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RETHINKING POLITICAL RHETORIC AND AUTHORITY DURING RWANDA'S FIRST AND SECOND REPUBLICS

Marie-Eve Desrosiers

Contemporary literature on post-independence Rwanda tends to portray the country's political rhetoric as ethnocentric or to interpret the history of the two pre-genocide Republics through the lens of ethnic relations. This should come as no surprise. Considering what a watershed moment the 1994 genocide was, many now read Rwanda's past through the events of the 1990s (Newbury 2012; Newbury and Newbury 2000: 832; Prunier 1995: 74). While this is to be expected, reading Rwandan history through the genocide comes with risks. Chief among these is the risk of misrepresenting this complex period.

This article reassesses the political rhetoric and authority of pre-genocide Rwanda to bring nuance to our understanding of the regimes of Grégoire Kayibanda (First Republic, 1961–73) and Juvénal Habyarimana (Second Republic, 1973–94). It holds that their political rhetoric – defined as public speech strategically constructed and deployed to the extent that it can be – is often misconstrued. The article shows that this rhetoric was forged in reaction to a challenging environment. It argues that, although commonly portrayed as anti-Tutsi, especially under Kayibanda, the regimes' rhetoric was cautious and seemingly ethnically accommodating. Anti-Tutsi references generally only transpired when regimes faced a 'terminal crisis' threatening their survival. Not only is moderate rhetoric more representative of what the Republics promoted, but it sheds better light on the political aims and strategies the regimes deployed to face challenges and constraints.

Specifically, the article contends that this moderate rhetoric was a key component of regime resilience strategies, or what Schatz called a 'soft authoritarian tool kit' (2009). Born of questionable origins, the regimes faced recurrent challenges and had difficulty imposing their authority on segments of the population – a fact rarely acknowledged. Unlike ethnocentric rhetoric calling upon limited ethnic affinities and a 'risk-all' survival strategy, moderate rhetoric was meant to 'persuade' and 'pre-empt': it served to extend support for regimes uncertain of their grounding.

The article draws on a survey of transcribed public speeches in French and Kinyarwanda by Presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana, as well as on Mouvement démocratique républicain-Parmehutu (MDR-Parmehutu, First Republic) and Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement (MRND, Second Republic) manifestos for the period under study. Since this was material produced and published by national authorities, it can be considered representative of the regimes' publicly deployed ideology. It also draws on archival material gathered at the National Archives in Rwanda and Rwandan

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archives at the National University of Rwanda. Additional material was obtained from Belgian and French diplomatic archives. Speeches were qualitatively analysed to identify recurrences of concepts and themes to develop a representative account of First and Second Republican rhetoric. Other documents were surveyed to map and assess major political trends under these Republics.

The article's contribution is twofold. To date, little work has been conducted directly on the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes[1] and the recent literature's tendency to read this period through the lens of the genocide has led to a loss of historical texture. In addition, an in-depth comparison of these Republics has never been undertaken. This article provides a nuanced comparison of these regimes, focusing on their political rhetoric outside terminal crises, a feature never studied in the case of the First Republic. Second Republican rhetoric has been the subject of recent analyses (Desrosiers and Thomson 2011; Verwimp 2000), but these contributions have not contextualized the rhetoric, looking at how it reflected, and simultaneously tried to manage, the challenging environment. More broadly, this article contributes to the study of authoritarian practices. Bueno de Mesquita and Smith recently re-emphasized how rulers strategize their interactions with supporters and ordinary citizens to retain power (2011). The subject of too little attention (Schatz 2009: 207), rhetoric is part of available endurance strategies. Broadening the scope of traditional state survival studies (Brownless 2007; Herbst 2000; Jackson and Rosberg 1992), this article adds to the growing literature on rhetoric's role in authoritarian resilience, particularly in terms of how autocrats engage with domestic audiences (Desrosiers and Thomson 2011; Dunn 2001; Jourde 2005; Wedeen 1999). Far from an exercise to whitewash these regimes that clearly infringed on basic rights and practised identity-based discrimination, including violence, the article aims to revisit this period to shed alternative light on the political strategies adopted by Rwandan leaders in the face of significant challenges and constraints.

The article begins with a survey of how contemporary Rwandan literature portrays the Republics and introduces the conceptual framework. It then turns to developments under the two regimes, illustrating key challenges and constraints they faced. Finally, the article analyses rhetoric under both Republics, examining its forms and uses as a resilience strategy.

REVISITING CONTEMPORARY PORTRAYALS

Excluding work on the radicalization period (1990–94), Rwanda's First and Second Republics have received little academic attention. Two exceptions, Lemarchand's *Rwanda and Burundi* (1970) and Reyntjens's *Pouvoir et Droit au Rwanda* (1985), were rich analyses of events and institutions, but studied only the First Republic. Concentrating on the Second Republic, de Lame (1996), Jefremovas (2002),[2] Newbury (1992) and Reyntjens (1986) offered insights on

[1]Exceptions include Bézy (1990), de Lame (1996), Gasana (2002), Jefremovas (2002), Lemarchand (1970), Newbury (1992) and Reyntjens (1985; 1986; 1987).

[2]Jefremovas is included in pre-genocide literature since research for her 2002 book began prior to 1994.

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the administration and the shape of state–society relations under Habyarimana. Some authors insisted on elite competition, highlighting the intricacy of Rwandan politics (Lemarchand 1970; Newbury 1988; 1992; Reyntjens 1985; 1986). Notwithstanding how detailed and well-grounded this literature was, it remained too sparse to provide a portrait of key political trends for the entire period and failed to produce an in-depth comparison of these regimes.

Work published after the genocide also contributes to literature on the Republics. As this period preceded the genocide, authors often discuss the Republics in their analyses of the genocide or of post-genocide Rwanda. But lack of attention to historical context, including when citing pre-genocide literature, has resulted in a loss of historical nuance and problematic historical accounts, a point well argued by Newbury (2012). The influence of the genocide also shapes how events and trends during the Republics are interpreted.

Although a few scholars stand apart,[3] this post-genocide literature has given rise to a relatively coherent and rarely questioned narrative on pre-genocide Rwanda. Authors touch on similar themes and trends, insisting on the same events and junctures. This narrative centres on ethnocentrism, which often organizes how authors analyse pre-genocide Rwanda, moving from one tense 'ethnic episode' to the next.

Certain authors insist on the continued existence of an ethnocentric ideology throughout the period.[4] Speaking of a decades-old racial ideology stigmatizing the Tutsi, authors such as Chrétien and Uvin imply that ethnocentrism was openly promoted throughout the era (e.g. Chrétien 1995: 140–1; 2006; 299, 309; Uvin 1997: 91, 98; 1998: 23, 27). More commonly, authors differentiate between the Republics, painting a fiercely ethnocentric portrait of the Kayibanda years. Authors insist on First Republican authorities' regular recourse to racist theories to radically distinguish between ethnic groups (e.g. African Rights 1994; Guichaoua 2010; Kimonyo 2008; Mamdani 2001; Prunier 1995; Vidal 1991: 28, 39). It is also argued that Tutsi in Rwanda were targeted in a corporate manner, demonized as a whole or presented as a fifth column (e.g. African Union 2000; Chrétien 1996; Vidal 1991).

The Second Republic is portrayed as more accommodating and its ethnocentrism as latent. To illustrate this moderation, reference is made to the space Tutsi carved out in the private sector, close ties some Tutsi businessmen built with power-holders, or the tendency towards assimilation in the late 1980s (e.g. Guichaoua 2010: 44; Prunier 1995: 75–6). Yet authors also remind readers that ethnic hatreds could easily be revived, as the genocide confirmed (e.g. Chrétien 2006: 305; Uvin 1997: 91).

The literature also focuses on the Second Republic's authoritarianism, a key for many to understanding mobilization during the genocide. Authors emphasize the regime's strength (African Union 2000: 4.11; Strauss 2006: 202; Uvin 1998: 22). The literature points to the predominance of the executive, with power emanating from the office of the President, the MRND and a few other appointed positions (Des Forges 1999: 41; Guichaoua 2010: 42; Newbury 1995: 13).

