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\*Corresponding author: Seif Sekalala,  
School of Communication, Media, and  
Journalism, Kean University, Union,  
NJ, USA  
E-mail: [seifsekalala@gmail.com](mailto:seifsekalala@gmail.com)

Reviewing editor:  
Claudia Alvares, Universidade Lusofona  
de Humanidades e Tecnologias,  
Portugal

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## MEDIA & COMMUNICATION STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The dynamics of deliberate and unintentional amnesia in narrative sensemaking and enactment of resilience: A case study of four Rwandan narratives of genocide survival

Seif Sekalala<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** In this case study, the author reports the findings of the narrative analyses of four Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors from the USC-Shoah visual archive of holocaust and genocide survivors' testimony. The analyses specifically identify and explicate some of the techniques of narrative sensemaking, both macro (thematic) and micro (via time and place, corporal/mental state recollection, and evaluation), and enactment of resilience. Overall, the results of the case study indicate that the dynamics of memory and amnesia—both deliberate and unintentional—can have an impact on narrative sensemaking and capacity for resilience of survivors of mass conflicts, genocides and displacement, both during and after mass-conflict.

**Subjects:** Discourse Analysis; Heritage; Intercultural Communication; Race & Ethnicity; Rhetoric

**Keywords:** memory; sensemaking; resilience; refugees; Rwanda

### 1. Introduction

Since 1994, Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors (FRGSs)—both in Rwanda (survivors or “returnees”) and other parts of the world—have had to cope with their genocide memories and

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As of August 2016, Dr Seif Sekalala is an independent communication studies researcher and an adjunct instructor at Kean University, Union, NJ. The topic of this paper—i.e. Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors' narrative sensemaking and resilience—is emblematic of his general research interests. These include communication studies and social scientific interdisciplinary topics such as narrative sensemaking and memory, intra- and interpersonal crisis communication, political communication, and health communication. He is currently working on a number of other research studies, including one that examines the ways in which the millennial generation discusses personal illness, pain and suffering via online platforms e.g. chat forums, and on Reddit, and a study about the way the American mass media community handles the concept of “T/truth,” using the aftermath coverage of the 2010 Benghazi American consulate attack as an example.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This paper provides a brief literature review about the communication and social scientific interdisciplinary topics of narrative sensemaking, refugee and mass conflict survivor narratives, and post-mass conflict and genocide survivor resilience. The author also reports the findings of a study he conducted about those topics, using USC-Shoah visual archive data. Specifically, the author analyzes the videos of four Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors (FRGSs), in which they narrate their genocide survival ordeals. Overall, the author finds that genocide and mass conflict survivors can choose if and how to remember and interpret their traumatic memories. And that fact, i.e. whether or not, and how they remember and interpret their traumatic memories—influences how they persevere on a day-to-day basis, as they try to move on from their trauma.

trauma on a regular basis (e.g. Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Kolassa et al., 2010; Pham, Weinstein, & Longman, 2004). Regardless of their particular methods of perseverance, one can argue that these FRGSs enact survivorship through at least two main modes. The first mode of survivorship is via enactment of resilience by carrying on day-to-day life activities despite physical and mental anguish, as articulated by Zraly and Nyirazinyoye (2010) and Zraly, Rubin, and Mukamana (2013). This type of resilience translates as “[K]wihangana, an intrapsychic creative process of drawing strength from within the self in order to withstand suffering; *kwongera kubaho*, affirmation of the reestablishment of the existential conditions for being; and *gukomeza ubuzima*, the moving forward in life by accepting ongoing struggles and fighting for survival” (Zraly & Nyirazinyoye, 2010, p. 413).

In this article, on the basis of the findings of a study I completed in the fall of last year (2015), I will demonstrate, through the use of discursive methods, another mode of survivorship, namely one in which Rwandan FRGSs make sense of the genocide events responsible for their trauma, enabling them to persevere. By talking about their survival of the genocide and their strategies of resilience or coping up to the present moment, Rwandan FRGSs can make sense of their past experiences, contributing to a spirit of perseverance. But in making the latter assertion, I am not presuming that talking about one’s trauma is automatically therapeutic. As the details of the findings below will attest, sensemaking and resilience in Rwandan FRGSs is necessarily influenced by different individuals’ ability and willingness to actively remember and interpret, or actively forget or ignore their past traumatic experiences.

There are a number of justifications for narrative-analytical studies of particular population samples of refugees and genocide survivors, including Rwandans. For the community of scholars engaged in interdisciplinary research on communication/media and mass-conflict, refugee studies, sensemaking and memory, identity, and post mass-conflict resilience (among other fields), such analyses add new dimensions to our knowledge of the effects and implications that specific mass-conflicts and their aftermaths bring to bear on all these topics combined. This knowledge can in turn help professionals such as psychologists, social workers, and inter-governmental and non-profit refugee assistance service providers. Perhaps most importantly, via dissemination through conference presentations, publications, word of mouth, and other avenues, genocide and other mass-conflict survivors themselves can gain directly from the findings of this research. For instance, the latter may serve as inspiration for refugees to come forward and share their own stories of survival and resilience, in what amounts to the adoption of best practices for coping, or they can find solace in knowing that they are not alone in the quest for peace and closure in the aftermath of suffering *in extremis*.

## 2. Brief literature review

### 2.1. Narratives of mass-conflict survivors, refugees, and former refugees

Mass-conflicts necessarily present themselves under a variety of types, e.g. as civil wars, wars between nations, internally orchestrated genocides, externally orchestrated genocides, etc. Arguably, the best conception of mass-conflict survivors we have today is that of refugeehood. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) definition, a refugee is “a person outside of his or her own country with a well-founded fear of future persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group” (UNHCR, 2015). However, a large number of refugees go on to apply for permanent residence and citizenship.

A number of non-profit and academic institutions have taken interest in the curation of particular types of mass-conflict survivor narratives for the transmission of collective memory on human rights and justice to posterity. The USC-Shoah Foundation, which maintains the USC-Shoah visual archive, is one example of such organizations. The archive contains narratives of survivors of genocides including the European (WWII) Holocaust, Nanjing massacre, and the Rwandan Tutsi genocide, and is publicly-available via subscribing institutional library databases. Therefore, outside of the context of legal/political studies of refugeehood, studies of communication/media, mass-conflict and forced

migration can further our understanding of how life stories of refugeehood are portrayed by both the refugees themselves and media commentators. These studies can be carried out using methods like narrative analysis of archives, such as those of the USC-Shoah Foundation, and critical discourse analysis of mass media reports and discussions.

### 2.1.1. Narrative sensemaking

To-date, various studies (e.g. Linde, 1993; Riessman, 1993; Schiffrin, 2002) have credited Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997) with the formulation of a systematic framework for the study of narratives. According to their formulation, a narrative can be defined as “one way of recounting past events in which the order of narrative clauses matches the order of events as they occurred” (p. 546). The essence of Labov and Waletzky’s definition of narrative—the key ingredient—is what they call “*temporal juncture* between two independent clauses” (p. 547). This quality exists between two independent clauses if the reflection of a past sequence of events is dependent on the present corresponding sequence of clauses referring to each event.

One can combine the above framework of the study of narrative with the concept of sensemaking in an attempt to garner a clearer understanding of the complex life-stories and testimonies often told by mass-conflict survivors. In my research with Rwandan FRGSs, the operational definition of narrative sensemaking is informed by a number of studies from the field of organizational studies. Studies by Maclean, Harvey, and Chia (2012), Abolafia (2010); and Brown, Stacey, and Nandhakumar (2008), all look into the processes and implications of shared narrative sensemaking in organizations. All three sets of authors precede their findings with succinct histories of narrative sensemaking studies. However, according to Brown et al. (2008), two major threads of narrative sensemaking literature have emerged in the past two decades, with a number of theorists positing that individuals generally recall and interpret events similarly (in line with Canterill’s 1941 concept of “frames of reference”), while other theorists posit that individuals recall and interpret events uniquely. However, Brown et al. (2008) claim that much of the literature from that second thread of sensemaking studies above has tended to focus on the idea of equifinality. In other words, individuals might recall and interpret events uniquely, but those recollections/interpretations will still result in uniform future group-behaviors or reified group values and goals.

Whereas Abolafia’s study highlights the process of narrative sensemaking in groups via negotiation with the goal of building/maintaining consensus, Brown et al. (2008) and Maclean et al. (2012) studies emphasize instead the stakes involved for individuals— i.e. in terms of identity, self-conception and reputation—during the interpretation of events or “facts” and the attachment of value to them.

In my research on Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors (FRGSs), the operational definition of narrative sensemaking (based on the above and other studies) generally corresponds to the discursive attempts by Rwandan FRGSs to explain, clarify, or describe the feelings, states of mind, or situations they were experiencing at particular moments during and after the genocide. On a more specific level, the definition entails understanding, recounting, and (re)interpretation, for one’s own benefit and for the benefit of others, of past events via: (1) locating personal experiences within or outside of the generally known/accepted historical narrative of the Rwandan genocide (as disseminated by the media and by written and oral histories); (2) the provision of thematic narratives of lived personal experiences; and (3) the recounting of specific details via time and place, description of past thoughts and states of being, and evaluations or interpretations.

To date, there is a dearth of studies making use of such conceptions of narrative sensemaking to try and understand mass-conflict survivors’ resilience formation processes and the general effects of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication processes in and among mass-conflict survivors.

### 2.1.2. *Post mass-conflict resilience*

A number of studies in communication, sociolinguistics, and anthropology have to date shed much light on the general concepts of survivorship and intercultural adjustment of refugees, and the concept of resilience in particular (e.g. Foxen, 2007; Kim, 1990; Schiffrin, 2002; Welaratna, 1993). In these and other disciplines—with the notable exception of psychology, psychiatry, and similar fields—the authors might not use the term “resilience,” or they might use constructs somewhat similar to resilience. It should also be noted that mass media commentators, who have not endured the experience of mass-conflicts, might represent resilience in a different light from the ways mass-conflict survivors themselves embody and discuss it.

