

What Is the Relationship between Hate Radio and Violence? Rethinking Rwanda's "Radio Machete"

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The importance of hate radio pervades commentary on the Rwandan genocide, and Rwanda has become a paradigmatic case of media sparking extreme violence. However, there exists little social scientific analysis of radio's impact on the onset of genocide and the mobilization of genocide participants. Through an analysis of exposure, timing, and content as well as interviews with perpetrators, the article refutes the conventional wisdom that broadcasts from the notorious radio station RTLM were a primary determinant of genocide. Instead, the article finds evidence of conditional media effects, which take on significance only when situated in a broader context of violence.

Keywords: *genocide; ethnic violence; media effects; hate radio; Rwanda*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1994, government and military officials in Rwanda orchestrated one of the twentieth century's most extreme human rights crimes. During a three-month

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period, in the midst of a civil war that they were losing, Rwandan officials led an extermination campaign against the country's minority Tutsi population that left some 500,000 civilians dead.¹ At the time it occurred, despite the magnitude and character of the violence, the genocide in Rwanda received relatively little attention in the English-speaking developed world. Rwanda was a small, landlocked, coffee-and-tea-exporting, francophone, and strategically insignificant country. However, more than a decade later, interest in Rwanda has surged, as evidenced by a raft of major motion pictures, documentaries, and books (both scholarly and popular) about the country. Through these various media, Rwanda has emerged as one of the most recognizable contemporary cases of mass violence and as a textbook example of the international community's inaction in the face of genocide.

A prominent theme running through the corpus of work on Rwanda is the pervasive and pernicious role that modern media, in particular "hate radio," played in stoking the genocide.² In popular settings, films on the Rwandan genocide invariably feature radio.³ In policy circles, debates on how to contain the genocide often focus on jamming the radio.⁴ For skeptics of rapid democratization, Rwandan private radio is a showcase example of the dangers of media liberalization.⁵ In addition, students of genocide,⁶ journalism,⁷ and international law⁸ all highlight Rwandan radio. And in a major decision in 2003, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) found two radio journalists and a print journalist guilty of inciting genocide, the first international court to do so since the Nuremberg conviction of Julius Streicher.⁹ In short, radio has become a symbol of the genocide in Rwanda, and Rwanda has become a paradigmatic case of hate radio sparking genocide.¹⁰

However, despite the central role regularly attributed to radio, there has been little sustained social scientific analysis of radio media effects in the Rwandan genocide. Many of the standard methods and concepts of political communications empirical research—such as exposure, timing, frequency, reception, audience selectivity, and survey research—have found little to no application in the literature on Rwanda. This is the case despite the presence of often quite strong claims about media effects, found especially in film and popular writings. Such claims often assert or imply undifferentiated, direct, and massive media effects—effects that, if true, would be at odds with decades of political communications empirical research. Scholarship on Rwanda shows greater differentiation, but many observers suggest large-scale media effects or employ somewhat vague terms, such as radio "fomenting" genocide.¹¹

Given the importance of the Rwandan case and given the centrality of hate radio to the commentary on Rwanda, a better assessment of radio media effects in the genocide is needed. At stake is not only getting the Rwandan story right, which has implications for a series of related issue areas, including genocide studies, ethnic conflict, humanitarian intervention, and democratization. The issue

also matters for the political communications field, for which the bulk of research focuses on voting behavior and electoral outcomes in Western countries. But perhaps most significantly, the Rwandan radio case raises the question of how outside observers conceptualize extreme behavior in poor, non-Western settings. The conventional wisdom on hate radio and massive media effects in Rwanda is undoubtedly an improvement on ahistorical and empirically untenable claims that “ancient tribal hatred” drove the violence—a view common to press commentary on Rwanda and ethnic conflict in general. Nonetheless, much of the conventional wisdom on hate radio reproduces simplistic models of political behavior that attribute little or no agency to Rwandans and that minimize the context in which extreme violence took place. Reexamining radio effects in Rwanda thus allows for a reintroduction of causal complexity to help explain what was a very complex and multidimensional outcome.

To gain analytical leverage on the issues at hand, the article focuses on two researchable questions: first, do radio broadcasts account for the onset of genocidal violence in Rwanda; second, is radio responsible for prompting ordinary citizens to become genocide perpetrators? I examine the questions using a series of methodologies and triangulating available data and original field research, including a survey of convicted perpetrators. On the whole, I conclude that radio alone cannot account for either the onset of most genocidal violence or the participation of most perpetrators. That said, I find some evidence of conditional media effects. Radio catalyzed a small number of individuals and incidents of violence, framed public choice, and reinforced messages that many individuals received during face-to-face mobilization. Situated in context—that is, seen alongside the primary dynamics of violence that drove the genocide—I hypothesize that the effects had a marginal impact on the outcome. To be clear, the overall point is not to exonerate, legally or morally, journalists found guilty of incitement; radio broadcasts were at times racist and openly inflammatory, and those responsible deserve punishment. Rather, the point is to evaluate systematically and empirically, using the tools of social science, the conventional wisdom about media effects for what has become a world-historical event.

The article is laid out in four sections. In the first, I discuss the media environment in Rwanda as well as the main claims about radio media effects in the Rwandan genocide, isolating causal mechanisms in the literature. In the second, I underline a series of theoretical and empirical problems with the conventional wisdom. In the third, I test the hypotheses that radio drove the genocide and participation in violence against available evidence. In particular, drawing on methods and concepts from the political communications field, I examine broadcast exposure, timing, content, and reception. I also discuss the results of a survey of perpetrators conducted in Rwanda. In the final section, I conclude by proposing an alternative model of conditional media effects, which take on significance only when embedded in an analysis of the principal dynamics of the genocide.

II. MEDIA AND MEDIA EFFECTS IN THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

Most discussions of media effects in the Rwandan genocide focus on radio, in particular a notorious semiprivate FM station called Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), which began broadcasting in July 1993.¹² The focus on radio is appropriate, given that radio in Rwanda and throughout sub-Saharan Africa is the most important medium of public communication.¹³ Radio transistors and batteries are comparatively plentiful and cheap in Rwanda, as throughout Africa. By contrast, print media have limited circulation outside the capital and are accessible primarily to urban and educated elites. Television media have similar demographics.

RTLM was not the only radio station accessible in Rwanda on the eve of and during the 1994 genocide. Rwandans could listen to the more staid, state-owned station, Radio Rwanda. In addition, the Tutsi-led rebels, who were fighting the government in a war that began in 1990, operated a station called Radio Muhabura. Several foreign stations were also accessible.¹⁴ But for discussions of the relationship between media and genocide, RTLM garners the most attention. The station was owned and controlled by Hutu hard-liners within the ruling regime who ultimately organized the genocidal violence.¹⁵ Before the genocide, RTLM broadcast a steady digest of belligerent, nationalist, antirebel, and often openly inflammatory statements. During the genocide, RTLM announcers encouraged listeners to fight, and in some cases, the announcers broadcast names of individuals and places, which were subsequently attacked by citizen bands. For these reasons, RTLM is the subject of most commentary on genocidal media effects: "If ever there was a textbook case of broadcasting genocide, RTLM's emissions after 6 April 1994, fit the bill—chapter and verse," claims an ICTR prosecutor in a typical statement.¹⁶ RTLM is thus the focus of this article.

Within the literature on Rwanda, a number of claims about RTLM's effects are evident. The strongest and most common assertion—the conventional wisdom—is that RTLM broadcasts had large-scale and direct effects on behavior. For example, Roméo Dallaire, the celebrated former United Nations force commander in Rwanda, claims, "In Rwanda the radio was akin to the voice of God, and if the radio called for violence, many Rwandans would respond, believing they were being sanctioned to commit these actions."¹⁷ Another well-known author on Rwanda, Linda Melvern, writes that RTLM radio was "a propaganda weapon unlike any other."¹⁸ She claims, "The influence of hate radio . . . must never be underestimated."¹⁹ Similarly, Pulitzer Prize winner Samantha Power claims, "Killers in Rwanda often carried a machete in one hand and a radio transistor in the other."²⁰ (The implication being radio delivered instructions, and then men attacked with machetes.) Such conceptualizations suggest a strong causal link between radio broadcasts and genocidal violence. So do expressions about RTLM such as "broadcasting genocide," "radio genocide,"²¹ "death by radio,"²²

the “radio dispatcher of murder,”²³ “radio murder,”²⁴ the “voice of genocide,”²⁵ “a tool for mass murder,”²⁶ and “call to genocide.”²⁷ The most common sobriquet—Radio Machete²⁸—directly equates RTLTM with a violent weapon.

Some observers—a minority in the literature—hold more moderate views. For example, Rwandan analysts Jean-Marie Vianney Higiho and Charles Mironko argue that media had some effect but that media alone cannot account for citizen mobilization during the genocide.²⁹ After interviewing perpetrators in Rwanda, researcher Darryl Li concludes that RTLTM communicated ideology and constituted “performances” that listeners subsequently reenacted. Radio routinized and legitimized violence,³⁰ he argues; RTLTM “may have been the key thing that helped transform the genocide from a state-led campaign into a nationwide project.”³¹ But Li distances himself from claims that radio had direct media effects capable of instantly causing violence. Richard Carver, a rare skeptic, faults most commentary on hate radio in Rwanda for failing to establish a causal relationship between radio propaganda and the violence.³² Similarly, Alan Kuperman doubts that radio broadcasts were essential to the genocide outcome because military officials had separate communication networks, and moderate Rwandans were not convinced by such broadcasts.³³ Nonetheless, neither these moderate claims nor the stronger ones have been subjected to systematic empirical research, testing, and adjudication.

