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**Growing more than coffee:**  
Global narratives and national reconciliation within the Rwandan coffee industry

Katie R. Grandelli

Hollins University  
International Studies Honors Thesis  
Dr. Jon Bohland  
May 2020

To the world we dream about and the one we live in now

*Community*

*We come together over coffee. It is a constant and a catalyst, common ground uniting us with the earth from which it grows and the farmers who work the land.*

*Cooperation, culture, and communication.*

*Love, inspiration and connection.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to understand the Rwandan coffee industry following the genocide of 1994. The two major questions that are asked of the Rwandan coffee industry are the roles that it plays in reconciliation efforts and in global perception. The data examined in this thesis ranges from the marketing strategies of internationally popular coffee brands to an interview at a local coffee shop that specializes in Rwandan coffee products. This research engages in discussions of consumable goods as economic stimulants in post-conflict situations and indicators of neoliberal buying behavior on the part of consumers. Final analysis within this thesis suggests that the coffee industry has played and will continue to play a key role of Rwanda's greater global growth.

**Keywords:** Rwandan coffee industry, global perception of Rwanda, economic development, post-conflict reconciliation

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<sup>1</sup>Quote found in the world's largest Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Chicago, Illinois, opened in November 2019. See Figure 1.a in the Appendix for reference picture.

## Acknowledgements

*To Dr. Jon Bohland*, thank you for believing in me and letting me run wild with this idea. I am so honored to have done this project under your guidance and knowledge. Thanks for the coffee shop recommendation!

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#wordsmatter

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

My memories of coffee start from a young age. Some of the first ones are from the kitchen table when I was probably six or seven years old. My mom would let me stir her coffee and watch the spoonful of sweetened condensed milk turn the black coffee into that desirable soft brown color. Some years later, I could be found (almost) unashamedly putting a picture of a beautiful cappuccino on my Instagram while in London with my friends. Mention rose flavoring to me, and I can remember the pink rose iced coffee I had while spending a week in Saudi Arabia.

Why is our modern lifestyle and society drawn to coffee? In short, it is useful. Coffee can be so many different things. It can be the lifeblood of university students. Coffee is the sustaining force for late night and early morning projects. A rotten attitude can shift into a well-meaning smile after a cup of coffee. And it can bring peoples and communities together, no matter how large or small. Coffee is universal with its many meanings and uses.

The greater coffee industry has more of a purpose than just providing caffeine for the masses. Coffee and its production has been the stimulant for economic growth in many nations—Rwanda being one of these. However, the case of Rwanda's coffee industry is unique. Their coffee industry was directly affected by the Rwandan genocide of 1994; today the industry still is in a position to shape post-conflict economic stimulus and growth.<sup>2</sup> This thesis asks specifically how the coffee industry has affected post-conflict reconciliation movements as well as the greater global narratives about Rwanda following 1994.

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<sup>2</sup>Isaac A. Kamola, "The Global Coffee Economy and the Production of Genocide in Rwanda," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2007), 587.

## **Outline of Research**

This thesis begins with a historical background on the coffee, the Rwandan genocide, and the Rwandan coffee industry. My data collection and analysis methodologies are outlined preceding the theory for this thesis. In my theory examination, I discuss my usage of a post-colonial feminist geopolitical theory for my research. Historical background on Rwanda, the Rwandan genocide, and the Rwandan coffee industry leads into the literature review. This literature review engages two key discussions: economic development programs and the status of reconciliation movements. These two elements provide a groundwork for the international community's perception of Rwanda following the genocide. The conclusion of this thesis presents areas for future study, research limitations within this project, and ties all analysis into a greater global discussion. It seeks to place the themes from this research into the larger discourse of the international coffee industry.

## **Analysis Methodology and Data Collection Strategies**

The first mode of analysis used is a content analysis. It is beneficial to subject matter such as documents, speeches, or other written documentation because it provides a way to quantify the data into a system that can be measured. Content analysis can be defined as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.”<sup>3</sup> Further discussion of content analysis tools such as the coding of phrases and their specific coders are discussed with their specific sections of analysis.

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<sup>3</sup>David E. McNabb, *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 2010), 320.



Discourse analysis is the second method in this thesis. Discourse analysis considers written or spoken communication like content analysis, but has a specific focus on how the language itself is effectively used to spread said communications.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, discourse analysis studies the rhetorical means used within texts.<sup>5</sup>

The first data set is rhetoric regarding the Rwandan coffee industry itself. This data includes articles from Rwandan news sources as well as how Rwandan coffee is marketed and depicted by Starbucks and independent international coffee blogs. This chapter engages in a content analysis on the narratives of Rwandan published by both Starbucks and the coffee blogs as well as the Rwandan news media. These two differing elements of rhetoric create a global depiction of how the Rwandan coffee industry is described from a national standpoint and by those simply purchasing and consuming Rwandan coffee products.

The second data set is gathered from an in-person interview with the owner of Land of a Thousand Hills coffee shop in Daleville, Virginia, from March 2020. This interview is analyzed using a discourse analysis to provide as full a picture as possible on the role that local coffee shops play within the greater coffee industry and how twenty-first century consumerism has changed to reflect consumer tendencies. Land of a Thousand Hills was selected based on its proximity to me and the shop's close ties to the contemporary Rwandan coffee industry.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 323-324.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 324.

<sup>6</sup>At the time of completion of this project, Land of a Thousand Hills had rebranded to be called Nature's Cool Coffee Company. This change does not directly affect the data collected for this thesis, and it will be referred to as Land of a Thousand Hills throughout this project. For more information on this change, please see <https://www.naturescoolcoffeeco.com/#/>.

## Theoretical Framework

This thesis engages post-colonial feminist geopolitical theory. Such a theory is a significant vantage point for this research because it provides a way to look at the everyday occurrences that are taken for granted in an international light. It “links international representation of everyday life” while providing a real and personal perspective.<sup>7</sup>

A feminist geopolitical theory seeks to relocate and individually examine elements that have traditionally been lumped together and studied from afar.<sup>8</sup> Inclusion of feminist theory within the greater geopolitics creates three different benefits. The first is that there is now a way to “embody geopolitics” and study deeper into representation and presentation of certain subjects.<sup>9</sup> Next, it provides a better location and grounding of study instead of the traditional western habits of creating distance between the researcher and the subjects. Finally, feminist geopolitics asks how international occurrences and representations can be based in normal, everyday life.<sup>10</sup> All three of these elements of feminist geopolitical theory are important in this thesis since this research asks all of these questions of Rwanda, its coffee industry, and how both interact with the rest of the world.

This theory is in fact much larger than the word “feminist,” and it does not seek to provide analysis through a specifically gendered discourse.<sup>11</sup> Rather, the usage of the word “feminist” demonstrates the emphasis being on the study of issues from the bottom up, taking a

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<sup>7</sup>Lorraine Dowler and Joanne Sharp, “A Feminist Geopolitics?” *Space and Polity* 5, no. 3 (2001), 171.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 175.

<sup>9</sup>Rachel Pain, “Globalized fear? Towards an emotional geopolitics,” *Progress in Human Geography* 33, no. 4 (2009), 476.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 476-477.

<sup>11</sup>Joanne Sharp, “Doing Feminist Political Geographies,” in *Mapping Women, Making Politics*, eds. Lynn A. Staeheli, Eleonore Kofman, and Linda J. Peake, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 88.

much more grounded approach. It seeks to grapple with the immense scale of international issues by looking at them in their most basic and honest nature. Utilizing a feminist method for this thesis means it is much more of an interpretive study rather than a quantitative analysis.<sup>12</sup>

Providing feminist geopolitics with the post-colonial lens allows a vantage point into Rwanda at a level that could not be obtained from other methods. Usage of post-colonial theory in this case of Rwanda is imperative because it provides a framework to understand the colonialist legacy that remains still embedded in the country. Post-colonial analysis is direct attention and focus given to the western imperialism remnants in a society following decolonization. It is derived from the fact that narratives surrounding first world countries vary wildly from those narratives for third world countries. Results of a post-colonial analysis show these changes.<sup>13</sup>

## **Historical Background**

The modern cup of coffee has come a long way to sit on your table. Anthony Wild states that coffee was present in ancient Egyptian and Greek civilizations, as well as being possibly referenced in the Old Testament, but both of these claims can be boiled down to an argument of linguistics and semantics.<sup>14</sup> More definitively, the origins of coffee as we have come to know it can be traced back to the Middle East, specifically in Turkey and Yemen, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> Coffee then was not nearly as pleasant as it is today, for it was much less

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 91.

<sup>13</sup>Brad S. Long and Albert J. Mills, "Globalization, postcolonial theory, and organizational analysis: Lessons from the Rwandan genocide," *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 4, no. 4 (2008), 393.

<sup>14</sup>Anthony Wild, *Coffee: A Dark History* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2004), 27.

<sup>15</sup>Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), 5.

refined, giving it a “burnt, bitter, and gritty” taste.<sup>16</sup> But whatever the taste, this coffee was the basis for the phenomenon we know now. Coffee-houses in Turkey in 1603 were akin to the London taverns and pubs.<sup>17</sup>

Coffee rapidly grew in popularity across Europe, and that spread translated into the need for more production. It was brought to Rwanda in 1905 by German colonists who had discovered that the climate and land lent itself well to coffee growing.<sup>18</sup> German control of Rwanda transitioned to the Belgians by 1922. By 1927, Rwandan coffee in international markets was selling so well that the Belgian colonial powers set aggressive and forceful quotas, relegating most coffee production to be done under slave-labor like conditions. Under policies such as these, the Belgian control in Rwanda was set to “integrate Rwanda into the world economy.”<sup>19</sup>

However, these colonialist policies in Rwanda exacerbated the tension growing between the Hutus and the Tutsis. Conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis had existed for years based on the legacy of German and Belgian colonization. But it was not ethnic by origin; the divide was more derived from lineage and could be quite fluid in greater Rwandan society. Regardless, the divide existed and had manifested itself into the makeup of the societal structure. German and Belgian colonial powers used this divide within society to further their colonial agendas. It took the form of a major class schism, with the Tutsis being left in positions of power following independence in 1962 with the departure of the Belgians.<sup>20</sup> This split caused by German and Belgian policies pulled the Hutus and the Tutsis apart from each other and caused conflict that would turn deadly.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid, 6.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 8.

<sup>18</sup>J. A. Kieran, “The Origins of Commercial Arabica Coffee Production in East Africa,” *African Historical Studies* 2, no. 1 (1969), 60.

<sup>19</sup>Kamola, “The Global Coffee Economy and the Production of Genocide in Rwanda,” 577-8.

<sup>20</sup>Norman M. Naimark, *Genocide: A World History* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2017) 131.

By the time Rwanda gained independence in 1962, the coffee industry accounted for one of Rwanda's major exports and a primary source of income. However, the road to that status was neither easy nor bloodless. The divide between Hutus and Tutsis existed in seemingly every element of Rwandan society, government, and even the coffee industry itself. Both national leadership and local positions of power periodically changed from Hutu to Tutsi control in the years prior to the start of the genocide in 1994. A coup d'état was carried out in 1973 wherein the existing Tutsi government was overthrown by Hutu vigilantes and politicians. Juvénal Habyarimana gained the Rwandan presidency as a result of this coup. This government change was continually contested, resulting in a civil war that lasted from 1990 to 1993. The coup and this civil war is commonly accepted as a major precursor to the actions of 1994.<sup>21</sup>

The Arusha Accords that brought this civil war to an end helped put in place a fragile peace until a new government could be elected and more peacekeeping aid from the United Nations could arrive to the country. However, these actions were not enough to keep violence from breaking out again.<sup>22</sup>

On April 6, 1994, President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane suspiciously crashed. While the cause of the crash has yet to be fully understood, the action sent the country into its worst one hundred days. Rwanda, as years of post-colonial stress and hateful sentiment reached a breaking point, erupted.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, 132.