[3]Examples include Fujii (2009), Newbury and Newbury (2000), Pottier (2002) and Strauss (2006). These authors warn readers about overly simplistic, ethnic readings of Rwandan history.
[4]It is also the position generally defended by the current Rwandan regime.

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This authoritarian structure, it is said, dissuaded political opposition and ensured tight control of Rwandan society (African Union 2000: 4.7, 4.9; Gasana 1995: 213–14). Many discuss the state's great – totalitarian even – control over the entire territory and over Rwandan citizens (e.g. Fujii 2009: 72; Guichaoua 2010: 42–4; Prunier 1995: 76; Strauss 2006: 203; Uvin 1997: 97; 1998: 22). For Strauss, for example, this overbearing state ensured Rwandans' compliance (2006: 202). A similar ability for control and social compliance is sometimes attributed to the Kayibanda regime (Prunier 1995: 57; Strauss 2006: 202–3; Uvin 2010: 168). However, the Habyarimana regime's hyper-management of the country was not to last. According to this narrative of authoritarianism and control, the regime's undisputed command faltered in the late 1980s with the onset of an important economic crisis.

Post-genocide literature is not wrong in insisting on ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. Ethnocentrism fuelled dramatic episodes of violence, in particular in 1963–64, when thousands of Tutsi were killed, and during the 1994 genocide, as well as featured more consistently in regular discriminatory practices against the Tutsi. Similarly, the Republics practised, although with variable success, authoritarianism and social control. But while there is truth to this narrative, it is an oversimplification.

When dealing with ethnocentrism, post-genocide literature often assumes a necessary concordance between practice (what regimes do) and their discourse and ideology (what they say, or the public face they choose to display). To validate this assumption, the literature tends to rely on very specific quotes, repeatedly reproduced as evidence of pervasive ethnocentric rhetoric. For example, authors rely excessively on the 1957 Bahutu Manifesto and a 1964 speech by Kayibanda – the 'who is genocide' speech – to build their characterization of the First Republic (e.g. Erny 1994: 62; Kimonyo 2008: 54–5; Uvin 1997: 99).[5] Quotes are neither put in the context of the broader document they are taken from, nor considered in the context of broader government rhetoric, which would reveal them to be misconstrued or unrepresentative. Statements about chauvinistic rhetoric also rarely distinguish between actors. Vague references to authorities or elites, presented as producers and disseminators of racist rhetoric, blur who did what and leave readers to assume that all authorities were involved in spreading ethnocentric propaganda, when in reality differences existed among authorities in terms of how they behaved and what they promoted.

Unlike claims about ethnocentric rhetoric, statements on authoritarianism are not incorrect per se. But focusing on regimes' ability to control political and social realms neglects the continued existence of contestation and resistance, including during the purportedly stable first decade of the Habyarimana regime. Although some of this turmoil may seem insignificant compared with the terminal crises the regimes eventually faced, it should not be assumed that Rwanda's leadership took dissent and resistance lightly. As a matter of fact, it would be more accurate to presume that authoritarianism and attempts at social control came about to

[5]'Le manifeste des Bahutu: note sur l'aspect social du problème racial indigène au Rwanda (24 mars 1957)' and 'Adresse du Président Kayibanda aux Rwandais Émigrés ou Réfugiés à l'Étranger (11 mars 1964)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

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try to wrestle with existing challenges and constraints to the regimes' rule over the country.

Authoritarianism is never fully attained; absolute control is never secured. Authority should be conceptualized instead as a dialectical relation between forces of control and forces of opposition and resistance. Authoritarianism triggers forms of dissension, as well as forms of retreat from authorities' attempts at control. Power-holders try to contain these forces, but also to extend their control over society to pre-empt future challengers. Authoritarianism is therefore practised, performed by authorities in the face of challenges through resilience strategies.

Rwandan authorities practised authoritarianism during the majority of the post-independence years. Did strategies deployed by these regimes take the same form throughout the period, outside and during terminal crises, which would be the case if credence is lent to authors arguing that leaders remained openly ethnocentric for a good part of the period? Drawing on framing literature, which emphasizes the strategic nature of communication (Benford and Snow 2000; Desrosiers 2012), this article maintains that outside terminal crises, the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes continued to experience challenges and constraints, although not to the extent of having their basic political survival threatened. As a result, they deployed rhetoric more moderate than generally proposed as a strategy to ground their power.

As Jourde argued, 'the "engineering of authoritarianism" relies on the use of symbolic and cultural strategies' (2005: 422). Even discriminatory regimes, such as the pre-genocide Republics, opt for a more moderate, positive approach (Dunn 2003; Wedeen 1999). Authoritarian regimes greatly rely on persuasion and what Schatz calls discursive pre-emption (2009: 207),[6] understood broadly in this article as the projection of norms and expectations intended to shape people's behaviour. In other words, authoritarian leaders use rhetoric to try to achieve buy-in on the part of domestic audiences through conversion and disciplining language, a buy-in that the wrong rhetoric, such as playing the ethnic card in the wrong context, does not afford and even jeopardizes.

Status, power and context permit or limit certain types of rhetoric and representations. They influence how one sees and, hence, represents oneself. They also influence the type of rhetoric publics accept and respond to. Rhetoric and representations that stray too far from reality have little traction (Gamson 1992; Tarrow 1994). Extreme ethnocentric rhetoric should therefore be understood as a gamble. Where regime survival is at stake, leaders fearing for their hold on power or wishing to wrestle power away from existing authorities may be willing to gamble all on keeping or building a strong constituency, betting on a narrowly defined identity, and turning to ethnocentric appeals. Such rhetoric has traction in specific contexts, particularly where fear (physical threats, economic insecurity, etc.) exists and collapses issues around zero-sum perceptions (Desrosiers 2012; Kaufman 2001). Without the right conditions, however, extreme rhetoric may appeal to some, but it rarely resonates and even risks triggering strong negative reactions.

[6]Schatz defines discursive pre-emption as the 'staging of political dramas that undermine opponents' efforts to gain popular support' (2009: 207).

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Outside terminal crises, moderate rhetoric is more agile. Striving for resilience instead of 'risk-all' survival, political leaders tend to choose resilience-driven strategies, which rely on measured language. They try to persuade wide audiences, to build stronger constituencies, create alliances and relations, at least rhetorically, which requires bridging diverse interests and promoting commonalities. This means working around polysemic themes – ambiguous and able to mean different things to different people – to capture the interest of many, if not most. Polysemic themes may even be broad enough to accommodate ethnocentric interpretations. Free of coercive undertones, at least in appearance, moderate language is also a tool to convey discursive pre-emption. Unlike coercive rhetoric that forbids outright, it can subtly impress upon supporters, challengers and citizens an expected line of conduct, norms and expectations for behaviour, as well as the implicit consequences of failing to meet them.

STRONG, STABLE REPUBLICS?

The pre-genocide Republics are described as tightly structured administrations that sought to control the public sphere. Political life centred on a national party or standalone political movement.[7] Regime reach extended to public employment, education, religion and the media.[8] Administrative structures were decentralized to bring politics and services to the *commune* level, ensuring closer ties between the state and citizens.[9] Additional state manifestations in Rwandans' lives included public celebrations, the *animations*, organized 'voluntary' public exultation of the regime centred around collective activities such as sports, and, under the Second Republic, *umuganda*, mandatory communal work.[10] There clearly was a 'hierarchical ethos', a propensity towards top-down centralization

[7]Under the First Republic, the MDR-Parmehutu became a de facto state party as of the 1965 legislature. During the Second Republic, the MRND was the only political organization allowed up until the early 1990s.

[8]On links between the state and the church, see Longman (2001).

[9]Under the two Republics, the administrative system was organized around a series of levels: the *cellule*, at the lowest level, followed by the *secteur*, the *commune* and the *préfecture*. On the *commune*'s role in Second Republican authoritarian structures, see de Lame (1998) and Newbury (1992: 205–6).

