cleaning the house and yard as well as for laundry. I have never seen Anastase cooking or doing laundry. Instead, he took care of the cow in the shed and supervised a boy who helped feed it. He raised coffee, brought coffee beans to the local coffee-washing station, and brought home the money he was paid for them. Alphonsine managed agricultural production, other than coffee that was reserved to her husband. She bought food to supplement their crops if there was not enough to eat. Most evenings before sunset, they sat together in their courtyard and exchanged various stories. (Interviews with Anastase and Alphonsine, 26 November 2019, Mubuga).

This case shows how spouses constitute a resource for elder care. The activities accomplished by each spouse in the framework of the traditional gendered division of labour in the household are a critical source of care for each spouse. Caring practices among spouses take various forms. These include the material, like food provision; the financial, like selling coffee beans; and the emotional, like spending time together talking and exchanging stories and advice. Research indicates that interacting with a spouse provides a moral feeling of being surrounded and loved (Steverink et al., 2005). Moreover, living with a spouse helps elders avoid becoming isolated: neither Anastase nor Alphonsine suffers from loneliness, unlike many single elders. In her research on ageing and dignity in Rwanda, Sadruddin (2020) emphasises how small details of caring practices among spouses are a source of pride. She indicates that the small things they do for each other to provide emotional and physical support exchange are more important than purely economic resources.

In this case, Anastase and Alphonsine's emotional care is reciprocal. Each of them needs and provides care. They are thus embodied in a mutual caring process that enables both to fulfil their responsibilities. Notably, spousal care is provided daily, unlike other forms of care that may be occasional or periodic. Spousal care's ability to continuously respond to the everyday needs of elders makes it a critical resource for elder care in Karongi District. While spousal care cannot last forever, it continues as long spouses are still living together, have a good relationship, and are healthy enough to provide it – as is the case with Anastase and his wife.

However, I also observed that not all elders could count on a spouse's care. In particular, the political history of Rwanda, and specifically the violent conflict that culminated in the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, disrupted many families and left some elders disabled and many widowed. Those who have children must turn to them for care.

4.2.2 Children: A Resource for Elder Care

Alongside spouses, who constitute a multifunctional resource, children are also a valuable resource for elder care in Karongi District. The fact of having had children creates a feeling of pride for elders. In African societies, children are an integral part of family life and both men and women who lack them are stigmatised, have a lower status in society, and lose hope of being supported in old age (Alber, 2018b). Similarly, having children is considered a symbol of wealth and prosperity in Rwandan society. This is expressed in traditional Kinyarwanda greetings like *Gira abana!* (I wish for you to have children) that demonstrate the value Rwandan society attaches to them: not just one child (the singular would be *gira umwana*) but many. Children constitute a valuable resource and a symbol of family continuity.

My informant Adela confirms the importance of resources like children for elder care. A widow living in Rubengera village, she is in her nineties and does not know her exact age: she thinks she was born during the reign of King Musinga (r. 1897–1931; see Kagame: 1943, 1947). In December 2019, she told me of her satisfaction that she had children to care for her. She had three sons and two daughters, all of whom lived in Kigali except for one daughter in a neighbouring village. She enjoys the way her children care for her: those in Kigali send money, clothes, and products that are not available in rural areas, while the local daughter helps with domestic chores and agriculture. She is proud of her children and knows that when she dies, they will give her a decent burial and keep her memory alive.

The importance of having children as a source of care in old age was not only a concern for Adela but also Anastase, who pointed out that children are a valuable resource for their parents: 'My children are significant in my life. This is not only because they provide me with financial or material support but also because the simple fact of having them alive pleases me. On my death, I wish to die when they are present in the same room with me.' (Interview with Anastase, 26 November 2019, Mubuga).

From the above, we can see that children constitute a precious resource for elder care in Karongi District. The importance of children in the life of elders is also expressed in popular

narratives through proverbs like '*ukwibyara gutera ababyeyi ineza*.' ('Giving birth brings joy to the parents.') Elders regain joy from the existence of their children. Therefore, as Roth (2008) puts it regarding another social-cultural setting, having children of one's own is very important to the social security of elders. This idea also applies in the Rwandan context.

Furthermore, elders exist through their children and even after their death will still exist through the presence of their children. Thus, someone who dies without descendants is wholly extinguished: as the proverb goes, '*Ikitibyaye kiba gicitse.'* ('Whoever dies without [leaving] a child behind dies forever.') When elders die, people remember them when they see their children and recall their images through their children.

Children constitute a resource for caring for elders both during and at the ends of their lives. Adela is happy that she is cared for by her children and expects – even at the end of her life – to be cared for by being given a decent burial. In the same vein, Anastase's wish is to die with his children present. As elders grow old, they imagine and foresee the care they will receive at the end of their days. This is what makes Anastase wish to die when his children are around. It is also linked to the idea in Rwandan culture that older men want to die after they have spoken their last words to their children – these are family secrets that they have not told anybody else. It is also the occasion to bequeath property to prevent conflicts after the death. Here, it is relevant that people in rural areas of Rwanda generally do not make a written will in advance but do it orally in their last days – or not at all if they die alone.

These two cases show how elders perceive their children as a meaningful care resource during and after their lifetimes. Thus, children constitute a resource for elders even after death, as they are expected to provide a decent burial and to continue the family line. They are therefore both a resource for elder care themselves and a source of emotional, physical, and financial resources as well.

While this section began with human resources for elder care in Karongi District, other resources are also important to elders. The next section will discuss the importance of land.

4.3 Natural Resources for Elder Care: The Land

83% of the Rwandan population lives in rural areas (NISR, 2014b) and 96% of the rural population lives by subsistence agriculture (MINAGRI, 2018), so land represents a valuable resource for the survival of rural inhabitants, especially elders, who depend on it for their daily

living. In their research on elders in rural Rwanda, Zihindula & Maharaj (2013) indicate that elders not only consider their land a material resource but also have an emotional attachment to it: they were born on it, spent their whole lives cultivating it, and wish to die on it. This section discusses, based on empirical material, how land constitutes a valuable resource for elder care in Karongi District. Insights from elders' lived experiences, and their narratives are paramount in shedding light on the significance of land in elder care arrangements.

4.3.1 Land: A Basis for Food Production

In rural Rwanda, food production depends on the possession of land or the ability to rent it. Takeuchi & Marara (2011) stress land's role as a precious means of food production for Rwandans, particularly for rural elders who struggle to gain food security through it. Here, case studies will illustrate the relevance of land in food production.

The Case of Anastase and his Wife Alphonsine

Anastase and Alphonsine use their land to produce the food they need for survival. They have told me that they cannot get everything they need from their children, whom they recognise as having their own families to care for, so they must grow food on their land and supplement that with support from their children as necessary. As they are not strong enough to cultivate it themselves, they pay others to cultivate the plot closest to their home and rent more remote plots to a tenant who cultivates them and divides the harvest with them equally. As Anastase puts it:

> To produce food for my family, I use this land around the house, I pay someone who needs money to do so. I agree to pay him a predetermined sum of money, either daily or once he finishes the task. This depends on the person. As for the other land located far from here, on the other hill, I give it to someone who agrees to share the harvest equally with me. This is what we call *hinga tugabane* [cultivate and share the harvest with me]. (Interview with Anastase, 26 November 2019, Mubuga).

When I asked whether it was hard to find someone who would agree to these conditions, he answered:

> People here do not have enough land to cultivate. Everyone needs land. At the beginning of every agricultural season, neighbours are always asking for my land, and I have to choose the one who will not compromise my

> interests. You know, you can give your land to someone who cheats you and harvests without informing you. You have to give your land to a person with integrity. (Interview with Anastase, 26 November 2019, Mubuga).

Adela uses the same hinga tugabane practice to get food for her household. She explained to me that her land provided with her sufficient food from one agricultural season to another. She was never short of food, as some of her neighbours used to be. I wanted to know how she was able to get enough food when she looked so frail. She responded that:

> I give my land to those who can cultivate it, and then at harvest time, they have to share the harvest with me. I appreciate this practice because I cannot grow crops on that land myself. I am very old, but with hinga tugabane I can get the food I need. (Interview with Adela, 22 December 2019, Rubengera).

Hinga tugabane benefits not only elders who own land but also those who do not. Beata was a sixty-six-year-old widow when I first visited her in Rubengera in 2019. She has six children, four sons and two daughters. The daughters live in Kigali and the sons live in another province. She does not own land as she sold it to pay compensation for her husband's actions during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Beata relies on hinga tugabane to get food:

> I make an agreement with the landowner, who agrees to give his land to me on the condition that I share the harvest equally with him. I cultivate the land and grow the crop that I agreed on with him. Under this agreement, I cannot produce any crop other than that we agreed on when making the agreement over land use. (Interview with Beata, 23 December 2019, Rubengera).

Based on the narratives above, land is an essential resource for elder care arrangements. To get food in rural areas, someone must have land to grow it or else rent land from others. Hinga tugabane is thus a resource for social relationships that serves as a basis for negotiating care relationships between elders and their neighbours. Elders who cannot use their land find someone to do so. Hinga tugabane relates to one of the aspects of the definition of care by Van der Geest (2002), according to which care includes carrying out activities for others who, for physical or emotional reasons, are unable to do so.

Hinga tugabane is thus an emerging form of care practice for elders and a new way of building care relationships between elders and their surrounding neighbours based on land ownership. This practice echoes Häberlein's (2015) research on intergenerational entanglements in northern Togo, where access to land is not only a matter of family inheritance but also a matter of personal network and relationships with the owner of the land. Furthermore, it constitutes an alternative way of arranging for care. Elders, being aware of the limitations on their children's support, choose an alternative way of care practice through *hinga tugabane*. Coe (2018) calls this openness to alternative care arrangements 'alterodox' age-inscriptions. Elders' land ownership makes this openness to other ways of caring practice possible, helps them attract people willing to use their land and enlarge their social network, and thus puts those with land in a powerful position toward those who are landless.

Salamon and Lockhart's (1980) research on land ownership and elders' position of in farm families, indicate that they use their landownership privileges to enhance their status through ongoing exchange processes that gain them respect in their communities. The process of land negotiation in hinga tugabane likewise makes the status of elders more visible in their village. Furthermore, by sharing the harvest between elders – the landowner and the land user – both parties ensure food security for their families that might not have been possible without the practice. In this situation, land appears to be a vital resource that elders prefer to maintain their power through retaining ownership and making it productive through hinga tugabane.

Hinga tugabane also allows elders like Beata who lack land to benefit by gaining access to it. In this case, the access is not in terms of ownership but by making it productive while it remains the original owner's property. In this way land and livelihoods are linked in rural areas, as land is the basis on which rural people produce food and earn a living (Quan, 2000).

However, even though empirical evidence indicates that elders without land benefit from it to some degree, those who lack land still have a problem, especially if they are too frail to cultivate others' through hinga tugabane. I expect these elders will be enrolled in the state support programme for vulnerable people once they are selected by their neighbours to benefit from it.

It should be noted that land constitutes not only a basis for food production but also a social space for elders' sense of belonging and attachment.

4.3.2 Land as a Social Space for Elder Belongingness

When I visited Adela, she told me that her son had invited her to live with him in the city, but she had declined the offer. She told me that she could not leave the land where she had lived so long and that she preferred to live where she had a solid social network. She told me that her neighbours came in the morning to check up on her and say hello and she knew she would not be able to build the same kind of social network in the city that she had in a rural area. Moreover, she explained, she could not sell her land. She had to keep it for her children, who would inherit it at her death.

> It is not good to die without leaving land behind for your offspring. A good parent always thinks about the children and is proud to bequeath something to them. But if you liquidate all your property, people will consider you a greedy parent who has forgotten their children. People call this *kurya abana* [eat children]. (Interview with Adela, 22 December 2019, Rubengera).

The idea of attachment to the land is also present in Anastase's narrative:

> My land is my ancestors' land: I inherited it from my father, and I will be proud to pass it on to my children, who, in turn, will do the same for their children. This is the family's land that has to pass to other generations of this family. Selling it is compromising the ideal and the wish of our ancestors. It is on this land that our ancestors are buried, and I will also be buried here.' (Interview with Anastase, 26 November 2019, Mubuga).

Drawing on the above narratives, elders think about their children: even if they are adults and self-sufficient, they are proud to leave them the land when they die. Their willingness to give something to their children, even at the end of their life, testifies to the strong attachment that aged parents express toward their children by giving them land. In this way, Adela and Anastase are very attached to their children, an attachment materialised in passing on something to inherit.

Moreover, land for elders is a social space where they can sustain a sense of belonging and extend their social networks. Wiles et al., (2009) highlight the social importance that elders in New Zealand attach to the place where they live and show how they give it a sense of belonging, attachment, and well-being. Elders' feelings about their place of living in New

Zealand are echoed by Rwandan elders' feelings about their land, as evidenced in my empirical material.

Bequeathing family land to one's children maintains the family's continuity of as the land continues to be seen as belonging to the ancestors. People call such land *gakondo y'umuryango,* 'the family land that passes from one generation to another through inheritance'. From this perspective, the land is a heritable asset that serves as the foundation of future generations' wealth and livelihood security (Quan, 2000). This idea is corroborated by De Klerk (2018), who states that land is a durable asset that ensures generational continuity. Even when children live in the city, they expect to inherit land in rural areas.

Land as a resource in elder care is not only a physical space but also a moral one that connects family members, the deceased ancestors, the surviving, and the future generations. Thus, it plays a significant role in care negotiations among family members and enables a kind of connectedness that strengthens strong bonds among family members.

It should be noted that these empirical narratives contradict the argument of modernisation theorists that modernisation weakens the power and prestige of elders by encouraging younger generations to migrate to the city for specialised and more lucrative jobs (Cowgill & Holmes, 1972). Instead, in Rwanda elders' control of land enables them to establish strong ties with their children. It does this by strengthening their relationships with their children in the city, who expect to inherit it when their ageing parents die. It is also consistent with the idea that in some societies elders continue to be valued and respected by the young generations. Since they continue to control a scarce resource, land, they have an advantage position over young people who do not (Foner, 1984).

However, elders who lack sufficient land struggle to maintain care relationships with their children. This is the case with Beata, who has a small landholding and must earn her living by cultivating land rented from her neighbours. Her children have left her for various destinations – some in the city; others elsewhere – and they rarely return to see her. She is not the only older person without land. André is another older man who doesn't own enough land. He was seventy-seven years old when I first visited him in December 2019. He has two sons in Kigali but lives with his sick daughter in a small house in Rubengera that has only a small piece of land. He told me how his sons had deserted him because he had no land to give them when they started their own families. When I met one of these sons in Kigali in February 2020, he

explained to me the problem his family had with land in the village and that he could not find a place there to build his own house. He added that he had no motivation to return there, as he could not earn a living without land. This implies, conversely, that the expectation of owning land in rural areas motivates migrants to return to live in the village.

The above cases show how the lack of land in rural areas makes urban migrants reluctant to return to their native villages and, thus, that land in Karongi District is an attractive factor for children considering returning to their native villages. Ferguson (1999) stresses the attractiveness of land to migrants working in the Zambian Copperbelt region, where miners are expected to eventually return to their native villages where they have land and relatives. Similarly, Rwandan migrants who have land in their native villages are likely to return to rural areas to farm (World Bank Group, 2017a) but lose their motive to return home when land is unavailable in the village. People who have land in a village have the basis for a livelihood and can return to it whenever necessary. In the context of Karongi District, landownership can strengthen the continuity of family relationships, just as landlessness can weaken it. Therefore, owning land entails care practices, as well as signifying belongingness, attachment, and generational continuity.

Along with land, money is another vital resource in elder care arrangements in rural Rwanda, particularly Karongi District.

4.4 Financial Resources for Elder Care

In traditional Rwandan society, before the introduction of money as a medium of exchange, care for elders took the form of performing services for them or offering goods necessary for their well-being. Now that money has penetrated social relationships it has emerged as an essential element in the everyday lives of elders. This section discusses its significant role as a crucial resource in the elder-care landscape of Karongi District. Elders' narratives about their lived experiences testify to the relevance of this resource, which comes from various sources, including adult children and other relatives, the state, the community, growing cash crops, and saving groups.

4.4.1 Money from the Children and Relatives in the City

The elders I talked with during my fieldwork described receiving money from children and other relatives living in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda through electronic mobile money transfers. As Anastase described it,

> I receive money from my children in Kigali through a mobile money transfer. Whenever they send money, I receive a message on my mobile telephone telling me I have received it. They also call and inform me about the amount of money they sent, and then I pick it up from the mobile money agent in the business centre. (Interview with Anastase, 1 December 2019, Mubuga).

Adela describes a similar process:

> My children send me money through my daughter, who brings it to me. I am not strong enough to pick up the money from the mobile money agent. My daughter, who lives in the nearby village, is there to do it for me. When one of them sends money, he informs her, and she gets it on my behalf. (Interview with Adela, 7 January 2020, Rubengera).

Both ageing parents in the rural settlements and children in Kigali report using mobile transfers to receive or send money. Regarding the latter, Anastase's son explains:

> I have a brother and a sister in this city, and I always consult with them about supporting our older parents. We have planned how to send money and when to send it. The money is transferred to them through mobile money transfer services. We do not all send money at the same time – everyone has their turn. (Interview with Daniel , 12 February 2020, Kigali).

It is not only children who send money to their ageing parents in rural areas using mobile money transfer: other family members also engage in this caring practice. For example, Kamali, a seventy-six-year-old man in Rubengera, explained to me that he had fostered his orphaned nephew. When Kamali had a dispute with his sons and they stopped sending money, his nephew took over his support and now sends him money to pay his premiums for the community health insurance plan (Mutuelle de Santé)[10] and to cover other needs. Kamali does

[10] A community-based health insurance plan available to any Rwandan who lacks other health insurance, as provided by the law No. 48/2015 of 23/11/2015 governing organisation, functioning and management of health insurance schemes in Rwanda. Published in Official Gazette No 04 of 25/01/2016.

not own a mobile telephone, so when his nephew sends money, he calls one of his neighbours and the neighbour informs him that it is ready to pick up.

As these accounts show, mobile money transfers speed up sending money to elders in rural areas. This helps adult children in the city to maintain their attachments to their ageing parents from a distance. Thus, they are a way of participating in elder care arrangements (Van der Geest, 2002). Furthermore, elders depend on money to live day-to-day, so giving it to them is shows respect and strengthens family solidarity (Van der Geest, 1997). In this way, the money they receive from their children helps elders respond to some of their needs in rural settings. They are also proud of having someone in the city who sends them money.

In this process of giving and receiving money through intergenerational support, the geographical distance between givers and receivers is reduced through technology that enables adult children in the city to transfer money to their ageing parents and thus care for them at a distance. Mobile money transfer services provide a safe and practical way to send and receive money domestically (Argent et al., 2013) and are thus an excellent means for remitting money to people in rural areas without travel (Kroeker, 2016).

In this way, money has become an essential resource in elder care arrangements in a constantly changing society. The geographical distance between the giver and receiver does not disturb the process of giving and receiving money; rather, it has been reconfigured and adapted to a new technology that facilitates money transfer from the children in the city to their ageing parents in rural areas.

4.4.2 The State as a Resource for Elder Care: The Cash Transfer Programme

In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, the Rwandan population faced a range of social deprivation and vulnerability. This situation required state interventions to support those vulnerable people by providing them with a minimum standard of living and protecting them against socio-economic shocks (MINALOC, 2011). One of these was the 'Vision 2020 Umurenge[11] Programme', which is one of Rwanda's main social protection programmes and is administered by the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC).

[11] Sectors (Kinyarwanda: Imirenge, sing. Umurenge) are the third-level administrative subdivision in Rwanda. The country is divided into provinces, which are divided into districts, which are divided into sectors. There are a total of five provinces, thirty districts, and 416 sectors. See the Law No 08/2006 of 24/02/2006 Determining organisation and functioning of the District in Official Gazette No 08/2006.

The VUP programme has three components: a public works programme that employs very poor people who can work; a microcredit scheme that provides low-interest loans to individuals to support small income-generating projects; and direct cash transfers for impoverished households whose members cannot be employed on public works projects (NISR, 2018b).

This sub-section focusses on the direct support component because it was the one that the elders I interviewed were most often enrolled in. The state provides this support to vulnerable people defined as 'very poor' in the Ubudehe categorisation (see Section 2.6.4, above). During my fieldwork, informants reported receiving money from the state. One of these was Adela.

Adela has received monthly payments from the state through VUP since she was selected as one of those from her village to be entitled to the state cash transfer. The money is transferred to her account at the microfinance institution known as SACCO.[12] She has designated her daughter to withdraw the money from the account and do shopping for her.

Gatera Pierre is another informant who benefits from the state cash transfer. A seventy-nine-year-old man who lives alone in Mubuga, he has two sons and one daughter. One son lives in the village, while the other two live in Kigali. As a vulnerable elder, he was selected to receive cash transfers from the state, which he uses to satisfy his daily needs. I will discuss the criteria for enrolment in the state cash transfer programme in Chapter Five in a detailed section on state social protection projects for elders in Rwanda.

These two cases show how the money from the state is a resource elders in Karongi District can rely on once they are enrolled in the cash transfer programme. The fact that it is transferred to the beneficiary's account monthly helps them to plan its use. However, the money from the state does not substitute for but supplements family support to elders. In Adela's case, she receives remittances from her children as well as the state cash transfer. For Gatera Pierre, on the other hand, the cash transfer is the only financial resource he has to cover to his needs, as he receives no remittances. What is essential in his case is that he is enrolled in the state cash transfer programme at all, as its number of beneficiaries is still low compared to the number of people needing state support (MINALOC, 2018).

[12] SACCO (Saving and Credit Cooperative) is a cooperative bank in which individuals deposit money and can get loans to invest in various activities. Every beneficiary of the state's support must have a bank account at the nearest SACCO branch, to which the money is transferred. There is at least one SACCO branch in every sector. See MINECOFIN, Umurenge SACCO strategy: Financial Development Secretariat, Kigali, 2009.

The state constitutes a valuable resource for those elders enrolled in the VUP direct cash transfer programme. Research indicates that the state's support for elders is a way of sharing national resources and an expression of national belonging (Thelen & Coe, 2019). Similarly, state cash transfers to elders in Rwanda fall into the category of resource redistribution embedded in social protection programmes. Hence, the state's support implies a symbolic recognition of elders' belonging in the country.

However, the state's support can express not only belonging but also exclusion. This applies especially to those who expect that support without receiving it. Thus, while care entails the inclusion and protection of some individuals or groups, it can also entail the neglect and exclusion of others (Drotbohm, 2015). Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that this kind of state support for elders is different from the state pension schemes for elders who have retired from formal work in government institutions or large private employers. It falls, rather, into the category of state poverty reduction through social protection programmes, which do not only target elders but also other persons who meet their criteria, regardless of age.

4.4.3 The Saving Group: A Financial and a Social Resource for Elders

Saving groups *(itsinda)* are support agencies or 'solidarity groups' to which people contribute a small amount of saved money and take mutual responsibility for loans. This kind of community-based solidarity is considered as an informal way that poor people can participate in financial markets to support each other (Bähre, 2007). In his article on 'Les organisations populaires du Rwanda' ('People's Organisations of Rwanda'), Nzisabira (1992) considers community-based solidarity to be a savings and credit system initiated by people sharing common needs with the objective of responding to those needs. He particularly emphasises the mutual aid aspect of the saving groups, which is built on mutual trust among members.

Elders in Karongi District testify how the saving groups constitute a financial resource to them. This is the case with Beata, who expressed her satisfaction with the saving group as follows:

> I joined the saving group to meet others and avoid loneliness. Later, it became an institution for saving and borrowing money. I borrowed money for the first time from the saving group; I used one part of it to start a small business and another to rent land for cultivation. I paid off the loan in instalments. After I had paid it off, I took out another to start breeding pigs

> and to renovate my house. (Interview with Beata, 23 December 2019, Rubengera).

Another informant, Anastase, explained how he joined the saving group:

> I was among those who initiated the saving group in this village. It started with a few elders, when we used to meet and exchange ideas and have a drink together. Then, the idea of contributing money started to come into our minds, and from that time we started to contribute money weekly. The contributed money is lent to every member who needs it and pays it back with interest. At the end of the year, the contributions and the interest generated through lending are shared among members. This is what we call *kurasa kuntego* (target shooting). I bought the calf you see in this cowshed with that money I contributed. (Interview with Anastase, 1 December 2019, Mubuga).

These narratives show how elders have organised institutions to help solve their problems. A group that started as a social venue for elders to get together and exchange ideas later took on the economic function of a savings association whose members can now contribute and borrow money to support their activities. This idea is based on the participatory spirit of joining hands by pooling resources for mutual help and support in the present and future: as Che Fonchingong (2013) argues, elders' social organisations constitute a support network that helps them mobilise resources necessary for the needs.

This spirit of togetherness for mutual help is rooted in Rwanda's culture. Traditionally, the Rwandan community has been characterised by mutual help practices such as *umubyizi,* where inhabitants of the village help each other to cultivate their land, and *umuganda,* where people gather to help a neighbour build a house (Sentama, 2009). This idea of community-based solidarity is also expressed by proverbs like '*Inkingi imwe ntigera inzu.'* ('One pillar doesn't make a hut.') or '*Ntamugabo umwe.'* ('Togetherness is strength.') These highlight the importance of togetherness to mutual support. This spirit has evolved and adjusted to the current situation to incorporate economic aspect of support like saving groups, which in Karongi District function both as financial resources for elder care and as social resources that allow elders to come together, to fight loneliness, and discuss their everyday lives.

However, saving groups are not the only physical resource for elder care in Karongi District: houses also play a significant role in rural Rwanda.

4.5 Physical Resources for Elder Care: The House

In Karongi District, houses constitute a crucial resource for elder care. Owning a house means having an asset that serves multiple purposes: a living space, a source of pride for elders and their families, and a primary care space.

4.5.1 A House as a Living Space

Beata explained to me how she was struggling to repair her house, which had been about to collapse. She had done this to have a place to live: not renovating it could have seriously harmed her.

> Before I renovated this house, I was in danger of it collapsing at any time. Whenever it rained, I could not sleep. I had to sweep the water that came into the house to prevent it from damaging the whole house and other stuff. I was living in a high-risk house. I am now safe. The rain no longer keeps me from sleeping at night. (Interview with Beata, 23 December 2019, Rubengera).

While Beata repaired her house on her own, Adela had her children build her a new house to replace her very old one, which had been in poor condition. She told me how she appreciated her children, who contributed to improving her place of living. 'God bless them for having built a house for me!', she said.

From these narratives, it emerges that having their own house to live in is important in the lives of elders. However, just any house is not enough: it must be a decent house. Thus, when Beata was unhappy with her house and worried that it was dangerous in the rainy seasons and thus not a suitable place to live, she decided to repair it and invested her efforts and resources into making a decent dwelling that provided her with comfort and security. She had been.

On the other hand, Adela benefited from her children's support when they built a new house for her. Having a decent house to live in means an elder possesses a resource that indicates caring practices, while living in a dilapidated house indicates a lack of care or the neglect of an older person.

In Rwandan society, a house has different meanings depending on the context in which this concept is used. Someone who says *inzu* (a house) means a group of people who share a

common ancestor or a lineage (Freedman et al., 2006). In some cases, it is equivalent to *umuryango,* an extended family (Maquet, 1954). It also means a nuclear family, and a building where people live and engage in family activities. Considered as a physical structure, the house is a resource that protects elders and their family members against inclement weather and climate hazards. Furthermore, a house is someone's most valuable asset and can be enjoyed by all members of the family, so building one entails building relationships and cementing reciprocity (Van der Geest, 1997).

In Rwandan culture, not having a house is shameful. People who want to insult or even curse someone say *Kabure indaro!,* meaning 'May you have no place to live'. This emphasises the importance attached to the house, especially in rural areas.

During my fieldwork, I learned that most elders I visited live in their own houses. However, the appearance of those houses differs according to the differences in their owners' socio-economic situations.

4.5.2 Owning a House: A Source of Pride for Elders and Family Members

Owning a house in Karongi District gives pride to elders. This is the case with Anastase. He used to live in a small house with a roof covered with locally made tiles that his children have renovated and enlarged: it is now big, with a metal roof and a cement floor. He told me how proud he was living in such a house, and of his children for providing him with it.

Similarly, Adela, expressed her pride that her children had built a new house for her in these words:

> I am happy that I have this house. When members of my church come to pray with me, they do not lack a place to sit. My sons did well to build a house like this for me. I feel comfortable in it, and I am proud to have it. (Interview with Adela, 7 January 2020, Rubengera).

This sentiment of pride is not only expressed by elders but also by the children who have managed to build a house for their parents. When I met one of Adela's sons in Kigali, he expressed his satisfaction at having built his aged mother a house in collaboration with his brother. He illustrated his feeling this way:

> It is a pleasure to build a house for one's old parents. My brother and I built a house for our mother. We couldn't bear to let her live in the old house

> where we grew up. It was time to give her a good house. When your parents live in a good place, you are proud of it. But when you do not build a house for them although you have the means to do so, people in the village will always laugh at you, and you become an object of mockery. (Interview with Gaspard, 26 February 2020, Kigali).

Although some elders I interviewed during my fieldwork were provided a house by their adult children or managed to repair their house independently, some live in decrepit houses that they cannot rebuild. One of these is André, who lives in a small house in Rubengera that is about to collapse. The house is built on ground that is sometimes saturated with water, especially in the rainy season and some of the clay roof tiles are broken or missing. He does not plan to repair his house, as he lacks the means.

> I live in this house. As you see, it is now very old, like me. Now the tiles have started to fall from the roof, and some are broken. I do not have the means to replace those tiles with iron sheets or to renovate the walls. I cannot afford to do so. The fact that I have this is better than not having it at all. (Interview with André, 24 December 2019, Rubengera).

As a physical structure, a house is visible to everyone in the village. The way it is built makes the occupant proud of it or not. A solid house in good repair is better than an old, dilapidated one. Thus, Anastase is pleased with his house because it has been renovated. Likewise, Adela is proud of her new house and of her children. She is also proud that it can accommodate visitors from her church. Hence, a house is a place that allows social interactions with the social network. On the other hand, André, who lacks the means to repair his old house, must be content with it as he has no other alternative. Although dissatisfied with its condition, he adopts the accommodative mental strategy through which elders deal with their negative appraisals of their housing and try to make the best they can of their residential situation (Golant, 2015).

Adult children are indeed proud when they build houses for their parents and fulfil their filial obligations, but by doing they also maintain their social status in the village and avoid criticism from the surrounding community. Thus, social control in the community is also an important motivation for adult children to provide their ageing parents with a good-quality house. Popular discourse in Karongi District interprets a house's size and materials as signs of social

status and pride for the family members living in the house. From this perspective, building or renovating houses is a way of paying respect to aged parents and making them proud.

It is important to note that elders are proud of whatever kind of house they live in. Having a house of any kind depends on the means available to their owners and their children. Notably, it is from the house that elders create a social network, so it is a place where a person feels an emotional connection to a larger community (Tuedio, 2009). For Van der Geest (2008), a house is one important factor in preserving the memory of a deceased elder. Hence, I argue that in Karongi District a house is a resource for care for elders and the basis for other practices of elder care.

4.5.3 A House as a Space for Elder Care Provision

During my fieldwork, I learned that elders attach paramount importance to the house within caring process, as they are identified with their houses and build a social network based on them. Elders consider their house the place where they feel most comfortable.

On one of my visits, Adela told me she had refused to go live with her son in Kigali. She said she preferred to remain in her house and any support had to be directed there. She thought that at her age she could not move or live elsewhere. She will die in her house, and nowhere else. In addition, Adela has built a solid social network with her neighbours and the members of her church still visit her. She told me how her neighbours and their children came to her house almost every morning to say hello and check up on her. She rarely lacks company. Whenever I visited her, neighbourhood children were playing in her compound. Some of them call her *nyogokuru* (grandmother) and others *mukecuru* (a respectful word for an old woman) and some of them also do chores for her like bringing water and firewood. Furthermore, members of her Presbyterian church come to pray with her, which she considers strong support. She describes her home life as follows:

> In this house, I am not lonely: neighbours, adults, children, and church members come to see me. I feel appreciated when they come to my house because this shows that they think about me. I also enjoy when my children visit and spend a day with me. I am so delighted by their visit because it testifies to how much they value their old mother.' (Interview with Adela, 7 January 2020, Rubengera).

Another informant, seventy-six-year-old Kamali, emphasised the care he had received at his house:

> To have a house is to have somewhere to live where people can find you and provide support. It is not easy to support someone without a fixed address. I received this cow through Girinka because I have somewhere to live – you cannot raise a cow when you have no fixed residence. (Interview with Kamali, 27 December 2019, Rubengera).

Similarly, André reported being supported by his neighbours – who not only help him pay his contribution to the community health insurance plan but also bring him food –because he both lives in the same village with them and has a house there.

> In this village, my neighbours raise money to pay for my health insurance. They know that I cannot pay for it by myself, but since I live here as their neighbour, they support me. Some of them bring food to my house at harvest time, like beans, soya beans, or sorghum.' (Interview with André, 24 December 2019, Rubengera).

In Karongi District, a house plays an important role in elder care. The house is a private space where care takes place, and elders with their own houses feel more secure than they would living in some other place and are grateful to all those who care for them there. Obrist (2018), stresses the house's importance as a key site of elder care. Similarly, Pype (2018) states that housing matters in care practice for elders. As Adela's case demonstrates, elders prefer to receive care in their own houses rather than move to other places to live with kin. Their attachment to their homes motivates them to stay there.

I thus argue that a house is a resource in elder care and serves as the primary care space and a place that attracts care. A house is both a physical structure – a living space – and a social structure that serves as the basis for social networking. The amount and types of care received depend on the size of the social network elders have built: the more significant the social network, the more various kinds of care they receive. Having a house allows elders to live an independent life and enlarge their social network among neighbours, while not having a permanent home in the village renders someone an outsider who is not entitled to receive any kind of care from the neighbours.

4.6 Religious and Emotional Resources

Religious institutions in Karongi District participate in caring for elders and are thus another resource on which elders can depend. They provide both material and emotional support to their members.

As previously described, the members of Adela's church come to her house to pray. She is a member of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda and belongs to a prayer group that meets at her house every Wednesday morning since she is no longer able to attend her local church. The prayers themselves are a kind of comfort she receives from this group and afterwards the members discuss their social lives and reinforce their ties with one another. Moreover, whenever the church offers material support to its members, she is among the first to receive it. She said that from time to time they sent her sugar, rice, soap, and kitchen utensils like pots and plastic containers.

Another informant mentioned earlier, Pierre, also reports support from his church. He is a member of the Roman Catholic Church and also of an *umuryango remezo* (base ecclesial community), a group of twenty and thirty households that forms the smallest subdivision of the Catholic Church in Rwanda. This community prays with him and has petitioned Mubuga Parish to help him get a goat from the Catholic aid agency Caritas.

The above narratives show that religious institutions are an important resource for elder care in Rwanda, as elders in Karongi District receive material and emotional support from their churches. These empirical findings relate to the idea that the church is an institution that inspires and attracts a high level of social trust in Rwanda. It offers hope to desperate people and through church and community mobilisation ensures that church members provide various forms of consolation and mutual support to elders (Davis et al., 2019).

Coe (2018) also discusses the church's support to elders in a Ghanaian socio-cultural setting. There, despite competing demands on the church and its focus on attracting the youth, the Presbyterian Church in Ghana provides not only moral support by organising senior fellowship groups, but also health care provided by nurses who regularly visit elders in their homes. similarly, another faith-based group provides spiritual and financial support to elders in Cameroon, especially those from disadvantaged groups like widows and widowers (Che Fonchingong, 2013).