<sup>22</sup>Jennie E. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda* (Monroe: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 16.

<sup>23</sup>Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 1995), 212.

Hutus, enraged by the sudden and highly suspicious death of their president, started upon the slaughter of Tutsis and even of moderate Hutus. Within the next four months, over 800,000 people would be dead and more than a million displaced.<sup>24</sup> The genocide only ended when the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), based out of Uganda at the time when the genocide started, controlled enough Rwandan territory and the capital city of Kigali.<sup>25</sup> A shaky peace was established on July 4, 1994. The long road to recovery and reconciliation now began.

This tragedy helped shape the international community's modern conceptions and definitions of genocide as well as creating better response systems to claims of genocide and ethnic violence.<sup>26</sup> The legacies of the Rwandan Genocide haunt Rwanda and the rest of the world to this day. The Rwandan coffee industry was not immune to the genocide, and as such its legacies and development following the genocide need further examination.

The current state of the Rwandan coffee industry is one of prosperity and growth, but it has not always been so. Following Rwandan independence in 1962, the coffee industry went through periods of instability such as the global coffee crisis in the 1990s that caused prices to plummet and the genocide in 1994. By 2000, the coffee infrastructure in Rwanda was all but destroyed. Now the government boasts a National Coffee Strategy that helps guide the direction and upward growth of the industry as well as stabilizing prices to protect farmers.<sup>27</sup> The National Coffee Strategy is focused on Rwanda's ability to produce high quality coffee beans which

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<sup>24</sup>Naimark, *Genocide: A World History*, 135.

<sup>25</sup>Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 293.

<sup>26</sup>Naimark, *Genocide: A World History*, 136.

<sup>27</sup>C. Cameron, "The History of Rwandan Coffee & The Story Behind Epiphanie Muhirwa," Perfect Daily Grind, edited by N. Bhatt, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.perfectdailygrind.com/2015/04/drop-coffee-epiphanie-muhirwa/>.

garner a much higher price in the global market because of their quality and ability to be marketed as a specialty and boutique coffee.<sup>28</sup>

Since 2000, Rwanda has now become one of the top twenty-five largest coffee growing nations. However, Rwandan coffee makes up less than 1% of the world coffee market, but that is due to the high quality of the coffee. Rwandan coffee is not mass produced.<sup>29</sup> The coffee does not come from massive estates or plantations, but rather from small farms and cooperatives. There are close to half a million micro-coffee farms in Rwanda, and these small farms are what give Rwanda the ability to market such niche, specialty coffee.<sup>30</sup> These small farms also speak to the great aspect of community that surrounds the industry in Rwanda.

Rwandan coffee has quickly climbed to the top tier of international coffees, bringing home the awards of “Best of the Best” and “Coffee Lover’s Choice” at the 3rd Annual Ernesto Illy International Coffee Awards in 2018 held in New York City.<sup>31</sup> Rwandan coffee beat the typical coffee powerhouse nations from South American and eastern Asia.<sup>32</sup> While its global victories are still growing, Rwanda has long pushed its coffee products to become better and better at its national Cup of Excellence competition, held every year since 2008 in Kigali.<sup>33</sup> Rwandan coffee is poised to become a key player in the greater global coffee industry.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “Rwanda,” Coffee Hunter, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.coffeehunter.com/coffee-country/rwanda/>.

<sup>30</sup> Alex Mastin, “Rwanda Coffee: Everything You Need To Know,” Home Grounds, accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.homegrounds.co/rwanda-coffee/>.

<sup>31</sup> Edmund Kagire, “Awards pour in as Rwanda produces world’s best coffees at tasting fair,” The East African, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Rwanda-produces-world-best-coffees-at-tasting-fair/2560-48079-14-p9wan8z/index.html>.

<sup>32</sup> “Rwanda beats Brazil, Colombia as “Best of the Best” coffee producer,” Further Africa, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://furtherafrica.com/2018/10/21/rwanda-beats-brazil-colombia-as-best-of-the-best-coffee-producer/>.

<sup>33</sup> “Rwanda: Small but mighty,” Global Coffee Report, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://gcrmag.com/profile/view/rwanda-small-but-mighty>.

## Literature Review

This literature review provides a groundwork on two fronts. The first front is a review on economic development and rebuilding efforts in Rwanda. The second is the national and international reconciliation efforts as well as the legal actions that took place in Rwanda following the genocide. These two elements work together to create a baseline understanding of Rwanda's position in the international community within the scope of this research.

This thesis sits in the intersection of economic development and reconciliation efforts. Economic development must be included in any and all reconciliation efforts.<sup>34</sup> This is not to diminish the role that social work has in reconciliation, but to highlight the sometimes overlooked importance of economic improvements. Society must be rebuilt following tragedy, and so must the economy as well. If the economy is left untouched, the entirety of reconciliation work might as well be deemed useless.<sup>35</sup> In the case of reconciliation work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “there was generally a deep desire by the communities in question to improve their economic circumstances despite past conflict.”<sup>36</sup> It is not hard to include economic improvements in reconciliatory work; in some cases, economic development was readily accepted in societies. The need to improve the economic conditions of estranged communities is more than enough incentive for cooperation and reconciliation.<sup>37</sup> However promising this hope might be, economic improvements cannot automatically solve the wounds of past violence.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Lina Strupinskiene, “‘What is reconciliation and are we there yet?’ Different types and levels of reconciliation: A case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Journal of Human Rights* 16, no. 4 (2017), 454.

<sup>35</sup>Graeme Simpson, “Reconstruction and Reconciliation: Emerging from Transition,” *Development in Practice* 7, no. 4 (1997), 476.

<sup>36</sup>Vince Gamberale, “The Role of Economic Development in Reconciliation: One Experience from Bosnia and Herzegovina,” in *Pathways to Reconciliation: Between Theory and Practice*, eds. Cleo Fleming and Philipa Rothfield, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 155.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>Simpson, “Reconstruction and Reconciliation,” 478.



Regardless, economic improvement measures are good ways for communities and nations to prepare for long-term reconciliation efforts because of the community that such efforts create.<sup>39</sup>

Economic development can bring reconciliation efforts to the international level as well. In joining with local business enterprises, international corporations not only can bring in aid to the local community, they can make the local business much more profitable and successful.<sup>40</sup> For post-conflict cases, businesses trying to regain their profitability are sometimes unable to do so by just operating in local markets. The assistance of larger companies is greatly helpful for these businesses because then local businesses are able to bring in more revenue that can benefit their immediate community. With these joint business maneuvers, both the local and the international companies are better off.<sup>41</sup>

This partnership is a hallmark of the broader discussions within “peace through trade” literature and theories. As its name suggests, this theory champions the idea that nations with the ability to trade will create more opportunities and incentives for its people to work towards a common end goal of profitability and better lifestyles.<sup>42</sup> More opportunities for trade also drastically reduces the chances of conflict breaking out within the nation or armed disputes between nations.<sup>43</sup> This is not a new theory of politics and economics by any means; it dates back to the middle of the eighteenth century and was heavily discussed by philosophers of that time. Even then, peace was called “the natural effect of trade.”<sup>44</sup> If communities in post-conflict

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<sup>39</sup>Gamberale, “The Role of Economic Development in Reconciliation,” 157.

<sup>40</sup>Krishna Kunwar, “Promoting Social Reconciliation in Postconflict Societies: Selected Lessons from USAID’s Experience,” *USAID Program and Operations Assessment Report 24* (1999), 17.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>42</sup>Karol Boudreaux, “The Business of Reconciliation: Entrepreneurship and Commercial Activity in Post-Conflict Rwanda,” *Economic Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2007), 7.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Solomon W. Polachek and Carlos Seiglie, “Trade, Peace and Democracy: An Analysis of Dyadic Dispute,” *IZA Discussion Paper* 2170, (2006), 7.

nations are provided with means for economic development and increased trading opportunities, the entire nation has a much better chance for success and stability.

The GDP of Rwanda fell by 58% in 1994, but today it now boasts one of the fastest growing African economies.<sup>45</sup> There are a few major elements that contribute to this growth, and one is the efforts to increase gender equality. Such equality has come more so out of survival than political change, but regardless of the origins of such movements, women now play a much more active role in reducing Rwandan poverty.<sup>46</sup> Women hold many more entrepreneurial roles in Rwanda than they traditionally did.<sup>47</sup>

Entrepreneurial efforts in Rwanda in general have greatly increased following 1994, especially within the coffee industry. Not only have enhanced economic activities in the coffee industry created positive growth, they might have also caused some elements of positive social change among coffee farmers. Such impacts have yet to be fully realized, but the potential for positive change exists where it previously had not before.<sup>48</sup>

However, not all efforts in Rwanda to develop what the rest of the world would see as “modern policies” and steps in the right direction have yielded positive results. In the case of land reform and land ownership, many problems have yet to be worked out. With the role of women so dramatically increased since 1994, the legal system has yet to catch up. The legal system is still rooted in ways that discourage women from owning land due to the long and deep

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<sup>45</sup>Karen E. Woody and Abbey R. Stemler, “The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Rebuilding a Nation: the Rwandan Model,” *Minnesota Journal of Int’l Law* 28, no. 2 (2019), 392 and 368.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 394-395.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>Jutta M. Tobias and Karol C. Boudreaux, “Entrepreneurship and Conflict Reduction in the Post Genocide Rwandan Coffee Industry,” *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* 24, no. 2 (2011), 239.

ancestral history of land ownership in Rwanda.<sup>49</sup> The system is still under a lot of duress following 1994 and has yet to catch up to the society that it now needs to serve in order to continue a culture of economic growth.<sup>50</sup>

One system of economic development that was poised for success was the Rwandan mineral industry. In 1996, it embarked on a path for ten years of economic growth when it was opened up to foreign companies for investment.<sup>51</sup> This move appeared to be smart by the Rwandan government and modeled other sub Saharan African countries' policies of the same type.<sup>52</sup> The potential for a highly successful ten years did not come to fruition because government policy was not enacted in such a way to allow foreign investment to cooperate with existing Rwandan labor and mining operations.<sup>53</sup> The Rwandan GDP did not increase as the government hoped it would at the outset of the program. The one good result borne out of this economic plan was that the growing Rwandan labor force was able to easily provide the labor power for these developments.<sup>54</sup>

Economic development in Rwanda has seen both success and failure after the genocide in 1994. Small scale efforts have had more growth than larger efforts, but such efforts do not help to increase the entire economy as much as a few successes in large industries. The coffee industry has seen economic improvement, but again the main question now is if such effort can be translated into large scale movements, or if it can only stay at the community level.

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<sup>49</sup>Jamie Crook, "Promoting Peace and Economic Security in Rwanda through Fair and Equitable Land Rights," *California Law Review* 94, (2006), 1489.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 1490.

<sup>51</sup>Rachel Perks, "Re-framing the nature and success of the 'post-conflict' mineral reform agenda in Rwanda," *The Extractive Industries and Society* 3, (2016), 329.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 339.

