

The Ideological Politics of English in Rwanda and the Implications for 'Global English'

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ABSTRACT

'Global English' is a defining linguistic issue of our time. In part, English is considered the 'global language' because it has been given a special status in at least 70 countries. Yet, despite the importance of different governments in producing 'global English', the role played by English in individual States is rarely analysed through political theory. In this thesis, I investigate how local politics underpin 'global English' through a case study of Rwanda. Specifically, I draw on linguistic and political theory in order to interrogate the political importance of Rwanda's recent shift from a French-medium to an English-medium education system.

In the first part of this thesis, I situate the move towards English within Rwanda's historical and political context. In Chapter 1, I outline important developments from the pre-colonial period up to 1962, when Rwanda achieved independence. I discuss the foundations of the Rwandan State, and the politics of class and language in relation to Rwanda's first language policy (1962). In the second chapter, I use Gramscian theory to interrogate the circumstances surrounding Rwanda's second language policy (1996), in which English was added as an official language.

In the second part of the thesis, I develop an original theoretical model of language with which to investigate the ideological role played by particular languages. In Chapter 3, I introduce the model through a case study of the discursive construction of English and the Bantu languages throughout the colonial period. In Chapter 4, I use the model in a broader analysis of the relationship between the representation of English and Rwandan hegemony.

The thesis closes with a set of theoretical reflections on how the Rwandan case study can advance our understanding of 'global English'. On the basis of my findings, I advocate a politically-sophisticated approach to 'global English'.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APROSOMA	Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse
CDR	Coalition pour la défense de la république
CERAI	Centres d'enseignement rural et artisanal intégré
EMI	English Medium Instruction
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MDR	Mouvement Démocratique Républicain
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement
MSM	Mouvement Social Muhutu
NRA	National Resistance Army
PARMEHUTU	Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
RADER	Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais
RANU	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UNAR	Union Nationale Rwandaise
UNHCR	United Nations High Committee for Refugees

GLOSSARY

Abiru	The court historians of Rwanda
Bahutu	The Kinyarwanda plural for 'Hutu'
Banyarwanda	Kinyarwanda for 'Rwandan people'
Barundi	Kirundi for 'Burundian people'
Batutsi	The Kinyarwanda plural for 'Tutsi'
Gucupira	The process whereby one ceases to be 'Tutsi' and becomes 'Hutu'
Ibikingi	A land grant given by the Rwandan crown to favoured warriors, chiefs, and clients.
Kwihutura	The process whereby one ceases to be 'Hutu' and becomes 'Tutsi'
Muhutu	The Kinyarwanda singular for 'Hutu'
Munyarwanda	Kinyarwanda for 'a Rwandan person'
Mututsi	The Kinyarwanda singular for 'Tutsi'
Ubuhake	An arrangement in which a patron loans cattle to a client
Ubureetwa	A form of labour contract, whereby a Hutu tenant would be compelled to undertake manual labour.
Ubusho	A herd of cattle, the basic economic unit in pre-colonial Rwanda
Umwami	A king

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Introduction

1 ‘GLOBAL ENGLISH’ AND RWANDA

This thesis aims to improve our understanding of the phenomenon of ‘global English’. It is commonly calculated by several different metrics that English is the world’s most widespread language. In fact, there is no authoritative figure that represents the number of English speakers worldwide. Crystal’s (2008) influential estimate is that there are 2 billion speakers, though *Ethnologue* (2019) offers the more conservative suggestion that there are around 1.1 billion, the majority of whom (some 750 million) do not speak English as a mother tongue. Besides counting speakers, another way to quantify the prominence of English is with reference to its legal status. English is the most common ‘official language’ in the world: it is either official or ‘semi-official’ in 70 countries, and plays a ‘significant role’ in 20 more (McArthur, 2002, p.3). This is not to say that English is necessarily widely spoken in these countries, or, importantly, that it is spoken by all social groups. Indeed, there are at least 55 countries in which English is a minority language (that is, it is spoken by less than half the population), but is nevertheless the language used in public education (Dearden, 2014). Scholars have taken different approaches to understanding the growth of English. For instance, the ‘world Englishes’ paradigm suggests that the spread of English around the world has entailed the creation of different ‘Englishes’ (see Jenkins, 2003), while the field of ‘English as a lingua franca’, foregrounds the role of English as a means of communication between individuals with different first language backgrounds (see Seidlhofer, 2011). Others highlight the unprecedented extent to which English is used in diverse contexts throughout the world, and, on that basis, argue that it is an ‘international language’, or even a ‘global

language' (see Crystal, 2003). This thesis responds to the latter tradition of scholarship, and it will ask why English is thought to be a 'global language', with a particular focus on the underpinnings and ramifications of the prioritisation of English in the specific local context of Rwanda. The most influential account that addresses these questions is David Crystal's *English as a Global Language* (2003), which provides useful background to the topic at hand.

Crystal's (2003) account sets out to explain why English is the best contender for the title of 'global language'. He recognises that a 'true global language' would be spoken in every country in the world, and that, strictly speaking, no such language exists (Crystal, 2003, pp.3-4). However, in simple terms, Crystal argues that the extent to which English is spoken by individuals, and consecrated in official settings, renders it the language that is closest to 'global'. He approaches the issue from two different angles. First, he explores the historical spread of English (ibid, pp.29-71), to explain how the language initially reached 'a position of pre-eminence' (ibid, p.29). Second, he considers the cultural 'foundation' (ibid, pp.72-85) and 'legacy' (ibid, pp.86-122), in order to explain 'why it remains [pre-eminent]' (ibid, p.29). I will explain this in more detail.

Crystal prioritises culture over history in the spread of English. He argues that 'socio-cultural questions', including the ways in which people value English and come to depend on it in particular situations, 'give us a sense of the language's social usefulness, which is actually more informative, in addressing the question "Why World English?" than any bare historical account of the language's geographical spread' (2003, p.77). Thus, in his view, history is subordinate to the evolution of particular social roles for English. However, Crystal observes that the historical spread of English was a necessary foundation for it to become 'global'. He summarises that:

The historical account traces the movement of English around the world, beginning with the pioneering voyages to the Americas, Asia, and the Antipodes. It was an expansion which continued with the nineteenth-century colonial developments in Africa and the South Pacific, and which took a significant further step when it was adopted in the mid twentieth century as an official or semi-official language by many

newly independent states (Crystal, 2003, p.29).

In essence, Crystal's historical account is an account of colonialism, beginning with the establishment of settler colonies in America, and continuing through the British Raj and the colonisation of much of Africa. Implicit in his history is the notion that English can claim to be a 'global language' due to the fact that it is still used in many former exploitation colonies. This is because there are now thought to be more speakers of English in these post-colonial contexts than in the UK and its former settler colonies. Moreover, former exploitation colonies constitute the majority of countries in which English is an official language (Crystal, 2003, pp.29-71).¹ As part of his account of the 'socio-cultural' foundations of 'global English', Crystal points to 'political developments', by which he refers to the linguistic effects of empire. Colonisation, in his view, offered a tool for national and international linguistic unity, with '[t]he language of a colonial power introduc[ing] a new, unifying medium of communication within a colony ... [and reflecting] the bonds between that colony and the home country' (ibid, p.79). Crystal also argues that English grew in stature because it was useful: throughout the nineteenth century, the language was favoured because it provided access to the industrial and scientific knowledge produced in Britain and the USA (ibid, pp.80-83). A combination of these factors, in Crystal's view, led to English being 'taken for granted' as the 'natural choice for progress' and the 'dominant language of global politics and economy' by the dawn of the twentieth century (ibid, pp.83-85). However, Crystal argues that it was only after the process of decolonisation began in the 1950s that English could be called 'global'. He states that '[i]n 1950, the case for English as a world language would have been no more than plausible. Fifty years on, and the case is virtually unassailable' (ibid, p.71). This is due to particular developments in the mid-late twentieth century.

For Crystal, the socio-cultural factors in evidence throughout the twentieth century are

¹ Young defines 'settler colonies' as those 'predominantly established for the purpose of forms of settlement', and 'exploitation colonies' as those which were 'established for economic exploitation without any significant settlements' (2001, p.17). The terms are absent from Crystal's analysis.

the means by which ‘global English’ developed from a potentiality to a reality. He argues that, from the 1950s, the most important factors motivating the spread of English ceased to be those closely related to the British empire; instead, it was ‘far more important’ that ‘the cultural legacies of the colonial era and the technological revolution were being felt on an international scale’ (2003, p.86). His central argument is that English was established in ‘growth areas which would gradually shape the character of twentieth-century domestic and professional life’ (ibid). One of these is ‘international relations’, by which Crystal means the use of English in international political bodies and other international organisations (ibid, pp.86-90). In addition, he refers to the position of English in global media (ibid, pp.90-104), international travel (ibid, pp.104-106), ‘international safety’ (by which he chiefly means safety in air and maritime travel) (ibid, pp.106-110), and in international communication (particularly the internet) (ibid, pp.114-120). Finally, he points to the concern that is most relevant to this thesis: the fact that English is given priority in numerous education systems around the world. For Crystal, the dominant position of English in schools is due to the fact that it is the ‘medium of a great deal of the world’s knowledge’, and that ‘access to knowledge is the business of education’ (ibid, pp.110-113). Ultimately, Crystal argues that English was in ‘the right place at the right time’ to become the ‘global language’, as it was uniquely positioned to fulfil the ‘unprecedented need for a lingua franca’ that emerged from the ‘fresh networks of international alliances’ which developed in the twentieth century (ibid, pp.120-122). We can, then, draw some generalisations from Crystal’s account: in his view, English has become the ‘global language’ partially as a result of the extensive British empire, but largely in order to fulfil communicative late-twentieth-century needs, as well as to provide access to knowledge that is contained in English.

The case study that I focus on in this thesis allows us to test Crystal’s theory. Rwanda is a small, landlocked country in East Africa. It is known, above all, for being the site of one of the great human tragedies of the twentieth century: the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. This is a

subject that has rightly received much attention since 1994: the defining scholarly and journalistic responses include Alison des Forges' *Leave None to Tell the Story* (1999), Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (1998), and Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers* (2001), while explorations in popular fiction and media include *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), Scholastique Mukasonga's *Our Lady of the Nile* (2012), and the recent television drama *Black Earth Rising* (2018). But one issue that has yet to be explored in-depth is Rwandan language policy. In fact, the specific context of Rwanda raises certain questions about 'global English'. At independence, Rwanda made French the official language of government and education, but, in the intervening years, English has become increasingly important. Indeed, in 2008, French was removed from the public education system, and English became the sole language of instruction in most Rwandan schools. Rwanda has no place in Crystal's account of 'historical foundations', because it was never colonised by Britain. Rather, it was first a German, then a Belgian colony. According to Crystal, one alternative reason that post-colonial countries might adopt English is to 'avoid the problem of having to choose between competing local languages', because English is perceived to be 'neutral' (2003, p.85). But, in Rwanda, as much as 99% of the population speaks Kinyarwanda; perhaps more importantly, data from 2012 show that only some 1.9% of Rwandans speak English (Assan and Walker, 2012, p.182). As a country with an indigenous national language, no history of British colonisation, and limited English competence, Rwanda is an interesting example which allows us to consider what mechanisms facilitate the spread of English in today's world. Crystal only gives Rwanda cursory treatment, asserting that the country 'made a political decision to give the language special status' (ibid, p.67). The specific details of this 'political decision' are not clear. An initial question that this thesis will seek to answer, then, is why, seemingly without any historical foundation, English has become important in Rwanda. How can we understand the 'political decision' that Crystal gestures toward?

2 POLITICS AND THE ‘GLOBAL ENGLISH’ DEBATE

In order to generate appropriate research questions for the Rwandan case study, it is necessary to examine an important debate surrounding ‘global English’. That is, we must consider the extent to which ‘global English’ might be a political phenomenon. Crystal emphasises utilitarian reasons to learn English, and argues that ‘[t]he convenience of having a lingua franca available to serve global human relations and needs has come to be appreciated by millions’ (Crystal, 2003, p.30), but other scholars, including Robert Phillipson (1992), Alastair Pennycook (1998; 2017), Marnie Holborow (1999), and Rey Chow (2014) have observed that the spread of English is not necessarily welcomed by all, and that it does not offer the same opportunities to all speakers. A particular set of exchanges between Crystal and Phillipson serves to illustrate the conflicting perspectives. In a review of *English as a Global Language*, Phillipson argues that Crystal neglects to consider how the spread of English affects the fates of other languages and ‘ignores the fact that global (and local) inequalities are increasing’ (Phillipson, 1999, p.265). He criticises the fact that Crystal avows to be ‘politically neutral’ in his account, arguing that ‘even the wish to be apolitical involves political choices, not least in relation to choice of scientific disciplines that can clarify his questions, their procedures and epistemological roots’ (ibid, p.266). That is, Phillipson suggests that Crystal’s reliance on the tools of mainstream linguistics is insufficient for dealing with a topic that interacts with deeply political concerns such as colonialism (ibid). Moreover, Phillipson characterises Crystal’s account as ‘eurocentric and triumphalist’, and he contends that the reading of history provided by Crystal ignores resistance to the spread of English and ‘avoids any upsetting talk of bloodshed, let alone that what colonizers saw as triumph involved capitulation and domination for others’ (ibid, pp.266-268). Phillipson also rebukes Crystal’s understanding of political considerations that link to ‘global English’, arguing that, despite decolonisation, most former colonies remain ‘undemocratic’, with

linguistic hierarchies in place that privilege English. Thus Phillipson argues that most people in post-colonial countries are ‘governed in a language that they do not understand, and live in abject conditions’ (ibid, p.268). In short, Phillipson criticises what he sees as an uncritical endorsement of the spread of English, where the idea that English was ‘in the right place at the right time’ masks ‘structural and material power and particular interests’ (ibid, p.273). Thus, for Phillipson, post-colonial countries are not reaping the benefits from ‘global English’ as Crystal suggests. Crystal (2000), for his part, gave an equally acerbic response, accusing Phillipson of writing a partisan, politically-motivated review that used loaded terminology and was ‘ideological’. The review, he felt, was ‘a mass of ideology, innuendo, and misrepresentation’ (Crystal, 2000, p.422). I refer to this debate because it highlights that the story of ‘global English’ is not uncontroversial. The issues raised by Phillipson have been acknowledged by other scholars; Thomas Ricento, for example, calls *English as a Global Language* a ‘descriptively neutral - if not idealized - view of English in the world’ that epitomises a need for more nuanced accounts of the subject (Ricento, 2000, p.vii). A consideration of the wider debate around the politics of ‘global English’ is evidently necessary.

In recent years, a number of scholars have called for a more sustained focus on ‘global English’ as a political phenomenon. This is in response to a broader ‘liberal approach’ (see Pennycook, 2001), which generally acknowledges the complexity of the spread of English, but suggests that it is largely a ‘natural’ outcome of the utility of the language. Put simply, it posits individual, rational, relatively unconstrained choice as the key factor in the spread of English. For example, Abram De Swaan’s *Words of the World* (2002) and Phillippe Van Parijs’ *Linguistic Justice for the World* (2011), both suggest that English is becoming more widespread as the result of a myriad of individual choices. There is little consideration of history in either account, though Van Parijs echoes Crystal (2003) in arguing that historical circumstances determine which particular languages are primed to become the most widespread (2011,

pp.21-24). In particular, Van Paris and De Swaan alike stress the communicative value of English as the main explanatory factor of 'global English'. De Swaan calculates the communicative potential of a given language (in his terms, its 'Q-value') on the basis of its 'prevalence' and 'centrality' in a 'language constellation' (2002, pp.33-40). Van Parijs, by contrast, focusses more closely on individual interactions, and argues that the determining factor is the 'maxi-min' criteria: which language is understood best by the least competent speaker in a multilingual group (2011, pp.13-20). Importantly, as Phillipson (2004), Peter Ives (2006), and Stephen May (2015) have pointed out, neither De Swaan nor Van Parijs gives adequate space to political questions that relate to 'global English'. Indeed, De Swaan assumes that '[t]he road to English is paved with good intentions' (2002, p.127), while Van Parijs argues that power in linguistic interactions is only a consideration of 'minor magnitude' (2011, p.20). As May points out, Van Parijs suggests that the 'maxi-min' principle is driving the 'stampede towards English', and, on this basis, he uncritically represents the rise of English as a 'massive irreversible phenomenon' that must be welcomed (Van Parijs, 2011, p.3; May, 2015, p.135). On the other hand, for De Swaan, it is simply the case that speakers will choose to learn 'the language which appears to be the most useful, the one which offers the greatest possibility of communication, either directly, or *indirectly*, through the mediation of interpreter and translations' (2002, p.33, italics in original). For Ives, a key point is that both authors focus solely on the communicative potential of language, treating it as a type of network and ultimately requiring that we excise questions of politics and culture from accounts of 'global English'.² The result is that De Swaan claims that 'the spread of English is the mostly unintended outcome of expectations held and decisions made accordingly by hundreds of millions of people across the globe' (2002, p.142). In this way, the importance of history is minimised, alongside issues around class, power, and inequality. And yet, even

² Grin (2013) is explicit about the fact that study of language and economics generally views language as a network. See his explanation for a nuanced understanding of the assumptions that underly this conceptualisation of language.

a preliminary examination of research on Rwanda's language shift points to a more complex reality.

The Rwandan language shift has been addressed, from different perspectives, in recent work on Rwandan education. Topics have included the use of code-switching in the classroom (Tabaro, 2013), practical strategies used to teach English (Pearson, 2014), and student motivations for learning the language (Habyarimana, 2015; Tabaro, 2015). These studies raise two key points that are overlooked in the liberal approach. First, students often see English not as simply communicative, but instrumental. Habyarimana (2015) and Tabaro (2015) found that many Rwandan students view English as a vehicle that will allow them to access well-paid employment, suggesting that decisions to learn the language are related not only to wider communication but to notions of the differential value of particular languages. This, in turn, indicates that we must consider language in relation to material circumstances and wealth. Second, it is not necessarily the case that students choose to learn the language, because language policy is the remit of the State. Indeed, one teacher interviewed by Pamela Pearson told her that the instruction to teach through English was 'like a presidential order' (2014, p.44), while Hintjens (2008) and Samuelson and Freedman (2010) are clear that there is a relationship between the policy and identity politics at the level of the Rwandan élite. The liberal approach, however, assumes democratic decisions, without any sustained engagement in the analysis of the State. As Phillipson (1999) argued in his critique of Crystal (2003), in liberal accounts there is rarely an acknowledgement that States can be undemocratic. This lacuna is particularly surprising because, as Pierson notes, 'it is now widely recognized that, in most developed societies, the state has probably been the single most important social, economic, and political force' (2011, p.1). To examine the Rwandan case, then, we need to be prepared to look beyond the communicative function of language, and to understand the important role played by the State in a given society.

There is a body of work that deals with languages as more than merely communicative

networks. Indeed, it is widely understood in sociolinguistics that languages are powerful ideological constructs that can serve particular interests (see for example Crowley, 1989; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998; Shohamy, 2006). Scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu (1991) highlight the role of language in social reproduction, while Marnie Holborow (1999) analyses the intricate links between English and the spread of global capitalism. Throughout the thesis, I will draw on such scholarship in order to examine how English, and indeed other languages, play ideological roles in Rwanda. That is, I will examine how ideas about language shape and are shaped by particular ways of understanding the world. I will develop a working definition of 'ideology' in the following section, but it is first important to consider the role of the State.

It is necessary, for this approach, to engage with political theory. The relationship between the State and 'global English' in local contexts is yet to be fully understood. In part, this may be because, as Ives (2010) has observed, insights in political theory are rarely brought to bear on the study of language. Ives (2006; 2010; 2019) argues that there are routine lacunae in liberal accounts of 'global English', and he implores scholars to draw on political theory in order to fill them. Ives characterises the spread of English as a 'world historical phenomenon that presumably has massive political consequences' (2006, p.122), but notes that interdisciplinary work between linguistics and political theory has tended to avoid 'global English', focussing instead on language rights (Kymlicka and Patten's *Language Rights and Political Theory* (2003) for example). Political theorists, Ives argues, have tacitly agreed to 'leave "global English" to applied linguistics' (2006, p.123). There are some exceptions to this trend: for instance Selma K. Sonntag's *The Local Politics of Global English* (2003), and Ives's (2006; 2009; 2010; 2016) own body of work. Additionally, scholars have recently shown that political theory can be useful for understanding language policy (see for example Helder de Schutter's 'Language Policy and Political Philosophy' (2007) and Ricento, Peled, and Ives's *Language Policy and Political Theory: Building Bridges, Assessing Breaches* (2015)). But Ives argues

that the approaches to ‘global English’, including those of Crystal (2003), De Swaan (2002), and Janina Brutt-Griffler (2002) continue to ‘de-emphasise the role of state activity in the spread of English’, and accordingly to obscure the importance of the politics of language and the conceptualisation of language in the political arena (Ives, 2010, pp.517-518). To counter this, I will undertake a sustained analysis of the development of the Rwandan State, in order to understand what practical effects this has on life in Rwanda, and, more generally, what role it plays in the ‘global English’ phenomenon.

The conceptualisation of the State in this thesis will be developed through the work of Antonio Gramsci. Ives has on several occasions called for scholars of ‘global English’ to engage more thoroughly with Gramsci’s work. In linguistics, ‘[a]s is common in many academic fields, Gramsci is taken up mostly, often solely, through his concept of “hegemony”’ (2019, p.58). For Ives, this is a significant limitation of current research; he insists that a more sophisticated engagement with the breadth of Gramsci’s thought promises new insights into the ‘global English’ question. He demonstrates that ‘hegemony’ can be an extremely useful tool for the analysis of the politics of language, but that it should not be considered in isolation. ‘Hegemony’ is central to Gramsci’s basic understanding of the State, but it interacts with a number of other concepts, including Gramsci’s specific articulation of ‘ideology’. In the following section, I introduce Gramsci’s thought, and his approach to these two key concepts, as a theoretical foundation for the study at hand.

3 ANTONIO GRAMSCI’S APPROACH TO ‘HEGEMONY’ AND ‘IDEOLOGY’

Throughout this thesis, I will explain several of Gramsci’s key concepts as they become pertinent to the analysis. First, however, it is necessary to sketch two key concepts: ‘hegemony’ and ‘ideology’. Scholars routinely stress the importance of understanding

Gramsci's work in relation to his personal life and the historical context within which he was writing (see Nairn, 1982; Thomas, 2009). Indeed, for Bates, the concept of 'hegemony' is nothing less than the 'logical conclusion to [Gramsci's] total political experience' (1975, p.351). Thus, it is useful to begin this discussion with a short biography. Gramsci was born in Sardinia in 1891, and he died in a clinic in Rome in 1937, after being imprisoned for 11 years by Mussolini's Fascist government. Nairn observes that most prominent European intellectuals of the period had fairly comfortable upbringings, whereas Gramsci's early life was characterised by hardship and, after his father was imprisoned in 1898, destitution (Nairn, 1982, pp.161-163). But as Nairn (1982) and Thomas (2009) both stress, it was not only Gramsci's personal history that deeply influenced his work, but the historical context within which he was writing. The Italy that Gramsci grew up in had only been a political unit since 1870, when the capture of Rome signified the final stage of the Italian 'Risorgimento', or reunification. Though politically unified, Italy was a country of extreme contrasts, with regions that differed greatly in cultural, linguistic, and economic terms. These contradictions were not resolved within Gramsci's lifetime, and they figure prominently in his thought. As a socialist, Gramsci also grappled with the rise of Italian fascism, including the success with which Benito Mussolini took power in 1922. As Nairn concludes, the 'problematic conditioning all Gramsci's themes and researches was essentially one of Italian catastrophe' (1982, p.170). That is, Gramsci's writing constitutes an extended attempt to make sense of the inherent contradictions of early twentieth century Italy, and of the calamity of the Italian descent into fascism.

Gramsci's perspective on these questions was influenced by the Sardinian experience. At the turn of the twentieth century, Sardinia was one of the most impoverished regions in Italy. It had been dominated and 'oppressed for centuries by foreign invaders' (Showstack Sassoon, 1982, p.159). Control of the island had passed from the Romans, to the Kingdom of Aragon, the Spanish Empire, and, ultimately, the House of Savoy. Sardinian history was

characterised by injustice, the specific character of which is well-illustrated by Sardinia under the Savoyards. The island was in fact of great importance to the House of Savoy, which had been somewhat 'obscure' before a series of military campaigns under Victor Amadeus II greatly extended the Savoyard territory beyond its traditional heartland in the northwest of the Italian Peninsula. The Spanish War of Succession (1701-1714) allowed Victor Amadeus II to claim the Kingdom of Sicily, and with it he ascended from the status of a duke to that of a King. However, he was forced to exchange Sicily in 1720 for the Kingdom of Sardinia, which was 'much inferior', but allowed him to retain his royal status and the associated prestige (Storrs, 1999, pp.4-5). Victor Amadeus II owed his kingship to Sardinia, but he undermined the importance of the island by unifying it with Savoyard territories on the European mainland (Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice) and making the Piedmontese city of Turin the de facto seat of power. In fact, the King of Sardinia only resided on the island from 1800-1814, when Napoleon I annexed the mainland Savoyard territories. Over a century after the Savoyards took control, Sardinia was nominally at the heart of the Risorgimento: the King of Sardinia took control of the Italian peninsula, changed the name of his realm to the Kingdom of Italy, and became the first monarch of the new nation-state (Beales and Biagini, 2013, pp.3-18). Yet throughout this process, Sardinia itself remained home to the 'most direly exploited, miserable and little-known peasantry in Europe' (Nairn, 1982, p.16), whose condition only worsened as the Italian government routinely favoured the northern industrial mainland and neglected the impoverished, largely agricultural regions of the south, Sardinia, and Sicily (Showstack Sassoon, 1982, p.150). Against this historical backdrop the young Gramsci developed a 'ferocious [Sard] nationalism', which by 1911 led him to view world history 'as the Sard tragedy on a bigger scale' (Nairn, 1982, pp.160-161). It was at this point that Gramsci wrote that the fundamental truth of the world was 'an insatiable greed shared by all men to fleece their fellows, to take from them what little they had been able to put aside through privations' (quoted in Nairn, 1982, p.160). Exploitation became a recurring

theme in his work, as did the underdevelopment of the south, and the contradiction between Italy and so-called 'backward Italy' (the south, Sicily, Sardinia, and the poor areas of the centre and the north). Gramsci argued that the Risorgimento had forced Italian reunification without 'any period of slow maturation towards civil homogeneity', and that southern intellectuals had 'betrayed the Southern masses into a permanent internal colonialism' (Nairn, 1982, pp.174-175). For Gramsci, however, intellectuals could also be part of the solution.

Much of Gramsci's writing focussed on developing political theory as a blueprint for practical political strategy. In 1911, he began a degree in linguistics at the University of Turin, and, though he never finished his studies, linguistics continued to be a defining influence on Gramsci's thought until his death (see Ives, 2004a; 2004b). His political awareness began to develop in Turin, and was 'expressed in rebellion against the rich and in regionalist pride' (Showstack Sassoon, 1982, p.150). By 1918, he was 'fully absorbed by political journalism and militancy', taking on 'leading roles in the Italian and international working-class movement' (Carlucci, 2018, p.27). He praised Lenin and the Russian Revolution of 1917 for disproving 'any mechanical interpretation of Marx which assumed that revolutionaries had to wait until historical conditions were ripe before intervening in history', and called for the Italian working class movement to develop its own 'creative socialist politics' (Showstack Sassoon, 1982, p.153). As fascists became a formidable force in Italy, Gramsci differentiated himself from other socialists and communists who 'tended to reduce fascism to simply another manifestation of bourgeois oppression' by undertaking historical analyses of the crisis of Italian liberal democracy and the growth of the fascist movement (ibid, p.154). This ultimately led to him becoming an enemy of the State. Gramsci co-founded the Italian Communist Party (PCI), and on that platform he was elected as an MP in 1924. Two years later, he published his celebrated essay on the 'Southern question', which called for an alliance of the northern proletariat and the southern peasantry in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie (ibid, p.155; Gramsci, 1978). It was at this point, however, that Mussolini

outlawed the PCI and Gramsci was arrested, and imprisoned for nine years. His health deteriorated, and he only left prison to spend his final two years in a clinic, still under fascist guard. In this time, under strict censorship, Gramsci wrote his *Prison Notebooks*, a set of (originally) unpublished notes that reflected on diverse aspects of history, politics, and culture. They are now considered among the defining political works of the twentieth century.

A particular focus of Gramsci's work is the relationship between power, culture, and politics. The concept of 'hegemony' emerges within this rubric. Specifically, Ives situates 'hegemony' within Gramsci's project of understanding the rise of the fascist State. For, by the time of Gramsci's death, both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini enjoyed 'substantial support from within societies that had been democratic' (2004b, p.14). The question was not only how Hitler and Mussolini had been able to take power and maintain their control over the State, but how they were able to do so within a once-democratic society. 'Hegemony' is, in part, Gramsci's answer (ibid). The following is a preliminary definition: 'hegemony' refers to the mechanisms by which the State is able to maintain its power, both by using coercive strategies and by manufacturing consent (Cox, 1983, pp.163-164; Ives, 2004, pp.63-64). As Ives puts it, the concept helps to explain 'why large groups of people continually acquiesce to, accept and sometimes actively support governments – and entire social and political systems – that continually work against their interests' (2004b, p.6). Importantly, however, 'hegemony' is not always negative in Gramsci's eyes; Thomas argues that the fundamental unity of inspiration in the *Prison Notebooks* is 'the search for an adequate theory of proletarian hegemony', through which the proletariat would be able to overthrow the fascist State and establish stable, hegemonic rule (2009, pp.136-137). Through 'hegemony', then, Gramsci sought to understand how the fascists had successfully acquired power, and how the masses could eventually displace them.

Due to the conditions in which the *Prison Notebooks* were produced, they are fragmentary

in nature. Arguably, Gramsci provides no clear, unambiguous definition of 'hegemony' (Ives, 2004b, p.65). For instead of 'defining concepts, the *Prison Notebooks* contain investigations that use these concepts. Gramsci ... shows us how he uses them to analyse various historical situations' (ibid). As a result, at times Gramsci's use of the term appears inconsistent. Thus Eagleton argues that 'Gramsci normally uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates - though it is true he occasionally uses the term to cover both consent and coercion together' (1991, p.112). Indeed, some scholars use 'hegemony' only to refer to the manufacture of consent; Cox, for example, states that '[t]o the extent that the consensual aspect of power is in the forefront, hegemony prevails' (1983, p.164). Yet there is an argument for using 'hegemony' to mean consent and coercion, since, in practice, consent and coercion cannot always be clearly separated from one another. Gramsci was 'continually perceptive about how the possibility or threat of coercion and subtle uses of it are often integral to shaping and organising consent' (Ives, 2004b, p.64). The separation of consent and coercion may be useful as a heuristic device, but it is somewhat artificial, since although

consent is sometimes defined as an antonym to coercion, as the absence of coercion, actual operations of power rarely separate them so clearly. Often, the very fact of having power means you do not have to use it, a point that both Machiavelli and Hobbes noted. The most effective way to maintain control is often to create consent, which is easier if you hold the potential use of force in reserve (Ives, 2004b, p.61).

A more complex definition of 'consent' in Gramsci's work is suggested by Femia (1987). Femia argues that for Gramsci, 'consent' refers to a '*psychological* state, involving some kind of acceptance - not necessarily explicit - of the socio-political order or of certain vital aspects of that order' (Femia, 1987, p.37, italics in original). Gramsci's 'conception of consent is purely descriptive, referring to an empirical, if not directly observable, fact', meaning that consent need not be given freely and in fact, in this view, one can identify hegemony and consent even in the contexts that are 'totalitarian in the strictest sense' (ibid, pp.37-38). Thus in colonial societies, where oppression is so violent that 'to talk of consent appears a

contradiction in terms', hegemony remains a relevant factor (Engels and Marks, 1994b, p.1; see also Engels and Marks, 1994a). However, in Femia's view, there are different forms of consent, which can be weaker, stronger, more active or more passive (1987, p.38). He suggests that one may consent for 'fear of the consequences of non-conformity', and so consent may be produced through coercion; he also argues that one may consent out of habit, where consent arises from 'unreflecting participation in an established form of activity' (ibid, p.38). The ideal form of consent for hegemony, Femia argues, derives:

from some degree of *conscious attachment to, or agreement* with, certain core elements of the society. This type of assenting behaviour, which may or may not relate to a perceived interest, is bound up with the concept of 'legitimacy', with a belief that the demands for conformity are more or less justified and proper (Femia, 1987, p.38, italics in original).

It is clear, then, that there are different ways that a given hegemony can manufacture consent. We might consider tacit consent, or the simple absence of dissent, as relevant but less ideal for the State than consent that is rooted in alignment with the principles of the society (or State). Femia also observes that legitimacy is central to hegemonic rule, as it plays a role in manufacturing the ideal form of consent. Gramsci's account of 'ideology' allows us to clarify how this particular type of consent can be produced, where citizens come to attach to, or agree with, core elements of society.

'Ideology' is an important mechanism for 'hegemony' and the manufacture of consent. For the purpose of clarity, however, it is necessary to differentiate the Gramscian tradition from the use of 'ideology' in linguistics. Eagleton argues that the term 'ideology' 'is a *text*, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands' (1991, p.1, italics in original).³ Put another way, 'ideology' has been developed for different purposes, within different intellectual lineages, and as a result the term has a number of distinct meanings. For Gramsci, as for the Marxist scholars on whose work he draws, 'ideology' is fundamentally political. In

³ See Eagleton (1991) for an overview of different traditions and uses of the term 'ideology'. See also Williams (1977, pp.55-74; 1983, pp.153-157) for a focus on how the concept has been understood by Marxist scholars.

the social sciences, the term has more usually been employed in what Eagleton calls a ‘politically innocuous’ way, where it is given a meaning that ‘comes close to the notion of a “world view”, in the sense of relatively well-systematised set of categories which provide a “frame” for the belief, perception and conduct of a body of individuals’ (ibid, p.43; see also Geuss, 1981, pp.4-12). In linguistics, ‘ideology’ is often associated with the theory of ‘language ideologies’. Importantly, certain scholars have self-consciously approached ‘language ideologies’ as a useful concept in the investigation of belief systems that concern language. For example, Richard J. Watts defines a ‘language ideology’ as ‘a set of beliefs about the structure of language and/or the functional uses to which language is put [that] are shared by the members of a community’, and he uses this concept to investigate the ‘ideology of dialect’ in Switzerland (1999, p.68). In a later work, Watts refers to this as a purposefully ‘apolitical notion of “ideology”’, developed in order to ‘put a little more historical meat onto the bones of the notion of *language myth*’ (2011, p.viii).⁴ He clarifies in the discussion of Switzerland that this understanding of an ideology is political only ‘inasmuch as it forms part of the total set of social principles by which the community organizes itself institutionally’ (1999, p.68). Thus, questions of power and statecraft are either excluded or de-emphasised, and for this reason the apolitical notion of ‘ideology’ is not appropriate for the study at hand. For a more critical, political definition we must turn first to Classical Marxism.

The foundational text in the Classical Marxist study of ideology is Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s *The German Ideology* (1846). In this polemical exploration of political economy through the methodology of historical materialism, Marx and Engels assert that ‘ideology’ is central to the reproduction of the social order of capitalism. That is, they argue that the capitalist mode of production necessarily produces a dominant capitalist class and an exploited labouring class (the ‘bourgeoisie’ and the ‘proletariat’). In their view, this inherently exploitative system is able to reproduce itself in part because of bourgeois

⁴ See Bauer and Trudgill (1998) on ‘language myths’.

'ideology'; Marx and Engels hold that 'the sanctimonious and hypocritical ideology of the bourgeoisie voices their particular interests as universal interests' ([1846] 1998, p.194). In doing so, it articulates the material reality, in which the bourgeoisie is a dominant and subordinating force, as the natural order, or as an 'eternal law' (ibid, pp.67-71). 'Ideology', in this view, naturalises and thereby legitimises the extant social system. Marx and Engels point to the importance of intellectuals in this process, as they argue that the bourgeoisie is ultimately in possession of the means of 'mental production', and accordingly it is able to 'regulate the production and distribution of ideas' (ibid, p.67). In doing so, it constructs a view of the world in which the relations of production are just and inevitable. Thus, Marx and Engels argue, ideology distorts one's understanding of the world to the extent that 'men [sic] and their relations appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*' (ibid, p.42, italics in original). In this view, then, 'ideology' is a force that projects a distorted view of reality, in which bourgeois rule is legitimated because it is presented as natural and beneficial.⁵

Gramsci developed the notion of 'ideology' as a force that is intimately linked to hegemony. He drew on Classical Marxism to facilitate his investigation of State power, but his work represented a move away from the abstract theorisation of ideology and towards an analysis of ideology in practice, or, in other words, the diverse, historically contingent methods by which social groups have used ideas to organise societies (Hall, 1986, pp.39-40). That is, Gramsci's focus was on how ideology worked, particularly as it was manifest in institutions, in order to manufacture consent within a particular society. Within the problematic of 'hegemony', ideology represents one way in which the ruling class can establish the 'conscious attachment' referred to by Femia (1987), insofar as it represents specific aspects of the society as natural and legitimate. One of Gramsci's key innovations

⁵ There is not space here for an in-depth engagement with or critique of Marx and Engels' view of ideology. For an overview of the theory, its historical roots, and some of the questions it raises, see Williams (1977, especially Chapter 4). For a critique of the Classical Marxist view of ideology, see Stuart Hall's 'The Problem of Ideology' (1986). For a 'post-marxist' perspective, see Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985).

was to incorporate ideology into his larger theory of coercion and consent, thereby recognising it as only one of the mechanisms by which a particular group is able to establish domination. For Gramsci:

hegemony is ... a broader category than ideology: it includes ideology, but is not reducible to it. A ruling group or class may secure consent to its power by ideological means; but it may also do so by, say, altering the tax system in ways favourable to groups whose support it needs, or creating a layer of relatively affluent, and thus somewhat politically quiescent, workers (Eagleton, 1991, p.112).

Ideological and non-ideological strategies combine to manufacture consent. Ideology works to articulate a particular understanding of the world, which legitimises and naturalises the dominant position of the ruling group. A simplified account would hold that individuals internalise that ideology, and therefore consent to the extant power structure. As Gramsci was clear, however, the reality of ideology is more complex. This becomes evident if we consider how Gramsci approached the issue in the *Prison Notebooks*.

In Gramsci's view, particular institutions perform ideologically 'influential' roles, or, put another way, they use ideological strategies in an attempt to shape the world-views of individuals. In the passage 'Cultural Topics. Ideological Material,' Gramsci identifies a number of institutions as constituent parts of the 'material structure of ideology'. He argues that:

The press is the most dynamic part of the ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything that directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture, the layout of streets and their names (Gramsci, [1930] 1996, pp.52-53).

For Gramsci, then, ideology is embodied in the institutions that are able to affect how people think. It has particular manifestations, that might range from an article in a given newspaper to the underlying principles of a national education system. Thus ideology is a constituent part of everyday life, and particularly of the interactions that individuals have with various institutions. Such institutions are able, at least in principle, to influence the way that people make sense of the world. This relates to Ives's argument that the richness of 'hegemony' is

in part due to its ‘philosophical and epistemological elements that show how seemingly private or personal aspects of daily life are politically important aspects of the operation of power’ (2004, p.71). That is, everyday interactions, individual beliefs, and the actions that they inspire, are all considered to be both structured by power and to be vital for its reproduction. In this way, hegemony offers an understanding of how dominant powers can influence popular world-views, and, in turn, how people might come to support the continuation of their own domination and disenfranchisement (ibid). It is useful to consider a specific case to illustrate how hegemony and ideology can interact.

The list of ideological institutions in Gramsci’s work is by no means exhaustive. Another salient example is ‘the elaborate structure of liberal democracy (e.g. parliaments, courts, elections, etc.)’ (Femia, 1987, p.28). Femia argues that the institutions and practices that are part of liberal democracy ‘create a façade of freedom and popular control’ and serve an instructive function, ‘educating men [sic] in the ways of bourgeois politics’ and thereby ‘condition[ing] them to accept the status quo willingly’ (ibid). Eagleton focusses specifically on the parliamentary system, and argues that:

the parliamentary system in Western democracies is a crucial aspect of such power, since it fosters the illusion of self-government on the part of the populace. What uniquely distinguishes the political form of such societies is that the people are supposed to believe that they govern themselves, a belief which no slave of antiquity or medieval serf was expected to entertain (Eagleton, 1991, p.112).

Thus, in Eagleton’s view, the parliamentary system acts as an ideological support for the liberal democratic State. This helps to produce a citizenry that accepts the extant social order and considers itself to be an integral part of societal decision-making. In this sense, the parliamentary structure must be considered part of the ‘material structure of ideology’, as it has the power to influence opinion, by inculcating the notion that the populace determines who is in control of the State. Certainly, the population is self-governing to an extent; voters are able to select representatives, and, at times, to influence policy through such mechanisms as referenda. But the strength of Eagleton’s analysis is in the assertion that the parliamentary

system suggests that the populace is self-governing to a greater extent than is actually the case. Moreover, if the people are educated in the ways of bourgeois politics (to borrow Femia's phrase), the choices they make when they interact with the parliamentary system may already be conditioned by the ideological strategies of the State. Thus ideology can play an important role in sustaining hegemony, and, ultimately, in manufacturing consent. And, at least for some citizens, ideology may produce conscious attachment to the principles of liberal democracy (for example), and, accordingly, it may manufacture the ideal form of consent.

A final important point is that hegemony is always a process, and as such it is never truly completed and it is always contestable. This point is well illustrated with reference to language. Ives (2004a; 2004b) demonstrates that Gramsci developed a number of his concepts by using linguistic ideas as metaphors. For our purposes, it is valuable to consider the process of standardisation as an explanatory metaphor for hegemony. Gramsci viewed language as a 'historical institution that changes constantly', and so rejected prevailing views that presupposed a 'static, ahistorical structure of language' (Ives, 2004a, p.23). He understood standardisation as a process of 'transforming chaos into coherent structures', where the 'unity of a language structure is always something that is created or endeavoured toward' (ibid). His position on the importance of standardisation is exemplified in his writing on the 'questione della lingua', the debate about how Italy should be linguistically unified. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, scholars deliberated over how to create and spread standardised Italian. It was a matter of political significance, since '[t]he language issue was integrally related to other questions of national unity and how to rectify, decrease or mediate all the various divisions that separated Italy into its regions and social classes' (Ives, 2004b, p.8). This was particularly pertinent to Sardinia, where in 1861 some 90% of the population was illiterate, compared with 75% in the whole of Italy (ibid, p.36). The solution that was adopted was proposed by Alessandro Manzoni, best known as the author of *I*

Promessi Sposi (1827). Manzoni argued that the spoken language of Italy should be that of educated Florentines, 'a dialect quite close to literary Italian' (Ives, 2004b, p.37). By no means did Manzoni's suggestion end debate on the subject, but in 1868 he was appointed to head a government commission on linguistic unification, where, without distinguishing between the spoken and written language, he 'proposed subsidising dictionaries and grammar books of this new standard Italian and that the school-teachers for all of Italy should be recruited as much as possible from Tuscany, the region around Florence' (ibid, p.37). Gramsci criticised Manzoni for the fact that his strategy proposed to take a single model of language and elevate it to the status of standard, thereby diminishing the value of what became defined as 'non-standard dialects'. In his view, a more equitable method would have been to construct a model of language on the basis of diverse speakers (ibid, p.100). The decision to impose a linguistic standard based on Florentine was, in Gramsci's eyes, supporting 'the language of an exclusive caste which has no contact with a historical spoken language' (Gramsci, [1929-1930] 1992, p.179). Ives (2004a; 2004b) demonstrates that Gramsci's thought on this issue informs his theory of hegemony. The creation of a national language, in the manner of Manzoni's project, is akin to the construction of a hegemony that does not arise from the masses, but is imposed upon them. There is a preferable process, whereby a 'truly democratic normative language' might arise from the distinct dialects, but it is suppressed by the imposition of the single, elevated dialect (Ives, 2004b, p.100). It is worth noting here that, where Gramsci viewed standardisation as a way to create order out of chaos, in his writing on hegemony he argued that 'the chaos and the lack of coherence among the world views of various subordinated and oppressed social groups in modern capitalist societies ... enables bourgeois ideology to dominate' (Ives, 2004a, p.24). That is, the lack of unity among the masses allows the imposition of a given hegemony. As a common, democratic language might supplant the imposed standard, so too does Gramsci argue that the only practical option for the subordinated masses is to construct their own hegemony to

combat that of the bourgeois class (ibid). Hegemony requires the creation of coherent structures that manufacture consent out of chaos, but it is also always challengeable by a sufficiently organised subordinate class.

As his approach to the ‘*questione della lingua*’ indicates, Gramsci viewed language debates as inherently political, because:

Every time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national–popular mass, in other words to recognize the cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1985, pp.183-184).

Thus not only does the process of constructing a unitary language mirror that of the creation of a form of hegemony, but the imposition of language itself forms part of ‘cultural hegemony’. For Gramsci linguistic questions are simultaneously political and cultural. In this view, ‘Manzoni’s purely rationalistic approach to language reform represented linguistic “force” rather than “consent” in using state means to impose from above a linguistic “Florentine hegemony”’ (Boothman, 2008, p.44). Here we can see the relevance of hegemony to linguistic questions in two ways. First, coercion and consent become practical ways to think about how languages might be regulated and imposed, particularly from above. Second, the imposition of a particular linguistic order might relate to a larger hegemony, in this case of a social order or a State in which educated Florentines dominate.

The notions that I have outlined here will be central to this thesis. Gramsci suggests that questions about language index other issues: social class, the relation between the ruling group and the masses, and perhaps most importantly, hegemony. Given that ideology is a valuable strategy of hegemony, we must also ask whether linguistic issues entail ideological questions. By engaging with these ideas, I will critically investigate Crystal’s simple observation that Rwanda made a ‘political decision’ to legislate in favour of English (2003, p.4). The questions that the thesis as a whole tries to answer are why the Rwandan State has chosen to prioritise English, in whose interests, and with what practical effects?

4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into three parts, which address the topic from different angles. The first part consists of Chapters 1 and 2. It constructs an initial understanding of language and hegemony in Rwanda, through a historical account that leads up to the language policy implemented in 2008. This allows me to provide an understanding of Rwandan history, the development of the Rwandan State, and the dynamic relationship between language and hegemony in colonial and post-colonial Rwanda. Chapter 1 introduces the Rwandan case from the pre-colonial era to independence. It examines the development of the colonial State in relation to Rwanda's social class structure and, later, its racial/ethnic structure. It shows how the colonial State regulated identity and language, and produced an utterly racialised political field. Chapter 2 addresses independent Rwanda, and it uses Gramsci's concepts of the 'war of position', 'war of manoeuvre', and 'integral State' in order to understand the conflict over the State and hegemony that arose in the post-genocide period. It demonstrates the importance of the ruling group in determining the character of the State and, ultimately, the way that the State structures society. Throughout, it considers how social class interacts with questions of language and power.

The second part of the thesis innovates a methodology for investigating the ideological politics of language, by which I mean the ways in which ideas about language play ideological roles in support of particular positions and institutions. In Chapter 3, I respond to scholarship that calls for a post-structuralist approach to language, and develop a theory of language that avoids Saussure's distinction between 'internal' and 'external' linguistics. I test this model by considering the representation of English and Kinyarwanda in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Chapter 4, I mobilise the model, alongside the notion that language is a historically-conditioned institution, in order to analyse the ideological politics of English in post-2008 Rwanda. This produces insights in relation to social class, hegemony,

and language.

The final part of this thesis, Chapter 5, offers theoretical reflections on the case study in relation to the 'global English' debate. It attempts to develop a more nuanced understanding of how English spreads, or, rather, how the institution of 'global English' is constructed, with reference to the specific insights that are generated by the Rwandan case study.

Part One: A History of Language, Class, and the Rwandan State

One: Social Class, Linguistic Legitimacy, and the 1962 Language Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

The *Constitution de la République Rwandaise* was passed in 1962. It stated that the official languages of Rwanda were French and Kinyarwanda (GoR, 1962, p.5), with French given priority in educational and governmental institutions (Assan and Walker, 2012, p.177). This document, which was effectively Rwanda's first official language policy, has yet to be explored in-depth by scholars. At present, the understanding is that the 1962 policy 'reflect[ed Rwanda's] colonial past' (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.193). A preliminary question, then, is how did French function in colonial Rwanda? Is it enough to claim that the policy merely 'reflected' the colonial past, or did it play an active role in reproducing it? In this chapter, I will argue that the 1962 policy was created with specific aims, to consolidate rather than challenge the linguistic order that was imposed through colonialism. I contend that in order to understand the political importance of the policy, we must relate it to the colonial politics of language and situate it within a wider set of processes (including the development of the colonial State, the creation of systemic material inequality, the production of racial taxonomies under empire, and the construction of particular social groups as 'legitimate'). A crucial fact is that, throughout the colonial period, a new Rwandan class emerged that was distinguished by its ability to speak French.

Any discussion of identity in Rwanda is necessarily conditioned by the fact that, in 1994, the social categories to which individual Rwandans were bound became of grave importance. For, as is well-known, between the second week of April and the third week of May in 1994,

between five and ten per cent of the Rwandan population was killed. The majority of victims were targeted on the basis of their ethnic identity, specifically because they were Batutsi (Prunier, 1997, pp.261-265). As I will argue in Chapter 2, the violence was facilitated by a State that permeated Rwandan society at every level, and regulated ethnic identity as part of its hegemonic strategy. For the present discussion, it is necessary to consider the roots of those ethnic identities. Narratives of Rwandan history are central to interpreting the genocide, and they frequently interpret the past in 'politically convenient ways' (Longman, 1999, cited in Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.196). Longman observes that after the genocide Rwanda became 'synonymous with violence and disaster' (2004, p.29). In Bowen's terms, the Rwandan genocide reinforced inaccurate notions that 'ethnic identities are ancient and unchanging; ... that these identities motivate people to persecute and kill; and ... that ethnic diversity itself inevitably leads to violence' (1996, p.3). Bowen challenges this notion:

True, before the modern era some Africans did consider themselves Hutu or Tutsi, Nuer or Zande, but these labels were not the main sources of everyday identity. A woman living in central Africa drew her identity from where she was born, from her lineage and in-laws, and from her wealth. Tribal or ethnic identity was rarely important in everyday life and could change as people moved over vast areas in pursuit of trade or new lands. Conflicts were more often within tribal categories than between them, as people fought over sources of water, farmland, or grazing rights (Bowen, 1996, p.6).

