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# Relative Democracy: Rwandan Perspectives on Representative Government

Gabriel C.J.M. Nahmias  
*SIT Study Abroad*

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# SIT Rwanda: Spring 2011

Relative Democracy: Rwandan Perspectives on Representative Government



Gabriel C.J.M. Nahmias

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05/10/2011

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## Dedication

To all those brave enough to speak without regard to their own wellbeing.  
To all those prudent enough to hold their tongue for the good of their people.  
To all those patient enough to listen to what people say and to what they don't.

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Credit is also due to our wonderful academic director Stefanie, who, in spite of being German, led us with warmth and wisdom. She made eleven kids first experience in Africa an amazing and enlightening one. We will miss her dearly, and this program will be the less for her absence. I wish her all the best.

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## Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to ascertain, at least in part, the importance Rwandan's place on different aspects of democracy. This is done with the hope of giving Rwandans more voice in the discussion of the "democratization" of their own country. With Rwanda's unique culture and history, the application of "democracy" within this nation should be done, in the mind of the researcher, in accordance to the context, and the only people who fully understand this context are Rwandans themselves. The secondary objective is to hypothesize why these aspects have particular importance in the Rwandan context. The tertiary object is to determine what structural aspects of Rwanda's current government do not align themselves with the desires of the people and their concept of democracy. The fourth and final objective is to make a tentative assessment as to the level of democracy in Rwanda using Rwandan priorities of the content of democracy and their own appraisal of the current government.

As it is the primary objective of this research to understand Rwandan priorities in the construction of representative government it is necessary to ground the research in an understanding of Rwanda's history with democracy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, given two of the most defining aspects of the Rwandan political environment are its post-conflict environment and the continued role of ethnicity, the relationship that these factors have with democracy will be explored. Additionally, as the 2003 Constitution of Rwanda was ostensibly designed through consultation with the people, understanding its particulars and peculiarities is indispensable to understanding democracy in Rwanda. After exploring "democracy on paper" in Rwanda, an examination of Western literature on the status of Rwandan democracy shall be discussed. After entertaining Western perspectives a discussion of the ambiguous nature of democracy, its ethnocentric biases, and the value of a relativistic approach shall act as the final foundation on which the research shall proceed to ground its analysis.

In an attempt to achieve the prescribed objectives a small-n qualitative analysis was done on ten members of the Rwandan society who were selected for the study on the basis of various political, occupational, and demographic dimensions. Ages of subjects varied between early 20s and early 60s. Eight of the participants were male and two female. Every province of Rwanda was represented in the sample, though some more heavily than others. Despite efforts otherwise, all

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<sup>1</sup> It is only now, while preparing my own research that I understand why presenters always oblige us to relearn the history of Rwanda. While there is of course a reasonable expectation that readers will know this history, the aspects which need be emphasize and which are important for the narrative of democracy must be discussed.

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participants could be considered members of the educated Rwandan middle-class; while originally considered a drawback, this allows for a unique analysis using Aristotle's argument that democracy originates with the middle-class. Semi-structured interviews ranging between 45 minutes and 4.5 hours were used to obtain data. Sites of the interviews varied, yet were when possible selected to put the subject at ease as rapport was particularly important in obtaining accurate data. The questions asked were grounded in various aspects of Rwanda expected to reflect unique qualities in their perceptions of democracy. Informed consent was obtained orally, and efforts were made to ensure the anonymity of all participants. Analysis of the data was done via an indexing system.

The results of the data while inconclusive for two of the objectives allowed the researcher to draw some preliminary assessments in terms of Rwandan priorities and the status of the Rwandan government. Rwandan's consider diversity of opinion within the context of national identity and personal responsibility to be essential to government. While understanding of the role of anti-genocide ideology law, and considering security a priority, Rwandan's believe that some things are more important than security. For that reason, one must tentatively decide that the Rwandan government is only relatively democratic.

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## Introduction

### *The United States is Not a Democracy*

*Democracy is a process, it has its principles, its principles are the same in Southern and Northern countries. The principles are the same, but enforcing these principles is different in Southern and Northern countries because of different historical backgrounds and because of political and social maturity. In the case of Rwanda, in my own opinion, you cannot take things from America, France, and other Western countries and say this should be enforced in Rwanda because the elements are not the same (Claude).*

Democracy is a tricky word. It is both very simple to understand and impossible to decipher. Democracy is a government in which the will of the people decides the policies the government adopts. Or in the words of Claude, Jeanine, David, the 1962<sup>2</sup>, 1978, 1991, and 2003 Constitutions of Rwanda, and Abraham Lincoln democracy is “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” But in practice what does this mean? What political institutions must exist for democracy to be present? Majority rule? Free and fair elections? Multiple parties? Separation of power? Free speech? Human rights? A vibrant civil society? One can imagine a democracy with each of these qualities and one can imagine a democracy where each of these characteristics is limited or non-existent. In the United States minorities were prevented from taking part in elections until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The United Kingdom has a unification of powers as opposed to separation of powers. Sweden was ruled by the Social Democrats for half a century. Yet, Americans, Brits, and Swedes would certainly conceive of their states as democracies.

The Rwandan government is considered by many in the West “not-free” (Freedom House) and “autocratic” (Polity Project). But on what grounds are they making these accusations and using what standards are they assessing Rwandan democracy? While Rwanda may not stand up to the standards of Western democrats, how well would the American democracy fair in the mind of a Rwandan? Fifty-six percent of Rwanda’s parliament is female but women make up only 18% of the U.S. congress. Can one really claim women are fairly represented in the United States? Rwanda requires a separation of political power between parties (Peter and Kibalama 14), in the United States one party can take control of the White House, Congress, and (given enough time) even the Supreme Court. Does one party, even if it has a majority of the population represent the will of all Americans? As an American who lived under the Bush regime I can answer that question with a definitive no. Rwanda is moving more and more towards a system of decentralization which gives

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<sup>2</sup> The 1962 Constitution states this mantra in French : « Gouvernement du peuple, par le peuple, et pour le peuple. »



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the Rwandan population increased personal authority over the administration of their nation (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 12). On the other hand, the United States has over the last two and a half centuries been moving in the opposite direction, giving more power to the federal government. The United States is, using these Rwandan standards, not a democracy. Yet, if a Rwandan came to US and started telling us how to run our country more democratically Americans would scoff.

Democracy is about the will of the people. To understand if Rwanda is a democracy one cannot rely on Western constructs; one must endeavor to discover Rwandan perceptions of what constitutes democracy, discover their will in how their government is structured. Democracy in the United States was born in a specific context, evokes a particular history, and had evolved with the nation. The 3<sup>rd</sup> right prescribed in the US Bill of Rights is that “No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law” (US Const., amend. III). In the modern context this right is almost pointless, but in colonial America British troops were often garrisoned in private homes at the expense of the homeowner (Silversmith), making this rights inclusion in US Constitution not as ridiculous as it seems. There is a context to democracy, and while the principle of “rule of the people<sup>3</sup>” is universal its application may not. It is therefore the aim of this paper to understand what structural aspects of democracy are important to Rwandans and if Rwanda is, by Rwandans’ own standards, democratic.

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<sup>3</sup> Democracy directly translates from the Greek *demos* meaning “people” and *kratos* meaning “power” to mean “rule of the people”

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## Objective

### *To Democratically Discover the Definition of Democracy*

1. Identify what form democracy should take in the Rwandan context through the perspective of Rwandans.
2. When feasible, hypothesize the historical, cultural, and situational factors which explain the relative importance of various facets of democracy in the minds of Rwandans.
3. Determine what aspects, if any, of the current government defy the structure of democracy prescribed by Rwandans.
4. Assess, vis-à-vis the possible disconnect established in Objective Three, the status of democracy in Rwanda.

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## Background

### *Democratization and Rwanda: A History of Bloody Failures*

In 1961, majority rule entered the Rwandan stage with blood soaked hands. Having spent decades under the Belgian supported Tutsi elite, and arguably many decades more under Tutsi royalty<sup>4</sup>, the Hutu majority, now the darling of the Belgians, demanded ethnic-majority rule. They did so following a wave of attacks on Tutsi authorities, homes, and families (Melvern 14). They did so under the banner of “Parti du Mouvement de L’Emancipation Hutu” (Parmehutu) a Hutu party which called for the end of what it deemed “Tutsi colonization,” and the expulsion of the “[Tutsi] invaders who had enslaved the Hutu” (Melvern 13). They did so in the name of inequality. In 1962, a referendum ended the monarchy and the new president, Gregoire Kayibanda, declared Rwanda an independent republic (Melvern 16). This new “democracy” was born into a nation filled with arbitrary arrests, torture, massacres, mass exile, and the development of an “apartheid system” (Melvern 18-20). Despite Parmehutu’s resulting single party dominance and the systematic exclusion and repression of the Tutsi during the “First Republic,” as the period of Kayibanda’s regime (1961-1973) has come to be known, the world largely considered it to be a democracy thanks to the presence of “majority rule” (Melvern 20). In the words of an International Crisis Group report from 2001, “Leaders [Kayibanda and later Habyarimana] built their regimes on the ideology that political majority rule equals ethnic majority rule, implying that democracy mandated the empowerment of Hutu leaders and the exclusion of Tutsis from all positions of government” (3).

In 1973, the Parmehutu single party state of Kayibanda gave way to the totalitarian regime of General Habyarimana; Kayibanda’s single-party Parmehutu state was replaced by Habyarimana’s Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND) dominated government (Melvern 24), and the southern based regime swapped for one dominated by a cadre from the north (Melvern 22) later dubbed the Akazu (Melvern 42). But the apartheid state remained and rights were extremely limited; no one could even leave their prefecture without approval (Melvern 25). “Habyarimana brought peace and stability to Rwanda but the price was a lack of freedom for the people (Melvern 24).” Winning “democratic” elections in both 1983 and 1988, as the only candidate on the ticket (Melvern 25), Habyarimana continued his authoritarian and relatively peaceful rule into the early 1990s, and may still have been in power to this day were it not for the intervention of Western democrats .

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<sup>4</sup> I say arguably, as the relationship between political power and “ethnicity” may not have been as clear-cut as the Belgian colonists later established it to be.

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With the end of the 1980s came a decline in coffee prices worldwide, and as one of Rwanda's chief exports, this caused a 50% reduction in Rwanda's export revenue between 1987 and 1991, ultimately leading the country to face an economic crisis (Andersen 443). This economic crisis turned into a political crisis as the "development dictatorship" of Habyarimana failed to deliver growth. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) a rebel army made up of Rwandan's in exile used this as their cue to launch an invasion and began a civil war. It is with the backdrop of civil war and a political & economic crisis that the West began to insist on democratic reforms, namely the adoption of a multiparty system; blackmailing the regime with aid money that it so sorely needed (Anderson 444). "It is this which provides a clue to the great paradox of 1990: that a government would respond [to civil war and political unrest], not as most governments in similar situations would, by curtailing civil liberties and declaring a national emergency, but by ushering in the dawn of multiparty democracy" (Mamdani 208-209).

The legalization of political parties in July of 1991, for the first time since 1963, brought about demands for more political rights. Thirteen thousand people went to the streets in November of 1991 when Habyarimana named a member of his own party Prime Minister, fifty-thousand protested a month later when the cabinet was filled with only members of the MRND (Mamdani 208). As the former leader of Parti Liberal said in 2005, "Multiparty competition at a time of civil war put Rwanda in a state of permanent tension" (Mamdani 209). Balancing domestic and foreign pressure, Habyarimana was delegitimized with his own constituency by the moderate stance the West obliged him to take during peace negotiations and against protesters (Anderson 450-1). The Akazu, Habyarimana's cadre who had been enjoying their position of political supremacy for a over a decade, began to feel their hegemony slipping away (Mamdani 209). In March of 1992, as Habyarimana attempted to negotiate peace with the RPF, many members of the ruling elite defected from the MRND and formed the Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique (CDR). This party, joined by the Mouvement Democratique Republicain (MDR) espoused a policy of Hutu Power, and criticized the MRND for its weak stance against the RPF and against the protesters (Anderson 449). This divide in the ruling elite grew with time as the "economic stranglehold" of donor nations both forced Habyarimana to the center and rendered him too impotent to maintain discipline within the ruling elite – causing the Hutu Power movement to grow more and more extreme (Anderson 450-1). The CDR proceeded to develop institutions utilizing the new freedoms given political parties: establishing media (Radio-Television Libres des Mille Collines (RTLMC) and Kangura) and youth "organizations"<sup>5</sup> which later evolved into militias which carried out the

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<sup>5</sup> The interhamwe began as a football fan club (Gourevitch 93).

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Genocide (Mamdani 209). The Arusha Accords did little but solidify the schism in the government and further discredit Habyarimana (Anderson 452).