The first thing that must be brought up in discussions of reconciliation in Rwanda is what the word reconciliation means for the country. Rwanda experienced one hundred incredibly bloody days of violence, and to ask the entire country to forgive itself for such actions is virtually unattainable. What can be asked of the people, however, is to look for ways in which they can find compromise and small agreements. The biggest thing that the country must now focus on during this process of “reconciliation” is to make sure that events like the genocide are not able to happen again. Only then can forgiveness, healing, and understanding start to take place in Rwanda.<sup>55</sup>

The reconciliation efforts that have taken place in Rwanda following 1994 have been mainly based out of the economic sector. The communities that have seen the greatest involvement of women are more likely to work towards reconciliation than communities that are still primarily male-dominated. The role that women entrepreneurs have played in Rwanda has reached beyond just economics; they now have the ability to bring people back together and into more welcoming spaces.<sup>56</sup> This is especially the case within the coffee industry. In older, more established coffee mills, Hutus and Tutsis are much more willing to work together than in newer coffee mills. Their attitudes towards work collaboration and general reconciliation are more positive in these situations than in other locations.<sup>57</sup>

Besides these coffee mills, other areas within the coffee industry have seen some reconciliatory efforts due to the involvement of outside NGOs and private investment. These

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<sup>55</sup>Eugenia Zorbas, “Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” *African Journal of Legal Studies* 1, no. 1 (2004), 30-31.

<sup>56</sup>Woody and Stemler, “The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Rebuilding a Nation: the Rwandan Model,” 397.

<sup>57</sup>Tobias and Boudreaux, “Entrepreneurship and Conflict Reduction in the Post Genocide Rwandan Coffee Industry,” 235.

efforts have established coffee cooperatives which are now experiencing positive economic growth as results of the external funding. However, the funding is more geared towards economic development instead of direct reconciliation efforts. Regardless, the introduction of more economic incentive has created new opportunities for reconciliation as well as more positive attitudes in general in Rwanda.<sup>58</sup> The support received from the outside community following the violence of 1994 has helped to strengthen the healing efforts taking place in Rwanda.<sup>59</sup>

The efforts made towards reconciliation by the Rwandan government have raised more questions than answers. The government of Rwanda, following 1994, created a prosecuting system to parallel the international tribunal set up by the United Nations to try the perpetrators of the genocide. However, this move was not as successful as it was hoped to be, given that there were only ten Rwandan lawyers alive following the genocide. It was a slow, cumbersome process for Rwanda to try to bring the perpetrators to justice on their own terms.<sup>60</sup> This system has since grown immensely and as of 2004, brought 5,500 people to trial over actions in 1994.

Still, this justice system is not without problems. The major concerns over its actions are that the current government now seems to be following the same ideas that were in place before April 1994, causing great concern that violence might break out again.<sup>61</sup> Coupled with national attempts for reconciliation, there have also been community level movements initiated by the government to give other spaces for dialogue and discussion. The Gacaca Courts were established in 2001, and they were similar to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Zorbas, "Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda," 34-35.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, 32.

Commission after the lifting of apartheid regulations. The Gacaca Courts were community based truth-telling missions to bring to light the still unanswered questions and actions from the genocide.<sup>62</sup> Thousands of Rwandans were arrested, and thousands more waited to testify against those who had wronged them. The system was overloaded and experienced a great backlog.<sup>63</sup>

While the Gacaca system might appear on the surface to be a good measure to bring closure to some of the remaining stress within Rwanda, it did not do so fully. The legal system embedded in it was clumsy and used judges who did not have the right experience to deal with intricate, incredibly complex, and community based disputes. The participants who testified also experienced great trauma while having to relive their memories of the genocide in order to bring justice against the perpetrators.<sup>64</sup> As with the national legal system, the same worry about ethnic divides and superiority resides in the Gacaca system as well, leaving some who might wish to testify unsure of their belief in this process.<sup>65</sup> The Gacaca Courts still did bring about some resolution, but it was far from what its original purpose had hoped for. Allowing justice and reconciliation to be done at a community level was a good idea by the government, but the nature of community-based initiatives is a double edged sword. For the Rwandan coffee industry, community based economic incentives have shown good results in both economic and reconciliation movements. Within the legal system that was supposed to bring answers and truth, communities have yet to fully trust each other and the system that could bring them justice.

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<sup>62</sup>Allison Corey and Sandra F. Joireman, "Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda," *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (2004), 82.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid, 84.

<sup>65</sup>Zorbas, "Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda," 36.

The efforts of the international community, more specifically the United Nations, in the months leading up to the start of the genocide tell a complex story. The UN already had boots on the ground in Rwanda in the form of UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda). UNAMIR was started on October 5, 1993, to aid with the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement that had been signed in August of the same year. UNAMIR's original mandate had eight objectives as laid out in UN Security Council Resolution 872 (1993). The most notable of these objectives were the security and weapons-secure areas of Kigali, monitoring the cease-fire agreement, and aiding with the repatriation of Rwandan refugees and resettlement movements.<sup>66</sup> UNAMIR's mandate continued to be extended and expanded until their withdrawal from Rwanda in April 1996.<sup>67</sup>

UNAMIR's presence in Rwanda during the months of the genocide does not accurately depict the sentiment of the UN regarding the violence. Before the violence of 1994 began, the commander of UNAMIR, Canadian General Roméo Dallaire, attempted to remove a weapons stash from the Rwandan army that if removed would have helped stave off violence. He was denied permission from the UN to do so. Shortly after this denial, ten Belgian troops who were part of UNAMIR were killed by members of the Rwandan army, prompting Belgium to hastily remove the rest of their troops from UNAMIR. Dallaire was left with a crippled and ineffective peace-keeping force in a country on the brink of disaster.<sup>68</sup>

The UN's inaction and stagnation take a lot of blame for the months of bloody genocide in Rwanda. Such an argument has merit, but there are also a plethora of other factors that need to

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<sup>66</sup>Security Council resolution 872, S/RES/872 (5 October 1993), accessed January 24, 2020, [https://undocs.org/S/RES/872\(1993\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/872(1993)).

<sup>67</sup>See UNSC resolutions: 912 (1994), 918 (1994), 965 (1994), 997 (1995), 1029 (1995).

<sup>68</sup>Naimark, *Genocide: A World History*, 136.

be considered as well before drawing any sort of conclusion on the role that the international political community had in the Rwandan genocide. Actions by the international community following the end of the genocide must also be taken into account, and only then can the perception of Rwanda start to be understood.

The biggest thing that the United Nations did following the Rwandan genocide was establishing an international criminal tribunal (ICTR) per UN Security Council Resolution 955 (1994). This tribunal was established for “prosecuting persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide...between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994.”<sup>69</sup> By the official end of the tribunal in December 2015, ninety-three individuals had been indicted. The work of the tribunal was ground-breaking in multiple ways. It was the first international tribunal to hold media broadcasters responsible for the roles that they played in arousing the public regarding the genocide. It also was the first to use the definitions of genocide provided in the 1948 Geneva Conventions and also the first to definitively decide verdicts relating to acts of genocide.<sup>70</sup>

The legacy of the ICTR and the Gacaca Courts remains complex. The Gacaca system, while allowing justice to be done on a community level still allows many loopholes in said “justice.” Only those accused specifically of genocide and not of war crimes were tried in the Gacaca Courts; such a discrepancy has left many still seeking the justice they deserve.<sup>71</sup> The

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<sup>69</sup>Security Council resolution 955, S/RES/955 (8 November 1994), accessed January 24, 2020, [https://undocs.org/S/RES/955\(1994\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/955(1994)).

<sup>70</sup>“The ICTR in Brief,” United Nations: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, accessed 15 January 2020, <https://unictr.irmct.org/en/tribunal>.

<sup>71</sup>Corey and Joireman, “Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda,” 86.



Gacaca Courts also did not try any members of the Rwandan Patriotic Army--a group that acted with the Hutus during the genocide but now is integral to the governance of Rwanda.<sup>72</sup> The findings of the ICTR, while internationally important for legal precedent, found less than one hundred guilty and ended its proceedings in 2015.<sup>73</sup> The Rwandan genocide carries the same sentiment of “never again” that other international tragedies do, but such remembrance does little to understand the complex legacy that genocide leaves. What is the nation of Rwanda, now twenty-six years later? How Rwandan coffee described by the world that drinks it? And what is the role of the modern Rwandan coffee industry?

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<sup>72</sup>Dominique E. Uwizeyimana, “The Challenges of Ensuring that Justice is Done and is Seen to be Done in Post- Ethnic Conflicts: The Case of Rwanda,” *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 13, no. 2 (2015), 123.

<sup>73</sup>“The ICTR in Brief,” United Nations: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

## Chapter 2: A Rhetorical Analysis

This chapter discusses the data collection and analysis on national and international rhetoric on the Rwandan coffee industry. The goals of this chapter are to answer the following questions: How does the global coffee industry view and portray the rebirth of Rwanda following the genocide, and how does the Rwanda creates its own, new narrative about its coffee industry? These two question seek to understand this new description of Rwanda in a way that is grounded within its representation in international and national coffee media outlets.

The data analyzed in this chapter is made up of articles published by Starbucks and randomly selected independently published coffee blogs, and articles from three major Rwandan news websites. Analysis is carried out with a coding process and content analysis. All articles scrutinized for this thesis had to have the majority of their content focused on the Rwandan coffee industry, so articles that only briefly mentioned coffee without an explicit focus on the entire industry were excluded. The majority of articles that were excluded only mentioned coffee once, usually as part of a list of Rwanda's major exports. The topics of articles included range from individual success stories, trade deals directly impacting the industry, and international social impact outreach programs designed specifically for the coffee industry.

These articles were then coded using the following method. Each article was read and searched for any of the four sets of coders below in Table 1.a. These coders were based on four key words or phrases that appeared multiple times in the previously reviewed literature. The coders can also be associated in either post-conflict situations or settings where economic development takes place. There were some cases where an article fit the coffee-content criteria but did not have any results from the four coders. These articles are included in the data pool and

are reflected in the final article counts. Coders 2, 3, and 4 utilize synonyms; any article using more than one of the same coder was still only counted once in that category.

<b>Coder</b>
1. Genocide
2. Community/growth
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/healing
4. Development/rebuild

Table 1.a

“Genocide” was used because the inclusion of that word is such a touch stone to the modern conception of Rwanda. Its inclusion (or exclusion) in the article’s content shapes the perception of Rwanda. Coder #2, “community/growth,” was used to discern if the article had a focus on either the community producing the coffee or if coffee was discussed in a way that had an impact on the community’s economic/personal improvement. The usage of the word “grow” and its variants regarding the actual growing of coffee did not fall into this coding category. “Reconciliation/forgiveness/healing” was decided upon to relate the coffee industry back to the overarching goal of Rwanda to find ways to move past the acts that occurred during the genocide. Finally, “development/rebuild” was used to see if the article mentioned the power of the coffee industry in the development or rebuilding efforts of communities or of the industry in general following the genocide.