Bowen's explanation of the limited importance of ethnic identity in history raises an important question: how did ethnicity become so central to Rwandan life that it became 'the defining feature of Rwandan existence' by the 1930s (Gourevitch, 1999, p.57)?

The dominant understanding of ethnicity in Rwanda holds that the Belgian administration, which de facto ruled the country from 1916-1962, created an ethnic or racial divide between the Bahutu and Batutsi. Since the end of the genocide, this has been the history taught in Rwandan schools (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.196). This view also has currency in scholarship: for instance, Prunier's *The Rwanda Crisis* (1997) and Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers* (2001) discuss the racialisation of the Rwandan population, and

the systematic and strategic prioritisation of the Batutsi over the Bahutu. There is much evidence to support this account, but certain aspects have yet to be explored in detail. To my knowledge, the link between the racialisation of the Bahutu and Batutsi, social class, statecraft, and language has yet to be established. Through Foucault's concept of 'discourse', and Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) theory of 'legitimate language', I will demonstrate that these concerns are vital for a nuanced understanding of the 1962 policy and the construction of hegemony in post-colonial Rwanda.

Foucault's work on power and discourse allows us to discuss how it is that the vast majority of individual Rwandans became externally and dichotomously categorised as either 'Bahutu' or 'Batutsi'.⁶ In 'The Subject and Power' (1988), Foucault defines the object of his work as the creation of 'a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (1988, p.777). His aim is to discuss the ways in which people are categorised externally, and thereby 'made subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to [their] own [identities] by a conscience or self-knowledge' (ibid, p.781). To establish this understanding, Foucault focusses on 'everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him' (ibid). In short, Foucault's work demonstrates the ways in which individual's identities are constructed for rather than by them. As we will see, this can be done in ways that connect to strategic uses of power.

The value of Foucault's work for producing a history of Rwanda is that it facilitates the denaturalisation of particular notions of 'ethnicity' and 'race' as primordial, static categories.

⁶ It should be noted that a third group, the Batwa, forms around 1% of the Rwandan population (Gourevitch, 1999, p.57). Historically, the Batwa were hunter-gatherers, although they are increasingly forced to join mainstream Rwandan society (Vansina, 2004, p.36; Warrilow, 2008, pp.7-9). Doubtless, the issues addressed in this thesis affect Batwa people in specific ways. However, I cannot do this subject justice in the space available, and for this study it is pertinent to focus on the Bahutu and Batutsi. See Lewis (2000) for an overview of the issues facing Batwa people, and Warrilow (2008) for an account of problems faced by Batwa children in education.

Foucault historicises knowledge, and thereby demonstrates that it is constituted in specific ways in different geographic and historic contexts. Knowledge, he argues, is constituted through discourse, or ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment’ (Hall, 1992, p.291). Crucially, discourse is not limited to linguistic signs, but rather includes a network of related forms of representation. This is perhaps best illustrated with Foucault’s own discussion of the ‘discursive formation’ of psychiatry. In *Madness and Civilisation* (1960), he conducts a historicised analysis of the discipline of psychiatry. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he reflects on his analysis as follows:

On examining this new discipline, we discovered two things: what made it possible at the time it appeared, what brought about this great change in the economy of concepts, analyses, and demonstrations, was a whole set of relations between hospitalization, internment, the conditions and procedures of social exclusion, the rules of jurisprudence, the norms of industrial labour and bourgeois morality, in short a whole group of relations that characterised for this discursive practice the formation of its statements; but this practice is not only manifested in a discipline possessing a scientific status and scientific pretensions; it is also found in operation in legal texts, in literature, in philosophy, in political decision, and in the statements made and the opinions expressed in daily life. The discursive formation whose existence was mapped by the psychiatric discipline was not coextensive with it, far from it: it went well beyond the boundaries of psychiatry (Foucault, [1969] 2002, p.197).

The discursive formation surpasses the field of language, but relates to language as it is imbricated within a complex set of historical and representational processes, and operationalised in specific domains. Foucault indicates that the particular type of knowledge created within the discipline of psychiatry underpinned cultural depictions, legal policy, and political debate. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the discipline of racial science similarly organised social, economic, and political life in Rwanda.

For Foucault, knowledge and meaning are produced through discourse. As our understanding of the psychiatric discipline is produced through statements, so too is our understanding of notions such as ‘madness’, ‘punishment’, and ‘sexuality’. Knowledge about

these subjects is produced through discursive practice. To take a pertinent example, Said's *Orientalism* (1978) argues that discourse produced the idea of the 'Orient' in the 'West'. In Said's view, orientalist discourse represented the 'non-Western' world in specific ways, both through 'so-called truthful text' (such as philological analyses and political treatises) and 'openly imaginative' text (for example novels and artwork) (Said, 1978, p.21). In fact, the Orient does not antedate discourse, but rather arises through it, since through orientalist discourse 'European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period' (ibid, p.3). Thus in Said's terms, the discourse of 'orientalism', permeating texts and other discursive practices, constructed not only our knowledge about the 'Orient', but the 'Orient' itself as an idea. Importantly, the meaning given to something through discourse is contingent upon a particular historical moment, because 'discourse [produces] forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge, which [differ] radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them' (Hall, 2013, p.31). To understand how a given construct is discursively produced, then, we must consider context. Equally important is how discourse is 'operationalised'.

Knowledge produced through discourse is mobilised in conjunction with power, and, in that way, it authoritatively constitutes particular understandings of the world. As Hall puts it: 'knowledge linked to power ... assumes the authority of "the truth"' (2013, p.33). That is, in Foucault's view, power produces our reality, the truth we perceive, and the subjects we become (1995, p.194). In part, this is because discourse is 'operationalised' by institutions that develop specific practices for dealing with subjects, such as 'medical treatment for the insane, punishment regimes for the guilty, moral discipline for the sexually deviant' (Hall, 2013, p.30). When this happens, the knowledge produced through discourse acquires the power to 'make itself true', as all 'knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and, in that sense at least, "becomes true"' (ibid, p.33). Accordingly, discourse prescribes

certain ways of talking about topics and excludes others, thereby governing what is ‘sayable’ and ‘thinkable’ at a particular historical moment (Hall, 2013, p.30). Thus discourse, in its relationship to power, not only constitutes subjects but designates what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct, and informs how people respond to one another. In the Rwandan case, the implications of this point are clear. Here, European discourse fundamentally altered the lived experience of everyday Rwandans.

This chapter demonstrates the ways in which discourse produced Rwanda at the time of independence. The ramifications of this history are still felt today. Before colonialism, Rwandans were stratified on the basis of wealth and relation to the means of production. During colonialism, the socioeconomic bases of particular categories were excised, so that racialised identities supplanted what we can understand as class positions. Moreover, colonialism created a new class: the *évolués* (a term that meant ‘evolved’, ‘developed’, or even ‘civilised’). The *évolué* class was defined in part by its relationship to language: the French language was constructed as more prestigious than Kinyarwanda, and so, by extension, were its speakers. The structure of the chapter is as follows. The first section considers the pre-colonial origins of ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ in relation to the cattle economy and social class. The second section outlines the discursive formation of racial science, alongside its interpretation of Africa. The third section traces the operationalisation of racial science as a mechanism to transform Rwanda into a profitable exploitation colony. It shows that, to an extent, social class was racialised, but also that an *élite*, non-racialised French-speaking class was produced. The final section examines the impact of racialisation and language in relation to the Rwandan independence movement. It explores how the politics of language informed Grégoire Kayibanda’s attempts to garner support before he became the first president of Rwanda. I conclude by arguing that the 1962 policy allowed the *évolués* to protect the privilege conferred upon them by their knowledge of French and to produce a hegemonic foundation for the post-colonial State.

2 CATTLE, CLASS, AND IDENTITY IN PRE-COLONIAL RWANDA

In the late nineteenth century, European powers ‘pictured most of [Africa] as “vacant”, with the bulk of the continent legally designated ‘terra nullius’ (‘nobody’s land’) (Pakenham, 1991, p.xxiii). In practice, however, colonial States could not ignore pre-colonial history. For while colonialism operated with a greater focus on coercion than consent, it was still the case that ‘the successful acceptance of colonial ideologies and politics as natural and legitimate depended on their being rooted in the worlds of both rulers and subjects alike’ (Engels and Marks, 1996, p.4). Often, colonialism adapted and transformed pre-colonial institutions (see Ranger, 1983; Mudimbe, 1988). In Rwanda, Sinema argues that colonialists ‘ignored the complexity with which Rwandans identified members of the community and created a calcified, highly simplistic and stratified system that denied Rwandans opportunities for social mobility’ (2015, p.49). However, as we will see, aspects of the pre-colonial social configuration were in fact transposed into new colonial frameworks. Colonial Rwanda was built on the ‘economic, social, and political foundations’ of the Kingdom that preceded it (Vansina, 2004, p.3), and an understanding of both is necessary for a nuanced approach to post-colonial Rwanda.

The categories of ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ arise from the pre-colonial economic system. In the Kingdom of Rwanda, cattle were a form of wealth. Indeed, there is an argument for understanding cattle as a form of money.⁷ I will explain this point using the ‘conventionalist’ approach to money, which is rooted in Aristotlean thought (Chakrabarty, 2000, p.51), and

⁷ The appropriateness of designating cattle as either money or capital was the subject of debate in the 1960s and 1970s (see Quiggin, 1963; Nash, 1966; Sundström, 1974). It was argued, for instance, that cattle cannot be considered ‘money’ because they are difficult to transport and they constitute indivisible units (Quiggin, 1963, p.322; Sundström, 1974, p.114). However, even at this time, Nash argued that ‘such qualities as divisibility or portability are less important than the recognition that money is something generally accepted in a society for a range of exchange activities’ (1966, p.26). Nash’s perspective is supported by more recent scholarship, including Orléan’s (1992) work on the conventionalist approach to money, and Friedman’s (1991) detailed account of the use of immobile stones as money. It is perhaps worth noting in this respect that Latin ‘pecunia’ (‘money’ or ‘wealth’) derives from ‘pecū’ (‘cattle’).

whose main proponent is André Orléan (see Orléan, 1992). There are two premises to this view: (1) a given unit becomes money because one accepts it as such, which one does because others are expected to accept it also; and (2) what represents money is at least partially arbitrary, in the sense that there exist alternative forms that money can take, and ‘if everybody accepted some other object as money, this could be money’ (Dequech, 2013, p.253). Vansina holds that cattle were the privileged medium of exchange in Rwanda, counted by the ‘ubushyo’ (‘herd’), which consisted of between thirty and fifty head of cattle (2004, pp.32-34). Much like contemporary forms of money, cattle circulated as a form of payment: bridewealth, fines, debts, and dues were all demanded in cattle (ibid). Thus, cattle was the money-form that dominated economic life in Rwanda.

Importantly, in this economic system, an individual could expand their wealth by calving their cattle. Thus, in Rwanda, cattle could be loaned out for ‘interest’, in an arrangement called ‘ubuhake’. Ubuahake was at once an economic and a social process. The client, who loaned the cattle, would act as labour, by caring for and calving the animals. The patron would receive a calf at the first calving, and a specified number of additional calves at regular intervals (Vansina, 2004, p.33). Thus, the patron became wealthier, without performing labour. The social function of ubuhake exemplifies the importance of cattle as a nexus for social relations. An ubuhake contract entailed that a client became indebted to their patron, and was required to act as their servant (ibid, p.47). Ownership of cattle, then, allowed one to reproduce one’s wealth and to acquire a dominant position in networks of social obligation.

The Kingdom of Rwanda was founded around 1600CE, in close proximity to a number of small societies that had predominantly agriculturalist populations (Ogot, 1984; Vansina, 2004). It was established by a pastoralist clan, on the hill of Gasabo (which now comprises some of the wealthier districts of Kigali). The first umwami (‘king’) created the Kingdom and oversaw the expansion of its territory, as it came to form what we understand as modern-

day Rwanda. Vansina argues that umwami Ndori was able to consolidate the country precisely because he possessed hundreds of heads of cattle (2004, p.46). He used his wealth to create ubuhake contracts with the leaders of local societies, and by this mechanism was able to forge at least a dozen alliances. The agriculturalist communities in question had developed specific methods of food production and hunting, alongside related industries, and a number of them constituted complex, politically organised societies headed by an umwami (Ogot, 1984, p.516). On the basis of Ndori's wealth Rwanda quickly expanded, incorporating many of these smaller States and agricultural communities, along with their traditions and institutions (ibid, p.517). Ubuhahe was a mechanism of Rwanda's growth, and it soon became a driver of economic disparity.

Wealth inequality developed in Rwanda during the seventeenth century. This fomented the development of social classes, in the sense of objective categories in which members possessed 'the same kind of relation to the means of production as well as other common economic and social characteristics' (Hobsbawm, 1973, p.5). One reason for this was ubuhake: since it essentially entailed the enrichment of the patron, ubuhake produced 'relationships of power, privilege, and class' (Sinema, 2015, p.51). In other words, the power and privilege of the patron was used to secure the class positions of patron and client: the patron was enriched, and the client subordinated. Archaeological evidence reveals the existence of luxury wares around this time, which indicates that the consolidation of wealth engendered the creation of an élite whose 'style of living was somewhat more opulent than the bulk of the population' (Vansina, 2004, p.32). Importantly, by the seventeenth century certain pastoralist lineages were wealthier than others, and the difference between them continued to grow over time (ibid).⁸ At this point, individuals may not have identified

⁸ By 1900 the wealthiest herder owned more than 20,000 heads of cattle (Vansina, 2004, p.233). It is difficult to put this number in perspective as the exact number of cattle in Rwanda in 1900 is unavailable. However, a 1921 survey found between 3-4 million cattle across Rwanda and Burundi (Mortehan, 1921, cited in Nkurikiyimfura, 1994, p.157). In 1921, a herder with 20,000 heads of cattle would possess approximately 0.5% of all money-wealth.

themselves as members of a particular class, but, in materialist terms, social classes were being formed.

The economic system of the Kingdom of Rwanda evolved in such a way that wealth was accumulated and consolidated by the umwami and the ruling lineage. Starting around 1720 with umwami Gisanura, the kings attempted to fortify their power through the seizure of great herds that belonged to local lords (Vansina, 2004, p.68). In part, this was important because it was tantamount to the seizure of the means of production, as well as the seizure of wealth (ibid, p.73). In this respect, Gisanura's project was a form of Marx's 'primitive accumulation', the pre-capitalist process whereby producers are divorced from the means of production (Marx, 1906, pp.784-787). Not only did it enrich the umwami, it created a situation in which wealthy lineages could be compelled to become his clients, reliant on his goodwill and, essentially, politically impotent. For the purpose of creating new ubuhake relationships with the great families of the region (thereby acquiring new clients to the crown), Gisanura established 'official herds', as well as restricted pastures and land rights (ibid, p.69). For the most part, these herds were seized from wealthy lineages, although some were raided from abroad. The story of Mugata, whose herd of black cows was coveted by Gisanura, serves to illustrate the general process. Gisanura obliged Mugata to surrender his herd, in exchange for usufruct rights on a herd called Ingoma. This was underwritten by a patron-client contract, which required Mugata to give regular deliveries of milk and calves, while Gisanura retained the right to repossess Ingoma or to claim any other heads of cattle that Mugata and his heirs acquired. By the end of the eighteenth century, under the justification of divine right, the umwami owned all of the cattle and all of the land (at least nominally) (Vansina, 2004, p.73; Magnarella, 2005, p.803). In this manner, cattle and land were held under tenure by the king's subjects, and any pastoralist's wealth could be rescinded at the umwami's will. The wealth acquired by the crown was used to create a standing army, which consolidated the power of the ruling dynasty and allowed umwami Mazimpaka to

significantly expand the territory under his dominion (Vansina, 2004, p.73). As a result, more pastoralists and agriculturalists found their cattle and their land falling under the ultimate ownership of the umwami.

By this point, the possession of cattle had become a determining factor in group membership. There were three main groups in the Kingdom of Rwanda: the 'Bahutu', 'Batutsi', and 'Bahima'. The latter two were the earliest to be defined in reference to cattle. Both terms indexed pastoralists, with 'Bahima' used to the north of Rwanda, and 'Batutsi' to the south (thus, in some parts of the Great Lakes Region, a pastoralist was simply a 'Muhima' or a 'Mututsi' as the local society dictated). In Rwanda, however, the terms coexisted, and it is likely that 'Bahima' initially referred to the commoners amongst pastoralists and 'Batutsi' to a political élite (ibid). However, by the time the Kingdom of Rwanda was founded around 1600CE, Vansina argues that the term 'Batutsi' had likely begun to designate all pastoralists, in implicit distinction to the agriculturalist population (ibid, p.37). The term, then, indexed those who owned or worked with cattle. The ruling dynasty was Batutsi, and the prestige of the term grew with its stature. In time, 'all nontranshumant herders in the kingdom claimed this designation even if their social condition was but modest' (ibid). As pastoralists, the Batutsi had the greatest access to wealth, although it was eventually 'owned' by the umwami. Thus, Maquet argues that Mazimpaka was able to consolidate his power militarily precisely because he was a Mututsi: 'to mobilise an army required capital, which only came in the form of livestock, and the Tutsi controlled the cattle' (1961, pp.103-105). Since at least the seventeenth century, then, the term 'Batutsi' was linked to socioeconomic activity. The term 'Bahutu', however, has a less clear history, and it was not until the eighteenth century that it became the counterpart to 'Batutsi' as one of Rwanda's two broad social classes.

Mazimpaka's army institutionalised the opposition between 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi'. Before the eighteenth century, a 'Muhutu' was either a servant, someone who behaved 'loutishly', or a foreigner (Vansina, 2004, pp.134-145). This was not an ethnic or racial term:

the élite at court would refer to a Mututsi servant as ‘Muhutu’ (ibid). Servants who supplied the court were probably the first group to be called ‘Bahutu’, and this meaning influenced the use of the term in the army. In the military, a ‘Mututsi’ was any combatant. This meant they were either a warrior or a cattle rustler, the latter of whom drove the enemy’s cattle into a safe place for capture. Warriors were exclusively pastoralists, and cattle rustlers were predominantly so (ibid, pp.70-75). Thus, it was the case that most combatants, institutionally designated as ‘Batutsi’, were pastoralists, with the top ranks of warriors filled by the aristocracy. Non-combatants stood in distinction to the ‘Batutsi’: they were foragers and servants, in charge of provisioning, portering, and lodging. Because they were servants, they were called ‘Bahutu’. Vansina argues that, over time, this opposition led to the definition of ‘Batutsi’ and ‘Bahutu’ in socioeconomic terms: ‘as most noncombatants happened to stem from lineages of farmers, the elite eventually began to call all farmers “Hutu” in opposition to the ‘Batutsi’ pastoralist combatants (ibid, p.75). Thus socioeconomic background became a basis for group identity, and, within the army, class-based designations were operationalised.

Precisely because ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ were class-based designations, if one’s class position changed one’s group membership also changed. A woman’s class position derived from that of her husband: if a Muhutu woman married a Mututsi man, she would become a Mututsi (Sinema, 2015, p.48). Men changed groups on the basis of wealth and socioeconomic activity. If a prosperous Muhutu man was able to accumulate cattle (including via an ubuhake contract), he underwent ‘kwihutura’ (literally ‘losing-ones’s-Hutuness’). The reverse was also true: if a Mututsi lost his cattle, or was otherwise forced into agricultural work, he would become a Muhutu in a process called ‘gucupira’ (Mbanda, 1997, p.4; Mamdani, 2002, p.499). As Sinema observes, there was a crucial corollary to this: by definition, the development of a Bahutu élite was impossible, as if a Muhutu acquired many heads of cattle they became a Mututsi (2015, p.48). Yet, there was a political importance to these institutions. Ochwada

refers to them as a method of integration, which prevented ‘the hardening of lordship-like distinctions and differences that might give rise to disaffection against the Tutsi leadership’ (2013, p.50). Critically, their very existence indicates that the boundaries between the Bahutu and Batutsi groups were, at this point, porous.

Despite the fact that it was technically possible to change one’s class position, throughout the eighteenth century inequality increased and it became increasingly unlikely that the poorest Bahutu would ever undergo *kwi hutura*. This was because the system of land tenure, premised on the ultimate ownership of all land by the *umwami*, dispossessed many Bahutu of their land. Prior to this, it had been tradition that sons of Bahutu lineages were bequeathed tracts of land when they married (Vansina, 2004, pp.129-130). But following the seizure of land by the crown, a system was introduced where a land grant (*ibikingi*) would be given by the royal court to favoured warriors, chiefs, and clients. *Ibikingi* stripped Bahutu lineages of their autonomy, as they became tenants indebted to landlords (Newbury, 1980, pp.99-100). In certain areas, rapid increases in population exacerbated the problem of *ibikingi*, and if Bahutu did inherit plots of land these became progressively smaller (*ibid*). For these reasons, by the nineteenth century agriculturalists were either very small land-holders or without land entirely (*ibid*). As favoured Batutsi lineages appropriated traditional Bahutu landholdings, an agriculturalist underclass was formed, and the poorest Bahutu began to experience ‘a crippling land crisis and abject poverty’ (Magnarella, 2005, p.803). The land crisis exacerbated inequality between agriculturalists and pastoralists, and strengthened a hierarchical class system that would be solidified under *umwami* Rwabugiri.

Rwabugiri reigned over the Kingdom from 1853-1895, and was thus the last *umwami* of the pre-colonial State. His reign was characterised by external expansion and internal institutional development, with the aim of augmenting ‘the extractive capacities of the state’ (Newbury, 1980, p.100). Under his reign, the vast majority of the population, Bahutu and Batutsi alike, had ‘virtually no control over their land and labour power’ (Pottier, 2002,

p.110). The umwami imposed harsh, centralised rule on formerly autonomous lineages, and he ‘confiscated their lands and broke their political power’ (ibid). Rwabugiri introduced the position of the ‘land chief’, who presided over a specific district and whose job it was to collect ‘prestations’ (Newbury, 1980, p.100). Each lineage was expected to periodically provide payment to the land chief. For residents of an ibikingi, payment had to be made to the owner of the land grant (ibid). Batutsi were required to give payment in cattle as prestations, while Bahutu tenants were forced to labour for either their land chief or the owner of the ibikingi for two out of four days (Newbury, 1980, p.100; Vansina, 2004, p.134). This system was called ‘uburetwa’, and it provoked ‘a rift that was to divide society from top to bottom in two hierarchized and opposed social categories’ (Vansina, 2004, p.134). In this way, Rwabugiri institutionalised class positions and practices of exploitation. Indeed, he ‘manipulated an “ethnic” differentiation between Tutsi and Hutu based on historical social positions’ (Eriksson et al, 1996, p.11). Despite the crown’s increasing hold over wealth and land, which at an earlier point would have entailed many Batutsi undergoing *gucupira*, it ceased to be possible for Rwandans to transcend social categories.

By the time that Europeans arrived in Rwanda, social mobility had become extremely rare. Despite the fact that the labels ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ were still based on socioeconomic activity, group boundaries appeared to be so fixed that European scholars referred to the pre-colonial society as a ‘caste system’ (Magnarella, 2005, p.804). Batutsi privilege and access to cattle was protected by the social institution of *uburetwa*, the umwami’s ultimate ownership of the land and livestock, and the introduction of a brutal penalty of death by impalement for anyone who attempted to steal cattle (ibid). Precisely because it had become increasingly difficult for anybody but a Mututsi to accumulate cattle (Sinema, 2015, p.51), it appears that, by the end of Rwabugiri’s reign, class position was increasingly determined by parentage and the socioeconomic circumstances into which one was born. Thus, a system of inherited privilege and hereditary wealth was interpreted as a caste system.

At the end of the nineteenth century, social stratification was causing severe tensions in Rwanda. Indeed, by some accounts, European colonialists were welcomed by farmers and less-wealthy herders, who anticipated a challenge to the aristocracy (Vansina, 2004, p.136). But Europeans were to severely exacerbate antagonisms, by introducing and operationalising the discourse of racial science, as part of a discursive formation that would constitute Rwandans as racialised subjects within two entirely separate groups.

3 THE 'HAMITE' AND THE 'NEGRO' IN THE EUROPEAN DISCOURSE OF RACIAL SCIENCE

The colonisation project required African people, economies, and societies to be interpreted through European epistemological frameworks. Mudimbe emphasises this fact in *The Invention of Africa*, where he asserts that colonialism is fundamentally a process of reconstitution, as colonialists 'organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs' (1988, p.14). This transformation entailed specific ways of understanding space, and of conceptualising the people who occupied it. As a way of exploring this idea, I will argue in this section that the process of colonisation in Rwanda was facilitated by the development of a discourse of 'racial science', which in turn was used to produce Rwandans as racialised subjects. This argument is premised upon the recognition of racial categories as constructs: Baum, for instance, argues that 'scientific' knowledge of race has been shaped by social and political forces, to the extent that 'race, in short, is an effect of power' (2006, pp.7-8). In what follows, I will focus on the way in which a European discourse of racial science constructed Africa, and the people who lived there, as two separate categories, each with a spatial and racial element. This created enduring divisions that were mobilised by governments before the 1994 genocide, in order to renegotiate the class identities that were present in Rwanda in 1890. Precisely because Rwanda had developed an

ostensibly clear dyadic class structure, its population was taken as exemplary of the dualistic conceptualisation of Africa put forth by colonialists.

The discourse of racial science was a complex ideological construction with its roots in the Enlightenment (Baum, 2006). One particular school, the polygenists, believed that humanity comprised separate species, each of which had distinct origins and capabilities (Lieberman and Reynolds, 1996, p.144). Voltaire, for instance, argued in 1733 that ‘Negroes’ were entirely separate from ‘Europeans’: ‘[t]he negro race is a species of men as different from ours as the breed of spaniels is from that of greyhounds’ (cited in Baum, 2006, p.63). Polygenists generally ‘conceived race to signify deep, intractable differences among unequal species of human beings’ (Baum, 2006, p.63). Ideas about race were not consistent, and throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century different racial taxonomies were produced. It was common, however, for writers to construct the putative ‘Negro’ races as innately inferior to most, if not all, others (Baum, 2006, pp.58-94). Edward Long’s *The History of Jamaica* (1774), for instance, included a number of disparaging and dehumanising comments about the appearance and smell of ‘Negroes’ (pp.351-352) and claimed that ‘in regard to the faculties of the mind’, ‘Negroes’ ‘remain at this time in the same rude situation in which they were found two thousand years ago’ (ibid, p.353). Moreover, Long argued that ‘Negroes’ ‘seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science’ (ibid). For our purposes, this is a key point: the discourse of racial science constructed the figure of the ‘Negro’ as a species of humanity that was unable to produce ‘civilisation’.

The construction of ‘Negroes’ as a subspecies of humanity that was inherently incapable of cultural achievement initially played a role in justifying the slave trade (Baum, 2006), and, in the nineteenth century, it became an important support for the colonisation of Africa. As Europeans engaged more closely with Africa, however, the fact that the continent was home to advanced civilisations posed a problem for the discourse of racial science. The issue first arose after particular discoveries in North Africa. During the Napoleonic occupation of

Egypt (1789-1801), archaeological projects uncovered mounting evidence of a highly advanced civilization that not only pre-dated the Romans and the Greeks, but developed indigenously in Africa (Sanders, 1969, p.525). Yet, 'individuals on both sides of the Atlantic ... were convinced of the innate inferiority of the Negro', and so did not take the discovery of Ancient Egyptian civilization as evidence that claims about the 'Negro' race were inaccurate (ibid). Rather, they produced a significant amount of scholarly work that aimed to 'prove in some way that Egyptians were not negroes' (ibid). To this end, a discursive formation emerged that produced the figure of the 'Hamite'.

The 'Hamite' was constructed across numerous scholarly and creative works, as the putative source of Egyptian civilisation. Distinct academic disciplines provided 'evidence' that the Ancient Egyptians were not 'Negroes', but of a different race entirely. Early work in this area drew from Abrahamic stories, particularly from Genesis and the Talmud (Sanders, 1969). The 'Hamites' were named for Ham, the son of Noah, who was cursed for emasculating his father. As punishment, Noah supposedly doomed Ham's descendants to slavery (ibid, p.522). Prior to Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, the 'Hamite' was often identified with the 'Negro', as a branch of humanity that was 'preordained for slavery' (ibid, p.523). This notion justified the institution of slavery from a different perspective to that of the polygenist theories: it was God's will, rather than innate inferiority, that dehumanised African people. After Napoleon occupied Egypt, however, the 'Hamite' was progressively separated from the 'Negro'. The discovery that the oldest civilisation in the Mediterranean was established by Africans forced theologians to revisit Noah's curse. And as Sanders shows, new interpretations were offered: 'Egyptians, it was now remembered, were descendants of Mizraim, a son of Ham. Noah had only cursed Canaan-son-of-Ham, so that it was Canaan and his progeny alone who suffered the malediction. Ham, his other sons, and their children were not included in the curse' (1969, p.526). 'Negroes', then, were descendants of Canaan, while 'Hamites' were a different group entirely.

The Egyptians were produced as ‘Hamites’, and distanced from ‘Negroes’, through the discourse of racial science. It is worth identifying three academic disciplines that contributed to this: philology, history, and craniology. Philologists drew on a polygenist idea that echoed the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9): the notion that all races developed independently, and, accordingly, had their own proper primordial languages. Thus philologists argued that, because Coptic was clearly related to Arabic, the populations who spoke each language must have derived from a single parental race (Sanders, 1969, p.526). The argument that followed was that the Egyptians, along with Nubians and Ethiopians (who were allied with imperial European powers) were in fact early colonists hailing from the Arabian Peninsula (ibid). Historians concurred, arguing that ancient writings indicated that Ancient Egyptians ‘were not Negroid, as such a fact would have startled the ancients into a detailed description’ (Sanders, 1969, p.526). W. G. Browne even argued that Ancient Egyptians left mummified remains for fear of ‘errors into which posterity might fall, [as mummies exhibit] irrefutable proof of their features and of the colour of their skin’ (1806, cited in Sanders, 1969, p.526). Browne suggested that Ancient Egyptians were in fact ‘Caucasoid’, a notion that was supported by craniologists. Craniology examined formal differences in skull size and shape, in an attempt to map putative internal characteristics (including the putative inferiority of the ‘Negro’) onto external features that could be directly measured and quantified. In *Crania Americana* (1839), Dr. Samuel Morton, a leading figure in the field, ostensibly ‘proved’ the existence of both a Caucasian race with larger brains than any other, and a ‘Negro’ race with particularly small brains. He classified the Egyptian cranium as Caucasian, and postulated that Egyptians were a race indigenous to the Nile Valley (and therefore referred to them as ‘Nilotic’) (Sanders, 1969, p.527; Micheal, 1988, p.350). Craniology was thought to elicit concrete facts, and Morton’s findings supported the idea that Ancient Egyptians ranked alongside European and Arabic races (albeit in a relatively subordinate position) (Sanders, 1969, p.528). In concert, then, philology, history, and

craniology acted as constituent parts of a discursive formation of racial science which sanctioned the notion that the Nile Valley was home to a previously unidentified Caucasian race. Ultimately, ‘the Egyptians emerged as Hamites, Caucasoid, uncursed, and capable of high civilisation’ (ibid, p.527). Thus, it became doctrine that there were at least two races on the African continent, one of which was related to Europeans and capable of civilisation, one of which was fundamentally inferior.

As the newly constituted ‘Caucasoid’ ‘Hamite’ emerged discursively, a new cultural mapping of Africa arose. This saw the continent as two, or possibly three, broadly separate entities, partitioned by the Sahara (and, for some, the Nile). Despite the fact that there were ‘deep historical connections between societies to the north and south of the Sahara’, colonial discourse represented the desert as an impassable barrier that kept sub-Saharan Africa in relative isolation (Zezeza, 2016, p.17). The conceptualisation of space in European accounts of Africa was important since ‘people’s creativity and thought produce places as much as places produce people’s cultures and identities’; that is, places are ‘products of historical processes’, constituted in particular ways and with attendant effects on the development of culture and identity (ibid). The work of G. W. F. Hegel, for example, had implications for the construction of Africa’s population as predominantly belonging to two racial groups. Writing in 1837, Hegel argued that the vast landmass of Africa must be divided, with North Africa or ‘European Africa (if we may so call it)’ as one part, and a less familiar part south of the Sahara ([1837] 2001, p.109). Zezeza describes Hegel’s sub-Saharan Africa as ‘a truncated monstrosity ... from which North Africa and especially Egypt is excised and attached to Europe’ (2016, p.15). The extraction of North Africa from ‘Africa proper’ (Hegel, [1837] 2001, p.109) was rationalised in terms of its ‘purported extra-continental connections and Arabness’ (2016, p.16). Specifically, Hegel distinguished Sub-Saharan Africa as an area shut off from the development that had taken place in Europe and Asia, which had remained in social, economic, and cultural infancy. He claimed:

Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained — for all purposes of connection with the rest of the World — shut up; it is the Gold-land compressed within itself — the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night (Hegel, [1837] 2001, p.109).

For Hegel, Africa is an insular continent, with infantile people and a history that remains ‘dark’. Thus he constructs it as ‘the ultimate “undeveloped, unhistorical” other of Europe’ (Zezeza, 2016, p.15). ‘Africa proper’ was represented as devoid of history, philosophy, and culture on the premise that ‘the Negro exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state’ (Hegel, [1837] 2001, p.111; Zezeza, 2016, p.15). For Zezeza, Hegel’s account contributed to a racialized mapping of Africa as ‘the black continent’ (Zezeza, 2016, p.15). And precisely because Hegel’s Africa is ‘black’, it has diminutive cultural, economic, and social achievements. Indeed, Hegel attributed Islam with being ‘the only thing which in any way brings the Negroes within the range of culture’ ([1837] 2001, p.111). It followed that culture, for Hegel, had necessarily been imported from outside of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The reality was that, in spite of European representations, sub-Saharan Africa was home to complex cultures and societies, including intricate, centralised States like that of Rwanda. The ‘Hamite’ was used to explain such achievements. Indeed, the popular stereotype of the Hamite became that of a proud, ‘Caucasian’ pastoralist, who shone a light on Hegel’s ‘dark’ continent (Farelius, 1993, p.109). Seligman argues this point in *The Races of Africa* (1930), claiming that aside from relatively recent influence:

the civilisations of Africa are the civilisations of the Hamites, its history the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two more primitive African stocks, the Negro and the Bushman, whether this influence was exerted by highly civilised Egyptians or by such wider pastoralists as are represented at the present day by the Beja and the Somali (Seligman, 1930, p.96).

If we follow Foucault’s argument that knowledge, when connected to power, produces truth, then the accepted truth between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was that, since civilisation could only be arrived at through the mediation of the white race, in Africa it must have been bequeathed by the ‘Caucasian’ ‘Hamites’ (Sanders, 1969, p.529). This

provided historical precedent for ‘Caucasian’ intervention to foster ‘civilisation’ in Africa: the ‘civilising missions’ of European empires were only the latest phase in a historical process by which members of the Caucasian race carried ‘civilisation’ from the Mediterranean Basin to Africa. Thus Europeans imagined ‘Hamites’ as ‘dark faced Europeans’ (Basaninyenzi, 2006). And in fact, scholars explained that ‘Hamites’ had darker skin than European Caucasians because for centuries they had had intercourse with their ‘Negro slaves’ (Peschel, 1888, pp.481-485). Such a claim both naturalised the idea of ownership over human beings, and reinforced the necessity for ‘higher’ races to establish relations of dominance over ‘lower’ ones. Ultimately, the ‘Hamite’ came to represent a precursor to European colonialists, as well as the progenitor of all African civilisation. Crucially, the story dispossessed Africans who were considered truly indigenous (for the most part, ‘Negroes’) of any agency in the production of culture.

The figure of the ‘Hamite’ was quickly applied to East African pastoralist populations. Specifically, the Bahima, and by extension the Batutsi, were classified as ‘Hamites’ in Richard F. Burton’s *The Lake Regions of Africa* (1860). Burton argued that the Bahima were distinguished from other East African populations insofar as they had reflexive capabilities, Caucasian features, and a certain level of intelligence. By this token, they were ‘superior in civilisation and social constitution to the other tribes of Eastern and Central Africa’ (Burton, cited in Basaninyenzi, 2006, p.116). According to Basaninyenzi, Burton’s text was the first to racialise the East African pastoralists, treating them not as an occupational or ethnic groups but as properly a different race from East African ‘Negroes’ (2006, pp.115-116). On the basis of Burton’s account, Seligman incorporated the Bahima and Batutsi into his description of the ‘Hamitic’ race (ibid). Seligman also assigned the ‘Hamites’ a particular trajectory: they had journeyed through Ethiopia (also known to Europeans by the name ‘Abyssinia’) in order to arrive as conquerers in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa (ibid). This conceptualisation of the ‘Hamites’ was soon mobilised to explain Rwandan society.

Rwanda was largely untouched by Europeans until the 1890s, after the Berlin Conference (1884) decreed its fate in the Scramble for Africa (Fegley, 2016, p.8). The first European to enter Rwanda is believed to have been Oskar Baumann, an Austrian scholar. Of his entry to Rwanda from Burundi, Baumann said:

Here were large crowds, too; here, too, they were dancing and cheering, and the women, among which there were very pretty ones, were welcoming us with “open arms” and singing melodious songs, while swinging their leafy branches... I was ... at most a foreign potentate, to whom one gives small gifts. We camped at the height, in a beautiful banana-rich village of Munbadi, which had well-built, comfortable huts. Here, some chiefs introduced themselves to me, Watussi, with completely Abyssinian types of faces, who were representing Kigere, the king of Ruanda (Baumann, 1894, p.84).⁹

By claiming that the Batutsi were clearly ‘Abyssinian’, Baumann categorised them as ‘Hamites’. Indeed, by the time Baumann wrote about Rwanda, the Galla in Ethiopia were considered to be the archetypal example of the ‘Hamite’ (Peschel, 1888, p.481). Baumann’s account was typical of colonial texts in describing the appearance of putative ‘Hamites’ as evidence of their racial background (see Basaninyenzi, 2006), but the categorisation is better explained through a historical perspective on Rwandan society. For, in Rwanda, Europeans were faced with a complex social system, alongside a ruling class whose wealth was grounded in pastoralism. For colonialists, these were issues that needed explaining, and a viable answer was that the Batutsi must be a ‘Hamitic’ race, who brought ‘civilisation’ to the Bahutu from the north. Contradictory evidence was explained away; for example, the fact that Batutsi spoke the same language as the Bahutu, rather than a separate ‘Hamitic’ language, only meant that the Batutsi were incorporated into the ranks of the ‘many [Hamitic groups who] have wholly or partially lost their language’ (Sergi, 1901, p.40). The physical similarities between the Bahutu and Batutsi were seemingly ignored, and it was frequently stated that the Batutsi were distinguished by their ‘Caucasian features’ (Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.839). The figure of the ‘Hamite’, as a ‘Caucasoid’ race of North African or Arabian origins, continued

⁹ I am grateful to Andreas Bruns for this translation.

to be invoked into the twentieth century:

Arriving in Rwanda from upper Egypt or the Abyssinian highlands, one recognizes [the Tutsi] immediately. One had already seen these men of tall stature, . . . with slender bodies and long lanky limbs, well-proportioned features, and a noble, serious, and haughty demeanor. These are the brothers of the Nubians [in Sudan], the Galla [Somalia], the Danakil [Eritrea]. They have Caucasian features and resemble the Semites of Asia Minor. But their coloring is black, sometimes bronze or olive; their hair is curly . . . Before becoming black, these men were bronze in color (De Lacger, 1939, cited in Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.839, parentheses Newbury and Newbury's).

The discourse of racial science, then, became the dominant framework through which Europeans interpreted Rwandan society during the colonial period.

Importantly, the categories of 'Hamite' and 'Negro' were operationalised by the colonial State, and this had particular implications. '[M]irroring European attitudes of the era, the Tutsi ruling class was seen as a superior racial type' by the administration, and it received the associated privileges (Fegley, 2016, p.9). This was universalising: despite the fact that less than 10% of the Batutsi ever wielded significant political power, colonialists assumed that the entirety of the Batutsi formed a political élite that derived from their racial superiority (Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.839). The fact that the Batutsi were pastoralists only served as evidence of their nomadic origins and more advanced nature. The history of Rwanda was recorded in a way that reflected this: it developed a tendency to conjoin 'race, culture, and history, drawing on selective physiological traits to postulate a sweeping historical narrative encompassing thousands of miles and thousands of years' (ibid). Within this narrative, the Bahutu were broadly described as 'Negroes': Captain E. M. Jack, for instance, described the Bahutu as 'a Bantu people, and the aboriginal inhabitants of Rwanda', who were 'serfs to the [Batutsi]' (1913, pp.538-539).¹⁰ They were conceptualised as 'short', 'sturdy', and 'dark', as

¹⁰ The Bahutu were sometimes referred to as a 'Bantu' race. The implications of this varied. The origins of the term 'Bantu' are addressed in Chapter 3; essentially, it was the name given to a putative language family in sub-Saharan Africa. Chrétien (1985) argues that the term 'Bantu' sometimes came to stand in for the term 'Negro' in colonial discourse. For some, however, it referred to 'a superior type of Negro dashed with the Hamite' (Johnston, 1907, pp.331-332; p.335). This was a point of disagreement among racial theorists, though it is worth noting that some who believed the 'Bantu' people to have benefitted from 'Hamitic' influence still viewed them as 'primitive' (ibid).

well as suitably 'naïve' for inhabitants of Hegel's atavistic sub-Saharan Africa (Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.839). Fundamentally, they were considered to be 'Negroes' who were well suited to form the colonial 'labouring classes' (ibid). Precisely because the discourse of racial science attributed putative characteristics to unchangeable racial types, the Bahutu inherited the prejudices associated with the 'Negro', and thus colonialists asserted that it was only right that they be ruled over by a 'Caucasian' race. Rwanda was reshaped in relation to this overarching narrative, in ways that profoundly influenced both the interpretation and production of class-based realities in the colonial period.

4 RACE, COFFEE, AND LANGUAGE IN COLONIAL RWANDA

The discourse of racial science was operationalised as part of a strategy to transform Rwanda into a highly stratified part of the Belgian Empire, profitable to the metropole primarily on the basis of its coffee industry. In this section, I discuss three arenas in which the colonial State had a lasting impact: the creation of the coffee industry, the racialisation of class categories, and the creation of a French-speaking élite. These factors were closely intertwined, and they should be understood in relation to the demands of colonial statecraft. For, as James C. Scott (1998) argues, 'legibility' is a central concern of the State. That is, the State requires a 'synoptic' view of the territory, resources, and people under its control, in order to facilitate 'interventions of every kind, such as public-health measures, political surveillance, and relief for the poor' (Scott, 1998, p.3). Without the help of abstractions and simplifications, people and possessions are largely incomprehensible to the State. Thus, in Europe in the early modern period, 'officials took exceptionally complex, illegible, and local social practices, such as land tenure customs or naming customs, and created a standard grid whereby it could be centrally recorded and monitored' (Scott, 1998, p.2). Scott gives diverse examples of the acts that helped to make early modern society 'legible', including the

introduction of permanent surnames to 'allow officials to identify, unambiguously, the majority of [the State's] citizens' (ibid, pp.64-71, quote from p.65) and the development of forestry as a way to reduce complex ecosystems to economically productive monocultures (ibid, pp.11-52). In the colonial context, such interventions were made by executive fiat, with little tolerance for popular resistance (ibid, pp.49-69). This point is evidenced by colonial Rwanda.

Rwanda was under German control between 1890 and 1916. For Berlin, the country was of fundamental strategic importance: it was to form a central territory of 'Mittelafrika', a giant African colony that would link German East Africa with present-day Cameroon and Namibia (Fegley, 2016, p.8). Prunier argues that the German administration did not modify Rwandan society in any depth (1997, p.25), but it did make certain minor changes that would become more significant under the Belgian mandate. First, the German missionaries introduced coffee to Rwanda, under the rationale that it would provide Rwandans with opportunities for employment and development (Kieran, 1969, pp.51-52). Second, Germany instigated a policy of indirect rule, whereby it controlled the country through the court and the umwami. This allowed the Batutsi establishment to conquer hitherto unincorporated areas at the periphery of the Rwandan border, thereby expanding the colony (Fegley, 2016, p.9). German involvement, then, buttressed Batutsi rule and introduced a new industry to Rwanda.

The changes made by the Belgian administration were more significant. Belgium took control of Rwanda following the first world war. As Germany and Belgium were on opposing sides, their forces stationed in Africa were also in combat. The colonial army of the Belgian Congo, the Force Publique, besieged the small German garrison in Rwanda, and took control of the colony on May 21st, 1916 (Fegley, 2016, p.10). Belgium intended to use Rwanda as a bargaining chip, as it planned a complex negotiation that would incorporate the Portuguese southern bank of the Congo estuary into the Belgian Congo (ibid). However,

Portugal refused any such arrangement. Finding no way to trade Rwanda for a territory that better fit its interests, Belgium retained legal ownership of the colony, and it was officially incorporated into the Belgian Empire by the League of Nations on August 23rd, 1923 (ibid). Thereafter Belgium endeavoured to transform the colonisation of Rwanda into a profitable enterprise.

The colonial State carried out agricultural and anthropological research on Rwanda as early as 1921, in order to render the colony 'legible'.¹¹ On the basis of this, Belgium reorganised the Rwandan economy into one that more closely reflected the economic systems of Europe (that is, a monetary economy). In part, this was a strategic response to what could be termed 'the cattle problem'. That is, by 1921 Belgian colonists were aware that Rwandans used cattle as a form of wealth. Morteihan, an agronomist stationed in Rwanda in the 1920s, discussed the implications of this; specifically, he argued that the use of cattle as wealth and media of exchange was fundamentally incommensurable with the European approach to production. He stated:

Horned beasts were considered by the natives more as an external sign of wealth than as working animals. Certainly, the Tutsi breed [cattle], but more to augment this practically unproductive wealth than to procure a source of profit. Indeed, they only rarely sell a male calf or a bull, never a heifer or a cow. At the very most, they slaughter sick, sterile, or very old animals for consumption.

It is the same for the raising of dairy cows: the native does nothing to try to increase the milk production of their animals; they consume that which the animals give without envisaging the possibility of increasing the yield of milk or of butter that could sell for a good price (Morteihan, 1921, cited in Nkurikiyimfura, 1994, p.156).¹²

Morteihan was clear that the cattle economy was a problem for the Belgian authorities. He insisted that cattle should be treated as either commodities, or means of production (for milk and butter). He argued that, particularly because the best land was dedicated to feeding livestock, it was crucial to lessen the number of cattle in Rwanda. Morteihan's survey found

¹¹ As Scott notes, the colonial State often carried out such projects more extensively than in the metropole. Ireland, for example, was comprehensively mapped far earlier than England (1998, p.49).

¹² My translation, with thanks to Tony Crowley.

that there was a total of 3-4 million cattle in Rwanda and Burundi in 1921; his recommendation was that this number be reduced to between 1.5-2 million females and 150,00-200,000 males (Nkurikiyimfura, 1994, p.157). This would both maximise the economic productivity of livestock and allow for the dedication of arable land to profitable crops (ibid). The Belgian authorities thus embarked on a mission to reduce the importance of cattle and to introduce Rwanda to a European-style monetary economy. But this posed a challenge to the pre-colonial economic system, and the class-based identities that attended upon it.

The Belgian administration introduced a new economic unit to Rwanda: the Congolese Franc. This linked Rwanda to the Belgian Congo, Burundi, and Belgium itself, in an imperial 'currency bloc'. Helleiner (2002) observes that a number of imperial powers created currency blocs, the imposition of which served several strategic goals. For instance, there were certain economic benefits for the metropole: linking the currencies of the empire lowered transaction costs and provided the metropole with greater macroeconomic influence. Importantly, the imperial currency blocs also played an ideological role, as they were linked to the idea of 'civilising' the colonised and fostering a process of 'modernisation' (Helleiner, 2002, pp.22-24). And, by introducing European-style currencies, imperial powers demonetised existing economic units that were considered 'primitive' (such as cowries), which had no place in a 'modern' social order modelled on European society (ibid, p.22). Thus, the imposition of new currencies rendered traditional economic institutions redundant. In practice, this required that individual subjects were incorporated into the new monetary economy. In Rwanda, this was achieved through the expansion of the coffee industry.

The Belgian administration significantly increased coffee production in Rwanda, in order to make the colony profitable. It used traditional structures of power to compel individual subjects to cultivate coffee, and accordingly the industry was primarily overseen by the

(predominantly Batutsi) chiefs. In 1925, each chief and sub-chief was ordered to maintain at least half a hectare of coffee, with fifty plants to be tended by each person under their authority. In the 1930s, that requirement became sixty plants per person (Uwizeyimana, 1996, p.55). Around this time, the administration introduced a head tax, which fell upon every adult male. The tax was due in Congolese Francs, and therefore forcefully imbricated Rwandans into the new 'monetised' economy. Uwizeyimana foregrounds this point, as he argues that the Belgians recognised the strategic value of cultivating coffee insofar as it would incorporate Rwanda into the global economy and the imperial currency bloc (ibid, pp.51-53). Precisely because the coffee industry was the only way to accumulate Congolese Francs, Rwandans increasingly dedicated any land to which they had access to coffee cultivation (ibid, p.51). In this way, a monetary economy became a fact of everyday life for Rwandans.