Popular discourse in Rwanda has criticised religious organisations for paying too much attention to their followers' spiritual well-being while neglecting their social and material well-being. Currently, they are changing their approach and trying to consider their followers' social and material well-being along with their spiritual state. This change in perspective is conveyed through the slogan *Roho nziza mumubiri muzima*. (A healthy soul in a healthy body). This slogan is prominent in the preaching of various religious organisations and aligns with the Rwandan government's vision of transforming the socio-economic conditions of the Rwandan population. Religious organisations in Rwanda use it to show that they are taking care of not only their followers' souls but also their bodies, and it has motivated them to invest in their fellows' material well-being by undertaking different activities intended to support needy people.

Religious institutions undoubtedly constitute a resource for elder care in Karongi District. Even if material support is not provided as regularly as spiritual care, it is meaningful in the everyday lives of elders. It is worth mentioning that religious organisations do not have specific programmes for elders in Karongi District but include them in the broad context of supporting vulnerable people in general. In addition, church support only targets members, so to benefit from it someone must be a follower of the specific church providing the support.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter explores resources for elder care in Karongi District as the elders themselves experience them in their social settings. These various resources contribute significantly to elders' care landscape. Among them is land, which is considered an essential resource in elder care in both Mubuga and Rubengera villages. Land serves as the basis for food production and is a foundation of social networking through hinga tugabane, which allows elders to make their land productive through someone else's labour while retaining ownership of it. Land ownership by elders also increases their social status in the village and attracts various forms of care from their children, who expect to inherit it, and from others who need land to cultivate.

Spouses and children are also valuable resources for elder care. They are the sources of other material, financial and emotional care resources. They remain a resource throughout and even after the lifetimes of elders, as the latter expect them to provide a decent burial.

A house is a still more important resource for elder care in Karongi District. It is a source of pride for elders, a place of belongingness and attachment, and a site for providing care. Money is another resource in everyday life of elders and comes from children and relatives through mobile money transfers, the state through the cash transfer schemes, and saving groups through loans. Moreover, religious organisations are not excluded from elder care arrangements in Karongi District but are a resource that offers emotional and material support.

While elders can draw on many resources for care, they access and enjoy them to varying degrees. Hence, I argue that access to elder care resources depends not only on the socio-economic status of elders in society but also on the size of their social networks and their achievements throughout their life courses. This is always a matter of negotiation between elders, their children and spouse, the state, the neighbours, and the church.

Chapter V: Social Protection of Elders in Karongi District

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents empirical findings from my fieldwork concerning practices of social protection of elders in Karongi District. It focuses on a range of interventions for social protection for elders by the state and others, including the family, the community, churches, and the elders themselves and emphasises how elders experience these interventions in their everyday lives. I also identify some inadequacies and focus on how elders mitigate them, not to contrast state-based with family-based social protection but to explore the connections between the various forms of social protection elders experience. In Rwanda, social protection of elders occurs through multiple interventions from various actors who contribute to the social protection landscape. These come not only from others but also include activities the elders initiate themselves to avoid dependency and contribute to their social protection. The chapter uses the concepts of social protection and care interchangeably since they have the same meaning in the context of this study (see Chapter 2).

5.2 State Social Protection Interventions: From Cash Transfer to In-kind Transfer

The state has an obligation to socially protect its citizens and especially elders, who are among the most vulnerable groups in the population. This obligation is codified in both the Rwandan constitution and various international treaties the government has ratified. The constitution of 2003 (revised in 2015) stipulates that the state has the duty, within the limits of its means, to act for the welfare of the indigent, elders, and other vulnerable persons (GoR, 2015), while the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mandates the provision of support and assistance to families and recognises a universal right to social security and social insurance.[13] To fulfil its constitutional and international obligations, the present government of Rwanda initiated the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), which includes cash transfers to elders. Meanwhile, in-kind transfers are provided by the Girinka programme (see 2.7). These governmental programmes are the prominent ones providing support to elders. The following sections discuss how these programmes benefit elders in Karongi District based on empirical materials.

[13] See Articles 9 and 10 of The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966. Rwanda acceded on 16 April 1975.

5.2.1 VUP Programme in Support to Elders: Direct Support Scheme

Iyo hatabaho VUP, simba nkiriho ('If it was not for VUP, I would not be alive today'), Nyampame told me, emphasising how VUP is important in her life. A seventy-nine-year-old widow, she is enrolled in the direct support component of VUP and receives a monthly cash payment from the state.

Social protection to elders is provided through the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), which was initiated in 2008. It is the primary government social protection programme in Rwanda and aims to accelerate poverty eradication, rural growth, and social protection. It encompasses three components: direct support, public works, and financial services (MINALOC, 2008). VUP is a programme within the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and is managed by the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA). This section focuses on the direct support component, the one in which elders are most likely to be enrolled.

In Karongi District, elders who are beneficiaries of this direct support testified to the relevance of this state support to their living conditions. Nyampame tells her story thus:

> I am benefiting from direct support in the VUP programme. I receive money monthly that helps me buy the products I need at the market. if it was not for VUP, I would not be alive today. (Interview with Nyampame, 2 December 2019, Mubuga).

This cash transfer to vulnerable people within the framework of direct support aims to provide an income to beneficiaries to prevent them from experiencing a crisis. Some beneficiaries use part of the income received to create ways to cope with future risks. Others buy livestock that they may be able to sell if they need money. This is what Sibomana, a seventy-five-year-old man receiving direct support in Rubengera village, did. He told me:

> With the money I received from VUP, I bought a goat, which has given birth to many kids. Now, I can sell the kids and get money without waiting for the transfer from VUP. Any time I need more money, I sell a goat to supplement the income from direct support. (Interview with Sibomana, 21 December 2019, Rubengera).

Elders, beneficiaries of direct support, are not passive receivers who wait for the support to come and consume it. Instead, they leverage the support received so that they will be able to

respond to risks in their own way. This resonates with the intentions behind it: not to support vulnerable people indefinitely, but rather to help them emerge from poverty and improve their living standards. Beneficiaries' strategies for using state support productively align with the promotive aspect of social protection, which is to enhance income and capability (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). In this way, as James Ferguson characterises the cash transfer programme in South Africa (Ferguson, 2015), direct support is not just like giving someone a fish: the person takes the (metaphorical) fish and does not eat it all right away but first studies it to learn how to catch more fish to eat in the future.

Along these lines, some elders use the income from VUP to buy livestock and gain an income beyond that they receive from the state, which is one way of catching their own fish. The photo below shows the goats Sibomana bought with money he received from the direct support programme.

Left: Sibomana in front of his house in Karongi District. Right: his goats tied up in the yard. Photos by author, December 2019.

Elders' efforts to convert state cash support into livestock testifies to how they are always worrying about the future and how they will sustain themselves when the state support ends. Those I spoke with reported that the state support was not permanent but only for a limited time. In fact, the guidelines for VUP direct support indicate that it is provided based on the social-economic category of beneficiaries, who may be dropped from the programme if they are no longer classified in Category One or live with a working family member (LODA, 2019).

Sibomana explained to me that he had saved money until he had the 20,000 Rwandan francs (about 20 euros) he needed to buy his first goat. At the time of my visit, he had four, and he expected to have more goats soon as two were about to give birth. Sibomana's narrative

shows how direct support is a starting point for some ageing beneficiaries to get access to other resources necessary for their daily lives.

Cash transfers to elders play a significant role in their everyday lives. Elders receiving it, like Nyampame, praise it for being the one thing that helps them to stay alive. She explained to me that she had no one to support her. Her cousin, who could have done so, withdrew her support due to a conflict over land, an issue I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter Seven. Nyampame did not buy livestock as she did not own a house, but with direct support, she could afford to buy some products at the market. As the direct support is paid monthly, beneficiaries are assured of receiving the money regularly and being able to meet their needs. Its beneficiaries are free to use the money they receive according to their priorities to improve their living conditions. The direct support targets the most vulnerable in the village and Nyampame's testimony indicates that she could not have survived without the direct support, in accordance with the programme's aim of directing that money to the neediest segment of the people (MINALOC & NISR, 2008).

The direct support beneficiaries I spoke with during my fieldwork in Karongi District were explicit that the direct support had transformed their living conditions. This attitude is clear once one knows its criteria for inclusion.

5.2.1.1 Criteria for Inclusion in the VUP Support Scheme

The direct state support to poor and vulnerable people consists of what the state presents as an unconditional cash transfer. However, it is conditional insofar as there are selective conditions beneficiaries must meet to be enrolled in it. More people need some support than the state has the means to provide with an unconditional cash transfer, so these conditions designate the neediest people. While there are some criticisms of both the selection process and criteria, I will discuss these in a later section.

Elders who were beneficiaries of direct support in Karongi District told me the criteria under which they had been enrolled in the direct support programme. Sibomana explained it this way:

> I benefit from the direct support programme because I am classified in Category One of Ubudehe,[14] and am among the most vulnerable people in the village. (Interview with Sibomana, 21 December 2019, Rubengera)

One of the conditions necessary for a person to be enrolled in direct support programme is to be classified in Ubudehe Category One. This category is for people who are very poor and who cannot afford to live on their own. The Ministry of Local Government provides criteria for people to be classified in Ubudehe categories according to their socio-economic well-being. Nevertheless, not everyone who is classified in Category One is entitled to direct support: this is one of the conditions, but it is not enough on its own. Other conditions, like being considered a very poor person by one's neighbours in the village, are more determinant than just being in the socio-economic category. One older woman summed up her experience in this way:

> I was enrolled in the VUP direct support programme because I was selected by the inhabitants of this village as the poorest person, who deserved to be supported. (Interview with Nyampame, 2 December 2019, Mubuga).

The selection of the beneficiaries is made from among those who are classified in Category One of Ubudehe. This is organised at the village level and is conducted by the village's inhabitants at an ad hoc meeting. In collaboration with the executive secretary of the cell, the village coordinator convenes the meeting to select beneficiaries. The village inhabitants select the beneficiaries based on the level of their vulnerability, and those who they consider most vulnerable are the first to be selected. The village inhabitants are in an excellent position to know who deserves support and who does not. They know each other, and it is easy for them to identify who is more vulnerable than others.

The selection of direct support beneficiaries uses a participatory approach that is based on who is most vulnerable. In other terms, it is based on deservingness (Thelen, et al., 2018). Tatjana Thelen and her colleagues explain that welfare policies are linked to the dominant discourse on need and deservingness. This applies to the direct support policy in Rwanda,

[14] Ubudehe categories: this is a social-economic classification of the Rwandan population by the Ministry of Local Government. Every Rwandan belongs to a specific social-economic category. These categories range from the first category of impoverished people to the fourth category of wealthy people. For more details, see the Ministry of Local Government. (2015). New Ubudehe Categorisation, Kigali. By the time I was on the fieldwork, these Ubudehe categorisations were being reviewed by the Ministry of Local Government in order to meet the demands of the population who claimed to be wrongly classified in categories in which they did not fit.

which is designed to target the neediest people. However, the implementation of direct support does not always seem to target the neediest, as there are occasional critics of the selection process and conditions. Furthermore, errors in the direct support scheme's implementation sometimes lead to inclusion or exclusion, despite the state's genuine efforts to target the poorest in designing anti-poverty policies (MINALOC, 2020).

Another condition for being selected as a beneficiary of the direct support scheme is that the beneficiary should not be living with working-age adults. In such cases, the working-age persons are offered employment on public works projects and the income they receive from this is supposed to benefit the elder who lives with them. However, some elders disagree with this criterion and think they should be enrolled in direct support based on their individual living conditions and not whom they live with. One of these is Izakayo, an eighty-one-year-old man who is in Ubudehe Category One but not enrolled in the direct support scheme. He expressed his dissatisfaction as follows.

> I am not among the beneficiaries of direct support because I live with my daughter in the same house. She works building radical terraces [a type of erosion control structure] for VUP, but the money she earns is her money and not mine. (Interview with Izakayo, 28 December 2019, Rubengera).

Izakayo is far from the only such case in Karongi District. During my fieldwork, I heard elders lamenting their exclusion from direct support for living with a working-age adult. Indeed, it is misleading to assume that elders who live with working-age adults benefit from their income from public works. Elders who live with someone working may still suffer from a lack of income as what is not paid to them is not their own income. The needs of the young differ significantly from those of elders, and young people living with elders must satisfy their own needs before their parents'. The case of Izakayo shows how those elders who are not included in the direct support indeed disagree with selection criteria that they consider inequitable and lacking social justice. Research indicates that poorly developed selection criteria are likely to lead to diversion and leakage in implementing welfare policies (Ellis et al., 2009).

Once elders are selected by the villagers for the direct support scheme and placed on the final list of beneficiaries, they must open accounts at the nearest Saving and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) as the district finance unit will only transfer the money to such an account. Elders who cannot get to a SACCO branch to withdraw the money have to delegate someone to do

it for them. For example, Adela explained to me that when she opened a SACCO account, she named her daughter as a trusted person who could withdraw money on her behalf.

The idea of transferring money to beneficiaries' savings accounts and not delivering it to them directly is aligned with an initiative to familiarise all people, including elders in rural areas, with microfinance institutions and encourage them to develop the habit of saving. Thus, when the money reaches beneficiaries, they will leave a certain amount in their accounts with the microfinance institution. The direct support scheme thus aims not only to boost the financial capacities of the beneficiaries but also improve their financial practices.

The general opinion among the population in Karongi District is that the direct support programme should be extended to all those in need. In my informal conversations, both old and young people were unanimous that the programme should be universal and not require them to select the neediest among those in need of support. This wider net would likely end conflicts between local leaders and people who had not been enrolled in the programme even though they expected it. Universal cash transfers to all eligible elders exist in other countries, like South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, Swaziland, and Senegal (Ellis et al., 2009). Rwanda could learn from these best practices in other African countries and extend similar benefits to its own elders.

However, given the government's constrained financial resources, the goal of universal cash transfers in Rwanda cannot be realised in the near future. According to the Ministry of Local Government, the direct support scheme's coverage is still low. Only 40% of currently eligible elders (those who do not live with working-age adults and who are classified in Category One of Ubudehe) are covered by the direct support scheme (MINALOC, 2020).

Although praised for boosting the beneficiaries' living standards, the direct support scheme is constrained by financial resources and requires additional selection criteria. Only the most vulnerable are considered and a significant number of elders in need of support are left behind.

In addition to the criteria for inclusion in the direct support scheme, it is essential to explore how the selection process of beneficiaries of direct support takes place.

5.2.1.2 The Selection Process for Inclusion in the VUP Support Scheme

The selection process for inclusion in the direct support scheme starts at the village level. The executive secretary of the cell convenes a community meeting of all the inhabitants to select who should benefit from the direct support scheme. The inhabitants of each village select vulnerable people in their village to be enrolled in the direct support scheme. During my fieldwork in Karongi District, I attended one of these meetings. Participants there discussed the case of every candidate suggested and then decided whether the person should be enrolled in the programme or not. Those who were suggested by the community meeting had to stand in front, and then the participants in the meeting discussed their cases based on their criteria for a person to be enrolled in the direct support scheme. The executive secretary of the sector also attended the meeting.

The photo below shows people in a community meeting in Karongi District to select beneficiaries of direct support.

Applicants for state support appearing before a community meeting in Rubengera village. The participants in the meeting will analyse each case and decide which to approve. Photo by author, January 2020.

During these meeting, some attendees support candidates, and others object to them depending on their socio-economic situation. If someone knows something about a candidate that might bar them from support, they provide this evidence. The people who participate in the selection meeting perceive this process as transparent to those in the village because it includes its inhabitants, and those selected for enrolment in the scheme consider their neighbours to be familiar with their misery and thus likely to sympathise with them and select them to benefit from state support. However, this process also tends to create anger and resentment among those who apply but are rejected and they often hold grudges against those who raised objections and thus opposed their well-being. Thus, the selection process, however transparent, often creates conflicts among a village's inhabitants.

After discussing all the suggested cases in the meeting, participants agreed on which individuals should be enrolled in the direct support scheme and the executive secretary of the cell compiled a list of their names. The photo below shows him holding this list as he explains the next steps to the meeting: it will be submitted first to the sector council and then to the district unit of social affairs for approval.

The executive secretary explains the selection process for direct support beneficiaries to a community meeting in Rubengera village, Karongi District in January 2020. Photo by author.

This selection process uses a participatory approach based mainly on a bottom-up approach. The village population decides who should be included in the support programme. Local leaders attend to monitor the process but are not supposed to influence the decision. The village assembly plays a role in the selection process; however, their role is limited to nominating beneficiaries and the final list of beneficiaries that must be approved by the district council[15] is compiled by the executive secretary of the sector. This list often does exclude some of those selected in the village meeting, which raises some questions about the selection process.

5.2.1.3 Criticism of the Selection Process

The process for selecting those to benefit from direct support attracts much criticism from elders who are not enrolled in the programme. While local leaders claim that their exclusion is due to the limited financial resources available, they accuse them of engaging in nepotism and favouritism when they compile the final list for the sector council. For example, André complained:

> The process of selecting beneficiaries of direct support is not fair: local leaders at village and cell levels change the decision of the village assembly and put those on the list who were not selected by the population'. (Interview with André, 24 December 2019, Rubengera).

Another informant expressed her frustration about not being enrolled in this way:

> I don't understand how I'm not among the beneficiaries of the state support, as an old and widowed woman, and when I was selected in my village to benefit from the state support. However, my name did not appear on the final list of the beneficiaries. Some individuals who were not suggested in the village meeting appeared on the final list. There are problems with the selection of beneficiaries. (Interview with Mahoro, 3 December 2019, Mubuga).

The publication of the final list of beneficiaries for direct support raises criticism and discontent, not only from those who expected to be selected but also from other villagers who

[15] District Councils are decision-making organs of local government that are elected for five-year terms. See Law No 08/2006 of 24/02/2006 Determining the Organisation and Functioning of the District. In Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No 08/2006 of 24/02/2006.

supported them. People start whispering about corruption and favouritism on the part of the local leaders who have participated in the selection process. Although the Rwandan government has a zero-tolerance policy for corruption in public and private sectors and has adopted anti-corruption mechanisms, a report by Transparency International Rwanda reports some cases of corruption in local government entities and suggests that local leaders are the ones most involved in corrupt practices (Transparency International Rwanda, 2020).

When implementing a cash transfer programme, some unqualified beneficiaries may be enrolled to the detriment of legitimate ones. This has two causes, targeting error and exclusion error. Targeting error consists of including unqualified beneficiaries, while exclusion error means leaving out vulnerable people who do not meet programme-specific selection criteria (Ellis et al., 2009). In some cases, the cash transfer programme faces the challenge of targeting and exclusion errors due to corruption and abuse on the part of bureaucrats, who refuse benefits to poor people who do not show them sufficient deference (Ferguson, 2013). This observation about the difficulties in the implementation of the South African cash transfer programme also applies to the Rwandan direct support programme.

The narratives of some elders in Karongi District testify to the existence of targeting and exclusion errors. They complain about not being enrolled in the direct support programme and accuse local village and cell leaders of corruption, considering them the cause of their misfortune. Local complaints about such cases of corruption are corroborated by Transparency International Rwanda. (Transparency International Rwanda, 2011). These flaws in implementing a direct support scheme may affect the well-being of poor people whose expectations of coping with poverty rendered illusory by their exclusion from the direct support scheme. This income transfer intends to smooth vulnerable people's consumption of goods and services, in response to their economic risks and vulnerability (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). Thus, the targeting of the beneficiaries must be based on deservingness to avoid having those not enrolled in the programme fall into deprivation. It is crucial that the direct support implementation process be implemented transparently to ensure that the state transfer reaches those who need it (Norton et al., 2002).

5.2.1.4 Elders' Expectations from the Direct Support Scheme

The initiation of a direct support scheme in Rwanda raised hopes among elders, who expected to have their needs satisfied and their lives transformed. Those I talked to in Karongi District

expected the scheme to include all vulnerable elders, but when it started to be implemented some were left out. At that point, they realised that the state financial assistance was not a universal support system but a targeted financial transfer and only those who meet the selective conditions have benefited and continue to benefit from it.

Elders expected the direct support scheme to address issues related to lack of income and access to health services. As one put it:

> When I heard about the direct support to be provided to vulnerable people, I was happy because my problems of lack of income and the treatment of my back disease would easily be solved. However, I did not get what I expected to get from the direct support programme since I was not selected to be part of the programme's beneficiaries. (Interview with Izakayo, 28 December 2019, Rubengera).

Such expectations were based on the benefits elders would gain if they could be enrolled in the direct support scheme. Some of these included the monthly income and the provision of community-based health insurance. Thus, not being selected as the beneficiary is one of the exclusion errors observed in the scheme's implementation, as the programme is designed to provide beneficiaries not only with income but also community-based health insurance.

Elders who expect to access the benefits of direct support feel dissatisfied when they are not among those to be supported. André expressed his dissatisfaction thus:

> I expected that the programme of direct support would target all vulnerable people, but when the selection was made among the vulnerable people, I was disappointed, because few people get selected to be part of the programme. (Interview with André, 24 December 2019, Rubengera).

The above narratives show that elders expected direct support to be universal. However, the programme was not as broad as people expected: instead, it was a categorical targeting programme which, as defined by Ellis et al., (2009) selected only the most vulnerable people from the vulnerable group.

It is essential to mention that the expectations of elders enrolled in the programme differ from those not enrolled. Those not included expected a universal targeting of all vulnerable people, while those enrolled express satisfaction that it meets some of their needs. Sibomana, whom

I mentioned above, recounts his experience as a beneficiary of the direct support scheme this way:

> The direct support scheme came at the right moment, I could not manage to respond to my needs by myself, but with the direct support I can do so. I easily access health services and pay the labourer to cultivate my field. (Interview with Sibomana, 9 January 2020, Rubengera).

However happy he is to be among the beneficiaries of direct support, he deplores how the value of money received has been eroded by inflation. As the prices of goods and services keep rising, he wishes the state financial support would also increase so he can continue to afford the price of goods and services on the local market. Sibomana explained to me that he receives 12,000 FRW (about 12 euros) per month, but that was not enough. He had to look for other sources of income and now raises goats to supplement the payments he receives and support himself and his wife.

The direct support scheme in Rwanda was established in 2008. The monthly amount varies between 7500 FRW and 21,000 FRW, depending on the size of the household, but can never exceed 21000 FRW, however big the household is (LODA, 2019). If, indeed, the amount of money to which a household is entitled has not changed since 2008, inflation could well be affecting the purchasing power of its beneficiaries.

Adjusting income transfer payments to the cost of living exists in countries like South Africa, where pension benefits are periodically adjusted to match market prices (Barrientos, 2004). Therefore, Rwanda could also adjust the direct support payments according to the cost of living to allow beneficiaries to meet their expectations.

This all goes to show that the direct support scheme is limited in its targeting approach and hence cannot enrol all those who wish to receive its benefits. Furthermore, the lack of increases to compensate for inflation means the programme falls short of the expectations even of those who are actually enrolled.

However, state-based social protection is not limited to cash transfers alone, but also includes in-kind transfers like giving a cow to a poor family through the Girinka programme.

5.2.2 In-kind Transfer: The Girinka Programme

The Girinka – or 'one cow per poor family' – programme distributes one dairy cow to each poor household selected, with the condition that the first female calf be passed on to another beneficiary of the programme. It aims to fight malnutrition by increasing milk consumption, improve crop productivity by providing manure, and generate family income from the sale of milk. It also promotes social cohesion: each beneficiary provides the heifer for the next, which creates strong bonds of solidarity and attachment (Mugabo et al., 2019). The beneficiaries are selected at the village level based on the criteria of poverty, personal integrity, lacking other sources of income, and owning less than 0.75 hectares of land (RAB, 2013).

Heads of households that meet these conditions, including those of elders, receive cows. One of them, Beata, told me her story:

> I was among the first people who received a cow in this village, in 2007. The cow was very productive. The first time it gave birth to a bull calf, and I sold it and built that house you see there. The second time, it was also a bull calf. I sold it and rented a piece of land for cultivation and renovated my house. The third time, it gave birth to a heifer, and then I gave that to my neighbour who did not have any cow – as the agreement for receiving the cow stipulated. The fourth time, it gave birth to another female calf, and I kept that calf and sold the old cow. (Interview with Beata, 19 December 2020, Rubengera).

Beata after feeding her cow, Rubengera, December 2020. (Photo by author)

The Girinka programme is a home-grown solution to poverty that is rooted in the cultural values surrounding cows in Rwanda. A cow is considered as a symbol of wealth and prosperity, so giving someone a cow represents strong friendship and the desire for their wealth and prosperity. The cultural value of a cow is also shown by the Rwandan greeting 'Girinka', which literally means '[may you] have a cow'. Previous research offers evidence that the programme has improved the living conditions of other beneficiaries (Ngamata & Mbonyinkebe, 2019), and this is certainly the case with Beata: with the income from the cow she received, she was able to rent land for growing crops and renovate her house. However, despite the importance of cows to the livelihood of rural Rwandans, some elders in Karongi District have trouble finding enough for their cows to eat. This is especially difficult since free-range cattle grazing is not permitted in Rwanda and providing fodder can become a burden for elders in Karongi District as well as other parts of the country (Klapwijk et al., 2014). For example, Sibomana received a cow but had to spend so much time searching for fodder that he was unable to keep up with other household tasks. His inability to feed the cow resulted, properly, in his losing it:

> I received the cow, with the other vulnerable people, but I had problems feeding it. When I gave it hay, it ate it at once and kept mooing: a sign it was asking for more. The cow was taken away and given to another person by

> the executive secretary of the cell, who accused me of having failed to feed it. (Interview with Sibomana, 17 December 2020, Rubengera).

The cow's recipient thus has to feed it and keep it under conditions where it will give birth and continue the process of distributing cows, which is known as *kwitura* and consists of giving the first calf to the next neighbour on the village's waiting list. If local leaders realise that a Girinka cow is not well cared for, they can give it to another person who can make it productive and continue the chain of distributing cows among neighbours.

The cultural and economic value attached to cows make them a valuable asset in Rwanda. However, the changing social, economic, and political environment makes it difficult for elders to honour the agreement and properly care for it, so it produces a heifer to pass on to the next recipient. A cow's productivity depends on the labour-intensive task of feeding it well, so some elders prefer to raise smaller livestock that need less food, such as goats or sheep. It would thus be beneficial for the state to give elders smaller animals that they can care for more easily than a cow.

However, it is not only the state that intervenes in the social protection of elders in Rwanda. The family and community also play a significant role in protecting those people.

5.3 Kinship and Community Social Protection of Elders

In Rwanda, social protection of elders is not limited to the state, but also includes kinship and community-based support systems. Both play a significant role in the social protection of elders and co-exist with the state support system. The three are not separate but provide social protection in an intertwined way. For instance, the Girinka programme involves both the state and the community: the recipient of a cow gives its calf to someone else, making the practice state-induced relationship. Other 'customary' kinship and community-based social support systems occupy a prominent place in the welfare of elders throughout sub-Saharan Africa, where comprehensive social protection systems for elders are almost absent (Aboderin & Hoffman, 2015).

5.3.1 Kinship Social Protection Interventions for Elders

Kinship-based social protection is the primary source of social security in Rwanda, and it is a normative obligation for adult children to support their ageing parents when they are in need. This duty to support parents finds its basis in intergenerational reciprocity, as expressed in the

previously quoted proverb about the old rabbit who suckles on the young. Within social, cultural, and economic contexts, the kinship-based support of ageing parents in Karongi District takes various forms.

During my fieldwork, I discussed elders' support from their children with them. In our conversations, they detailed the kinds of support they receive from their children: cash, in-kind, and labour. One elder, Anastase, told me that his children in Kigali sent money to support him and his wife. He explained to me that the money reached him through a mobile service. Each child who sent cash through mobile money transfer would call to inform him of the amount, and he would then pick it up from an agent in the village centre who serves as an intermediary for money transfers between children and their parents. In Rwanda, such mobile money transfers are a popular way to transfer money between individuals located in different places (Argent et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Anastase explained that it is not only money he receives from his children: they also bring clothes and groceries from the city whenever they visit him. Clothes are one gift that elders particularly enjoy receiving from their children. Support to elders in Karongi District is also provided in the form of labour.

Kinship Support: Labour and Company

The Case of Izakayo and His Wife

Caring for older people is not limited to providing material and financial support but also includes tasks that they may not have the strength to perform. Izakayo is eighty-one and lives with his wife, whose health is poor. He told me that his daughter and a daughter-in-law who lives nearby cultivate his land every growing season to feed the couple. In Kinyarwanda, this is called *gutanga umubyizi* (offering labour). The main crops in this region are maize, beans, soya beans, and potatoes and the two women ensure that the crops are well-tended until the harvest time. Izakayo expressed his satisfaction with this support from his kin as follows:

> When you are frail, it is very challenging to get enough food if you do not have someone to help you. It might have been impossible to get enough to eat if not for the support of my daughters, who cultivate and grow crops. (Interview with Izakayo, 28 December 2019, Rubengera).

Izakayo did not just receive labour support: his daughter-in-law also kept him company while his wife was hospitalised. While their daughter took care of her mother at the hospital, their

daughter-in-law came to his house to cook for him. His wife is still sick with cancer and frequently spends long periods in hospital. This illness has immiserated the household as Izakayo's two children in Kigali did not provide enough money to pay all the medical fees and he was forced to sell land. At seventy-two, his wife, Madarina, has lost hope. In an interview, she expressed her worries.

> I have had this disease for twelve years now; I have been to different health centres and hospitals, but in vain. This disease is terminal, and all I can do is wait until the day of my death. The problem is dying after ruining the family by spending so much money to treat the disease. The wish is to die soon rather than waiting a long time. (Interview with Madarina, 28 December 2019, Rubengera).

Elders are often vulnerable to chronic diseases and during such crises they need closer care and attention from kin. Such support is only financial and material but also includes labour, company, and meaningful emotional support.

The Case of Adela

Adela is an older woman who benefits from labour provided by her daughter Uwimana, who lives in a neighbouring village. At the beginning of every growing season, she comes to cultivate the land and sow the seeds. She also helps during the harvest. When I visited Adela, her daughter was also there. She had come to help her sort beans to store them efficiently.

Uwimana sorting beans in Karongi District, January 2020. (Photo by author)

Uwimana told me that she was happy to support her mother in agricultural activities and domestic chores like cooking and laundry. Such activities are crucial to the well-being of elders and generate a feeling of emotional and physical attachment that providing economic resources does not. Research on caring, ageing, and dignity in Rwanda has revealed how performing small everyday activities expresses emotional and physical support that strengthens elders (Sadruddin, 2020).

Support of Elders: A Symbol of Reciprocity

The support of elders by adult children testifies to the existence of intergenerational reciprocity. This is the key element on which care for elders by their adult children is based. Those who gave their children good care in the past expect to receive good care from them when they are adults (Van der Geest, 2016). This reciprocity does not apply only to the quantity of care or protection but also its quality. Thus, while the act of support matters, its quality matters the most. The quality of a caring act is akin to what Engster (2005) calls 'caring manner,' which is caring in an attentive, responsive, and respectful manner.

Elders are cared for by their children because of what they did for them in the past, as Anastase recounted.

> I was able to send my children to school and regularly paid their school fees. Thanks to their education, they all have jobs in the city and now they take care of me. (Interview with Anastase, 26, November 2019, Mubuga).

The general feeling in Rwanda is that education is the best thing parents can offer to their children to ensure they have a bright future. The efforts and resources parents invest in educating their children are repaid by caring for them in their old age. When I interviewed one of Anastase's sons, who works for a bank in Kigali, he confirmed this duty of reciprocity to his parents:

> I have an obligation to look after my aged parents. They made me who I am by sending me to school. If I had not been at school, I could not have gotten the job I have today. (Interview with Jerôme, 22 February 2020, Kigali).

Children recognise what their parents have done for their education and thus feel obligated to reciprocate it to their ageing parents. Parents provision of education to their children aligns with the Rwandan National Transformation Strategy (NST1), which aims at transforming the Rwandan population into capable and skilled people (GoR, 2017) and can only be achieved

through investment in education. Educating children provides them with the opportunity to access formal employment and thus the ability to care for their parents as they age. However, elders are aware that they cannot always depend on support from their children, who have responsibilities to their own families. Anastase explained that parents should not burden their children but have to supplement their support somehow as that could never cover all the parents' needs.

Adult children try to balance their own needs with supporting their ageing parents. For example, Anastase's son explained to me that he enjoys helping his parents but is limited by his own family's grown needs and his financial resources. The challenges adult children face in supporting their ageing parents can be observed in Karongi District and other parts of Rwanda. Research on demographic change and ageing in the context of social protection in Rwanda points to economic hardships faced by adult children as one cause of the uncertainty of financial and material support to elders (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2020). Similarly, research on family support for elders in sub-Saharan Africa has identified the increasing needs of adult children as the source of inadequacies in care for elders (Aboderin, 2006).

In the case of Karongi District, reciprocity with elders should not be seen as automatic. Children may find an excuse to escape the social norm of reciprocity and withdraw support from their parents. This is the case with Kamali, a seventy-six-year-old man whose two sons live in Kigali. He lost his wife in 2014. When he later decided to remarry, his children did not approve of his choice and suggested another woman. Kamali refused to marry her and married the wife he had chosen, whom his children considered an enemy of their mother. Because of this disagreement, the children withdrew the support they used to provide to him. One of the sons, whom I met in Kigali, told me he felt uncomfortable supporting a father whose wife was an enemy of his mother. Kin care for elders is not inevitable but is always negotiated and keeps changing over the life course. From this perspective, care might lead to stable relations – but it might also lead to their dissolution (Thelen, 2015).

However, is not only kinship-based support that elders in Karongi District benefit from but also community-based support.

5.3.2 Community Social Protection Interventions for Elders

'The community is my family.' – Kamana

In this study, community support for elders is understood as that provided by neighbours and social networks within a village. It is embedded in Rwandan culture, which considers it a virtue and an expression of connection. There is a proverb that warns against failing in this duty: '*Uriye umusaza aruka imvi.'* ('Whoever neglects an elder will face misfortune in the future.') The provision of care to elders through various activities is essential to the philosophy of *ubuntu* (humanity), which exhorts people to prioritise humanistic values through social relations of mutual support that strengthen community belonging and responsibility. This philosophy is the foundation of mutual support and sharing of resources among community members (Brubaker, 2013).

Elders in Karongi District appreciate the support they receive from their surrounding community. Kamana, an elder in Mubuga, was supported by his neighbours during an illness he suffered while his sons were away in Kigali. He recognises the community's support as follows: 'When I was sick, it was my neighbours who kept sending me food and drink.' (Interview with Kamana, 2 December 2019, Mubuga).

Kamana's statement describes a crucial role the community played in caring for him during the period of his sickness. He fell while walking in his banana field and broke his right leg. He was admitted to the district hospital and treated for two months before his leg healed. During this challenging situation, his neighbours did not abandon him and even drew closer to him, providing him with the support he needed. Even after he was discharged and back at home, they kept visiting to comfort him. The cost of his medical treatments was paid by his community-based health insurance plan, Mutuelle de Santé. Since he did not have enough money to pay for transportation home from the hospital and could not walk the ten kilometres from the hospital, his neighbours also hired someone to drive him. This support that the community provided to Kamana during his sickness made him consider it his family:

> The community is my family, and it is the one that looked after me during my entire period of sickness. (Interview with Kamana, 2 December 2019, Mubuga).

