

RENDERING RWANDA GOVERNABLE: ORDER, CONTAINMENT AND CLEANSING IN THE RATIONALITY OF POST-GENOCIDE RULE

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Résumé

Le présent article examine l'« espace intermédiaire » peu étudié de la gouvernementalité – les rationalités et les stratégies destinées à faciliter le progrès dans la réalisation des buts du gouvernement, quels qu'ils soient (c'est-à-dire la préservation du pouvoir lui-même ou de la biopolitique). Surtout, notre article situe la gouvernementalité rwandaise dans un contexte social et culturel plus large et explore trois stratégies dominantes de la gouvernementalité – la mise en ordre, le confinement et la purification – ainsi que trois « méta-modes » transversales de gouvernementalité – création de la présence, création de surfaces et direction. Notre étude tente de contester la conception d'une gouvernementalité qui totalise et contrôle, en montrant comment elle s'efforce non seulement de mouler les « socio-paysages » environnants, mais aussi comment elle est elle-même « formée » par une dynamique plus large. Ainsi qu'on le verra, une analyse assez fine de la gouvernementalité rwandaise souligne à la fois la force et la fragilité du système de gouvernement post-génocide.

1. INTRODUCTION: RATIONALITIES OF RULE

Women from the *Dusukure* association sit and carefully clear already neat-looking urban patches of grass. Women employed by the *Ababerarugo* association slowly sweep sides of rural roads. Men and women everywhere manicure already well cared for bushes. There seems to be an excess of meaning and utility to public *gusukura* (cleaning) in Rwanda. Some of that utility is certainly turned into direct political credit in discourses of government legitimacy.¹ But actions and wider symbolic registers attached to cleaning and cleansing, as well as other social themes, come to inform and mould a broader field: a unique form of governance.

This should not be surprising since cultural and historical dimensions are rarely absent from what is merely an additional sphere of human interaction – centralised rule. In Rwanda post-genocide, the government's belabouring of order and legibility, containment and stasis, as well as cleaning and cleansing follows a particular governance rationality that is as much meant to be instrumental as it is dialogic with wider social dynamics that help to give it its shape.

The state and central governance in Africa have usually been approached either through their structural composition – the institutions or lack thereof, their reach and effectiveness – or through the, often negative, impact on the ground. Central power has been shown to be either weak, failing or collapsed, or predatory and over-controlling, able to insert and assert itself even through outwardly benign and well-meaning international projects of

¹ Cleanliness is often highlighted in narratives of Rwanda as a success story.

economic development,² reconciliation and unity building³ or the war on drugs.⁴ Government has certainly not attracted close-up analysis as a form of rule unique in every case, as a social artefact not only of particular ideologies and strategies, but also of particular political histories and cultural idioms.

In the present paper, I temporarily shift away from my own interest in encounters with power and the state in order to study this very different type of field – the logics, imaginaries and strategies of governance itself. The discussion here does not revolve around structures or institutions and neither around the experiences of those on the ground. The paper rather takes up the study of the little-understood intermediary space between the two, where mediums rather than ends are key, and where order and visibility, containment and cleansing are appropriated as ‘facilitators’ in the ‘ability to govern.’

In Rwanda, an expanding body of literature addresses the concentrated nature of power,⁵ the manifold reach of the state as well as the experiences of power and authority ‘down below’.⁶ Little, however, has been written about this intermediary space of governing rationalities, mentalities and strategies that are meant to smooth the progress of achieving ends, whatever these are – i.e. preservation of power itself and biopolitics.⁷ This is the sphere of governmentality – a given government’s ‘art’ of producing citizens that not only fit the government’s policies but are also capable of

² FERGUSON, J., *The Anti-Politics Machine. “Development,” Depoliticisation, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

³ PURDEKOVÁ, A., *Political Projects of Unity in Divided Societies: The Discourse and Performance of “Ubumwe” in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2011; THOMSON, S., “The Darker Side of Transitional Justice: The Power Dynamics Behind Rwanda’s *Gacaca* Courts”, *Africa*, Vol. 81, No. 3, pp. 373-390.

⁴ CARRIER, N., KLANTCHNIG, G., *Africa and the War on Drugs*, London, Zed Books, 2012.

⁵ REYNTJENS, F., “Post-1994 Politics in Rwanda: Problematising ‘Liberation’ and ‘Democratisation’”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 6, 2006, pp. 1103-1117;

REYNTJENS, F., “Rwanda, Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship”, *African Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 411, 2004, pp. 177-210.

⁶ INGELAERE, B., “The Ruler’s Drum and the People’s Shout: Accountability and Representation on Rwanda’s Hills”, in STRAUS, S., WALDORF, L. (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda. State-Building and Human Rights After Violence*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2011; PURDEKOVÁ, A., *op. cit.*; THOMSON, S., “Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday resistance of Peasant Rwandans to Post-Genocide Reconciliation”, *African Affairs*, Vol. 200, No. 440, pp. 439-456.

⁷ Biopolitics reflects the modern state’s interest in regulation of its subjects through “an explosion of diverse technique for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations” (FOUCAULT, M., *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge*, London, Penguin, 2002, p. 140 – *L’histoire de la sexualité, t. 1*, Gallimard, 1976). The attempt is to foster (and hence control) the life of the population/society, which is reflected in state’s interest in public health and hygiene, production and reproduction, birth and death, but more generally, conduct as such.

accomplishing them. Essentially then, the focus here lies on how a society is “rendered governable.”⁸ This encompasses “mechanisms that try to shape, sculpt, mobilise and work through” different lived registers of individuals and groups.⁹

The sphere of governmentality is of course not disconnected from the structural or the lived aspects of rule. Neither is it separate from power, the state, or the ‘ends’ of government themselves, though these are all separate aspects of the political domain. Despite these important interconnections, the focus here lies squarely on the creation of spaces (physical, social, ‘mentalities’) that are more amenable to the project of governance. Hence the article discusses neither the government as the conduct of conduct, nor the effects and effectiveness of policy. Rather, it is ‘conducibility’ of conduct that is placed in relief. In a sense, the current analysis converts the search for instrument-effects¹⁰ – referring to effects that are at once (perhaps not intentionally) instruments of power – into a study of ‘effect-instruments’ – the harnessing of instrumentality that produces (often unintended) impacts. The study then revolves around the strategic rationalities of intermediacy, the art of paths to ends.

In what follows, the paper first places governmentality in the wider context of power and governance in post-genocide Rwanda, and explores the importance of this particular case in the study of governmentality. Thereafter, the paper turns to analysis proper, investigating three key socio-political registers – order, containment, and cleansing – as they are employed in the work of governmentality. The investigation concludes with the exposé of three ‘meta-modes’ of governmentality, namely ‘surfacing,’ ‘saturating’ and ‘directioning,’ which crosscut the themes hitherto discussed. Overall, the paper questions the dominant conception of governmentality – a domain associated with ‘strength’ and ‘control’ on behalf of the state. By placing governmentality in a dialogic relation with the wider social and cultural field, the paper aims to demonstrate how Rwanda’s rationalities of rule betray both strength and distinct fragility. The conclusion draws out implications vis-à-vis the ambitious project of social transformation that the Rwandan government currently oversees.