The democratization pushed by the West destabilized the government, making the peace process ever the more difficult, and giving radical ethnic groups the ability to activate politically. The multiparty system allowed Hutu Power the political space to organize and develop institutions. Hutu Power proceeded to use these institutions to suppress any positive political reforms through massacres of Tutsis e.g. following the March 1992 negotiations to form a multiparty government and the December 1992/January 1993 negotiations between the government and the RPF (Mamdani 209). “The multiparty system, as it evolved in Rwanda, has been described as a cloak behind which particular interests encouraged ethnic mobilization and fed political fiefdoms which usurped the civil administration” (Anderson 450). Without the democratic reforms that donor nations forced on Rwanda in the early 1990s, Hutu Power may never have had the impetus or the ability to form. And it was Hutu Power through the influence of the media, their voices on RTLMC, their words in Kangura, who called for and organized the 1994 Genocide that decimated their nation (Gourevitch 4, 88, 111).

### *Democratic Peace: The Role of Development, Ethnicity, and Rule of Law*

As observed in the Rwandan case the 1990s brought a change in Western democratization policy; donor states began to make their aid, the aid which much of the developing world has become dependent on, contingent on democratic reforms. In part these reforms were driven by the proposition that democracy leads to peace (Grimm and Merkel 550). “If conflict is about power, then elections are a peaceful method of allocating power. They can be a first step in the peace-building process where political institutions are created to represent political positions and manage diversity without violence (Collier, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* 9).” While conventional democratic peace theory contends that there is a direct positive relationship between democracy and peace (Kinsella 453), some research has found a parabolic relationship in which the highest rate of internal conflict is found in states with “semi-democracy” or states in the process of democratization actually experience the most violence (Baliga, Lucca and Sjoestroem 458).

These results correspond with a study done on the relationship between democracy and mass killings. This research found that while countries with “perfect” democracy are less likely to commit mass killings, until the highest level of democracy is achieved, democratization actually increases the propensity for government backed mass murders (Easterly, Gatti and Kurlat 146). However, while the last two decades have observed a rise of semi-democratic states throughout

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sub-Saharan Africa it has also seen a major decline in violence (Goldsmith 413). The parabolic relationship between peace and democracy seems to be in question; as factors such as the end of the Cold War (and its proxy wars e.g. Angola), economic growth, and consolidation of government appearing to be more important in the stabilization of African nations (Goldsmith 428-9). In fact, the very contention that democracy leads to peace in general is coming under fire (Rosato 585). Furthermore, while the effects of democracy on peace are debatable, the effects of democratization are no less ambiguous. According to Mansfield and Snyder, “in the transitional phase of democratization, countries become more aggressive and war-prone, not less” (5), and yet research exists which challenges this assertion as well (Naranga and Nelson 357)

With all this ambiguity as to the effects of democracy, if Rwanda further democratizes<sup>6</sup>, will this cause more or less conflict? Again the evidence is unclear. Democratization appears to have a dual effect on domestic conflicts. On the one hand, by allowing people a non-violent means of expressing dissent it lowers the incentives for rebellion. On the other hand, it restricts the ability of the government, as we saw in Rwanda in the early 1990s, to suppress rebellions should they come about (Collier, *Democracy Development Conflict* 531). The question then becomes, what decides whether democratization will lead to peace and prosperity as seen in Botswana (Comaro and Comaroff 123) or death and destruction as seen in Rwanda in the early 1990s. Collier argues development is key. His findings show that in richer countries democracy reduces the propensity for rebellion, but in poorer nations it increases the probability of insurrections (*Democracy Development Conflict* 534-5). While ostensibly this indicates that democratization should only follow development, Collier argues if the West desires to continue to pressure for democratization, “that international promotion of democracy needs to be complemented by international strengthening of security” (*Democracy Development Conflict* 536). One might then argue that for the international community to intervene in developing nations political systems, as they did in Rwanda in the 1990s, without being willing to ensure the maintenance of peace is irresponsible. “If external actors withdraw before the roots of democracy are deep enough and before democratic institutions are strong enough to stand alone, then the entire endeavor may fail” (Grimm and Merkel 547).

It is worth noting, that while level of development impacts the propensity of democratization to cause violence it also impacts the propensity for democracy to occur at all. Specifically, increases in the per capita income, primary school education, and gender equality in education all cause an increase in the creation of democracy (Barro S158). This fits with classical

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<sup>6</sup> Assuming that Rwanda is not currently a democracy as the Polity Project IV and Freedom House contends.

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democratization theory: “from Aristotle down to the present, men have argued that only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics and could develop the self-restraint necessary to avoid succumbing to the appeals of irresponsible demagogues” (Lipset 75).

While economic development appears to be important, it is not alone in deciding the success of peaceful democratization projects. Ethnicity is the curse of democracy in Africa. It has been found, that in most African nations, party alignment is along ethnic rather than ideological lines. A hopeful note for Rwanda, however, is that this condition declines in linguistically homogeneous nations (Norris and Mattes 1-2). Furthermore, ethnic voting has been found to increase corruption (Banerjee and Pande 30). Paul Collier recommends in War, Guns, and Votes that governments promote nationalism to overcome blind ethnic voting. Though he warns that the methodology of dialogue suppression (the anti-genocide ideology law) in Rwanda may create problems of its own while working to generate a national identity (War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Difficult Places). Groups generally align themselves around ethnic lines as a result of rent-seeking behavior. Control of government is seen as a means of capturing state controlled wealth for the sub-national group, in terms of resources and employment. This will lead to an uneven distribution of wealth, and will plant the seeds of conflict which may erupt violently. This is particularly prevalent in unconsolidated democracies (Osborne 517, 522). Furthermore, if conflict should result in a change of ethnic dominance it has been found that “resentment felt by members of ethnic groups that have suffered sudden demotion from power through undemocratic exclusion is especially prone to trigger political violence (Cederman, Hug and Krebs 379).” Additionally, peace agreements are far less likely to be achieved in ethnically charged conflicts and if they are realized there success rate is well below the rates in non-identity based conflicts. Finally, ethnicity also spoils the well for democratization; making the transition more difficult to negotiate and sustain than elsewhere. Democratization in post-ethnic-conflict situations might even prove to deteriorate the situation as parties will tend to arise from the ethnic groups (Gurses and Mason 322).

Two general solutions have typically been used in an attempt to overcome the problem of ethnicity. One methodology is to ban “particularistic parties” i.e. ethnic parties. By banning particularistic groups one hopes to avoid the entrenchment of identity differences and to prevent the marginalization of minorities who cannot hope to be represented if parties are based off of identity. Furthermore, if groups are not allowed to unify around ethnicity they will be forced to find other issues to base their parties on. This may lead to cross-ethnic parties creating inter-group interaction, a proven source of decreased social tension. However, the risk with this technique is

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that it will prevent a peaceful and legal expression of particularistic sentiment which may result in their extralegal or violent manifestation. Additionally, the party bans may be used as a means of discrediting the government, destabilizing an already unstable political arrangement (Basedau and Moroff 206-7). Evidence of the effects of party bans is mixed. In the majority of cases its effects are negligible. In Kenya in 1993 it caused a spike in violence, while in Rwanda it appears to have helped in stabilizing the situation. However, in a number of cases it was used merely as a means of repressing opposition (Basedau and Moroff 216-7).

The other option is the use of consociationalism. A consociational system is essentially a deal struck between ethnic elites to share power, and the accompanying rents, in an effort to avoid the violent manifestation of identity politics (Dryzek 222). As opposed to party bans which are seen by some as “exclusionary” consociationalism includes all parties in the democratic process, regardless of their status as an electoral minority which in theory should promote conflict resolution: “Incorporation rather than exclusion is seen as the key to conflict resolution” (Lemarchand 2). However, consociationalism has a shaky track-record, in Africa (Spears 105). While some claim that this is because of inappropriate application (Lemarchand 3) the major flaw of consociationalism is that it is often merely a band-aid solution, allowing for peaceful distribution of resources between parties who maintain their identity based structure (O’Flynn 572). Whether the consociational solution falls apart almost immediately as it did in Angola in 1992 (Spears 116) or erupts into civil war after thirty years as it did in Lebanon in 1975 (Dekmejian 252) consociationalism without an attempt to address the sources of conflict risks an eventual return to violence.

It could be argued that “democratization” is an attempt to begin at the end. Countries in the first wave of democracy (e.g. the United States, France, and the United Kingdom) became “modern states” with established rule of law, civil society, and government accountability before the adoption of universal suffrage. By democratizing backwards, establishing elections before the development of basic institutions, “third wave” democracies run the high risk of slipping back into authoritarianism or worse being trapped as incomplete democracies where the people learn to expect little from their government (Rose and Shin 331). Furthermore, there is evidence that the establishment of rule of law, indicating sense of security and respect for the Constitution, is a key determinant of the success of new democracies (Bratton and Chang 1059). Some might argue that there is a bias in the minds of modern liberal thinkers towards the preeminence of restraining government. Classic liberal philosophers, such as Locke, de Montesquieu, and Kant all began their political perspectives from the “state of nature,” a hypothetical reality in which there is no law and



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no government. Hobbes described this existence as “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (Hobbes 168)” as there would be nothing restraining the greed and brutality of our fellow man. If one begins by assuming a “state of nature” order may be considered a necessary condition for and even a higher priority than liberty. Contemporary liberal thinkers tend to assume a functioning state, whether authoritarian or democratic, when discussing the establishment of free societies, but the establishment of an effective state is the first step to the creation of a democratic state particularly in post-conflict environment (Paris). Perhaps it is inexperience with the “state of nature” which causes modern Western scholars to overlook the importance of security, but Rwandans do not yet have that luxury.

### *The Fourth Times the Charm: The 2003 Constitution of Rwanda*

Rwanda is currently on its fourth constitution, having failed to consolidate democracy with the previous three. Designed by the Legal and Constitutional Commission, an institution called for by the Arusha Peace Accords, it was adopted on June 2, 2003. Before presenting the modern constitution, the commission engaged in public sensitization and consultation with the Rwandan people, sought advice from international constitutional law experts, and examined an assortment of constitutions from various established democracies (Brannigan and Jones 201). Several unique priorities were established in the 2003 Constitution which helps to define the unique framework of Rwanda’s democracy, if not its democracy in practice. At the heart of this document is Rwanda’s history, specifically the Genocide. While the establishment of democratic elections and free and fair elections makes up the third clause of the constitutions preamble, the first two are dedicated to positioning this document in the context of the Genocide and pledging to combat “the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations and to eradicate ethnic, regional and any other form of divisions” (2003 Const. of Rwanda, preamble 1-3). Aside from a commitment to peace and unity, the Constitution emphasizes the importance of national identity (2003 Const. of Rwanda, preamble 7), decentralization, the representation of marginalized groups, power sharing among different parties, human rights, reconciliation, transparency, (Rutikanga) the eradication of discrimination, and the rule of law (Brannigan and Jones 202).

In comparison with the position of former-President Kayibanda that, “there is no intercourse and no sympathy [between Hutus and Tutsis. They] are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets” (Spears 109), the modern constitution recognizes (or perhaps establishes) a shared Rwandan identity: “Considering that we enjoy the privilege of having one country, a common

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language, a common culture and a long shared history which ought to lead to a common vision of our destiny” (2003 Const. of Rwanda, preamble 7).

In order to decentralize the government the constitution called for a reorganization of the administrative structure which took place in 2006 with intention of creating a slimmer and more responsive hierarchical structure: beginning at the umudugudu level, then cell, sector, district, and finally province (Peter and Kibalama 11-12). Furthermore, National Dialogue Councils shall meet at least once a year to bring together local leaders with leaders from the national government and “debate, among others, on issues relating to the state of the Nation, the state of local governments and national unity” (2003 Const. of Rwanda, title VI, ch. II, art. 168). In regards to minority representation, 8 of the 26 seats in the Senate are appointed by the president to represent marginalized groups, at least one of which is Twa. Furthermore, 30% of the Senate and 24 of the 80 members of the Chamber of Deputies is required to be female. The Chamber of Deputies is also required to have two youth representatives and one disabled (Rutikanga). In an effort to share political power and institute checks on the government, the President of the Republic and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies must be members of different political parties (Peter and Kibalama 14).

Commissions to support national reconciliation, human rights, and the fight against genocide ideology are all mandated by the Constitution (Rutikanga). Furthermore, transparency and freedom from corruption are maintained through the Office of the Ombudsman whose responsibility is to prevent and fight government corruption and injustice and corruption (2003 Const. of Rwanda, title VIII, ch. VII) and the Auditor General whose responsibility is to ensure that government funds are transparently accounted for (Rutikanga).