Kamana considers his community of neighbours as his family because when it provided support to him it became his kin. The neighbours did what the members of Kamana's family should have done and thus became not just a community but a new family for him. Thus, care defines and redefines kinship rather than biology (Borneman, 2010).

Community support for elders can include paying premiums for community-based health insurance and providing food and clothes. This is the case with André, from Rubengera, who depends on his neighbours to help pay his premiums and get enough to eat. André told me that sometimes one neighbour will pay for his health insurance and sometimes a group of neighbours will raise money. Meanwhile, he lives by cultivating his neighbours' land in exchange for some of the food, which is called *guca inshuro* (working on other's land to earn an income). Moreover, some neighbours volunteer to bring him beans or sweet potatoes: he cannot ask directly because in Rwandan culture a man cannot request food from neighbours. André appreciates his neighbours support, and they continue to give him food and used clothes – he told me he cannot afford to buy new ones. He also told me participants in the mutual aid system known as *umuganda*[16] also sometimes raise money for him, which is called *kuremera.* For André, this support from the community makes him feel that he is surrounded by neighbours who care for him.

Though intermittent, community care for elders plays a significant role in ensuring their well-being by filling gaps in family care. However, looking more closely at kin, community, and state-based support reveals that they are not as separate and distinct as the structure of this dissertation may suggest they form an interconnected web of social protection interventions that shapes elder care both in Karongi District and in Rwanda in general.

5.4 Churches' Provision of Social Protection to Elders

'Whenever the church has support for elders, it starts with me,' Adela explained to me. She has been a member of this Presbyterian church since her childhood and it supports her in many ways, both material and spiritual. Materially, it has provided her with food and kitchen utensils: '[It was] my church that provided me with the pots I am using now. It also gives me rice, cooking oil and soap.' (Interview with Adela, 7 December 2019, Rubengera).

Adela's narrative shows that the church intervenes in providing material support to elders, but this is not constant. Interestingly, Adela receives spiritual as well as material support from her church: she belongs to one of its prayer groups and its members visit every Wednesday

[16] Umuganda is a valuable tool for mutual aid in Rwandan culture in which the community works together to solve social and economic problems for mutual benefits. Nowadays, it is considered a homegrown solution for implementing development projects and especially providing social and economic infrastructures. Every last Saturday of the month is a day of umuganda in Rwanda and citizens work together to contribute to the building of their country. See Rwanda Governance Board, Impact Assessment of Umuganda 2007-2016.

morning to pray with her. Since Adela cannot walk to Sunday services at the church, it comforts her to receive these morning prayer sessions from the group.

These visits to Adela's home reflect the prayer group members' commitment to building strong bonds with church members in their old age. After praying, the group discusses its members' social lives, which reinforces their ties. They also sometimes offer her labour by cultivating her land, which is called *gutanga umubyizi* (volunteering). Notably, the prayer group is composed of people who belong to the same church and who live in the same village. It is thus for them easier to regularly visit an elder from the same village to pray with her and offer her labour assistance. Prayer constitutes an activity of social security since it helps people to come together and strengthen their social relationships and belongingness. This understanding aligns with the view that elders pray together because it offers an opportunity to overcome loneliness, commiserate, and comfort each other (Davis et al., 2019) and with research indicating that elders' involvement in religious activities and social networks of church members improve their quality of life (Hooyman et al., 2015). In other words, Adela's involvement in the prayer group helps her avoid loneliness and feel integrated into her church community.

The Presbyterian Church is not the only one that provides support to elders: other faith-based organisations are also concerned with elders' vulnerability and promote the material and spiritual well-being of their followers by providing various forms of support. A common feature of all this support is that each denomination targets its own members, and it is rare for persons to be supported by a faith-based organisation from a denomination to which they do not belong. Therefore, faith-based support to elders can be interpreted as a strategy for mobilising and retaining members. The fact that faith-based organisations target only their adherents corroborates public criticism of their support for being solely membership-based. In some faith-based organisations, members use kin terms such as sister and brother to address each other but not for outsiders to their churches. Klaits (2010) describes this tendency to use kin terms among members of the same church as creating spiritual kinship among church followers. Research on social security and religion in Africa has demonstrated that faith-based organisations can produce or favour inequality (De Bruijn & van Dijk, 2009). In the Rwandan context, and specifically in Karongi District, faith-based organisations that support only those affiliated with them create inequality among needy people. However – and

despite this criticism – faith-based organisations play a role in the care landscape of elders in Rwanda, where they bring varying contributions to their well-being.

5.5 Elders' Contribution to Their Own Social Protection

Elders in Karongi District are not passive receivers of support from the various actors mentioned above but rather active contributors to their own social protection. Their initiatives towards this end are in accord with the ethos of retaining some independence and building up their dignity called *kwihesha agaciro*. This consists of striving to respond to one's own needs without depending on others. One elder repeated a proverb to me: '*Akimuhana kaza imvura ihise*.' ('Support from others comes when bad moments have already passed.') This proverb warns against depending on others' support, because it does not always arrive at the moment when it is needed. Instead, people should rely on their own capacity to respond to their problems. In this spirit, elders take various initiatives to contribute to their own social protection. My fieldwork indicates that the youngest-old and middle old can still contribute to their social protection on their own, while the oldest old no longer do so except for those who own land that neighbours can cultivate through *hinga tugabane*.

5.5.1 Elders' Self-help Social Protection Initiatives

In rural Rwanda, as evidence from Karongi District indicates, elders undertake various income-producing activities and thus both make valuable contributions to their own social protection and engage with their communities. This section illustrates such activities using the above-mentioned case of Beata.

To provide income for her day-to-day needs, Beata, a widow in Karongi District, started a small business brewing banana beer and juice and selling it at a nearby market. Since she does not have enough land to plant banana trees, she uses fruit she buys from her neighbours. The income is necessary, she explained, because she cannot rely on support from her daughters in the city who also have a hard time making a living.

Beata is an example of an older woman who strives to meet her needs on her own. Furthermore, she is someone who understands the economic hardships also faced by adult children living in the city and who manages to fill this care gap by independently initiating a small income-generating project. The feeling of seeking solutions to problems not adequately addressed by social norms is what Coe & Alber (2018) call age-inscription. In this case, age-

inscription comprises elders undertaking novel activities to contribute to their own social protection when they can no longer rely on support from others.

On the other hand, elders who own land try to make it productive through *hinga tugabane*, (literally 'cultivate my land, and we share'). This practice involves renting the land to someone else in return for an equal share of the harvest and allows elders who are no longer able to cultivate their land to get food for their households without having to pay for the required labour in advance. It is enough for one person to own land and another to agree to cultivate it and share the harvest with the owner. One older man mentioned above, Anastase, exemplifies this practice: he gives his land to one of his neighbours to grow maize and then shares the harvest with him. Anastase cannot even consume his share on his own but sells part of it to get money for his other needs. This practice was an innovation by elders as the usual practice has been to pay cash rent before using someone else's land.

Hinga tugabane is not only a way of producing food for household consumption but also a means for generating money necessary for day-to-day needs.

5.5.2 Saving Groups: A Mean of Elders' Togetherness

Saving groups are another means elders use to contribute to their own social protection. These developed out of social groups that were originally intended to provide settings where elders could come together for conversations with their peers to prevent loneliness. They were a way to create social belonging – to draw elders in and connect them through their social interactions. Research indicates that building social capital among elders is essential to their well-being (Zhang & Lu, 2019). However, its benefit is in interpersonal relationships and does not necessarily need to be an economic benefit (Bourdieu, 1986).

It was these social groups of elders which came up with the idea of forming saving groups and combining their efforts to respond to their economic needs. These saving group are not rotating funds where members take turns receiving money from other members, but saving and loan schemes that accumulate money for a set time before lending it to their members. This kind of saving group is called an accumulative saving fund, which is distinct from a rotating fund (Bouman, 1995). Elders mobilise their savings at weekly meetings where every member contributes 500 FRW (0.50 euros). The contributed funds are managed by an elected committee and at the end of the year the original contributions are returned to the members,

along with the interest generated from loans to them. This is called *kurasa ku ntego*, which means 'reaching the target'.

Elders praise the saving groups for helping them get small loans easily. For example, when Beata started her business making banana juice and beer, she borrowed money and paid it back after four months. Then, she took out another loan to buy three pigs (which would eat the leftover banana peels) and to build a pen for them. When they had piglets, she sold these and paid off the second loan.

The saving group provides not only financial support through loans but also social support. When members experience unpredictable misfortunes like a death in the family, members of the saving group come to help them and continue visiting to provide consolation. Beata described the group members' compassion when her husband died in 2004. They attended the funeral ceremonies and kept visiting to support her emotionally and help her recover from the shock of losing her beloved husband. Thus, mutual care among members of the saving group is intensified in times of crisis as this is when such support is most needed. As Drotbohm (2015) puts it, care is expected to be given or to be intensified during a crisis as it creates a situation of exposure that requires others' attention and support. In the saving group, mutual caring creates a relationship where the recipient of care, like Beata, is also expected to care for others when they are in need. Relationships among members of the saving group are strengthened and cemented through attending one another's ceremonies, and it is the duty of each member of the saving group to maintain the spirit of mutual support that benefits them all.

Mutual care is a crucial element of togetherness in a saving group. The idea of creating a saving group for elders was intended to mobilise their efforts to respond to their care needs on their own. The possibility of mutual support is greater when people are together than when they are scattered. In addition to that, but also in the spirit of supporting its members, the saving group helps them to pay for health insurance. One man expressed his satisfaction with his membership in a saving group as follows:

> It is invaluable to be in a saving group with others. Before, I could barely pay for my community health insurance, but since I joined a saving group it has been easy to pay for my health insurance regularly. (Interview with Kamana, 6 December 2019, Mubuga).

As this statement implies, a saving group may help to cover premiums for its members' community health insurance. Community health insurance schemes, known as *mutuelles de santé,* are important to rural Rwandans and particularly for elders, who are at risk for chronically illness. If people without community health insurance get sick, it is hard for them to obtain health care, as it is expensive without insurance. The policy on community health insurance in Rwanda was introduced in 1999 to ensure access to health care for all and revised in 2010 and to smooth its implementation. It requires people who are not covered by another form of insurance to subscribe to a community health insurance scheme and pay a contribution according to the size of their families (MOH, 2010). Under this policy every Rwandan must be covered by health insurance, so when members of a saving group have trouble coming up with the necessary contributions for their families it can help them. In doing so, it provides care to its members and gains them access to other forms of care, such as health care. Members of the saving group sometimes use the interest paid on their savings to contribute to their community-based health insurance.

5.5.3 Land Acquisition: A Strategy for Old Age Preparedness

People think about ageing and prepare for it in earlier stages of their lives. What individuals accomplish throughout their life courses, and when they do it, has an impact on their old age. Acquiring land is one strategies people use during their active age to prepare for old age. Anastase, whom I mentioned above, explained how he had prepared for old age using the proverb '*Akabando k'Iminsi gacibwa kare kakabikwa kure.'* ('A staff for old age is cut earlier and kept far from the reach of any other person.') Anastase explained that this proverb has a deep meaning regarding old-age preparedness. Elders use a staff to support themselves while walking, but to make one you need to go to the forest and cut a stick. However, someone who needs a staff to walk is obviously no longer strong enough to do this. Cutting the stick is a metaphor for accomplishments during the active age that will provide support in old age. However, it is critical to cut the proverbial stick at the right time and to store it in the right way.

Anastase told me he bought land during his active age. He tended this land well and did not sell it, even when he was short of funds. Instead, he planted coffee trees on one piece of land. Now, he uses hinga tugabane to benefit from his other land and the coffee trees also generate an income – coffee beans are among the most important exports of Rwanda and invariably

generate income for those who grow them (Mutandwa et al., 2009). Buying land in one's active age and retaining it for later use shows a strong desire to invest in one's old age. This is a way of imagining, planning, and living old age, as Alber (2018) explains in her research on new age-inscription in Northern Benin.

I asked Anastase why he had invested in land rather than in some other asset or by depositing his money in a bank. He responded that the value of land increases over time, but that money in the bank may lose value due to inflation. Moreover, land is the most valuable asset in rural areas since most of the population depends on it for survival and this makes it a resource in high demand. He added that it did not require much effort to keep the land: it could be cultivated, but if left fallow would still retain its value. Research indicates that land ownership is the main form of self-insurance in peasant societies (Freiberg-Strauss & Jung, 1988). For Anastase, having land in old age is a social insurance for him and his family.

It is important to mention that in a country where 90% of the population depends on it for survival land's scarcity makes it a coveted resource for the rural population (Leegwater, 2015). It was thus a wise decision when Anastase invested in land to plan for his well-being in old age. I will detail the point of land scarcity in a later chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed social protection for elders as provided by various actors, ranging from the state to the elders themselves. All have their own ways of contributing to elders' care landscape. I argue, following Drotbohm (2015), that with the plurality of interventions in elder care provision in Karongi District care practices for elders in Karongi District extend beyond kinship to include neighbours, friends, the broader community, and large institutions like the church and state.

Each form of care has some weakness that limits its response to elders' care expectations. State-based care faces the challenges of resource constraints and inefficiencies in selecting beneficiaries, which means it does not cover all people in need of support. Although the Girinka programme is appreciated by the beneficiaries, some elders are unable to provide the food to keep a cow. Meanwhile, kinship-based care sometimes does meet elders' care expectations because the family members who provide it face their own economic hardships or have competing needs. Furthermore, adult children in the process of care negotiation may

find a way to avoid providing it to their ageing parents. Community and church-based care provision, meanwhile, are intermittent and unpredictable. In particular, church-based care seems to be a means of mobilising beneficiaries around its religious ideology by targeting church members. However, it is important that elders are not passive receivers of care. If they are given a fish, they teach themselves how to fish. They also demonstrate their agency by taking action to supplement the forms of support they receive from others through initiating small income-generating projects, the saving group, and investing in land.

This last has paramount importance for elders. Land generates income through hinga tugabane and farming and is also an asset that someone can sell later. Elders' exercise of their own agency accords with an ethos of independence that entails striving to contribute to their own social protection and this is even somewhat expected. Such initiative reveals elders as resilient and unwilling to throw up their hands in the face of the dynamics of care practices. The chapter argues that social protection for elders in Karongi District is embedded in the interconnectedness of interventions from various actors. However, these do not just come from others but also include elders' own contributions to their social protection.

Chapter VI: Rural-urban Migration's Influence on Elder Care

6.1 Introduction

Rural-urban migration is a form of spatial mobility that makes people permanently or temporarily change their place of residence from a rural to an urban area (Mutandwa et al., 2011) and a common phenomenon in Rwanda. The amenities and opportunities found in urban but not rural areas are the main draw for migrants. They thus consider rural-urban migration as a survival strategy and an opportunity to care for those left in rural areas. This chapter highlights different care practices between adult children in the city and ageing parents in rural areas. It shows how these adult children use modern technologies in their social interactions with their parents to help reduce the geographical distance between them and their parents.

However, I also found that nothing can replace proximal care, where the care provider and the care receiver are in close contact and can feel each other's presence. Migration co-exists with a responsibility to care for those left behind. However, this is not always the case: some elders become foster parents who bear the burden of caring for the grandchildren left behind by their unmarried daughters. Hence, migration not only brings positive benefits but also is associated with negative values and deviant behaviour. This adds another layer to the care landscape in in the context of mass rural-urban migration. Thus, the chapter also explores disagreements between adult children and their ageing parents about caring practices. While adult children must balance sending remittances with travelling back to the village to visit their parents, elders would like to have them return home with money and stay. They also must balance their own needs and the provision of support to their old parents. The chapter argues that care for the elders in the wave of rural-urban migration keeps reconfiguring itself and takes various forms from proximal to digital care. It is influenced by the circumstances of the time as well as by the ability of the migrant to care.

6.2 Contextualising Rural-Urban Migration in Rwanda

One afternoon in February 2020, I met Eric in the Nyabugogo neighbourhood of Kigali. This took three tries, because he kept rescheduling our meeting at the last minute because of work conflicts. Eric drives a motorcycle taxi in the city of Kigali and works out of the neighbourhood of Nyabugogo, Kigali's transport hub and the location of the main bus station, and takes

people to different places in the city and its vicinity. Eric left for Kigali in 2015, a year after completing secondary school, because he could not find a job in his village. He said the only institutions that offered employment were the secondary school and the local government, he had no money to start a business in the village, and there was not enough land available to make a living farming. Therefore, he decided to migrate to Kigali because of the various opportunities there. After arriving, he worked as a mason's helper on construction projects in various parts of the city and used the money earned from that job pay for driving school. After three months, he passed the driving test and obtained his license. He told me that 'I could not have got the driving license if I had remained in the village.' (Interview with Eric, 15 February 2020, Kigali). He is now able to drive a motorcycle as his main job. As he does not own one, he contracts with someone who does to rent one by the day. Motorcycle transport is a common business for young people in Kigali and provides an income for both motorcycle owners and drivers. Motorcycles reach all areas in the city, unlike the bus system.

This discussion with Eric revealed that rural-urban migration in Rwanda is primarily labour migration: migrants are attracted by non-farm employment and better economic opportunities in the city. Eric is one among many young people who could not earn a living in rural areas and decided to migrate to the city.

The rapid urbanisation of Kigali has made it a hub of commercial, industrial, administrative, educational, and health activities (Schutten, 2012). These opportunities constitute a pull factor for migrants. Meanwhile, the shortage of arable land resulting from demographic changes and the lack of formal employment in rural areas push young people to leave them for urban ones (Uwimbabazi & Lawrence, 2011). The city of Kigali receives the highest number of migrants from rural areas. According to the fourth Rwanda population and housing census in 2012, 54% of its population were migrants (NISR, 2014c). Research indicates that rural-urban migration not only provides social and economic opportunities to the migrants but also enhances their ability to care for those who remain in rural areas. Migration exists alongside an obligation to care for those left behind not only in a transnational context, (Drotbohm, 2015), but also in a national context. In this case, Eric can support his mother who stayed in the village with the money he earns in the city and thus his decision to migrate has offered an opportunity to increase his care for his family. To practice care requires the capacity to do so, and rural-urban migration is one strategy to gain this capacity.

However, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration does not benefit all migrants in the same way. Some succeed in making a living and caring for their family members in the village, while others experience difficulties with this. This results in criticism of rural-urban migration for putting pressure on urban infrastructure and exacerbating the phenomenon of urban unemployment, especially when cities are not well prepared to accommodate this increasing number of migrants (Uwimbabazi & Lawrence, 2011).

The issues of unemployment and poorly paid jobs are another challenge facing migrants. Some migrants, when unable to find steady work, rely on causal labour to support themselves in the city, like one young man named Bahati who left his village for Kigali in 2012, when he was nineteen and had dropped out of school in his final year due to inability to pay the fees. In the city, he worked as a fare collector on a minibus taxi, but lost the job after less than a year, when the authorities banned minibus taxis within the city.[17] Since then, he started working as a porter at the Nyabugogo bus station, where people pay him to transport heavy luggage from the car park to the bus. He told me that his earnings from this job depends on the number of customers: he may earn a fair amount of money one day and nothing at all the next. His urban life is characterised by fluctuations in income, and he does not have the means to care for his father in the village. Thus, caring for elders in the village depends on the capacity of the migrant. When people can care for those left behind, one wonders what care practices take place in the context of rural-urban migration.

6.3 Caring Practices in the Context of Rural-Urban Migration

Migrants undertake different activities to care for their ageing parents left in rural areas. The geographical difference between elders and their children does not prevent the latter from supporting their parents. Caring practices for those left in rural areas have a deep significance: they demonstrate that their migrant children have not abandoned them and also show the attachment and commitment of adult children to their old parents. Migrants provide care to their older parents while staying apart, and this is caring at distance (Merla et al., 2020). Care practices by migrant children for their old parents left in rural areas take various forms, as described in the following sub-sections.

[17] When implementing the Strategic Transport Master Plan for Rwanda, the city administration banned minibus taxis and replaced them with a system of more comfortable and higher capacity full-sized buses. See MININFRA, The Strategic Transport Master Plan, 2012.

6.3.1 Remittances

Remittances are commonly defined as cash or in-kind transfers from one location to another (De Bruyn & Wets, 2006). Here, this means cash transfers from urban to rural areas. I focus on cash transfers because they are currently used by all the families discussed in this section. Remittances are an important form of care by migrants for their ageing parents in rural areas, to whom they are sent through mobile money transfer services or entrusted to a reliable person going to the village. One example is Daniel, who has lived in Kigali since 2008. He was employed as a civil servant until 2014, when he was dismissed during a national public service reform. Since then, he has been self-employed and owns a small neighbourhood shop. When we met in February 2020, he told me how he sends remittances to his parents. He opened an account with a mobile money transfer service[18]. that allows him to send money to an agent in the village who will give it to his parents. Once he has sent money, he informs his parents and tells them where to pick it up.

Mobile money transfer is an easy and reliable way of sending money to ageing parents in rural areas that is also convenient, fast, and cheap (Argent et al., 2013). Daniel is in close contact with the agent in the village and always sends money to him rather than directly to his father's telephone – his father always forgets the password, which makes withdrawing the money more complicated. Daniel explained that 'elders experience memory lapses, and it is not good to stress them when I send them money' and that his agent is a trustworthy person; otherwise, the agent can use the money for his business. (Interview with Daniel, 12 February 2020, Kigali).

Mobile money agents thus serve as intermediaries between adult children sending money from the city and ageing parents receiving it in the villages.

Daniel also sends remittances to his parents through associates who are travelling to the village from the city. During my second visit to him in January 2021, a man came into his shop and chatted with him about various topics for a couple of minutes. When he was about to leave, Daniel took money from the drawer, gave it to him, and said *Uzabansuhurize!* (pass my greetings on to them). I did not know how much money he gave him, because he had folded the red banknotes. After the man left the shop, Daniel explained to me that he was a friend

[18] Mobile money service was first introduced in Rwanda by MTN telecommunication operator in 2010, followed by Tigo in 20211 and Airtel in 2013. In 2018, Tigo merged with Airtel and became Airtel-Tigo. Nowadays, MTN and Airtel-Tigo telecommunication operators provide the service. See The Newtimes Newspapers, 25January 2018.

from his village who had to travel there the following day and that he had given him money for his parents. When I asked Daniel if he was sure that the money would reach his parents, he replied: 'You cannot give your money to just anyone, you give it to someone you know well and trust. That man has been my friend since my childhood, and I am sure that he will give it to my parents.' (Interview with Daniel, 12 February 2020, Kigali).

He further told me that sending money this way is slower than a mobile money transfer. However, it had the advantage of his friend visiting his parents, giving them the money directly, and returning to the city with all their news.

Both ways of sending remittances to ageing parents in rural areas require an intermediary and trust in this intermediary is a central element in the sender's decision about whether to send remittances. Lianos & Pseiridis (2013) emphasise the relevance of trust in this decision and how such trust in the person bearing the money and his ability to deliver it to the recipient is required before a migrant will decide to remit money. In this light, adult children living in Kigali fear that the money they remit to their parents might end up in the wrong hands. This is why they use people whom they trust and are careful when selecting someone to carry money to or receive money for their parents. Most of the informants I talked with in Kigali frequently use these forms of remittances. Among their merits are reliability, quickness, and easy use.

Elders Appreciation for Remittances

Elders expect to receive remittances from their children once they migrate to the city. When they receive them, they appreciate it and consider the sender of remittances as a source of pride for the family. This is the case with Daniel's father, Anastase, whom I mentioned earlier. He is proud of him for sending him money to meet his needs through a mobile money agent operating in the village. In this village, such agents serve as intermediaries between parents and their children when they send and receive money. Remittances give prestige to elders in their local settings. Thus, receiving them is not only about the money itself but also sentiment and emotion in the village towards people who get money from their migrant children. The local community considers ageing beneficiaries of remittances valuable people who can help them when they need money themselves. Neighbours will ask elders who they know have money for a loan if they have a problem come up that requires money to be solved. Anastase is one elder whose remittances from his children benefit his neighbours.

One morning, I saw a man talking quietly with Anastase in the corner of the fenced yard, near the cowshed. Then, Anastase went into his house and came back out holding banknotes that he gave to the man, who took the money, said goodbye, and left. When I asked Anastase about this encounter, he told me that the man had come to borrow money because his wife was sick and he wanted to take her to the health centre. When I asked how the man knew that Anastase had money, he explained to me that the people in that village knew that his children sent him money, and some had seen him go to the mobile money agent to collect it. When I insisted on knowing why he had given him money without hesitating, he replied that he knew the man to be an honest person and have integrity. Anastase was sure that he would pay it back soon. He added that *'Umuturanyi aruta umuvandimwe wa kure.'* ('A neighbour is better than a brother who lives far from you.') He said that the neighbour would be the first to come to the rescue when a problem occurred. In this case, I realised that remittances not only help elders meet their needs but also provide them with social status in the village. Moreover, remittances to Anastase benefit both him and the surrounding neighbours. Anastase is given social consideration in his village because of his wealth. In this way, wealth in money creates wealth in people. Anastase's case shows how money has a vital social role by connecting people and enhancing social status and the position of an older adult in society.

In other societies, like Ghana, giving money to an older adult is an act of respect (Van der Geest, 1997). In the Rwandan context, giving money to elders is not only paying them respect but also makes them respected by the surrounding community. Throughout my fieldwork, I would hear people greeting Anastase with the expression *mwaramutse,* a plural form of 'good morning' which is often used when greeting very highly respected persons in the Rwandan society. However, I never heard anyone greet him with the less respectful singular form *waramutse*. Addressing an older adult with respect signifies recognition by the surrounding community. Anastase is, thus, an elder who is respected for his social-economic status in his community and on whom his neighbours can rely when they need money. As people say, *'Ufite ifaranga arubahwa':* 'Money commands respect.'

On the other hand, André, another elder in a different village, is not treated by his neighbours in the same way as Anastase's. André is the father of Bahati, also mentioned above, and lives in a small house in Rubengera village. He has only a little land near the house and lives by guca inshuro (cultivating his neighbours' land for food). In all the times I visited him, I never heard his neighbours addressing him with respect, as was the case with Anastase: they always said

‘waramutse’ when greeting him. Some added his name: ‘Waramutse, André.’ This also meant they were denying him appropriate deference. In Rwandan culture, respected persons are not addressed by name, so this also signalled his low socio-economic.

André is aware of his situation as a poor elder who does not have the wealth to attract the respect of his neighbours. His son Bahati, who lives in the city, could have brought him wealth, but this was not the case. He does not understand why his son does not send him money like his neighbours’ children in the city and complains about his son’s selfishness in rarely sending him money. In Rwandan society, migrant children who do not meet expectations of taking care of their ageing parents are accused of being ungrateful or selfish. In other societies, such as Cape Verde, migrant children who do not care properly for their family members left behind are accused of laziness and stinginess (Drotbohm, 2015). In both cases, the attitude is related to negative reciprocity – the tendency to reciprocate each other’s negative behaviour (Burman et al., 1993).

Furthermore, rural people in Rwanda tend to associate migration to the city with quickly and easily accumulating money. Therefore, a failure to send money to the relatives results in a negative perception that is called the urban myth. What the rural family members do not understand, however, is that life in the city is more difficult and money is not so easy to get (Mutandwa et al., 2011). André thinks about his son from the perspective of this urban myth.

Young people who migrate to the city are expected to care for the family members they leave in the village through remittances. However, this depends on an ability to do so which they do not necessarily gain simply by living in the city. Some have difficult situations which mean they lack the means to care for those left in the village. Elders who receive them gain respect and enlarge their social networks and those who do not face disrespect and shrinking social networks. Money is an essential resource in the everyday life of elders, so it is reasonable both for some elders to appreciate their children who keep sending them remittances to meet their needs and for others to complain about not receiving adequate remittances from theirs.

The two situations reflect inequalities and hardships in urban life that influence remittances to those left behind. Care providers’ capacities determine their ability to provide care in the form of remittances. In the case of Anastase, the care provider has this ability, while in André’s it is quite non-existent. The way migrants send remittances to their ageing parents in the

village impacts their position in their local community. Hence, community members treat Anastase and André differently based on their socio-economic status.

Remittances are not the only way of caring for ageing parents at a distance in Rwandan society. Telephone calls also play a significant role in caring for elders living in rural areas.

6.3.2 Telephone Calls

Telephone calls are among the means for social interactions between people at different locations. A telephone call constitutes an essential part of the intimate relationship between migrants and their family members (Drotbohm, 2015) and migrants use them to enact emotional care for their ageing parents left in the village. One informant I met with in Kigali said, 'The telephone calls to my parents allow me to exchange my news with parents and know about their everyday situation, whether they have a problem or not.' (Interview with Vestine, 27 February 2020, Kigali). In this way, telephone calls help keep migrants continuously updated about their parents' living conditions and let them know when they need to intervene.

Telephone calls connect elders with their migrant children and bring them closer despite the geographical distance. They are not only used in exchanging news but also are used to provide advice. Adult children are their parents first advisers on various matters. For example, Daniel's parents ask him for advice whenever they undertake a project.

> Last time I called my parents, they informed me that they wanted to buy a cow. They asked me to advise them about whether this was a good decision, and whether I would pay someone to feed the cow, which I willingly agreed to.' (Interview with Daniel, 12 February 2020, Kigali).

In this case, Daniel's parents wanted him to advise them and to agree to contribute to feeding and caring for the cow. As Daniel is their main provider of care, they could not buy the cow without informing him of their plans and preparing him to bear some of the expenses.

Telephone calls are a tool that helps to maintain constant interaction between children and their parents. They also help ageing parents get advice from their children about how to deal with complex issues. It is culturally recognised that parents provide advice to their children (Davis et al., 2019). However, they also seek advice from them, especially when they are dealing with situations they are not used to. This is the case with Vestine, a teacher at one of

the secondary schools in Kigali. During my interview with Vestine, I heard her mobile telephone ring several times. As she used speakerphone to take the calls, I was able to hear a man's voice saying, 'Call me. I want to talk to you.' Then he hung up. Vestine went out of the house with her telephone and was on the phone for at least ten minutes, but she had switched off the speaker and I did not hear their conversations. When she returned to the house, she said, 'It was my father.' She explained that he had a problem related to land tax. He had received a letter from the Rwanda Revenue Authority telling him that he was in arrears. Since his land was in an agricultural zone, not a residential one, it should have been exempt from taxation, so he needed advice about how to deal with this problem. Vestine told me that she would write to the Revenue Authority and explain her father's situation: she believed his agricultural land had incorrectly been assessed as if it were in a business district.[19]

Using telephone calls to interact with elders and provide advice on challenging situations they cannot handle by themselves is a valuable way of enacting emotional care for elders. Having someone to provide advice whenever needed increases the feeling of being emotionally supported.

Elders who have mobile telephones find it easy to interact with their children living in the city. Those without mobile telephones use their neighbours'. André, who was mentioned above, is does this whenever he wants to talk to his son. On the third day I visited him, a young boy came to André's house to tell him he had a call. He went to his neighbour's house for at least thirty minutes. When he returned, he told me that his son Bahati had called. He was happy to hear from him as it had been several months and he was worried, but his son explained that he had lost his phone and could not call. André had thought that something terrible might have happened, so this call was a relief.

In this way, telephone calls not only enable constant interactions among migrants and their ageing parents but also provide everyone with news about each other's living situations, which helps to reduce worries and anxiety on both sides, and transfers additional knowledge as well. Even if André complains about his son not sending remittances, he still feels

[19] Law No 75/2018 of 07/09/2018 on the source of revenue and property of decentralized entities exempts owners of two hectares or less if the land is used for agricultural or livestock activities. See the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No 44 of 29/10/2018.

uncomfortable when he does not hear his news. Telephone calls are one of the main tools that help him stay in touch with his son and talk with him about his living situation.

The use of mobile telephones in rural areas of Rwanda is a result of the Rwandan Government's efforts to invest in modern information communication technology (ICT) in all aspects of the country's life. This commitment has resulted in access to and the penetration of ICT into various segments of society, particularly in rural areas. For instance, by January 2021 out of the total Rwandan population of 13.11 million, 9.69 million had access to a mobile telephone (Global Digital Overview, 2021). The penetration of mobile telephones into rural areas has allowed elders to obtain them and become familiar with their use when interacting with their faraway children. Hence, they reduce the geographical distance between ageing parents in rural areas and their children in the city and bring them together. Since their introduction in Rwanda in 1998, communication between family members in different locations has become easier (Donner, 2006): landline telephones were unavailable in rural areas, so calls there were impossible. With the expansion of the mobile network to rural areas, there is now rapid communication between elders in rural areas and their children in the city. Even elders without a mobile telephone can communicate with their children living in the city with their neighbours' help.

6.3.3 Visits to Elders: A way of Providing Proximate Care

Elders living in villages expect their children to visit them, even if they live far away, and this is one of the ways of providing proximate care to them. The presence of children at their parents' homes brings them happiness. On my second visit to Adela, I met her visiting daughter. When I entered the house, Adela called her daughter in from the yard to greet me. Adela told me that her daughter had been there since the day before and said 'Yanyibutse.' (She remembered me). Then, she explained to me that her daughter visited more often than her sons.

This conversation with Adela revealed that ageing parents imagine that children do not think about their parents when not visiting them as a metaphor for forgetting them. Those who seldom visit their ageing parents, like Adela's sons, do not necessarily never think about them. However, elders think that migrants' interest in their parents is made concrete by their travelling from the city to visit them. If this does not take place, the parents say 'Baratwibagiwe.' (They have forgotten us). Migrant children owe their ageing parents visits,

which also helps prevent their being criticised for forgetting own parents. Elders form the idea that they have been abandoned when they do not receive any visits from their migrant children (Drotbohm, 2015).

Adela's daughter explained to me that she visited her mother whenever she had the time and means to do so. She is a nurse at a hospital in Kigali and said that her job was very demanding and did not allow her to visit her mother as much as she would like. She must plan visits around her time off, but also must have enough money to pay for the trip and to bring a gift for her mother. Whenever she visits her mother, she brings some foods that are not grown in the village or some clothes to her mother. She said, 'I cannot come home empty handed. I have to bring something from the city to my mother.' (Interview with Chantal, 7 January 2020, Rubengera). Since providing proximate care through visits to ageing parents in the village requires the time and money to travel to the village with a gift, it is not only willingness on the side of migrant children but also their resources and time that determines the frequency of visits to ageing parents.

Adela appreciates how her daughter brings her gifts or other products from the city. She enjoys the food she cooks with the ingredients she brings from the city. Adela told me that she eats delicious food when Chantal is there, and she admires her cooking style. And although the food is delicious because of her culinary skills and the ingredients she uses, sharing it with her makes it even more delicious. Adela lives alone and eats alone when she does not have a visitor to share the food. There is a proverb '*Biryoha bisangiwe*' ('Food tastes better when shared'), and recent research indicates that eating together with family members is a highly significant social and psychological event for elders. They meet and exchange stories and experiences while sharing the food (van Eeuwijk, 2007). It is thus a joyful moment for Adela when she gets to do this with her daughter. Furthermore, when older adults have food and share it with their relatives, it creates strong ties between them (Nyambedha, 2008). Likewise, Adela's daughter cooking food and sharing it with her mother symbolises her solid devotion and attachment to her.

In Karongi District, daughters are appreciated for visiting their ageing parents and what they did when they arrived there. During visits, they perform domestic chores for their parents that Rwandan society's culturally constructed gender roles do not allow sons to perform, so their ageing parents wish they could stay forever. They wish to have their children present at home because elders cannot perform in the same way as their children. As Sjaak Van der Geest

(2002) indicates in his research on care for elders in rural Ghana, it also includes performing activities for those who have impediments to doing them themselves.

