

# Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda\*

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For some 100 days in the spring and summer of 1994, millions of Rwandans witnessed, participated in, or otherwise lived through a nationwide campaign of extermination, a collective effort whose rhythm was in many ways regulated by the broadcasts of Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM). “The graves are only half empty; who will help us fill them?” an RTLM announcer is reputed to have wondered out loud in one of the station’s less subtle moments. The semi-private radio station, reportedly linked to a circle of high-ranking Hutu extremists, has achieved an infamous, if not legendary, reputation for allegedly inciting Rwandan Hutu to participate in massacring the country’s Tutsi minority on a scale and scope without precedent in the country’s history.<sup>1</sup> Aside from acting as a surrogate information network for the Interahamwe militia and other organized groups dedicated to the killing, RTLM was also the most popular station in the country during the genocide,<sup>2</sup> perceived as a reliable political barometer, a source of entertainment, and a provider of breaking news. Yet in many ways, despite a burgeoning literature on the Rwandan genocide (notably African Rights, 1995; Des Forges *et al.*, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998; Mamdani, 2001; Prunier, 1995) and even specific studies on radio’s role (Chalk, 1999; Chrétien *et al.*, 1995; Kellow and Steeves, 1998; Kirschke, 1996; Nkusi *et al.*, 1998), its impact on listeners remains relatively unexplored and its overall place in encouraging mass participation in the killings largely undertheorized.

This enquiry, based in part on three months of fieldwork conducted in Rwanda in the summer of 2000,<sup>3</sup> seeks to integrate the perspectives and experiences of radio listeners with broader considerations about the study of the Rwandan genocide and mass atrocity more generally. Specifically, I will argue that the question of RTLM’s role in the genocide can be elucidated through three aspects: *ideologically*, it played on existing dominant discourses in Rwandan public life for the purposes of encouraging listeners to participate in the killings;

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*performatively*, the station's animateurs<sup>4</sup> skilfully exploited the possibilities of the medium to create a dynamic relationship with and among listeners; and finally, RTLM helped the Rwandan state appropriate one of the most innocuous aspects of *everyday life* in the service of the genocide. Taken together, these three aspects make radio a useful prism through which one can approach the question of mass participation in a genocide that was diffuse, routinized, and intimate in nature.

### Opening Questions

An enquiry into the Rwandan genocide and RTLM's role in it reveals parallel questions and gaps in the existing literature on collective violence and media studies, both essentially revolving around the question of subjectivity and human action. Commentators have frequently remarked upon the highly centralized and labour-intensive nature of the killing campaign, involving the direct or indirect efforts of hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens working under the direction of a strong state utilizing a dense networks of local administration and parastatal entities. Although it was spearheaded and guided at the local level by bureaucrats, party cadres, and armed elements (military, police, militia), what sets the Rwandan genocide apart from many other contemporary mass atrocities was the participation of such a sizeable and heterogeneous portion of the population (farmers, businessmen, journalists, NGO workers, clergy, teachers) as killers, lookouts, informants, looters, logisticians, and cheerleaders.

The fact of mass participation in the genocide, however, needs to be further understood through three particular aspects that frequently elude systematic enquiry. First, the killing was highly diffuse. Although it did not unfold evenly or simultaneously across the country, it left no region untouched and the killing itself was carried out in spaces both public and private, including churches, roadblocks, homes, schools, fields, and government office buildings, obviating the need to relocate and concentrate large numbers of victims to distant, secluded institutions such as camps or prisons. Second, in the vacuum left by the absence of much cultivation, business, and study, the genocide established its own rhythm; participation (construed broadly, not necessarily killing) was routinized. While orgiastic massacres did occur, many of the day-to-day activities of the genocide (primarily roadblock duty, patrols, and searches) were carried out by work crews rotating according to set schedules, sometimes electing their own leaders. Third, the genocide was a project in which mass violence relied on social intimacy. Systematic identification and pursuit of Tutsi depended on the compilation of comprehensive lists at the local level; such surveillance, coupled with movement restrictions, made escape and anonymity extremely difficult. Moreover, the killing involved widespread denunciation and betrayal of friends, neighbours, and loved ones.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars have drawn from many of the existing theories of collective violence in order to explain the Rwandan genocide. So-called "primordialist" approaches, based on the idea of reified "ancient ethnic [or tribal] hatreds" (teleologically

drawing upon earlier episodes of anti-Tutsi violence in the late 1950s and 1960s), initially dominated much of the media coverage of and some of the scholarship on the genocide. These have been widely criticized, however, to the extent that they now serve as little more than an academic piñata, though their political potency cannot be underestimated (and their potential analytical value, if properly revised, is perhaps underappreciated at this time). Primordialist approaches have been largely displaced by explanations that emphasize the historicity/contingency of ethnic identities, the role of manipulative and self-serving political elites, crushing economic and demographic pressures, the importance of racist anti-Tutsi ideologies, or often some combination thereof. While these diverse theories (at times grouped together as “instrumentalist”) have provided a useful critique of primordialism and have made a number of positive contributions to the study of the genocide, the question of how mass participation was secured and sustained is often effaced (notable exceptions include Uvin, 1998 and Mamdani, 2001).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in the face of such widespread participation in diffused, routinized, and intimate killing, it seems difficult to rely on existing explanations—ideas such as cultural norms of obedience, elite-driven manipulation, and socioeconomic pressures—without somehow speaking of Rwandans as easily open to manipulation and control. Yet at the same time, one cannot lose sight of the fact that the genocide came immediately after the period of multipartyism, which was marked by unprecedented political openness and opposition to the state, including intra-Hutu violence.

