UNIVERSITY of RWANDA

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CENTRE FOR GENDER STUDIES

The Resilience of Female-Headed Households in a Context of Husbands' Incarceration in Rwanda: An Exploratory Study of Genocide Convicts' Families from Nyamata Sector (Bugesera District)

A thesis submitted to the University of Rwanda in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of a Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Gender and Development

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Kigali, September 2022

CERTIFICATION

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AUTHORISATION OF SUBMISSION OF POST-GRADUATE THESIS

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Department: Center for Gender Studies

Period of study: 2019/2021

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As The supervisor of this thesis, I authorize him to submit his thesis for defense

Date and signature of the Supervisor: 26/04/2022

DECLARATION

I, Révérien Interayamahanga, do hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the work presented in this thesis entitled ""*Resilience of Female-Headed Households in a Context of Husbands' Incarceration in Rwanda: An Exploratory Study of Genocide Convicts' Families from Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District"* is my own work and has never been submitted for any academic award to any university or higher learning institution. All the resources used or quoted have been duly acknowledged in the references.

Signature :

Student's name: **Révérien Interayamahanga**

Date : 15 September 2022

DEDICATION

To my wife, Lidvine

To our children Jesca Révine, Glodi Lévine and Jess Levi

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the resilience of female-headed households in the context of husbands' incarceration for charges of genocide crimes. Specifically, it examined the effects of male parental incarceration on the families and found out coping mechanisms used by families to withstand those effects. It also identified challenges that hinder the resilience of affected families and eventually proposed actions to mitigate these hindrances. It is a qualitative study which was conducted in Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District and applied an exploratory design relying on desk review, in-depth interviews and key informants' interviews.

The research reveals that male parental imprisonment imposed severe adversities on convicts' wives, marriage, children, households and relationships. Effects on convicts' wives consist of emotional and psychological stress; wives' sudden taking of households' headship which involved issues associated with single parenting and striving to bridge lost income gap, among others Effects on marriage include the abominable nature of the genocide crime and which is therefore unbearable in the eyes of marital partners; affected conjugal duties such as sexual intercourses; perceived and actual wives' infidelity and children born out of wedlock, to name a few.

Effects on convicts' children relate to the stigma and shame associated with fathers' abominable crimes; children's early involvement in labor, poor school performance and dropout, early and unintended pregnancies etc. Regarding households, consequences include the loss of income, difficulties to afford human basic needs, the burden of visiting incarcerated parents, and paying for properties that convicts looted or devastated during the genocide. Furthermore, male incarceration damaged relationships both within family members (including some in-laws) and with some community members. Nevertheless, it was found that affected families turned to several coping mechanisms (individual, family, relational, community, organizational and institutional).

Despite those capacities, the study identified major hindrances to convicts' families' optimal resilience to the shock, and proposed mitigating actions.

Key words: resilience, male incarceration, female-headed household, genocide

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
Art.	Article
Covid-19	Corona virus disease-19
CSOs	Civil society organizations
DK	Don't know
EICV	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
EIGE	European Institute of Gender Equality
FIDH	Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
F	Female
FRW	Franc Rwandais [Rwandan Franc]
KII	Key informant's interview
LODA	Local Administration Entities Development Agency
M	Male
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIGEPROF	Ministère du Genre et de la Promotion de la Famille (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion)
MINECOFIN	Ministère des Finances et de la Planification économique (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning)
n.d.	No date
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NSDS	Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

P.	Primary (school)
p.	Page
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Service
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
S	Secondary (school)
TA	Thematic analysis
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Program

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis on the Resilience of Female-Headed Households in a Context of Husbands' Incarceration in Rwanda: An Exploratory Study of Genocide Convicts' Families from Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District. It comprises nine sections: introduction to the chapter, background of the study, statement of the research problem, study objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, structure of the study and conclusion of the chapter.

1.2. The Study Background

The burden of violent conflicts affects men, women, and children disproportionately. While men bear a heavier mortality burden, women and children are more likely to be affected by refugeehood, orphanhood, widowhood, and sexual violence. There is plenty of scholarship on how violent conflicts adversely affect women (United Nations, 1995; Susan, 1998; Hedström & Senarathna, 2015; United Nations Populations Fund, 2002; Snoubar & Duman, 2016). The United Nations (UN) Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995) elaborates that "grave violations of the human rights of women occur, particularly in times of armed conflict, and include murder, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy and forced abortion, in particular under policies of ethnic cleansing" (p.9).

Similarly, while analyzing the impact of conflict on women and children in the Middle East, Snoubar & Duman (2016) maintained that "women and children are the most affected by traumatic events of the war, and they are the most vulnerable to all types of exploitation and abuse" (p.211). As cited in Susan (1999), Gardam also echoes the disproportionate effects of armed conflicts in terms of disability. This author argues that "women suffer under a double disability compared to combatants because women possess inferior status as civilians and more so as women" (p.384). Furthermore, OXFAM Intermón (2019) notes that "many outbreaks of violence today are of religious or ethnic origin, linked to issues of identity, which play against women and women's rights…[and] are marked by extreme violence and gender-based abuse" (p.2).

As far as the conflict in Rwanda is concerned, especially the genocide against the Tutsi, extant literature has largely portrayed women and girls as victims because "women are traditionally cast as victims during mass violence, and indeed many women do suffer horrific sex-specific abuse and violence (Sara, 2008). For that reason, perpetrators resorted to rape as a weapon of war and genocide against them (Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme [FIDH], 1997; Des Forges, 1999; Sara, 2018). de Brouwer and Ruvebana (2013:938) and René Degni-Ségui (cited in Sara, (2018, p.2) estimate the number of women raped during the genocide to stand between 250,000 and 500,000. In this regard, René Degni-Ségui as cited in Sara (2018) claims that women "may even be regarded as the main victims of the massacres, with good reason, since they were raped and massacred and subjected to other brutalities" (p.8). In some instances, they underwent gang rapes, mutilation of sexual organs, the introduction of objects, such as sharpened sticks and gun barrels, into sexual organs before they were eventually murdered, which resulted in HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, and unwanted marriages (FIDH, 1997; Des Forges, 1999).

However, to a less extent, women participated in the genocide. Hogg (2010:70), women detained over genocide-related crimes represented 5.6% as of February 2008, evidence abounds on women's participation in the genocide: for example, they have played an active role in perpetrating violence (Rakia, 1995, Jones, 2002; Hogg, 2010; Hedström & Senarathna, 2015; Sara, 2018). Summarizing Rakia (1995), Sara (2018) shows that during the genocide in Rwanda, women were involved in committing crimes which range from leading the killings, willingly killing, killing due to coercion, serving as cheerleaders for killers, finishing off the wounded, and stripping the dead, including stealing the jewelry, money and clothes (Sara, 2018)

Beside women as victims and perpetrators, there is also scanty evidence to suggest that women also stood as rescuers during the genocide in Rwanda (Sara, 2018). Still on a positive note, "women played a role in enhancing peace and reconciliation through various areas" (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). For example, Mutamba and Izabiliza's study maintains that as of 2005, women represented 29% of judges in Gacaca courts, while, traditionally, women were excluded from such courts (2005, p.32). Similarly, some female judges served as presidents of courts and, in such cases courts performance was reportedly largely better than those that were chaired by men (Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). In the same vein, de Brouwer & Ruvebana (2013, p.950), note that

as of 18 June 2012 - when *gacaca* courts closed officially- 90% of people prosecuted were men while only 10% were women. In a detailed account, de Brouwer & Ruvebana (2013) provide figures of cases and people who were tried, convictions, and acquittals.

> By June 2012, 1,958,634 cases involving 1,003,227 people[1] (90 percent men and 10 percent women) were judged through *gacaca*, of which 60,552 cases fell in the first category, 577,528 in the second category, and 1,320,554 in the third category. Of all cases tried, 277,066 resulted in acquittals (14 percent), 1,681,648 or 86 percent) were convicted, while 225,012 (or 13 percent) of convictions were based on guilty pleas. On appeal, 178,741 cases were tried (with 45,839 or 26 percent resulting in acquittals), representing 9 percent of all cases tried by Gacaca (p.950).

The very fact that more men than women were prosecuted and eventually convicted sparked another category of women whose fate would also be problematic: wives of incarcerated husbands. Their number across the country is unknown, yet given that not all convicted men were necessarily married[2] by the time of detention. Their wives not only took over men's traditional household responsibilities in the absence of their husbands but they also had a new social identity of being associated with genocide convicts. Elsewhere, evidence has suggested that the father's imprisonment can disrupt family ties, contribute to negative children's outcomes, and exacerbate social and material standing such as employment and inclusion (Wildeman, 2010 as cited in Markson, Lösel, Souza & Lanskey, 2015).

Unfortunately, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no evidence on how men's imprisonment over genocide-related crimes impacted their wives, especially regarding their role as heads of households, yet there is a concern that they may face stigmatization and exclusion. Lack of evidence-based information on actual challenges that those women may have been facing and their resilience capacities remains a real gap from academic, policy-making, and programmatic perspectives. It is worth highlighting that through the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the

[1] There were more cases examined than individuals tried because in some instances one person could be involved in several cases.

[2] Refers simply to both couples in cohabitation and those that are legally married

Government of Rwanda is committed to the value of inclusiveness in all development processes and programs, which is also reflected in the UN value of "Leaving No One Behind" (United Nations, 2017; United Nations, 2015).

Against this backdrop, the researcher seeks to fill the gap on the resilience of female heads of households in a context of husbands' incarceration in Rwanda, focusing on wives of genocide convicts from Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District, Eastern Province of Rwanda

1.2. Problem statement

The Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV) in Rwanda places the proportion of female-headed households at 25% (excluding 6.4% of "de facto female-headed ones"[3]) (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), 2018, p.8). Regarding their age and marital status, the same source reveals that 68.7% of these female-headed households were aged 45 or above, while 5.5% were married and 62.7% were widows (p.9). However, since 2016, there has been a shift in the conceptualization of female household headship. As a matter of fact, art.209 of because law nº 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family stipulates that:

> Spouses jointly provide management of the household, including moral and material support to the household and its maintenance (para. 1).
>
> One of the spouses performs those duties alone if the other cannot do so. In case of disagreement, competent authorities decide (para. 2).

While the concept of a female-headed household would imply households with women without husbands (e.g. single mothers, divorced, widows, separated) and *de facto* households without present husbands, it also includes a household whose husband is present but cannot co-manage the household with his wife. One of the reasons for such husband's incapacity to do so may be a situation of acute mental illness.

Although there are no official figures of households with incarcerated fathers/husbands from 1994 to date, many of them are convicts of genocide-related crimes. De Brouwer & Ruvebana (2013) suggest that 1,681,648 that is 86 percent of all cases that Gacaca courts tried, eventually

[3] Households that are temporarily headed by females due to the absence of the male heads for a certain period of time (six months or above)

resulted in convictions (p.950), and that of 178,741 cases that Gacaca tried on appellate, 74 percent resulted in convictions, even though not all convictions involved necessarily imprisonment.

In line with the above, Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS), as cited in the United States Department of State (2017), indicates that inmates steadily declined from 58,515 in 2011 to 53,600 in 2014" and "was expected to decline further in the coming years as convicted persons sentenced to 20-25 years' imprisonment for crimes related to the 1994 genocide, who comprised approximately 60 percent of the prison population, finished serving their sentences". Similarly, as of January 2021, the total prison population, including pre-trial detainees, accounted for 76,099 (National Human Rights Commission, cited in World Prison Brief, Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, 2021).

From a gender viewpoint, as of March 2020, women prisoners represented only 5.4% of the total prison population in Rwanda (World Prison Brief, 2021) . It implies that households of prisoners who were married during their detention remained primarily headed by their wives.

Due to the dominant patriarchal system and a minimal level of women empowerment in Rwanda, at least as of 1994, the increasing female household headship after the genocide occurred in a context where women were not prepared for such new and suddenly acquired responsibilities. It applies to female genocide survivors, wives of imprisoned perpetrators, and other categories of female heads of households.

To date, there is a body of knowledge about the issues faced by genocide widows and existing coping mechanisms (Williamson, 2012; Rieder & Elbert, 2013; Militery, Mbonyinkebe, Lebailly, 2014; Picco, 2014; Bayisenge, 2016), although much is yet to investigate notably on long term effects of the genocide on widows, the psychosocial and economic conditions of the elderly widows (e.g. *Intwaza*[4]), to name a few. However, to the best of my knowledge, no research involved wives of genocide convicts with a particular focus on the effects of husbands' imprisonment on wives' social and economic well-being as heads of household on the one hand and their related resilience on the other hand. Nevertheless, the lack of knowledge is vital for

[4] Name given to elderly genocide widows who no longer have close living relatives and who are currently taken care of in government-established collective households commonly known as "Urugo Impinganzima/Impinganzima Household".

policy-makers and peacebuilding and development practitioners to ensure that such a category of women is not left behind in post-genocide reconstruction and development efforts. Therefore, the study at hand seeks to contribute to filling this gap modestly.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to understand the resilience of female-headed households with a focus on those of male genocide convicts. Specifically, it pursues the following objectives:

1. Explore social and economic effects of imprisonment of male genocide perpetrators on their families (households, wives, and children).
2. Identify coping mechanisms used by convicts' families to overcome those effects.
3. Examine emerging and persisting issues faced by households of genocide convicts, which hamper their resilience.
4. Formulate strategies to mitigate identified challenges

1.4. Research questions

In line with the above specific objectives, the proposed study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are major social and economic issues facing households of male genocide convicts?
2. Which coping mechanisms do female-headed households of genocide convicts use to withstand the issues?
3. What are persisting and emerging challenges to the resilience of genocide convicts' families?
4. How can those challenges be mitigated?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study has a three-fold significance. First, the study is of academic significance. In partial fulfillment of academic requirements for the University of Rwanda, each student must conduct independent research on a topic pertaining to their area of study to obtain a master's degree. The researcher undertook the study at hand to meet this requirement.

The study has an academic significance. While there is a body of knowledge on the effects of the genocide on male parent conviction, there is a dearth of evidence on the resilience of women-headed households due to men's incarceration. This study investigates the resilience of the aforesaid families and thus modestly contributes to filling this knowledge gap.

The study finally has a policy significance. This research explores both the effects of male parental incarceration on their families and existing capacities of resilience. In this regard, findings from this study might contribute in raising awareness of policy-makers and practitioners on those issues and lessons learnt on the one hand, and inform them in designing policies, programs and projects that take into account specific needs of those women.

1.6. Scope of the study

This study focuses on female-headed households of genocide convicts. For logistical reasons (financial means and time), the study includes households in this category from Nyamata Sector, in Bugesera District, Eastern Province. From a temporal perspective, the study covers the period 1995-2012 to include both wives of people convicted by specialized courts and those whom Gacaca courts tried.

1.7. Structure of the research report

In addition to chapter one, the study has four chapters. Chapter two defines key concepts and reviews existing literature pertaining to the actual study. It also provides the theoretical framework for the research. Concerning chapter three, it describes the research methodology with its various aspects such as the study design, the approaches and data collection methods, the study population and sampling plan, the data analysis, interpretation and report drafting, ethical consideration and research limitations. As for chapter four is devoted to data presentation and analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the study findings. Beside the participants' profile, the chapter also presents the effects of male parental incarceration on convicts' families, the coping mechanisms used by the latter families headed by women. It also explores major hindrances to the resilience of convicts' families. The last chapter summarizes the study findings, draws the study conclusion, and formulates actions to mitigate the identified hindrances to the resilience of households of male genocide convicts. The report winds up with a list of references and annexes.

1.8. Conclusion of the chapter

This introductory chapter gave an insight into the context of this study and clarifies its objectives and research questions among other things. It sets the scene for this research and is therefore essential for the reader to understand where the study comes from and the purpose it should serve. The next chapter introduces the reader to the relevant literature pertaining to male parental incarceration and its effects on affected families.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on extant literature pertaining to this study topic. Beside this introductory section, the chapter also covers other four sections: definitions of key concepts, the theoretical framework, and the empirical review the conceptual framework. The second section reviews some definitions of key concepts such as resilience, household, female-headed household and husband's incarceration. For each concept defined, the researcher concludes with an operational definition. As far as the third section is concerned, it reviews theoretical considerations which underlie the actual study with a focus on the crisis theory. Regarding the fourth section, it explores some empirical researches that were previously conducted male parental imprisonment and its impact on families. Most of studies that the researcher was able to access are from the United States of America (USA), Canada, Zimbabwe and Ghana. The last section consists of a conceptual framework which depicts expected relationships between male parental incarceration and family resilience through female headship.

2.2. Definition of key concepts

The study defines key concepts relevant to the current study: resilience, household, female-headed household, and husband's incarceration.

2.2.1. Resilience

The concept of resilience is differently defined depending on the context or the discipline to which it is applied to (such as medicine, physics, environmental science, clinical psychology, sociology, and, peacebuilding).

According to Morgan (2020):

> "epidemiology has examined "host resistance" as a resilient response to a person who did not become ill when introduced to a pathogen that would generally foster illness […] Simultaneously, sociology coined "salutogenesis" to describe Holocaust survivors who appeared to adjust well following the atrocities of World

> War II […]. In psychology, resilience was used to describe high functioning children in circumstances where pathology was likely […] (pp. 9-10).

This quote from Morgan (2020) illustrates how resilience is differently defined depending on the context or discipline it is applied to (such as medicine, physics, environmental science, clinical psychology, sociology, and peacebuilding).

According to Mckay (2011) the term "resilience" originates from the latin word "*resilire*" which means "to spring back, or to return to the original form after being bent back or stretched" (p.11). The same author claims that when this concept was first used in psychology it meant "someone's ability to "bounce back" or recover quickly from traumatic events and other types of adversity" (p.11). Therefore, this definition is close to the above Latin meaning of "*resilire*".

However, as initially used in psychology, it looks pretty narrow given that it simply considers that the resilient person bounces back to the initial point or condition following a traumatic event. McKay (2011, p.12) therefore fills this gap by defining resilience as "the ability to navigate high levels of challenge and change successfully and to bounce back after stressful or traumatic events". This definition brings in an essential aspect of "successfully navigating high levels of challenge and change." It is equally important because, as McKay (2011) put it, if returning to the status quo matters, thriving and flouring after a stressful event matters more.

Resilience appears to be a process rather than an event or a destination (an outcome). In this regard, the American Psychological Association & Discovery Health Channel (2013) define resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress, such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors" (p.1).

Furthermore, from a family perspective, Walsh (1996) criticizes the then theorists of resilience for having viewed it "as residing within the individual, with the family often dismissed as dysfunctional" (p.1). To expand this minimalistic view, this author thus envisioned "a systemic view of resilience in ecological and developmental contexts and presents the concept of family resilience, attending to interactional processes over time that strengthens both individual and family hardiness" (p.1).

In this regard, Cyrulnik & Seron (2004), as cited in Interayamahanga et al. (2020, p.17), define resilience as "the ability of an individual or group to recover from shocks and keep moving forward, projecting into the future, despite events destabilizing, tough living conditions and trauma" (my own translation from French).

It is important to note that Cyrulnik & Seron's definition views resilience as a phenomenon that applies to individuals and groups such as families, communities, and countries.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher borrows and slightly nuances the definition from Cyrulnik & Seron. He thus defines resilience as "the ability of an individual or a household/nuclear family to recover from shocks or stressors and keep moving forward, projecting into the future, despite stabilizing events, tough living conditions, and trauma". The nuance made in this definition lies in the emphasis that is put on "household" or nuclear family instead of "group" such as communities and countries (as is the case in the Cyrulnik & Seron's definition). As matter of fact, in the actual study, the focus is particularly put on households and their members rather than larger groups.

2.2.2. Household

The term household is differently defined depending on the context in which it is used. Sometimes people use it as synonymous with the concept of family (nuclear family). According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) (2012a.), the term household "is based on the arrangements concerning food or other essentials for living" (p.5). According to them, the (private) household refers to a setting whereby "one or more persons living together and sharing at least one daily meal. Persons in a private household may or may not be related, or may constitute a combination of related and unrelated persons" (p.6).

In this regard, the Office for National Statistics [United Kingdom] (2019).provides a much closer definition of the term household as "one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area" and highlights that "a household can consist of a single family, more than one family or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people" (p.3).

Both definitions have in common the fact that they focus on the household size (one or more individuals), household composition (related or unrelated individuals) and the connecting factors such as living together and sharing at least a daily meal.

For the purpose of this research, the concept of the household borrows but nuances the definition given by Office for National Statistics (2019). The researcher therefore defines the household as "a group of people living at the same address, who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area and whereby at least two people are related". In fact, the "entity" that this research focuses on is the household as a family (that is where at least two members are related) given that the family dynamics such as relationships between children (boys and daughters) and their mothers and convicted fathers may be important in examining both the effects of parental imprisonment on households/families and the household resilience. Household and family are thus used interchangeably.