## The International Coffee Industry's Narrative

Starbucks was chosen to make up the majority of the first data set because of its great global relevance in the coffee industry and how it is a part of twenty-first century life and culture. Starbucks is an international occurrence within daily habits. There are more than 25,000 Starbucks stores in 78 different countries.<sup>74</sup> The coffee giant brought in over \$26.5 billion USD, solidifying its place at the top of the international coffee shop hierarchy.<sup>75</sup> Starbucks first started selling Rwandan coffee products in 2006.<sup>76</sup> Since then, Starbucks has highlighted specialty Rwandan coffee more than five times as a part of its Reserve Roastery program.<sup>77</sup> The Rwanda and Starbucks partnership extends beyond just coffee products as well. Multiple times, Starbucks has worked alongside Rwanda in international programs such as World AIDS Day and various global sustainability movements. Starbucks also proudly operates a Farmer Support Center in Kigali that opened in 2009.<sup>78</sup>

The data for this chapter was drawn from Starbucks publications. Starbucks maintains a secondary website, Starbucks Stories and News, as well as their original website that is more focused on products and store locations. These articles are either written by staff writers in Starbucks' marketing division or have no author listed. Starbucks Stories and News introduces itself as:

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<sup>74</sup>“Starbucks Coffee International,” Starbucks, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.starbucks.com/business/international-stores>.

<sup>75</sup>“Net revenue of Starbucks worldwide from 2003 to 2019,” Statista, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266466/net-revenue-of-the-starbucks-corporation-worldwide/>.

<sup>76</sup>“Starbucks to offer coffee grown in Rwanda,” NBC News, accessed January 25, 2020, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/11625229/ns/business-us\\_business/t/starbucks-offer-coffee-grown-rwanda/#.XizAOTJKjIU](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/11625229/ns/business-us_business/t/starbucks-offer-coffee-grown-rwanda/#.XizAOTJKjIU).

<sup>77</sup>For more information on Starbucks Reserve Roastery, see the Appendix.

<sup>78</sup>“Starbucks Farmer Support Centers,” Starbucks Stories and News, accessed January 25, 2020, <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2018/starbucks-farmer-support-centers/>. For more information on Starbucks' Farmer Support Centers, see Appendix B.

“all about people. And we believe that every person has a story...you’ll see films, photos, written stories, information graphics, illustrations and maybe even some graphic-novel style stories...you’ll meet coffee farmers and the agronomists working with them to create the world’s first sustainable agricultural product. You will experience the selfless spirit of our partners around the world. You will hear people speak to country, togetherness, family, service as we continue to report on what is meaningful and real.”<sup>79</sup>

These writings place the reader into the location where their coffee comes from, enforcing this junction of the international to the local. This Starbucks outlet provided a singular place to collect and analyze their writings on Rwanda. Articles were taken from Starbucks Stories and News using the search term “Rwanda”. This search yielded 89 results, out of which 24 articles focused on the Rwandan coffee industry. The other results either focused on other international social programs run by Starbucks or articles written to promote new coffee products. These 24 articles were combined with various documentaries and interviews also published by Starbucks, bringing the total to 29. The 29 articles were then run through the coding process as described above, which yielded the results as shown in Table 1.b below.

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<sup>79</sup>Jen Sizemore, “Welcome to our new storytelling website, Starbucks Stories,” Starbucks Stories and News, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2019/welcome-to-our-new-storytelling-website-starbucks-stories/>.

<b>Coder</b>	<b>Starbucks articles</b>
1. Genocide	20
2. Community/growth	16
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/ healing	12
4. Development/rebuild	7
<b>Total articles</b>	<b>29</b>

Table 1.b

Twenty of the articles used the word genocide explicitly. Sixteen articles used either community and/or growth. Reconciliation, forgiveness, and/or healing were found in twelve out of the twenty-nine articles. Finally, development and/or rebuild occurred seven times.

The two most significant results of this analysis are the prevalence of the words “genocide” and “community/growth.” As the two highest results from the articles from Starbucks, their presence indicates the attitude of Starbucks towards the Rwandan coffee industry. The usage of “genocide” sixty-nine percent of the time serves as a continual reminder of the history of Rwanda. There were also cases where “genocide” was not used, but it was alluded to by using words such as “horrors” or “atrocities.” Such usages were also significant, but were not counted.

The second highest result, “community/growth” appearing just over fifty-five percent of the time, shows that as the main storyline that Starbucks Stories and News is interested in highlighting. The best example of the narrative of the Rwandan coffee industry that Starbucks wants to highlight and disseminate extensively is with their documentary *Hingakawa* that

premiered on April 2, 2019, on Youtube and was also selected for screening at the Sarasota Film Festival that same year.<sup>80</sup> With their published articles and this documentary, Starbucks is able to produce a global narrative about the individual communities in the Rwandan coffee industry. This narrative is one of recognition of the events of 1994, but doing so with attitudes of forgiveness and the momentum to move forward for the good of communities and the entire nation. This documentary and the literature surrounding it that was published directly by Starbucks does not explicitly mention the role that Starbucks had in transforming this cooperative. However, such influence is implied due to the fact that Starbucks made and publicized this documentary.

The *Hingakawa* documentary is an important case study in Starbucks' ability to create this narrative about Rwanda. As described on Starbucks Stories and News:

“*Hingakawa* tells the story of two women who made the choice to rise above and choose forgiveness. Vestine and Genevieve are best friends—one Tutsi, one Hutu. Once on the opposite sides of war, these women experienced heartbreak in very different ways. Finding common ground through their shared livelihood of coffee, they are no longer each other's enemy, they are each other's strength.”<sup>81</sup>

This documentary perfectly encapsulates the Rwandan narrative that Starbucks wants to tell: a nation acknowledging its status as a post-conflict state with an attitude of community,

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<sup>80</sup>“Hingakawa: A Starbucks Productions Documentary Short,” Starbucks Stories and News, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2019/hingakawa-a-starbucks-productions-documentary-short/>.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

forgiveness, and hope for the future. The documentary never mentions Starbucks by name, but even so, the documentary reflects Starbucks' intentions for the nations since they produced it.

Hingakawa is not just the name of the documentary, but the name of the coffee cooperative itself. Described in the documentary, it was "created to bring together women whose husbands were killed and those whose husbands participated in the killings."<sup>82</sup> Day in and day out as the women work together, they strive to produce coffee under three circumstances: "good quality, good quantity, and [by] working fast!"<sup>83</sup> Outside of coffee farming, the cooperative served a much larger purpose, and that was to provide a space for the community to attend training "about how to live in harmony with those we harmed...and now there is no problem...no one suspects each other anymore."<sup>84</sup> The coffee cooperative, while outwardly producing one of the finest coffee in the world, inwardly accomplishes a much larger goal--one of reconciliation and forgiveness.

The Hingakawa cooperative also is an example of the power of economic development within Rwanda. The women highlighted in the documentary share their motivation for joining together, and that was to "fight the prevailing poverty through coffee farming. Now we are united. We all work together for the same goal."<sup>85</sup> The Hingakawa cooperative is not only profitable; it also is an example of the importance of economic development in reconciliation efforts. As the documentary stated, "how do you prevent genocide? You have to unite to fight poverty."<sup>86</sup> One of the final quotes in the documentary is "If people get along with each other,

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.



nothing can delay our development...but when a woman develops herself, the whole country also develops.”<sup>87</sup> The *Hingakawa* documentary from Starbucks is a perfect encapsulation of many elements: reconciliation tied to economic development, coffee as a uniting force within communities, and the power of women in bringing about substantial and meaningful change for good. Including women’s voices and narratives into the greater discussion of the global coffee industry further grounds this research into the normal and daily representation of the Rwandan coffee industry. No voices are left out in *Hingakawa*, Starbucks’ representation of the Rwandan coffee industry. All these elements of the documentary are incredibly moving, as well as being extremely marketable for international companies like Starbucks. It also helps the overall image of Starbucks as an upstanding global citizen.

Using *Hingakawa* as a starting point for the rest of the Starbucks rhetorical analysis, the published articles were then run through the coding process. “Genocide” and “community/growth” were the two highest mentioned coders out of the entire data pool from Starbucks; those two words are how Starbucks wants to portray Rwanda. The articles from Starbucks Stories and News give the time and space for the details that would usually go unnoticed and unmentioned on the normal Starbucks website where the space is used to sell products. This extra space is where the heart of the Rwandan narrative that Starbucks tells (and sells) lives. Starbucks tells the story of Rwanda as one of developing communities--a narrative that is beautiful in this day and age; that narrative also sells products well.

To complement the data drawn from Starbucks Stories and News, I also found fifteen independent coffee blogs that had articles on the Rwandan coffee industry. I chose to include

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

these blogs in this data pool because they are another major international voice in the coffee world but do not have to answer to the branding of massive coffee companies. Coffee blogs are another global outlet that has a clear representation of the Rwandan coffee industry. The blogs were chosen based on their ease of accessibility. The fifteen articles that also fit the same requirements of being focused on the Rwandan coffee industry were then run through the same coding process as the Starbucks data, and their results are shown below in Table 1.c.

<b>Coder</b>	<b>Coffee Blogs</b>
1. Genocide	12
2. Community/growth	7
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/ healing	2
4. Development/rebuild	10
<b>Total articles</b>	15

Table 1.c

Similar to the results from the Starbucks articles, the top coder result from the coffee blogs is “genocide.” Unlike the Starbucks articles, however, “development/rebuild” is the second highest, then followed by “community/growth.” This difference from the Starbucks results is most likely because of the amount of space that coffee bloggers can devote to story-telling. They are limited to usually just one blog post about certain topics or products, and they have to make conscious decisions about what content can be included in posts. They have much less space than Starbucks has to publish content, so their narrative on Rwanda is different.

“Genocide” is mentioned in all but three of these blog posts. Its inclusion can be justified using the same logic for its inclusion in Starbucks articles--it merits a mention because it is the

basic and common association of Rwanda. But since these blogs do not have the luxury of publishing as many articles as they like about Rwanda, their narrative must focus more on the importance of the Rwandan coffee industry as a vehicle for national economic development. While “community/growth” is not far behind “development/rebuild,” there is a definite narrative difference between the Starbucks articles and the coffee blog posts. This difference is illustrated best by the excerpt from a blog post below:

“The Rwanda Buf Café coffee crop is gathered from the Buf Café co-operative plus a large amount of small holders in the Bufundu area.

It is a coffee with a great story behind it, that of owner Epiphanie Mukashyaka. She was made a widow during the terrible time of the Rwandan genocide but rather than leaving, Epiphaine made the decision to stay on her small family coffee farm.

Back in 2000 with a loan from the Rwandan Development Bank and the assistance of the PEARL programme she set up Buf Café and through much hard work she has turned it into a thriving business. A true African success story.”<sup>88</sup>

The rest of the article is a detailed review of the Buf Café coffee mentioned in the excerpt above and has no further discussion of Rwanda. This was commonplace in the blog posts analyzed. There would be a paragraph or two on the story behind the coffee, but then the article would turn into a breakdown of the coffee and other associated products.

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<sup>88</sup>“Rwanda Buf Cafe, Ozone Coffee Roasters, UK,” Damn Fine Joe, accessed January 17, 2020, <http://damnfinejoe.blogspot.com/2012/05/rwanda-buf-cafe-ozone-coffee-roasters.html>.

The coffee blogs share the general theme of being able to briefly discuss Rwanda when they are reviewing Rwandan coffee, but their doing so is not at all to the extent seen in the work published by Starbucks. The similarities and differences of these two data sets is shown below in

Table 1.d

<b>Coder</b>	<b>Starbucks</b>	<b>Coffee blogs</b>	<b>Combined totals</b>
1. Genocide	20	12	32
2. Community/growth	16	7	23
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/healing	12	2	14
4. Development/rebuild	7	10	17
<b>Total articles</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>44</b>

Table 1.d

The combination of Starbucks and the coffee blogs totaled forty-four articles. Out of the forty-four articles surveyed, thirty-two mentioned the word “genocide” explicitly at least once, representing 73% of the articles. The words “community/growth” appeared in twenty-three of the forty-four articles, coming to 53%. The coders “development/rebuild” were found in seventeen of the forty-four articles or 39%. Finally, “reconciliation/forgiveness/healing” appeared in fourteen articles for 32% of the articles. These combined totals show that the international, independent coffee industry portrays Rwanda as a nation overcoming its past conflict and looking towards the future with hope in its communities. Rwandan coffee can be seen as a “feel good story” for consumers because the narrative they are consuming from the coffee community is one of promise and hope.