The reorganisation of Rwanda's economic sphere created the conditions necessary to divorce 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi' from their original bases in cattle wealth. The socially disturbing effect of this measure is perhaps indicated by the fact that rumours circulated the country, 'confirming that the coffee bushes killed livestock or that they rendered them sterile ... essentially that the coffee bush was an evil plant brought by the Whites to destroy the people and occupy their lands' (Uwizeyimana, 1996, p.54).¹³ Uwizeyimana refers to these speculations as 'prejudices' (ibid), but they were underpinned by economic anxieties. For coffee bushes may not have killed livestock, or made them infertile, but it removed their importance and social function as a form of wealth. Coffee, the commodity at the heart of the new monetary economy, supplanted cattle as the nexus of class relations. As a result of the cash economy, the cultural legitimacy of pre-colonial structures rooted in the cattle economy waned (Prunier, 1997, p.42). The categories of 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi' endured, but, rather than being determined by one's wealth or relation to cattle as the means of production,

¹³ My translation, with thanks to Tony Crowley.

they were transformed into elements of an absolute, racial taxonomy.

As I noted in the previous section, Europeans began to valorise the ‘Hamitic’ Batutsi as early as 1894. The notion that the Batutsi were racially superior to the Bahutu underpinned Belgian governance in Rwanda. In 1927, the Vicar Apostolic of Rwanda wrote the following plea to the Belgian government:

The greatest mistake this government could make would be to suppress the Mututsi caste. Such a revolution would lead the country directly to anarchy and to hateful anti-European communism. [...] We will have no better, more active and more intelligent chiefs than the Batutsi. They are the ones best suited to understand progress and the ones the population likes best. *The government must work mainly with them* (Classe, cited in Prunier, 1997, p.26, italics in original).

For Classe, the Batutsi were the only Rwandans capable of ‘understanding progress’ and working with the Belgians to ensure that Rwanda would become an orderly, capitalist colony. The colonial State took heed of his argument, and ruled the colony by giving systematic privilege to the Batutsi. In this respect its reorganisation of Rwanda’s political structure is exemplary. Until 1929, every hill in Rwanda was presided over by three chiefs, one of whom would usually be a Muhutu. This system prevented any single person having total control over a hill, and it also kept the administrative apparatus from being completely dominated by the Batutsi aristocracy. However, under the Belgian mandate, Bahutu chiefs were fired en masse, and overwhelmingly replaced with Batutsi (Prunier, 1997, p.26). In 1929, the system was restructured so that the three chiefly offices were consolidated into a single position, which would usually be given to a Mututsi (ibid, p.27). The resulting political dominance of the Batutsi in relation to the Bahutu had particular implications, not least because the Belgian administration removed the mechanisms by which Rwandans could transcend class categories. Belgium introduced racial identity cards in 1933, which categorised Rwandans (somewhat arbitrarily) on the basis of their wealth in cattle: those with ten heads or more were classified as ‘Batutsi’, and those with fewer were categorised as ‘Bahutu’ (Magnarella,

2005, p.808).¹⁴ The cards eradicated the (theoretically) porous boundaries between the 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi'; from this point, group membership was fixed, and one inherited one's racial identity from one's father (Eriksson et al, 1996, p.11; Magnarella, 2005, p.808). Thus the distinctions that were based in cattle endured, but were disconnected from long-standing economic structures. Consequently, the implementation of the Congolese Franc, and the institutionalisation of racial identity as separate from cattle-wealth, enabled the Belgian administration to operationalise the discourse of racial science in order to model society on a distinction between the 'Hamitic' Batutsi and the Bahutu 'Negroes'. By 1959, 43 out of 45 chiefs were Batutsi, as were 549 out of 559 sub-chiefs. Thus, political life increasingly became the domain of the Batutsi, with the the Bahutu peasantry on each hill falling under the control of a single chief, backed by the Belgian administration. The sociopolitical organisation of Rwanda was altered to reflect the Belgian perception of a society split into two races, one worthy of ruling and the other incapable of doing so.

The coffee industry became an arena in which the dominance of the Batutsi was institutionalised and justified by the idea of race. As Newbury and Newbury argue, the racialisation of the Bahutu and Batutsi warranted their filling different roles in the production process. In particular, the 'short, sturdy, and dark' Bahutu were represented as ideal labourers (Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.839). The 'aristocratic' Batutsi, who were increasingly the chiefs of individual hills, were well-placed to administer the coffee plantations. In fact, the Belgian administration permitted the chiefs and sub-chiefs to 'force their subjects to cultivate coffee for export' by way of ubureetwa (Kamola, 2007, p.578). Ubureetwa was incorporated into the European legal system, in such a way as to individualise the obligation. For, prior to colonisation, a single representative fulfilled the ubureetwa obligation of an entire kinship

¹⁴ A number of scholars refer to these as 'ethnic identity cards', as they bore the term 'ubwoko' in Kinyarwanda, and 'ethnie' in French (Magnarella, 2005, p.808). However, as we will see, throughout this period 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi' were produced as racial groups. For instance, the groups were treated as races in education, and in the political manifestos produced in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Prunier, cited in Magnarella, 2005, p.808). In order to be consistent with the racialisation of Rwandan social categories, I refer here to 'racial identity cards'.

group; Belgian law made it incumbent upon every adult male (Newbury, 1980, p.103). This contributed to the formation of an ‘increasingly identifiable and impoverished agricultural class’ made up of the Bahutu peasantry (Kamola, 2007, p.578). Within the coffee industry, individual subjects became completely subordinated on the basis of the racial identity assigned to them.

In fact, it is overly simplistic to state that racial categories replaced social classes in colonial Rwanda. Rather, the colonial State transformed and reconstituted the ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ and, by the 1950s, created a new social class entirely: the évolués. The évolués emerged as a ‘distinct subject/category’ in French and Belgian colonies; it was an élite urban class, whose members often aligned themselves closely with ‘francophone culture’ and the particular forms of ‘civilisation’ that were celebrated by the European empires (Genova, 2004, pp.48-49). Language was an important credential as an évolué: in the Belgian Congo, for instance, the class developed because waged labour was only available to those who had learnt French in colonial schools (Nyembwe Ntita 2010, p.14). A knowledge of French allowed colonised subjects to accrue social and cultural capital, and ultimately to ascend the ranks in colonial society (Nyembwe Ntita, 2010; Spowage, 2019, pp.9-15). In Rwanda, as elsewhere, the évolué class was produced through the education system, in part as a consequence of the reorganisation of ‘linguistic markets’ (explained below). While it may be anachronistic to talk of a ‘Rwandan language’ in the pre-colonial era, Nassenstein argues that those living in and around Rwanda before colonisation were able to communicate with each other, and that they would also be able to understand the language used at the highest level of political authority (that is, the umwami’s court) (2015, p.193). This changed dramatically under Belgian control, as the colonial State made French the dominant language. To illustrate this point, it is useful to turn to Bourdieu’s understanding of the ‘linguistic market’ and ‘legitimate language’.

In Bourdieu’s thought, the ‘linguistic market’ is the terrain on which linguistic exchanges

take place. Broadly speaking, a set of relations between languages or forms of language constitutes a linguistic market. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of the market to highlight the fact that different codes are socially valued in different ways, which are intimately related to the structure of social and cultural capital in society as a whole (1972, pp.651-652). Thus the market 'is itself a particular expression of the structure of the power relations between the groups possessing the corresponding competences (e.g. "genteel" language and the vernacular, or, in a situation of multilingualism, the dominant language and the dominated language)' (Bourdieu, 1972, p.647). In general terms, Bourdieu argues that the State, as it expands its dominance over society, creates a single, unified 'national linguistic market' (Woolard, 1985, p.740). In more precise terms, there is not a single linguistic market that incorporates the entire political territory: rather, the national linguistic market is one among many that are 'integrated under the sponsorship of the state' (ibid). For Bourdieu, both formal contexts (such as the political field) and informal ones (such as the shop floor) are 'markets with their own properties' (Thomason, 1991, pp.21-22). But the markets that are particularly associated with State power (such as those of education and the State administration) are considered 'legitimate', and one can only succeed in them if one's competence is recognised as 'legitimate' (Bourdieu, 1972, p.654). It is important to explain 'legitimacy' in greater detail.

Within the linguistic market, a particular code is constructed as the 'legitimate language'. This is the most prestigious code in the market, which serves as a central reference point for making linguistic judgements. Thus, individual speakers are in part valued on the basis of their speech, and its proximity to the 'legitimate language' (Woolard, 1985, p.740). Linguistic and social legitimacy exist in a circular relation: as Bourdieu puts it 'a language is worth what those who speak it are worth', and the reverse is also true, since competence in the legitimate language confers legitimacy upon speakers (1972, p.652). Accordingly, the legitimate language derives its currency on the linguistic market from the 'economic and cultural power' of its

speakers; and the economic and cultural power of speakers is inseparable from their use of the legitimate language (ibid). But it is also true that ‘a whole set of specific institutions and mechanisms’ continually inculcate a recognition of the legitimacy of the language (Bourdieu, 1991, p.50). For Bourdieu, this is above all the work of particular State-sponsored institutions (such as the public school system), which both reproduce political domination and construct linguistic dominance (1991, p.46). Because linguistic legitimacy arises from a whole network of relations, language policy itself is only its ‘most superficial aspect’ (ibid, p.50). Moreover, awareness of the legitimate language is not ‘an explicitly professed, deliberate, and revocable belief’ (ibid, p.51), but is rather the result of a code being sanctioned in practice as legitimate within particular markets (ibid, p.45). Bourdieu’s theory helps to explain the situation in colonial Rwanda, where the education system created a peasant class with limited literacy in Kinyarwanda, and an élite class whose status was tied to a knowledge of French.

In Rwanda, education was not the priority of the government, and, for the most part, it was left to missionaries. Indeed, the earliest educational institutions were independent mission schools. The Belgian administration competed with these by opening State schools until, in 1929, it was decided that the State would indirectly control mission schools instead. From this point, all formal education was delivered by missions (Walker-Keleher, 2006, p.38), with the most prestigious school being the Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida (Mamdani, 2001, p.89). In part, the prestige of the Group Scolaire d’Astrida derived from its close relationship to the State (ibid). This is an important point, as the less prestigious schools, which were more loosely related to the State, educated more students and took a different approach to language. From 1929, schools were categorised on the basis of State involvement: the écoles officielles were either government-run or managed by missions under government contracts; écoles libres subsidées were Belgian mission schools in receipt of government subsidies; and écoles libres non-subsidées were privately funded mission schools (Walker-Keleher, 2006, p.38). Écoles officielles were the rarest, and by 1952 they accounted for only 5 of 1,855

primary schools in Ruanda-Urundi (Duarte, 1995, p.278).¹⁵ By far the majority of children who were educated (some 75% of primary school students) attended non-subsidised free schools (ibid, p.279). It is worth considering in some detail the distinct treatment of language in different institutions.

The écoles officielles both served to diffuse the racialised understanding of the Bahutu and Batutsi, and to construct French as the legitimate language most closely associated with the ‘Hamitic’ Batutsi. As was the case in other colonies, education was central to the creation of local auxiliaries that could buttress the administration (see Genova, 2004). In part, this was because the colonial State required a class of translators, since ‘a unique language represents a formidable obstacle to state knowledge, let alone colonization, control, manipulation, instruction, or propaganda’ (Scott, 1998, p.72; c.f. Macaulay, 1835). In Rwanda, this class was to be comprised of the Batutsi, and so the colonial education system in Rwanda worked to ‘make the [Hamitic] theory a reality’ (Mamdani, 2001, p.89). Indeed, Mamdani argues that the objective of these schools was ‘to turn the Tutsi, the “born rulers” of Rwanda, into an élite “capable of understanding and implementing progress,” and thus functioning as auxiliaries to both the missionaries and the colonial administration’ (ibid). This was done by teaching the Hamitic hypothesis explicitly. King highlights that, at least at secondary school, students were taught to recognise themselves as fitting into racial categories (2014, p.66-67). She refers to textbooks that were used in colonial schools, which stressed the ‘atavistic stupidity of the Bahutu’ in contrast to the ‘sage and prudent’ Batutsi (Sandrapt, 1939, cited in King, 2014, p.66). Colonial institutions employed teachers who subscribed to the Hamitic hypothesis, a fact demonstrated by a piece in the Astrida graduate newspaper, written by a Groupe Scolaire teacher:

...the Hamitic people at base have nothing in common with Negroes ... especially in Ruanda-Urundi ... Physically, these [Hamitic] races are superb; despite the

¹⁵ ‘Ruanda-Urundi’ was the name given to the German, and later Belgian, territory that occupied modern Rwanda and Burundi. I use this term when addressing that political territory, to cover developments during the period of colonial rule that affected both Rwanda and Burundi.

inevitable race mixings that are a result of prolonged contact with Negroes, the preponderance of the Caucasian type has remained deeply marked among the Batutsi... Their elevated height... the fineness of their traits, and their intelligent expression all contribute to their being worthy of the title that explorers gave them: aristocratic Negroes (quoted in Chrétien, 2003, cited in King, 2014, p.67, parentheses King's).

Within the *écoles officielles* the racialised categories were associated with linguistic stratification. In theory, all secondary schools in Rwanda taught exclusively in French (Duarte, 1995, p.280), yet at the *Groupe Scolaire*, only Batutsi children received the 'superior' French-language education (Mamdani, 2001, p.90). The Bahutu children who attended the *Group Scolaire* were taught through Kiswahili, a language that was hardly known in Rwanda (ibid).¹⁶ The resulting linguistic difference was mapped onto the constructed racial difference: 'the products of the French stream identified themselves as "Hamites" and those of the Kiswahili stream as "Bantu"' (ibid). This helps us to understand the construction of legitimate language in colonial Rwanda. On the one hand, French was the language that distinguished prestigious forms of education, and, at least within certain institutions, the favoured 'racial' group. Conversely, knowledge of French contributed to the cultural capital of the 'Hamitic' Batutsi. Thus, in the linguistic market of the *écoles officielles*, French was the code of the 'Hamites', and Kiswahili that of the 'Bantu'. There is evidence, however, that the situation was different in the *écoles libres*.

The majority of schools either taught through Kinyarwanda or French. In the subsidised schools, it was policy either to use Kinyarwanda or one of Belgium's national languages, though there is little evidence of Flemish being taught (Duarte, 1995, p.279). This suggests that the practice of putting Bahutu children into Kiswahili streams was limited to the schools directly managed by the Belgian colonial State. Official and free schools served different purposes: the former prioritised the Batutsi and aimed to create colonial auxiliaries, while it

¹⁶ It should be clarified that the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida* did not educate many Bahutu children. Until 1959, Bahutu students consistently accounted for less than 20% of the student body (Walker-Keleher, 2006, p.38).

was generally the goal of the latter to spread Christianity and to ensure that, when a Rwandan élite emerged, it would be Catholic (Carney, 2012, p.85). Thus free schools, precisely because they aimed to reach the masses, offered education to Bahutu and Batutsi children alike. They offered a rudimentary curriculum that ‘consisted of one- or two-year courses in reading and writing, in addition to religious instruction’ and, because they were not subject to government regulations, they did not follow a unified language policy (Duarte, 1995, pp.278-281). It is likely that most taught in Kinyarwanda. Indeed, the basic education provided by the church contributed to the modest expansion of Kinyarwanda literacy, albeit only sufficient literacy to read prayers and hymns (Duarte, 1995, p.281; Childress, 2015, pp.68-71). A Kinyarwanda-medium education was available, then, but it was less prestigious than the French-medium version, and its overarching goal was to equip the peasantry for conversion to Christianity.

The mission schools that taught through French were almost entirely responsible for the creation of a Bahutu élite. As Carney notes, nearly all Bahutu who were educated had been trained in Catholic schools and seminaries (2012, p.182). While these schools were not as prestigious as the Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida, they nevertheless produced an educated stratum of French-speaking Bahutu. In this regard, the life of Grégoire Kayibanda demonstrates that, in very rare circumstances, connections to the Catholic church could provide a Muhutu child born into poverty with a path to the educated élite. Born to impoverished parents, Kayibanda was able to attend the prestigious secondary school Le Petit Séminaire Saint Léon as a result of his father’s influence as a local catechist (Childress, 2015, p.72). Kayibanda went on to the Grande Séminaire at Nyakibanda, the only available institute of higher education in colonial Rwanda (ibid, p.74), before becoming a seminarian, journalist, businessman, and, eventually, president.

The évolué class emerged from particular institutions within the colonial education system. It is true that to be educated at all was something of a distinction, but the évolués were distinguished in Rwanda, as elsewhere, by their command of French. As Nyembwe

Ntita demonstrates in the context of the Belgian Congo, one's success in learning French was viewed as mark of superior intelligence in relation to those who could 'only' speak Congolese languages (2010, p.15). Because of the specific dynamics of Rwandan schooling, and in spite of Belgian colonial policy, the new élite that emerged was not racialised to the same extent as society at large. Rather, it comprised both Bahutu and Batutsi who found success in the monetary and linguistic market of colonial Rwanda, and were distinguished by their command of the French language. As Carney puts it: 'conversant in French, serving in the Belgian colonial administration ... working within Rwanda's emerging monetary economy [and] comprised of both Tutsi and Hutu, the évolués owed their social status to European commerce and Catholic schools rather than Rwanda's ancestral institutions' (2012, p.185), and they 'emerged as the dominant sociopolitical category in the 1950s' (ibid, p.187). Certainly, there were more Batutsi évolués than Bahutu; in 1956-7, only 35% of secondary school students were Bahutu, while 65% were Batutsi (despite the fact that the latter comprised only 15% of the population) (Nzabairwa, 2009, p.162). But the key point is that there were enough Bahutu évolués so that, while the vast majority of Rwandans were stratified into the racialised groupings that constructed the Batsi as superior 'Hamites' and the Bahutu as inferior 'Negroes', the emerging élite was distinguished not solely by race, but by education and by language.

5 THE ÉVOLUÉS, RACIALISED POLITICS, AND RWANDAN INDEPENDENCE

The issues of class, race, and language came to the forefront during the Rwandan independence movement. As I will attempt to show in this final section, the political parties that formed in Rwanda were created by the évolués, unsurprisingly, given that they had access to the field of politics. With a particular focus on Grégoire Kayibanda, I argue that the Parti

du Mouvement et de l'Émancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU), which won the 1962 election that inaugurated independent Rwanda, utilised the existing racialised categories of Bahutu and Batutsi as a means to organise politically. Kayibanda's ability to mobilise support was rooted in the discursive process of racialisation and the consolidation of the colonial linguistic market that I have described above. That is, Kayibanda rearticulated the discourse of racial science in order to argue for the creation of an ethnic/racial polity. And he spread that message through distinct linguistic markets, communicating with the Bahutu masses in (written) Kinyarwanda, and with the évolués in French. As I will demonstrate, the fact that French was made an official language in the 1962 Rwandan constitution served the interests of Kayibanda and the évolué class.

The onerous conditions that the Bahutu faced in Rwanda created more discontent over time. By the late 1940s, the future of Rwanda had become uncertain. As Carney puts it: 'colonial forced labour, crop failures and higher export demands took their tolls on the local Hutu population, leading to widespread anti-Belgian and anti-Tutsi protests and higher Hutu emigration rates to neighbouring Congo, Uganda and Tanganyika' (2012, p.86). The idea of independence became increasingly prevalent at this point. However, as Tsuruta observes, those with the most political authority remained unsympathetic to the experience of the Bahutu. The traditional Batutsi élite and the umwami benefitted from the complete racialisation of Rwandan life, and therefore did not treat racialised inequality as a problem; where they did focus on inequality, it was articulated in terms of the economic disparity between the Europeans and the Rwandans (2013, p.66). In fact, as it became apparent that Rwanda would become independent, it was also clear that there were conflicting visions of how an independent society would function. The traditional élites envisaged a continuation of Batutsi monarchy and dominance, but an end to Belgian interference (ibid). But the évolués, including the more progressive elements of the Batutsi élite, argued for a republic in which the educated class would lead 'the lower classes to a higher level of civilisation'

(Carney, 2012, p.186). In the early stages of the independence movement, the categories of Bahutu and Batutsi were not foregrounded, as the key social division was considered to be the cleavage between the évolués and the peasantry (ibid). In the final years of colonial rule, however, particular political figures sought to racialise the debates around independence. This was a political strategy that ultimately shifted the focus from class politics to racial politics.

In colonies at large, the process of decolonisation was often accompanied by tensions over language. In French and Belgian colonies in particular, there was generally an élite class distinguished by its use of the legitimate language (Genova, 2004). With specific reference to French colonies, Calvet argues that élites among the colonised population were acutely aware that French was the ‘social key’ that conferred upon them ‘exorbitant’ power (1977, p.135). Thus, they were often firm supporters of the legitimate language, and wished to see its dominance continue through a popular independence movement (ibid). This, of course, posed a particular problem: how could there be a popular independence movement that favoured a minority, prestige language? Or, put another way, how could évolué politicians garner support from the masses, who rarely spoke the legitimate language? Evidently, in these cases, the field of politics could not be dominated by French; it was necessary to use widely-spoken languages in order to produce propaganda and to spread a political message to the masses (ibid, pp.132-135). The work of Grégoire Kayibanda usefully demonstrates this fact: his crucial role in the independence movement involved the use of Kinyarwanda to galvanise the literate elements of the peasantry, and French to spread political ideas among the évolués.

In the decades preceding independence, a linguistic market of Kinyarwanda-language media was established. This was a significant political development, as it was primarily through newspapers that the Bahutu peasantry was able to develop ‘a new awareness of itself’ (Childress, 2015, p.71). To echo Benedict Anderson (2006), newspapers allowed Bahutu peasants to develop a sense of themselves as an ‘imagined community’, linked by a

shared history and experience of oppression in the colonial system. Kayibanda played a crucial role in politicising the peasantry, and in the early 1950s he represented Rwanda as a country beset by a stark class divide. He joined the editorial staff of *Kinyamateka*, a newspaper published by the Catholic church, in 1953. By this point, *Kinyamateka* had shifted its focus from news and religious issues to the analysis of larger social questions (Linden and Linden, 1977, p.241; Childress, 2015, p.92). Through the 1950s, the newspaper addressed the specific problems facing the Bahutu peasantry, and accordingly became ‘extremely important in affecting political attitudes and mobilizing political action’ (Childress, 2015, pp.95-96). Indeed, by 1956, it had become ‘*the organ for fighting social inequality*’ (ibid, p.96, italics in original). Alongside his position at *Kinyamateka*, Kayibanda became an editor at *L’Ami* in 1953. *L’Ami* was directed at the évolués, and written in French, and so it allowed Kayibanda to access a different audience entirely (ibid, p.97). In both papers, Kayibanda pushed the same message: that there was a need to build grassroots awareness of the injustices being perpetrated against the Bahutu by the monarchist system (ibid, p.98). His position was not anti-Batutsi, but anti-monarchy, and fundamentally anti-aristocracy. By the mid-1950s, his voice had become important enough to cause the Batutsi élite concern, as he was inspiring anti-monarchism in the Bahutu évolués and the Kinyarwanda-speaking peasantry (ibid, p.99).

In 1956, under growing pressure to reform the power structures in Rwanda, the Belgian administration permitted democratic elections to appoint sub-chiefs, chiefs, territorial councils, and a national council. Constituents were elected by confidential vote among all adult males. The results gave Bahutu 54.4% of sub-chief council membership (up 6.8), 15.2% of chief councils (up 3.8), 11.4% of Territorial councils (up 2.1), but only 3.1% of the National Council (- 5.9) (Childress, 2015, pp.99-100). The Bahutu represented some 84% of the population, yet neither the anti-monarchist message conveyed through *Kinyamateka* and *L’Ami* nor the burgeoning sense of group identity had translated into a significant rebalancing of power. Importantly, those in power worked to ensure that voters either stayed

home or supported the candidates that were favoured by the establishment (ibid). ‘Class conflict did not enter the election’, and so Kayibanda began to rearticulate the discourse of racial science to galvanise support for a Bahutu nationalist party (ibid, p.100). Prior to the elections, Kayibanda had predominantly pushed for ‘inter-racial and intra-class collaboration’, and his critiques did not feature the language of the Bahutu-Batutsi divide as late as January 1957 (Carney, 2011, cited in Childress, 2015, p.100). After the 1956 elections, however, Kayibanda was instrumental in the organisation of Bahutu évolués around the discourse of racial science.

In part because the coffee industry had served as the nexus of racialised exploitation throughout colonial rule, in the 1950s it became fertile ground for the growth of the Bahutu nationalist movement. In 1956, Father Louis Pien donated a hectare of land in Gitarama to form the TRAFIPRO coffee cooperative, in order to aid impoverished Bahutu farmers (Kamola, 2007, p.579). TRAFIPRO, whose name derived from ‘travail, fidélité, progrès’ was strongly supported by certain Bahutu évolués. It became a space for interaction between the impoverished Bahutu masses and the Bahutu évolués, and Kayibanda became its first chairman. In TRAFIPRO, a group developed that would become the ‘ruling clique’ at the time of independence (Prunier, 1997, p.45; Kamola, 2007, p.579). This clique formed one of Rwanda’s first political parties, the Mouvement Social Muhutu (MSM) (later to become PARMEHUTU), and sought to unite the Bahutu in racialised terms against the Batutsi. TRAFIPRO was crucial to MSM, as the latter utilised Kayibanda’s ‘extensive connections within TRAFIPRO’ to build a grassroots network across Rwanda (Carney, 2014, p.109). Precisely because the coffee industry incorporated the bulk of the population, the cooperative allowed Kayibanda to establish local party organisers on every hill in Rwanda (Kamola, 2007, p.579). While the ostensible aim of TRAFIPRO was to help impoverished and exploited Hutu coffee farmers (Kamola, 2007, p.579), it served a role as a political instrument for the burgeoning Hutu nationalist movement.

In 1957, two political documents were released, with each representing a particular social issue as the defining problem facing Rwanda: one argued that the division between Rwandans and Belgians was of primary importance, while the other stressed the stratification of the Bahutu and Batutsi. The former viewpoint belonged to the Batutsi aristocracy's *Mise au Point*, while the latter was the message of PARMEHUTU's *Le Manifeste des Babutu*. *Mise au Point* demanded that Rwandans be trained for self-governance, that the reach of education be extended in order to prepare a larger élite to take over the administration, and that there be an end to the discrimination 'between white and black' (Tsuruta, 2013, p.67). The Batutsi authors planned to continue collaboration with the Belgians, and therefore the *Mise au Point* was well-received by the administration. The Belgians even 'held up the possibility that the document had been written by Europeans due to its "good command of French"' (ibid). Conversely, *Le Manifeste des Babutu* asserted that Rwandan society could not resolve its underlying tensions without first addressing the 'fundamental problem' of relations between the Batutsi and the Bahutu (Niyonzima et al, 1957, p.1). With Kayibanda as one author, *Le Manifeste des Babutu* detailed the exploitation of the Bahutu, and argued that democratisation must abolish the inequality between the Bahutu and Batutsi.

By 1959, four mainstream political parties had been established. These were the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR), the Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais (RADER), the Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse (APROSOMA), and PARMEHUTU. Of these four, PARMEHUTU, RADER, and UNAR released manifestos in French, while APROSOMA contributed to the discussion of independence through its newspaper, *Ijwa rya rubanda rugafi* (Adekunle, 2007, p.18).¹⁷ PARMEHUTU, RADER, and UNAR, then, contributed to debates on issues of social, political, and economic emancipation, but ignored the questions of cultural and linguistic emancipation. In this, Rwanda was typical of

¹⁷ The manifestos were PARMEHUTU's *Le Manifeste Des Babutu* (1957), UNAR's *Manifeste du parti politique "Abashyirabamwe B'Urwanda"* (Union Nationale Ruandaise) (1959), RADER's *Manifeste du R.A.D.E.R.* (1959).

‘francophone’ colonies, where, precisely because the political élite benefitted from the existence of a distinct legitimate language, decolonisation movements generally left the issue of cultural and linguistic dominance aside (Calvet, 1977, pp.132-133). In Rwanda, French conferred legitimacy upon political figures and political movements, and so it was used by the évolués (alongside Kinyarwanda), and the question of language remained conspicuously absent from manifestos. There are parallels here with Bourdieu’s discussion of members of local élites during the linguistic unification of France who, despite being from regions with forms of speech that were being relegated to the status of dialect, supported the French language because they ‘owed their position to their mastery of the instruments of expression’ and gained the ‘*de facto* monopoly of politics’ through the imposition of the legitimate language (Bourdieu, 1991, p.47, italics in original). Correspondingly, by not questioning the position of French in Rwanda, the évolués stood to benefit from a monopolistic control of the code most closely related to power.

As a result of the developments mentioned above, the political landscape became utterly racialised, as parties used racialised categories to organise support. This was particularly clear in *Le Manifeste des Bahutu*, where Kayibanda began to articulate Rwanda’s social problems in terms of the Bahutu-Batutsi divide (Carney, 2011, p.100). For this purpose, Kayibanda, alongside his co-authors, mobilised the discourse of racial science, and the idea of the two Africas. The manifesto discusses the dual effect of colonialism: the subordination of the ‘Bantu’ Bahutu to the ‘Hamitic’ Batutsi, and the subordination of the Bahutu to the European administration (Niyonzima et al, 1957, p.2). *Le Manifeste des Bahutu* states: ‘[i]t seems constructive to us to demonstrate in a few words the agonising realities of the Guardianship that exist for all of the population but not for a caste that represents scarcely 14% of inhabitants’ (Niyonzima et al, 1957, p.2).¹⁸ The PARMEHUTU évolués who wrote the manifesto appropriated both the constructed figure of the ‘Hamitic’ Batutsi and the

¹⁸ My translation, with thanks to Tony Crowley.

accompanying myth of that race's 'Nilotic' origins, rearticulating the discourse with the aim of unifying the Bahutu in opposition to the Batutsi. Thus in the quote cited above, the authors refer to the Batutsi as 'inhabitants', but exclude them from the totality of the 'population'. The writers of *Le Manifeste des Bahutu* argued that the Bahutu had been constructed in such a way as to instil them with a sense of inferiority, and proposed that they were the victims of a political, economic, and cultural monopoly established by the foreign Batutsi. In short, the Batutsi were portrayed as an exogenous race, imposing upon the indigenous Bahutu (Niyonzima et al, 1957, pp.1-3). As Carney points out, *Le Manifeste des Bahutu* may not have represented the views of 'the silent Hutu majority' (2011, p.152). But its racialised message gained currency, as did its analysis of the structural privilege accessed by the Batutsi.

Le Manifeste des Bahutu illuminated the reality that, as Gourevitch puts it, racial identity had become 'the defining feature of Rwandan existence' (1999, p.57). Eighteen months after the release of the manifesto, Rwanda's Vice-Governor-General, Jean-Paul Harroy, admitted that there was a significant problem in relations between the Batutsi and the Bahutu (Mwakikagile, 2012, p.205). He proposed that the government cease to sanction the use of the terms, and to support the perception of a racial divide in Rwanda. However, by this point racialised difference was operationalised at all levels of government and society. Harroy's proposal was rejected, and the figures of the Bahutu 'Negro' and the Batutsi 'Hamite' retained their cultural significance (ibid). The pernicious results of the discourse of racial science remained in place, and they defined the political divide in Rwanda as the country approached independence.

Following the release of *Le Manifeste des Bahutu*, political parties primarily portrayed themselves as networks organised around race. Carney argues that RADER was the only party that continually portrayed itself as 'pan-ethnic', calling for universal suffrage and the democratisation of Rwanda's key institutions. The failure of RADER to appeal to voters

underlines the extent to which racialised subjectivities had become a central issue in Rwandan political debate. In fact Carney argues that precisely because RADER was ‘pan-ethnic’ it quickly became irrelevant (2013, pp.109-110). Of the other parties, UNAR was the only strong supporter of the ‘traditional’ structure, and thereby of Batutsi dominance and the continuation of the monarchy (Mamdani, 2001, p.119). APROSOMA was founded with the aim of benefitting the Rwandan poor, regardless of whether they were Bahutu or Batutsi. But because the vast majority of the poor were Bahutu, in effect it became a Bahutu party (ibid, p.122). Only PARMEHUTU mobilised the rhetoric of indigeneity, and this contributed to the 1959 ‘social revolution’.¹⁹

The claim that the Batutsi were colonisers of Nilotic origin was mobilised to horrific effect in November, 1959. A fortnight of violence was sparked by the beating of Dominique Mbonyumutwa, one of only ten Bahutu sub-chiefs in Rwanda and a member of the PARMEHUTU leadership (Carney, 2014, p.124). The men who beat Mbonyumutwa were associated with the youth wing of UNAR. In reaction, ‘bands of Hutu arsonists roamed the countryside, pillaging and burning Tutsi homes’, driving thousands of the Batutsi to the safety of Catholic missions, Belgian outposts, or else into exile in Uganda (ibid, p.125). And in turn, umwami Kigeli and a number of chiefs ordered the political decapitation of the Bahutu, which entailed the assassination of twenty suspected leaders of APROSOMA and PARMEHUTU (ibid). Tens of thousands of the Batutsi were driven out of Rwanda, over eight thousand homes were burned to the ground, and some seven thousand Batutsi were internally displaced. In the words of the Muhutu priest Bernard Manyurane, most Bahutu ‘did not want to kill the Tutsi but only oblige them to leave’ (1959, cited in Carney, 2014, p.126). The November violence was seen as the start of a ‘social revolution’, in which the

¹⁹ In contrast to PARMEHUTU, APROSOMA held that the racialised categories of ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ were constructed by the Belgian administration. It argued that those categories could be transcended through popular Rwandan nationalism (Mamdani, 2001, p.123). UNAR justified Batutsi dominance by tradition, and also rejected the racialised categories as the product of Belgian colonists (Tsuruta, 2013, p.67).

Bahutu 'reclaimed' Rwanda from the aristocratic Batutsi (see Mamdani, 1996). It was, in part, the manifestation of a struggle over indigeneity that drew heavily on the discursive construction of the North African 'Hamite' and the Sub-Saharan 'Negro'.

Following the November violence, the Belgian administration began to offer more support to the Bahutu who, in the view of the Belgian military, were only guilty of 'a justified rebellion of oppressed Hutu peasants against oppressive Tutsi overlords' (Carney, 2014, p.127). The military authority in Rwanda, Colonel Logiest, unilaterally replaced the exiled Batutsi chiefs with members of the Bahutu évolués, thereby considerably shifting the demographic balance of Rwanda's administration (ibid). As Carney puts it, 'Belgium's decision to hold UNAR accountable while giving [PARMEHUTU] a free pass not only decapitated the internal UNAR movement but greatly strengthened the hand of its political rivals' (ibid, p.128). Following this, in 1962, the government in Brussels accepted the demands of the UN to hold a general election in Rwanda (Mamdani, 2001, p.125). PARMEHUTU received 77.7% of the vote, from a population that tacitly sanctioned the discourse of race that was operationalised by colonial rule, while rejecting its system of Batutsi dominance (ibid). Thus Grégoire Kayibanda became the first president of the Republic of Rwanda, and began the process of constructing an independent nation that remained divided across stark ethnic lines. Kayibanda's victory was a victory for Bahutu ethno-nationalism, and a victory for the discourse of racial science.

The November violence in 1959 is characterised by Linden and Linden as a 'peasant revolt' (1977, p.xi), but the success of PARMEHUTU transferred control to the évolués, rather than the masses. As we will see in the following chapter, the actual conditions faced by Rwandans remained much the same, while Kayibanda and the ruling élite became wealthy on the basis of the coffee industry (Kamola, 2007). In reality, the évolués reproduced the key divisions of Rwandan society, both in terms of race and class. The *Constitution de la République Rwandaise* (1962) overturned certain aspects of the colonial order, but maintained

others. For instance, it abolished the system whereby Batutsi students were privileged in education (GoR, 1962, p.11), and made Kinyarwanda an official language, but it also gave French official status (ibid, p.5). As we will see in the following chapter, French continued to distinguish the élite from the masses and to dominate legitimate markets. While literacy in Kinyarwanda expanded, due largely to the expansion of primary school education, access to secondary and higher education remained low, and it was in those institutions that French was made compulsory (Andersson, Kagwesage, and Rusanganwa, 2013, p.438). The évolue government did not reject French, then, but rather reproduced the institutions of the colonial State that had produced the legitimacy of the language throughout the Belgian mandate. The reality was that Kayibanda's government defended the privilege afforded to them by access to the legitimate language, and ensured that competence in that form remained a mark of differentiation between the élite and the masses.

6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of particular factors that facilitate a nuanced understanding of the political role played by Rwanda's first language policy. By situating the Rwandan Constitution alongside the history of racialisation, exploitation, and the construction of legitimate language, I have attempted to show that the 1962 language policy served to buttress the power of the évolués. As I will argue in the following chapter, the legitimacy of French became an important aspect of hegemony in post-colonial Rwanda. In the interest of clarity, I will restate the key points of this chapter here.

In order to understand language in post-colonial Rwanda, alongside questions about race and ethnicity, it is important to take a historical approach to the categories of 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi'. The division was neither primordial, nor did the Belgian administration 'invent' it per se. Rather, relatively porous class boundaries were transformed and racialised through

discourse, with the socioeconomic origins of 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi' increasingly obscured by racial discourse. There was some continuity here: the Bahutu ceased to be defined solely as agriculturists, but largely became subordinated cultivators within the framework of colonial coffee production; the Batutsi were once defined by relative wealth, and came to be systematically privileged by the Belgian government. By approaching these developments as in part the consequences of discourse, we are able to see how the intellectual history of racism played a role in producing modern Rwandan subjectivities. This account also highlights the specific circumstances required for a Bahutu nationalist movement. Before the racialisation of 'Bahutu' and 'Batutsi', somebody in Grégoire Kayibanda's position may well have undergone Kwihutura, and for that reason would have been unable to draw on social class and race in order to inspire a nationalist 'revolution'. This particular dynamic created the conditions necessary for the development of the Bahutu évolués, while the Hamitic hypothesis constructed indigeneity as an aspect of political identity.

The complex transformations of Rwandan categories are related to the politics of language in important ways. The introduction of a new legitimate language to Rwanda complicated the social dynamics of the country. As the language of education, of the administration, and latterly of political debate, French was established as 'legitimate', and it conferred legitimacy and prestige upon those who spoke it. Thus, it is not enough to state that Rwanda maintained the language of its colonisers merely because of the colonial tradition. Rather, the continued prioritisation of French in secondary and higher education, as well as in government, ensured that the language continued to serve as a marker of distinction for the évolués. The dominance of a small class of educated French-speaking Bahutu in Rwanda would continue for some thirty years, as would the operationalisation of the discourse of racial science. Its effects were to be devastating.

In the wider context of the thesis, this chapter demonstrates that language has been a political issue in Rwanda since the colonial period. It has also provided important

background into the development of the State prior to independence. In particular, the State was increasingly centralised, and, with PARMEHUTU's popular movement, the political élite was able to establish a network that involved every hill in Rwanda. But the 'social revolution' expelled waves of Batutsi from the country, and, as we will see, elements of the Banyarwanda diaspora became a powerful force in the Rwandan Civil War (1990-1994). As in the period leading up to 1962, language was a key point of contention in the aftermath of the Rwandan Civil War, and the struggle for hegemony in Rwanda. By examining the period between 1962-2008, then, we are able to procure more insights into the relationship between language and power in post-colonial Rwanda.

Two: Linguistic Legitimacy and the Struggle for Hegemony: 1962-2008

1 INTRODUCTION

The attainment of independence in Rwanda, as elsewhere in Africa and Asia, was accompanied by profound changes together with consequential continuities. Generally, in former colonies, colonial élites inherited the ‘predetermined state structures and boundaries’ of the colonial period (Barkey and Parikh, 1991, p.532). However, new post-colonial States varied in terms of how they approached the consolidation of power, including their management of the balance between consent and coercion (ibid, pp.534-541). In general, the strength of a post-colonial State was in the first instance ‘based on the particular nature of colonial authority and government’ (ibid, p.532). In Rwanda, this meant that the post-colonial State was a product of the colonial processes of centralisation and expansion, by which the State developed its capacity to penetrate society at the local level (Newbury, 1988). Moreover, the évolué government operated within the legacy of the linguistic structure of colonialism, and, as we will see, reproduced key aspects of it. Simply put, linguistic legitimacy continued to play a role in naturalising profoundly unequal structures. For in the early post-colonial period the élite recognised the role that the State apparatus could play in engineering societies. As Migdal puts it, rulers of post-colonial countries in the 1960s had a belief ‘in their states’ potential to mold their societies through virtuous planning and meticulously laid out policies’, in order to ‘*penetrate* society, *regulate* social relationships, *extract* resources, and *appropriate* or use resources in determined ways’ (1988, p.5, italics in original). As I will argue throughout this chapter, in post-colonial Rwanda the State was used as an instrument for

shaping society, in ways that sought to build on or adapt colonial structures of power and prestige. The post-colonial approach to language was part of this, and became an important site of political struggle after 1994.

The period considered in this chapter spans the development of all three of Rwanda's language policies. The official linguistic order consecrated in the 1962 constitution remained in place for 34 years. After the genocide, language policy was changed twice. First, in 1996, English was added as a co-official language alongside French and Kinyarwanda. Second, in 2008, French was removed from the public education system, thereby making Rwandan public schools English-medium from the fourth year of primary school. In general, scholars have viewed the latter two policies as the result of the post-genocide political order: because 'English is the language of the victors' (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.194), new policies have increasingly prioritised that language. While such claims are correct, there remains a need for an analysis that uses political theory in order to understand the relation between the policies and the demographic changes at the level of the State. Thus, in this chapter I analyse the policies from a Gramscian perspective, with specific emphasis on the role of linguistic legitimacy in the creation of hegemony. In particular, I focus on the politics of language between 1962-1994 and 1994-2008 in order to demonstrate how language has been an important part of Rwandan statecraft.

The starting point for this analysis is Gramsci's conceptualisation of the State. Anne Showstack Sassoon argues that Gramsci works with two definitions of the State, one of which is more traditional and the other more innovative (1987, p.112). Buttigieg observes that in liberal thought the State is generally identified with the 'government' or 'government apparatus', as 'the embodiment of power, which it exercises by enacting laws and enforcing them' (1995, p.5). In this view, the State is opposed to 'civil society' or the 'private sphere', an arena that is free from State interference and has a necessary function in keeping the government in check (ibid). In one sense, the traditional Marxist understanding of the state

operates a similar distinction, as it distinguishes between a political superstructure and an ideological superstructure that occupy 'different theoretical space' (Showstack Sassoon, 1987, p.112). Gramsci complicates this view 'so that institutions like the State machinery or, for example, the Church, occupy two spaces at one time; they can have meaning both in terms of political society and civil society so that any division is purely methodological' (ibid). In certain passages, Gramsci uses the term 'State' in a way that is consistent with the traditional emphasis on government and its institutions. He suggests:

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society", that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private", and that of "political society" or "the State". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government (Gramsci, 1971, p.12).

This is what Thomas calls Gramsci's 'limited' conception of the State, which mirrors the division in liberal thought and does not complicate the distinction in Marxist thought. This stands in contrast to Gramsci's more sophisticated understanding of the 'integral State' (sometimes called the 'enlarged State').²⁰ Gramsci introduces this anatomy of the state in the passage 'Gendarme or night-watchman state, etc.', wherein he argues that:

it should be noted that certain elements that fall under the general notion of the state must be restored to the notion of civil society (in the sense, one might say, that state = political society + civil society, that is, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion) (Gramsci, [1930-1932] 2007, p.75).

Thus in the 'integral State', 'political society' becomes only the most visible aspect of the State, indivisible from 'civil society'. The distinction between the two, as both Showstack Sassoon (1987, p.113) and Thomas (2009, p.137) note, is purely methodological rather than organic. This is a particularly important point in terms of hegemony.

²⁰ Throughout this thesis, I will use the term 'integral State'. This is in recognition of Thomas's argument that Gramsci's model was not 'expanded' in either conceptual, historical, or political terms; rather than perceiving the State as 'expanding' into a previously pristine civil society, Gramsci argued that the modern State was characterised by an increasingly 'sophisticated internal articulation and condensation of social relations' (2009, pp.139-140). That is, for Gramsci, the distinction between the modern State and earlier models of the State was one of degree, rather than character.

Though civil society and political society are properly ‘indivisible’ (Thomas, 2009, p.137), there is a tendency among scholars to suggest that the former is more closely associated with the construction of hegemony via consent. Some of Gramsci’s passages lend themselves to this interpretation: in his explication of the limited State, for instance, he clearly suggests that civil society corresponds to hegemony while political society is the locus of coercion. Moreover, his explanation of the ‘material structure of ideology’ (referred to in the introduction to this thesis as a key factor in the production of consent) comprises a list of institutions that are generally characterised as belonging to civil society (such as libraries, schools, and associations) (Gramsci, [1930] 1996, p.53; Buttigieg, 1995). Yet as coercion and consent are rarely diametrically opposed in practice, it may be more beneficial to consider the association between civil society/consent and political society/coercion as a generalisation rather than a rule. As Showstack Sassoon notes, Gramsci’s reference to the ‘direct domination’ of political society in his passage on the limited state implies the existence of indirect domination in civil society (1987, p.113). Indeed, the example of liberal democracy given by Femia (1987, p.28) and Eagleton (1991, p.112) demonstrates that consent can be manufactured within political society (by the parliamentary system, for instance). Rather than delineating functions for each society, it is more useful to focus on the connections between them.

An important strength of Gramsci’s model of the integral State is that it demonstrates how civil society and political society co-produce power and political legitimacy. Gramsci sees a ‘mutual interpenetration’ between the two, important both for the analysis of State power and for revolutionary strategy. As Buttigieg puts it, ‘the intricate, organic relationships between civil society and political society enable certain strata of society not only to gain dominance within the state but also, and more importantly, to maintain it, perpetuating the subalternity of other strata’ (1995, p.4). Gramsci distinguishes between pre-1917 Russia and Western Europe, in a passage that allows us to clarify the precise nature of this coordination:

In the East, the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous, in the West, there was a proper relation between state and civil society, and when the state tottered, a sturdy structure of civil society was immediately revealed. The state was just a forward trench, behind it stood a succession of sturdy fortresses and emplacements (Gramsci, [1930-1931] 1975, p.169).

As Buttigieg (1995) argues, Gramsci suggests that the Russian limited State was insufficiently protected by its relation to civil society, for which reason it was overthrown with relative ease. In Gramsci's eyes, to take control of one of the limited States of Western Europe would have been more difficult, as they were protected by their relation to civil society. In Ives's terms, while a particular government 'held adequate prestige and legitimacy in civil society, any momentary conquest of the state or government would be viewed as illegitimate and undemocratic' (Ives, 2004b, p.117). For this reason, in a revolutionary movement, civil society is the key terrain 'upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other classes', even though hegemony can only be 'guaranteed', as much as is possible, through the 'capture of the legal monopoly of violence embodied in the institutions of political society' (Thomas, 2009, p.137). And in the process of establishing hegemony, it is critical to use both civil society and political society, or the integral State as a whole, in order to legitimate and consolidate power through the manufacture of consent.

How, then, can we understand language policy as an act of statecraft? The notion that relationships between political and civil society allow certain strata of society to dominate indicates that we must consider the composition of the élite itself, and the ways in which it moulds society in its favour, if not in its image. In this chapter, I will examine how distinct élite groups attempted to construct hegemony in Rwanda after independence. As we will see, there were certain continuities with pre-colonial Rwanda. But there have been key differences too, including the transfer of power in 1994 to a group of former refugees, who have often been characterised as 'anglophone'. A key question, then, is whether élites shape linguistic stratification? Or, more specifically, how have different Rwandan governments sought to engineer the legitimacy of different languages as part of the construction of hegemony? As

we will see, these issues are thrown into sharp relief by the struggle in Rwanda between French-speaking and English-speaking élites over the integral State.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In the first section, I conduct an analysis of post-colonial, pre-genocide Rwanda (1962-1994), focussing particularly on the mechanisms by which Habyarimana's regime constructed a hegemonic system that both restricted access to the urban, French-speaking élite and attempted to legitimise its hold on power. Next, I provide a history of the RPF, in order to show how certain members of that group came to speak English, and to provide the historical context for the Civil War that culminated in the genocide. Finally, I consider the post-genocide period in Rwanda, and examine the methods by which the RPF strengthened its control over the integral State. Here, I will attempt to discern whether the shift towards English, evidenced at the official level from 1996, played a role in the production of RPF hegemony. Ultimately, I aim to contextualise the 2008 language policy as the part of the consolidation of RPF control over the integral State.

2 FRENCH AND THE ÉVOLUÉ HEGEMONY (1962-1994)

In Rwanda, the moment of independence promised the creation of a democratic State, albeit one that was premised on Bahutu Nationalism, and one that would merely tolerate the existence of Batutsi outsiders. Democracy, however, was never fully achieved. President Kayibanda became increasingly autocratic in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in effect created a one-party State (Lemarchand, 1970, p.228). Approval for Kayibanda fell dramatically, as many Rwandans perceived the President and his ministers as a corrupt group who monopolised economic opportunities and circumvented the law as a matter of course (ibid, pp.238-239). Ultimately, in 1973, Kayibanda was deposed by his Minister of Defence, Juvénal Habyarimana. In 1975, Habyarimana founded the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND). The President mandated that the MRND be the

only legal political party in Rwanda; every citizen was made a member, and so began a situation in which ‘the party was everywhere’ (Prunier, 1997, p.76). In one sense, there was continuity at the level of the State, as the governments of Kayibanda and Habyarimana were de facto run by the évolué class. As I will demonstrate, the political élite continued to consist of a small group of predominantly Bahutu, educated, French-speakers; this class also became increasingly urban, and defined itself as ‘revolutionary’. The gulf between the masses and the ruling class continued to grow, in part under the aegis of the exploitative coffee industry. Precisely because of the social, economic, and at times spatial distance between the two poles of Rwandan society, the State enacted specific policies in the interest of achieving hegemony. Verwimp, for example, demonstrates that the State attempted to restructure society through a project of ‘spatial and social engineering’, which ultimately sought to manipulate the ‘size and composition of the population’ (2011, p.400). I build on Verwimp’s analysis by considering the specific character of the Rwandan ruling class, and the processes that were necessary for its legitimisation. I will argue that through spatial and linguistic engineering, together with particular uses of political discourse and reforms to the education system, the ruling class attempted to manage the contradictions of a country that was increasingly polarised in terms of wealth, class, race, and language.