2.2.3. Female-headed household

In societies where the patriarchal system prevails, household headship has been a man's monopoly. A glossary by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) defines such a female-headed household as one "in which an adult female is the sole or main income producer and decision-maker" (European Institute of Gender Equality, n.d., n.p.). This definition does not rule out the presence of an adult male within the household.

In this regard, Yoosefi Lebni et al. (2020) define the term *female head of household* as " a woman in charge of managing the family as a result of divorce, separation, immigration, or widowhood" (p.2).

Nonetheless, International Labor Organization (2000) provides a definition that considers either a male's absence or presence. According to them, a female-headed household is one "where either no adult male are present, owing to divorce, separation, migration, non-marriage or widowhood, or where men, although present, do not contribute to the household income" (p.43).

For this research, the notion of female headed-household refers to a household in which women (legally married or married de facto) are in charge of managing the family due to the husband's incarceration over genocide-related crimes, regardless of whether the husband is still alive or

not". This definition is purposively minimalist and applies to a specific category of female-headed households rather than other categories (such as genocide widows, divorced females, and separated females).

2.2.4. Husband's incarceration

The term *incarceration* etymologically comes from two Latin words, "in" and "carcer" meaning respectively "into" and "prison". In criminal justice, the term is used interchangeably with *imprisonment* and *conviction*. Different scholars and practitioners have defined this concept. For the United Nations (2021), incarceration refers to "(t)he state of being deprived of liberty in prisons, including pre-trial detention facilities (p.2). This definition highlights the deprivation of the liberty for the incarcerated person and includes a pre-trial period.

Furthermore, the United States Department of Justice (1999) defines the term as "the long-term confinement of convicted and sentenced offenders (p. V.1). While this definition does not explicitly evoke deprivation of liberty, it underscores the long-term and confinement aspects of incarceration, among its core characteristics. For this research, incarceration refers to spending time in a detention facility. The end of the imprisonment sentence can occur by getting a legal pardon, fully completing the sentence or death in prison. Concerning husband's incarceration as used in this study relates to the imprisonment/incarceration of male individuals who were in marriage (either legal or *de facto*) by the time of their arrest and left a family behind.

2.3. Theoretical framework

This section reviews the underlying theories for the current research. It focuses on crisis theory which applies to both individual and family stresses. The crisis theory dates back to the early 1900s. However, many scholars consider Eric Lindemann, Kazimierz Dabrowski, and Reuben Hill the founders of the crisis theory (Thompson, n.d.). Lindemann developed his crisis theory in his search for intervention models for specific human dilemmas, such as the Coconut Grove Club fire in Boston (Poal, 1990) in 1942, which claimed 493 lives (Puleo & McGlothlin, n.d, p. 3). The crisis theory, therefore, emerged from community psychology.

Reuben Hill (1971), as cited in Bruynson (2012) applies the crisis theory to families. First of all, Hill defines the term crisis as "big jolts that are not anticipated and which challenge daily life" (Bruynson, 2012, p.16). Subsequently, Hill argues that "(I)mmediately following a crisis event, a

state of disequilibrium occurs at which time the individual must find some way of coping. Subsequently, "a new state of equilibrium will occur" (Woolley 1990 as cited in Bruynson, 2012, p.16).

In his crisis theory applied to families, Reuben Hill (1971), as cited in Bruynson, 2012, p.16), suggests that

> all families experience worry, trouble, insecurities, and problems (p.16) [and] that a crisis strains the resources which families possess. Furthermore, those who have been in this situation before are less likely to define their situation as a crisis because they know what to do. Upon facing a crisis the family members may feel paralyzed. They may, at first, act as if nothing has happened. In time they will spin into a downward spiral. Eventually the family will start to reorganize the problem and develop new routine through trial and error or by planning and sacrificing (p.17).

In a similar vein, Hill as cited in Bruynson (2012) proposes a trajectory of person's reaction to crises which comprises 4 phases as follows:

Phase 1: The stressor event. Hill defines a stressor "as a situation for which the family has had little or no prior experience or preparation (p.17). At the family level, Hill describes two types of stressors: the first one consists of the change that occurs within the family status, while the second one relates to conflict that may arise among family members over their roles (p.18).

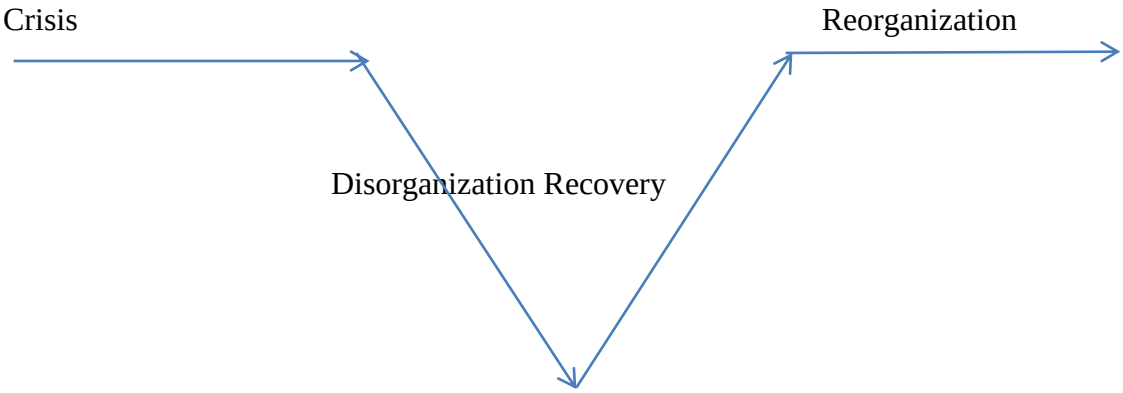
Phase 2: Disorganization: Hill, as cited in Bruynson, 2012), suggests that "the individual realizes that past routines are no longer workable and new actions are required" (p.18).

Phase 3: recovery through adaptation: in this phase, "the individual will start to recover through adaptation, coping mechanisms, and role changes." Regarding the family, Fisherman (as cited in Bruynson, 2012) argues that " family members must reorganize their lives in order to adapt to the changed situation" and "(c)hanges in the family structure must be immediately initiated. Decisions about whether to work, change residence or whether to apply for welfare all have to be made" (p.18).

Phase 4: adjustment and reorganization. Concerning cases of husband incarceration, Bruynson (2012) suggests that the "adjustment can be with or without the incarcerated individual" (p.18). She depicts the four phases of Hill's crisis theory in the following diagram.

Figure 1:

Hill's trajectory of a person's reaction to crises



Source: Bruynson (2012, p.19)

However, Hill's theory overlooks some critical aspects that can influence family reactions to a crisis. Firstly, he takes the reaction as a linear process, yet in some instances, stressors or crises may take the lives of individuals and families and therefore do not let them any opportunity to recover and reorganize.

As an exploratory research, the study at hand did not test this theory. Nonetheless, it has given insights into the development of interview guides and the researcher's probing questions during the fieldwork and has largely informed the data analysis. Resultantly, in the discussion of findings, the researcher endeavors connecting the findings to this theory.

2.4. Empirical Review

The empirical review outlines extant literature in line with the research objectives outlined above, including effects on male parent incarceration in households, coping mechanisms, and persisting issues resulting from a male parent is serving a prison sentence.

2.4.1. Effects of male parent incarceration on households

Extant literature suggests that the incarceration of male parents affects their families in many respects. Studies conducted in Canada, the USA, Zimbabwe, Denmark, and New Zealand list effects, including financial difficulties, communication and visitation barriers, stigmatization and emotional stress, and difficulties maintaining the family's well-being.

First, following the incarceration of male partners/parents, families experienced financial acute financial issues. These are associated not only with the freeze of the incarcerated partner's income but also with the cost of collecting calls and visitation, financial support to the person in prison (such as phone cards, and canteen), legal fees and lawyers' fees, extra travel expenses (Bruynson, 2011). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Taviringana's (2017) research suggests that most families of incarcerated parents sustained severe financial losses following imprisonment. Financial losses proved to be heavier among families that were already poor by parental arrest and incarceration and where the imprisoned parent was the core breadwinner.

Unlike in Canada, the most significant financial effects in Zimbabwe were associated with the loss of income (Taviringana,2017), while in the two latter countries, the biggest financial problems were tied to the cost of collecting calls and visitation, financial support to the person in prison, legal fees and lawyers' fees, extra travel expenses (Bruynson, 2011). Definitely, in Zimbabwe, the cost of maintaining the incarcerated parent and legal fees is also incurred, but it remains a significant family burden because of the loss of income following the imprisonment. It reflects the existing difference between the two worlds, whereby in the West (such as Canada), both spouses are likely to be highly educated and may therefore have economic independence than in Africa, where husbands are most likely to be the core and or sole bread winner.

Secondly, for the prisoners and their relatives, there is a need to stay in touch for the sake of communication and moral support. In Bruynson's study, the communication for these two sides maintained communication through three major ways namely visitation, phone calls and letters. Prisoners' female partners encountered some difficulties "including feeling degraded and uncomfortable, denial of physical contact, their loved one being moved without knowledge of their whereabouts and being refused a visit or having their visits cut short" (p. 51). In addition, in some instances, visiting women (partners) had the feeling that "they were being criminalized

themselves, being treated as part of the system, having someone watching and listening to what they do and say or being sniffed by dogs and having to go through ion scanners" (Bruynson, 2011, p. 51). Likewise, Taviringana (2017) reports issues associated with maintaining contact with the imprisoned parent during his incarceration.

Thirdly, Bruynson's study (2011) suggests that female partners of prisoners reported experiencing feelings of emotional stress and stigmatization. While some participants strived to hide their emotions from their male partners in prison, others would instead argue more with their incarcerated partners. Other women were even so emotionally drained that they refrained from talking to their partners on the phone. Stopping phone talks with their incarcerated partners also proved to be a mechanism of not leaving the latter upset and more stressed than they were. The same study revealed that some women were concerned about their partners' physical well-being in prison, another critical source of stress (Bruynson, 2011).

Concerning the feeling of stigmatization, Bruynson (2011) asserts that her participants revealed instances whereby they felt that prison's guards criminalized and degraded them simply for their being partners to the incarcerated men. On the other hand, stigmatization came from women's friends who sometimes told these women to leave their incarcerated partners because they were so bad. A similar situation was reported in Zimbabwe. As Taviringana (2017) puts it:

> Most of the participants indicated that the imprisonment of a person reduces the dignity and worthy of the family in a society and this creates a difficult situation on top of economic challenges. To them recognition in the society depends on who you are, your background and what we learn from you, this creates some social marginalization in the society if one comes from families of incarcerated parent (pp.36-37).

Like in Canada, the principle of individual responsibility is not fully embraced by community members in Zimbabwe. In many instances, families of incarcerated parents are also seen as criminals. It involves spouses of incarcerated parents and children in the community and at school. It constitutes an essential source of stress and stigmatization and, therefore, critical psychosocial issues resulting from parental incarceration.

Extant studies have also classified effects of incarcerating a male partner or parent regarding marriage, children's feelings, and effects on partners.

Effects on marriage: In his research, Taviringana (2017), shows how family structure and roles are perturbed by parental imprisonment. Due to the absence of a parent, generally the father (husband), family responsibilities were restructured to fill the gap left by incarcerated parents. Not only did remaining spouses have no choice but to revisit their roles to include roles of the incarcerated parents, but older children also took over some roles, namely taking care of younger siblings and others that are usually taken by adults (Taviringana, 2017). Such a situation turned to be worse:

> [s]ome of the spouses insisted that the burden that comes from incarceration is unbearable, and they find it difficult to cope with it. Additionally, family roles seem to put some marriages at crossroads as they feel they cannot continue with such situations" (p. 38).

Following such a burden, Taviringana (2017) contends that a prolonged duration of incarceration eventually resulted in unfaithful relationships, such as cheating on their incarcerated spouses, and in some instances, speeded up cases of divorce and remarriage with new partners. For most of them, "secret relationships" with other men were cited as a coping mechanism. A study conducted by Siennick, Stewart, and Staff (2014) in the USA suggests similar findings. Their research "confirmed that incarcerations occurring during, but not before, a marriage was associated with an increased hazard of divorce" and that "[i]ncarcerations occurring during marriage also were associated with less marital love, more relationship violence, more economic strain, and greater odds of extramarital sex" (p.1).

Effects on children: Parental incarceration leaves severe adversities on children. Such adversities may occur at two levels. Firstly, a study by Arditti (2012) in the USA, as cited in Hardy (2014) found that parental incarceration was traumatizing and, therefore, emotionally impacting children when they witnessed a parent being arrested and handcuffed. Secondly, such a parent imprisonment on children "stem from the changes associated with parental incarceration, such as a lack of economic stability" (Hardy, 2014, p.126). Other scholars also echoed similar effects of parental incarceration on children. For instance, Morgan et al. (2021)

maintain that many children with incarcerated parents are likely to face criminal justice systems. They also tend to experience mental health challenges, trauma, anti-social behavior, poor school performance, poor physical health, profound poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, and stigma-laden interactions.

Effects on prisoners' partners: Besides the effects on marriage stability (Taviringana, 2017; Siennick, Stewart, and Staff, 2014), scholars such as Roguski & Chauvel (2009, p.52) documented other issues facing prisoners' partners in New Zealand. They include "worry, anxiety, loneliness and isolation and sacrificing one's wellbeing for the sake of other family members" and suicide [of the prisoner's partner] mainly due to anxiety and despair following inmate's long sentence (Roguski & Chauvel, 2009, p.52). Additionally, in New Zealand, like in the USA, prisoners' partners face issues such as taking over the caregiver role, undertaking regular prison visits, emotional and psychological stress, stigmatization, and financial stress (Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide, McKay, Landwehr, Kennedy, Lindquist & Bir, 2017; Roguski & Chauvel, 2009, p.52). It is worth noting that parents and other family members are also likely to face similar issues in case of parental incarceration.

2.3.2. Coping mechanisms for families with parental incarceration

While the preceding section explored some risks associated with parental incarceration, this section reviews the literature on resilience capacities for families with parental incarceration. Both Bruynson (2011), Taviringana (2017), and Morgan, Arditti, Dennison & Frederiksen (2021) examined mechanisms to which families of incarcerated parents turned to coping with the stress imposed by parental imprisonment, including support from faith-based organizations (FBOs), relatives and friends, and professional support.

First such families seek support from FBOs. There exists a plenty of literature that accounts for the role of religious organizations in assisting vulnerable people and families, in addition to their core spiritual mission (UNICEF, no date; UNFPA, 2009; UNICEF, 2012; The Faith to Action Initiative, 2014; Taviringana, 2017). Taviringana (2017) shows that Christian churches take the lead in helping affected families cope with parental incarceration adversities in Zimbabwe. The support encompasses "material *assistance such as food, clothes to their kids, money and other support[…]in supporting their partners in prisons and they labelled them a special actors they never want to part ways with as they are working with them in hard times*" (p.41).

They also seek support from relatives and friends: in most of human societies the family has traditionally been a source of support for members who are in need. There is abundant literature on the role of family support and support from social networks to families and individuals who face adversities imposed by stressors and shocks. However, the literature on friends and family members to families facing parental incarceration remains little. In the USA, Bruynson (2011) suggests that female partners of male prisoners received support from families and friends, among other sources of support. In Zimbabwe, Taviringana (2017) claims that relatives and friends to some extent, supported the families of incarcerated men. Such support was channeled through both the wives and the children. However, their support was largely not genuine; family friends ended up in secret love with the wives of their incarcerated friend. The same applies to landlords who sexually exploit women and their older daughters.

They may also seek professional support. A study conducted by Morgan, Arditti, Dennison & Frederiksen (2021) on the resilience of families with an incarcerated father in Denmark suggested that caregiver mental health support helped affected families cope with such a stressor. The study shows that "for Danish families with an incarcerated father, stronger caregiver mental health mediates the otherwise adverse effects of material hardship on youth academic adjustment" (p.13). By generalizing their research findings, the same authors argued that "The impact of caregiver mental health as a mechanism in promoting family-level resilience during PI [parental incarceration] may be even more pronounced in countries with less robust social welfare systems" (p.13). Like in Denmark, Bruynson (2011) suggests that in the USA, women partners of incarcerated men benefited support from professional helpers in legal matters and psychosocial support. Affected women reported that lawyers, counselors and medical doctors were so valuable to them in this particular respect.

In Rwanda, few studies were conducted on or involved genocide convicts and prisoners in general (Uwera Gakwaya, 2020; NURC, 2015; Hatzfeld, 2007; McDoom, 2005). They mainly explored issues such as prisoners' participation in the genocide, reintegration of ex-prisoners and prisoners' security. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a lack of research on both families of genocide convicts and families of prisoners at large in terms of effects of incarceration on families and of related coping mechanisms. The researcher therefore argues that lack of research on such families is likely to worsen their vulnerabilities and therefore

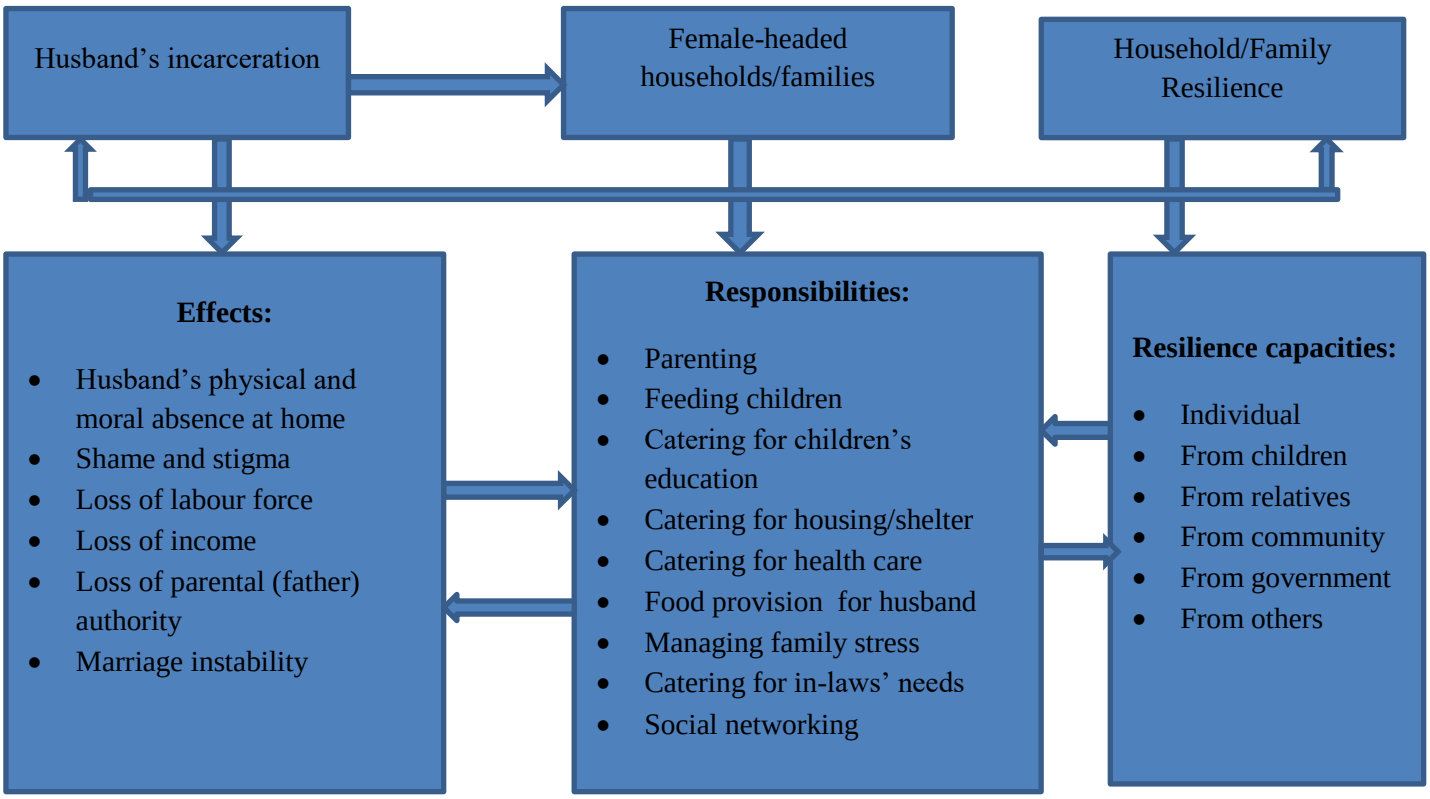
have long-term adverse effects on reintegration of prisoners after completing their sentences. This thesis therefore modestly contributes to filling this gap.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a textual or graphic presentation of how the researcher suggests going about understanding the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The actual study proposes the conceptual framework in Figure 1.