Since the paper draws as much on the social and cultural as it does on the political, a wide array of sources were used as well as a variety of methods ranging from observation to the study of primary and secondary materials. The analysis draws heavily but not exclusively on fieldwork research

⁸ JONES, M., *An Introduction to Political Geography: Space, Place, and Politics*, New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 174.

⁹ DEAN, M., *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London, SAGE, 1999, p.

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¹⁰ FOUCAULT, M., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London, Penguin Books, 1979.

conducted in Rwanda in 2008-2009.¹¹ The paper uses a case-study approach, which has its inherent limitations. Many dynamics explored here are not completely 'unique' to the post-genocide period. Nonetheless, the post-conflict setting and the profound disruptions that the genocide engendered, as I hope to show, do have an effect in producing specific versions of governing rationality. Comparative governmentalities research (both inter-temporal in Rwanda, and across countries) would certainly be an important extension of the present work.

2. GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTALITY IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA

Since Michel Foucault first introduced the concept of governmentality, it has been enthusiastically appropriated and applied in multiple research locations. Nonetheless, few scholars posed the question of how well Foucault's concepts actually 'travel' outside of the European context. On the one hand, Foucault's meticulous genealogical study within a particular geographical location is what allowed him to singlehandedly reshape political thought. This *forte*, inevitably, marks his limits too (note that limits need to be distinguished from 'limitations'). In the present section, I aim to engage the Foucauldian government and governmentality framework by investigating its application to post-genocide Rwanda – a developmental state that is still recovering from a profound social disruption.

Analysing the evolution of practice and thinking on 'government' in Europe, Foucault¹² noted a transition from 'sovereignty,' whose end is fundamentally circular (i.e. the exercise of sovereignty, the assertion and preservation of rule) to government with a 'whole set of specific finalities' such as maximisation of wealth, provision of sufficient means of subsistence or assuring that the 'population is enabled to multiply.'¹³ In this new 'biopolitical' context, "government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population."¹⁴ At the same time, there is a shift from governing largely through coercive power to a form of governance utilising disciplinary institutions and knowledge.

In Rwanda, sovereignty and welfare in fact coexist as the ultimate ends of an authoritarian government and a developmental state. Government is not only invested in the 'care' of the population, but is also working to assure the

¹¹ During this time, I have undertaken doctoral fieldwork studying the politics of unity building in post-genocide Rwanda. In the process, I have gathered a lot of data (through interviews, informal encounters and observation) on state, power and governance more broadly, only some of which was incorporated into the dissertation.

¹² FOUCAULT, M., "Governmentality", 1991, reprinted in SHARMA, A., GUPTA, A. (eds.), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2006.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

survival of itself as a particular political project. Surveillance, coercion and indirect pressure are useful both in undermining challenges and opposition to the governing project, and the execution of the desired biopolitical goals through extraction of compliance. Both of these ends are of course presented in legitimisation narratives as being ‘for the good’ of the population. To buttress its legitimacy, the Rwandan government points to achievements in the biopolitical sphere – the 60% reduction in malaria, the virtual elimination of measles or the progress in eliminating rubella.

The biopoliticisation of legitimacy is certainly not a surprising political strategy in contexts of illiberal governance. Africa’s colonial governments sought to narrate legitimacy by pointing to achievements in the ‘production of life.’ With the explosion of humanitarian interventions in African societies, a true biopolitical paradigm of ‘fostering life’ has both legitimised these interventions and repainted biopolitics as at once neutral and effective, despite evidence to the contrary. In late stages of colonialism, higher immunization rates, lowered infant and child mortality, higher life expectancy rates have together led to vast and fast population growth.¹⁵ The decades that followed decolonization, filled with varied registers of suffering, quickly and powerfully showed the limits of the biopolitical paradigm, demonstrating that an approach merely focused on multiplying, guarding and guiding life cannot be sufficient if attention is not given to the local, national and transnational politico-economic structures that have the power to either nurture or suffocate it.

Nonetheless, the physicality of life still looms large in the dominant discourse of ‘the political’ in Africa. The tide has now turned full course – from mass production of life in form of population explosion in mid-20th century to the mass productions of death and depletions of populations either through conflict, drought and famine, or the endemic HIV/AIDS epidemic. In both cases, the causes are seen as internal to the continent and the question is whether Africans can ‘bear’ it – on the one hand, all this life, the ‘youth bulge’ that cannot be properly supported and accommodated into the dominant social order, on the other hand, all this death that no less than threatens to ‘hollow out’ the state and unwork societies from within.¹⁶

Such frames clearly biopoliticise legitimacy and legitimise increased interventions into the social body. This vision also makes political agency, autonomy or dignity subservient to goals of life itself. Biopolitics here is not Aristotle’s *eudaimonia* (i.e. full human flourishing), the art of the ‘good life.’¹⁷ Instead, it becomes the art of survival, of healthy physiognomy and of

¹⁵ ILIFFE, J., *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

¹⁶ E.g. POKU, N. K. *et al.*, *AIDS and Governance*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2007.

¹⁷ ARISTOTLE, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, the Revised Oxford Translation*, BARNES, J. (ed.), Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984.

basic 'fitfulness.' It is an art of fashioning of the 'sufficiently good life' largely conceived in its physicality.

Government in Rwanda, however, cannot be reduced to the sovereign and the biopolitical. The governing elite grapples with other fundamental issues – with the survival of the social body – with 'make live' (*hobera ubuzima* – bless/embrace life¹⁸), make live *here* (i.e. forced repatriations/repopulations key to the political project) and make live *with* (i.e. coexist). From the three Rwandan verbs related to existence – *kuba* ('to be,' referring to the issue of personal existence and identity), *kubaho* ('to be here,' referring to earth, this place, referencing the problem of survival) and *kubana* ('to be with each other,' referring to the problem of coexistence)¹⁹ it is surely the latter – the problematic of coexistence that is emphasized most by the state.

However, in the complex tangle of government's ends, *kubana* is not the end-all of government. As I have explored elsewhere,²⁰ *kubana* is very much subordinated to other goals, the most important being the 'fashioning of life' or 'making live a certain way,' a way that is both amenable to power and conforming to the ideas of an ideal subject (both individual and collective) capable of delivering itself from the liminal and unfinished space of 'developing.' Transformation, and more precisely yet, making society transformable, is prioritized above other goals such as social cohesion, though these must exist 'to a degree,' 'at some level,' in order not to impede the desired transformations.²¹ The visible preoccupation with transformability in post-genocide Rwanda lies precisely in the interim layer of government – governmentality – that is of interest to us here.

The study of governmentality has at times been accused of creating a 'representation of power that is omnipresent and totalising,'²² leading to a false notion of a totality or unity of rule seen from the central planner's point of view. This perspective might contrast starkly with the frayed and fragmented applications seen from the ground of policy application. Naturally, any sphere of governance is marked by inadequacies and

¹⁸ For many survivors of genocide, key themes include *kwongera kubaho* ("to live again") referring to the 'process of finding, living and having a life after genocide' (ZRALY. M., *Bearing: Resilience Among Genocide Rape Survivors in Rwanda*, unpublished PhD Dissertation, 2008, p. 218), *gukomeza ubuzima* ("to continue life", "keep life going") and *kwihangana* ("withstanding"), which is in fact frequently used in Rwanda more generally (*ihangane* – "bear it without fuss and don't complain").

