Upon my visit to Kigali, Rwanda in the summer of 2012, I was surprised by how many of the children and young adults in the region had begun to embrace Western cosmopolitanism. This was evidenced in their acquisition of English from a young age, their motivation to pursue technological education, and their love of American pop culture. Furthermore, I noticed that the ethnic conflicts that ravaged the nation not even twenty years ago were completely invisible or at least well hidden today. Nonetheless, I found that the atrocities of the genocide and the militarized aftermath were still performed to an extent in the Rwandan culture, whether it was through museum displays, drama exercises, school textbooks, or press releases.

In my honors thesis I will demonstrate how the Rwandan state is seeking to overcome its violent past by establishing a post-ethnic society that, with the help of Western powers, is becoming integrated into the globalized economy. The building of this technocracy, while effectively shadowing the atrocities of the past, could also potentially place Rwanda in a controversial position because of its highly militarized local environment, continued alliance with Western countries, and secret reliance on conflict minerals in neighboring Congo.