## Rwanda's Narrative

The rhetoric that the Rwandan news uses to describe its coffee industry tells a different narrative, however. I collected articles with content focusing on the Rwandan coffee industry from three different Rwandan news sites: The New Times, News of Rwanda, and Rwanda Today. These three were selected due to their ease of accessibility in the United States and are accessible in English. From these three sites, broad searches of “coffee” yielded 574 total articles. From that large pool, articles that did not mention the coffee industry were excluded, bringing the total down to just 42 articles.

Only 11 of these articles have no author listed, appearing without any byline or crediting the work to staff reports or reporters. The remaining 31 have authors listed, and those authors are a range of independent journalists and staff writers for specific publications. All authors of these 31 articles were not white as determined by checking their Twitter accounts or LinkedIn profiles. This determination is important because they clearly are not portraying Rwanda's development from a western journalism and developmental perspective.

These remaining 42 articles were then coded through the same process as the previous sets of articles. The results are as follows in Table 1.e.

<b>Coder</b>	<b>The New Times</b>	<b>News of Rwanda</b>	<b>Rwanda Today</b>	<b>Combined totals</b>
1. Genocide	7	1	4	12
2. Community/growth	9	5	4	18
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/healing	10	0	0	10
4. Development/rebuild	14	5	1	20
<b>Total articles</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>

Table 1.e

The most noticeable difference in these articles from the independent articles is that “genocide” is not the most common coder result. The top result is “development/rebuild,” followed by “community/growth.” “Genocide” is in third place, appearing just two more times than “reconciliation/forgiveness/healing.”

The departure of “genocide” as the top result shows that the Rwandan media is more focused on stories that are more forward looking, rather than a retrospective reminder to readers about the horrors in Rwanda’s past. Rwanda is much more focused on showing that their story is one of forward movement and development instead of always tracing every narrative back to the genocide. A good example of this narrative is the article “From Rags To Riches; Story Of Rwanda’s Gikongoro Region.”<sup>89</sup> This article tells the success of the region’s agricultural work that ranges from coffee to honey, tea, and trees as well. It focuses on the infrastructure programs and initiatives that have had success in the area. Not once is genocide mentioned or even hinted at; the article keeps a positive light on how this community is now better off due to their hard

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<sup>89</sup>Gahiji Innocent, “From Rags To Riches; Story Of Rwanda’s Gikongoro Region,” News of Rwanda, accessed January 21, 2020, <http://www.newsorwanda.com/featured1/28052/from-rags-to-riches-story-of-rwandas-gikongoro-region/>.

work.<sup>90</sup> This article is one of many that depict Rwanda as an up and coming nation, not one tied to a tragic past.

Current President of Rwanda Paul Kagame praises his country for its hard work, especially within the agricultural sector, to improve the national GDP. He has put forth several large initiatives to further provide for the good work that is being done for Rwanda's agriculture, assuring communities of his trust and reliance on their efforts to better the national economic outlook.<sup>91</sup> The rising national GDP is accompanied by increases in international trade and within foreign markets.<sup>92</sup> Again, Rwanda is described here as a nation of promise and growth. The local communities receive monetary and structural investment from the government because they are proving to be the driving force in increasing Rwanda's economic outlook. The state focuses on their communities not simply because it is marketable, but more so because communities and their contributions to the nation are valued.

This narrative is not just exclusive to the agriculture industry. It is seen everywhere in the country and in the government. The lines between remembrance, forgiveness, and moving forward are incredibly difficult to navigate.<sup>93</sup> Rwanda as a nation is doing what it considers to be the best for the country on their own terms, a noble step in the right direction as seen by the rest

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Gahiji Innocent, "Kagame Outlines Pragmatic Shift Into Agriculture," News of Rwanda, accessed January 21, 2020, <http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/25764/kagame-outlines-pragmatic-shift-into-agriculture/>.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Peter Gwin, "Rwanda: The Art of Remembering and Forgetting," National Geographic, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/4/140407-rwanda-genocide-today-anniversary/#close>, and Lillian Leposo, "Remembering -- and trying to forget -- Rwanda's genocide, 20 years on," CNN, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/04/04/world/africa/rwanda-remembering-forgetting-genocide/index.html>.

of the international diplomatic community.<sup>94</sup> This is their preferred presentation of their nation and the work that is going on within their coffee industry.

This data collection and analysis is finally combined together, as shown in Table 1.f. This table is the culmination of the coding results from the 44 Starbucks articles and blog posts, and the 42 Rwandan news articles.

<b>Coder</b>	<b>Starbucks articles and coffee blogs</b>	<b>Rwandan news articles</b>
1. Genocide	32	12
2. Community/growth	23	18
3. Reconciliation/forgiveness/healing	14	10
4. Development/rebuild	17	20
<b>Total articles</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>

Table 1.f

The biggest difference in these combined results is the large difference between the usage of “genocide” in the two data sets. It occurs 72% of the time in the Starbucks articles and blog posts, while only being used 29% of the time in the Rwandan news articles. The international, independent narrative that is publicized by Starbucks and various coffee blogs focuses much more on the history and past trauma of Rwanda. I argue that this deep focus on the Rwandan genocide by the international coffee industry has two folds. One is that the Rwandan genocide is the only reason that some people have heard of Rwanda. Secondly, continual reminder of the Rwandan genocide keeps the sentiment of “never again” alive. Rwanda does not place near as

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<sup>94</sup>“Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations,” United Nations, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/day-of-reflection.shtml>.



much attention on the genocide because not only do they not need continual reminders of those horrors, they are also actively working in multiple ways to put such a history behind them.

The highest result for the Rwandan news articles was “development/rebuild,” appearing in 48% of articles. This coder occurred in the Starbucks articles and blog posts 39% of the time. Its significance for the Rwandan news articles stems from the narrative that Rwanda presents to the world, and that narrative is one of forward movement and progress. However, “development/rebuild” is the second lowest occurring coder for the Starbucks articles and for the blog posts. As discussed previously, this is most likely because these independent, international outlets of the coffee industry are more apt to publish content that is more driven by community and the stories of individuals instead of attempting to engage in articles that might appear too driven by infrastructure or economics. The commonality of “development/rebuild” makes sense in Rwandan rhetoric because it works with the narrative that Rwanda shares with the rest of the world.

Throughout this entire analysis, the coder “reconciliation/forgiveness/healing” was present, yet it did not appear enough times for explicit, individual discussion. It appeared 32% of the time in the Starbucks articles and the blog posts, and in 24% of the Rwandan news articles. The justification for the usage of this coder is its own undoing: reconciliatory themes, stories of forgiveness, or communities healing the wounds from 1994 were not at all the focus of all the articles surveyed. Reconciliation and its variants were not the primary focus of the articles analyzed, so when it did appear, it was to be a secondary effect of the work that was happening within the coffee industry.

Finally, “community/growth” was the second highest result for both data categories surveyed. It appeared in 52% of the Starbucks articles and blog posts and in 43% of the Rwandan

news articles. Its occurrence in just about half of all the articles can be attributed to the fact that any content that references the community can be extremely marketable to the rest of the world. That is exactly the case with the Starbucks articles and the blog posts; a community's story told well can be published and broadcasted throughout the whole world to generally positive reactions. Starbucks' *Hingakawa* documentary is a prime example of a community's story told well and reaching tens of thousands and gathering critical acclaim. Today, telling the stories of communities is something that is heavily leaned into by companies and brands, and it is no different when discussing Rwandan coffee.

In summary, this chapter began a discussion on the narratives surrounding Rwandan coffee as portrayed in various media outlets within the greater global coffee community. This discussion was driven by a coding process that combined articles by Starbucks and independent coffee blogs and compared them to articles from local Rwandan news sources. Both sets of articles were run through the same coding system to determine if they were included four major themes: "genocide," "community/growth," "reconciliation/forgiveness/healing," and "development/rebuild."

The articles from Starbucks and the coffee blogs both resulted in "genocide" being the most appearing coder, followed by "community/growth" and "development/rebuild," respectively. These two sets of articles present the theory that the narrative presented by foreign coffee presences in Rwanda choose to remind their readers of the tragedy of 1994 in Rwanda while highlighting the work that has been done since then to better the nation and national coffee industry. This representation of Rwanda by Starbucks and the selected coffee blogs becomes a daily part of their consumers' daily life and is influenced and shaped by the global coffee industry. This narrative of Rwanda is also a much more heartwarming story to publicize since

both of the organizations who are publishing this content are driven by the desire to sell products or make a profit by visits to their website.

The theme that emerges from the news articles from Rwanda differs wildly from that of the international coffee industry. This Rwanda-specific narrative focuses much more on the developmental work and community growth that has happened in the years since 1994 within the coffee industry. Articles such as these present the national coffee industry as well as the entire nation in a light that remains grounded in local community development while touting the success and growth on a global scale. This is not to say that the genocide of 1994 is forgotten, but its remembrance is balanced by the growth that has happened since

### Chapter 3: Case Study--Land of a Thousand Hills, Daleville, Virginia

This chapter delves into a specific case study on how the Rwandan coffee industry interacts both locally and globally to create relationships of lasting economic development and growth. It further seeks to place the importance of the boutique Rwandan coffee into broader discussions of ethical consumerism. I was incredibly fortunate to go to university ten minutes away from a coffee shop that served almost exclusively Rwanda-sourced coffee. This shop was, at the beginning of this project, called “Land of a Thousand Hills”—the name being a common nickname of Rwanda. By the end of this project, however, the shop had rebranded itself to “Nature’s Cool Coffee Company.”<sup>95</sup> This change was to allow the shop to partner with other local coffee cooperatives and brands. Nature’s Cool Coffee Company still proudly serves coffee from Land of a Thousand Hills. This interview serves as the primary data for this chapter. Land of a Thousand Hills is how this coffee shop will be referred to throughout this chapter to keep the focus on their products from Rwanda. Regardless of the physical name of this coffee shop, it serves as tangible evidence of Rwanda’s participation in the global coffee community. In March 2020, I secured an interview with its owner, Kelly.<sup>96</sup> It further bases this thesis as a study of the intersection of the international occurrence with normal, everyday life.

Land of a Thousand Hills coffee was originally founded by Jonathan Golden in 2005. It started out as a small roasting operation after Golden was moved to begin a collaborative project with coffee farmers in Rwanda. The project began in Ruli Mountain, outside of the capital city of Kigali. As Kelly told me, the coffee trees and other various coffee production infrastructure were in bad shape when Golden found them. His mission was, and still is, to help the farmers revive

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<sup>95</sup>For more information on this change, see their website here: <https://www.naturescoolcoffeeco.com/>

<sup>96</sup>Name changed to comply with Hollins University’s Human Research guidelines.

their coffee production into a money-making operation. The beans were grown, washed, and dried in Rwanda, then shipped to Golden in Georgia for roasting and distribution. At the beginning, this coffee was mainly sold to church congregations. Following that success, Golden was able to branch out into actually having brick and mortar locations of Land of a Thousand Hills coffee shops. Golden continued his work within the church community, promoting his products and the story of Land of a Thousand Hills at various religious conferences. Land of a Thousand Hills is tangible and grounded evidence of the greater Rwandan coffee industry.