Though my focus is on Habyarimana’s regime (1973-1994), it is useful to briefly discuss some key developments that took place under Kayibanda’s government (1962-1973). After PARMEHUTU won the 1962 elections, ‘the regime felt obligated to encourage the play of democratic forces’ (Lemarchand, 1970, p.228). Accordingly, in the early 1960s, the government encouraged the mass participatory politics that had been promised in the social revolution: in particular, communal and legislative elections were held, and a ‘structure of accountability’ established (ibid). The constitution made several declarations that would ostensibly allow greater social mobility and democratise access to power. Of particular interest to the present discussion is the fact that the constitution decreed that Kinyarwanda

should be the sole national language of the Republic, and a co-official language with French (GoR, 1962, p.5). This law gave unprecedented recognition to Kinyarwanda, but it did not loosen the association between the French language and the élite. The uneducated majority continued to struggle for their livelihoods, in worsening conditions (Obura, 2003, p.34), while reforms to education only focussed on expansion, rather than on transforming the structural legacy of the Belgian colonial system (Hoben, 1989, p.14). As a consequence, under Kayibanda's regime French continued to be the language of the élite, and inequality increased.

The first republic saw the évolués incorporated into a modestly expanding 'state class', whose standard of living increased far beyond that of the general population. Uvin defines the 'state class' as those who were able to access dominant positions, particularly within political society, and who thereby became the '1 percent or so of people who lived wealthy, urban, educated, Westernized, travelling lives' (Uvin, 1998, p.21). Education was a prerequisite to entering the 'state class', with the overwhelming majority of educated jobs in public employment (and a small minority in private business) (Childress, 2015, p.195). These public sector jobs were the main avenue for 'rapid wealth accumulation' (Reyntjens, 1995, cited in Uvin, 1998, p.21), and they were subject to fierce competition (Childress, 2015, p.195). And, while the richest members of the state class were the Bahutu at the highest levels of government, Batutsi continued to staff much of the administration, in part because of the advantages of 'several generations of preferment' (Hoben, 1989, p.15). By 1970, the state class was easily identifiable by ostentatious displays of wealth, symbolised in the adoption of expensive suits and Mercedes cars (Lemarchand, 1970, pp.238-239). In this context, Lemarchand offers a comparison between the income of an average primary school teacher and the Minister of Finance in 1964: the former earned RwF 750 per month (approximately \$7.50), while the latter was paid approximately RwF 120,000 per month (approximately \$1,200) (ibid). Of even greater significance, however, was the material divide

between rural and urban workers.

The state class was particularly associated with urban areas, and Kigali above all. As Uvin indicates, the very fact that the *élite* lived urban lives distinguished them from the masses (1998, p.21). In part, this was because Kigali was the main focus of Kayibanda's development policy. After declaring that Kigali would be the capital of the Republic of Rwanda (thereby moving it from the colonial capital of Butare, formerly known as Astrida), Kayibanda attempted to transform Kigali into a thriving city. He improved infrastructure by widening roads and introducing networks for water and electricity (Childress, 2015, p.197). He also encouraged companies based in Bujumbura (Burundi) to install head offices, workshops, stores, and warehouses in Kigali (Paternostre, 1994, cited in Childress, 2015, p.197), which created a limited amount of waged employment outside the remit of the State. The opportunities in Kigali meant that waged work in the city became the focal ambition of children who were able to access education (King, 2014, p.80). However, prosperity in the city was distinguished from, and to an extent parasitic upon, the restructuring of the rural colonial coffee industry.

The rural areas not only remained underdeveloped, but they became enmeshed in an exploitative labour process with particular spatial and social coordinates, wherein the rural majority produced agricultural commodities that enriched the urban *élite*. Thus by the 1970s, there was a stark rural/urban divide in Rwanda (Jefremovas, 2002, cited in Goodfellow, 2012, p.105), which was more than a geographical fact, since regional class-based subjectivities were also produced in this period.²¹ This is illustrated by the case of TRAFIPRO. As Kamola notes, the *élite* benefitted from the reorganisation of TRAFIPRO, which was transformed into a state-owned marketing board, controlling 27 national shops and 70 coffee purchasing

²¹ See Massey (1986, pp.57-58) for a useful explanation of how the spatial organisation of an industry can foment the creation of new subjectivities. She argues that 'spatial differences can develop to such an extent that geography itself may become a politically self-consciously chosen and defining characteristic', given that '[p]eople in different parts of the country experience different economic fortunes at any one time; "the crisis" hits different regions in different ways' (ibid, p.58).

points in Rwanda (2007, p.581). TRAFIPRO was used as a mechanism for transferring wealth to the 'Gitaramistes', members of the state class who hailed from the same region as Kayibanda (Gitarama) (Pottier, 1993, p.11; Smith, 1997, p.235). Far from operating within its original remit as a farmer's collective, 'the country's largest producer-consumer cooperative ... enriched the political leaders' (Pottier, 1993, p.11). By 1968, TRAFIPRO had become the economic arm of the Gitaramiste regime (ibid), actively contributing to the production of a wealthy urban state class and an exploited rural class. The inequality produced by the coffee industry only grew under Habyarimana's regime.

The fact that the Gitaramistes profited from Rwanda's burgeoning coffee industry was a key factor motivating Habyarimana's coup d'état, a development that essentially saw the coffee profits transferred from the Gitaramistes to the Northern Bahutu élite, and particularly those who were close to the new regime. In attempting to understand the politics of language in Habyarimana's 'Second Republic', it is critical to consider the economic and social role played by the coffee industry. Habyarimana seized power in July 1973, with the support of the Northern Bahutu élite who felt that they had been pushed out of TRAFIPRO, business, and politics in favour of the Gitaramistes (Pottier, 1993, p.11; Kamola, 2008, p.581). Habyarimana closed down TRAFIPRO, and created 'Rwandex' in its stead, a government-run monopsony that purchased all Rwandan coffee at subsidised prices (Goldstein, 2011, pp.138-139).²² Habyarimana's regime prospered from the sale of coffee, as profits were routinely diverted 'into the hands of the well-connected Hutu class' (Kamola, 2008, p.582). The logic of the regime was that as 'the rural population grew more coffee, the political elite prospered' (ibid). For this reason, Habyarimana took certain steps to encourage the production of coffee. The land available for cultivation was extended significantly, as the government converted pastureland, marshes, and forests into farmland, to the extent that,

²² The term 'monopsony' refers to a 'market condition in which a single buyer dominates or controls trade in a commodity, product, or service' (OED, 2003).

by the late 1980s, all available land was used for arable purposes (Verwimp, 2011, p.398). Rwandex also doubled the purchasing price of coffee to incentivise its cultivation, while the government created systems to monitor farmers' production, and made neglecting coffee trees punishable by law (Verwimp, 2003, pp.171-172).²³ In short, under Habyarimana's regime, the major sources of wealth accumulation for the élite exploited peasant communities, while those with political power were able to control land, labour, transport, and local commerce (Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.872). Kamola notes that the intensified production was encouraged 'under the banner of "rural prosperity"' (2008, p.581). This is a crucial point, and as we shall see, the exploitation of the peasantry in the Second Republic was justified through political discourse as 'pro-peasant development'.

The coffee industry formed part of a growing rural/urban divide, which reinforced existing class positions and contributed to the growing prestige of the urban population. Movement between the rural and urban class was restricted, as Habyarimana's government imposed the requirement to acquire a government job before migrating to the city (Verwimp, 2000, p.331). As Kamola argues, this was a deliberate strategy to shield the urban élite from growing rural discontent, while 'the urban class in Kigali prospered, enjoying unprecedented wealth, paved roads, increased car ownership, and plentiful fuel, building materials and food' (Kamola, 2008, p.582). The success of spatial engineering is indicated by the fact that, by 1993, 95% of Rwanda's population lived in rural areas - the exact same proportion as in 1973 (Verwimp, 2000, p.339). But these strategies also served to reshape the co-ordinates of class in Rwanda, and to construct the urban minority as a focus of aspiration. This is indicated by Rumiya, who proposed in 1985 that:

The prototype of the wealthy man is no longer the well-off peasant, respected by his peers, or the government official who returns to his hill, but the city dweller, preferably in Kigali, whose living standard attains an international level in the areas

²³ It should be noted that, despite the fact that Rwandex increased the price paid to coffee producers, evidence indicates that individual households were able to secure a higher income, as well as a larger calorific intake, from planting bananas (see Verwimp, 2000, p.346-347). That Habyarimana penalised intercropping indicates that the livelihoods of peasants were not the priority, but rather the income tied to the export of coffee.

of leisure, transport, or lodging. This paradise has a strong attraction for youth ... But in this type of competition, there are only a few winners (Rumiya, 1985, quoted in Newbury and Newbury, 2000, p.873).

The uneven development in Rwanda was stark, and the population increasingly polarised.

How, then, did the government attempt to manufacture consent and legitimise its rule?

Throughout his reign, Habyarimana implemented a number of policies that sought to consolidate his hegemony, which he defended through particular discursive strategies. Verwimp (2000) demonstrates this point. His analysis shows that Habyarimana enacted policies that were 'designed to' entrench his 'dictatorial power' (ibid, p.341), which he legitimised through his representation of Rwanda as a 'pro-peasant' society. The government's restrictive policy on internal migration serves as an illustrative example. Habyarimana discouraged migration to the cities, and, for Verwimp, this served to reduce the options available to peasants and to strengthen government control over the peasantry at large (ibid). This was certainly a coercive strategy, and one that forcibly prohibited urbanisation. In order to justify such measures, Habyarimana regularly gave public speeches (all of which were published by the state agency for information (ORINFOR)) that represented MRND policies within a discourse of 'pro-peasant revolutionary development' (Verwimp, 2000). Verwimp demonstrates that the discourse was comprised of several fairly coherent strands. The notion of 'development' pervaded Habyarimana's rhetoric, as is suggested by the name of his party, and for him it was a capacious term that justified a range of policies which aimed both to consolidate his hold on power and to increase Rwanda's export earnings (ibid, pp.341-349). Habyarimana argued that development was 'exactly the fruit of people's work' (Habyarimana, 1979, quoted in Verwimp, 2000, p.343), and so could only be achieved through popular labour. The idea that Rwanda was run by a 'pro-peasant' State was frequently mobilised; for example, Habyarimana represented the aforementioned controls on internal migration as measures to protect rural citizens from the immorality of the cities (Verwimp, 2000, pp.339-340). Despite the fact that his regime was characterised by

power and wealth, Habyarimana lauded the value of the peasantry, and discursively ‘ennobled’ them. While government jobs were held by the urban, educated class, Habyarimana celebrated manual labour and disparaged intellectual labour (ibid, p.331). The following is an illustrative example:

Some societies have, in the past, opposed manual and intellectual labour, with the latter giving in general more prestige to its performer. Such a concept not only seems outdated but also unacceptable because it is not realistic. In fact manual labour, especially agricultural labour is the basis of our economy. We want to repeat that agriculture will stay the essential base of our economic system for the years to come.

In order to attract the attention of the Rwandan population for this reality, We have named the year 1974 the national year for agriculture and manual labor Remember that this is the way we want to fight this form of intellectual bourgeoisie and give all kinds of physical labor its value back (quoted in Verwimp, 2000, p.325).²⁴

There was, then, a disjuncture between discourse and material reality, with Habyarimana attempting to construct Rwanda as a country run by and for the peasantry. There was a logic to this: Uvin observes that ‘if all Rwandans were peasants, there were no more classes, no distinctions - except of course, between Hutu and Tutsi, the only allowed, and never forgotten, distinction’ (1998, p.24). This latter distinction was also rearticulated, in terms of ‘revolutionaries’ and ‘counter-revolutionaries’.

The racialised identities constructed under Rwabugiri’s reign and colonial rule remained important, but they were built on by Habyarimana in light of the ‘social revolution’ of 1959. Even before his Presidency, racial categories became evaluated in terms of their association with revolution. In 1972, for instance, ‘Committees of Public Safety’ posted lists of Batutsi who occupied prominent positions within education and the civil service, and defined them as ‘counter-revolutionaries’ (Mamdani, 1996, p.16). Habyarimana’s party was a self-described revolutionary movement (the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement),

²⁴ This speech was originally published in French, in the May 6th issue of *Carrefour d’Afrique*, a periodical published by the Rwandan Ministry of Information. The speech was delivered on May 1st, at ‘La Fête du Travail’. It is unclear whether the speech was originally delivered in Kinyarwanda or French, but it appears to have been transcribed only in French. (For a full transcription see Habyarimana, 1984, *Message du chef de l’état, le 1er May 1974*).

and when Habyarimana took power, he claimed that his ‘cultural revolution’ would complete the ‘social revolution’ of 1959 (ibid). Though he cultivated a plot of land with his friends in order to appear closer to the peasantry, Habyarimana did not deny that his state class enjoyed an elevated social status (Verwimp, 2000, p.345). But, in Verwimp’s view, its relatively opulent standard of living was represented as the legitimate privilege of a ‘revolutionary élite’ (2000, p.340). Moreover, as Mamdani points out, the MRND’s imposition of military dictatorship was justified on the basis that the army was the ‘child of the “revolution”’ (1996, p.16). The Batutsi, by contrast, continued to be constructed as dangerous subversive elements. Verwimp shows that while the Bahutu were represented as peasants and revolutionaries, the Batutsi were depicted as feudalist counter-revolutionaries, and ‘the development problem of Rwanda’ (Verwimp, 2000, p.357).²⁵ Ironically, then, even members of the Bahutu state class, who were enriched on the basis of peasant labour, were ‘peasant revolutionaries’ in official discourse. Habyarimana’s discursive strategies appeared to manufacture consent, at least from certain areas: the Catholic Church, for instance, strongly supported his advocacy of moral values, work ethic, and obedience to authority (ibid, p.338). However, penury remained a lived reality for the Rwandan masses, and the persistence of inequality could not be entirely hidden by pro-peasant discourse. Another key hegemonic strategy was the reorganisation of the education system, which worked both to restrict access to the élite and to produce ideological support for it.

Under Habyarimana, the education system was comprehensively reformed, ostensibly to provide ‘strong vocational and professional training, attuned to Rwandan needs and context, accessible to all’ (Hoben, 1989, p.17). The education reforms were well-received, at least in part. Hoben, for example, was critical about certain aspects of them, but praised the curriculum for being ‘thorough, thoughtful, and culturally and linguistically appropriate’

²⁵ Chrétien’s (1995) study of media in the genocide demonstrates that revolutionary discourse permeated the racist propaganda that precipitated and encouraged the mass killings.

(ibid, p.124). And Obura states that the reforms ruralised, vocationalised, and democratised schooling (2003, p.39). Internationally, education became one of the reasons that Habyarimana's Second Republic was considered to be a development model: alongside growing GDP and low inflation, Habyarimana's regime saw an increase in enrolment levels (Chossudovsky, 1996, p.939; Obura, 2003, p.33). But in order to appreciate the hegemonic function of the education system, we must undertake an analysis with reference to the material realities of Habyarimana's Rwanda. Much as a number of government policies in other areas served to consolidate the regime's hold on power (Verwimp, 2011), reforms to the education system played a critical role in reproducing and legitimising the extant social order. In part, this was by committing the majority of students to rural labour and restricting avenues into the urban, French-speaking élite. In short, the reforms must be understood within the discursive framework of Habyarimana's pro-peasant rhetoric, and the material reality of rural-urban exploitation. The fact that Habyarimana praised manual labour and disparaged intellectual labour is pertinent here. The system that the MRND constructed greatly restricted access to traditional academic education that might lead to intellectual labour, and which was crucial for entry into the élite, and instead directed the majority of children into manual labour.

The main education reforms were instituted in 1979, and it is worth assessing the extent to which they ruralised, vocationalised, and democratised education.²⁶ In fact, ruralisation and vocationalisation were closely linked, as the curriculum became more vocational in a manner that was specifically tailored to rural industries. Habyarimana amended the duration of primary education, so that students attended for eight years instead of six. The final two years had a vocational emphasis; students focussed on agriculture, construction skills, and homemaking, alongside minor courses in Kinyarwanda, arithmetic, and a small amount of

²⁶ There were also reforms undertaken in 1991/1992. These are not considered in detail, in part because they were 'seen to be negligible' (Obura, 2003, p.39). The main change that they instituted was to shorten primary school from eight years to six (ibid). They were superseded by new reforms after the Rwandan Civil War.

French (Hoben, 1989, p.21; Obura, 2003, p.38). In principle ‘students would graduate at about age fourteen, old enough to work productively on their parents’ farms and with some basic skills’ (Hoben, 1989, p.21). The focus was clearly on preparing students for labour in rural areas. Indeed, it was argued that P7 and P8 were needed precisely because students missed out on learning farming and homemaking techniques because they spent ‘so much time’ in school (ibid). For those who progressed to post-primary institutions, the new system offered two tracks: one, for the majority, provided further vocational training, and the other, for a small minority, constituted a French-language ‘academic track’. These two tracks were materialised in two separate institutions: traditional secondary schools, and centres d’enseignement rural et artisanal intégré (CERAI). CERAI were three-year community schools that taught home economics to girls, vocational skills to boys, and agricultural skills to everybody; they sought to prepare students to ‘enter the job market as farmers or artisans’ (Hoben, 1984, pp.21-22). The ruralisation and vocationalisation of education, then, created particular educational opportunities that would prepare students for work in rural industries. This was in stark contrast to the more exclusive secondary schools.

Secondary school remained the main vehicle for students to enter the élite, but enrolment was extremely limited. Indeed, a 1988 World Bank study found that, of 29 African countries, Rwanda admitted the lowest proportion of students into secondary school (cited in King, 2014, p.84). If primary schools and CERAI prepared manual labourers, secondary schools produced ‘professionals’ (Hoben, 1989, p.25). They offered twelve main tracks: agriculture and veterinary science; education; sciences; letters; social welfare; commerce and economics; law and administration; health sciences; nursing; nutrition; technical studies; and art. Students were assigned to a track once they entered school, and the decision was usually final (ibid, p.52). Formal employment was closely managed by the State, which matched secondary graduates’ qualifications to available positions (ibid, p.57). Secondary education also played an important role as a demonstration of the Bahutu nationalist principles of PARMEHUTU

and, later, the MRND. A quota system was introduced, ‘on the basis that the secondary school pie was of limited size and had to be divided proportionally to the Rwandan population in each ethnicity and region’ (King, 2014, p.88). In fact, the system disproportionately favoured Bahutu students, and while some saw the quotas as redressing the imbalances of colonial education, others felt that they were a form of discrimination that divided the population (ibid, pp.88-89). It became common for Batutsi students to attend privately run schools, which were considered second-rate compared with public schools. They were joined by Bahutu students who were ‘on the wrong side politically’, as well as children who had one Muhutu parent and one Mututsi parent (ibid, p.91). Moreover, Batutsi children who were able to access secondary school were often relegated to a track that would limit their access to the élite class and well-paid work in the city: primary teaching. Most secondary tracks lasted for six years, but the primary track took only four years (Hoben, 1989, p.24). Thus one former Mututsi student recalled: ‘they would put us in classes of two or three years and nearly all Tutsi were streamed into education’ (King, 2014, p.91). Another interviewee observed that a Mututsi was ‘not supposed to become a doctor ... and they sent you back to your birth hill. You didn’t get to work in the city like the others’ (ibid, p.92). Racialised subjectivities, then, continued to be operationalised in the education system, thereby reproducing the colonial division and, at least in some cases, functioning as part of a system of spatial engineering. Wealth served as another important barrier to education.

Under the Second Republic, education was only available to those with access to capital. The cost of education was a significant obstacle to access to primary school; at the secondary level, it became almost insurmountable for many. As part of the ‘democratisation’ of education, primary schools were made ‘free’ for the majority of Habyarimana’s regime. But there remained ‘indirect costs including uniforms and school material’, and many poorer families ‘had to make up for lost hands around the home’, as they needed their children to work. Thus, there were families who simply could not afford to send their children to school

(King, 2014, p.86). Indeed, King estimates that, throughout the Second Republic, poverty was responsible for as much as 50% of the dropout rate (ibid). In 1988, the average Rwandan family had six children, and the GDP per capita was around \$255; at this time, secondary school tuition was RwF 7,200 (approximately \$90) per child per year, which Hoben described as ‘unquestionably expensive by African standards’ (Hoben, 1989, pp.52-58; King, 2014, p.86). In fact, ‘higher class Rwandans and those with ties to the government’ could ‘circumnavigate’ the quota system, and so it was largely the poor who were ‘stuck in their ethnic and regional positions’ (King, 2014, p.94).²⁷ The cost of education allowed the system to largely reproduce the extant class structure, and this was intricately intertwined with language. One interviewee in King’s study suggests the crux of the issue: ‘there were schools for the rich ... where they studied in French, and schools for other Rwandans in Kinyarwanda. Normally, the children that went to rich schools, it was them that were able to get to the top. And they were Hutu’ (ibid, p.96). Those with access to wealth were able to gain an education, and in turn this allowed access to government jobs and other forms of off-farm employment. Language played an important role in this process.

In fact, the 1979 education reforms involved several changes in relation to language, which suggested that education was being ‘democratised’. Hoben’s response was representative: she stated that the Second Republic created a ‘truly Rwandan curriculum, teaching national culture and values and using Kinyarwanda as the language of instruction throughout the primary system’ (1989, p.18). French was taught as a subject for six hours per week in P4-P6, and four hours per week in P7-P8 (ibid, p.38). CERAI’s also used Kinyarwanda as the medium of instruction (ibid, p.32), while secondary schools taught through French (ibid, p.38). There is an argument to say that the early focus on Kinyarwanda was progressive, as, according to Alexander, children need to receive at least six years of

²⁷ King gives some examples of how wealthy Batutsi families were able to pay for their children to access education; she notes that some paid to have their identity cards changed to read ‘Bahutu’ (2014, pp.93-94).

education in their mother tongue if education is to be accessible to all and not just a small élite (2009, p.60). Yet the mother tongue policy must be understood with reference to the linguistic market of Rwanda, within which French continued to be the legitimate language and a pre-requisite for access to the urban élite. In Habyarimana's Rwanda, the évolué class continued to be distinguished from the society it dominated. For:

Its members had a different language (in every conversation with ordinary people, they would make sure to use French words, incomprehensible to the latter, to remind them of the difference), were literate, traveled broadly, had access to cars (pens and paper, as well as car keys, casually displayed, were important symbols of the évolués), ate different food and drank different beer, and wore different clothes (Uvin, 1998, p.128).

In reforming the language of education, Habyarimana's government restricted access to French, essentially to those who had access to capital and could attend European-style secondary schools. Language became a hidden barrier to education in a number of ways. For one thing, because students were spent more time studying French in P4-6 than in P7-8, the French proficiency of eight graders was generally thought to be poorer than that of sixth graders, and '[f]or students who continued into secondary schools ... this was a real handicap' (Hoben, 1989, p.38). This could be alleviated somewhat for children from wealthy backgrounds, who might attend private tuition to practice their French, or whose educated parents would likely speak French (ibid, p.38; p.52; p.92). Thus, French continued to be restricted to, and therefore symbolic of, a wealthy and dominant class. In this way, education served not only to restrict access to the élite, but to reproduce the legitimacy of the French language.

Schools played an additional role in supporting MRND hegemony by operationalising Habyarimana's legitimacy discourses. King (2014) observes that children who attended school were taught a particular view of Rwandan history. She notes that some children learnt in school that they and their families were assigned to racialised categories, which were enforced by teachers who segregated the class into Bahutu and Batutsi students (King, 2014,

pp.96-97). In her terms, 'because schools are seen by Rwandans as official and respectable, this categorization is legitimated. Schools marked ethnicity as an important, and moreover exclusive, classification in interactions with the state' (ibid p.97). In the first six years of primary school, history lessons were an important mechanism for operationalising racialised subjectivities, alongside the more subtle distinctions that Habyarimana constructed between peasants/feudalists and revolutionaries/counter-revolutionaries. Students learnt the colonial model of Rwandan history: that the Batwa originally inhabited Rwanda, they were joined by Bahutu agriculturalists, and, eventually, Batutsi pastoralists invaded from Ethiopia (ibid, pp.102-103). This was taught without the colonial lens that valorised the Batutsi as a 'Hamitic' race; rather, students learnt that the Batutsi arrived and 'started a system of slavery' (quoted by King, 2014, p.102). In fifth grade, the history of *ubuhake* was taught, in such a way as to emphasise 'that the relationship, which constituted virtual slavery, disadvantaged Hutu' (ibid, p.104). The Batutsi were represented as dominant aristocrats, and the Bahutu as subjugated agriculturalists, and this lent historical weight to Habyarimana's construction of the noble Bahutu peasantry and the insidious Batutsi feudalists. Revolution was also a theme in history lessons; primary school students learnt that the oppressive nature of the Batutsi aristocracy necessitated the 'social revolution', in order for the Bahutu peasantry to liberate itself (King, 2014, p.104). Importantly, students learnt that 'the [Bahutu] majority took power in the spirit of liberation, justice, and democracy, and that the revolution overthrew feudalism and *ubuhake*' (ibid, p.105, italics in original). Batutsi were portrayed as an enduring threat to the revolutionary order, as schools taught that they wanted 'to continue practices of "injustice and oppression" in Rwanda' (ibid). Those who attended primary school, then, were taught a history that helped to produce Habyarimana's discourse as 'truth', in the Foucauldian sense. In this way, education helped to legitimise the Habyarimana regime and thus to manufacture a level of consent.

There are several ways in which the education system can be viewed as playing a

hegemonic role in Rwanda. The reproductive function of the system served to ensure the continuation of the *élite*, and to reify its distinction from the masses. If one outcome of this was that the majority continued to live in rural areas and went on to work in rural industries, it both benefitted the regime and posed a problem for the ruling class. In material terms, rural labour was vital for the enrichment of the *élite*, and for the Rwandan economic model at large. But rural citizens were isolated from urban centres of wealth and power, and became increasingly discontent. ‘Pro-peasant’ discourse can be seen as one way to attempt to manage this, as it valorised the Rwandan peasant as the national ideal. Perhaps more important were the specific distinctions enforced under the Second Republic. King notes that ‘when strong intragroup differentials exist, for example between rich and poor Hutu, or between Hutu from different regions ... leaders may exploit intergroup differences to avoid animosity being directed at them’ (2014, pp.94-95), and she argues that this was the case in Habyarimana’s Rwanda. In her view, the limited access to schooling served this purpose, by fomenting animosity between Bahutu and Batutsi students, with the former perceiving the latter as having ‘too much’ and the latter resenting the limitations placed on their opportunities (ibid, pp.70-110). The distinctions between peasants/feudalists and revolutionaries/counter-revolutionaries that were operationalised in history lessons served the same function, with the continual scapegoating of the Batutsi sanctioned by key political figures (ibid, pp.27-28; p.95). The education reforms in reality served to reinforce the extant social order by producing a large peasant class specifically trained to produce commodities from which the regime could profit. By 1989, André Sibomana described the relation between the regime and the peasantry as follows:

Rwanda was a country which still had the reputation of being well run, ruled by a sort of ‘enlightened despot’, Juvénal Habyarimana. But you don’t become an honest man just by knowing how to quote French poetry to President Mitterand. Juvénal Habyarimana and his people were plundering the country while the peasants were starving (Sibomana, 1996, cited in Verwimp, 2013, p.101).

This was the situation as Rwanda approached the Civil War and the 1994 genocide.

The point for our purposes is that the Second Republic constructed a complex system that helped the government to consolidate its power and profit from the coffee industry. The specific character of this system was shaped by Rwandan history, the nature of the transfer of power that put the President in power (the ‘social revolution’ of 1959 and the ‘cultural revolution’ of 1975), and the particular composition of the French-speaking élite. French continued to be associated with the legitimate markets in Rwanda, alongside the ruling class. The implementation of mother tongue instruction was symbolic of democratic reform, and may have constituted an ideological support for the regime, but it only masked the reality that linguistic legitimacy continued to be primarily the preserve of French-speakers. Ultimately, the integral State was used for an ambitious project of spatial, social, and linguistic engineering that served a hegemonic purpose. It is a crucial point, then, that the system in place for legitimising the French-speaking, Bahutu, ‘peasant revolutionary’ government was largely at odds with the English-speaking, Batutsi, reputedly well-educated, ‘counter-revolutionary’ (at least in Habyarimana’s terms) RPF that would take control in 1994.

3 EDUCATION AND POLITICS IN EXILE: THE CREATION OF THE RPF IN UGANDA

When the RPF came to power in 1994, it comprised 25,000 soldiers (Prunier, 1997, p.117), headed by a National Executive Committee that began the process of reorganising the State (Musoni, 2010, p.2). The bulk of the military force were Batutsi refugees who, having been made an underclass by the Bahutu nationalist movement, fled Rwanda in three waves after 1959 (Mamdani, 2001, p.164). This history has been set out recently by scholars who have argued that a small clique of ‘anglophone’ Batutsi returnees from Uganda came to dominate the Rwandan government (see Hintjens, 2008; Ansoms, 2009; Samuelson and Freedman, 2010). As part of my analysis, I will identify the precise character of the RPF

leadership, and clarify the mechanisms by which certain refugees learned to speak English. Watson (1991) and Mamdani (2001) have offered in-depth accounts of the refugee experience in Uganda, and both argue that, for the most part, refugees were able to become well-educated there. I follow these scholars in considering the impact of education on the refugees, but argue that the extent of the education of the refugees was actually relatively limited. Instead, my analysis suggests that a specific section of the refugees became well-educated, and formed the intellectual core of the RPF. Crucially, evidence suggests that the better-educated English-speakers generally occupied the highest positions in the RPF hierarchy, and this must be taken into account if we are to consider the politics of language in post-genocide Rwanda.

It is necessary to provide historical context in order to understand the experience of Batutsi refugees in Uganda. For even before refugees first arrived there, the Banyarwanda were legally categorised as the country's sixth largest ethnic group (Watson, 1991, p.6). The Banyarwanda who lived in Uganda prior to 1959 have been categorised as 'nationals' and 'migrants.' 'Nationals' traced their lineage back to those who were considered to be ethnic Banyarwanda, but lived in Uganda when its colonial borders were fixed. 'Migrants' arrived in Uganda by way of economic migration during the colonial period (Watson, pp.4-6). By contrast, Rwandan refugees fled in three waves. The first was that of 1959-61, and involved mainly the Batutsi élite who were displaced by the Bahutu revolution. The second (between 1963-64) fled intensified repression under Kayibanda's regime. The third came in 1973, following Habyarimana's coup d'état (Mamdani, 2001, p.160). As a result, by 1991, there were 81,000 Banyarwanda refugees registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), though the total number of Banyarwanda refugees was likely around 200,000 (Watson, 1991, p.6). As Watson puts it, 'the balance was thought to be self-settled' (ibid). The 119,000 'self-settled' refugees, however, were still subject to certain legal restrictions, because refugees in Uganda could not attain citizenship. Indeed, even the

Ugandan-born children of refugees were legally defined as refugees under Ugandan law (Mamdani, 2001, p.164). For as Mamdani (2001) illustrates, indigeneity was the necessary condition for Ugandan citizenship, and, accordingly, refugees were in a constant state of precarity. Even the way that refugees were treated by the citizenry and the State was not consistent: as Mamdani shows, the Ugandan response to Banyarwanda refugees oscillated between tolerance (particularly under Idi Amin's regime), and overt hostility (2001, pp.159-184).²⁸ Nevertheless, the Rwandan government was unwilling to repatriate refugees, and it became clear by 1972 that 'thoughts of returning to Rwanda [had] been largely dispelled, particularly among the young' (Holborn, 1975, p.1228). For many Banyarwanda refugees, it was necessary to attempt to create a life in Uganda.

Access to education was an important factor in improving the lives of refugees in Uganda. The value of education is particularly clear when one takes into account the fact that many refugees 'lost everything they possessed several times' (1991, p.8). In this precarious context, cultural and social capital became especially important. Christine Majagari, a second-generation refugee, demonstrated this when she told Watson that 'we had no land so we had to move with our heads. Our heads were our only capital' (Watson, 1991, p.8). As Mamdani notes, those who were able to receive an education often managed to settle, to some degree, throughout Uganda (2001, p.165). At this point, it is important to provide an overview of the Ugandan education system, precisely because a number of prominent members of the RPF were able to ascend through it. Uganda was similar to Rwanda in that education was a primary vehicle for membership of the *élite*, but it was distinct in that the

²⁸ In brief, we can summarise the treatment of Banyarwanda refugees by the State as follows. In the late 1960s, refugees were targeted by the Obote regime as 'trespassers'; they were subject to arbitrary questioning or detention. From 1971-1979, the Amin regime halted persecution of the Banyarwanda, and even accepted a number of refugees into the army and security forces (although other Banyarwanda joined the forces opposing Amin). When Obote was reinstated, from 1980-1985, hostility towards the Banyarwanda recommenced in earnest, particularly because they were considered to have collaborated with Idi Amin. Under Yoweri Museveni, for whom many Banyarwanda refugees fought in the Ugandan Civil War, refugees experienced a brief integration into society before it was made clear that they were no longer welcome to remain in Uganda (Mamdani, 2001, pp.159-184).

ruling class was considered to be 'anglophone'.

By 1959, when the first Batutsi refugees arrived, education in Uganda was becoming the central route to prosperity. Karlstrom argues that education grew in importance throughout the 1950s, as a new 'educated technocratic élite' appeared, whose members were 'to take over the state apparatus after [the British administration's] departure' (1999, p.144). The majority of this élite became employed by the public sector, in part because the employment opportunities in the civil service and State apparatus grew considerably after independence (ibid, p.168)²⁹. It appears, however, that Banyarwanda rarely entered this élite.³⁰ In part this was because they were underrepresented at secondary school: in 1960, only 2.6% of secondary school places were occupied by Banyarwanda, despite the fact that they formed 5.9% of the population (Kasfir, 1976, p.110). Nevertheless, during the first Obote regime, the expansion of the public sector created opportunities for graduates, who, if they were employed by the State, could earn twenty times the income of the average Ugandan peasant (Karlstrom, 1999, p.169). This general trend persisted under Idi Amin, when the economy at large suffered but urban careers and those in the civil service remained prestigious, and closely associated with 'perks' such as free housing, access to vehicles, and readily available 'soft loans' (ibid, p.174). Ultimately, the growth of well-paid jobs and the attendant expansion of the élite made education a valuable resource in Uganda.

The educated élite was closely associated with an English-speaking, urban culture. During the 1970s and 1980s, education, salaried labour, and urban life were valued as the 'epitome of modernity', accessible to a small élite class that was distinguished by its use of English (Whiteley, 1969, p.109; Karlstrom, 1999, p.174). Mamdani argues that British and American

²⁹ Jørgensen provides some figures that illustrate the growth of State employment. The number of jobs in the civil service rose from 16,898 in 1962 to 27,066 in 1970. Overall, public sector employment grew from 88,480 in 1963 to 128,815 in 1970. (Jørgensen, 1981, cited in Karlstrom, 1999, p.169).

³⁰ Lindemann shows that there were no Banyarwanda in government from 1962-1979 (2010, pp.15-19). However, since the government is only one area of public employment, and there are no data available on the access different ethnic groups had to prestigious private employment, it is entirely possible that some Banyarwanda entered the educated élite.

imperialism was key to the cultural prestige of English in Uganda, being ‘reflected in every aspect of the country’s economic, political, cultural, and military life’ (1983, p.61). Consequently, he is clear that there was an association between British and American culture and the wealthy urban class, and that ‘culturally, urban life, especially in the affluent circles, was stamped “Made in Britain” or “Made in the USA”’ (ibid). In part, this was reflected by the dominance of English in political society: throughout the limited State, English was used alongside Luganda, and the former was the exclusive language of the law courts (Ladefoged, Glick, and Cripser, 1972, pp.21-24). But the influence of Britain and the USA also permeated the institutions of civil society, and it was evidenced in newspapers, magazines, learned societies, the theatre, the cinema, television, schools, colleges, and churches (Mamdani, 1983, p.61). In these arenas, language and cultural imperialism were linked. In the media, for example, the majority of radio broadcasts were conducted English, and more than half of Ugandan newspapers were written in the language (Ladefoged, Glick, and Cripser, 1972, p.20).³¹ Importantly, most newspapers were published fairly infrequently, due largely to a lack of resources and labour (Isoba, 1980). It is telling, then, that the only English-language daily being published at the time of Amin’s coup (1971) was owned by the London and Rhodesian Mining Company (Mamdani, 1983, p.61). This serves as an example of how British and American corporations helped to shape cultural life and linguistic life in Uganda, one effect of which was the promotion of English among the Ugandan élite.

As the opportunities for educated Ugandans grew, so too did the the English-medium education system. During the 1950s, the future of this system was the subject of some debate, and language emerged as a key issue. In 1953, the British Administration appointed the De Bunsen Committee to create a plan for the future of Ugandan education (Scanlon, 1964, p.30). Generally, it was argued that there was strong support on the part of students

³¹ It should be noted that 40% of newspapers in Uganda were published in Luganda; the remaining 9.5% were split between ten named dialects (Ladefoged, Glick, and Cripser, 1972, pp.19-20).

and parents to retain the existing curriculum, which was strongly influenced by that of Britain. In part, this was because Ugandan decision-makers resisted efforts to reform the system in a way that would make it different to, or even 'lesser than', those of Europe (Slater, 2002, p.24). It is clear that access to English was prized by stakeholders, with the De Bunsen Committee reporting in 1953 that it was 'impressed with the great demand for English on the part of parents and pupils throughout the Protectorate' (Scanlon, 1964, p.30). Thus, in 1963, it was decreed that only the first two years of education would be taught in students' home languages, and from the third year English would be the medium of instruction (Slater, 2002, p.25). To facilitate the expansion of the education system, Uganda recruited teachers from Britain, the USA, Canada, and Australia (Ssekamwa, 1997, pp.178-179). In absolute terms, more Ugandans accessed English-language education than ever before, with the number of students sitting English examinations virtually doubling between 1965-68 (Ladefoged, Glick, and Cripser, 1972, p.97). Generally speaking, however, the expansion of Uganda's education system only benefitted a small stratum of the population.

A closer examination of the data on Ugandan education throughout the 1960s demonstrates that several barriers served to limit both enrolment and progression. The education system expanded at a greater rate than enrolment, and as a result the average Ugandan primary school was operating at 65% capacity in 1966 (Hindmarsh, 1966, cited in Slater, 2002, p.27). For the most part, barriers precluded female, rural, and poor students from accessing school. More girls were enrolled in Buganda than any other region, but still they accounted for only 34% of the student body (Scanlon, 1964, p.26). Rural children had difficulties reaching schools, as it was common for their homes to be as far as 10 miles from the local institution (ibid). And, as in Rwanda, education was relatively expensive. In 1964, Uganda's GDP per capita was \$76.04, but primary school fees ranged from \$2.80 to \$8.40 per year, and the average cost of secondary school was approximately \$69.75 per year (ibid, p.20). While there were a 'substantial number' of local government scholarships available for

students to attend senior secondary school (ibid), only students whose families could afford to pay for primary and lower secondary school would be eligible. Those who were able to access school still encountered problems that arose from the English-medium system.

In one sense, English became a benchmark of students' success in Uganda. The education system constituted precisely the system of 'selection' that is described by Shohamy, whereby exams act as a means to affect 'the future of individuals by granting them permission to enter higher education and become part of that society's élite' (2001, p.28). Students had to pass a primary leaving exam in order to qualify for secondary school. The exam consisted of three equally-weighted sections: English language, maths, and 'general knowledge'. Of these, the English language paper was deemed to be the 'most difficult hurdle which local candidates have to face' (quoted in Scanlon, 1964, p.52). In part, this was because the schools generally lacked resources, and teachers lacked training. Musisi and Heaton surveyed the education system in the 1960s and found that school textbooks usually used English that was too complex for the students, and that very few schools had supplementary reading beyond the core textbooks (1970, p.32). The pedagogical model relied on lecture-based lessons, which, as Musisi and Heaton observed, limited the opportunities for children to practice and learn English (ibid, p.33). The issues associated with English-medium education were acute for older Batutsi refugees, who were at an often insurmountable disadvantage after having been partially educated in French (Holborn, 1975, p.922). As noted by Ladefoged, Glick, and Criper, the highest performing primary school leavers were able to understand short English texts, but had only limited comprehension of English (1972, p.124). Figure 1, which illustrates the progression rates of an average Ugandan cohort in 1966, shows that less than a third of children who finished primary six would qualify for secondary school. Taking into account Ladefoged, Glick, and Criper's observation, it appears that out of 650 students enrolling in primary school, around 110 would learn to handle short English texts. If, as Scanlon suggests, the English language

section of the primary leaving exam posed the biggest challenge, it follows that English competence was a deciding factor in ascension beyond the primary education system. And evidently, students would need to progress to secondary school at least in order to gain more than a ‘limited comprehension’ of English.

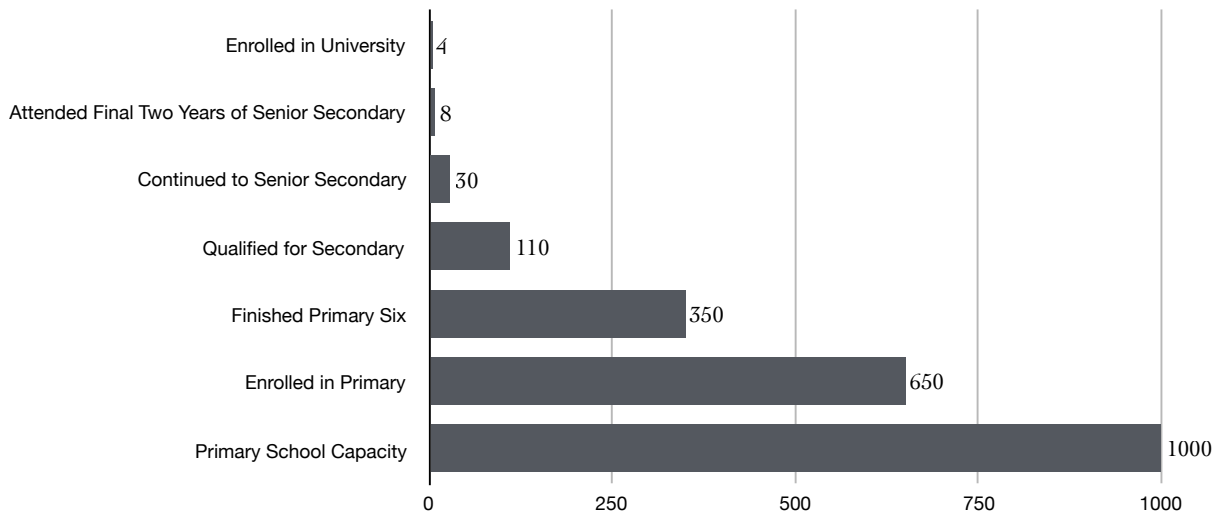


Figure 1 Average enrolment and progression in the Ugandan education system in 1966 (per 1,000 primary places). Data from Hindmarsh, 1966 (cited in Slater, 2002, p.27).

For refugees, the education system operated differently, and it involved specific restrictions on access. Importantly, until 1969, the education of refugees was largely prohibited in Uganda, as the government permitted neither students to enter the national education system nor the UNHCR to provide educational facilities (Holborn, 1975, p.313; p.1242). After 1969, the UNHCR began to construct primary schools within refugee camps, as part of a project that ultimately aimed to make refugees self-sufficient. The primary schools were designed to conform to the national education system, and they were also open to local children (ibid, pp.909-919). It was a tenet of UNHCR aid that ‘the percentage of refugee children in primary school should not be higher than the national average in each country of asylum’ (ibid, p.919). In refugee settlements in Uganda, this initially meant that a primary school was allowed to take 30% Rwandan children, a figure that was raised to 50%

in 1971 (ibid, p.1228). Consequently, Holborn observes that members of the former Batutsi élite were frustrated with the fact that only half of their children were allowed to attend primary school, in contrast to the near-universal enrolment they had achieved in Rwanda (ibid, p.919). The refugee students who were successful in primary school would, in theory, compete for secondary school places on the same basis as Ugandan nationals (ibid, p.313). This is significant because access to secondary school had the potential to make a crucial difference in children's lives. For refugees, as for nationals, it was the mechanism by which children might enter the élite, and learn English, but it was also particularly expensive. For this reason, access to scholarships was critical.

The fact that refugees were unable to attain Ugandan citizenship prohibited them from accessing certain scholarships, but made them eligible for others. Scholarships were provided by the Ugandan government to the highest-performing primary students, but only if they were Ugandan citizens (Waugh, 2004, p.8). However, the UNHCR also provided specific scholarships for refugees.³² Due to a lack of data, it is difficult to ascertain how extensive such provision was, but evidence from annual UNHCR reports offers some insight. In Uganda, scholarships were provided at least between 1973-1983, and the majority of these were given to secondary students, with a lesser number allocated for university studies (UN, 1973; 1975; 1976; 1977; 1978; 1979; 1980; 1981; 1982; 1983). My research indicates that absolute figures on the number of scholarships given to refugees in Uganda are only available from 1973, 1975, and 1976. Respectively, in these years scholarships were given to 114 students, 'over 200' students, and 164 students (UN, 1973; 1975; 1976). Importantly, the

³² It is unclear whether children had to be registered with the UNHCR in order to access scholarships. This is problematic, as there were likely more unregistered than registered Banyarwanda refugees. In 1975, Holborn noted that more than half of the Banyarwanda refugees had settled with friends or relatives in Uganda (1975, p.1244), which conforms to Watson's 1991 estimate that 119,000 unregistered Banyarwanda refugees were living in Uganda, compared with 81,000 who were registered with UNHCR (1991, p.6). Because of a lack of clarity in the data, the discussion in this paragraph is based on the number of registered refugees. It should be noted that, if scholarships were open to all refugees, the percentage receiving scholarships would be considerably smaller.

refugees registered with UNHCR in Uganda included some 35,000 who were primarily from Zaire and Sudan, and thus the Batutsi refugees were unlikely to have received all of the scholarships in question.³³ Hypothetically, if all available scholarships had been given to registered Banyarwanda refugees in 1976, it would allow approximately 6.67% of those students to continue into post-primary education with UNHCR funding.³⁴ While these figures are only speculative, they indicate that the extent of UNHCR assistance should certainly not be overstated, and also suggest that we should be sceptical towards the claim that most Banyarwanda refugees became educated.

The available evidence demonstrates that, at least in certain cases, the lack of scholarships was overcome by those with access to economic or social capital. Paul Kagame serves as a salient example of someone who was able to access education because of his social connections. Kagame was a successful primary school student, and, if he had been a citizen, he would have qualified for a government scholarship to one of the best secondary schools in Uganda. As a refugee, however, he was precluded from accessing the scholarship. Ultimately, his well-connected family reached out to a friend in Belgium, Yves Genin, who secured funding from a refugee assistance network for Kagame to attend secondary school (Waugh, 2004, p.10; Kinzer, 2008, pp.14-17). Other children relied on access to money, and in this respect an entire family could benefit from a single child accessing a scholarship. Catherine Watson gives the example of a 'reasonably' successful family of Batutsi refugees, whose eldest child was funded by UNHCR to pursue secondary education. After she graduated, she went to work at an embassy, thence using her salary to send her four siblings to secondary school (Watson, 1991, p.6). These may be isolated examples, but they suggest

³³ Specifically, in 1976, 78,000 of the 112,930 refugees registered in Uganda were Banyarwanda (UNHCR, 1976).

³⁴ These calculations are speculative, in the absence of specific demographic data that relate to the Banyarwanda refugees. The figure is calculated as follows. On the basis that 47.3% of the populations of both Uganda and Rwanda were between ages 0-14 in 1976 (World Bank, 2018), it is assumed that approximately 36,894 registered Banyarwanda refugees would fall into this age bracket (47.3% of the 78,000 registered refugees). Assuming that an equal number of children were born every year, 2,460 would be a given age. On that basis, 6.67% of children in a single year group (164 out of 2,460) would receive a scholarship to continue into post-primary education.

that, where individual refugees were unable to access scholarships, they would only be able to reach post-primary education if they had access either to stable income or to useful social connections. Overall, then, it appears that refugee access to education was limited, particularly at the post-primary level, and that many were unable to become educated. There is an important corollary to this: it is likely that the educated elements of the RPF were not typical of the refugee population, but rather were distinguished from it.