Interestingly, the holes in the extant literature on RTLM and the genocide are similarly shaped. Pictures of Interahamwe militia with their ears glued to radios and stories of RTLM’s more gory announcements were easily incorporated into atavistic explanations of the genocide. The first in-depth studies (Chrétien *et al.*, 1995; Kirschke, 1996) reviewed the kinds of racist stereotyping used in the station’s broadcasts or unearthed the overlapping networks of power, money, patronage, and ideology that brought RTLM and other extremist media to life. Others have analysed the question from the perspective of sociolinguistics (Nkusi *et al.*, 1998) and media studies (Kellow and Steeves, 1998). In extensively cataloguing and analysing the broadcasts of RTLM, these works highlight the station’s role in disseminating racist stereotypes and inciting specific killings. They say little, however, about how media messages were received by their intended audiences and how such broadcasts interacted with other factors at the local level (especially state coercion and mobilization). This empirical gap often allows analyses to fall back upon older “magic-bullet” theories of media studies in which, as Jean-Marie Higirot, a Hutu opposition journalist, put it, “human beings are considered as automatons” (Higirot, 1996, p 170). Chrétien’s thorough catalogue of ideological themes and tropes in newspapers and radio, considered the authoritative work on media in the genocide, essentially relies on this theory: “Two tools, one very modern, the other less so, were particularly used during the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda: the radio and the machete, the first to give and receive orders, the second to carry them out!” (Chrétien *et al.*, 1995, p 191). He says little of the perspective of listeners or their immediate contexts. In a similar

vein, Kellow and Steeves write: “some African countries have strong traditions of hierarchy and authoritarianism, which increase the likelihood of blind obedience to the orders of officials on the radio. Norms of rote obedience were, and continue to be, exceptionally strong in Rwanda” (Kellow and Steeves, 1998, p 116). Yet such an argument is undermined by the fact that RTLM, started just months before the genocide, was younger than both the familiar state-controlled Radio Rwanda and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front’s (RPF) Radio Muhabura. Moreover, many of the Rwandans I interviewed recalled actively debating, comparing, and doubting broadcasts from different radio stations, including RTLM, and still do. At the same time, however, it is clear that media audiences do not exist in a cultural vacuum that allows them to “objectively” evaluate different radio stations; although RTLM *was* popular and many Rwandans *did* indeed obey orders to kill, the connection between these two facts must be analysed rather than taken for granted.

Accounts of the genocide and of radio’s role in it share a problematic approach to the role of the human as subject; both tend to uncritically assume the existence of an ordinary farmer/citizen/radio listener, open to manipulation, mobilization, and stimulation. These perspectives can find their parallels in the rich and long-running tradition of scholarship that seeks to explain collective action, especially in relation to violence. It is of little surprise, then, that the old dyads of structure vs. agency and materialism vs. idealism that have long dogged social science research should reemerge here.

### **Radio and the ideology of genocide**

There is little disagreement that RTLM propagated a racist anti-Tutsi ideology, drawing upon historical myths, stereotypes of the Tutsi, and appeals to Hutu unity, and that it often did so in a thinly veiled code referring to “work” instead of killing and “cockroaches” (*inyenzi*) instead of Tutsi. Furthermore, the station described gruesome acts of violence attributed to Tutsi as a means of implying what should be done to them (the so-called “accusation in a mirror” technique; see Des Forges *et al.*, 1999, pp 65–66). Yet accounts of RTLM’s ideological role that focus solely on racist aspects do not explain why the station’s particular ideological world-views caught on more than those of other stations; moreover, they fail to show how RTLM transcended ordinary propaganda, from simply propagating certain beliefs or feelings about Tutsi as an ethnic category, to encouraging and facilitating participation in the murder of friends, neighbours, and relatives.

In order to address these two points, the analysis of the ideology of the genocide as propagated through RTLM needs to be widened beyond its amply documented anti-Tutsi imagery, as the use of racism or hatred to explain the ideological aspects of violence is already a road academically well-trodden. In light of the near-absence of anti-Tutsi propaganda or policy in Rwanda from the early 1970s to the 1990s, I would like to draw attention to how RTLM appropriated and transformed elements of three of the dominant public dis-

courses of post-colonial Rwandan modernity: *history* (as a particular way of thinking of the past); *democracy* (as a particular way of thinking about governance); and *development* (as a particular way of thinking about economy and work). RTLM built on these discourses while responding to the particular contingencies of the post-1990 political situation in a way that neither Radio Rwanda nor Radio Muhabura appeared to match. Moreover, RTLM helped Rwandans make sense of their active participation in the genocide in terms that were broader than simple hatred or fear of Tutsi by creating a context in which euphemisms such as “work” and “cockroaches” could be easily understood through an indirectness that left nothing unsaid.

The discourse of history in Rwanda was a product of late colonial modernity, a particular way of looking at the past based on a unified national narrative incorporating the lives of all its people past and present and cast in the mould of linear progress, whose dominant theme was Hutu victimization (in the colonial era) and emancipation (1959 onwards). In this formulation, the “Hutu revolution” of 1959 that precipitated the end of elite Tutsi hegemony (many Tutsi were as poor as their Hutu neighbours) and Belgian rule represented a radical and emancipatory leap forward, the *raison d’être* of the post-colonial Rwandan state that had always implicitly legitimized itself in opposition to the past.

During the genocide, however, RTLM portrayed the progress achieved since the revolution as under threat from the RPF, collapsing past into present and calling upon Rwandans to re-enact the do-or-die moment of 1959. Georges Ruggiu, RTLM’s Belgian animateur, recalled that the station’s management issued explicit instructions to make such historical comparisons and that he said on the air that “the 1959 revolution ought to be completed in order to preserve its achievements” (ICTR-97-32-DP, paras 110, 186). Kantano Habimana, arguably RTLM’s most popular animateur, once told listeners: “Masses, be vigilant ... Your property is being taken away. What you fought for in ’59 is being taken away” (RTLM, January 21, 1994). Venant, a 69-year-old Tutsi, told me that RTLM “made [people’s] heads hot [*ashyushe imitkwe*]” when speaking of how the RPF intended to restore the monarchy and reinstate dreaded colonial-era clientship institutions, while another farmer said he feared a repetition of the events of 1959 (interviews, August 11, 2000 and August 8, 2000).

I do not wish to imply, however, that the simple invocation of specific historical memories had a predetermined effect. What is important about the examples above are not simply that they alluded to the past (after all, one could easily mention a past characterized by Hutu-Tutsi cooperation or even indistinction, as official RPF rhetoric does), but that they built upon the discourse of History while undermining its *structure* as a discourse, specifically by removing the element of progress.<sup>7</sup> The linear shape of History, implying inevitable teleological progress, had long been used to legitimize the regime through implicit comparison with the colonial era. By disrupting linearity and folding 1959 into 1994, not only did RTLM evoke negative historical memories of colonial rule but it also contributed to a deep sense of crisis, in which the nation

was suddenly and violently derailed from the path it had been on. While the state had earlier evoked a fear of the past based on comparison to produce assent, RTLM brought the past into the present, producing a more profound horror intended to prompt action.