In the context of Rwanda’s FRGSs, two studies by Zraly and Nyirazinyoye (2010) and Zraly et al. (2013) provide a specific conception of resilience among Rwandan women who survived the genocide. Both of these studies were carried out in post-genocide Rwanda with women survivors of the genocide who had also been raped during the ordeal. Some of those women contracted HIV; some gave birth to the children of their rapists; and some both contracted HIV and gave birth to HIV-positive children.

In both of these studies, the authors define the concept of resilience—with roots in developmental psychopathology—as the “... positive patterns of functioning or development during or following exposure to adversity” (p. 1657). Resilience can also be defined as “... more simply ... good adaptation in a context of risk” (p. 1657). The authors also note that, post-traumatic “emotional integrity” can signify resilience.

The authors also unveil some of the local Rwandan terms or concepts that help in the breaking down and contextual application of resilience to Rwandan genocide-rape survivors. In other words, they answer the question: how do Rwandan genocide-rape survivors enact the concept of resilience *in their own contextually and culturally specific ways*? The three key concepts through which these women enact resilience are: (1) “*Kwihangana*, an intrapsychic creative process of drawing strength from within the self in order to withstand suffering”; (2) “*Kwongera kubaho*, the affirmation of the reestablishment of the existential conditions for being”; (3) “*Gukomeza ubuzima*, moving forward in life by accepting ongoing struggles and fighting for survival” (p. 413). Future studies might help us uncover other survivor communities’ particular conceptions and expressions of resilience.

In the current study, based on the studies above by Zraly et al. (2013), Zraly and Nyirazinyoye (2010), Witteborn (2007, 2008), Foxen (2007), Schiffrin (2002), and Kim (1990), my operational definition for resilience therefore is:

Phrases that demonstrate that narrators/Rwandan FRGSs were able to persevere through the ordeals of the genocide; these phrases typically describe very distressing physical, mental, and emotional states of being (e.g. hunger, fear, torture, etc.). Sometimes, they also describe some of the methods that were used to cope with the distress.

### 3. Research question

The concepts above (i.e. mass conflict survival and displacement, narrative sensemaking, and post mass-conflict resilience) have been analyzed by scholars raising various problematics. These include: the dialectical tensions experienced by persons in exile (e.g. Sendlak, Pearson, Amundson, & Kudak, 2008), the influence of the interactional and interview setting on refugees’ story-worlds (e.g. Hatoss, 2012), and the efficacy of culturally-influenced discourses in tackling the challenges of refugeehood (e.g. Gilpin-Jackson, 2014). But while it is important to understand the various applications and implications of refugee and mass-conflict survivor narratives, it is arguably as important or more so to first understand how various FRGSs within particular populations construct these narratives. This leads me to the formulation of the following research question: How is sensemaking achieved, and how is resilience expressed, in the narratives and discourses of Rwandan former refugees and genocide survivors?

#### 4. Methods

The above research question was investigated using narrative analysis methods applied to a set of four Rwandan FRGSs' testimonies from the USC-Shoah visual archive. By the time this study was completed in late-2015, these four individual testimonies were the only ones given in English; the others are in Kinyarwanda, a language in which this author is not fluent. Undoubtedly, these interviews recorded in Kinyarwanda contain a myriad of important individual details, stories, and themes. However, one can confidently reckon that (a) project(s) that involve(s) the accurate translation, transcription, and analysis of those testimonies from Kinyarwanda to English would be of a longer-term nature than the one and a half year duration in which this study was completed. Indeed, long testimonies such as these should arguably be analyzed methodically over time, e.g. in sets of less than ten per study.

Each of the four videos has an average running time of one and a half hours, and the videos were watched repeatedly (at least three times) by this author, who wrote summary notes about their content and then completed summary transcriptions for all video minutes. This was followed by the writing of verbatim transcriptions for an average of 30 min per video, covering various stories on each of the four FRGSs' lives before, during, and after the genocide in the USA or Rwanda. This process resulted in an average of 50 pages of verbatim transcripts per video. Later, thematic narratives from these transcripts were demarcated for each FRGS using a simplified version of the narrative analysis conventions of Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997), Linde (1993), Riessman (1993), and Gee (2011).

In addition to the use of narrative analysis methods as refined by the seminal narrative methodology prescriptions of the above scholars—i.e. transcription, timeline demarcation, and story topic/theme categorization—the specific themes arose from a process of *in vivo* and axial coding (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The commonly uttered words, descriptions, and meta-analyses of the narrators themselves, along with the similarities and differences observed by this author between their stories, were used to create profiles for each individual's testimony (see Table 1). The specific operational definitions of sensemaking and resilience listed above were then used to identify, list, and explicate as many instances as possible of sensemaking and resilience that this author could find in the transcripts (Brief excerpts of the transcripts can be found in the Appendix A section of this paper).

It should be noted in earnest that rigorous social scientific research can, and has been done, using small population samples and qualitative methods (e.g. as discussed in Riessman, 1993, pp. 64–70 and Porpora, 2015, pp. 16–19). And in the context of the topics being discussed in this article, I would argue that a qualitative/narrative-analytic study is indeed the most appropriate. Besides random short clips on YouTube, to the best of this author's informed knowledge, the USC Shoah archive is the first public visual archive with curated video testimonies of the Rwandan FRGS population. The

**Table 1. Summary of four Rwandan USC-Shoah archive narrators' testimonies**

Narrator No.	Narrators' profile names	General themes of narratives
1	<i>The Expert</i> : Freddy Mutanguha	A practiced, authoritative stance with an activist message
2	<i>The New American Activist</i> : Daniel Ndamwizeye (AKA Daniel Trust)	An emphasis on his new American citizenship and a budding public speaker/activist ethos
3	<i>The Narrator of a Raw Tale of Innocence Lost</i> : Esperance Kaligirwa	A raw style i.e. unrehearsed and detailed; meta-analysis of testimony/experience
4	<i>The Traumatized Child</i> : Arsene Nsabimana	An explicit mention of self-perception of trauma, and a mechanism for healing that trauma via the deliberate forgetting of details

Notes: All narratives use historical-cultural themes (i.e. "Hutu vs. Tutsi," trigger of genocide = killing of Habyarimana, etc.). Each narrator's story is also marked by a unique set of themes.

Rwandan testimony videos are part of the wider collection of genocide survivor testimonies from the Holocaust, the Nanjing massacre, and the Armenian genocide, catalogued and indexed, with searchable keywords relating to life before the genocides, discrimination leading up to the genocides, the main genocide events, and liberation and post liberation experiences.

In the findings section below, I will provide an overview of all the four Rwandan FRGS's profiles and their testimonies, the general formula of their narrative sensemaking and resilience processes. I will end with a contrast between the particular sensemaking and resilience processes of two of the FRGSs, which highlights the large amounts of information to which we can or cannot be made privy, depending on whether or not an FRGS is willing and able to remember and discuss the traumatic events s/he went through, during and after the genocide.

#### **4.1. Findings part I: Brief overview and context of narrators' lives**

##### **4.1.1. The Expert: Freddy Mutanguha**

Of the four testimonies analyzed, Freddy Mutanguha's is the longest, with a running time of four hours and fifty-three minutes. He is well-versed in the political history of Rwanda, providing long, nuanced answers to most of the questions put to him by the interviewer; and overall, he comes off as an authoritative commentator on the subject of the Rwandan genocide. Mutanguha is currently the director of the Kigali Memorial Center, as well as the country director (Rwanda) of the Aegis Trust, a non-profit organization headquartered in London, UK, whose mission is the "prediction, prevention" and "... elimination of genocide" around the world (Aegis Trust, n.d.).

Mutanguha was born in 1976. Despite not clearly stating how old he was during the genocide, he alludes to having been in his third year of school at the time, corresponding to his mid-to-late teenage years. After the killing of his family (his mother, stepfather, and his siblings), while he hid in his childhood best friend's house (a Hutu peasant farmer), Mutanguha and his lone surviving sister took refuge in an internally displaced persons' camp.

##### **4.1.2. The New American Activist: Daniel Ndamwizeye (AKA Daniel Trust)**

Some of the most noteworthy features of Ndamwizeye's testimony are related to the effects of the aftermath of the genocide on his personal life as opposed to his experiences during the genocide per se. There seem to be a lot of details/sentiments he leaves out of his testimony deliberately. For instance, he explicitly tells the interviewer that he is not ready to say the names and precise familial relationships of the abusive relatives with whom he lived after the death of his parents in the genocide. Ndamwizeye was five years old when the genocide broke out, and he witnessed the killing of his mother outside of their (Seventh Day Adventist) church. Ndamwizeye was later assisted to flee to the Congo, before returning to Rwanda after the genocide to live with "a close family relative", namely his older brother and his wife, who physically and psychologically abused him. Later, with the help of his brother-in-law, he moved to Zambia from where his applications for refugee status and migration to the USA were processed. As of mid-2016, Daniel Ndamwizeye is also known as Daniel Trust. He lives in the USA and is the founder of a non-profit foundation based in Connecticut, under whose auspices he donates scholarships to needy college students. Various newspaper and online articles also describe him as an LGBT advocate (e.g. Gilbert, n.d.; Nyberg & Dayton, 2015). In the public lectures he has given about his life since the 2010 USC-Shoah Foundation (2010a) interview, he has revealed the identities of those responsible for his abuse.