The combined writings on RTLTM indicate two prominent causal mechanisms. The first is that radio broadcasts implanted ideas in listeners that subsequently caused them to hate, dehumanize, and fear Tutsis. Radio thereby conditioned, facilitated, and legitimized violence and became a tool for the mobilization of genocide. Writing in the preface to a seminal study, for example, a UN investigator claimed Rwandan media were the vector by which “the poison of racist propaganda is spread.”³⁴ Similarly, Melvern claims, “In order to commit genocide, it is necessary to define the victim as being outside human existence—vermin and subhuman. In Rwanda, the propaganda campaign against the minority Tutsis was relentless in its incitement to ethnic hatred and violence.”³⁵ In another study, communication scholars Christine Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves assert that radio indoctrinated the public by “instill[ing] a pronounced fear and hatred that previously had not been part of the everyday culture.”³⁶ Such views are fairly common in the commentary on radio media in Rwanda.³⁷

The second major theme is that radio was a voice of authority and that having issued orders to kill, Rwandans obeyed. In their seminal study *Les Médias du Génocide*, French historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien and coauthors claim that the Rwandan genocide had two main tools: “the radio and the machete, the first to give and receive orders, the second to execute them.”³⁸ Another observer, a journalist, asserts, “When the radio said it was time to kill the people opposed to the government, the masses slid off a dark edge into insanity.”³⁹ The UN investigator quoted above similarly concluded that the “poison” of radio propaganda

“is all the more effective because, it is said, the Rwandan peasant has a radio culture of holding a transistor up to his ear in one hand and holding a machete in the other, waiting for orders emitted by RTLM.”⁴⁰

The ICTR decision is a variation on these themes. The judges essentially make two arguments. The first, and the emphasis in the decision, is about indirect incitement. The judges find that media “spread hatred and scorn” and equated the Tutsi ethnic group as a whole with the Tutsi-led rebels, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Thus, the court concludes that

RTLM broadcasts engaged in ethnic stereotyping in a manner that promoted contempt and hatred for the Tutsi population. RTLM broadcasts called on listeners to seek out and take up arms against the enemy. The enemy was identified as the RPF, the *inkotanyi*, the *inyenzi*, and their accomplices, all of whom were effectively equated with the Tutsi ethnic group by the broadcasts. After April 6, 1994, the virulence and the intensity of RTLM broadcasts propagating ethnic hatred and calling for violence increased. These broadcasts called explicitly for the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group.⁴¹

Hate media thus “paved the way for genocide.”⁴²

The second argument that the court makes is about direct incitement. The court recounts instances when people or places were named on the radio; that naming was followed by attacks:

Both before and after April 6, 1994, RTLM broadcast the names of Tutsi individuals and their families, as well as Hutu political opponents. In some cases, these people were subsequently killed, and the Chamber finds that to varying degrees their deaths were causally linked to the broadcast of their names.⁴³

In short, the court finds that radio played an essential role in the genocide by indirectly and directly inciting listeners to commit genocidal violence.

III. PROBLEMS WITH THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Nothing a priori discredits a causal relationship between RTLM radio broadcasts and the bulk of genocidal violence in Rwanda. However, to be persuasive, the strong claims found in the literature should be well grounded theoretically and empirically. As I show in this section, neither is the case.

Theoretically, the strong claims that radio indirectly instilled ideas that led to violence and issued orders that directly led to mobilization have three primary weaknesses. First, the claims are at odds with mainstream political communication research. The claims closely resemble a “hypodermic needle” model of media effects, whereby media purportedly inject ideas into the body politic and thereby have a direct impact. That view—and similar elementary models of propaganda stimulus and behavioral response—have been largely discredited after more than four decades of empirical research.⁴⁴ Even if political communication

scholars no longer agree, as they did for many years, that mass media have “minimal effects,”⁴⁵ contemporary scholarship still focuses on effects of much smaller magnitude than what is claimed for Rwanda. The focus of most contemporary political communication scholarship is on voting behavior and electoral outcomes.⁴⁶ The common causal mechanisms found in the literature include agenda setting, elite persuasion, and reinforcing predispositions.⁴⁷ To be sure, the field is considerably more complex than this truncated summary indicates, but the point is to highlight the very large gap between the effects claimed in mainstream political communication research and the effects commonly attributed to the Rwanda case. Candidate preference, voting turnout, and agenda setting are quite different media effects than murder and genocide.

Second, the strong claims found in the literature on Rwanda imply a simplistic and improbable model of agency. With the exception of Li and Mironko—both of whom did interviews with listeners and perpetrators—most discussions of Rwandan media effects attribute little or no agency to listeners. The Rwandan public is often characterized as hearing a drumbeat of racist messages and directly internalizing them or as hearing orders to kill and heeding the command. Those views are consistent with stereotypes about Rwandans, namely that they obey orders blindly, that they are poorly educated and thus easily manipulated, and that they are immersed in a culture of prejudice.⁴⁸ But being based on stereotypes, the assumptions deserve close scrutiny. Third, most discussions of media effects are not situated in a broader discussion of the dynamics of violence or of an assessment of rival explanations.⁴⁹ None of these latter assumptions—minimal agency; an obedient, pliant, and hateful public; or uncomplicated dynamics of violence—should be dismissed out of hand. But to have validity, the claims require empirical substantiation.

However, the existing empirical case is as weak as the theoretical one. The most common method of analysis in the literature on Rwanda is nonsystematic content analysis.⁵⁰ One exception is a study by Kenyan journalist Mary Kimani who conducted a detailed content analysis of RTLM transcripts.⁵¹ Even so, Kimani and other studies do not systematically address questions of timing (whether content correlates to violence in temporal terms) or audience selectivity (whether and how media effects varied by social category, education level, region, political party affiliation, or some other potentially relevant variable). Some studies suggest RTLM appealed to young listeners because of the station’s talk show format. If true, the finding runs contrary to expectation because the two existing published studies on the demographic profile of genocide perpetrators indicate that they were a cross-section of the adult male population.⁵² In addition, some commonly cited broadcasts—such as the evocative command “the graves are not yet full”⁵³—may never have aired.⁵⁴

Perhaps the most glaring absences are questions of exposure and reception. As I discuss below, it is not clear that RTLM reached all areas of Rwanda where

violence occurred. Moreover, with the exception of Li and Mironko, the existing literature does not assess media effects through interviews or survey research. Li's study also has empirical limits. Li primarily interviewed detainees and sentenced perpetrators in Kigali's Central Prison, thus drawing an urban (as well as a nonrandom) sample. Mironko had a larger and more rural sample, but he concludes that media had minimal effects and that most perpetrators he interviewed thought broadcasts were destined for the urban, elite, and educated.⁵⁵ In short, despite very strong causal claims about media effects commonly found in commentary on Rwanda, the supporting evidence is weak.

The ICTR judgment is a case in point. Like other studies, the judgment documents content of fear-mongering and racist stereotypes in RTLM before the genocide as well as incitement to violence during the genocide. However, in most cases, the effects of the broadcasts are not specified. In fact, the Chamber concludes it does not have to prove a causal link because

With regard to causation, the Chamber recalls that incitement is a crime regardless of whether it has the effect it intends to have. In determining whether communications represent an intent to cause genocide and thereby constitute incitement, the Chamber considers it significant that in fact genocide occurred.⁵⁶

The court's claim may work for legal arguments, but it is less satisfying from a social science perspective.

IV. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Given the attention Rwanda receives and the prominence of hate radio in the commentary on Rwanda, a better appraisal of media effects is critical. While existing data to test hypotheses are not extensive, enough evidence exists to test, in various ways, some of the claims found in the literature. In this section, I pursue several approaches. Each method is independently inconclusive, but triangulating the approaches yields a cumulative evaluation.

Exposure

A central issue for assessing media effects is exposure: in this case, how many Rwandans had access to RTLM broadcasts? One way to answer the question is by looking at radio ownership rates. United Nations statistics indicate that less than 10 percent of the Rwandan population in 1994 owned radio transmitters, which is comparatively low for Africa.⁵⁷ But the data are weak, and individuals listened collectively.

A better measure is broadcast range: did RTLM reach areas where the genocide took place? The genocide itself was national. The violence occurred in all eleven prefectures and in all but one commune (an administrative unit equivalent to a

town) under government control. By contrast, while the data to evaluate RTLTM's range are inconclusive, most indicators suggest the broadcast range was not national.⁵⁸ Several studies claim RTLTM had little reach in rural areas,⁵⁹ even if Rwanda's population was 90 to 95 percent rural in the early 1990s.⁶⁰ The ICTR decision does not address the question of broadcast range, but during the trial, the prosecution produced a Rwandan radio technician who testified that RTLTM had two transmitters. He claimed RTLTM had a 100-watt transmitter that could reach the whole of the capital Kigali and a few areas south and east of Kigali as well as a less powerful transmitter on Mount Muhe in western Rwanda that could reach some areas in that part of the country.⁶¹ If true, then RTLTM would not have reached large segments of the country, including northern, northeastern, southern, and southwest areas, where genocide occurred.