The discourse of democracy was built around a congruence between ethnicity and nation (specifically the Hutu as the Rwandan nation, with the Tutsi transformed from exotic aristocrats to parasitic outsiders) and a notion of ethnic majoritarianism in which the president rules by virtue of his membership in and representation of an ethnic majority that will always be entitled to rule by virtue of its numerical preponderance. Not only did this allow the state to demonize the Tutsi as a hostile minority bent on restoring its old dominance (especially in the early years of the post-colonial state, when monarchist Tutsi guerrillas continued to launch raids from neighbouring countries, prompting bloody reprisals against Tutsi who stayed behind), but more importantly, it squelched economic, regional, and ideological differences between Hutu in the name of ethnic solidarity.

During the genocide, RTLM, the self-styled voice of the *rubanda nyamwinshi* (“numerous people,” i.e. majority or masses), drew upon this discourse of democracy in its frequent appeals to ethnic majoritarianism, while at the same time attempting to channel the participatory potential of opposition politics rather than simply suppress it. Because the genocide was preceded by a period of multipartyism which witnessed intense and at times violent opposition by various Hutu parties, a priority of the regime was to co-opt or split the opposition as a means of promoting ethnic solidarity (or vice versa). The many such “conversions” I was told about included a Hutu opposition activist called Ngerageze who, according to an acquaintance, “heard on RTLM that you had to forget about parties and think only of ethnicity” and became a local militia leader during the genocide (interview, August 9, 2000). While it may be impossible to say how much Ngerageze’s decision was influenced by RTLM, it is clear that re-establishing ethnicity as the supreme principle of democracy was a priority of the genocidal regime. It is in this context that one can make sense of the following remark by RTLM animateur Valérie Bemeriki, a sample typical of the station’s broadcasts:

Now, we seem to have forgotten political parties and it is understandable since the enemy who harasses us is unique ... In the meantime, we have put aside matters of political parties even if the international community is shouting: “Interahamwe! Interahamwe!” ... But for us, we apply that word to all of us, to all Rwandans who stood up together, at the same time, who got united in order to beat the Inyenzi Inkotanyi. (RTLM, June 22, 1994)

The station also played on the idea of democracy by reminding people of the numerical weakness of the country’s Tutsi minority, which would not only guarantee their defeat but absolve Hutu of any blame, since an enemy resisting in the face of such odds could be nothing but suicidal. “These are Inkotanyi [nickname for RPF fighters, or Tutsi generally], they come from a very tiny minority called the Tutsi,” Kantano once explained. “Will those people truly

continue to commit suicide against the majority? Will they not be exterminated?" (RTL, May 12, 1994).

The discourse of development in post-colonial Rwanda defined the relationship between state and economy after the abolition of colonial-era forms of often coercive "customary" clientship. It was especially important in legitimizing President Juvénal Habyarimana's regime from the early 1970s onward (Uvin, 1998, pp 23–24).<sup>8</sup> The consequences were both symbolic (Habyarimana's party called itself le Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement, or MRND; the rubber-stamp parliament of the regime was le Conseil National pour le Développement) and material (foreign aid inflows comprised 22% of the country's GNP by 1991; Prunier, 1995, p 79). The centrepiece of development was *umuganda*, obligatory communal labour mandated upon nearly the entire population on a weekly basis, enforced through dense administrative networks of both state functionaries and party cadres (*umuganda* was officially an MRND activity) at the local level.

RTL's notorious use of "work" as a euphemism (with machetes as "tools") needs to be understood in the context of development, with participation (manning roadblocks, taking part in night patrols, conducting house searches, clearing fields) being likened to *umuganda* on a number of occasions. RTL's invocation of work drew upon the existing discourses of development while simultaneously recasting communal labour as an exercise in national survival (sometimes described as "civil defence") at a moment of crisis. "Mobilize yourselves," animateur Georges Ruggiu told listeners during the killings. "Work you the youth, everywhere in the country, come to work with your army. Come to work with your government to defend your country" (RTL, June 5, 1994). A Western missionary who spoke fluent Kinyarwanda recalled: "Every morning, [RTL] was in the habit of asking listeners, 'Hello, good day, have you started to work yet?'" (interview, April 29, 1997, supplied by an anonymous source). It is important to emphasize that work had a value beyond *umuganda*, which was so burdensome that it more or less fell into disuse during the era of post-1990 multipartyism. The value of work was also tied to the virtues espoused by the Catholic Church (Prunier, 1995, p 77; Verwimp, 2000, p 338) and to the dignity of being associated with the activities of the state (Taylor, 1999, p 141).

It is also important to note that state-controlled Radio Rwanda, which had been broadcasting since the eve of independence in 1962, played a pivotal role in propagating each of these discourses (history, democracy, development) in post-colonial Rwanda; the majority of those I spoke to learned much of their country's past through the radio. Radio was a key site for the articulation of democracy, and Radio Rwanda regularly exhorted listeners to work harder and advised them on agricultural techniques.<sup>9</sup> Yet in the context of instability caused by the RPF invasion in 1990, Radio Rwanda's reticence about the progress of the war began to raise listeners' suspicions that it was withholding the full extent of the truth; this stiltedness was amplified in the opening weeks of the genocide, when the station was largely paralysed by internal power struggles between MRND supporters and opposition sympathizers. Radio Rwanda's inability to

adjust to the fluid political situation in the early 1990s is best captured by the memory of many Rwandans of Habyarimana's death; Domitille, 57, an accused génocidaire, recalled listening to the radio the morning after the crash in which he was killed: "While Radio Rwanda played classical music, RTLM gave news about the situation" (interview, July 11, 2000). On the other hand, the appeal of RPF's Radio Muhabura remained limited (although it sought to tap into anti-regime sentiment and many of the people I spoke to listened clandestinely out of curiosity, despite potential repercussions). Aside from its dull and propagandistic style (even RPF soldiers were said to prefer RTLM), its ideological vision was perhaps too radical for much of the Rwandan population; not only did it espouse a view of politics that entirely ignored ethnicity (or reduced it to an imperialist plot) but it also raised fears of a radical change in the country's demographic, economic, and political makeup by billing itself as the "voice that repatriates" (Kirschke, 1996, p 50)—a reference to the diaspora of predominantly Tutsi refugees in neighbouring states who fled Rwanda in 1959.

While Radio Rwanda appeared mired in the past and Radio Muhabura seemed to foreshadow a frightening future, RTLM somehow struck a balance between continuity and change, positioning itself in relation to dominant discourses while departing from them in specifically compelling ways. At the same time, it appropriated ideologies that had previously produced acquiescence and depoliticization and gave them a participatory, mobilizational edge that resonated with the dynamism of political plurality that marked the period of the early 1990s.