Figure 1:

Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's own design

Figure 1 depicts the interconnections between husband's incarceration with its effects, the new female household headship and associated roles, and the household resilience.

The imprisonment of husbands on charges of genocide crimes was a stressor event associated with effects on the household/family. These include husband's physical and moral absence at

home, shame and stigma, loss of labor force, loss of income, loss of parental (father) authority, marriage instability etc.

Due to those effects, the stressor event entailed change in gender roles whereby convicts' wives became new heads of households and thus took over related responsibilities. Taking such responsibilities implies endeavoring to handle the effects in question. Responsibilities involved parenting, feeding children, catering for children's education , catering for housing/shelter, catering for health care, food provision for husband, managing family stress, catering for in-laws' needs, social networking etc.

However, fulfilling those changing gender roles to address the said effects requires coping mechanisms which are hereby referred to as resilience capacities. The latter consist in mechanisms or resources that families have to coping with adversities imposed by male parental incarceration. They include spouses' individual resources and/or those from children, relatives, community, government and other actors.

In a nutshell, the link between the three variables is that the imprisonment of men (husbands) on charges of genocide related crimes has entailed the phenomenon of female-headed households or families and associated adversities. In turn, those female-headed strived to find out coping mechanisms to resist or absorb the shock/stressor which is male incarceration.

Although the study design was exploratory, this conceptual framework guided the development of data collection tools, the facilitation of discussions with participants (especially on probing questions) and the data analysis.

2.6. Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter has helped the reader understand theoretical and operational definitions of the study key terms such as resilience, households, female headship, and husband's incarceration. Further, it endeavored to help the reader get immersed with some relevant literature on the effects of male parental incarceration on families (headed by wives). By doing so, it showed that the phenomenon of male incarceration leading to female-headed households is not peculiar to Rwanda. Nevertheless, the issue of male parental imprisonment on charge of the genocide related crimes is not a common phenomenon. It only applies to societies that sadly experienced

genocides and related prosecution by relevant judicial institutions. However, male incarceration in Rwanda is particular in that the genocide in Rwanda was largely executed by neighbors rather than "foreigners" or mainly by armed forces as was the case other genocides (Holocaust, Armenian genocide, Bosnian Genocide etc.). This particularity also makes related female (household) headship peculiar due to dynamics associated with the wider environment in which the genocide took place and its aftermath. Furthermore, this chapter has explored Hill's crisis theory with a focus on how individuals and families react to stressors and what their coping trajectories look like. Last but not least, the conceptual framework that the researcher developed offers his conceptual reflection of relationships between male imprisonment on charges of genocide crimes, and family/household resilience through female headship. Resultantly, both the theoretical and empirical reviews as well as the conceptual framework have been instrumental to the research process in that they informed the design of the interview guides, the probing questions during the discussions with the participants and the data analysis and interpretation. The following chapter answers the "How" question by describing the methodology of this research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the proposed research. It encompasses the study design, approaches and methods, study population and sampling plan, data collection process, data analysis techniques, study limitations, quality assurance, and ethical considerations.

3.2.Study Design

According to Bryman (2012), "a research design relates to the criteria employed when evaluating social research. It is, therefore, a framework for generating evidence suited for a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which the investigator is interested" (p.45). Concerning the selection of a research design, Bhattacherjee (2012) observes that "Generally speaking, researchers tend to select those research designs that they are most comfortable with and feel most competent to handle, but ideally, the choice should depend on the nature of the research phenomenon being studied" (p.41). In this regard, Bryman (2012, p.46) posits that "a choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher applied an exploratory design. Vogt (1999) as cited in Stebbins (2011), defines exploration as:

> a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding of an area of social or psychological life. Such exploration is, depending on the standpoint taken, a distinctive way of conducting science—a scientific process—a special methodological approach (as contrasted with confirmation), and a pervasive personal orientation of the explorer (p.3).

While this definition makes good sense of what exploration is, it appears that the design is a monopoly on social and psychological life. In this regard, Stebbins (2011) argues that "it would not be difficult to broaden this definition to include all sciences" because "exploration does occur in physical science, for example, astronomy, mineralogy, and entomology, where it is often

conducted by amateurs who, in part, are needed because professionals alone cannot systematically cover all of outer space or the surface of the earth" (p.3).

Polonsky and Waller (2005), Cooper and Schindler (2006) as cited in Kelly (2008) contend that "exploratory research is most useful in situations where limited information is available, and the researcher wishes to have the flexibility to future explore areas of research" (p.48). Therefore, the choice of the exploratory design for the actual study is mainly motivated by the fact that the phenomenon of female-headed families of genocide convicts in Rwanda is relatively new in post-genocide scholarship.

3.3.Study /setting

This research was conducted in Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District, Eastern Province of Rwanda. The selection of this district was dictated by two primary reasons: (1) geographical proximity and (2) its peculiar history of violence and the genocide against Tutsi. Concerning the former reason, Bugesera is a rural district situated near the City of Kigali (where I dwell), and it was easy for me to drive for data collection and return home every day, thus presenting me with a logistical benefit. Regarding the latter reason, Bugesera was host to the Tutsi killed in 1994, and these had been deported from various regions such as Bufundu, Bunyambiriri, Gitarama, Ruhengeri) in the early 1960s (Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide [CNLG], n.d.a). In a similar vein, some authors view Bugesera as an area where Habyarimana's regime experimented the genocide. According to Muse (2021) "*in March 1992, state-run radio broadcasts incited militias to murder Tutsi civilians and political opponents of Habyarimana's government in Bugesera, a region just over 40 kilometers south of Kigali. This would later be referred to as the "dress rehearsal" for the Genocide*" (p.572). Currently, Bugesera district hosts two of six national memorial sites in Rwanda (National Commission for the Fight against the Genocide, n.d. b.). Given that it was a proximity genocide (Lefranc, 2015), there is a high likelihood that Bugesera hosts women whose husbands are serving a prison sentence for charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

3.4.Study population

The study population refers to "all people or items (unit of analysis) with the characteristics that one wishes to study" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.65), or "the cluster of people, events, things, or

other phenomena in which you are most interested" (Sheppard, 2020, p.154). In the actual research, the study population consists of households that are headed by women after the imprisonment of their husbands on charges of genocide crimes from Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District. Female-headed households of genocide convicts therefore constitute the unit of analysis.

3.5. Sampling strategy and sample size

Sheppard (2020) defines the term sampling as "the process of selecting observations that will be analyzed for research purposes […it] has to do with selecting some subset of one's group of interest and drawing conclusions from that subset"(p.153). Sampling involves two significant aspects: sample size and the sampling method (Omona, 2013). Unlike quantitative research, which uses statistical formulas to compute the sample size, sampling in qualitative research is entirely subjective (Curtis et al., cited in Omona, 2013, p.174). In qualitative research, the sample size is sufficient if it allows "theoretical saturation," that is, until a category is saturated with data (Strauss and Corbin, cited in Bryman (2012; p.421). In practice, research requires financial, infrastructural, and time resources (Grover 2015, p.7). Kumar (2011) emphasizes that the budget has a bearing effect on the sample size and advises researchers to balance the sample adequacy and the available financial resources (p.192).

From the above considerations, sampling was also crucial because the study population is dispersed across the Bugesera district, thus making it very difficult for the researcher to cover, given logistical and time constraints. As such, these constraints make the researcher consider a sample size of 23 participants as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Distribution of interviewees by type of interview

Methods	**Number of participants**	**Target category**
In-depth interviews	16	Wives of genocide convicts
	3	children of genocide convicts
KIIs	4	2 local leaders,1opinion leader & 1 psychotherapist
Total	**23**	

Source: Primary data, April 2022

Regarding sampling methods, I used non-probability sampling methods, which, according to Bryman (2012), is essentially an umbrella term to capture all forms of sampling that do not abide by the canons of probability sampling (p. 201). The researcher took sampling decisions at two levels: (1) selection of the study geographical sites, such as the administrative sector and cells, and (2) selection of participants). The researcher used a purposive sampling method – a calculated decision with which the researcher hopes to have access information – rich sites - at the former level and, both snowball and purposive methods at the latter level. Concerning the snowball sampling method (also known as network sampling), research participants lead the researcher to other participants who may be hard to reach (Omona, 2013, p.180). In this study, the researcher approached village leaders to help identify some participants who met the selection criteria (female-headed households whereby husbands were imprisoned on charges of genocide crimes). After being interviewed, some participants also assisted in identifying other households with similar characteristics until the expected number was reached. As far as the purposive sampling technique is concerned, it served the researcher to select key informants. In this regard, the researcher selected them based on their professional positions and their social status in the community (e.g. 2 local leaders, 1 opinion leader & 1 psychotherapist).

3.6. Research approach, data collection techniques and instruments

Creswell (2014) defines research approaches as "plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (p.31). For this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach. The nature of the research topic basically dictated the choice of the qualitative approach for this research. The insufficiency of literature on this category of Rwandan population in a post-genocide context motivated the topic choice, hence, an exploratory design. As for data collection techniques, this triangulated desk research, in-depth interviews and key informants' interviews. **Desk review** served in reviewing extant literature, including peer-reviewed articles, research reports, books on issues about the effects of parental incarceration on families and related coping mechanisms. Additionally, the researcher reviewed some legal instruments on some aspects of the research. The researcher also used **in-depth interviews** to engage wives of genocide convicts to collect their experiences of living as spouses to convicts and as heads of households in the absence of their husbands. Similarly, this technique involved offspring of genocide convicts to understand

effects of parental incarceration and existing coping mechanism. In addition, the researcher conducted **key informant interviews** (KIIs) with selected local leaders and opinion leaders. The purpose was to get "observers" views about the effects of male parental incarceration on families and existing coping mechanisms. In this regard, KIIs involved the district director in charge of social affairs (Bugesera District), a villager leader in charge of security and information, a former judge in Gacaca courts, and a psychotherapist working with Prison Fellowship Rwanda whose interventions cover Bugesera District among other districts. Furthermore, KIIs also involved three children from genocide convicts' families.

As far as research instruments are concerned, the researcher designed interview guides (see Annex 1) and used them to collect primary data through in-depth interviews and key informant's interviews techniques. It is worth mentioning that in order to record interview data, the researcher hired a note-taker, who used block notes to capture major ideas from the discussions and thanks to which, with the support of the researcher, she drafted daily interview reports. In a similar vein, the team used a voice recorder after getting informed consent from research participants.

It is important to note that the fieldwork was marked by a couple of moments/events that kept the researcher attention and that are hence worth highlighting. These include an intended interference of a village official and confusing the researcher with decision-makers (among some participants).

- **Unintended interference of a village official**

One morning, to start interviews, the researcher turned to a member of the village committee to help identify a couple of households of genocide convicts. Once arrived next to an eligible household, the village official hastened to enter the compound to check if the head of the household (convict's wife) was around for an interview. It happened that the lady in question had left for a while but her neighbour saw the village leader and the team (researcher and note-taker) that were still in the car. The official took the team to the next eligible household for an interview and eventually left. Once done with the interview, the team went back to the previous household and met the head of the household who had just arrived back. The latter warily welcomed the team and angrily asked them "why have you earlier come here with the village

official? How do you know him? Is he your acquaintance? […]". The researcher introduced the team and clarified that he had approached the said village official to identify an eligible household to start with. The host stated that she would not accept to participate because the leader was not trustworthy to her. The researcher apologized for any inconvenience that this may have caused and clarified that the team had no prior ties with the village official. He kindly urged the lady to voluntarily participate.

After a short moment of discussion, she eventually accepted. A further investigation revealed that the village official was both a demobilized soldier (from Rwandese Patriotic Army) and a genocide survivor, while that lady's husband was involved a genocide-related case which was in connection with the village official's family. From this incident, the researcher learned that household' visits with the presence of a local leader was not appropriate. Since that day, interviewed participants played a big role in identifying other eligible households. In few instances where village leaders' intervention was deemed necessary, efforts were made to avoid these officials' interference (be it intended or not) the research process, especially the one associated with accompanying the research team in identified households. It is worth noting that the researcher did not notice any intended (negative) interference of local leaders. On contrary, the local government leaders have been supportive throughout the fieldwork.

- **Confusing the researcher with decision-makers**

  Although the researcher consistently introduced his team and provided relevant information to the research participants, some of them tended to consider the former as a decision-maker and sometimes as a donor. At times participants would therefore request the researcher to take measures aimed to solve their problems. Other participants would urge the researcher to leave them with money to use in handling their immediate livelihood issues. This underscores the challenge of conducting research in socioeconomically vulnerable communities or groups. As a feedback to such participants' expectations, the researcher clarified that he was neither a decision-maker nor a donor. He highlighted that their plight would be reflected through the research report and subsequent research papers such as articles in scientific journals with hope that decision-makers would read these papers.

3.7.Data analysis procedures

Data analysis operation was done manually through the thematic analysis method (TA). Braun and Clarke (2012) define this method as "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set (p.57). TA was appropriate for this research because "the main point is that thematic analysis is a common approach to analyzing documents (and indeed interview transcripts) and that it can be applied in relation to different kinds of orientation to qualitative data" (Bryman 2012, p. 558).

As far as the actual research is concerned, after the data collection, the researcher hired two hired clerks who transcribed all interview audios in word format. Thereafter, the researcher perused all interview transcripts and embarked on data analysis. In this endeavor, he inductively constructed themes and sub-themes based on progressive discussions (in-depth interviews and KIIs), daily debriefing sessions, and eventually on interviews transcripts. The perusal exercise was repeated two times and allowed the researcher to not only better grasp the overall interviews outcomes but also map similarities, dissimilarities, and peculiarities from the participants' narratives. This process paved the way for the research report drafting. While the researcher did not face any particular challenge, the fact that the researcher did not use any qualitative data analysis software (due to logistical reasons such as time and affordability issues) may have made the data analysis not optimal. Nevertheless, this limitation did not much affect the quality of the data analysis outcome.

3.8. Position of the researcher

Berger (2015) posits that "because reflexivity is a major strategy for quality control in qualitative research, understanding how it may be impacted by the characteristics and experiences of the researcher is of paramount importance" (p.221). Such characteristics may involve demographic features such as gender, age, race, immigration status, sexual orientation, personal experiences, and cultural, religious, political and professional beliefs (Berger (2015).

As far as the actual research is concerned, there is a connection between the researcher's educational and professional background and his interest in conducting this study. As a matter of fact, the researcher previously trained in development sociology and has over fifteen years working experience in the field of peacebuilding research and human rights. He has been

involved in several participatory action research and community dialogue projects that shaped his encounters with community members from diverse socio-historical backgrounds including genocide survivors, wives and children of genocide convicts, among many others. Furthermore, between 2018 and 2019, the researcher was part of a regional research team that conducted a study on capacities of resilience for reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region with a focus on Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Furthermore, as a student in the master's degree program at the Center for Gender Studies (University of Rwanda), he took several modules including that of *Gender and Transitional Justice.* The latter module explored different themes including the one on how gender specific issues associated with the conflicts, are addressed by transitional justice mechanisms. This module therefore sparked the researcher's interest in exploring some issues that had emerged from his past engagement with community members, especially the wives of genocide convicts, their children and their families at large. Nevertheless, the researcher has no direct connection or relationship with the study population. This therefore excludes any bias that would be linked to the researcher being at the same time part of the study subjects.

3.9. Validity and Reliability

In social science research, both validity and reliability are core criteria for quality control. Concerning the former concept, Bryman (2012) advances that it "validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (p.47). Validity is assessed from both internal and external perspectives. According to Bryman (2012) internal validity "is concerned with the question of whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water" (p.47), while external validity "is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context" (p.47).

As far as reliability is concerned, Bryman (2012) maintains that it "*is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable* (p.46).

However, there is large agreement among social scientists that both criteria fit best quantitative research (Bryman, 2012), However, some scholars such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) as cited in Bryman (2012) highlight the necessity to specify assessment

criteria for qualitative research. To this end they proposed two core criteria namely trustworthiness and authenticity. Guba as cited in Shenton (2004) maintains that trustworthiness is concerned with credibility (in preference to internal validity), transferability (in preference to external validity/ generalizability), dependability (in preference to reliability), and confirmability (in preference to objectivity) (p.64).

In the actual study, the researcher took the following measures to ensure trustworthiness:

Close supervision by appointed supervisor: Throughout the research process, the researcher's supervisor, appointed by the Centre for Gender Studies, reviewed and guided the research proposal, literature review, methodology and data collection tools, data analysis plan, and draft report. All chapters of this report provided relevant guidance throughout. His reviews and guidance were instrumental in assuring quality assurance from the design to report drafting.

Data triangulation: Triangulation refers to using multiple (at least more than one) data collection methods and from multiple data sources to investigate a research problem (Bryman, 2012). To this end, the researcher used various methods, including desk review, in-depth interviews and KIIs. Similarly, the study relied on different data sources as described in the methods sub-section.

Use of a voice-recorder: The researcher was aware that the use of voice recorders may be problematic in some instances. Some participants may be frightened by recording their voices and therefore question the study purpose. On the other hand, it may be challenging to collect qualitative data based solely on notes. To balance these two challenges, the researcher considered using voice-recorder with participants who freely consented. The researcher addressed every concern related to recording.

Defense of the research report: Last but not least, the General Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Studies of the University of Rwanda provide for an oral defense of the dissertation. The defense therefore constituted another avenue for quality assurance.

3.10. Ethical considerations

To be consistent with ethical standards, the researcher took the following measures:

Seeking permissions: Prior to data collection, the researcher successively secured a research recommendation letter from the Centre for Gender Studies[5] and a permission letter from the Mayor of Bugesera District. The latter granted the permission and facilitated the researcher to access lower administrative entities in which research participants were to be selected.

Do – no – harm: For the sake of effectively handling potential emotional cases that might arise during the discussions with participants, a female co-facilitator (also note-taker) with basic counseling skills supported not only in taking notes but was also ready to help the researcher in referring any critical psychological case to a nearby relevant facility (in Nyamata Town)[6] if need be. Fortunately, no critical case requiring such a referral occurred during interviews.

Informed consent: Prior to commencing the discussion with each participant, the researcher sought informed consent from each of them. Participants were briefed on the identity of the research team (names and positions of facilitator and co-facilitator), the objective of the study, participants' selection criteria, and the purpose of data collection the data. Given the sensitivity of the study with wives of genocide convicts and their adult children, informed consent was verbal rather than written. The choice of verbal consent was motivated by the researcher's previous experience whereby some participants refused to sign the consent form in some sensitive studies, arguing that doing so made the exercise look like more a police investigation process than a research one.

Confidentiality: In research, confidentiality is not about keeping research data or information secret. It is not about hiding information. As Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles (2006) put it, "What researchers can do is to ensure they do not disclose identifiable information about participants and to try to protect the identity of research participants through various processes designed to anonymize them" (p.1). In the actual study, the researcher granted confidentiality to all participants, including key informants who sought it.

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[6] The senior psychotherapist referred to under section 3.6. is a professional psychotherapist and would have provided relevant assistance had there been a critical case.

3.11. Study Limitations

This study faced two major limitations: the lack of husbands' perspectives and the very qualitative approach that makes study findings not generalizable. First, the researcher did not collect convicts' perspectives because they were still serving the sentence, or those who completed the sentence were not available to participate. Secondly, the exploratory nature of the study has some bearing; the study covered only Nyamata Sector from Bugesera District, and the sampling nature does not allow extrapolation of findings to other settings, because the sample is not representative. Nevertheless, these limitations do not compromise the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.12. Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter described the methodology that the researcher applied to carry out the actual study. It provided the reader with relevant information mainly about the study design, the sampling plan, the data collection techniques and instruments, the data analysis method and the interpretation of the study as well as measures taken for the sake of quality assurance and ethical considerations. Such information is therefore useful as it helps the reader assess the quality of this research. This is an important research milestone, the absence of which can question the relevance and validity of the findings. The next chapter presents and analyses the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1.Introduction

The preceding chapter describes the methodology that the researcher used to conduct this study. The current chapter presents and analyses the research data and interprets its findings. It comprises four sections. The first one describes the participants' profiles (socio-demographics). The second section examines the effects of male parental incarceration on their families, while the third focuses on available resilience capacities for wives, children, and the households at large as far as coping with the stressors (parental incarceration) is concerned. Finally, section four assesses persisting and emerging challenges associated with male parent incarceration and its effects on families.

4.2. Participants' socio-demographics

This section briefly describes the profile of research participants who consist of genocide convicts' wives, older children, and resource persons. Table 1 depicts their demographics.