The Constitution officially prohibits “discrimination of whatever kind based on, inter alia, ethnic origin, tribe, clan, color, sex, region, social origin, religion, or faith, opinion, economic status, culture, language, social status, physical or mental disability, or any other form of discrimination is prohibited by law” (2003 Const. of Rwanda, title II, ch. 1, art. 11). Political parties are banned from utilizing any of the aforementioned identities as their political basis (2003 Const. of Rwanda, title III art. 54). Finally, while “Freedom of thought, opinion, conscience, religion, worship and the public manifestation thereof is guaranteed by the State in accordance with conditions determined by law” the “Propagation of ethnic, regional, racial or discrimination or any other form of division is punishable by law” (2003 Const. of Rwanda, title II, ch. 1, art. 33).

Perhaps the best indication of the 2003 Constitution’s stance on the nature of government in the Rwandan context can be found in part six of the preamble, “Resolved to build a State

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governed by the rule of law, based on respect for fundamental human rights, pluralistic democracy, equitable power sharing, tolerance and resolution of issues through dialogue.”

*Not-Free: Western Perspectives on the Current Status of Democracy in Rwanda*

While on paper the current Rwandan government has all the makings of a democracy, is it? That is a question the international community seems more than willing to answer. “Rwanda's development and economic growth continued in 2010, but there were numerous violations of civil and political rights, and the government failed to fulfill its professed commitment to democracy” (Human Rights Watch). Using a measure of democracy designed by the Polity Project, in 2009 Rwanda scored a 0 out of 10 in terms of democracy and 3 out of 10 in terms of authoritarianism, combining these scores to create a polity score<sup>7</sup> of just -3 (Marshall and Jaggers, Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2009). To put this assessment in perspective, in 2009 the autocratic regime of Hosni Mubarak, the same regime the world cheered out of office just three months ago, also had a polity score of -3 (Jansen). Similarly, according to Freedomhouse Rwanda's current score in terms of Civil Liberties is 5 out of 7 and in terms of Political Rights is 6 out of 7, seven indicating the least free. This is the same score Rwanda had 1993 as it prepared for the genocide (Freedom House).

In his scathing 2004 article *Rwanda, Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship* Filip Reyntjens accuses the RPF of rigging elections, banning any viable opposition, controlling civil society, “disappearing” opponents, suppressing the media and NGOs, human rights abuses, the use of intelligence forces to intimidate and control the general population, monopolizing power in the hands of the Tutsi, the creation of a new Akazu, and the use of the Genocide as a means of manipulating the world into ignoring its totalitarian behavior... among other things (177-210).

This assault on the democratic nature of the regime was updated in 2010 by Danielle Beswick. She argued that the RPF is limiting political space in Rwanda through a combination of the application of anti-genocide ideology and anti-divisionism legislation (232) with the threat of action by Department of Military Intelligence, who have taken on the reputation, if not the behavior, of a secret police (243). Highlighting the arrest of Bizimungu, the former president of Rwanda; the banning of Mouvement Democratique Republicain (MDR) at one point the second strongest political party in Rwanda; and intervening in the leadership of LIPRODHOR on accusations of genocide ideology, a once vibrant human rights organization who expressed opinions critical of the government; as cases in which the RPF turned on once allies creates a general sense of uncertainty

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<sup>7</sup> Polity score is a determined by subtracting a states “authoritarian” score from its “democratic” score resulting in a 20 point scale, -10 indicating strongly autocratic and 10 indicating strongly democratic.

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about the boundaries of political space which causes people to remain silent rather than test the water and pay the price (248).. This uncertainty favors the RPF, forcing civil society to become an extension of, rather than a check on, the current government (245). For Beswick it does not really matter whether the government is or is not oppressive, the fact that the people feel as if there are limits on what they can say is sufficient to hinder Rwanda's democracy (243-5). Beswick, unlike Reyntjens, seems willing to give the government the benefit of the doubt. "The government's strategies for managing political space may well reflect a genuine fear of divisionism and violence, which it associates with more open political debate, but there is no guarantee that tightly circumscribing political space will not, ultimately, have the same negative consequences" (248).

Four recent developments in Rwanda have brought a renewal in accusations of autocracy by the West. The build up to the presidential elections in the summer of 2010 were marred by "undemocratic" events: the prevention of FDU-Inkingi and the Democratic Green Party from registering as parties, the disruption of and eventual takeover of PS-Imberakuri, as well as the arrest of Bernard Ntaganda on charges of genocide ideology; the arrest of Victoire Ingabire, president of the FDU-Inkingi and one of the leading figures in opposition to the current government, on accusations of genocide ideology<sup>8</sup>; and the subsequent arrest of an American attorney Peter Erlinder on charges of "genocide denial and minimization," and "spreading malicious rumors that could endanger national security"<sup>9</sup> all appear to indicate a government with a repressive streak (Human Rights Watch). The second development is the closing of two newspapers, *Umuseso* and *Umuwugizi*, by the government for posing a threat to national security (Human Rights Watch). Third was the election itself. The huge majorities with which Kagame and the RPF win elections cannot help but create a sense of disbelief for those whose leaders are occasionally decided by a few poorly punched ballots in south Florida. Accusations have even been levied that in 2008 the Rwandan government stuffed ballot boxes with votes for opposition parties in hopes of creating an appearance of democracy (Freedom House). "Some ballot boxes were swathed in shiny pink fabric and festooned with bows, ribbons and balloons. The elaborate decorations, along with the reports of 100 percent turnout in some places, seemed to reinforce what Western human rights groups and critics inside the country have been saying about Rwanda's

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<sup>8</sup>In the immediate wake of returning to Rwanda after 16 years of self-imposed exile, Victoire Ingabire visited the Gisozi Memorial. In a move which Victoire cannot reasonably have expected to be ignored by the government, she commented on the absence of a memorial to the Hutu who died during the Genocide perpetrated by the RPF against Hutu.

<sup>9</sup> Though in the Rwandan government's defense, Erlinder has written an article entitled *Rwanda: No Conspiracy, No Genocide Planning ... No Genocide?* Therefore it would be hard for anyone to deny that Erlinder falls under the heading of genocide denier.

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democracy, that it is essentially a dressed-up dictatorship” (Gettleman). Finally, the recent departure of another four members of Kagame’s inner circle makes some question Kagame’s legitimacy (Chief-Editor). Particularly as it is reminiscent of the departures, exiling, and/or arrests of previous allies such as the previously mentioned former president Pasteur Bizimungu (Reyntjens 193), the founder of *Ibuka* Bosco Rutagengwa, RPA Chief of Staff General Kayumba Nyamwasa, (Reyntjens 183), former prime minister Faustin Twagiramungu, former Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga (Reyntjens 180) just to name a few. Furthermore, reports of exiled oppositions being assassinated while in Uganda (Kron) and South Africa (Bearak), add to a general sense of autocracy.

The West has been characterized in this section as the naysayers of Rwandan democracy. While there are some who might concur with such an opinion, such as New Times columnist Arthur Asiiimwe, “as we pride in these achievements [in education, health, infrastructure, unity and reconciliation], there are some doomsday prophets, the spoilers that will quickly jump into the pan to discredit this journey. They guise under the cover of human rights defenders or champions of democracy.” However, this characterization was done for the express purpose of illustrating why a Rwandan standard is particularly appropriate, why reassessment is relevant, and to provide some anecdotal examples of how a Westerner might interpret events. However, one would, in the opinion of the research, be quite remise if one were to view the West as staunch opponents of Kagame. One of Beswick’s complaints about the situation in Rwanda was Western aid partner’s willingness to work with the Rwandan government despite the lack of political space (Beswick 225). Tony Blair has called Kagame a “visionary leader” (McGreal). There are some who are even willing to entertain the possibility that the version of democracy the current government in Rwanda is offering may be the most democratic government that Rwanda can sustain, “his government's seemingly draconian measures are designed to save Rwanda from its worst demons. And if that means some Western critics question his human-rights record, so be it. There's no bigger rights violation than genocide, after all, and the results his administration has delivered give him the authority to challenge Western notions of how his country — and Africa — should be governed” (Perry).

### *The Difficulty of Definition: What is Democracy?*

As one may have noticed while exploring the relationship between democracy and various social conditions, e.g. ethnicity, conflict, development, there was the reoccurring complication that different research on the same subject found different statistically significant relationships. The regular occurrence of conflicting causal relationships in empirical research may at first seem rather bizarre. However, research indicates that the reason behind this is that different researchers use different conceptualization of what aspects of democracy to measure (Munck and Verkuilen 5-7).

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For example, two different measure of democracy have already been discussed in this work: Polity IV and Freedom House. Polity IV bases its analysis on three principle aspects of democracy: “One is the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies and leaders. Second is the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive. Third is the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens in their daily lives and in acts of political participation” (Marshall, Polity IV Project: Dataset Users’ Manual 14). Freedom House, on the other hand, focuses only on Civil Liberties and Political Rights (Freedom House), and as we have seen they had different, if related conception of Rwandan democracy.

Democracy is a very fluid topic. A simple example being the United Kingdom, where “given the residual legislative override power of the unelected House of Lords, the absence of a freedom of information act, and the quasi-legislative role increasingly arrogated by the European Court” its status as a democracy is questionable (Whitehead) yet the Polity IV project considers, and has considered it a democracy since 1922 (Marshall and Jagers, Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2009). One might also question the democratic status of the United States when Abraham Lincoln suspended habeas corpus – the North and the South having very different opinions of the subject (Whitehead). While attempts are often made to create a barebones conception of what is democracy, e.g. Schmitter and Karl’s conception of nine procedural minimal conditions for democracy (46) see *Appendix 1*, as Whitehead points out these conditions are both too strict and too lenient to truly capture the concept of democracy. While there are certainly nations which are considered democracy that do not fulfill standardized institutional conditions; e.g. the United States until the Voting Rights Act (Whitehead) However, other conditions are often considered necessary for democracy that are not included in this list, e.g. the Swedish Welfare State (Whitehead). Richard Rorty argues that it is national identity that drives a society towards mutual betterment and thus is a necessary condition for democracy (3). Using the example of the United States, he notes how since the Vietnam War general sentiments of self-disgust, self-mockery, and a general rejection of national-pride have overcome the population (6-7). If people are “convinced that they live in a violent, inhuman, corrupt country...this insight does not move them to formulate a legislative program, to join a political movement, or to share in a national hope,” thus fundamentally weakening the democratic process (7).<sup>10</sup> While many more conditions for democracy exist, the last we shall mention here is the conception that democracy should be

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the conception of democracy put forward by in the “minimal conditions for democracy” argument of Schmitter and Karl depicts an increase in the quality of democracy since the 1960s, while the nationalism argument of Rorty portrays exactly the reverse.

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measured by responsiveness to the needs of the people rather than a standard set of procedural norms (Doner).

It is quite possible, “any definition of 'democracy' will remain in this sense 'essentially contestable', precisely because all worthwhile conceptions of democracy must incorporate a cognitive capacity to challenge reigning orthodoxies” (Whitehead). Ignoring the inherent paradox of that turn of phrase, it throws the very idea of the universalism of democratic principles under the bus. In what has come to be known as the “Asian Values Debate” relativistic approaches have been used by some Asianist to explain that Western values are not necessarily Universalist values (Buck 29-30). Liberal democracy is a product of a specific environment which gave birth to it and a perspective of human existence that is not shared in every culture. Specifically, liberalism emphasizes the individual:

**“Society 'consists' or is 'made up' of individuals and is at bottom nothing but the totality of its members and their relationships. The view that the individual is conceptually and ontologically prior to society and can in principle be conceptualized and defined independently of society, which we shall call individualism, lies at the heart of liberal thought... The ancient Athenians saw the human being as an integral part of nature and society... For the Hindus the caste into which a person is born is not an accident but a result of his or her actions in a previous life... The Chinese view of the family as an indissoluble organism linking ancestors and descendants into a living union gives rise to a highly complex conception of the individual” (Parekh 161).**

The result of this is that Asian societies must develop their own modes of democracy, of government of, by, and for the people (Lawson 21). The same is logically true of African nations.

“Liberal democracy offers a form of political participation which is markedly different from and arguably inferior to the African concept of participation. For the African, especially the rural dweller, participation is linked to communality. Africans do not generally see themselves as self-regarding atomized beings in essentially competitive and potentially conflicting interaction with others” (Ake 242). Taking for example the case of Botswana, perhaps the most “liberal” democracy one finds a mass movement in 1974 for the establishment of a single-party system for the establishment of a more democratic society (Comaro and Comaroff 127). A multiparty system forced the people of Botswana to abandon a system in which daily political participation was used to condition leaders to behave well, punishing those that did not by slowly removing power and rewarding those who did with more respect and rights – the multiparty electoral system alienated the voter (Comaro and Comaroff 131-141). This example is used to illustrate the point that western democratization may in fact disenfranchise the population; American hegemony may still oblige African to abandon an African democracy (Ake 244) due to misguided democratization projects of Western idealist and (neo)imperialist project of Western realists (Ayers 1).