[10]Although more commonly associated with the Second Republic, '*animation*' was also a feature of the First Republic. Kayibanda explained with regard to *animation* that '[i]nformation and propaganda, direct contact with the masses must be further encouraged to bolster their enthusiasm, to chase away doubts, to eliminate pessimisms, to fortify conviction in the government's action [. . .]'. Personal translation. 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du premier anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2861). For his part, Habyarimana explained *animation* in the following terms: 'No one can act when they are not animated. To animate is to give life, it is to enlighten, and finally to put in motion, to give movement. It matters to start by animating movement within ourselves, to fill ourselves with its principles and ideals.' Personal translation. 'Discours d'ouverture de son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République à la rencontre avec les agents de l'État' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2861). *Animation* and *umuganda*, as practised under the Second Republic, were inspired by similar practices in North Korea and in Mobutist Zaire, such as *salongo*. North Koreans even participated on some occasions in the training of Rwandans in the preparations of 'movements' for important celebrations such as 5 July. I thank David Newbury and Noel Twagiramungu for this insight.

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and control.[11] But the period from 1959 to the late 1980s was far from stable. Although the Presidents were popular, both regimes were born of contestation, their rule rather turbulent, and their reach within segments of society questionable.

The First Republic sprang from a purported ethnic revolution led by educated Hutu to overthrow Tutsi indirect rule, calling for greater equality. Violence began as a result of the actions of new political parties (Aesrt and Régnier 1960) but eventually spread to peasants (Newbury 1988: 181). The notion of an ethnic revolution is misleading, however. Significant intra-group divisions existed. Calls for reform were promoted by progressive Tutsi, while Hutu intellectuals were split about the means to attain change (Gasana 2002: 14; Pottier 2002: 123–4; Reyntjens 1985: 224–8). Motives were not necessarily shared, especially across regions. Also, the Rwandan population was not unified. During the violent incidents of November 1959 that triggered the 'social revolution', popular revolt was not necessarily about anti-Tutsi ideals (Newbury 2012: 51).[12] The violence was largely directed at chiefs and sub-chiefs, admittedly mostly Tutsi, in an explosion of frustration against the 'visible hand' of an oppressive system (Lemarchand 2002: 308; Newbury 1988: 195). Yet many acted in response to the opportunities to loot or to respond to leaders' expectations.

Hutu popular support was not assured for the party most clearly associated with the revolution, the MDR-Parmehutu. While the MDR-Parmehutu claimed a sweeping victory in Rwanda's first communal elections following the violence, new Parmehutu leaders' abuse and corruption led to declining support (Kimonyo 2008: 50; Reyntjens 1985: 284). It was because of the 'weakness of its base' that, according to Lemarchand, the MDR-Parmehutu hastened a transfer of power from the Belgian *Tutelle* or trusteeship (1970: 189). Hutu political elites, complicit with Belgian authorities,[13] assembled in Gitarama on 28 January 1961. During the 'Coup d'État de Gitarama', they proclaimed the abolition of the monarchy and the institution of a republic. Rwanda obtained its independence the following year. These early years proved turbulent, especially in terms of interactions between new political parties, which turned violent on a number of occasions.[14]

The rest of the First Republic was no more stable. Early on, instability largely resulted from military incursions by Tutsi refugees nicknamed '*Inyenzi*' who had fled to neighbouring countries during the revolution. These attacks occasionally triggered reprisals against Tutsi living within Rwanda. In one of the worst instances, over 10,000 Tutsi were killed following an attack in

[11]Catharine Newbury (1992: 199) used the concept in reference to the Second Republic.

[12]While violence against Tutsi is often discussed, a Tutsi counter-reaction also resulted in violence against Hutu (Lemarchand 1970: 167).

[13]Belgian support for the Coup d'État de Gitarama was discussed extensively at the United Nations in 1961, a number of countries being critical of Belgian support of 'illegal institutions'. This led to international pressure, channelled through the UN, to regularize the situation through a referendum on the monarchy and elections. See, for example, Telegram of the Belgian representation to the United Nations, 'New York 571 1264/1210 29 11 05', 29 March 1961 and 'Télégramme no 476 du 10 avril 1961', 10 April 1961 (Belgian diplomatic archives, binder 18858).

[14]Annual reports by the Government of Belgium commenting on domestic trends in Rwanda mentioned, in 1959–62, the troubles of the time, often pointing to the role played by political parties and their action (Government of Belgium 1960; 1962).

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December 1963.[15] While not necessarily behind local retaliation against Tutsi,[16] the Parmehutu national leadership nonetheless took the opportunity to target political opponents, killing some of the last officials of two prominent opposition parties.[17]

Although external attacks became less frequent in the late 1960s, stability did not return. By 1967–68, a malaise could be felt throughout the country. In 1968, a parliamentary commission revealed the fragmentation of Parmehutu supporters into different factions at the local level. In addition, the report described the ineptitude, corruption and violence of officials in numerous parts of Rwanda, and their role in feeding popular discontent (Nzeyimana *et al.* 1968: 97). Additional trends in the late 1960s included a deep disconnect between rural populations and intellectual elites at the head of the country (Vidal 1991: 29–31), and a growing frustration among a new generation of Rwandan intellectuals with the regime's heavy footprint[18] and inability to create opportunities for them, as the 'generation of the revolution' monopolized positions (Kimonyo 2008: 58; Lemarchand 1970: 238).[19]

Elite circles echoed this malaise. Dissensions within political institutions, and within the MDR-Parmehutu itself, were often raised in the late 1960s in speeches by the President.[20] An increasing schism between supporters from the north on one side and the south and central regions on the other further weakened the regime's bases. By the early 1970s, the Kayibanda regime had cut itself off from key sources of support.

Although more stable, the Second Republic faced its own share of instability. It too was born of revolt and to some degree violence. Following the massacres of hundreds of thousands of Hutu in Burundi (Lemarchand 1996; 2009; Lemarchand and Martin 1974), Rwandan Tutsi students and entrepreneurs were targeted in spring 1973.[21] According to a common explanation, the violence was stoked by the authorities as a scapegoating strategy to secure their hold on

[15]Lemarchand points to 'at least 10,000 Tutsi [dying] under the blows of the Hutu' (1970: 216, 225).

[16]During different instances of violence, incidents were often stoked by local leaders (Des Forges 1995: 45). In the case of reprisals following the 1963 attack, Reyntjens explains that the responsibility for the violence rested indirectly with the Parmehutu leadership, having chosen to empower ministers and local authorities to take control of the situation which then resulted in abuse and killings (1985: 469).

[17]The parties were the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) and the Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais (RADER). UNAR was a predominantly Tutsi monarchist and conservative party, while RADER was an inter-group party advocating social and democratic reform.

[18]Letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France to the Ambassador of France to Rwanda, 'Instructions', 1976 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 2, sub-series 2, box 2 S/D 2).

[19]See also Ministère de la famille et du développement communautaire (1969) for regime concerns about youth delinquency.

[20]'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 6ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale (1er juillet 1968)' and 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 7ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale (1er juillet 1969)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[21]With regards to Rwanda, most of the violence took place in February and March 1973, though some incidents took place as early as December 1972.

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power (Reyntjens 1994: 29; Vidal 1991: 38).[22] Once unleashed, this violence became an opportunity for populations to express class-based and regionally based frustrations (Newbury 1992: 197). Within a few months, Habyarimana, then Minister of Defence, along with military officers mostly from the north, staged a coup. This successful coup on 5 July 1973 followed an aborted attempt in April.[23]

By most accounts, the coup was welcomed. But, despite the initial enthusiasm, the Second Republic quickly stirred dissent. Disagreements between the original members of the coup, the '*camarades du 5 juillet*' were prominent. Rumours of trouble and of potential coups surfaced regularly in the early years,[24] especially about plots involving Alexis Kanyarengwe, number two in the regime. Competition among personalities shook Rwandan political life often[25] and led key political and military elites to part ways with the regime or to be ejected from power circles. The regime also had an uneasy relationship with educated elites and bureaucrats. This intellectual elite resisted, for example, the MRND and the institution of a single-party state.[26] This tension between the regime and the Rwandan intelligentsia continued into the 1980s, the government regularly facing difficulties in promoting its policies among Rwandan intellectual elites.[27] Throughout the Second Republic, the Rwandan intelligentsia also practised its dissent, many refusing to take part in regime-sponsored activities such as *umuganda*.[28]

Similar resistance to government programmes existed among ordinary Rwandans. In a letter in 1979, Rwandan bishops indicated that the 'little people' suffered from rights violations, especially from administrators and justice and

[22]According to another perspective, the violence is attributed to northerners seeking to destabilize the regime in preparation for a coup (Gasana 1995: 213; Guichaoua 2010: 40).

