Outline for

Women's Access to Land in Rwanda

- I. Introduction
 - A. Background to research project
 - B. Objectives of the study
 - C. Research design & methodology
 - D. Summary of report
- II. History of land tenure in Rwanda
 - A. Two systems of land tenure
 - 1. Ubukonde
 - 2. Igikingi-isambu
 - B. Colonial period
 - 1. Transformations in clientship
 - 2. Political dominance of north by central kingdom
 - 3. Institution of western notions of individual ownership of land
 - a. Ownership limited to whites & church
 - D. End of colonialism & first republic
 - 1. Reclamation of ubukonde rights in the north
 - 2. Flight of refugees into exile
- III. Post-conflict & post-genocide context
 - A. War & Arusha Accords
 - B. Genocide
 - C. Return of old-case load refugees
 - D. Closing of camps & return of new-case load refugees
 - E. Insurgency in the North
 - F. Villagisation policy
- IV. Ownership or Use?
 - A. Legal rights to land
 - B. Customary rights to land
 - C. Popular conceptions of land ownership
 - D. Conflicting understandings of rights to land
- V. Gender and access to land
 - A. Women's rights guaranteed by links to men
 - B. Conceptions of women's land rights today
 - C. "Vulnerable" populations
 - D. The marriage problem
 - E. New inheritance law
- VI. Resolution of conflicts over land
 - A. Gacaca and family councils
 - B. Local authorities

- C. Courts
- D. Protection of women's rights
- VII. Emerging issues affecting women's rights to land A. Clash of "custom" with new inheritance law
 - - 1. "Legal" marriage
 - 2. Polygamy
 - B. Land policy and land bill
 - 1. Individual land holdings vs. major land holdings
 - C. Villagisation
- VIII. Recommendations

Women's Access to Land in Rwanda

By

Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD)

"Women constitute the majority of the Rwandan population and labour force, particularly in agriculture, but have faced substantial constraints on their participation in the economy and society. The discriminatory laws and practices in education, employment, inheritance and finance have marginalized women. Consequently, the majority of women in Rwanda remain poor and vulnerable."

— from 1999 Rwanda Development Indicators, Ministry of Finance and Planning

As in other regions in Africa, women in Rwanda face numerous cultural, "customary," social, economic, and legal constraints on their access to land and ownership of property of all sorts. The statement above summarizes what is generally accepted to be the status of women's rights in Rwanda. As for women's rights to land, "the discriminatory laws and practices" have an even greater impact on women and on women headed households due to the scarcity of land. Rwanda has an average population density of over 300 people/km2 and over 91% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Therefore, access to and control over land is crucial to all Rwandans, but to women in particular, especially given the fact that the number of women and child-headed households (the majority of these "children" being girls) has greatly increased as a result of the war and genocide of 1994.

The post-conflict and post-genocide context has thrown several cultural and legal assumptions previously controlling women's access to land into conflict. Furthermore, Rwandan women have been forced into new roles in the family and society because many men were killed in the genocide and massacres and many others have been imprisoned. Other recent developments in Rwanda have also transformed the ways in which decisions about land are made. For example, the Government of Rwanda (GOR) has implemented a new rural settlement policy that requires the population to build their homes in grouped settlements or villages (known as *imidugudu*¹ in Kinyarwanda.) In the past, Rwandans lived scattered over the hills and not in villages as in other parts of Africa. The intent of the new policy is to increase the amount of land available for agricultural activities and encourage a shift towards large landholdings and commercial agriculture.

As part of the Cultural Transformations and Human Rights in Africa research project of the Law and Religion Program of Emory University School of Law, Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD) carried out research to establish what rights, in practice, Rwanda women have on property ownership in general and land ownership in particular.

_

¹ *Imidugudu* is plural and *umudugudu* is singular.

The specific objectives of the RISD study were to establish the main forces influencing women's access to and control over land, to understand how ordinary citizens as well as decision-makers (such as government authorities) at the local level conceive of women's access to land, and to delineate the vectors that protect or guarantee women's control of land. Of particular interest were the influence of "customary" laws and norms, cultural values, religious institutions and norms, statutory law, and national policies in relation to the actual realities on the ground. Researchers paid particular attention to the two major "customary" laws (*ubukonde* and *igikingi*) controlling land tenure in Rwanda, statutory law controlling land tenure in Rwanda (in particular the new law of succession² promulgated in 1999), recent national policies impacting land tenure (in particular the villagisation policy implemented since 1994), the mechanisms by which disputes over land are resolved, cultural ideas regarding women and their capacity to control land, and the impact of women's associations and cooperatives on women's access to land.