Another way to consider broadcast range is through an analysis of topography and elevation. The assumption would be that hilly and mountainous areas have comparatively limited exposure to radio broadcasts. Here again, the evidence from Rwanda points to nonnational range. Rwanda's nickname is the "land of a thousand hills," which reflects the country's mountainous and hilly terrain and large numbers of changes in elevation. Rwanda's topography thus makes the country a poor exemplar for mass effects from FM broadcast media. In short, the available evidence suggests a significant exposure gap between broadcast range and where the genocide occurred.

Timing 1: Broadcast Range and Regional Patterns of Violence

Another way to test media effects is through an analysis of timing, here operationalized as whether broadcast range corresponds to regional temporal patterns of violence. Even though the genocide occurred nationally, the violence started at different times in different regions. In some regions, violence started immediately after President Juvénal Habyarimana's assassination on April 6, 1994. In other regions, the violence took two weeks or longer to materialize. Moreover, in one commune (Giti) under government control, genocidal violence did not occur. The temporal variation is small, but nonetheless, it represents different levels of local willingness to commit genocide and of resistance to it.

Since RTLTM's exact range is unknown, I compare four hypothetical broadcast models against a data set of onset variation. The data set includes onset estimates for about two-thirds of Rwanda's 145 communes that existed in 1994.⁶² The four hypothetical models of RTLTM's broadcast range are as follows: (1) national coverage, (2) urban coverage (including the capital Kigali and environs), (3) coverage as stipulated in the ICTR testimony (Kigali and environs and Mount Muhe and environs), and (4) coverage in Kigali plus flatter and lower-elevation regions.

All told, no hypothetical model clearly supports the conventional wisdom, and some models flatly contradict it.

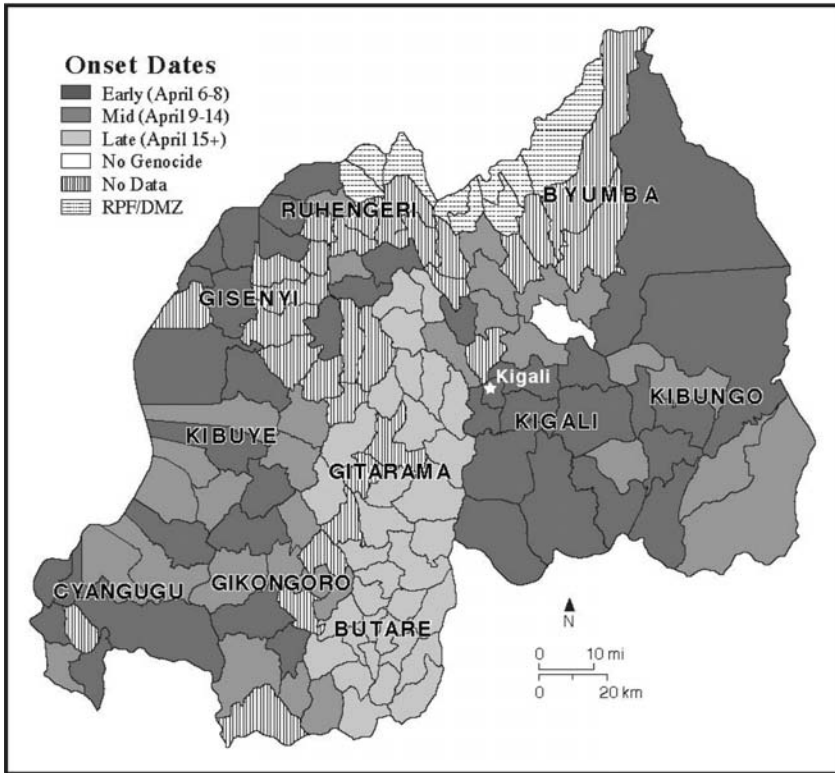


Figure 1. Genocide onset dates with hypothetical national RTLM broadcast range.

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Under model 1 (national coverage, as represented in Figure 1), the prediction would be that violence happened simultaneously countrywide. But Figure 1 shows that simultaneous onset was not the case; as noted above, there were pockets of early and late onset in the country. Under model 2, as represented in Figure 2, the prediction would be that Kigali as well as proximate areas in Kigali rural, Byumba, and Gitarama prefectures would be early onset areas. However, Figure 2, which depicts the hypothetical scenario that RTLM had a forty-kilometer radius around the capital Kigali, demonstrates that coverage areas exhibit the onset spectrum. The hypothetical broadcast range includes areas of early onset (around Kigali and southeast of Kigali), mid onset (parts of Byumba Prefecture), and late onset (parts of Gitarama Prefecture). Under model 3, as represented in Figure 3, the prediction would be that areas around Kigali and Gisenyi would be early onset. Figure 3, which depicts the hypothetical scenario of a forty-kilometer broadcast range around Kigali and a twenty-kilometer range around Mount Muhe (under the assumption that the Muhe transmitter was less powerful), does

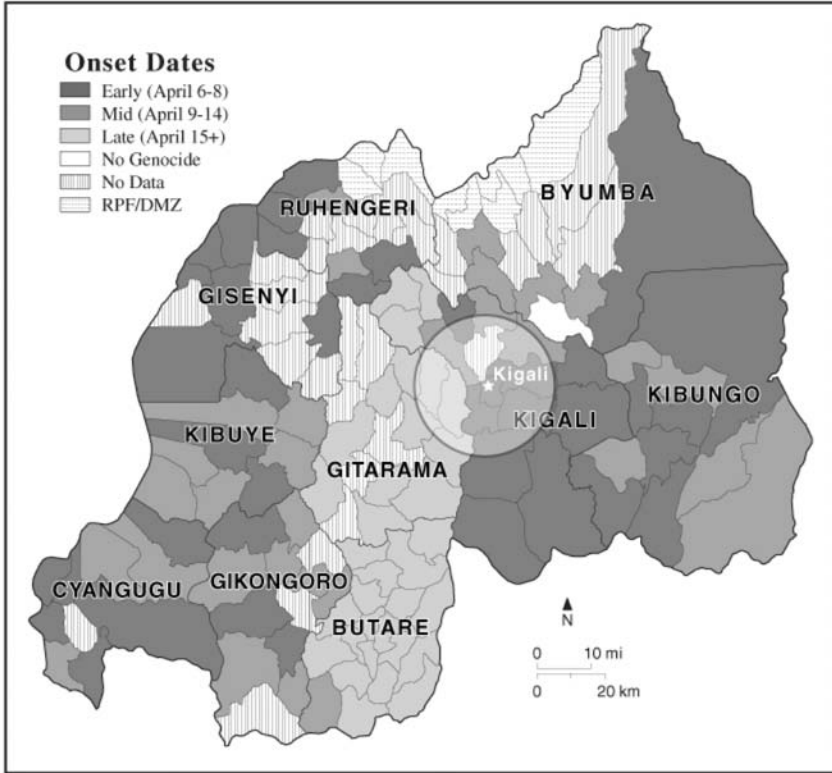


Figure 2. Genocide onset dates and hypothetical RTL broadcast range of Kigali City and environs. Source: Figure by author.

show a hypothetical broadcast range that includes primarily areas where genocide started earliest. However, the map also shows many uncovered areas where violence started earliest.

Finally, under model 4, the prediction would be that flatter and lower elevation regions would be early onset areas. However, Figure 4, which shades higher elevation areas darker, shows almost the opposite. The prefectures with the highest elevations (Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Kibuye) had early and mid onset. By contrast, the prefectures with the lowest elevations (areas south of Kigali, Gitarama, Butare, Kibungo, and Gikongoro) run the onset spectrum. There are similar results for changes in elevation. All eleven prefectures in Rwanda have at least a 1,500-meter spread in elevation.⁶³ However, the prefectures with the greatest height variance (Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Kibuye) are areas where violence started earliest.