[23]According to rumours, the coup aborted because its instigators failed to get Habyarimana's support. Telegram of the Belgian Ambassador to Rwanda to the Belgian Ministry of Exterior Relations, 'Télégramme no 258 du 7 avril 1973', 7 April 1973 (Belgian diplomatic archives, binder 16393) and Telegram to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Coup d'État avorté au Rwanda', 9 April 1973 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 7, sub-series 1, box 30).

[24]The height of these rumours was in 1974–75, 1978 and around the time of the Lizinde affair.

[25]There was regular public fighting between key regime officials, including between Jean Birara, governor of the National Bank, and Aloys Nsekalije, who occupied different ministerial positions, including Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[26]On resistance to the MRND structures, see Kimonyo (2008: 88) and Munyarugerero (2003: 165–70).

[27]Commenting on the Rwandan political sphere, the French Ambassador at the time stated that 'constant efforts by the government to explain its policy, get it accepted and lived by the population, are not always successful, at least among the intelligentsia'. Personal translation. Letter of the French Ambassador to Rwanda to the Ministry of Exterior Relations, 'La Presse au Rwanda', 14 May 1982 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 6, sub-series 2, box 1).

[28]Habyarimana raised the issue on a number of occasions. In an interview, he explained that 'there is a certain reticence [towards *umuganda*], especially from intellectual cadres. [. . .] when I ask them to go do *umuganda*, they wear nice suits, they have always been in school with paper and pencils; they work with their brain; when you ask them to work with their hands, they hesitate for fear of getting dirty.' Personal translation. 'Entretien du Président de la République avec les journalistes à Nice, le 10/05/1980' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2839). See also 'Dialogue du Chef de l'État avec les employeurs et les employés du secteur privé, Kigali, le 6 avril 1978' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2861).

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health personnel.[29] Frustrations with the lack of basic freedoms, expected participation in *animations* and *umuganda*, mandatory monetary contributions called *imisanzu* and the lack of social services surfaced regularly. Jefremovas also found that, in some *communes*, agricultural and artisanal cooperatives set up by the regime were judged to be an imposition and were 'resisted [peasants] acquiescing in word but not in deed' (2002: 53; Seruganda 1979).[30] Rwandans' resentment of the state presence also extended to the military and the *gendarmerie*, a foreign intelligence note even speaking of 'hostility' towards the security forces.[31]

By the late 1970s, greater dissension emerged. Favouring his home prefecture of Gisenyi, and more specifically the Bushiru region, Habyarimana neglected not only the south and centre of the country but also previously allied northern prefectures. Regional tensions peaked during the 'Lizinde affair' (Munyarugerero 2003; Reyntjens 1986: 286–8). Following the dismissal in November 1979 of Théoneste Lizinde, head of the central intelligence service and originally from the Bugoyi region, a competitor region to Bushiru, tracts surfaced criticizing the government's corruption, regionalism and pro-Tutsi stance.[32] Arrests following these events became a purge against popular '*camarades du 5 juillet*' and remaining actors of the First Republic who continued to stand as competitors to Habyarimana. Commenting on political life in Rwanda in these years, the French Ambassador described it as 'a dense and incessant confrontation', marked by challenges and resistance to power, where even at the local level 'the MRND tried, often in vain, to mobilize [. . .]'.[33]

The regime turned instead to a new base for support, a younger generation of bureaucrats recruited and maintained through clientelist ties. Not only did the allegiance of this new base rest on the government's ability to sustain its clientelist networks, an unstable foundation, but clientelism accentuated the rural–urban divide in Rwanda, feeding rural discontent (Bézy 1990; Reyntjens 1994: 33).[34] Thus, by the early – not late, as often claimed – 1980s, the recurrent political crises the regime had faced in its early days had given way to deeper political and social resentment across society. The economy added to the mix, with increasing poverty, growing inequalities and insufficient productive capacities.[35] Rwanda

[29]Monseigneurs Nsengiyumva, Perraudin, Sibomana, Gahamanyi, Nikwigize and Kalibushi, 'Lettre pastorale', 1979, summarized in 'Lettre pastorale des évêques du Rwanda', 14 December 1979 (French diplomatic archives, series RWA 4).

[30]Within a few years, the cooperative movement even became, according to Pottier, a 'hotbed for social contestation and change' (1989; 2002: 22).

[31]Letter of the French Ambassador to Rwanda to the Ministry of Exterior Relations, 'La situation des droits de l'homme au Rwanda', 4 March 1982 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 3, sub-series 12, box 29). See also Telegram to the Ministry of Exterior Relations, 'Développement politique au Rwanda', 11 February 1982 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 3, sub-series 1).

[32]For a summary of the tracts, see Barahinyura (1988).

[33]Personal translation. 'Rapport de fin de mission septembre 1980 – janvier 1983', January 1983 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 2, sub-series 2, box 2).

[34]A French diplomat also commented in 1981 on the gap existing between elites and rural areas at the time. Letter of the French Ambassador to Rwanda to the Ministry of Exterior Relations, 'Fêtes nationales rwandaises', 10 July 1981 (French diplomatic archives, series RW 2, sub-series 7, box 4).

[35]These economic issues were already raised in 1982 by Philibert Ransoni in an article entitled 'Le peuple croupit dans la misère', published in *Kinyamateka*, a major Rwandan newspaper.

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was already among the poorest countries of the world, and the few development successes of the early Habyarimana years did not erase growing monetary and budgetary problems and an increasing inability to meet development goals (Republic of Rwanda 1981). Elite and popular disenchantment only deepened. Within a few years, the weakened regime gave in to domestic and international pressures to liberalize.

While the two Republics were authoritarian regimes, this did not make them the stable, strong states many authors assume they were. The challenges and contradictions the regimes faced prior to terminal crises were not existential threats, but they were enough to keep the regimes on edge and concerned with their bases. Their authoritarian practices were a response, in large part, to the challenges they faced. Both regimes evolved, each in their own way, from a more 'open' stance – they started, it would be fair to say, with hopes for positive change and some good intentions – to growing authoritarianism, a tightening of control and a falling back on a narrow base of support. In both cases, dissent, opposition and different forms of resistance increasingly became a threat, real or perceived, to regimes uncertain of their bases. Under the circumstances, Rwandan authorities were made hyper-vigilant and focused on ensuring regime resilience through authoritarianism, including through rhetorical strategies.

STRATEGIC RHETORIC

Their questionable origin and the dissent and resistance they confronted throughout their rule impacted on the Republics, and on Republican authorities' perceptions and choices for managing their hold on the country. It also affected their rhetoric. The Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes could not employ rhetoric associated with stronger regimes: confident, bold and secure in their bases, such regimes do not feel the need to reach beyond their expected constituency. Nor were they, at least until their last years, in the position of extremely shaken regimes, in terminal crises, fearing for their very survival and willing to gamble on an exclusionary constituency. Striving for resilience, a more adapted strategy was to focus on courting – at least rhetorically – broader constituencies and alliances. Far from showing open ethnocentrism, in general their rhetoric was moderate and their language ambiguous enough to build bridges and promote commonalities, as well as to include prompts for social control, for discursive pre-emption.

First Republic

The First Republic witnessed many episodes of violence perpetrated against the Tutsi. This violence and the repression of Tutsi political opponents in the early years, along with discriminatory practices against Tutsi, contributed to the lasting perception that the First Republic was openly anti-Tutsi. But its stance towards the Tutsi was not this simple. While the Kayibanda regime targeted the Tutsi through its practices, it did not generally advocate anti-Tutsi sentiments in speeches and public documents. Instead, it conveyed an image at odds with regime practices. Rhetoric focused on justifying the First Republic's existence and the MDR-Parmehutu's rule by stressing how leaders had brought freedom to Rwanda. The Kayibanda regime also claimed to defend noble aims, democratic

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development and social tranquillity. Regime rhetoric also called for patriotic and supportive behaviour. Overall, First Republican rhetoric was more subtle and more strategic than is often believed.