Furthermore, Adela is not the only person who appreciates visits from her daughter more than her sons. Anastase confirms that daughters visit their ageing parents in the village more than sons. One weekend in December 2019, his daughter came to visit and brought him clothes, including a jacket and a pair of trousers. She also brought *igitenge* for her mother. This is a famous cloth used for women's clothes in Rwanda (and other East African countries like Tanzania and Kenya; its Swahili name is *kitenge*). Offering igitenge to an aged woman represents a precious gift. In my conversation with Anastase's daughter, she explained that she had brought money and new clothes so her parents could properly celebrate Christmas and the new year, which many people in Rwanda celebrate by wearing new clothes and eating and drinking special foods. The community perceives those who cannot do this as poor, so providing elders with what they need for the festivities is another form of care migrant children provide to their ageing parents.

In my conversation with Anastase, I asked why his son Daniel did not visit him during my stay in his home. He explained that his son was always busy with his business. When he sent money and called him, he claimed to have fulfilled his duty, but he was forgetting that his presence at home was just as essential as sending money. When I met Daniel in Kigali, he also admitted that he did not visit his parents frequently. He had to stay in his shop waiting for customers to come and spend money so he could pay his own expenses and send the rest to his parents. Daniel had to balance visiting his parents in the village with selling products in his shop in the city. He praised the advances in technology, such as mobile money transfer services and telephone calls, for helping him to interact with his parents, but they want to see him at home and feel his presence. From their perspective, the emotional feature of care, as explained by Thelen (2015), is an important aspect of relationships among kin.

A visit to one's ageing parents provides an opportunity to furnish both physical and emotional care, things that are not possible with distant care like remittances and telephone calls. However, it should be noted that this kind of care is gendered care. All the informants above report more visits from their daughters than their sons. While sons send money and talk to their parents on the phone, daughters go beyond offering distant care, visit their parents bringing gifts, and perform domestic chores for them at their homes. Other research indicates

that female migrants maintain stronger connections with their ageing parents in their place of origin through having more contact with them (Wahba & Wang, 2019).

It is worth noting that visits to ageing parents in the village are times for parents to give as well as receive gifts. Migrants who visit their parents with gifts also always return to the city with a gift from their parents. For example, Anastase's daughter went home with several kilograms of peas and a bunch of bananas, while Adela's daughter got a rooster. When children and their parents exchange gifts it is an important act of caring. Caring practices, described as acts of giving, play a crucial role in making care meaningful to all the parties involved (Liebelt, 2015). When ageing parents and their children exchange gifts, everyone is expected to accept the gifts they are offered. It is not its value that counts but the genuine intention of the giver that makes it meaningful. Any kind of gift from ageing parents is always accepted as it symbolises the value the giver attaches to the gift's receiver. Mauss (2002) when describes the exchange and acceptance of gifts in Polynesian society in the early twentieth century as regulated by the law of morality. Similarly, in Rwanda a gift is always accepted and appreciated as to refuse one would be to reject the bond of alliance and commonality and thus show contempt for the giver. However, accepting a gift is interpreted as an expression of respect to the giver. Given the respect that children owe to their parents and the value that ageing parents give to their children, both find it delightful to exchange gifts with each other.

6.3.4 Housing Provision

Everyone in Rwanda hopes to have a roof over their head, especially in rural areas. Elders enjoy living in a proper house with a roof that does not leak when it rains. This resembles Van der Geest's (2003) account of Ghanaian society, in which the economic position of elders depends on whether they have been able to build or otherwise acquire a house. In Rwandan, having a house indicates a higher socio-economic status within the society. In Karongi District, some elders have houses that need to be repaired or replaced, but not all of them are able to do so and their adult children must undertake this responsibility. Migrants expect to build or renovate their parents' houses in the village and providing a house for one's ageing parents is a key caring activity, one that Rwandan culture sees as providing an asset that all members of the family will enjoy. Hence, a house is a source of pride for the family and a symbol of family unity (Byanafashe, 1997) that expresses intergenerational reciprocity and recognition of what

ageing parents did for the child. When migrants achieve this aim, they are proud. Eric expressed his satisfaction as follows:

> ‘When I left my village for the city, I was expected to show those left in the village that I had been doing something in the city. So, I built a house for my parents and when I go there, I am proud of having built that house there. If you fail to provide an appropriate house for your parents, people in the village will always criticise you by saying that you have been carried away by the city’s leisure and are doing nothing for your parents.’ (Interview with Eric, 15 February 2020, Kigali).

Migrant children build a house in the village not only to care for their ageing parents but also to avoid being criticised by the surrounding community. It is also one way to avoid public shaming and attract admiration by the surrounding community that constitutes symbolic capital for migrants. Furthermore, research has indicated that the accumulation of symbolic capital increases the family’s social standing (Bourdieu, 1986). The symbolic capital resulting from building a house benefit both migrants and their ageing parents who live there. There is thus a kind of social control that pushes migrants to preserve their dignity by building a house in the village. As Eric put it,

> ‘I was uncomfortable with the house where my parents lived before. It was a small house where I grew up, and I was ashamed of not having the means to change it. I was sometimes reluctant to go to the village because of the state of my parents’ house. With my job as a motorcycle taxi driver, I started saving money for that purpose, and after three years of saving, I built the house.’ (Interview with Eric, 15 February 2020, Kigali).

For migrants to build a house in the village for their parents, they must mobilise the necessary resources. These are not obtained all at once but acquired over time. Migrants cannot build a house immediately after migrating to the city: to mobilise the resources, they must have had the opportunity to earn an income there. Otherwise, building a house in the village remains a distant dream. This is the case with Bahati mentioned earlier. With his precarious job and modest means, he does not expect to be able build a house for his father. Furthermore, he does not plan to build a house of his own in the village, as no land is available: his father sold almost all of it some years ago.

Those who migrate to urban areas do not expect to remain there all their lives. They envision returning to live in their village. Migrants who succeed in building a house become motivated to go back. While they give the houses to their ageing parents, they are the owners and will reclaim them when the parents die. Thus, building a house in the village is a farsighted provision for their own future social security. Likewise, not being able to build a house in the village is perceived by the local community as a kind of blindness to the future. One informant I met in Kigali, recalls the recent experience of urban dwellers who moved to their village of origin when the Genocide Against the Tutsi was intensifying in Kigali in 1994. Migrants who had built houses in the villages easily integrated into the rural areas, while those who had not struggled to manage life in a small house with their parents. This experience points to the necessity of building a house in a village in a country that is prone to violent conflicts. In the case of an escalation of violence in the city, city dwellers may take refuge in their village of origin. A house in the village serves multiple purposes. It is an asset that serves to care for ageing parents, but also for the adult children themselves if they are compelled to live in the village due to sudden and unexpected changes in the city.

It is important to mention that migrant's care practice for their ageing parents through housing provision cannot be taken for granted but must always be renegotiated over time. This was the case with Kamali, whom I mentioned in Chapter Four. When he came into conflict with his children about his second marriage, they stopped supporting him and refused to renovate the house where he lived. This particular situation requires thinking about care not only as positive protection and inclusion but also as something that can lead to exclusion and neglect (Drotbohm, 2015).

Providing a house to elders is one way of caring for them. However, this form of care provision is not enough when it is taken separately from other kinds of care practices. Housing provision must thus be situated within the range of care practices of migrant children for their ageing parents, which include the provision of health insurance. The following section discusses how this is another care practice by migrant children for their ageing parents.

6.3.5 Health Insurance Provision to Elders

In Rwanda, health insurance is essential for everyone's access to health care. This is especially the case with elders, who are often more vulnerable to diseases, including chronic ones (NISR, 2015). In 1999, the government of Rwanda established a community-based health insurance

(CBHI) scheme, commonly known as 'Mutuelle de santé,' to provide universal health coverage. Before that, only employees of the government, large private companies, and non-governmental organisations were covered by health insurance (MOH, 2010). CBHI enables a significant segment of the Rwandan population in the informal sector to access healthcare. Data from the Rwandan Institute of Statistics indicates that most elders in rural areas work in the informal sector – specifically, small-scale farming (NISR, 2015), so they must subscribe to the CBHI to gain access to health care services. Those with migrant children often rely on them to pay their premiums.

Daniel, whom I mentioned earlier, explained that in addition to the remittances he sends to his parents he also pays for their health insurance. He pays the annual premiums to their local Credit and Saving Cooperative (SACCO) branch and then takes the receipt to the nearest health centre to renew their insurance card. He also told me that his parents do not always know the exact due date since the community health insurance term is different from the calendar year: it starts in July and ends in June of each year to match the fiscal year of the Rwandan government and this sometimes confuses people. Daniel shared his father's experience with me. Once, he sent him money to pay for his insurance, but his father did not do so right away as he did not realise that it was going to expire at the end of the month. Then, he contracted malaria just after his health insurance expired. This error cost him a lot of money: without insurance he had to pay the entire cost of the treatment, but if he had paid the insurance on time, he would only have had to pay 10%. Based on that experience, Daniel decided he would start paying his parents' premiums personally to make sure they were on time.

Community health insurance allows elders to access health services at a low cost. When the parents know that their premiums have been paid, they are confident that they will get medical care and do not worry about that, even when they fall ill. However, migrant children have a second reason pay for their parents' insurance. Not only do they want to care for their ageing parents by getting them easy access to health care services, but they also need to protect their own financial situation in case their parents become ill.

Often, migrants are not asked to pay if their ageing parents are covered by community health insurance. Anastase told me that whenever he is sick he does not hesitate to seek medical treatments at the health centre and pay himself, without asking his children to help out. The co-payment is low, and he can afford it on his own. However, without community health

insurance, he could not afford the cost of medical treatment. The policy on community-based health insurance in Rwanda entitles those enrolled in community-based health insurance to the services of health centres, district hospitals, and referral hospitals (MOH, 2010) and elders can seek health services from all these institutions without worrying about the cost.

Even though community-based health insurance is designed to allow the segment of the population in the informal sector access to the health insurance system, some elders have difficulty paying their contributions. André reports that he is unable to access it, as he does not receive support from his migrant children. But apart from those like him who lack such support, paying for their ageing parents' CBHI is a typical caring practice for migrant children who live apart from them.

Even though migrants recognise their duty to care for their ageing parents left in the villages, they must balance this with their own needs. The following section discusses that issue in detail.

6.4 Balancing One's Own Competing Needs and the Provision of Care

While migrant children's needs and responsibilities in urban areas keep increasing, their resources are not increasing proportionally. This limits their ability to respond to the needs of their ageing parents in the village as well as their own households in the city. Kigali's rapid growth is making urban life more and more expensive. During my fieldwork there, people reported difficulties in meeting their own needs and the care needs of their parents.

The second time I visited Daniel, in January 2021, he told me the cost of living in the city of Kigali was too high. He spoke of the high cost of goods and services and the increasing school fees. Daniel is married and has three children, two in secondary school (at a boarding school), and the youngest in primary school. He lives in his own house in a Kigali neighbourhood and his wife is a teacher at a primary school nearby. Daniel lamented each months increasing water and electricity bills and he must also make payments on the loan for building his house. He shares other household costs with his wife, but there are also taxes on his business. At the beginning of school terms, he has no money left to send his parents as he must pay their tuition and for materials at the beginning of the semester and this is especially expensive for the two in boarding school. When his household's needs conflict with his parents', he must

prioritise the former, so timing is very important: he must send support to his parents at times when he has fewer family expenses.

Daniel's case is very different from that of Bahati, who was mentioned earlier. Bahati is a single man who does not own a house in the city. When I met him, he told me he had no steady job – he makes his living carrying passengers' luggage at the bus station – and earned hardly enough money to meet his needs. He said, 'Life here in the city is tough', explaining that one day he might earn money, and another go home empty handed. Thus, he must spend the little money he earns carefully. Bahati rarely sends money to his father since he has such difficulty supporting himself in the city. He cannot plan when and how much to send because he has no control over his situation and must decide based on the circumstances at the time.

Furthermore, Bahati does not feel obliged to send money all the time because his father sold all his land without considering his children's future. He only sends a remittance on a good day when he has earned enough by carrying many people's luggage.

These two cases indicate how migrants in different socio-economic situations face the growing challenges of urban life when required to provide financial and material support to their ageing parents in rural villages. These needs vary according to the socio-economic status of the individuals. Daniel must time support for his parents properly, recalling the relevance of timing over an individual's life course and the connectedness between the time frames of an individual, that of a family, and historical time (Häberlein, 2015). In the case of Bahati, he cannot predetermine when to send his father a remittance as his life in the city is full of uncertainty; he only does it when the opportunity arises. The common point in both cases is recognising a duty to support those left in the village. On the one hand, this duty is challenged by concurrent needs that require timing and prioritising to satisfy them; on the other, it is challenged by the lack of sufficient means to sustain oneself in the city.

Research on intergenerational support and old age in Africa indicates that growing economic constraints and an escalation of needs on the part of migrant children is the source of inadequacies in providing care to elders (Aboderin, 2006). Likewise, research on the implication of demographic changes and ageing for social protection in Rwanda points to the economic hardships faced by migrants and their inability to respond to their own needs as the cause of the fragility of support to elders in rural areas (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2020).

Therefore, I argue that the prevalent socio-economic changes in urban areas force migrants to balance support for their ageing parents with responding to their own needs since they have limited means to respond to a multiplicity of needs. Thus, caring for those left behind in the village not only depends on the willingness of migrants to do so but also on their ability to mobilise resources to respond to their own needs and those of their parents in the village.

Given this situation of needs versus means in terms of caring for elders, the rural-urban migration of the young generation undoubtedly has created a care gap for the elders left in the village.

6.5 Care Gaps in the Waves of Rural-Urban Migration

'Instead of sending money, come with it.' – Anastase

The above statement from Anastase highlights how important the care provider's presence is to elders. Those I talked to in Karongi District indicated the existence of care gaps caused by their adult children's absence. Adela described how she misses her adult children's basic care. Whenever she has a problem, her children are not around to help; at first only her neighbours are there to intervene. When she gets really sick, her neighbours take her to the health centre for treatment and inform her children, who only come later once she is already there. She recognises that her children pay all the costs related to her medical treatment, but she deplores how they are not present to take her to the health centre when she needs them most. Thus, if children are not around to care for elders at the critical moment, neighbours assume their caring role.

Even if elders in Karongi District recognise the importance of rural-urban migration, they emphasise its negative impact on how they are cared for when it deprives them of proximate care. In the absence of vertical care, elders rely on horizontal care from their social networks of surrounding neighbours. This is related to the life-course nature of social relationships, where people in the social network adopt various supportive roles depending on the needs of the people related to them (McCarty et al., 2019). It is therefore in the interest of rural elders to strengthen and enlarge their social networks over time so they can mobilise necessary support in the absence of the children. To this end, they adopt various strategies for social networking, such as sharing available resources like crops with them, giving one land for hinga tugabane or joining a saving group.

The need for proximal care arises not only in times of crisis but also in everyday life. Elders in Karongi District express their wish to have their children close by or at least come home frequently to visit. In my conversation with Anastase he said, 'Instead of sending money, come with it.' (Interview with Anastase, 4 December 2019, Mubuga).

This does not mean Anastase would turn down money remitted to him by his children in the city. However, he would prefer for them to bring it themselves, as this might make them visit him more often. He wants to feel the warmth of their presence at home rather than interact with them at a distance.

Sometimes, elders do not understand why their migrant children do not visit them often. Adela questioned the fewer visits she was receiving from her children and asked, 'If they are busy during weekdays, then why not come home on the weekend?' (Interview with Adela, 7 January 2020, Rubengera).

Adela's questioning shows that that migrants' justifications for their fewer visits do not hold up. Parents understand what their children are doing in the city, but they do not like them to stay there all the time: they should not forget to come to the village to visit their parents.

Furthermore, rural-urban migration by the young generation has left a gap in the agricultural workforce. Young people in the village help their parents cultivate their land and grow various crops, and when they leave there is no one to take their place. This is the case with Beata, who used to cultivate rented land with her daughters and could grow enough food for her family. Once her daughters had migrated to the city, however, she struggled to cultivate the land alone and feed her family. Most rural households in Rwanda rely on agriculture to survive. It is thus essential for them to have the labour force for agricultural production. Because Beata does not have her own land, she must rent it from her neighbours and wants her daughters there to support her in making the rented land productive. In this context, rural-urban migration is a destabilising element of agricultural productivity in rural areas. I argue that rural-urban migration brings about new aspects of caring for elders even as it is leaving gaps in proximal care practices. In some cases, rural-urban migration makes ageing women become foster mothers for their grandchildren. The following section provides more details about elders caring for their grandchildren.

6.7 When Ageing Women Become Foster Mothers

'Instead of bringing money, they bring grandchildren.' – Beata

The statement came from an older woman, Beata, in Rubengera village. She expressed her dissatisfaction that her daughters living in the city leave the grandchildren with her to look after and return to the city alone. Grandmothers raising their grandchildren refers to the idea that children belong not only to their parents but also to the whole family. This reflects the Rwandan proverb '*Umwana ni uw'umuryango*.' ('A child belongs to the extended family.')

During my first visit to Beata in December 2019, she explained her discomfort about her unmarried daughters who bring her grandchildren to her. She is disappointed in her daughters because she did not expect them to bring back grandchildren when they migrated to the city. She had been expecting financial support from them, but unfortunately, they did not. She said, 'Instead of bringing money, they bring grandchildren.' (Interview with Beata, 23 December 2019, Rubengera).

She regretted how her daughters had sunk into what she considered deviant behaviour that resulted in undesired pregnancies. She said that when young girls are away from parental control and no one is there to scold them, they behave differently from when in rural areas. In other cultural settings, like in northern Benin and Togo, parents do not like the migration of adolescents because they move out of normative parental control (Häberlein, 2018). Parents in northern Benin and Togo have the same worries about the migration of adolescents as Beata, who cannot exercise parental control over her daughters when they are away from her.

In Rwanda, there is a cultural practice of grandparents fostering their grandchildren and providing them with day-to-day care. According to the cultural norm, a child belongs not only to its biological parents but also to its whole family. Hence, there is a shared responsibility among family members to care for the child and every family member must care for the child if necessary. Any family member can foster a child, especially when the biological parents cannot do so or are no longer alive (Dona et al., 2001). Children belonging to parents other than biological ones is a phenomenon not only of Rwandan culture but also various other African societies. One example is in northern Benin, especially in Baatombu society, where a child does not exclusively belong to its biological parents but also to its social ones (Alber, 2003). Research on fosterage in West Africa indicates that non-biological parents still raise

children. Fostering may aim at educating fostered children or mobilising their labour (Alber et al., 2010). Similarly, Coe (2018) indicates that fostering may serve as a way for busy adult children to provide care to ageing parents. In the context of migration, parents can leave their children with their grandparents and provide care to them at a distance through remittances (Coe, 2014). While child fosterage is a common practice in Africa and considered beneficial to the child's social and intellectual development, it is uncommon in Western countries where it is considered to risk coddling and spoiling the child (Bledsoe & Sow, 2011). In West Africa, fosterage is often done at the request of the foster parent and a child is one of the most precious gifts one can give or receive (Alber, 2003).

However, child fosterage in Beata's case differs slightly from the fosterage practices mentioned above. She did not request a grandchild from her daughters; rather, they left the village and returned to leave the children with their ageing mother for her to take care of without her consent. Beata recounted that her two daughters had left the village in 2009 to look for work in Kigali. In 2012, the elder came back with a nine-month-old boy that she left with her. Beata did not even know her daughter had been pregnant or given birth and only found out when she saw her arrive with a baby. According to Beata, the daughter promised to provide support, but she did not provide much. Since then, Beata has carried the burden of rearing a small child.

In 2015, the same daughter brought her a second child that was one year old. Now, she had to care for two grandchildren and also provide for her own household. In 2017, her second daughter brought another child, and she has since had the heavy responsibility of caring for three grandchildren. She did not receive as much support as either had promised, only occasional money when one of them is sick. When I asked why she kept accepting grandchildren from her daughters, she replied, '*Abana ni umugisha*,' which means 'children are a blessing.'

Beata is not happy about her daughters bringing her grandchildren. She explained to me that it is against cultural norms for a young girl to give birth without being married. When this happens, it represents either a failure of her parents to educate her or else her disobedience towards her parents. Beata tried to educate her daughters alone and to pass on cultural values to guide them throughout their lives, but the results were disappointing. Parents thus have the obligation to educate their children about what cultural values permit, *indangagaciro,* and about what they forbid as anti-values or taboos, *kirazira.* Research on kinship in Rwanda

indicates that single women struggle to raise and discipline children and to convey kinship norms and values without their husbands (Pontalti, 2018). If a child does not observe these norms, this constitutes a revolt against his parents. In this way, the community views young girls who give birth without being married as lacking indangaciro and having chosen to violate the cultural norm and disobey her parents. This is itself a violation of a cultural norm that it is the duty of children to always obey and respect their parents, even once married (Pontalti, 2018).

Beata indicated that if a young girl gives birth before marriage, it is shameful for the family. The surrounding community considers parents as bad educators or careless parents. It is also a loss for the family since the daughters are no longer *Nyampinga* (well-educated girls) who can unite two families through marriage and gain her parents the dowry expected for a well-educated daughter.

Beata is not the only older woman to lament migrant young girls giving birth before they are married. Another example, Yudita, was born in Rubengera in 1957. She married a man named Abdara in 1979 and had eight children, three daughters and five sons. All are married except for the youngest daughter. This daughter went to Kigali in 2014, came home in 2017 with an eighteen-month-old daughter that she left with her mother, and went back to the city. The next time she visited Yudita, her granddaughter was almost four years old, and she had been responsible for caring for her for over two years. She even had to carry her on her back when she went to cultivate her land, which was far away from home. She is not happy with the demanding responsibility of rearing a small child because it is very demanding. She said, 'It is not easy rearing a small child. It requires providing it with care every day. A small child cannot bring water or collect firewood. It is an additional responsibility that adds weight to the domestic tasks.' (Interview with Yudita, 29 December 2019, Rubengera).

Like Beata, Yudita receives little money to support her granddaughter from her migrant daughter. This is not enough to care for the granddaughter and pay others to work in the field and she must do both herself.

In both cases, the older women have assumed what Alber (2018b) calls social parenthood: they have accepted the responsibility of caring for a child who is not their biological child. The two cases also indicate the behavioural changes of migrant girls under the influence of urban life. While young girls are supposed to observe the cultural value of having sexual relations

only after marriage, they changed their behaviour when they migrated to the city, which resulted in unwanted pregnancies. However, older women are tolerant towards their daughters and accept these changes by caring for and raising their grandchildren, even if they have been born under circumstances contrary to cultural norms. In addition to that (although it is not the case with the older women discussed above) fostering children may be desirable if they are able to do chores such as fetching water, cooking, or collecting firewood. Otherwise, however, they become burdens.

In the above cases, it seems clear that child fostering is a gendered practice because it is only older women who look after their grandchildren, never older men. The gender division of labour in Rwandan culture assigns the duty to care for and raise children to women, not to men (Maquet, 1954; Byanafashe, 1997).

An analysis of older foster mothers points to an asymmetric care relationship between them and their migrant daughters. Older mothers who cared for their daughters when they were children are now not receiving the same level of care from them. However, they continue to care for the adult daughters by caring for their small children. In this situation, older women give more to their daughters than they receive from them. Furthermore, fostering grandchildren shows the interconnectedness of family life, where the event happening in the life of one individual affects other family members (Hagestad, 2009). In this case, the fact that a young girl has given birth before marriage affects her ageing mother, who must assume the duty of caring for another child despite her many other household responsibilities. It also affects her social status, as she is exposed to shame in the community for not educating her daughter well or making her follow cultural norms.

6.8 Conclusion

Rural-urban migration in Rwanda in general and in Karongi District in particular occurs in the context of labour migration. It is a survival strategy for young generations to become able to make a living and care for their ageing parents. Migration patterns affect caring practices for elders in the village. Care becomes distant and this leaves a gap in the proximate and emotional care that elders in the village most need. Elders must resort to their local social networks to fill the care gaps left by migrants. Even if migrants support their ageing parents through various forms of caring, their presence is more needed than their presents.

Furthermore, migrants care for their ageing parents by paying for insurance that grants them access to health care. They also build houses for their ageing parents in the village. Building a house constitutes pride for ageing parents, who receives a house, and the migrant, who escapes public shame.

There are some gender differences regarding the caregiver's presence at the parents' home in the village as migrant women frequently visit their ageing parents more than men. Hence, proximal care is gendered care. A caregiver's presence at the older parents' home allows an exchange of gifts among them. However, given the time and resources required to travel to the village migrants cannot visit their parents whenever they need it. In addition, empirical evidence indicates an asymmetrical care relationship between older women and their daughters, especially in cases where migrant daughters give birth before marriage and bring home grandchildren for them to raise. Instead of being cared for, older women must take on the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. Considering children a blessing makes older women accept raising their grandchildren, even if they do not receive much support from their daughters.

The chapter has argued that care for elders in the wave of rural-urban migration does not die out but is reconfigured and keeps adjusting to the ability of the migrants, as shaped by the economic constraints and their growing needs in urban areas.

Chapter VII: Housing Patterns and Land Scarcity's Effect on Elder care in Karongi District

7.1 Introduction

Land is an essential asset for making a living and thus in high demand in Karongi District. This chapter discusses past and contemporary landownership and housing patterns there, with an eye to how they relate to elder care practices.

First, I analyse elders' narratives of the practice of land inheritance and how land serves as the basis for care negotiations when children expect to inherit or not the land of their parents. Then, I investigate the occurrence of land-related conflicts among family members and how these conflicts affect caring practices for elders. When the demand for land increases, disputes over land also multiply and the local mediation committees called *Abunzi*[20] become important in resolving such conflicts. The chapter concludes that, in the context of land scarcity and changes in housing patterns, the provision of care to elders depends on elders' possession of land to maintain their power and prestige. However, the proximity of care depends on housing patterns: the closer the provider is to the receiver, the sooner the care is received.

7.2 Past Housing Patterns and Elder Care

As discussed in Chapter Two, caring for elders was the family's responsibility in the past, just as it is today, and was characteristic of the solid kinship ties and extended family bonds of the time (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). Descendants of a common ancestor normally lived together on the same hill and this housing pattern facilitated their everyday interactions and mutual support (Maquet, 1954).

In my discussions with elders in Karongi District, they romanticised pas housing patterns and caring practices for elders. In this section, 'past' refers to the days the elders interviewed were in their active age and caring for their own older parents and grandparents. In the past, according to Anastase, all family members lived together in the same compound. Parents and children lived in different houses in the same compound, but the head of the family

[20] Abunzi are committees that are responsible for providing mediation services that are required before parties can bring a case before a court. This organ exists at the cell and sector level. See Law No 020/2020 of 19/11/2020, amending Law No 37/2016 of 08/09/2016 determining the organisation, jurisdiction, competence, and functioning of Abunzi committees in Rwanda. In Official Gazette No Special of 20/11/2020.

coordinated all its activities, which mainly consisted of farm work. He organised all activities related to agriculture and farming and decided which land should be cultivated and which left fallow. The production of crops was the work of the whole family, and each member had a role to play. Men and young boys cleared and tilled the land, while the women and girls did domestic work, planted seeds, and tended the growing crops until the harvest.

Anastase further explains that when adult male children married, they received land in the compound and remained attached to the family and its activities. Living together was essential to family solidarity, cohesion, and mutual support. Anastase's narrative of family cohesion relates to Ntampaka's (1995) idea that family togetherness consists of a group of households related by blood relationships and possessing a common patrimony like land, cattle, and grazing rights. According to Anastase, this family lifestyle facilitated daily care for elders. He explained that no one could go to work in the morning without first going to the older parents' house to greet them and ask how they were. Whenever ageing parents had problems, they immediately asked their family members to help. He deplores the fact that families no longer live together.

> Today, everything has changed. Family members no longer live together, as was the case in the past, and the daily care that existed before is lacking. We elders now live alone and are provided with care occasionally. (Interview with Anastase, 1 December 2019, Mubuga).

In their narratives, elders in Karongi District praise the housing patterns and care practices of the past because they were based on the dominant ideals of solidarity and supporting each other among family members (Maquet, 1954). The tendency to eulogise past housing patterns and caring practices is related to what Laslett (1976) calls the 'world we have lost syndrome,' in which elders idealise the past and assume that care was once better than it is now.

It is important to note that changes in housing patterns in Rwanda have had an impact on elder care. In the past, this was provided in a proximal setting where all family members lived close to their ageing parents, but it is now rare to find a family whose members live together in rural areas of Karongi District. Socio-economic changes make the young generations move to other places for better opportunities. One should note that these changes in housing patterns affect both elders and members of other age categories in Karongi. In the past, a family's land was sufficient to supply to the needs of every family member, but land is

becoming scarce and some elders in Karongi District do not have enough to give some of it to their children. As indicated in Chapter 6, many adult children migrate to the city because of the lack of land in rural areas. Following Foner (1984), changes in society do not affect only one age group category: all are affected, even if not in the same way.

In Karongi District, elders are the ones who feel the magnitude of the change most: as they grow old, they need more proximate care. Changes in housing patterns go along with changes in caring practices. The proximal care that elders enjoyed in the past has been replaced by distal care, which differs in not being available any time it is needed. and takes time to arrive. Proximal care for elders is daily, while the distal care is occasional.

Thus, care for elders occurs within a process of changes that require both providers and receivers to continually adjust to the changing society with new forms of caring practices.

7.2.1 The Responsibility to Care for Elders in the Past

Caring for elders in the past was a shared responsibility of all family members and each had a specific role. Anastase said that adult men had to provide them with shelter as well as milk, and beer whenever they were thirsty, as elders rarely drank water. This meant men's duties included milking cows and brewing banana beer. Moreover, these had to be of good quality: it was unacceptable to give a*macunda* (skimmed milk) to elders, as this was only for children. It was the same with beer: well-brewed banana beer was reserved for the elders.

Similarly, Adela said that women and girls had a duty to provide care to elders daily. They had to cook for them, wash their clothes, sweep the house and compound, and make sure that there was always a fire in the kitchen to keep the house warm. Young boys herded cattle and collecting firewood, while teenagers fetched water and helped their mothers with domestic chores. Adela said: 'No old parent would be left alone without support. All the time, they were with family members to care for them.' (Interview with Adela, 7 January 2020, Rubengera).

Meanwhile, Adela explained, aged parents' role was to educate their grandchildren. They taught them the history of their ancestors, cultural values, and societal taboos. Drawing on these narratives, one can assume that in the past caring for elders was a joint and interactive family effort within the framework of the cultural, gendered division of labour.

However, in the past failing to care for elders was also associated with a fear of being cursed (*kuvuma*). As Adela explained, ageing parents whose family members did not provide them

with appropriate care could curse them and they would not be successful in their lives. To avoid that situation happening, people fulfilled their care obligations. Adela believed strongly in the cursing power of elders. She recalled the story of a neighbour who had lost his cattle because of being cursed for neglecting elders. She said that whenever family members failed to care properly for an ageing parent, the latter could curse them, which would lead to misery. However, elders also had the power to withdraw the curse if someone corrected his behaviour and bless him instead. The belief in elders' power to curse and bless made them command care and respect from kin members. Elders' cursing power in the Rwanda context is related to the metaphysical sanctions discussed by Aboderin (2006) in her research on intergenerational support and old age in Africa, which shows how metaphysical sanctions can result in a life of misfortune or an early death for those who fail in their filial obligation of caring for elders.

In addition to metaphysical sanctions, there were economic ones. The narratives of elders in Karongi District indicate that an elder used to have the power to refuse to give property, or to give less of it, to a son who had disobeyed him and failed to provide appropriate care. Anastase recalled that that an ageing father had to divide his property among his sons before his death. Those who had cared for him received extensive land and many cows, while those who had failed to care for him received little land and few cows. The testament of an aged parent could not be contested, and all family members had to accept it. Anastase recounted his family experience this way: 'I was the one who received plenty of land and cows from my father, before he died in 1967. I was always with him, helping him fill his pipe with good tobacco and light it, then bringing him the calabash of banana beer anytime he wanted them.' (Interview with Anastase, 1 December 2019, Mubuga). Anastase explained that the land where he grows coffee came from his father.

Caring for an ageing parent thus once gave protection against supernatural punishments. It also anticipated an inheritance when the elders died. Hence, caring for them was also an act of investing in one's own social security. It was thus in the children's interest to strategise on how to get enough property from their ageing parents by providing proper care to them. Research on kinship in Rwanda indicates that land inheritance was way children could overcome constraints and enhance their opportunities (Pontalti, 2018).

However, caring for elders did not end at their death: it extended beyond it. The interactions between the deceased parents and his family members continued to occur through the ritual of *guterekera*, (to honour an ancestor). Anastase explained how this ritual was performed. He

said that the death of an elder in the family involved various ceremonies. After a mourning period, the sons of the deceased father built a hut in the backyard that served as place for the deceased and his family members to meet. To avoid the deceased's spirit, or *umukurambere*, troubling the survivors, the new head of the family had to offer him his favourite products in the hut, which were usually mainly beer and meat. When making the offering, the head of the family made a speech in his honour and beseeched him to give peace and prosperity to the family members alive since they had not forgotten him. The head of the family performed the guterekera ritual regularly. Any problem in the family (like a sickness) would signify the ancestor's dissatisfaction and getting rid of the problem required performing the ritual to appease his spirit and stop it from harming the living family members. Research indicates that this ritual reinforced family unity and conviviality and after it family members would gather in the family head's house to share part of the meat and drink they had offered to the ancestor (Maquet, 1954).

Guterekera was thus a practice of caring for deceased elders and a way to gain security for family members, who expected it to bring them a peaceful and prosperous life. While this ritual is still practiced in some parts of Rwanda, especially in the north, my informants say that due to Christianity's dominance few people still practice it in Karongi District.

7.3 Current Housing Patterns and Elder care in Karongi District

When an elder is asked to compare past and the present housing patterns, the answer is that they have profoundly changed. Anastase explained that family members now live in different places. Ageing parents live apart from their children, who either live in nucleated settlements or in urban areas under living conditions that differ from those in rural areas. In this context, children do not learn promptly of the daily problems of the parents who stayed behind. Anastase indicated that such children respond to problem more slowly than they might if present at home. He said, 'Faraway children cannot know whether you have to eat or not, unless you inform them. This was not the case in the past. Family members watched over the elders' well-being constantly.' (Interview with Anastase, 1 December 2019, Mubuga).

This narrative confirms that the provision of care for elders in the rural settlements in Rwanda is affected when family members move far away from them. However, such changes do not eliminate caring practices for elders: it is only their modality that changes. Care for elders was a daily practice in the past that was not demanded but rather a norm. Now, ageing parents

must contact a care provider who is not present and who can decide when and how to respond to the concerns they express.

The dynamism of the Rwandan society has induced changes in housing patterns and caring practices for elders. This is particularly true for adult children who prefer to live in other locations far from their parents' homesteads. Factors that underpin these changes are mainly the education of the younger generations, the depletion of resources in rural areas, and the rural settlement policy.

7.3.1 Young Generations' Education

Parents in Karongi District like to invest in their children's education because it opens opportunities for formal employment and qualifies them for salaried jobs. However, there are few such jobs in villages and the children must usually move to other places, usually cities, to get them. This situation means they live far away from their ageing parents, who benefit from their children having a salary but also can no longer live with them in the same compound as was the case in the past. Anastase is one parent who invested in educating his children, who then got jobs and moved to Kigali. They send him remittances, but he wants to have them closer. Research indicates that the ability to give one's children a good education ensures attractive jobs for them (Van der Geest, 1997).