Table 2

Participants' socio-demographics

	genocide convicts' wives							
	Age	**Education level**	**House hold size**	**Year of marriage**	**Year of husband's incarceration**	**Sentence length (years)**	**Incarceration status**	**Cell**
	70	P3	2	54	1995	30	Died	Kanazi
	65	P 5	7	46	2007	19	Ongoing	Kanazi
	67	P3	4	41	1997/2006	Life imprisonment	Ongoing	Kanazi
	58	P5	5	38	1997	Life imprisonment	Ongoing	Kanazi
	66	S3	5	46	1997/2005	Life imprisonment	Ongoing	Murama
	65	P3	4	45	2007	17	Ongoing	Murama
	67	P5	7	49	2007	30	Ongoing	Murama
	71	P3	5	DK	1995	Life imprisonment	Ongoing	Murama
	67	None	2	30	2007	15	Ongoing	Murama
	66	None	2	17	2006	30	Ongoing	Murama
	42	P3	3	27	1995	30	Ongoing	Murama
	44	P4	4	26	2006	22	Ongoing	Murama
	47	S5	5	28	2008	12	Completed	Maranyundo
	52	P8	5	28	1997/2007	30	Ongoing	Maranyundo
	55	None	6	26	1997/2007	Life imprisonment	Ongoing	Maranyundo
	75	P1	3	58	1997	30	Ongoing	Maranyundo
Convicts' children								
	Age	sex	Education level	Marital status				
	22	F	P5	Single mother of 1			Maranyundo	
	29	F	P6	Single mother of 3			Murama	
	32	M	P6	Married			Murama	
Key informants								
	Sex	Position			Organisation			
	M	In charge of security and information			Kivugiza Village Committee, Murama Cell			
	F	Former Gacaca judge			Nyamata Sector			
	F	Senior psychotherapist			Prison Fellowship Rwanda			
	M	Director of Social Affairs			Bugesera District			

Source: Primary data, April 2022

The majority of sampled wives of genocide convicts are pretty old (over 60 years). The youngest is aged 42 while the oldest is 75. They are almost uneducated as only 2 (out of 16) have completed primary education (grade 6). None of the latter successfully attained as high as grade 12. Most of them were married, at least during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Concerning the time of husbands' incarceration, the majority got first detained in 1997 and eventually released by the 2003 presidential decree, along with around other 40,000 prisoners. However, gacaca courts reconvicted most of them since 2006. Others were incarcerated for the first time in 2006, 2007, and 2008. The majority of husbands were sentenced to at least 30 years imprisonment, 5 of whom (out of 16) are serving life imprisonment. Of all convicts from sampled families, only one has completed his sentence, while one died in prison. In other words, most of them were still serving their sentences by the time of data collection. Regarding participants' residence cells, half of them come from Murama Cell, while another half are equally distributed from Kanazi and Maranyundo Cells.

As far as the offspring of genocide convicts are concerned, three older children (over 18 years old) were purposively selected, two of whom are daughters and one son. Both daughters are single mothers of 1 and single mothers of three, respectively, while the son is married. Concerning key informants, two of them are community members, one of whom is a male genocide survivor and a member of the village committee. Another one is a female genocide survivor and former gacaca judge. The other two are the director of social affairs in Bugesera District and the senior psychotherapist for Prison Fellowship Rwanda, respectively.

4.3.Effects of male parents 'incarceration on families

This section explores consequences of male parental incarceration on families. It examines them at five levels: effects on convicts' spouses (wives), on marriage, on children, on households and on relationships.

4.3.1. Effects on convicts' wives

The study reveals two main consequences of husbands' incarceration on their spouses which include psychological effects and sudden taking of all household responsibilities.

4.3.1.1.Psychosocial effects

It emerged from interviews that male parental incarceration caused severe emotional stress among spouses (wives). To substantiate their emotional stress, interviewed wives reported having had cases of insomnia, prolonged anger, anxiety, indulging in alcoholism, fear and avoidance of meeting/passing genocide survivors.

> His imprisonment gave me the hardest time ever. I got so anxious and spent several sleepless nights. I was worried about my future and that of the two baby twin daughters he left me with. I wondered whether I would stay home or not. My mother had also died during the war. I was in total confusion; I could not figure out what to do. Before my husband's conviction, I used to take him as my god; I always felt safe when I was with him. Then I started thinking of my fate should people attack me at night. I also thought of such a long period of 30 years imprisonment and wondered whether he would serve them and find me still alive. It was an unbearable situation. It is hard to describe it (participant # 10).

For most of the wives, such stress was a result of three significant concerns; (1) the fear of being confronted alone with family responsibilities, (2) the severity of the crime and subsequent sentence and (3) the shame associated with the crime in the eyes of community members and genocide survivors at large. Similarly, emotional stress -for some participants, at least the few who already were aware and immediately accepted their husbands' role in the genocide- resulted from the feeling of betrayal by their husbands who committed such an abominable crime. However, some women kept denying or doubting their husbands' role were emotionally shocked mostly by the feeling that their spouses had been falsely accused and convicted over such grave crimes.

> As her wife, I got so anxious. It was a shock to me. My anxiety stemmed mainly from the fact that I knew that he was going to be unfairly imprisoned. I thought about how he refrained from joining the killings; he did not bring anything at home, and I wondered how false accusations could eventually lead to his conviction [...] (Participant # 3).

In any case, such male incarceration entailed a sudden change in a family structure in a post-genocide context that left spouses in unprecedented uncertainty and anxiety and eventually constituted a source of severe emotional/psychological stress.

4.3.1.2.Sudden taking of all household responsibilities

Male parental incarceration left profound gaps in affected families. Following the verdicts that involved a prolonged or permanent absence of incarcerated husbands, their spouses as the remaining parents had no choice but to strive to take up alone all parental responsibilities for their families. It means adding husbands' responsibilities on their own as mothers. It implied playing a single parenting role, striving to bridge lost income, ensuring household safety, to name a few. This situation occurred in a general context of poverty in the country and in high levels of mistrust among community members. This did not make it easy for these wives to take up household headship alone in a patriarchal society, as was also the case for genocide widows (although I do not intend to compare the two categories of women).

- **Single parenting issues**

Parenting in a context of female household headship is challenging, especially in a social setting where women empowerment is not achieved and where poverty still prevails. This is the real context in which most participants lived in the aftermath of the genocide against Tutsi. Parenting involves disciplining children and inculcating moral values in them and providing for their basic needs, among others. It was therefore found that parenting in the absence of husbands gave those wives an arduous task for three main reasons:

Firstly, right after husbands' incarceration, their spouses (wives) were emotionally stressed (as discussed above), anxious, and alcoholic (for some). This context was, therefore, not conducive to effective parenting.

Secondly, incarcerated husbands' spouses spent much of their time struggling for family livelihoods through casual work in agriculture, cultivating their pieces of land, and walking long distances to visit their husbands in prison. In most cases, those single mothers (yet married) neither had enough time nor were they in a relevant psychological mood to concentrate on appropriate parenting.

Thirdly, due to mothers' incapacity to get and provide basic human needs for their children, some children, both males, and females, questioned their mothers' authority and eventually turned into wandering and delinquency.

Lastly, some women lapsed into behaviors that challenged their parenting role in the early years following husbands' conviction. Due to emotional stress and shortage of livelihoods, some women went alcoholics while others indulged in extra-marital relationships, some of which eventually resulted in pregnancies and babies (this issue is discussed in section 4.3.3.). In such a context, affected mothers may not have had sufficient moral authority to discipline their children effectively. As a Rwandan proverb goes "*uwiba ahetse aba abwiriza uwo mu mugongo*" (literally to suggest that he/she who steals in the presence of his/her children, he/she implicitly teaches them to do so).

4.3.2. Effects on marriage

In married couples, a prolonged parental absence from their homes can hardly go without any consequences on marriage. This research shows that male parental incarceration adversely impacted their marriages. Most of the participants concurred with this reality. Such an impact is mainly tied to (1) long-term or life imprisonment sentence, (2) the fact that genocide crime is abominable and therefore unbearable in the eyes of marital partners (at least for those who do not deny or doubt their husbands' responsibility), (3) affected conjugal duties including sexual intercourses, and (4) alleged or actual wives' infidelity and children born out of wedlock.

4.3.2.1.Long-term or life imprisonment sentence versus marriage stability

This study reveals that the minimum sentence among the participants' husbands is 12 years, while the maximum one is life imprisonment (see Table 2). Life imprisonment is implying the end of living together as spouses for affected families. In some women's eyes, such a sentence is simply an implicit divorce. It also holds true for old men (say those aged 50 and above by incarceration) who got over 25 years of imprisonment sentence. Considering the life expectancy of the Rwandan population (67.9 years)[7], one can argue that some prisoners in the latter category would like to see the lives ending in prison. Like for life imprisonment sentence, it is evident that

[7] https://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/life-expectancy-birth, accessed [22 March 2022]

long-term imprisonment for older prisoners would equally mean implicit divorce. In this regard, it was found that by the time of data collection [which occurred after the release of government re-authorization of visits to prisoners that had been suspended following the measures to curb the spread of Covid-19), there was more or less high excitement to visit their husbands among wives whose husbands are serving shorter sentences than those of prisoners who got long-term imprisonment sentence and life imprisonment. A countrywide study would better test the validity of this conclusion.

4.3.2.2.Issues linked to conjugal rights and duties

The Rwandan Law nº32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family states four significant obligations and rights and duties arising from the marriage. They include the obligation to cater to and educate children (art. 203) and alimony obligations between spouses (art.204). Concerning rights and duties of spouses, these consist of equality of spouses (art. 206), the duty of cohabitation (art.207), the right to the patrimony of the spouses (art.208), the joint management of the household (art.209) including the joint spouses' contribution to the household expenses under his/her capacity and means (art. 210).

Because of male parental incarceration, marriage stability is therefore affected because only wives remain subject to nearly all these obligations, rights, and duties. This research reveals the feeling among some convicts' wives that their husbands committed crimes that resulted in long-term or life imprisonment and therefore left all marital duties and obligations on the shoulders of former (wives). This goes beyond obligations towards the children, spouse mutual alimony obligation, management of the house to embrace that of sexual duties/rights. As far as the latter duty is concerned, some women highlighted that they faced a severe issue of marital sexual intercourses given that their husbands were in jail. Some of them suggested that they kept painfully striving to observe fidelity in a context of a highly active temptation mainly escaladed by socioeconomic vulnerability. However, few of them openly confessed that they did not pass that test because sexual intercourse is a biological need and that the burden of taking all household responsibilities eventually jeopardized the duty of conjugal faithfulness.

4.3.2.3.Wives' infidelity and children born out of wedlock

In the preceding paragraphs, the researcher alludes to reports of extra-marital sexual relationships involving convicts' wives. While some women claimed that there have been allegations/rumors of infidelity that sometimes are spread by in-laws to the convicts, others did not fully deny the occurrence of extra-marital sexual relations. In few cases, the latter encounters ended up in pregnancies and, later, in new babies. In both cases, marriage status has not remained intact, which had already been adversely affected by husbands' conviction. Participants advanced that even in case of merely unfounded rumors of infidelity, such allegations eventually got in the way of both spouses relationships and communication as in the following narratives.

> Following my husband's conviction, life became very tough. My children and I were in constant starvation.[…], then the guy promised me to support me. Sometimes he would give me FRW 1,000 or 2,000. We have been in close relationship that eventually resulted in pregnancy and this baby out of wedlock. I had reached a point where I had no alternative (Participant # 12).

> Some convicts' wives behave well and focus on working seriously for their households. However, some others behave as sex workers. There are such cases in this community. Of recent, a genocide convict was released [after serving his sentence]. His wife who had sexually misconducted eventually left her home and went to cohabitate with a man they had been in intimate relationship for a while. There are many convicts' wives who got children out of wedlock and live with them in their homes (Key informant #21)

4.3.3. Effects on children

This section explores the consequences of male parental incarceration on children. It focuses on psychological effects, children's early involvement in labor/work, poor school performance and dropout, and early and unintended pregnancies. For this study, the term child refers rather to offspring and therefore goes beyond the legal definition. Art. 3, paragraph 10 of law n°54/2011 of 14/12/2011 relating to the rights and the protection of the child defines as a child as "[a]ny person under the age of eighteen (18) years".

4.3.3.1.Psychosocial effects

The presence of parents in a family means a lot in terms of psychological safety, livelihood and socialization. The long-term or permanent absence of either or both parents- whatsoever may be the reason- cannot go unnoticed for children. It emerges from this research that male parental incarceration negatively impacted children's lives. Both parental absence and the reason for incarceration shaped the psychological burden on children.

- **Striving to figure out why daddy is no longer at home**

The study shows that by the time of fathers' conviction, some children were old enough to see what was going on, while others were too young to do so. Some other children were still in their mothers' wombs. The former children witnessed their fathers' arrest and incarceration, and some were aware of their parents' role in the genocide. However, some of them were not aware of the said role. Therefore, their fathers' incarceration came as a surprise and shock, which were magnified by the crime they were accused of or convicted for and the length of their sentences.

Concerning children who were too young to understand what had happened and those who were conceived but not yet born, it took them time to figure out why their fathers were not or no longer at home. As they grew up, they kept wondering why they were in single parent families. Discussions with both mothers and a few children showed that some mothers used to take their younger children with them to visit their fathers in jail. These mothers were courageous enough and wanted to have their children have an answer to their persisting question about "why don't we have a father like some other fellow kids in the vicinity?"

Nevertheless, some mothers who were ashamed and frustrated by the husbands' role in the genocide and were still striving to live with it were reluctant to reveal the reality to their children. However, when these children grew up they knew the reality through their peers, neighbors, or, their mothers - after realizing that their children got information. In some cases, mothers had no choice but to tell their children the truth because they also needed the latter to support them by visiting convicts and bringing them food and other needed items.

On the other hand, mothers who believed that their husbands were falsely prosecuted and convicted, tended to share this narrative with their children. In some cases they would advance that their neighbors made false statements that eventually led to their fathers' imprisonment.

In both cases, interviewed children suggested that they asked their fathers about the reasons for incarceration on the occasion of prison visits. Both children and mothers concurred that, in most cases, incarcerated fathers denied their responsibility in the genocide.

This denial increases confusion in children's search for the truth and is likely to fuel enmity between them and their neighbors. While some cases of false statements and corruption were actually reported in Gacaca courts, from both accusation and defense sides (National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions as cited in Penal Reform International, 2008; Penal Reform International, 2010; Brehm, Uggen & Gasanabo, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2011; Redress, 2012), the prevailing denial of responsibility in the genocide does not disqualify the merits and achievements of this home-grown judicial system (Clark as cited in de Brouwer & Ruvebana, 2013). Instead, it may challenge effectiveness of ex-prisoners' reintegration in their communities. Such a denial is likely to impact negatively not only relationships between ex-prisoners and genocide survivors but also with witnesses during Gacaca proceedings.

In any case, children of parents who were/are convicted on charge of genocide crimes went through critical moments of confusion as they strived to search for the truth about their father's whereabouts.

- **Psychological stress**

Like their mothers, children of genocide convicts have experienced critical psychological stress following imprisonment. Such stress is caused mainly by the prolonged absence of their fathers and related safety issues, the gravity of the crimes they were convicted for, the shame entailed by the same crimes, the stigmatization that children are subject to as children of genocide convicts, and the loss of hope in the future (for some children).

> I suffered so much from his conviction [father]. My school mates bullied me, they stigmatized me. They used to call me a killer's daughter, insisting that my father was in prison on charges of genocide crimes. Sometimes, they would surround me

> in the school yard and shout to me "Look at the daughter of a genocidaire". I was highly traumatized. I felt very ashamed and anxious. In the mornings I used to wonder whether or not I would go to school again. When I remembered how my school mates bullied me the previous days, I was sure they were going to carry on. I eventually dropped out of school in grade 5 to avoid that (Participant # 17, a convict's daughter).

According to interviewed children, psychological stress manifests mainly through frequent anger, insomnia, anxiety, suicide thoughts, and self-stigmatization. As living conditions got worsened, such stress went worse. For girls who got early and unintended pregnancies, psychological stress got equally much worse due to issues associated with taking care of their children.

> Life became so tough for us after his imprisonment [my father] [….]. I lived with my mum and my older siblings […] It was not enough to meet our basic needs. It was a real struggle […] I eventually got pregnant and the father of my son refused to recognize him and did not help me in any way. Life started getting meaningless to me and I resolved to end it. I bought a product to commit suicide. But my close girlfriend warned me of its effects, and then I changed my decision (Participant # 18, a convict's daughter).

Children in such situations live with unhealed wounds that call for relevant mitigating actions. One can argue that without effective psychosocial support and socioeconomic interventions, affected children are likely to transmit their wounds to their sons and daughters and the latter children might inherit mothers' socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Scholars argue that social disadvantages are inherited across generations (d'Addio, 2007; Vauhkonen, Kallio, Kauppinen, Erola, 2017). Existing government and stakeholders' interventions in social protection and socioeconomic development should pay greater attention to these children and their families at large.

4.3.3.2.Early involvement in the labor force

The Rwandan labor law places the minimum age for admission to employment at sixteen years (art. 5. Para.1). Nonetheless, the law moderates that "a child aged between thirteen (13) and

fifteen (15) years is allowed to perform only light works in the context of apprenticeship" (art.5. para.2). However, this research suggests that following parental incarceration, some children, then below 17 years, either dropped or often skipped schooling as they had to support their mothers and siblings to get subsistence means. While some would work in their family farms alongside their mothers, others would cultivate in neighbors' farms or be involved in other casual work (fetching water, construction sites) against modest remuneration.

> The next was that children dropped out of school because we were faced with starvation as you understand. I and the children started going through forests to collect fire wood for sale. That was our new job. Once we gathered three good bundles of firewood, i.e. mine and those for my two children, other two having stayed at home, we would head to the market. By chance, I could sell for FRW 200 that I would pay for little maize flour for daily survival. Sometimes, there could be more suppliers [of fire wood] than buyers, which would be a tough day for us (Participant# 14) .

It is worth highlighting that this type work is by law and ethically meant for adult people and proves to be too hard for children, which may have had health implications. Additionally, early involvement in adult work resulted in poor school performance and eventually dropout (this is further explored in the following section).

4.3.3.3.Poor school performance and dropout

> Before my father's incarceration, my dream was to attain the highest level of education and become a great person, say a medical doctor, but after that, I dropped schooling and, now my dream is lost forever, (Tearfully disclosed a young single mother, aged 22).

The above statement comes from a daughter of a convicted parent but reflects the reality of many children with similar family background. Discussions with all participants concurred on adversities associated with parental incarceration of children. Most of the sampled families have no child who attended secondary school, and many of them did not even complete primary

education. In other words, just a handful of the total sampled families have at least a child who attended secondary school but none of them successfully completed it.

In their vicinity, some obviously many children either did not perform well in school or eventually dropped out. Many factors may explain this situation - including those from two-parent families.

However, participants in this research made a clear causal connection between parental incarceration and poor school performance/dropout. Psychological stress, starvation, stigmatization, early involvement in adult work, and early pregnancies, all tied largely to fathers' imprisonment, are among other factors that contributed to reducing children's concentration in school and eventually led most of them to drop out.

Obviously, most of these young people from families with genocide convicts have a minimal level of education and thus very limited opportunities to make a living and contribute substantively to ongoing efforts of the country's socio-economic development. It calls for government and stakeholders' increased efforts to equip these young people and their families with relevant technical skills and opportunities to make a living.

4.3.3.4.Early and unintended pregnancies

Early or unintended pregnancies are one of the core features of families covered by this research. Nevertheless, this has never been a criterion for selecting these families. The study found out that there has been at least a case of early or unintended pregnancies among young girls in most the families sampled for this study since parental incarceration occurred. In some families, all young girls got pregnant before some of them eventually got married. Similarly, some young girls have got more than one baby from unintended pregnancies.

> My husband has been in prison since 1997. Family life went worse. I and children entered a dark era. […] But we kept praying. As a Christian, I thought religious practice would help disciplining my children, especially my daughters. Later on, I was surprised and shocked to learn that one of my daughters got pregnant, yet she was still in grade 5. It was unbelievable […].Then she got her baby here […]. Sometime later, it was another shock to notice that she got a

> second pregnancy […]. This was a result of not only the shortage of livelihoods but also a fact of mother parenting. Had my husband been around, maybe it would not have happened (participant #4).
>
> Since my husband's imprisonment, our household living conditions turned significantly worse[…] Even our last born [daughter] started performing poorly in school, and later on she dropped out after completing grade 6. I think she has psychological severe stress. Shortly after, she got pregnant […] as of now she has three children here at home. Each child has a different father [...] (Participant #5).

