

## **Transitions Justice, National Memory and History Teaching in Rwanda**

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The paper investigates the strategy of the Rwandan government in pursuing transitional justice and its stated objective of national unity and reconciliation after the 1994 genocide. In order to unmake the divisions of the past it promotes a notion of collective identity, which is no longer based on ethnic but on civic identity of all as citizens. The strategy is centred on an interpretation of Rwanda's history according to which ethnicity did not exist prior to the arrival of the colonialists. But does narrating the nation as founded on ethnic harmony lead to unity in Rwanda? I argue that due to the top-down nature of the government's history discourse, its censorship of alternative accounts as well as the deep scars of the genocide division and resentment persists. At present, ethnic belonging is still very important for most Rwandans restricting their willingness to consider different interpretations of the past.

The paper draws on the teaching of history as an example of illustrating means by which the Rwandan government narrates its past. It analyses the debates about and practises of history teaching in schools as well as in education camps called ingandos through which released genocide prisoners, but also a considerably large portion of the society in general, have to pass. By way of conclusion it argues that the Rwandan government introduces narrative closure on alternative interpretations of the past which stands in the way of transitional justice and genuinely grown national reconciliation in the future.