The RPF was rooted in two institutions: the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU) and the National Resistance Army (NRA). Kuperman refers to the RPF as a 'merger' between Batutsi 'political activists' and 'warriors' (2004, p.67). It could also be understood as a coalition between the Batutsi 'refugee intelligentsia' of RANU and the Batutsi guerrilla fighters of the NRA, two groups that had been intertwined for some eight years before the RPF was founded in 1987. The term 'refugee intelligentsia', proposed by Mamdani (1996, p.25) is useful because it indexes both the level of education attained by certain refugees, and the fact that they remained distinct from the Ugandan 'educated technocratic élite' identified by Karlstrom (1999). That is, despite their level of education, and the fact that they 'came to form an élite educated stratum whose members could be found in the professions, business, and the civil service', educated refugees continued to be discriminated against by the population at large. In order to access salaried employment, they were often forced to bribe their way into particular institutions, or to hide the fact that they were Banyarwanda (Mamdani, 2001, p.166). Precarity remained a defining feature of life for the refugee intelligentsia, especially from 1981-1985, when Milton Obote was reinstalled as President and Banyarwanda were summarily dismissed from public employment (Clay, cited in Reed, 1996, p.484). In part as a reaction to the unstable status of Banyarwanda refugees, RANU was founded in Kampala, in 1979, by members of the refugee intelligentsia. It was an explicitly leftist organisation that campaigned for the repatriation of Banyarwanda refugees and the transformation of Rwanda into a socialist state (Mamdani, 1996, p.25; Reed,

1996, pp.484-485). RANU had limited success in campaigning for a negotiated return to Rwanda; it held conferences on the issue and attempted to establish connections throughout the diaspora, but most educated members of the diaspora were unwilling to risk their socio-economic status by becoming actively involved in discussions of refugee repatriation (Reed, 1996, pp.484-485). Despite its efforts to create a transnational network, RANU essentially remained an organisation of the refugee intelligentsia, counting a 'small intellectual following' of 100 supporters in 1983 (Reed, 1996, p.484; Kuperman, 2004, p.66). Yet certain members of this small group of intellectuals came to form a significant part of the upper echelon of the RPF guerrilla army, and, in due course, the RPF government.

A number of the earliest members of the military arm of the RPF had already fought in two guerrilla wars: against Idi Amin as part of the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) in 1979, and against the second Obote regime as part of the NRA from 1981-1986. FRONASA was successful in overthrowing Idi Amin, but the result was that Milton Obote returned to power in 1981, thereby inaugurating a renewed period of anti-Banyarwanda discrimination (see Mamdani, 2001). In opposition to the second Obote government, a number of soldiers who had fought alongside Museveni in FRONASA joined him in a new struggle: the Ugandan Civil War against Obote (Mamdani, 2001, p.168). At the culmination of the war, when the NRA took Kampala in 1986, some 3,000 of the 14,000 strong army were Banyarwanda soldiers (Mamdani, 2001, p.170). Among these, the best-known are Fred Rwigyema, Paul Kagame, Chris Bunyenyezi, Sam Kaka, and Dr. Peter Bayingana, each of whom, according to Otunnu, was encouraged to join FRONASA in 1979 by RANU, in order to gain military experience that would be invaluable if it became necessary to invade Rwanda (Otunnu, 1999, p.16; Mamdani, 2001, pp.167-173). By the time of the invasion, these were some of the most powerful members of the RPF (Ottunu, 1999, p.16), and they followed a shared trajectory: they were first members of RANU, then Museveni's FRONASA and NRA, and, later, the RPF army. Those who survived the Rwandan Civil War formed the RPF

government.

In the immediate aftermath of the Ugandan Civil War, many Banyarwanda soldiers were rewarded for fighting with Museveni. Fred Rwigyema, for example, was made Deputy Army Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Minister of Defence, which meant that he was subordinate in the military hierarchy only to the Minister of the Defence, the new President Yoweri Museveni (Mamdani, 2001, p.175). But the growing presence of Banyarwanda soldiers in the higher ranks of the army was received with resentment, and soon Museveni's government effectively blocked the promising careers of those who had fought in the NRA (ibid, pp.174-175). For RANU, which had employed a task force that aimed to integrate the 'cadres who possessed ready experience in fighting a protracted guerrilla war' (Reed, 1996, p.485), the renewed discrimination faced by soldiers was a call to action. A RANU founder discussed the experience of Banyarwanda members of the NRA who felt 'betrayed by their former comrades-in-arms', telling Mamdani that:

The NRA experience was a catalyst in mobilizing the Banyarwanda in NRA. As far as 1983, our position was that people should join the struggle in Uganda voluntarily. It was worthwhile. It was not a deliberate effort to organize an army inside an army. The discrimination and harassment puzzled them, made them look for alternatives. They turned to senior RANU members, like Baingana. The discrimination did mobilize quite a few for us (quoted in Mamdani, 2001, p.175).

RANU began to associate with the Banyarwanda members of the NRA, though Rwigyema warned them not to do so openly (Kuperman, 2004, p.66). In 1987, on the recommendation of the task force, RANU members voted to change the organisation's name to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (Reed, 1996, p.485). The same vote transformed RANU from a leftist intellectual organisation to a broad-based military movement, 'socially anchored in the refugee population', and with a 'clear message which could be understood by even those with little or no education' (Mamdani, 1996, 27; Reed, 1996, p.485). Thus, the small intellectual group represented by RANU became a movement of 4,000 soldiers by 1990, led into battle by Fred Rwigyema (Reed, 1995, p.50; Mamdani, 1996, p.28; Kuperman, 2004, p.70). Still, it

remained distinct from the refugee population, rather than representative of it.

The RPF leadership was not only militarily successful but also well-educated. In this way, they were distinct from the wider refugee population, for whom access to education appears to have been relatively limited. By April 1994, the RPF constituted some 25,000 soldiers (Prunier, 1997, p.117). But it remained dominated by refugees from Uganda whose roots were in RANU, the NRA, or, we might add, FRONASA (Kuperman, 2004, p.68). This early cadre of soldiers included around 4,000 NRA deserters, almost all of whom had attended primary school, with around 50% reaching secondary school and up to 20% attending university (Prunier, 1997, p.117). Accordingly, because a level of English competence was necessary to pass the primary leaving exam in Uganda, at least half of these must have been able to speak some English. It is also important to note that, while there are no comprehensive accounts of who formed the RPF's upper ranks, the evidence available suggests that Banyarwanda who were well-educated in Uganda were particularly prominent in positions of power. For example, Kuperman interviewed 10 senior members of the RPF, at least seven of whom were educated to university level, and five of whom were at Makerere University in Kampala (2004, 62).³⁵ Other educated English-speakers were also in prominent positions of command. Fred Rwigyema, for example, became the Chairman of the RPF, and Paul Kagame was his second-in-command. And, after Rwigyema was killed in battle in 1990, Kagame replaced him as the military commander (Kuperman, 2004, p.71; Musoni, 2010, p.1). If approximately half of the early core of the RPF could speak some English, that proportion would have decreased as the army grew, particularly because it came to enlist

³⁵ The university-educated interviewees were as follows. Charles Muriganda was the RPF representative in Washington during the war, and later foreign minister, and was educated to university level in Burundi before working as a post-doctoral researcher in the USA. Tito Rutaremara was the leader of RANU's task force, founding coordinator of the RPF, and, ultimately, chairman of the 2003 constitutional congress; he attended secondary school and university in Uganda. The Makerere graduates were: Protais Musoni, vice-chairman of the RPF, and later electoral commission president; Patrick Mazimaka, member of the executive committee, RPF director of external affairs, and later foreign minister; Theogene Rudasingwa, deputy peace negotiator, later chief of cabinet; Karenzi Karake, top delegate to the 1991 peace talks and director of war operations during the genocide and later chief of army operations; and Aloysie Inyumba, RPF head of finance and later prefect of the capital area (see Kuperman, 2004, p.62).

soldiers with little or no education, including young boys (Prunier, 1997, p.117). Ultimately, it appears that the core of the RPF consisted of English-speakers, but that lower ranks were less likely to be competent in the language. At a broader level, English competence within the RPF was probably not representative of that within the refugee population in Uganda. This has particular implications for the political significance of the 1996 language policy, which will be explored in the next section. Simply, the linguistic competence of the RPF leadership forced a struggle over the politics of language in post-genocide Rwanda.

4 LANGUAGE AND HEGEMONY IN THE POST-GENOCIDE ORDER (1994-2008)

The Rwandan Civil War began on October 1st 1990, after a group of around fifty RPF soldiers crossed the border from Uganda to Rwanda. A guerrilla war raged until July 1992, when the RPF agreed to stop fighting, and all parties involved decided to formally discuss peace negotiations at Arusha, in Tanzania (Jones, 1999). In Arusha, the RPF and Habyarimana's government negotiated a cease-fire and a power-sharing agreement, with provisions for the integration of armies and the repatriation of Banyarwanda refugees. The result was the Arusha Accord (1993), which was signed on August 4th 1993. However, as Mamdani points out, the 'Hutu power' proponents in the Rwandan government (which is to say the extreme Bahutu nationalists) had no say in the negotiations (1996, p.29). They viewed the agreement as a 'capitulation', and increasingly looked towards a 'final solution' for the so-called 'Batutsi problem' (ibid). Echoing the discourse of Batutsi counter-revolutionaries/feudalists, Bahutu nationalists claimed that 'the RPF stood for nothing less than a Batutsi resurgence which would reverse the social gains of the 1959 revolution, restoring a rule reminiscent of the Batutsi chiefs under colonialism' (ibid, p.30). Ultimately, as is well known, the Arusha Accords were not implemented, and, on April 6th 1994,

President Habyarimana was assassinated. The killing began within hours, and over 100 days of slaughter as many as one million Bahutu moderates and Batutsi civilians were murdered. In the end, the RPF took control of Kigali, and the post-genocide State was born.

The RPF became the dominant political force in Rwanda in July 1994. In order to understand the challenge that it faced, we must clarify that the genocide was not an anarchic event, but a carefully organised instance of mass participatory violence that reified the social structure of power in Rwanda. This latter point is particularly clear from the anti-Batutsi propaganda, which, evidence suggests, was produced by the educated class.³⁶ Des Forges demonstrates this point, referring to the exemplary *Note Relative à la Propaganda d'Expansion et de Recrutement*, in which a propagandist gives instructions on how best to use the media to spread the genocidal message of the Bahutu extremists (1999, p.65). The author had 'obviously ... studied at university level', and presented a detailed analysis of Mucchielli's *Psychologie de la publicité et de la propagande* (1970). Propaganda was disseminated to the masses, with Kinyarwanda-language media emphasising the unity of the Bahutu, the cruelty of the RPF, and/or the ingratitude of the Batutsi (Rwigamba, Nkusi, and Ruzindana, 1998, p.55). French-language radio played a particularly illuminating role, both in inciting violence and reinforcing sociolinguistic hierarchies. As an example, Li (2004) refers to the case of a Belgian man, Georges Ruggiu, who broadcasted anti-Batutsi messages. Li argues that while 'a priori, Ruggiu's authority or credibility as a white man with Rwandan farmers who could not understand his words would seem at best dubious, one must recall that radio often feeds into the dynamics of other enduring social hierarchies and relations' (2004, p.99). Educated French-speakers, including the bourgmestres (local community leaders or 'mayors'), would listen and translate for the uneducated, as part of a 'mutually reinforcing process, [whereby] local élites could play upon and enhance their credibility as educated Francophones vis-à-vis

³⁶ A full examination of the use of media during the genocide is outside of the scope of this chapter. However, see Rwigamba, Nkusi, and Ruzindana (1998), Des Forges (1999), and Thompson (2007) for comprehensive studies.

those who could not speak French' (ibid). Genocidal messages, then, were diffused from the French-speaking urban élite to the Kinyarwanda-speaking masses, who were imbricated in a genocide in which 'every attempt was made to involve everyone' (Mamdani, 1996, p.19). The fact that the Rwandan social hierarchy was an instrument of the genocide raises important questions. For example, how did the RPF consolidate power when the existing system in Rwanda constructed the French-speaking Bahutu 'peasant revolutionary' élite as a hegemonic class? Did it, in fact, take steps to reshape Rwandan institutions in aid of its own hegemony?

I argue that we can begin to answer these questions by returning to Gramsci, and specifically focussing on his understanding of revolutionary movements. For Gramsci, a revolutionary war is fought at two levels: that of political society, and that of civil society. Respectively, these are the 'war of manoeuvre' and 'war of position'. The war of manoeuvre, as Ives puts it, 'is a frontal attack on one's enemies, in this case on state power. It characterizes any attempt to gain actual control of the government, whether through armed combat, democratic election or other means' (2004b, p.107). In short, it is an attempt to wrest control of political society. Ultimately, however, Gramsci argued that radical revolutionary change would be impossible without first building the social foundation for a new state (Cox, 1983, p.165). If the state is supported by the continual manufacture of consent, largely in and through civil society, it resists transformation, as '[t]he state [is] just a forward trench, behind it [stands] a succession of sturdy fortresses and emplacements' (Gramsci, [1930-1931] 1975, p.169). Gramsci's implication is clear: the mere action of toppling political society cannot ensure a successful revolution; rather, a revolutionary government would have to establish a counter-hegemony, particularly through the organs of civil society, thereby dismantling and reconstituting the 'sturdy fortresses and emplacements' of the State. In Femia's terms, a new regime would need 'to conquer one after another all the agencies of civil society (e.g. the schools, the universities, the publishing houses, the mass media, the trade unions)' (1987,

p.52). It is worth noting once more that, for Gramsci, the distinction between political and civil society is methodological, rather than organic. As such, we must remember that establishing a new hegemony must necessarily involve both arenas, and, because hegemony is processual and never ‘completed’, a group may never achieve the complete takeover of all institutions in question.³⁷ Nevertheless, Gramsci’s account offers a useful framework for analysing the changes that the RPF instituted after 1994. As I argue here, 1994-2008 can be usefully understood as a particular period within a war of both manoeuvre and position, in which language was one of a number of factors that the government attempted to transform into a hegemonic support for its rule.

In the decade after the genocide, the RPF consolidated its control over the State apparatus. From 1994 to 2003, Rwanda underwent a ‘transitional period’, that would ostensibly restore order, stability, and democracy to the country.³⁸ In 1994, Waldorf argues, ‘there was some prospect that Rwanda might finally achieve a nonethnic and more democratic government’ (2007, p.405). After the genocide, Habyarimana’s MRND was outlawed, as was the Bahutu extremist party Coalition pour la défense de la république (CDR). The remaining political parties took the seats allotted to them in the Arusha Accord, which in fact meant that the RPF had no more seats than any other party (Reyntjens, 2006, p.1105). However, the RPF made certain unilateral amendments to the Accord, introducing a ‘strong executive presidency’ and attempting to ‘mask’ its ‘hold on political power’ (ibid). Moreover, the RPF used the transitional period to consolidate its control and make the system increasingly autocratic (Reyntjens, 2006). From 1994, opposition parties were weakened, and subversive political figures were forced to resign, pushed into exile, arrested, or, allegedly, assassinated (ICG, 2002, pp.10-12; Waldorf, 2007, p.405). RPF members, and

³⁷ Ives uses the example of Mussolini’s government to demonstrate that war of position is never ‘complete’, and rather must be fought continually in order to retain power (2004b, p.112).

³⁸ Initially this was to last from 1994-1999, but in 1999 it was extended by four years, to July 2003 (Reyntjens, 2006, pp.1105-1106).

non-members affiliated with the party, came to occupy the majority of powerful positions in diverse areas of the integral State (ibid, p.11).³⁹ Such political manoeuvres had their ideological counterpart. The RPF has continually attempted to control knowledge construction and to manage public discourse (Reyntjens, 2011). The official thinking on ethnicity serves as an example here. The RPF State has attempted to ‘contain’ any discussion of ethnicity or race through its policy of ‘de-ethnicisation’ (Purdeková, 2013, p.369). Thus, at least in public, there are no Bahutu or Batutsi in post-genocide Rwanda, but only Banyarwanda, the members of a single Rwandan ‘family’ (Ingeleare, 2010, p.53). In this logic, underpinned by the government-sanctioned claim that ‘genocide ideology’ is particularly pervasive in Rwanda, prominent figures insist that ‘guidance from within the liberation movement of the RPF is necessary to fully embrace the restored order of “Rwandanicity,” free from the perils of ethnicity and the whims of dictatorship’ (ibid). However, while some scholars have gestured towards the shift to English as an effect of RPF power (see for example Samuelson and Freedman, 2011), it has yet to be analysed as part of the construction of hegemony. In the face of increasing RPF control, the State was still considered a terrain of competition between élites in 2008. According to Hintjens (2008) the élite increasingly came to be defined in linguistic terms, as either English-speaking or French-speaking. Prior to 2008, I argue that the integral State was characterised by a façade of linguistic pluralism and a de facto struggle for linguistic legitimacy, in which the legitimate market of education did not, in general, construct either French or English as more legitimate. This does not mean that RPF hegemony became total or unchallengeable after 2008, but rather that one of the central ideological institutions of the integral State came to serve its interests.

³⁹ The following is an abridged list of RPF-dominated institutions in 2002. 11 out of 12 prefects, who supervised the election, were affiliated with the RPF, as were 13 out of 15 ambassadors; RPF members headed the central institutions of the court system, 7 of the 9 security services, 8 out of 9 Rwandan banks, all institutions of higher education, and 25 out of the 29 State-run companies (ICG, 2002, p.11). For a full list of RPF members and affiliates in prominent Rwandan institutions, see ICG (2002, pp.34-39)

The RPF strengthened its dominance by limiting the possibilities for ideological subversion. Control of the Rwandan media is exemplary of this point (see also Waldorf, 2007). It is worth recalling that, for Gramsci, the press is the ‘most dynamic part of the ideological structure’ ([1930] 1996, pp.52-53), and therefore central to the war of position. Immediately after the RPF came to power, more media outlets were established in Rwanda, and the government was credited with helping to create ‘an open forum for public debate’ (ICG, 2002, p.14). However, from 1998, with ‘each stage in the concentration of power’ came additional restrictions on what the press could cover (ibid). For instance, one newspaper published an issue that dealt with the growing number of Rwandan citizens in exile (many of whom were genocide survivors). In response, the government banned the newspaper and seized all copies on sale, while Paul Kagame used a press conference to directly attack the journalists involved, claiming that they aimed to ‘torpedo public order’ (ibid). In this way, public criticism of the government was stifled, and by 2001 one human rights organisation observed that ‘the spaces of free expression are almost all occupied or reduced to the minimum in order to prevent contestation’ (LGDL, 2001, cited by Reyntjens, 2006, p.1107). It became increasingly dangerous to criticise the RPF in the media, as legal reforms were implemented that put the press under ‘supervision’ and offered no protection for journalists (ICG, 2002, p.16). By 2002, the International Crisis Group proclaimed that Rwandan mass media was ‘atrophied and muzzled’ (ibid, pp.14-16). Throughout the transitional period, a number of media outlets were shut down, often as a result of intimidation or exile (ICG, 2002, pp.14-16). As Sundaram (2016) shows, the press fell under increasing pressure to reproduce government-sanctioned narratives. It is an important point that controlling information is central to RPF governance (Waldorf, 2007; Ingelaere, 2010; Reyntjens, 2011), and it has particular implications for understanding the representation of relationships between languages in post-genocide Rwanda.

Language was one of the first issues raised in the post-genocide period. The 1996

language policy was part of an amendment to the *Loi Fondamentale* (GoR, 1995; GoR, 1996), the legislation that constituted the post-genocide order. The *Loi Fondamentale* was the result of the unilateral amendments made by the RPF to the Arusha Accord. Reyntjens observes that it ‘profoundly modified the political regime agreed in Arusha’ (2004, p.178), but the fact that it also altered the linguistic provisions of the Accord has received little attention. In its original form, the Accord defined measures that would allow Rwanda to repatriate Banyarwanda refugees while maintaining the linguistic power structure of Habyarimana’s Rwanda. Specifically, it required refugees to undertake intensive courses in French and Kinyarwanda. This provision was primarily aimed at educated refugees. Thus, for those who would enter public service, it decreed that ‘during the first three years of service, with effect from the date of appointment, the returnees shall use those languages they are most familiar with, and shall take intensive French or Kinyarwanda courses’ (Arusha Accord, 1993). Repatriated students would be entitled to use the language of their previous country of asylum for one year, but within the first three months they would be required to undertake ‘intensive French courses’ (ibid).⁴⁰ In effect, the Accord demanded the rapid assimilation of ‘the anglophones’ (Ntakirutimana, 2012, p.13), thereby avoiding the creation of a rival élite with vested interests in promoting a different European language. By contrast, the amended *Loi Fondamentale* established a tripartite policy that made English co-official with French and Kinyarwanda. Perhaps as a consequence, language became a terrain of struggle between élites.

It is a crucial point that language debates after 1994 became increasingly linked to tensions between the surviving pre-genocide élite (both Bahutu and Batutsi) and the post-genocide Batutsi élite (represented by the RPF). Rurangirwa argues that there was continuity with pre-genocide Rwanda insofar as the élite continued to express ‘indifference’ towards Kinyarwanda; when linguistic issues entered public discourse, the focus was on the ‘conflict

⁴⁰ Respectively, the sections of the Arusha Accord cited are from Article 25 and Article 30.

between French and English' (2012, p.170). The emphasis on European languages was disproportionate to the actual demographics of Rwanda: according to the 2002 census, 99.4% of the population spoke Kinyarwanda, 3.9% spoke French, and 1.9% spoke English (Assan and Walker, 2012, p.182).⁴¹ However, in post-genocide Rwanda, élites were increasingly defined in terms of linguistic identity politics, and this helps to explain the fact that language debates revolved around French and English. For as Hintjens demonstrates, following the repatriation of educated members of the RPF and other refugees, language became a key aspect of new identities that differentiated the élite and 'cut across the formerly dominant ethnic identities of Rwandans' (2008, p.13). English became particularly associated with the Batutsi returnees from 'anglophone' countries, while French speakers were 'not just Hutu genocidaires but also Tutsi genocide survivors, Tutsi returnees from Francophone countries, and moderate Hutu who did not participate in the genocide' (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.194). In short, it was the 'Tutsi Anglophone elite, mostly from Uganda, versus the Francophone elites, both Tutsi and Hutu, who were in Rwanda before the genocide, along with other returnees, mostly Tutsi, from Francophone countries' (2010, p.199). Thus, as Samuelson and Freedman (2010) observe, after 1994 language became a vexed issue among Rwanda's élite. Indeed at the élite level, linguistic competition was a form of political competition.

Within the context of a competition for power between English-speaking and French-speaking élites, there is also necessarily a contest for the construction of linguistic legitimacy. Indeed, Bourdieu's understanding of the linguistic market is that it is inherently a site of struggle: he states that 'only the process of continuous creation, which occurs through the unceasing struggles between the different authorities who compete within the field of specialized production for the monopolistic power to impose the legitimate mode of

⁴¹ For clarity, these are not monolingual speakers; the total is 105.2% because French and English speakers are largely also conversant in Kinyarwanda.

expression, can ensure the permanence of the legitimate language and of its value, that is, of the recognition accorded to it' (1991, p.58). Principal among the 'authorities' is the State itself. Yet, the *Loi Fondamentale* established a system that, in theory, gave equal status to Kinyarwanda, French, and English, without State interference.⁴² Where Reyntjens argues that particular amendments to the Arusha Accord amounted to 'constitutional engineering which attempted to mask the consolidation of the RPF's hold on political power' (2004, p.178), I contend that the linguistic amendments formed part of the RPF war of position. That is, they played an ideological role in legitimising RPF rule. Kagame addressed the language policy in a 2005 interview: '[w]e have here three official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, and French. Each evolves, progresses, or regresses within the framework of a free and open linguistic market. The state does not intervene' (Soudan, 2005, cited in Rosendal, 2009, p.23).⁴³ As I have demonstrated, English was most closely associated with those who were dominant within the RPF. Yet the 1996 *Loi Fondamentale* introduced the ostensibly 'free and open linguistic market', thereby precluding either élite from constructing the language with which it was associated as the sole legitimate code. However, it is worth interrogating the extent to which a such a linguistic market actually existed.

The very idea of a 'free and open linguistic market' is at odds with Bourdieu's theoretical account. Bourdieu is clear that the legitimate language is 'bound up with the State, both in its genesis and in its social uses' (1991, p.45). For the legitimate language is inculcated through its obligatory nature 'on official occasions and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.)', and so it is a language sanctioned by the State that becomes 'the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured' (ibid). In this view, the linguistic market cannot be 'free and open', because it is necessarily linked to the power of the State; indeed, the unified national linguistic market

⁴² Specifically, the *Loi Fondamentale* stipulated that 'the national language is Kinyarwanda, the official languages of Rwanda are Kinyarwanda, French, and English' (Rurangirwa, 2013, p.41, my translation).

⁴³ My translation.

only exists because the State defines its boundaries, and controls the institutions that are able to 'endlessly reproduce' 'universal recognition of the dominant language' (ibid, p.46). Kagame claims that languages under the tripartite policy evolve, progress, or regress without the intervention of the State, but State institutions are central to the production of linguistic legitimacy. For instance, the education system is one of the 'principal factors of production of the legitimate competence', which plays a central role in inculcating recognition of the legitimate language (ibid, p.62). Specifically, Bourdieu argues that it is 'a linguistic market strictly subject to the verdicts of the guardians of legitimate culture,' which is 'dominated by the linguistic products of the dominant class' (ibid). That is, the State education system must reflect the State-sanctioned legitimate language, at least insofar as it makes students aware of the existence of a particular valorised code. This is important for understanding the Rwandan case. Here, the educational market was not dominated by either English or French between 1994-2008 (although it prioritised both of those languages at the expense of Kinyarwanda). Yet the official plurilingualism should be understood in reference to two related points that facilitate a more nuanced understanding. First, in 1996, though dominated to a degree by the RPF, political society was putatively diverse. Second, prior to 2008, covert mechanisms increasingly equated linguistic choice with political allegiance, thereby undermining the supposed 'freedom' of the linguistic market. I will explore these points in turn.

After the genocide, Rwandan politics was characterised by the appearance of power-sharing. Though scholars have argued that the RPF held the balance of power early on (Mamdani, 1996), in 1994 an apparently diverse political society was created. This incorporated both English-speaking and French-speaking élites, and both Batutsi and Bahutu politicians. Linguistic equilibrium was salient at the highest levels of government. The *Loi Fondamentale* created a vice-presidency, which was occupied by Paul Kagame, though commentators believed that he already held the real power in the RPF (Reyntjens, 1996, p.237; *BBC News*, 2000). The presidency itself was given to Pasteur Bizimungu, a French-

speaking Muhutu member of the party. *BBC News* (2000) commented that ‘the division of power between the English-speaking Tutsi Kagame and the French-speaking Hutu Bizimungu was a delicate balancing act intended to symbolise Rwanda’s post-genocide reconciliation’. At least initially, linguistic and ethnic diversity was maintained throughout government, in part because the RPF had committed itself to the principle of power-sharing that underpinned the Arusha Accord (Reyntjens, 2004, p.178). In addition to the President, the Prime Minister was also a French-speaking Muhutu: Faustin Twagiramungu of the Mouvement démocratique republicain (MDR) (Reyntjens, 2004, p.178). Yet, as early as 1996, Mamdani dismissed the broad-based government as merely ‘nominal’, arguing that those from outside the RPF were only present in government at its behest (1996, p.31). In fact, it was increasingly the case that despite ‘the appearance of political pluralism ... the RPF managed to monopolize real, though sometimes less visible, decision making’ (Reyntjens, 2011, p.17)⁴⁴. This strategy of symbolic pluralism was also evident in linguistic terms. For instance, as I have already argued, after 1994 the media was increasingly subject to RPF censorship. Yet language use was not restricted: outlets were free to broadcast in any language, provided that the government was informed (Rosendal, 2010, p.166). Between 2005-2008, Rosendal recorded language use across different Rwandan media outlets. She found that Kinyarwanda was used the majority of the time, but that, the rest of the time, English and French were used to a similar degree (ibid, p.311). The Rwandan media, then, presented equilibrium between the two languages of the élite, in spite of the fact that the English-speaking élite exercised greater control over what was published. Thus, we must question whether the ‘free and open linguistic market’ in fact served merely to project an appearance of power-sharing and democratic politics.

⁴⁴ One way that this was achieved was by making RPF members permanent secretary-generals in each of the ministries. By 2002, while ministers were drawn from a number of parties, twelve out of sixteen ministries had a permanent RPF secretary-general (and the ministers of the four remaining ministries were RPF members (ICG, 2002, p.11). Thus, non-RPF ministers gained a ‘post but no power, while the pro-RPF secretary-generals wield[ed] the real power’ (ibid).

The education system was characterised as ‘free and open’ in linguistic terms, although strictly speaking it was neither: the *Loi Fondamentale* created an element of choice, but only insofar as teachers and institutions could choose between French and English. Kinyarwanda became the medium of the first three years of primary school, and, according to policy, upper primary school would be taught through a dual system, with the language of secondary schools decided at the institutional level (Pearson, 2014, p.41). Samuelson and Freedman are clear that the policy posed practical difficulties, particularly at the upper primary level. They observed that schools they visited in 2001 were ‘scrambling to adapt to a French-English dual system, trying to find English-proficient teachers ... and teaching materials for them to use’ (2010, p.205). Particularly in poorly-funded schools, teaching staff could not provide parallel courses in both French and English, and therefore taught through whichever prestige language they knew best (ibid, pp.205-206). At the secondary level, a number of newly created schools were English-only, while some existing secondary schools switched to English-medium and some remained French-medium (ibid, p.205). Until 2008, then, there were two dominant languages in public schools, and one subordinate one. Those who went to university usually had insufficient skills in either language, and had to devote their first year to intensive study (ibid). The situation had interesting implications for the production of new educated élites: they could leave the system with a knowledge of French, or English, or both. In the linguistic market of education, neither language was the only legitimate code. The prestige of English, however, continued to grow in other legitimate markets, particularly the government.

The dominance of English-speakers in key institutions, and hence the legitimacy of English, grew as the RPF consolidated its control over political society and English-speakers were increasingly favoured for positions and promotions in government. In an interview with An Ansoms in 2007, one representative of civil society stated that, in terms of assigning individuals to government posts, ‘[t]hose who speak French and have the right competences

are not taken into consideration; and when they are, they keep quiet because they do not want to create any problems' (quoted in Ansoms, 2009, p.295). Linguistic capital interacted with social capital, as Ansoms observed that even French-speaking élites who learnt English often had lower chances of being promoted because they did not have the right connections (Ansoms, 2009, p.296). By 2008, Hintjens commented that it was 'impossible, in any dealings with Rwandan officials, diplomats, bureaucrats or NGO workers, not to notice the increasing dominance of the anglophone "Ugandans"' (2008, p.13). The period leading up to the 2008 language policy, then, saw an apparently diverse political society become increasingly dominated by English-speakers. Ansoms implied that this was largely a question of social capital, as he concurred with a representative of a European donor country that '[t]he language issue is simply the consequence of the fact that more people from Uganda are pushed forward' (quoted in Ansoms, 2009, p.296). Yet this perspective does not account for the fact that, as Samuelson and Freedman (2010) found, language 'choice' had increasingly become an issue of political allegiance.

Though direct control of language was, during the transitional period, effectively prohibited by the *Loi Fondamentale*, Samuelson and Freedman (2010) found that the implementation of the 'genocide ideology' law played a crucial role in giving the government some control over language. The terms 'genocide ideology' and 'divisionism' were both enshrined in law in 2001, though their definitions were vague (Beswick, 2010, p.236). The former was more clearly defined in 2006, when the Rwandan Senate declared that 'genocide ideology' was 'a set of ideas or representations whose major role is to stir up hatred and create a pernicious atmosphere favouring the implementation and legitimisation of the persecution and elimination of a category of the population' (Rwandan Senate, 2006, quoted in Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.198). Both 'genocide ideology' and 'divisionism' were used as political tools, with Reyntjens arguing that the legislation 'allowed the elimination of dissident voices and the imposition of the RPF's reading of history and truth', precisely

because its definition of ‘genocide ideology’ was capacious (2011, p.16). On January 18th 2008, just under nine months before the 2008 language policy was established, the ‘genocide ideology’ law was used to control language: a primary school teacher, Ms. Musabyayezu, was suspended over allegations of genocide ideology that cited her decision to suspend the teaching of English in her school as a ‘clear manifestation of her ill motives’ (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.199). Thus Samuelson and Freedman concluded that the ‘use of English is a political act that supports the Kagame government, with potentially serious consequences for resistance or non-compliance’ (ibid). Thus, alongside the use of the legislation to dissuade and discredit those who were critical of the RPF (Beswick, 2010, p.241), it allowed the RPF a degree of control over language use in civil society. This tells us that the government itself viewed language in politicised terms, as something that needed to be managed and a potential site of dissidence. At least towards the end of the transitional period, the RPF was able to influence the linguistic market, in spite of its supposed ‘freedom’ from the State.

In October 2008, the order was given to make the education system play a critical role in constructing English as the legitimate language. This was through a cabinet decision, which was enacted swiftly, with teachers describing it as ‘sudden’ and unexpected (Pearson, 2014, p.43). Viewed in retrospect, the legislation was perhaps not as sudden as it seemed, for it was produced in the context of a prolonged war of position and manoeuvre in which the English-speaking élite increasingly dominated arenas of political and civil society. It was, however, an end to the avowed linguistic pluralism of the education system. Essentially, the policy ‘ignor[ed] educational specialists’ recommendations, UNESCO and African Union policies’ (Rosendal, 2010, pp.130-131), and constituted a critical moment in the war of position. The resolution was as follows:

As a part of enhancing Rwanda’s role within the East African Community in particular, and at international level in general, Cabinet requested:

- The Minister of Education to put in place an intensive programme for using English in all public and Government sponsored primary and secondary schools and higher learning institutions;
- The Minister of Public Service and Labour to put in place a programme to help Government employees at all levels learn English, starting with Top Ranking Officials (GoR 2008).

While the decision is couched in terms of international politics, it can be understood within a domestic context. In Gramsci's view, the war of position, as hegemony, is never 'complete', but rather must be fought constantly in order to maintain legitimate control of the integral State. Revolution, then, is an ongoing process, and the official prioritisation of English in 2008 must be understood in terms of its continuity with RPF strategy at large. In removing French from Rwanda's education system, the RPF was able to reshape a key organ of civil society into a mechanism that, at least theoretically, would bolster the legitimacy of English, and thereby of English speakers. Clearly, it was not for the immediate benefit of students, as the 'policy of abruptly switching from French to solely English in 1 or 2 years virtually ensure[d] that all but the most privileged or talented of the non-Anglophone students [would] fail to finish secondary school' (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.209). And, as we will see in Chapter 4, the loss of linguistic pluralism in education has not been celebrated universally. The point here, however, is that by changing the language of education, the RPF was able to take a further step towards the creation of its own hegemony.

5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the 1996 and 2008 language policies must be understood within the context of two linguistic histories: that of Rwanda and that of the RPF. Habyarimana's Rwanda maintained the linguistic status quo of colonialism; that is, it privileged French at the expense of all other languages. From the perspective of hegemony, the progressive takeover of the State by the RPF necessitated that language be managed in

new ways. In part, this was influenced by the importance of ‘democratisation’ in the early years of the post-genocide State. The façade of democratic rule was supported by a putatively diverse government, and, I argue, by the rhetoric of the ‘free and open linguistic market’. In this view, the 2008 policy was an important moment in Rwandan linguistic politics. For it was a significant step towards the legitimisation of an increasingly dominant English-speaking élite, which already had considerable control over other aspects of the integral State. The extension of RPF control over media freedom can clearly be considered a part of the ‘war of position’, and so, I argue, must the anglicisation of the education system. For it constituted the retroactive construction of linguistic legitimacy for an increasingly ‘anglophone’ government.

Together with Chapter 1, this chapter has also provided a synoptic account of language, power, and the State in Rwanda from the pre-colonial era up to 2008. There have been a number of consistencies. Perhaps most importantly for our purposes there has been, since the onset of colonialism, at least one dominant European language, known to a small segment of the population but crucial for access to the élite. Throughout the period covered, the majority of the Rwandan population has been composed of uneducated, rural Kinyarwanda-speakers. These facts alone highlight the political importance of language policy in the country. But there have been discontinuities too, particularly between pre-genocide and post-genocide Rwanda. For not only did the linguistic composition of the country’s élite change, but racial and ethnic identities were officially suppressed. This is a significant break from pre-genocide governments, which routinely foregrounded the categories of ‘Bahutu’ and ‘Batutsi’ as political tools. Of course, this is not to say that ethnicity or race has ceased to be experienced in Rwanda, only that the government has significantly deemphasised the issue.

In terms of the wider aims of this thesis, this chapter has further detailed the relationship between language and hegemony in Rwanda, through an examination of the particular

groups in control of the State. As is clear from Gramsci's explorations of hegemony in diverse contexts, the specific character of a hegemony is closely related to the State, and the group in control of it. In this view, language must be recognised as being imbricated in the hegemony of the State, with the legitimacy of a given language conferring legitimacy on its speakers. Political theory, then, can offer useful insights into the local politics of language. However, Bourdieu's model leaves certain questions to be answered. For one thing, he is clear that the State determines the legitimate language through the various legitimate markets and other complex mechanisms. But, in terms of the linguistic legitimacy of European languages, is it also relevant that English is considered to be the 'global language', or that French is an official language in 21 African countries? Put another way, is there a relationship between the languages that the State constructs as legitimate, and their role and reputation as important languages in a wider context?

In the following two chapters, I will develop an original model of language that helps us to answer these questions. Put simply, I will argue that to consider such issues we must conceptualise languages not as empirical realities, but as discursive constructs. Importantly, I will investigate how the particular nature of discursively constructed languages allows them to play ideological roles, in support of the local State or wider projects such as colonialism. Thus, the following two chapters will aim to address how the discursive construction of English informs the ideological politics of the language in Rwanda. Chapter 3 will propose the model, and consider it in relation to the discursive production of language in the colonial era. Chapter 4 will apply this methodology to post-2008 Rwanda.

Part Two: The Ideological Politics of Language in Rwanda

Three: The Representation of English and Bantu in Colonial Discourse

1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter and the next, I aim to enrich the investigation into the politics of language in Rwanda by producing an alternative to the dominant conceptualisation of language in empirical applied linguistics. One purpose of my model of language is to avoid treating languages as given entities that are objectively equal. For as I will show in the following two chapters, languages are frequently understood as fundamentally unequal, with certain languages thought to be better equipped for specific purposes than others. Indeed, scholarship on language ideologies has proved this point repeatedly (see for example Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity, 1998). Yet linguists commonly approach languages as entities that are objectively equal. In contrast to this position, I will argue here that languages are discursive constructions (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2007b) which are likely to be unequal. In support of this argument, I will provide a historical account of the discursive production of English and Bantu, which demonstrates that, throughout the colonial period, different actors with particular agendas constructed languages as being more or less suited to cultural and intellectual pursuits. As I will demonstrate, these partisan accounts of language were employed in specific ways that helped to legitimate the colonial project.

In order to make my argument, I put forth an original model of language, which is intended as a heuristic device for the investigation of the politics of language, and which considers a given language to be a historically and discursively constituted phenomenon. In this respect, it is useful to consider a language, in one sense, as an archive of information. Here, I purposefully echo Said, who views 'Orientalism' as a discursively constructed archive

of information or 'family of ideas' that constituted the 'Orient' in the eyes of 'Europeans' (1978, pp.41-42). For Said, 'Orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly and, in some of its aspects, unanimously held' (ibid, p.41). That is, 'Westerners' at large drew on Orientalism, and the archive 'allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics' (ibid, p.42). Orientalist discourse, then, produced a generally coherent conceptualisation of the Orient. I argue that discourses about language function similarly. They produce specific languages, alongside an archive of relatively coherent ideas that make sense of those languages. To make this point, I will draw on Valentin Vološinov's semiotic theory of ideology, together with recent debates that call for linguists to critically evaluate the way that language is understood in the discipline, including notable critiques that draw on poststructuralist ideas (see for example Reagan, 2004; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook; 2007a; 2007b; García and Wei, 2013). I develop my alternative theorisation of language through a consideration of language and the creation of 'colonial difference'. Precisely because I argue that languages are historically-constituted, I will attempt to show how pre-Saussurean approaches to English and Kinyarwanda/Bantu treated them as ciphers for civilisation and primitivism respectively. In Chapter 4, I will use this model to analyse the ideological politics of English in Rwanda post-2008.

For Pennycook (2001), the notion that languages are equal derives from structuralism, itself the dominant framework for conceptualising language in modern linguistics. There are, of course, exceptions to the structuralist perspective, including Pennycook's own work (for example Pennycook, 1998; 2007a; 2007b). However, a critique of the model of language implied by structuralism is useful in part to highlight and challenge certain assumptions that are present not just in structuralist linguistics but in widely held common sense notions of language. A historical account of different understandings of language highlights the extent to which structuralism radically reconceived discrete languages, and began a movement that

helped to ‘move thinking away from a hierarchical view of values with primitive languages, cultures, and societies on the bottom and developed languages, cultures, and societies on the top’ (Pennycook, 2001, p.31). As we will see, before Ferdinand de Saussure’s groundbreaking *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), certain influential figures held that languages were unequal in specific ways, and, accordingly, so were their speakers. Particular properties of languages, such as the purported size of the English lexicon (Pennycook, 1998), were made to stand as evidence of a given language’s capabilities. By contrast, the methodology put forth by Saussure insisted that linguists focus on what is ‘internal’ to a language, rather than what is ‘external’. This intervention provided a tool for refuting evaluative approaches to language, because Saussure ‘urged us not to judge or evaluate from some external position but rather to describe from the inside’ (Pennycook, 2001, p.31). By following this maxim, linguists were able to demonstrate that even languages that had been hitherto thought of as rudimentary were in fact sophisticated and complex; they became ‘able to argue that all languages were equal in that they served the needs of their speakers equally’ (ibid). After Saussure, mainstream linguistics began to insist on the equality of languages, in a move that Milroy describes as ‘overtly and deliberately ideological’, whereby linguists decried discriminatory stances towards linguistic standards as ‘based on a set of unfounded beliefs about language’.⁴⁵ The structural analysis of language was the method by which to prove this point (Milroy, 1999, p.20). In Pennycook’s view, Milroy’s example speaks to a broader trend, where ‘structuralism in linguistics has grown up as a predominately liberal defence against the more hawkish attitudes of the Right’ (2001, p.32). The value of such an egalitarian approach to language notwithstanding, it is necessary to question whether the structuralist view, and the model of language that it implies, is particularly appropriate for considering the politics of

⁴⁵ Bauer and Trudgill’s *Language Myths* (1998) provides an excellent example of this tendency. The collection takes a number of commonly held beliefs about language or particular languages and interrogates them from the perspective of modern linguistics. An exemplary chapter titled ‘Italian is Beautiful, German is Ugly’, dispels the ‘Inherent Value Hypothesis’ by arguing that all languages are equal and ‘[i]n sum, it is the social connotations of the speakers of a language variety ... that dictat[e] our aesthetic (and other) judgements about the language variety’ (Giles and Niedzielski, 1998, p.89).

language.

In his critique of the structuralist approach to language, Pennycook (2001) argues that Saussure's model represents a refusal or inability to engage in the sustained political analysis of language. He argues that if structural analysis demonstrates the formal equality of language, then it suggests that the contribution of linguistics should be limited to the descriptive demonstration of the equality of linguistic varieties. In Pennycook's view, in spite of its overtly political roots, the structuralist position has come to be accepted as the 'standard received wisdom' of the discipline, or the 'neutral ground of scientific linguistics' (2001, p.32). Yet Pennycook argues that the focus on internal structures, underpinned by a doctrine of equality, 'detracts from the possibility of a more sustained critique' (ibid). He summarises that 'structuralism support[s] liberal pluralism (all structures are equal), and liberalism support[s] structural isolation (if all structures are equal, why look elsewhere for inequality?)' (ibid). Certainly, while it may be true that equality at the level of linguistic structures can cause 'structural isolation', this is not inevitable, and Pennycook underemphasises the extent to which linguists have grappled with inequality without rejecting the structuralist model of language (see for example Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity, 1998). Nonetheless, his critique suggests that the structuralist paradigm is not sufficient for a fuller interrogation of the politics of language. I will address this point in greater detail in the first section of this chapter, but it is first useful to outline 'colonial difference', to which Rwanda and Kinyarwanda were subject and which discursively produced them as unequal to European societies and languages.

The colonial project entailed that material and intellectual connections were established between European empires and colonised territories. As Irvine observes, the 'century of expansion into Africa [c.1800-1900] was also a time of intellectual and social changes in Europe itself, changes in which ideas about language were linked with ideas about biological evolution and history, with the rise of European nationalisms, and with the emergence of

linguistics and anthropology as academic disciplines' (1993, p.27). European ideas were significant in the categorisation of colonised peoples, and the transformation of their languages and culture into 'European objects of knowledge' (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.5). But as a corollary it is also true that European knowledge creation was profoundly affected by the colonial project; as Makoni and Pennycook argue, European colonisers 'invented' their own identities and those of colonised peoples in a 'reciprocal process' (2007, p.8). There was a linguistic element to this: Errington (2007) demonstrates that European thinkers constructed sweeping linguistic hierarchies, which represented European languages as worthy of empires, and non-European languages as in need of 'civilising'. Hence, European powers constructed not only inferiority, but superiority, as part of the formation of 'colonial difference'.

It was vital to the colonial project to posit a fundamental distinction between the colonising powers of Europe, and the colonial territories that they administered.⁴⁶ Mignolo and Tlostanova argue that Europe established itself as a 'zero-point of observation and of knowledge', by undertaking a classification of the world and establishing 'epistemological frontiers' and 'colonial difference' (2006, pp.205-206). In their terms, 'colonial difference' refers to 'the difference that hegemonic discourse endowed to "other" people, classifying them as inferior and at the same time asserting [Europe's] geo-historical and body-social configurations as superior and the models to be followed' (ibid, p.208). Thus, European social, political, economic, and intellectual paradigms became the 'model', and the colonised societies became the deficient other. One arena in which colonial difference was salient was the classification of discrete languages, and broader 'language families'. As Gal and Irvine

⁴⁶ This is not to suggest that only European empires constructed colonial difference, nor that similar differences were not created between empires. Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006) discuss 'imperial difference', the process by which European empires produced (for example) the Russian, Ottoman, Chinese and Japanese empires as 'second-class', fundamentally non-'European' entities. As this chapter deals with the relationship between European empires and African colonies, 'imperial difference' lays outside of its scope, but see Tlostanova (2003) for a study of the Russian Empire's position vis-à-vis Europe, and Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006) for a broader discussion of 'imperial difference'.

put it:

[a]rguments about language were central in producing and buttressing European claims to difference from the rest of the world, and claims to the superiority of the metropolitan bourgeoisie over “backward” or “primitive” others, whether they were residents of other continents, other provinces, or other social classes (Gal and Irvine, 1995, p.967).

Languages, then, were laden with political significance. In this chapter, I will argue that by taking a discursive approach to language we can develop a sophisticated understanding of how ideas about language constructed ‘civilised’ Europeans in distinction to ‘primitive’ others. Specifically, I will undertake a comparison between the construction of English and the construction of the Bantu language family.

The model of language that I propose in the following section, then, aims to facilitate the investigation of how languages became central to claims of ‘superiority’. This requires that we conceptualise them as ideologically significant entities, as opposed to objective linguistic systems. That is, we must view languages as constructions, which serve broader social and political agendas. In following section, I give a sketch of Saussure’s model of language, and develop an alternative that extends Makoni and Pennycook’s ‘Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages’ (2007). In the second section, I examine key European ideas that antedated Saussure, and were influential in the discursive construction of language during the colonial period: namely the dominant ideas of Romantic nationalism, which underpinned innovations in German comparative philology. In the final two sections, I trace the influence of Romantic nationalist thought and an inherently evaluative model of language on the production of English as a language of ‘civilisation’, and Bantu as a ‘rudimentary’ language, or language family. Ultimately, I will attempt to demonstrate how we can usefully conceptualise languages as unequal entities.

2 THE INTEGRAL MODEL OF LANGUAGE

Mainstream linguistics owes its conceptual model of language to Ferdinand de Saussure, whose *Cours de linguistique générale*, published posthumously in 1916, laid the foundation for ‘general linguistics’. Saussure was among the thinkers on language who wished to make linguistics fit for the cultural order of modernity, in which ‘the status of scientificity for any new discipline is one to be devoutly sought’ (Crowley, 1996, p.6; see also Harris, 1988, pp.121-127). In order to make linguistic science a reality, Saussure needed to devise a descriptive approach to language. Specifically, he required a way to advance empirical propositions about the nature of language(s) (Harris, 1988, p.123). And he argued that linguistics needed a clearly defined object if it was to qualify as a science (Crowley, 1990, pp.27-28). It was insufficient to contend that linguists simply needed to study ‘language’, because, as Saussure observed, ‘language’ can be constituted in different ways depending on the framework with which it is approached. Saussure exemplifies this problem with reference to a specific word:

Someone pronounces the French word *nu* ‘bare’: a superficial observer would be tempted to call the word a concrete linguistic object; but a more careful examination would reveal successively three or four quite different things, depending on whether the word is considered as a sound, as the expression of an idea, as the equivalent of Latin *nudum*, etc. Far from it being the object that antedates the viewpoint, it would seem that it is the viewpoint that creates the object; besides, nothing tells us in advance that one way of considering the fact in question takes precedence over others or is in any way superior to them. (Saussure, [1916] 2011, p.8, italics in original).

Thus the word ‘nu’ does not index a specific linguistic object, amenable to scientific study. Rather, it can be conceptualised in different ways, which have specific implications for how the word can be studied. To study ‘nu’ as a sound requires a different conceptual framework than to study it as a product of diachronic language change. In Saussure’s view, it was a methodological necessity to develop an approach to language that privileged certain questions over others.

