



Trajectories of Authoritarianism in Rwanda

Challenging assumptions regarding the strength and ability to control of authoritarian governments in Rwanda in the decades before the 1994 genocide, Marie-Eve Desrosiers uses original archival data and interviews to highlight the complex relations between authorities, opponents, and society. Through a careful and detailed analysis, Desrosiers offers a nuanced assessment of the functions and evolution of authoritarianism over time, demonstrating how the governments of Rwanda's first two post-independence Republics (1962–1990) sought and often struggled to cement their rule. While the deeper, lived realities of authoritarianism are generally neglected by multi-case comparisons at the heart of comparative authoritarian studies, this illuminating survey highlights the essential yet subtle authoritarian strategies, patterns, and forms of decay that are too often overlooked when addressing authoritarian contexts.

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Trajectories of Authoritarianism in Rwanda

Elusive Control before the Genocide

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To Rwandan friends and colleagues met over the years.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	x
Trajectories of Authoritarianism: An Introduction	1
1 The Study of Authoritarianism	21
2 Should Rwanda Matter to the Study of Authoritarianism?	59
3 Some Background: Timelines, Beginnings, and Endings	89
4 The Shape of Authoritarianism in Pre-genocide Rwanda	149
5 Communicating Norms for Behavior	178
6 Challenges to the Monopoly of Legitimate Violence	210
7 Competition around and within the Security Sanctum	240
8 The Political and Economic Grind	265
9 Local and Individual Trajectories	312
Conclusion	340
<i>Bibliography</i>	364
<i>Index</i>	382

Figure

1.1 Pre-genocide administrative levels below national authorities	<i>page 54</i>
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Tables

3.1 National-level defence and order corps	<i>page</i> 138
4.1 MRND structures	163

Abbreviations

Aprosoma	Association pour la promotion sociale de la masse (Association for the Social Promotion of the Mass)
ASSERU	Association des éleveurs du Rwanda (Association of Herders of Rwanda)
CERAI	Centre d’enseignement rural et artisanal intégré (Integrated Rural and Artisanal Education Centers)
CESTAR	Centrale syndicale des travailleurs du Rwanda (Workers’ Union of Rwanda)
CND	Conseil national de développement (National Development Council)
CNLG	National Commission for the Fight against Genocide
CPUN	Comité pour la paix et l’unité nationale (Committee for Peace and National Unity)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	gross domestic product
MDR	Mouvement démocratique républicain (Democratic Republican Movement, also known as MDR-Parmehutu in its early iteration. See entry ‘Parmehutu’)
MOMOR	Mouvement monarchiste rwandais (Rwandan Monarchist Movement)
MRND	Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement (National Revolutionary Movement for Development)
MSM	Mouvement social Muhutu (Muhutu Social Movement)

List of Abbreviations

xi

NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
ORINFOR	Office rwandais D’information (Rwandan Information Office)
Parmehutu	Parti du mouvement pour l’émancipation hutu (Party of the Movement for Hutu Emancipation, also known as MDR-Parmehutu. See entry ‘MDR’)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
RADER	Rassemblement démocratique ruandais (Ruandan Democratic Rally)
RANU	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity
RDF	Rwandan Defence Force
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UN	United Nations
UNAR	Union nationale rwandaise (Rwandan National Union)
UNR	Université nationale du Rwanda (Rwanda National University)
URAMA	Organisation politique des femmes rwandaïses (Rwandan Women’s Political Organization)
WYSIWYG	what you see is what you get