Research Design and Methodology

The RISD study was based on the **complete model approach** developed in previous phases of the Cultural Transformations and Human Rights in Africa project. The research design was developed to include as much grassroots input and field research as possible in addition to standard national policy analysis and literature reviews. To account for substantive regional differences in terms of customary land practices, implementation of national policies influencing land distribution, cultural and family norms, and economic activities based on differing ecological zones; research was carried out in communes in four regions of the country.

- **Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture**: Customary land tenure in northwestern Rwanda (*ubukonde*) differs substantially from other regions. This region is also known for a "traditional" acceptance of polygamy due in part to intense cultivation of the especially fertile soil. In addition, Kinigi commune was in the thick of the insurgency crisis from 1996-1999. Insecurity from the insurgency significantly influenced implementation of the villagisation policy here.
- Mugina commune, Gitarama prefecture: This commune was chosen because it falls in the central region of Rwanda controlled by *igikingi* customary land tenure. In addition, Mugina has known two different national land policies, the paysannat system of the First Republic, and the villagisation policy of the post-genocide government. Finally, RISD has a long-term sustainable development project in the commune and wanted to build its knowledge base of land issues there.
- Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture: Kahi is a new commune created following the 1994 genocide and war. It is a semi-arid region, largely settled by old-caseload refugees³ and dominated by pastoral activities although there is also

² {Rwanda, 1999 #415}

³ "Old-caseload refugees" is the term commonly used to refer to Rwandans returning to Rwanda between 1994 and 1996 from exile from 1959-1990.

some agriculture. Prior to 1994, most of Kahi commune was part of the Akagera National Park.

• **Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture**: Kigarama commune reflects the particularities of Kibungo prefecture, which has been almost completely "villagised" according to the national villagisation policy. The installation of large numbers of old-caseload refugees as well as the return of new caseload refugees required land sharing and redistribution that have affected virtually the entire population.

Women's rights in these different socio-economic, cultural, and ecological settings were studied in the context of community and family norms with a view to establish the nature of women's rights to access and/or control land and how these rights have been influenced by statutory law, religion, and customs. The study also focused on whether initiatives to raise awareness about family property laws have influenced opinions on these issues and what the level of women's participation has been in land policy and the land reform process.

Primary data collection for the study was conducted at the grassroots level in the four communes using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) research techniques. The field research teams used open-ended interviews, direct observation, semi-structured focus group sessions, mapping, diagramming, and other PRA exercises to gather data from communal officials, elected grassroots structures, local residents, community elders, church members and leaders, and members and leaders of local women's associations, agricultural cooperatives, and other organizations.

Literature reviews were conducted to study the evolution of land law and land policy in Rwanda from precolonial days through the colonial and postcolonial periods. The literature reviews included published statutory laws, government studies and reports, non-governmental and intergovernmental organization reports and studies, academic research, National University of Rwanda student theses, and other materials.

At the national level, semi-structured interviews (SSI) were conducted with staff of relevant GOR ministries, and other GOR institutions and commissions concerned with land, legal matters, women's affairs, and human rights. SSI were also carried out with representatives of international and national nongovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and other key informants knowledgeable about land, statutory law, customary practices, women's affairs, human rights, and advocacy on land issues.

A data analysis workshop was conducted following the field research to seek input from representatives of selected government ministries and commissions, women's organizations, human rights organizations, key informants knowledgeable about customary and statutory law, life in rural Rwanda, and Rwandan history. At the workshop the research team presented their initial results and asked for input for refining the analysis and detecting gaps in the data. This current report has been prepared for presentation at a formal workshop scheduled for March 2001 to present research results to policy makers, funding agencies, and other concerned parties

and to seek additional input from these key partners. Finally, the workshop will also formulate a plan of action to influence policy around the issues confronted by the research.

