



Rwanda's Memory Gap

Assessing National and Informal Memorial Distribution



Overview

In the spring of 1994, Rwanda experienced close to 100 days of genocide in which *génocidaires* murdered approximately one million Tutsis, along with thousands of moderate Hutus who opposed the killing campaign. Over the past two decades, perhaps thousands of memorials have been constructed – by the Rwandan government, smaller communities, and individual families – as a means to remember their loss, honor those who died and attempt to rebuild the moral fabric of their country. The goal of this project is to assess how the distribution of memorials across Rwanda corresponds to 1) the number of Tutsi deaths that occurred in particular areas and 2) the country's current population density. By exploring which factor tracks more closely with memorial location, this analysis seeks to ask a broader question about who memorialization in Rwanda is for: the remembered victims or the living public? Additionally, the project examines how the distribution of national (government-constructed) memorials and informal (community-constructed) memorials differ, and therefore how these two groups may prioritize genocide-era deaths and current area population differently in their memorial construction. Finally, the analysis identifies so-called “memorialization gaps” in Rwanda: areas with both high population density, a high percentage of Tutsi deaths, and a comparatively low ratio of existing memorials to the percentage of Tutsi deaths. These are areas where one would expect to encounter more memorials, based on these criteria, than have so far been constructed.

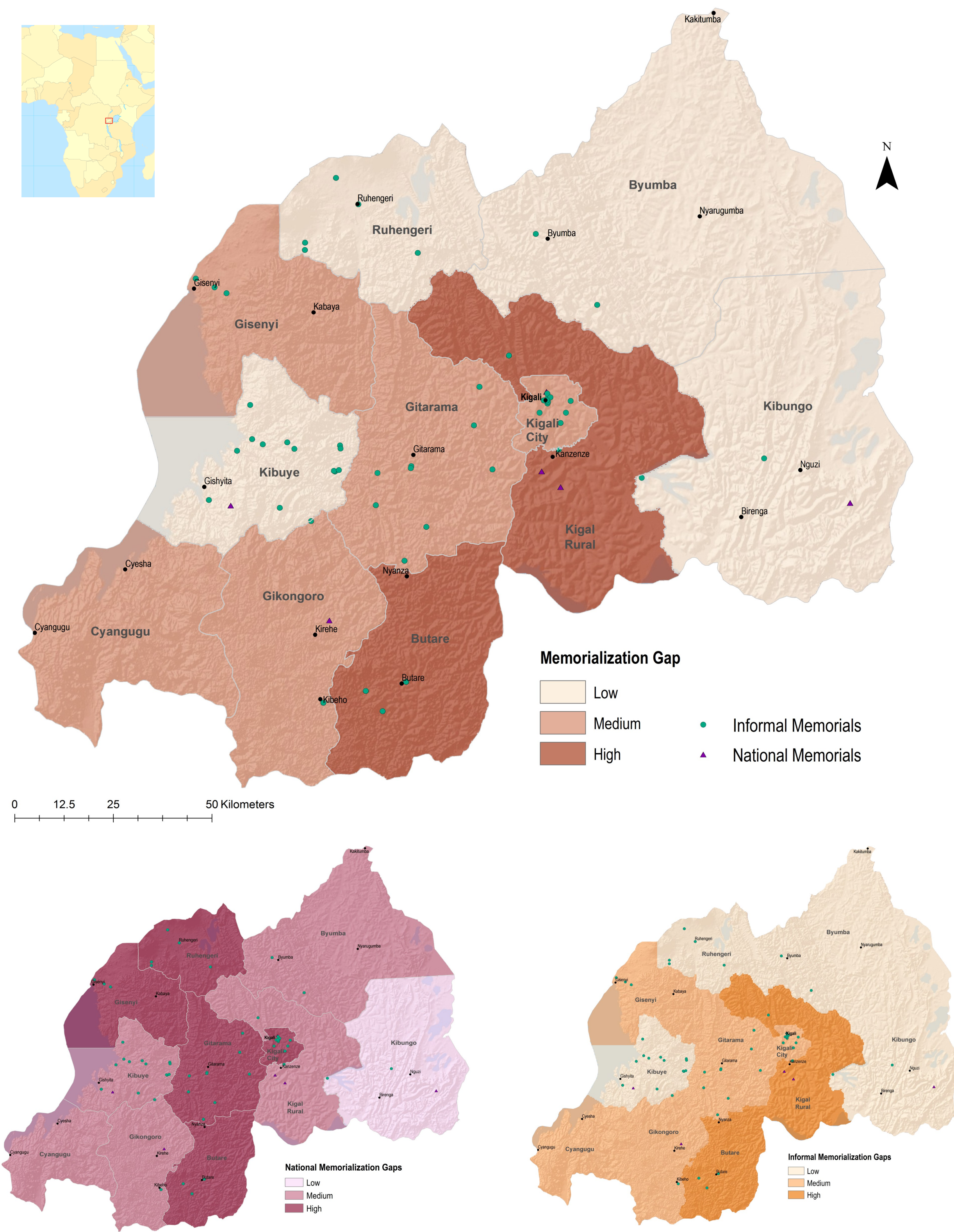
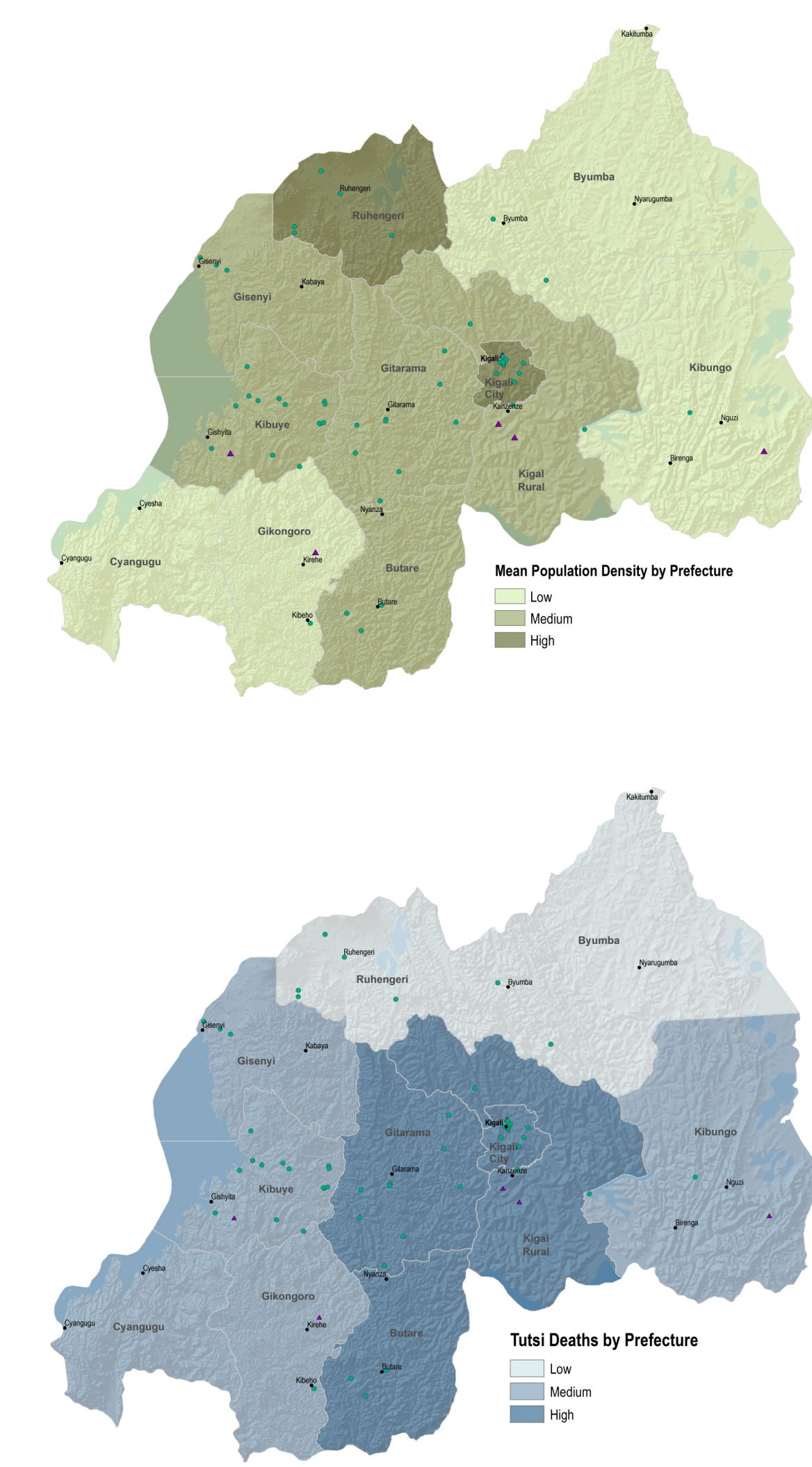
Methodology