While this issue prevails most in Eastern Province (Hakizimana, 2022; Gasana Sebasaza, 2019),, where Bugesera District is located participants found vulnerabilities associated with parental incarceration that contributed to this shaping this social phenomenon. They are summarized in 4 points including (1) reduced parental authority; (2) unmet basic human needs (shortage of livelihoods that) and those that are specific to girls and women (cosmetics, hygienic pads, clothes); (3) empty promises for marriage by better-off boys/men (leading sexual advances); (4) limited awareness and decision-making about sexuality and reproductive health (resulting mainly from a low level of education). This finding concurs with a recent study conducted on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and the associated contextual correlations in Rwanda (Uwizeye, Muhayiteto, Kantarama, Wiehler, Murangwa, 2020). These authors reported that "teen girls who stay with their parents are less likely to get pregnant than those whose parents are divorced or separated (p.6). They also concluded that "[social and economic support to teen girls which include parental supervision, guidance, and financial care are essential aspects to consider in order to reduce teenage pregnancy rates" (p.6).

The problem of early and unintended pregnancies stands as a development issue, especially in the developing world. Beyond the stigma that affected girls are subject to, particularly in Rwandan society, such pregnancies have negative repercussions on girls' schooling, health, economic development (Brown & Eisenberg, 1995).

4.2.3.4.Children's wandering and early marriage

It was earlier argued that following parental conviction, convicts' families faced adversities including loss of capacities to meet basic human needs (e.g. food), poor school performance and

dropouts, single parenting, and challenged parental authority. The study shows that due to these issues, some children lacked both psychological and material safety and eventually left their homes. These children became wanderers and rarely returned home, while others were involved in early marriage.

> Due to lack of livelihoods, they [our two sons] left home and I cannot tell exactly where they are for now […] Maybe they went to serve as houseboys in Kigali, I cannot really tell] (Participant # 12).

> They are like wanderers, and as I become physically weak, they despise me; whenever I give them a task to perform they refuse. Everyone does whatever he/she wants […] due to the hardship of life, the second son is is eventually involved in early marriage [cohabitation]. He was 17 years old. He is now a father of three […]. Similarly, my daughter left home. I heard she had gone to Kigali to serve as a house girl. After some time, she got pregnant and came back home. Now she and her son live here with me (Participant #14).

Similar problems were reported in families that experienced parental convictions in Zimbabwe. As Tivingirana (2017) put it " In trying to cope with parental loss and the social and economic difficulties that come as a result of incarceration, children end up behaving unexpectedly and not surprisingly absolute change in their behavior. The change in behavior comes from a a lack of role model in the family that shapes children's behavior (p. 46).

One can argue that if adequate measures are not taken to help offspring of genocide convicts improve their living standards, they are likely also to have children (second generation) who will inherit their misery. Similarly, due to harsh living conditions, some of these children risk indulging in delinquency/crime and thus getting convicted like their fathers' or grandfathers. This argument is backed by other scholars such as Hardy (2018), Bruynson (2011). In a similar vein, in his study, Tivingirana (2017) found that "the female majority lamented challenges they face with male children that range from stealing of family resources, bullying and other forms of misbehavior" (p.46).

4.3.4. Effects on households

Besides the effects on mothers and children as individuals, the incarceration of male genocide convicts has severe consequences on their households. The study comes up with several issues that faced convicts' families. These include loss of income and subsequent effects on livelihoods, the challenge associated with visiting parent convicts, the burden of paying for looted properties, and relational issues.

4.3.4.1.Loss of income

This research shows that convicts' families faced income loss following their husbands' incarceration. Prior to imprisonment, some wives were mainly involved in reproductive and farming activities, some men ran small and medium-sized businesses, and few were in the public sector (e.g. in the army). Other men used to work simultaneously in agriculture and casual work (e.g. manpower on construction sites). Husbands' incarceration has deeply impacted their families in terms of income as the primary breadwinner was no longer active. Their wives maintained that their families experienced a loss of both labor force and brains (thinkers).

> He [my husband] was a businessman. He had a business here and another one in Nyamata [then a business center]. He was the main thinker of the family [….] His conviction put an end to the businesses. Now I think alone for the family, yet I am getting old, and I have a physical disability. I cannot walk beyond this compound. You understand what I mean in terms of the impact of his incarceration […] (Participant #8)

It also emerges from this research that the loss of income brought about other shocks that severely hit households. These include issues associated with affording human basic needs, the burden of visiting incarcerated parents, and paying for looted properties, as discussed in the following sections.

4.3.4.2.Issues associated with affording basic human needs

Meeting basic human needs depends largely on household income. Nevertheless, the preceding section suggests that male parental incarceration entailed a profound loss of income. In the early years following the said waves of imprisonment, many convicts' households went through

critical moments associated with getting quality and sufficient food, health care, affording school fees and related materials, dressing and housing. Some participants recalled instances of time they hardly found at least a meal daily, striving to find annual contribution to community health insurance (*mutuelle de santé*). They narrated how their children focused on joining mothers' efforts to find foodstuffs for subsistence and eventually dropped out of school. Others simply dropped out due to failure to get school fees and related materials.

Furthermore, the majority of convicts' families lived in poorly constructed houses or grass-thatched houses ("*nyakatsi*") that went degrading and seeped over time to an unbearable extent. However, many of them could not afford to renovate them or build better houses. Some other families, especially those that were formed during the genocide or shortly after, did not have own houses by the time of their husbands' incarceration. They used to live in rented houses. These families experienced more challenging problems affording the rent given that their primary source of income was no longer active.

> By the time of my husband's conviction [second imprisonment in 2007], we did not have our own house. In addition, there was not any foodstuff at home. I got completely anxious and confused. Then the landlord gave me a 15-day notice to give him the house. He argued that my husband used to pay his regularly and that even when he was unable to pay he would work for him in return for the rent. Therefore, he questioned my capacity to afford the rent in the absence of my husband. Subsequently, I went to find another rent elsewhere. Four months later the new landlord also sacked me. Given that we owned a small forest, I took a machete and cut down a few timbers, those for wall erection and roof structure. My children and I carried the timbers to my parents' piece of land and then asked someone to help us build a small grass-thatched house (participant #14).

Obviously, the loss of income and subsequent socioeconomic shocks has been so adverse for some family members- especially children- that their initial life trajectory got radically overturned. As earlier discussed, most of children at school age and those who were so young by the time of parental incarceration hardly completed grade 6. In 2003, the Government of Rwanda introduced a free basic education program to optimize school enrolment as part its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the Ministry of

Education (n.d. paragraph 1), "[t]he Basic Education (BE) sub-sector is composed of Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary education levels." Despite the introduction of this program, when it kicked off, some children of genocide convicts (at least those who were incarcerated since the end of the genocide) had already dropped out of school.

Similarly, some younger ones (mainly those born after the genocide) were neither able to complete primary education nor be admitted to secondary education. Few children from interviewed families benefitted from this program and got admitted to public secondary schools (Nine Years Basic Education). However, by the time of the interviews no single case of secondary school completion was reported. Four significant reasons explain it: (1) lack of school materials and financial contribution to the school feeding program and (2) children's poor school performance that did not motivate to carry on studying, (3) fear of the stigma associated with a parental conviction, and (4) early pregnancies.

One can thus argue that considering such a low level of education, their future has been largely compromised as their chances to make a living in the formal economic sector (public service, private sector, and civil society organizations) are minimal.

4.3.4.3.The burden of visiting incarcerated parents

During the first wave of massive incarceration of genocide suspects, prisons and detention centers were so overwhelmed that they could not feed their inmates. The second wave came in when several new and more spacious prisons were built across the country. However, this shift did not completely spare convicts' families from providing them with food and "pocket money." This research shows that those families have been visiting their genocide convicts for two major reasons. Firstly, the provision of food is meant to supplement the daily meals that prisons give them. Secondly, there was a need to get inmates' news and share information about their families/ relatives.

Participants from affected families highlighted that prison visits have been a heavy burden in many ways. The first issue is associated with getting and preparing foodstuffs and pocket money for the convicts, while it was so hard for many of these families to get daily meals for themselves. Generally, wives or older children and sometimes other relatives were involved in such visits on a weekly basis.

The second problem is walking long distances to reach the prison. All convicts of interviewed families are hosted in Ririma Prison (in Bugesera District). Participants claimed that in most cases, they walked for three to four hours to the prison and took similar time back home due to a shortage of money to afford transportation costs. All in all, average time they spent on a typical prison visit could stand at 8hours[8]. Such a walking time proves to be weary in general and particularly for women who, during the early years of husbands' incarceration, used to walk as they also carried their babies on their back.

The third issue associated with prison visits is that, while such visits were avenues through which wives and convicted husbands discussed family matters, sometimes they were at the same time a moment to quarrel over some controversial issues (these are elaborated in the section on relational issues).

Lastly, visiting convicts involved sparing time and labor force that would have been dedicated to productive work for family subsistence. In this regard, the heaviest burden is on the shoulders of wives who do or did have neither older children nor other relatives to support in visiting the convicts. Such wives have thus to do everything alone on a weekly basis. It was found that sometimes such families failed to conduct regular visits due to limited resources.

It is worth noting that since the Covid-19 outbreak in Rwanda in March 2020, prison visits were suspended as part of government measures to curb the spread of this pandemic. During that period, inmates' meals were fully supported by the government. Convicts were allowed to call their relatives while the latter could send them pocket money via "Mobile Money" system. While amounts of money they used to give to their convicted parents ranged from FRW 1,000 to FRW 5,000 (i.e. USD 1 to USD 5)[9] per visit beforeCovid-19 pandemic, both the amounts and the frequency of financial support to convicts decreased significantly since the outbreak due to tougher living conditions imposed by the pandemic. Many women (almost a half of them) interviewed in this research maintained that they could not afford to send that money regularly due to shortage of resources, particularly during the pandemic. Few of them confessed that they never sent money due to increased vulnerabilities during that period.

[8] Depending on household location
[9] The amount depends on household capacity; it is not an established fee for everyone.

> How would he [my husband] expect me to send me, yet I and my kids were hardly getting daily meals. Priority was given to kids (Participant # 12)

However, prison visits have resumed since February 2022 after the Government lifted anti-Covid-19 measures, mainly related to people's movement. Nevertheless, all families that participated in this research complained that the cost of compulsory Covid-19 test prior to prison visits is very expensive.

> I heard that prison visits are resuming. However, new requirements for visits are tougher now. We have to take a covid-19 test which costs FRW, 5,000. This is a lot of money that I cannot afford. Should I manage to get this amount, I would rather use it to cover basic needs here at home. You should advocate for us to get this requirement waived (Participant # 16).

As of March 2022, the price for rapid test is worth FRW 5000 (i.e. around USD 5), which stood at FRW 10,000 (i.e. USD 10) before. One should also note that the cost of Covid-19 test adds on that of food and transportation for relatives who can no longer walk long distances (i.e. the elderly and the sick).

4.3.4.4.Burden of paying for looted properties

Parental incarceration occurred after affected people had been found guilty of genocide crimes. At the same time, in many cases, the courts condemned convicts over property looting or devastation during the genocide. Considering the then context of poverty, adding on reduced income and labor force following male parent incarceration, paying for those properties is another heavy burden that came on shoulders of convicts' families. Family members, especially wives and older children,, suffered many hardships as they strived to mobilize adequate resources to meet basic human needs and pay for looted properties. Some families had to sell portions of their lands (often initially too small to serve as a source of livelihoods) and/or livestock to address this judicial challenge, as illustrated in the narrative below.

> During Gacaca courts, my husband was also found guilty of destroying genocide survivor's house and looted iron sheets […] He was therefore to pay for it but as

> he is in prison, all went on my shoulders. […] I approached the survivor and begged him to reduce the total amount to pay [i.e. FRW 200,000]. We bargained with him and he eventually accepted me to pay a half i.e. FRW 100,000. I struggled a lot to get this amount. To be able to pay, I sold some goats I had raised, I also got some money from banana beer (from our banana plantation) and requested a loan from a saving tontine (Participant #6).

Similarly, in some families, convicts' wives sold their small pieces of land inherited from their parents to pay for the properties in question. Additionally, some affected families without relevant properties or assets to pay for looted properties had to work in farms of well-off people or on construction sites to get means of payment. Strategies that some affected families used to handle this issue are further examined in the section on coping mechanisms.

4.3.5. Relational issues

Male parents' incarceration took place in a particular context. Some of landmarks of this context include high levels of mistrust among Rwandans due to the genocide and its aftermath, social tensions involved by the then judicial proceedings of genocide (classic judicial system first and Gacaca courts afterward). Other contextual characteristics include poverty and intra/interfamily conflicts to name just a few. Based on this challenging context, the said incarceration affected family relationships at several levels: between wives and husbands, mothers and children, fathers and children, households' members and in-laws as well as between households' members and community members.

4.3.5.1.Deteriorated relationships between wives and husbands

While inter-spouse relationships may, in a few cases, have been enhanced due to exceptional care and support that wives have shown to their convicted husbands, this study reveals that in some families, husband-wife relationships took an opposite trajectory. Divisive issues are mainly associated with perceived or actual accusations formulated by husbands against their wives concerning mismanagement of household property/assets, infidelity, children born during husbands' imprisonment, irregularities in prison visits, and quality of food supply/pocket money, and mistreatment of husbands' relatives. Equally reported issues involve ineffective children's disciplining and related effects such as early/unintended pregnancies and delinquency. In many

cases, such accusations are fuelled by rumors spread by some husbands' relatives and former family friends. The quote below illustrates what inter-spouse relationships look like in some families.

> On many occasions of visits, he [my husband] alleged that I had become a prostitute. This is what my mother-in-law and my co-wife used to tell him. This rumor became a big driver of conflict with him to such an extent that he sold without my knowledge the piece of land that he had given me […] I turned to local authorities for help in vain […]. Relationships with my husband have frozen and since then I refrained from visiting him (Participant #14).

From women's viewpoints, major blames include husbands' involvement in the genocide which negatively impacted their family lives and relationships with neighbors (mainly genocide survivors), and debts/loans that some husbands incurred without the knowledge of their wives.

Given the degradation of some husband-wife relationships resulting from incarceration, I argue that this situation is likely to carry on or worsen after husbands complete their sentences. A study conducted by NURC (2015) on the reintegration of ex- genocide convicts, showed an increase of inter-spouse conflicts after their release (from 0.7% before incarceration to 3.8% after incarceration) (pp. 76-77). Significant drivers of such conflicts (by order of importance) included extra-marital sexual relationships during spouse's incarceration, children born out of marriage during spouse's incarceration, mismanagement of family resources during spouse's incarceration, and reversed power relationships. It calls for ongoing efforts of ex- genocide convicts' reintegration to pay attention to these issues to assure that such conflicts are considered in the reintegration package.

4.3.5.2. Compromised mothers-children relationships

Male parents' incarceration did not leave fully intact relationships between mothers and their children. This research suggests that ties between mothers and children went degrading in some families. There are four major reasons that shaped the deterioration of those relationships:(1) the loss of income that reduced mothers' capacity to help their children meet basic human needs, (2) single parenting that challenged mothers' time and moral authority to discipline children, (3) some mothers' misconduct that questioned their moral authority towards their children, (4)

some convicts' manipulation of their sons/daughters against their mothers. Participants reported instances whereby quarrels and divisions between children and mothers led some of the latter (yet still very young) to leave homes and go to live by their own angrily.

Although parents-children conflicts also exist in families with no parental incarceration background, participants highlighted that those are actually linked to fathers' imprisonment in some families.

4.3.5.3. Effects on fathers-children relationships

The research suggests that male parental incarceration did not jeopardize relationships between mothers and children only. It also adversely impacted relationships between children and convicted fathers. Some underlying reasons for deteriorated relationships between children and mothers also apply to relationships with their fathers (e.g. loss of income). Also, some children blame their fathers for committing an abominable crime which ashamed children and their families at large. They equally reproach their fathers for being involved in this crime resulted in imprisonment that eventually overturned children's hope for a decent future.

> My father's crime and subsequent conviction are the primary source of our misery and the loss of my dream to become a great person. It is so unfortunate (Participant # 17).

Moreover, the study reveals that children-fathers' relationships were endangered by the misconduct of some children (delinquency, early/unintended pregnancies…). In some families, those relationships started turning bad when fathers learned of their daughters' pregnancies. Similarly, such relationships were hampered when some fathers realized that some children were much closer to their mothers, whereas the latter were no longer on good terms with their convicted husbands.

It is important to underscore that conflicts opposing children and their fathers also weaken family support to convicts. Food supply and pocked money are provided by convicts' wives who, sometimes, get supplemented by efforts of children who have access to some resources. As shown in Table 2, most convicts' wives who were interviewed (9 out of 15, i.e. 60%) are aged 65 or above. This means that they are increasingly getting too old to work and get income that could

be used to contribute to the well-being of convicts. Similarly, as they get older, their physical strength goes eroding to such an extent that it gets more challenging for them to carry out regular prison visits.

Resultantly, considering prevailing conflicts between some children and fathers in prison, there might be difficult for some convicts (particularly those serving longer sentences and including life imprisonment) to find family members who would visit and bring them food and pocket money in prison.

Furthermore, I can advance that deteriorated relationships between some children and parents (fathers and mothers) challenge family stability and cohesion, especially after convicts have completely served their sentences and eventually returned home. In fact, in post-release reintegration, ex-convicts may need greater moral and material support from their families, particularly their wives and children. When relationships with them went deteriorated during incarceration, the former stand reduced chance to get the aforementioned support. Faced with lack of such a support, one can thus assume that likelihood for ex-convicts' recidivism may get higher. Therefore, it is a challenge put out for actors involved in reintegration of ex- genocide convicts to help take it up.

4.3.5.4. Damaged relationships with in-laws

Intra and interfamily conflicts involving in-laws is not a new social phenomenon in Rwanda (Interayamahanga, Kanakuze & Mutamba, 2019) and most likely in many societies (Emel & Joyce, 2018). They unfold in various contexts and circumstances. However, post-genocide context has been a fertile ground for some such conflicts to arise or escalate faster. This research also shows that some convicts' family relationships with in-laws went degrading in a context of male parental incarceration on genocide crimes charges. While some enmities involved convicts' wives and or children with convicts' close relatives (parents, brothers, sisters), others opposed convicts and their close relatives (mainly brothers). The former enmities arose particularly when convicts' close relatives attempted to interfere with managing the convicts' families headed by their wives. They either wanted to chase away these wives or children to usurp their properties or negatively reacted as they stopped getting some of the material advantages/benefits they used to have before their brothers or sons (convicts) incarceration. They equally occurred when some

convicts' brothers attempted getting sexual advances from their brothers' wives in return for financial/material support.

> Since my husband's conviction, my mother-in-law worsened our plight. She ordered the destruction of our [second] house to remove tiles. I boldly stood against that, told the one she had sent to demolish it to stop it […] when the latter told her that I opposed the demolition she said that the owner is in prison, so there was no one to oppose it […] I told her that I and my children are there and that the house was ours. She replied that both I and my children used to relate to her because his son was there, and yet he was no longer there. […] She concluded that we had no right to his son's property because he was no longer there. Then the house got eventually put down. (Participant #4).

Additionally, this investigation suggests that conflicts involving in-laws occurred when convicts' wives were genocide survivors' (Tutsi) and that the latter or their close relatives witnessed against the convicts during the proceedings of genocide crimes in classic judicial system or in gacaca courts. The study shows that some conflicts arose from such situations and opposed convicts' relatives and their families, particularly their wives whom they took as "family betrayers". On the other hand, those wives equally considered some of their husbands' relatives as "persecutors" due to their emotional and moral support to genocide perpetrators.

Concerning enmities between convicts and their close relatives, they sometimes occurred following rumors (well-founded or baseless) that reached convicts about intimate relationships between convicts' brothers and their convicts' wives.

In any case, like conflicts between convicts and their wives and those opposing children to parents, those involving relationships between convicts' families and in-laws also threaten convicts' family stability and cohesion. Whether they are based on genuine or false reasons, those conflicts may weaken the already fragile psychological and social health of convicts' families and that of convicts themselves.

4.3.5.5. Challenging relationships with community members

The genocide against Tutsi and its aftermath tore apart the social fabric in Rwanda. By so doing, it brought about distrust, deep psychological wounds, and high levels of trauma to name a few (NURC, 2020). In most cases, Tutsi were killed by their neighbors, which means that the genocide deeply weakened the then fragile community relationships. One of the objectives of gacaca courts was to "reconcile Rwandans and support their unity" (de Brouwer & Ruvebana, 2013, p.940) and various assessments claimed that this community-based judicial system has largely achieved the reconciliation objective (de Brouwer & Ruvebana, 2013; Ingabire et al., 2017).