##### **4.1.3. The Narrator of a Raw Tale of Innocence Lost: Esperance Kaligirwa**

Of all the four testimonies, Kaligirwa's is the most raw, i.e. unrehearsed and detailed. Unlike Mutanguha—a genocide memorial center director who infuses his testimony with his historical knowledge of Rwanda and genocide survivor advocacy—Kaligirwa gives a detailed lay person

account of the experiences she remembers during the three/four months of the genocide and her recollection of her thoughts and feelings during that time-period. Prodded by the interviewer, she also offers some meta-analyses of her testimony/experience.

Kaligirwa was born in 1973, and seems to have also been in her teenage years at the onset of the genocide in 1994. She tells of an ordeal that involved the barricading of her family inside their house with little or no food and water, the constant comings and goings of soldiers looking for war loot in exchange for not killing her and her family, and of two particular execution survival incidents before the end of the genocide. Kaligirwa currently lives in the USA.

#### *4.1.4. The Traumatized Child: Arsene Nsabimana*

Nsabimana also currently lives in the USA. Throughout his testimony, Nsabimana repeatedly states that he tries as hard as he can to forget all the details of his life back then, including the names of his parents and siblings. This, he says, helps him move on from his trauma.

Born in 1986, Nsabimana doesn't clearly state how old he was at the onset of the genocide. However, based on what he says about his progress in school, he seems to have been less than 10 years old. Right at the outset of the genocide (the night of 6th April), a group of soldiers came to his house, gathered his family in their living room and shot at them. He woke up later under his mother's body with a gun wound on his back. After surviving that incident, Nsabimana was hidden by a neighbor. He then made his way to his primary school, which was hosting other displaced survivors. After the genocide, he was found by an uncle who brought him back to North America (he first lived briefly in Michigan, then went to school in Canada).

#### **4.2. Discursive sensemaking and resilience processes across all four testimonies**

Despite the categorization of resilience-indicative phrases using the same three definitions of sensemaking previously presented, it should be noted that not every expression of sensemaking can also be categorized as an expression of resilience. For instance, a review of all the four narrators' use of sensemaking via the use of specific details or micro-sensemaking tools (time & place, mental/corporal states, and evaluation/interpretation) can reveal that it might be hard for one to find a substantive number of instances of the use of time and place that may also be judged to be expressions of resilience, as they do not conform my definition above of resilience. However, it is conceivable that one will find a number of instances of micro-sensemaking via the recounting of mental/corporal states and the use of evaluation/interpretation, which also express resilience.

##### *4.2.1. Locating personal experiences within or outside the generally known/accepted historical narrative of the Rwandan genocide*

In the context of this article, the emblematic historical account of the Rwandan genocide is the Des and Human Rights Watch (1999) report. In it, Des Forges chronicles the historical Hutu/Tutsi divisions exacerbated by colonial rule, post-colonial political jockeying among the two groups and their aligned parties, the assassination of President Habyarimana, and the major highlights (esp. largest recorded massacres) during the three/four month-long genocide in Rwanda (April to July) in 1994.

To varying degrees, all four narrators whose USC-Shoah archive videos are analyzed in this article have testimonies that corroborate the above historical narrative of the Rwandan genocide. For instance, all four narrators state that they and their families are/were of Tutsi heritage and were targeted simply because of that ethnicity, and they confirm that the genocide started after the assassination of president Habyarimana. Granted, this characteristic (location of stories within the historical narrative) might in large part be a result of the USC-Shoah interviewers' assumptions and the way they phrase their questions. However, any of these interviewees could have said of their own volition that, for instance, their families were killed not because they were Tutsi, but because they were providing help to the rebels that wanted to overthrow the government.

Given Daniel Ndamwizeye and Arsene Nsabimana's young ages during the months of the genocide and thus their limited memories of the main events themselves, as well as their eventual departure after the genocide, we can only get a basic conception vis-à-vis the relation between their personal stories and the popular historical narrative of the genocide. However, the testimonies of Freddy Mutanguha and Esperance Kaligirwa provide us with a good opportunity to examine this feature (location of stories within the historical narrative). For instance, both testimonies assert that the assassination of President Habyarimana on the evening of April 6th 1994 was the trigger of the genocide. While Mutanguha brings up the incident himself, Kaligirwa is asked about it by the interviewer. However, both narrators highlight it as the 'trigger' of the genocide.

In addition, this testimony of Esperance Kaligirwa conforms with the timeline as indicated by Des Forges (1999), which chronicles the genocide as having taken place from 7th April to the beginning of July 1994. At one point in her testimony, Kaligirwa explicitly discusses the timeline after the interviewer asks her about the first two weeks of the genocide, which her family had spent hiding indoors, where they remained 'until June'.

#### 4.2.2. *The provision of thematic narratives of lived personal experiences*

The testimonies of all four narrators contain a wealth of distinct and poignant details that would be hard to get from a general/macro narrative using news reports, statistics, and the major documented events, massacres (e.g. as witnessed by peacekeepers and aid workers). Even though the average educated or well-informed Westerner might be familiar with the historical event known as "the Rwandan genocide," this same individual won't be able to comprehend what that historical event meant to the average Rwandan genocide survivor. Arguably, the best way to explain that significance would entail the use of testimonies such as the ones analyzed herein.

There is at least one seminal example of a distinct and poignant story within each of the testimonies of these four FRGSs. For Freddy Mutanguha, it is the story of his hearing the dying sounds—i.e. screaming, wailing, begging, etc.—of his mother and siblings, as he was hiding in his childhood friend's house (i.e. Jean-Pierre, a Hutu peasant farmer who had dropped out of school after his primary education, while Mutanguha—thanks to his family's higher socioeconomic status—had continued to high school). For Daniel Ndamwizeye, the most poignant part of his testimony is that in which he details the suffering he endured while staying with the unnamed relatives after his parents' death in Rwanda, as well as his turbulent sojourn in Zambia while waiting for refugee resettlement in the USA.

In comparison to the others, Esperance Kaligirwa's testimony contains the highest number of poignant stories. Most significant among these are the stories of her and her family's hiding in their home for over two months during the genocide with inadequate supplies of food and water, with no electricity or phone service, in constant fear for their lives. Soldiers and Interahamwe militia repeatedly went into their home to loot property, and they once abducted her younger sister and briefly detained her. Upon returning to the house, the family asked her no questions, nor did she talk about what had happened during the detention. Eventually, the soldiers came to take the family away to be killed. After being rescued by Hutu neighbors, who had told the militia that Kaligirwa's late father had been a kind man, they returned to their house. The militia returned one last time and took numerous members of the family to be killed while Kaligirwa, her mother, and a couple of other siblings locked themselves in one of the bedrooms. Luckily, the Interahamwe militia gave up after trying to open the door, which is how Kaligirwa and the others survived.

Finally, Arsene Nsabimana offers the least amount of details about his genocide survival and post-genocide life. Part of the reason for this is the fact that he explicitly mentions repeatedly that he does his best to forget as many details about the ordeal as possible, as a way to cope and move on. However, the story that stands out the most in his testimony is that of the night of 6th April, during which his entire family—i.e. parents and siblings—were killed, but he survived. The climax of the story is the arrival of soldiers at the family home, summoning his father (who had been the head of the national electric utility company) and his wife and children to the living room, and shooting them

all. Somehow, Nsabimana awoke with a gun wound on his back under the body of his mother. He walked dazedly to their neighbor's house, where he hid until his uncle found him.

#### 4.2.3. *Recounting of specific details via time and place, description of past thoughts and states of being, and evaluations or interpretations (micro-sensemaking)*

The last sensemaking discursive tool I am analyzing and explicating in this article is the recounting of specific details via time and place, description of past thoughts and states of being, and the provision of evaluations or interpretations. In general, all four narrators employ the above three sense-making tools in varying degrees. For instance:

- All four narrators allude to the place/country known as Rwanda, the year 1994, and the months of April through July, as the spatial-temporal anchors of the historical event known as the Rwandan Genocide. Each of the narrators also discuss either staying in Rwanda, or leaving Rwanda (to come to the USA or elsewhere) after the genocide.

(Use of Time and Place)

- All four narrators recount a number of thoughts and states of being, e.g. Kaligirwa's wishing "... they would just come and kill you [right away] instead of killing you, like, slowly," and Mutanguha and Nsabimana's initial feelings of enmity towards Hutus after the end of the genocide.

(Description of past thoughts and states of being)

- All four narrators in essence are thinking out loud via their testimonies, as part of an effort to explain *how and why* the genocide happened, how and why they survived, and even, how and why they are talking about their experiences.

(Provision of Evaluations or Interpretations or the "Hows" and "Whys" of Phenomena)

### 4.3. **Findings part II: Contrast of two testimonies marked by active recall vs. unintentional and purposeful amnesia, or ignoring (traumatic) personal historical details**

#### 4.3.1. *Overview*

Previous studies have documented and analyzed the phenomenon of trauma victims' (including genocide and sexual violence victims') willingness and ability to remember and discuss, or to forget their past traumas (e.g. Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Connerton, 2008; Fivush & Edwards, 2004; Foxen, 2000). In this study's findings as summarized above, the testimonies of Daniel Ndamwizeye and Arsene Nsabimana can be used to highlight the dynamics of the active recall vs. unintentional and purposeful amnesia phenomenon.

This phenomenon might be starkest in Nsabimana's testimony; we witness his purposeful amnesia when he repeatedly tells the USC-Shoah Foundation (2010b) interviewer, that he does his best to forget as many specific details as possible that he experienced during the genocide, including his parents' names. That technique, he asserts, helps him cope and move on from the trauma. However, Daniel Ndamwizeye's testimony also demonstrates a paradoxical active recall and discussion reticence. For instance, Ndamwizeye asserts that he is not ready to reveal the identities of the caretakers in Rwanda who abused him, and he assigns them the placeholder monikers of "John" and "Jessica." He also talks about an event that precipitated his only visit to a professional psychotherapist, but he tells the interviewer that he is not ready to discuss the specifics of that event.