A key theme of the First Republic's rhetoric was its rejection of the past and embrace of a 'revolutionary' present. Rhetoric stressed the absolute break between the two systems through references to a definitive victory over the 'feudal–colonial system' that preceded the Republic. In front of the Legislative Assembly,[36] Kayibanda claimed in 1960 that 'feudality in Rwanda has been definitely vanquished' and exclaimed at another point that '[f]eudality has definitely fallen apart'.[37] According to national authorities, the previous regime had provoked the revolution, its wrongdoings demanding redress. The Parmehutu had thus struggled to abolish the oppression of the many and privileges for the few. The authorities also promised to keep the fight against injustice alive. In fact, terminology used to characterize the pre-revolutionary period or individuals associated with it continued to be used to describe 'ills' and 'wrongdoings' throughout the First Republic. Kayibanda exclaimed on different occasions, for example, that 'banditry, unemployment and depression [...] are a form of *inyenzism* sometimes worse than the exiled feudalists' and that 'the feudal and colonial [ills] we must fight today are poverty, ignorance and immorality'.[38]

Such stark depictions of the previous regime allowed First Republican leaders to distinguish their rule from their predecessors. Rhetoric cast MDR-Parmehutu leaders as the midwives of the social revolution and the guardians of its legacy. The regime worked to build a myth around the events of 1959–61, focusing on the Coup d'État de Gitarama as the key foundational moment for the First Republic. Focusing on the Gitarama Congress put the onus on the prominent role Hutu, especially MDR-Parmehutu, elites played in the events. From the leaders of the party at the podium to the recently elected communal politicians who were present, all could claim to have played a role in the country's march to freedom. According to rhetoric, leaders had not acted in their own interests but to represent the will of the people – although the ambiguous reference to '*le peuple*' left enough room for it to be interpreted as the Hutu or Rwandan nation as a whole. This 'mythification' of events conveyed the sense that the Republic, and the regime, was born of ideals of freedom, and thus born of revolutionary and popular legitimacy. Even as the regime began unravelling – indeed, likely because it was unravelling – the MDR-Parmehutu reminded Rwandans that it continued to stand for the revolution's goals: 'replacing serfdom by democracy, replacing kingdom by the republic, replacing colonial regime by independence'.[39]

[36]It would eventually be renamed the National Assembly.

[37]Personal translation. 'Discours prononcé le 26 octobre 1960 devant l'Assemblée législative' and 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda, le 26 octobre 1964, à l'occasion de la Fête du gouvernement' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[38]Personal translation. 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion de la reconnaissance des officiers de la Garde nationale (Vième promotion) (23 février 1966)' and 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 6ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale (1er juillet 1968)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[39]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Letter by HE [His Excellence] Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic, to all the nation's servants (2 August 1970)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

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First Republican rhetoric also played on positive and appealing themes. Paramount among these were democracy and peace, or what Kayibanda called social tranquillity. Democracy was presented as an end to the privileges of the few and as equal participation of all. Throughout the First Republic, Kayibanda insisted that the pre-eminent goal for Rwanda was the 'democratic improvement of the masses' living standards'. He referred to this objective as a core law in the country: 'the President and the Rwandan government pursue their programme, which continues to have as its fundamental law improved standards for popular masses in Rwanda, workers, and particularly peasants [...]'.[40] The poor, the peasants, in large part Hutu, had been greatly limited in their social mobility under the previous system. Democratic development meant 'democratizing' the system: equity in terms of access to education and ensuring no privileges existed with respect to employment and profit. As Kayibanda explained on the tenth anniversary of the Coup d'État de Gitarama, the regime 'meant to serve the nation and to share its production, where the nation's production is not reserved to some and not others, and where the leadership mainly [works] for the development of poor people'.[41] Democratizing the system also meant recovering the political rights of the 'majority' after years in the hands of a minority. References to a rightful majority rule overlapped with advocating for the rights of the Hutu, as the most numerous group, or what was called in the governmental declaration to the Legislative Assembly at its opening session on 26 October 1961 'real rights of the majorities'.[42] But to stress further the Parmehutu's devotion to democratic ideals, its leaders claimed that, despite their 'extraordinarily majoritarian' stance, they strove zealously to respect the rights of minorities.[43] In a similar vein, Kayibanda exclaimed: 'Be praised PARMEHUTU for you rose as a liberator of the majority and that is what democracy is all about; and thanks to your kindness and victory, you did not even hate the minority.'[44]

According to public rhetoric, stability, or social tranquillity, was necessary to achieve the ideals of democratic development. For the most part, social tranquillity referred to peace among groups in society. Throughout the First Republic, the MDR-Parmehutu claimed to support national cohesion, even making finding a solution to ethnic coexistence problems part of its statutes.[45] The party claimed to stand for 'the promotion of a concrete and fraternal cooperation between peoples' or for 'relationship, collaboration and conviviality'

[40]Personal translation. 'Message du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 1er mai 1964' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

[41]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by HE Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the MDR Parmehutu, January 28th, 1970' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

[42]Personal translation. 'Déclaration gouvernementale prononcée le 26 octobre 1961 devant l'Assemblée législative' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[43]'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du premier anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[44]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Official note by the President of the Republic Grégoire Kayibanda during a meeting at the National Assembly' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

[45]Secrétariat exécutif national, MDR-Parmehutu. *M.D.R. Parmehutu, Manifeste-Programme, statuts, résolutions*. National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2855.

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between all components of Rwandan society – Hutu, Tutsi and Twa – and, as became more prominent in later years, between regions in Rwanda.[46] To further illustrate this point, in its early *Manifestes-Programmes*, the party explained that it harboured no ill will towards the Tutsi. The second *Manifeste-Programme*, for example, explained that the Parmehutu 'does not harbour any racial hatred intent towards the Tutsi. The promotion of the Hutu group, enslaved by the feudal regime, has not amounted to a hatred of our brothers' race.'[47] Later manifestos proclaimed its defence of equality among all Rwandan citizens.[48]

Early Kayibanda speeches also focused on the question of refugees, presenting them as an obstacle to development. Attacked in early years by the '*Inyenzi*', the regime focused to a significant degree on decrying these 'terrorists' or 'feudal laggards' seeking to restore the power they held under the monarchy. Clearly distinguishing between Tutsi refugees as a whole and these 'terrorists', Kayibanda often called on refugees not to let themselves be influenced by the '*Inyenzi*' and offered to welcome back refugees willing to cooperate with the new leaders in Kigali.[49] In a rare address to Tutsi as a corporate group, Kayibanda extended this call to all Tutsi, whom he called 'Rwanda's children', asking them to forego the ways of the past, reject '*Inyenzi*' terrorists, and 'accept the brotherhood you have with the Hutu [... and] to work as ordinary people do, to respect the leaders and laws of democracy that some of you are already respecting'.[50] Within a few years, and with '*Inyenzi*' attacks receding, rhetoric turned to a vaguer threat, which Kayibanda often referred to as '*la subversion*'. This *subversion* consisted of a group of ill-intentioned Tutsi with monarchist leanings and bad 'whites' wedded to colonial dreams – the involvement in 1967 of European mercenaries in Congo, *les hommes de* Schramme, and their subsequent flight to Rwanda constituting one point at which this type of rhetoric featured prominently. Still early in the regime's existence, Kayibanda warned foreigners that 'exploitation for profit, fomenting *la subversion*, [...] indifference to the needs and preoccupation of the country: these are issues on which the people's judgement of foreigners will be based'.[51] *La subversion* eventually became one of his speeches' most common

[46]Personal translation. 'Message du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 1er mai 1964' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557). Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by HE Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic of Rwanda on peace in the country, 22 March 1973' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

[47]Personal translation. 'Manifeste-programme no. 2 du Mouvement démocratique républicain Parmehutu (27 août 1961)' (National Archives of Rwanda, documents no. 8559 and 8558).

[48]The regime also claimed it was tolerant towards groups not supportive of it or that it responded with 'courteous calm' to provocations. 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du premier anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale' and 'Message adressé à la nation rwandaise à l'occasion du nouvel an 1963' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[49]Reyntjens discusses Kayibanda's appeals for refugee return, explaining that despite the rhetoric, in light of the context in Rwanda, return was far from being a viable option (1994: 25–6).