However, by unveiling the truth that eventually resulted in many suspects being convicted, relationships between convicts, their family members, on the one hand, and other community members, on the other hand, did not improve as fast as some people may have believed. In some cases they raised more distrust and suspicion. As Ingabire et al. (2017) put it, "while Gacaca did ease tensions within communities as a first step to reconciliation, in some cases, it also engendered the opposite "(p.245).

Similarly, this research suggests that following male parent incarceration, relationships with some community members, particularly with genocide survivors and accusation witnesses, worsened. Some convicts' relatives were upset and anxious about conviction of their husbands /fathers/ due to the accusation witnesses (often neighbors). In many cases, convicts' relatives advanced that conviction was a result of false accusations/testimonies. On the other hand, genocide survivors were largely satisfied with the conviction as they believed that at least justice was done.

Relationships between those two sides of community members were marked by social tensions in a society already under the shocks of the genocide and its aftermath. While those relationships improved over time, the ongoing process of ex-prisoners reintegration should be mindful of those tensions and related wounds to ensure that they are effectively addressed.

4.4. Some positive outcomes of male parent incarceration

As an English proverb goes “every cloud has a silver lining”. Unexpectedly, this study reveals that despite all adversities imposed by male parent incarceration, it was also associated with a couple of positive outcomes for some convicts' families. These include the opportunity for women to prove their capacity to be resilient on the one hand, and experiencing the end of male-led domestic violence on the other hand.

4.4.1. Evidence of women’s resilience

As will be discussed in the section on resilience, it was found that despite sudden incarceration of their husbands and related challenges, some wives of genocide convicts steadily strived to take over family responsibilities in challenging times and eventually made it. By going through such unprecedented hardship, they learned to be independent heads of households to such an extent that they view their current socioeconomic conditions as much better than before their husbands’ imprisonment. Some of them highlighted that had their marriage not been interfered with husbands’ incarceration, they would not have realized what they are capable for. Similarly, some believed that their family socioeconomic status would have been much worse. Women’s narratives below illustrate this finding.

> Should he [husband] complete his sentence and come back home, he would be positively surprised to notice that most of things here have changed. He would not easily recognize his household. I renovated it and built a second one. Even the quality of our banana plantation has completely changed. Despite the hardest times we went through since his incarceration, I confidently claim that my household socioeconomic situation stands far better than if he had always been here (Participant # 6)**.**

4.4.2. End of male-led domestic violence

Domestic violence is not a new social phenomenon in Rwanda. The patriarchal nature of the Rwandan society has remained the core underlying factor of this type of violence (MIGEPROFE, 2010; Brown, 2018). This research shows that some convicts' families experienced high levels of domestic violence before male parent incarceration. The husbands often carried out violence against wives and children. Participants maintained that such a type of violence encompassed

squandering of family resources, exclusion of wives from the management of family resources, constant drunkenness, assault and battery, adultery, psychological violence, to name a few. There were even reports of murder attempts during the genocide. Affected families got an enormous relief from such violence when the abusers (husbands) got imprisoned on genocide crime charges.

> When the genocide started, he severely assaulted me and pushed me to flee the house momentarily. I had returned to my parents. Had I been here [at home] during the genocide, he most likely would have killed me. He was a very violent guy […] despite the tough adversities that his imprisonment brought about, at least I am safe from his then constant aggression (Participant #3).

From the foregoing, it is observed that marriage is not always a guarantee of family psychological, social, or economic stability. In other words, this evidence that if effectively empowered, single-parent families, including those of genocide convicts, widows or separated, can be psychosocially stable, economically prosperous and thus resilient to life hazards and shocks. The issue of resilience is further examined in section 4.5.

4.5. Coping mechanisms for households of genocide convicts

This section explores existing capacities for families headed by wives of genocide convicts to face adversities imposed by male parent incarceration. I analyze resilience capacities at four (4) levels: individual/family, relational, community, and institutional levels.

4.5.1. Individual/psychological capacities

Grabe, Pichon & Carabine (2015) defined psychological resilience as "a dynamic psychosocial process through which individuals exposed to sustained adversity or potentially traumatic events experience positive psychological adaptation over time" (p.5). In this regard, Fikretoglu & McCreary (2012) identify five (5) individual influences of resilience including (1) physical and medical fitness; (2) mental toughness and confidence; (3) adaptability; (4) realistic training and (5) effective utilization of peer and family networks (p.16).

Participants in the actual research pointed out several individual factors that underlie their resilience to the shock/stressor of male parent incarceration. They include the commonness (high rate) of the stressor (incarceration), wives' determination to bridge the gap left by their husbands, religious faith, and effective utilization of family property/assets and networks.

- **The "commonness" of the stressor event**

The genocide against Tutsi claimed over a million lives and has had a countrywide coverage except in areas where there were no Tutsis and in zones under the control of the then Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF). Genocide suspects were, therefore, equally in all areas that saw the genocide implementation of the genocide. Subsequently, the arrest and prosecution of genocide suspects took place across those areas.

From the preceding, it is clear that the rate of conviction among genocide suspects was very high, which made it a widespread or a common phenomenon. All convicts' wives interviewed in this study revealed that the commonness of genocide-related incarceration has been a factor of resilience for them. The feeling that "it is not about me only" reduced levels of anxiety and implicitly established an avenue for solidarity and exchange of information among affected women.

> The first thing that contributed to easing my anxiety is that I was not the only one affected. Most of men in this community were being convicted. This instilled some comfort in me because I said to myself that at least I not only the problem is common but also that I will join my fellow wives of other convicts to exchange on our problems and comfort each other (Participant #7).

- **Determination to bridge the gap left by their husbands**

In most convicts' families, female spouses stayed as oldest family members after husbands' incarceration. As mothers and senior household members, some convicts' wives eventually felt challenged to build psychological adaptation strategies to bridge the gap that their husbands had left behind. Despite all and uncertainties, those women resolved to wake up, move forward to care for their children. A participant's account below illustrates her determination.

> […] I reflected a lot on what we were going through as a family and I said to myself that life has to carry on anyway. As the oldest person in the household and a mother, I resolved to take things forward and take over household headship to protect my children (Participant #2).

- **Religious faith**

All wives of genocide convicts who participated in this research evoked their faith in God as an important source of their resilience to the shock imposed by their husbands' conviction. They claimed that their faith made them believe that God would give them strengths to face trials they were going through and that there was no reason to be so much anxious. The Rwandan population is very largely religious and dominantly Christians. According to National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), (2012b.), 95% of Rwandans are Christians and 2% are Muslims (p.17).

- **Leveraging available family resources**

By the time of husbands' conviction, some families had some resources. These encompassed land properties, houses, cattle, and some household assets such as bicycles, motorcycles, small shops, and farm business. Nevertheless, others just had houses they were living in and small land portions on which their houses were built, while others did have neither houses nor pieces of land to cultivate. It emerged from this research that some families took advantage of available resources to address some of the incarceration effects. Most cited instances related to selling some portions of land and some heads of cattle, some heads of goat to mainly pay for properties looted or destroyed by convicts. Income from that sale equally served to pay for school fees/school materials, meals or renovate houses.

> **T**o pay for the cow he had looted during the genocide, I went to my native family and sold my inheritance [land]. I paid FRW 50,000 for the cow, and I used the rest of the money to build a house as the one we lived in was too old. I also used part of that money to build a second house thanks to which I get some income from rent (Participant # 5).

Prior to their incarceration, some husbands had illegally sold or mortgaged some family properties (land and houses). In search of resources to fill the gaps engendered by husbands' convictions, some wives noticed such a problem and embarked on another struggle to recover affected properties. Given that those properties had been sold or mortgaged without wives' knowledge, relevant authorities successfully helped the latter recover the properties in question. Recovered properties were therefore instrumental to concerned families to get some livelihoods. However, over time, some of those resources decreased, and some eventually got exhausted. As a consequence, some families sank back in socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

- **Turning to native families to request for inheritance**

Rwanda's efforts to enhance gender equality led to passing legal instruments[10] that abolished women/girls' discrimination from the succession of parents' patrimony. Article 28 of Article 54 of Law nº27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions states that:

> The family donation may be made between spouses themselves or between spouses and another person or may be made between parents and their children whereby they donate a portion of their property. Where parents donate to their child, they do it without any discrimination between girls and boys.

Furthermore, Article 54 of the same Law stipulates that "Legitimate children of the *de cujus* succeed in equal portions without any discrimination between male and female children".

To handle some issues resulting from the conviction of male parents, it was found that some convicts' wives turned to their native families to claim and sell their donations or inheritance ("*izungura*"). Both donations and inheritance often involved pieces of land. These wives therefore got money that they use to address some effects of husbands' incarceration.

> By the time of his conviction we did not have our own house. We lived in one of his parents' small houses. After his imprisonment life got worse […]. I resolved to sell a piece of land I inherited from my parents and was able to build a house

[10] See Law nº 22/99 of 12 November 1999 to supplement Book One of the Civil Code and to institute Part Five regarding Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Successions reviewed by
Law nº27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions

> we live in. Of course to have the house completed I added on some money I got from a saving tontine. (Participant # 11)

While women and girls' equal access to family donations and inheritance is a right, evidence from this research also shows that both inheritance and donations are resources that can help women/girls build resilience to shocks. Therefore, it is important for relevant public institutions, civil society organizations, parents, and family members to ensure that the above law is always respected in practice.

- **Undertaking small-scale income generating activities**

To build more significant and more sustainable resilience capacities some wives of convicts used to income from sold land properties to put in place small-scale income-generating initiatives. Some of them built modest houses for rent, while others invested in livestock (cattle, goats, pigs and poultry). Nonetheless, other women, especially those without portions of land property or other productive assets to sell, they get subsistence means either through work in their own tiny farms, on which they often add casual agriculture work in neighbors' farms, and or in construction sites in return for remuneration. These are younger women who are still physically active and who sometimes team up with their older children for increased income.

In a similar line of thought, the study reveals that some wives of genocide convicts, whose families are landless, live on hiring farms in their locations, cultivate and plant in them. They agree with land owners to share the produces. These are generally farms whose landlords are old people who either are unable to work, have no personal background in farm work or are involved in other businesses mainly in Nyamata Town or in Kigali City.

> My neighbor has rented me his farm. I cultivate and plant in it, and then we share the produces. It has been so useful for me to address livelihoods issues for my family (Participant #11).

> It is common for some land owners to rent them to landless and poor people in this community. I also have a small farm I rented from a neighbor. We will definitely share the harvest (Participant # 18).

This finding under this section on individual resilience is evidence that women can adapt to new challenging situations, including very severe adversities such as spouses' long-term or life imprisonment. These are capacities that can relevant stakeholders should leverage to build women's stronger resilience.

4.5.2. Relational capacities

Positive interpersonal and social relationships stand as effective mechanisms for people to withstand adversities. This research reveals that despite tough adversities that hit families of genocide convicts, some members of these families have ties and social networks that serve as mechanisms for coping with the effects of parental incarceration. These mechanisms consist of positive relationships with family relatives and friends, former classmates, godfathers/godmothers, goddaughters/godsons and neighbors to name a few. Some convicts' wives and children claimed that while some interpersonal and social relationships eroded since the parental incarceration, others steadily remained and provided them with emotional support and sometimes with material one.

Additionally, through prayer groups, they come together, pray together and support each other. Such groups have been serving as an avenue for them to try to overcome anxiety and the feeling of loneliness. In some cases, members of those groups provided material or labor force assistance to convicts' families. In the words of a participant,

> My prayer group members provided me with labor to make bricks for my house. This was so instrumental in renovating my house after I get received iron sheets from the government (Participant # 3).

Such a relational support has been instrumental in helping affected families to cope with adversities imposed by male parent convictions. This concurs with Heatherton & Nichols and Wagnild & Young as cited in Gianesini (2015) who posit that "the perceived presence of a supportive social network enhances a person's capacity to deal with life's challenges" (p.87).

Nonetheless, such support especially from men did not come with genuine intentions, in some cases. Some individuals took advantage of existing relationships to support convicts' wives or

daughters, expecting sexual favors in return. Some participants reported instances whereby rebuking sexual advances led to conflicts between involved persons, thus ending the support.

Moreover, as discussed above, in many cases where sexual advances were conclusive, they eventually yielded unproductive effects (early and unintended pregnancies) that eventually hampered the resilience of affected persons and their families. As a matter of fact, besides health and nutritional issues tied to pregnancies, concerned mothers and daughters faced with problems of taking care of new babies. Similarly, perceived and real extra-marital affairs and early/ unintended pregnancies have inflamed inter-spouse and father-daughter relationships among families of genocide convicts. Sexual favors in return for material support have thus fostered negative resilience of those families.

This finding concurs with that of a study conducted by Taviringana (2017 on effects of male imprisonment of their families in Zimbabwe. The latter research found that:

> […] friends of the incarcerated came to the non-imprisoned spouse as lion in sheep clothes. The majority of participants insisted that friends of incarcerated were not good to them as they try to give them support but with strings attached. Some of the spouses ended up making secret love with the friends of the incarcerated for them to get aid in sustaining their families (p.42).

This calls for increased initiatives to empower women through human and financial capital to enable them to face adversities without reaching such a level of sexual exploitation.

Moreover, it is worth noting that in a few cases, convicts' wives that clearly proved to be unable to pay for looted or destroyed properties and who expressed remorse on their husbands' crimes, eventually got exempted by offended families. The bargaining that led to such an exemption was either self-initiated or reached to thanks local leaders' facilitation. This has been thus instrumental in easing the burden on convicts' families.

In a similar vein, it was found that some genocide survivors made the first step in approaching convicts' families to help them overcome isolation.

> After the genocide and subsequent incarceration, our relationships with convicts' families were extremely tense […]. However, as time went on relationships got

> increasingly improved mainly due to survivors' efforts. We [Survivors] endeavored to comfort those convicts' wives and we have been renting them our farms in order to share the harvest. You may be aware that FARG[11] has been supporting vulnerable survivors to get school fees and school materials. Some of us used a portion of those materials such as pens and notebooks to support some children from genocide convicts' families (Key informant #20).

4.5.3. Community-based capacities

In this regard, the research finds out two major community-based initiatives: These are tontine for solidarity ("*ikimina cy'ingobyi*") and saving tontine ("*ikimina cyo kuzigama*"). The former tontines involve community members' annual contributions, say FRW 3,000 (i.e. USD 3) per household to help members in case of medical visit (transport to health center/hospital), death in the family (coffin and transport of the body). Members can also get emergency loans from these tontines. Concerning saving tontines, these bring together community members who agree to give regular contributions (weekly or monthly) in terms of saving and get short-term loans to solve individual or family problems. At the end of the year, members share the savings based on everyone's contributions.

It was found that all interviewed convicts' wives (as heads of households) are members of solidarity tontines, while most of them and their older children as well as older children are members of at least a saving tontine. Some of them have multiple memberships to such tontines.

In particular, the Government of Rwanda and local government officials in collaboration with some civil society organizations have been successfully mobilizing citizens to join tontines a poverty alleviation strategy. Since then, tontines are increasingly rooted in the communities and constitute a major source of cash for small-scale investments and modest household problem-solving. It stemmed from interviews that thanks to tontine membership, some convicts' families were able to renovate houses, buy household livestock purchases, pay for school materials, and community-based health insurance to mention a few. Few of them used money from tontines to pay for properties/assets that convicts looted or destroyed during the genocide.

[11] Genocide Survivors' Assistance Fund

In a similar line of thought, tontines have been playing a social integration role for members of convicts' families. Thanks to regular contacts and interactions with fellow community members (including genocide survivors), tontines increasingly help convicts' wives and children to overcome self-stigma and anxiety. In addition, as they manage to make small-scale investments and meet some family needs, they feel greater self-worth.

4.5.4. Institutional and organizational capacities

This type of coping mechanism refers to efforts of government institutions and civil society organizations (non-governmental and faith-based organization) to mitigate the effects of parental incarceration on genocide convicts' families. This study suggests that there are neither government nor CSOs initiatives that target specifically families of genocide convicts. According to a district official:

> Families of genocide convicts are not homogeneous. Vulnerable households in this category are considered as such and therefore catered for in the broader framework of assistance to vulnerable groups (Key informant #22).

Participants' narratives also concur with this district official's statement. Interviews with convicts' wives revealed two main instances whereby the received government assistance. Firstly, during the process of improving housing quality through the eradication of grass-thatched houses ('*kurwanya nyakatsi'*). Like other vulnerable community members, all participants whose houses fell in this category received iron sheets and trees for house roofing and were urged to use their ways to renovate the rest of houses. To get complementary means to fill the gap in construction materials (e.g. bricks, wall trees, doors, windows etc.) some families had no choice but to sell some portions of their land. In some cases, neighbors and friends helped to make bricks.

> The government of Rwanda supported me with iron sheets. We were living in a grass thatched house. Then we heard of the government's plan to eradicate this type of houses. I was therefore listed among beneficiaries of this program. They [local authorities] asked us erect walls for them to give us iron sheets. To erect the walls, I sold my inheritance [land) from my parents […] (participant #3)

Secondly, under 'One Cow per Family Programme ("*Girinka*"), few convicts' families received cattle as they met the requirements to get it. Similarly, one family with a new-born baby reported being under the VUP Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS). However, due to the absence of husbands or adult male children in their households, some received cows got stolen. This means that households with no husbands or older boys have higher security threats when it comes to theft of household assets.

Moreover, while beneficiaries of these two government pro-poor programs praise them for positively impacting their living conditions, they view these conditions as still modest and expected programs such as Vision 2020 Umurenge Program -Public works (VUP-PWs) to integrate them as well. However, all convicts' households covered by the actual research fall under Ubudehe category 2 which are not eligible for this VUP component. As per related guidelines, eligible households are those "*in ubudehe category 1 with at least one worker. However, households in other ubudehe categories may participate if the community confirms that their situation deteriorated significantly since the time of classification as a result of socioeconomic shocks*" (Local Administration Entities Development Agency[LODA], 2019, p.5).

It is worth noting that there have been citizens' complaints about the accuracy of socioeconomic classification, which resulted in currently used ubudehe categories. It is worth highlighting that those complaints stood among other factors that prompted the revision of ubudehe categories (in 2019). Will the revised ubudehe categories (that are yet to be enforced) be able address those complaints?

In a similar vein, the study shows that some convicts' households are headed by women who are too old to offer labor force in return for remuneration and do neither live with older children who can work. Instead, some live with very young grandchildren left by their daughters affected by early or unintended pregnancies. Those women also complained that they have not been integrated into existing social protection schemes (e.g. assistance to the elderly) and are thus scared of their present and future living conditions.

As far as the support from CSOs is concerned, this research did not come up with much about their roles in helping convicts' families to cope with adversities imposed by parental

incarceration. Only a couple of instances were cited whereby two faith-based initiatives (chronologically, one facilitated by late father Ubald Rugirangoga and one jointly implemented by Prison Fellowship and Interpeace) that brought together genocide survivors and families of genocide convicts for healing and reconciliation purposes. Also mentioned was an organization that trained young single mothers in tailoring as part of skills development. The latter initiative was commended for providing hands-on skills but criticized for not supporting trainees to get start-up tools/equipment such as sewing machines.

To conclude, it is clear from this research that families of genocide male convicts, now headed by women, have multi-level coping mechanisms that underlie their resilience to male parents' incarceration shock. These families have been increasingly striving to wake up and move forward from individual, relational, community to institutional and organizational resilience capacities. Therefore, these are good grounds to leverage to enhance great resilience of female-headed families of genocide male convicts.

Nonetheless, their journey has been neither linear nor homogeneous. Some have access to more capacities than others depending on many factors such as the pre-conviction socioeconomic situation of the households, individual capacities of affected wives (networking, problem-solving etc.). Similarly, at some point, some families were so hit by the effects of parental incarceration that their vulnerability went worsening (e.g. early and unintended pregnancies, extra-marital pregnancies, aging of the mother as core breadwinner, shortage of basic livelihoods). The following section explores main challenges currently facing households/families of genocide male convicts.

4.6. Challenges impeding the resilience of genocide convicts' households

The preceding sections have focused on various effects of male parents' convictions on charge of genocide crimes and resilience capacities owned and accessed by convicts' families to withstand the latter effects. This section identifies and analyses persisting and emerging challenges to the resilience of those female-headed families. Major issues discussed relate to (1) livelihoods constraints, (2) unhealed wounds, (3) aging of mothers and implication on family livelihoods, (4) children conceived and born during husbands' incarceration, (5) children born from early and unintended pregnancies (daughters), (6) problems associated with family reintegration of

returning husbands, (7) family reintegration in a context of decreased or loss of trust between wives and husbands, "pervasive" sexual behavior issues (8) and problems in connection with prison visit in Covid-19 context.