To discern the object of linguistic science, Saussure developed the structuralist model of language. He was conscious that in doing so he was simplifying a complex phenomenon. Indeed, he acknowledged that to elevate the status of a single conceptual framework would be to focus on one aspect of language at the expense of others, but he argued that the alternative, namely to consider all aspects simultaneously, would be to conceptualise language as ‘a confused mass of heterogenous and unrelated things’ (Saussure, [1916] 2011, p.9). Thus, he suggested a ‘definition of language [that] presupposes the exclusion of everything that is outside its organism or system - in a word, everything known as “external linguistics”’ (ibid, p.20). Moreover, he decided not to focus on the disorderly reality of linguistic production, but instead to ‘use language as the norm for all other manifestations of speech’ (ibid, p.9). That is, he argued that there was a unifying, underlying structure, an acquired or conventional system, which he called ‘langue’ (ibid, p.9). Saussure held that ‘langue’ comprised an abstract mental system of distinctions between units made up of a concept and a ‘sound-image’, or, in short, that it was a self-contained entity amenable to scientific study (ibid, pp.102-107). ‘General linguistics’ was to be occupied with ‘langue’, and particularly those elements that are ‘internal’ to a given language (‘everything that changes the system in any way is internal’) (ibid, p.23). To make his science of language possible, then, Saussure argued for a methodological detachment of a presumed linguistic system from all other aspects that, in earlier conceptual frameworks, might have been considered to be part of a ‘language’. As Harris notes, these ‘external’ aspects comprised ‘the whole range of historical, geographical and cultural factors which bear upon the life of the linguistic community’ (1987, p.37). Saussure explicitly relegated the various ways that language exists in and is impacted by history, geography, politics, and specific institutions to the status of ‘external’ concerns ([1916] 2011, pp.20-22). In fact, he insisted that ‘the study of external linguistic phenomena is most fruitful’ (ibid), but, tellingly, concluded the *Cours de linguistique générale* by arguing that ‘[t]he only true object of study in linguistics is language, considered in itself and for its own

sake' (1916 [2011], p.232).

In light of the structuralist model, how can we analyse the following explanation of Rwanda's language policy, given by Claver Yisa, the director of policy and planning at the Rwandan Ministry of Education?

Really, it is not choosing English for its own sake ... This is a way to make Rwanda to be equal, to use English. English is now a world language, especially in trade and commerce. Rwanda is trying to attract foreign investors - most of these people are speaking English (quoted in McGreal, 2009).

The Saussurean model of language cannot account for this perspective on English. For, the idea that English is a particularly important language in terms of trade and commerce is certainly 'external', and therefore, from the implied perspective of general linguistics, not a part of the language itself. Yet for Claver Yisa, English is precisely the language of trade and commerce. Saussure himself was clear that it is 'the viewpoint that constructs the object', and that a different understanding of language is necessary to study it from different angles (1916 [2011], pp.8-9). Thus, it is evident that we require a different model of language to fully appreciate how this Rwandan official understands language. In order to produce such a model, I will aim to reunite the 'internal' aspects of language with particular 'external' aspects: the ways in which specific languages are constructed through representation. Before doing so, however, it is important to recall that Saussure's model was revolutionary, and that its definition of a 'language' in opposition to what was 'external' to the 'langue' had a lasting impact on linguistic thought.

Saussure's work facilitated an authoritative, structuralist understanding of language as a 'real object' ([1916] 2011, p.102), an entity that existed in the psyche. As Crowley observes:

[Saussure's] radical break ... [claimed] that the world and language are not distinct orders of being, but belong to the same ontological order. The break amounts to this: that Saussure conceived of language as a thing to be found in the world of other real things. As such, of course, and like other worldly things, it became open to the methods of objective scientific study (Crowley, 1990, p.30).

Saussure broke with earlier thinkers who viewed language as a 'medium by which

consciousness named the pre-linguistic objects of the world' (Crowley, 1996, p.18), instead constituting it as an entity that was able to be considered in and of itself. In the century following the publication of *Cours de linguistique générale*, this epistemological stance became the dominant viewpoint by which language is constructed in linguistics (Crowley, 1990). Indeed, some scholars have suggested that the Saussurean model has essentially been naturalised as the commonsense understanding of language. Thus, Thorne and Lantolf argue that Saussure, and those who followed him, 'strongly shaped ... a debilitating and on-going construction of language as a natural object' (2007, p.172). That is, despite Saussure's self-conscious construction of a particular model of language for use in 'scientific' linguistics only, the idea that the term 'language' indexes a given, specific system has become commonplace. As a consequence, Reagan argues that linguists and the lay public alike generally conceptualise languages as discrete entities (2004, p.42), while Rajagopalan asserts that the dominant understanding is that languages exist as natural entities in the world that are 'waiting to be discovered, described, and catalogued by the linguist' (2001, p.17). It is necessary to denaturalise this idea in order to permit a reconceptualisation of language.

Structuralist linguistics is unable to answer the question of how languages are delimited, a concern that clearly belongs to 'external' linguistics. For example, it is common practice to periodise languages in the style of Old, Middle, and Modern English. Implicit in texts such as Mayhew and Skeat's *A Concise Dictionary of Middle English* (1888), for example, is the notion that one can separate a particular period and describe it as a language with a particular phonology and lexicon. Yet, as Reagan notes, there was clearly no point at which 'speakers of Old English suddenly began speaking Middle English ... at no point were speakers of one generation unable to understand speakers of another generation' (2004, p.43). An important question, then, is on what grounds Modern English is deemed to be the 'same' language as Old English, despite its differential structure? Broadly speaking, we must see this as a result of factors which are squarely within Saussure's description of 'external linguistics'.

To put the point another way, consider the boundaries between discrete languages. It is well-known that the criterion that a language is defined on the basis of mutual intelligibility is only partially adequate, given, for example, the fact that Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian are classed as different languages by linguists and speakers alike, but are generally considered to be mutually intelligible (ibid, p.44). Likewise a speaker from Madrid will likely exhibit differences when compared with a speaker from Havana or Gran Canaria, yet all three would generally be classified as speaking Spanish. As Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015) argue, these distinct ways of speaking are not grouped together on a linguistic basis, but as a result of historical, cultural, and political circumstances. However, within the structuralist framework, Harries argues that languages are portrayed as ‘givens’ which ‘operat[e] according to the laws of science’ and are ultimately taken to operate ‘autonomously of their creators’ (1995, cited in Makoni and Mashiri, 2007, p.74). That is, they are treated as real entities that exist prior and external to human practice. This is an important point: if, as Rajagopalan (2001) and Reagan (2004) argue, we conceptualise languages as naturally-occurring entities of a specific sort, then it follows that we view their classification as independent of interested agendas. In Makoni and Mashiri’s terms, this is ‘the danger of effacing the social situated nature of knowledge construction’: ‘a constructed linguistic phenomenon assumes an ontological status independent of the analysts and producers. The constructed knowledge is presented as natural knowledge’ (2007, p.75). Makoni and Mashiri (2007) demonstrate that if we examine the history of languages, and particularly the ways in which they have been constituted, it becomes clear that, far from being natural entities, they are artefacts of a particular kind. This point is elaborated by Makoni and Pennycook’s (2007) work on the ‘invention’ of languages, to which I now turn.

Precisely because languages are not delimited on purely linguistic grounds, it is necessary to view them as social and historical products, rather than as natural entities. This is Makoni and Pennycook’s central argument: ‘languages do not exist as real entities in the world and

neither do they emerge from or represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements' (2007, p.2). They compare the construction of discrete languages to the measurement of time: while the rotation of the Earth on its axis is a natural phenomenon, hours and minutes are a construction (ibid, p.1). To exemplify the point, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is a social construct through which time in one part of the globe is related to time in another area, via London. It was in fact a colonial construct that ultimately served to regulate and rationalise colonial territories in relation to Britain (Prasad, 2012). In the same way, Makoni and Pennycook argue that a general human faculty for language is a natural phenomenon, but that named, discrete languages such as 'Kinyarwanda', 'French', and 'English' are products of social and semiotic processes undertaken within a specific epistemic framework (2007, p.1). Such a view of languages, as 'separable and enumerable categories', often conflicted with those of colonised peoples (see Mühlhäusler, 1996; Heryanto, 2007). In fact the principle of enumerability was at the heart of European colonial work on language (Makoni and Mashiri, 2007), and colonists tended to introduce the concept of discrete languages to people who did not conceptualise them in this way. Mühlhäusler's work is important in this respect. Following Bender (1971), Mühlhäusler observes that, in Micronesia, there is a linguistic continuum from Truk in the east to Tobi in the west, in which all contiguous 'dialects' are mutually intelligible.⁴⁷ But in this context, linguists 'brought into being ... labelled and classified' languages (1996, p.6). As Mühlhäusler puts it:

the place where missionaries, administrators or linguists settle becomes the focus of development of linguistic systems of 'language' status. Arbitrary points on a linguistic continuum are made into discrete abstract entities called 'languages' whereas all other reference points on the same continuum, unless of course some important outsider settles there, become marginalized, dialectal deviations from the standard (Mühlhäusler, 1996, p.6).

⁴⁷ It is worth pointing out that the notion of a 'dialect' is also a construct. Mühlhäusler's (1996) use of 'dialect' exemplifies the point that such concepts are useful and indeed necessary in certain areas of linguistic work. In attempting to denaturalise and rethink languages, I do not intend to suggest otherwise.

In this way, complex sociolinguistic reality is organised, during the process of colonisation, into discrete languages (and dialects). This exemplifies Mignolo and Tlostanova's observation that Europe established itself as a 'zero-point of observation and of knowledge', as European epistemic frameworks were used to organise colonial territories.

Before I consider the processes by which languages are invented, it is useful to consider how scholars have understood similar social, historical, and political processes in other areas. One seminal study that develops the concept of 'invention' is Hobsbawm and Ranger's collection *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). Hobsbawm and Ranger investigate the genesis of particular traditions, and find that they are often shaped by particular agendas. As the notion of a 'language' organises complex linguistic reality, so too do 'invented traditions' respond to constant historical change by attempting to structure 'at least some parts of social life' as 'unchanging and invariant' (Hobsbawm, 1983, p.1). Their underlying purpose, according to Hobsbawm, is 'to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (ibid). Trevor-Roper's (1983) account of the history of the kilt offers an illustrative example. He argues that the wearing of kilts is an 'invented tradition', which inscribes a belief in a distinct Highland identity. This is despite the fact that the kilt is not an object of 'great antiquity' (as it is often perceived), but an invention of the late seventeenth century. Trevor-Roper observes that from the fifth century until the latter part of the seventeenth, 'the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were simply the overflow of Ireland' (ibid, p.15). The invention of the kilt played a role in calling into being a new cultural identity. Trevor-Roper's study incidentally indicates the importance that languages can have in this process: he notes that 'the Gaelic language spoken [in the Highlands] was regularly described, in the eighteenth century, as Irish' (ibid, p.16), while today, the Highlands are associated with 'Gaelic' or 'Scottish Gaelic' (pronounced distinctly from Irish 'Gaelic') (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.5). The kilt and the renaming of the language are both factors in the production of a distinct culture and

identity. The research on ‘invented traditions’, then, suggests that invention can play a role in shaping individual understandings of the world, in part through a repetition that makes inventions appear invariant, if not natural.

Processes of invention were central to the colonial project, and the creation of colonial difference. In that context, the concept has been developed by Ranger (1983), Mudimbe (1988), and Zeleza (2006). In ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’, for example, Ranger argues that the traditions that had been invented for empires prior to the Scramble for Africa were deployed in newly colonised territories and ‘took on a peculiar character, distinguishing them from both their European and Asian Imperial forms’ (1983, p.211). Indeed, Mudimbe extends the point beyond ‘traditions’, as he argues that Africa itself has been discursively ‘invented’ by European colonialists. Thus, in *The Invention of Africa*, he argues that colonisation was fundamentally a process of organisation, within which colonists and colonialists ‘tended to organise and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs’ (Mudimbe, 1988, p.14). It is vital to foreground the artificiality of such powerful concepts, for, as Zeleza puts it: ‘[i]nvention implies a history, a social process; it denaturalises cultural artefacts and practices, stripping them of primordial authenticity and essentialism’ (2006, p.14). Crucially, by divesting phenomena of their ‘primordial authenticity and essentialism’, ‘invention’ also challenges their authority. As the term ‘invention’ ‘points to specific contexts - as well as the specific agendas and conceptual beliefs - in which institutions, structures, language and languages are produced, regulated, and constituted’ (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.12), it allows us to identify the ways in which the invention of languages serves specific goals and operates within wider projects.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to highlight two key ways in which languages are invented. First, they undergo processes of linguistic delimitation, which produce the specific system that equates to Saussure’s ‘langue’. And second, through discourse, they are ascribed particular characteristics. Delimitation constitutes languages as

discrete systems, with specific grammatical, lexical, and phonological features that are fixed to a greater or lesser degree. In this regard, Makoni and Mashiri argue that it was a significant part of the colonial project in Africa that colonists not only reduced language to written systems, but also compiled inventories of linguistic forms, and attempted to regulate meaning through the production of dictionaries (2007, p.73). These compiled inventories were to 'subsequently pass for languages', and, furthermore, to shape oral language, through their diffusion in colonial education systems (ibid, p.74). Likewise, in the Indian context, Makoni and Pennycook observe that colonialists invented the names of many languages, and, by naming them, 'performatively called the languages into being' (2007, p.10). In these ways, linguistic heteroglossia was organised into named, discrete languages. Crucially, as Harries notes, the categories produced by European specialists of different kinds were taken to be objective (1988, p.25). In the context of the invention of the Tsonga language, for example, Harries (1988) demonstrates that the creation of a new language was intertwined with the construction of new ethnic identities. The result was the production of distinct ethnic groups, which were frequently in conflict with one another and were thought to be in primordial opposition. Now the Tsonga language can of course be analysed through the structuralist model of language. But to do so we must relegate the historical production of the language, as well as its links to social and material issues, to the status of 'external' concerns.

There are other processes of invention that, within the Saussurean approach, would be considered wholly 'external'. Specifically, the ascription of particular characteristics to individual languages would be 'external' in the structuralist model. The compilation of linguistic inventories is related to, but somewhat different from, the discursive construction of language. This point is demonstrated in Pennycook's 'The Myth of English as an International Language' (2007). Here, Pennycook does not focus on the invention of English as an inventory of linguistic features, but on the creation of 'stories' or 'myths' that attend

upon the presumed entity that is 'English'. He elaborates a definition of 'myth' that draws on Barthes' *Mythologies* (1973), where myth 'has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal' (Barthes, 1973, p.142). In fact, as Eagleton observes, 'myth' is Barthes' articulation of 'ideology' through 'discourse': myth, as a form of discourse, functions ideologically insofar as it 'transforms history into Nature by lending arbitrary signs an apparently obvious, unalterable set of connotations' (Eagleton, 1991, p.199). Thus, Barthes argues that, through myth, things are 'emptied ... of history and ... filled ... with nature', which is to say that they cease to be taken for historical products and are instead naturalised (1973, p.96). For Pennycook, Barthes' account of myth suggests that we must consider languages as products that are at once ideological and discursive; he argues that 'if we cannot gain unmediated access to the real world, let us focus instead on the modes of representation (discourse) through which the world is constructed, on the naturalisations of language and the productions of metalanguage' (2007, p.97). Discourses about language, or myths, 'constantly reconstruct' English in particular ways - for example, as the panacea for economic development (ibid, pp.100-104). On the one hand, the discourses around English serve to inculcate belief in the existence of the language itself, as they work 'by constantly talking about things, by constantly assuming the existence of things', or, specifically, by assuming that English exists a priori (ibid, p.97; p.108). Despite the fact that multiple discourses of English exist, they are unified in that they all 'incessantly' invoke the language, and 'put English into discourse', thereby allowing it to pass as a natural entity (ibid, pp.96-100). Stories about English presume the existence of English. Pennycook's approach thus highlights one critical way in which the Saussurean model of language restricts our understanding. Saussure stated that his 'definition [of language] ... presupposes the exclusion of everything that is outside its organism or system' ([1916] 2011, p.20). As a result, the Saussurean model only allows processes that change the system itself to be treated as producing the specific characteristics of the language. Pennycook (2007) demonstrates that,

because discourse represents English as, for example, an ‘international language’, it gives meaning to the putative entity. It constitutes the language in a particular way, and yet the characteristics that it produces are, in both Saussure’s model and the common sense view, not part of language itself.

My contention is that, for an analysis of the politics of language, we must consider a given characteristic as an important aspect of the language to which it is ascribed. In place of Saussure’s methodological distinction between the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ aspects of language, I propose that, for the analysis at hand, we consider a given language, or linguistic construct, as consisting of a ‘constitutive body’ and a ‘representational archive’. By the ‘constitutive body’, I refer the parts of a language that structuralist linguistics has focussed on since Saussure: the collection of linguistic features that form a more or less specific lexical, phonological, and grammatical inventory. The ‘constitutive body’, then, is akin to Saussure’s ‘internal’ aspects of language. It is perhaps most clearly shaped by processes that seek to make the system of a language explicit, for example through the production of a comprehensive grammar that codifies rules for the language, or through the production of dictionaries, which seek to describe the lexicon of the language, but can serve to authoritatively delimit the lexical boundaries of a language (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2007b). I do not argue that the constitutive body is an empirical reality, nor that it is somehow non-ideological. Indeed, the specificities of a given constitutive body are influenced by the ideological currents of history, a point that is evidenced in the use of nationalist frameworks to determine the geographic locus of a given language (thus the language of Norway is Norwegian, and vice versa). Nor do I contend that the constitutive body is divorced from processes of representation: indeed, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, particular features of the constitutive body have frequently been employed as ideological supports for particular agendas, and as evidence for the validity of specific representations of discrete languages. However, the constitutive body can readily pass for a

language in the sense of a ‘natural entity’ (Rajagopalan, 2001). In this reading, Pennycook’s investigation of language ‘myths’ proceeds from his rejection of accounts that reduce languages to their constitutive bodies. In order to discern what English is, or might be, Pennycook points to the empirical argument that English ‘exists in the words, grammar, lexicon ... of all those books, dictionaries and grammars of English’ (2007, p.92). In doing so, he echoes Dwight D. Whitney’s suggestion that we can locate a ‘language’: ‘in its dictionary ... in its grammar; as, also in the material and usages which never get into either dictionary or grammar; and you can trace the geographical limits within which it is used in all its varieties’ (Whitney, 1875, cited in Crowley, 2003, p.82). As Pennycook observes, this empiricist view implies that there is an entity, ‘English’, that exists not only within reference works but also prior to the processes of invention that create them. This recalls Rajagopalan’s argument that the dominant understanding is that languages exist as natural entities in the world that are ‘waiting to be discovered, described, and catalogued by the linguist’ (Rajagopalan, 2001, p.17). In fact the constitutive body is an artefact of a specific kind, since:

this realist claim [that English pre-exists its description] overlooks the obvious process by which English was produced by such activities, and to allege, as many do, on this basis that English has more words than other languages (see Pennycook, 1998) is akin to claiming that the British Empire included a vast number of territories prior to colonisation. Colonisation produced the empire as dictionary writing produced the language (Pennycook, 2007b, p.93).

The point is, however, that there is a presumed entity that is thought, generally speaking, to constitute the language. Moreover, for some, this entity can be treated separately from ‘external’ concerns; thus, in Pennycook’s view, empirical linguists argue that we are able to draw a line ‘between subjective and objective, or political and scientific, approaches to understanding language’ (2007b, p.94). This ignores the fact that, as Pennycook suggests, the putative linguistic object, comprised of the constitutive body, is indelibly linked to ‘external’ processes, and, I argue, to overtly ideological discursive constructions of the language.

The putative linguistic system is, in truth, inseparable from the ‘representational archive’

of a language. It is useful here to refer to Valentin Vološinov's conceptualisation of the tool:

A tool by itself is devoid of any special meaning; it commands only some designated function - to serve this or that purpose in production. The tool serves that purpose as the particular, given thing that it is, without reflecting or standing for anything else. However, a tool also may be converted into an ideological sign. Such, for instance, is the hammer and sickle insignia of the Soviet Union. In this case, hammer and sickle possess a purely ideological meaning. Additionally, any instrument of production may be ideologically decorated. Tools used by prehistoric man are covered with pictures or designs - that is, with signs. So treated, a tool still does not, of course, itself become a sign (Vološinov, [1929] 1973, p.10).

In common sense views, and in the structuralist tradition in linguistics, a 'language' is, like Vološinov's tool, thought to be devoid of any special meaning: its constitutive body, including its lexicon and grammar, simply constitutes a tool for communication, and an object amenable to linguistic study. For the study of the politics of language, however, it is crucial to investigate how the 'tools' are 'ideologically decorated'. That is, we must consider how the construct of a given language is wedded to the dominant discourses that ascribe meaning to it in specific ways. It is useful here again to refer to Said's *Orientalism* (1978). As noted earlier, for Said, the 'orient' is not just a social construct, but a 'library' or an 'archive'. That is to say, not only is the 'orient' constructed through discourse, it provides people with a repository of discourses, or a 'family of ideas' that allow Europeans to (re)construct the 'orient' in particular, relatively stable ways (Said, 1978, pp.41-42). If the archive of 'orientalism' 'explained the behavior of Orientals; ... supplied Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; ... [and] allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics' (ibid,p.42), it must be considered that the archive of a particular language helps to explain its position, its uses, and its relations to other languages and to people. Thus, I argue that, in a process without a clear beginning or end, the representational archive is produced as part of a larger linguistic construct. The archive inflects the putative language with particular values or associations. In this way, I argue that languages are made to refract specific understandings of their own characters and roles in the world. Take Pennycook's argument that English is produced as a:

‘language of international communication’ rather than a language embedded in processes of globalisation; that English holds out promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it (rather than a language tied to very particular class positions and possibilities of development); and that English is a language of equal opportunity (rather than a language that creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities) (Pennycook, 2007b, pp.101-102).

As Pennycook suggests, each of these descriptions of English offers only a partial description of the role that the language actually plays. Implicit in his account is the idea that particular characteristics or circumstances, such as the idea that English is embedded in international communication, are grafted onto the linguistic construct itself: English becomes the ‘language of international communication’. Similarly, Robert Phillipson defines English as simultaneously the ‘lingua economica’, ‘lingua emotiva’, ‘lingua academica’, ‘lingua cultura’ and ‘lingua bellica’ (2008, p.250). Again, the language is defined in part by the way it is perceived or represented. If we read these examples through the model that I propose here, then, the representational archive includes distinct discourses that give meaning to English, and represent the putative constitutive body as being capable of particular feats (for example, of giving new speakers and learners of the language access to social and economic development). In this view, to claim that ‘English’ is merely an invented, delimited and named ‘system’ risks ignoring the fact that it is discursively produced as more than a linguistic entity.

The separation between the constitutive body and representational archive is purely methodological. As I will demonstrate throughout the case studies in this chapter, the aspects are often mutually constitutive. The representational archive can be constructed with reference to the presumed features of the constitutive body, so that, for example, English is considered to be an exceptional language because it has a large vocabulary. But the reverse is also true: the notion that English has been a language for a thousand years or more influences how lexicographers produce the constitutive body. I separate these two aspects of the linguistic construct not to follow Saussure in isolating the internal system of a language from its representations, but precisely to highlight the ways in which they are mutually-constitutive,

integral parts of a given 'language'. By relegating questions of, for example, history and politics to 'external concerns', Saussure insisted that linguists should examine the constitutive body in isolation. And, because the constitutive body does not exist in isolation, this amounted to ignoring the 'external concerns' to pursue the 'science' of language. The linguistic construct includes (at least) the constitutive body and representational archive, but the dominant conceptualisation of language in applied linguistics only allows us to treat the former. In the next section, I will further denaturalise Saussure's approach to language by exploring the conceptualisation of language in the work of key thinkers from the German Romantic nationalist movement. As we will see, these scholars constructed a particular understanding of language which became dominant before Saussure redefined the object of linguistics. The conceptualisation of language developed by such thinkers provide us with greater insight into language in colonial thought.

3 LANGUAGE AFTER HERDER: EVOLUTION AND THE 'NATIONAL SPIRIT'

The invention of languages throughout the colonial project was not framed by Saussurean linguistics, but rather by an earlier 'science' of language: comparative philology. Comparative philology arose in the first half of the nineteenth century, as part of the early 'triumph of positivism in Western academia' (Harris, 1988, p.126). In this framework, languages were not only placed in genealogical relation to one another, but reconceptualised as products of a hitherto undiscovered linguistic past. Put another way, languages were treated as the products of diachronic processes. Thus, for comparative philology, time was both a resource for making claims about language, and the epistemological terrain on which analysis was carried out. By contrast, the very premise of 'general linguistics' required that such diachronic study (or what Saussure called 'evolutionary linguistics') be relegated to a

position of secondary importance (see Saussure, [1912] 2011, pp.80-100). To paraphrase Saussure, comparative philology constructed its object of enquiry from a distinct, diachronic, non-scientific viewpoint. This conceptualisation of language dominated European scholarship until Saussure's intervention, with those who considered themselves 'linguists' being, generally speaking, interested in the study of diachronic change in language (Newmeyer, 1986, p.27). In this section, I will trace how this precursor to 'general linguistics' developed a distinct conceptualisation of language, which had its roots in German Romantic nationalism and eventually came to shape (to a certain extent) the ideological defence of imperialism. A key aspect of this process, which became influential in nineteenth and early twentieth century thought on language and imperialism, was the construction of languages as expressions of the 'national spirit', situated within teleological, and, for some, comparable processes of development.

The inception of comparative philology must be understood within a context of nascent German nationalism. This movement developed rapidly: Greenfeld argues that 'one cannot speak' of German nationalism before 1806, but that by 1815 it had 'come of age' (1992, p.277). It became known as 'Romantic' or cultural nationalism, because it defined the nation as a cultural (and historical) entity (Wilson, 1973, p.820; Greenfeld, 1992, p.277). Specifically, it put discrete cultures at the heart of its philosophy, on the premise that 'each nationality is a distinct organic entity different from all other nations and that the individual can fulfill himself only to the degree that he is true to that national whole of which he is merely a part' (Wilson, 1973, p.820). Romantic nationalism was a product of the German Wars of Liberation (1813), in which the German-speaking peoples of the then Holy Roman Empire fought against the domination of French Emperor Napoleon I (Greenfeld, 1992, p.277). At this point, the term 'nation' was used synonymously with the term 'people' ('Volk'), and 'tied to the vision of a German "cultural nation" (*Kulturnation*), whose unity rested on primordial factors such as a shared history, language and culture' (Hagemann, 2004, p.412). German

nationalism was largely confined to middle-class educated men, who called on all ‘Prussians’ and ‘Germans’ to resist ‘Gallomania’, or the adoption of aspects of French culture, which was thought to encourage people to abandon their own language and culture (ibid, pp.417-418). The conflict between the German Kulturnation and the French empire was represented by German nationalists as an explicitly cultural problem, with German francophiles and ‘collaborators’ branded ‘scoundrels’ and ‘excluded from the community of free, honourable and valorous “German men”’ (ibid, p.419). Although German nationalism was not visible as a political movement until the early nineteenth century, the Romantic ideas that underpinned it began to be developed in the Sturm und Drang movement of the 1770s (Greenfeld, 1992, pp.322-344). For our purposes, the most relevant source of Romantic thought, which was to underpin Romantic nationalism and to have an enduring effect on late nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses on language, was the work of Johann Gottfried Herder.

Herder wrote on various aspects of philosophy for some forty years, approaching questions about language, the mind, history, politics, and the nation. For Herder, the ‘nation’ was a discrete cultural unit, comprising a group of people who shared not only a culture, but a specific destiny and a personality. It was foundational, then, that the ‘nation’ was a coherent whole. The postulated unity of the ‘nation’ is evidenced in the following passage:

Just as entire nations have one language in common, so they also share favorite paths of the imagination, certain turns and objects of thought: in short, one genius that expresses itself, irrespective of any particular difference, in the best-loved works of each nation’s spirit and heart (Herder, [1796] 2004, p.119).

Thus, contrary to the ‘universalising tendencies of the Enlightenment’, Herder argued that every nation must be recognised as distinct from every other (Evrigenis and Pellerin, 2004, p.xxviii). For Herder, the differences between nations were ‘irreducible’; each nation had a unique culture and history that was expressed, preserved, and transmitted through language (Evrigenis and Pellerin, 2004, p.xliii). In short, a nation had a ‘personality’, that emerged as a natural consequence both of the nation’s history and of the way it had been shaped by nature

(Wilson, 1973, pp.821-822). And ‘each nation has its *centre of happiness in itself*’ (Herder, [1774] 2002, p.297), that is, it must be ‘master of its own destiny’ if it is to meet its potential (Wilson, 1973, p.821). Thus, Wilson argues that each nation ‘by developing its own language, religion, customs, and laws - all of which were expressions of the national soul - would be working not only for its own strength and unity, but for the well-being of civilisation as a whole’ (Wilson, 1973, pp.823-824). The cultivation of the national spirit, then, was a duty owed not only to the nation but to the world at large. It was the only way that a nation could achieve its destiny.

Herder believed that discrete languages were ‘at the heart of culture’, and therefore central to the national spirit (Crowley, forthcoming, 2020, p.3). He argued that each nation had a national language, which in turn had ‘its definite national character’ (Herder, cited in Wilson, 1973, p.827). Herder was certainly aware of the reality of linguistic heteroglossia, but he nevertheless claimed that a national language existed, and in doing so enacted a ‘denial of difference in linguistic practice’ (Crowley, forthcoming, 2020, pp.20-21). Indeed, this was central to his formulation, which insisted on language, and culture more broadly, as the ties that bind the nation. Thus ‘everyday cultural differences’ were subordinated to the notion of a larger, culturally distinct nation. Crucially, this idea had the potential to be progressive. Crowley (forthcoming, 2020), for instance, demonstrates that a Herderian approach to language, culture, and the nation was a powerful anti-colonial tool in Ireland, albeit one that became problematic in the post-colonial period. For Herder was a fierce critic of colonialism, and argued explicitly that European cultures were not superior to those of their colonial territories (ibid, pp.2-3). For example:

Does a people, especially an uncultivated people, have anything dearer than the language of its ancestors? In it resides their entire wealth of ideas on Tradition, History, Religion and the Principles of Life, all their heart and soul. To take away or despise the language of such a people means to confiscate its immortal property, that which is passed on from parents to children (Herder, 1888, cited in Crowley, forthcoming, 2020, p.4).

Clearly, Herder rejected imperial linguistic dominance, notably in both evaluative terms (whereby a nation ‘despises’ the language of another) and in more practical terms (where a language is ‘taken away’). Yet in spite of Herder’s anti-colonial stance, certain elements of his approach to language were later appropriated and reshaped into ideological supports for European imperialism.⁴⁸

In line with his belief in the universal reality of national-cultural difference, Herder argued that the same forces that shaped the national personality also shaped the national language. Sikka considers the extent to which these arguments were inflected by embryonic ideas of race (2011, pp.126-159). She argues that:

He accepts a view about the identity of peoples that contains a racial component ... but that does not commit him to support forms of violence and oppression based on racial distinctions, which he always opposes ... It is possible to believe, as Herder did, that there are biologically distinct human types about which some limited judgements of higher and lower can be made, and, at the same time, that the individuals belonging to these types are all fully human, and deserving of the moral consideration due to every member of this species (Sikka, 2011, p.129).

It is worth being clear on this point. Herder’s work did not advocate racial discrimination, and consistently condemned European colonialism as an interference in the destiny of other nations. But, in Sikka’s view, Herder frequently drew ‘highly Eurocentric’ contrasts between the character of nations on the basis of physical appearance (2011, p.131). While he rejected the idea that the ‘European ideal’ should be taken as a model of beauty, and was indignant ‘at the way Europeans ... excluded whole groups of people from moral concern under the pretext of race’, he did not believe human beings to be inherently equal in the ‘sense of having the same innate abilities’ (ibid, p.158). Herder linked physical characteristics, linguistic features, and the ‘spirit’ of non-European nations in particular ways. In *On the Change of Taste* (1766), for example, he argues that physical difference (‘in size and shape, in color and

⁴⁸ This is not the only way in which Herder’s work has been adapted to support a position that actually contradicts his political thought. As Sikka notes, writers in the 1930s often manipulated Herder’s writing in order to make it speak to Nazi ideas about racial superiority (2011, p.126).

lineaments, in the proportion and varying firmness of the parts’) ‘has an influence on the manner of thought’, and above all on the ‘senses’ of a particular nation (Herder, [1766] 2002, p.250). For Herder, the ‘senses’ are ‘the door for all our concepts’, and ‘savages’ (by which term he generally refers to Native Americans and Africans) are endowed with stronger senses because they are ‘trained from youth up by hunting and fear’ (ibid, pp.250-251). Germans, by contrast, have weak senses and a more ‘subtle constitution [in which] the soul gets developed for thought’ (ibid, p.250).⁴⁹ Herder’s *Treatise on the Origin of Languages* (1772) develops these ideas with explicit reference to linguistic tendencies among different nations. He depicts the ‘hot Easterners and the savage [Native] Americans’ as ‘peoples who live in the youth of their cultivation’, and whose organs, as their senses, are ‘strong and unpolished’ (Herder, [1766] 2002, p.60). These ‘nations’, he argues, are the closest to a dawn of humanity that is impossible to remember, where the earliest and least developed (or ‘polished’) nations would stare ‘transfixed before every new object out of fear’ and ‘amazement’ (ibid). He argues that ‘such a people will also communicate this spirit to its language, will announce great passions with violent gestures and mighty sounds, will register rapid needs through short and powerful accents of shouting’ (ibid). Implicit here is the notion that a nation’s language will exhibit particular linguistic characteristics if it is at an earlier stage in its development than a comparable nation. For Herder, the only way that nations could reach their own potential was through an autochthonous process of development (Forster, 2002, p.xxxii), and it followed that Europeans were erroneous in describing ‘the manner of thought and taste of savages to be fanciful or foolish because it deviates from ours’ (Herder, [1766] 2002, p.248). But the notion that a nation’s language might reflect its stage on its own developmental trajectory left an important legacy, as it was incorporated into the science of comparative philology, via August and Friedrich von Schlegel.

⁴⁹ It should be noted, in this regard, that Herder did not ‘see intellectual agility as continuous with virtue’ (Sikka, 2011, p.158), and so this is not necessarily a value judgement on his part.

The field of comparative philology was inaugurated by the famous argument made by Sir William Jones in 1786. Jones undertook comparisons of ancient written texts, and by this methodology demonstrated a historic link between Sanskrit and the European languages of antiquity, Latin and Ancient Greek. Specifically, Jones argued that the similarities between the languages were such that they must have ‘sprung from a common source’ (Jones, [1786] 2013, p.34). Jones’s contention had important implications, including the notion that, by ‘relating Sanskrit to some European tongues, he added a cultural link to the ties between East and West’ (Cannon, 1990, p.246). The precise nature of this link was determined by later scholars, who explained that Sanskrit was in fact a parent language to Latin and Ancient Greek (Rocher, 1995). In truth, Jones was not the first to make the argument in question, but he became ‘almost universally associated with it’, in part because he was already recognised as a successful scholar, but also because ‘he presented his “discovery” in a systematic context that gave it abundant meaning and implications; he created a method’ (Aarsleff, 1982, p.315). The method, by which written texts were compared and made to yield insights about relationships between the languages in which they were written, became the basic practice of comparative philology (Errington, 2007, p.58). This field was established as ‘the first science which regarded evolution as its very core’, and it aimed to produce laws that demonstrated how languages changed through time (Hobsbawm, 1996, p.286). As it developed, comparative philology drew heavily on the foundations laid by Herder, and, consequentially, it incorporated his principle that ‘[m]ankind exhibits profound differences in modes of thought, concepts, and language, especially between different historical periods and cultures’ (Forster, 2011, p.111).⁵⁰ The arguments put forth by German comparativists - in particular the von Schlegel brothers, Bopp, Grimm, and von Humboldt - took for granted a connection between the constitutive bodies and representational archives of languages,

⁵⁰ See Forster (2011, especially Chapter 4) for a fuller account of Herder’s influence on the development of German linguistic thought.

whereby linguistic features were taken to index the specific ‘national’ characters of languages.

The work of leading comparative philologists gradually produced a conceptualisation of discrete languages as self-contained wholes, which reflected the supposed qualities of the ‘nations’ that spoke them and which were each on a specific developmental path. August and Friedrich von Schlegel, for example, were two German Romanticists whose research contributed to a historicist understanding of language and literature, which was strongly influenced by Herder (Forster, 2011, pp.109-112). Both were concerned with aesthetic ideals of language: the ‘beauty’ and ‘strength’ produced through ‘organic’ development. ‘Organic’ development in this sense meant a form of self-contained development that fulfilled Herder’s maxim that each nation must develop according to its own principles. Thus in his 1818 lecture on theatrical form, August von Schlegel echoes Herder by arguing that the most successful and powerful theatrical traditions are developed ‘organically’, in such a way as to suit their individual nations. The poetic spirit, he argues, ‘must act according to laws derivable from its own essence, otherwise its strength will evaporate in boundless vacuity’ (Schlegel, [1846] 1965, p.340). The lesser ‘mechanical’ form is impacted by ‘external force’, whereas the ‘organical’ form ‘is innate; it unfolds itself from within, and acquires its determination contemporaneously with the perfect development of the germ’ (ibid). Friedrich von Schlegel conceptualised the development of languages according to the same principles. He explains that an ‘organic’ language is distinguished by its use of inflection, which allows it to produce new meanings on the basis of a root that functions ‘like a living and productive germ’. This is opposed to ‘mechanical’ languages, whose vocabularies grow through the use of ‘supplementary particles’, or, put another way, an ‘agglomeration of atoms’ (von Schlegel, 1849, p.449).⁵¹ Friedrich von Schlegel was clear that this was a question of the aesthetic beauty inherent to some languages and alien to others. He states that an ‘organic’ language:

soon becomes woven into a fine artistic tissue, which may be unravelled even after the lapse of centuries, and afford a clue by which to trace the connexions of

⁵¹ German, of course, is precisely such an agglutinative language, despite Schlegel’s claims.

languages dependent on it ... [while 'mechanical languages'] have no such bond of union ... [t]hey have no internal connexion beyond the purely mechanical adaptation of particles and affixes ... and an accumulation of affixes, instead of producing a more highly artistic construction, yields only an unwieldy superabundance of words, inimical to true simple beauty and perspicuity (von Schlegel, 1849, p.449).

Tellingly, the 'organic' languages included Sanskrit, Persian, and the European languages, while 'mechanical' languages included Coptic, Native American languages, and Chinese. For the von Schlegels, then, languages stood as testament to the success of a nation in following its process of organic development. Features found in particular languages marked their associated nations out as those that had been subject to 'external force'. Discrete languages began to be judged on Herderian nationalist principles, or on the basis of whether they were able to follow an internal process of development.

The von Schlegel brothers, then, suggested that linguistic features could indicate the degree to which a nation was cultivated. But it was the work of Franz Bopp and Jakob Grimm that developed a 'distinct methodology, which marks the beginning of comparative philology proper' (Crowley, 1996, p.10). Grimm's work stands out, in part, because his focus was narrower than that of his contemporaries: he focused specifically on the development of the German language (Errington, 2007, p.79). His contemporaries generally viewed his analysis of Germanic consonantal shifts as his most important contribution, on which basis he formulated 'Grimm's Law' in 1822 (Morpurgo Davies, 1998, p.142). This was set out in *Deutsche Grammatik*, published between 1819-1837, where Grimm described sound shifts that were universal, which linked Proto-Indo-European forms to Proto-Germanic and Germanic forms. For example, he showed that Greek or Latin words with initial T, D, TH (Latin *tu* 'thou', Greek *damān* 'to tame', Greek *thugatēr* 'daughter') correspond to Germanic words with initial TH, T, and D (*þu*, *zemen*, *tohtar*) (ibid, p.143). As Hobsbawm points out, Grimm, and those who followed him, were certain that language change 'ought to be explained by general linguistic laws, analogous to scientific ones' (1996, p.287). At this point, however, to call the study of language 'scientific' was not to imply that it was non-evaluative or non-political.

Throughout his life, Grimm ‘never abandoned the view that language, literature, law, customs, beliefs and folklore are the true expression of the national culture and reflect its development’ (Morpurgo Davies, 1998, p.138). Thus Morpurgo Davies argues that we ‘find in him a naïve belief in a direct link not only between the history of words and the cultural and historical development of a nation but also between the development of the more structured parts of language and that of culture in the broadest possible sense’ (ibid, p.139). For example, Grimm held that the German ‘national spirit’ drove the shift explained by ‘Grimm’s Law’:

From one point of view the sound shift seems to me to be a barbarous aberration from which other quieter nations refrained, but yet which has to do with the violent progress and yearning for liberty as found in Germany in the early Middle Ages, and which started the transformation of Europe (Grimm, 1848, cited in Newmeyer, 1986, p.20).

Grimm’s attempt at historical explanation suggests both that the change was ‘barbarous’ in some sense, and that it was authentically ‘German’, driven in part by the national spirit. In a wider perspective, Grimm viewed the process of language change as evidence that grammar is ‘perfected’ through processes of development, ‘as part of the joined ascent of language and humanity’ (Errington, 2007, p.80). In Grimm, then, we see an approach to language that seeks to formulate scientific laws, but does not enforce a separation between science and politics, or, for instance, between sound change and the ‘national spirit’.

Grimm’s work also created a new way of representing the relationship between a single language and the passage of time. Specifically, in *Deutsche Grammatik*, Grimm ‘pioneered the notion of the “Old”, “Middle”, and “New” or “Modern” phases of Germanic languages’ (Matthews, 2000, p.4). This was an important move, for it suggested that, though there were significant differences between one ‘phase’ and another, they nevertheless represented parts of a single language. Grimm’s method of periodisation was not immediately adopted, but, as I will argue with reference to English, it became integral to the invention of languages that stood as evidence of the longevity of established nations. In constructing a periodised

view of the Germanic languages, Grimm followed the work of Herder and von Humboldt, both of whom had constructed a link between contemporary Germans and history. In 1766 Herder had made the point that ‘every human being in every age ... stands in a middle, so to speak’ of the past and the future (Herder, 2002 [1766], p.254), with the nation being the bond that holds past, present, and future Germans together. By contrast with those who viewed themselves as independent of ‘ancestors’ and ‘descendants’, Herder stressed the fact that every human being is at once a product of history and a foundation of the future (ibid). Grimm’s law gave this idea linguistic expression, as it demonstrated a certain continuity, that linked German speakers in the present to their ancestors. As Errington puts it:

Grimm had shown how everyday speech bound them organically, through speech, to their ancestors in a kind of intimate but unconscious project, working itself through between generations and across centuries. Right under their noses, the German language’s historical unity was being created and recreated by speakers every day (Errington, 2007, p.80).

This is a key point, for Grimm’s work consolidated, with the status of science, a view of the German language not just as a product of history - the implicit understanding of other evolutionist views on language - but as a continuous unity, linking contemporary German with Old German, and, accordingly, the nineteenth century Germans with Germans of a bygone age. As we will see, the intellectual and ideological ramifications of Grimm’s work were felt in England, where scholars became interested in the precise dates applicable to ‘Old English’.

A further consequential argument was put forth by Wilhelm von Humboldt, who created an explicit link between language, ‘nations’, and intellectual capability. Specifically, he conceptualised linguistic features as indicative of the mental development of a nation. In *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its influence on the mental development of mankind*, a posthumously published collection of work, von Humboldt argues that every nation must ‘be regarded as a human *individuality*, which pursues an inner spiritual path of its own’ ([1836] 1988, p.41, italics in original). He also positions languages as ‘spiritual creations’

that emanate from those nations. And, since languages ‘always’ have a national form - that is, they always index a nation - it is in languages that nations are ‘truly and immediately creative’ (ibid). Ultimately, for von Humboldt, language is ‘the outer appearance of the spirit of a people’ (ibid, p.46). Not only is language a reflection of a nation’s spirit, however, it also shapes the mental capacities of its speakers. Von Humboldt claims that ‘an undeniable connection exists between language-structure and the success of all other kinds of intellectual activity’ (ibid, p.44). In fact, the development of languages is ‘utterly and inseparably’ the same as the development of mental power (ibid, p46). Von Humboldt argues that:

In that a people effects, from its inner freedom, the development of its language, as the instrument of every human activity within it, it seeks and simultaneously attains to the thing itself, that is, to something different and higher; and in that it gets on to the road of poetic creation and speculative thought, it simultaneously works back, in turn, upon language (Von Humboldt, [1836] 1988, p.46).

A people develops its language, and, as a necessary consequence, develops a ‘higher’ intellect that eventually comes to bear on language itself, in the production of poetic and speculative thought. But ‘the structure of languages differs among mankind, because and insofar as the mental individuality of nations is itself different’ (ibid), and so it follows that one can analyse the structure of a language to derive an accurate picture of the mental acuity of the nation. A less ‘developed’ language indexes speakers (or nations) of lesser mental capabilities. The method by which it is made to do so analyses aspects of the constitutive body of a language in order to situate a nation on a scale from ‘primitive’ to ‘cultivated’. The fact that a nation could develop its language, somewhat surprisingly, did not entail for von Humboldt that any given language held the potential to be among the most sophisticated. Rather, he argued that ‘isolating’ languages ‘with no grammatical structure’ were ‘essentially flawed as a means for intellectual expression’, while a select group, again typified by Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, were among those that were ‘the most capable of *perfection* in their *progress*’ (von Humboldt, [1836] 1988, p.87, italics in original). In summary, Von Humboldt perceived language as tied

to the differential cultivation of mental capacities amongst different nations, and thereby conceptualised the linguistic features of a language as indexical of the capabilities of speakers.

Comparative philology, then, constructed a specific way of conceptualising the links between language and history, language and nation, and, by extension from the latter, language and race. Errington argues that it 'made the past into a resource for nationalist ideologies in an industrializing Europe, nowhere more importantly than in Germans' confrontations with a political and cultural crisis of identity quite close to home' (2007, p.71). Importantly, however, its impact was also profound within the context of imperialism. The idea that the particular character of a discrete culture, nation, or language necessarily indexed its level of development (even, following von Humboldt, the mental development of individuals) allowed the study of language to function as a tool for the evaluative classification of peoples. Thus while the development of comparative philology as a discipline created a radical new methodology for the diachronic study of language, it also provided the tools to construct contemporaneous languages as entities that occupy different positions on an evolutionary scale. If Herder believed that each nation/language should follow its own internal path to a national destiny, comparative study invited scholars to compare those developments, and to judge them in terms of how closely they conformed to the 'best' examples of 'civilisation'. In relation to the conceptualisation of language, it was decisive that constitutive bodies were taken to index the characters of languages: the national spirit, embodied in the national language, could be discovered through an analysis of the inventory and grammar of discrete languages. In the following two sections, I will demonstrate how this notion underpinned the particular constructions of 'Bantu' and 'English', the former as a family of 'rudimentary' languages and the latter as a language of 'civilisation'.

4 MISSIONARIES AND COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGISTS IN AFRICA: THE INVENTION OF BANTU

Comparative philology provided the intellectual background for the study of language in the colonial project. As we will see, certain consequential acts of linguistic invention in colonial Africa were informed both by the Herderian connection between one language and one nation (as a body of people) and by von Humboldt's causal link between linguistic features and mental capabilities. From the perspective of the comparativist, colonialism presented the opportunity to achieve two interrelated goals: the philosophical goal to discover the 'very nature of human language', or 'in Platonic terms ... the "idea" of language', and the practical goal to describe the wealth of new languages with which Europeans came into contact (Ramat, 2011, p.15). However, much linguistic work in colonial Africa was carried out by missionaries, rather than comparativists. At least some of these were influenced by the developments of comparative linguistics (Gilmour, 2006, pp.118-168), but ultimately it was their goal to learn languages in order to translate scripture (ibid, pp.57-65). Thus missionaries rarely compiled material with a view to comparative study; rather, they produced grammars, dictionaries, and phrasebooks as aids for learning a single language (ibid, p.62). Nevertheless, missionary work functioned alongside comparativist research, in order to 'invent' African languages (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Makoni and Mashiri, 2007). Missionary linguistics involved the 'appropriation of languages and the assertion of ... authority over them' (Gilmour, 2006, p.4), and, much as colonial historians 'construct[ed] the history of others for them', colonial linguists (both missionary and professional) constituted and represented the languages of the colonised (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.5). In this section, I will focus on the way in which Kinyarwanda was invented as part of the 'Bantu' language family, a larger construct that served to primitivise African speakers by representing their languages as merely 'rudimentary'. Interestingly, while

the Romantic nationalist understanding of language underpinned the notion that ‘Bantu’ was a family of ‘primitive’ languages, it was on this same discursive terrain that Alexis Kagame, the Rwandan writer and philosopher, later sought to make Kinyarwanda fit for Rwandan cultural nationalism. This account begins with a brief consideration of the impact of missionaries in Ruanda-Urundi.

A number of scholars have demonstrated the importance of missionaries as agents of particular forms of colonial power (Fabian, 1986; Gilmour 2006). They were generally stationed in colonised territories for long periods and, at least in Africa, they were in regular contact with local populations. The work of missionaries was shaped by colonial institutions, the authority and agendas of which they were obliged to accept (Errington, 2007, p.94), but it is overly simplistic to view them as actors in the direct service of their respective countries. Some who were marginalised in their home societies felt a closer allegiance to the Church, while others accepted the dual authority of their church and their government (ibid). In Ruanda-Urundi the situation was particularly complicated. The German Protectorate was established in Rwanda in 1897, but it was limited in both its budget and its staffing. Soon after, the *Pères Blancs*, a French Roman Catholic order, sought permission from the German administration to set up a mission in Rwanda. Given its limited finances, the German Administration ‘saw the merit of utilizing Catholic missionaries to educate and pacify the Rwandan people’ (Carney, 2011, pp.40-42). And so began a situation in which German Lutheran administrators worked with predominantly French Catholic missionaries, the latter of whom catechised the population and, ultimately, delimited the language that came to be known as ‘Kinyarwanda’.