Summary of Report

[to be added later]

History of Land Tenure in Rwanda

Upon the arrival of Europeans at the beginning of the 20th century, two principle systems controlled land tenure in Rwanda: *ubukonde* in the northwest (regions today comprised in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri prefectures) and *igikingi* in central, eastern, and southern Rwanda.⁴ These systems were very different but they shared notions of collective ownership of land among members of patrilineages (*imirywango*.)

In the *ubukonde* system, the people gained rights to large tracts of land by being the first to clear and valorize the land. In this system, a lineage held the rights to land commonly and major decisions about managing land holdings were taken by the lineage chef (*umutware w'umuryango* or in speaking of land specifically *umukonde*.) The *abakonde* lineage held political and economic power over their *ubukonde* and could grant rights to others to use land in their territory through a form of clientship known as *ubugererwa*. Clients, "*abagererwa*," in this form of clientship were required to make payments to their patrons, most often in the form of a portion of the harvests or in manual labor in the patron's fields or enclosure.

In the early part of the 20th century with the added military backing of first German and then Belgian colonizers, the *mwami* Yuhi Musinga consolidated the central court's domination of the formerly independent chiefs in the northwest. The *ubukonde* system transformed because of the greater political control by chiefs (*abatware*) under the authority of the *mwami* and central Kingdom. As political control increased the means of gaining *ubukonde* rights changed. In the early part of this evolution, land was still gained through "*gukonda*," but the meaning of the term changed. Chiefs began granting *ubukonde* based on how far the lineage chief could shoot an arrow (*ubukonde bw'umuheto*) or their capacity to clear the bush using a machete (*ubukonde bw'umupanga*)⁷ rather than on who cleared and claimed land independently. During this period, lineages began making gifts to the chiefs in the form of cattle and agricultural products in order to be considered for land allocation. Over time the *ubukonde* system continued to evolve. Eventually, chiefs partitioned (*gukebera*) the virgin land, which was often referred to as *igisagara*, and the beneficiaries of this scheme would then be called *abakonde*.⁸

[part about igikingi goes here.]

⁴ {Andre, 1998 #419:142}

⁵ {Cyiza, 2000 #421}

⁶ {Newbury, 1988 #38:79}

⁷ Interviews with key informants and community elders, Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture. November 2000.

⁸ Interviews with key informants and community elders, Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture. November 2000.

In the 1930s, the *ubukonde* system of the northwest was officially replaced by the *igikingi* system upon orders of *mwami* Musinga. Yet, many former *abakonde* in the northwest did not recognize the new official owners of the land, all of whom were political chiefs sent from the central court to continue the colonization of the northwest.

[more history to be added here.]

Post-conflict and Post-genocide context

[need to add here.]

Ownership or Use?

Land rights in Rwanda today. [need to add part about statutory law here.]

The current Rwandan land tenure system is two-fold, consisting of "customary" land tenure and statutory land tenure systems. In the comprehension of most Rwandans, they own the land that they occupy and use. This is land that they have inherited, bought, or taken possession of through government-sponsored land distribution (or re-distribution) such as the paysannat system or the newer *umudugudu* policy. Yet, according to the state and statutory law, all land in Rwanda belongs to the state (aside from cadastral properties) and citizens retain only usufruct rights. This fundamental contradiction between popular conceptions and state practices is at the root of many land disputes today.

Gender and Land

According to custom in Rwanda, women's land rights are guaranteed by men because women are dependent upon men in her family, "managed" but also protected by her father, then her husband, and finally her male children. In general, land was inherited patrilineally from father to sons. 10 Although land was held commonly by the lineage, each male descendent was allocated a plot for constructing a house and fields for cultivation. Forests and grazing land remained a common holding of the lineage, and the lineage chef (*umutware w'umuryango*) managed these resources. This practice maintained the family's legacy intact, but also guaranteed the son's rights to marry and procreate. In turn, women were guaranteed access to land through their husband's family.