### **Radio and performance in the genocide**

RTLM did more than merely articulate the ideological world-view of the genocide; after all, there were dozens of Hutu newspapers that did so as well. Also important was its use of radio's specific properties as a medium of broadcast performance, where oral texts are perfectly reproduced but uniquely received in thousands of different locales as specific events in time.<sup>10</sup> With a virtuosic flare, RTLM's animateurs played off and around the ideological agenda they sought to promote, developed distinctive on-air personalities, and sought to implicate listeners in the project of the genocide.

While the extant literature on the genocide has cited RTLM's informal atmosphere, lively style, good music, off-colour jokes, and the introduction of "Western-style interactive broadcasting" in order to explain its appeal (Chrétien *et al.*, 1995, pp 73–74; Des Forges *et al.*, 1999, p 70; Higiroy, 1996, p 171; Kirschke, 1996, pp 84–85; Prunier, 1995, p 189), it has often been understood simply as a means by which the station could easily "manipulate" audiences, a kind of Rwandan breads and circuses.<sup>11</sup> Instead, it is also necessary to grasp how listeners interacted with RTLM's broadcasts, and how animateurs consciously or unconsciously exploited the possibilities and limits of the medium.

One key performative aspect was the skill with which RTLM's animateurs played off the ideologies of the genocide, giving an impression of frankness and trustworthiness that also gave the ideology resilience in dealing with contin-

gency. In doing so, RTLTM did what any good propaganda must do: provide specific responses to opposing arguments (“balance”), even if they are based on non-falsifiable assumptions. On January 6, 1994, RTLTM broadcast an interview with Tito Rutaremara, a high official in the RPF, in which he was allowed to voice harsh critiques of the MRND. Yet Kantano prefaced the interview with a very long monologue peppered with numerous jokes and attempts to discredit Rutaremara, referring to him as “that tall Tutsi” and reporting that he was surrounded by other Tutsi drinking milk (milk, metonymous with cattle, is often considered a symbol of Tutsi refinement or snobbery); after playing back the recording, Kantano noted that Rutaremara “was of course answering [the questions] in the Inkotanyi way.” RTLTM also corrected itself, especially in cases where it retracted denunciations (which were effectively death warrants), paradoxically bolstering its claims to tell “only the truth.” The performative contingency of the moment allowed RTLTM’s animateurs to depart from the ideological script of the genocide in order to strengthen it.<sup>12</sup>

RTLTM animateurs themselves became personalities, known and invested with certain meanings by many of their listeners, often fitting into typecast roles, for example, Ananie Nkurunziza, a former intelligence officer, as the serious political analyst; and Editor-in-Chief Gaspard Gahigi as political pundit). However, Kantano Habimana was by far the most popular animateur (“Kantano talked as if people were right in front of him, which was good for getting their attention,” recalled James, a 41-year-old farmer; interview, August 6, 2000), a sentiment echoed by many others I spoke to, both Hutu and Tutsi. Perhaps the most interesting example of the personal authority of animateurs is the strange case of Georges Ruggiu, a Belgian citizen newly arrived in Rwanda, hired at Habyarimana’s behest despite having barely any journalism experience and no knowledge of Kinyarwanda (ICTR-97-32-DP, paras 87–90). While there has been speculation as to why Ruggiu was hired, most Rwandans I spoke to believe it was because he was white.<sup>13</sup> Both Hutu detainees and Tutsi survivors I spoke to said that the presence of a *muzuungu* (white man) at RTLTM gave it the appearance of strength, perhaps even international sanction. Indeed, some of Ruggiu’s monologues seem to serve little purpose other than to leverage his Europeaness for credibility. Several weeks before the genocide, Ruggiu engaged in one of RTLTM’s routine denunciations of the Arusha accords before adding a unique twist:

Then, this evening in order to feed your thoughts, we thought of searching in our library. We then chose for you two extracts from *The Prince* by Nicholas [sic] Machiavelli. That book about government and political principles was written in 1514, that is more than 490 years ago now. But good ideas don’t die. ... These two extracts are going to feed your thoughts and we remain open to others; dialogue and mutual listening seem to us profitable to everyone and if you have written comments, we remain always available to be acquainted with them and perhaps even to broadcast them if they are worth it. Here then is Nicholas Machiavelli who speaks through my voice ... (RTLTM, March 15, 1994)

After relaying Machiavelli’s advice about how a prince must learn not to be

good (Chapter 15) and that he must be loved and feared (Chapter 18), Ruggiu signed off in a din of classical European music. In this performance, one can see how the invocation of a founding treatise of modern Western political thought, the emphasis on its age, the use of European classical music (probably not contemporaneous with *The Prince*), and the alignment of Machiavelli the author with Ruggiu the performer (“speak[ing] through my voice”) were brought together to create an intertextual narrative linking the political situation in Rwanda to a construction of European thought and authority, dangling the weight of centuries of “civilization” in the air before RTLM’s listeners.

The power of the myth of whiteness in sub-Saharan Africa is a thing that cannot be discarded, yet, at the same time, must be invoked with the greatest caution. *A priori*, Ruggiu’s authority or credibility as a white man with Rwandan farmers who could not understand his words would seem at best dubious. Still one must recall that radio often feeds into the dynamics of other enduring social hierarchies and relations. As Immaculée, 36, a detainee accused of participation in the genocide, explained: “Those who understood French liked to listen to the *muzuungu* [white man] and said he was on the side of the Hutu, and that he spoke well and was against the Tutsi. Educated people and bourgmestres would explain the French broadcasts to others” (interview, July 11, 2000). Here, one can see radio broadcasts as events in which different actors create multiple meanings. In a mutually reinforcing process, local elites could play upon and enhance their credibility as educated Francophones *vis-à-vis* those who could not speak French, while Ruggiu’s reach was extended and his own authority strengthened by the endorsement of such notables.<sup>14</sup>

Besides apparently alerting listeners to specific targets and hiding places,<sup>15</sup> RTLM’s animateurs also implicated ordinary listeners in the activities of the genocide; farmers at roadblocks or on the street were frequently interviewed, and RTLM employed techniques that acted upon relations among listeners. During an interview at a roadblock, a man once told Kantano that he and his colleagues had killed five inyenzi. After encouraging them to “keep it up,” Kantano asked: “When testing if people like a radio station, you ask the following question: who are the speakers of that radio whom you know? Who are the RTLM speakers you know? ... If you do not know them that means that you do not like this radio ...” (RTLM, May 29, 1994). In another instance, Kantano called upon Tutsi who were not RPF accomplices to man the roadblocks with the Hutu. The following day, while addressing the people manning the roadblocks, he suggested, “look around you, the enemy is among you” (interview, September 18, 1995, supplied anonymously). Whether intended or not, such tactics probably indirectly pressured people to listen to RTLM or at least to conceal any opposition to it. “Some people were against RTLM but didn’t have the strength to say so in public,” recalled Jamad, 48, a mason (interview, August 17, 2000); one Tutsi I met was so afraid that he went so far as to purchase a recording of the music of Simon Bikindi, whose anti-Tutsi songs were played repeatedly on RTLM before the genocide, to demonstrate his loyalty to the regime (interview, August 11, 2000).