Kelly and her husband first met Golden at these conferences. They had just recently traveled to Rwanda with their church, and Kelly had come back from that trip with a desire (like Golden) to do something to help those in Rwanda whose lives had been so overturned by the actions in 1994. The pieces continued to fall into place for the opening of this specific coffee shop by Kelly and her husband. Following a second mission trip to Rwanda a few years later, Kelly still felt called to open her own iteration of a Land of a Thousand Hills coffee shop. On her second trip to Rwanda, she was able to actually visit the coffee washing station that was working with Golden and Land of a Thousand Hills. Upon her return from this second trip, the opening of this coffee shop was finalized and has been serving the community for seven years now. Since the opening of the coffee shop, she has been able to visit Rwanda once more, still with her church. At the time of our conversation, a trip for 2021 was in its planning stages.<sup>97</sup> There were several employees who were very interested in going on this trip, further reinforcing Land of a Thousand Hills' ability to bridge the gap between coffee producers and consumers. Land of a

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<sup>97</sup>Kelly, interview by the author, audio recording, Daleville, Virginia, March 16, 2019.

Thousand Hills is local, community data to further understand the role of the Rwandan coffee industry in global society.

This chapter seeks to analyze Land of a Thousand Hills within the following three contexts--its role in helping promote economic growth in Rwanda, social development and reconciliation as a result of said economic progress, and how independent coffee shops empower their producers and consumers.

## **Economic Growth**

While Rwanda's production of specialty, high quality coffee is now well known, the process to get there was not easy. With coffee farms virtually destroyed by the genocide in 1994, most farmers and cooperatives had to restart their growing processes. Land of a Thousand Hills saw these re-starting farms as an opportunity to help Rwandan communities get back on their feet, as well as providing a way for national economic stimulus. For Land of a Thousand Hills, the question was, "what can we do to help the developing markets of Rwandan specialty coffee, and how can we help the communities that support this coffee economy?"<sup>98</sup> However, that is not a question that is specific to Rwanda.

It is a question that has been asked in the context of other nations emerging out of periods of economic and social hardship, such as South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In South Africa, transitioning out of the apartheid-era of social structures and developing better economic growth were processes that happened on a community level, one that sought out ways to "rebuild

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

the social fabric.”<sup>99</sup> Keeping this development process grounded at a local level allows the communities to decide their own reform structure, making sure that everything that is done is for the better of the community and not for some overseeing international figure. This is how development happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina to great levels of success.<sup>100</sup> Development work that is in place in Rwanda is taking this same bottom up approach to development and community support. Due especially to the agrarian nature of Rwanda, community is more important than ever because the farms are so dependent on local cooperation and participation. Allowing development to take place on this communal level allows for all to participate in the development of a successful industry, coffee or otherwise.<sup>101</sup>

This focus on small farms and communities has much larger implications than local growth. Economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Nicaragua started at the local levels following their respective internal traumas. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, their path for economic growth came through rebuilding and developing better transportation infrastructure to facilitate easier passage of goods and services after the Bosnian genocide of 1992-1995. A national stimulus scheme was also implemented to incentivize small businesses and local homeowners associations to provide local opportunities for employment.<sup>102</sup> In Nicaragua, civil society tapped into women farmers as a way to capitalize on the agriculture industry following the decades-long civil war. International NGO-backed initiatives started on a very local level, providing some useful farm animals to each family, as well as providing training and educational

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<sup>99</sup>Simpson, “Reconstruction and Reconciliation: Emerging from Transition,” 479.

<sup>100</sup>Gamberale, “The Role of Economic Development in Reconciliation,” 155.

<sup>101</sup>Gaudiose Mujawamariya, Marijke D’Haese, and Stijn Speelman, “Exploring double side-selling in cooperatives, case study of four coffee cooperatives in Rwanda,” *Food Policy* 39, (2013), 83.

<sup>102</sup>Gamberale, “The Role of Economic Development in Reconciliation,” 153-154.

opportunities. This program grew into a larger enough success that it became a national development scheme utilized by the Nicaraguan government.<sup>103</sup>

Starting economic development processes at the community level for a nation requires a vast amount of trust by the overseeing organization. If this trust is given to communities, growth can happen at wildly successful and sustainable levels that spread all across the nation. Land of a Thousand Hills achieves just that with their partnerships in the Lake Kivu region of Rwanda. Their work over the past fifteen years there has allowed for the building of a second coffee washing station, local schools, and even a church. Land of a Thousand Hills in its entirety wants to help their partnered farmers help themselves.<sup>104</sup>

As the global coffee market becomes more dominated by massive corporations, small coffee farmers are partnering with other global coffee chains for their survival and success within the industry.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, these partnerships develop and maintain economically suitable communities, both in and outside of Rwanda.<sup>106</sup> The biggest hallmark in all three of these cases (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nicaragua, and Rwanda) is that the emphasis is on letting the communities dictate their growth speed and direction. There can be initial guidance at the outset of the program, but the cause of success is the community's drive to better themselves and make their own growth. As Kelly said, "this is what they [the Rwandan people] want for their country...they don't want to be known as the poor country."<sup>107</sup> Starting at the community level

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<sup>103</sup>Peter Utting, Amalia Chamorro, and Chris Bacon, "Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Development in Nicaragua," *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development* 22, (2014), 19-20.

<sup>104</sup>Kelly, interview by the author.

<sup>105</sup>Edita Smelikova and Ivo Zdrahal, "Participation of Developing Countries' Producers in Global Networks: The Case of Coffee," *Research in Agricultural and Applied Economics* 1, (2011), 9.

<sup>106</sup>Adrie Mukashema, Tom Veldkamp, and Sherif Amer, "Sixty percent of small coffee farms have suitable socio-economic and environmental locations in Rwanda," *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 36, no. 2 (2016), 1.

<sup>107</sup>Kelly, interview by the author.



and growing into national development programs has succeeded in the past, and it continues to do so in Rwanda.

## **Reconciliation by Coffee**

It is not, however, just a desire to grow economically. These economic movements are backed by a much deeper desire to forgive and to reconcile within communities that were so torn apart following 1994. Forgiveness, along with the power of faith, was another common theme throughout my interview. Kelly made a great effort to tell me the stories of her times in Rwanda that showed her just how much the people care for each other and their nation. These instances ranged from the care given to cleaning up a neighborhood after a destructive rainstorm, or the entire nation putting aside one Saturday a month for community improvement initiatives. Rwandans have a deep trust and love for their President, going so far to have images of him in their houses.<sup>108</sup> This iconography can also be a tangible reminder of the government's stance that all citizens are now "all Rwandans," and that ethnic descriptors like "Hutu" or "Tutsi" should not be used within the national vocabulary.<sup>109</sup> Communities are returning to their natural melting pot state wherein all live, work, socialize, and marry without the deep prejudiced fears that surrounded the build up to the genocide of 1994.<sup>110</sup> Rwandan communities are learning how to trust and care for their neighbors again and for their entire nation.

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Marc Lacey, "A Decade After Massacres, Rwanda Outlaws Ethnicity," The New York Times, accessed May 7, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/09/world/a-decade-after-massacres-rwanda-outlaws-ethnicity.html>.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

There is a greater belief in community in Rwanda, and that is what has contributed vastly to its emergence from 1994 into a key player in East African countries. Rwanda has taken ownership of its own development, all the way down to the local level. The people realize that if they do not fully own this development process, they do not deserve to make it. The country is driven by purpose--to reconcile and to develop.<sup>111</sup>

Community (re)development must be more than economic incentives; people must be engaged and willing to participate for there to be measures of success. Again, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, society must reconcile with their past actions before real economic growth can be seen.<sup>112</sup> Kelly also was a testament to seeing the forgiveness Rwandans have for each other following the act of 1994. She told me of a story of Land of a Thousand Hills' coffee farmers where two workers now work together, but in 1994 the families had actively fought against each other. But they were able to forgive each other and come to a reconciliation of the things that happened to them and to their nation. There is a drive for all of Rwanda, coffee farmers or not, to not be known as another poor country. Rwandans want to be an example for recovery and forward progress.<sup>113</sup> This presentation of the nation in this light is accomplished, in part, by partnerships with companies like Land of a Thousand Hills.

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<sup>111</sup>Jeff Chu, "Rwanda Rising: A New Model of Economic Development," Fast Company, accessed April 17, 2020, <https://www.fastcompany.com/1208900/rwanda-rising-new-model-economic-development>.

<sup>112</sup>Strupinskienė, "What is reconciliation and are we there yet?", 454.

<sup>113</sup>Kelly, interview by the author.

## Power of Independent Coffee Shops

Finally, Land of a Thousand Hills opens up the discussion on the ethics behind the coffee industry. Some of the key points in the larger debates about the coffee industry are the various fair trade or direct trade movements, labor rights and organizations for growers, and international or national organic qualifications.<sup>114</sup> The coffee industry can also come under fire for the possible continual perpetuation of neocolonialism within various marketing schemes and strategies.<sup>115</sup> In short, it is an industry full of challenging and complex facets. Companies that take a stand on these issues are becoming more likely to be better respected within the industry than those that throw ethics out the window for pure profits.

By being such a small coffee shop chain, Land of a Thousand Hills is able to interact with these ethical issues much easier than massive coffee chains like Starbucks. For instance, I was able to very easily set up this interview with the owner of this location in Daleville. Her availability and willingness to talk on these topics speaks for her care for the mission of her coffee shop. Land of a Thousand Hills ensures that their farmers in Rwanda are paid a fair wage for the product they deliver in this direct trade relationship.

The biggest ethical statement that Land of a Thousand Hills makes within the larger coffee industry is the fact that consumers know that their money goes directly towards these communities in Rwanda, where it is spent based on the needs of the community and not the demands of the overhead organization. Even though Kelly made sure to say that her coffee shop

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<sup>114</sup>Tim Hunt, "Drinking an ethical cup of coffee: how easy is it?" The Guardian, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/may/29/drinking-an-ethical-cup-of-coffee-how-easy-is-it>.

<sup>115</sup>Katie Grandelli, "A cup of colonialism: A qualitative analysis of Starbucks and Fair Trade Coffee," *Undergraduate Research Awards* 46, (2019), 22. Originally written to fulfil requirements of Hollins University's class GPS 216 Research Methods in Social Science.

is still a for-profit company, a percentage of the proceeds from every single cup of Rwandan coffee served goes back to the community that produced it.

This ethically-driven approach to coffee is what continues to keep independent coffee shops in business regardless of the predominance of massive chain coffee options.<sup>116</sup> What Land of a Thousand Hills is selling to its customers is not just a cup of coffee, but a cup of coffee that comes with the promise of a prosperous community in Rwanda. Consumers want to support small coffee shops because they are searching for ways to support more ethical products, and independent shops are more likely to have such offerings and options.<sup>117</sup> For some shops, the options are paper or reusable cups, and for Land of a Thousand Hills, it is the support going directly back to their partnerships in Rwanda.<sup>118</sup>

The main hallmark of Land of a Thousand Hills coffee is their slogan “Drink Coffee. Do Good.” This is the message customers see when they first arrive, and it is ever present in the decor of the shop as well.<sup>119</sup> For those who continue to choose Land of a Thousand Hills’ coffee over the average supermarket blend of chain coffee shops, that decision could be attributed to the neoliberal concept of “boycotting.” Such an act is the consumer’s active choice to purchase products with the express intent on rewarding companies for their desirable behavior.<sup>120</sup> And while Land of a Thousand Hills is still a decidedly for-profit business establishment, that does not detract in any way from their ethical and personal goals for their partnerships with farmers in

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<sup>116</sup>Peter Bakerville, “What’s The Secret To A Successful Coffee Shop?” *Forbes*, accessed April 18, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2012/12/20/whats-the-secret-to-a-successful-coffee-shop/#437215cd13c3>.