When a woman was married, she automatically gained access to her husband's fields to cultivate in order to meet the needs of her husband, their children and herself. If or when her husband died, a widow remained on the husband's land, holding it in trust for her male children. If the widow was still within her reproductive years, levirate marriage (a brother of the deceased husband marrying the widow) was often practiced. Through levirate marriage the brother-in-law became responsible for the two separate households, but he produced children in place of his brother (i.e. the sons he produced with his brother's wife were considered his brother's sons and not his own.) Yet, levirate marriage sometimes caused conflicts between the different children's competing interests. If there were no children, a widow most often returned

⁹ {Andre, 1998 #419:144}

[{]Gasasira, 1995 #422}

to her own family in the hopes of marrying again. Thus, according to Rwandan customary practices, a widow possessed usufruct rights over the land of the deceased husband until her sons were mature enough to manage the family property. These usufruct rights were conditional on a widow's "good conduct," that is to say they lasted as long as she remained faithful to her husband's lineage either through abstinence or through levirate marriage.

There were other provisions through which women could gain access to land. In many regions of Rwanda, women could receive outright gifts of land from her father or use of land from her father's family. For example, before the genocide a woman, married or not, could at times receive land "as a gift (*urwibutso*) from her elderly father. The gesture [wa]s denoted by the verb *kuraga*" {Pottier, 1997 #413:17}. In Ruhengeri, a newlywed girl could received a gift of land known as "*intekeshwa*" from her parents when they came to help her "get used to her new home" (*gutekesha*) following her wedding ceremony. Similarly a married woman in Ruhengeri would often receive a gift of land known as "*inkuri*" when she presented a newborn baby to her father's family. Both of these land gifts remained the outright property of the woman and were inherited by her sons. In other regions of Rwanda, gifts made on these occasions were most often made in the form of cattle and thus did not have the same implications for land ownership and access as in the northwest.

Other forms of access to land existed for women in the form of temporary use rights over land held by her father's patriline. For example, a daughter rejected by her husband or his family (*indushyi*) could be given a portion of land (called *ingarigari* in the Center and South or *ingaragaza* in the Northwest) from lands held in reserve (*ingarigari*) by the patrilineage for such emergencies. Similary, a woman who never married and did not bear children (*uwagumiwe*) could also receive an allocation of land from the lineage's holdings. The *ingarigari* land was controlled by the lineage chief (*umutware w'umuryango*) who was supposed to permit access to it in the interests of the entire lineage. According to Pottier {, 1997 #413} she "would have access to it for as long as she was deemed in need, if necessary for life. After her death however, the land would be reclaimed by her late husband's nearest patrinkin" {Pottier, 1997 #413:17}. Yet, according to RISD field research, the *ingarigari* land reverted to the woman's brothers when she no longer needed it (in the case that she remarried or reconciled with the husband who rejected her.) The ingarigari land reverted to the woman's brothers.

Even before the genocide, however, these cultural protections for women's access to land were under attack. In general, Rwandan customary norms and practices allocated plots to women and other secondary right holders, as long as this land is not needed by the household. If a man or his family found themselves in need of land, a woman's field (allocated under the customary systems delineated above) could be taken from her for reallocation. Constraints on women's access to land were heightened when land became increasingly scarce, and men's land holdings came under pressure.

¹¹ Interviews with key informants and community elders, Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture. November 2000.

¹³ Interviews in Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture, November 2000; Interviews in Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, December 2000; {Pottier, 1997 #413; Andre, 1998 #419; de Lame, 1996 #389}

¹⁴ This was in the research team's report, but I need to know where it came from?

¹⁵ Key informant interviews, Kinigi commune, Ruhenheri prefecture, November 2000, and Kigali, January 2001.

Conceptions of women's land rights today

As explained earlier, custom plays a major role in determining land claims today in rural Rwanda. Among rural respondents, both men and women hold a very strong conviction that the family land and property belong to the head of the family (*umutware w'urugo*) who is often a man, but in certain circumstances can be a woman. ¹⁶ In most regions, land is considered to be family property and is used by either men or women in the best interests of the family. In an ideal situation decisions about land are made through mutual understanding between husband and wife. Yet, many male and female respondents declared that a woman could never be equal to a man in terms of knowing how to best manage family resources. They backed this argument by citing Genesis 2: 18, 20-23:

Kandi uwiteka Imana iravuga ati "si byiza ko uyu muntu aba wenyine; reka muremere umufasha umukwiriye." ... Uwiteka Imana isinziriza uwo muntu ubuticura, arasinzira: imukuramo urubavu rumwe, ihasubiza inyama: urwo rubavu Uwiteka Imana yakuye mure uwo muntu, iruhindura umugore imushyira uwo muntu. Aravuga ati "uyu ni igufwa ryo mu magufwa yanjye, N'akara ko mu mara yanjye. Azitwa Umugore kiko yakuwe mu mugabo." ¹⁷

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him." ... So the Lord caused the man to fall into a sleep; and while the man was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'Woman' for she was taken out of man. (Genesis 2: 18, 20-23)

Thus for many Rwandans, Christian (and in particular Roman Catholic) doctrine has been synthesized with tradition notions to justify the belief that women should act as a helper or companion whose duty is to assist a man in effecting his duties.