RTLTM explicitly informed conversations that took place away from the physical contexts of listening as well. Broadcasts were often reincarnated elsewhere as rumour, where the possibilities for exaggeration or reinterpretation could only expand. According to one of his neighbours, a militia member named Hakiri used to spend mornings on the roof of his shop with a radio clutched to his ear, listening to RTLTM. When he listened, “his mood changed” and he would climb down and gather people to tell them what he had heard (interview, July 22, 2000). Even if one assumes that Hakiri relayed the content and tone of these broadcasts as faithfully and uncritically as possible, he was still engaging in a process of performance, acting as a medium through which the project of the genocide manifested itself and could possibly be shaped. Across the country, thousands of listeners were relaying, embellishing, and even misrepresenting RTLTM’s broadcasts. One prominent Hutu extremist, taking pity on some Tutsi children at a roadblock, reportedly admonished the militiaman harassing them: “Don’t you listen to the radio? The French said if we don’t stop killing children they’ll stop arming and helping us” (Gourevitch, 1998, p 130).

The process of re-performance is even more interesting in the case of oral texts which are repeatedly played and thus more likely to be remembered and passed on in everyday speech, such as songs. The music of Simon Bikindi, with its rousing tunes and anti-Tutsi lyrics, was part of RTLTM’s regular fare and provided many of the anthems of Hutu power. Many Hutu sang along with Bikindi’s songs on RTLTM in bars and in streets, and even after “work” shifts. Bikindi’s songs, however, could somehow take on a life of their own in different contexts of performance. Immaculée told of an old Tutsi woman who was hiding in a cassava field when some passing militia, ignorant of her presence, started singing one of Bikindi’s songs. “When the old woman heard the song, she thought she had been found and so she ran from the bush,” Immaculée explained; the old woman barely managed to relay her story to Immaculée before being found and killed by the militia (interview, July 11, 2000). As the old woman’s “accidental” interpretation suggests each context of re-performance beyond the physical site of listening presents opportunities for different meanings to be derived, thus adding a crucial dimension of versatility to the circulation of oral texts. Although the Hutu were not reshaping the message of the song (in the way that a rumour may mutate), the old woman’s behaviour was not a reaction to a song *per se*, but to an oral text relayed by particular actors (a gang of armed Hutu) and heard in a particular context (while hiding in a cassava field). In short, she was shaping meaning in the context of performance, however inadvertently. In this way, ordinary people became a medium through which the inescapability of the genocidal project manifested itself, and the old woman’s “mistaken” interpretation serves as a reminder of how contextualized creativity can work in unpredictable and unintended ways.

RTLTM sustained the larger edifice of the ideology of the genocide on a continuously shifting foundation of smaller truths, performative moments that rendered amateurs endearing or familiar or otherwise authoritative to listeners. Moreover, the amateurs did not simply perform the genocide before

captive audiences, but indirectly implicated them in the performance of the project itself.

### **Radio in the time of genocide**

In contemplating the question of obedience in the genocide, it is important to note that the capture and mobilization of state resources by its orchestrators mirrored a gradual appropriation of the cornerstones of collective life for the purposes of the killing. The genocide extended beyond bureaucracies to other everyday routines and contexts. From the point of view of most Rwandans, it was not simply that the priest, the schoolteacher, and the radio amateur all spoke of the same necessity to work, but that they sometimes did so as part of the weekly sermon, the daily lesson, the hourly bulletin. Indeed, one of the most pervasive and overlooked aspects of RTLM's influence on listeners was its quotidian role.

Radio, which bookends and punctuates the daily routine of many ordinary Rwandans, continued to do so during the genocide. RTLM did not simply whip Hutu into a frenzy to channel fear and anger into sudden attacks. Rather, through the daily diet of informational updates, operational details (not to leave bodies on the road in view of Western journalists, for example), and encouraging monologues, it contributed to the framing of schedules and the routinization of "work." According to one survivor, local Hutu would gather at the nearby government office and then spend the day performing the mundane tasks of the genocide, occasionally coming upon and killing Tutsi. During that time, many people would listen to RTLM at roadblocks, in homes, and in bars, during breaks. Sometimes they would listen outdoors in groups as large as 100, closely following the information relayed to plan the next day's activities. When asked if this took place every day, he replied, "Of course. It was work. It was to know what to do" (interview, August 18, 2000). Regardless of whether all of the news it passed on was true or not (and many Rwandans recognized that at times it was not), those who killed still built their schedules in part around RTLM and used its broadcasts to help guide the details and schedules of work. "Kantano said there are no RPF here, so we can continue our work," one Hutu cultivator recalled hearing some locals say (interview, August 6, 2000).

Even Rwandans who did not kill still arranged their activities around and took advantage of the rhythms of "work." Knowing when certain teams would be called up could help some Hutu evade roadblock duty by hiding or feigning illness. And as in ordinary times, listening schedules were also shaped through gender. While the men were at work, women often listened and followed RTLM's advice in other ways. Bonfride, a 21-year-old Tutsi, spent several weeks sheltered in the homes of sympathetic Hutu neighbours, often with families that had no sons. Although they risked their lives to hide a Tutsi, women in these families also liked RTLM's broadcasts and heeded the station's entreaties to go out and pillage the belongings of those who had been killed (interview, September 2, 2000).<sup>16</sup>