<sup>117</sup>Jamie Roberts, “Why Are Independent Coffee Shops Succeeding?” *Modern Restaurant Management*, accessed April 18, 2020, <https://modernrestaurantmanagement.com/why-are-independent-coffee-shops-succeeding/>.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid* and Kelly, interview by the author.

<sup>119</sup>Kelly, interview by the author.

<sup>120</sup>Lauren Copeland, “Conceptualizing Political Consumerism: How Citizenship Norms Differentiate Boycotting from Buycotting,” *Political Studies* 62, no. 1 (2014), 174.

Rwanda. This shop represents the partnership of farmer, coffee shop, and consumer working together towards the same goals of good coffee and doing good for those around them.

Twenty-first century consumerism is inherently political, which means the decisions made by consumers are backed by more than just a monetary amount. In the case of boycotting behavior, consumers choose to reward certain industries and producers with their purchase based on the ethics behind the product. This neoliberal concept stems from consumers' desire for civic engagement within certain industries and to create social change.<sup>121</sup> Land of a Thousand Hills exemplifies this behavior on two specific levels.

First, the shop itself has a much more specific purpose than just being another run of the mill chain coffee shop. Its purpose is to serve the local community high quality coffee and to help its Rwandan partner communities survive and grow economically.<sup>122</sup> The management of Land of a Thousand Hills supports and values the coffee products, as well as the community development and reconciliation that is happening within the Rwandan coffee industry. Land of a Thousand Hills is a grounded presentation of the Rwandan coffee industry.

Second, Land of a Thousand Hills provides a very attractive alternative to the basic supermarket blend or chain coffee shop cup of coffee. Not only is the coffee from Land of a Thousand Hills a higher grade and quality, it comes with a much more humanitarian message behind it. That message is one of growing community and development in a nation that is seeking to be known for more than just its tragic past.<sup>123</sup> Land of a Thousand Hills invites its

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<sup>121</sup>Lisa A. Neilson and Pamela Paxton, "Social Capital and Political Consumerism: A Multilevel Analysis," *Social Problems* 57, no. 1 (2010), 5.

<sup>122</sup>Kelly, interview by the author.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

customers to make the choice to boycott these products and to show their support for the work that is happening throughout the Rwandan coffee industry. Coffee and community is the power of Rwanda that Land of a Thousand Hills taps into and activates into a profit making system by encouraging this neoliberal behavior of boycotting.

This chapter is a focused discussion on just one small coffee shop chain that has a deep partnership with the Rwandan coffee industry. Land of a Thousand Hills (now Nature's Cool Coffee Company) in Daleville, Virginia, makes the Rwandan coffee industry much more visible and accessible to the everyday coffee drinker by continuing to serve and promote Rwandan products. Their motto "Drink Coffee. Do Good." serves as the reminder that this coffee has a higher purpose than just a drink. That higher purpose goes back to Rwanda and the communities that have been working with Land of a Thousand Hills for close to a decade. These towns have grown out of their past traumas together, forming communities that are tighter and more powerful than they were prior to 1994.

This transformation has been due in part to the partnership with Land of a Thousand Hills, but it also speaks to the greater power that is within communities themselves. Land of a Thousand Hills has been a helpful presence in these communities, assisting with the development and building of better coffee growing infrastructure and public usage buildings such as schools, hospitals, and churches. But Land of a Thousand Hills has not been the controlling voice in this work; it has been left to the community to decide what is best for them. This community driven development has been a great success in Rwanda, as well as in other nations such as Nicaragua and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It allows communities full ownership and authorship of their development without demanding expectations put on them by outside bodies.

The communities themselves have used these infrastructure developments to further reconcile with each other. This reconciliation can be attributed to the great attitude of forgiveness that Rwandans have developed since the genocide in 1994. They want to see their country succeed and prosper in the global community, and they have realized that forgiveness and reconciliation is the best way to achieve this. The Rwandan coffee industry is one area where these attitudes have taken great hold.

Finally, the partnership with Land of a Thousand Hills gives the Rwandan coffee industry a platform for success and visibility. Because independent coffee shops like Land of a Thousand Hills cater more so to the coffee consumer who is concerned with the ethicality of coffee, the message and meaning of the coffee is noticed. The message and meaning from Land of a Thousand Hills is the all-encompassing “Drink Coffee. Do Good.” motto, but for other small independent shops it can be their dedication to initiatives like fair trade or labour organizations for the coffee workers. Land of a Thousand Hills is dedicated to a portion from every cup of coffee returning to its partner communities in Rwanda, as well as ensuring that their customers know of the work that is taking place in Rwanda, transforming communities for better.

Land of a Thousand Hills, as discussed in this chapter, is just one example of how coffee producers and consumers can work together to form a partnership that benefits all involved parties. It is an example of an international phenomenon, the Rwandan coffee industry, that takes up space within both the local life of Rwanda and Daleville, Virginia. The Rwandan communities that grow the coffee are experiencing economic and community growth while also becoming stronger as a result of their attitudes of reconciliation. The coffee shop that sells their products is able to further this growth by making sure that consumers know the narrative behind

their coffee, and that the money spent on this cup of coffee will have a lasting impact on the community that produced it.



## Chapter 4: Final Outcomes

This concluding chapter brings in some elements for further study and presents the limitations on this work. This final chapter finally brings together the main results from the previous two parts of analysis, as well as tying their major themes into the greater global discussion on the power of coffee.

### For Further Exploration

One element that deserves discussion within this thesis is how the genocide of 1994 affected the land holdings and ownership of Rwandan coffee farms. The beginning of this discussion is on the Rwandan government's crackdown to virtually eliminate the usage of the ethnic descriptors “Hutu” and “Tutsi” from the national vernacular. The acceptable descriptor of the nation’s inhabitants is “all Rwandans.”<sup>124</sup> Prior to the genocide, Hutus and Tutsis lived side by side in many villages. This neighboring does not detract from the social prejudices that allowed the genocide to take place, but it more speaks to the ways that communities that were made up of both Hutus and Tutsis found the forgiveness and means to reconcile with each other after the genocide.<sup>125</sup> Now, two and a half decades later, Rwandan coffee farms are held by both Hutus and Tutsis, and each employ each other.<sup>126</sup>

The rebirth of the coffee industry in Rwanda gave many of these communities a place for this reconciliation work to take place, since both groups realized the importance of the coffee industry as their means for growth and economic development. The collaborative nature of

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<sup>124</sup>“Rwanda has banned talking about ethnicity,” The Economist, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2019/03/28/rwanda-has-banned-talking-about-ethnicity>.

<sup>125</sup>Tobias and Boudreaux, “Entrepreneurship and Conflict Reduction in the Post Genocide Rwandan Coffee Industry,” 222.

<sup>126</sup>Laura Fraser, “Coffee, and Hope, Grow in Rwanda,” New York Times, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/06/business/yourmoney/06coffee.html>.

coffee production has become a major mediator between the two parties.<sup>127</sup> It also reinforces the Rwandan government's stance that "we are all Rwandans."<sup>128</sup>

The extent to which Hutu and Tutsi have reintegrated into society with one another makes it difficult to determine specific areas where growth of the coffee industry is supporting one over the other. However, such integration gives Rwanda the chance to present itself as a much more unified nation than what it could truthfully be. With the coffee industry developing better communal relationships, all that is seen from the global community is profits from coffee and communities bettering themselves. This is an image that the Rwandan government has no qualms with at all. Any press that is not criticism towards the government's seeming crackdown on any ethnically-based outbursts is good press for Rwanda. International critics often turn to Rwanda when looking for states that excessively control and demand participation of a strict national narrative due to the government's insistence of unity and no divisions.<sup>129</sup> The Rwandan government defends their actions by saying that they are preventing another horrific genocide from happening. It is indeed a sturdy defense. Even so, the extent to which the success of the coffee industry is touted can always be questioned against the strength of governmental measures.

Additionally, the major literature surveyed in this thesis does not dwell on the ethnic divide that used to wrack Rwanda. If it is necessary for the literature, it gets mentioned within a historical context, but then the literature continues discussion speaking broadly of Rwandans in general without regard to their ethnic background. It is becoming more difficult to ask about

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<sup>127</sup>Tobias and Boudreaux, "Entrepreneurship and Conflict Reduction in the Post Genocide Rwandan Coffee Industry," 221.

<sup>128</sup>"Rwanda has banned talking about ethnicity," *The Economist*.

<sup>129</sup>Richard Grant, "Paul Kagame: Rwanda's redeemer or ruthless dictator?" *The Telegraph*, accessed May 3, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/rwanda/7900680/Paul-Kagame-Rwandas-redeemer-or-ruthless-dictator.html>.

ethnic identity in Rwanda even in a research sense and doing so is an incredibly delicate process, as described in Tobias and Bordeaux's work.<sup>130</sup>

## **Limitations**

The largest limitation that this entire thesis faced was that it is only an undergraduate research project. For better and for worse, that meant I was limited to my university and departmental guidelines and deadlines while conducting this research. I also did not have any sort of funding at all to aid with this research which meant that there could be no fieldwork element in Rwanda. I fully acknowledge that the nine months I spent on this project is not nearly enough time to do this topic complete justice.

The data pool analyzed in Chapter 2 of this thesis is ultimately very small, being made up of only 86 articles, even though my initial search results brought in over 700 articles. The 86 articles that were selected are just a small slice of the wealth of primary and secondary sources that exist on the Rwandan coffee industry. The articles selected also might not present a fully accurate depiction of the rhetoric on the Rwandan coffee industry because they are only in English.

This project was also interrupted by the COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020. While this did not deeply affect my work, it did mean I was no longer able to physically access the Hollins University Wyndham Robertson Library or carry out follow-up interviews at Land of a Thousand Hills. My thanks are in order to the staff at the Hollins Library for their digital assistance and accessibility as I was finishing this work. This thesis also does not account for the

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<sup>130</sup>Tobias and Boudreaux, "Entrepreneurship and Conflict Reduction in the Post Genocide Rwandan Coffee Industry," 229.

effects of COVID-19 within the Rwandan and global coffee industries since the majority of my research had been done prior to the outbreak reaching the United States. I am sure that my data could be different as a result of the pandemic, but such questions can be left for future study.

## **Conclusion**

The major goals of this thesis were to explore the ways in which the Rwandan coffee industry has served as a vehicle for post-conflict reconciliation and what shape global narratives took when describing the industry and Rwanda in general. This thesis used a post-colonial feminist geopolitical theory. This theory allows for the topics of this thesis to be analyzed through three main points--the representation and presentation of an industry, a bottom-up focus rather than an omniscient international study, and the realization that these topics are a part of everyday life.<sup>131</sup>

The process to answer these questions began with a historical overview that surveyed the major points in the Rwandan coffee industry and the nation as a whole. Colonialism was a massive factor that shaped the nation and the coffee industry, ultimately leading to the bloody genocide of 1994. Such colonialist legacies echoed throughout the coffee industry and Rwandan society as the nation sought to put itself back together in the years after 1994. The biggest factors that play into this national redevelopment are economic development and community reconciliation.