In sum, the mapping analysis indicates that broadcast range does not correlate well with onset of genocidal violence in different regions. Of four tested hypothetical models of broadcast range, only one (the third) lends minimal support to the hypothesis that violence started earliest where RTL reached. The three

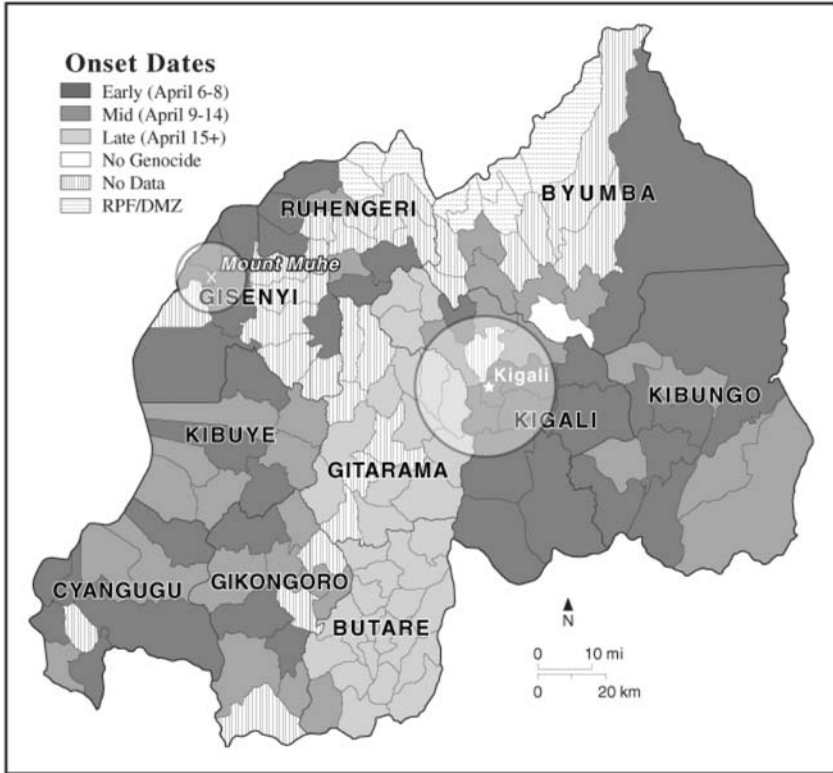


Figure 3. Genocide onset dates and hypothetical RTLM broadcast range of Kigali City and environs plus Mount Muhe and its environs.

Source: Figure by author.

other models show either no correlation between early onset and broadcast range or an inverted relationship. Moreover, the third model leaves out many areas where violence started earliest, which indicates that RTLM would not have been necessary to trigger the onset of genocide.

Timing II: Broadcasts and Violence

A related timing issue is whether violence tended to happen when broadcasts tended to air. In some cases, the answer to the question is “yes.” There are examples where RTLM broadcast specific names and places, which were followed by attacks on those individuals and locations. However, the cases comprise a tiny fraction of the total violence and appear to be limited to the capital and its environs. The ICTR Media Trial decision, for example, lists about ten instances. The ICTR may not have discovered or reported all such incidents, but even if the number were increased twentyfold to two hundred, the percentage of attacks

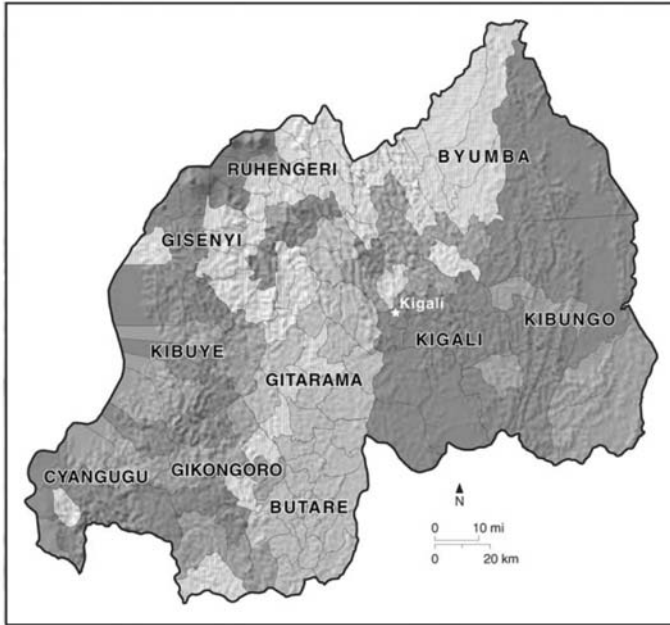


Figure 4. Genocide onset dates and elevation levels (higher areas shaded darker).

Source: Figure by author.

would be small compared to the total numbers of attacks and murders during the genocide, which left at least 500,000 dead countrywide.

With regard to general trends of broadcasts and violence, the existing data show a limited temporal relationship at best. Most violence during the genocide happened in April. The only comprehensive data on timing of deaths comes from Kibuye Prefecture, where a survivors' organization conducted a household survey documenting the date and location of deaths. The organization's findings show that some 85 percent of all reported deaths took place between April 7 and April 20.⁶⁴

Kibuye was a mid onset prefecture, meaning that violence spiked earlier in Kigali, Gisenyi, and Rugengeri. By contrast, violence spiked later in Gitarama and Butare, between April 21 and the first week of May. By mid May, moreover, the RPF rebels had won control over large areas of the country. For simplicity, I categorize the genocide into two periods: a "high genocide" period (between April 6 and May 7) and a "low genocide" period (between May 8 and early July).

When then did most inflammatory broadcasts take place? The ICTR decision lists relatively few specific broadcasts from the high genocide period, and those that are listed focus on the Kigali area. The decision discusses three broadcasts in which people were named on April 7 and 8 and subsequently killed.⁶⁵ A separate broadcast took place "days after" the president's assassination, according

to the ICTR, and it encouraged listeners in three locations in and around Kigali to search for *inyenzi*.⁶⁶ (The Kinyarwanda word *inyenzi* means “cockroach” and was a pejorative term for the rebels and sometimes all Tutsis.) A broadcast from April 11 encouraged Tutsis to return from their hiding places to their homes; a court witness testified that some who did return after the broadcast were subsequently murdered. On April 12, an RTLM announcer claimed armed *inyenzi* were at an Islamic Center in Kigali; a day later, attackers stormed the center’s mosque and massacred hundreds of unarmed civilians there.⁶⁷ On April 13, the same announcer implied that Tutsis, as a minority, should be exterminated for seeking to take power.⁶⁸

The broadcasts provide evidence of direct media effects, especially where attacks followed the broadcasting of a name or location. At the same time, the broadcasts amount to a handful of examples from the high genocide period, and they focus on the capital Kigali. The ICTR decision cites many other broadcasts in the decision, but they date from May 13 onward. The later broadcasts are indeed consistently inflammatory, urging listeners in instances to quash the rebels and their Tutsi “accomplices” or to “break” Tutsis’ noses. On several occasions, the broadcasts refer to “exterminating” the rebels and the “enemy.” Indeed, as Mary Kimani concludes, RTLM broadcasts appear to become more extreme during the later stages of the genocide, as the government side lost ground to Tutsi rebels.⁶⁹ However, as Figure 5 shows, by mid May, most killing of Tutsi civilians had already taken place. Thus, citing mid May or later broadcasts is weak evidence to support the hypothesis that broadcasts drove the violence and participation in it.

Other sources show similar patterns. In the seminal book *Les Médias du Génocide*, Chrétien and his coauthors list only three specific April 1994 RTLM broadcasts.⁷⁰ Almost all of the most explicit and inflammatory RTLM broadcasts cited in the book are dated from mid May onward.⁷¹ Communication scholars Kellow and Steeves make generalizations about radio broadcasts after April 6, but the earliest specific RTLM broadcast they cite is from May 14.⁷² The report *Broadcasting Genocide* from media watchdog group Article 19 cites five specific broadcasts in the high genocide period. According to the report, on April 8, listeners at roadblocks (where violence happened frequently) were told to remain “strong” and to know that the radio supported them. On April 10, listeners were told to “remain vigilant,” to “defend themselves,” and to man roadblocks. On April 13, listeners were additionally told to “give punishment,” to remain “heroic,” and to prepare for “battle.” On April 15, listeners were told to “stand up” and “take action” lest they be exterminated.⁷³ The report provides some evidence of a temporal link between belligerent broadcasts and the bulk of killing countrywide as well as evidence that hate radio served to bolster and encourage those who were committing violence. Even so, the frequency of broadcasts and their reception are not documented.

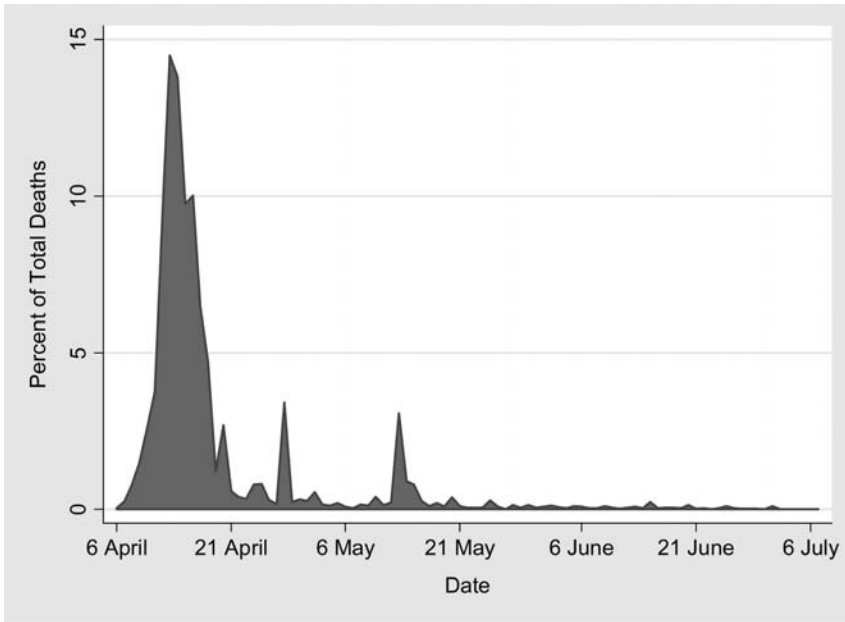


Figure 5. Dates of killings in Kibuye Prefecture.