[50]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by HE Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic of Rwanda on the first anniversary of the independence, 1 July 1963' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557). See also 'Adresse du Président Kayibanda aux Rwandais Émigrés ou Réfugiés à l'Étranger (11 mars 1964)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[51]Personal translation. 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du quatrième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale (1er juillet 1966)' (National Archives of Rwanda,

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themes. Indeed, Kayibanda blamed this vague group for the troubles in the country in 1973 in a number of speeches.[52]

While a significant portion of rhetoric centred on the regime itself, speeches also focused on Rwandans and, more specifically, on expectations Kigali held for their behaviour. A common message was that Rwandans needed to understand their place in the new system. In a speech given in 1961, Kayibanda explained that, in striving for order, the regime would make sure 'everyone and everything is in its place, the place where everyone will develop best and will be best able to be useful to their fellow citizens'.[53] The key to the relationship between state and citizens under the First Republic was to be discipline. As explained in a speech in 1962, 'the Rwandan people understand that democracy entails responsibilities and are ready to fulfil them'.[54] Building on this, the regime developed and promoted the idea of 'disciplined freedom'.[55]

Rwandans were regularly reminded that actions that destabilized and divided the country undermined democratic development and social tranquillity. Misdeeds of all sorts, from political division to delinquency, were condemned. So was individualism in the general sense of shunning collective efforts or popular displays of support. Egotism and individualism failed to embody the spirit of cooperation the country needed and threatened the core of the Republic's democratic enterprise. The regime called instead for temperance, patriotism and an active engagement on the part of the population. Temperance stressed restraint. Well-behaved individuals did not exercise freedom without self-control, but weighted their actions. Loyalty, devotion and love of one's country also featured regularly in First Republican speeches. The regime congratulated Rwandans who were true to the collective cause. Kayibanda called upon them to remain 'revolutionary in their soul', for the good of the country.[56] As he explained on the fifth anniversary of the country's independence:

> a state is built on its construction sites, in workshops, in fields, but also in hearts and minds; [it] requires strong infrastructures, but most of all strong psychological bases building on citizens devoted to the collective cause, aware of the need, in all cases, for cohesion between citizens, between leaders.[57]

To embody this temperance and patriotism, the regime expected Rwandans to demonstrate active engagement and invited them to work 'positively' for their

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document no. 8559). Despite this, he regularly congratulated himself on good relations with foreign donors, insisting that Rwanda had 'friends'.

[52]See in particular 'Speech by HE Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic of Rwanda, about peace in the country, March 22nd, 1973' and 'Speech by HE Grégoire Kayibanda, President of the Republic of Rwanda, at the Independence Day, July 1st, 1973' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8557).

[53]Personal translation. 'Déclaration gouvernementale prononcée le 26 octobre 1961 devant l'Assemblée législative' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[54]Personal translation. 'Message du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion des fêtes du premier mai 1962' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[55]See, for example, 'Message du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 1er mai 1964' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[56]'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du premier mai 1965' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[57]Personal translation. 'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du 5ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale (1er juillet 1967)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

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country,[58] to enthusiastically take part in national efforts for democratic development and peace. As transpired in a speech addressed to public servants in Gitarama for labour day, lazy and passive obedience represented ill will.[59] True virtue was expressed through motivation, initiative and hard work.

Second Republic

Although ushered in by a coup ousting key figures of the First Republic, the Second Republic did not completely break with its predecessor. Many who became the new leaders of Rwanda had served under Kayibanda, including Habyarimana himself, who relatively early on during the First Republic was appointed as minister.[60] Consequently, a number of structures, policies and practices were retained.[61] Continuities with regards to public rhetoric also existed. Like Kayibanda had done in previous years, the Second Republic developed rhetoric built on the notion of a radical break from the past, selling the new regime as the 'shining present'. The Second Republic also chose to couch its rhetoric in positive, resonating themes, as illustrated by the MRND motto: *Unité, Paix, Développement*. Building on these themes, it also promoted a vision of responsible, supportive behaviour on the part of Rwandans. As had been the case with its predecessor, a survey of rhetoric deployed under the Second Republic reveals cautious and strategic language.

Second Republican authorities' early speeches focused on justifying their coup. In part, this strategy rested on conveying the sense that the military had been compelled to act in self-defence in the face of a plot to assassinate key political figures 'who refused to be puppets', including Habyarimana.[62] Habyarimana insisted that the events of July 1973 had taken place without bloodshed, calling it a 'pacific revolution'. Just as importantly, much of the rhetoric presented the Second Republic as a radical break. The Habyarimana regime regularly exposed First Republican authorities as corrupt, nepotistic, divisive and violent. Images of rot and degeneration, as well as references to a national disaster, abounded in speeches made in the early to mid-1970s. And while rhetoric generally avoided pointing a finger directly at Kayibanda, the power circles around him were decried. Habyarimana described in an international interview how '[t]he administration, around the former state leader, had become a "court" filled with scheming courtiers, eager for promotion and privileges', or on another occasion how '[l]ittle by little the Kayibanda regime had fallen prey to politicking and

[58]'Allocution du Président Kayibanda à l'occasion du nouvel an 1967 (1er janvier 1967)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[59]'Message prononcé à Gitarama, le 1er mai 1963, à l'occasion de la fête du travail' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 8559).

[60]He became Minister of the National Guard and Police under the Second Legislature, 9 November 1965.

[61]These include, for example, the mono-party system, quotas in education, public employment and military commissions, a policy of fostering strong and regular contacts between the local and national levels and a strong focus on formal and informal education.

[62]In an editorial of *La Relève*. 'Éditorial: Deuxième République: gage de paix et d'unité', *La Relève*, no. 2, 31 October 1973 (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 6767). Habyarimana discussed the plot in various interviews in 1973. See, for example, 'Interview accordée au correspondant de la Deutsche Welle' and 'Goma (18.7.1973)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

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feuding'.[63] Just as importantly, the First Republic had divided Rwandans and even sought to provoke a 'fratricidal war'.[64] Beyond 'threatening' the Tutsi, the Parmehutu had, according to rhetoric, 'not wanted to understand that all Rwandans are brothers no matter what region they come from'.[65] In unforgiving terms, Habyarimana concluded that under the First Republic, Rwanda had lived through a 'decline from a moral, ethical and social standpoint, which choked popular aspirations';[66] at another point he stated that 'our country was politically dead both inside and outside'.[67]

In return, the Habyarimana regime strove to portray the Second Republic as the redress. In his first official address to the nation, Habyarimana claimed that his group of officers had saved the nation.[68] They had, as stated on another occasion, 'lifted the country out of hell'.[69] Particularly notable is Habyarimana's characterization of the events of 5 July 1973 as a 'moral coup d'état', which he replaced eventually by 'moral revolution'. The actions taken in 1973 had been a revolution on their own, defending and rescuing the ideals Rwandans had fought for in 1959.[70] And, as a revolution, it had received popular support, Habyarimana even speaking at one point of 'a generous and unanimous outpouring' of support on the part of the population.[71] In time, the Habyarimana regime increasingly claimed that the Second Republic was the height of Rwanda's evolution. Often the subject of his speeches abroad, Habyarimana promoted a narrative describing four centuries of feudalism, subsequent feudal–colonial oppression and minority rule bravely challenged by the social revolution, the struggle only ending with the Second Republic securing revolutionary ideals.[72]

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[63]Personal translation. 'Interview à Nations Nouvelles, juillet 1974' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063) and 'Tribune du lecteur: La Révolution pacifique de la Deuxième République', *La Relève*, no. 1, 15 October 1973 (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 6767).

[64]Personal translation. 'Discours prononcé par le Président de la République son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana, à l'occasion de la Fête des forces armées rwandaises' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[65]Personal translation. 'Interview accordée à M. E. Ugeux [1976]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2880) and 'Message à la nation [5 July 1973]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7142).

[66]Personal translation. 'Annexe: Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement à l'occasion de la présentation des voeux de nouvel an 1976' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[67]Personal translation. 'Discours prononcé par le Président de la République à l'occasion de la réunion de cadres de la préfecture de Kigali et à l'occasion de la clôture des tournées générales dans le pays (20 mai 1975)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[68]'Message à la nation (6 juillet 1973)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[69]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by the President of the Republic, 1 August 1973' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[70]Contrary to the Kayibanda regime, Second Republican rhetoric focused mostly on the 1959 popular uprisings instead of the Gitarama Congress as the watershed moment of the revolution. In part, this helped minimize the Parmehutu elites' role in the revolution.