The fact that adult children get jobs away from their native villages influences care for elders as well as housing patterns. Unable to live with their parents, they cannot provide daily care to them as they did in the past. Furthermore, when such children build a house in the village, they do not build it in their parents' compounds but in the centre or a designated grouped settlement site with utilities such as water and electricity. As Anastase pointed out, children are unwilling to live closer to their ageing parents in part because of the lack of modern amenities in villages.

Furthermore, children want to live away from their parents to have more independence. Anastase said that this is possible because children have money and do not depend on their parents' resources, like cows or land. In the past, the only source of resources was gifts from (mainly) parents or other family members, but today children earn money and can buy assets independently. They can live wherever they choose because they can either buy land and build a house on it or buy an existing house where they want to live. The positionality of adult children towards asset acquisition echoes with the idea of Foner (1984) who suggests that the

advent of wage labour and the cash economy has reduced elders' economic dominance because young generations have access to more lucrative positions than in the past.

Even though adult children's access to wage labour and other resources affects their parents' economic dominance over them, it does allow them to provide them with housing. As discussed in Chapter Six, providing housing for ageing parents in the village is one of the caring practices of migrants.

In addition to education, the depletion of resources in rural areas influences housing patterns in Karongi District.

7.3.2 Depletion of Resources in Rural Areas

Family members lived and cared for their elders together because there were resources like land and cattle that they could use to produce what they needed, but old and young agree that these resources are becoming depleted in rural areas. André told me that the lack of land was one of the things that had caused family members to disperse.

> I don't have land to cultivate, except for a little land around my house. I don't have any other land. I cannot divide it and give part to my sons to build their houses. (Interview with André, 19 December 2019, Rubengera).

When I asked him where his sons lived, he informed me that they had migrated to Kigali. He continued that in addition to having very little land, he owns no livestock. As mentioned in Chapter Four, he relies on his neighbours' support for essentials like food and clothes and his sons in the city rarely send money and, as one of them explained to me, there was no land in the village where they could farm or build a house. André recounted that he and his five brothers had inherited land from their father, but he sold his share bit by bit to respond to his family's needs and ended up with too little to share with his sons. He sold his last field to pay the school fees of his youngest son. (See photo)

Source: Fieldwork photo in December 2019. The photo shows André's house with a little land around it.

André's family's experience is an extreme case of how the lack of resources in rural areas influences housing patterns. His sons cannot live near him because he has no land for them to build their houses. They are then obliged to look for land independently and not expect to get it from their father. Furthermore, the state of André's house shows it needs to be renovated. However, he does not have the means to do so, and his son is also unable to renovate it or build a new one for his father. Given the importance attached to having a house in the rural community, living in one in such poor condition is a sign of poverty and lack of proper care.

It is not only land that is in short supply, but also cattle. Elders no longer own many cows as they once did, but owning cows still signifies wealth in Rwandan culture. Anastase argues that the reason elders do not have many cows is that the policy of zero-grazing[21], means people are only able to feed a few cows in pens, unlike the old days when people could graze them in the hills. As he explained it, cows were and remain highly valued by elders and their children and present-day elders' lack of cows makes staying around them less attractive to their adult children. In fact, the children of elders who do have cows expect to eventually be given them and, in such case, they remain closer to them, strengthening family ties. Recent research indicates that in Rwanda sons were once supposed to take care of their father's cows because

[21] Landholdings are very small with more than 60 per cent of households cultivating less than 0.7 ha, 50 per cent cultivating less than 0.5 ha, and more than 25 per cent cultivating less than 0.2 ha. This constraint is aggravated by the fact that most farms have multiple, scattered plots, many of them very small. This should also be an important limiting factor of doing an open livestock grazing or pastoral grazing in Rwanda.
The Government of Rwanda (GoR) encourages zero grazing because it avoids over-grazing and subsequently reduces land degradation. The zero-grazing system is characterized by keeping animals in a shed and feeding by cutting and carrying forage and crop residues to the cows. This production system is increasing in proportion due to the shrinkage of grazing land, which has been widely turned over to crop cultivation in response to increasing population. See Nyabinwa et al. (2020.) Furthermore, the National Land Policy of 2004 bans overgrazing to prevent soil compression and erosion. It only grants grazing rights to professional pastoralists with sufficient land grazing land. All other cows must be fed hay in their pens. See MINERENA. (2004). National Land Policy, Kigali.

some of these cows would pay for their bridewealth and make them men (Pontalti, 2018). All this shows how any change in customary norms can influence old age social protection. For instance, changes in responsibility for marriage influence old-age social protection when their prominent role of paying the bridewealth becomes obsolete.

Both educated and non-educated children live far from their ageing parents because of labour migration and the depletion of resources in rural areas. However, the rural settlement policy has also impacted housing patterns in Karongi District.

7.3.3 From Scattered Settlement to Grouped Settlement

Traditionally, human settlement in Rwanda has been dispersed, with each homestead on its own hilltop. This scattered settlement pattern puts pressure on arable land. To respond to the problem of arable land scarcity in rural areas, the government of Rwanda adopted a grouped settlement policy in 1997 that encourages the rural population to move to designated areas of grouped settlement called *imidugudu.* (The singular is *umudugudu*). However rural perceptions of this policy vary by age group. While younger generations reacted positively to the policy, elders were reluctant to comply with it. Therefore, younger people moved to the imidugudu and elders remained on the hills near their fields. This policy thus changed the existing housing patterns not only by creating nucleated settlements but also physically separating the generations. How does this situation affect elder care?

Gatera Pierre is an illustrative case. His son lived in the same house with him until he got married. Then, he built a house nearby, on the same hill. The married son, with his wife, and children, lived close to Gatera Pierre as he grew older and provided him with necessities like water and firewood. The daughter-in-law brought him food and his grandchildren kept him company, especially in the evening and when school was not in session. However, this changed in 2016 when his son decided to move to an umudugudu settlement. Since then, he has been isolated and because his son can no longer came every day, he has received less intense material and emotional support. He is also lonely without his grandchildren's company in the evenings.

When I asked why he did not move closer to his son's family, he said he could not afford a new house in the umudugudu. To build a house there, he told me, one must first buy a plot there, which costs between 300,000 FRW and 400,000 FRW (300 euro to 400 euros). This is too much for him as there is no source of income from which he could save that much money.

Furthermore, he did not want to live in there because the houses were too close and there was no privacy. As he put it, 'In the umudugudu, everyone knows what others have cooked and eaten. Everyone is watching everyone, and there is no private life. In addition to that, there is no land to cultivate and you must walk to your land.' (Interview with Gatera Pierre, 3 January 2020, Mubuga).

Here, it is worth mentioning that when the grouped settlement policy was introduced in 1996, the state and its partners built houses in the pilot sites for needy people and homeless returning refugees. However, after that, people had to buy plots and build their houses at their own cost (Ngoga, 2015). Today, the cost of building a house in an umudugudu, coupled with the long distance to the cultivable land, means elders do not find living there attractive.

From the conditions described above, it is clear that the establishment of grouped settlements has influenced care for elders. The way elders were cared for when their family members were living on the same hill with them changed when the younger generation moved away. Moreover, it is not only the high cost of moving to an umudugudu that makes elders reluctant to do so but also their views about life there and the lack of nearby farmland. Older people in Karongi District made it clear to me that this did not appeal to them.

It is essential to mention that research on villagisation in Rwanda indicates that critics of introducing the policy had also pointed out that the imidugudu were distant from farmland and this could obstruct the potential for agricultural production because people then were used to having their fields near their houses (Hilhorst & van Leeuwen, 1999). However, this dissertation's focus here is not on the merits of the policy itself but on how these changing housing patterns are affecting caring practices for elders.

Having addressed the issue of changes in housing patterns in relation to elder care practices in Karongi District, I now turn to the influence of land scarcity on elder care.

7.4 Land Scarcity in Karongi District

'Today there is no more land.' – André

This statement came from André, who (as we have seen above) suffered from having lost his land. He attributed the present-day land scarcity to the increasing population. He said, 'Today there is no more land. The population in need of the land is increasing, and the land itself does

not increase. Land for cultivation is becoming more and more scarce.' (Interview with André, 24 December 2019, Rubengera).

This statement indicates how the scarcity of land is becoming a crucial issue in the lives of the inhabitants of Karongi District. The annual population growth rate there is 1.8%, compared to 2.6% at the national level (NISR & MINECOFIN, 2015). This population increase means very demand for land leads to it being subdivided into smaller parts. When elders talk about land scarcity, they are comparing this to the conditions during the time of their parents and grandparents. The following subsection presents their views about land holding and elder care in the past.

7.4.1 Landholding and Elder care in the Past

'It was different from these days.' – Anastase

When I asked Anastase − an older adult in Karongi District − to talk about landholding in the past, he answered that 'it was different from these days.' This was because there was both land for agricultural activities and pastoral land. He said that land belonged to the head of the family, (*umutware w'umuryango*) who had to distribute it to his sons as they get married. He then shared his own family's history of landholding, explaining that his father had inherited sufficient land from his father and had also been given another hill by the regional chief at that time.[22] His father gave part of his land to each of his six sons, one at a time, as they grew up and got married. These pieces of land were called *umunani* and their size differed depending on how obedient and devoted the son was to his father. He himself had received a large one. Once his father had distributed this land among his sons, he was left with some land that would be distributed after his death. A few days before this, he called his sons to explain how they would divide his property, which is called *kuraga*. Anastase was a favoured son, and his father bequeathed him more land and cows than his brothers. Therefore, caring for an ageing father was once not only an expression of reciprocity but also resulted in dutiful sons being rewarded with a bigger share of the land.

[22] Receiving land from a regional chief is *kugabana*, while the chief's action is *kugabira*. Even during the colonial period, all land in Rwanda still belonged to the king and he had the right to give it to whomever he wanted and take it back at any time. His local representatives were regional chiefs, who also had this right as the king's representative in their region (Maquet, 1954). Thus, in the past land could be gained either by inheritance or by *kugabana*.

According to this narrative, caring relationships between the father and the son played a significant role in how sons acquired land in the past. While daughters also participated in caring practices for elders, they were not normally entitled to inherit land and could only get it from their father or brother if they divorced their husbands and did not remarry. They could also receive it as a gift from their fathers at their weddings or when they presented new-born grandchildren to them (Rose, 2004).

When I wanted to know what was necessary to be given land by a regional chief, Anastase explained that this required having a good personal relationship with him. Relations between the chiefs and users of land were part of the client-patron system that prevailed in Rwanda prior to independence (Musahara & Huggins, 2005a) and Anastase explained that his father had gotten the land because he was the chief's client (*umugaragu*). The chief had the right to give the vacant land to his client based on his exemplary behaviour toward his patron.

Gaining access to land through the representative of a political authority continued after independence and the abolition of the monarchy and its associated system of clientelism, as shown by Kamana's family. Kamana is seventy-one years old and lives in Mubuga. He explained to me that his father had been given land by the mayor of the municipality soon after independence. This land's owners had fled the country in 1959, during the social revolution.[23] This land, which was very fertile, was what his father had distributed to his sons during his lifetime as imunami. His father decided to give Kamana a generous portion because he had herded the cows rather than attending school like his brothers and the other children his age. In his research on kinship in Rwanda, Pontalti (2018) indicates that sons who showed absolute obedience and respect to their older fathers were given more resources than their less-compliant siblings, as was the case with both Kamana and Anastase.

Thus, care practice allowed those who provided care to acquire extensive and high-quality land as a reward for the effort they had devoted to their elders. Conversely, in order to own land, adult children had to stay close to their father and render obedience to him. After

[23] This is a controversial topic in current Rwandan political discourse. Some do not consider the events of 1959 a social revolution, as they led to the exile of some Rwandans in neighbouring countries. Others do, because they led to the abolition of the monarchy and establishment of a republic. What is relevant to this study is that these events trigged a population movement into and out of Rwanda that has led to the current land scarcity issue and thus indirectly affected elder care.

discussing landholding and elder care in the past, it is now time to look at contemporary landholding and its influence on elder care in Karongi District.

7.4.2 Land Scarcity and Elder care in Karongi District

Land constitutes one of the main resources for elder care in Karongi District, and its scarcity complicates practices of care for elders. To explore the relationship between land scarcity and elder care in Karongi District, I refer to some illustrative case studies.

The Case of Beata

Beata is widowed and has four sons who do not live with her. She explained to me that she did not have enough land and lived by renting others' land for food production. When her sons became adults and realised that there was none for them to cultivate or build their own houses on, they moved to the Eastern Province to look for it. Beata said her sons never came back to the village to see her or send her any support. When I asked why, she said that they always told her they are working hard and saving money to buy land of their own where they can build houses. Beata struggles to earn a living on her own, but said that if she had had enough land, her sons would have stayed and supported her. She regretted not having had land to give to her children, who cannot demand non-existent land from her but use its absence to justify not supporting her and claim to be mobilising resources to buy their own land. Beata did not blame them for this, as she understood their social-economic position, and does not put much pressure on them to provide support. She conceded that land is expensive and that someone must work hard to get money to buy it. She is aware that she must strive for all that she needs to make ends meet.

In Karongi District, like in other rural areas of Rwanda, a young boy is considered to become a man when he gets married. To do so, he must first build a house, so if his family has no land for this, it becomes an obstacle to his marriage. Boys from landless families must struggle to get the land to start families and change their social status from youth to manhood. This goes along with the idea that sons from a family without sufficient land must fend for themselves and find a way to buy their own (Andre & Platteau, 1998). Moreover, it must be stressed that the adult children of elders can refuse to support them as an act of retaliation, which is what has happened to André.

The case of André

As discussed, André does not have enough land to cultivate or to give to his two sons. Although he and his brothers inherited his father's, he gradually sold off his share when he needed money. Too little remained for his sons to get inheritances, and he himself lives by guca inshuro, cultivating other people's land in exchange for money or food. With no land in the village, his two sons moved to Kigali to seek work. André complained to me that they did not support him. He must fend for himself to find food and the other necessities of daily live. When I met one of the sons in Kigali, he said his father had been a bad manager of his land and accused him of selling off the land like someone who had no children. He considered him a careless father who did not worry about his children's future. He said, 'He could have managed not to sell all of the land if he wanted to care for his children and deserve regular support in return.' (Interview with Bahati, 1 March 2020, Kigali).

Bahati considers André imprudent because he did not care properly for his children. In his view, to not sell the land would have been to care for his children, who would have eventually gotten land from their father to start their families. On the other hand, selling it signifies the lack of a caring spirit toward his children.

Research indicates that acts of retaliation by adult children are the main cause of a shift in the normative basis of filial support in which children withhold support from parents whom they consider to have completely failed to try to set them up with the necessary foundation (Aboderin, 2006). In Karongi District, the land is the foundation of the population's livelihood, so adult children who inherit no land at all because of their parents' poor management of this scarce resource perceive this as the parents' failure to provide for their future livelihood. In Rwandan culture, a father has the responsibility to support his adult son in starting a new life by providing land to build a house and a calf for the bridewealth, and when someone fails to do so due to poor resources management, this is not taken well by his adult children (Pontalti, 2018).

The issue of land scarcity is a much-debated subject in Rwandan popular discourse. Land constitutes a primary livelihood asset that allows people to produce food for their families. It is also an inheritable asset that serves as the basis for the wealth and livelihood of future generations and a source of income for rural farmers (Musahara, 2006). Some factors contribute to the issue of land scarcity in Rwanda. Musahara & Christopher (2005) indicate

that the high population density coupled with population displacement due to a history of violent conflict makes the demand for farmland and buildings increase constantly. In Karongi District, land scarcity is a crucial issue. According to the district development strategy, 77.7% of households own less than 0.99 hectares of land even though 85.2% of the population works in the agriculture sector (Karongi District, 2019).

Land scarcity in Karongi District affects not only elder care but also inheritance. The following sub-section explores this issue.

7.4.3 Land Holding and Inheritance in Karongi District

In Karongi District, as in other parts of the country, land constitutes an asset that connects generations. Ageing parents' possession of land ensures that their children will get an inheritance. Furthermore, it is a source of pride for parents to have land to bequeath to their children, as Adela's case illustrates. She has two pieces of land, one that belonged to her deceased husband and another that she herself bought. She uses this land to produce food through hinga tugabane and is proud that she has land to leave to her children when she passes away. She explained that she has abstained from selling it because to sell family land is an act of disrespect to the living members of the family. Because Adela kept her land for her children, she had to look for other sources of income to meet her needs. When she was younger and more mobile, she would go to other households and buy their crops, especially beans and sorghum, store them until planting time, and sell them when seed was needed, and the prices were higher. This income, along with that from her own land, supported her and she did not have to sell any land.

In addition, the children whose parents have land feel attracted to the village as there is an immovable asset there that they will one day be their inheritance (*kuzungura*). When I met Adela's son in Kigali, where he was an employee of the Presbyterian Church, he told me that he would move back to the village when he retires. He planned to live closer to the family land and make it productive while renting out his house in Kigali. Expecting to inherit land in the village thus represents an incentive for migrant adult children to move back to the village at a certain point in their life trajectory and sustains the connection between migrants and their place of origin.

However, Adela and her son's narratives contrast with those of a father who did not keep his land for his children. André disagreed with Adela's point of view and justified selling the

family's land with the proverb *'Ukena ufite itungo rikakugoboka.'* ('When you become poor, it is your property that rescues you.') As mentioned above, André did inherit land from his parents, but whenever he was faced with challenges that required money, he sold part of it and was eventually left with too little land to divide among his children. For André, the livestock available to help him get the money he needed was his land. As land is a highly coveted asset in Karongi District, there is no doubt that an owner can make a lot of money by selling it. Research on the highly strained land relations in Rwanda indicates that most land sales are motivated by the need to deal with a financial or social crises (André & Platteau, 1998). In the case of André, meeting his social obligations caused him to sell his land. The lack of land discourages André's children from trying to earn their living in rural areas. One of his sons told me he has no intention of living in his native village: staying on the outskirts of Kigali is preferable to living in a village where he does not have land for cultivation.

While André lost his land when he sold it to meet his needs, this was not the case for Kamana. The latter explained that he inherited sufficient land from his parents. When refugees returned to Rwanda from neighbouring countries after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, some started to claim the land their fathers and grandfathers had left when they fled in 1959[24]. Kamana's land was among that claimed by the descendants of refugees who learned that their parents had owned land which Kamana now occupied. They asked him to return it, but Kamana refused because he thought having received the land in good faith made him the actual owner of the land. They took their case to local authorities to settle that issue, but although Kamana explained that he had received the land from his father some of his neighbours confirmed that the land had belonged to the parents of the returnees. As a result, the authorities decided in their favour and Kamana was obliged to give up the land and left with too little to give his children any to build houses. His sons, realising that they would not get land from their father to build houses and start families, then moved to Kigali to earn money to buy land where they could build their own houses.

Research indicates that resolving land disputes between the population that remained within the country and the former refugees has exacerbated the issue of land scarcity in Rwanda,

[24] Following the social revolution of 1959, most Tutsi who held positions of power fled to neighbouring countries. The post-independence regime distributed their among the remaining population. Subsequently, the refugees organised an army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which attacked Rwanda in 1990 and gained complete control in 1994. See Herman Musahara & Christophe Huggins, Land Reform, Land Scarcity and Post Conflict Reconstruction: The Case Study of Rwanda, 2004.

which the process is referred to as 'sharing scarcity' (Leegwater, 2015). Those who occupied land refugees left behind lost it when the original owners came to take it. In this case, the legal principle of acquisitive prescription,[25] which confers the right of ownership of the immovable property on someone who has occupied it for a period of thirty years, does not apply. The Arusha Peace Agreement[26] established a similar principle of acquisitive prescription, stipulating that refugees who had been out of the country for ten years could not claim their land if it was now occupied by others (Bruce, 2007). Instead, the policy was for the state to distribute other land to the returning refugees if regaining there was not possible. Kamana told me that he disagreed with the decision but had no choice but to accept it. He feared he would be accused of opposing the government's reconciliation policy, since the local leaders had told him that their decision was within the framework of reconciling him with those who had taken his land. Other people who lost their land in Karongi District in the same way have similar criticisms that they cannot express in public and only whisper about in their private circles.

The above cases show how land scarcity is one of the major issues in Karongi District. They are far from isolated: many people are in similar situations. Furthermore, whether an elder owns land depends on socio-economic and political factors. Adela retained her land because she was involved in economic activities that generated an income for her family. However, this was not possible for the case with André as he had to gradually sell off his land to meet his family's needs and ended up with only a little land left that could no longer support to his needs or those of his offspring. Moreover, political upheaval, coupled with population movements in and of out the country, created uncertainty over land ownership. Hence, the activities of elders over the life-course together with socio-political and economic environments over the country's whole history play a crucial role in land ownership for elders in Karongi District. Following Elder (1998), the lives of elders and their children are interdependent and reciprocally connected: elders' possession of land encourages their children to use it as their parent's get older. On the other hand, when ageing parents have

[25] See Article 70 of the Organic Law No 08/2005 of 14/07/2005 governing Land Tenure in Rwanda. In the Official Gazette No 18 of 15th September 2005.

[26] During the1990-1994 civil war, neighboring countries and the international community mediated between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front. The two parties signed a peace agreement in Arusha, Tanzania on 3 August 1993 that detailed how the various socio-economic, political, and military conflicts would be resolved. See Peace Agreement between the Government of Republic of Rwanda and The Rwandese Patriotic Front at https://peacemaker.un/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/RW_930804

limited land this makes adult children seek it elsewhere as they cannot inherit it from their parents.

Importantly, all these cases of inheritance concern sons. This is because they are the ones who need family land to build a house before they get married. Daughters do not need this, because they marry into other families, to men who have already built houses. In the Rwandan culture, women seldom build houses on their family's land and get married there. Even though Rwandan law accords sons and daughters the same inheritance rights,[27] I did not observe cases where land inheritance for daughters constituted the kind of parental challenge that it did with sons.

As land is becoming a scarce asset that generates conflicts among people competing to occupy or seize it, it is essential to explore how land-related conflicts impact elder care in Karongi District.

7.4.4 Land Related Conflicts' Implication on Elder Care

Conflict over land in Rwanda is prevalent throughout the country. A recent study indicates that the majority of property disputes in Rwanda are over land and specifically over land inheritance in rural areas (Rurangwa, 2013). Furthermore, Ngoga's (2018) research on land tenure reform in Rwanda indicates that more than 80% of court cases involved land disputes. Given the issue of land scarcity in Rwanda and the pressure on it by a growing population, Leegwater (2015) argues that if violence recurs in Rwanda it will be because of land. According to local authorities in Karongi District, land-related conflicts constitute most of the cases heard by Abunzi (see Section 7.1). I also noticed the predominance of land cases among those handled by these mediation committees when researching family-based land conflicts in Karongi District and their social-economic impact in 2011 (Irambeshya, 2013). In this section, I use two case studies to explore the impact of land-based conflict on elder care in Karongi District.

From Frustration to Abandonment: The Case of Kabano

Kabano is a seventy-four-year-old man who lives in Mubuga and got into a conflict with his sons over land. Kabano has a relatively small amount of land that he cultivated with his wife

[27] See article 54 of the Law No 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 Governing Matrimonial Regimes, Donations, and Successions in Official Gazette No 31 of 01/08/2016. See article 5 of the Law No 27/2021 of 10/06/2021 Governing Land in Rwanda. In Official Gazette No Special of 10/06/2021.

to feed his family of two sons and three daughters. In 1994, when the Rwandan Patriotic Front took power in Rwanda, Kabano and his family were exiled to Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC). After a few months there, his wife became ill and died. In 1996, his sons returned from exile and found that their family house had been destroyed, so decided to sell the land and moved to Kigali. When Kabano returned home in 2008 he found that not only was his was gone but another person was occupying the land. He was very frustrated by this situation, as he had no place to go and had to stay with a neighbour. When he asked the new occupant of the land to give it back to him, the latter refused since he had bought it legally from the sons. Kabano did not know what to do at that point and kept asking his friends for advice. Some advised him to give up, others to try to claim his land. After a period of hesitation and confusion, he decided to take his case to the Abunzi. Kabano recounted to me how he had tried to prove his land ownership by explaining at one of its sessions that the land was for his family and he had lived there using the land for many years. The alleged buyer should give it to him as he had not purchased it from the real owner. However, he was frustrated by the Abunzi's decision: he lost the case because the ones who sold the land had been his biological sons. They decided that if Kabano wanted his land back, he would not only have to reimburse the new owner what he had paid to the sons for the land, but also pay interest and compensation for improvements he had made, and this was beyond his means. In his opinion, they should have ordered the occupant to return his land to him and seek compensation from his sons, who had sold it to him when they had no right to.

Kabano explained to me that after he came back one of his sons visited and told him that they sold the land because they had heard that he had died when he was in the DRC. He angrily reprimanded this son and none of them has visited him since. Since they abandoned him, he has lived by *guca inshuro,* working for others: he has no land to grow food for himself or arrange *hinga tugabane*.

Guca inshuro is a practice used by poor people who lack land to grow their own food. They work for others and get food in return as a reward for their work. Kabano not only does not have his own source of food but does not have his own house. He told me he lived in his neighbour's house under a *gusembera* agreement that requires him to work one day per week in exchange for rent. Kabano explained to me that he was injured twice: first when his sons sold his land, and second when the Abunzi did not give him back his land. Therefore, land that is supposed to be an asset that connects generations and a resource to care for elders may

also become a cause of abandonment and abuse if family members' conflict. Then, the connection between generations through the scarce resources vanishes. Research indicates that such conflicts over land intensified because of its commercialisation (Takeuchi & Marara, 2009). Thus, Kabano's sons' eagerness to sell the family land created conflicts not only among family members but also between their father and the buyer. Kabano revealed to me he also holds a grudge and is angry with him as he considers him an illegal squatter on his land.

Furthermore, population movements due to the recent violent conflicts in Rwanda have played a role in the complexity of the land-related conflict. If Kabano had not left his land to go into exile, his sons would not have had the opportunity to sell all his land. Nyampame is another elder whom land-related conflicts have deprived of food, shelter, and a fixed place of residence.

Living a Precarious and Nomadic Lifestyle: The Case of Nyampame

Nyampame is a seventy-nine-year-old woman who inherited her parents' land since she was their only living close relative. Since she had no children nearby, she lived with a cousin, who used the land to grow food for his family. When land registration was systematised in 2008, the cousin registered her land as his own. After he had gained title, he started to mistreat her, and their relationship deteriorated daily. She decided to leave his house and move in with a neighbour who agreed to host her in return for the use of her land, but the cousin refused and claimed that she did not own any land. She then brought her case before the Abunzi, which ordered her cousin to return her land. However, the executive secretary of her cell[28] failed to this decision. Although he had promised to do so when she delivered an official copy of the Abunzi's order, he unfortunately did not come on the day he had promised to. Nyampame explained to me that she had learned that her cousin had bribed the executive secretary to stop him from implementing the decision. He also conspired with the neighbour who was hosting her to sell her goats. She had to move again but could not stay there long either because her cousin continued to conspire with her hosts against her interests. When I first visited her, she was living with her fifth host. Nyampame explained to me that her cousin had suborned almost everyone to prevent her from reclaiming her land. She said: *'Yaranguze ahantu hose.'* ('He buys me at all the administrative levels'). Here, to 'buy' someone means

[28] The executive secretary of the cell has the duty of carrying out judicial decisions, decisions of competent organs, and other enforcement orders. See articles 50 and 52 of the Law No 12/2013 of 22/03/2013 governing bailiff function in Rwanda. In the Official Gazette No 14 of 08/04/2013.

paying money to prevent someone from getting the service they deserve. Nyampame has lost hope of regaining her land because everyone to whom she takes her case promises to solve it and then does not come. Her cousin persuaded everyone who hosted her to withdraw their support. She thought that her cousin wanted her to die so he could keep the land as her daughter is afraid to come in the village to help her reclaim the land.

The two cases presented above show the negative impact of land conflicts on care for elders. Family members who have misappropriated the land of elders use their lack of land as a pretext for not supporting them. Since land is the primary source of livelihood in rural areas, lacking it certainly immiserates elders and makes them dependent on others to survive. Furthermore, the cases presented in this section also show elders who do not give in to those who try to take their land but know the process to secure their land rights. In two cases, elders with land conflicts issues have sued their cases before 'Abunzi' to be restored to their land rights.

However, even though the Abunzi's decision was different in each case, neither elder reclaimed the land. Kabano lost the case and his land remained with the buyer: while he continued to maintain that the land had belonged to him and his sons had sold it illegally, he could not contest the Abunzi's decision and lost it. He was also abandoned by his sons, who provided no support to him. Meanwhile, although the Abunzi decided in Nyampame's favour and ordered her cousin to give back her land, the decision was not implemented. In addition to her land, she lost her cousin's support and that of her neighbours, who were under his influence and became homeless in her old age. As part of her research on caring for people without value (Pype, 2018) characterises the immobility of elders is a sign of power, honour, and privilege in Kinshasa-Democratic Republic of Congo. Nyampame's case is the other way around. The fact that she must keep moving from one household to another signifies abuse, neglect, and disrespect. The two cases clearly indicate that land-related conflicts often lead to the lack of care by elders dispossessed of their land.

7.4.5 The Role of Abunzi in Solving Land Conflicts

Abunzi are a traditional institution for conflict resolution that existed in pre-modern Rwanda and were revived and institutionalised in 2004to strengthen the complementary roles of the local community and state in the conflict resolution process (Mutisi, 2012). This took place within a framework of home-grown solution initiatives that seeks to apply local solutions to

contemporary issues. As local institutions closer to the local population, the Abunzi plays a role in resolving land-related conflicts. In both cases presented above, elders with land conflicts took their cases to an Abunzi for settlement. Elders who brought cases before Abunzi give various reasons for choosing that institution.

Kabano explained to me that bringing a case before an Abunzi is not as costly as it is at a more formal court. There are no court fees and no need to pay for transportation, as Abunzi sessions take place at the local cell office and the plaintiff and witnesses can walk there on the day of the session. Thus, the institution of Abunzi is a more accessible way to settle disputes among the population.

When a case is submitted to an Abunzi, the committee first tries to mediate between the conflicting parties. Kabano informed me that the mediation between him and the occupant of his land failed. He did not want a negotiated settlement but for the Abunzi to return his land. However, the Abunzi then decided against him. However, this decision seems not to conform to the law, which states that the property of an absentee can only be inherited once a competent court has pronounced a declaratory judgement of the absentee's death[29]. As no court had declared Kabano dead, his sons had no right to dispose of their father's property. However, when Kabano appealed the cell-level Abunzi's decision to the sector-level Abunzi,[30] they upheld it. These decisions support a criticism that Abunzi lack legal knowledge which is very common in public discourse in Rwanda. This is not surprising as their members are selected based on personal honesty and integrity, not professional knowledge.

Nyampame, on the other hand, had no complaint about the Abunzi's decision. However, its non-implementation raises concerns about the commitment of local leaders to enforcing such decisions.

Despite these loopholes, however, Abunzi appear to play a significant role in land-related conflict resolution at the grassroots level. As a state organ instituted to bring free justice closer to the local population, they eliminate the need to pay the fees and transportation costs required for the normal courts, which elders may not be able to afford.

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[29] See Articles 31 and 33 of the Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 Governing Persons and Family in Rwanda. In the Official Gazette No 37 of 12/09/2016.

[30] The law stipulates that any party that is not satisfied with a verdict of an Abunzi at the cell level may, within a period of thirty days, appeal to the Abunzi committee at the sector level. See article 25 of the Law No 37/2016 of 08/09/2016 Determining Organisation, Jurisdiction, Competence and Functioning of an Abunzi Committee.

7.5 Connecting Landholding, Housing Patterns and Elder Care

The shortage of arable land is one challenge facing Karongi District. The Ministry of Agriculture estimates the average household landholding in Karongi District to be 0.5 hectares (MINAGRI, 2013). This scarcity of arable land constitutes a primary concern for a population that depends on agriculture for survival and is worsening for elders who lack the means to buy land for food production.

The cases presented in this chapter highlight how owning land is a factor that attracts care for elders from all directions. It is a means for building social networks, as neighbours who need it try to develop good relationships with elders own some. Moreover, children whose parents own land do not have to struggle to buy their own as stand to inherit it and thus maintain good caring relationship with them as they age. On the contrary, children whose parents do not have enough land must focus more on mobilising resources to buy their own and focus less on supporting their ageing parents, as in the cases of Beata and André, whose adult children have moved to other places and stopped providing support to them. Furthermore, the lack of land may result in abuse or abandonment, as in the cases of Nyampame and Kabano.

It is worth mentioning that the land scarcity in Karongi District has changed housing patterns. Adult children whose parents have no land struggle to get it in other places, often far away from their ageing parents – as illustrated in the case of Beata. These changes bring a shift in caring practices where constant proximal care is replaced by occasional and distal care. In rural Rwanda and specifically in Karongi District, access to land is a vital element in securing a livelihood. Those who do not have a chance to own land express concerns about their current and future lives. In other cultural settings like Benin, land acquisition is one of the strategies people use to plan their retirement (Alber, 2018a). In Rwanda and Karongi District, young people who will not inherit land move elsewhere to earn money to buy land to secure their current and future livings.

In Karongi District, getting food for one's household requires land to grow it. However, land scarcity makes food production for families without land somewhat challenging. Recent research on ageing in Rwanda indicates that land scarcity has led to an increased number of people who need food but cannot produce it, including elders (Davis et al., 2019). While elders with land can easily feed their households and enlarge their social networks through hinga

tugabane, those without land experience difficulties. They must live by cultivating others' land in exchange for food through guca inshuro. This is a survival strategy for people who have no alternative way to earn a living. The question arises here of what will happen to these landless elders when they can no longer work for food. Landholding is, therefore, the foundation of care for elders. It determines housing patterns and influences caring practices for elders by their kin and neighbours. Since land is an asset that connects generations, it plays a crucial role in the well-being of elders and their children.

7.6 Conclusion

The cases presented in this chapter demonstrate how elders in Karongi District experience changes in house patterns and land scarcity as they shape caregiving relationships with their children. I presented different scenarios of how elders can access or lose land in old age in Karongi District. The primary ways of getting land are by inheritance from father to son or by buying it. Elders' landlessness may result from various factors: some have lost their land due to displacement during the violent conflicts at various times, while others have lost it due to social and economic difficulties that forced them to sell their land.

The chapter also explored the issue of how changing housing and landholding patterns have affected caring practices for elders. Empirical evidence indicates that family members used to live together on the same hill and had sufficient land for agriculture and cattle grazing. Elders were cared for daily by family members, who all stayed close to them.

In the past, care for elders, was rewarded with gifts of land and cattle. Failure to care resulted in metaphysical sanctions – curses – and material sanctions like the refusal of land and cattle. These rewards and sanctions were motivating factors to care for elders, whose narratives relate that their predecessors received better care than they do today. These changes in caring practices are due to children's education and to resource depletion in rural areas. Educated children do not need to depend on their parents' resources. They live where they have salaried jobs, which is rarely close to their ageing parents. Resource depletion in rural areas means elders do not have enough land and cattle to give to their children to get them to stay close. Hence, they move elsewhere to gain resources to buy their own land. In addition, the introduction of the grouped settlement or imidugudu policy has attracted the adult children to these designated settlement sites with utilities such as electricity and water but where elders cannot afford to build a house.