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Content Analysis

Another way to consider media effects is to examine the content of entire RTLM transcripts systematically. The ICTR produced transcripts of thirty-four distinct broadcasts that were translated from Kinyarwanda to French and English and which were provided to me (see appendix).⁷⁴ The transcripts include nine that aired before the genocide, four that aired during the high genocide period, ten that aired during the low genocide period, and eleven that are undated. In total, the transcripts amount to 973 pages and an estimated 2,070 minutes of airtime. My analysis proceeds in two ways, first, quantitatively and second, qualitatively; the latter focuses on the broadcasts from the high genocide period.

To conduct the quantitative content analysis, I selected five indicators of inflammatory broadcasts: (1) calls to be “vigilant,” (2) calls to “fight” or “kill,” (3) calls to “defend” the nation or themselves, (4) mention of the word *exterminate*, and (5) mention of the word *inyenzi* (or “cockroach”—the derogatory term for Tutsi rebels and Tutsi civilians). The results are fairly consistent with the pattern seen so far. During the high genocide period, there are some hateful and inciting messages, but they are not overwhelmingly frequent. During the low genocide period, the inflammatory broadcasts are more frequent and virulent, but again

citing broadcasts from mid May onward is weak evidence to show that radio broadcasts sowed violence.

The results are as follows. There are 80 total references to being “vigilant,” 14 in the high genocide period and 28 in the low genocide period. There are 86 total references to “fight” or “kill,” 11 in the high genocide period and 36 in the low genocide period. There are 87 total references to “defense,” 12 in the high genocide period and 50 in the low genocide period. There are 46 total references to “exterminate,” none in the high genocide period and 32 in the low genocide period. Finally, there are 460 total references to *inyenzi*, 9 in the high genocide period and 399 in the low genocide period.⁷⁵

The qualitative analysis reveals the same patterns. The pregenocide broadcasts present Rwandan history in a tendentious, nationalist, and antirebel fashion, often accompanied by negative commentary about Tutsi behavior. The low genocide broadcasts include inflammatory calls to arms. Broadcasters urge listeners to fight the *inyenzi* and “their accomplices” (references to Tutsi civilians). However, a close reading of the four available broadcasts from the high genocide period reveals little evidence of direct calls for violence against Tutsis. In fact, on several occasions, announcers or interviewees urge listeners not to attack civilians; they also advocate negotiation with the rebels. To be sure, the tone of the broadcasts is decidedly hostile toward the rebels, and it is hard to know how tone was interpreted. Moreover, speakers urge the population to assist the armed forces, and on two occasions, broadcasters mention place-names where listeners are supposed to go to find *inkotanyi* (another Kinyarwanda synonym for rebels). But officials also sometimes encourage listeners to avoid excesses and spare civilians. A discussion of the four broadcasts follows.

The April 9 broadcast is primarily a report on the swearing-in ceremony of the new transitional government. Speeches by the new prime minister and president emphasize the importance of future elections, the constitution, and negotiations with the rebels. The tone of the broadcast is mild, and there is no evidence of orders to kill.

The April 14 broadcast is on balance more aggressive, but it displays some of the complexity of the broadcasts from this period. Early in the transcript, the announcer urges listeners to be courageous in the war. The announcer also makes reference to a busload of *inkotanyi* in Kigali and calls on listeners to protect the area. Later the announcer urges the “sons of *Sebahinzi*” (codeword for Hutus) to “unite” and “be on guard.” But he adds: “We would like however to say that those who kill and loot must stop . . . You have been given a gun to be on guard and to maintain security, not to intimidate people, steal goods from them or to kill them . . . Stop this business, you have done enough!”

The latter parts of the transcript include interviews with the prime minister and the president. The officials blame the rebels for the current crisis, but they

also encourage negotiations. When asked by a journalist to address the population, the prime minister urges listeners to help the armed forces but to “avoid divisions on regional or ethnic grounds.” Similarly, the president urges listeners to “forget excess anger, hatred, and vengeance because if you are attacked and you fight amongst yourselves, what will that accomplish?” The prefect of Kigali (who also is interviewed) takes a similar line. He urges the population to take part in the government’s self-defense operations, but he calls for an end to violence against innocents.

The April 15 transcript is also aggressive and hostile toward the rebels, but there are again no direct calls to attack the Tutsi population. The transcript begins with a telephone interview with a caller from abroad; he encourages listeners to be vigilant and to recognize the ethnic minority basis of the RPF rebels. An RTLM journalist similarly urges the population to remain vigilant and to fight alongside the soldiers. He also publicizes rebel atrocities, claiming he had seen evidence that the rebels were murdering Hutu civilians. The remainder of the transcript, however—more than a third of it—is an interview with a captured rebel soldier. Throughout the interview, the tone of the RTLM journalist is antirebel and jingoistic.

The April 22 broadcast is similarly hostile to the rebels. An interviewed political party leader rebuts claims made on Radio Muhabura that the rebels enjoy the support of the Rwandan population. At one point, an RTLM announcer broadcasts the name of a location in the capital, where four inkotanyi in civilian clothes allegedly were. He additionally says, “You people manning roadblocks should also double your efforts, be alert and observe the situation to make sure they do not trick you . . . and slip through. So stay firm, remain vigilant.” Later the announcer rails against Hutus who joined the RPF and counters claims that the rebels have taken certain locations. He further presents a nationalist-inflected rendition of Rwandan history, emphasizing Tutsis’ alleged superiority complex. Yet at the same time, the announcer admits that the rebels have bombed their studio and that RTLM is operating from a different one.

In sum, the qualitative analysis of the existing high genocide RTLM broadcasts paints a more complex picture than the conventional wisdom suggests. The tone on RTLM was belligerent; the ideology was consistently pro-government, nationalist, virulently antirebel, and hostile to Tutsis in general. But the available full transcripts from the high genocide period complicate the “Radio Machete” image of a station openly and repeatedly calling for genocide.

Reception I: Quantitative Analysis of Perpetrator Interviews

It is possible that RTLM aired more virulent broadcasts during key periods in the genocide but that the broadcasts were not recorded, have since disappeared, or are otherwise inaccessible. Thus, another way to triangulate evidence

is through interviews: do those who took part in the genocide say that radio influenced them to commit violence? To answer the question, I draw on results from a survey I conducted of 210 sentenced and self-confessed perpetrators, who were sampled randomly in fifteen prisons nationwide in 2002. The results are consistent with the thread of analysis so far: there is evidence that radio broadcasts had a conditional effect of catalyzing some hard-line individuals, but most respondents claim radio was not the primary reason that they joined attacks. Most commonly, individuals say they chose to participate in the genocide after face-to-face solicitation, usually from an authority, elite figure, or a group of violent men.

The general pattern of mobilization at the local level reported by respondents is that elites and young toughs formed a core of violence. They then traversed their communities, recruiting a large number of Hutu men to participate in manhunts of Tutsis or to participate in other forms of “self-defense,” such as manning roadblocks. The recruiting most often was done house to house, at markets or rural commercial centers, at rural bars, or at meetings called by local authorities. Radio, in short, was not the principal reason why men entered into violence; rather, mobilization was locally organized and face-to-face. Those results are consistent with other extended, interview-based studies of genocide perpetrators in Rwanda. Researchers consistently find that face-to-face mobilization and social ties were the primary vectors through which ordinary citizens joined the killings.⁷⁶

In the survey, respondents claimed that they participated in the violence for various reasons. The stated motivations included intra-ethnic coercion and intimidation, obedience, wartime fear, a desire for revenge, anger, a desire to loot or gain land, and interpersonal rivalries, among other factors. The two most commonly cited responses were intimidation from other Hutus—respondents said they feared negative consequences for themselves and their families if they refused to take part in the violence after being solicited to do so—and wartime fear and anger—they said they feared Tutsi rebels and wanted to attack their supposed ethnic supporters first, or they said they were angry at the president’s assassination and sought revenge. Asked to name the most important reason why they participated, not one respondent said radio broadcasts (although many claimed that they participated because “the authorities” instructed them to). Asked to name the most important reason why the genocide happened, not one respondent cited radio broadcasts. Most blamed the genocide on the assassination of the president, which they attributed to the rebels.⁷⁷

Closed-ended questions in the survey reveal much the same. The most direct question about radio media effects put to respondents was “Did the radio lead you to take part in the attacks?” About 85 percent of respondents said “no;” 15 percent said “yes” ($N = 176$). About 52 percent of respondents said they owned a radio ($N = 157$). A subsample of those were asked what stations they listened to during or prior to the genocide. About 60 percent did not cite RTL; 34 percent

named RTLTM and at least one other radio station, and 6 percent said they listened to RTLTM exclusively ($N = 65$). Cross-tabulated with age, the results about RTLTM listening conform to expectation. The majority of RTLTM listeners (exclusive or not) were twenty to thirty-nine years old in 1994. As for education, RTLTM listeners tended to have above-average education (which in the sample meant completion of primary school or greater).