A dataset of 58 national and informal memorials, created by the Through a Glass Darkly Project, were mapped across Rwanda by prefecture as points and by using graduated symbology to visualize memorial count. Mean population density by prefecture was determined by using SEDAC's World Population Density Grid, and Tutsi deaths were mapped by prefecture as a percentage of total Tutsis killed in 1994 using data from Scott Strauss' *The Order of Genocide*. Graduated symbology illustrates which prefectures show a high, medium or low population

density and percentage of Tutsis killed during the genocide.

To identify Rwanda's memorialization gaps by prefecture, three criteria were identified: 1) where there had been a high percentage of genocide-era Tutsi deaths, 2) where there is currently high population density and 3) where there is a low ratio of existing memorials to the percentage of Tutsi deaths. These criteria were broken into classes and assigned a score of 1-4, indicating a lower to higher weight for prefectures where memorials are “missing.” Using a raster calculator, these values were added together for a final memorialization gap score from 3-12. This score was then broken into three final classes where 3-6 = Low, 7-9 = Medium, and 10-12 = High, which are represented by prefecture on the final map.

This was performed for both total number of memorials and separately for national and informal memorials.



Results

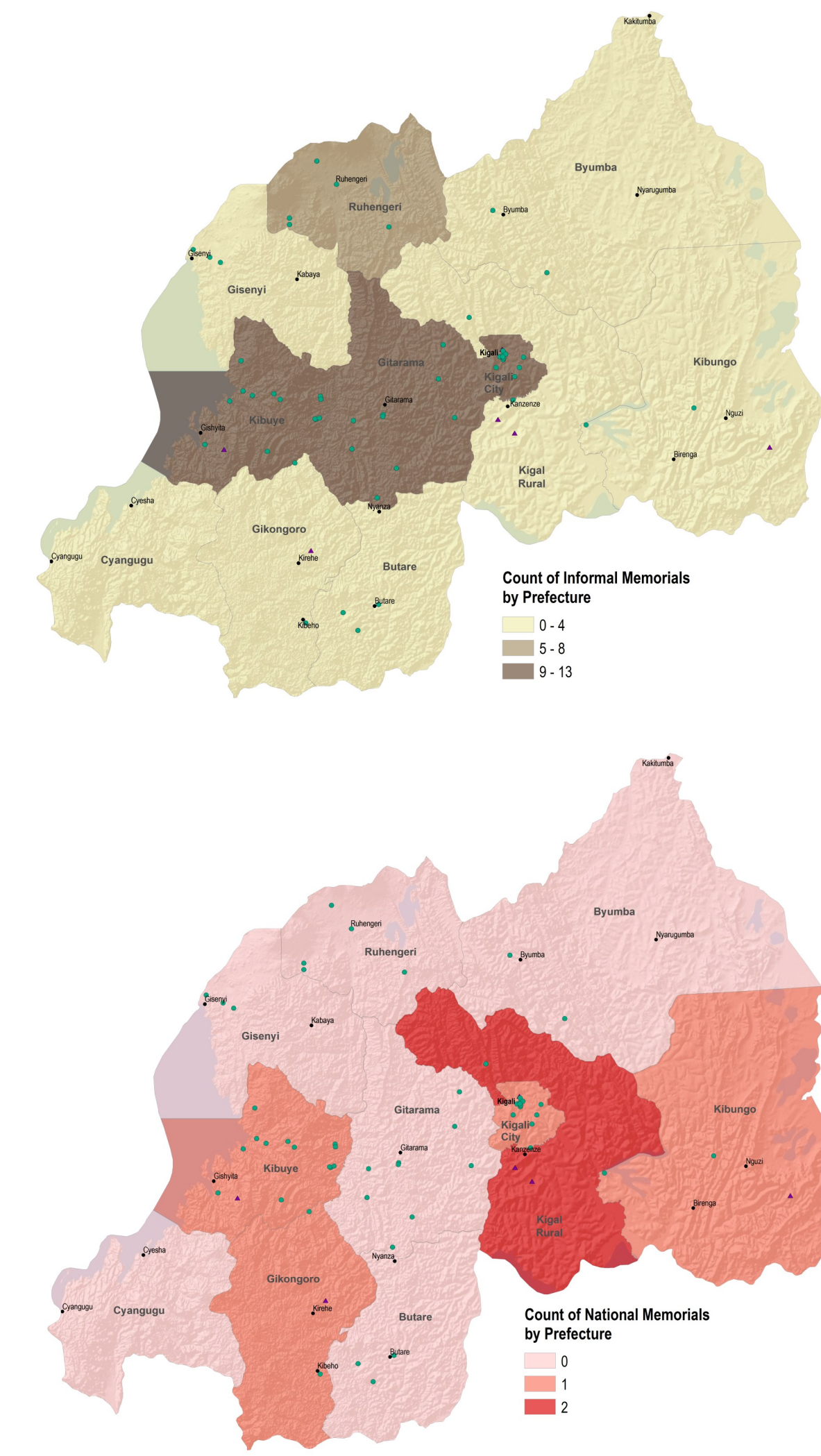
Final analysis shows that Rural Kigali and Butare are the prefectures with the highest memorialization gaps for both total memorials and for informal memorials; these prefectures also had the highest percentages of Tutsi deaths. For national memorials, the prefectures with the highest gaps are Kigali City, Butare, Gitarama, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. This suggests that the Rwandan government and communities are indeed choosing the location of their memorials based on differing considerations, although it is not possible from this level of analysis to conclude precisely what those considerations are. Other prefectures with high percentages of Tutsi deaths are Kigali City, and Gitarama, and those with the highest population density are Kigali City and Ruhengeri. The greatest number of national memorials is in Rural Kigali, and the greatest number of informal memorials are in Kigali City, Kibuye and Gitarama. Given that there appears to be no consistent correlation between either Tutsi deaths, current population density and memorial location in either group demonstrates that further research is needed to determine how memorial location is chosen.