Empirical evidence indicates that land in rural areas is becoming scarce, leading to conflicts among family members in need of land. Some land conflicts among family members result in the abuse and abandonment of elders. Those dispossessed of their land turn to Abunzi to mediate disputes.

The lens of land scarcity and housing patterns allows one to see the complexity of how elder care is entangled with land-related conflicts. Thus, land scarcity and changes in housing patterns in Karongi District are primary elements in shaping the context within which elders experience their care relationships with their adult children and relatives.

Chapter VIII: Impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on Elder Care

8.1 Introduction

'I lost everything, people and property' – Sibomana

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, of which Sibomana is a survivor, is a topic that must be addressed with care, patience, and flexibility to avoid offending or distressing interlocutors when recalling traumatic experiences. I therefore refrained from asking about it when I first visited him in December 2019, and we discussed various other topics about the lives of and care for elders. As I got to know him better and we developed a rapport, we began to touch on more sensitive issues. We first discussed the genocide in January 2020.

Sibomana and I were sitting the living room of his three-room house, which has a sheet-metal roof, a cement floor, and stucco walls. An *imiyenzi* (euphorbia) hedge surrounds the compound, but it is not high enough to prevent passers-by from looking in. As Sibomana recounted his life story and his experience of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi to me, he fidgeted with his walking stick, sweeping it back along the floor. For almost two hours, I listened attentively to his story, from his survival to the support he now received from the state. He summarised the effect of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on the provision of care to him in one sentence: 'I lost everything – people and property.' (Interview with Sibomana, 9 December 2020, Rubengera).

During my field research in Karongi District, elders whom I asked about the effects of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on care mostly referred to their loss of family members and property. People and property have been discussed in other chapters of this thesis. These themes are critical social fields for elder care that have been affected by the Genocide, so I found it important to include this chapter and link it with the others. Here, I reflect on the Genocide Against the Tutsi as both a period and an event in elders' life and explore how it affected them.

In 1994, a brutal Genocide Against the Tutsi erupted in Rwanda. Over only three months, a large part of the population were murdered. All numbers are contested, however just to give an impression: the data collected by Rwandan Ministry of Local Government indicate that more than one million Tutsi were murdered (MINALOC, 2004) – that would be more than 14% of the total population. of 7,157,551 (MINECOFIN, 1994). Scholars like Prunier (1995),

Chrétien (2002) and Reyntjens (1995), attribute the genocide to both external and internal causes. The external causes include colonial and neo-colonial manipulation of ethnic identities, while the internal causes include the population density, ethnic conflicts, and psychological factors that led to blind obedience. Percival and Homer-Dixon (1996) specifically invoke the scarcity of resources like land resulting from rapid population growth as a possible cause.

All these explanations have some issues. The accounts based on external factors have been criticised for seeking to shift the responsibility of the Genocide Against the Tutsi elsewhere and tend to exonerate Rwandans (Hintjens, 1999), while those based on internal scarcity of resources fail to explain why people who had resources participated in the genocide alongside people who did not (Uvin, 2001). Furthermore, the hypothesis of blind obedience represents Rwandans in general as blindly following orders from the state leaders. However, Rwandans are not passive implementers of the state or elite order: recent historical research offers examples of Rwandans refusing orders to participate in mandatory *umuganda* (community work) and to plant and maintain coffee trees after prices dropped in the 1980s (Uvin, 2001). I concur with the idea that the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi resulted from the interaction of complex and longstanding factors including exclusion, marginalisation, inequality, and ethnic polarisation (Univ, 1998).

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi had numerous persistent consequences for the Rwandan community. This chapter focuses on the lived experience of elders as they themselves recall them. However, it should be noted that those who are now elders in Rwanda were not yet old in 1994, but still of working age. Some of them were targets and some perpetrators during the genocide against the Tutsi – a situation that has had consequences for elder care in Rwanda. As indicated above, elders in Karongi District lost family members like children, spouses, and relatives. They also lost property that was the foundation of their well-being. Both have increased their vulnerability and care needs in old age. I argue that the Genocide Against the Tutsi altered life courses in a way that even people who have become elders almost thirty years later are still affected. These elders experienced intergenerational ruptures that left care gaps. The chapter demonstrates that the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi affected not only those who were targeted but also those who were not. Some have seen their family members sentenced and imprisoned; others fled to neighbouring countries and

did not return. Thus, the care gap induced by the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi is visible not only in the cases of genocide survivors but also among the groups that were not targeted.

Here, care is understood in the local context as referring to the emic concept of *kwitaho* (mentioned in Chapter Two). This broad concept encompasses practical, material, and emotional ways of supporting people. Kin, friends, community, and institutions can do this. This local conception of care is related to that of care as an open-ended process and a key dimension of social security (Thelen, 2015). This helps in understanding the closeness of care and social security in old age.

I do not indicate the ethnic identity of respondents so as to abide by the Rwandan government's ban on ethnic labels to unite and reconcile Rwandans and its process of de-ethnicising the Rwandan society in favour of a national identity described in the phrase '*Ndi Umunyarwanda.*' (I am Rwandan). (Sentama, 2014). Therefore, I use the terms 'survivor' and 'untargeted groups' to describe how various groups of elders were and are still affected by what is officially called 'the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi'.[31]

8.2 The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi's Impact on Ageing Survivors

The notion of temporality is crucial to understanding the immense impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on the well-being of those of who survived it as adults and are now among the elders with whom this study is concerned. The genocide's effects on them in the past extend to their present and future living conditions. Evidence from Karongi District indicates that the human and material losses inflicted on them produced a psychological insecurity. People, property, and the state are the factors that improve elders' situation, and I will organise the remaining sections of this chapter around them. Moreover, the concept of the genocide survivor in this chapter follows the definition given in the law establishing the fund for support and assistance to the survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi: any person

[31] The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/58/234 on 23 December 2003 and designated 7 April as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda. The title of the annual observance was amended in 2017 when the UNGA adopted Resolution A/72/L.31 and proclaimed 7 April as the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. See https://documents-dds-ny.un.org, accessed on 16 August 2022. In addition, the Rwandan government adopted a No 2/1998 of 22 January 1998 Establishing a National Assistance Fund for Needy Victims of Genocide and Massacres Committed in Rwanda between 1st October 1990 and 31st December 1994. In the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda No Special dated 2nd November 1998.

who survived the genocide and other crimes against humanity committed in Rwanda between 1 October 1990 and 31 December 1994.

8.2.1 The Loss of Family Members: A Traumatising Event

The illustrative case studies presented in this subsection provide more insights to demonstrate the extent to which elders lost family members during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Losing parents, children, spouses, brothers, and sisters is a traumatic event in the life history of elders that keeps coming into their minds.

a. The Case of Sibomana

'I survived because of God's grace.' - Sibomana

During my visit, Sibomana explained how he survived the Genocide Against the Tutsi but lost his family members. In 1994, he was married and had six children: two daughters and four sons. Five of his children were killed, with only his wife and one daughter surviving. His three brothers were also killed. Sibomana explained that he had survived by hiding in the house of a friend who was not part of the targeted group. First, Sibomana hid on the roof, and when the perpetrators became suspicious of the neighbour the latter took him to his banana field, hid him in a cave, and brought him food until the genocide ended. The day after he left the house, the killers came and ransacked it looking for hidden Tutsi. Sibomana said, 'I survived because of God's grace. It was terrible.'

His wife and the daughter who survived, meanwhile, had found refuge in another village, but the remaining children had hidden themselves in other places and not so lucky. After the RPF[32] victory, he left his hiding place. He was relieved to learn that his wife and daughter had survived but devastated by the deaths of his other children and brothers.

> It was shocking to hear that my children were brutally killed and thrown in Lake Kivu. (Interview with Sibomana, 9 December 2020, Rubengera).

As for his brothers, Sibomana did not even know where they had been killed. Some people repeated rumours that they had been degradingly thrown into thickets or ditches. He could not find them to give a decent burial at the genocide memorial. Here, he fell silent, bowed his

[32] The Rwandese Patriotic Front's forces defeated the former government's forces in the 1990-1994 civil war and since then it has been the ruling political party in Rwanda.

head, took breath, and resumed by expressing his gratitude to the neighbour who saved his life and those who hid his wife and daughter.

Sibomana indicated that losing his children was a crushing blow materially as well as emotionally. He had also lost a key basis for his support in old age since those children had been at school and if they had survived, they would have found good jobs when they grew up and supported his daily needs as he aged. He wished that one could have become a local leader or occupied a senior position in the country's administration. As he put it, 'If my children had not been killed, one of them might have become the mayor of this district and changed the life I am living today.' (Interview with Sibomana, 9 December 2020, Rubengera).

b. The Case of Adela

'There was no sanctuary, even in the church.' – Adela

This statement is from Adela, who survived the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi together with five of her children. Adela once had nine children, seven sons, and two daughters. Four of the sons were killed, and she survived along with three sons and two daughters. (Her husband had already died before the genocide). Adela explained to me how she lost her children. When the Genocide Against the Tutsi broke out her four sons sought sanctuary in the Catholic parish church at Kibuye and were massacred along with the others who had taken refuge there. 'There was no sanctuary even in the church,' Adela lamented: she could not understand how anyone could be so full of evil as to kill people in a sacred place like a church.

Adela explained to me she and her children had survived by hiding in various places: in banana and sorghum fields and in bushes. They kept moving to avoid being found by the killers. But she added that 'not everyone was cruel during the Genocide.**'** One neighbour brought them food at night, warned them about what was going on, advised them when they needed to change their hiding place, and helped them move to new places at night. She also described how in losing her sons she had also permanently lost potential caregivers. However, even if there is no evidence that her children could have contributed to her well-being because normative care obligations keep changing over time, the benefits of having them alive would have extended beyond normative care obligations to family pride, social status, and family continuity.

c. The Case of Dative

'I am not incike [childless] because I am sterile but because of the Genocide.' – Dative

Dative is a sixty-nine-year-old widow in Rubengera who lost her husband and seven children, five sons and two daughters. She described how when they heard that some *interahamwe* ('those who attack together', a group of killers associated with the ruling party of the time) were killing Tutsi on the next hill over, she and her children decided to hide separately to avoid being discovered and killed all at once. (This was a common strategy to ensure that some of the family would survive even if some were captured and killed). She hid in the nearby bushes and her children hid, some in in banana fields and others in sorghum fields. When the genocide ended, she realised that she was the survivor from her family. Her husband and all her children had been killed. She said: 'I am now incike, not because I am sterile but because of the genocide that took all my children.' (Interview with Dative, 17 January 2020, Rubengera).

Dative told me that she had lost not only her nuclear family members but also her parents, brother, and sisters, who lived in another district. (She was not originally from Karongi District but had come there for her marriage in 1972). She mourns that her family will completely disappear after her death. She said, distressed, 'At my death, that will be the end of the family. I will leave none behind.' Dative does not fear death, but she is tormented by the knowledge that she will die without heirs and with no one to organise her funeral and honour her with the final dignities.

These ageing survivors' narratives show how hard it is to lose family members, and it is still worse when it results from a tragedy like the Genocide Against the Tutsi. There is a break of reciprocity and people have not only lost the foundation of their care but also what they imagined would be the basis for care in their future old age. Being cared for by others makes us understand ourselves as people and think about care as a generational practice and a fundamental human practice (Kavedžija, 2021), so losing this potential future care constitutes a severe shock. The shock of the loss is even more severe with the loss of children.

In view of the cultural value of children in Rwandan, to lose them is to lose vital assets and eternal blessings. In Rwandan society, a child is considered God's blessing on the family (Byanafashe, 1997). The meaning and values attached to a child in Rwandan society are

expressed in the Kinyarwanda greeting *Gira abana,* '[may you] have children', to which the response is *Ndabashimye,* 'I appreciate your good wishes'. From this perspective, losing children and remaining childless, like Dative, is an especially sorrowful memory. Children are expected to care for their ageing parents during their lifetimes and at last by giving them a decent burial. Having no child to do this, increases elders' despair and their worries about how they will be cared for at the end of their lives. With children, one is likely to someday enjoy a happy old age and dignified burial (Byanafashe, 1997). Moreover, children become memorials to their parents. Older people who die with children leave behind a living symbol who will always remind of them. However, this is not the case for childless people.

Furthermore, during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, people lost children whom they cared for and who were also, significantly, those who would later care for them. Parenting and being a child are intimately linked in the reciprocal flow of care. Someone who loses children loses the possibility of current and future care. Someone who has no children to care for cannot expect to be looked after by others in the future. Moreover, in Rwanda having children goes beyond these normative care obligations to include familial pride, social status, and continuity. Maquet (1954) indicates that in Rwanda society children ensure that the family's reputation, traditions, and legends will be passed on. Thus, the loss of one's chance to raise children is a fundamental rupture in the kinship system and a breakdown of the family line's continuity.

Dative emphasised her childless state and its cause, the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Her testimony shows how difficult life is when one has lost all one's children and has become (and remained) incike. She is left with no kin to care for her in a setting where elder care mainly comes from kin and not having any child means lacking a valuable support base. Before the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, it was rare to find a childless family and the few such cases were attributed to infertility. Against this cultural background, Dative must stress that despite being incike she was not sterile. Because of the importance of a woman's reproductive role in Rwandan society, being sterile is perceived as a shame to the woman (Maquet, 1954) and the very word 'incike' has a negative connotation. Since Rwandans consider children a blessing from God, being incike is like having been cursed.

In some societies, people may remain childless by choice, but in most African societies, having children is an essential element of family life, and being unable to do so is considered a serious family problem (Balen & Bos, 2009). Infertility is one of the leading causes of childlessness in

Africa, and this phenomenon understood in highly gendered ways. People recognise a woman's adult status only after she has had a child (Hallos, 2003). In Rwanda, the cultural perception of infertility and childlessness is related to the institution of marriage and the family. Infertility in traditional marriage is a cause for divorce, and a family is considered complete only when it has a child (Adekunle, 2007). Being infertile means losing social status in society, which is why Dative insists that she is not infertile. She has lost her status as a mother not because she is infertile but because of the Genocide Against the Tutsi. She thus cannot be blamed for not having children, unlike those who are childless because of infertility. When a married couple lacks children, the woman is likely to shoulder the social consequences. Her in-laws criticise her and accuse her of interrupting the family lineage (Adekunle, 2007). This is because in Rwandan culture, a child belongs not only to the nuclear family but also the extended family, and they say '*aciye umuryango*' (she is cutting off the family line) as continuing the family line is considered part of women's reproduction role. Even though Dative is not infertile, she endures the consequences of childlessness including lacking the status of a mother as well as care in old age and at the end of her life.

Furthermore, the lived experience of genocide survivors in Karongi District reveals the extent to which the Genocide Against the Tutsi was perpetrated in Karongi District, with every corner ransacked to discover the fugitives, even in sacred places like churches that seemed like safe havens to those seeking refuge but became the first places they died. It is estimated that three thousand people were killed at the Kibuye parish church (African Rights, 1994) including Adela's sons. People from the targeted group sought refuge there believing it to be a safe place, but the institution they expected to provide care did the opposite when that care was most needed. This constituted a rupture in care relations not only at the individual but also the institutional level.

Many people lost their family members and relatives in the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. In Karongi District, the pace was so rapid and the scale so large that 75% of the Tutsi there were killed in April 1994 alone (Verwimp, 2004). Furthermore, the NGO African Rights reported that the death rate in Kibuye Prefecture (most of which is now part of Karongi District) was the highest in the country because Tutsi in that region had nowhere to flee. In Rwanda, the surrounding regions were full of extremists, while those who crossed Lake Kivu to Ijwi Island in Zaire (now the DRC) were met with hostility by those already living there (African Rights, 1994).

The devastating Genocide Against the Tutsi has reconfigured elder care and, in some cases, horizontal care has replaced vertical care, especially for childless older people like Dative. However, nothing can fully replace vertical care relationships and hence it is more important than ever to have children of one's own (Roth, 2008). This offers social, cultural, and emotional benefits beyond material support. The loss of family members during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi suggests that one consider kinship relations in terms of care relationships and the emotions aroused by tragically losing such relationships. Elders suffer from the loss of their children and lack the care they would receive if their children were there to give it.

It is important to note that the testimonies of ageing survivors do not overlook the care they received from the community during the genocide. Even though these people were younger then, this shows how care is needed at all stages of the life span, especially in such times of crisis when even just to survive depended on others' interventions.

Research indicates that a crisis, whether at the individual, social or institutional level, is accompanied by intensified claims to care (Drotbohm, 2015). Even though some people were hunting their own neighbours, others retained a sense of humanity. Those who risked hiding their targeted neighbours during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi showed their greatness of heart and how much they really valued human life. Brehm et al. (2021) consider rescuing Tutsi during the 1994 Genocide a behavioural boundary crossing in which some people transgressed the expected behavioural norm and risked their lives. The fact there was not only violence, but that people also acted on their desire to help the targeted group testifies to the different positionalities of untargeted people in giving or refusing care at critical moments during the Genocide Against the Tutsi. Caring for targeted people has a high significance in this context where people feared to provide needed care while others opted for selfless heroism and sacrifice for the sake of others (Dudai, 2012).

Apart from the human loss, the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi caused a considerable material loss to today's elders.

8.2.2 Material Loss

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi not only took away human lives but also material goods. Elders in Karongi District recounted to me how they lost their movable and immovable property. For example, while Sibomana was hiding from the massacres, he lost everything. His five cows were killed and eaten, his house was burnt, and all his furniture was looted.

Afterwards, he had to start anew, including building a new house and replacing the furniture, but he did not have the means to satisfy all his urgent needs at once. Similarly, Adela lost her four cows and the stock of food at her house, while Dative lost everything: her house was destroyed along with all its contents, and like many other survivors was left homeless. As Sibomana said:

> Right after the genocide, I had nowhere to go – I had no house. I decided to occupy the house of some people who had fled the country. (Interview with Sibomana, 9 January 2020, Rubengera).

Sibomana's lived experience in the aftermath of the genocide resembles that of many other survivors in Karongi District whose houses were destroyed. Dative also occupied houses of absent neighbours. However, Adela did not face the same challenge and regained her residence as soon as she left her hiding place. The neighbour who had supplied her with food while she was hiding looked after her house and prevented people from destroying it.

Losing property in this way made elders vulnerable as it was the foundation of their everyday livelihood. Furthermore, some of the property that they lost, like cows, could have been used to generate other assets. In Rwandan culture, a cow represents wealth and social status and is the most valuable gift possible (Rwanda Governance Board, 2018). Thus, losing one is not only losing income-generating wealth but also one's social status in society. It is worth mentioning that the two main greetings in Kinyarwanda, *Gira abana*, and *Gira inka* mean, respectively, '[May you] have children' and '[May you] have cows.' Given the significance of cows in everyday life, wishes for people to have them are wishes that they will prosper (Gatwa, 2019). The reverse also holds: to dispossess people of their cows is to immiserate them. In Karongi District, as elsewhere in the country, a cow serves multiple purposes. It produces milk, but also manure, which is essential in increasing agricultural productivity. Due to soil acidification in Karongi District,[33] farmers who do not use manure have trouble producing enough food. In any case, not everyone can afford chemical fertilisers, so not having a cow signifies not having enough to get by. Indeed, stealing cows was in part a deliberate strategy to reduce the victims to abject poverty, although the genocide perpetrators also looted property for their own benefit (Storey, 1999).

[33] See Karongi District Development Strategy (DDS) 2018-2024.

In addition to the looting of property, houses were destroyed, as in the above cases of Sibomana and Dative. In Rwandan society, a house is not just a functional shelter but a place of social and cultural belonging where mutual support takes place. For elders, it thus has a deep ritual meaning. The house's ritual significance exists until the very end of one's life and beyond (Maquet, 1954). Destroying a family's house uproots its members by destroying their social, cultural, and ritual bonds.

Both Sibomana and Dative, left homelessness and lacking the means to build new houses of their own, occupied their neighbours' vacant houses. It is worth mentioning that following the overthrow of the former government, many people fled to neighbouring countries. These included not only militia members, soldiers, murderers, and politicians, but also ordinary civilians (Prunier, 1995). This population movement left many houses unoccupied that could provide temporary shelter for homeless genocide survivors.

However, occupying others' houses was not what the survivors wanted: they wanted to have houses of their own. Moreover, this temporary solution did not last for long as two years later the refugees started returning en masse, especially from Tanzania and Zaire (now the DRC) and claiming their houses. To reduce conflict between the returning refugees and the occupants of their houses, the government of Rwanda instructed the latter to give them back (Crisp & Tan, 1998). This decision was adopted in the framework of the government's reconciliation process. This decision meant Sibomana and Dative had to give back the houses they were occupying and put them under pressure to find other accommodation. In this urgent situation, the state had to intervene to help those unable to build their own houses. I will discuss this point later in this chapter.

I argue that the destruction of houses in Karongi District during the genocide exposed the survivors to a greater need for care as a house is not only a physical structure, but also a place of care and interrelatedness (Obrist, 2018). Sibomana and Dative's loss of their houses has affected them both mentally and materially since their lost their place of belongingness. Even if they now have houses again, these are not built on the same sites as the ones they lost, and they have thus also lost the emotional attachment to where they lived before.

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Karongi District not only impacted the material well-being of the survivors but also their psychological well-being.

8.2.3 The Psychological Impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on Older People

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi had a profound psychological impact on the survivors that their narratives show that they still suffer from. They especially suffer when they recall their family members who were killed or remember what it was like to be hunted down to be killed. In Sibomana's words,

> When the memory of my children comes into my mind, I feel overwhelmingly shocked and cannot sleep all night. I ask myself many questions. Why were they killed? Who killed them? And what would they have become if they were not killed?' (Interview with Sibonama, 9 January 2020, Rubengera).

As for Adela, she said:

> Sometimes, I feel like I'm still living during the genocide, especially during the genocide commemoration week. I reconstruct the scene of the genocide many times. I see people hunting me with machetes and spears and become very traumatised. After that, I can't eat and sleep. (Interview with Adela, 19 January 2020, Rubengera).

Dative expressed her traumatic experience as follows:

> The sad memory of my deceased children and husband is always coming into my mind. I feel distraught when I think how lonely I am without my kin's support, while those who could have been around me were savagely killed by genocide perpetrators who lacked humanism and common sense. The sad memories cause an intense headache that makes me have to go to hospital regularly. (Interview with Dative, 17 January 2020, Mubuga).

Following the above life stories of the genocide survivors, the genocide caused deep psychological problems among the survivors. Their traumatic experiences during the Genocide Against the Tutsi – fleeing the killers, constantly moving between hiding places, losing some or all family members, property destruction, and looting – recur whenever they think about what happened. For Dative, the shock was so deep that she still needs medical treatment and counselling. Research indicates that people who were exposed to harm or who experienced the death of a close relative or friend during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi suffer from a high level of post-traumatic disorder compared to those who were not exposed

to terrifying events (Platt et al., 2021). These traumatic memories are still vivid in their minds, even though the genocide happened almost three decades ago, and affect their past, present, and future lives. The interdependence of these temporalities constitutes the path dependence of a life course, where people learn from the past, make their current decision, and plan for the future (Heinz et al., 2009).

The ageing survivors of the 1994 Genocide in Karongi District also suffer from loneliness. Dative is isolated because of the Genocide Against the Tutsi that took all her family members, which makes her think deeply about how she lost all her children and her husband. During the fieldwork in Karongi District, I heard elders lamenting that they live alone because of social changes such as rural-urban migration. However, they are not lonely in the way Dative is. For those whose children have moved to the city attracted by job opportunities, the loneliness is temporary. Their children occasionally visit, so they have the opportunity to enjoy their emotional and material support. But for Dative, the loneliness is permanent, and she will never see her children again: they are gone forever, which psychologically shocks her.

Dative has remained alone since she lost her husband and children in the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. It is more difficult for women to remarry than men, and widows rarely remarry. Furthermore, the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi killed more men than women and those survived married young women rather than widows whom they considered to be getting old. The data from the fourth population and housing census in Rwanda in 2012 indicates that the proportion of married men is higher than the proportion of married women. Furthermore, the proportion of widows among women is higher than the proportion of widowers among men (MINECOFIN & NISR, 2014). In Rwandan culture, a man is likely to get married at any stage of his life after he reaches twenty-one, the legal age of majority. However, women are sometimes not able to get married, especially when they get older. This gendered pattern means ageing women are more likely to be alone than ageing men.

The effect of the Genocide Against the Tutsi on elders' psychological well-being correlates with their loss of people and property. Those who expected care from people they lost or to have property to ensure for their well-being and have lost these expectations are likely to suffer from psychological insecurity and a lack of hope for the future. People and property are entangled and shape caring practices for elders. The loss of people influences property, as people are the ones who generate the property necessary for care provision. Furthermore, property loss affects people, as they use it to sustain their well-being. Not having property in

old age means misery. In addition, property enlarges social networks, which is a source of potential care (Maria, 2000). As discussed in Chapter Four, elders with land attract people to them who want to use that land under hinga tugabane. Therefore, people and property are meaningful to the well-being of elders and ensure safety and independence, while losing people and property produces psychological insecurity and dependence on others.

The next section will detail how the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi affected not only the targeted group but also other population groups in Rwandan society.

8.3 The Impact of the 1994 Genocide Against Tutsi on Non-targeted Elders

When looking at the impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on elder care, one first thinks of those who were targeted, and the body of research reflects this (Longman, 1995). However, my fieldwork suggests that other population groups were also affected by its consequences, even though they did not face the genocide as it took place. The case studies presented in this section illustrate and give insights into its impact on those not targeted.

Beata explained to me how she was affected by the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Her husband had been charged of participating in it and imprisoned in 1995. When the Gacaca courts were introduced in 2001 and started to hear cases, he was convicted of participating in the Genocide Against the Tutsi, looting, and destroying property. He was sentenced to nineteen years imprisonment and also to pay restitution for the damaged property. Beata then had to sell the family land to pay this compensation and was left with only a little land on which she could not raise enough food for her household. She must thus practice hinga tugabane, cultivating others land in return for a share in the harvest. Beata suffered not only from this lack of land but by losing her husband, who died in prison in 2007, leaving her a widow with no means to support herself. Moreover, she was exposed to public shaming: some people accused her of being complicity in the Genocide Against the Tutsi.

> I was considered by some of my neighbours as a genocide perpetrator. They confused me with my husband and with what he did during the 1994 Genocide. (Interview with Beata, 28 January 2020, Rubengera).

It shocked Beata psychologically when she was falsely accused of being a genocide perpetrator. Society incriminated her in a crime she did not commit. In this case, the criminal liability was not personnel but extended to the family members who had to bear the

psychological burden of crimes committed by a family member. The way some of Beata's neighbours treated her must be seen in the context of the genocide's legacy: the dislocation of the social fabric and a climate of fear, mistrust, hatred, and suspicion (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000). This climate has gradually evaporated as the government of Rwanda intensified efforts to unite the Rwandan population and encouraged them to put aside their divisive past and embrace unity and reconciliation.

Beata also suffers from losing care she would have had if her husband had been with her. His responsibilities are now on her shoulders as well as her own. Research suggests that, in the aftermath of Genocide Against the Tutsi, women who are heads of households have increased family responsibilities and must shoulder enormous burdens (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000). Beata has struggled to fulfil her increased responsibilities given her unfavourable social and economic status. In Rwandan culture, a man is the head of the household, a position that comes with a responsibility to protect and to provide for the household's members. When there is no man present, a woman must step in and assume these responsibilities in addition to her own culturally assigned role.

Beata's case is far from being isolated other older adults like André have also been affected by the consequences of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. As we shared some banana beer, André explained to me how it had affected him. His wife was imprisoned on genocide charges and the Gacaca court found her guilty in 2009 and sentenced her to seventeen years imprisonment. She is serving her sentence in Muhanga prison in the Southern Province. André misses his wife's presence at home. She used to perform domestic chores, which he finds difficult, especially when the daughter he lives with is sick. But importantly, he finds it even harder that he lacks the money to travel to visit his wife in prison and has only seen her twice since 2009. He thinks she considers him an ungrateful man who abandoned his wife when the situation became difficult. He is ashamed that his wife will one day return home at the end of her sentence without him having visited her in prison.

Thinking about his wife makes André feel like he failed his in responsibilities of caring for his wife when she needed it. Providing care requires the means to do so (Glenn, 2010) and his lack of financial means prevents André from travelling to the prison to provide emotional and material care to his wife.

While André suffers from the absence of his wife and lacking the means to care for her, Nyampame suffers from the disappearance of her three sons. Shortly after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, and with the overthrow of the interim government, some politicians encouraged citizens to flee the country and leave it deserted to leave the incoming regime with no one to govern (Prunier, 1995). Nyampame' sons were among this wave of mass refugees to neighbouring countries, in their case Zaire (now the DRC). Since then, Nyampame has heard nothing about their whereabouts, even when refugees from the camps in Zaire were returning in masse in 1996–1997. She does not know whether they have died or are still alive. However, she does not believe they feared coming back because of anything they had done because no one at the Gacaca courts accused them of participating in the genocide, (unlike some others who fled the country and did not return). Nyampame remains alone with no kin support and no one to help her recover her land. She said: 'If my sons could have been here, they would have secured my land, and none would have dared to take it.' (Interview with Nyampame, 5 December 2019, Mubuga). Not having her sons around made vulnerable to her cousin's malice and resulted in fraudulently seizing her land. If they had been there, they could have claimed the land without paying a price since they were her legitimate heirs.

However, the suffering of those who were not targeted during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi seems invisible and unrecognised in the Rwandan public discourse. These sufferings resulted from the deliberate actions of their family members who participated in the genocide or decided to flee the country, so elders cannot talk about this kind of suffering openly.

The cases presented above reveal how elders were affected by the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi to a varying degree depending on personal experience. Even if these people did not need to worry about being targeted, its consequences still affected them as they lost care they could have had if it had never happened. They suffer from the acts of their family members or their departure from the country. The above narratives echo the interconnectedness of family life, which is expressed in linked lives and social ties to others (Mitchell, 2003). From a similar perspective, large-scale changes or events at the societal level affect individuals and families (Glen et al., 2003). In the case of ageing genocide survivors, the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi was a turning point in their family life. They experienced abrupt changes resulting from the genocide itself, in its aftermath, or from its consequences. This harsh past eroded their caring basis and undermined their care expectations from absent family members, which still shapes their current living conditions.

8.4 State Support for Elders Genocide Survivors

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi left survivors with multiple deprivations. One of the post-genocide government's priorities in nation-building was to help genocide survivors recover from its psychological consequences and access proper healthcare services.

8.4.1 Psychological Caring

'I was treated in a neuropsychiatric hospital.'

This statement from Dative describes how she suffered from mental health disorders caused by the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. When I visited her one morning in January, during the harvest season she gave me a stool to sit on and sat on a mat in the shade outside her house. It was a typical sunny day in *Urugaryi*, the brief dry harvest season. Dative explained to me that the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi gave her '*guhungabana*' (literally, 'having trauma'). She described how this becomes acute any time an event reminds her of her lost family members and during *Kwibuka* (to remember), the genocide commemoration week[34]. She said: 'I am treated at the Neuropsychiatric Hospital whenever I have ihungabana.' When I asked how she got there and paid the fees, she told me that the state paid for her medical and travel costs via the Genocide Survivors Support Fund (FARG). During this conversation, Dative also said that a neighbour friend came with her to the centre, where she receives counselling, as well as medication for severe headaches.

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi left many survivors with serious health problems. After experiencing horrific threats to their lives, they displayed symptoms of psychological trauma and depression, one of the durable marks the genocide has left (Rieder & Elbert, 2013). Dative's psychological conditions force her to travel more than one hundred kilometres to Kigali as medical treatment at a specialised health institution is not available in Karongi District. The horrors that Dative experienced during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, when she lost all her children, her husband, and her parents caused her recurring trauma. Research on the rate of trauma and the risks of post-traumatic stress disorder in Rwanda indicates chronic mental health problems among genocide survivors and particularly widows

[34] Every year, the week from 7 to 13 April commemorates the Genocide Against the Tutsi. This period honours and restores dignity to the victims of the Genocide Against the Tutsi and is a time for other activities intended to address its consequences and ensure that it will never happen again. See Law No 15/2016 of 02/05/2016 Governing Ceremonies to Commemorate the Genocide Against the Tutsi and Organisation and the Management of the Memorial Sites for the Genocide Against the Tutsi.

(Schaal et al., 2011). Other research has similarly found that females genocide survivors in Rwanda developed more mental health problems than male ones (Schaal et al., 2012).

The mental health conditions among genocide survivors like Dative, has compelled the state to take on the responsibility of providing health care services to traumatised and impoverished people to improve their psychological well-being and become the primary carer for genocide survivors who have been deprived of their support base. Dative's inability to afford the transport and medical treatment costs necessitated its intervention through a fund initiated to support genocide survivors in need. This aligns with the state's constitutional obligation to support vulnerable people.

However, although the state supports genocide survivors with health care, this must be supplemented by social networks' support. Research indicates that a social network is a potential source of social support and influences psychological well-being (Wills & Ainette, 2012). For example, the state pays for Dative's transport and medical service, but that is not enough unless her friend also accompanies her when she travels, which is just as important since she needs it to access the state support. Recent research on caring for elders in Rwanda indicates that small things in the everyday life of elders are more meaningful than money and give their lives dignity (Sadruddin, 2020). Dative's friend's presence during the most acute episodes of her illness is meaningful emotional support that is crucial to her psychological well-being. Therefore, I argue that the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi has not only reconfigured the care relationship between childless elders and the state as care provider but also their care relationships with their social networks. However, psychological care for genocide survivors is not limited to medical treatment and counselling but also extends to prayers and forgiveness.

8.5 Healing Psychological Sequelae of the Genocide Through Prayers and Forgiveness

> 'Prayers and forgiveness gave me back the taste of life.'

When Dative told me this, it aroused my curiosity and I wanted to know more. She explained that she had been a Christian and a member of the Presbyterian church since childhood. After her experiences during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, she decided she would no longer attend any congregation: she no longer believed in God. She thought that if he had been in Rwanda, he would have prevented the Genocide Against the Tutsi. She explained this with a

proverb, '*Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha i Rwanda.*' ('God spends the day elsewhere but sleeps in Rwanda.') This proverb means that God is the protector of Rwanda as nothing wrong can happen where God sleeps. Dative was saying that God must have abandoned Rwanda and that was a reason for the Genocide Against the Tutsi.

As she narrated her story, Dative revealed to me that in the days following the Genocide Against the Tutsi she was embittered felt anger towards those who had perpetrated the genocide and towards God who had not prevented it. She could not bear to meet people from the families of the genocide perpetrators without showering them with insults. Dative told me that her pastor had visited her, changed her mind, and convinced her to return to the church. As she continued to pray with others and listened to gospel, her anger gradually disappeared. She told me that the pastor's sermons on forgiveness inspired a desire in her to forgive those who had killed her family members, and this made her feel relieved. The anger and desire for revenge that she had long felt vanished. She said, 'Since the time I decided to forgive those who apologised to me for what they did, I am no longer disturbed by meeting relatives of those who killed my family. Prayers and forgiveness gave me back the taste of life.' (Interview with Dative, 21 January 2020, Rubengera)

Not only Dative's narrative but her actions demonstrate her trauma. Her revolt against everyone, even God, was a psychological consequence of her experiences during the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. These negative emotions produced a climate of mistrust, suspicion, and despair and led to depression that she then needed support to overcome. She needed to be closer to others and not isolate herself. The visit from her pastor played a significant role in helping her to break out of this isolation and free herself from her intrusive memories by coming to the church to pray with others. Recent research on ageing in Rwanda indicates that the church, through prayers, brings greater hope and encourages consolation and mutual support among elders (Davis et al., 2019). Dative needed the hope, consolation, and support her church members provided, which had the psychological benefit of reducing her negative emotions. As I indicated in Chapter Four, the church supports its members with both material and spiritual support. In the cases of despair and trauma, like Dative's, spiritual support proves crucial in consoling them and giving them new hope by healing the psychological consequences of the genocide.