The work of missionaries organised complex linguistic heteroglossia into ‘languages’, which were firmly rooted in European, rather than local, understandings of language. Errington observes that missionaries functioned in three key roles: as ‘linguists (describing languages), teachers (of literacy), and preachers (to pagans)’ (2007, p.94). These roles were

not easily separable, and in fact it was the impetus to preach which necessitated a close engagement with questions of language. The doctrine was to preach in local, rather than European languages. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV ordained that missionaries must give ‘a place of paramount importance’ to their ‘ready’ and ‘competent’ acquisition of the language of their catechumens (Pope Benedict XV, 1919). And Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the Pères Blancs, mandated that language be an immediate concern for each new African mission. As soon as missionaries established themselves in a new location, Lavigerie encouraged them to adopt the ‘external’ habits of the population, including language, and to begin the compilation of a bilingual dictionary (Shorter, 2006, pp.155-162). There were, then, two stages to the missionaries’ engagement with African languages. In the first stage they learnt, to a greater or lesser extent, how to communicate with the local population. In the second, they constructed a writing system to represent the language, or rather their understanding of it, and used it to produce dictionaries and grammars. This second stage was crucial, as the missions ultimately laboured under a ‘Christian obligation’ to translate the Bible into as many languages as possible (Pennycook and Makoni, 2005, p.138). The Pères Blancs were successful in this respect, producing nearly fifty grammars and dictionaries between 1892 and 1914 (Shorter, 2006, pp.161-162). In doing so they were not recording African languages, they were inventing them.

By cataloguing and categorising languages, missionaries played a role in organising African society through European concepts. Samarin argues that, before European intervention, Africa was a ‘continent without languages’, which is to say that it is unlikely that African people either had ‘ethnolinguistic self-consciousness’, or thought of themselves as utilising discrete languages (1999, p.390). But, through missionary work, heterogenous linguistic input was organised into discrete languages, which were named and diffused through colonial education. Moreover, such work was profoundly conditioned by the notion of discrete languages attached to discrete population groups. As Harries (1988) shows, in

certain circumstances, colonial missionaries 'invented' not only new languages, but, through such means as education, new ethnic groups to correspond with them. The categorisation of such languages became central to missionary work; in Fabian's view, learning to communicate in order to spread 'the message' soon became 'overshadowed by attention to formal and normative matters such as the exact classification of languages, the standardisation of writing, and the teaching of correct grammar' (1986, p.76). As Mühlhäusler (1996) has shown in the context of the South Pacific, by describing linguistic heteroglossia in terms of discrete languages, European missionaries fundamentally altered local understandings of language. For, as Harris argues, to bring a child up as a 'potential bilingual' 'makes a fundamental difference to his [sic] grasp of what a language is' (1980, p.5). That is, if education treats the existence of discrete languages as a given, it serves to inculcate a belief in the existence of discrete languages. Thus, Harris argues, we come to view language as divisible into 'languages' (ibid). Similarly, by producing a range of texts that focussed on specific languages (such as grammars, Biblical translations, and bilingual dictionaries), missionaries operationalised the idea of languages as discrete systems capable of equivalences of meaning.

A further important point is that missionaries did not necessarily record 'languages', but rather 'invented' them on the basis of their own, limited understandings. As Gilmour observes, missionaries always relied on native speakers, to some degree. Whether they spoke local languages or not, they required assistance from native speakers, and while some had 'unquestioning faith' in their interpreters, others expressed anxieties that their message might become distorted (2006, pp.58-59). Even those who spent years learning local languages required some local expertise. Thus John Bennie, who undertook 18 years of missionary work among the Xhosa and was considered the foremost missionary expert in the language, 'confessed that he could still be baffled or misled by unfamiliar metaphors or figurative language' (ibid, p.60). Yet, the grammars and dictionaries produced by missionaries passed

as objective works of description, at least in some cases (Errington, 2007, p.97; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007, p.7). This is an important point, as not only did missionaries produce reference materials without full linguistic understanding, but their bilingual dictionaries functioned as ‘a space that enabled Europeans to exercise authority over African languages’ (Makoni and Mashiri, 2007, p.76), by defining and delimiting them. One aspect of this process was the manipulation of words as a method of transforming concepts. In the case of Kinyarwanda, for example, missionaries attempted to introduce a new word for ‘God’, under the justification that it would allow them to translate the Christian concept of God. ‘Imana’ was a term that already had divine connotations in Rwanda, but the Pères Blancs held that it was too ‘tribal’ to express the idea of a Christian God, and that ‘the more universal Mungu [taken from Kiswahili] would help to transform the concept of Imana itself’ (Shorter, 2006, p.164). Ultimately, in this instance, popular pressure from Rwandans forced missionaries to use the term ‘Imana’, and this point demonstrates that, in linguistic description, there were opportunities for resistance. In other cases, there were successful attempts to either create new words (Harries, 1988, p.43), or to change the meaning of existing words. The introduction of the concept of a language in Indonesia serves as an example. Heryanto (2007) demonstrates that in order to inculcate the notion of discrete languages, colonialists took a pre-existing word used in the territory (‘Bahasa’, with a meaning close to ‘culture’) and redefined it. He argues: ‘[i]t took European colonialism to introduce the idea of “language” before the old word bahasa came to articulate this newly-acquired concept. The adoption of a pre-existing word in East Asia to articulate a new concept from modern Western Europe helped make the concept appear universal’ (Heryanto, 2007, p.43). The success of the enterprise is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Indonesia’s national language is today called Bahasa Indonesia.

As Fabian indicates (1986, p.76), missionaries were central not only in the process of defining languages, but in classifying them in relation to other languages. In Ruanda-Urundi,

this was particularly difficult, because scholars disagreed over whether the region was home to a single language, or two languages that were broadly coterminous with the pre-existing political boundaries of Rwanda and Burundi. Thus Van der Burgt, one of the earliest missionaries to write on language in Ruanda-Urundi, argued that the colony was home to one language, Kirundi, which was spoken with only minor differences in Rwanda (1904, p.73). This argument was repeated elsewhere, with some asserting that Kirundi and Kinyarwanda should be properly considered dialects (*African Affairs*, 1905; Laman, 1928, p.377) and others claiming that the differences in speech were so minor that they could 'hardly be described as dialects' (Roehl, 1930, pp.191-192). The deciding factor was perhaps that, though they were members of the same order, the Rwandan and Burundian missions developed independently from one another (Barakana, 1952, p.54; Louis, 1963, p.176; Shorter, 2006, pp.80-82). Following Cardinal Lavigerie's directive, each quickly compiled a bilingual dictionary: Van der Burgt's *Dictionnaire français-kirundi et kirundi-français* in 1903, and Hurel's 'Manuel de Langue Kinyarwanda' in 1911. Also in 1911, the Rwandan mission translated Jacob Ecker's *Bible for Schools* into Kinyarwanda from the original German, and began work on the further translation of prayer books, hymns, and sermons (Shorter, 2006, pp.141-142; Adekunle, 2007, p.51). The discrete languages were constructed discursively, then, despite disagreement as to how they should be categorised in relation to each another.

While there was disagreement over whether Ruanda-Urundi was home to one or more languages, accounts agreed that the language(s) were 'Bantu'. In fact, for some scholars, there was no need to go further than that (see de Martonne (1897), and van Gennep (1905)). The definition of speech in Ruanda-Urundi as 'Bantu' had particular implications. To uncover these it is necessary to consider the invention of the category of 'Bantu', which involved particular representational processes. The category was constructed by the German philologist Wilhelm Bleek, who lived and worked in South Africa, and whose focus was the comparative study of South African languages. He had a successful career; his 1875 obituary

in the *South African Mail* stated that: '[a]s a comparative philologist he stood in the foremost rank, and as an investigator and authority on the South African languages, he was without peer' (Skotnes, 2007, p.189). After studying Semitic languages at the University of Bonn in the late 1840s, Bleek 'became the curator of a unique library in Cape Town that served as a repository for much of the ethnographic and linguistic work then just beginning all over Africa', and he acted as a mediator between missionaries and 'explorers' in Africa, and scholars and theorists in Europe (Thornton, 1983, p.1). Bleek's university education put him in contact with the ideas of the German school of comparative philology. As Thornton puts it:

For most of Wilhelm's teachers, and his intellectual models, the theoretical identity of language group and nation was a basic tenet underpinning their aspirations for a united Germany. The romantic nationalism of Herder, Goethe, and Fichte was an extremely important element of the intellectual life surrounding Friedrich Bleek [Wilhelm's father], as Professor of Theology in early nineteenth century Prussia (Thornton, 1983, pp.1-2).

Wilhelm Bleek worked with these concepts throughout his career, oscillating 'between the radical ideas of complete separation of "race", "language" and "nation", and the romantic nationalist idea that these categories necessarily and exclusively imply each other, since all were seen by Herder and others as merely different aspects of a national genius or *geist*' (Thornton, 1983, p.2, italics in original). But Bleek 'revered' Wilhelm von Humboldt's research on language, and 'in his own work he attempted to develop a theory of language that began with Humboldt's insistence on the complete identity of thought and language in the mind of the individual' (ibid, pp.3-4). A fundamental tenet of his work, taken from Von Humboldt, was that language had a direct impact on the mental capability of speakers.

Von Humboldt's link between language and thought was at the root of Bleek's *On the Origin of Language* (1869). In this work, which Bleek considered his finest achievement (Thornton, 1983, p.3), he proposed that languages could be categorised through a binary typology: they were either 'sex-denoting' (also called 'suffix-pronominal') or 'prefix-

pronominal'. Bleek held that the former classified nouns by gender, while the latter did not (see Bleek, 1869, pp.xx-xi; Gilmour, 2006, pp.180-181). He believed that the 'sex-denoting' languages were superior, as 'almost all civilised languages belong to the sexual family of languages' (1869, p.xx), and, moreover, 'nearly all the nations which have made any progress in scientific acquirement speak sexual languages' (pp.xxii-xxiii). Conversely, Bleek represented 'prefix-pronominal' languages as a barrier to civilisation. He stated that:

among the mass of nations speaking prefix-pronominal languages, many of which form extensive political unions, there is not one that has added any noteworthy contribution to scientific knowledge; and not a single individual who could be called great as thinker, inventor, or poet has risen among them. This fact is, doubtless, the result of an organic defect, the ground of which lies in the lack of any power of seizing poetically the constitution of things. The grammatical form of their languages does not allow their imagination that higher flight which the form of the sexual languages irresistibly imparts to the movement of the thought of those that speak them.

This enables us to see why the mode of speech, and hence also the mode of thought, prevalent among peoples who speak prefix-pronominal languages is strikingly practical and prosaic. Of poetry, as well as of science, mythology, and philosophy, there is hardly even a trace among them (Bleek, 1869, p.xxiii).

For Bleek, then, prefix-pronominal languages were essentially rudimentary, as they were incapable of expressing abstract or higher thought. Just as other forms of European discourse served to construct Africa as atavistic (see Chapter 1), Bleek's work on comparative philology constructed speakers of prefix-pronominal languages as being in the infancy of civilisation. The very nature of those languages barred their speakers from imaginative or original thought, and confined them to the 'practical and prosaic'. Gilmour situates Bleek's distinction within the larger project of his work: to construct a unitary understanding of how languages evolved, along the same developmental path, with some attaining greater levels of 'sophistication' than others (2006, pp.172-177). Through his classifications, 'Bleek presented a model of language ... in which a hierarchical arrangement of *contemporaneous* human groups was mapped directly onto a *sequential* process of evolutionary development' (ibid, p.175, italics in original). Languages were made to stand as testimony to the putative

fact that indigenous African populations were incapable of cultural production.

Bleek's typology was rooted in his *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* (1862), wherein he first proposed the 'Bantu' language family. From the outset, the concept of 'Bantu' had a complex relationship to race. The contention that underpins Bleek's *Comparative Grammar* is that 'the great mass of African languages is reducible to two families', of which 'Hottentot' and 'Kaffir' served as the most 'primitive' (and well-studied) examples (Bleek, 1862, p.viii; p.ix). Indeed, Bleek explicitly refers to these languages, and, by extension, the families to which they belonged, as representing the 'original mental tendencies' of two races (*ibid*, p.ix). This distinction, by which Bleek categorised the diverse populations of Africa, in some ways echoed the Hamitic hypothesis (see Chapter 1). Bleek himself argued that the 'Hottentots' were of North African origin, and that, like the 'civilised' Europeans, they were speakers of a 'sex-denoting language'. This mirrored the claim that the Hamite was ancestrally a 'Caucasoid' North African. Moreover, just as the Hamite was represented as the lowest form of the 'Caucasian' race (Sanders, 1969, p.528), so too did Bleek place the 'Hottentots' at the 'lowest' stage of development among speakers of 'sex-denoting' languages (Bleek, 1862, p.viii; Bleek, 1869, p.xiii; p.xxiv). Others took Bleek's work as evidence of the Hamitic hypothesis; Chatelain, for instance, argued that one of Bleek's discoveries was that there were 'Hamitic' features in the 'Hottentot' language (1894, pp.299-300). Bleek's work was also received as a confirmation of the figure of the 'Negro'. As I argued in Chapter 1, the Bahutu were perceived as 'Negroes', and, in Chrétien's view, this meant that they were represented as 'true Bantus' in colonial and missionary literature (1985, p.58). In fact the term 'Bantu', with its connotations of an atavistic speaker who was incapable of advanced civilisation, at times stood in for the term 'Negro' in colonial discourse (*ibid*).⁵² Indeed, so closely did the colonial imaginary of the Bahutu cohere with

⁵² The identification between the terms 'Bantu' and 'Negro' was not universal. Carl Meinhof, Bleek's most famous successor, argued that Africa was home to three main racial groups: 'Negroes', 'Hamites', and 'Bantu',

Bleek's construction of the 'Bantu' languages that it was proposed, via a dubious etymology (or 'word game'), that the term 'Bantu' derived from 'Bahutu' (ibid, pp.58-59). It is instructive, in this regard, that the Batutsi were considered to be among those 'many [Hamitic groups who] have wholly or partially lost their language (Sergi, 1901, p.40). The implication here is that, being capable of civilisation, the Batutsi must originally have spoken a more advanced language than the variety of 'Bantu' that Europeans found them speaking.

As I argued in Chapter 1, the Hamitic hypothesis divided the African population, attributing complex cultural phenomena to the 'Hamites'. Similarly, Bleek's categorisation of language offered a dualistic understanding of the majority of Sub-Saharan Africans. In essence, Bleek classified languages negatively: any African language that was not 'Hottentot' (or, potentially, a language of the 'Bushmen') belonged to the 'Kaffir' languages, 'which we call the Bâ-ntu family' (1869, p.2). And for Bleek, the 'languages and nations' of the 'Kaffir' race extended 'over all parts of South Africa known to us' and over 'the greater part of Western Africa' (ibid, p.viii). Hence, aside from the exceptions above, Bleek argued that 'the whole remaining portion of the South African continent' spoke a Bantu language (ibid). These were necessarily 'prefix-pronominal languages', as all Bantu languages were thought to derive a case marker for 'reasonable beings' from the prefix 'ba-', in some variation (Bleek, 1869, p.3). As speakers of prefix-pronominal languages, Bleek argued that Bantu speakers - the vast majority of people in Sub-Saharan Africa - were incapable of creative thought. Accordingly, a specific aspect of the constitutive body of the putative language family (the derivation of pronouns from prefixes) was made to stand as evidence of the mental capacity of language users. There is a clear parallel here with the Hamitic hypothesis: in one view, almost all Africans are 'Negroes', and hence incapable of cultural production, while in the

with the latter being the genealogical offspring of the two former (Irvine, 1995, pp.147-149). On the other hand, Seligman asserted that there was 'sometimes' a distinct 'physical type' associated with 'Bantu' speakers, and that in those circumstances the term could differentiate between 'physical groups' (1930, p.183). Johnston firmly rejected the idea that there was a Bantu 'physical type', though he referred to '[t]he primitive "Bantu" [as] perhaps a superior type of Negro dashed with the Hamite' (1907, pp.331-332; p.335).

other, virtually all Sub-Saharan Africans are ‘Bantu’ speakers, and hence ‘condemned ... to a limited and prosaic range of ideas and to cultural non-productivity’ (Gilmour, 2006, p.183). Thus, ‘Bantu’ was invented not only as a language family, but, through its representational archive, as rudimentary and even mentally prohibitive. The speakers of Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, then, were similarly condemned.

It is interesting that, forty years after Saussure’s model of language revolutionised linguistics, the battle to raise the status of ‘Bantu’ was fought not by demonstrating its equality in structuralist terms (see Pennycook, 2001), but rather by attempting to alter its representational archive as part of the project of Rwandan cultural nationalism. Throughout the colonial period, there was little written material produced in Kinyarwanda. As I argued in Chapter 1, French was dominant in terms of power, and this was partially reflected in cultural production. Alongside the translations of Christian material, *Kinyamateka* became the first Kinyarwanda newspaper in 1933, and was primarily used as an organ to communicate with churchgoers (Adekunle, 2007, pp.56-57). For the most part, Rwanda’s literary culture remained characterised by orature and poetry (a genre which, in spite of Bleek’s claims, had a long history in Rwanda) (ibid, pp.50-52). The first body of work published in Kinyarwanda, and written by a Rwandan, is that of Alexis Kagame (1912-1981). Kagame’s work had an influence on both the constitutive body of Kinyarwanda, and the representational archive of ‘Bantu’ more broadly. Kagame was born into a family of court historians (*abiru*), and educated by the *Pères Blancs* (Vansina, 2004, p.222). He wrote in both French and Kinyarwanda, with his most celebrated work (in Rwanda) being *Inganji-Karinga* (1943), a collection of stories from the Banyarwanda oral tradition. According to Nzabatsinda, Kagame’s work was part of a project to construct a ‘Rwandan nation consolidated by politicohistorical, ethnocultural, religious, linguistic, and literary elements’ (1997, p.100). In short, Kagame envisaged his role as key to the production of a form of Rwandan cultural nationalism. To that end, Kagame aimed to standardise written Kinyarwanda through his

work, by employing uniform grammatical and orthographic conventions that were based in the speech of Rwanda's central and southern élite (ibid, pp.103-104). In this way, Kagame contributed to a more homogenous model of Kinyarwanda, thereby eliminating variation in the written form. Nzabatsinda finds a salient example in grammar: Kagame presents the progressive aspect of *'gukora'* ('to work') as *'ndakora'*, as used in southern Rwanda, rather than *'ndigukora'*, which is used in the north. Thus, where Kagame transcribes oral stories from northern Rwanda, he presents them in the language of the south, simultaneously designating northern linguistic features as 'non-standard', and purging them from his writing (ibid). In this way, Kagame 'promote[d] a language whose apparent homogeneity was to testify to the postulated nation' (ibid). Thus, he aimed to reify the notion that Kinyarwanda existed as a discrete language, to emphasise that it was uniform and coterminous with the political territory, and, crucially, to posit it as distinct from Kirundi (ibid, p.103).

The Romantic nationalist idea of 'one nation - one language' further entrenched the production of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi as separate languages. In 1948, as part of a survey that considered how Belgian colonial authorities could better facilitate the administration of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, van Bulck suggested that the first measure that should be taken by the colonists was the unification of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi (1948, p.659). The practicalities of the idea were considered by Gabriel Barakana, a Burundian priest and educator. Barakana argued that the current population of Rwandan and Burundi were once a single, homogenous people, who divided over time as a result of the evolution of their respective States (1952, p.68). For Barakana, a unification was technically possible, and, interestingly, would bestow a 'greater prestige' on the resulting language, which would be spoken by over four million people (ibid, p.73). Yet while it is clear that Barakana saw unification as possible, and potentially beneficial, he was ultimately pessimistic about the feasibility of the project. For not only did he conclude that it was not in the interest of the Belgian administration (ibid, p.75), he also realised that the idea would be impermissible due

to the ‘patriotic susceptibilities’ of the Barundi and the Banyarwanda (ibid, p.76). The distinct languages, by now consolidated by distinct (albeit limited) literatures (ibid, p.74), were tied to the cultural nationalism propagated by prominent thinkers like Kagame.

Internationally, Kagame’s best known work is *La philosophie bāntu-rwandaise de l’Être* (1956), a treatise on Bantu philosophy which must be understood as situated within his own cultural-nationalist project, and rooted in Bleek’s work on Bantu. Mudimbe is skeptical of Kagame’s work on a philosophical basis, but argues that it was ‘ideologically ... quite important, if considered to be an answer to hypotheses on “pagan” cultures’ (Mudimbe, 1988, p.71). The thesis was characterised by ‘a nationalist reading and the introduction of an intellectual rupture in colonial history’ (ibid, p.70). That is, Kagame approached the question of ‘philosophy’ from a perspective that was nationalist in its fundamental outlook, and one that challenged the colonial understanding of Bantu. Mudimbe argues that Kagame:

use[d] the Aristotelian model in order to demonstrate that, contrary to anthropologists’ and missionaries’ accepted opinions, his people had always had a well-organized and systematic “philosophy.” He explicitly intended to undermine the myths which sustained both colonial policies and the Church’s programs for an adapted Christianity (Mudimbe, 1988, pp.70-71).

The ‘accepted opinions’ that Kagame attempts to discredit were rooted in Bleek’s typology of language, and, ultimately, Kagame refutes those opinions on linguistic grounds (that is, that there is a Bantu philosophy inherent to the languages). The treatise focusses closely on Kinyarwanda, but Kagame clearly asserts that his project is generalisable to other ‘Bantu’ languages (Kagame, 1956, p.4). Thus Masalo argues that Kagame tried to demonstrate that ‘the very language of the Bantu was structured on the model of a clear metaphysical conception of being and of the metaphysical hierarchy of things’, and that the ‘cultural practices of the Bantu embodied a logically coherent body of thought’ (1983, p.449). Masalo summarises one of Kagame’s points:

In order to philosophise, it is necessary to be able to express the abstract, that without which we would be completely cut off from the concrete. Contrary to earlier claims by Western scholars that the Bantu were not capable of expressing the abstract,

Kagame demonstrates, from an analysis of the Bantu language, that there is a specific class (normally expressed by the classificative *bu*), reserved for the expression of the abstract (Masalo, 1983, p.451).

Kagame's intervention is interesting because it operates within the same basic framework as that of Bleek, not challenging the idea that the constitutive body of a language can stand as evidence that it is rudimentary, but rather intervening by demonstrating that the 'Bantu' languages possess specific constitutive aspects that render them capable of philosophy and thus superior in nature.

In the invention of 'Bantu' and 'Kinyarwanda', then, we can see how the tools of comparative philology allowed African languages to be organised into a large family, in which all 'Bantu' languages were constructed as necessarily rudimentary. The influential ideas of the German comparative philologists allowed specific linguistic features to be constructed as evidence of broad mental underdevelopment. In addition, the fact that Kagame refutes the limitations of 'Bantu' through a linguistic study on 'Kinyarwanda' demonstrates the profound influence of European missionaries and comparative philologists on the epistemological conceptualisation of languages in Africa. In the following section, we will see that there are stark contrasts between this case, and the invention of English as a language of 'civilisation'.

5 COPIOUSNESS AND CIVILISATION: INVENTING ENGLISH

The construction of colonised languages as inferior occurred alongside the valorisation of European languages, in an interrelated set of processes that helped to produce the superiority of 'the West'. On the premise that a language captures the personality, indeed the 'cultivation', of the nation that supposedly speaks it, claims were made about languages that were, by extension, claims about nations and their roles in the world. In this section, I take English as an example of a European language constructed as a cipher for civilisation. The

focus is on English, as opposed to French, to highlight the ways in which the post-colonial discourses of English examined in Chapter 4 differ from those of the colonial period. Conceptualising English as a discursive construction, I argue that the language was constructed as a 'language of civilisation' through the work of nineteenth century British thinkers, and that as part of this project scholars compiled a vast inventory for the language. As we will see, scholars saw the constitutive body and representational archive of the language as interrelated factors that informed one another; the vocabulary of English was large in part because of the language was 'civilised', and the language attained its level of civilisation in part because of its vast lexicon. As we will see, a salient part of this project was the creation of the *New English Dictionary*.

In Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the conceptualisation of language as emblematic of the national character was present in linguistic work. Britain had developed a form of linguistic-national consciousness in the seventeenth century (Hobsbawm, 1987, p.147), and later thinkers continued to explore questions of language and national identity. The reason for this, Crowley asserts, is that the construction of national identity is not a settled matter, but a 'constant process of change and development determined among other things by the political purposes that such constructions [are] to serve' (2003, p.57). In nineteenth-century British thought, that constant process of change was mapped onto change in language. For example, in *A book about words* (1869), G.F. Graham is explicit that the perpetual transformation of the nation finds its parallel in language: 'in the same way as a nation never stands still, but is constantly undergoing a silent - perhaps imperceptible - transformation, so it is with language' (Graham, 1869, p.xi). The fortunes of a language are tied to those of the nation. Graham argues that: '[i]t would be impossible for a nation either to improve or decay, and for its language to stay stationary. The one being a reflex of the other, they must stand or fall together' (ibid). Thus, Graham suggests an almost mechanical link between the fate of a nation and of its language: the fate of one expresses the fate of

another. For Graham, as for Herder's followers, claims about a nation are also claims about a national language, and vice versa. And as the construction of national identity is an ongoing process, in this view so must be the constitution and representation of the national language. The discursive construction of English served nationalist purposes, in terms of both seeking to unite the population of Britain itself, and representing Britain as a nation with an imperial destiny.

Crowley (2003) has shown that work on the national language attempted to unify the British population. While the advent of comparative philology began to have an impact in Britain in the 1830s (van Whye, 2005, p.95), British linguistic scholarship became distinguished from that of mainland Europe by the increasingly dominant discourse of 'the history of the language' (Crowley, 2003, pp.17-42). Essentially, 'British linguists did not pursue language, but *a* language (English)' (ibid, p.41). They attempted 'to trace the development of that genius [of English] as it historically evolved ... [engaging] with one of the most crucial tasks for any nation: the figuring of the national past in regard to its critical present' (ibid). The language itself, then, was conceptualised as an entity that bore historical witness to the 'English-speaking nation' (ibid, p.50). A key aspect to this was the construction of English as a unifying force (ibid, pp.63-70). Crowley demonstrates that in the 1850s there was an awareness that Britain remained divided following the Chartist movement, and that '[i]t was such division that the discourses constructed around the English language attempted to help heal as constant appeals were made to the socially unifying character of the language both nationally and intra-nationally' (ibid, p.66). Crowley refers to Archbishop Trench's *English Past and Present* (1855) as an archetypal example. Written during the national crisis provoked by the Crimean war, Trench's text appealed to readers to explore their affection for their country, by way of their language. He argued that a war leads each person 'to esteem and prize most that which he has in common with his countrymen, and not now any longer these things which separate and divide him from them' (Trench, 1855, cited in Crowley, 2003,

pp.66-67). The study of language was a key expression of this, as ‘the love of our language, what is it in fact but the love of our country expressing itself in one particular direction?’ (Trench, 1855, cited in Crowley, 2003, p.67). The use of English as a force to unite the nation was one aspect of its invention, but the language also served to represent colonial expansion as the natural extension of Britain’s greatness.

Indeed, English was, in part, constructed as exceptional precisely because of the success of Britain’s colonial expansion. This was necessarily related to the unity of the English nation, since:

The more the English nation extended the boundaries of its empire, the more the English language was praised as a superior language and subjected to extensive study. And, as a corollary, the more the unified English people were praised as all sharing in this sense of superiority (Crowley, 2003, p.60).

For certain commentators, this pride in the language took on a prophetic quality, as the exceptionality of English conferred upon it a global destiny. Trench wrote:

If the great acts of that nation to which we belong are precious to us, if we feel ourselves made greater by their greatness, summoned to a nobler life by the nobleness of Englishmen who have already lived and died, and have bequeathed to us a name which must not by us be made less, what exploits of theirs can well be nobler, what can more clearly point out their native land and ours as having fulfilled a glorious past, as being destined for a glorious future, than that they should have acquired for themselves and for those who come after them a clear, a strong, an harmonious, a noble language? (Trench, 1905 [1855], pp.3-4).

For Trench, language itself bears witness not only to the previous successes of the nation, but to its illustrious future. Like Herder, he perceived a national destiny, to which the language stood as testimony.⁵³ As Crowley observes, this glorious future was necessarily imperial: in Trench’s view, the expansion of Britain into new lands and the establishment of dominion over new peoples entailed victories for the English language (2003, p.60). De Quincey foretold of a (more specific) future of English, that was triumphant, bellicose, and firmly rooted in the imperial power of Britain. He claimed that:

⁵³ Crowley (2003, pp.43-76) demonstrates that Trench was inspired by the sort of nationalism that Herder represented.

The English language is travelling fast towards the fulfilment of its destiny. Through the influence of the dreadful republic [the U.S.A.] that within the thirty last years has run through all the stages of infancy into the first stage of maturity, and through the English colonies - African, Canadian, Indian, Australian - the English language ... is running forwards towards its ultimate mission of eating up ... all other languages. Even the German and the Spanish will inevitably sink before it (De Quincey, 1862, pp.149-150).

De Quincey conceptualised language contact as a battle that English would inevitably win. Taken together, these prophetic accounts of English suggested a 'manifest destiny': the expansion of English would be natural and justified, in part because the greatness of the language had already been demonstrated.

If De Quincey portrayed the success of English in conflict with other languages as inevitable, G.F. Graham (1869) drew on the idea of 'cultivation', and the discourse of the 'history of the language', to theorise why that was so. For Graham, a conflict of nations was necessarily (but secondarily) a battle of languages. Graham argued that when one 'nation' conquers another, the effect on the language of the conquered depends on the 'condition' of the language of the conquerors (1860, p.xi). 'If the victors be as superior to the vanquished in civilisation and improvement as they have proved themselves in physical power, they will impose their language on the conquered people'. Whereas if the language of the 'vanquished' is 'more cultivated' the reverse will take place: the language of the conquerors will be absorbed into the language of the conquered (ibid, pp.xi-xii). To prove his point, Graham referred to the Norman invasion of Britain. William the Conqueror, he argued, may have overpowered the 'Saxons', but the English language was 'much further advanced than the invading Norman-French [and it] therefore resisted this external pressure' (ibid, p.xiii).⁵⁴ This claim was likely inflected by the wider debate about the 'Norman Yoke', in which it was argued that, prior to the Norman invasion, the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Britain had lived in a free and equal society (see Hill, 1997, pp.46-111). In Hobsbawm's view,

⁵⁴ Graham uses 'the Saxon language' and 'the English language' interchangeably.

the 'Norman Yoke' debate was used as both an explanatory device and as part of the search for an English genealogy (Hobsbawm, 1972, p.9). It reflected the fact that a 'sense of the past as a collective continuity of experience remains surprisingly important, even to those most dedicated to innovation and the belief that novelty equals improvement' (ibid, p.13). In Graham's account, English was used as a resource both for establishing continuity with the past and for making a claim about the superior power of the Anglo-Saxons vis-à-vis the Normans. Precisely because the account suggested continuity, the posited history of the language proved the inherent strength of the language.

The link between English and 'civilisation' was salient in nineteenth century British discourse. Commentators argued that '[l]ike other empires the British Empire bestowed upon its citizens the greatest gift of all, the language of civilisation' (Crowley, 2003, p.61). The 'language of civilisation' was a significant element in the representational archive of English during the colonial period.⁵⁵ Marsh argued that 'English is emphatically the language of commerce, of civilisation, of social and religious freedom, of progressive intelligence, and of an active catholic philanthropy; and beyond any tongue ever used by man, it is of right the cosmopolite speech' (Marsh, 1860, cited in Crowley, 2003, p.61). And the Reverend James George, like Herder, understood nations as endowed with a specific mission to fulfil. His attempt to elucidate the 'mission of Great Britain in the world' begins with the point that 'she has been commissioned to teach a noble language, embodying the richest scientific and literary treasures' (George, 1867, p.4).⁵⁶ George held that there would one day be a universal language, to 'repair the evil that happened at Babel', and argued that the most suitable candidate was English, a language that has adapted itself to the thinking of its people, 'a highly civilized race' with a necessarily 'highly accomplished language' (ibid, pp.4-5). The

⁵⁵ Scholars have also shown that colonial-era French thinkers constructed French as the 'language of civilisation'. The language was envisaged as the vehicle of France's mission civilisatrice. See Kasuya (2001).

⁵⁶ In this, George echoes Thomas Watts, whose essay 'On the Probable Future Position of the English Language' argued that English enjoyed the 'most splendid' prospects 'that the world ha[d] ever seen'. This was in part because its roots in the 'Romanic and Teutonic stocks' made it particularly suitable to be a literary language (1850, p.212).

spread of English would bring a time ‘of great purity, moral order, truth and comparative peace’, and, ultimately, other languages ‘will remain only as the obscure patois of the world, while English will become the grand medium for all business of government, for commerce, for law, for science, for literature, for philosophy, and divinity’ (ibid, pp.5-6). Fundamentally, by dint of its supposed civilisational achievements, England was construed as ‘a modern nation which is fit to lead the world, especially in the very matter of language’ (Skeat, 1895, cited in Crowley, 2003, p.62). The discourse produced by these thinkers helped to justify British colonial expansion, and, in part, to naturalise it as a necessary extension of British civilisational success. Thus, they shaped the representational archive of English in a particular way: it became the ‘language of civilisation’, or, in Crowley’s terms, ‘the great exhibit of the empire’ (2003, p.62). In the remainder of this section, I consider how the delimitation and compilation of a linguistic inventory of English (realised, in part, through the *New English Dictionary* project) served to establish a definitive aspect of English’s constitutive body that lent significant weight to the language’s claim to greatness.⁵⁷

The work of linguists in nineteenth-century Britain served to establish an ostensibly objective basis for the claims that English was an exceptional language. I focus on one aspect of this: the ‘copiousness’ of the lexicon. Pennycook argues that the size of English, in terms of its vocabulary, was emphasised in colonial discourse as a ‘key argument in the demonstration of the superior qualities of English’ (1998, p.139). Indeed, since the colonial period, discourses of English have frequently invoked the notion that the language is particularly ‘big’ in order to support dubious images of English as ‘open, flexible, and integrationist’, and of English speakers as ‘the ablest thinkers’ precisely because of their access to a ‘vast vocabulary’ (ibid, pp.139-147). The creation of the *New English Dictionary* (later the *Oxford English Dictionary*) is relevant here because, as Willinsky argues, it ‘defines the

⁵⁷ There is not adequate space here to provide a full history of the *New English Dictionary*, and so my discussion will be limited to certain decisions made in the creation of the dictionary that had an impact on the invention of English. See Willinsky (1994) for an in-depth history.

scope of the English language, attesting to both its historical reach and global currency' (1994, p.7). That is, the *OED* indicates, with authority, what can and cannot be considered 'English'. Winchester, in his popular history, suggests a natural link between the *OED* and the discourses of English. The *OED* constituted a 'brand new dictionary of what was, after all, the very language of all this [British] greatness and moral suasion and muscularly Christian goodness, and a language that had been founded and nurtured in ... Britain' (Winchester, 2003, p.43). Thus English is greater than the body of words contained in the dictionary: those words merely stand as the lexical embodiment of a language that mirrors the exploits of the British Empire, a language of greatness, of morality, of an aggressive, purportedly benevolent, Christianity. Fundamentally, Willinsky indicates that the dictionary played a part in constructing a language fit for an empire. He argues that:

The making of the *OED* provides its own lessons in how English was imagined as a civilizing beacon, a light to guide lesser peoples out of their own dark ages. This dictionary provided a gothic tower of suitable proportions to hold that light aloft, all the while asserting its linguistic domination over nation and empire (Willinsky, 1998, p.200).

If the English language was 'the great exhibit of the Empire', then the *OED* was to become its showcase.

To understand the ideological role played by the *OED*, it is necessary to contextualise it as one of the 'massive projects of Victorian invention' (Pennycook, 2007, p.92), framed by the discourses of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The impetus for the project was outlined in Archbishop Trench's presentation to the Philological Society, published as *On Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries* (1857). The close identification between language and nation that Trench establishes in *English Past and Present* (1855) underpins his call for a new dictionary, which should stand as 'an historical monument, the history of a nation contemplated from one point of view' (Trench, 1857, p.6). The dictionary, Trench was clear, was to be the most comprehensive linguistic history of the nation yet compiled. This meant that the lexicographer should not act as the arbiter of language, making aesthetic judgements

as to which words were worthy of inclusion; rather, lay speakers should be trusted to ‘sift the bran from the flour’, while those compiling the dictionary should focus on the task of doing justice to the ‘immense extent of the literature of England’ (ibid, pp.2-7; pp.51-52). Thus, the aim was to produce a dictionary which ‘by the completeness of its vocabulary, and by the application of the historical method to the life and use of words, might be worthy of the English language and of English scholarship’ (Murray, 1888, p.v). The work was published by volumes from 1884-1928, at a cost of at least £300,000 (equivalent in 2019 to over £18.5m)⁵⁸ (Willinsky, 1994, p.12). Willinsky situates the creation of the *NED* as part of a project to construct the idea of the English nation as an engine of progress. He states:

The nation-as-instrument-of-history played its part in imperialism, serving as proof of an advanced civilization worthy of a global expansion that would bring such tools of modernization as nationhood to the rest of the world. During the rise of Victorian imperialism in Great Britain, Thomas Macaulay wrote his monumental history of England, the National Portrait Gallery was founded, and the massive publishing projects behind the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (which later became the *Oxford English Dictionary*) and the *Dictionary of National Biography* were initiated. These mighty works retroactively assembled a historical foundation for a nation worthy of a global empire (Willinsky, 1998, p.120).

In this case, the dictionary ‘retroactively assembled’ an inventory of the language that was sufficiently extensive to do justice to the exceptionalist discourses of English.

In order to produce a linguistic inventory of the language, however, lexicographers required a methodological tool that would allow them to delimit ‘English’, and to record it in a finite dictionary. James Murray, the primary editor of the *NED*, clearly addressed this issue in his ‘General Explanations’ for the first volume of the dictionary. He clarified that, due the imperceptibility of any clear ‘borders’ to the language, it was the job of lexicographers to draw definite limits for the language (1888, p.xvii). The delimitation of the language was facilitated by the concept of the ‘standard language’. Crowley argues that the

⁵⁸ This figure is a conservative estimate, based on Willinsky’s assertion that the project had cost £300,000 by 1928. It is worth noting that the press was already operating at a debt of £51,452 (£6,569,296.74, February 2019 equivalent) by 1897 (Murray, 1977, p.252). Moreover, this figure does not account for the hours of volunteer labour employed in the gathering of citations. Inflation is calculated using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator (BoE, 2019).

lexicographers working within the discourse of ‘the history of the language’:

in some senses did more to theorise and delineate the standard literary language than any other influence. Their project and the discourse within which they worked did, in a certain sense, create the ‘standard literary language’ since their work demanded it. They needed the ‘standard literary language’ as a concept since it offered a set of delimitations that were essentially required for the project to be able to function since it delimited both the period they had to cover and the material they were to consider (Crowley, 2003, p.99).

The standard literary language, then, was a heuristic concept, necessary to approach a project of such scope. It was also necessary because the lexicographers were reliant on written records in order to compile a history with examples of usage (Crowley, 2003, pp.99-101). Fortunately, as Trench had argued, there was an ‘immense’ body of literature to be drawn on (1857, pp.51-52). And because words were to be included regardless of the lexicographers’ personal tastes, the dictionary was still able to serve ‘ostensibly as a proper and far more democratic foil to the forty dignitaries of the [French] academy across the channel’ (Willinsky, 1994, p.17). If the source was to be literature, one question remained: what temporal boundaries should be placed on ‘English’?

The lexicographers and historians of the language involved in the *New English Dictionary* project were keenly aware that language constantly changes, and that, accordingly, English does not exist as a static entity. Grimm’s innovation of periodising Germanic languages (giving them ‘Old’, ‘Middle’, and ‘Modern’ variations) was enabling, but posed a specific problem in itself: when does ‘real’ English begin, or, as the question was posed by scholars at the time, at what point does ‘Saxon’ mutate into ‘English’ (Matthews, 2000, p.3)? There was minor disagreement amongst those who broadly saw ‘English’ as existing after the Norman Invasion: Charles Richardson, in his *New Dictionary of the English Language* (1837) held that ‘English’ began in 1300, while for T.R. Lounsbury, the date was 1150 (1883, pp.71-72). For these scholars, ‘English’ was opposed to ‘Saxon’, and their work is ‘associated with the pervasive ideas that such a change [from Saxon to English] is brought about by skilful poets who renovate a barbarous language, purging it of its Germanisms (Matthey, 2000, p.4).

In this view, then, Saxon had been ‘cultivated’ and distanced from its Germanic roots, after its contact with Latinate Norman French. Clearly, this stands in direct contrast to Graham’s (1860) argument that Saxon defeated Norman French because it was the ‘stronger’ language. Indeed, for some scholars, English was a particularly valuable language precisely because it was influenced by Norman French. For instance, Grimm argued that both of English’s progenitors contributed positively to the state of the language. He argued that English’s:

highly spiritual genius, and wonderfully happy development and condition, have been the result of a surprisingly intimate union of the two noblest languages in modern Europe, the Teutonic and the Romance—It is well known in what relation these two stand to one another in the English tongue; the former supplying in far larger proportion the material groundwork, the latter the spiritual conceptions (Grimm, quoted in Trench, 1855, p.38).

Grimm referred to ‘Old English’ to mean what is now commonly called ‘Middle English’ - English at the beginning of the Norman era (Matthews, 2000, p.4). Thus he indicates here that, for him, ‘real’ English begins as an admixture of Latinate and Germanic tongues.

The opposing view incorporated Saxon into English, a rhetorical move that played an ideological role. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this was increasingly the approach that was adopted. The shift is evident in two editions of T.R. Lounsbury’s *The History of the English Language* (1886; 1897). Lounsbury notes that there are clear grammatical and lexical differences between ‘Anglo-Saxon’ (450-1150CE) and ‘Modern English’ (1550CE onwards), and, on that basis, argues that they are very different linguistic systems (Lounsbury, 1886, pp.22-24).

These differences between the earliest and modern English are essential differences: they are not the characteristics of a development of language, but of an actual transformation. Hence has arisen the necessity of a special term applied to this period of our speech. A nomenclature which, in the history of our tongue, includes under one name the English of Cadmon and of Tennyson is unsatisfactory and misleading - full as much so one which confounds the language of Cadmon and of Chaucer (Lounsbury, 1886, p.24).

At this point, Lounsbury is against a common name for ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘English’, because it is not just a matter of linguistic ‘development’ but of fundamental ‘transformation’. Eleven

years later, in the revised edition of the same work, Lounsbury states that:

There are, indeed, advantages and disadvantages connected with any terminology that may be adopted. It is certainly an argument in favor of the designation as Old English of what is here called Anglo-Saxon, that it makes prominent the continuity of our speech. It is an objection to it that, besides the inevitable ambiguity of the epithet 'old,' it suggests wrong ideas as to the nature of that continuity. Still it would be folly to attach importance to this particular subject (Lounsbury, 1897, p.v).

Paradoxically, Lounsbury both acknowledges the significance of nomenclature, and denies its importance. But he is clear that there is a particular benefit to the use of the term 'Old English' to cover the period from 450-1150CE, as it demonstrates an evolutionary trajectory from the language of the Anglo-Saxons to the language of late-nineteenth-century England. And, since the language 'stands or falls' with the nation (Graham, 1869, p.xi), it follows that there is an English nation in continuous existence from 450CE.⁵⁹ As Winchester comments, what scholars previously designated as 'Anglo-Saxon' is now generally referred to as 'Old English', 'in an effort to promote the notion of English as an ever-evolving language' (Winchester, 2003, p.5). Employing this nomenclature at the end of the nineteenth century, then, constructs the English language and nation as an entity that has endured for around 1,500 years.

The *New English Dictionary* was somewhat ambiguous on this point. Murray argued that there was no clear point of inception for the English language, and that the lexicographers had to impose limits for practical purposes (1888, pxviii). He resolved that the only temporal basis on which the *NED* would exclude words would be if they were obsolete by 1150CE. But this was itself slightly contradictory, since 'to words actually included this date has no application; their history is exhibited from their first appearance, however early' (ibid). From this, it appears that Murray concurs with scholars who see 'real' English as beginning with the Norman Invasion. His justification for the date, however, is that 1150CE constitutes 'the

⁵⁹ Certainly, this is very early in terms of dating, but the appeal of such a long history of the language is demonstrated by Kington-Olyphant's claim that Beowulf was 'written on the mainland' in the fifth century and 'sets before us the doughty deeds of an Englishman, before his tribe had come to Britain' (1878, p.18).

only natural halting place, short of going back to the beginning, so as to include the entire Old English or “Anglo Saxon” Vocabulary’ (ibid). Thus Murray acknowledges the debate, and suggests that the historical break represented by Norman rule was a natural turning point for the language itself. But he suggests that, prior to the Norman Invasion, the main language of England was still a form of English. At any rate, the dictionary would comprehensively exhibit some 700 years of the history of the English language and, following Trench (1857), the English nation. The 700 years prior to that (the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ period, according to Lounsbury (1883)) would neither be fully compiled nor excluded - it was part of ‘English’, but not necessarily part of the project.

The discursive construction of English as a language of civilisation, then, found a justification in the compilation of a ‘vast’ inventory for the language. In one view, the *NED*, at great financial cost, retroactively assembled an unbroken ‘language’ from centuries of literature produced in something like ‘English’, and, in doing so, constituted the literature of England. As Winchester puts it, the *NED* included a ‘gigantic amassment of words... [with] 414,825 discerned and catalogued [by] 1928’ (2003, pp.1-2), and it displayed them with ‘comprehensive authority’ (Willinsky, 1994, pp.3-4). In 1904, Henry Bradley, himself an editor of the *NED*, praised English thus:

we cannot reasonably deny that English has been immeasurably improved by its incorporation of alien elements ... It is true that our language is a difficult instrument to use with full effect, on account of its richness in those seeming synonyms which ignorant or careless writers employ without discrimination; but in skilled hands it is capable of a degree of precision and energy which can be equalled in few languages, either ancient or modern (Bradley, 1904, p.110).

Bradley’s mention of ‘alien elements’ presupposes an originary core to the English language, which has presumably been built upon since the Saxon period through the incorporation of ‘alien elements’. For precisely this reason, Bradley suggests that the long history of English has only strengthened the language. And if the perceived growth and ‘richness’ of the English language did not suggest its ‘cultivation’, then surely the success of the English

nation did. In a context where national destiny is indicated by linguistic history, the constructed history of English pointed to an equally successful future.

6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have considered the discursive construction of language. In doing so, I have attempted to show the limitations of the structuralist model for analysing the ideological politics of language in the colonial project. For, the structuralist approach relegated the representational archive to the status of an ‘external’ concern, and in doing so it developed the radical methodology that was necessary to study language as a system, and ultimately to argue in favour of linguistic equality. However, as I have demonstrated, neither the invention of ‘Bantu’ nor ‘English’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century isolated the constitutive body from the representational archive. Rather, thinkers attempted to shape the representational archive in particular ways, at times using facts about the putative constitutive body in order to support broad, ideological claims. Through discursive representation, one language was produced as ‘rudimentary’, and the other as ‘civilised’. Thus, grammatical features of ‘Bantu’ entailed a ‘prosaic’ worldview, and the size of the ‘English’ lexicon presupposed a sophisticated tongue. Though this is only a limited study, it demonstrates the critical point that Saussure’s model of language truncated its object of study, conceptualising it rather differently from those engaged in processes of linguistic invention. An integral model of language, which acknowledges the relation between the constitutive body and the representational archive, offers a more sophisticated understanding of how, throughout the colonial project, languages were made into ciphers for civilisation.

It is also worth pointing out that the examples given here demonstrate the importance of material support given to different languages. A great deal of capital was invested in the production of ‘English’, by contrast with ‘Bantu’. The invention of ‘English’, which involved

such massive projects as the creation of the *NED*, required vast resources, including both paid and unpaid labour. The total cost to produce the authoritative inventory of English has never been released (or possibly calculated), but the project represented an investment of at least £18.5m (2019 equivalent). By contrast, the ‘Bantu’ languages were compiled by Christian missionaries, at a fraction of the cost and drawing on a far more limited body of written material (if any at all). The investment involved in the two respective processes were also distinct. ‘English’ was, to a significant degree, constructed by British scholars who were operating under a nationalist aegis. ‘Bantu’ languages were constructed for their speakers, rather than by them, and it was not until 1956 that an autochthonous account helped to shift the representational archive of the language family. This is not to say that the differences constructed were always the result of conscious decisions made by those involved, but the degree to which linguists and language specialists were stakeholders in either context should be considered a factor.

The construction of both languages demonstrates an important point: in language, as in other areas, discourse produces a specific kind of ‘truth’. As I noted in Chapter 1, discourse becomes ‘truth’ when it is operationalised and it has real effects. The discursive construction of languages, as representational archives, produces particular regimes of truth. As the virtues of languages were directly linked to the human qualities of speakers, claims about languages produced subjects in different ways. Thus, through the methods of comparative philology, ‘Bantu’ was produced as a family of languages that rendered its speakers incapable of cultural production. By stark contrast, and because of the link between a language and a nation, the discursive and material work on ‘English’ endowed Britain with an imperial destiny, premised upon an ostensibly ‘civilised’ language. Thus, the fact that languages were unequal in discourse was inseparable from the fact that they were unequal in practice. In this view, the representational archives of ‘Bantu’ and ‘English’ played a role in the ideological politics of language throughout colonialism. That is, by shaping views about the roles that

were appropriate for each language, and by extension for speakers, the representational archives of 'Bantu' and 'English' contributed to the legitimisation of the colonial project. Debates about the characteristics of languages were by extension debates about the rights of their speakers to political and cultural autonomy.