In parts A through D below, I provide a summary of the details of Ndamwizeye and Nsabimana's testimonies in the same format that was used to garner the specific themes, as well as the sense-making and resilience instances from all four individual testimonies. These details shed more light on the reticence of Ndamwizeye and Nsabimana vis-à-vis their ability and willingness to recall and discuss their genocide survival stories in earnest.

#### 4.3.2. Part A: Thematic narratives of personal experiences (Macro-sensemaking)

4.3.2.1. *Daniel Ndamwizeye's personal experiences.* Due to the fact that the two young men were very young—toddlers below the age of five or six during the genocide—the lived experiences of Daniel Ndamwizeye and Arsene Nsabimana are not ideal for examining the events of the three/four months of the genocide itself in 1994. Rather, their lives show us the effects that the genocide wrought on the lives of two young children who lost parents and siblings and were traumatized by the violence they saw or experienced, and other adversities they encountered after the genocide. In the case of Ndamwizeye, we get to see the experiences of a six year-old child who unfortunately ended up in the care of guardians who mistreated him.

Fortunately, his brother-in-law picked him up from the relative's house in 2001 and took him along to Zambia, where they would both start their official refugee declaration and US emigration processes. By then, Ndamwizeye was 11 years old. But in Zambia, his brother-in-law's refugee and US visa application were approved immediately, while his was still pending. Ndamwizeye was thus left under the guardianship of family friends. Soon, however, this Congolese family, who had been expatriates in Zambia, also had to return to the Congo. Again, Ndamwizeye had to move in with another family. Throughout this entire tumultuous transition, Ndamwizeye had had to learn English and some basic Lingala so as to go to school and communicate with his guardians. Eventually, in 2005, Ndamwizeye's refugee and US visa application were finally approved, and he moved to the USA to join his two sisters.

From the 50th to 84th segment of his USC-Shoah video archive testimony, corresponding to a total of 34 min (from the video's total duration of one hour and 24 min), one can demarcate 11 specific sub-stories or topics of discussion to help us highlight four themes from Daniel Ndamwizeye's lived experiences as a refugee-cum-citizen in the USA. These four themes are: (1) The creation of a new identity, (2) The assertion of a new identity, (3) Spirituality/religiosity, and (4) The obliquely spoken.

4.3.2.1.1. *The creation of a new identity.* The sub-stories or topics of discussion under this first theme highlight the process that Daniel went through as he shed his old identity as a wandering Rwandan refugee/genocide survivor, becoming instead a new American. There are four sub-stories or topics of discussion under this theme, namely: Arrival in the USA, adjustment, college, and work.

4.3.2.1.2. *The assertion of a new identity.* Under this theme, we encounter a repetitive assertion or emphasis on Ndamwizeye's new American identity/citizenship. He talks about it while discussing the implications of the historical Hutu-Tutsi ethnic divide in Rwanda, his future aspirations, and the future message he would like to send to citizens in the US and around the world who will watch his testimony. There are three sub-stories or topics of discussion under this theme, namely: Reflections on ethnicity, future aspirations I, future aspirations II, which also falls under another theme that I'll discuss below i.e. the obliquely spoken, and public message.

4.3.2.1.3. *Spirituality/religiosity.* There is only one topic of discussion under this theme, namely. Coping Mechanisms I. The topic of discussion highlights the specific mechanism—i.e. spirituality/religiosity—that Ndamwizeye claims to have employed so as to cope with his travails as an orphaned genocide survivor and refugee.

4.3.2.1.4. *The obliquely spoken.* There are two main topics of discussion under this theme, namely, "Coping Mechanisms II," and "John and Jessica." These topics highlight the remarkable amount of information that Ndamwizeye leaves out of this interview. The first one is in regard to the names/identities (or nature of familial relationship to Ndamwizeye) of the relative and his wife with whom he stayed in Rwanda before leaving for Zambia with his brother in law. Early on during the interview, he explicitly mentions that he would like to keep their identities a secret for the time being. The second topic is revealed when Ndamwizeye talks about therapy, saying that to him, public speaking (i.e. about his past experiences) is a form of therapy. He goes on to say that there was only

one situation in his past in which he went for actual clinical psychotherapy, but quickly adds that he is not yet ready to discuss the precise reason he sought it (therapy) on that particular occasion.

4.3.2.2. *Arsene Nsabimana's personal experiences.* Of all four testimonies analyzed in the set, Arsene Nsabimana's is the one with the least number of stories/discussions which highlight the distinct experiences he went through as a genocide survivor and former refugee. The three stories present are also very short in comparison to the other three survivors' (with running times of 16, six, and three minutes consecutively). This small quantity and brevity may reflect the fact that Nsabimana is the genocide survivor, among all four, who left Rwanda the earliest, within less than two years of the end of the genocide.

He also repeatedly explicitly mentions at the beginning of the interview that he tries his best to forget as many details as he can about his life prior to, and during, the genocide. These details include the names of his parents and siblings, the memories of the incident in which they were killed, and the dates on which that and other incidents happened (e.g. his wandering around the city and being found by an aunt). Based on their content, I have given the following titles to the three stories told by Nsabimana in his interview: (1) Memories: Forgetting and remembering; (2) Diaspora and return; and (3) Forgetting and forgiving.

The first story/discussion—Memories: Forgetting and remembering—is at the beginning of Nsabimana's interview. It starts when the interviewer asks him the names of his parents, as is the procedure with all USC-Shoah survivor interviews. Nsabimana responds only with his father's name—"Mathias"—and adds that he does not remember neither his mother's nor his siblings' names, thanks to a deliberate effort to forget that he has made over the years. The interviewer then proceeds to ask Nsabimana about the memories he has of the beginning of the genocide. Nsabimana recounts the events in his family's house, the night of the Habyarimana plane crash: his father summoning him and his siblings to his bedroom; the arrival of Interahamwe militia inside their house, his father getting beaten by them during interrogation, the subsequent killing of his entire family by the militia, as well as his survival of that incident.

The second story/discussion—Diaspora and return—comes up around the middle of Nsabimana's interview. Having concluded his recounting of his memories of the genocide and its aftermath in Rwanda, Nsabimana recounts his arrival in the USA (in Niles, Michigan) under the guardianship of his uncle. After living in Michigan for over a year, his uncle then had to relocate to Kenya for work, but Nsabimana "just did have—I didn't want anything to do with Africa, period," "I mean ... I didn't even wanna go anywhere where ... There were Hutus, any—I didn't wanna be affiliated with-those people ...." Thus, his uncle left him in a Christian boarding school in Oshawa (Ontario), Canada, where he completed his high school years. After the end of high school, his uncle returned with his family to the USA for a visit and told Arsene to consider visiting Rwanda (see Appendix A, A.N.–E1).

The third and final story/discussion that highlights Nsabimana's distinct personal experiences as a genocide survivor/refugee, revolves around "Forgetting and Forgiving." This comes up towards the end of the interview, in response to a question from the interviewer:

1. I: People around the world will listen to your testimony ...
2. What would you want them to hear?
3. What message would you want them to ...
4. Get from your testimony?

(Nsabimana's answer:)

5. **AN:** That we need to stop fighting ...
- ...
6. **AN:** Fighting with each other
7. We-r-we're human ... we all have feelings ... you know?
8. We n-we need to stop fighting with each other
9. And just build with-you know, friends-friendship with each other
10. That killing people you know I—it took-it took me a lot
11. To forgive ... you know?
12. Like to me I can sit down and talk to a hut-to a Hutu right now
13. And you know, I wouldn't feel any sort of
14. Like anger towards that person
15. But ... I just feel like we—we have to be friends
16. Stop fighting and ... just ... build the world together

A few moments later, the interviewer asks Nsabimana about the details of his own forgiveness process:

23. **I:** H-hm ... and when did you actually forgive ...
24. Or have you fully forgiven?

...

34. **I:** And uh, what made you forgive?

(Nsabimana's answer:)

35. **AN:** I mean, it's like—it's all ... of like forget-forgive and forget
36. Kinda thing ...
37. **I:** H-hm ...
38. **AN:** Start getting comfortable talking about it
39. You know ... forgetting a little bits and pieces about it
40. **I:** Yeah ...
41. **AN:** And ... yeah that's how it came about just felt comfortable

...

42. I just forgot ... little bit pieces-of-about it ... and yeah ...

(see Appendix A, A.N.-E2)

#### 4.3.3. Part B: Micro-sensemaking, (1) Use of time & place, (2) Description of past thoughts and states of being, and (3) Provision of Evaluations or Interpretations

4.3.3.1. *Daniel Ndamwizeye's recounting of specific details.* As previously mentioned, the testimony of Daniel Ndamwizeye contains a number of narratives that can be categorized under four themes, namely "Creation of a New Identity," "Assertion of a New Identity," "Spirituality/Religiosity," and "The Obliquely Spoken." From the "Creation of a New Identity" theme, we can focus on the narrative titled "Adjustment" in our attempt to highlight Ndamwizeye's use of the above three micro-sensemaking tools. In that narrative, Ndamwizeye recounts the adjustment process he underwent as a new young (teenager/high school) refugee in the US (see Appendix A, D.N.-E1: instances of

micro-sensemaking via time and place, recounting of states of being, and evaluation/interpretation are double underlined and italicized).

4.3.3.2. *Description of past thoughts and states of being.* Similarly, I have isolated five instances of Ndamwizeye's formulation of micro-sensemaking via description of past thoughts and states of being:

...

(1)

58. Everything, it seemed like

59. I had lived here for a while

...