Dative's decision to return to the church to pray not only helped her to meet church members and socialise with them, but also encouraged her to forgive those who killed her family

members. In the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, the government of Rwanda's primary mission was to unite the divided Rwandan society and promote peaceful cohabitation among Rwandans. Different state partners, like churches, had to actively contribute to achieving this mission. Although religious organisations in Rwanda are criticised for failing to prevent killings or stop their members from participating in the Genocide Against the Tutsi, they are playing a vital role in the unity and reconciliation process (Kubai, 2007). Their ability to mobilise people and influence their attitude toward forgiveness makes their contribution to uniting and reconciling people meaningful (Sundqvist, 2011). Furthermore, the concepts of confession, regret, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion are more prominent in religious contexts than in any other (Sampson, 1997). In this context of prayers and preaching for unity and reconciliation, Dative changed her mind and forgave those who did wrong to her. Forgiving them and giving up her grudges and desire for revenge was a kind of psychological healing for her.

A body of research highlights the relevance of forgiveness in healing the psychological wounds in post-genocide Rwanda. Staub et al. (2005) indicate that forgiveness helps people let go of anger and diminishes their pain from being a victim. Because it depends on an acknowledgement of the wrong done and an apology, it not only heals the survivors but also the perpetrators. Similarly, the survivors experience relief from the pain they endured when they forgive offenders who sincerely admit their wrongs and apologise (King, 2011). Thus, there is a connection between forgiveness and psychological wounds' healing. I argue that healing the psychological wounds of survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi is not only limited to counselling and medical treatment but also includes prayers and forgiveness.

8.6 Conclusion

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi marked a turning point in the life trajectory of elders and brought profound changes in elder care relationships in Karongi District. Elders' narratives reveal how it destroyed their past and future expectations of care. Elders' hope for care from their family members vanished. This perception of care expectation goes together with the idea of taking care in its positive aspect (Pysklywec et al., 2020). Both targeted and untargeted groups of elders have been affected and to varying degrees. The losses experienced by elders were both material and human: it killed more than one million people and destroyed invaluable material assets that were the basis of the survivors' present and future livelihoods.

This has had a significant impact on elders' mental health, especially for survivors' who suffer from profound psychological wounds due to their trauma. Despite this past, they have not sunk into hopelessness and despair but have striven to create networks with neighbours, friends, the church, and the state. Such social networks are a source of needed support for elders. Furthermore, the different social networks' various forms of care are mutually reinforcing. The state provides houses and medical care, while neighbours, friends and the church provide psychological care. These forms of care resonate with care embedded in a large institutional framework within different temporalities (Thelen, 2015): during the genocide, soon after it, and to this day. Hence, care does not die out during and after a horrific event like the Genocide Against the Tutsi; rather, it is continually reconfigured to include other actors like the state, the church, neighbours, and friends in the cycle of care.

Chapter IX: The COVID-19 Pandemic Effect on Family Care Relationships

9.1 Introduction

'COVID-19 made me someone to take care of.' – Vestine

This statement came from Vestine when she narrated how the COVID-19 pandemic reduced her financial capacity and made her a person who needed care.

During my second period of fieldwork in Rwanda, from December 2020 to March 2021, my informants in both rural and urban areas were lamenting the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which suggested the idea of expanding my interviews to explore how that situation was affecting care relationships. Everyone emphasised the effects the lockdown had on their living conditions and on those of the family members they cared for. When COVID-19 was first identified in China in late 2019, no one expected it to spread throughout the world so quickly. Since the first known case in Rwanda in March 2020, various restrictive measures have been taken to curb the spread of the pandemic. These disrupted care relationships among family members, especially those between migrants in the city and their parents in rural areas. Among the measures the government of Rwanda adopted was lockdown that cut off numerous people's professional, social, and economic activities. This reduced their ability to care to such an extent that those who had provided care before now received it themselves. The chapter shows the various ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted family care relationships and reduced the caring capacity of migrants to the point that it reversed their caring roles.

9.2 Shifting Care Positionalities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

When I visited Vestine for the second time, in February 2021, she was unemployed. Since 2017, she had been a teacher at a private school in Kigali since 2017, while her husband owned a neighbourhood bar there. When the first COVID-case was identified in Rwanda, on 14 March 2020, the government instituted a total lockdown that included all social, professional, and economic activities. Some days after that, the owner of her school terminated all its employment contracts. Since then, she and her husband (whose bar, of course, was also closed) had been jobless and had difficulty supporting their family. At first, they had savings, but this did not last long. She then asked her family to supply her with food. She said:

> Before the pandemic, I cared for my parents in rural areas, but when the pandemic came, I became a seeker of support from them. I was a person who cared for others, but COVID-19 made me someone to take care of. My parents in the village sent me food during the lockdown. (Interview with Vestine, 17 February 2021, Kigali).

When I wanted to know how this food got to her from the rural areas under lockdown, Vestine explained that her parents sent it with a businessman from the village who supplied food to the city as vehicles transporting food were exempt from travel restrictions. Once a week, she received potatoes, beans, and a banana bunch from her parents. Meanwhile, the reopening of schools was delayed until November 2020, so she decided to teach her neighbours' children at home to earn a little money. This is commonly known as coaching and consists of helping children review their lessons at home. However, such activities violated the government's stay-at-home order and she described how she went to coach her neighbours' children in fear of being punished if the local authorities found out. However, she said:

> Even though I knew that I could be punished if caught coaching children, I had no other alternative to earn an income. I always paid attention so that no one could see me leaving my home without authorisation. (Interview with Vestine, 17 February 2021, Kigali).

Eric also received support from his mother during the lockdown. As I described in Chapter Five, Eric drives a motorcycle taxi in Kigali, where he lives with his wife and two children. He explained to me that as he earned his living transporting people around Kigali the lockdown and its restrictions on movement were a fatal blow to his activity. He said:

> I couldn't send money to my mother during the lockdown; instead, she kept sending a part of her harvest to feed my family because, without my job, it was difficult for me to buy food for my whole family. (Interview with Eric, 6 February 2021, Kigali).

Eric explained to me that during the lockdown, his wife's job also stopped. She was a tailor, but during the lockdown selling food was the only commercial activity permitted, and even that required a movement pass from the National Police. He explained that no one was allowed to start a new food business during the lockdown and only those who had sold food before the pandemic were allowed to continue. Overwhelmed by uncertainty and confusion of the situation, Eric did not know what to do, so he requested money from a motorcyclists'

cooperative of which he was a member. He said the cooperative was required to support its members in difficult times but had rejected his request due to having insufficient funds to distribute. He lamented what he considered mismanagement and criticised it for failing to support its members as stated in the cooperative's regulations. His only remaining source of support was the food his mother sent him.

The above case studies show how the pandemic response caused people to lose their jobs and thus their ability to provide for their families. The United Nations report on its social and economic impact on Rwanda indicates that the measures adopted by the Rwandan government positively impacted the containment of the pandemic while negatively impacting households as they induced poverty at the household level (UN, 2020). This happened to Eric and Vestine, who lost the ability to care for both their families in the city and their parents in rural areas. The shutdown of economic activities and loss of income deeply affected their families. The pandemic also reversed the existing care relationships between urban migrants and their parents with those who were care providers before it, becoming care receivers during it.

By analogy to the principle that care obligations shift during the different life stages (Kavedžija, 2021), we can also say that care obligations shift during a crisis that reduces people's ability to care for one another. Research indicates that a societal crisis hinders the proper provision of care while simultaneously intensifying the demand for care (Drotbohm, 2015). During the pandemic, Vestine and Eric were not only unable to provide care to their parents in rural areas; rather, their need for food from them intensified. I argue that care circulation is not unidirectional but reverses the direction in which it flows, depending on the circumstances and the care receiver's needs.

Furthermore, the institutional response to the pandemic produced inequities. While teachers in public schools received their regular salaries during the lockdown, those in private schools saw their contracts suspended abruptly as their employers claimed they faced financial difficulties and could not pay an employee who was not actively working.[35] The differentiation of employees based on belongingness within a public or private institution speaks to the idea that care produces and reproduces structural inequalities (Kavedžija, 2021). Moreover,

[35] For more details see https://www.ktpress.rw/2020/05/pay-our-salaries-private-school-teachers-under-lockdown-ask-govt/

inequalities have not only been observed in how teachers at private schools were treated during the lockdown but also in how some businesses were allowed to function while others were not. The expectation of institutional care vanished during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in disappointment and frustration. The above cases show how people faced the consequences of the pandemic without the institutional support they expected and to which they felt entitled.

The absence of institutional care challenged the existing lifestyle of the migrants. Eric expected his cooperative to rescue him but was frustrated when his request was rejected. Similarly, Vestine expected to continue receiving her salary, but her employer suspended her contract. The lack of expected private institutional support at the crucial moment led them to look for other alternatives. Vestine opted for coaching neighbours' children to earn an income, an activity that not only risked spreading the disease but was also contrary to the government measures obligating people to stay at home. Even though Vestine knew that she was running a risk, she had no other way to earn an income. This made me recall some jokes on social media, where people said that remaining at home and dying of hunger was worse than going out and dying of COVID-19. Hence, the pandemic put people at risk of starvation as well as infection.

9.3 Food Shortage in Urban Areas During the Pandemic

'There was not enough food at the market during the lockdown.' – Daniel

During my second visit to Daniel in February 2021, he described the food shortages during the lockdown. Daniel owns a shop where he sells various goods, including groceries. He explained to me that the Rwandan government's response the pandemic has significantly reduced the movement of goods and people. The supply of food both from within and outside the country was no longer regular. Daniel said he used to buy stock for his shop at Kigali's wholesale market, but he no longer found food there once the warehouses were empty. Even where it was available, the prices were too high compared to before the pandemic. He described the food shortage in this way:

> There was not enough food at the market during the lockdown. Both products from outside, like cooking oil, sugar, and rice, and those produced in the country, like beans and maize, were scarce, and their price was too

> high for the consumers to afford. (Interview with Daniel, 21 February 2021, Kigali).

Vestine also reported facing food shortages. She told me that she had given up sugar and rice as they were available in only a few shops and expensive. She explained this decision to give up on some of the food commodities by citing the proverb '*Iyo amazia baye make aharirwa impfizi.*' ('When water becomes scarce it is reserved for the ox.') This proverb makes an analogy with the dry season, when water becomes scarcer the more that cattle need it. In these circumstances, the strongest, the oxen, are the only ones who get to drink, as they prevent the others from drinking it. In this way, Vestine expressed to me that she was no longer economically strong and left those products to those who could afford them.

The food shortages and associated price increases also hit Eric. As mentioned above, he earned his daily living from transporting people on his motorcycle, but after the ban on travel, including motorcycle transportation, he lost his daily earnings. He used his savings to buy food for his family at first, but his savings quickly ran out due to the increased price for food at the market. During this period, Eric said that only his children got to eat twice a day, while he and his wife only ate one meal to help conserve the food from the rural areas while waiting for another shipment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in food insecurity, especially in urban areas. Food shortages at the markets resulted from the responsive measures adopted by the Rwandan government to fight the spread of the pandemic. The restriction of movement and the border closure profoundly impacted the domestic and international food supply chains. Even though agricultural activities were permitted during the lockdown, some farmers feared going to fields located far from their homes to cultivate or harvest crops because such movement required special authorisation from the police (Rwigema, 2021). These measures also slowed down the food distribution chain within the country, and the requirements when importers returned to the country – which included paying for fourteen days of quarantine at a designated hotel – reduced the frequency with which they abroad.[36] Moreover, Rwanda is a landlocked country that depends on ports in Tanzania and Kenya. Due to COVID-19, the decline in the volume of trade through Dar es Salaam and Mombasa, coupled with delays in

[36] See the Office of the Prime Minister, Announcement on Enhanced COVID-19 Prevention Measures of the 21 March 2020, available at https://www.primature.gov.rw

transporting the goods to Rwanda, significantly exacerbated food insecurity there (UN, 2020). These internal and external factors have strained the food supply chain and increased prices for both imported and locally produced food commodities.

In addition, the macro-economic situation induced by market volatility affects households and shapes caring practice among family members. While the care economy requires a balance between household needs and the labour market to maintain families' capacity for care, the COVID-19 pandemic created an unstable situation (Ahmed et al., 2020). As the cases presented above show, this instability is related to unemployment that reduced their ability to respond to their families' increasing care needs amid the lockdown so much that even paying for food became a challenge. The loss of jobs stressed families financially, decreased their purchasing power, and strained their routine care practices. The UN report indicates that casual workers and low-paid workers strata were affected the most by the government's response in Rwanda (UN, 2020).

Eric and Vestine both fall into these categories that endured the most severe financial shock during the pandemic. Eric is self-employed and lives on what he earns each day, while Vestine is a low-paid worker. For Eric to miss work means suffering from hunger. Similarly, teachers in primary and secondary schools are among the less paid category and have been demanding higher salaries. Moreover, Vestine did not even receive her low salary during the pandemic because her employer suspended her contract, condemning her and her family to hunger and vulnerability. In response to teachers' longstanding demands for a salary increase, the government of Rwanda recently decided to raise primary school teachers' salaries by 80% and secondary school teachers by 40%.[37] While this decision was welcomed by teachers and the population in general, teachers in private schools are dependent on the decisions of individual school owners. Vestine works for a private school and will not receive a salary increase.

The food shortage also made people change from how they lived prior to the pandemic and adopt strategies to mitigate its adverse effects. The relative abundance from before the pandemic was gone, so urban dwellers opted for austerity. They ate fewer meals per day while reserving as much food as possible for their children, who are generally considered a vulnerable group that needs more care in a crisis. Research on future family roles in the care

[37] See the communique of the Ministry of Education of 1 August 2022. Available at https://www.mineduc.gov.rw

economy indicates that people's behavioural changes during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed them to continuously address the pandemic's effect on family stability (Ahmed et al., 2020).

The state's responses to the pandemic had side effects that required people to adjust their behaviour to the pandemic-induced impact by changing their way of living and embracing austere living. However, as the pandemic intensified and the lockdown was extended, the food shortage in Kigali reached an unbearable level. Hence, numerous voices called for state intervention.

9.4 State Food Distribution Scheme

'The state's food helped me face the food shortage during the pandemic.' – Eric.

When I met Eric in February 2021, he recounted how the state and his mother had provided him with food: rice, *kawunga* (maize flour), and beans. He emphasised that, although he could not underrate the support from his mother, the type of food the state distributed had a longer shelf-life than the perishable potatoes and bananas from the countryside. When I asked how the state learned that he was short of food, he explained that the *umudugudu* (village or local neighbourhood) leaders had made a list of those most affected by the pandemic who needed food more than others. They sent this list to the cell-level administration, which organised door-to-door food distribution in collaboration with higher-level state agencies. This was carried out by youth volunteers, who delivered food to the families concerned. Eric appreciated the state's support and how it had been carefully coordinated and directed to those in need.

While Eric was grateful for the state support he received during lockdown, this was not the case with Vestine. She lamented how she had been left out of the food distribution scheme despite the pandemic's adverse impact on her. When Vestine learned that the government would give food to those affected by the pandemic, she expected to be among the recipients. However, she did not know how or when the food would be distributed, and only heard about this from neighbours when they received it. Vestine complained to her umudugudu leader, who told her that the food was for day labourers, not salaried employees. Vestine said she had tried to convince him that she was no longer employed, but he did not believe her. She criticised the local leaders for always looking for an excuse to exclude people from access to state food.

Like Vestine, Bahati received no food support. When we met for the second time, in March 2021, he recounted his experiences during the COVID-19-related lockdown. He lived in an urban neighbourhood in Kigali and before the pandemic, he had lived by carrying people's bags at the central bus station at Nyabugogo. He explained to me that even if his activity was not very profitable, he got by. However, the pandemic and its related lockdown overturned everything. He barely had anything to eat as he did not have enough savings to buy food during the lockdown. Bahati told me that when the food distribution scheme was announced, he expected to receive some. However, he was disappointed when no food was delivered to his home, unlike his neighbours'. When he complained to his umudugudu leader, he was told that single people were not a priority for food distribution. He criticised the unfairness of the local leaders in this matter. He said:

> The government did well to give food to the population, but local leaders ruined everything when they were biased in the implementation. (Interview with Bahati, 4 March 2021, Kigali).

Bahati then revealed to me that he lived entirely on maize porridge and only ate on alternate days until the lockdown was relaxed in May 2020.

Food was not distributed only in the city but also in rural areas but in a different way. During my visit to André in January 2021, he reported that he had received food from the village coordinator. Before the pandemic, he had lived by guca inshuro, cultivating his neighbours' land for food, but he could not continue this during the lockdown. André explained to me that during that period, the coordinator of his village made a tour of the village to encourage inhabitants to give food to those suffering from hunger. He collected food from various households in the village that had it and then distributed it to people like André who had nothing to eat. André told me that the village coordinator redistributed food every Saturday, so he was able to eat during the lockdown.

The above cases illustrate how during the pandemic people benefited differently from the state food distribution scheme. The government of Rwanda introduced the food distribution scheme in response to households' food shortages due to the lockdown, especially day labourers (Rwigema, 2021). The initiative was appreciated by city dwellers, who saw it as a remedy to their food insecurity. However, its implementation received both praise from those, like Eric, who benefited and criticism from those who were excluded, like Vestine and

Bahati. Nevertheless, no criticism was addressed directly to the programme or to the government that initiated it. Instead, they blamed its implementation by local leaders at the umudugudu level. One might wonder why the population's attitude towards the government and its social policies in this way. Popular discourse in Rwanda generally credits the government and its policies with improving the welfare of the population. However, it blames local leaders for problems with the implementation of these policies. In particular, local leaders are sometimes accused of bias. (See Chapter Four, on social cash transfer implementation).

In both cases, the state appeared in the form of grassroots local leaders, who played a significant role in food distribution. In the city, the state drew on its food reserve to distribute food to with no means to get it on their own, while in rural areas, state officials collected food from the population to distribute to poor people. This is how local leaders facilitate the state's supportive actions toward the population and shape the image people make about the state and how they link it to its policies (Kay, 2018).

Organising the distribution of food through local leaders testifies to the pervasive presence of the state and its closeness to the population through well-established structures from the top level to the grassroots. The state apparatus available to provide food to the neediest urban population exemplifies its interventionist character, especially in times of crisis. Food distribution was one of the state's strategies to respond to the crisis and help people who could not care for or feed themselves recover from its adverse impact (RNSF, 2017) and also strengthens the state's positive image among the population. Similarly, welfare provision represents an essential site where the state redefines itself (Thelen et al., 2018). The relationships between Rwandan citizens and their state are materialised in various forms of support through different social protection programmes or rapid responses to crises that often expose people to vulnerability, like floods or landslides. The response to the food scarcity issue during the COVID-19 pandemic was in alignment with the rapid response framework. Thus, the state's caring role was not limited to instituting measures against the pandemic itself but extended to providing food to needy citizens as well.

Some informants also complained that the food scheme implementation was arbitrarily distributed. In Brazil, arbitrariness in the implementation of social assistance programmes has been cited as a case of deliberate inclusion and exclusion errors (De Britto, 2008). This may also apply to the food distribution programme during the lockdown in Kigali. The umudugudu

leader had the authority to decide who would benefit. Furthermore, while the minimum condition was to have lost one's livelihood due to COVID-19, the leader could accept some while rejecting others. For instance, the fact that Vestine had worked for a salary before the pandemic was enough for her to be excluded, while Bahati's unmarried state was the reason for his exclusion. Vestine and Bahati's experiences lead us to think about care not only in a positive but also in a negative sense, where it is seen as cruel and ambiguous and can lead to neglect and exclusion (Kavedžija, 2021). In this respect, unsatisfied care expectations during the pandemic created frustration and resentment. When Vestine and Bahati did not receive the support they expected because they had lost their means of living due to COVID-19, they blamed their respective umudugudu leaders and accused them of excluding from the food distribution. Even though Vestine and Bahati lived in different umudugudu, their respective local leaders treated them the same way. Thus, state care was embedded in the political system's complex web of power relationships in which local leaders hold a dominant position over citizens who are potential beneficiaries of state support.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only caused a food crisis that required state intervention through food distribution scheme in urban areas but also caused some urban migrants to return to rural areas.

9.5 Returning to Rural Areas: A Strategy to Escape Urban Hardships During the Pandemic

During my second period of fieldwork in Karongi District in December 2020, I visited Beata again and found her sitting in the compound with her daughter. They were winnowing beans. Beata introduced me to her daughter Agnes. I had heard about this daughter from her mother but had never met her before – she always told me she was busy when I had tried to meet her in Kigali – and I was glad to finally have this opportunity to interview her. She told me that she had worked as a waitress in a bar in Kigali before the pandemic and had lost her job when bars were closed in March 2020. Even when the lockdown was relaxed in May 2020, they did not reopen so she returned home to the village in case another lockdown trapped her in the city with no job and exhausted savings.

> After the first lockdown, I almost remained with nothing to eat. As I did not get another job, I could not stand another lockdown; and I returned to my village, where I could easily get to eat and sleep without paying the rent. (Interview with Agnes, 19 December 2020, Karongi District).

Agnes informed me that she seldom travelled back to the village before the pandemic. Her job was very demanding, and she had to work late every night of the week. Going to the village meant she had to get permission from her employer to take time off. From her narrative, I learned that she really had been busy at work and was not making excuses to avoid meeting me. She told me that she would only return to work once the government allowed bars to reopen.

Agnes' mother Beata was paying attention to my conversation with her daughter. She joked that 'when they face hunger in the city, they remember to return to the village.'

That comment shifted the conversation to Beata and her daughter. Agnes smiled a little and acquiesced. 'That's true; we don't have gardens in the city where we can even grow vegetables. We buy everything at the market with money. Don't exaggerate, Mama, I don't come here only when there is a problem in the city. Even if I don't come regularly, I do sometimes come to see you.'

Beata stood firm. 'You go to the city, and once you're there, you forget that we exist. You have to remember that we're here, and we need you!'

Agnes replied, 'I didn't forget you, Mama. It's because life in the city is too hard; you can't eat if you don't work hard.'

Then Beata said, 'If it's too hard to live in the city, why not remain in the village?'

Agnes answered, 'Even if urban life is difficult, the city is better than the village.'

This conversation reminded me of Beata's complaints in previous discussions when she blamed her daughters for not visiting or providing enough support. This leads her to accuse her daughter of only coming home when she is running away from hunger in the city. Although Beata seemed to be joking, her comment to her daughter was meaningful. There is a proverb '*Ukuri gushirira mubigniro*,' which means 'The truth ends up being revealed through a conversation.' She revealed what she really thought about her daughter, who went to the city and did not care for her as she expected. This was also an opportunity for Beata to remind her daughter that she not only should spend time in the village when she has no alternative (like during the pandemic) but also during normal times.

Furthermore, Agnes's justifications for her absence from home did not convince her mother, which is why she insisted that Agnes should stay at home if she had so much trouble in the

city. While in the city, people only eat after they have bought groceries and get accommodation only after they have paid rent, in rural areas people eat what they harvest in their fields and live in houses that they own. These advantages available in rural areas made Agnes flee the city's high living costs during the pandemic. Thus, despite the city's advantages, the rural area is still better when the situation is so challenging in urban areas.

Moreover, rural and urban areas interact within a climate of inequality and complementarity. On the one hand, the higher level of development and greater social and economic resources in urban areas draw migrants from rural ones. On the other, the flow of food supplies and labour forces to the city from the countryside shows that urban areas need rural ones to survive. Thus, urban regions cannot overlook the rural areas, which supply labour, food, and other commodities to the cities. This interdependence and complementarity make urban migrants return to rural areas whenever they go through hardships in the city and cannot sustain their livelihoods. The disruption of supply chains and loss of employment due to COVID-19 constitute the main factors pushing urban migrants to return to rural areas, while the loss of wealth and the lack of jobs are among the factors that drive people to leave the city for rural regions (Kumar, 2012). Similarly, Agnes losing her job and livelihood in town made her return to the village to live with her mother.

Agnes's case is far from unique. When the government banned movement among the districts and Kigali city, some urban dwellers moved from the city to rural areas in unauthorised ways, like walking around the police checkpoints on the main roads. A Rwanda National Police (RNP) spokesperson warned those people sternly, reminding them that they were taking a big risk and could face severe sanctions if caught flouting the measures against COVID-19.[38]

People who do not have permanent jobs in the city are tempted to return to their villages when prevented from going to their everyday work. This is especially true for urban migrants working in the informal sector, who live day-by-day. The pandemic left many such people unable to make a living in the city who returned to the village to wait for the relaxation of the pandemic measures and then return to resume their work.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only influenced the movement back to the village but also caused worry and anxiety among both the rural and urban populations.

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[38] See https://umuryango.rw/amakuru/mu-rwanda/umutekano/article/gahunda-ubu-ni-guma-mu-mugi-guma-mu-karere-cp-kabera

9.6 Worriedness and Anxiety in Rural and Urban Areas

'I worried a lot – about my life and that of my children.' — Adela.

The third time I visited Adela, in January 2021, it was still during pandemic, and in some regions, there were still lockdowns. We mainly discussed the pandemic, a hot topic that was arousing a lot of concern in the population. Adela told me all about her experiences during the pandemic. She had panicked when she heard that a pandemic had reached the country and was killing people. In addition, she heard on the radio that the disease had no treatment and was most dangerous to older people.

> I was confused and worried about the pandemic. I have never seen a situation where people were obliged to remain home without visiting each other. I worried a lot about my life and that of my children in the city where the pandemic was reported to spread quickly. (Interview with Adela, 9 January 2021, Rubengera).

Adela's worry intensified when she was informed that his son, grandchildren, and daughter-in-law living in Kigali had been infected. She said:

> I was terribly shocked by the bad news, when I was told my son and his family were infected. I worried a lot and panicked. I did not know what could happen to them. But by God's mercy, they all recovered from the pandemic. (Interview with Adela, 9 January 2021, Rubengera).

This worry was not one-sided: urban migrants also worried about their parents in rural areas. Gaspard, the son of Adela who had COVID-19, testified to worrying a lot about his mother during the pandemic.

> I always worried about my mother, because with her advanced age getting infected could have been fatal to her. (Interview with Gaspard, 5 March 2021, Kigali).

Gaspard worried much more about his mother's life than his own and his nuclear family's. He told me that he had tested positive for COVID-19 at the end of April 2020. His wife and three children also were infected. They were all admitted to the Kanyinya COVID-19 treatment centre.[39] He said that the most frightening thing was not the disease itself but how health

[39] Kanyinya is a COVID-19 treatment center established by the Government of Rwanda in Kigali in response to the spread of COVID-19 infections. See COVID-19 Clinical Management Guidelines, available at

professionals came to his home with security officers and took him to the isolation centre. He said:

> The physical appearance of health professionals, the way they were dressed, and the presence of security officers at my home were more terrifying than the disease I had. (Interview with Gaspard, 5 March 2021, Kigali).

When I wanted to know why he was terrified by the presence of security officers and health professionals, he told me that it was like they were arresting a terrorist, not caring for a sick person.

Furthermore, after Gaspard was taken to the health centre for treatment, his entire family was tested for COVID-19 and received positive results. Then, they were all taken to the same isolation centre. When I wanted to know who took care of his house and property during this time, he informed me that an agent from the District Administration Security Support Organ, known as DASSO, watched the house until his wife came home (she recovered before him). During the family's absence, the state had protected his family property against theft. He spent three weeks at the isolation centre, while his wife and children spent two weeks.

The above narratives indicate that the pandemic's outbreak and the subsequent lockdown created a stressful situation for everyone. People worried not only about themselves but also their faraway family members. As the pandemic did not subside, the lockdown was extended, and people's panic and anxiety escalated since they did not know how to escape the situation and kept asking themselves how it would end. Worry and panic are emotions that all human beings experience throughout their life span, depending on what events or conditions threaten their life or usual ways of responding to everyday needs. Research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic was an exceptional event which made people worried and anxious, as they had no control over what was happening and could not predict what was to come (Šrol et al., 2021).

People think about those they care for when an unexpected misfortune occurs at the community or regional level. Since the COVID-19 pandemic was a national and even global danger, it made urban migrants worry about their parents in rural areas and vice versa. Each worried about one another's lives and hoped that nothing terrible would happen. Thus, in

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https://www.moh.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Moh/Publications/Guidelines_Protocols/Covid_-19_Clinical_Management_Guideline.pdf.

times of crisis, the emotional aspect of care prevails over its other forms. As Van der Geest, (2002) suggests, the emotional meaning of care includes concern, dedication, and attachment. Thus, the way urban migrants felt concerned for their parents in rural areas and vice versa speaks to their firm attachment and dedication to each other.

Moreover, the pandemic increased isolation and loneliness. Before, some elders in Karongi District had suffered from loneliness, but then it was broken by visits from their children and neighbours. As people's usual social relations, events, and interactions were prohibited, elders became increasingly lonely and worried about this exceptional situation they had never seen before. Research indicates the existence of more loneliness among elders in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dahlberg, 2021). Dahlberg also indicates that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of social distancing has had collateral damage of increased loneliness among elders (Dahlberg, 2021). This was the case for elders in Karongi District, as on the one hand the travel ban made adult children in the city unable to travel to rural areas to visit their parents and on the other hand, the stay-at-home order prohibited visits among neighbours.

In addition, people's perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic differed according to their geographical locations. Adela perceived it as an urban phenomenon. At the same time, his son considered it dangerous to older people. The way rural and urban areas perceived the pandemic contributed to intensifying their worries about it. During my second fieldwork period from December 2020 to March 2021, some people I talked to informally in Karongi District commented that COVID-19 was a disease of rich people in urban areas and that rural people had nothing to do with it; others considered it a hoax with a hidden political agenda. Some went so far as to say that it was unfair to apply the same measures, like lockdowns, in rural and urban areas, since rural people were not in the habit of travelling to regions affected by COVID-19. One man I knew from my first fieldwork asked me if I was not myself bringing it to them. For rural people, living in the city signified being infected with COVID-19, and travelling to a rural area meant bringing it there. The different perceptions towards the pandemic made elders in rural areas think their children in the city were in danger while the urban children thought their parents were most at risk given their age. The perception of the pandemic influenced emotional reactions to it, depending on people's position. Research on community perception of COVID-19 and its socio-economic effects in Rwanda indicates that

such misconceptions impacted adherence to the preventive measures (Umumararungu & Bazubagira, 2021).

Moreover, the government of Rwanda considered the COVID-19 pandemic a threat to national security. Hence, all the state institutions were mobilised to fight against its propagation. In this respect, security officers were present during the actions taken to contain the pandemic and deal with identified cases. As people were not used to a situation where a sick people like Gaspard were taken to the health centre by health professionals and security officers dressed in masks and personal protective equipment, they were frightened as much by the response as by the pandemic itself.

The security officers handled infected people admitted to the isolation centre and cared for the property they left behind. This helped keep them from worrying about their property and feeling that they were alone: the state was at their side and protected their property. As people are connected to their property, caring for it implies caring for them. Thus, as (Reece, 2022) observes of Botswana, the crisis defines the process and care characteristics. In the present case, the state takes the place of infected people when they are away from home and cares for their belongings.

Nevertheless, the worry and anxiety induced by the COVID-19 pandemic and its related responsive measures adopted by the government created emotional stress among adult children and their ageing parents, which required emotional care to be appeased.

9.7 Enacting Emotional Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As people worried about themselves and their loved ones during the pandemic, exchanging emotional care at a distance seemed to be a strategy to comfort each other. Telephone calls played a significant role in maintaining the connections between ageing parents and their migrant children. As I indicated in Chapter Five, telephone calls are one means urban migrants use to provide distal care to their parents in rural areas. During the lockdown period, telephone use between urban migrants and their parents intensified and it became a meaningful tool for conveying emotional care. According to the informants' narratives, they provided emotional care through comforting words, frequent calls, chats, and early morning greetings.

9.7.1 Comforting Words in Conveying Emotional Care

'A good word heals.' — Adela

During my conversation with Adela, she explained to me that the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic had caused her emotional stress. When I asked her how she managed to overcome that emotional stress, she said: '*Ijambo ryiza rirakiza*' (A good word heals). She explained to me that hearing her comforting words from made her feel stronger and less anxious about the pandemic.

> I feel very relieved and comforted to hear words from my son or daughter like 'we are together'; 'don't panic'; 'we will get rid of it soon.' This makes me think they are always concerned about my life and closer to me during this period when no one comes to my home. (Interview with Adela, 9 January 2021, Karongi District).

Meanwhile, Gaspard, the son of Adela, said:

> Whenever I talked to my mother, she asked me whether I was safe and [said she] wished us to remain safe and healthy. (Interview with Gaspard, 5 March 2021, Kigali).

Similarly, Anastase said:

> Any time I talked to my son or daughter on WhatsApp, I expressed my concern about COVID-19. They always told me to be strong and believe nothing wrong would happen to me. This encouraged me not to have negative thoughts about my life and to feel that I am supported in any situation. (Interview with Anastase, 12 December 2020, Mubuga).

In the same vein, Vestine, Anastase's daughter, said:

> I had to talk to my parents during the pandemic to express my moral support to them and to receive their best wishes and prayers for my family and me so that the pandemic spares us; their words strengthened me all over the lockdown. (Interview with Vestine, 17 February 2021, Kigali).

Yudita, another informant, corroborated the relevance of comforting words in conveying emotional care in this way:

> My son was closer to me on the telephone during the lockdown, which helped me to go through the stressful situation created by COVID-19. He always advised me to observe the COVID-19 hygiene measures and comforted me when I started losing hope (Interview with Yudita, 12 January 2021, Rubengera).

The above narratives show the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic created an environment of fear and distress among elders and their children. The situation was because the pandemic and the response to it were beyond their control, and no one could predict what might happen soon. Furthermore, the information that the pandemic was most dangerous to elders contributed to intensifying the emotional stress. Thus, exchanging comforting words became a means of exchanging emotional care. Emotional care becomes meaningful when it comes from a person with whom the care receiver has a relationship of trust (Rejner, 2012). Thus, family members were in an excellent position to provide that kind of care to their ageing parents. It is evident that elders need emotional care all the time; however, they especially needed it during lockdown, when travel and visiting was not allowed. Thus, comforting words played a more significant role in making elders in rural areas bear the emotional insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research on emotional vocabulary about distress and well-being indicates that during stressful situations encouraging words play a role in generating emotional well-being (Vera et al., 2020). This observation connects to when Adela said, 'Ijambo ryiza rirakiza', comforting words that can heal emotional wounds. The role of such words in appeasing emotional distress among elders during the COVID-19 pandemic reflects the power words in general: a good word can heal, while a bad one can harm.

Moreover, elders exchange emotional care with their children using social media like WhatsApp, which Anastase used to interact with his children in the city. This shows that social media is no longer the youth phenomenon it tends to be considered in Rwanda. Elders have embraced the new era of communication technology, especially social media. During the lockdown, it was impossible to meet face-to-face, so social media served as an effective tool to enhance daily interactions between adult children and their parents at different locations. Indeed, WhatsApp offers various features like video calling that help people to communicate at a distance as if they were close to each other. A report on social media usage in Rwanda indicates an increase of 39% in social media users between 2020 and 2021 (Global Digital Overview, 2021). This was the intense period of the pandemic, when people were compelled

to remain at home and had to rely on social media to communicate with their friends and relatives. Elders also took advantage of the situation that prevented their children from going to their usual work to interact with them through social media.