Although many Rwandan women accept the notion that the woman should be a less than an equal partner in marriage, they insist that land and property are held in common by a husband and his wife and that decisions about it should be taken together. However, most men

¹⁷ Two important variants in translation are interesting to note. First of all, the word for "man" in English is translated as "umuntu" in the Kinyarwanda. The word, "umuntu" designates a person without indicating the sex of the person. The word in Kinyarwanda, most commonly used for "man," is "*umugabo*," a word which necessarily implicates the notion of marriage, and thus not possible in this Bible verse where the "man" is not yet married. Another interesting note about the Kinyarwanda translation is the word "helper" of verse 18 in the English version, which is translated to an equivalent word, "*umufasha*." In common parlance, Rwandan men often refer to their wives as "*umufasha wanjye*" or "my helper" as the literal term "*umugore*" meaning both "wife" and "woman" has a negative connotation.

¹⁶ The most common of these instances is a widow, who holds her husband's land in trust for her male children. The next most common instance is that of orphans or girl-headed households.

encountered by the researchers argued that men have greater rights over land as land has "always belonged to men." Men used several Rwandan proverbs to justify their arguments:

Umugore abyara umuryango w'ahandi. Women give birth to an outside lineage (and thus cannot herself own land in that lineage.)

Umugore ntagira ubwoko, afata ubw'umugabo. Women do not have an identity, they adopt their husband's.

Nta mugore ugabana iz'iwabo, azihawamo. A woman does not inherit from her family, it is given to her. ¹⁸

[Need to refer to Crepeau for precise translations and explanation.]

In general, men believe that women cannot be landowners because women cannot go to war to become heroes (*intwari*.) As discussed in an earlier section, land (*ikigingi*) under one of the "traditional" land tenure systems in Rwanda was awarded to "heroes" (these heroes could be defined either by heroism in battle or by political preference.)

In Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, study participants, especially men, were very outspoken about women's lesser rights to family property. They asserted that men and women can only have equal rights to land as brothers and sisters inheriting the father's land. Yet, in a marriage, women cannot hold equal claim over the home or land because "it is men who toil to secure the needs of the home" while women come and find everything *in situ* "except for a few domestic utensils such as plates, saucepans, and her clothing." Their conclusion is that it is men who own everything and have the right to own it.¹⁹

The proverbs used by respondents as well as their generalizations about women and land point to the main risk for Rwandan women vis-à-vis land: women's access to land depends on her good relations with men whether it is her husband, her husband's family, her brothers, or her father. While women accept that it is "good enough" to use her husband's land, they recognize that their rights are only "guaranteed" if they have a loving husband who respects them. Furthermore the former customs through which women gained land independently have largely passed away due to the problems of land scarcity and population pressures. Before the genocide in the early 1990s *ingarigari* land was still given to daughters, but her brothers were likely to pressure her into giving the land up early {Pottier, 1997 #413:17}. Since the genocide, however, women and girls are unlikely to have access to their own lineage's land except in cases where everyone else in her own lineage was killed.²⁰

"Vulnerable" populations

¹⁸ Informant interviews, Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture, November 2000, Mugina commune, Gitarama prefecture, November 2000, Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, November 2000, and Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, December 2000.

¹⁹ Informant interviews, Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, December 2000.

²⁰ Informant interviews, Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, December 2000 and Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture, November 2000.

The "traditional" notion in Rwanda is to protect "vulnerable" individuals including widows, orphans, and girls rejected by their husbands. As delineated above Rwandan culture respected provisions to guarantee land, and thus survival, to these populations. Yet, the post genocide and post conflict context has greatly challenged these "traditional" notions. Today in Rwanda, widows, orphans, and women whose husbands are in prison constitute the vast majority of family heads. The intensity of need in Rwanda today is such that families and/or society are not capable of dealing with all of those in need. Thus in many cases, widows, orphans, and other vulnerable populations are denied their cultural and statutory rights to land and other resources.