(2)

61. Uh ... it was very difficult at the beginning

62. You know, adjusting to the language

63. Uh ... adjusting to the culture

64. And you know, the kids ... the differences

...

(3)

67. Everything was perfect, I did very well

68. I was top in my class ... in most of my classes

69. I did very well so ...

...

(4)

80. So I was on the bowling team as well

81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...

...

(5)

84. I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\***

85. Have people who cared about you

86. I ... this all ... all this was very new to me

4.3.3.3. *Provision of evaluations or interpretations, or the 'Hows' and 'Whys' of Phenomena.* Remarkably, in my evaluation, there is only one elongated instance (with 33 lines of text) of evaluation or interpretation micro-sensemaking in this narrative. Apparently, this is mostly due to the fact that Ndamwizeye is making a list of some of the attributes which, according to the standards of his new society of abode (the USA), signify a student's 'success' in high school and or teenage life. Even though he had struggled to adjust to high school life in the US at first, he thrived from his sophomore year through graduation:

69. I did very well so ...

70. I joined a few—I played volleyball

71. From the time I was a freshman to the time I was a senior

72. I was the captain from sophomore year to senior year

73. Um ... I won the MVP junior years and senior years
74. I actually got the ... co-athletic of the year
75. At my senior banquet
76. Uh ... I also ran cross country
77. From the time I was a freshman to senior year
78. I was the captain also
79. Um ... I played bowling we had a bowling team
80. So I was on the bowling team as well
81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-[career] ...

(see Appendix A, D.N.-E3)

4.3.3.4. *Arsene Nsabimana's recounting of specific details.* Nsabimana's narratives of his adjustment and stay in North America throughout his high school years, and his subsequent visit to Rwanda at the end of high school, provide us with an opportunity to study his use of the micro-sensemaking tools of time and place, recounting of mental/corporal states, and evaluation/interpretation. Below are the instances of these three tools.

4.3.3.5. *Arsene Nsabimana's use of time and place & description of past thoughts and states of being.* There are 14 instances of Nsabimana's formulation of micro-sensemaking via use of time and place, all from his narrative excerpt titled Diaspora and Return, and General Reflections on the Genocide (see Appendix A, A.N.-E3; instances are double underlined and italicized). For his use of the description of past thoughts and states of being, one can isolate at least 12 discrete instances (see Appendix A, A.N.-E4; instances are double underlined and italicized). In these two sets of narrative excerpts, the most significant lines vis-à-vis the highlighting of purposeful amnesia, are those in which Nsabimana states that he did not want to go back to Africa, because it would "bring a lot of tough memories." (A.N.-E4)

4.3.3.6. *Arsene Nsabimana's provision of evaluations or interpretations, or the "Hows" and "Whys" of phenomena.* While most of Nsabimana's instances of evaluation and interpretation are derived from clauses that also give us instances of recounting of mental/bodily states, one of these instances stands out due to his providing it after a prompt from the interviewer, explicitly asking him to share his thoughts about the genocide in general (italicized and underlined for emphasis).

71. I: Um ... As a young ... um ... a Rwandan guy Nsabimana
72. Who ... luckily survived the genocide ...
73. Um ... when you think back, um ...
74. *What feelings does it bring to you?*
75. AN: *I just feel like ... that sort of stuff should never have happened anyways*
76. I: H-hm ...
77. AN: *You know it could have got dealt with*
78. *\*\*shrugs\*\* so different, you know ...*
79. *Like the presidents die every day, you know?*
80. *In history ... so you don't have to, like, start killing other race*
81. *Because your president has passed away ... you know?*
82. *I just feel like ... as soon as their president passed away*
83. *They just felt like the Tutsis are the ones who killed him*
84. *And they just got ... angry at with hut-with the Tutsis*
85. *Where they just wanted to clean up ... eV-the whole race*

86. *You know? Just clean out, try to clean out the whole race and*
87. *Even though ... some Hutus were killed too ... but Tutsis were the more ...*
88. *You know, they were, they're the ones who lost the most*
89. *[Word unclear] most of their families, you know ...*
90. *People who didn't even have authorities in the army*
91. *People who was living like friends probably which-your parents*
92. *Who were trying to kill your parents the next day*
93. *You know because you were Tutsi*
94. *So I, I just felt like ... there was no respect for human ... beings, period*

(see Appendix A, A.N.-E5)

#### 4.3.4. Part D: Expressions of resilience

4.3.4.1. *Daniel Ndamwizeye's expressions of resilience.* Similarly to the structures of expressions of sensemaking above, Daniel Ndamwizeye and Arsene Nsabimana's coping mechanisms differ substantially from those of Freddy Mutanguha and Esperance Kaligirwa. This is because Ndamwizeye and Nsabimana were toddlers in 1994 and thus could not fully comprehend the events of the genocide and their meanings or ramifications. Thus, their expressions of resilience are mostly in reference to events and challenges that they went through *after* the genocide.

Among Ndamwizeye's narratives of his genocide and migration experiences, one can isolate four excerpts in which his expression of resilience is clearest, namely: (1) The assertion of a new identity-B: Future aspirations I, (2) The assertion of a new identity-C: Future aspirations II, (3) Spirituality/religiosity, and (4) The obliquely spoken-A.

In "The assertion of a new identity-B: Future aspirations I," Ndamwizeye indirectly refers to the struggles that he endured while living with the unnamed relative in Rwanda who mistreated him, before being rescued by his brother-in-law. While expressing his desire to give motivational speeches based on past experience, he states:

81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...
82. Coz ... these are things that I didn't have ...
83. When I was growing up ...
84. I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\***
85. Have people who cared about you
86. I ... this all ... all this was very new to me
87. And I make sure that I use all the opportunities
88. That I was given

(see Appendix A, D.N.-E3)

Again, in the excerpt "Spirituality/Religiosity," Ndamwizeye directly discusses the challenges he faced in Rwanda after losing his parents, in a response to the interviewer's question, "Where did you get, in your opinion, the strength to keep going on?" After saying that he tries to "... focus on the things that I can do better or ... things that I can have control over instead of focusing on things I have no control over," (lines 367 to 369), Ndamwizeye credits God for keeping him alive and well since the genocide:

371. DN: You know ... so that's ... that keeps me going and ... you know and God
372. Has always been there, I'm not ... I'm not very religious
373. You know I like to be very um I like to be free spirited
374. Um ... but I know that there's you know somebody who guides me
375. Somebody who saved me from the genocide
376. Somebody who takes care of me every day ...
377. Somebody who puts a smile on my face every day
378. Regardless of what I go through at the end of the day

(see Appendix A, D.N.-E5)

But unlike the above numerous examples of the general presence and structure of his resilience expression, it should be noted that there are only two isolatable examples from Ndamwizeye's micro-sensemaking instances, which can also be interpreted as incidents of resilience expression. These are:

Daniel Ndamwizeye's descriptions of mental/corporal states as resilience:

61. Uh ... it was very difficult at the beginning
62. You know, adjusting to the language
63. Uh ... adjusting to the culture
64. And you know, the kids ... the differences

...

Daniel Ndamwizeye's provision of evaluation or interpretation as resilience:

81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...
82. Coz ... these are things that I didn't have ...
83. When I was growing up ...
84. I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\***
85. Have people who cared about you
86. I ... this all ... all this was very new to me
87. And I make sure that I use all the opportunities
88. That I was given

(see Appendix A, D.N.-E6)

Besides those two exceptions above, the majority of Ndamwizeye's micro-sensemaking instances do not contain phrases that fit my definition of resilience in this study, i.e. past-tense references to distressing physical, mental, and emotional states of being, and or the methods that were/are used to cope with those states of being.

**4.3.4.2. Arsene Nsabimana's expressions of resilience.** Generally, one can find most expressions of resilience in Arsene Nsabimana's narratives of genocide and migration, embedded in the excerpt, "A: Memories: Forgetting and Remembering," in which he recounts his memories of the night (of 6th April) during which his parents and siblings were killed. In the other two excerpts analyzed in this section, i.e. "B: Diaspora and Return" and "C: Forgetting and Forgiving," Nsabimana's expressions of resilience are minor and or indirect.

In excerpt A, from lines 30 to 107, Nsabimana recounts his dad's summoning of the entire family into his (and his wife's) bedroom after learning of President Habyarimana's assassination, the arrival of the Interahamwe militia, the interrogation of his father and the shooting to death of his family,

his arousal from a fainting spell with a gun-wound and his disorientation among the bloodied corpses of his family members; his seeking of refuge at his neighbors' house; and his subsequent relocation in an internally displaced people's camp at his elementary school, where his aunt would find him. Clearly, all these events are traumatic, especially to a six year old child. And yet, Nsabimana is somehow able to recount them.

From lines 117 to 135, Nsabimana also discusses a method he uses to cope with the distress of those memories; "I try my best to forget everything that happened," including the names of his parents and siblings, "because the names always bring up the picture of how they looked and everything and ... bring more emotions" (Lines 131 to 133). Thus, based on the definition of resilience as stated above i.e. past-tense references to distressing physical, mental, and emotional states of being, and or the methods that were/are used to cope with those states of being, excerpt A is a good demonstration of the expression of Arsene Nsabimana's resilience .

However, excerpts B and C also contain some minor resilience expressions. For excerpt B, this expression is best exemplified in lines 21–24, in which Nsabimana recounts his uncle's suggestion to him, and his reaction to it, of visiting Rwanda after living in North America for over ten years (line 24 underlined for emphasis):

21. **AN:** They-c-I, they came back, I came to visit them
22. And that's when they're like you should come back to Africa and visit
23. I was like, ah ... I don-I don't know ...
24. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories

(see Appendix A, A.N.-E6)

That last line is also supportive of Nsabimana's strategy of coping via forgetting. One can also argue that Nsabimana's reference above to "tough memories" indicates the latent presence of distress or anguish from those memories that he lives with or tries to overcome on a daily basis. Thus, if his functionality via school, work and other areas of life has not been affected, we can state—at least tentatively—that he has persevered.