One indirect test of media effects is whether respondents had heard or believed anti-Tutsi and nationalist themes that were common on RTLTM prior to the genocide. The survey included three relevant questions: first, whether Tutsis were racial others, in particular “Hamites” who had, according to legend, descended from North Africa to dominate Hutus in the past; second, whether respondents had heard that Tutsi rebels’ objective was to reinstall a monarchy and enslave Hutus; and third, whether respondents believed the rebels were dangerous. RTLTM was not the only source of such views, but any correlation would be at least some plausible evidence of a media impact. The results are mixed. On the Hamite question, of 204 respondents, 58 percent said they had not heard that idea; 28 percent said they had heard it but did not believe the claim; 14 percent said they believed the statement to be true. On the monarchy question, of 197 respondents, 49 percent said that they had not heard the idea; 32 percent said they heard it but did not believe it; and 20 percent said they had heard it and believed it. On fear of the rebels, of 198 respondents, half said they were afraid of the RPF. The survey includes other relevant questions on interethnic relations. One in particular is a question about how respondents got along with their Tutsi neighbors. Of 200 respondents, 87 percent said the relationships were good; 11 percent said they were without problem; 2 percent said they were bad.⁷⁸

The descriptive statistics show, again, that radio was not the main vector of mobilization. According to the respondents, radio was neither the primary cause for their individual participation nor for the genocide as a whole. Asked directly if radio contributed to their decision to join the killing, 85 percent of the respondents—again all perpetrators—answered negatively. The survey results also show that many perpetrators may not have been exposed to RTLTM: many respondents did not have a radio, and only a fraction of those who did listened to RTLTM. Of equal significance, the survey results indicate that, even for respondents who were exposed to anti-Tutsi propaganda, there is evidence that many listeners did not internalize what they heard. The findings are consistent with other efforts to measure media impact through interviews with genocide perpetrators in Rwanda; listeners critically evaluated and discussed what they heard on the radio.⁷⁹

Regression analysis offers another cut on the evidence. I ran a series of bivariate and multivariate analyses. The most important finding is that radio incitement—whether individuals say radio influenced them to participate—has a statistically significant relationship with degree of participation in bivariate

and multivariate models. In other words, the perpetrators who say radio incited them were more likely to commit more violence and to be leaders of the killing than those who said radio did not incite them.

Seen in the context of the local dynamics of violence described above, whereby local elites and especially violent young men would circulate in their communities mobilizing other men to take part in the genocide, the results provide some evidence that radio catalyzed the more hard core among the broader pool of perpetrators. The causal arrows remain unclear. Those who say they were incited by radio may have already been those elites and youth already predisposed to committing the most violence. But at a minimum, the regression results provide some plausible evidence that RTLM radio empowered a few key local leaders of violence in some locations.⁸⁰

Reception II: Qualitative Analysis of Perpetrator Interviews

To probe the issue further, I examine interviews with perpetrators qualitatively. I start with a typical example of face-to-face mobilization in the survey. The respondent describes how national government officials traveled to his commune, held meetings, and then local officials instructed the population to attack Tutsis:

After the death of the president, the Hutu authorities thought that they would lose power. The high authorities of Kigali went to their home areas. . . . [They] met the local authorities, notably the burgomasters [local officials] who had never before incited people to kill others. . . . Afterwards, our burgomaster changed his behavior and started to look for others to join him. He called a meeting of leaders from political parties and the local administration. . . . *How did you become involved in these events?* I left to go and loot.⁸¹

Radio plays little evident role here. Rather, national elites fanned out to local areas to meet with local officials; the latter in turn mobilized citizens directly.

Another excerpt mentions the radio but only as relaying information about the president's assassination and violence elsewhere in the country. As in the excerpt above, the respondent described how violence started after high authorities (in this case, Interim President Théodore Sindikubwabo) traveled to the region:

After the crash of the president's plane, on April 7th we heard on the radio that in other regions the massacres started immediately. On April 19th, when Théodore came . . . he met the leaders of the administration. After the meeting, these leaders of the administration told us that the Tutsis had to be killed as it was in other regions . . . In a meeting by the *conseiller* [a local official], he told us, "One must look for the *inyenzi* among us and put them to one side." When we left the meeting, people began to burn Tutsi homes. Then one looted and took cows. The next day, roadblocks were erected to look for Tutsis.

As in the first excerpt, face-to-face mobilization and coordination among officials precipitated the anti-Tutsi killing. National elites traveled to local areas to

order the killing to start. Having initially opposed the violence, local officials in turn decided to join the program. They then held meetings and instructed Hutus under their jurisdiction to attack Tutsis. Radio did not unleash the violence: meetings and direct mobilization did. Rather, radio conveyed information and framed the context in which political action took place.

The two excerpts are representative of the dynamics that most respondents in the survey described. Below is a panel of different excerpts from respondents who, in the survey, answered negatively when asked if radio led them to participate in the genocide:

Radio is where we learned that the president died. But radio is not what led me to join. I went in order to obey the authorities.

Did the radio lead you to take arms? No. *Why not?* I am not a politician. I was not part of the state. *So the broadcasts were for the authorities?* Yes.

The radio did not lead me to take part in the attacks. It was the meetings.

Did the radio lead you to take arms? No. If other people did not demand this of me, I would not have gone.

I participated because all Rwandans had to participate . . . to save his own life. Those who did not participate were considered enemies and the penalty was death.

Did the radio encourage you? No, but it did for others. *Why do you say that?* Because after the radio said the enemy is such and such, it was then that the leaders said that to the population and that is when the killings began.

We were people convinced the Tutsis would kill us. I would not say that RTLM encouraged us. To the contrary, it lied saying we were winning.

In these excerpts, the principal motivations to join attacks are coercion, compliance with authorities, and wartime fear. Radio mattered, but according to one respondent, broadcasts were intended for the authorities, and according to another, radio shaped and encouraged elite actions.⁸² In that sense, there is some, albeit weak, evidence that radio broadcasts served as an elite coordinating device and as a tool that strengthened the hand of elites who advocated violence. But the broadcasts were not the principal reason why the respondents participated. Rather, face-to-face mobilization and fear were the primary drivers.

In contrast is a panel of excerpts from respondents (again, a significant minority) who claimed radio did encourage them to commit violence. But the described dynamics of mobilization are not altogether different from the excerpts above:

Yes, the radio encouraged this. *Did you listen and go out to attack?* No. We waited for the order from the authorities. We had to wait for the order from them. We knew them and they were closer.

Did the radio have an effect? Yes, the radio confirmed what the *responsable* [a local official] directed us to do.

Yes [the radio had an effect]. When we were in the fields and we heard that the enemy was the Tutsi and that came from the high authorities, we understood it was serious.

The radio encouraged people to participate because it said “the enemy is the Tutsi.”

If the radio had not declared things, people would not have gone into the attacks. *What declarations?* There was a communiqué that came over the radio that said Habyarimana’s plane was shot down by the RPF and that there was a combat between the FAR [the Rwandan government army] and the RPF and that the Tutsis were the enemy . . . Leaders’ ideas were on the radio.

The station that encouraged me was RTLM . . . *Was there a specific broadcast?* There were songs about how Hutus had to rise up and fight for their country.

RTLM said the Tutsi is the enemy. That is where I heard the word *inyenzi*. They said you could not sleep: you had to look everywhere for the enemy.

In these accounts, respondents claim several radio media effects. First, radio broadcasts communicated the intent and instructions of authorities. Second, radio broadcasts reinforced messages that authorities communicated in person. And third, radio broadcasts framed the political crisis: broadcasts categorized Tutsis as “the enemy” or as *inyenzi*. In these accounts—a minority in the survey of 210 perpetrators—radio is not the only or even the primary cause of onset or mobilization. Rather, radio broadcasts had more marginal and conditional effects. Radio communicated who had power, what “authorities” supposedly wanted, and how to think about the crisis, but the issues took on significance in the context of what individuals knew was happening around them in their communities or what they were being told directly through face-to-face mobilization and interpersonal communication.

V. AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF MEDIA EFFECTS IN THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

The evidence presented above consistently contradicts the conventional wisdom. There appears to be a substantial gap between RTLM’s broadcast range and where genocidal violence took place; there is little positive and much negative evidence that broadcast range corresponds to where violence started earliest in different regions; the bulk of violence appears to have occurred before the most inflammatory broadcasts aired; most perpetrators in a survey say face-to-face mobilization and fear, not radio, led them to join attacks; and, when asked, no respondent identified radio as the primary determinant of the genocide. Each piece of evidence has limits. RTLM’s range is not conclusively known; a full transcript record of RTLM broadcasts is not available; convicted perpetrators may not tell the truth. But together, the evidence amounts to a persuasive refutation of the commonly held beliefs that radio had widespread, direct effects and that hate radio was the primary driver of the genocide and participation in it.

That said, the evidence suggests radio had some marginal and conditional effects. RTLM broadcasts instigated certain attacks, particularly in and around the capital. The survey research shows statistically significant correlations between radio incitement and higher levels of violence among perpetrators.