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## Methodology

### *Type of Research*

Given the ultimate goal of this research is to establish *Rwandan* perspectives on democracy; one's initial methodological response might be a large-n analysis using a random sample of the Rwandan population. However, upon reflection a large-n analysis of the subject, within the current Rwandan context, has several practical constraints that might make a small-n analysis more appropriate. First, given the researcher is a foreigner with only limited experience in Rwanda, knowing which questions will elicit a relevant response is restricted. A "qualitative" analysis would allow participants more opportunity to direct their responses towards culturally relevant information and thus to provide more enlightening insights than might be elicited in a questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher will, if using an unstructured or semi-structured interview technique, have the ability to allow the interview, and the questions used, to evolve in a manner which will more accurately garner relevant information from Rwandan subjects. Second, given the politically charged nature of discussing democracy in Rwanda<sup>11</sup> and the culture of restricted dialogue on sensitive topics (Grubbs 21), a methodology which allows for increased rapport with the interviewee is more likely to garner accurate information. Finally, given practical restraints, both financial and time related, gathering a large enough and a diverse enough sample to use statistical procedures to validly reflect Rwanda would be infeasible, and therefore using a large-n analysis will increase the temptation to, but not the ability to, use statistics which would add an air of certainty that does not actually exist.

### *Participants*

Deciding on a small-n analysis causes naturally leads to the question of who to interview. As the research is ostensibly intended to gather the opinions of all Rwandans one might expect that all members of Rwandan society are worthwhile subjects. While this is strictly speaking true, in hopes of attracting the maximum diversity of opinion with a small sample one cannot leave participant selection to random chance as one would, and should, in a large-n analysis. Therefore a list of potential subjects was created based on 20 different political, occupational, and demographic dimensions (*Appendix 2*) in hopes of creating an appropriately stratified sample. Efforts were made, through existing contacts, cold-calls, and visits to various government offices and places of business to interview as many of these representative participants as possible. Due to the limited duration allocated to data collection, only ten participants representing eleven of these subgroups were

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<sup>11</sup> Take for example that article from that one time



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interviewed. It was expected that finding individuals willing to discuss the loaded topic of democracy may be difficult, however, the majority of those contact were more than willing to meet.

While full demographics of those interviewed can be found in *Appendix 3*, there are some important demographic characteristics of the sample that warrant explicit discussion. Those sampled ranged in age from 21 to early 60s<sup>12</sup>, there are therefore respondents capable of remembering both the First and Second Republic and there are those too young even to remember Rwanda before the Genocide. All five provinces were represented, with a slight bias towards the east and south, (four from the east, three from the south, one from the west, one from the north, and one from Kigali). This is important due to the historical role regionalism has played in Rwandan politics (Melvern 22).

Given the accusations of the “Tutsization,” of the government by some prominent if controversial scholars (Reyntjens 187), an attempt to get Tutsi/Hutu/Twa data might have proven useful. However, due to the sensitivity of the subject, such data collection was avoided for reasons of rapport. In spite of this, some such information can be derived from what arose during the interviews. Two of the respondents are children of refugees who fled during the persecution of the Tutsis in the decades preceding the genocide. One would be classified as a survivor. One offered that he or she is a Hutu. While good-guesses could be made as to the classification of the other six, it is impossible to do so with 100% certainty. What can be deduced, however, is that there is a diversity of “ethnicity” in the sample.

Only two out of the ten interviewee were women. This can be partially explained by the more outspoken nature observed of men in Rwandan culture. However, more effort should have been made on the part of the researcher to overcome this gender discrepancy. Furthermore, given the increased role of women in the current government as compared to any previous administration, there is some theoretical groundwork for why this gender discrepancy might bias the sample. Despite this, in the two interviews done with women the views expressed were not sufficiently different from men’s that the absence of further female subjects discredits the relevance of this research.

A more troublesome bias in the sample is that it over represents the educated middle-class of Rwandan society. In fact, only two subjects did not have at least some university education. However, of those two, one is a secondary student with every expectation of attending university, and the other, while having only seven years of secondary school education, has worked as a researcher for NGOs and is, in the opinion of this researcher, a member of the burgeoning Rwandan

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<sup>12</sup> Exact age excluded to make it more difficult to ascertain the identity of the subject

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middle-class. This was not an intentional exclusion, but rather the byproduct of the manner in which subjects were selected. Of the subgroups brainstormed for inclusion only four (rural population, working class, police, and military) have even a reasonable expectation of not being members of the middle-class. Furthermore, conducting the research in urban (Kigali and Butare) rather than rural communities biased the sample towards wealthier educated Rwandans. While there were two active attempts to conduct interviews with rural populations, both fell through due to issues of timing with contacts. While the omission of peasants/working-class in the research was happenstance there is a theoretical framework by which to justify it. There is extensive literature going back to Aristotle on the role of the middle-class as the driving force behind the establishment of democracy (Aristotle Book VI, Ch. IV; Lipset 75; Barrow S158). Therefore, an analysis of this subgroup of Rwanda is reasonable given the subject. This does mean, however, that this research should be understood to be representative only of members of the Rwandan middle-class and not of the Rwandan population as a whole.

### *Structure of Data Collection*

As mentioned earlier, interviews were used. While the general interview ran between 1.5 and 2.5 hours, the shortest was 45 minutes and the longest was 4.5 hours.<sup>13</sup> While eight of the ten participants were interviewed individually, two were interviewed as a pair. This double interview happened inadvertently. The original interviewee was not completely comfortable with English, and due to the controversial nature of the information he wanted to share he brought along a friend who shared a similar mindset to translate. As he was not there in the formal capacity of a translator, but rather as a friend of the interviewee, he was introduced to the researcher as fellow interviewee. While it was a bit awkward to interview two people at once, and the researcher was not wholly prepared to do so, the double interview took place without a hitch. All interviews were done in a single sitting with the exception of one in which the interviewee abruptly ended the interview 15 minutes into the session due to a family emergency. The interview recommenced a few weeks later.

The sites of the interviews varied dramatically. Two interviews were done in the interviewee's own home, three were done in their offices (including the first half of the disrupted interview), three (including the double interview, and the second half of the disrupted interview) were done at restaurants or bars where the interviewee felt comfortable, one was done at the home of the contact who arranged the interview, and one was done while in transit. Due to time constraints this interview was in fact done on a bus while to and from a location of interest to both

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<sup>13</sup> This was a double interview. A chicken was shared half way through.

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the interviewer and interviewee. It should be noted that others were present causing ethical considerations, but the subject was willing to take part in the interview regardless. The bumpiness of the road and chatter of those around us may have hindered the interview. At one point another individual interrupted the interview, while on the “to” part of the journey, and began to argue with the interviewee. This forced the research to end the interview, and recommence only when the “return” part of the journey began. As the interviewer did not take part in the disagreement, rapport was not compromised and the interview could continue.

On two other occasions non-interviewees were present during the interview. In one of the instances the individual was a translator, this was the only occasion a translator was used except during the dual interview when one interviewee translated for the other. The translator was briefed about anonymity and her responsibility to translate exactly what is said, regardless of her own opinions of it. Due to an existing amiable relationship with the translator and knowledge of her translating ability, it was expected and confirmed that she would do a successful job. In fact, she assisted with the interview by improving rapport. Furthermore, as the subject could understand English somewhat she could correct any minor mistakes the translator made. In the second instance, the contact who arranged the interview remained during the interview. This was the 4.5 hour double interview which was interrupted for lunch. It was quite positive that the contact remained as it helped build rapport with the interviewees due to his very good relationship with both the interviewer and interviewees. His own political views, making ensuring his silence redundant, but he was explained to the participants the fact that the interviews should remain confidential.

Rapport proved essential to obtaining a good interview. Rapport was generated in a variety of ways. On six occasions, a meeting with the interviewee before the interview took place and this assisted in establishing a good relationship. During one interview, the translator helped create a sense of comfort. It was found that interviews in homes and offices, where the interviewer was naturally at ease, proved to allow for more freedom of expression. Furthermore, an attitude of gratefulness while explaining the nature of the research and why they were chosen to participate proved helpful as did self-deprecation which was used, whenever possible, by the researcher to relax the situation. As a Westerner, the researcher’s role in Rwandan society is ambiguous, especially given its hierarchical structure. However, given the Muzungu (the local word for white/European) is sometimes used to describe wealthy Rwandans, it follows that the researcher may fall into a “dominant” social role. Add to that the interviewer-interviewee relationship, which often includes bizarre power dynamics; it seemed very important that the subject’s own dominance

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in the situation as the one doing the favor and as the one with the information be emphasized. This is further aggravated due to the subject being democracy, which Westerners often preach to Africans rather than discuss. Thus, it was important also to emphasize that the researcher was there to listen and learn from the subject about their opinion.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured. While a list of general questions was used to guide the sessions along (see *Appendix 4*), the researcher used follow-up questions whenever necessary as well as improvised questions when they appeared relevant. This allowed the research to go far more in depth than it would otherwise. Given comparability between interviews was not a priority, highly structured interviews were unnecessary. Furthermore, as information was gathered from earlier interviews, later interview questions were used to direct the research toward more relevant information. The questions were intended to address different concepts typically attributed or associated with democracy, and particular emphasis was given to the inclusion of concepts which were anticipated to be influenced by Rwanda's history and culture. However, as questions were generally (with some exceptions such as "What do you consider democracy to be?") in reference to specific aspects of democracy, if the aspect was not asked its possibility of being referred to by the participant severely decreased.

The major concepts explored included separation of powers, freedom of expression, a free media, a vibrant civil society, rights, justice, majority rule, multi-party governments, treatment of minorities, the objectives of government, security, the role of education, nationalism, term limits, and the treatment of opposition. While this is certainly not a full exploration of all the concepts that are generally included in democracy, given the lack of an academic consensus of what constitutes democracy, to do an entirely comprehensive analysis would require far longer interviews than feasible or desirable. Notable exclusions were economic rights and addressing human rights outside the general concept of rights. While their exclusion is unfortunate due to the prominent role both play in the universalism debate (Ake 241; Buck 29), these "subtopics" carry enormous ideological baggage themselves, and due to the limited duration of the research were excluded for practical reasons. It should be noted that subjects occasionally brought up Human Rights of their own accord.

One significant difficulty was the dual objective of determining what Rwandans considered democracy to be and whether they considered Rwanda a democracy. It was difficult to separate the abstract concept of democracy and democracy in the case of Rwanda. While this was intentional, as the researcher hoped the participants would base their understanding in their own experience rather than what they have "learned" from the West, it led to some confusion. Some participants

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chose to favor phrasing things in the abstract, while others chose to talk about specific aspects of Rwanda. There was also a slight bias, in that those who choose to ground things in the Rwandan experience tended to express more negative opinions of the government than those who spoke in the abstract.

Perhaps the most surprising part of the interviews was the candidness with which interviewees responded to questions. While it is certain that restraint was used by the subjects, the willingness of all the participants to expound perspectives different from the “government line” adds a semblance of validity to the proposition that they might actually maintain the positions they professed.

Examples of interviews can be found in *Appendices 5 & 6* illustrating some of the points discussed in this section.

### *Ethics*

The objectives of the interview was explained to all subjects as directly as possible but replacing the word “democracy” with “representative government.” All interviewees were informed verbally of their rights as subjects. They were told that they were taking part in this interview completely voluntarily. No incentives were used. They were told that they could end the interview at anytime. They were told they did not have to answer any question they were uncomfortable answering. They were reminded of this fact if they ever looked uncomfortable.

They were told that their anonymity would be protected to the utmost ability of the researcher. To accomplish this, in field notes no actual names were recorded. Throughout this report minimal demographic data is included to avoid identification of subjects. All hard copy field notes recording the interview will be destroyed within one month of the interview. And finally, all ethics information was given verbally, and no documents with signatures were collected. While this is partially done to protect report; Rwanda has a very suspicious culture, and whether valid or not, the threat of someone using their signatures against them is too real in their minds for it to be done. This suspiciousness was notable in the how respondents, even after being informed that anonymity would be protected, asked that certain parts of the interview not be attributed to them. It was also apparent in how some respondents told the researcher to be careful protecting the field-notes. Finally, the general demeanor with which people responded to some particularly sensitive questions added to this sense of suspicion, e.g. leaning in during the response or looking agitated, these would be moments when interviewees would be reminded of their right to end the interview.

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## *Analysis*

To analyze the data different topics were identified e.g. term limits, security, multiple parties, etc. The transcripts of each interview were then scoured for references made to each of the topics. An index was then created so that comparison between interviews became more practical. As topics generally correlated with which questions were asked, the sheer quantity of times a topic is mentioned had little significance. Furthermore, as different questions were asked in each interview pseudo-qualitative analysis such as “six out of ten participants considered quotas important” is generally not feasible, though there are some exceptions. However, reading through the transcripts it becomes rather quickly apparent which topics resonate more with the participants. After identifying the key subjects, evaluation of dominant and, when appropriate, secondary perspectives were made. When possible contextual explanations for these perspectives were hypothesized. Grievances with and appreciation for the government which arose were used as an imperfect measure to assess the alliance of Rwandan desires for democracy and the conditions which exist. Finally, using this grossly “imperfect measure” a hesitant appraisal of Rwandan democracy was made.