[71]Personal translation. 'Message du Chef de l'État à la nation à l'occasion du nouvel an 1977' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2868).

[72]See, for example, 'Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République rwandaise et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, au banquet offert en son honneur par son Excellence Ndugu

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Second Republican rhetoric also built on positive, broadly resonant themes. Most frequently discussed were unity, peace and development. Unsurprisingly, peace was presented as a key priority in the months following the coup. As stability returned to Rwanda, peace-focused rhetoric waned, Habyarimana claiming within a year of his access to power to have 'succeeded in bringing about an era of peace, unity and national concord'.[73] Such claims remained a feature of early Second Republican years.[74] Yet concerns with peace made a notable return during the Lizinde affair. Further reflecting the climate in the country, the tone of Second Republic speeches changed in the early 1980s, accusatory rhetoric becoming more common as Habyarimana described mounting 'centrifugal forces [which] are looking to stop [the regime's] course and hinder [its] actions'.[75]

Unity proved a more versatile and consistent theme than peace. Commonly, unity-focused rhetoric emphasized the fair recognition of each group's rights and the promotion of national concord. Although ethnicity featured regularly in regime rhetoric, Habyarimana seemed mainly concerned with regionalism, especially in the early days. Early speeches concentrated on regional divisions, the radio communiqué following the 1973 coup, for example, pointing solely to regionalism as the source of trouble in Rwanda.[76] Unity-focused rhetoric also proved an opportunity to promote the regime's 'accommodating stance'. Promising 'the definitive elimination of scars of hatred and division', the Second Republic pledged to transcend ethnic and regional divisions to achieve a true unity of Rwandans.[77] Underlining what Rwandans shared, particularly language and culture, this rhetoric built on the notion that, under the Second Republic, all were brothers, all were Rwandan.[78] Other speeches described Rwandan

Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, Président de la République unie de Tanzanie et Président du Parti "Chama Cha Mapinduzi" [1977]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2868).

[73]Personal translation. 'Interview à Nations Nouvelles, juillet 1974' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[74]Examples of such rhetoric include '[w]e are happy to note with you that today there is peace, that the children that hatred and intrigue had divided are reunited' and '[t]oday, peace and national unity, to which we devoted our efforts, exist among the Rwandan populations'. Personal translation. 'Allocution de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement à l'occasion du 14ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale, du 3ième anniversaire de la 2ième République et du 1er anniversaire du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement (5 juillet 1976)' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2880) and 'Discours prononcé par son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République rwandaise et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement pendant sa visite officielle en République populaire de Chine, à l'occasion du banquet offert en son honneur par son Excellence le camarade Teng Hsiao Ping, Vice-président du Comité central du parti communiste chinois et vice-premier ministre de la République populaire de Chine, Pékin, le 8 juin 1978' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2861).

[75]Personal translation. 'Discours-programme du 8 janvier 1979' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2843).

[76]'Message à la nation [5 July 1973]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7142).

[77]Personal translation. 'Éditorial, le 5 juillet = Mythe ou réalité historique' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[78]See, for example, 'Speech by HE Habyarimana Juvénal, President of the Republic and Président-Fondateur of the MRND on the last day of the national tour of prefectures, 6 May 1976' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2880).

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plurality as enriching. In a speech in Kinyarwanda at the creation of the MRND, Habyarimana explained that ethnic and regional differences were 'a source of exchange of ideas, customs and strength rather than the way towards division and feelings of superiority over others'.[79] The regime strove, according to its rhetoric, to 'make all the children of the country feel like they all belong to the same family'.[80]

Of themes promoted by the Second Republic, the most prominent was national development, described in one speech as 'the principal goal of [the regime's] actions'.[81] Habyarimana regularly reminded Rwandans that the country faced a difficult struggle on the road to progress. Development was therefore used as a rallying cry for the nation. All Rwandans needed to work for development if progress were to be made, a process Habyarimana described in an interview as 'building all together a boat to cross the river of poverty'.[82] This vision of development 'for Rwandans, by Rwandans', reminiscent of the First Republic's rhetoric, was best captured by a concept the regime developed: 'endogenous auto-centred development'.[83] As declared within months after the coup, the regime's vision was that 'development of our country is first and foremost a Rwandan affair'.[84] Mirroring this vision of development, the regime also praised the virtues of manual labour[85] – an emphasis that could be interpreted as recognition of Hutu peasants' traditional way of life.

As development-focused rhetoric illustrated, regime rhetoric made it a point to convey to Rwandans a sense of the behaviour the state expected of them. Political agitation, intrigue and divisiveness, presented as vestiges of inappropriate practices associated with previous regimes, were not tolerated. Adopting a strong stance – stronger than that of the First Republic – the Habyarimana regime

[79]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by HE Habyarimana Juvénal, President of the Republic and Président-Fondateur of the MRND at the creation of the MRND, 5 July 1975' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867). See also 'Interview accordée au correspondant de la Deutsche Welle' and 'Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République rwandaise et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, à l'occasion de la Fête des forces armées rwandaises' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2843).

[80]Personal translation. 'Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République rwandaise et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, à l'occasion de la Fête des forces armées rwandaises' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2843).

[81]Personal translation. 'Discours-rapport du Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement à l'ouverture du troisième congrès ordinaire du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement [1980]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2839).

[82]Personal translation. 'Interview accordée à M. E. Ugeux [1976]' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2880).

[83]Similar notions surfaced as early as 1973–74. The term 'développement endogène auto-centré' was consecrated in the early 1980s when it became a pillar of the regime's policy in the Second Republic's Third Plan for Economic, Social and Cultural Development (1982–86). Internationally, 'endogenous development' featured in the 1980 Organisation of African Unity's Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa.

[84]Personal translation. 'Message aux lecteurs de La Relève', *La Relève*, 31 December 1973, special issue (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[85]See, for example, 'À la revalorisation du travail manuel', *La Relève*, no. 22, 31 August 1974 (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 6767).

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promised to punish troublemakers and target terrorism, division and political opposition, as well as petty criminality, delinquency and vagrancy. Numerous speeches also expressed disapproval of idleness, laziness and tendencies towards isolation. Anyone refusing to do their share or demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm or dedication was 'harmful to society'.[86] In one of his early speeches, Habyarimana went as far as to claim that 'whoever will refuse to contribute to the national development will then be called "enemy" of Rwanda because they do not want the country to develop'.[87]

Since the country's stability and development required everyone's efforts, good behaviour entailed embracing the regime's plan for security and the advancement of the Republic and its regime. Good citizens were thus devoted to their country and welcomed their responsibilities. To capture this notion, speeches referred to the concept of 'responsible democracy'. Under this responsible democracy, Rwandans' principal responsibility was active engagement.[88] As Habyarimana explained, 'the raison d'être of any citizen is to be useful to his fellow citizens by fully playing his role in society'.[89] Responsible democracy thus called for 'total participation from all, peasant, minister, supervisor at all levels, private or public employee, soldier, each Rwandan'.[90] The concept of responsible democracy also conveyed the sense that Rwandans were expected to behave with restraint, enjoying their rights and freedoms in moderation, in 'respect of hierarchy'.[91] Rhetoric deployed under Habyarimana therefore borrowed significantly from the First Republic, especially in terms of Rwandans' duties to authorities. Where the two differed was in terms of scope. Habyarimana's rhetoric went beyond his predecessor's, calling altogether for transformed Rwandans and a renewed Rwandan culture. The Rwanda ushered in by the Second Republic marked a time for 'the development of a new mentality and national conscience characteristic of a people determined to be masters of their destiny'.[92] 'Renovated' Rwandans and

[86]Personal translation. 'À l'occasion de l'ouverture de l'année académique de l'U.N.R à Butare' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[87]Professional translation from Kinyarwanda. 'Speech by His Excellence President of the Republic and President of the Peace and National Unity Committee, Gitarama, 15 October 1973' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 7063).

[88]'Annexe: Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement à l'occasion de la présentation des voeux de nouvel an 1976' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[89]Personal translation. 'Message du Chef de l'État, son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, à l'occasion de la Fête des forces armées rwandaises du 26 octobre 1976' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2880).