4.6.1. Livelihood issues

It was earlier highlighted that male parents' conviction entailed loss of income and other resource-consuming imperatives such as prison visits, paying for looted/destroyed properties etc. In turn, these effects led to livelihoods issues in convicts' families, such as difficulties to get quality and quantity foodstuffs, scholastic materials and related costs, contributions to community-based health insurance, decent housing, to name a few. Despite efforts made to overcome these issues, some convicts' families still face them.

The persistence of some of these problems is associated with limited access to income-generating activities and the aging of some women heads of households. These women were core breadwinners for their families since their husbands' imprisonment, but most of them do not have appropriate investments to live on in their old age (this issue is further discussed in the following sub-section. Its persistence is equally magnified by the fact that, in some families, the size of households kept increasing due to early/unintended pregnancies as well as extra-marital pregnancies. Therefore, the livelihoods constraint remains a big challenge for the lasting resilience of affected families.

4.6.2. Unhealed wounds

The genocide against Tutsi impacted all Rwandans depending on their sides. The detention of genocide suspects which resulted in convictions of many of the latter stands among the effects of the genocide. While the involvement in the genocide and subsequent convictions has had severe psychosocial repercussions on perpetrators, they did not leave members of their families intact. The latter have sustained multi-form psychological wounds such as anxiety, stigma and self-stigma, shame, etc., magnified by tougher living conditions and associated consequences. The two testimonies below illustrate such unhealed wounds:

> I sometimes nearly spend sleepless nights when I think on my current plight versus my initial dream when I was still at school [Before daddy's incarceration] I find life meaningless as my future is almost lost (participant # 18).

> When I look at the life hardship I and my children have been going through and which has not improved a lot, I sometimes enter my room and silently cry. It really gives me chronic headache […] it is hard to describe the extent to which my husband's imprisonment adversely impacted our family (participant #14) .

As of the time of data collection for this research, those wounds remained largely unhealed and are likely to worsen if subsequent livelihoods issues are not adequately addressed and if ex-convicts' reintegration is not effectively prepared and accompanied.

4.6.3. Aging of convicts' wives and implication on family livelihoods

It emerged from this that most genocide convicts' families are headed by wives aged 65 and above. Like younger female heads of households, these women have remained key breadwinners for their families. However, as they get older their labor force goes decreasing, which worsens their socio-economic vulnerabilities.

> As you can see, I am sickly and too old to work in my farm while there is no other labor force to bridge the gap. As time goes on, my household resources crumble away and life gets tougher (participant # 16)

While this problem is common even among female-headed households that were not necessarily affected by genocide convictions, it is clear that the adverse effects of male parents' incarceration as described above left a big gap that makes these households somewhat uncommon. There is a need for the government social protection scheme for the elderly to consider these women among many other eligible groups.

4.6.4. Children conceived and born during husbands' incarceration

It stems from this study that due to socioeconomic vulnerabilities resulting largely from male parents' imprisonment and biological needs, some convicts' wives indulged in extra-marital sexual intercourses. In some instances, those relationships ended up in pregnancies and thus in

children born out of wedlock. As discussed above, such pregnancies and children have jeopardized inter-spouse relationships and in some cases, engendered conflicts. As some genocide convicts have been completing their imprisonment sentences and returning home, this issue increasingly yields both emotional and relational negative outcomes among marital partners. This challenges effective reintegration of released convicts and lasting social cohesion and development of affected families. It is a challenge put out for existing and emerging healing and social reintegration of ex- genocide convicts.

4.6.5. Children born from early and unintended pregnancies

The research suggests that in most of sampled genocide convicts' families there is at least one case of early or unintended pregnancy among daughters. Such cases occurred after fathers' conviction and were largely a result of household socioeconomic vulnerabilities. While some daughters got married later, others still live with their children and mothers. In most cases, the fathers of these children have not legally recognized them and therefore do not support them in any way.

Due to both limited livelihoods facing some of these families, and limited education level of their mothers, these children are unlikely to complete their basic education and thus face their mothers' fate. The ongoing government efforts to enhance school enrollment and eradicate school dropouts need to be effectively complemented by those aimed to fight early and unintended pregnancies and to alleviate poverty.

4.6.6. Issues associated with family reintegration of returning husbands

The fieldwork for the research at hand took place 21 years after the beginning of the first wave of genocide-related detentions (in 1995), and 15 years after that of the second wave (in 2006). The majority of those sentenced to over 15 years imprisonment (as is the case for those from sampled families for this study) either have recently finished or will be completing their sentences in the coming years, except for those with life imprisonment. A number of family reintegration issues emerged from this research.

Firstly, in some cases, not only convicts were violent towards family members before their conviction, but also the latter members (wives and children) were shocked by the abominable

crimes they committed. Adding on that is the unbearable hardships that family members went through as a result of male parents' imprisonment. It is thus predictable that convicts' family reintegration might face severe relational challenges of which reintegration stakeholders should be mindful.

Secondly, some issues are linked to convicts' psychological wounds, mainly to extra-marital relations and children born during husbands' incarceration. Thirdly, it was reported that some convicts had adopted "pervasive" sexual behaviors (e.g. homosexuality, anal sex etc.) that compromise ordinary marital sexuality after convicts' release.

> While genocide perpetrators were in prison, their wives faced livelihoods issues that pushed some of them into extra-marital sexual intercourse. Some eventually got pregnant and now they have children. This is one of critical challenge we have to manage in the framework of ex-prisoners' reintegration (Key informant #23).

Equally related is the problem of sexual performance of some released convicts resulting from aging, psychological stress and prison conditions. In the words of a wife of recently released convict:

> He got old both literally and figuratively. Even in bed he looks old. I was eager to resume and enjoy marital sex, but was eventually disappointed […]. Anyway, I bear with it as life has to carry on (Interview with participant #13).

4.6.7. Issue associated with prison visits in Covid-19 context

Since the Covid-19 outbreak in Rwanda, prison visits were suspended. Visits resumed mid February 2022 following a communiqué issued by Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS).[12]. This resolution came with a couple of requirements for visitors namely to have been fully vaccinated and have a negative Covid-19 test result.

[12] https://www.rcs.gov.rw/index.php?id=51&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=952&tx_news_pi1%5Bday%5D=25&tx_news_pi1%5Bmonth%5D=2&tx_news_pi1%5Byear%5D=2022&cHash=a25c4f2ec49d23cd625cd1728ec016af

While convicts' families view this communiqué as good news, they fear that many will not afford to pay FRW 5,000 (i.e. USD 5) for each prison visit and per person. For instance, in rural Nyamata sector, this amount is worth 5man/days at the rate of FRW 1,000 (i.e. USD 1) in farming sector as of data collection period (February 2022). In other words, it would require one member of a convict family to work 5 days in landlord's farm to get FRW 5,000 needed for taking one round Covid-19 test. It is important to note that this is just the cost of a Covid-19 test. It does not, therefore, include the cost of transportation to and from the prison, the cost of food supply and pocket money for the convict to be visited, which are likely to be costlier than that of Covid-19 test. This implies that many convicts' families will not be able to visit incarcerated relatives regularly until the test requirement will be lifted. Therefore, this calls for efforts to find a common ground between public health concerns and the need to ease family members' visits to their relatives.

4.6.8. "Sorcery syndrome" that fosters paranoia among convicts' families

Sorcery is a term that interestingly crossed all interviews with convicts' relatives, yet the study had nothing to do with it. There is no single sampled convicts' family that missed to blame at least one of their problems on sorcery. During interviews with convicts' families, there was at least a family member's illness, a problem about livestock sickness or death, or the farm (e.g. land barrenness). While these problems may occur in any family and may be of empirically observable origins, and sampled members of these families advanced that their causes were simply linked to sorcery from their enemies in their vicinities or from distant family members. Below are two participants' narratives on this issue

> Some of my neighbors are malicious. For a couple of years, my land has gone barren. They poisoned it and it is no longer productive. They also targeted my cow and it eventually died. They made my life harder (Participant #12).

> Look at my body! Look here! This is a longstanding disease. I visited some doctors and they failed to heal me. They cannot treat sorcery. Even people I pray with prayed for me in vain. I cannot have peace here as long as sorcerers are active (Participant # 3).

Sorcery is a social phenomenon that not only characterizes traditional societies but also prevails in contemporary societies including Rwanda. However, most of problems that participants associate with sorcery are ordinary issues that can be empirically examined and practically addressed by the science.

The fact that members of convicts' families and most probably other community members tend to attribute those problems to sorcery make them somewhat paranoiac. In fact, while some suggested that they know their sorcerers, others maintained claimed that they ignore them, maintaining at the same time that the latter live in their neighborhood. I argue that while sorcery actually exists, such a high belief in it among convicts' families is likely to hamper their psychological resilience and social relationships with neighbors and prevent some of them from seeking services from credible health service providers. This argument is backed by Burton et al. cited in Cox and Philips (2015). They posit that " sorcery is an effect of poverty that explains misfortune and illness but does so in an unsatisfactory manner that lowers expectations of health services and makes it unlikely that villagers will demand better services from government or their elected representatives" (p.49).

4.6.9. Challenged gender relations in families after convicts' release

Convicts' wives took over household headship in a patriarchal society that is still striving to end male domination over women. These women have been in this position for over a decade and, despite various challenges and circumstances, they endeavored to play their role effectively in many cases. Nevertheless, this study reveals that when some ex-convicts return home, gender relations conflict. While returning husbands want to retake their positions with a patriarchal posture (giving orders, intimidating etc.), wives who have been taking headship alone for such a long period, challenge husbands' attitudes and behaviors. Children, especially those who were too young by the time of parental incarceration equally, tend to rebuke such fathers' behaviors and attitudes.

> When he [husbands] came back home, he spent some days with a relatively calm and observation attitude […], shortly after, he started behaving as the man he used to be before conviction […], giving orders, scolding us, etc. While I was excited about his returning home, I started getting concerned with his attitude. So did our

> children. One day, our last born, the pregnancy of whom my husband had left me with, asked him why he would behave that way, and yet he was away for long time (Participant # 13).

Three main factors can explain this situation. Firstly, the prolonged male parents' imprisonment over the crime of genocide has, to some extent, challenged convicts' moral authority towards wives and children. During interviews, some participants viewed convicts as "traitors" due to their participation in the genocide. Secondly, by staying with and caring alone for their children and for a long time, some mothers and children may have built strong bonds that remain impermeable for returning fathers.

Last but not least, substantive legal and policy reforms that Rwanda made in connection with gender equality over the past two decades have undoubtedly shaped Rwandans and particularly women's perceptions of gender relations and gender roles. Therefore, there might be some discrepancies between ex-convicts' understanding of gender relations and gender roles and those of their wives and children.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting that the 2016 Law governing persons and the family provides for a joint management of the households (for married couples). As per art. 209 of this law "spouses jointly provide management of the household including moral and material support to the household as well as its maintenance (para. 1). One of the spouses performs those duties alone if the other is unable to do so. In case of disagreement, competent authorities take the decision (para. 2)".

This finding calls for current actors involved in ex-prisoners reintegration to not only raise awareness of both sides on this challenge and support them in reaching a common ground for safer and better households management in a post-incarceration environment.

4.7. Discussion of findings

This section furthers the discussion of key findings which actually is done throughout the entire chapter. This section emphasizes the effects of male parent incarceration of families, blaming wives over extra-marital sexual intercourse, women's household headship, connecting the findings to Hill's crisis theory.

- **Effects of male parent incarceration of families**

This research shows that husbands' imprisonment led to the changing of gender roles. Female spouses took over from their husbands and played the roles of both mothers and fathers. In other words, that incarceration overturned the then two parents' family structure to single parent one. Subsequently, followed other critical effects such as loss of income, emotional and psychological stress, stigma among wives and children, poor school performance and dropouts, and the burden of prison visits. Similar results emerged from studies conducted by Tivingirana (2017) in Zimbabwe, Ofori-Dua, Akuoko & Kanwetuu (2015) in Ghana, and Bruynson (2011) in Canada and USA. To a large extent, these effects are interrelated.

However, in Rwanda, the genocide against Tutsi's aftermath makes this country peculiar in terms of the impact of male parents' incarceration. For instance, families' burden of paying for properties that were looted and destroyed by convicts during the genocide is a unique landmark of the Rwandan context. Likewise, the issue of early and unintended pregnancies among daughters from convicts' families appears to be more prevalent in Rwanda than in aforementioned countries. It could be partly associated with the girls' limited level of education and their awareness of sexual and reproductive health. It has, therefore a policy implication. If the right to basic education has been increasingly becoming real in both theory and practice in Rwanda, some young people –like in many sampled convicts' families- hardly completed grade 6 or at least attended grade 7. In a similar vein, teenage and unintended pregnancies have been reported by participants in the study. It has thus adverse implications for the future of these young people and that of the country at large. Therefore, there is a pressing need to strengthen existing efforts to eradicate school dropouts and enhance access to and use of sexual health and reproductive health methods, especially for youth.

- **Blaming wives over extra-marital sexual intercourse**

The study also shows that following husbands' incarceration, some wives have indulged in risky and extra-marital sexual intercourse, which, in some cases, resulted in pregnancies and increased the size of the households. Previous studies also support this finding. For instance Tivingirana (2017) in Zimbabwe and Asomaning as cited in Tivingirana, in Kumasi (Ghana) found that due to the stress associated with livelihoods shortage and prolonged confinement of convicts, some

wives of incarcerated husbands ended up involving in extra-marital sexual encounters that eventually led to divorce.

While such behaviors may be rebuked from both a moral and legal perspectives, they also need to be put into their context. First and foremost, the study reveals that in most cases, extra-marital intercourses were, on women's side, motivated by the pressing search of family livelihoods in a context whereby husbands' incarceration had entailed loss of income and related adversities. I therefore argue that for those women, such risky intercourses intervened as a last resort for family survival. This stance concurs with that of Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (2007) advancing that:

> Living without one's basic needs can increase a person's risk of sexual victimization. Perpetrators of sexual violence target individuals who seem vulnerable—whether due to gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, immigration status, income, or other reason; they exploit victims and survivors caught in Catch-22 situations created by poverty (p.1).

Secondly, husbands' absence which resulted in such wives' behaviors did not consist in a business or study tours but in judicial sentences for abominable crimes of genocide. Therefore, it is worth noting that by committing those crimes and getting incarcerated, convicts opened the door for families' psychological and socioeconomic vulnerabilities that eventually sparked off extra-marital relations.

Thirdly, husbands' convictions involved the latter's prolonged or permanent absence, yet sexual relations constitute a biological and human need for male and female partners. I, therefore, argue that it is unfair to expect that convicts' wives who had extra-marital intercourses would have remained in such a deprivation of such a human need for the rest of their life or at least for the entire period of husbands' imprisonment. It goes without saying that by the time of husbands' conviction, some couples were still too young for the wives to stay in lifelong sexual fidelity.

Last but not least, I posit that by taking such risky behaviors (extra-marital sex), affected wives knowingly but unwillingly self-exposed for the sake of families' survival. From the foregoing, I argue that while convicts have been offended by their partners' infidelity and subsequent births, actors who intervene in healing and reconciliation should help affected convicts understand their

wives and bear with them. It is importantly not only to enhance effective family reintegration of ex-genocide prisoners but also for that of mitigating stigmatization and self-stigma among affected women.

- **Women's households headship**

The study reveals that despite severe effects of male parents' incarceration, female-headed households strived to withstand these effects and thus moved forward. Irrespective of persisting and emerging impediments, convicts' wives proved their capacity to manage their families and navigate through such most challenging adversities. The research equally suggests that with wives' headship, some convicts' families have achieved much in terms of housing, households assets, small-scale investments, community participation and feel much safer than before husbands' conviction. This is strong evidence that despite few biological differences, women are as capable as men concerning all spheres of life. If empowered, women can achieve a lot at individual, household, community and institutional levels. They can also effectively withstand life challenges as well as men can do.

- **Connection to Hill's Crisis Theory**

This research explores the effects of male parental incarceration on their families and coping mechanisms for those female-headed families. Although the purpose of this study was neither to test nor build any theory, its findings are largely in line with Hill's Crisis Theory applied to families of convicted parents. In fact, this theory proposes four steps of a trajectory of a person's reaction to a stressor (Hill, 1971 as cited in Bruynson, 2012) (see theoretical framework). The actual research thus shows that sampled convicts' households experienced the stressor event (imprisonment of male parents), then got disorganized through the realization of the need to find out or switch to coping mechanisms, then started recovering through the enforcement of coping mechanisms, and eventually reached adjustment and reorganization.

Nevertheless, based on participants' narratives, this trajectory has not either been linear or uniform. While some sampled families have recovered to a large extent, some others are still striving to overcome the effects of parental incarceration (healing of psychological stress, meeting human basic needs, school dropouts and early/unintended pregnancies, children born out

of wedlock etc.). In other words, the affected families' reaction has not taken a uniform trajectory. This is an indicative hypothesis that future research could test.

4.11.Conclusion of the chapter

Through this chapter, the study contributed to the understanding of effects parental incarceration on families in post-genocide Rwanda with a focus on male parental imprisonment on charges of genocide crimes. It revealed that the said male parental incarceration adversely impacted convicts' families in many respects especially convicts' wives, marriage, children, households and relationships. This research also showed that affected families-headed by women- have some resilience capacities helping them to cope with adversities that were imposed by parental incarceration. However, it suggested that despite existing coping mechanisms for female-headed families of genocide convicts, there are still several factors that hamper ongoing efforts aimed to build the sustainable resilience among convicts' families. This calls for government and stakeholders' initiatives in poverty alleviation, healing of historical wounds, reintegration of ex-genocide prisoners among others to include those hindrances into their priorities for better and lasting solutions.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.Introduction

The four preceding chapters focus on the general introduction, the review of literature, the study methodology and the presentation of findings, respectively. Chapter five therefore winds up this research report. It encompasses a summary of the study findings, a general conclusion and proposed actions to mitigate the challenges to the resilience of female-headed households in a context of husbands' conviction on charges of genocide crimes.

5.2.Summary of findings

This research aims to examine the resilience of female-headed households in a context of husbands' incarceration in Rwanda. It specifically pursues four objectives including (1) explore social and economic effects of imprisonment of male genocide perpetrators on their families (households, wives, children); (2) identify coping mechanisms used by convicts' families to overcome those effects; (3) identify and analyze emerging and persisting issues faced by households of male genocide convicts, and (4) formulate strategies to mitigate identified challenges.

The study comes up with some findings summarized as follows:

5.2.1. Effects of male parents' conviction on their families

The incarceration of male genocide perpetrators adversely affected their families. Its effects hit particularly convicts' wives, their children and the households at large.

- **Effects on wives**

Convicts' wives were psychologically affected, including emotional and psychological stress. Other consequences consist in wives' sudden taking of households' headship which involved issues associated with single parenting, striving to bridge lost income gap to name a few. The imprisonment of male genocide convicts also negatively impacted the marriage. Such an impact is mainly tied to (1) long-term or life imprisonment sentence, (2) the fact that genocide crime is abominable and therefore unbearable in the eyes of marital partners (at least for those who do not

deny or doubt their husbands' responsibility), (3) affected conjugal duties including sexual intercourses, (4) perceived and actual wives' infidelity and children born out of wedlock.

- **Effects on children**

The study also reveals that male parental conviction jeopardized the lives of children in various regards. First of all the absence of fathers, the struggle to figure out "why daddy is no longer at home", the stigma and shame associated with fathers' abominable crimes and subsequent incarceration, are among other factors that caused emotional and psychological stress to convicts' children. Other repercussions consist of children's early involvement in labor/work, poor school performance and dropout, early and unintended pregnancies.

- **Effects on households**

The research reveals that male parents' incarceration has deeply affected their households/families. Main effects include loss of income, difficulties to afford human basic needs, the burden of visiting incarcerated parents, and paying for properties that convicts looted or devastated during the genocide. The consequences consist of damaged relationships at many levels (between wives and husbands, fathers-children, mothers and children, families and in-laws, and between convicts' families and other community members (mostly with genocide survivors and with witnesses during Gacaca proceedings).

Nevertheless, male parents' conviction is also associated with positive outcomes. The first one consists of the fact that husbands' conviction tested women's capacity to suddenly take over households' headship and that actually most of them, to a large extent, made it, despite several challenges they faced. The second one is that in some households; incarceration ended male-led domestic violence (including assault and battery, among others) that women had been subject to since marriage.

5.2.2. Coping mechanisms for genocide convicts' families/households

This research also explores coping mechanisms that these female-headed households rely on to withstand the adversities imposed by male parents' incarceration on charges of genocide crimes. Identified coping mechanisms stand at four levels: individual/family, relational, community and institutional/organizational. Main **individual coping capacities** consist of the wives' awareness

of the "commonness" (high frequency) of the same stressor (i.e. massive imprisonment on charges of genocide crimes) in the community, wives' determination to bridge the gap left by their husbands and religious faith.