¹⁹ SEBASONI, S., *Le Rwanda: Reconstruire Une Nation*, Imprimerie Papeterie Nouvelle, 2007, p. 169.

²⁰ PURDEKOVÁ, A., "Civic Education and Social Transformation in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Forging the Perfect Development Subjects," in CAMPIONI, M., NOACK, P. (eds.), *Rwanda Fast Forward: Social, Economic, Military and Reconciliation Prospects*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² McKEE, K., "Post-Foucauldian Governmentality: What Does it Offer Critical Social Policy Analysis?", *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 29. No. 3, 2009, p. 474.

inefficiencies, multiplications arising from different local logics of social life, and similarly diversified resistances, and I will try to point to these occasionally. Nonetheless, the paper is predicated on the belief that there is a ‘common identity’ to the government’s rationality, which it is both possible and worthy to uncover.

What follows does not aim to be a totalising grasp of a totalising concept. First, the focus of the paper is a *selection* of important dynamics in governmentality; it is not meant as an exhaustive account. Further, as will become apparent, the Rwandan ‘mentality of rule’ hides within it tensions and contradictions. Last but not least, the paper hopes to demonstrate that governmentalities are not simply formative, but are themselves being formed. They are ‘social artefacts with specific historical trajectory’,²³ and, as I hope to show, they are affected by, negotiate with and manipulate cultures within which they are embedded.

3. ANALYSIS: CREATING GOVERNABLE ‘SOCIOSCAPES’

What are ‘governable’ subjects and societies? In the Rwandan government rationality, a governable subject is construed as one that is both docile (non-contrary, accepting, responsive) and easily organized (visible, readable, accessible, traceable, orderly). In such framework, homogeneity is preferable to divergence because it is associated with both docility and organisation. However, there might be a trade-off between these two variables that is not easily resolved. Publicly voiceless (i.e. docile) subjects are not easily legible (i.e. feelings, opinions do not necessarily dissipate but are guarded). In addition to requirements of homogeneity, people also need to be ‘unified’ and ‘reconciled’ at some level, the meaning of which, the production of which and the constitution of which I explore elsewhere.²⁴ Suffice it to mention that both unity and reconciliation are construed as means, not simply ends.

In what follows, the paper analyses three²⁵ key ‘arts of means’ of the Rwandan government in its pursuance of the governable subject – ordering, containing, and cleansing. The desired end is in each case increased control, which becomes largely internalized. Internalization is part of the preferred indirect manner of rule operating in Rwanda.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

²⁴ PURDEKOVÁ, A., “Civic Education...”, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Surely, other ‘arts of means’ could be identified and the present paper does not make claims to exhaustive analysis.

a. Ordering

“Welcome to the capital of Rwanda, where cleanliness and order prevail. Trash is hard to find, even on the dirt roads outside the main arteries. Vendors have been banished from the sidewalks. And plastic bags? Walking down the street with one could cost you more than \$150, while store owners found stocking them face six to 12 months in prison. All this housekeeping makes Rwanda a pleasant place to visit.”

Website of the Embassy of Rwanda, Washington, D.C.²⁶

In a state where all aspects of society are of political interest, the social, the cultural and the political interlace in complex ways. Cleanliness has become a true ‘cultural brand’ exploited for political credit, set among other utilisations and inventions of ‘cultural traits’ useful to the project of transformation.²⁷ And yet, besides useful appropriations, the notion of cleaning opens a much richer insight into governmentality in Rwanda and its fundamental accent on order.

For one, cleaning, ordering and manicuring of the environment, the mastery over nature, seems to betray a profound drive for control. But physical cleaning has also been connected to moral cleansing through ‘neural re-use, grounded cognition, and conceptual metaphor.’²⁸ A growing body of literature suggests that by removing physical ‘dirt,’ you might also be removing ‘psychological residues of your past.’²⁹ Both drive for control and cleansing is especially significant in Rwanda, where most people still ‘bear the past,’ both violent in its profound disruption and tainting in its moral, bodily and/or psychological implications.³⁰

The striking, publicly displayed labour of producing immaculate lawngardens (*imirima*) and other green arrangements has much meaning besides a simple political exploitation of foreign acclamations of neatness. Women and men (but overwhelmingly women) can be seen everywhere weeding

²⁶ Official Embassy website: <http://www.rwandaembassy.org/the-embassy/172-welcome-to-rwanda-where-cleanliness-is-mandatory.html>, accessed on March 1, 2013.

²⁷ See for example the Kigali *New Times* article from January 26, 2009 entitled “Hero’s Day to Focus on Reviving Cultural Values for Development,” available at: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/views/article_print.php?&a=12781&icon=Print, accessed January 23, 2010.

²⁸ LEE, S., SCHWARTZ, N., “Wiping the Slate Clean: Psychological Consequences of Physical Cleansing”, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, in press, available at http://sitemaker.umich.edu/norbert.schwarz/files/lee__schwarz_clean_slate_cdps_in-press_pri.pdf, accessed on March 20, 2013.

²⁹ LEE, S., SCHWARTZ, N., *op. cit.*; ZHONG, C.-B., LILJENQUIST, K., “Washing Away Your Sins: Threatened Morality and Physical Cleansing,” *Science*, Vol. 313, 2006, pp. 1451-1452; LAKOFF, G., JOHNSON, M., *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York, Basic Books, 1999.

³⁰ In this sub-section, I explore order and associated themes, whereas cleansing will be treated separately in another section.

lawns, sweeping dirt, or cropping and trimming bushes at the sides of roads, in front of houses or hotels. “Rwandans are very serious about their gardens,” Aloys tells me as he takes a detour around a carefully preserved patch of grass and low shrubs in Nyanza.³¹ The public cleaning (over)drive is produced around Rwanda through specialized cleaning associations, but the minutely tended environments cannot be reduced to policy. The omnipresent ‘tending’ can also be read as the excretion of social pre-occupations, symbolizing the profound need to re-establish control, at least minimally, by creating clear patterns and systems, which one knows one can protect and make ‘continue.’

Order and concepts connected to it – hierarchies, divisions and cleanliness as some of its manifestations, discipline and containment (to be discussed below) as its own intermediaries, and legibility/visibility and control as some of its key aims – are highly relevant as frames to understand post-genocide Rwanda. They reach beyond (though are elaborated further by) the culture of militariness of the current governing elite, reflected in disciplining, self-control and self-sacrifice, or the political culture of rules and dictums, and connect to broader and pre-genocide social themes (though again appropriated by the political sphere) stressing self-composure and self-control such as *gukomera* (being strong), *hagarara kigabo* (stand firm like a man) and *kwihangana* (withstand). In what follows, I want to demonstrate how political practices of ordering betray both the system’s fragility and its strength.

The need for re-establishing order after the experience of genocide translates into political life itself in a number of ways. For one, it is reflected through the notion and practice of ‘protocol.’ Anyone who spends longer time in Rwanda and attends large gatherings of people, whether commemorations, graduations, public rallies and speeches, or community festivities such as *ubusabane* (any large community get-together) or weddings, notices the importance of what Rwandans call ‘protocol’ – the set arrangements of space, and guests and events in it.