Moreover, elders suffered from isolation during the lockdown. Exchanging comforting words with their faraway children was also a remedy for this loneliness. During the COVID-19 pandemic, one could not fight loneliness, worry, and anxiety by having people physically around; instead, it meant having people to talk to and making sure that they were psychologically and emotionally present with comforting words using the telephone. For this, elders resorted to telephone calls to interact with their distant social contacts.

Such telephone calls played a significant role in the emotional care process during the pandemic; however, the timing and the frequency of the interactions was equally crucial in conveying emotional care.

9.7.2 Timing Matters to Convey Emotional Care

'A morning greeting is a wish of a blessing' – Anastase.

In my conversation with Anastase on his interactions with his children during the lockdown, he said '*Mwaramutse iraguma*.' (A morning greeting is a wish of a blessing). He meant that receiving a morning phone call from his daughter or his son was a wish of a blessing. He explained that many things could happen during the night, so calling in the early morning to ask how he was doing was a way of checking up on him and making sure that he was safe. Anastase's narrative emphasised the relevant of timing when interacting with elders. There are some specific times of the day when it is most important to talk to each other, like the morning and evening. Anastase said:

> Every morning, I receive a WhatsApp call or a text message from my daughter or my son living in the city. They ask me about how I spent the night and whether I got up in the morning peacefully. This makes me feel that I am not alone, feel that even if I am not with them, they care about me. (Interview with Anastase on 12 December 2020, Mubuga).

Adela also highlighted the relevance of timing in emotional care when describing her experience.

> An early morning or evening call from my son makes me feel very happy. It brings me a feeling of closeness to him and shows how eager he is to inquire about my day and evening news' (Interview with Adela, 9 January 2021, Rubengera).

Another informant, Vestine, concurred.

> I couldn't start my day without calling my parents in the morning to greet them, and wish them a good day, and make sure that they were doing well. This made me spend the whole day in a good mood'. (Interview with Vestine, 17 February 2021, Kigali).

Based on the above narratives, it is obvious that the timing of calls has a significant meaning for elders. The morning calls signify a greeting and a wish for a good day and the evening calls a wish for a good night. This is very important in the life of elders, as it created a feeling of closeness and attachment, despite the geographical distance between them. In this perspective, talking to ageing parents not only helps adult children in the city to express their strong attachment to them but also to have information about their well-being and health situation. In this way, mornings and evenings are appropriate moments to check that nothing bad has happened to their ageing parents during the night or the day. It is important to note that in Rwandan culture, offering greetings in the morning is considered a wish of good luck for the new day. Similarly, greeting someone in the afternoon without one in the morning is regarded as a lack of care and neglect. Here, temporality is analysed through the lens of the life-course theory, which suggests that time greatly influences individuals' decisions about when, where, and with whom to engage in activities to shape their life trajectories (Heinz et al., 2009). In the case studies above, timing mattered in deciding about producing and providing emotional care to elders who attach deep meaning to care practice within a specific sequence of time in the day. Temporality has a crucial role in shaping care relations. In this context, Thelen (2015) suggests the inclusion of care temporality in analysing the dynamics of development, reproduction, and dissolution of significant bonds.

Intergenerational relationships are embodied in a set temporality that connects individuals to their family as a micro-organisation and extends to society as a macro-organisation. In structuring these temporalities, individual and family times converge, like social roles, expectations, and responsibilities and the individual's generational position (Settersten, 2006). I argue that intergenerational care relationships are embodied in interwoven

temporalities that shape the provision of emotional care through comforting words to appease the emotional stress created by the pandemic.

The pandemic thus transformed the established care relationships and created emotional stress among care receivers and care providers that required specific ways of dealing with it, it also induced conflicts among them.

9.8 Conflicts Around Care-receiving and Caregiving in Pandemic Times

The COVID-19 pandemic not only challenged routine care practices among adult children and their ageing parents but also produced conflicts in the process of receiving and giving care. To understand its role in creating conflicts among care receivers and caregivers, I use two case studies of people whose care practices generated conflicts during the pandemic.

Case Study 1: Adela

As indicated in Chapter Four, Adela benefits from the state cash transfer scheme known as direct support (DS). She has authorised her daughter to withdraw the money the state transfers to her SACCO account for her. Adela gave her daughter credit for diligently fulfilling this responsibility before the pandemic. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, she stopped bringing her mother the money. Every time, she told her mother that the state had suspended the money transfers because of the pandemic. However, the daughter was lying: the money was still being transferred to Adela's account, but she was withdrawing it for her personal use. Adela told me that found out when the village coordinator visited her, and she asked him why her money was not coming to her account. When informed that the money was still being transferred, she was surprised: she trusted had trusted her daughter and did not think she would withdraw money and not tell her. She asked the village coordinator to investigate at the SACCO office and the village coordinator returned with the shocking news that the daughter was withdrawing the money as usual. With Adela's consent, he decided to summon Adela's daughter for a hearing, during which the daughter admitted she had taken and spent the money, apologised, and promised to pay it back. However, she did not keep this promise, but moved away from her mother to another village and found a partner there. This behaviour destroyed Adela's caring relationship with her daughter, as she no longer trusted her. When I visited Adela in January 2021, her daughter had still not come back.

Case Study 2: Vestine

Vestine also experienced conflicts with her husband because of the pandemic. As indicated earlier in this chapter, Vestine was a teacher at a private school in Kigali. The school closed during the lockdown after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, her employer suspended her contract, and she lost her job. Deprived of her salary, she made up for the lost income by teaching neighbours' children at home during the lockdown. As going from one house to the next took time and energy, Vestine decided to invite children at the same level to her home and teach them together. However, her husband was also at home and watched television all the time to distract himself: even when she was teaching the children in her living room, he would watch television there. This distracted the children from learning, not only because it made noise, but because they had a hard time not looking at the screen and irritated Vestine, who considered it disrespectful to interfere with her making money for the family. She refrained from showing her anger in front of her students, but at the end of every teaching session she would argue with her husband. Then, he would sometimes slap her, claiming that a wife had no right to give orders to a man in the household. However, Vestine did not report this abuse to the authorities because she feared that would exacerbate the conflict rather than solving it.

These two cases show how caring relationships are always surrounded by conflicts and uncertainties and extend the image of care beyond its positive normative sense to include its negative sense, as it can also lead to the dissolution of relations (Thelen, 2015). The pandemic created an environment that fuelled conflicts and abuse in the process of giving and receiving care. Adela, for example, experienced economic abuse that eventually cut off her caring relationship with her daughter and resulted in abandonment and neglect. Research indicates that elders have been victims of various abuses during the pandemic. This includes physical and emotional abuse, abandonment, neglect, and financial abuse (Han & Mosqueda, 2020). Adela's reaction is an instance of breaking the silence, as she decided to report the situation to the closest administrative authority. Recent research on ageing in Rwanda reports the abuse of elders in their families and their fear of the repercussions when reporting the abuse (Davis et al., 2019). Even if Adela's approach did not gain the results she hoped for, her assertiveness is an example of practising of self-care. The fact that she could use administrative means to resist the financial abuse she suffered demonstrates her self-caring practice.

Meanwhile, Vestine experienced domestic violence from her husband. Even though she was the primary breadwinner for her family, her husband did not value what she did. This resulted in psychological and physical abuse. However, her response differed significantly from that of Adela as she opted not to report it. Her family's privacy prevailed over her rights, an approach she shares with many other women in Rwanda who prefer not to report their husbands' abuse to avoid exposing their families' private lives to the public. Research on gender inequality in Rwanda indicates that abused women tend to keep the abuse as a private family matter which does not need to be disclosed to the public (Umubyeyi et al., 2016). This way of thinking prevented Vestine from reporting the abuse, which she thought would not bring a solution.

Vestine's lived experience during the pandemic shows that power relationships within the household are unequally distributed. This inequality was exacerbated by the pandemic, which made men and women remain at home, where sometimes even minor disagreements eventually led to domestic violence. Research indicates that the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Rwandan families included increased domestic violence, and family disorganisation and dysfunction (Umumararungu & Bazubagira, 2021). Similarly, the COVID-19 rapid gender assessment in Rwanda highlights cases of gender-based violence (GBV) during the pandemic and recommends the inclusion of GBV preventive and protection measures in the ongoing response to COVID-19 plans and actions (MIGEPROF, 2020). Thus, I argue that the pandemic transformed caring relationships. It intensified some aspects of care and devastated others. At the same time, it fuelled family conflicts and exacerbated domestic violence within households and women were the primary victims.

9.9 Conclusion

This chapter explored the impacts that COVID-19 had on the social protection and care of elders in Karongi District. While the pandemic had both social and economic impacts worldwide, it also had an enormous impact on family care relationships locally. For some people, it led to loss of their jobs, of the ability to care for their family members, and of their means of livelihood. A sharp decrease in the caring abilities of urban migrants resulted in shifting positionality in the caregiving and receiving process.

Moreover, the pandemic was like a double-edged sword (Çiğdem, 2020) and affected all aspects of individuals' lives, including their social, economic, and health conditions. This devastating event demanded both institutional and individual interventions. At the

institutional level, the state adopted measures to protect the population from being infected and also initiated the food distribution scheme to support those unable to feed themselves in urban areas, although the latter's implementation received criticisms as local leaders had a leeway to include or exclude a beneficiary for one reason or another. At the individual level, people changed their consumption behaviour, as their purchasing power was drastically reduced by the pandemic and response. In addition, some people decided to return to their villages to escape urban hardships. The abrupt changes in the individuals' ways of living and their reactions to the pandemic caused psychological stress among migrants and ageing parents which made emotional care at a distance through digital technology of paramount importance.

Moreover, the pandemic induced all kinds of interpersonal transgressions. Some people failed in their moral obligation to care (like Adela's daughter) and conflicts it induced among family members dissolved existing care relationships and increased domestic violence against women (as in the case of Vestine).

Chapter X: Conclusion, Reflections, and Implication

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has discussed the social protection of elders in the context of social changes in Rwanda. The research was focused on Rubengera and Mubuga villages in Karongi District in the Western Province of Rwanda. The central question was how social protection for elders is practiced in the waves of social changes. Data was collected from elders in rural areas and their migrant children in Kigali and analysis centred on caring practices for elders as they themselves experience them in their social and cultural settings and especially how social changes have shaped and influenced them in Karongi District. A conceptual discussion in Chapter Two indicated that social protection and care are both included in the emic concept of kwitaho, which motivated my use of the two interchangeably.

The empirical data shows that social protection for elders in Karongi District comes from different actors, including adult children, the state, the community, and the church. While social changes transform caring practices and care relationships between adult children and their ageing parents, the latter constantly adjust to these changes and understand the how social chances sometimes limit the care their children provide.

Several changes have noticeably transformed caring practices for elders in Karongi District. These include rural-urban migration, land scarcity and changing housing patterns. The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi destroyed the livelihood foundation for elders, while the COVID-19 pandemic redefined caring practices and reversed caring positionalities. Despite these changes, and to varying degrees, elders in Karongi District demonstrated resilience in the face of these changes. The ability of elders to adapt to social changes depends greatly on the resources they can access and enjoy and on the size of their social networks. It is also a result of elders' efforts to contribute to their own social protection. The study argues that, in the wake of social changes which influence social protection for elders, the latter do not remain passive recipients of social protection but use their own agency to actively contribute to their social protection.

Methodologically, I employed ethnography at home to generate the data that constitutes the main basis of this thesis. The primary data collection techniques were participant observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and photography. I also used the extended case study method to connect with adult children living in Kigali. Furthermore, I supplemented this data

with various documents. On a theoretical level, the study relies on life-course theory, which has provided insight into how elder care is shaped by the interconnectedness of children's and parents' lives and events happening throughout their life trajectories within the dynamic of societal changes.

To understand the dynamism of elder care, scholarly works by Thelen (2015; 2021); Coe (2018); Drotbohm (2015); Häberlein (2015); and Van der Geest (1997; 2002) were especially important. These works show that care keeps changing over time: it is not automatic but always negotiated. This applies to Karongi District, where elder care keeps being transformed by social changes and is always negotiated between elders and the various actors involved in care provision.

This study contributes to the ongoing debate on elder care by adding further evidence on everyday care practices for elders in Rwanda and shows how care constantly changes to adjust to societal changes. It refutes the notion that elders always need to be cared for by others and demonstrates how they are engaged in active life and able to create their own agencies for care in response to the weakening mechanisms of support.

10.2 Summary of Findings

The study started from the issue that the state pension scheme in Rwanda only includes elders who have been formally employed in public or private institutions. Using the theoretical perspective of the life course to understand how elders' lives are connected to those of their family members, it sheds light on how events and activities over elders' life courses in Karongi District shape their caring practices. In this study, elders are defined based not only on chronological age but also social age, in order to capture the local meaning ascribed to being an elder. A glance at the Rwandan government's social policies indicates that elders are not a priority for the policy maker, but their practices show another view of the local reality: that the state intervenes in support of elders within the framework of state support to vulnerable people. Hence, it has a predominant image of caring for elders as the most vulnerable category.

My central research question was how elders are socially protected in the wake of social changes. The empirical data I present in Chapter Five reveals various social protection interventions for elders in Karongi District. State-based social protection includes cash

transfers to poor elders and distributing cows to elders who are able to maintain one. While ageing beneficiaries appreciate the state support as contributing to their well-being, those excluded criticised it for inclusion and exclusion errors and sometimes for intentional exclusion. In addition to the state, children participate in the social protection of their ageing parents. This kinship-based social protection represents reciprocity. Furthermore, the community and the church play a role in caring for elders, providing numerous types of support. I found that elders contribute to their own social protection by creating and joining saving groups for solidarity and the ability to borrow and earn interest. They also acquire and keep land to support their care in old age. Elders' contributions to their own social protection echoes the idea that elders in Rwanda continue to work and participate in productive activities far into their old age (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2020:348).

The study also discusses resources for elder care in Karongi District. These resources were presented in Chapter Four and include children and spouses who are a source of financial, material, and emotional care. There are also financial resources from the state, the children, and the saving group. The last of these is simultaneously a financial, social, and emotional resource, as it allows elders to get money, come together, and avoid loneliness. A house is another resource for elder care that serves as shelter, as a source of pride, and as a site of care provision. Land is also an essential resource in elder care and serves as the basis for food production through hinga tugabane. It is also a space for belongingness, since elders feel an inseparable connection to their land where they have lived for a long time. Religious and emotional resources are another source of care for elders in Karongi District. Faith-based organisations not only convey emotional care through prayers but also provide material support to their followers.

The study also explored rural-urban migration as a driver of societal change that prevents elders from benefiting from proximate care: now, migrants provide care at a distance through remittances using mobile money service and telephone calls. The findings presented in Chapter Six indicate that migrants' busy workload of and competing needs reduce the visits elders strongly desire to a minimum. The use of communication technology services helps to reduce the geographical distance between elders in rural areas and migrant children in the city. The use of telephones in interacting with elders in rural areas and conveying emotional care intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic when everyone needed to comfort each other.

The provision of care to elders during the COVID-19 pandemic is the subject of Chapter Nine of this thesis.

In Chapter Seven, the study examined how the changes in housing patterns and land scarcity constitute significant threats to elder care in Karongi District. While family members used to live together don the same hill and provided care to elders continuously, today family members live in different places, mainly due to the lack of land for the younger generations to build houses and start their own nuclear family. In most cases, the younger generations live in grouped settlements, as the government policy on rural settlement dictates. At the same time, elders remain on the hills because they cannot afford to build a house in the grouped settlement sites. These changes in housing patterns affect care provision for elders. They are no longer provided with care continuously but occasionally.

Moreover, land scarcity constitutes a push factor that causes youth to live far away from their parents. As discussed in Chapter Four, land is the basis for livelihood in rural areas of Rwanda. Children from families without sufficient land thus migrate to other places to look for jobs that will allow them to buy their own land. As land becomes scarce and highly desired by the rural inhabitants, it is likely to generate conflicts among family members and neighbours, as the case studies presented in Chapter Seven demonstrate. These findings agree with Leegwater's (2015) premise that mounting pressure on land exacerbates land conflicts in south-eastern Rwanda, as this also applies to Karongi District in western Rwanda. Similarly, Musahara & Huggins (2005b) have indicated that land conflicts result from land sharing and disagreement between or within families and erode social relationships between conflicting parties. This also holds for the cases presented in this thesis, in which people unsatisfied with the settlement of such conflicts over land harbour resentment for those now occupying that land. Of course, elders play a non-negligible role in solving land-related conflicts as some of them are members of an Abunzi; however, they do not have the authority to enforce their decisions. In this regard, Abunzi's role should not be limited to deciding on cases but also implementing their decisions.

When researching social protection and social changes in Rwanda, it is impossible to overlook the catastrophic 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, in which more than a million were killed. Chapter Eight shows how the genocide affected and still affects the livelihood of elders in Rwanda. Empirical findings show that some lost family members and property they expected to rely on for care in their old age. The current generation of elders was the active generation

and the most targeted during the genocide. Almost thirty years after, they are still affected and suffer from its consequences. Both population categories − the targeted and non−targeted – were affected by the genocide to varying degrees. Those who survived it appreciated the support from their neighbours who hid them and made them survive the genocide. It has been comprehensively argued that care does not die out during a catastrophe like the genocide. Rather, it takes various forms and adjusts to the circumstances of the time. In the aftermath of the genocide, people had lost almost all their properties, including their homes. The state was expected to intervene by providing houses and other support to those dispossessed.

The findings of this study also expose some important issues related to the provision of care. Some of the issues worth reflecting on include the image of the state in providing social protection, elders' agency in contributing to their own care, and the dynamism of caring practices for migrants. These issues are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

10.2.1 The State's Image in Social Protection Provision

At the beginning of this thesis, I cited the concern that the formal pension scheme for elders does not reach elders in the informal sector. The findings of this study indicate that the state has other ways of providing social protection for elders. These interventions include distributing cash, cows (Girinka), community health insurance, and housing. Thus, there are many ways of doing social protection. It is obvious that if one thing does not work another will. For instance, elders who do not receive a cow, may get something else like a cash transfer or a house. This is because nothing is completely secure: everything can change, an elder can fail in one aspect, but still have other options.

The state's interventions in caring for elders through its social protection programmes display the state caring dimension within the neo-liberal era. The neoliberal system dictates that people are expected to leverage their human capital for themselves and their families and avoid being a burden to the rest of society (Schram, 2018). Nonetheless, when this becomes impossible for some people for various reasons, the state adopts a social governance system and goes beyond the principle of marketising the citizens' welfare to support people who are unable to face the socio-economic shocks induced by the liberal market. Therefore, social policies prevail to ensure social justice and resource redistribution.

As my research indicates, most state support for elders in Rwanda is based on Ubudehe categorisation. These are increasingly contested between the population and their local leaders as many perceive them as not reflecting their socio-economic situation accurately. Some elders claim to be classified in the wrong category, which excludes them from state support. In classifying people into categories, inclusion and exclusion errors or deliberate malpractice related to corruption can occur. Furthermore, there is no consensus between the population and the state agents on the criteria that should serve as the basis for classification. Therefore, these categories need to be revised to ensure that they reflect the social and economic status of every person in need. As indicated in Chapter Five, one must be classified as a poor person (Category One) to benefit from state support. Those not in that category are not entitled to benefit from state social protection programmes such as cash transfers and community health insurance. The misclassification of people in the socio-economic categories and the associated malpractices may create a gap between the state's vision of care and the practice. Thus, classification is a powerful act only when both parties agree on the criteria.

It is also worth indicating that the state image becomes visible in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned in Chapter Nine, the state's imposition of restrictive measures to curb its spread was a care practice to protect its citizens from infection. Furthermore, the food distribution scheme during the pandemic, the healthcare services for those infected, and the safeguarding of their property give insights into how the state cares for its population during the crisis. In all these state caring practices, local leaders play a role in materialising care for the beneficiaries.

As local leaders represent the state at the grassroots levels, they are thus involved in different state care practices for elders. These care practices entail the transformation and reproduction of the state image. Thus, through caring practices, the image of the state as a coercive institution is transformed into one of an institution concerned with its citizens' care needs. In this regard, the state apparatus at the local level plays a significant role in maintaining and sustaining this image for those benefiting state care.

The state is not absent in caring practice for elders, even though this is not explicitly indicated in its policy, its intervention is visible in various social protection programmes in Karongi District.

10.2.2 Elders Striving for Self-Reliance 'Kwigira'

'It is a reminder to all of us to ask ourselves why it was ever in their interest to care for you. It reminds us to challenge ourselves to be self-reliant. We should not wait for people to care for us.' — President Paul Kagame during Rwanda day in Ghent, Belgium on 10 June 2017.

This speech reminds Rwandans not to rely on others but rather to be the catalysts of their own care: to be self-reliant. *Kwigira* (self-reliance) is a salient concept in political and popular discourses in Rwanda. In political discourse, it refers to relying on internal resources rather than international aid. In popular discourse, it means responding to own's needs without resorting to others. Kwigira goes hand in hand with *agaciro*, which means 'dignity' or 'self-respect'. From this perspective, elders consider total dependency to undermine their dignity. They are also aware of the limits of care provided by others, which makes them choose not to remain passive care receivers but rather strive to be active contributors to their own care, as they believe that care from others is always unreliable. This makes them initiate activities to contribute to their own care. Research demonstrates that care keeps changing over time (Drotbohm, 2015) and is always negotiated (Thelen, 2015). The constant changes in and negotiations about care indicate its uncertain character.

The uncertainty of care from others and the desire to become self-reliant motivate elders to imagine their own initiatives on which they can depend when they need care. Furthermore, these efforts to contribute to their own care can also be interpreted as a response to the call for self-reliance always included in the speeches delivered by President Paul Kagame. Elders' initiatives described in this thesis include creating a saving group, renting out land for food production (hinga tugabane), and grazing livestock. The most common practice in Karongi District is hinga tugabane. The practice is innovative as instead of renting out land for money in advance, elders give up their land for cultivation and in return receive a share of the harvest. This practice benefits both ageing landowner and their tenants, as it ensures the food security of both. Elders without land also practice of hinga tugabane, but as the tenants: they use others' land and share the harvest with the landowner. However, landless elders can only benefit from hinga tugabane while they are still relatively strong and risk suffering from food insecurity when they become frail. Therefore, land plays a vital role in elder care practices in Karongi District, and not owning land exposes elders to the risk of lacking care when they can no longer do hard physical labour.

Moreover, elders' contribution to their own care is no substitute for the other forms of care described in this thesis but a supplement to various caring practices of other actors, from which elders benefit.

Thus, elders agency refutes the stereotypes often attributed to them of being unproductive and dependent (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2004) and demonstrates their willingness to engage with the community for their successful ageing (*gusazana agaciro*). Elders in Karongi District do not exhibit dependence but use their agency to contribute to their care needs.

10.2.3 Elder Care Dynamics in a Changing Society

Care practices are not static but dynamic and evolve with societal changes and technological advancements. This study has found that migrants in the city provide care to their ageing parents left in the village using mobile money transfer services to send remittances. Migrants no longer need to travel to the village to support to their parents. Information and communication technology make it possible to send money from Kigali to Karongi District in a few seconds using a mobile money service. Furthermore, with mobile telephones, migrants can interact with their ageing parents whenever they want. Through these interactions, migrants convey emotional care to their parents at a distance. As Chapter Nine of this thesis shows, this interaction on mobile telephones intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of telephone calls helped people to learn about each other's health daily when both migrants and their parents were worrying about the pandemic.

Furthermore, the use of mobile telephones by elders in their caring interactions with their children indicates that they have not been left behind in the diffusion of communications technology. Youth discourse in Rwanda refers to elders 'born before computer' (BBC), which means they were born before the advent of technology. Hence, they do not know how to use technological devices. Despite this stereotype, elders can use mobile telephones and adapt to technological advances.

It is worth mentioning that, with the aim of the Rwandan government to promote modern technology and information communication technology for the country's development, mobile telephone penetration has reached all regions. Optical fibre infrastructure was installed throughout the country to provide cheaper internet access to the Rwandan population (GoR, 2013b). This project may have contributed to elders' rapid adaptation to

technology use alongside the utility of technology in giving and receiving care – like sending money transfers – from distant kin to elders in rural areas.

In these ways, societal changes and technological advancement have deeply penetrated social life and influence caring relations between migrants and their ageing parents. Thus, the use of modern technology in enacting care for elders has proven efficient not only during a crisis like COVID-19, but also in everyday processes of giving and receiving care like staying in contact and transferring money.

10.3 Policy Implication and Generalization of Findings Beyond Karongi

The significance of a case lies in what it tells us about a society as a whole, rather than other similar cases (Burawoy, 1998). Thus, Karongi District has something to tell us about elder care practices that is relevant to other settings. While this study does not have a broad geographical scope, its findings are relevant to other social-cultural settings that are also experiencing challenges in elder care due to social changes. The best practices of elders in Karongi District to use their agency in contributing to their own social protection, like saving groups and hinga tugabane, could offer inspiration for other regions in Rwanda and beyond to help reduce elders' dependence on others and engage them in the community to age successfully and with dignity. If these mechanisms are strengthened and supported by state institutions, they could play a significant role in sustaining the social protection of elders.

Furthermore, even though policymakers do not differentiate social groups when referring to social security policies, it is still worth considering the specificities of each social group when developing social policy. Therefore, the results of this study can help in designing policies for elder care that take into consideration such characteristics of each region as the needs of elders and the resources available for elder care. This study recognises the tangible progress achieved by the Rwandan government in terms of social protection. There is, however, one remaining step to take to ensure the inclusion of all those who need state support. The findings of this study indicate that some elders who expected to benefit from the state support are not enrolled due to their socio-economic classification (Ubudehe categorisation) not reflecting their real living conditions. This study can help in refining the existing social protection policy so that it reflects the living conditions of the beneficiaries rather than simply the Ubudehe category in which a beneficiary is classified, as in some cases that does not correspond to the actual socio-economic situation of the person in need of support. Such a

policy would best handle the persistent needs for care of elders in Rwanda. More broadly, there is a need to redesign social protection policy to go beyond existing social protection interventions limited coverage to include all elders in need.

10.4 Future Research

The results presented in this study come from one region of Rwanda, Karongi District. They reflect the lived experiences of elders when and where I collected data. Furthermore, the study focused on the social protection of elders in rural areas, where land plays a significant role in caring practices. Thus, it does not claim to be exhaustive but opens pathways to further research on elders' social protection in other areas of Rwanda and on aspects of social protection not covered here. For instance, I would recommend that future researchers investigate the social protection of elders in a different socio-cultural setting, like a city, to identify differences from and similarities with rural areas. If land occupies a central role in the livelihoods of rural inhabitants and attracts care for elders, if agricultural land plays a role in elderly care, what plays this role in urban areas?

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Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

Elders					
No	Names	Age	Sex	Location	Dates
1	André	77	M	Rubengera	19/12/2019 24/12/2019
2	Anastase	82	M	Mubuga	26/11/2019 01/12/2019 04/12/2019 12/12/2020
3	Alphonsine (Anastase's wife)	77	F	Mubuga	26/11/2019
4	Adela		F	Rubengera	07/12/2019 22/12/2019 07/01/2020 19/01/2020 09/01/2021
5	Beata	66	F	Rubengera	23/12/2019 19/12/2020 28/12/2020
6	Gatera Pierre	79	M	Mubuga	29/11/2019 03/01/2020
7	Kamali	76	M	Rubengera	27/12/2019 11/01/2020 14/01/2021
8	Nyampame	79	F	Mubuga	02/12/2019 05/12/2019 11/01/2021
9	Sibomana	75	M	Rubengera	21/12/2019 09/01/2020 09/12/2020 17/12/2020 19/12/2020
10	Izakayo	81	M	Rubengera	28/12/2019 07/02/2020
11	Madarina (Izakayo's wife)	72	F	Rubengera	28/12/2019

					07/02/2020
12	Mahoro	68	F	Mubuga	03/12/2019 07/12/2020
13	Kanuma	65	M	Mubuga	27/11/2019 03/12/2019
14	Yudita	62	F	Rubengera	29/12/2019 12/01/2021
15	Kamana	71	M	Mubuga	02/12/2019 06/12/2019
16	Kabano	74	M	Mubuga	28/11/2019 07/12/2019 06/01/2020
17	Dative	69	F	Rubengera	17/01/2020 21/01/2020 13/01/2021
Adult Children					
1	Daniel	46	M	Kigali	12/02/2020 21/02/2021
2	Gaspard	54	M	Kigali	26/02/2020 05/03/2021
3	Jerôme	39	M	Kigali	22/02/2020
4	Eric	33	M	Kigali	15/02/2020 06/02/2021
5	Bahati	27	M	Kigali	01/03/2020 04/03/2021
6	Vestine	42	F	Kigali	27/02/2020 17/02/2021
7	Chantal	48	F	Kigali	07/01/2020 26/01/2021
8	Agnes	26	F	Rubengera	19/12/2020
9	Uwimana	48	F	Rubengera	22/12/2020
10	Baptiste	37	M	Kigali	27/02/2020 02/03/2021

11	Emma	32	F	Kigali	24/02/2020
12	Mulisa	29	M	Kigali	14/02/2020
13	Leonidas	36	M	Kigali	27/02/2020
14	Sugira	31	M	Kigali	12/02/2021
15	Claude	37	M	Kigali	17/02/2020
16	Clarisse	28	F	Kigali	09/02/2021
17	Muhire	34	M	Kigali	13/02/2021
18	Karama	41	M	Kigali	04/02/2021
19	Bernard	37	M	Kigali	28/02/2020
20	Sifa	29	F	Kigali	07/02/2021
21	Valens	54	M	Kigali	04/02/2021

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introduction

Introduction: I am Albert Irambeshya, a Ph.D. student at Bayreuth University in Germany. I am researching the social protection of elderly people in the context of social changes in Karongi District. I want to request your consent to discuss this topic with you. The information you will provide me will only be used for this research, and your identity will be kept secret and will not be disclosed to anybody.

Section A: Interview guide for elderly people

1. **Identification of Informant**
   - When were you born? And where?
   - If you were not born in this village, since when have you been living in this village?
   - What is your marital status?
   - Do you have children? If yes, where do they live?
2. **Elders' living conditions.**
   - Who is an older person in this village?
   - How do older adults live daily in this village?
   - What resources can older adults draw on for their daily living?
   - Among those resources, what are the most important for you? And why?
   - How do you use these resources?
   - Do you find these resources sufficient for your caring practices?
   - Do older adults contribute to their self-care? If yes, how do they proceed?
3. **Social Protection interventions**
   - What are the state social protection interventions for elders in this village?
   - Do you benefit from these social protection interventions?
   - What are the conditions to be enrolled in the state social protection programs?
   - What is your expectation toward the state social protection program?
   - Are you satisfied with the state social protection interventions for the elders?
   - What is the impact of the state social protection interventions on your daily life?
   - What is the role of your children in your social protection?
   - Apart from the state, is there any other actor that intervention in social protection for elderly in this village?
   - If yes, what is their contribution to social protection for elders?
   - Do elders play any role in their social protection? If yes, how?
4. **Rural urban migration**
   - What are the factors that contribute to rural-urban migration in this village?
   - Does any member of your family migrate to any other place? If yes, where?
   - Do you still benefit from caring practices from your child or family member migrant? If yes, how?
   - What are the caring practices of your migrant children/family members to you?
   - Does rural-urban migration influence your caring practices from your child/family member?
   - What caring practices from your child/family member do you most appreciate?
   - Is there any care gap induced by the migration of your child/family member? If yes, what is that gap?
5. **Land scarcity and housing patterns**
   - How are elders' holdings in this village?
   - What is the impact of your landholding on elder care?

- Is there any relationship between landholding and housing patterns? How does this influence elder care?
- How do you perceive the current landholding and that of the past? How does this influence elder care practice?
- How do you perceive the current and past housing patterns and their influence on elder care?
- How was the family care for elders in the past, and how is it to today?
- How do the current and past landholding shape inheritance practices?
- How do the current and past inheritance practices influence elder care?
- Do you experience land conflicts among family members in this village? If yes, how are these conflicts solved? What is the role of elders in solving these conflicts?

6. The genocide impact on elder care

- The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi has affected Rwandan society, how did it affect elders in particular?
- Based on your personal experience; how did you experience the genocide and its consequences?
- What kind of losses did elders endure due to the genocide?
- Did elders get any support due to the losses endured? If yes, what kind of support did they receive? Who did provide that support? How do you appreciate the support?
- Some years after the genocide, how are the relationships between the population in this village? (the survivors and the non-survivors), have people reconciled in this village?

7. The COVID-19 impact on care relationships.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged the world and the Rwandan country; how did you perceive this pandemic?
- What was your emotional feeling when the pandemic erupted?
- Did you or any relative get infected by the pandemic?
- How did you live throughout the pandemic and its consequences?
- During the pandemic, did you still benefit from caring practices from your migrant children and those in the village?
- What kind of caring practices did you benefit from during the pandemic?
- Did the pandemic change the existing caring relationship between you and your children?
- If there is any change in care relationships, how did you react to the change?
- Did you experience any conflict induced by the pandemic? If yes, how was the conflict solved?

Murakoze cyane! Thank you very much!!!

B. Interview guide for Migrant Children

1. Identification

- When were you born? And where?
- When did you come to live in this city?
- What is your marital status
- Do you practise any profession/activity in this city?

2. Rural urban migration

- What were the factors that motivated you to come to the city?
- How do you earn a living in this city?

- Do you still provide care for your parents left in the village?
- What are the types of care practices for your parents?
- Do you remit to your parents in the village? If yes, how do you proceed?
- Do you visit your parents in the village? If yes, how often?
- What are the main means you often use in interacting with your parents in the village?
- What are the main challenges you face in caring for your parents left in the village?
- How do you overcome those challenges?

3. Land scarcity and housing patterns

- What is the size of the landholding for your parents in the village?
- Are you expecting to inherit land from your parents?
- Have you built a house in the village? If yes, are you planning to return live to the village?
- Have built a house for your parents?
- Is there any impact on elder care practices when children live far from their parents?
- Is there any relationship between parents' landholding and caring practices?
- Does children's expectation of inheriting land influence the way they care for their parents?
- What is your perception about land holding in the village?
- Is there any relationship between landholding and housing patterns in your village?
- Does the land trigger family conflicts between parents and their children?
- How are these conflicts solved when they occur?

4. Genocide impact on elder care

- The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi has affected Rwandan society; how did it affect your family or parents?
- How is your family currently affected by the consequences of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi?
- Did your parents experience any loss due to the Genocide? If yes, what kind of loss?
- Personally, how has the 1994 Genocide affected or is currently affecting you?
- Did your parents get any support from the state because of the Genocide? If yes, what kind of support?
- How are your parents managing the consequences of the Genocide?
- Do you support to your parents in facing the consequences of the Genocide?

5. The COVID-19 impact on care relationships

- The COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged the world and the Rwandan country; how did you perceive this pandemic?
- What was your emotional feeling when the pandemic erupted?
- Did you or any relative get infected by the pandemic?
- During the pandemic, did you provide care to your parents? If yes, how did you proceed?
- Did you experience any loss due to the pandemic? If yes, what kind of loss?
- Did the pandemic affect your way of living?
- Did the pandemic affect your caring relationships with your parents left in the village?
- Did you experience any conflict due to the pandemic? If yes, how was the conflict solved?

Murakoze cyane!! Thank you very much!