In a later testimony/narrative excerpt, Nsabimana is discussing the overall message he would like viewers to get from his testimony, which he sums up as the "need to stop fighting," and to forgive each other. We can isolate examples of resilience from at least two sets of lines in the excerpt, i.e. 11–15, and 34–42. In lines 11–15, Nsabimana talks about the dissolution of the anger he once felt towards Hutus, "Like to me I can sit down and talk to a hut-to a Hutu right now and you know, I wouldn't feel any sort of like anger towards that person ...." And in lines 35–42, he again addresses the precise method (or at least one of them) that he has used to recover from his trauma, and to forgive the murderers of his parents:

35. **AN:** I mean, it's like—it's all ... like forget-forgive and forget kinda thing ...
36. **I:** H-hm ...
37. **AN:** Start getting comfortable talking about it
38. You know ... forgetting a little bits and pieces about it
39. **I:** Yeah ...
40. **AN:** And ... yeah that's how it came about—just felt comfortable

...

41. I just forgot ... little bit pieces-of-about it ... and yeah ...

(see Appendix A, A.N.-E7)

Finally, there are only three micro-sensemaking instances by Nsabimana which can also be interpreted as expressions of resilience. In the first two, he recounts his aversion towards Hutus and his desire to stay away from them and from Africa at large, and in a third instance, he utters the aforementioned statement, “that’s gonna bring a lot of tough memories.”

(1)

...

2. Me [Nsabimana], *I just did have—I didn’t want anything to do with Africa, period*

...

7. At the time ... *I just wanted more—I just wanted to stay away from there*

...

(2)

10. When I stayed ... I mean ... *I didn’t even wanna go anywhere where ...*

...

11. *There were Hutus, any—I didn’t wanna be affiliated with those people so*

...

(3)

24. *I don’t ... that’s gonna bring a lot of tough memories*

(see Appendix A, A.N.–E8)

## 5. Discussion/interpretation

The findings in parts I and II above offer at least two general insights in regard to FRGS narrative sensemaking and expressions of resilience that ought to be discussed in earnest. In part I, we encounter the general expression mechanisms of FRGSs’ narrative sensemaking and strategies of resilience. Arguably, this is the main focus of this article. It thus might be appropriate to also try and explain the “how” and/or “why” of those mechanisms; why, or how, do the above Rwandan FRGSs make sense of past experience and articulate mechanisms of resilience via narratives the way they do? Or, what are (some of) the underlying factors that influence these FRGSs’ capacity for sensemaking and expression of resilience? In all four sets of narratives, we come across at least four discrete social elements, namely: socioeconomic status, the breadth and cohesion of their social networks, personal dispositions, and religiosity/spirituality. Below are the explications of each of these elements.

Socioeconomic status: all survivors/former refugees whose narratives are analyzed in this article were from upper middle class or elite backgrounds before the genocide. This characteristic is starkly exemplified by the narrative told by Mutanguha about the living conditions of Jean-Pierre (his childhood friend, a Hutu peasant farmer) and his family. Nsabimana also recounts that his father was the head of the national electric utility company and his uncle later left him in boarding school in Canada before going to work in Kenya. Kaligirwa and Ndamwizeye both mention that their parents were business entrepreneurs prior to the genocide, and their siblings made use of their families’ resources to travel to Europe and the US for tourism and education. Overall, the role of these four FRGSs’ socioeconomic status can be summarized in two ways, i.e. before and during the genocide, and after the genocide. Shortly before and during the genocide, they experienced mental/corporal states because of the deprivation and discomfort which they were unaccustomed to in their wealthy pre-genocide lives. After the genocide, they had financial and other resources that helped them rebuild their lives in the diaspora, i.e. USA.

Perceived breadth and cohesion of FRGS' social networks: we can investigate this element vis-à-vis direct or indirect references to, or implication of family members, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers of note in the FRGS' narratives in the context of actively surviving the genocide and formulating expressions of sensemaking and resilience. In this context, the term 'actively surviving the genocide' includes modes of actions such as being saved by a Hutu friend or stranger via pleas and/or bribes to a soldier or militiaperson, hiding, provision of food and comfort, etc. In other words, we are asking the following questions: based on this particular FRGS' narratives, (A) who is/are the person(s) who helped save his/her life, and who is/are the person(s) who have played and/or continue to play a major role in his/her capacities for sensemaking and expressions of resilience, and (B) what was/is the relationship between the said savior, and the FRGS? This was arguably the most important factor vis-à-vis individuals' opportunities of survival during the genocide. It was also vital after their survival; relatives or friends provided financial, emotional, and other forms of support.

Personal dispositions: the four FRGS' narratives necessarily reflect the personalities of their principals. For instance: Freddy Mutanguha speaks not only with stoicism, but also with the knowledge, reflections, and authority of an advocate and leader; Daniel Ndamwizeye speaks with the passion, confidence, and even sophistication of a new American activist; Esperance Kaligirwa recounts her experiences in an earnest, calm, yet at times sanguine manner; and Arsene Nsabimana is a quiet, studious young man who speaks softly, in short sentences, and repeatedly mentions that he tries his best to forget the events of 1994.

Religiosity/spirituality: a total of three out of the four individuals whose narratives are analyzed in this chapter, make references to words or concepts such as 'God,' 'praying,' 'faith,' and even 'spirituality.' This, I submit, is indicative of these individuals' subscription to concept(s) or belief-system(s) involving omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnibenevolent power(s) beyond the realm of human understanding and ability; powers—or deities or a Deity—that can only help us if we *believe* or have *faith*.

The insight from part II of the findings is pithy, but also significant. Both sets of narratives from part II (i.e. Ndamwizeye and Nsabimana's respectively) offer an up-close demonstration of what Buckley-Zistel (2006) referred to as "chosen amnesia" (p. 131). Whereas her study concerned the members of communities with victims and mass murder suspects that had to find a way to harmoniously live side-by-side, the findings above demonstrate examples of the ways FRGS individuals choose to forget or ignore their past. Nsabimana's case is the simpler of the two; he explicitly states repeatedly, that he tries to forget, and has actually forgotten a lot of details of his genocide survival ordeal. However, Ndamwizeye's case is a little more complicated. Whereas he doesn't explicitly claim that he tries to forget information as does Nsabimana, it is obvious that he leaves out numerous details from his testimony, e.g. the identities of the relatives that mistreated him, the event that caused his only visit to a psychotherapist, and the details of a vague reference related to "having sex for money."

## 6. Conclusion

The narrative analyses presented above of all four Rwandan FRGSs demonstrate some of the techniques of narrative sensemaking and expressions of resilience, both macro (thematic) and micro (via time and place, corporal/mental state recollection, and evaluation). However, the narratives—particularly those of Nsabimana and Ndamwizeye—necessarily leave out numerous details due to deliberate and unintentional amnesia.

While it is important to avoid the assumption that talking about one's past experiences and trauma (outside the context of psychotherapy) necessarily leads to healing, FRGS narratives (regardless of their accuracy, breadth, and depth) and the sensemaking and resilience mechanisms they engender, should not be discouraged. Apparently, resilience is not simply enacted; rather, it is also verbalized and reified on an ongoing basis. One can also argue that it might be helpful to first make sense of experience and to verbally construct and reify resilience, before seeking professional psychological help.

The experiences of genocide widow-survivors in Rwanda also suggest that discussion among FRGSs of genocide survival experiences can be of immense help in mental and emotional perseverance (e.g. Topping, 2014). However, the experiences of a poor survivor and a rich survivor can be both similar, yet vastly different in various ways, as the experiences of Freddy Mutanguha and his childhood friend, Jean-Pierre, show us. Mutanguha is now the director of the national genocide memorial in Kigali, but he notes in his interview that Jean-Paul died of cholera in the D.R. Congo, where he had escaped with his family after the genocide for fear of retribution based on his Hutu identity.

The potential role of narrative sensemaking and expressions of resilience in justice and reconciliation should also be noted. By highlighting the life-stories of Rwandan FRGSs and the sensemaking and resilience expression therein, scholars can discourage revisionism and genocide denial. Testimonies of Rwandan FRGSs can also help in the tracking and prosecution of genocide suspects. For instance, in his testimony, Freddy Mutanguha notes that he knows of a suspect who currently lives in Argentina. And as Rakhmiel Peltz points out, stories of survivors recorded less than five years after the genocide will often sound different when those same survivors tell them 20 or 40 years later. In the latter cases, genocide survivors often assign much less blame (Peltz, personal communication March 2014). This implies that the search for justice and reconciliation after genocide is an ongoing quest. Thus, life-stories or testimonies by survivors have to continue being told, and scholars should continually analyze them to understand FRGSs' sensemaking and expressions of resilience, and the respective implications for justice and reconciliation.

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#### Author details

Seif Sekalala<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [seifsekalala@gmail.com](mailto:seifsekalala@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> School of Communication, Media, and Journalism, Kean University, Union, NJ, USA.

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## Appendix A

### Narrative Transcript Excerpts

#### Author's Note:

The partial excerpts below as referenced in this article, are taken from the full appendix that was garnered by this author's transcription and organization of the four USC-Shoah visual archive videos. The full appendix can be obtained (free of charge) by contacting me via email, and, depending on demand, I might put it on a webpage or blog.

#### Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 1

##### (A.N.–E1)

23. I was like, ah ... I don-I don't know ...
24. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories
25. I don't even think I remember ... the place ...
26. They said, yeah, it's very different, they built it ...
27. They, I mean, the roads ... are not dirt anymore ... you know
28. So I thought about it for like a year ...
29. And ... finally in two-thousand and seven that's when
30. I got the confidence to go back and-visit them
31. **I: Yeah ...**

32. **AN:** You know ...
33. Two-thousa-I went there-I went the first place I went was in Rwanda
34. Stayed there for a month, Gerome ... took me to ...
35. Where his parents lived ...
36. That's my grandpa, and grandma's, on my dad's side
37. **I: Okay ...**
38. **AN:** So we went, we went there ... spent a whole day
39. Showing me different s-places ... and where he was born
40. And ... et cetera et cetera but ... it was just different to see
41. Where ... my dad, and ... my uncles came from ...
42. And where they are right now
43. It was just amazing ...

Later, the interviewer asks Ndamwizeye to discuss some of his general reflections on the genocide and its aftermath:

71. **I: Um ... As a young ... um ... a Rwandan guy Nsabimana**
72. **Who ... luckily survived the genocide ...**
73. **Um ... when you think back, um ...**
74. **What feelings does it bring to you?**

Nsabimana's answer is as follows:

75. **AN:** I just feel like ... that sort of stuff should never have happened anyways
76. **I: H-hm ...**
77. AN: You know it could have got dealt with
78. **\*\*shrugs\*\* so** different, you know ...
79. Like the presidents--die every day, you know?
80. In history ... so you don't have to, like, start killing other race
81. Because your president has passed away ... you know?
82. I just feel like ... as soon as their president passed away
83. They just felt like the Tutsis are the ones who killed him
84. And they just got ... angry at with hut-with the Tutsis
85. Where they just wanted to clean up ... eV-the whole race
86. You know? Just clean out, try to clean out the whole race and
87. Even though ... some Hutus were killed too ... but Tutsis were the more ...
88. You know, they were, they're the ones who lost the most
89. [Word unclear] most of their families, you know ...
90. People who didn't even have authorities in the army
91. People who was living like friends probably which-your parents
92. Who were trying to killing your parents the next day
93. You know because you were Tutsi
94. So I, I just felt like ... there was no respect for human ... beings, period
95. You know?

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 2

(A.N.-E2)

(Interviewer:)

17. **I:** People around the world will listen to your testimony ...
18. What would you want them to hear?
19. What message would you want them to ...
20. Get from your testimony?

(Nsabimana's answer:)

21. **AN:** That we need to stop fighting ...
22. **I:** H-hm ...
23. **AN:** Fighting with each other
24. We-r-we're human ... we all have feelings ... you know?
25. We n-we need to stop fighting with each other
26. And just build with-you know, friends-friendship with each other
27. That killing people you know I-it took-it took me a lot
28. To forgive ... you know?
29. Like to me I can sit down and talk to a hut-to a Hutu right now
30. And you know, I wouldn't feel any sort of
31. Like anger towards that person
32. But ... I just feel like we-we have to be friends
33. Stop fighting and ... just ... build the world together

A few moments later, the interviewer asks Nsabimana about the details of his own forgiveness process:

25. **I:** H-hm ... and when did you actually forgive ...
26. Or have you fully forgiven?
- ...
43. **I:** And uh, what made you forgive?

(Nsabimana's answer:)

44. **AN:** I mean, it's like-it's all ... of like forget-forgive and forget
45. Kinda thing ...
46. **I:** H-hm ...
47. **AN:** Start getting comfortable talking about it
48. You know ... forgetting a little bits and pieces about it
49. **I:** Yeah ...
50. **AN:** And ... yeah that's how it came about just felt comfortable
- ...
51. I just forgot ... little bit pieces-of-about it ... and yeah ...

\*\*\* \*\*

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt I

(D.N.-E1)

**Use of Time and Place.** Below are seven instances of his formulation of micro-sensemaking via use of time and place that I have isolated (instances italicized and double-underlined):

(1)

...

48. Um ... coz when I was in Rwanda I stopped school when I was in  
49. Grade six, and then I went to Zambia, I went to grade 8

...

(2)

...

51. During I didn't go ... I spent two years in Zambia without going to school

(3)

...

54. When I came here I went to grade nine

(4)

...

59. I had lived here for a while

...

(5)

...

71. From the time I was a freshman to the time I was a senior  
72. I was the captain from sophomore year to senior year  
73. Um ... I won the MVP junior years and senior years  
74. I actually got the ... co-athletic of the year  
75. At my senior banquet

(6)

...

77. From the time I was a freshman to senior year  
78. I was the captain also

(7)

...

81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...  
82. Coz ... these are things that I-didn't have ...  
83. When I was growing up ...

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt 2

(D.N.-E2)

**Description of past thoughts and states of being.** Similarly, I have isolated five instances of Ndamwizeye's formulation of micro-sensemaking via description of past thoughts and states of being:

...

(1)

58. Everything, it seemed like

59. I had lived here for a while  
...  
(2)
61. Uh ... it was very difficult at the beginning  
62. You know, adjusting to the language  
63. Uh ... adjusting to the culture  
64. And you know, the kids ... the differences  
...  
(3)
67. Everything was perfect, I did very well  
68. I was top in my class ... in most of my classes  
69. I did very well so ...  
...  
(4)
80. So I was on the bowling team as well  
81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...  
...  
(5)
84. I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\***  
85. Have people who cared about you  
86. I ... this all ... all this was very new to me

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt 3

(D.N.-E3)

**Provision of evaluations or interpretations, or the “Hows” and “Whys” of phenomena.**

- ...  
55. And ... for some reason ...  
56. I did well **\*\*chuckles\*\***  
57. Uh ... for some reason ... uh ...  
58. Everything, it seemed like  
59. I had lived here for a while  
60. Like you know ...  
61. Uh ... it was very difficult at the beginning  
62. You know, adjusting to the language  
63. Uh ... adjusting to the culture  
64. And you know, the kids ... the differences  
65. Um ... but, after my ninth grade  
66. When I went to sophomore year  
67. Everything was perfect, I did very well  
68. I was top in my class ... in most of my classes  
69. I did very well so ...  
70. I joined a few I played volleyball  
71. From the time I was a freshman to the time I was a senior

72. I was the captain from sophomore year to senior year
73. Um ... I won the MVP junior years and senior years
74. I actually got the ... co-athletic of the year
75. At my senior banquet
76. Uh ... I also ran cross country
77. From the time I was a freshman to senior year
78. I was the captain also
79. Um ... I played bowling we had a bowling team
80. So I was on the bowling team as well
81. Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car ...
82. Coz ... these are things that I-didn't have ...
83. When I was growing up ...
84. I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\***
85. Have people who cared about you
86. I ... this all ... all this was very new to me
87. And I make sure that I use all the opportunities
88. That I was given

\*\*\* \*\* \*

#### Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 3

(A.N.-E3)

**Arsene Nsabimana's use of time and place.** There are 14 instances of Nsabimana's formulation of micro-sensemaking via use of time and place, all from his narrative excerpt titled Diaspora and Return, and General Reflections on the Genocide:

#### **(1)**

1. **AN:** ... In Niles, uh ... I was just finishing grade nine there

...

#### **(2)**

3. **AN:** Like the-I think the last two semester ... there
4. And ... at the time, my-my uncle [Gerome] was getting ready
5. To move back to Kenya, because he got a job there
6. Me, I just did have-I didn't want anything to do with Africa, period
7. At the time ... I just wanted more-I just wanted to stay away from there
8. So ... they found a boarding school, in-in Canada
9. A uh ... boarding school so I ... that school was called Kingsway college
10. When I stayed ... I mean ... I didn't even wanna go anywhere where ...
11. There were Hutus, any-I didn't wanna be affiliated with-those people so
12. Yeah, I just went to ... Canada ...
13. Went to a boarding school ... stayed there ...
14. During those years ... went to high school finished high school there
15. Yeah, and ... after high school ...

#### **(3)**

17. And I came back here, to visit them ...

...

(4)

21. **AN:** The-k-I, they came back, I came to visit them  
22. And that's when they're like you should come back to Africa and visit

(5)

23. I was like, ah ... I don-I don't know ...  
24. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories  
25. I don't even think I remember ... the place ...

(6)

26. They said, yeah, it's very different, they built it ...  
27. They, I mean, the roads ... are not dirt anymore ... you know

(7)

28. So I thought about it for like a year ...  
29. And ... finally in two-thousand and seven that's when  
30. I got the confidence to go back and-visit them

(8)

31. **I:** Yeah ...  
32. **AN:** You know ...

(9)

33. Two-thousa-I went there-I went the first place I went was in Rwanda  
34. Stayed there for a month, Gerome ... took me to ...  
35. Where his parents lived ...

...

(10)

38. **AN:** So we went, we went there ... spent a whole day  
39. Showing me different s-places ... and where he was born

...

(11)

44. And ... you know it just looks like, nobody really cares  
1. About the place ... coz they never rebuilt it

...

(12)

50. **I:** So, where do they come from, in Rwanda?  
51. **AN:** They were born in Kibuye  
52. **I:** In Kibuye ...  
53. **AN:** Yeah ... that's where they were ... grew up  
54. **I:** Okay ... um ... so ... you came back  
55. Er ... when I came back ... from ... Africa

...

(13)

57. **AN:** I started, I started college in Kingsway university college

58. That's in Alberta in Canada  
59. Started ... went there for ... psychology for one year  
(14)  
60. And I ... I just, I just ... felt like it wasn't for me ...  
61. Psychology ... I toughed it out for one year

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 4

(A.N.-E4)

**Arsene Nsabimana's description of past thoughts and states of being.** For his use of the description of past thoughts and states of being, one can isolate at least 12 discrete instances:

(1)

...

6. Me, I just did have-I didn't want anything to do with Africa, period  
8. At the time ... I just wanted more-I just wanted to stay away from there

...