Especially at large public events, protocol seems as important as the event itself. At my first visit of such kind, at the 2009 opening of the *Icyumweru U&U* (Unity and Reconciliation Week), facing the neatly arranged rows of chairs under various sets of tents, I asked a member of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) where I should sit. “I do not want to upset the protocol,” he told me after some thought, “we better ask the protocol ladies.” In the end, despite my protest, I (the ‘guest’ or *umushyitsi*) was seated in the visitors’ tent, in the first row, squarely in the sphere of visibility. The first row is the most important one and, accordingly,

³¹ Informal interaction with Aloys, a Ugandan returnee, November 17, 2008. Naturally, the way in which returnees interact with the notion of ‘Rwandan culture’ is a complex and interesting question that cannot be tackled here.

the one most carefully arranged (sometimes even being fitted with different quality chairs). I was seated at the end of the row, the centre being reserved for the authorities: the sector executive, the head of NURC, the mayor, a representative of the military, and next to him, a representative of the police. As I learned after months of frequenting various events, this was a repeated pattern.

Hierarchical space and careful divisions (such as cordoned-off VIP tents or sections) are nothing uncommon in Africa, especially at large-scale ceremonious events. Cook and Hardin,³² for example, describe this in their recent article “Performing Royalty in Contemporary Africa” in connection with the 2003 ceremony of installation of a new Bafokeng *kgosi* (king) in South Africa. In Rwanda, however, what is noteworthy is the vast scale of ceremoniousness replicated in multiple, often very local-level activities. Further to this, many activities at the local level such as the *ubusabane* ‘community festivals’ are precisely meant to be about building interconnection, sharing and togetherness among a divided population. But what seems to result instead are theatrical events orientated to the ‘big people;’ events characterised by a carefully divided social space, a structured program and little genuine interaction.

The scope and deployment of ceremoniousness in contemporary Rwanda is not incidental. Beyond the general need for order and maintenance of hierarchies of authority, the act of placing and being placed in the context of elaborate protocol reflects the need to at least figuratively enact and affirm a social and political balance. Creation of protocol serves as a symbolic reassertion of order.

A good example of this was the 15th official commemoration ceremony of the genocide, which in April 2009 was held at the Ibuka³³ Headquarters in Kicukiro, Kigali. The clear and fast delineation of boundaries (the VIP tent, the media tent, etc), the meticulousness of seating charts and program sequences, the representativeness of speeches, and within speeches, the hierarchies of acknowledgments (of first, the *nyakubahwa*, the honorables, then *bashyitsi*, the esteemed visitors, and then *abanyarwanda n’abanyarwandakazi*, men and women of Rwanda) all pointed to an elaborate ceremony of holding together a fragile social order. This explicit elaboration of the symbolic order in a fundamentally stylized setting of a ceremony demonstrated the powerful need to create ‘enactments’ of an order that is fundamentally in question outside of such contexts.

At the end of the official commemoration ceremony, the importance of protocol played itself out on a symbolic plane. The end was marked by the

³² COOK, S., HARDIN, R., “Performing Royalty in Contemporary Africa”, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2013, pp. 227-251.

³³ Ibuka (‘remember’) is an umbrella organisation for genocide survivors founded in August 1994.

President and the First Lady being escorted by an entourage of about a couple dozen people following closely behind. But in front, leading the President, was the now celebrity Rose Kabuye, the Chief of Protocol, the person responsible for clearing and showing the way, always in front assuring that everything was ready and that the President knew where, how and with whom to talk, shake hand and exchange greetings. There was someone 'leading' the President. The word *kuyobora abantu* refers to 'protocol people' and *kuyobora* means to lead the way. The simple set-up of the procession was generative of meaning: There was something larger than the person at the top of the pyramid – the need for ordering and order that pointed to the fundamental fragility, rather than strength of the system.

Protocol is one way of exposing the manicuring of social space, here in public ceremonies. But it is here, perhaps paradoxically, that ordering speaks of a struggle for control rather than a simple assertion or multiplication of control. The commemoration and other public gatherings lead us to a greater social tapestry of norms, balances and arrangements, to the grand accord to coexist that underlies the political community, where no one can be upset and all has to be carefully acknowledged albeit only at a ceremonious level with a gesture at an appropriate time and in an appropriate hierarchical order.

The political practices of ordering are varied, reaching beyond protocol to activities that we tend to associate with Rwanda more, activities meant to increase legibility and accessibility. These types of ordering of 'socio-scapes' (a notion combining physical and social environment) speak to the peculiar 'strength' of the system, being inevitably aided by the intricate administrative, information and physical infrastructures of the state reaching to the lowest level, as well as by the small total area of the country, the high population density and almost no uninhabited land.

But it is not only the state that is clearly organized and 'present,' able to 'read' the population up close. The National Youth League, for example, is organized in a similarly intricate way, having eight representatives per administrative unit, at each level from the cell up – this adds up to about 20,000 people. Even some *ingando* camps (political education and reintegration camps) partially replicate organisation of the state. The ordering is also seen in physical space, through the straight lines and identical structures of *imidugudu* villages, the new re-ordering of markets where every type of good has its 'place,' the 'clearing' of urban slums and tearing down of sub-standard structures (e.g. the anti-*nyakatsi* –anti-thatched huts campaign), the attempted clearing of streets of its street vendors and street preachers, of its *abana bo mu muhandanda* (street children).

Order naturally eases 'tracing' – the ability to find and locate, and fundamentally, to identify. Mostly clearly, this is achieved through the 'intimate register' – the closeness of the lower-level local authorities to those they are meant to 'govern.' But there are complementary strategies. There is evidence of 'lists' – names of potential targets or simply suspicious,

potentially 'problematic' people. On a less mundane level, there is a variety of personal documents such as *umuganda* and *gacaca* cards, *mutuelle de santé* cards, *umurengo sacco* cards – meant to facilitate tracing and identification (here of compliance). Tracing is also achieved through public displays of information – members of cleaning associations are instantly visible through overalls of different colours bearing the name of the cooperative as well as the number of the employee (e.g. 'coop Tugendane, no. 180'). In addition, tools such as 'mobility cards'³⁴ effectively trace spaces of reintegration and 'social maps'³⁵ effectively outline spaces of development insertion.

The intricate and clear hierarchies do not only allow 'legibility' of the social landscape, they also directly enable the mass gathering and dispersal of bodies. The power to assemble was well shown in the state-organized protests of late 2008. People were not only organised according to their cells and then 'merged' in the centre of town, cars with megaphones were announcing the details of the protests, offices were closed, and text messages were sent to all cell phones. MTN Rwanda cooperated – we all received the same messages at almost the same instant, detailing meeting points and times.³⁶ The power to disperse, on the other hand, was manifested not too much later during the peaceful refugee demonstrations in Gihembe and Kiziba camps. The police entered the camps and 'sought measures to quell the situation,' which involved firing 'several shots into the air to disperse the crowd.'³⁷

b. Containing

Another integrating theme, encompassing different governmentality techniques, is containment. This strategy broadly relates to the disciplinary technique Foucault named *clôture* (enclosure).³⁸ But containment in Rwanda

³⁴ A tool for tracing people, for example the relatives of young ex-combatants who have spent a large portion of their lives abroad, by putting together a map of places and landmarks that the young man remembers. Interview with the Muhazi ingando coordinator, Lake Muhazi, January 28, 2009.

³⁵ A MINALOC employee showed me a large cloth with a hand-drawn map of a village, each house being coded according to the type of structure (e.g. abandoned) and the level of poverty of each household. Every village in Rwanda allegedly has such 'social map,' but this is not something I could verify.