One of the most apparent ways in which RTLM placed itself in the daily routines of listeners was through one of its star animateurs, Noël (Noheli) Hitimana, who had become a household name after working at Radio Rwanda from the late 1970s until the early 1990s. During the early shift when farmers rose to tend the fields, one of Hitimana's trademarks was to call out to the furthest mountains in the country, issue personal greetings to specific regions of Rwanda, and salute named individuals with whom he had met or shared a drink the night before. He was also known for his quick wit, his adroit word-play (alluding to his name while giving Christmas greetings, for example), and his fondness of alcohol (he was supposedly fired from Radio Rwanda after insulting President Habyarimana during an inebriated on-air gaffe). Despite (or perhaps because of) these antics, Hitimana was well liked by radio listeners throughout the country. During my time in Rwanda, I knew professionals of both ethnicities who spoke highly of him as a kind man with no particular hatred or animosities for anyone before the period of multipartyism. Moreover, people appreciated his recognition of and speaking to audiences while on the air. "He showed that Radio Rwanda was interested in its listeners," said Elie, 30, imprisoned after the genocide, adding that being mentioned by name over the radio was a small honour for anyone, a moment's celebrity and recognition for hard work (interview, July 5, 2000). Philip, 56, also awaiting trial, claimed that two of his own friends were saluted once by Hitimana on Radio Rwanda. "He would say hello to this secteur and hello to that secteur. He had his own style, and people liked him and knew his voice" (July 10, 2000). Listening to Noheli Hitimana at dawn while heading out to the fields was itself a cultural practice, part of the daily process through which meanings—pertaining to the nation as an imagined community, or to the value of hard work as frequently extolled on Radio Rwanda—were brought to life.

Whether as a deliberate strategy or out of habit, Hitimana's work at RTLM continued in the vein of many of his old practices from Radio Rwanda. For example, in response to criticisms of RTLM broadcast over Radio Muhabura, he responded with a litany of areas that had experienced RPF attacks:

It's ridiculous to hear them declaring on their radio: "That murderer, Noël!" Ha! Ha! If you go to Ruhengeri or Byumba and walk around to the communes of Butaro, Kidaho, Cyeru, Cyumba, Kivuye, Mukarange, until Muvumba, if you come back to Kigombe or even to Mukingo, or up to Kora, you'll understand who has suffered and who's the murderer. You'll understand how deep their sorrow is. Their sorrow! When you go on until Base, Nyamugali, or Nyakinama and Nyamutera, you find sad people everywhere. Sad. Really sad. Ask them who's responsible for their sorrow ... (RTLM, April 1, 1994)

Here, one does not simply see an animateur invoking the names of specific locales; it is Noheli Hitimana, who for years has been known to salute and greet individuals in all of the country's communes and secteurs. Hitimana's invocation of locales capitalizes on the earlier variants of the practice to convince listeners of a particular world-view (in this case, that the Hutu are the victim of the Tutsi) while simultaneously implicating listeners in the areas cited as fellow sufferers.

Once the genocide began, the naming of places by Hitimana and other amateurs became associated with exhortations to rush to specific areas where there were still Tutsi to be found.

Similarly, Hitimana's habit of saluting individuals also shaped his work on RTL. Several days before the genocide, during a commentary on an unrelated subject, he suddenly launched into an attack on opposition journalist Joseph Mudatsikira:

Let me say Hello, child of my mother. Let me salute you, as you are the same as Noheli [i.e. also a journalist] ... If you die just as everyone has been speaking about you, it is not like dying like a sheep, without having been spoken of. When we have spoken about you, you have effectively been spoken of. (Kirschke, 1996, p 93)

The playful familiarity adopted *vis-à-vis* Mudatsikira is typical of Hitimana's style, even in the context of a death threat (Mudatsikira was killed several days after the broadcast). Kirschke adds that Hitimana "joked about the fact that he was singling out a journalist, as if it were an honour to be mentioned on RTL." Yet if one considers Hitimana's longstanding relationship with Rwandan radio listeners and his habit of naming personal acquaintances, then such an attitude may seem *almost* normal, which became the case as Hitimana began threatening individuals with increasing regularity. In the above examples, Hitimana converts his everyday habit of naming, recognizing, and saluting individuals into a means of denouncing, targeting, and threatening them, all within the boundaries of the same style and the same medium. In his invocation of names and places, Hitimana's broadcasts at RTL exploited a quotidian familiarity established over a decade's worth of performative participation in the lives of listeners, casting the genocide in the mould of a daily routine.

More importantly, however, the reliance on familiarity made Hitimana's actions more than mere threats. It made them betrayals, signals to listeners that underneath all that defines their social world, even routines followed in the privacy of the home, lies the possibility of treachery, of being attacked by a Tutsi neighbour or falsely accused of treason by a Hutu friend. Providing an example of what to emulate and a warning of what to avoid, Hitimana showed that it was better to denounce than to be denounced, and that even personal ties of mutual benefit or affection could be subordinated to the imperatives of the genocide. By setting this example in the intimacy of the home and implicitly telling Hutu that they too should denounce friends if need be, Hitimana was, ironically, educating listeners in the rules of the genocide, helping them build trust in a world that was built on the mistrust of others.

Based on available information, I would like tentatively to suggest that the appropriation of the rhythms of everyday life by the proponents of the genocide was part of a dialogic process through which Rwandans actively sought to understand and confront a social world disrupted by four years of civil war, political instability, and economic crisis, now coming to a head with the assassination of Habyarimana and the eruption of widespread violence. The process of balancing predictability and possibility is central to any notion of

human subjectivity, for the complete absence of either renders human action impossible. Thus, just as RTLM's ideological tropes and performative aspects successfully mimed the familiar while resonating with the contingent, its appropriation of everyday routines contributed to a context that shaped the incentives and categories of thought behind choices but did not determine them.

Although they do not directly involve radio, two sharply contrasting anecdotes may shed light on this idea. In early 1995, researchers for the NGO African Rights interviewed Zakia Uwamugira, then 42, from Gisenyi, in northwestern Rwanda. Having just returned from a refugee camp in Zaïre, she admitted to having encouraged Interahamwe through song during the genocide:

I am accused of being there when people were being killed and singing. I admit I did this. I was there when people were being killed. Many people. I joined the [animasiyo] just as I would join any other choir. ... I decided to come back because I realised I had not done anything that was wrong. (African Rights, 1995, p 72)

In full awareness of the murders being committed around her, Uwamugira repeatedly insisted that she had done nothing wrong, justifying her actions through the lens of the weekly state-sponsored ritual of animasiyo (in which farmers were obliged to sing songs in praise of the state, the MRND, or the president, often after participating in umuganda). Similarly, many who opposed the genocide also carried out their struggles in the vein of normality rather than nobility. Philip Gourevitch grapples with this apparent blandness in his profile of Paul Rusesabagina, the Hutu manager of the Hôtel Mille Collines in Kigali who saved hundreds of lives through his resourceful use of contacts in the regime, money, and alcohol. "Paul is a mild-mannered man, sturdily built and rather ordinary-looking—a bourgeois hotel manager, after all—and that is how he seemed to regard himself as well, as an ordinary person who did nothing extraordinary in refusing to cave into the insanity that swirled around him" (Gourevitch, 1998, p 127).<sup>17</sup> Rusesabagina's resistance of the genocide on its own terms and from within its own structures required a degree of trust in the system itself and in his ability to manipulate it.