Equally involved are pre-incarceration existing family assets/properties and those that wives inherited from their native families and wives and children's undertaking of small-scale income-generating activities.

Concerning **relational capacities**, these include convicts' family members' bonds with other extended family members, friends, former classmates, godfathers/godmothers, goddaughters/godsons and neighbors and prayer groups.

Nonetheless, in some cases, such support, particularly men, did not come with genuine intentions. Some individuals took advantage of existing relationships to provide support to convicts' wives or daughters expecting sexual favors in return. Sometimes, refusing or rebuking sexual advances led to conflicts between involved persons and thus ending the support.

Concerning **community-based capacities**, this investigation shows two major mechanisms: community solidarity tontines (*ibimina by'ingobyi*) and saving tontines (*ibimina byo kwizigamira*). The two have cited as most instrumental frameworks for poor households including those of genocide convicts to mobilize financial resources that they used to handle financial problems. Similarly, tontines have been playing a social integration role for members of convicts' families. Thanks to regular contacts and interactions with fellow community members (including genocide survivors), tontines increasingly help convicts' wives and children to overcome self-stigma and anxiety. In addition, as they manage to make small-scale investments and meet some family needs, then they feel greater self-worth.

As far as **organizational and institutional capacities** are concerned, the research reveals that there are neither government nor CSOs initiatives that specifically target families of genocide convicts. Instead, vulnerable members of this category are taken as other vulnerable households in the community, and their needs are thus addressed in the same framework. Given that nearly all sampled genocide convicts' households are in Ubudehe category 2, most did not benefit from existing social protection instruments such as VUP with its various components. However, during the campaign aimed to eradicate grass-thatched houses (nyakatsi), most of them received

iron sheets from the government. Additionally, few households received cattle under One Cow per Family Program (Girinka), while one family with a new-born baby reported being under the VUP Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS).

Regarding CSOs, participants in this research mentioned only three initiatives: one then facilitated by late father Ubald Rugirangoga[13], and one jointly implemented by Prison Fellowship and Interpeace. The latter initiative brings together genocide survivors and ex-genocide convicts and their relatives, among others, in effort to heal and reconcile. This initiative has completed a pilot phase and moving forward to scaling up to more administrative sectors and districts. The third initiative that some respondents cited was undertaken by an organization that trained young single mothers in tailoring as part of skills development. Nevertheless, those who benefited from it regretted that its package does not include start-up tools/equipment. A separate study would better assess the effectiveness of these initiatives with regard to enhancement of individual and community resilience.

5.2.3. Persisting and emerging challenges impeding the resilience of genocide convicts' households

Despite existing coping mechanisms, the research also finds out several challenges to the resilience of those female-headed families. These include livelihoods constraints, unhealed wounds, aging of mothers and implications on family livelihoods, children conceived and born during husbands' incarceration, and children born from early and unintended pregnancies (daughters). Equally involved are problems associated with family reintegration of returning husbands, family reintegration in a context of decreased or loss of trust between wives and husbands, sexual behavior issues, issues in connection with prison visit in Covid-19 context, the " sorcery syndrome" as well as challenged gender relations in families after convicts' release.

This calls for government and stakeholders' initiatives in poverty alleviation, healing of historical wounds, and reintegration of ex-genocide prisoners to include those hindrances into their priorities for greater and lasting resilience of these female-headed families.

[13] He was a Roman Catholic priest whose work primarily involved a biblical approach to healing and reconciliation across the country.

5.3.General Conclusion

This research successfully explored the repercussions of male parental incarceration of families. It also examined capacities that these female-headed families have to cope with the effects of this incarceration. Moreover, the study identified persisting and emerging challenges to the resilience of affected families and at the same time, it formulates recommendations to mitigate those issues. Overall, thanks to a rigorous methodology, and despite its limitations, this research has achieved its assigned objectives. Although it is an exploratory study with a small geographical coverage, its findings highlight relevant policy implications. Similarly, as the first of its kind in post-genocide Rwanda, this study modestly contributes to the existing body of knowledge, particularly in areas of effects of parental imprisonment on families, resilience to parental incarceration, and female household headship.

5.4.Recommendations

This research, through Chapter 4, comes up with significant issues that hinder the resilience of female-headed families of genocide convicts in the face of adversities associated with male parents' conviction. In consideration of identified challenges and gaps, the study formulates the following actions to mitigate those issues.

1. To the government of Rwanda, through the **Ministry of national unity and civic engagement**, the **Ministry of health and the Ministry of finance and economic planning.**

- Increase the funds allocated to the healing of psychosocial/historical wounds in order to reach more Rwandans with wounds, including members of genocide convicts' families
- Integrate ex-prisoners family reintegration into the broader reintegration frameworks to ensure that marital and intra-family-related relationships issues are catered to.

2. **To the Ministry of local government**

- To speed up the launch and use of newly revised ubudehe categories so as to help socioeconomically vulnerable households that may have been unfairly categorized (in the current ubudehe categories) to access intended social protection services

- To strengthen vocational training initiatives meant for non-schooling youth and including young single mothers to equip them with relevant hands-on skills (such as tailoring, hair dressing, motor-vehicle mechanics and masonry)
- Strengthen existing pro-poor programs for increased coverage of needy eligible households, including vulnerable genocide convicts and /or their grandchildren (born from early and unintended pregnancies), to ensure that the latter do not inherit the misery of their families.

3. To development partners (donor community)

- Consider psychosocial support interventions among priority areas for funding in Rwanda in order to reach more Rwandans with wounds, including members of genocide convicts' families

4. To civil society organizations

- Include members of genocide convicts' families in existing psychosocial support programs to help them heal their psychological wounds. Given the peculiarity of wives, offspring and prisoners/ ex-prisoners, efforts should be made to screen beneficiaries' status and healing needs before joining healing spaces.
- Expand geographical coverage of healing programs to reach out to many individuals and families living with unhealed wounds (e.g. wives and children of genocide convicts)
- Integrate ex-prisoners **family reintegration** into the broader reintegration frameworks to ensure that marital and intra-family-related relationships issues are catered to.

- Support ex-convicts family reintegration by specifically facilitating a dialogue between husbands and wives on the one hand, and husbands and children on the other hand, particularly on issues pertaining to children born out of wedlock (during husbands' incarceration period). More specifically, there is a need to help ex- convicts understand that while they have been offended by their partners' infidelity and subsequent births, in most of cases their wives also took such risky behaviors knowingly but unwillingly and hence self-exposing themselves for the sake of families' survival. Efforts should be made to help affected ex-convicts to understand their wives and bear with them. Strengthen existing pro-poor programs for increased coverage of needy eligible households including

vulnerable genocide convicts and /or their grandchildren (born from early and unintended pregnancies), to ensure that the latter do not inherit the misery of their families.

5. **Genocide convicts' families (wives & children)**

- Leverage existing coping mechanisms (individual capacities, tontines, family support, community relationships) to build greater resilience of convicts' families

5.5.Areas for future research

By design this research is exploratory and covers only one administrative sector of Nyamata in Bugesera District. Its findings may therefore be neither generalized to the whole district of Bugesera nor to the national level. Further research should expand this study's scope and design to give it a more extensive coverage and a mixed-methods design for extrapolation purposes. In addition, for comparative purposes, future research should also examine the effects of female parents' incarceration on their families (husbands, children, households) and related coping mechanisms. Last but not least, extensive research is needed to investigate the family integration of male and female genocide ex-convicts.

5.6. Conclusion of the chapter

Chapter five winds up this research report by presenting a short summary of the findings aligned with the research specific objectives and questions. Given that the study also examined hindrances to optimal resilience of female-headed households at hand, this chapter also includes proposed actions aimed to contribute in addressing those challenges. Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher suggests some themes of focus for future research in same field. Some of those themes are tied to the study limitations as highlighted in the methodology chapter. To ensure that the proposed actions reach both relevant policy-makers and practitioners, the researcher intends to publish this thesis and develop a couple of journal articles and policy briefs.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WIVES OF (ex)-GENOCIDE CONVICTS

Identification of the interview site
District:
Sector:
Cell:
Village:

Date of interview:

Introduction

My name is Interayamahanga Révérien; I am a student at the Center for Gender Studies, University of Rwanda. I am conducting ~~a carrying out~~ a research as part of my MA degree requirements, on the Resilience of Female Heads of Households in a Context of Husbands' Incarceration in Rwanda, with a focus of wives of genocide convicts. This study aims to understand the experience of wives of the said category of men with regard to how their husbands' incarceration affect female household headship, and to existing mechanisms at women's disposal to cope with subsequent issues. Your name was given by other women whose husbands were/are imprisoned over the crime of the genocide against the Tutsi. Like those other women, I wish to discuss with you on your experience of your being a wife of a man imprisoned over the crime of the genocide, and how you cope with related consequences. I will treat your responses together with those from other participants and I grant you that no personal data will be presented in a way that could identify you. Kindly note that your participate is voluntary. Should you feel uncomfortable with any question, feel free to not respond it.

Do you have any question to ask me before we proceed?

Let us proceed if you agree to participate:

Selected respondent's demographics:

1. Names :
2. Age :
3. Years in marriage by the time of husband's detention:
4. Number of children by the time of husband's detention:
5. Legal marriage or de facto marriage :
6. Highest level of education attained:
7. Partner's highest level of education:

8. Current occupation/profession:
9. Household size:

Basic information about the husband

1. Husband's occupation before/during the genocide:
2. Current husband's age:
3. Number of years in prison (as of now):
4. Length of the sentence:
5. Sentence status (ongoing, fully completed, interrupted by prisoner's death, pardon, escaped)

S.R.Q.1. What are major social and economic issues facing households of men who were/are incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes?

- In which circumstance has your husband been imprisoned?
- What was your first feeling/reaction when he got imprisoned?
- How ready were you to take over household headship after your husband's incarceration?
- How did you take up parental responsibilities towards your children (if any)? What are major issues have you been facing in this regard?
- Did you have to make some expenditure associated with husband's incarceration?
- Did you have to cut some usual household expenditure following the incarceration of your husband? Why and which ones, if any? How often did that happen?
- What are the major basic needs did your household/family face since the incarceration of your husband? How often did you face them?
    - (**probe for income, food, health, education, housing/shelter and related assets, community participation, social relations,…) .**
- Which household basic needs were most adversely affected by the incarceration of your husband, and why?
- How did your children get to know about their fathers' whereabouts and what happened to him? Have you ever personally discussed on this issue with your children? How did it happen and what did you tell them? How comfortable were you to discuss on this with your children? What were your children feeling and feedback?
- As a female head of the household in the absence of your husband, could you share your experience with providing family education to your children (inculcating social norms, disciplining, correcting? What are the major challenges you faced? What was the success?

Community relational effects

- Did anything change in your relationship (attitudes, perception, support…) with your husband as a result of his incarceration?
- Did anything change in your relationship (attitudes, perception, support…) with your children as a result of your husband's incarceration? What would you say has been the biggest effect of your husband's incarceration on your relationship with your children (if any)?
- Did anything change in your relationship with your family members (own family, in-laws…) as a result of your husband's incarceration? (check for greeting each other, visiting each other, solidarity/compassion/mutual assistance, cooperation, attitudes towards children, …)
- Did anything change in your relationship with genocide survivors in your neighborhood as a result of your husband's incarceration? What would you say has been the biggest effect of your husband's incarceration on your relationship with genocide survivors?
- Did anything change in your relationship with other neighbours (non-survivors) as a result of your husband's incarceration? What would you say has been the biggest effect of your husband's incarceration on your relationship with family relatives and community members?
- If your husband was eventually released, could you describe your current relationship? Are you still head of the household? During your husband's incarceration and/or after his release (if applicable), has your husband placed any blame on you for what you did as head of the household, and overall, what you did in her absence? Elaborate further, if any? What were your feeling and feedback about it?

S.R.Q.2. which internal and external coping mechanisms do wives of men incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes have as mothers and heads of households?

- Since the incarceration of your husband, what did you do by your own as the new head of the household to face the problems involved by the said incarceration?
- Which internal capacities and or resources did you (as mother and head of the household) have to resort to in order to provide for the households basic needs?
- Which resources did your household already have that you resorted to in order to provide for the household basic needs?
- Which external assistance (if any) did you receive from various actors to address your household/family needs and issues during your husband's incarceration?
- What are the major community groups/platforms/structures of which are you personally a member? If any, would say they have any influence on your coping with consequences of your husband's incarceration?

- What are community groups/platforms/structures in which you currently take a leadership position (if any)? If any, would say they have any influence on your coping with consequences of your husband's incarceration?

S.R.Q.3.What are the persisting and emerging challenges that wives of men imprisoned over the genocide crime face as heads of households? How can they be mitigated?

- What are major challenges/issues you (as a mother) have personally been facing as a result of your husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other challenges/issues that you (as a mother) are personally facing now as a result of your husband's incarceration which you did not experience before?
- What are major challenges/issues your household/family has been facing as a result of your husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other challenges/issues that your household/family is facing now as a result of your husband's incarceration which were not experienced before?
- What does it look like to be a mother in a context where the husband has committed or has been found guilty of the crime of genocide?

S.R.Q.4. Which actions could be designed and implemented to help those women overcome the challenges they face?

- What can be done to address those issues in a sustainable way? Which role can you play? Which other actors can be involved?
- What are your currently most pressing needs you face as head of the households and wife to an incarcerated husband? How would you want them to be addressed?
- What are you biggest gains that would be associated with your husband's return home?
- What are your biggest worries or fears if your husband returned home after completion of his sentence? How would you want them to be addressed?

ANNEX 2: GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT CHILDREN OF GENOCIDE CONVICTS

S.R.Q.1. What are major social and economic issues facing your (parents) households/families?

- As a child, how and when did you get to know about your father's whereabouts and what happened to him?
- What was your first feeling/reaction when he got imprisoned?
- How did your mother take up parental responsibilities towards you, as children? What are major issues have you been facing in this regard?
- Which household basic needs were most adversely affected by the incarceration of your fathers, and why?
- How did your father's incarceration affect you personally? What are the effects?
- How did it affect your relationship with community members (extended families, neighbours, fellow children, genocide survivors…)?
- If your father was eventually released, could you describe your current relationship?

S.R.Q.2. which internal and external coping mechanisms do wives of men incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes have to play their roles as mothers and heads of households?

- Since the incarceration of your father, what did your mother do by her own as the new head of the household to face the problems involved by the parental incarceration? What did you personally 9or your siblings) do as a child to overcome those challenges?
- Which assistance (if any) did you receive from various actors to address your household/family needs and issues during your father's incarceration?

S.R.Q.3.What are the persisting and emerging challenges are wives of men imprisoned over the genocide crime faced with as heads of households? How can they be mitigated?

- What are major challenges/issues that your mother has personally been facing as a result of your husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other challenges/issues that your mother is currently facing as a result of your husband's incarceration which she did not experience before?
- What are major challenges/issues your family has been facing as a result of your father's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other challenges/issues that your family is facing now as a result of your father's incarceration which were not experienced before?

- What does it look like to be a son or daughter of a parent who has been found guilty of the crime of genocide?

S.R.Q.4. Which actions could be designed and implemented to help those women overcome the challenges they face?

- What can be done to address those issues in a sustainable way? Which role can your families play? Which other actors can be involved?
- What are current most pressing needs you have as children of incarcerated fathers? How would want them to be addressed?
- What are you biggest gains that would be associated with your fathers return home?
- What are your biggest worries or fears if your father returned home after completion of their sentences? How would you want them to be addressed?

ANNEX 3: GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

S.R.Q.1. What are major social and economic issues facing households of men who were/are incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes?

- As community members living with the wives of male genocide convicts, can you tell us what was the wives' reaction to the arrest, detention and imprisonment of their husbands?
- What are the major effects of their husbands' incarceration on their households/families?
- How did wives of genocide convicts take up all parental responsibilities (as heads of households) following the incarceration of their husbands over participation in the genocide? What are major issues they have been facing in this regard?
- What are the most important issues/challenges have the households headed by wives of genocide convicts been facing as a result of the said imprisonment?
- It is known that some genocide convicts served their sentences and have now returned to their respective communities and families. How would you describe their relationships with their wives after their release?
- What did it look like to be a mother and a wife of a genocide perpetrator in this community after the genocide against the Tutsi? Has this look changed over time? If yes, why has it changed?
- How did the husbands' incarceration shape the relationship between their wives and (1) their spouses, their children, their in-laws and community members at large? What is the state of those relationships today?

S.R.Q.2.Which internal and external coping mechanisms do wives of men incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes have to play their roles as mothers and heads of households?

- Which internal capacities and or own resources did those women as heads of households have to resort to in order to provide for the households basic needs?
- Which own resources have their households been using to cater to the household basic needs?
- Which assistance, if any, has the community at large been providing to the households of genocide convicts? What are the major actors involved? How often is the assistance provided?

S.R.Q.3. What are the persisting and emerging challenges are wives of men imprisoned over the genocide crime faced with as heads of households? How can they be mitigated?

- What are major issues have **wives of genocide convicts** been facing as a result of their husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other new/emerging challenges/issues that those women are facing now as a result of their husband's incarceration which they did not experience before?

- What are major challenges/issues have **households of genocide convicts** been facing as a result of husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other new/emerging challenges/issues in this regard?

S.R.Q.4. Which actions could be designed and implemented to help those women overcome the challenges they face?

- What can be done to address those issues in a sustainable way? Which role can those women play? Which other actors could be involved?

ANNEX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL LEADERS AND CSOs

S.R.Q.1. What are major social and economic issues facing households of men who were/are incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes?

- How did husbands' incarceration over genocide-related crimes affect their wives as **mothers** and as **new heads of households**?

- What did it look like to be a mother and a wife of a genocide perpetrator in the Rwandan community after the genocide against the Tutsi? Has this look changed over time?

- It is known that some genocide convicts served their sentences and have now returned to their respective communities and families. How would you describe their relationships with their wives after their release?

S.R.Q.2.Which internal and external coping mechanisms do wives of men incarcerated over the genocide-related crimes have to play their roles as mothers and heads of households?

- How did wives of genocide convicts take up all parental responsibilities following the incarceration of their husbands over participation in the genocide? What are major issues they have been facing in this regard?

- Which resources/capacities did those wives rely on to hope with the issues brought about by their husbands' imprisonment?

- Which assistance, if any, has the community at large been providing to the households of genocide convicts? What are the major actors involved? How often is the assistance provided?

S.R.Q.3. what are the persisting and emerging challenges that wives of genocide convicts face as heads of households? How can they be mitigated?

- What are major issues have **wives of incarcerated genocide convicts** been facing as a result of their husband's incarceration and that have not been solved so far? Are there other new/emerging challenges/issues that those women are facing now as a result of their husband's incarceration which they did not experience before?

S.R.Q.4. Which actions could be designed and implemented to help those women overcome the challenges they face?

- What can be done to address those issues in a sustainable way? Which role can those women play? Which other actors can be involved? Which role can local authorities and central government leaders play respectively?

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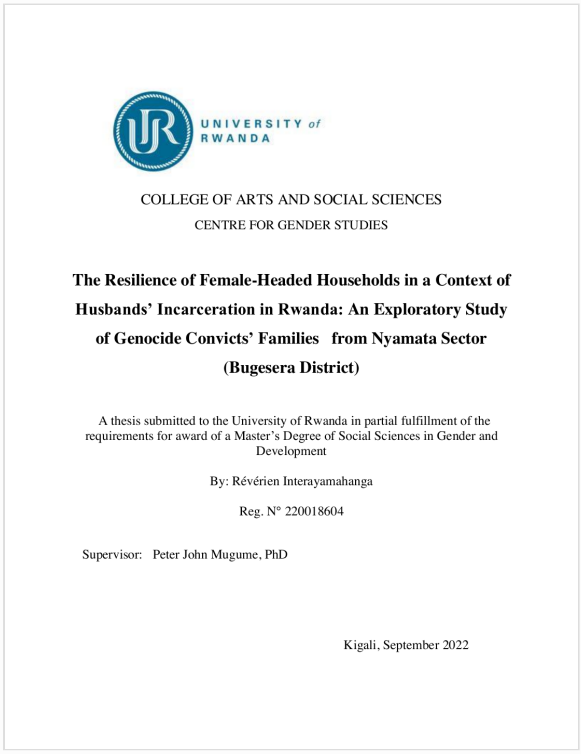

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The Resilience of Female-Headed Households in a Context of Husbands' Incarceration in Rwanda: An Exploratory Study of Genocide Convicts' Families from Nyamata Sector (Bugesera District)

A thesis submitted to the University of Rwanda in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of a Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Gender and Development

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