³⁶ One of the messages informed of what happened ("Leta y'Ubudage ejo yafunze Rose Kabuye wari mubutumwa bw akazi" – Germany arrested Rose Kabuye yesterday while on official business), the other gave details of where to assemble ("Ngwino duhurire kuri Rondpoint nini mu mujyi cyangwa ahahoze USAID cyangwa mu Rugunga saa munani murungendo rutuje rwo kwamagana abadaje" – Come meet at Rondpoint, USAID or Rugunga at 8am to walk towards the German Embassy) (November 10, 2008).

³⁷ Email with report from a BBC correspondent, January 28, 2009.

³⁸ FOUCAULT, M., *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975, p. 166.

goes beyond physical enclosure in the Foucauldian sense as capture in convents, factories and military barracks of 18th-century Europe. Neither does it simply mean capture through improved organization of analytical space whereby individuals are ‘placed’ so that they can be more easily seen and reached, thus preventing their disappearance, their ‘diffuse circulation,’ their ‘dangerous coagulation.’³⁹ Containment in Rwanda does not only intensify *overseeing*. It is also meant to cover up and remove from sight certain undesirable aspects of social reality.

At a physical and visible level, containment is reflected through multiple strategies of controlled and forced movement and stasis. At the level of the city street, the urge to contain is apparent if not wholly successful. All street traders are to be contained in markets. Street hawking is forbidden though nonetheless practiced in more underhanded ways. Similarly, street preaching is forbidden – preaching is to be contained in churches.⁴⁰ All rural farmers are to be contained in rural areas to limit unchecked urbanization. This is achieved through, for example, the type of houses that can be constructed in urban areas and the threats of tearing down all sub-standard structures.

Other strategies involve direct resettlement either because of expropriations of whole quarters, targeted ‘upgrading’ of housing (i.e. the nation-wide anti-*nyakatsi*⁴¹ campaign affecting mostly the rural poor) or the exigent, nation-wide resettlement scheme of planned villages called *imidugudu*. In Kigali, expropriation involves destruction of impoverished sections of hills such as lower Kiyovu hill, Gacuriro or Kimicyanga, these being essentially centrally-located ‘slums’ built on lucrative land. The quarters razed to the ground give no evidence of lively neighborhoods that were once so much more than the collection of bricks the residents are now allowed to take to the outskirts of town. But forced resettlement reaches beyond Kigali. In May 2009, for example, the Minister of Natural Resources announced the eviction of Ruhango (Gishwati Forest) residents and their relocation to a place “the residents say is a barren and small land compared to Gishwati, which has fertile soils.”⁴²

A prime example of containment as and through (often involuntary) relocation is the *imidugudu* villagization scheme. Initiated in 1996 with significant support of donors, *imidugudu* was meant to address the housing shortage created by mass repopulations of Rwanda shortly after the genocide. However, as the scheme quickly expanded into a massive, nation-wide feat of social engineering, aiming to no less than radically transform

³⁹ FOUCAULT, M., *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁴⁰ THE NEW TIMES, “Rwanda: Police Detain Street Preachers”, Kigali, March 4, 2007.

⁴¹ *Nyakatsi* refers to grass-thatched houses.

⁴² THE NEW TIMES, “Gishwati Residents Uproot Rwf 210 Million Worth of Forest”, Kigali, 25 May 2009.

the traditional dispersed settlement into a concentrated one,⁴³ and as it became clear that *imidugudu* proved useful as a counter-insurgency tactic in the North-West meant to 'break' the back of the rebellion by forcibly relocating vast sections of the population into concentrated artificial villages, donors gradually withdrew their support.

The government nonetheless persevered and *imidugudu* survived as a policy, though at a much-reduced pace. The villages have been rationalized as a way to relieve land pressure, and later economic and security arguments were added. Nonetheless, it is clear that regrouped villages are easier to 'read' and control.⁴⁴ The 1996 National Habitat Policy itself suggested that "regrouping residents counter[s] their dispersion, which makes it difficult to persuade [sensitize] them."⁴⁵

The government's technique of containment reaches beyond Rwanda's territory and comprises forced return of Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers from abroad. There is a long history of forced repatriations traceable to the 1996 destruction of largely Hutu refugee camps in Zaire and the forced massive repopulation of Rwanda that followed. Forced repatriations subsequently happened from Burundi and Tanzania (in the latter case, aided by Tanzanian military and facilitated by the UNHCR). The post-genocide returns of old caseload Tutsi were also manipulated.⁴⁶

Forced returns not only remain in evidence but are as key to control and legitimacy as ever before. For example, in December 2009, 'the Interior Minister [of Burundi] Nduwimana ordered police to return 103 asylum seekers to Rwanda. Burundi's decision came days after an official delegation from Rwanda told the Burundian government that recently arrived Rwandans should be sent back to Rwanda.'⁴⁷ The goal was to contain unpleasant impressions: "Officials were quoted as saying that they wanted to *protect Rwanda's international image as a peaceful country that does not produce refugees* [emphasis added]."⁴⁸

In the immediate future, a highly controversial Cessation Clause is to be invoked for all Rwandan refugees that fled before 1998 and remain in exile. The clause, which is coming into effect in June 2013, represents a symbolic gain for the Rwandan government because it asserts that 'lasting positive

⁴³ HILHORST, D., VAN LEEUWEN, M., "Emergency and Development: The Case of *Imidugudu* Villagization in Rwanda", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2000, p. 264-280.

⁴⁴ JACKSON, S., "Relief, Improvement, Power: Motives and Motifs of Rwanda's Villagisation Policy", *International Famine Centre*, undated, available online at URL <http://www.ucc.ie/acad/sociology/rip/essays/rwanda.htm>, accessed February 20, 2009.

⁴⁵ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, *Uprooting The Rural Poor In Rwanda*, 1 May 2001, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3bd540b40.html>, accessed 23 February 2010.

⁴⁶ PURDEKOVÁ, A., *Political Projects...*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, "Burundi: Stop Deporting Rwandan Asylum Seekers", New York, 2 December 2009.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

changes' have occurred in Rwanda that occasion such invocation. It also fits right within the government's accent and utilization of containment. In a last masterful twist, containment as a strategy is discursively abnegated: Refugees and asylum seekers are not only to be returned, they are proclaimed not to exist. They are labeled illegal immigrants, fugitives or those fleeing justice (i.e. the *gacaca* courts). The presence of persecution emanating from the centre of political power is simply denied and contained in the interior.

But containment extends beyond the strategic movements and concentrations of people. Public policy dictates that even genocide remains are to be contained, ordered and exposed, rather than, as cultural logics of proper burial maintain, to be dispersed across the land, close to relatives, and hidden.⁴⁹ All remains are instead gathered in official memorial sites (*inzibutso*) – the only spaces where they, by law, can be laid to rest. The strategy is, again, not completely successful. As one of my informants told me, “the government wants them [the exhumed bodies] to be in one place...but I know of people burying dead ones in their compounds... yes, even in my compound, there is a girl buried there... but the government does not want that.”⁵⁰

Importantly, containment reaches beyond physical manifestations. At the level of voice and action, it refers to all that, which as a result of power's varied interventions has been left unsaid and that has not been pursued. The attempt is to contain 'expression' of unofficial scripts, of undesirable opinions, emotions, even identities inside persons and inside unofficial and private spheres.⁵¹ In the domain of identity politics, a good example is 'de-ethnification' – the official discouragement of public expression of ethnicity (and in fact any other 'divisive' identities, such as regionalism) and the promotion of the notion of Rwandanity. The 'containment' aspect of this policy becomes apparent to anyone who spends a longer time in Rwanda only to realize that ethnicity and other identity markers are still very much discussed (though their mention is excluded from certain public settings).