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## Findings

### *Restraining the Majority and Sharing the Government*

Rwandans tend to consider majority rule to be a fundamental aspect of democracy. Every interviewee agreed that if the majority of a population wants something that should be government policy; “Democracy is dictatorship of the majority” (Henri). Nevertheless, most participants believed there should be some restraints on majority rule. Multiple participants mentioned the importance of respecting the rights of the minority (Fidele, Claude), though as we shall see later on Rwandan’s have a unique perspective on rights. Brigit and Innocent seemed to ground their responses more directly in Rwanda’s history, Brigit stating that “majority rule does not mean discrimination” and Innocent specifically mentioning genocide as something majority rule cannot justify. Henri added an interesting perspective saying that majority rule does not mean “biological majority” it means majority based on ideas. Brigit put this in more blunt terms, “just because Hutu is a majority does not mean that it should discriminate.” These perspectives certainly seem to be influenced by Rwanda’s experience with ethnic “majority rule” between 1962 and 1994. For Arthur allowing a diversity of opinion is a paramount limitation on majority rule, despite seeing democracy as a 0-sum game with winners and losers, and where minorities should lose out to the desires of the majority, he sees a free opposition to be an essential aspect of democracy; giving the minority the opportunity to become the majority as their ideas spread.

Claude takes this one step further, advocating “power sharing” as a means of tempering the majority. He considers this indispensable because “Africans believe taking power is having wealth.” By dividing the government, Rwanda is distributing the wealth to various factions who might otherwise be in conflict. This conception fits well with findings that the unrestrained use of identity based parties as a means of capturing rents lays the groundwork for conflict through the creation of economic inequality (Osborn 517). And inequality is, according to Arthur, the source of social tension. Henri further warns that a system which allows for winner-take-all government, as one would find in the United States, requires a level of political maturity across the board that does not exist in Rwanda. It necessitates institutions which deliver services without partisanship and a population “aware of their freedoms and rights.” Where the people lack such cognizance they require representatives to protect their interests as they would not represent themselves. This system of party based checks and balances allows for reconciliation. Henri’s position mimics the arguments made for the use of consociational in ethnically stratified societies. Eric on the other hand uses an analogy in his support of pluralistic government: government is like a marriage, if you do not consult or collaborate with your wife, she cannot be a good wife; if you do not incorporate all

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Rwandans into the government it is impossible for them to work together for mutual benefit. Innocent's support for power sharing stems from a belief that it will foster co-operation. In the US when the government is divided it leads to stagnation as both parties anticipate future dominance, however, in a society where complete dominance is impossible, parties must learn to "play nice" or policy making will be impossible.

Participants generally supported the conception of multiparty democracy as a means of developing a diversity of opinion and representing the general population. As David put it, when you have one party you have one idea. The same person makes all the decisions. Parties represent the people, and different people have different ideas. When they allow multiple parties they have multiple ideas and they bring these ideas together and get better ideas. David further elaborated on his opinion of multiple parties saying that if they had good ideas they should of course be listened to but if they had bad ideas, "given our history," they should be suppressed. Jeannine would be okay with such a proposition, "We had a very bad experience here in Rwanda with multiple parties. Both Tutsi and Hutu had influence, wealth. The uneducated rural population will make judgments based on ethnicity not on ideas. Hutus will oppose Kagame and Tutsis will support him based solely on ethnicity. Political parties won't work because people will vote on ethnicity not platform." Jeannine's position is certainly understandable given the role of multiparty democracy in the build up to the genocide and the general threat of identity politics. However, given the ban placed on identity based parties, perhaps Jeannine's fears are less warranted than they might otherwise be.

### *Rights*

Most participants were asked to name some rights which they felt were of paramount importance; and those that were not asked generally brought up a few anyway. A full list of the rights is included in Appendix 7, however, there were a few which deserve specific mention. First and foremost is the fact that Eric and Fidele, the two members of the opposition, don't believe people have rights in Rwanda. Fidele mentions "the right of dying exists" but that is it – "rights exist only in Western Mentality." Perhaps ironically, the most commonly mentioned right was the right to life, the right to security. Given Rwanda's violent past it makes sense that security would be particularly important. Other particularly important rights were freedom of expression and the media, freedom to control what is in your own head, and freedom of movement and settlement. Follow up questions were designed for security and freedom of expression and the media.

In terms of movement and settlement; the history of refugee status – for both Tutsi and Hutu --- may have played a role in the importance of this right. The fact that Habyarimana restricted



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the right to movement may also have played a role (Melvern 25). The current government requires one have a national identity card to get around the country, but these are issued regularly (Freedom House). The fact that so many people mentioned freedom to, essentially, be an individual, to be yourself in your own head (Freedom of the Mind, of Opinion, of Political Views, of Ideas, , to Be Different, to Self-Determination, to Think), is odd given African culture is so well known for its social nature. "Africans do not generally see themselves as self-regarding atomized beings in essentially competitive and potentially conflicting interaction with others" (Ake 242). While not enough is known about what exactly the participants meant when they indicated these rights, it acts as preliminary evidence that Rwandans may have a bit of an individualist streak in them yet.

### *Security*

When asked if anything was more important than security Henri and Jeannine gave the expected answer given the history. "[It] Depends on the context, region, a lot of things. Some countries can take security as a basic. Europe and America. Certain freedoms can be restricted for security. Our best need is security. Freedoms, food... come after security. When it comes to a country just getting out of a conflict, security is most important... When you are secure the rest will follow work, freedom, *investors*... you are asking me if anything comes before life" (Henri). Similarly Jeannine called security the 1<sup>st</sup> priority, "I know through speech of president that security is first priority." She backtracked from this and said it was from her own experience, "If I consider last 17 years, we had a difficult period with infiltrators from 1997-2000. Since 2001 security has led to development, before 2001 we were decreasing economically and socially. Since 2001 people coming back couldn't even recognize the country due to the amazingly fast growth, perhaps the highest in Africa. Security leads to investment both from outside and by the local population. Security plays a big role in feeling of safety for Rwandans and investment." The apparent importance of the investment as a reason for needing security was rather unexpected. Furthermore, the fact that Jeannine mentioned the president as how she knows that security is importance and that it was the government employee (Henri) who also responded in this way is rather interesting.

The other eight participants could think of things more important than security. Arthur believes "security means people are free, peace in their minds, peace in their hearts." The road to security is not to suppress tension but to avoid it: if people are happy there will not be conflict. He viewed inequality as the root of conflict. Brigit similarly thought that suppression was not an acceptable means of maintaining security: "Those who don't have a right to say will lose out to those who do. It is like with children, the one that talks the most will get food first and will get more food than those who don't say anything." Claude considered respect for rights pre-eminent over

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security – mentioning the Middle-East as a location where rights were traded for security and now they have neither.

David also views rights as more important. He expressed a view that security was used as an excuse to maintain power. “The grenades and the bombs, I think it is the government doing it itself. I can’t prove it, but I hypothesis. I believe this because I know power and authority. The attacks let them maintain power.” Eric on the other hand saw it the other way around, “The power is in the hands of the army, not in the hands of the people... Look at history, the root of violence in all societies is not allowing people to react, to think, to write (Eric).” For the sake of security, if you disagree you keep quiet, if you don’t you disappear (Fidele). There are spies everywhere (Eric). Even Gregoire mentioned that sometimes the police and the military use force to make people do thing. He also mentioned arbitrary arrests as a limit on security enforcement.

“Limits on activities of the government to ensure security should exist. The existence of government and its exclusive authority to use violence is driven by the idea that it is in the good of the society. If security means sacrificing fundamental beliefs than you shouldn’t... Security should not be a big driver for action. I have been thinking about two sayings recently, that a government should fear its people, and that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. A government driven by fear has destructive tendencies. Both fear of external and internal threat. Take Libya or Egypt for example. Its agency of the people versus fear of the people” (Innocent). When asked to explain Rwanda’s fundamental beliefs Innocent mentioned, among other things, “freedom from fear.” When asked how freedom from fear differed from security he said, “You can be secure but have fear. Look at the US, it has been attacked once in the last 50 years, and yet everyone is afraid. Fear does weird things.”

Innocent’s words seemed to fit together too well, as if there were a code to be deciphered. Reyntjens made the bold accusation that the Rwandan government is using “Genocide credit” to maintain power (177) and Perry seems more than willing to help the Rwandan government play that card, “there’s no bigger rights violation than genocide.” For some, Kagame is Hobbe’s Leviathan, keeping the nation safe. However, “a government driven by fear has destructive tendencies... fear does weird things.” Whether Kagame has spies everywhere (Eric), whether the military is forcing people to do things (Gregoire), whether people are disappeared (Fidele), whether the government is behind the attacks or not (David), the fact that people believe this may be true – the look of discomfort on their face as they say certain things – makes one wonder.

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## *Freedom of Expression*

**Interviewer: Is there anything you are not allowed to say?**

**Fidele: Everything we are saying now.**

Freedom of expression ranked high on the list of rights, and yet almost every participant who mentioned it added some caveats. The biggest one of course being the genocide ideology law. "Here in Rwanda some things are too delicate to talk about, like ethnicity. People want to say things about ethnicity but the government stops them... I can't blame the government for preventing them from speaking, because ethnicity played such an important role in the bad things that happened... The genocide ideology law keeps people quite; it does not change their will or what is in their hearts. Leaders realize that at this point free speech is too much for Rwanda" (Brigit). "[The] anti-genocide law, which is meant to prevent hatred... When someone has hatred it cannot go away in one year. They are working to amend the genocide ideology law. They are amending it because the hatred has declined. In 1994, 1995, 1996, the hatred was huge, now it has shifted and the law should be shifted.... A nation like Rwanda, coming from genocide, 17 years is not a lot of time" (Claude). "It is both good and bad. It is good in that it is teaching people new identities, no longer Hutu Tutsi. It is teaching people how to live. It is bad in that anyone can be arrested for having genocide ideology, even when you don't" (David). "Some journalists are in prison for writing about things they should not be allowed to talk about" (Jeannine). "Like the RPF killings, you can't talk about it, you will disappear." (Eric) "Just calling someone tall can be considered genocide ideology" (Arthur). "Some Rwandans prefer to keep quite because if they don't they will face intimidation (Jeannine)" "Many people think in the same way [anti-government] but they are afraid to die, they prefer to remain quite" (Fidele).

Rwandans appear to understand the genocide law. Even Arthur living in political exile said, "People should not be allowed to excite people to commit crimes, entice people to hate, or destroy culture." It seems it was a necessary evil for Rwanda. Some went to prison when they did not deserve it. Certain topics are off-limits. Self-censorship appears to have flourished and people's willingness to be open may never return. The question then becomes, is David and Claude right? Will the time come when you can talk about these things? Are people learning "how to live" as David put it? These are important questions that only time will answer. However, they are not the only questions when it comes to free speech in Rwanda. It appears that more is censoring Rwanda than just the anti-genocide law. "You cannot say things against the government... You cannot say opposition ideas, this is just an observation, but there are people jailed for it (David). David then

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explained that opposition ideas are things like the president is not doing well or disagreeing with the government, sometimes the government transforms opposition into genocide ideology.

Self-censorship goes beyond fear of the government though. Gregoire was more worried about security than the government: "You are free to say things, as long as security is maintained." While both Gregoire and Arthur said you should be allowed to say things if it is the truth (though Gregoire went on to say you should not be allowed to say untrue thing), Henri believes even the truth has limits, "The truth is not worth saying all the time. The consequences of statements should be considered. There should be restrictions based on values and interests. People must think; what should I say, when should I say it – cost benefit... Some laws aren't written, they are known by heart." People should be allowed to say whatever they want, but there should be consequences. If abusive to others, there should be consequences. If it is counter-productive sometimes it is good not to allow people to say things" (Innocent).

Context appears to be definitive in Rwanda. "In public dialogue you are not just a reflection on yourself, you are a reflection of your family. So there is a big difference between what you say in papers, what you'll say in a bar, and what you say at home... Westerners look at what people say in public as democracy; here they say things in private" (Innocent). "People should have the right to speak. But they need to know how and when to say things" (Brigit). "If people know their roles, than they can discuss anything" (Jeannine).

What goes for the individual goes for the press as well. "Normally [in the world at large] the press should say be allowed to say everything. But here some people are imprisoned. Having the right to free speech does not mean the right to say anything. Sometimes you may handle things in another way; instead of saying divisive things have a debate, instead of preaching have a conversation. Everyone here in Rwanda is not an intellectual so you have to know how to give them ideas they can handle. They lack critical thinking so will believe what they are told" (Brigit). "Bad media can do terrible things. Like RTL and the genocide, teaching people to kill. This type of media does not help democracy; it can be used to teach bad behavior (David). "Those that hate the government or other, especially in developing countries, lie and misinform just to influence and this is very bad, and this happens very often. This used to happen here in Rwanda and it is happening in other developing countries and it is very bad" (Jeannine).