Limitations

This project was constrained by several factors, the first being that Rwanda changed its administrative geography in 2006 from 12 prefectures to 5 provinces. Because data on 1994 Tutsi deaths was not available by province, the unit of analysis is prefecture rather than province and does not reflect Rwanda's current internal borders.

Furthermore, the dataset of informal memorials used in this project was published in 2010 but collected throughout the previous several years; the dataset is therefore not up-to-date for 2014, nor at the time was it able to capture a majority of the informal memorials, particularly those constructed by small communities or households. This project therefore shows a representative, and not a comprehensive, distribution of Rwandan genocide memorials.

Finally, it is important to note that the study of memorialization, a deeply personal and culturally-specific process, is exceedingly difficult to approach with quantitative methods. Identifying memorialization gaps illustrates where memorials are missing based solely on the criteria deliberately chosen; it is in no way a prescription that Rwanda's government, communities, or households change the manner in which they are constructing their own narratives of the genocide.



Prefecture	Percentage of Tutsi deaths out of total Tutsis killed in 1994	Fatality Ranking	Number of National Memorials	Number of Informal Memorials	Number of Total Memorials	Memorial Ranking	Difference in Fatality and Memorial Ranking
Butare	22.3	1	0	3	3	5	4
Kigali-Rural	14.6	2	2	2	4	7	5
Gitarama	12.2	3	0	9	9	3	0
Kigali-City	10.5	4	1	11	12	2	2
Gikongoro	10.4	5	1	2	3	7	2
Kibungo	9.9	6	1	2	2	7	1
Kibuye	7.8	7	1	13	14	1	6
Cyangugu	5.9	8	0	0	0	11	3
Gisenyi	3.7	9	0	3	3	5	4
Byumba	1.6	10	0	2	2	7	3
Ruhengeri	1.1	11	0	5	5	4	7

Map Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 35S

Data Sources: Through a Glass Darkly Project/Harvard University Genocide Memorials Dataset, 2010; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Rwandan Towns Dataset, 2011; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Rwandan Administrative Geography Dataset, 2012; Strauss, Scott. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC) Population Density Grid, 2000; Tufts M: Drive.

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