From that, it might be deduced that RTLM catalyzed some key agents of violence in some locations. Qualitative analysis additionally shows that a minority of the survey genocide perpetrators believed radio coordinated elites and signaled that authorities wanted the population to fight “the Tutsi enemy.” In sum, then, the positive evidence of radio media effects is that radio instigated a limited number of acts of violence, catalyzed some key actors, coordinated elites, and bolstered local messages of violence. Based on these findings, it is plausible to hypothesize that radio had conditional and marginal effects. Radio did not cause the genocide or have direct, massive effects. Rather, radio emboldened hard-liners and reinforced face-to-face mobilization, which helped those who advocated violence assert dominance and carry out the genocide.

If radio was not the primary driver of violence, what explains how and why the genocide took place? The field research I conducted in Rwanda yielded three primary factors: an intense civil war following a presidential assassination, a state with strong local capacity, and a pronounced history of ethnic categorization. The civil war had two principal effects. The war legitimized the logic of killing (in war, enemies are killed), and war created a sense of acute uncertainty and fear, which radicalized some and led others to be convinced that killing was necessary. Rwanda is a low-income country, but Rwanda’s state is compact and dense at the local level, with multiple layers of administration. Rwanda additionally has entrenched practices of civilian labor mobilization that date to the precolonial era. State power in Rwanda thus bequeathed on those authorities and elites who promulgated violence the institutional means to gain citizen compliance quickly. Finally, the logic of genocide was at base an equation between “enemy” and “Tutsi.” A condition for the success of such an operation depended on the resonance and preexistence of the Tutsi category, and indeed ethnicity has a long and pronounced political history in Rwanda, dating especially to the colonial period. Hutus did not, in general, hate Tutsis before the genocide, but ethnic categories were meaningful and salient and particularly so in wartime.

The unfolding of the genocide was not mechanical, as the maps of onset variation demonstrate. In early April, immediately after the president’s assassination and the renewed onset of civil war, hard-liners within the military and ruling political party engineered control of the central state. They set out to eliminate their immediate political rivals, Hutu and Tutsi alike, and proceeded to advocate violence against Tutsi civilians. At the subnational level in rural areas, the crisis triggered different responses. In areas with strong support for the deceased president and ruling party, coalitions of local hard-liners quickly formed and initiated violence against Tutsi civilians. In other areas, moderates sought to prevent violence from starting. Over time, however, in all areas not yet lost to rebels, hard-liners succeeded in undermining moderates, eventually consolidating control. Once they did, those hard-liners—usually local elites and violent young men, as we have seen—would mobilize a large number of ordinary Hutu

citizens to commit violence. Communities in turn switched from a period of heightened anxiety and confusion because of the president's assassination and resumption of civil war to a period of participatory and exterminatory violence. War set the immediate context for mass violence, but the primary means of communication and mobilization was face-to-face solicitation, which was made effective by a strong, dense state at the local level and preexisting labor practices.⁸³

To the extent radio mattered, it had a second-order impact. In the capital, RTLM's broadcasting of names and locations as well as its generally hostile tone inspired attacks and were a factor in the hard-liners' ability to assert dominance. But radio was not the only reason that Hutu hard-liners advocating genocide won the upper hand. Most important, the hard-liners controlled the balance of power among Hutus in the country; they controlled key military units and militia. Moreover, the civil war and advance of rebels undermined moderates and calls for peace. At the micro level, most individuals chose to enter the violence because they were afraid of the consequences of disobeying or afraid of what a rebel victory meant. In articulating hard-liners' positions, signaling who had power, and setting a tone of war and belligerence, hate radio narrowed the choices some individuals believed they had and reinforced the choices they faced in their communities—at least where RTLM was heard.

The conceptions of media effects hypothesized here—of catalyzing hard-liners, reinforcing messages, and framing public choice—point to real impacts. Hate radio constituted one dimension by which hard-liners achieved dominance and were able to persuade individuals to join attacks against Tutsi civilians. But the conceptualized effects are more marginal and conditional than the conventional wisdom would have. More significant was the immediate context of war and the state institutions that facilitated face-to-face mobilization. The effects advanced here also avoid what the article has shown to be the empirically untenable and theoretically doubtful notion that radio media had massive, direct effects on genocide onset and mobilization. Finally, the claims are consistent with cumulative findings in the political communications field, which stress agenda setting, elite persuasion, and marginal media impacts.

In sum, to claim that RTLM had no effect would be to overstate the case, just as to claim radio caused the genocide is overly simplistic and empirically unsupported. Highlighting modern media is perhaps an easy way to make sense of mind-numbing violence in faraway lands. But to understand how such terrible events occur, we need to look well beyond simplistic frameworks and consider complex issues of agency, context, institutions, and history. Perpetrators of genocide in resource-poor countries are like decision makers elsewhere: they act on the basis of what they see, experience, know, and fear, not simply on the basis of what they hear—or even what they are told—on the radio.

APPENDIX

RTLM Transcripts

	ICTR Identification	Date of Broadcast	Language	Source	Pages	Minutes
1.	P103-97C-K022-6840	10/29/1993	French	RTLM	38	60
2.	P36-14G-K025-9139	12/17/1993	French	RTLM	30	60
3.	P36-23C-K024-9406	1/4/1994	French	RTLM	47	60
4.	P36-34B-K025-9331	1/14/1994	English	RTLM	27	30
5.	P36-44E-K025-8264	2/2/1994	French	RTLM	26	60
6.	P36-53E-K025-8290	3/10/1994	French	RTLM	36	60
7.	P103-343C-K026-3167	3/22/1994	French	RTLM	26	60
8.	P103-188C-K026-3378	3/31/1994	French	RTLM	33	60
9.	P103-192G-K025-8873	4/3/1994	French	RTLM	29	60
10.	P103-58B-K023-6570	4/9/1994	English	RTLM	29	60
11.	P103-65C-K026-4687	4/14/1994	French	RTLM/ Radio Rwanda	33	60
12.	P103-70B-R-K026-3118	4/15/1994	English	RTLM	17	90
13.	P103-205B-K026-0705	4/22/1994	English	RTLM	27	60
14.	P103-207E-K026-2374	5/17/1994	French	RTLM	34	60
15.	P103-296C-K026-3696	5/28/1994	French	RTLM	28	60
16.	P103-16D-K023-8685	5/30/1994	English	RTLM	20	60
17.	P103-267C-K024-8397	6/3/1994	French	RTLM	26	90
18.	P103-84B-K024-8176	6/10/1994	English	RTLM	28	60
19.	P103-300C-K024-8229	6/23/1994	French	RTLM	25	60
20.	P103-302E-K026-0345	6/25/1994	French	RTLM	25	60
21.	P103-304C-K025-9931	6/27/1994	French	RTLM	39	60
22.	P103-214E-K024-9642	7/1/1994	French	RTLM	35	60
23.	P103-217D-K026-0917	7/3/1994	English	RTLM	26	60
24.	P36-54E-K024-9596	Undated	French	RTLM	25	60
25.	P36-64C-K024-9062	Undated	French	RTLM	24	60
26.	P36-73E-K024-9743	Undated	French	RTLM	35	60
27.	P103-11C-K023-5676	Undated	French	RTLM	25	60
28.	P103-47C-K023-7778	Undated	French	RTLM	34	90
29.	P103-120C-K024-8484	Undated	French	RTLM/ Radio Rwanda	32	60
30.	P103-130C-K024-7927	Undated	French	RTLM/ Radio Rwanda	22	60
31.	P103-170C-K024-9879	Undated	French	RTLM	29	60
32.	P103-198C-K023-0533	Undated	French	RTLM	25	60
33.	P103-249E-K026-7579	Undated	French	RTLM	10	30
34.	P103-295B-K024-4819	Undated	English	RTLM	28	60

Note: RTLM = Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines.

NOTES

1. Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).

2. Jean Pierre Chrétien, Jean-François Dupaquier, Marcel Kambanda, and Joseph Ngarambe, *Rwanda: Les Médias du Génocide* (Paris: Karthala, 1995); Christine Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves, "The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide," *Journal of Communication* 48, no. 3 (1998): 107–28; Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso, 2004); Kingsley Moghalu, *Rwanda's Genocide: The Politics of International Justice* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 90; William Schabas, "Hate Speech in Rwanda: The Road to Genocide," *McGill Law Journal*, 46 (2000): 141–71; and Allan Thompson, ed., *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

3. See, for example, the films *Hotel Rwanda*, *Sometimes in April*, and *Sleeping Dogs* as well as the PBS documentaries *The Triumph of Evil* and *Ghosts of Rwanda* and the November 30, 2006, *60 Minutes* show "Rwandan Genocide Survivor Recalls Horror."

4. Jamie Frederic Metz, "Rwandan Genocide and the International Law of Radio Jamming," *The American Journal of International Law* 91, no. 4 (1997): 628–51; and Department of Defense memos online at the National Security Archive, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/rw050594.pdf> (accessed on September 4, 2007).

5. Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 5–40; and Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000). See also Linda Kirschke, "Multiparty Transitions, Elite Manipulation, and the Media: Reassessing the Rwandan Genocide," *Vierteljahresschrift für Sicherheit und Frieden* 18, no. 3 (2000): 238–44.

6. Frank Chalk, "Hate Radio in Rwanda," in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, eds., *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1999), 93–107.