The press can do terrible things and Rwandans seem to believe it is important to restrain these bad things. Even Arthur thinks that the press should have limits. However, respondents also appeared to value the benefits that the media can play in society. How it can act as the intermediary between government, civil society, and the people. How it can play the part of the 4<sup>th</sup> power, be a

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check on the government, mobilize and inform the people (Henri and David). How it can even play the part of the opposition (Claude). While, Eric and Fidele believe the press is nothing here, that while it should be playing the role of the fourth power, as Henri described, in Rwanda “it is toothless.” However, David described they set up phone lines on TV to gather people’s opinions on policies. Innocent further noted how it was through speaking out in the press that the people forced the government to undo the law forcing restaurants out of residential districts and how a reporter uncovered a corrupt government official and stood up to Kagame when the president denied the veracity of the case.

It appears in Rwanda people are restricted in what they can say; by anti-genocide ideology legislation, by accusations of divisionism, by self-censorship, by responsibility, by prudence. However, the Rwandans interviewed did not appear, as a whole, to consider this situation unreasonable, merely unfortunate. As Jeannine put it, “In the US and Europe they talk a lot about freedom of speech, but when born in poor countries, [where it is] difficult to have water, food, good quality education, freedom of speech is not important. Basic needs are more important than freedom of speech.

### *Minority Representation*

While there were some accusations that mandatory minority rule is merely a way by which the RPF maintains control of government (Eric; Fidele), in general people supported it. Henri said, “History has sidelined women, and youths, and the disabled. This [minority representation] is to overcome that and make sure that everyone gets a chance.” Jeannine made the point particularly well, “It [minority representation] is very important for me. When such groups are represented their positions are taken into account. The problem of water in rural places was made a priority because women are represented. Women are responsible for water collection so it is a bigger priority for women. Divided tasks lead to divided interests. When Rwandan women began participating in civil society, this came after genocide, 34% of households were led by women, either as widows or due to having husbands in prison. These 34% had new responsibilities. Not enough were educated to have good jobs. They had no rights. They had no support from their families. They could not inherit because only boys could inherit. How can you educate your children without means? This led to the activation of women, they fought for their rights. New laws were passed to allow women to inherit from both sides of the family; allowing women to educate their kids. Everyone must be heard to harmonize development, growth. The period of fighting for rights led to quotas for women – and they are now required to be 30% of parliament. “ Or as Innocent put it, “we all love women.”

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### *Democracy: Representing What the People Want or What the People Need*

Participants were generally torn on this one. Some found that due to lack of education, people did not always know what was good for them and so the government should do it anyway (Brigit). Gregoire agreed that sometimes the government should do what the people need rather than what they want, but it is the responsibility of the government to teach the people why they should have wanted that, and if they still do not want it the decision rests with them. Claude took a different angle, he thought that while they should consult with the people, the national government gets the final say. David took this even further, "Sometimes it is better to be a dictator... if it will profit the people," however; he went on to say if it is not for the people, "it [dictating] is to take people as their slaves." Eric and Fidele pointed out that the government generally does not consult the people on issues themselves, but "it is a small and poor country. On most things we agree with the government, the government is building schools, bringing water to the people, bringing electricity." Henri felt that generally wants are needs, "They should represent what the people need. Most of the time what they want is what they need. Needs are security, water, health, education, food, jobs, not being poor." Innocent felt the government should do neither what the people want nor what they need. The government should be driven by "vision, vision of the past, present, and future. With emphasis on the future. (Innocent). Jeannine also put emphasis on the future, "As the people are not so educated here, they may want hand-outs, bribes. The leader has to see what is best for the future of the people. The good thing is to prepare for the future."

### *Education*

Education appears to play many roles in creating an effective democracy according to the participants. So many in fact that it is hard to understand how a democracy is expected function without it. Arthur lists education as one of the key conditions for democracy. Brigit noted that the reason "bad press" can exploit and manipulate the people is because they lack education. Jeannine made point that ignorance is often why people will vote along ethnic line. "If we have an educated people, to follow democratic principles, they will be free. There needs to be political space, freedom of association. IF people are educated they will form unions, associations, co-operatives. It will bring together ideas. People must not just seek government jobs to make money, they must seek out, create, work. Education is a positive element for democracy. The people will understand things easier, makes democracy a faster process (Claude). Innocent said that education was key because it led to more cash and a diversity of opinion. Eric and Fidele believe education is the key to social

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change, to relation. People have to know their rights they have to be willing and able to debate the subjects.

Claude's final comment to me was that Rwanda is a new democracy, the people lack political maturity, and so they require more guidance from the government than they might need otherwise. If education is promoted than democracy is promoted, and development goes hand in hand with good government which is democracy. If there is no democracy there is conflict. Gregoire perhaps says it best, "[Education] helps people make the right decision." Henri believes that decentralization will not work if people are not educated; if they do not know their rights, how to get services, or where their taxes are spent. Innocent also believes that the way to prevent conflict, genocide, is education. Jeannine think education will allow people to play the role they are meant to and have ownership of their government.

### *Decentralization*

Decentralization is considered important because it helps get priorities of the people become the priorities of the government (Claude). This is a position shared by most of the participants. David agrees that listening to the people on the ground is essential, but argues that local leaders will lie and abuse their power in hopes of looking good. Decentralization does nothing if it stops with the local leader and does not get to the grassroots level. Henri makes the subsequent contention that in a truly decentralized state it would be efficient and feasible to fire bad leaders. Those in opposition would like to see the country be more decentralized as it would weaken the central state and allow for a diversity of opinion.

### *Term Limits*

Every single participant considers term limits to be of the utmost importance, with the one exception of Gregoire who believes that it really just depends on what the constitution says. Arthur went so far as to say that if Kagame steps down the refugees will return. Eric pointed out how people leave power all the time and their life goes on. Many pointed out that a good leader would prepare a successor (Brigit; Claude; Innocent). No one man is the sole capable leader of a country (Claude). Henri expanded on this saying, "I strongly disagree with leaders who think they are the custodians of visions; I pity some of these people. Governments come and go. Even the worst leader cannot prevent a country from keeping going. Change brings diversity and it is positive. I am 100% for term limits. Even restrictions for popular leaders. Those that don't go are selfish, shortsighted, and will bring conflict." David agreed that by trying to stay in power a leader will cause conflict, his reasoning was that there are always others who want to lead and if they never think they will have

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a chance they are more likely to adopt conflict. Both Henri quoted management theory, Henri saying that a leader's input declines after 7 years.

### *Nationalism*

Innocent did a good job of summarizing the importance of nationalism, "It is important because identity is critical to people having a sense of themselves. Of a nation-state. The state decides the citizenry, so there have to be things that create a nation, symbols, myths, this is fundamental to self-determination. Africa is a weird case, because the boundaries are all made up, so it is particularly important. Without nationalism, there is secessionism, tribal wars – look at Somalia. States have the power to include and exclude and so there has to be a national identity that unites the people. If not people will say things like, 'that's not my government why should I pay taxes.'" People will not work for the betterment of the country if they do not feel like they are part of it. Everyone asked, even those in opposition, believe that Rwanda is one ethnic group, one people, and should work for the betterment of the whole nation.

### *Revolution*

Will some considered violent revolution to be unacceptable (Henri) and others thought it inevitable (Arthur) Brigit and Gregoire probable phrased it best. If the country stops developing there will be protest, there will be riots, so it cannot stop developing (Gregoire). Or in the Brigit's wording, "if it does not do things for the good of the people, the government will no longer exist." This explains why even those in opposition have to agree that Kagame is achieving development and infrastructure (Arthur, Eric, Fidele).



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## Discussion

### *Recommendations for the Findings*

It is the hope of this research that the information gathered here might be used as part of a discussion on democratization. The role that Western democratization projects can play in the creation of conflict and the suppression of efficient local governance is enormous and should not be taken lightly. The data gathered might act as preliminary results that will allow for broader surveys which will create a definitive and meaningful understanding of Rwandan's governance desires.

The results might also be meaningful for the government of Rwanda. Particularly in terms of importance participants placed on security and freedom of expression. While both were considered essential parts of democracy, many of the participants believed that they should be tempered by other priorities. In regards to security, this means that it cannot be used as a trump to allow for all policies. Furthermore, while the participants understood why freedom of expression needed to be curtailed there were also several expressions of dissatisfaction with this policy. For that reason, the government should, as it has already begun to do begin to rethink this policy (Human Rights Watch).

It is the hope that this research might add to the discussion of power sharing structures as a means of conflict resolution. The participants generally believe that the more diversity of opinion that was present, the more voice heard, the more accurately the government reflect the will of the people. While some believed democracy was a zero-sum game, most found that sharing power was a more effective system.

Finally, education appears to be the key to democracy. If the people are educated they will demand the rest. Therefore, those who are truly committed to democratization might redirect their pressure away from Western ideals of democracy and instead focus on educating the people so they may create the democracy that is best for them.

### *Recommendations to Improvements*

While there was philosophical groundwork for utilizing only the middle-class in analysis, the positions put forward by participants relating to diversity of opinion make the exclusion of any voice unacceptable. A larger sample size and more consistent questions that will allow for cross-sectional analysis may also have been valuable in increasing the diversity of opinion. The most meaningful results were those were the information provide was followed up on. Security was considered a very high priority for the subjects, and had there not been the follow up one may have assumed that a Hobbesian interpretation of Rwanda were correct, as became clear upon follow up though this was not the case. Questions involving the importance of individuality, due to the

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references made to various individualists characteristic labeled during the rights questions, would be worth discussing. While follow-up questions were certainly a benefit to the research, the lack of consistent wording makes one worried that the phrasing may have influenced the answers to the various questions.

As mention early Human Rights and Economic Rights were generally excluded from the study for practical reasons, but if repeated would likely prove valuable. Finally, if this study were to be repeated I would either ground it only in the abstract or only the context of Rwanda. The combination of the two confused both the participants and the researcher.

### *Recommendations for Further Research*

It might prove rather useful to expand upon the research done here via a large-n quantitative study. While a lot of depth was possible, the ability to generalize this data to Rwandans at large is almost non-existent. Furthermore, to be honest, due to the diversity of objectives none of them could be answered with any great level of certainty. Individual studies addressing each of the four objectives would be more effective and reasonable.

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## Conclusion

In terms of the objective of discovering Rwandan democratic priorities there were two major surprises in this study. First, no matter who the participant was, even those in exile and in the government, they always seemed to believe that a diversity of opinion was important for democracy. From term-limits to changing the leadership, to freedom of speech, to consociational structures allowing for representation of all interest groups, to mandatory representation of minorities, to education, all of the subcategories of democracy seem to in part harken back to diversity of opinion. However, this diversity of opinion is grounded in a conception of personal responsibility and a shared national identity.

Secondly, while there was a general acceptance of the necessity of suppressing some freedom of expression for the benefit of the whole, as one would expect if one attempted to empathize with Rwanda's history and context. The fact that only two of ten participants believed that security trumps all other social priorities stumps the imagination. One would anticipate that the experience of the genocide would make peace the highest priority. However, Rwandans appear to value some things even more than their lives.

In an attempt to address the first object the subsequent three all suffered. While contextualization was feasible for some of the priorities, due to a lack of actually addressing "why do you think that" for all questions a full understanding of individuals reasoning could not be achieved. Since the quantity of data on the government was incomplete, only this can truly be said: background research has tended to see a trade-off of diversity of opinion for security. While completely understandable that this might be the case in Rwanda's context, to the surprise of the researcher diversity trumps security. In that regard, one can draw a conclusion about the current regime. Despite the general support for many of the structural systems that define Rwandan democracy, the government has not fully embodied some desires of the people. Therefore, using this relativistic approach, one can at best consider Rwanda relatively democratic.

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## Appendix 1

### *Procedural Minimal Conditions for Democracy*

1. Control of government decisions about: policy is constitutionally vested in public officials.
2. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government.
5. Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined.
6. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
7. Citizens also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.
8. Popularly elected officials must be able to exercise their constitutional power without being subjected to overriding (albeit informal) opposition from unelected officials.
9. The polity must be self-governing: it must be able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overarching political system.