These two factors were discussed in greater detail throughout the literature review of this thesis. The economic development that has taken place in Rwanda since 1994 has been a large mixture of national and international efforts. Regardless of the scope of the efforts, they all

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<sup>131</sup>Sharp, "Doing Feminist Political Geographies," 88.

follow the general theory of promoting peace through trade wherein nations that have better trade opportunities are much more likely to be more economically successful and greatly decreasing the likelihood of violence erupting in the nation.<sup>132</sup> Rwanda's economic progress has also taken the form of a lot more entrepreneurial enterprises, the majority being spearheaded by women. The coffee industry has been positively impacted by all these different elements of development and growth.

The major reconciliation efforts that have taken place in Rwanda are based out of the economic development that has been happening and are focused on bringing Rwandan communities back together to a place of forgiveness and healing. The legal proceedings that followed in the wake of the genocide left a complex legacy, but they did set global precedents regarding ethnic violence and genocide.<sup>133</sup> The major element that emerged from this historical background and literature review was just how important community is to the modern nation of Rwanda and all aspects of its development henceforth. Without a base in the community, the entire nation of Rwanda is nothing.

The first main chapter of analysis determined the main streams of narratives that are presented by both the global coffee industry and within the national Rwandan media. Articles and documentaries published by Starbucks and independent coffee blog posts were the main data used to determine the global presentation of the Rwandan coffee industry. These two major elements showed that the general projection of Rwanda is primarily of a nation that is grappling with the after effects of genocide. Secondly, the nation is either focused on the future with an acknowledgement of community or driven by the economic development taking place.

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<sup>132</sup>Boudreaux, "The Business of Reconciliation: Entrepreneurship and Commercial Activity in Post-Conflict Rwanda," 7.

<sup>133</sup>"The ICTR in Brief," United Nations: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, accessed 15 January 2020, <https://unictr.irmct.org/en/tribunal>.

Regardless of the secondary nature of these narratives, the overwhelming takeaway from the first half of chapter 2 is that Rwanda is primarily a nation known for its genocide.

The second half of chapter 2 focused on the Rwandan portrayal of its coffee industry. Data for this portion of analysis came from three major Rwandan news websites that were published in English. These articles resulted in a much different narrative being projected about the Rwandan coffee industry. Their primary focus was to focus on the developmental efforts that are taking place in the country, followed by community improvements and growth over the years since 1994. Mentions of genocide amount to a distant tertiary reference.

The international coffee community, while recognizing the development and societal improvements that are taking place in Rwanda, still use the Rwandan genocide as their primary representation of the country. This can be attributed to two probable theories. One is a blatant exploitation of the Rwandan narrative as an excuse for marketing materials and generating profit. The second, a less extreme hypothesis, is that global coffee companies rely on this version of Rwanda to improve their image as an overall good global citizen by carrying out humanitarian projects or initiatives to help with Rwandan development. The Rwandan news' narrative tells a much different side of the coffee industry. It only seeks to show the forward movement of the industry and to highlight how much the coffee industry has shaped the positive growth of Rwanda, both socially and economically. International media on the Rwandan coffee industry remains based in a narrative that seems to always include the genocide while national depictions of the industry show the plans for the future and the growth of the nation as a whole.

These two different presentations of the Rwandan coffee industry ask two larger questions. Will it be possible for Rwanda to be described by international media without

reference to the genocide in 1994? If not, how will these two different narratives on the Rwandan coffee industry continue to exist with each other?

The second major analysis of this thesis focused on Rwandan coffee in a local context, with its local impacts being both the communities where it is produced as well as within the communities where it is sold as a final, consumable product. This analysis also explored the ways in which that local context extends to a global perspective in three ways--to the producer, local coffee shops, and the consumer. These questions were explored primarily through an in-person interview carried out at Land of a Thousand Hills coffee shop in Daleville, Virginia. This shop has been serving coffee produced in certain communities in Rwanda for the past seven years and was part of a larger network of shops that sold coffee sourced from the same coffee cooperative.

The overarching theme from this entire chapter of analysis can be summed up by the motto of Land of a Thousand Hills, "Drink Coffee. Do Good." From this motto come three takeaways on the micro, meso, and macro levels.

The first of these, the micro level, is the very presence of a coffee shop that serves Rwandan coffee in a small Virginia town with a population of less than three thousand people. Bringing the Rwandan coffee industry to this level makes it much more tangible and real for the local coffee drinker. Land of a Thousand Hills also works diligently to make sure that their partnership with Rwandan coffee communities does not go unnoticed in the store; pictures and information are readily available to open up discussion. While Land of a Thousand Hills is still a for-profit operation, they make sure that a portion of the proceeds from every cup of coffee returns directly to their partner farmers in Rwanda, and customers know of this partnership and that their money helps support these communities.

In the meso level sits Land of a Thousand Hills' dedication to helping the communities they work with to buy the coffee. The goal when Land of a Thousand Hills first started working with the Rwandan coffee industry was to help those communities have a way of growing and succeeding economically. This partnership is and was not planned to be a short-term monetary hand out but a true and lasting partnership that created lasting positive change within the Rwandan coffee communities. Land of a Thousand Hills wants its partner farmers to have a way to successfully help themselves.

Finally, the macro scale implications of "Drink Coffee. Do Good." lead into a discussion on the ethical consumerism of coffee. Customers who choose to purchase Land of a Thousand Hills coffee (or any other coffee product that falls under other qualitatators such as fair trade or organically certified) are making the decision to support the Rwandan coffee industry. Whether it is a conscious decision to drink Land of a Thousand Hills or not; regardless, such a decision is tied to the neoliberal concept of boycotting wherein the money spent is support for the ethical aims of the industry. In the case of Land of a Thousand Hills, coffee has more of a purpose than just being an enjoyable drink. It is a definite show of support to the Rwandan communities that have turned coffee into a profitable and successful livelihood.

In conclusion, the Rwandan coffee has played a part in the development of Rwanda as a whole following the genocide of 1994. Unfortunately, there will most likely never be a time when Rwanda is not remembered or referred to by the genocide. But what the nation can do is to continue to lean into promoting the successful development and growth that they have worked so tirelessly to achieve over the past two decades. The coffee industry has started to promote this success as well, albeit on a much smaller scale. In the case of Rwanda, coffee does have a higher calling than just a caffeinated beverage. Coffee is, and will continue to be, success.



## Appendix

### Further information on Starbucks' social impact programs

*Adapted from Starbucks.com and edited for clarity and length*

#### **Starbucks Fair Trade Centers**<sup>134</sup>

Starbucks currently operates Farmer Support Centers in key coffee producing countries around the world, from Costa Rica to Rwanda to China. There, farmers get free access to the latest findings of our top agronomists, including new varieties of disease-resistant trees, and advanced soil management techniques.

The goal is to build upon traditional growing methods to help farmers continue to improve both the quality of their crops, and their profitability, ensuring the future of high quality coffees for everyone.

#### Starbucks Farmer Support Center Locations:

- Guatemala
- Kigali, Rwanda
- Mbeya, Tanzania
- Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Manizales, Colombia
- Yunnan, China
- Alajuela, Costa Rica (Hacienda Alsacia)
- North Sumatra, Indonesia
- Chiapas, Mexico



<sup>134</sup>“On the ground support for Farming Communities,” Starbucks, <https://www.starbucks.com/responsibility/community/farmer-support/farmer-support-centers>, accessed September 7, 2019.

### **Starbucks CAFE Practices and Fair Trade Initiatives**<sup>135</sup>

Starbucks is dedicated to helping farmers overcome the challenges facing coffee communities. We are committed to buying 100 percent ethically sourced coffee in partnership with Conservation International. To improve productivity and sustainability, we share our research and resources through our Farmer Support Centers—located in coffee-producing countries around the world. They’re open to farmers regardless of whether they sell to us. Thanks to the support of our customers, we’re also donating millions of disease-resistant trees to help farmers fight threats like coffee leaf rust. And through our Global Farmer Fund program, we’re investing \$50 million toward financing for farmers, allowing them to renovate their farm or pursue more sustainable practices.

Now we’re collaborating with the industry to make coffee the world’s first sustainable agricultural product, as a founding member of the Sustainable Coffee Challenge. In total, Starbucks has invested more than \$100 million in supporting coffee communities. Collaborative farmer programs and activities – including Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices, farmer support centers, farmer loans and forest carbon projects. All of these programs directly support improving farmer livelihoods and ensuring a long-term supply of high-quality coffee for the industry.

More than three years after reaching an industry milestone of 99% ethically sourced coffee, Starbucks announced the launch of a traceability pilot program aimed to demonstrate how technology and innovative data platforms can give coffee farmers even more financial empowerment and share data along the journey of coffee beans within the supply chain.

The pilot allows Starbucks in collaboration with Conservation International, to explore how the technology solutions will have a positive impact to farmers, and to assess the viability of scaling the traceability technology and ensuring positive impact to farmers. True to its open-source philosophy, Starbucks plans to share what it learns openly.

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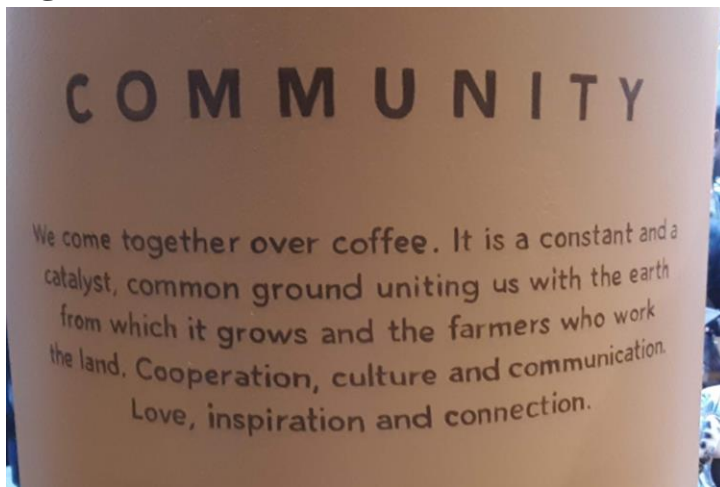
<sup>135</sup>“Ethical Sourcing: Coffee,” Starbucks, <https://www.starbucks.com/responsibility/sourcing/coffee>, accessed September 7, 2019.

## Starbucks Reserve

Starbucks Reserve is a selection of the rarest, most extraordinary coffees Starbucks has to offer. It's where we push our own boundaries of craft, developing a unique roast for each individual lot before experimenting with coffee as an art form—brewing, aging, infusing and blending it into imaginative and often surprising creations. Through our Roasteries and bars, we share our discoveries and the enjoyment of exceptional coffee with the world.

Starbucks began its journey over forty years ago to make premium arabica coffee accessible to all while fostering a culture of human connection. Starbucks Reserve is our commitment to push even further, scouring the world for its most exceptional beans while evolving the coffeehouse experience to something surprising and multi-sensory.<sup>136</sup>

**Figure 1.a**



Quote from Chicago's Starbucks Reserve Roastery, photo by the author, November 25, 2019, as quoted on page 3

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<sup>136</sup>“About,” Starbucks Reserve, <https://www.starbucksreserve.com/en-us/about>, accessed September 7, 2019.

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### **Interview**

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