Even as everydayness came to be defined according to the imperatives of the project of extermination, different paths of action carved out by circumstance and will remained open: "under conditions of terror most people will comply *but some people will not* ... Humanly speaking, no more is required, and no more can reasonably be asked, for this planet to remain a place fit for human habitation" (Arendt, 1964, p 233). Despite the impossibility of morally comparing the actions of Zakia Uwamugira and Paul Rusesabagina, it is their common appeal to normality in a shared social world defined by such "conditions of terror" that is so striking. Indeed, while it is often noted that the road to genocide is paved with smaller massacres, it may be more appropriate in this case to say that rather than violence becoming normal, it was normality itself that was co-opted in the service of violence.

## Reverberations

This article hardly represents a comprehensive study of RTLM radio's role in the genocide; at the very least, such an analysis would require extensive analysis of Kinyarwanda rhetoric in the broadcasts, more in-depth fieldwork with listeners, and more research on Radio Rwanda and Radio Muhabura. Nevertheless, I hope that this enquiry has helped shed some light on issues of relevance to the study of mass atrocity and mass media. In the above arguments, a broad theme emerges of radio implicating rather than manipulating its listeners, informing but not determining their choices. In its various aspects, RTLM's activities intertwined with Rwandans' efforts to make sense of and navigate the world in which they lived during such difficult times. Radio served as a medium through which Rwandans experienced and enacted the genocide, its broadcasts reverberating in the thoughts and actions of millions of people, both participants and witnesses, alongside and at times in opposition to other social forces based on coercion, interest, or fear. Its intangible power did not rest solely in words, memory, the psyche, the state, or some combination of causal factors, but was produced in the process of articulation and rearticulation by animateurs and listeners.

Such a perspective on radio's role is possible only if one regards listeners (or farmers, or killers) as constituted subjects rather than through a concept of agency that depends on unitary, autonomous actors, for whom radio is simply a source of information or misinformation, a stimulus eliciting a certain response. If the subject is permeable to mediated discourses, firmly embedded in an ever-shifting set of forces, structures, and meanings, it may be that choices are shaped by and made in the spaces and tensions between these currents. While this is hardly a novel insight given the contemporary trajectories of much of Western philosophy and social theory (and, subsequently, in some areas of anthropology and history), such developments—including the diverse and rigorous critiques of positivism in social science—have yet to be adequately confronted by much of the comparative and theoretical literature on mass atrocity. The fact that this literature takes such important human events as its object of study only makes this gap more saddening, and only makes bridging it more urgent.

## Notes

1. Though not without precedent in the region, unfortunately, given large-scale massacres of Hutu in Burundi in the early 1970s and 1990s. It is important to interpret Rwanda's history of violence in non-teleological terms. The 1959 "Hutu revolution" was marked by violence aimed at driving out Tutsi chiefs; after independence, monarchist Tutsi guerrillas attacked the new state from neighbouring countries, providing a pretext for pogroms against Tutsi in the country. Before such violence subsided in 1967, up to 20,000 Tutsi were massacred and 300,000 were forced to flee (Prunier, 1995, p 62), creating one of the first major refugee crises in Africa. In 1973, President Grégoire Kayibanda's largely unsuccessful attempt to incite violence against Tutsi was the last card he played before being overthrown in coup by Juvénal Habyarimana, who remained president until his death in 1994. Although Tutsi were excluded from public life and faced harsh discrimination, there was little ethnic violence directed against them until the 1990 civil war; between 1990 and 1994, tens of thousands of Tutsi were killed in a series of tightly focused and planned massacres.
2. Kirschke argues that "outside Kigali and other urban centres, the station is reported to have attracted