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## Appendix 2

### *List of Potential Subjects*

1. Businessman
2. Former-Politician\*<sup>14</sup>
3. Human Rights Activist
4. Journalist\*<sup>15</sup>
5. Member of Civil Society\*
6. Member of Government Organization\*
7. Member of the Military
8. Member of the Police Force
9. Member of the Political Opposition living in Exile\*
10. Member of the Political Opposition living in Rwanda\*
11. Member of Unity and Reconciliation Organization\*
12. Politician
13. Professor (hopefully in relevant field)\*
14. Rural Population
15. Rwandan extensively educated in West\*
16. Secondary School Student (above 18)\*
17. University School Student (hopefully studying in relevant field)\*
18. Western Ex-Pat Who Has Lived/Worked in Rwanda Since Before 1994
19. Women in Political Organization\*
20. Working Class Rwandan

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<sup>14</sup> A "\*" indicates the presence of this group in the sample

<sup>15</sup> While no actual journalist was interviewed, some subjects had unique backgrounds that allowed them to comment on the perspective of a journalist

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## Appendix 3

### *Demographic Data of Population Sample*<sup>16</sup>

#### Participant 1

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Arthur

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 30s

**Highest Level of Education:** Graduate School

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Lawyer

**Political Party:** Opposition Party

**Province of Origin:** East

**Lived abroad:** Tanzania early in life, currently in self-imposed exile in an East African Country

**Time Lived in Current Location:** For between 2 and 5 years

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Member of opposition living in exile

**Translator used in Interview:** No

#### Participant 2

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Brigit

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** Middle-Age

**Highest Level of Education:** 7 years of secondary education

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Researcher working for various NGOs, active in religious organization, small-business activities, and mother

**Political Party:** Unaffiliated for religious reasons

**Province of Origin:** East

**Lived abroad:** Not Asked

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since 1980s

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Member of civil society

**Translator used in Interview:** Yes

#### Participant 3

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Claude

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 40s

**Highest Level of Education:** Master's Degree

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Professor

**Political Party:** Un-Affiliated

**Province of Origin:** South

**Lived abroad:** Yes, Youth in Tanzania, Studied in Middle-East

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since late 1990s

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Professor in a field related to government

**Translator used in Interview:** No

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<sup>16</sup>Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, the vast majority of the demographic data is withheld to protect the identities of participants. Given the highly structured nature of Rwandan society and the relatively smaller size of the Rwandan community even data that might not be considered particularly identifying in the US is restricted.

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Participant 4

**Assigned Pseudonym:** David

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** Early 20s

**Highest Level of Education:** University Student

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Student

**Political Party:** RPF

**Province of Origin:** North

**Lived abroad:** No

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Has left village only for education

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** University Student in a field related to government

**Translator used in Interview:** No

Participant 5

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Eric

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 60s

**Highest Level of Education:** PhD

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Professor

**Political Party:** Not RPF, RPF aligned Party

**Province of Origin:** South

**Lived abroad:** Yes, Western Europe (unknown if this is the only place outside Rwanda he has lived)

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since 1994

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Holds opinions of the government contrary to those the government might find desirable, former member of post-1994 government

**Translator used in Interview:** No

Participant 6

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Fidele

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 40s

**Highest Level of Education:** Bachelor's Degree

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Works with Rural Communities

**Political Party:** Not RPF, RPF aligned Party

**Province of Origin:** South

**Lived abroad:** Not asked

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since 1994

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Holds opinions of the government contrary to those the government might find desirable

**Translator used in Interview:** Yes

Participant 7

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Gregoire

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** Early 20s

**Highest Level of Education:** Senior 6

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Student, Part-time jobs in IT

**Political Party:** RPF

**Province of Origin:** Parents from the East, grew up in exile

**Lived abroad:** Yes, grew up in Tanzania

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since 1994

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Secondary student, member of a unity organization

**Translator used in Interview:** No

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Participant 8

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Henri

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 30s

**Highest Level of Education:** Master's Degree

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** High Ranked Official of Government Organization

**Political Party:** RPF

**Province of Origin:** Parents from the East, grew up in Exile

**Lived abroad:** Grew up in Uganda

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since 2002

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Working within current government

**Translator used in Interview:** No

Participant 9

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Innocent

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** Late 20s

**Highest Level of Education:** Bachelor's degree

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Entrepreneur

**Political Party:** Un-affiliated, works with all parties

**Province of Origin:** Kigali

**Lived abroad:** Since 1996, South Africa and North America, spent formative years abroad

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Does not consider self to live in Rwanda currently

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** Rwandan heavily influenced by Western culture and education

**Translator used in Interview:** No

Participant 10

**Assigned Pseudonym:** Jeannine

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** Late 30s

**Highest Level of Education:** Bachelor's Degree

**Self-Ascribed Profession:** Coordinator of Democracy Projects, Former leader of Civil Society Organization

**Political Party:** Not asked

**Province of Origin:** West

**Lived abroad:** Never

**Time Lived in Current Location:** Since the early 1990s

**Reason for Inclusion in Sample:** woman leader, former member of civil society, someone working in a democratization program

**Translator used in Interview:** No

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## Appendix 4

### *Question Pool*<sup>17</sup>

- How old are you?
- What province are you originally from?
- How long have you lived in [location of interview]?
- What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
- What would you consider your occupation?
- What political party do you associate yourself with, if you associate yourself with a political party?
- Have you ever lived outside of Rwanda, if so where and when?
- If the majority of a population wants something should that be the policy of the government?
  - What if it is at the expense of a minority?
- Are there some things that people should not be allowed to say?
  - Like what?
  - Why?
- Should the leadership reflect the desires of the people or the needs of the people?
  - Why?
- Is there anything that the government should not be allowed to do to ensure security?
- What role does national identity or nationalism play in democracy<sup>18</sup>?
- Should a government require that minority groups are represented in government?
- Do you think all people should have the same influence over the government?
- Do you think the current government reflects the desires of the people?
  - In what ways does it, does it not?
- If a leader is doing a good job but has been in power for a long time should he step down?
- Should a government be required to include multiple parties?
- What role do you think opposition groups have in government?
- How responsive should the national government be to local concerns?
- Do you believe opposition parties are granted the opportunity to compete fairly in elections?
- How do people generally select who to vote for?
- If someone disagreed with a government policy how could they oppose it?
- What role does separation of powers play in democracy?
- What role does decentralization play in democracy?
- Should the government favor any groups?
  - What if it is to undue past injustices?
  - What if it is to undue structural inequalities?
- Should those who have committed a crime be allowed to vote?
- How important is it for local governments to be able to act independently of the national government?
- Are rights important to democracy?
  - Could you please name some important rights?
- Do you think that the civil service should employ people by merit?
- Do those who work for the government gain special privileges?
- Should all parties be allowed to compete in elections?
- Should the courts be independent of the executive and legislative branches of government?

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<sup>17</sup> This indicates the standard question list from which all interviews (with the notable exception of the first interview which suffered some from the inexperience of the researcher) were guided. However, in all interviews the exact questions and phrasing varied, the order and wording of questioning varied; and impromptu questions and follow-up questions were included. Therefore, this list should only be used as a sample of the questions, rather than a definitive list of them.

<sup>18</sup> The term democracy was generally not used unless the participant used it first; otherwise terms such as representative government were used in its place.

- 
- Do you believe it is?
  - How important is it for ownership of property to be protected?
  - Should the government restrict any religious practices or favor any one religious group?
  - What role should the press play in society?
  - If the government of a country is not working for the benefit of the people what should they do?
    - What if the government is maintaining its position through force?
    - Should the people be allowed to overthrow a government they do not agree with?
  - If a government enacts policies that are for the good of the country, but forces people to do things they do not want to, is this good or bad?
  - What role does education, having an informed populace, have in democracy?
  - What do you believe democracy to be?
  - Is there anything else you think I should know?

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## Appendix 5

### *Transcript of Interview with Member of Government Organization*

Date: 04/27/2011

Duration: 1.5 hours

Location: Office of Participant

**Just to give you a brief explanation of what I am doing. I am a student at University in the United States who has come here to learn about the people, culture, and history of Rwanda. Part of this is that I am doing a research project on Rwandan perceptions of what constitutes representative government. You have been referred to me as someone who would give me an interesting insight into this topic. This is entirely voluntary, you are doing me a huge favor by meeting with me and I really appreciate it. If at any point you are uncomfortable during the interview we can stop. If there is any question you do not want to answer you absolutely do not have to. Like I said, you are doing me a favor and your comfort is the most important thing during this interview. Your identity will be kept completely anonymous in my study, and any information that could be used to identify you will be excluded. I am not even attaching names to the notes that I am taking. Are you still willing to take part in this interview?**<sup>19</sup>

Yes

**Great. Okay, so let's start with some demographics.**

**What region of Rwanda are you from?**

[Excluded] the East

**How long have you lived in Kigali?**

Since [Excluded], but I came back in 1994.

**Have you lived outside of Rwanda?**

Yes, I was born in [excluded]

**How old are you?**

[Excluded] early 30s

**What is your highest level of education?**

Masters in [excluded]

**What do you consider your occupation?**

I am [excluded, high ranking position] of [excluded, government organization].

**Are you a member of a political party?**

Yes, the RPF, I am not ashamed of it.

**Should the government do what the people need or want?**

They should represent what the people need. Most of the time what they want is what they need. Needs are security, water, health, education, food, jobs, not being poor. Needs come back to what you want.

**If the majority wants something should that be the policy of the government?**

"Yeah, that is democracy." "Democracy is a dictatorship of the majority." But it must be a majority in terms of policy and interest, not a biological majority. A majority based on ideas.

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<sup>19</sup> Bold indicates interviewer



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### **Is there anything that people should not be allowed to say?**

"It depends, it depends on the society, culture, and historical values of a society." Some societies don't say some things, they have taboos. These taboos exist, not just politically, but in the family. Take journalism, "the truth is not worth saying all the time." The consequences of statements should be considered. There should be restrictions based on values and interests. People must think; what should I say, when should I say it – cost benefit. Even America restricts itself. Restrictions in the interest of the society. Some laws aren't written, they are known by heart.

### **Should the government be forced to include minorities?**

Could you explain what you mean?

#### **Like in the cases of quotas for women or youths?**

Well those are examples of vulnerable groups. It is affirmative action. Our history has sidelined women, and youths, and the disabled. This is to overcome that and make sure that everyone gets a chance. Affirmative action is very important in representative government, it should be. In the senate, the Twa, they were a marginalized, underdeveloped group. It is like a region of the country were left behind, why not have them represented to fix this. A member of the group "will understand their problems and articulate them."

### **Should leaders be limited in how long they can govern, even if they are doing a good job and the people want them to stay in power?**

Yes, "there definitely have to be restrictions." "The problem with some of us, it is human nature... people tend to fear change." Change will always bring virtues. I strongly disagree with leaders who think they are the custodians of visions; I pity some of these people. Governments come and go. Even the worst leader cannot prevent a country from keeping going. In Management theory, once you are in power for more than 7 years, your input declines. Change brings diversity and it is positive. I am 100% for term limits. Even restrictions for popular leaders. Those that don't go are selfish, shortsighted, and will bring conflict. "In any crowd where a bull is raised it is never raised alone." As a shepherd you choose the best, you either separate or sell the others, but this means the best will eventually grow old and die and you will need another. The faster we understand that we are mortal and need a successor, there need to be followers. Peace requires limits.

### **Is there anything more important than security?**

Depends on the context, region, a lot of things. Some countries can take security as a basic. Europe and America. Certain freedoms can be restricted for security. "Our best need is security." Freedoms, food, etc. come after security. When it comes to a country just getting out of a conflict, security is most important. "In our context, I would say no." When you are secure the rest will follow, work, freedom, investors. It is the foundation of like. "You are asking if anything comes before life."

### **What role do multiple parties play in government?**

It is absolutely important. It ensures checks and balances. You do not need one organization to dominate the state. A single-party poses a serious challenge. Winner-takes-all government requires maturity across the board. It requires institutions that deliver services without partisanship. "A population must be mature and aware of their freedoms and rights." Where the people are unaware they need representatives to protect their rights as they would not represent themselves. Rwandan needs consensual democracy. Everyone has to come together on policies. A time will come when a dialogue can happen in civil society. For now we need to minimize controversy. Representatives do the fighting to ensure that other don't do the fighting. Democracy is often illustrated as if people were allowed to choose everyone, as if everyone is allowed to campaign, come up on merit. The arrangement like we have in Rwanda is in line with our context. People should question traditional understandings of democracy. "Is democracy good in all societies?" Thinks like level of development, conflict, etc. Should be taken into account in structure of government. Checks and balances supports reconciliation. The arrangement depends on the context, society, etc

### **What can people do if they disagree with a government policy?**

They "should be allowed to do anything but one... use violent means to make their point. They should be allowed to form organizations, protest, write letters, they should be allowed to rally the people. They "should be allowed to overthrow the government through the ballot."

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### **What role should civil society play in democracy?**

An important role. The government cannot adequately represent all the people, and even if they are represented the leaders cannot be everywhere, or know everything. Civil society bridges the gap between the people and their representatives, and gives feedback to the government. It allows people to voice concerns. Civil Society is useful in mobilizing the population in positive policies. It is another arm of the government. It represents the views of the many. In democracy, in dictatorship of the majority, "the views of the minority must not be forgotten." Civil society helps these views be heard. A responsive government will listen to the people.