Kwihaakabanga is a Rwandan saying suggesting “do not wash your dirty linen in public.” The authorities very much support this dictum. They suppress problems and sanitize the surface public domain at the same time as they recognize the continued existence of problems and the fact that their attempts at containment cannot resolve them. However, creating surface-level appearances is 'useful enough.' Surface realities are tokens that translate to real pay-offs in terms of i) legitimacy; ii) foreign acclamation

⁴⁹ HATZFELD, J., *Into the Quick of Life. The Rwandan Genocide: Survivors Speak*, London, Serpent's Tail, 2005, p. 148; COLLINS, B., “Rewriting Rwanda”, 7 April 2004, Available at <http://www.spiked-online.com/articles/0000000CA4BD.htm>, accessed 22 February 2009.

⁵⁰ Informal chat with a housekeeper in Nyakabanda, a returnee, April 4, 2009.

⁵¹ PURDEKOVÁ, A., *Political Projects...*, *op. cit.*

and support; and which iii) in a curious self-fulfilling prophecy are meant to translate into real transformation.⁵²

Why such profound containment? Why has it emerged as a key means to ends in post-genocide Rwanda? Reducing the answer to 'control over the population' is insufficient. As mentioned above, on the one hand the accent on removal of symptoms (of dirt, poverty, frustration, trauma, mentions of ethnicity) is ultimately shallow and hence fragile as a control strategy. Nonetheless, it still holds value for the government, increasing the coveted control over image and impression. This preoccupation with image also leads to further belaboring of specific 'Rwandan traits' (cleanliness) and governance styles (order and discipline).

When considering strategies of containment, it is difficult to speak of governmentality as it is often spoken about – either as an 'art' or a 'rationality.' Containment in Rwanda is hardly an 'art' since it seems to demonstrate a fragile negotiation rather than an assured mastery. It is not quite a 'rationality' either as it is something rather different from a carefully planned 'policy.' Perhaps 'mentality,' a term forming part of governmentality itself, is more appropriate. Mentality invokes the notion of a 'predisposition' to contain across multiple spheres of central power's intervention – an overall approach that 'arises' against a complex social setting without necessarily being carefully planned. The notion better accommodates both a strong resolve to achieve and the embeddedness and constraint that such resolve faces.

c. Cleansing

"Ignorance" and "sensitization" are two words intensely deployed in the government's vocabulary. Reporting for *The New Times*, Kigali, Bucyensenge for example describes how "efforts to resettle residents of Rwabicuma Sector, Nyanza District into community settlements (*imidugudu*) have been frustrated by *ignorance* among residents... [concerning] the benefits of living in village settlements."⁵³ As a result, the authorities "intensified the sensitization campaigns to convince residents to relocate." The concern about ignorance is apparent through the multiple headlines dedicated to the topic in government-friendly press: "Ignorance Weighs Down Access to Loans,"⁵⁴ "Ignorance of Law Slowing Down GBV Fight,"⁵⁵ "Malnutrition Often Caused by Ignorance, Not Lack of Food."⁵⁶

⁵² E.g. the 'riches reconcile' notion, see PURDEKOVÁ, A., "Civic Education...", *op. cit.*

⁵³ THE NEW TIMES, "Ignorance Frustrating Imidugudu Policy in Nyanza", Kigali, November 11, 2011.

⁵⁴ THE NEW TIMES, January 18, 2012.

⁵⁵ THE NEW TIMES, August 17, 2011.

⁵⁶ THE RWANDA FOCUS, November 29, 2010.

Ignorance or *ubujiji*, however, is different from simply ‘not knowing’ (*ubutamenya*), though both are certainly targeted by the ubiquitous government sensitization campaigns. *Ubuji* itself is often connoted not just with a ‘lack of’ but with a presence, specifically the presence of ‘negative thinking’⁵⁷ – certain beliefs or general attitudes that the government deems counter-productive to desired change. This is where we come to the broader governmentality theme unifying the fight against ignorance and the labour in sensitization – cleansing. Cleansing combines both the practice of *kuvanamo* – the ‘getting rid of’ thoughts, feelings and ideas/ideologies especially if these are deemed negative – and the subsequent ‘refilling’ of self with desired or appropriate attitudes or understandings.

Rwanda’s governmentality cannot be fully understood by reference to ordering and containment. The government aims to change mentalities and transfer multiple knowledges that will ultimately help transform people into subjects capable of fulfilling the biopolitical/development goals set forth in official documents. Above any specific information package, the government tries to first and foremost form a citizen that is both flexible and disposed to ‘accept’ any given knowledge – a citizen-catalyst of desired change. This explains why the formation of the ideal political subject is so important, why civic education features in all official curricula or why a ‘Department of Civic Education’ is both the most important department of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the organizer of *ingando* camps. All of these are fundamentally about convergence and alignment with the government’s vision. The aim is to create a person who ‘responds to the requirements of the country,’ a person ‘of exemplary character who participates in development and other activities related to good governance and poverty reduction.’⁵⁸

Not all Rwandans manage to receive official or informally organized “civic education.” Yet all *baturage* (‘people,’ but referring to the rural masses or simply ‘ordinary people’) are certainly targeted for transformation of ‘mentalities’ that is best understood through the concept of cleansing. In Rwanda, “good” education – state-organized and condoned – is counter-posed to “bad” education – the passing on of ‘negative’ ideologies such as “genocide ideology” and “divisionism” but even “idealism”⁵⁹ inside families, sometimes referred to as “intoxication” or “contamination” of children by parents. To counter-act the latter, “[the teachers] start very early in civic education, from the nursery. Just like intoxication starts from very

⁵⁷ Ingando lecture ‘Introduction to Philosophy’, at Nkumba, Northern Region, December 16, 2008.

⁵⁸ REPUBLIC OF RWANDA, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES, “A Proposal to Distribute a Cow to Every Poor Family in Rwanda”, May 2006, available at http://www.rarda.gov.rw/IMG/pdf/ONE_COW_JULY2006_1-2.pdf.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; in the lecture, “idealism” (embedded in religious belief) was opposed to “materialism” and was said to breed “passivity” and determinism.

early age, so civic education needs to be started on early.⁶⁰ State-produced education or 'tutelage' does not only start early, it almost never ends. This might be connected to the paternalism characteristic of authoritarian systems, infantilisation of illiteracy, and the high-powered agenda of a developmental state.

Cleansing of minds does not happen only in classrooms or organized activities such as *ingando* camps or *itorero* 'traditional schools.' The transformation of mentalities project operates more widely through meetings, the radio, television, various activities, even songs and slogans on T-shirts. But it is especially the platforms of wide reach and authority into which key messages are to be plugged – schools, churches, public activities such as *umuganda* (the monthly community works). With regard to one of the biopolitical projects of prevention of intestinal worms, the NTK suggests that "a talk about worms at public gatherings is vital, for example when people gather for communal work (*umuganda*) where people meet in big numbers, and even in places of worship as the clergy are among the opinion leaders."