7. Article 19, *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda, and State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda 1990–1994* (London: Article 19, 1996); Tharcisse Gatwa, "Ethnic Conflict and the Media: The Case of Rwanda," *Media Development* 42, no. 3 (1995): 18–20; and Internews, "Media in Conflict: Case Study-Rwanda," http://www.internews.org/pubs/mediacconflict/mic_rwanda.shtml (accessed on September 6, 2007); Dina Temple-Raston, "Journalism and Genocide," *Columbia Journalism Review* 41, no. 3 (2002): 18–19; and Dina Temple-Raston, *Justice on the Grass: Three Rwandan Journalists, Their Trial for War Crimes, and a Nation's Quest for Redemption* (New York: Free Press, 2005).

8. Metz, "Rwandan Genocide"; and Schabas, "Hate Speech in Rwanda."

9. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, and Hassan Ngeze," ICTR Case No. 99-52-T, Judgment and Decision, December 3, 2003.

10. Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of Nation State*, Vol. 1 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 116; Metz, "Rwandan Genocide," 629; and Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*.

11. Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 6.

12. ICTR, "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana," 6.

13. Graham Mytton, "From Saucepan to Dish," in Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss, eds., *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition* (Oxford, UK: James Currey, 2000), 21–41.

14. These included Radio France International, the Voice of America, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and Deutsche Welle.

15. Article 19, *Broadcasting Genocide*; Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*; ICTR, "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana"; and Kirschke, "Multiparty Transitions."

16. Simone Monasebian, "The Pre-Genocide Case against Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 308.
17. Roméo Dallaire with Brent Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 272.
18. Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2000), 71.
19. Linda Melvern, "Radio Murder," *Times Literary Supplement*, September 9, 2005, 25.
20. Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Genocide Happen," *The Atlantic Monthly* 288, no. 2 (2001): 89.
21. Neil Mitchell, *Agents of Atrocity: Leaders, Followers, and the Violation of Human Rights in Civil War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 42.
22. Francois Misser and Yves Jaumain, "Death by Radio," *Index on Censorship* 4, no. 5 (1994): 72–74.
23. House Editorial, "Fanning Rwanda's Genocide," *New York Times*, December 5, 2003.
24. Melvern, "Radio Murder," 25.
25. Melvern, *Conspiracy*, 205.
26. Mary Kimani, "RTLM: The Medium that Became a Tool for Mass Murder," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 110–24.
27. Alison Des Forges, "Call to Genocide: Radio in Rwanda, 1994," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 41–54.
28. The term is found throughout the ICTR Media Trial decision; see also International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, "Three Media Leaders Convicted of Genocide," December 3, 2003, <http://69.94.11.53/ENGLISH/PRESSREL/2003/372.htm> (accessed on September 4, 2007).
29. Jean-Marie Vianney Higiho, "Rwandan Private Print Media on the Eve of the Genocide," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 86; and Charles Mironko, "The Effect of RTLM's Rhetoric of Ethnic Hatred in Rural Rwanda," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 134.
30. Darryl Li, "Echoes of Violence: Considerations on Radio and Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 9–28.
31. Darryl Li, "Echoes of Violence," *Dissent* 49, no. 1 (2002): 82.
32. Richard Carver, "Broadcasting and Political Transition: Rwanda and Beyond," in Fardon and Furniss, *African Broadcast Cultures*, 188–97.
33. Alan Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2001), 91.
34. Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*, 7 (translation by author).
35. Melvern, "Radio Murder," 25.
36. Kellow and Steeves, "The Role of Radio," 124.
37. For some additional examples, see Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "RTLM Propaganda: The Democratic Alibi," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 55–61; Frank Chalk, "Intervening to Prevent Genocidal Violence: The Role of the Media," in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, 375; and Richard Orth, "Rwanda's Hutu Extremist Insurgency: An Eyewitness Perspective," in Susan Cook, ed., *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 2006), 221.
38. Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*, 191 (translation by author).
39. Quoted in Kellow and Steeves, "The Role of Radio," 124.
40. Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*, 7 (translation by author).
41. ICTR, "The Prosecutor vs. Ferdinand Nahimana," 165.
42. *Ibid.*, 318 (the specific reference here is to the magazine *Kangura*).
43. *Ibid.*, 165.

44. On the “hypodermic needle,” see John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 311. On stimulus and response, see Elizabeth Perse, *Media Effects and Society* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001); and Jennings Bryant and Susan Thompson, *Fundamentals of Media Effects* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002).

45. John Zaller, “The Myth of a Massive Media Impact Revived: New Support for a Discredited Idea,” in Diana Mutz, Paul Sniderman, and Richard Brody, eds., *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 17–78.

46. This is true even in a non-U.S. setting. See, for examples, Chappell Lawson and James A. McCann, “Television News, Mexico’s 2000 Elections and Media Effects in Emerging Democracies,” *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005): 1–30; and Stephen White, Sarah Oates, and Ian McAllister, “Media Effects and Russian Elections, 1999–2000,” *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005): 191–208.

47. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins*; and Zaller, “The Myth of a Massive Media Impact.”

48. On the latter point, see also Carver, “Broadcasting and Political Transition.”

49. A similar point is made in Kirschke, “Multiparty Transitions,” 239.

50. Two of the most important studies are good examples: the ICTR Media Trial judgment and Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*.

51. Kimani, “RTL: The Medium,” 110–24.

52. Lee Ann Fujii, *Killing Neighbors: Social Dimensions of Genocide in Rwanda*, PhD diss., George Washington University, 2006; and Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

53. The broadcast is attributed to RTL and was the basis for a title of a popular book on Africa: Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe, and Power in the Heart of Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

54. There is no record of the broadcast (Article 19, *Broadcasting Genocide*, 112), and the ICTR does not cite it.

55. Mironko, “The Effect of RTL’s Rhetoric.”

56. ICTR, “The Prosecutor vs. Ferdinand Nahimana,” 342.

57. Rwanda in 1994 had sixty-seven radio receivers for every one thousand inhabitants, making Rwanda the country with the eleventh fewest per capita radio receivers in Africa, as reported in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Statistical Yearbook* (Rome: UNESCO, 1996).

58. An exception is Mironko, “The Effect of RTL’s Rhetoric,” 126.

59. Kellow and Steeves, “The Role of Radio,” 118; and Kirschke, “Multiparty Transitions,” 241.

60. République du Rwanda, *Recensement général de la population et de l’habitat au 15 août 1991: Analyse des résultats définitifs*, Kigali, Rwanda, April 1994.

61. See the July 4, 2001, testimony in the Media Trial at <http://www.hirondelle.org/hirondelle.nsf/0/54b248bce49a1b54c1256721007ae35c?OpenDocument> (accessed on September 4, 2007).

62. For greater details on onset dates in the data set and their sources, see Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, Appendix Table 2.1, 249–55.

63. The noted ranges are (from lowest to highest averages, measured in 500 m increments): 500–2,000 m (Kibungo); 1,000–2,500m (Butare, Gikongoro, Gitarama, Cyangugu, and Byumba); 1,000–3,000 (Kibuye); 1,000–4,500 (Gisenyi and Ruhengeri). The analysis is based on elevations reported in International Travel Maps, “Rwanda-Burundi,” map no. 669, 1998.

64. *Dictionnaire nominatif des victimes du génocide en Préfecture de Kibuye* (Kigali, Rwanda: IBUKA, 1999).

65. ICTR, "The Prosecutor vs. Ferdinand Nahimana," 151, 162.
66. *Ibid.*, 133.
67. *Ibid.*, 152.
68. *Ibid.*, 136–7.
69. Kimani, "RTLM: The Medium," 122.
70. Chrétien et al., *Les Médias*, 393.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Kellow and Steeves, "The Role of Radio."
73. Article 19, *Broadcasting Genocide*, 114–19.
74. These would appear to be a fraction of the total entered into evidence, but they are the only translated ones made available. See ICTR, "The Prosecutor vs. Ferdinand Nahimana," 117–18.
75. See also Kimani, who has a larger sample of transcripts with some apparently similar results, even if timing and content are not correlated in the study. Kimani, "RTLM: A Tool," 118–19.
76. Charles Mironko, "Means and Motive in the Rwandan Genocide," in Cook, *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda*, 163–89; and Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*.
77. Lee Ann Fujii's microlevel research in Rwanda produced similar results. While not probing specifically for radio effects, in her interviews with perpetrators, survivors, and witnesses in rural areas, radio was not mentioned as a primary driver of the violence (personal communication with author).
78. For further details on the survey, see Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, chap. 4 and 5.
79. Li, "Echoes of Violence"; and Mironko, "The Effect of RTLM's Rhetoric."
80. The regression results are available on-line at <http://www.polisci.wisc.edu/users/straus/research.html> (accessed on September 4, 2007).
81. A longer excerpt from the same interview as well as a number of other interview transcripts that show similar dynamics can be found in Robert Lyons and Scott Straus, *Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide* (New York: Zone/MIT Press, 2006), 39–96.
82. This is consistent with Mironko's findings in "The Effect of RTLM's Rhetoric."
83. For a fuller elaboration of the argument, see Straus, *The Order of Genocide*.

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