### **What are some foundational rights that all people should have?**

The right to live. The right to move freely. The right to speech, expression, opinion. The right to assemble. The right to association. The right to worship. Limitations on these rights should be respected, you should not interfere with the rights of others.

### **What role does decentralization play in democracy?**

It is the beginning of good governance. "Getting power back to the people." People choose and do what is closest to their basic needs. Things are based on actual needs. It enables and facilitates public participation. Another way to identify the real needs of the people and helps make national policies that resonate well with the people. It helps promote local development. Regions using their own revenue the way they want. (For rich regions this is good.) It makes services closer to the people. If the services are closer you expect compliancy and support for them on the local level. It is an important tenant of democracy. It helps promote accountability and transparency. It assumes people will choose leaders that will represent them. Gives them the ability to sack bad leaders. "It is giving power to the people." They get to choose and remove leaders. Decentralization is a tricky thing though. If it is not backed by strong local authorities, if the local authorities are too weak it will fail. The local government must be self-reliant. If not they will rely too much on the central government undermining the ability of the government to represent the people. If the central government is paying for things it will decide how the money is spent. The maturity of the local population to hold leaders to account is very important. A bureaucrat in the central government will make the decisions if the local is too weak.

### **What role does education play in democracy?**

What do you mean by that?

**People's awareness of their needs and rights. Whether they are informed. Whether they understand government policies.**

If you decentralize to an uninformed and ignorant citizenry it won't work. If the people don't know their needs or rights then they will not... "I have been calling for an access to information law" for the media and the citizenry. They should know how much taxes have been collected. They should know the government's plans and programs. They need to know how to educate their children, which hospitals to go to, etc. They need to get this information for free. Some local leaders think that the information they have is for themselves, some even say that it is security information, even when it has nothing to do with security. We need legislation which gives the people the power of knowledge. People should vote educated, not on the expectations of the elites. Development and democracy with follow being informed.

### **What role does the press play in democracy?**

Almost the same as civil society. The press also has interests. The press is central in that it provides feedback to the government, awareness to the people and acts as watchdog of the government. It watches excesses; the press checks the other 3 branches of government. But the press must be professional, it must have capacity, be developed, and be central. It has the power to mobilize the citizenry for policies and interest, and mobilize against negative things like corruption and genocide ideology. Before the genocide, if the media had been professional and independent, if the media would have fought the genocide it might not have happened, there were some that did, 50 press were killed in the genocide. Media is key, it allows for mobilization against bad leader, informing the populous, making it possible for the common man to understand.

**Thank you very much.**

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## Appendix 6

### *Transcript of Interview with Female Member of Civil Society*<sup>20</sup>

Date: 04/30/2011

Duration: 1.5 hours

Location: Office of Interviewee

**Just to give you a brief explanation of what I am doing. I am a student at University in the United States who has come here to learn about the people, culture, and history of Rwanda. Part of this is that I am doing a research project on Rwandan perceptions of what constitutes representative government. You have been referred to me as someone who would give me an interesting insight into this topic. This is entirely voluntary, you are doing me a huge favor by meeting with me and I really appreciate it. If at any point you are uncomfortable during the interview we can stop. If there is any question you do not want to answer you absolutely do not have to. Like I said, you are doing me a favor and your comfort is the most important thing during this interview. Your identity will be kept completely anonymous in my study, and any information that could be used to identify you will be excluded. I am not even attaching names to the notes that I am taking. Are you still willing to take part in this interview?**

Yes

**What region of Rwanda are you from originally?**

The West

**How long have you lived in Kigali?**

[Excluded, between 18 and 22 years]

**What is your highest level of education?**

BA in [Excluded]

**How old are you?**

[Excluded, 40s]

**Have you ever lived abroad?**

No

**What is your occupation?**

I am [excluded]

**If the majority of a population wants something should that be the policy of the government?**

It is not yet how things are done. This is how it should be done though. Decentralization is key. Rwanda is very decentralized. A village has 150-200 people. Everyone knows everyone and they elect their leaders. Things are supposed to come from the bottom and consolidate on the way up. Things are not yet done like that, sometimes local populations are not consulted. Local leaders have performance contracts based off of strategic plans. The strategic plans are supposed to reflect local views. They don't always. This leads things to come from the central, then down to the lower levels. [Excluded]

**What role does education and an informed populous play in democracy?**

It is like the first important element which will help local populations to fight for rights, their needs. This is the problem in Rwanda. Much of the population is illiterate, don't know their rights. "When the local population is educated, when they are informed... they play the role they are supposed to play." When they play that role they will increase their ownership of government. From the top, the local population will see

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<sup>20</sup> Approximated from field notes

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and watch. The genocide destroyed infrastructure because the people did not feel the structure were their own property, e.g. health centers, schools, roads.

**Is there anything that people should not be allowed to say?**

No, why? If people know their roles, than they can discuss anything.

**Is there anything that shouldn't be done to protect security?**

"It is the 1<sup>st</sup> priority." "It is even in our national emblem." We have security, patriotism, work. "I know through speech of president that security is first priority." What I know from my own experience, if I consider last 17 years, we had a difficult period with infiltrators from 1997-2000. Since 2001 security has led to development, before 2001 we were decreasing economically and socially. Since 2001 people coming back cannot recognize the country due to the amazingly fast growth, perhaps the highest in Africa. Security leads to investment both from outside and by the local population. The number leaving Rwanda has decreased. Security plays a big role in feeling of safety for Rwandans and investment.

**Should the government be structured to ensure that minority groups are represented?**

In Rwanda we have quotas for youth, women, and the disabled. In the past these groups were underrepresented. So we have affirmative action for them. The Twa too. "It is very important for me." When such groups are represented their positions are taken into account. The problem of water in rural places was made a priority because women are represented. Women are responsibly for water collection so it is a bigger priority for women. Divided tasks lead to divided interests. When Rwandan women began participating in civil society, this came after genocide, 34% of household were led by women, either as windows or due to having husbands in prison. These 34% had new responsibilities. Not enough were educated to have good jobs. They had no rights. They had no support from their families. They could not inherit because only boys could inherit. How can you educate your children without means? This led to the activation of women, they fought for their rights. New laws were passed to allow women to inherit from both sides of the family; allowing women to educate their kids. Everyone must be heard to harmonize development, growth. The period of fighting for rights led to quotas for women – and they are now required to be 30% of parliament.

**What role does civil society play in democracy?**

A very big role. Civil society lets people fight for their rights, e.g. women's associations. They contributed to pushing women to participate. Through umbrella civil society organizations they fought for their rights. "Democracy is promoting human rights." There are HR associations too, CLADHA, and rural associations, CCOAIDB. These associations play a big role in democracy, advocacy for prisoners, etc. Civil Society is an outside actor which helps the government to find out what is needed to do. It helps to elevate the people's voices. It helps change the government's attitudes. Without civil society to keep check on the government it would be bad. It is comparable to the international community keeping check. When you are outside of a program it is easier to watch it.

**Should a leader who has been doing a good job, and who the people like, be forced to step down when his mandate is up?**

If someone stays, is doing a good job, is liked... the level of innovation will decline. Things will stagnate. It is hard to have new innovations. Change helps people to think about how things could be better. Routines institutionalize mistakes. Change is very important.

**Should the government do what people want or what people need?**

The government should see what the priorities of the local population are. If the priorities are not understood they should follow the need not the wants. As the people are not so educated here, they may want hand-outs, bribes. The leader has to see what is best for the future of the people. The good thing is to prepare for the future.

**What are five important rights in your opinion?**

- 1) Security
  - 2) Education
  - 3) Employment
- \*long pause\*

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#### 4) Justice

When I worked with [excluded], we told women they had equal rights, don't have to be beaten, etc. When you have a household where a woman has been educated, she is empowered to fight for other rights. When both have jobs, contribute, both can fight for rights. Education will lead to other rights. Security is the biggest. Basic needs follow education. Justice allows for the following of the others.

In the US and Europe they talk a lot about freedom of speech, "when born in poor countries, [where it is] difficult to have water, food, good quality education, freedom of speech is not important." Basic needs are more important than freedom of speech.

#### **What role do multiple parties play?**

In my personal point of view, for me it is not the first priority. "We had a very bad experience here in Rwanda with multiple parties. Both Tutsi and Hutu had influence, wealth. The uneducated rural population will make judgments based on ethnicity not on ideas. Hutus will oppose Kagame and Tutsis will support him based solely on ethnicity. Political parties won't work because people will vote on ethnicity not platform. Even the Genocide has controversy. Some want to forget. Given our history, I want to have few political parties. The context in Europe and the US is different.

#### **Are there any opinions that should not be expressed?**

Yeah, there are some. Some journalists are in prison for writing about things they should not be allowed to talk about. Some Rwandans prefer to keep quiet because if they don't they will face intimidation, bad perceptions from the government.

#### **Are there checks on the President?**

There are some checks. The constitution has to be respected. He can be challenged by the Supreme Court. The budget must be approved. Only the legislature can make laws. There are checks and balances. Decisions must be approved, cabinet appointments are done by the president and prime minister together and the senate must approve. I know there are limits.

#### **What role do checks and balances play?**

They are necessary. Without them the president will do whatever he wants. He can abuse power. It is very important.

#### **What role does national identity play?**

We used to have ethnic ID cards. It was very bad, they used to discriminate against Tutsis, remove their rights. Traveling was very difficult, passports were hard to get, they couldn't get education. Now there is no way to discriminate. Hutu and Tutsi have the same names and culture, the same language, the same region, and it is not easy to recognize the difference. The only way to recognize who is who is by their experience during the genocide. There is no way to discriminate for scholarships or jobs, now they are merit based. It contributes to democracy, to feeling at home. National identity for me plays an important role for democracy. Everyone has the same rights.

#### **You mentioned justice, what role do criminal rights play?**

We still have some problems in the sector of justice. One good move was the abolishment of the death penalty, it was a good step. When the justice system is not working well there can be errors, and death is irreversible. Prisoners can spend many years in jail without justice. There were so many perpetrators, they had to judge them quickly. There have been improvements but it still has problems. In theory everything is good, but in practice not so much. There are requirements, documents, which are good, but they are not always followed.

#### **What effect do you think this has on democracy?**

"For me the right to justice is very important to feel like a citizen, you are participating, your views are taken into account." A democracy which is not respecting human rights is not a democracy. Respecting order. Respecting citizens.

#### **What role does the media play?**

Like civil society it plays a very big role. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> power: parliament, cabinet, justice, and the media. It is very important when it is working properly. It has two sides. One, they are there to analyze and to remind the

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government this is good, this is not good, this is not respecting the law. Two, the media has a responsibility to use the truth to not to criticize but to inform truthfully.

Those that hate the government or other, especially in developing countries, lie and misinform just to influence and this is very bad, and this happens very often. "This used to happen here in Rwanda" and it is happening in other developing countries and it is very bad. But in any case, the media is very important for democracy.

**What is democracy?**

In high school, democracy was taught to us as "government chosen by the local population, working for the local population, and accountable by the local population." Now I think democracy is a system where the government is involving the people in choosing priorities, where it is transparent, where Human Rights are taken into account, where public interests trumps individual interests, and many actors are involved in government including the local population, the media, development partners and civil society.

**Thank you very much.**

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## Appendix 7

### *Rwandan Bill of Rights*<sup>21</sup>

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Right to Security, Life, and Rule of Law -----                           | 7 <sup>22</sup> |
| 2. Freedom of Expression and Media -----                                    | 6               |
| 3. Freedom of Opinion, Political View, Idea -----                           | 6               |
| Freedom of the Mind, to Be Different, to Self-Determination, to Think ----- |                 |
| 4. Freedom of Movement and Freedom to Live Where You Want -----             | 5               |
| 5. Freedom of Association and Assembly -----                                | 4               |
| 6. Freedom of Religion -----  | 3               |
| 7. Right to be a Share in Government -----                                  | 3               |
| 8. Right to Justice -----   | 3               |
| 9. Right to be a Citizen, Right to Not be Discriminated Against -----       | 2               |
| 10. Right to Employment, Education, Health, Not Life in Poverty -----       | 2               |
| 11. Property Rights -----   | 2               |
| 12. Human Rights -----  | 2               |
| 13. Right to Demonstration -----  | 1               |
| 14. Right to Join a Party-----  | 1               |
| 15. Right to Access to Information -----                                    | 1               |
| 16. Civil and Political Rights -----  | 1               |
| 17. Right to Exercise One's Facilities -----                                | 1               |
| 18. Right to Self-Determination -----                                       | 1               |
| 19. Right to Exercise Your Rights -----                                     | 1               |

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<sup>21</sup> In order of number of times mentioned.

<sup>22</sup> Number of participants who mentioned this right.