The passing on of knowledge in today's Rwanda is best understood using the popular and ubiquitous terms of 'sensitisation.'⁶¹ The Kinyarwanda equivalents of the English 'sensitisation' or French *sensibilisation* are *gushishikariza* or *kubisenzibiliza* (though these are not used as often). When asked "How can one combat genocide ideology?" or "What is the most important thing to build national identity?", the instant response by an RPF Headquarters employee and an employee at the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), respectively, was "sensitisation."

Inquiring into the meaning of this ubiquitous term, one informant explained it to me broadly as 'to teach someone, to explain things.'⁶² But there are nuanced and important differences between 'teach,' 'sensitise,' and 're-educate.' One can 'teach' English but one 'sensitises' others to learn English. One can 'teach' about different ways of approaching post-genocide justice, but one 'sensitises' others to suppress ethnicity. Sensitisation is the urging to adopt certain behaviours, opinions and values. When people are sensitized, they are handed 'indisputably' positive guidelines; these are not to be discussed. Sensitisation of course comprises teaching too (e.g. what is HIV). Finally, re-education has a strong connotation of trying to remove 'negative' mentalities – genocide ideology, hate and divisionism – and to bring someone from the 'wrong' to the 'good' path. Re-education courses, such as *ingando* for FDLR ex-combatants or released prisoners, comprise

⁶⁰ Interview with the Director of the KIST Language Center, March 10, 2009.

⁶¹ Naturally, this term has a foreign origin and is employed everywhere where the word "development" itself is employed intensely. In other words, it is a staple of vocabulary in places of high insertion of the development enterprise.

⁶² Informal discussion with a Rwandan friend, Kigali, December 12, 2008.

both teaching and a lot of sensitisation, but are special due to the intensity of the attempted ‘turn-over.’

Sensitisation can indeed be understood as a mass persuasion/urging exercise. The typical target of sensitisation is *baturage* – the population at large. ‘Population’ can be used in its general notion as in ‘population of the country.’ But in the language of government, *baturage* refers to the rural illiterate masses. The local authorities also need to be sensitised because “they are *with* the population day to day.”⁶³ In today’s Rwanda, sensitisation is the most widespread manner of ‘passing information’ to the masses and is professed to be one of the most important tools in the population’s transformation. In its essence, it is a top-down exercise connoting persuasion, if not simply instruction. Sensitisation’s *raison d’être* is not discussion but rather rapid and mass *diffusion* or *vulgarisation* of ideas and attitudes that underpin desired behaviours.

The discourses of and attempts at cleansing through education, re-education but mainly sensitisation should again not be equated with any *actual* ‘deep transformation.’ Ultimately, the attempt is not to make people ‘believe’ all the messages, as sensitisation cannot make this possible. Rather, the aim is for people to possess key information and to know what is expected of them. That is sufficient because compliance thus can be and often is assured (not without resistance). An imposed cleansing reducible to performances of mass sensitisation again points to the surface-level nature of governmentality that extracts tokens of transformation without necessarily achieving it. The theme of cleansing as the fight *against* ‘negative mentality’ and *for* planting of key and useful knowledges demonstrates yet again the simultaneous strength of the state machinery in unrolling ‘mental cleansing’ on a vast scale and the fundamental fragility of the project as it tries to reach and mould the always-escaping ‘inside.’

At a very different level, the way in which official discourse attempts to ‘clear’ social spaces can be seen through name change. This is certainly not a prominent government strategy. Its usefulness here rather derives from its symbolic value, its demonstration effect. Naming is very important in Rwanda and each given name/nickname bears meaning and opens a route to a narrative. Hence changing names and ‘giving name’ to things in the broadest sense also ties in a most powerful way to the creation of appearances that the government so skilfully masters. Ultimately, the battle over naming is the battle over representation. But a top-down attempt is inherently fragile – it might produce its own public echoes but can hardly succeed in stemming private counter-narratives.

⁶³ Interview with the SCUR (Student Clubs for Unity and Reconciliation) President, January 9, 2009.

In today's Rwanda, there is a specific class of names that people can not only change without a problem but are in fact encouraged to do so.⁶⁴ The term *izina irigenurano* refers to traditional names that carry 'negative messages' meant to segregate or divide people. Examples include *mbarimombazi* ("I am with you but I know you" – meaning "I am watching you, I am vigilant, I do not necessarily trust you"), *tubanambazi* ("I live with you but I know you") or *mvukamubazi* ("I am born among the enemy"). Interestingly, simply harsh names such as *ntamuhe* ("I have no pity") are not considered divisionist.

Given names in Rwanda (as in Burundi) are meaningful in the sense that they often refer to important contexts of birth believed to determine the future of the child. They might also contain wishes for the future, or warnings about it. Names are a form of a concentrated message,⁶⁵ an opening to a personal historical narrative: "For example, children who were born while their father is in prison and who gives the child a negative, divisionist name... later the child asks the mother 'Why am I called like this?' [and she says:] This name was given to you by your father who is in prison. 'Why is he in prison?' Then the story comes out. You see, a name can be a memory, a trigger of negative ideology."⁶⁶

Names indeed are triggers; they are openings to very particular narratives and representations. Even if they are mere signifiers, they are partially constitutive in that they set us off on particular paths or are taken as tokens of realities that one does not have time to investigate. 'Re-naming' always follows regime changes. But in its essence, it is only one way of control over language, and how that language is allowed to reflect on society and its history. *Izina ni ryo muntu* (or *ni ryo kintu*) is a Rwandan and Burundian saying which translates as 'the name is the very man' (or 'the very thing').⁶⁷ The name as a signifier is supposed to contain in itself the core, the substance of the signified. Naturally, this presupposition is abusable by the government and leads to masking, especially when it comes to 'naming' the political.

The fragility of such 'representational cleansing' is not hard to make out. The government's re-presentations of reality create only a thin narrative layer that cannot stem out counter-narratives. The more the government tries to chase and suppress them, the more they will proliferate; repressive cleansing, as any repression, tends to ultimately destroy the power that

⁶⁴ Discussion with a NURC employee, January 7, 2009.

⁶⁵ See e.g. TESONE, J. E., *In the Traces of our Name: The Influence of Given Names in Life*, London, Karnac Books, 2011.

⁶⁶ Informal discussion with Jean-Claude at NURC, January 7, 2009.

⁶⁷ TESONE, J. E., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

wields it;⁶⁸ the strength of power as coercion is met with weakness of power as legitimacy.

4. THE META-MODES OF GOVERNMENTALITY: 'SURFACING,' 'SATURATING' AND 'DIRECTIONING'

Governmentality in Rwanda can also be understood through the lens of three 'meta-modes' that crosscut the themes already discussed. These three modes are distinct but intimately connected, and all again fundamentally benefit from the strength of the Rwandan state from which the governmentality project cannot be easily extracted.