[90]Personal translation. 'Annexe: Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement à l'occasion de la présentation des voeux de nouvel an 1976' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2867).

[91]'Discours de son Excellence le Général-major Habyarimana Juvénal, Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, à l'occasion du 5 juillet 1980, date commémorant le 18ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale, le 7ième anniversaire de la IIième République et le 5ième anniversaire de la fondation du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2839).

[92]Personal translation. 'Message du Chef de l'État à la nation à l'occasion du nouvel an 1977' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2868).

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a 'renovated' Rwandan culture meant Rwandans 'freed of vestiges of the feudal system, with a large cultural horizon and the heightened conscience of a responsible citizen',[93] although the term ' "renovated" Rwandan culture' could also be interpreted as breaking with traditional Rwandan folklore associated with the Tutsi in favour of a more mass-based, Hutu-based culture.

The strategy behind the rhetoric

Rhetoric often reflects one's situation, one's standing, strength or context. In the Rwandan case, the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes deployed rhetoric that displayed a sense of vigilance, even at times a worry about their hold on power, including when their basic survival was not at stake. They regularly spoke in a justificatory and, on occasion, defensive tone. Speeches conveyed the need to explain and sell the regimes, more than assurance. In times of turmoil, such as around '*Inyenzi*' attacks, troubles with mercenaries or times of growing popular dissent during the First Republic, and in the early years, around the time of the Lizinde affair and with growing contestation in the 1980s for the Second Republic, rhetoric also expressed a sense of alarm, as the tone turned to frustration or even perceptible aggressiveness. Opposition and resistance featured frequently in regime rhetoric, from Kayibanda's almost paranoid tirades against *la subversion* to Habyarimana's regular warnings against contestation in society in one form or another. While not desperate, at least prior to terminal crises, the rhetoric nonetheless suggested the regimes' awareness of the vulnerable nature of their rule, and the need to navigate challenges and constraints.

But rhetoric also proved a strategy in the face of these challenges and constraints. Consistently throughout the regimes' rule, rationalizations and references to unity and progress or development were repeated with little change over the decades. The stability of this rhetoric is striking. According to rhetoric, the Republics marked a stark contrast between their rule and that of their predecessors. Saving their most virulent words for the past, they worked to discredit previous leaderships and present themselves as saviours. Not only could this rhetoric serve to obscure the undemocratic means through which power was obtained, it also proved a legitimizing rationale for regimes' continued hold on power. They had taken power for higher ideals, for 'revolutionary' and 'moral' reasons. The two regimes also chose to play on positive, evocative themes. Recourse to these themes promoted the Republican leaderships as fair and just, striving for positive change. Built into a platform, this progressive image allowed regimes to gloss over or reinterpret in a positive light questionable institutions and practices.[94] At a deeper level, these themes were broad enough to have a wide appeal. Resonant, yet vague, they promised to cut across divisions. Themes such

[93]Personal translation. 'Message adressé à la nation par son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République et Président-fondateur du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, à l'occasion du 16ième anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale, du 5ième anniversaire de la IIième République et du 3ième anniversaire de la fondation du Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, le 5 juillet 1978' (National Archives of Rwanda, document no. 2861).

[94]The mono-party system, for example, and controlled political realm were sold as a means to unify Rwanda and work more efficiently for its development.

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as unity, equality and development, values all can aspire to, could be used strategically to reach across constituencies and to try to develop a wider base of support. Just as importantly, to further ensure support, regime rhetoric consistently involved discursive pre-emption: it appealed to supportive behaviour. Both Republics clearly delineated between 'bad' and 'good' behaviour, establishing norms with regards to what they judged to be 'well behaved' citizens. In a sense, regime rhetoric conveyed the underlying message that Rwandans could choose to work for or against the regime. Overall, with its moderate language and positive themes, rhetoric served as a tool of persuasion. To dissuade the unconvinced, though, it also built on discursive prompts meant to pre-empt, pitched positively around rights-based and patriotic language, conveying a sense of the line Rwandans were expected to walk.

What transpires from an analysis of the First and Second Republics' rhetoric is that speeches were more subtle and more strategic than often claimed. They were much less about calls for ethnic division than they were about political authorities calling for recognition, authority and support. Rarely openly against the Tutsi, except for very specific groups of 'agitators' and 'terrorists' and at times of terminal crises, regime rhetoric instead built the notion of an antagonism around past and contemporary challengers. Positive for the most part, words conveyed moderation and a careful language. Even 'coded language' to convey ethnic preferences was couched in positive yet ambiguous terms and themes. More complex than a chauvinistic discourse, pre-genocide Republican rhetoric reflected the regimes' vigilance, as they strategized rhetorically their hold on power.

CONCLUSION

Pointing to the subtlety and strategic nature of the Republics' rhetoric is not meant to deny the persecution the Tutsi endured in pre-genocide Rwanda. Over the course of the period, practice did not reflect the regimes' accommodating rhetoric. Nor is the argument meant to excuse the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. Seeking to understand the sources and motives of their behaviour certainly does not minimize the gravity of some of the decisions and actions taken. It is problematic, however, to read back unto the period elements and trends that were not necessarily representative of these Republics, at least prior to their terminal crises. The Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes were more complex than the caricatured xenophobes and brutal autocrats they are sometimes made out to be, demonstrating more cunning and political acumen than they are often credited with. Aware that they were playing a game of political endurance, seeking resilience in the face of the challenges and constraints they faced throughout their rule, they fought back. Authoritarian institutions and practices were their response, and rhetoric played a significant part in the strategies they deployed.

But revisiting this historical period makes a broader contribution. History, read in a non-deterministic manner, should inform understandings of more contemporary events. Rediscovering these Republics more accurately affords the historical texture needed to move beyond explanations of the genocide that are overly structural, whether in the sense of their focus on identity or in their focus on institutions. Textured history paints a portrait of pre-genocide Rwanda as a

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complex interplay of political and social forces operating within, around or against the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes. Elites at all levels, challengers and the Rwandan population, far from being monolithic, expressed different interests and motives through their own strategies aimed at navigating the changing structural and conjunctural constraints. As challenges mounted and contradictions remained unresolved, people's situations, including those of the political elites, became more dire. In turn, the strategizing, including rhetorical devices, became more desperate, opening the door to unpalatable options. The past was not an ineluctable progression towards the genocide. Instead, it should be read as a series of non-deterministic junctures, resulting from past choices yet opening the door to new, very real choices and actions taken by actors reacting to how they perceive their situation, and to their perception of their, other actors' and the environment's influence on that situation. In other words, it is only through a 'careful history' (Newbury 2012: 53) focused on rediscovering Rwandans as agents of their destiny, as opposed to pawns of broad structural trends, that the genocide becomes comprehensible.

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on rarely analysed primary sources obtained during multi-site archival research, this article examines and proposes to reassesses the political rhetoric deployed in pre-genocide Rwanda (First and Second Republics). The article contends that the First and Second Republics' rhetoric was not as ethnocentric as often contended. It argues instead that this rhetoric, cautious and moderate, should be understood as part of regime resilience strategies. Born of questionable origins, the two regimes faced recurrent instability and only imposed their authority questionably on segments of the Rwandan population. Unlike ethnocentric rhetoric calling upon limited ethnic affinities, moderate rhetoric was meant to 'persuade' and 'pre-empt', in other words extend support for regimes that were uncertain of their grounding.

RÉSUMÉ

S'appuyant sur des sources primaires rarement analysées et obtenues lors de recherches en archives dans différents sites, cet article étudie les discours politiques du Rwanda pré-génocide (Première et Deuxième Républiques) et en propose une relecture. Cet article soutient que les discours de la Première et Deuxième Républiques n'étaient pas aussi ethnocentriques que ce que l'on

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prétend souvent. L'article maintient que ces discours, de nature plutôt prudente et modérée, faisaient en fait partie des stratégies de résilience des deux régimes. Nés de circonstances problématiques, les deux régimes furent également régulièrement aux prises avec de l'instabilité et n'imposèrent leur autorité que de manière imparfaite sur certains segments de la population rwandaise. Contrairement à un discours ethnocentrique visant des affinités ethniques limitées, ces discours tentaient donc de 'convaincre' et 'déjouer', soit de favoriser un soutien élargi à des régimes incertains de leurs assises.

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