The Government of Rwanda (GOR), the United Nations, other inter-governmental bodies, and international NGOs have tried to take into account the special needs of vulnerable populations. For example, in many instances implementation of the *umudugudu* policy attempted to assist vulnerable people. In the communes involved in the study, women-headed households received equal consideration for land grants as male-headed households under the *umudugudu* policy. In Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, certain vulnerable populations were given special treatment in consideration for land grants: widows, single women considered to be "too old for marriage," genocide survivors, and other women-headed households. These types of households received land grants (between 60m x 80m to100m x 100m) equal to those of male-headed households. Despite this "equal treatment" vis-à-vis land redistribution in Kibungo, many former landholders in this region believe that their rights to land have been violated (please see villagisation section below.) The study was unable to establish whether women or other "vulnerable populations" were unfairly treated in this redistribution.

The study found that women who had not had a legally recognized marriage were the most vulnerable to losing their claims to land. The difficulties of these women are discussed in the following section.

The marriage problem

Today in Rwanda, marriage is a multi-step process requiring three different parts: "traditional" marriage ceremony, legal marriage, and religious marriage. To be considered a "real" marriage by many Rwandans, all three steps must be realized. Despite this tendency, few marriages in the countryside today manage to receive legal recognition as very little of the population goes through the legal marriage process (the only part of "marriage" recognized by the government.

The "traditional" marriage ceremony consists of the transfer of a cow or other property from the husband's family to the bride's family. Most often this part of the marriage ceremonies is respected by all Rwandans either in the regular exchange of bride wealth before other stages of the marriage ceremony or instances of "forced marriage" the exchange of cattle or other goods after the fact. The majority of marriages in the countryside today meet this minimal

Need to find statistical data from either ONAPO report or UNICEF report to substantiate this claim ???

²² Informant interviews, Kinigi commune, Ruhengeri prefecture, November 2000; Mugina commune, Gitarama prefecture, November 2000; Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, November 2000; and Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, December 2000.

requirement of marriage in the social sense. Yet, marriages based on this "traditional" exchange of bride wealth are not recognized by the Rwandan state and thus do not protect women in the event of a divorce or other rupture. Children born in such an arrangement have legal rights over their father's land or property only if they can prove their paternity. In such marriage arrangements, women gain usufruct rights to land which depend upon the goodwill of her husband or his family or eventually on her children's inheritance rights to such property.

A "legal" marriage in Rwanda consists of going to the commune office and taking an oath on the Rwandan national flag before local government officials. The marriage documents require the reporting of the amount of bride wealth paid by the husband's family to the woman's family. In Rwanda today, very few newly married couples are "legally" married. For example, in Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture 60% of women are not legally married.²³ Numerous reasons were cited for the low number of legal marriages. The most frequently cited reason was the expense involved in a legal marriage. A legal marriage requires not only the bridewealth of the "traditional" marriage, but also commune fees for marriage certificates and other identity papers required to receive the marriage certificate. Although not regularly enforced today, in the pregenocide period, young men had to prove that they had a house and plot in order to marry legally.²⁴ In the case of recently repatriated Rwandans ("old-caseload" refugees") living in Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, they feel that "legal" marriage in Rwanda is "too legalistic." They said that going to the commune and "swearing on the national flag" did not have any sense for marriage. ²⁵ In addition, married couples have the social obligation of throwing parties for both the "traditional" and legal marriage ceremonies. This sort of money is out of the reach of the vast majority of rural Rwandans today.

_

²³ Interviews with local officials, Kigarama commune, Kibungo prefecture, December 2000.

²⁴ Need to find citation for this.

²⁵ Interviews with residents, Kahi commune, Mutara prefecture, December 2000.

Glossary of Kinyarwanda Terms

indushyi
uwagumiwe
ingarigari or ingaragaza
gukonda
inkuri
intekeshwa
igikingi/ibikingi
ubukonde
ubukonde bw'inzogera
ubukonde bw'isuka
gukebera
abakonde
abagererwa
insisiro
abatware