(2)

10. When I stayed ... I mean ... I didn't even wanna go anywhere where ...  
12. There were Hutus, any-I didn't wanna be affiliated with-those people so

...

(3)

25. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories  
26. I don't even think I remember ... the place ...

...

(4)

28. So I thought about it for like a year ...

...

(5)

30. I got the confidence to go back and-visit them

...

(6)

40. And ... et cetera et cetera but ... it was just different to see  
41. Where ... my dad, and ... my uncles came from ...  
42. And where they are right now  
43. It was just amazing ...

...

(7)

62. And ... just ... stopped, coz I got confused I'm like ...  
63. This, I don't know if this is what I'm gonna do

...

(8)

66. Being just thinking about what I really need to do

...

(9)

68. AN: Right now ... I feel like I'm getting there, coz ...  
69. I'm leaning on towards one thing ...  
70. H-it's computer, computer science ... yeah

...

(10)

74. I: What feelings does it bring to you?  
75. AN: I just feel like ... that sort of stuff should never have happened anyways

...

(11)

82. I just feel like ... as soon as their president passed away

...

(12)

94. So I, I just felt like ... there was no respect for human ... beings, period  
95. You know?

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 5

(A.N.-E5)

**Arsene Nsabimana's provision of evaluations or interpretations, or the "Hows" and "Whys" of phenomena.** Similar to the case above of Freddy Mutanguha, many of Nsabimana's instances of evaluation and interpretation are derived from clauses that also give us instances of recounting of mental/bodily states (instances 1-7 below). However, one of the instances (No. 8) of Nsabimana's evaluation/interpretation stands out due to the fact that it is provided by him after a prompt from the interviewer, when he explicitly asks him to share his thoughts about the genocide in general.

(1)

...

6. Me, I just did have-I didn't want anything to do with Africa, period  
9. At the time ... I just wanted more-I just wanted to stay away from there

...

(2)

10. When I stayed ... I mean ... I didn't even wanna go anywhere where ...  
13. There were Hutus, any-I didn't wanna be affiliated with-those people so

...

(3)

27. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories  
28. I don't even think I remember ... the place ...

...

(4)

44. And ... et cetera et cetera but ... it was just different to see  
45. Where ... my dad, and ... my uncles came from ...  
46. And where they are right now

47. It was just amazing ...

...

(5)

64. And ... just ... stopped, coz I got confused I'm like ...

65. This, I don't know if this is what I'm gonna do

...

(6)

67. Being just thinking about what I really need to do

...

(7)

71. AN: Right now ... I feel like I'm getting there, coz ...

72. I'm leaning on towards one thing ...

73. H-it's computer, computer science ... yeah

...

(8)

71. I: Um ... As a young ... um ... a Rwandan guy Nsabimana

72. Who ... luckily survived the genocide ...

73. Um ... when you think back, um ...

95. What feelings does it bring to you?

96. AN: I just feel like ... that sort of stuff should never have happened anyways

97. I: H-hm...

98. AN: You know it could have got dealt with

99. \*\*shrugs\*\* so different, you know...

100. Like the presidents--die every day, you know?

101. In history ... so you don't have to, like, start killing other race

102. Because your president has passed away ... you know?

103. I just feel like ... as soon as their president passed away

104. They just felt like the Tutsis are the ones who killed him

105. And they just got ... angry at with hut-with the Tutsis

106. Where they just wanted to clean up ... eV-the whole race

107. You know? Just clean out, try to clean out the whole race and

108. Even though ... some Hutus were killed too ... but Tutsis were the more...

109. You know, they were, they're the ones who lost the most

110. [Word unclear] most of their families, you know...

111. People who didn't even have authorities in the army

112. People who was living like friends probably which-your parents

113. Who were trying to killing your parents the next day

114. You know because you were Tutsi

115. So I, I just felt like ... there was no respect for human ... beings, period

\*\*\* \*\*

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt 4

(D.N.-E4)

In “The Assertion of a New Identity–B: Future Aspirations I,” Ndamwizeye indirectly refers to the struggles that he through while living with the unnamed relative in Rwanda who mistreated him, before being rescued by his brother-in-law. While expressing his desire to give motivational speeches based on his past experiences or challenges, he states:

291. So I wanna get that message out there
292. That there are people around the world who
293. Go through a worse ... you know who go through a lot
294. You know people who sleep hungry
295. People who sleep on the floor

But later, in the excerpt “The Assertion of a New Identity–C: Future Aspirations II,” Ndamwizeye directly refers to the struggles he went through, stating:

323. Um ... I wanna write a few books ... I think I have a lot of uh stories
324. That I would ... want to tell not just my story
325. You know, my ... my ... being a genocide survivor
326. But there’s so much more ... there’s
327. I’ve been through a lot and you know ... losing my parents
328. Being called names you’re dumb you’ll never do anything with yourself
329. Um ... from stealing because of stealing food ...
330. Putting food in my ... in my underwear ...
331. A lot of stories ...
- 332. I: Hm...**
333. DN: You know ... um ... having sex for money ...
334. A lot of things I think, people would learn
335. I think I can teach people a lot of things about life you know ... and ...
336. One thing the most thing is, you know ...
337. I want people to stop whining about ... their lives
338. Because it could be worse

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt 5

(D.N.–E5)

...

371. DN: You know ... so that’s ... that keeps me going and ... you know and God
372. Has always been there, I’m not ... I’m not very religious
373. You know I like to be very um I like to be free spirited
374. Um ... but I know that there’s you know somebody who guides me
375. Somebody who saved me from the genocide
376. Somebody who takes care of me every day ...
377. Somebody who puts a smile on my face every day
378. Regardless of what I go through at the end of the day
379. And, trust me life is not perfect at the moment you know
380. It’s-life is not perfect but ... just the idea that I have a bed
381. You know I am going to school
382. I’m 21, we’re in a recession, right now
383. And I have a great job, um ...
384. I have-great-friends, great family ...
385. Those are things to be thankful [sic] ... you know

The final example that can demonstrate the general presence and structure of resilience expression in the narratives of Daniel Ndamwizeye, is from the excerpt titled “The Obliquely Spoken-A.” Again, Ndamwizeye is discussing his enjoyment of motivational speaking, based on his past experiences/challenges. In this particular context, Ndamwizeye is discussing the talks he has given and plans to keep giving to high school students:

- 468. ... so ... it's-its good coz it's I love doing it
- 469. Because, it gives me a chance to ... it's-it's kinda therapy you know
- 470. It's therapy for me ... um ... coz I didn't I-I-I've never went
- 471. I've never gone to therapy
- 472. Except for once, um ... and it was, because of an issue that is
- 473. An issue I w-not yet ready to share yet ...
- 474. So ... that's the only time I went for therapy
- 475. But other than that ... I do my own therapy
- 476. By talking to people ... people asking questions
- 477. You know ... people asking you know how do you do this
- 478. That kind of stuff ...

Daniel Ndamwizeye, Excerpt 6

(D.N.-E6)

But unlike the above numerous examples of the general presence and structure of his resilience expression, it should be noted that there are only two isolatable examples from Ndamwizeye's micro-sensemaking instances, which can also be interpreted as incidents of resilience expression. These are:

(1) Daniel Ndamwizeye's Descriptions of Mental/Corporal States as Resilience Expressions:

- 61. Uh ... *it was very difficult at the beginning*
- 62. *You know, adjusting to the language*
- 63. *Uh ... adjusting to the culture*
- 64. *And you know, the kids ... the differences*

...

(2) Daniel Ndamwizeye's Provision of Evaluation or Interpretation as Resilience Expressions:

- 81. *Um ... so, I had a very great, great, high school uh-car...*
- 82. *Coz ... these are things that I-didn't have...*
- 83. *When I was growing up...*
- 84. *I didn't know what it meant to **\*\*sighs\*\****
- 85. *Have people who cared about you*
- 86. *I ... this all ... all this was very new to me*
- 87. *And I make sure that I use all the opportunities*
- 88. *That I was given*

\*\*\* \*\* \*

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 6

(A.N.-E6)

Nsabimana recounts his uncle's suggestion to him, and his reaction to it, of visiting Rwanda after living in North America for over ten years (line 24 underlined for emphasis):

21. **AN:** They-c-I, they came back, I came to visit them
22. And that's when they're like you should come back to Africa and visit
23. I was like, ah ... I don-I don't know ...
24. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 7

(A.N.-E7)

And in lines 34 to 42, he again addresses the precise method (or at least one of them) that he has used to recover from his trauma, and to forgive murderers of his parents:

42. **AN:** I mean, it's like-it's all ... of like forget-forgive and forget kinda thing ...
43. **I:** H-hm ...
44. **AN:** Start getting comfortable talking about it
45. You know ... forgetting a little bits and pieces about it
46. **I:** Yeah ...
47. **AN:** And ... yeah that's how it came about just felt comfortable
- ...
48. I just forgot ... little bit pieces-of-about it ... and yeah ...

Arsene Nsabimana, Excerpt 8

(A.N.-E8)

Finally, there are only three micro-sensemaking instances by Nsabimana which can also be interpreted as expressions of resilience. In the first two, he recounts his feelings aversion towards Hutus and his desire to stay away from them and from Africa at large, and in third instance, he utters the aforementioned statement, "that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories."

- (1)
- ...
2. Me, I just did have-I didn't want anything to do with Africa, period
- ...
10. At the time ... I just wanted more-I just wanted to stay away from there
- ...
- (2)
10. When I stayed ... I mean ... I didn't even wanna go anywhere where ...
- ...
14. There were Hutus, any-I didn't wanna be affiliated with-those people so
- ...
- (3)
29. I don't ... that's gonna bring a lot of tough memories



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