- people from urban backgrounds ... rather than peasants from rural areas,” a claim which is not supported by the fieldwork undertaken for this essay. As one imprisoned Hutu told me, “it’s a lie if a farmer says he didn’t listen to RTL” (interview, July 8, 2000). The station began broadcasting in late 1993, with range limited to the Kigali area; from early 1994 onwards, its reach was more or less nationwide.
3. This research is based a number of sources, including interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted in the summer of 2000 with: approximately 30 inmates in Rwandan prisons who had already pleaded guilty to some form of participation in the genocide; approximately 60 farmers living in rural Rwanda; and conversations with various Rwandan academics, activists, and officials. Interviews in the first two groups were conducted through interpreters speaking French and Kinyarwanda. Other interview transcripts were provided by anonymous sources. The documentation reviewed included several dozen transcripts of RTL broadcasts translated into English and French, documents of the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and relevant writings by Rwandan public figures and academics. In this essay, surnames of interviewees will be omitted. Ages listed are those at time of interview. It is important to point out several empirical and methodological limitations to this enquiry. Empirically, I have been unable to locate extensive documentary evidence (including transcripts) on RTL’s competitors, namely, Radio Rwanda and Radio Muhabura (though the rival stations were often discussed in interviews). Methodologically, my lack of fluency in Kinyarwanda, the short timeframe of field research, and security considerations (regarding the prison) made it impossible for me to achieve the level of trust and familiarity with interviewees ideal for ethnographic work. Indeed, I would be the first to acknowledge the limitations of studying radio in a language one does not understand.
  4. In describing on-air radio workers, especially those of RTL, I have decided to employ the French *animateur/animateur* to emphasize the crucial performative and directive aspect of their work. The English equivalents of “journalist,” “broadcaster,” “disc jockey,” and “personality” do not capture this dimension, nor does the Kinyarwanda word “*umunyamakuru*” (literally, “one of the news” or “newsman”). RTL’s best-known animateurs included Kantano Habimana (allegedly died of AIDS in Congo), Valérie Bemeriki (currently in detention in Rwanda), Noël Hitimana (died in a Rwandan prison), Georges Ruggiu (pleaded guilty to ICTR and given 12 years’ imprisonment in 2000), and Ananie Nkurunziza (missing?). Other participants included Editor-in-Chief Gaspard Gahigi (missing?), manager Phocas Habimana (dead?), alleged founder and leading Rwandan historian Ferdinand Nahimana (currently on trial at ICTR). The singer Simon Bikindi, whose music was featured regularly on RTL, was arrested in the Netherlands in the summer of 2001 and is awaiting trial at ICTR.
  5. At the same time, it is crucial to recall the extent to which Rwandans either resisted the genocide or merely sought to avoid it. Numerous Hutu risked their lives to save Tutsi, whether out of altruism or greed, while many avoided work for reasons of disgust, laziness, or conscience. Indeed, it was not uncommon for individuals to have both taken lives and saved them, severely testing the familiar categories of perpetrator, victim, and bystander.
  6. Mahmood Mamdani sums up these difficulties well in noting the application of these arguments to hostel violence in apartheid South Africa: “All of these explanations contain a grain of truth, and none can be ignored. The argument of [manipulative elite] forces is compelling, but it cannot by itself explain the violence: conspiracies exist, but that fact on its own cannot explain why some succeed and others fail. Sociological conditions ... do explain why [people] are more disposed towards mobilization, as economic conditions in deprived communities explain the acute desperation that marks the quest to sustain life, but neither explains the ways in which people actually mobilize or act. Although material conditions do explain the constraints under which we make real choices in real life, they cannot by themselves explain the choices we do make within those constraints. The old argument between structure and agency, between sociological and historical constraint and human will, cannot be resolved simply by holding up one end of the pole” (Mamdani, 1996, pp 225–226).
  7. Rwandan elites, casting themselves in the mould of Jacobins, emphasized progress in nearly all discussions of the past. School textbooks cleanly segment the Rwandan past into the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial stages, each new phase foreclosing any possibility of returning to the previous ones. A book by the son of a prominent Hutu revolutionary charting the anti-monarchist struggle and the subsequent achievements of the post-colonial state (complete with a timeline from 1884 to 1994) is dedicated to those who fought for the “grands principes de Liberté, de Justice, et de Progrès pour nous” (Mbonyumutwa, 1990, p 5).
  8. The Rwandan state dedicated entire years to specific development goals, such as: the augmentation of production (1975), education (1979), and soil conservation (1980). In addition, state-controlled mass media were actively used to sensitize the population to such campaigns (Mfizi, 1983, p 57).
  9. Indeed, one cannot underestimate radio’s importance as the dominant medium of orality and communication in the post-colonial era. In a country without a daily newspaper and few television sets, radio was the dominant mass medium, one whose emergence marginalized earlier forms of orality to reflect a new

sense of nationness, making radio a dynamic site for the creation of “imagined communities” in ways beyond the nexus of “print capital” envisioned by Benedict Anderson in his discussion of how newspapers contributed to the rise of nationalism: “The significance of this mass ceremony—Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers—is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. Furthermore, this ceremony is incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar. What more vivid figure for the secular, historically clocked, imagined community can be envisioned?” (Anderson, 1991, p. 35). In Rwanda, the answer to Anderson’s rhetorical question is radio.

10. As I do not speak Kinyarwanda and my work is based mostly on RTLM transcripts rather than tapes, the analyses of performance here are obviously biased towards forms amenable to textual interpretation and are therefore far from comprehensive.
11. Interviews indicate that the reasons underlying the station’s popularity and importance during the genocide stem from other reasons as well. Some of those I spoke to recalled being drawn to RTLM’s liveliness, but only when specifically asked about it; more general questions about the sources of the station’s popularity almost never received replies such as “because it was funny” or “because the amateurs spoke well.” This suggests that RTLM’s entertaining style was not necessarily its most important aspect. Interestingly, educated Rwandans, primarily Tutsi, always pointed out RTLM’s “street style” as the primary reason for its appeal. It is possible that the reliance of some published accounts on educated, urban informants magnified or reproduced certain presumptions shared by elites.
12. At times, they were even forced to contradict the code of their rhetoric in order to avoid the pervasive influence of euphemism. As news spread that France was preparing to intervene in Rwanda, Valérie Bemerihi instructed Hutu to welcome them with flowers and greetings of “*bon jour*” and “*soyez le bienvenu*.” Still, after months of whipping up hatred against whites in general and Belgians in particular, and mixing anti-Tutsi invective with superficial reassurances that not all Tutsi were bad, it was only sensible to make the instructions absolutely clear. “*If you are told to do something, you are not told to do the opposite*,” Bemerihi announced to listeners. “If we are saying that we should welcome the French, that does not mean that we should throw stones at them” (RTLM, June 22, 1994).
13. Ruggiu has made some 60 hours’ worth of confessions to ICTR prosecutors, during which he presumably discussed in detail how he was hired and the nature of his work at RTLM, as both topics are featured in his plea agreement. The content of these sessions, however, remains confidential. My numerous requests to ICTR for access to the tapes and to Ruggiu himself received no official replies.
14. Ruggiu’s case also provides an example of the oversights that can come with an overly textual perspective in understanding radio. In June 2000, Ruggiu was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment by ICTR after pleading guilty to inciting genocide. In the judgement, the tribunal’s judges cited Ruggiu’s European background and consequent ignorance of the complexities of the situation in Rwanda as mitigating factors in the sentencing. The significance of his European background to his involvement with RTLM was not mentioned.
15. In one incident, the station issued the licence plate number of a red van reported to be “full of accomplices”; the passengers of the vehicle, Hutu dissidents, were stopped at a nearby checkpoint the same day and executed (Kirschke, 1996, p 121). Interestingly, Ruggiu also told ICTR prosecutors that at the behest of the Rwandan military, he once relayed a message to have a red Volkswagen stopped, giving registration number and general location, but did not know the result of the broadcast (ICTR–97–32–DP, para 171).
16. Similarly, the ones who needed most to adapt to the rhythms of work crews were the Tutsi who managed to go into hiding. Observing patrol patterns while hiding in the fields during the day, they came out at night to find food, new sanctuaries, or to get news from friends. In exploiting the regularity of schedules, even these Tutsi seem to have developed some sense of mastery over how the system of the genocide worked, even if it was working against them.
17. Resistance, of course, took on multiple and diverse forms, of which only some occurred in the framework of the genocide. In some instances, large groups of Tutsi were able to organize and defend themselves for some time, fending off multiple attacks before succumbing to superior military force (Des Forges *et al.*, 1999, pp 216–220).

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