The first mode – surfacing – literally refers to the moulding of surfaces, as in the physical, social and mental planes of action. The government has been both active and effective in the sheer scope of surfacing, which of course does not mean this intermediary action has borne all or most of its desired ends. 'Surfacing' is hence doubly useful as a term – the attempt does not necessarily hinge on 'deep' work of transformation, it merely requires a social contract whereby surfaces are publicly upheld, even if privately 'unworked.'⁶⁹

Many of those returning to Rwanda after prolonged separation find it unrecognizable. Interestingly, released prisoners, after having spent a decade or more in prisons and despite never having left Rwanda during this time, also speak of 'return,' return to an unfamiliar place, a new Rwanda they do not recognize and with which they need to familiarize themselves.⁷⁰ This is a segment of the population that is peculiarly 'displaced' without having moved.⁷¹ At the same time as they rush to return to *buzima busanzwe* ('normal life'⁷²), they find the registers of the 'New Rwanda' profoundly altered: "We felt we were about to be sent to a completely different country."⁷³ They find that new forms of settlement and association, new orders of power and new public discourses direct, channel and lay claims on the shaping of life (*ubuzima*).

A different meta-mode of governmentality is 'saturation' – the propensity and ability to permeate the surfaces of action – being there, spreading news, information and authority. Not only does Rwanda not evidence what

⁶⁸ ARENDT, H., "A Special Supplement: Reflections on Violence", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1969.

⁶⁹ PURDEKOVÁ, A., *Political projects...*, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ TERTSAKIAN, C., "'All Rwandans are Afraid of Being Arrested One Day:' Prisoners Past, Present and Future", in STRAUS, S., WALDORF, L. (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

⁷¹ At least not 'moved' in the sense we typically associate with mobility.

⁷² In the circa 70 questionnaires administered to former prisoners and demobilized combatants in *ingando/TIG*, there was a repeated reference of returning to *buzima busanzwe* afterwards.

⁷³ TERTSAKIAN, C., *op. cit.*, p. 210.

Herbst⁷⁴ saw as a key obstacle to the state project in Africa – the weak ability to ‘broadcast power’ over sparsely settled lands— the word ‘broadcast’ itself does not capture well the mode of Rwandan governmentality. This is instead much better grasped through the concept of ‘presencing.’ There is the presence of ‘important personalities’ at a variety of events and ceremonies, from *ubusabane* to *ingando* pass-out ceremonies to signing of performance contracts (*imihigo*), to the annual *icyuriro* (mourning ceremonies). There is also the sheer physical presence of low-level administrators and policing personnel in the community, as well as the creation of multiple platforms for information dissemination, which are at the same time stages of ‘presencing’ of authority. Importantly, presencing is a complex phenomenon that combines both intrusion from the outside and the cooptation from within (through ‘responsibilisation’⁷⁵).

Finally, the last mode of governmentality is what can be called ‘directioning’ or ‘herding’ – the channeling of the multitude in a desired direction. This is the art of successful enactments, actual production of façade realities and selective invocations. As a Rwandan student commented: “We are herded like cows, we just hope the place where they bring us has greener grass.” The government’s penchant for internal directioning of society clashes strongly with the uneasy dependence on external funding. “We shall not be led around like cows,” proclaims Kagame in November 2012 in an emotional speech reacting to the UN accusations of Rwanda’s involvement in the DRC.⁷⁶ Bowing to demands of those more powerful is like *kugaruzwa umuheto* – turning into a servant of someone who has more than you.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Certain social settings contain wrapped within them multiple layers of meaning; they offer rich entries to logics that lay claims to the directioning of life. The simple setting of women from association *Dusukure* manicuring Kigali’s streets is one of them. If looked at carefully, the setting divulges multiple references to cleaning and cleansing. Many of these women transitioned to the cooperative after leaving sex-work in Gikondo, thus being cleansed by leaving an ‘improper’ profession. After leaving, many sex

⁷⁴ HERBST, J., *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000.

⁷⁵ See PURDEKOVÁ, A., “Even If I Am Not Here, There Are So Many Eyes:” Surveillance and State Reach in Rwanda’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2011, pp. 475-497.

⁷⁶ A transcript of the speech can be found here: <http://www.therwandan.com/blog/transcript-of-remarks-by-h-e-president-paul-kagame-at-the-swearing-in-ceremony-of-minister-of-state-for-foreign-affairs-and-permanent-representative-to-the-united-nations-eugene-gasana-kigali-23-n/>.

workers went to an *ingando* camp where they received re-education, being cleansed of 'negative thinking' and refilled with useful developmental and political knowledge. Finally, they were offered a replacement livelihood as street cleaners in Kigali, appropriately involved in continual cleaning of their own selves, the city, and the image of Rwanda.

Cleaning and cleansing, ordering and disciplining, placing and containing are all themes that one repeatedly encounters in the context of government's fashioning of life. They arise as key social themes in its particular governing mentality. Situating Rwanda's governmentality in wider social and cultural milieus is not meant to make policies seem 'organic' and hence more justifiable. Culture and society themselves are moving and unclear targets, especially in Rwanda where at least two factors profoundly warp any space, including cultural one: the disruption of genocide, which shook received knowledges and other continuities, and the government machine, aiming to reshape and redefine most of the social and the ideational. The government's attempts at disruption of continuities (e.g. 'negative thinking') as much as the government's penchant for rediscovery of everlasting traits (evidenced in the rich discourse of 'traditionality' and institution of multiple 'traditional' activities), as well as the ability of state to create surface enactments, makes the 'cultural' domain in Rwanda highly elusive, posing unique difficulties in trying to disentangle 'reality' from its representation.

Instead, embedding governmentality in wider social themes is meant to i) counteract the image of governmentality as something that is controlled and self-contained; and ii) open the discussion on the strength versus fragility of the governing project itself. With respect to the latter, what can be concluded- do these governmentality strategies betray strength or fragility, or perhaps a simultaneity of the two? To begin with, all of the governmentality aspects discussed above are certainly meant to make governance more effective. Governmentality is the specific set of modes of making people or, perhaps more correctly, the socioscaples more governable so that, ultimately, policies can bear the desired results. People need to be made 'actable-upon' and 'pre-disposed' through visibilisation, ordering, containment, flexibilisation, sensitization and mobilization. The desired ends are not only docile and legible subjects, but ones transformed mainly through altered mentalities.

From one perspective, governmentality in Rwanda shows strength. The RPF as a developmental state has taken it upon itself to achieve a wholesale transformation of Rwanda. Various governmentality techniques are meant to make that transformation possible. The dense nature of the state reaching to the most local level is certainly an asset in this respect as it is intimately involved in the ability to saturate, order and surface, contain, cleanse as well as direction. Both the state and governmentality, in turn, are direct variables of power. Order and legibility heighten controllability. Surveillance and incorporation of knowledges, however superficial, increases self-control.

And yet, a broader analysis incorporating the social and cultural dimensions uncovers profound instabilities and weaknesses in the government's 'art of means.' Far from unequivocal strength and control, rationalities of post-genocide governance point to both a powerful resolve and variegated involvement and, simultaneously, key fragilities underpinning the government's overwhelming 'assertion' in the shaping of life. Ordering as glanced through protocol shows the frailty of the complex social contract. Ceremoniousness is both a repeated assurance of a tenuous social order and its acknowledgment. Containment, on the other hand, is certainly functional. But it is a delicate tool because it is ultimately shallow and not necessarily transformatory. The machinery resurfacing Rwanda, though undoubtedly strong in the scope of its transformativeness, might be ultimately weak in its depth.

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