The argument made in this chapter highlights a crucial point: we cannot fully understand the politics of language in the colonial era through a Saussurean model of language. This point is particularly stark because intellectuals at the time were explicit that, in their view, a 'language' was more than just its constitutive body. An important question follows: if we equate the term 'language' with the constitutive body today, are we able to develop a sufficiently sophisticated understanding of the politics of English in Rwanda? Evidently, as Rajagopalan (2001) and Reagan (2004) note, the implied model of Saussurean linguistics, which treats a language as a discrete system of linguistic features, is dominant today. Yet accounts such as Pennycook's 'The Myth of English as an International Language' (2007b) suggest that the linguistic construct continues to incorporate a representational archive, which is constructed through discourses and offers particular understandings of languages themselves. Indeed, it is clear from Alexis Kagame's *La philosophie bāntu-rwandaise de l'Être* (1956) that the *Cours de linguistique générale* did not end alternative conceptualisations of language; Kagame fights his battle not on Saussure's terrain but on that of Bleek, and ultimately von Humboldt. In the following chapter, then, I will ask whether the representational archive of English is an important feature of the ideological politics of language in Rwanda.

Four: English, Prosperity, and Hegemony after 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

On October 8th 2008, the Rwandan cabinet (consisting of the President, Prime Minister, and Ministers) passed a resolution calling for public education to be English-medium. Before the resolution, individual schools had the power to decide whether they would teach in French or English from Primary 4. After it was implemented, all state schools were required to teach through English alone. The language policy closely coincided with two other reforms that, at least superficially, aimed to extend access to schooling and create a mass education system. These were the 9 Year Basic Education (9YBE) policy, introduced in 2009, and the 12 Year Basic Education Policy (12YBE), introduced in 2012. These policies legislated that each child be entitled to nine, and later twelve, years of education, free of charge, in government-run 'basic education schools'. Theoretically, 9YBE allowed children to attend school until the end of lower secondary (S3), and 12YBE extended that to the end of upper secondary (S6) (Williams, 2015, p.9). As we will see, however, critics have argued that the promise of a free, basic education for all elides ongoing costs associated with education (see Abbott, Williams, and Mupenzi, 2015). Nevertheless, the government's aim to expand basic education 'quickly and in a cost-effective manner' garnered 'international recognition and respect' (Williams, 2015, p.9). The basic education policies seemed to indicate a pragmatic, education-focussed government.

Reactions to the language policy as it has been implemented in practice have been somewhat ambiguous. In Pearson's (2014) ethnographic study of how the policy is experienced at the school level, she characterises the situation as 'policy without a plan'. She

demonstrates that the education system was unprepared for the ‘sudden’ linguistic shift, pointing to the fact that teachers who could not speak English were given minimal language training (reportedly one month), and she outlines the difficulties faced by both students and teachers as a result of the policy. Pearson observes that teachers and journalists alike largely believed that the policy was motivated by political or economic reasons, rather than pedagogic ones (2014, p.44). Indeed, the cabinet resolution itself offered a simple reason for the prioritisation of English: the resolution was to be ‘a part of enhancing Rwanda’s role within the East African Community in particular, and at international level in general’ (GoR, 2008).⁶⁰ Thus at the inception of the policy the government defended it in terms of international communication, though, as we will see, more justifications were given over time. Samuelson and Freedman view the policy as enmeshed with domestic politics; they acknowledge that the government argues that it will be economically beneficial, but suggest that this ‘overlooks the ways that language use is linked to identity amongst Rwanda’s elites’ (2010, p.192). They conclude that a key factor in the policy is the conflict between English-speaking and French-speaking élites that I examined in Chapter 2, with language being a ‘proxy for identity’ (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.197; see also Hintjens, 2008). In this chapter, I aim to expand on the argument that the policy is related to the conflict between élites. In Chapter 2, I argued that after the genocide, the RPF began a ‘war of position’ to refashion certain institutions of civil society as supports for the hegemony of an English-speaking, largely Batutsi, élite. I take this argument as the political context for my examination of the 2008 language policy, from which I will attempt to draw some conclusions about the ideological politics of English in Rwanda. I will demonstrate that politics and economics are intimately linked in Rwanda’s language policy, precisely because the construction of English

⁶⁰ The East African Community (EAC) is an intergovernmental organisation, comprising Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and, since 2007, Rwanda and Burundi, and, since 2016, South Sudan. English is the official language of the EAC, and member states are encouraged to adopt it as an official language. The focus in this chapter is on the relevance of the 2008 policy to Rwandan hegemony, and as such the role of English in relation to the EAC will not be considered in detail. See Mwaniki (2010) for an overview of language management issues within the EAC.

as a 'language of prosperity' is central to the justification and ideological function of the new system.

First, it should be noted that the legitimacy of the RPF on the global stage is intimately connected to Rwanda's economic prosperity. The RPF took power four years after the civil war began, by which point Rwanda was socially and economically devastated. As Kagame put it, in the ruins of the genocide, the RPF was able to 'start from scratch' in rebuilding the country (2010). The government began an extensive, planned, 'high-speed transformation of the state and economy', aiming to '[re-engineer] the souls of "new Rwandans" that [would] populate the Singapore of central Africa' (Jones, 2014, p.251). The basic framework of this transformation was contained within the government's flagship blueprint for development, *Vision 2020*.⁶¹ Released in 2000, *Vision 2020* constitutes an ambitious twenty-year plan to radically transform Rwanda from a low income agricultural society to a middle income country built on a 'knowledge economy'. In the decade following the release of *Vision 2020*, Rwanda experienced strong economic growth that, at least 'at first glance', suggested a 'Rwandan renaissance' (Ansoms and Rostagno, 2012, p.428). The government received widespread praise for an impressive economic recovery; not only was the state rebuilt with 'surprising speed' after 1994, but economic growth (measured by GDP) has been 'exceptional', averaging 7.4% per year between 1997 and 2006 (Ansoms, 2011, p.241). Eleven years after *Vision 2020*, Zorbas makes a fairly typical comment about Rwanda's success:

Rwanda is a poor, land-locked, aid-dependent country with few natural resources, unstable neighbors, and a post-genocide legacy of physical and psychological damage (see Collier 2007). This context makes the Government of Rwanda's economic and social development all the more impressive. Over the past decade, the Government of Rwanda has won praise and trust from its main donors for these achievements and for managing aid efficiently (Zorbas, 2011, p.103).

It is undeniably the case that Rwanda has performed well on a number of indicators, including GDP. And, as Zorbas indicates, those successes have led to the government

⁶¹ As of 2019, *Vision 2050* is set to follow, but remains in preparation (World Bank/GoR, 2019, p.8).

receiving international praise for its governance. However, a rise in GDP does not necessarily entail a better standard of living for all citizens. Ansoms and Cioffo demonstrate that inequality has increased since 2000, with the majority of Rwandans enduring worsening living conditions while surviving on subsistence agriculture (2016, p.1247). Thus the praise that the government receives comes in spite of the conditions experienced by the country's poorest citizens, with both Rwandan officials and international actors benefitting from the depiction of Rwanda as an African 'success story' (Ansons et al, 2016, p.49). In short, the government is depicted as particularly successful largely on the basis of its performance in relation to key development indicators.

Recent work on Rwanda has argued that the country's economic success and political stability have shielded the RPF and President Kagame from criticism. As we saw in Chapter 2, the early post-genocide period saw greater restrictions on civil rights alongside the increasing dominance of the RPF in political society, and a number of commentators have characterised Kagame's premiership as increasingly autocratic or dictatorial (see Reyntjens, 2004; Jones, 2014; Rever, 2018). In popular media, Marc Sommers calls Kagame 'The Darling Dictator of the Day' (2012), while Jeffrey Gettleman sees him as 'The Global Elite's Favourite Strongman' (2013). Both writers argue that international governments support Kagame because of Rwanda's economic success, with Gettleman asserting that 'aid flows to Rwanda because Kagame is a celebrated manager' (2013). Reese echoes this opinion, contending that the government's supporters highlight 'Rwanda's rapid economic growth under Kagame's policies', alongside the 'paved roads and clean sidewalks' that have become a common motif in journalistic pieces on contemporary Rwanda (2014, p.108). Judi Rever suggests that Rwanda's development record casts Kagame 'as a hero for stopping the carnage and rebuilding a shattered nation from the ground up', a narrative which has allowed the government to 'consolidate power, pocket billions of dollars in aid and take credit for an economic miracle' (Rever, 2018, p.1; p.3).

The argument that Rwanda's reputation for economic success shields the government from criticism is significant because the education reforms are part of a broader economic plan. Ron-Balsera (2011) has argued this point, demonstrating that education policy should be understood as part of the Rwandan plan for economic development, in part because it conceptualises the education system as a mechanism for the improvement of 'human capital'. There is reason to consider language a crucial element in this process. For as Assan and Walker observe, Kagame has established a link between 'development, language, and education' (2012, p.176). But the justifications for the policy that characterise it as an economic decision also portray it as apolitical. In *The Washington Post*, McCrummen reports that government officials claim that the decision to focus on English was 'purely an economic one', and she quotes Aloisea Inyumba, a senator and member of the RPF, as saying '[i]ntroducing English is just being realistic. English is the language of business' (McCrummen, 2008). In *The Guardian*, McGreal quotes Vincent Karega, the Rwandan trade and industry minister, who stated that 'English has emerged as a backbone for growth and development not only in the region but around the globe' (McGreal, 2008). Thus the official justifications for the language policy draw on the general understanding that English is needed to compete in a global marketplace. This has been incorporated into scholarly discussions of the policy. Laviolette argues that '[m]astery of the English language is the most vital key to the creation of the type of economy necessary to alter [Rwanda's] current reality and fulfil its lofty ambitions' (2012, p.43).

I have discussed the notion that English is important to Rwanda's economic plans elsewhere (Spowage, 2018), observing that the medium of instruction policy is in part a response to the changing requirements of transnational capitalism, and that the reforms to education have entailed the creation of a small, elite stratum of English-speaking labour which fits the employment requirements of global corporations. But although this critique is important, there is yet to be an account of the policy that considers it as part of a

hegemonic strategy. Put simply, accounts that emphasise the role of global economics tend to suggest that the motivation for the policy is primarily external to Rwanda. But by interrogating the link between the language policy and RPF hegemony we can see that English not only connects a stratum of Rwandans to the ‘global economy’, but that it also serves to ensure the continuation of the RPF’s hold on power. The economic justification for the policy is not external to this function, but is rather a key component of it. For as I will argue, the notion that English is a ‘language of prosperity’ naturalises a shift towards English as Rwanda’s legitimate language, and encourages ideological alignment with the neoliberal reorganisation of Rwanda. In this way, the English language policy becomes part of the manufacture of consent.

The structure of my argument is as follows. The first section investigates the historical construction of the ‘language of prosperity’, giving an overview of how English has been constructed historically as a language that is able to offer wealth to its speakers. In the second section, I examine the economic context of the policy, and argue that the education system continues to produce a limited, educated élite, while helping to produce English as Rwanda’s legitimate language. In the final section, I analyse the justifications given for the policy, and the way in which the education system encourages children to think about English and prosperity. Here, I argue that the mobilisation of the ‘language of prosperity’ in Rwanda serves to naturalise the economic order of the country and, ultimately, to provide ideological support for the RPF. Accordingly, the policy itself must be understood as fundamentally political, and as part of the project to construct RPF hegemony.

2 THE 'LANGUAGE OF PROSPERITY', FROM EMPIRE TO 'DEVELOPMENT'

In arguing that English is needed in Rwanda for economic reasons, commentators place the language policy in a larger historical context. The discursive link between English and wealth has been acknowledged by Pennycook (2007) and Phillipson (2008; 2009), but it has not been explored or historicised in any depth. Phillipson refers to English as the 'lingua economica', pointing to its predominant role 'in business and in advertising', and the idea that it is 'the language of corporate neoliberalism', spread by 'the corporate globalisation imperative' (2008, p.250; 2009, p.338). Thus, for him, English is the 'lingua economica' by dint of its role in global business - and to this, we might add the role played by English in the forms of transnational capitalism that characterise 'globalisation' (see Spowage, 2018). However, this neglects a crucial, subtly different link between English and wealth. This is the notion that 'English holds out promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it' despite actually being 'a language tied to very particular class positions and possibilities of development' (Pennycook, 2007, p.101). In relation to this point we need to be specific, for it is not enough to characterise the link between English and wealth as merely a function of the use of the language in business. We must also be clear that English promises personal prosperity to those who are not involved in 'corporate globalisation'. The crucial issue is whether this is realised in practice. For this reason, throughout this section I will attempt to elaborate the discursive construction of English as the 'language of prosperity'. The 'promise' held out by English has in fact been a relatively stable discursive construction, first evident in the early nineteenth century and still current today. In the limited space here, I attempt to give a representative picture of this construction, demonstrating its colonial roots and the way in which it was rearticulated for the post-colonial era.

There is a contemporary school of thought that the spread of a language will increase in

direct relation to the economic power of States that are associated with it (either by its status as a majority or official language). This view is epitomised by a recent article in *The Economist*, which argues that Macron's France is wasting resources by building schools around the world with the aim of spreading French. Rather, '[r]eforms that get the French economy growing as Germany's has done would do more than all the shiny new French-teaching schools in the world' (*The Economist*, 2018). This mechanistic understanding of the spread of individual languages has a discursive history of at least two centuries, but the link between economy and the diffusion of a language was not always conceived in this way. In fact, in the eighteenth century, the expansion of British trade and commerce was perceived by some as an obstacle to the spread of English. This view is put forth by Antoine de Rivarol, in his 1757 essay on the 'universality' of the French language. De Rivarol's essay attempted to explain the dominance of French within the intellectual and literary circles of eighteenth century Europe. To do so, he detailed the language's merits relative to the failings of other European languages - in particular English, German, Italian, and Spanish. In part, merits and flaws are identified at the level of the constitutive body: de Rivarol criticised English as a language with neither the 'fullness' nor 'strength' of French, and critiqued its syntactic structure for having rules with 'fewer applications than exceptions' (de Rivarol, [1757] 1919, p.41).⁶² But de Rivarol also credited culture and the personality of nations with the relative spread and prestige of languages. In his view, British traders were too concerned with making money to recognise that trade had the potential to act as a vehicle for spreading one's language. Indeed, the British had an unfortunate habit of conducting business in the various languages of their customers (de Rivarol, [1757] 1919, p.40).⁶³ De Rivarol painted the British as accommodating

⁶² De Rivarol's position shares similarities with the 'inherent value hypothesis' proposed by Giles, Bourhis, and Davies (1979). The 'inherent value hypothesis' holds that certain models of language are superior to others on an inherent, aesthetic basis (Giles, Bourhis, and Davies, 1979, p.591). De Rivarol does not restrict his critique to aesthetic judgments, but he is clear that strengths and weaknesses are inherent to different languages.

⁶³ It is worth noting that '[t]he notion that English speakers were particularly inept in learning foreign languages arose only when English power had reached around the world; the prevailing sentiment in the seventeenth century was that they were accomplished polyglots' (Bailey, 1991, p.98). In the eighteenth century, de Rivarol appears to take the latter view.

multilinguals, and thus unwilling to spread their language despite the fact that they were representatives of an increasingly prosperous power, which was already beginning to dominate maritime trade. The French, by contrast, could spread the language ‘almost without leaving’ France, on the basis of ‘charm’ rather than ‘riches’ (ibid, p.21). De Rivarol’s reading of the situation became very influential (Thomas Watts credited it with ‘a reputation somewhat out of proportion to its merits’ (1850, p.209)). But it also represents a way of thinking that would soon be outmoded, as ‘riches’ came to be reconstituted not as an obstacle to the spread of English, but its motor.

In the century after de Rivarol’s essay, there was increasing optimism about the fate of English around the world. Underwritten by British and American imperial successes, commentators in the mid-nineteenth century declared ‘[w]ithout the least uncertainty ... that culture, religion, literature, technology, and wealth [were] all tied to the use of English’ (Bailey, 1991, p.116). The wealth of English speakers was represented by a number of commentators as directly related to the language itself; for example, in 1849, Read asserted that English ‘is the language of the arts and sciences, of trade and commerce, of civilisation and religious liberty’, and that it has ‘extraordinary resources for ameliorating the condition of man’ (1849, p.48). In this regard, it is worth looking in detail at one essay that represents English as tied to wealth: Eis Eclectikwn’s *Language in Relation to Commerce, Missions, and Government: England’s Ascendancy and the World’s Destiny* (1846). ‘Eis Eclectikwn’ is a pseudonym, and the identity of the writer has never been revealed. We can deduce that they likely had a classical education, with ‘Eis Eclectikwn’ being a transliteration from Greek.⁶⁴ The essay

⁶⁴ The exact meaning of this is unclear. ‘Eis Eclectikwn’ may be a transliteration of ‘εις ἐκλεκτικῶν’, or possibly ‘εἷς ἐκλεκτικῶν’. The former would be unconventional: ‘εις’ means ‘into’ or ‘to’, and usually governs an accusative; but ‘ἐκλεκτικῶν’ is a genitive plural, with a meaning close to ‘of those capable of exercising rational choice.’ ‘εἷς’ would translate as ‘one’, but would normally be transliterated as ‘heis’. However, this may be closer to the intended meaning; ‘one of (or belonging to) those capable of exercising rational choice’. I tentatively suggest that the name is intended to indicate an author who is sufficiently informed to offer recommendations on the future of English. My thanks to Tony Crowley for pointing out the Greek roots of ‘Eis Eclectikwn’, and to Sam Ross and Wei Zhou for their assistance with translation and transliteration. See TLG (2019) for definitions.

indicates that he was part of the British ‘mercantile community’, and the fact that it was published in Manchester and focusses on the context of British India might suggest that he was involved in the textile trade.⁶⁵ The essential argument of Eclectikwn’s essay is that the ‘mercantile community at home and abroad’ has failed to take adequate interest in English, and that, in fact, it should view the spread of English as a matter of vital importance (1846, p.19). This is based on the notion that a ‘lingua franca for commerce’ would facilitate international trade, while the general diffusion of English could transform British colonies into vast new markets for English publishing (ibid, p.5; pp.18-19). Thus the argument is that the spread of English will remove barriers to trade between individual merchants, and expand the markets that are available to them.

At the root of Eclectikwn’s argument is a construction of English as the natural partner of prosperity. It is worth quoting one passage at length:

If all seek to promote and solemnize the same rites and principles of religion, should they not cultivate the same medium of converse, a kind of sacred language, a consecrated speech, by which their hallowed sympathies shall blend together and their cordial Hallelujahs shall swell in one choral strain? The Jews had the Hebrew for their inspired mysteries - the Moslem creed consecrated the Arabic in the esteem of its votaries - the Church of Rome has usually celebrated its ritual in the Latin. Philosophy herself chose Greek as the vernacular dialect for all her schools and as the vehicle through which her wise men communicated to all lands and distant ages her maxims and counsels. All the Chinese (350 millions) have one written language. Is it chimerical to anticipate the prevalence of one tongue, the utterance of one lip, wherever Christianity and free trade are maintained? (Eclectikwn, 1846, p.5).

Eclectikwn draws on a salient feature of the Abrahamic religions: the association of a holy text, and the belief system that it represents, with a specific language. He extends this to the use of Greek in philosophy, a pairing that is clearly natural because ‘philosophy herself’ chose it. The implication, then, is not only that Christianity (by which we should perhaps understand Anglicanism, as distinct from the Catholicism of ‘the Church of Rome’) is

⁶⁵ I will refer to Eclectikwn as ‘he’: as someone wealthy and classically educated in 1846, he was likely to be male.

inherently married to 'free trade', but that there must be a language that is naturally the 'sacred language' of this unity.⁶⁶ Eclectikwn drew on both the constitutive bodies and representational archives of different tongues to argue that English must be this language; he pits the 'vigorous' English ('unquestionably the language most adapted for trade') against Italian (a language of 'measures and piano cadences', whose speakers 'thrill to its accents' but which 'boasts [sic] of no colonies') and French (a mincing tongue, prone to 'warlike gasconade', 'fashionable frivolities' and 'minute philosophy') (Eclectikwn, 1846, pp.6-8). That English is the suitable language for carrying commerce and Christianity is clear from the fact that it 'is imbued with the bold, the vigorous, and aggressive principles of liberty in politics, freedom in trade, and reform in religion' (ibid, p.7). And by arguing that English is 'imbued' with the values that Eclectikwn celebrates in British politics, economics, and theology, he suggests that the language can play a causal role in spreading these values. Thus, Eclectikwn argues that missionaries should preach the gospel of Christianity alongside the gospel of free trade, and that both should be facilitated by public servants who prioritise the spread of English above all (ibid, p.5; pp.17-18). In this way, Eclectikwn envisages a global linguistic community with commerce at its core.

One salient feature of Eclectikwn's essay is the link it establishes between English, commerce, and a 'storehouse' of knowledge. In this way, it goes beyond vague assertions about the suitability of English for trade, and suggests a concrete reason that the spread of English could entail the spread of prosperity. For Eclectikwn points to English as the gateway to a wealth of technical knowledge, the likes of which could serve to replicate industrial transformation around the globe (and as we will see, this is a notion that was drawn out more systematically in the following century). In particular, he applies this argument to India, asserting that the diffusion of English could be culturally and economically

⁶⁶ See Porter (1985) for a history of the discursive marriage of Christianity and commerce. As he points out, this was a prevalent 'slogan' of missionary activity in the early part of the nineteenth century.

transformative. He argues that access to English entails access to ‘a copious, expressive, and well modulated tongue, with its storehouse filled from the wisdom of a hundred generations’ (Eclectikwn, 1846, p.16). He continues to quote T.H. Maddock, then governor of Bengal, who told the alumni of a madrassa that a ‘Mohammedan gentleman’ ought to become acquainted with English literature (as well as ‘their own’), not only because they would receive preference for ‘respectable offices’ ‘if they were sufficiently conversant with English to discharge the duties which would be required from them’, but also because ‘through this language alone can you acquire all that information in arts and sciences which modern times have added to the stores of ancient knowledge’ (quoted in Eclectikwn, 1846, pp.14-15). Importantly, for Eclectikwn, the ‘storehouse’ must be accessed through English. This stands in stark contrast to Macaulay’s *Minute* of 1835. Macaulay also argued that the English language held particular knowledge, but, for him, it would be the duty of an administrative class of Indians to ‘refine the vernacular dialects’ of India and to ‘enrich’ them with Western scientific terms in order to render them ‘fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population’ (1835). Macaulay acknowledged the possibility of translating the ‘storehouse’, albeit within a paradigm that framed Indian languages as insufficient and in need of improvement.⁶⁷ But translation does not figure in Eclectikwn’s argument; in fact, his insistence that English is necessary to access the ‘storehouse’ implies that it is untranslatable.

The notion of the ‘storehouse’ asserts a close relationship between the spread of English and the spread of liberal capitalism, whereby the one presumes the other. Because English is ‘full of thought and goodness’, its diffusion in India will ‘remove hinderances to commerce and peaceful fellowship’ (Eclectikwn, 1846, pp.8-9). Eclectikwn suggests that the advanced knowledge contained within the ‘storehouse’ would facilitate the development of industrial, liberal capitalism, in the nineteenth-century British mould. Moreover, he posits the spread

⁶⁷ See Steadman-Jones (2006) for an account of the grammatical representation of ‘Hindustani’, which exemplifies the early nineteenth century paradigm that Indian languages must be ‘improved’ if they were to be considered fit for anything other than vernacular purposes.

of liberal capitalism as an unproblematic good, and as something that is naturally propelled by English. This is best demonstrated by the transformative power that he predicts English will have in India. He argues that through the diffusion of English, the colony will be converted into an 'Anglo-Indian confederacy'. In this, he echoes Macaulay, who argued for the creation of 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (1835). However, whereas Macaulay envisaged a small class that would act as interpreters between the British government and its colonial subjects, Eclectikwn predicted a wholesale anglicisation of the Indian peoples, including both the 'learned and the rude' (1846, p.12). Then, 'as wise and just principles become universal, India will exert a beneficial influence on China' (ibid). Four years after the end of the First Opium War, Eclectikwn proposes a solution for China's unwillingness to enter into free trade with British merchants: by diffusing the English language to Indian people - and with it liberal capitalism and Christianity - Britain will create an Anglicised South Asian population uniquely capable of compelling China to open its ports for 'knowledge and truth, for commerce and religion' (ibid, pp.12-13). In this way, Eclectikwn envisages a power that is inherent (and perhaps exclusive) to English that allows it to expand access to knowledge, to the benefits of free trade, and to Christianity, ultimately 'civilising' the British colonies by moulding them in Britain's image.

It is a crucial point that Eclectikwn's essay constitutes an early argument for the economic benefits that English can promise to the 'non-native' speaker. For while his focus is on the benefits of a global spread of English for the British mercantile community, he is clear that diffusing English in India will improve 'the rule, the commerce, and happiness' of the country itself (1846, p.17). He represents English not just as the language of the wealthy, but the language by which colonised people can acquire wealth; he supports this by pointing to South Africa, New Zealand, and the 'West Indies', where, in his view, 'natives' had accessed 'wealth, improvement, and power' by learning English (ibid, p.7). By arguing in favour of

public servants who are dedicated to spreading English as ‘an instrument of government and an agency for social improvement’ (ibid, p.18), Eclectikwn argues that the diffusion of English will benefit both the colonial government and its colonised subjects. He was not alone in making such recommendations; Pennycook demonstrates that in colonial Hong Kong a similar narrative explained the ‘promotion of English as a response to Chinese desires’ (1998, p.194). For example, Frederick Stewart, headmaster of the English-medium Hong Kong Central School, wrote in 1856 that ‘[n]othing seems to find favour with the Chinese which does not bear a market value. Hence the comparative success of the Central School, English being convertible into dollars’ (quoted in Pennycook, 1998, p.193). This fitted into a broader discursive construction of Chinese people as a distinct race characterised by a ‘pragmatic and mercantile orientation’, who were keen to learn English for practical, largely economic, reasons (Pennycook, 1998, pp.193-194). In the early twentieth century, this construction of English as the ‘language of prosperity’ continued, with Stewart’s comments reprinted in a 1902 issue of *The Hong Kong Government Gazette*. English had begun to be established as a language that offers prosperity to all, and this construction would gain further currency during and after political decolonisation.

The idea that English was ‘the language of prosperity’ for ‘non-native speakers’ became more persistent as a result of the changing nature of international relations after World War II. Rist argues that the notion of racial superiority was increasingly discredited, at least formally, by the United Nations and the dominant global economic and military powers after the atrocities of the Holocaust (2008, p.69). This, combined with the fact that the geopolitical structure of European empires began to be dismantled (ibid, p.75), led to a shift in the 1950s from ‘colonial discourse’ to ‘development discourse’ (Rist, 2008; Ziai, 2016). The latter provided a framework that ‘propos[ed] a new interpretation [of geopolitical reality] to kindle the illusion of change’ (Rist, 2008, p.78). The basic shape of this framework is generally considered to have been publicly outlined for the first time in US President Truman’s

inauguration speech of 1949. Here, Truman announced the need for an ambitious programme whereby ‘developed’ countries could assist in improving the conditions of ‘underdeveloped’ countries. He noted that more than half the world was ‘living in conditions approaching misery’, with a ‘primitive and stagnant’ economic life, and proposed that ‘developed’ countries inject ‘capital investment in areas needing development’ (Truman, 1949). In Ziai’s view, the colonial ‘uncivilised’ were recast as the post-colonial ‘underdeveloped’ while the underlying relationship remained fairly stable: as colonies gained independence, they would remain dependent on the industrialised Western countries for ‘development aid’ (2016, pp.30-35). Thus, the discursive shift redefined ‘development’. In colonial discourse, this term ‘referred to exploiting the economic resources of the region and civilising the colonised - but not to their standard of living’, whereas, in development discourse, it came to be systematically ‘linked with material improvements for the indigenous population’ (ibid, p.29). In this way, the prosperity of (post-)colonial subjects became a commonplace concern.

One important implication of development discourse was the framing of economic ‘development’ as a quantifiable question amenable to ‘technocratic’ solutions (Rist, 2008, p.79). Rist demonstrates that development discourse was strongly influenced by theories of economic history that proposed a universal trajectory from a ‘zero-point’ through ordered stages of economic growth (see Rist, 2008, pp.93-108 for an account which includes dissenting theories of economic history). One of the most influential of such theories, Walt Rostow’s *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960), viewed non-industrial society as equivalent to a state of ‘underdevelopment’, being characterised by ‘a low level of productivity due to ignorance of the modern technology that allows nature to be rationally exploited’ (Rist, 2008, p.95). Through greater understanding and application of modern technologies, societies could pass through five stages to the ‘age of high-mass consumption’ characterised by American Fordism (ibid, p.98). Rostow organised the countries of the world, or more

properly their economies, at different points along a universal path towards ‘developed’ status. And because the industrialised Western countries, and particularly the United States, had successfully extended their productive capacities, they were considered to be uniquely qualified to instruct other countries on how to achieve economic progress (Rist, 2008). Thus, development discourse invoked the ‘storehouse’, with Truman asserting that it was America’s role to make available ‘to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge’ (Truman, 1949). Crucially, the framework of development facilitated the depoliticisation of economic issues (see Ferguson, 1994; Rist, 2008). In Rist’s terms, it cast ‘development’ as achievable through ‘a set of technical measures outside the realm of political debate’ (2008, p.79). By defining ‘development’ as a matter of economic growth, facilitated by progress through particular, universally-applicable stages, the discourse prescribed supposedly ‘technocratic’ and ‘rational’ solutions to which nobody could object (Ziai, 2016, p.61). But, according to Ferguson, ‘by uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of “development” is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicised in the world today’ (1994, pp.256). The consequences of this will be explored in the following two sections, but first it is useful to consider how development discourse framed the question of language and its relation to prosperity for (post-)colonial subjects.

Development discourse suggested that complex social problems, including poverty, were, given time and resources, solvable by experts who could deliver ‘technocratic’ solutions to previously colonised countries from the former imperial centres. It is my claim that this same approach was taken to post-colonial language policy. In 1953, a report was released on education in British Africa, produced for the Nuffield Foundation and the British Colonial Office. The report aimed to make recommendations for the countries ‘aspiring to self-government’ in the ‘under-developed region’ of Africa (Batey, 1953, p.3). It casts the educator

as technocrat, defining their mission as to ‘design and provide a system of education which will enable the emergent peoples of Africa to take their full place in the modern world’ (ibid). The question of language is considered with specific reference to British colonies in Central and East Africa. Here, investigators were generally supportive of education in children’s mother tongues, but they also envisaged an enduring role for English, governed by the presumption that it would constitute a technical solution to the problem of ‘underdevelopment’. Echoing Eiectikwn’s understanding of the anglophone ‘storehouse’, and Truman’s argument about the need to share ‘technical knowledge’, the investigators argued that Africans needed English not only as a lingua franca, but as ‘a road to the technical knowledge of modern innovations’, ‘a means of contact with world thought’ (ibid, p.82). Through the ‘storehouse’, Africans could prosper:

Africans are avid to secure the technical knowledge and skill which will, they hope, raise them out of poverty and the ever-present fear of drought and famine, and they know that this knowledge in any amount is only available to the man who can read English. Every week new links are forged through trade with the outside world and so the utilitarian reasons for learning English grow stronger (Batey, 1953, p.82).

The investigators suggest that English is necessary to empower prosperity indirectly (by allowing access to the ‘storehouse’ necessary for economic development) and directly (by enabling trade links with the ‘outside world’). Perhaps more importantly, they conceptualise language policy as apolitical, wherein the prescription of English is a rational, technocratic decision made on the basis of its being the ‘language of prosperity’. In its conclusion, the report suggests that English should be taught from the second year of primary school as a subject, and that it should be used as the medium of instruction in ‘one or two subjects’ from the fourth year (Batey, 1953, p.82). The recommendation was largely realised in African post-colonial education: in Bamgbose’s study of 45 sub-Saharan African countries, the majority restrict instruction in the mother tongue to a period of between one and four years, at which point a European language is introduced (2004, p.2). The findings of the Batey report drew on earlier arguments that posited economic advancement as a key benefit to the

spread of English and they were influential on later work. Perren and Holloway, for example, argued in 1965 that 'English provides a window on the world and a widespread common language which can aid African unity and development' (1965, p.20).

There is one additional point worth making in reference to the 1953 report: it suggested that Africa required a Europeanisation of 'thought', and that the diffusion of English could achieve this end. The report states:

The African needs English today in the same sense and to the same degree as the Renaissance European needed Greek or Greek thought in Latin form. English thought could come to Africa with all the liberating power of Greek thought to Europe. Language carries with it the spiritual values on which it is based. Some of the moral confusion and lack of integrity in Africa comes from the fact that English, not being taught in the primary school, is understood only by the very few and European ideas come to Africans through the confused barrier of language: through the medium of Swahili; or a vernacular imperfectly spoken; or English very imperfectly understood, either because the hearer had learnt it imperfectly or because it was spoken by a foreign missionary. A better, wider, and deeper knowledge of English would mean a better understanding of European thought, and some steps would be taken towards that synthesis of African and European ideas which must be the basis of a firm and moral social order (Batey, 1953, p.82).

Clearly, the authors suggested that English would carry with it what were conceived to be European values, presumably contained within the 'storehouse' of knowledge. While this report is unclear as to what exactly those values are, it is interesting to note that there is a parallel with Eiectikwn's more specific contention that the spread of English would be followed by the spirit of 'liberty in politics, freedom in trade, and reform in religion' (1846, p.7). Language was thought to empower 'development', in part, by diffusing particular 'European' ideas and values. There is of course a certain arrogance to this claim: Africans, when able to access dominant Western ideas, will naturally recognise the superiority of European thought and acquiesce to it. Evidently, there exists an incongruity between the postulation of a depoliticised approach to language policy, and a fundamentally ideological understanding of the value of language diffusion.

3 ENGLISH, MASS EDUCATION, AND LINGUISTIC LEGITIMACY

The notion of English as the ‘language of prosperity’ did not gain currency in Rwanda until an English-speaking élite gained control of the state. Indeed, as I argued in Chapters 1 and 2, under the Bahutu French-speaking élite, the Rwandan State was actively reinforcing the position of French as Rwanda’s legitimate language. Under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, the education system functioned to inscribe the dominance of French within the national linguistic market (see Bourdieu, 1991, pp.43-65), and accordingly the question of language in education from 1962-1994 must be understood as fundamentally political. For if, as Bourdieu states, a language is ‘worth what those who speak it are worth’ (1972, p.652), then the linguistic market will follow the social market. Put another way, as English-speakers assumed the dominant positions in Rwanda, English became the legitimate language. At first glance, of course, the RPF reforms to the education system suggest that the restriction of access to the legitimate language in pre-genocide Rwanda has been mitigated by a more equitable system that diffuses the key language of power throughout the country. But from the perspective of legitimate language, the education reforms raise particular questions. If the education system were in fact giving English competence to every child, in their twelve years of free education, this would theoretically entail that the majority of the population would eventually have access to the legitimate language. But in reality, as I will demonstrate in this section, access to English remains restricted in covert, intricate ways. The result is a system that is often represented as a matter of rational, apolitical, technocratic planning, but which in truth has a political function in reproducing the extant social structure.

‘Development’ has been the problematic that has structured Rwanda’s image both nationally and internationally following the genocide. As Jones argues, the RPF government is ‘discursively constructed as a progressive, developmental state overcoming the odds to place Rwanda on a path to sustainable long-term prosperity and developmental modernity’

(Jones, 2014, p.246). Thus the notion of ‘development’ is frequently invoked in Rwandan policy documents and political discourse more broadly (World Bank/GoR, 2019a). The specific vision put forth by the government is that Rwanda will reproduce the experience of the so-called ‘Asian Tiger’ economies, whose ‘sustained promotion of rapid economic development, not least through educational reform, [functioned as] a means of maintaining state legitimacy’ (Green, 2014, p.15; Jones, 2014; Behuria and Goodfellow, 2019). The ‘resource’ at the centre of this transformation will be the Rwandan people; the claim is that Rwanda will transform its economy by investment in ‘human capital’ (in part through education) with the ultimate aim of transforming the country into the telecommunications hub of East Africa (Behuria and Goodfellow, 2019; see also GoR, 2000). In the interest of such ‘development’ goals, Rwanda receives significant amounts of foreign aid, alongside ‘considerable external input’ to policymaking from international development agencies (quote from Hayman, 2009, p.156; see also Zorbas, 2011). Rwandan policymaking, then, is tied to the global context and to international actors in a number of ways. In Hayman’s view, the policies that are ultimately put in place ‘reflect both Rwandan needs and dominant global norms for development’ (2009, p.156). In particular, they incorporate ‘neo-liberal economic reforms’ and other ‘social and political development activities’ that are intended to help Rwanda to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (ibid). It is within this context, where neoliberal ideals meet the concept of ‘human capital’ and the (at least rhetorical) focus on ‘development’, that education policy has been constructed as a technocratic issue whose function should be to encourage economic development in Rwanda.

The Rwandan approach to education policy is influenced by a shift in development discourse towards a focus on neoliberalism and ‘globalisation’. This began in the 1980s, with a neoliberal critique in which:

the perceived failures of development policy were attributed to flawed Keynesian strategies: the idea of the necessity and beneficial effects of state intervention was blamed for over-inflated public sectors, inefficient state enterprises, an overemphasis

on the means of production, neglect of human capital development and price-distorting interventions in the market mechanism benefiting urban sectors over rural producers (Ziai, 2016, p.109).

Introduced as a solution for the continued poverty of ‘underdeveloped’ countries, the neoliberal approach proposed to improve conditions by liberalising trade, privatising state enterprises, and allowing resource allocation to be determined by the mechanisms of the market (Ziai, 2016, p.109). Market-oriented strategies were ‘vehemently promoted’ by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and they stressed ‘higher productivity, innovation, and progress’ (ibid). Though the principles of neoliberalism were in conflict with the continuation of development aid, Ziai argues that the formulation of the MDGs signalled the operationalisation of a hybrid discourse that both emphasised the importance of aid and accepted ‘neoliberal globalisation as a process to which individuals and states have to adjust’ (ibid, p.119).⁶⁸ Further, Ziai demonstrates that neoliberal principles and the idea of technocratic development underpin the Millennium Development Goals. He argues that the prevalent themes in the MDG documents are ‘poverty reduction, development, and growth’ alongside ‘development as a technical problem’ (ibid, pp.155-171). In Ziai’s reading, the documents suggest that achieving development goals is ‘largely about making core investments in infrastructure and human capital that enable poor people to join the global economy, while empowering the poor with economic, political and social rights that will enable them to make full use of infrastructure and human capital’ (IID, cited in Ziai, 2016, pp.158-159). Ziai notes that power structures are not considered in the documents, and that instead ‘development’ is conceived as ‘joining the global economy’ and allowing the poor to escape poverty by ‘unleashing their entrepreneurial zeal’ (2016, p.159). This echoes ‘social mobility’ discourse: it denies the fact of structural inequality by promising that the individual can improve their own circumstances. Entering the ‘global economy’ then, is

⁶⁸ See Ziai (2016, pp.100-124) for an in-depth account of the introduction of neoliberalism and its interplay with development discourse between the 1980s and early 21st century.

portrayed as a move that will benefit the poor in developing countries. Development aims are presented as being in everyone's interests, and are constructed as apolitical, 'consensual, nonconflictive goal[s] to be achieved by technical processes to which no one can object' (ibid, pp.159-160). The essential features of this discourse, including the focus on joining the 'global economy' and solving problems 'technocratically', have been incorporated into the official discourse of the Rwandan government.

Since the late 1990s, the Rwandan government has constructed a detailed development plan. Poverty reduction has been its key focus, and was first addressed in-depth in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP) in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were rarely referenced in early documents, but they had become increasingly prominent in Rwandan policy discourse by 2005 (Hayman, 2005a, p.3). Rwanda has been widely praised for what is perceived as 'technocratic governance', and for its initially encouraging progress towards meeting the MDGs (Ansoms and Rostagno, 2012, p.428). Its education policy has been represented as part of its 'technocratic' performance. Indeed, education is a prominent theme in *Vision 2020*, which argues that an effective school system is key to producing a workforce that will become the motor of the Rwandan economy. It highlights the fact that Rwanda lacks raw materials and access to trading ports, and asserts that 'Rwanda's principle asset [is] its people' (GoR, 2000, p.4). The aspiration is to 'build a productive and effective workforce' (ibid, p.15), by improving the provision of healthcare and education. In line with neoliberal principles, *Vision 2020* represents the role of the state as merely that of a 'catalyst', 'ensuring that infrastructure, human resources and legal frameworks are geared towards stimulating economic activity and private investment' (ibid, p.17). Importantly, in setting out a plan for economic development via the education of the Rwandan population, *Vision 2020* marries the economic success of the country as a whole to that of the population: its stated aim is to 'raise the people of Rwanda out of poverty and transform the country into a middle-income economy' (ibid, p.27). The new economy will transition away from

subsistence agriculture and become ‘knowledge-based’, with a particular focus on ICT (ibid, p.15). And with the expansion of new forms of business, alongside entrepreneurship that will create wealth and employment (ibid, p.13), *Vision 2020* argues that a new middle class will be created (ibid, p.17). In sum, development will be achieved through the education of the populace, and it will produce benefits for everyone. This is the framework within which the decision to mandate an English-medium education system is defended.

‘Human capital’ is a dominant notion in neoliberal economic discourse.⁶⁹ Rooted in the work of Theodore Schulz (1963) and Gary Becker (1964), ‘[h]uman capital theory considers education relevant in so far as education creates skills and helps to acquire knowledge that serves as an investment in the productivity of the human being as an economic production factor, that is, as a worker’ (Robeyns, 2006, p.72). In its framing of the role of education in a ‘developmental state’, then, human capital theory is doubly important: it conceptualises human beings as the productive agents of economic development, and it specifies education as the mechanism by which those resources are improved and made fit for different forms of work. By the 1990s, the human capital approach had become the dominant model through which economists understood human behaviour and education (Becker, 1993, p.7), and it underpins the approach to development prescribed in the Millennium Development Goals (see Ziai, 2016, pp.158-162).⁷⁰ It is within this framework that economists and development agencies came to agree that education policy must be a priority for ‘developing’ countries, in order to facilitate macro-economic growth (Glewwe, 2002, p.436). In this view, the education system is an instrumental mechanism for diffusing particular skills, but, as Glewwe observes, there is no consensus on which skills offer the best prospects to individuals or the economies in which they exist (2002, p.466). Nevertheless, in Rwanda, English has been constructed as

⁶⁹ See Robeyns (2006) for an in-depth critique of the human capital approach to education, and see Ron-Balsera (2011) for an analysis of ‘human capital discourse’ in Rwandan education policy.

⁷⁰ The centrality of the concept of ‘human capital’ to aid agencies is exemplified by the World Bank’s ‘Human Capital Project’, launched in 2018 with the aim of quantifying the level of ‘human capital’ in countries around the world and working with states to identify how to maximise ‘human capital’ and make populations more ‘productive, flexible, and innovative’ (World Bank, 2018, pp.1-3).

precisely the skill that will facilitate development and prosperity.

Within the framework that conceptualises human beings as human capital, one's ability to speak a particular language is understood as a productive resource in its own right. In part, this may be a recognition of the increasing role of language in economic production within the context of late capitalism or 'cognitive capitalism' (see Virno, 2007; Duchêne and Heller, 2012; Ives, 2016). Monica Heller, for example, has argued that particular types of businesses, including call centres, tourist attractions, and advertising firms cast language as a direct productive force (see Heller, 2003; 2010a; 2010b). Moreover, Boutet's study of call centres suggests that specific languages can be understood as productive resources with differential values. She observes that such businesses in Tunisia and India, like 'many offshore call centres', generally require workers to speak in three languages that are considered valuable: English, French, and Spanish. Here, a plurilingual worker's home language may be viewed as without value, because 'family languages do not represent a resource for the company' (2012, p.221). I have argued elsewhere that transnational corporations are increasingly placing emphasis on workers using English as a way of facilitating the expansion of operations into different linguistic markets (or the global market) (Spowage, 2018, pp.168-170; see also Neeley, 2012). In this regard, it is important that, precisely because Rwandan development policy represents the education system as a mechanism for the improvement of human capital, it aims to produce the skills that particular forms of business demand.⁷¹ Specifically, in Rwanda, education policy prioritises English under the logic that competence in the language is demanded by transnational capitalism. This is related to the notion that the education system aims, and indeed promises, to form workers who are eligible to join the 'global economy' (Spowage, 2018, p.177). As part of this process, the language is positioned

⁷¹ This is fundamentally related to the role of language in cognitive capitalism. I have analysed English as an element in the construction of the blueprint of the ideal worker through the Marxist concept of the 'general intellect' elsewhere (Spowage, 2018). See Virno (2007), Vercellone (2007), Koloğlugil (2015), and Ives (2016) for work on the 'general intellect'.

as central to the construction of a knowledge economy and the promotion of the ICT sector (ibid). It is worth recalling the argument given by the director of policy and planning at the Rwandan Ministry of Education (cited in Chapter 3), as it clearly exhibits this rationale:

It's choosing English as a medium of instruction so we Rwandans of today, and more importantly of tomorrow, will be able to benefit. If Spanish or any other language could get us to that, no problem. If Kinyarwanda could get us to that, that would be marvellous. It is not English for its own sake (McGreal, 2009).

Yisa suggests that the language policy has been designed as a necessary step towards greater prosperity. He is clear that the promise extends to 'Rwandans' in general, and particularly to the next generation. In doing so, he presents the decision as rational, apolitical, and technocratic. But it is worth considering how distinctly political processes may be obscured by this rhetoric.

At a superficial level, the introduction of fee-free, basic education in Rwanda implies a system that provides education, and thereby the skills required for specific forms of work, to all children at no cost. And, importantly, it suggests that all children will learn English, which would theoretically give ordinary Rwandans access to a key language of power, and by extension to the global 'knowledge economy'. Indeed, the implementation of 9YBE was praised internationally, and it earned the government the 2012 Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards (IMF, 2013, p.80). It is undeniable that the basic education programme has coincided with a rise in net enrolment: according to the Rwandan National Institute of Statistics (NISR), net enrolment in 2010 was 95.4% for primary school and 22.6% in secondary school; by 2017, those figures were 98% and 34.1% respectively (GoR, 2013; 2018). Moreover, in theory, the abolition of school fees meant that Rwanda surpassed Goal 2 of the MDGs, which aimed to achieve universal primary education (Assan and Walker, 2012, p.178). Yet Ron-Balsera notes that both development agencies and the government have prioritised 'access' at the expense of 'quality', in such a way that basic education may actually widen socio-economic gaps because it does not take into account the

specific barriers facing certain population groups (2011, 283). As she puts it, because of the application of economic rationale to the education system through the discourse of human capital, Rwandan education policy does not prioritise ‘the necessary socio-economic transformations to alleviate and transform inequality’ (ibid). Rather, the commodified approach to education ignores students’ socio-economic backgrounds, and, moreover, holds individuals responsible for their choices within the education system (ibid, p.284). This is epitomised by an editorial in *The New Times* which states unequivocally that, if children fail in education, it is not the fault of government, because Rwandan children only become ‘failures’ if they lack ‘discipline and focus’ (*The New Times*, 2015). The editorial is an example of the aforementioned ‘social mobility’ discourse, which represents inequality as an individual rather than a structural issue. Thus it is the responsibility of the individual student to raise themselves out of poverty. And yet, in spite of the rhetoric, economic and linguistic barriers remain central to many children’s experience of education in Rwanda.

It is clear that there are obstacles to education in Rwanda, many of which are particularly obstructive for children with restricted or unreliable access to economic capital. These have been addressed in-depth in other studies (Williams, 2013; Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi, 2015; Williams, 2017), but I will highlight some key facts here. While official school fees are no longer permitted in Rwanda, there are many indirect costs associated with schooling. Uniforms, haircuts, sanitary pads, shoes, notebooks and pens are all considered to be essential for students, and they represent either one-off or ongoing costs (Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi, 2015, p.943). The example of uniforms suggests the stakes involved in meeting indirect costs. If children are not smartly presented, or they do not have school materials, they can be sent home from school (Williams, 2013, p.28). Indeed, both the importance and prohibitive cost of uniforms are starkly demonstrated by the fact that one student interviewed by Williams had her uniform stolen while she was helping her family in the garden (ibid, p.29). She stated that children at her school were beaten if they arrived without

uniforms (ibid). Even if schools are more permissive, students are often ashamed if they are unable to meet the costs of schooling. One student told Williams that the teacher would tell students without a uniform to stand in front of the class, an experience that made her feel humiliated; she did not return to school after Primary 3 (ibid, p.32). Of course, the stress caused by these costs is compounded for families with many children (ibid, p.36).

There are also costs that are directly associated with attending school and, crucially, progressing through the education system. Schools require that children pay contributions to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). There is no set value for PTA contributions, as they are determined at the level of school. But they essentially function as a school fee, without which children can be sent home or even excluded (Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi, 2015, pp.940-942). If children progress to the point of the national examinations, held at Primary 6 and Secondary 3, they must pay for passport photos, school reports, mock examinations, and a registration fee for both exams; and, in addition, an examination book, district examination fee, as well as food and accommodation for the secondary exam (ibid, p.942). Economic insecurity poses another major problem: if students cannot pay for a particular test, for example, but have otherwise paid the necessary costs to attend school, they may be required to repeat the year (Williams, 2013, p.25). It is also important that costs associated with education rise if one progresses to secondary school: it costs a child more than double to sit the S3 examination, which determines whether one can attend upper secondary, compared with the P6 examination. And if a child attends secondary school, both the costs associated with buying uniforms and notebooks and the value of PTA contributions increase significantly (Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi, 2015, pp.940-943). Supplementary, expensive coaching is also considered by many to be necessary for success. As one student put it: '[c]oaching is only attended by students from rich families, and those students are the ones that then succeed [in the national exam]' (quoted in Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi, 2015, p.944). It must be understood, then, that the abolition of school fees

does not entail the creation of a truly ‘mass’ education system; rather, it obscures the fact that education in Rwanda requires stable access to economic capital, and that, accordingly, children from poorer backgrounds are more likely to be excluded from education.

The barriers in place in Rwandan education interact with the English language policy in specific ways. I have argued elsewhere that, rather than operating as a key to a global market, for many students English constitutes another means of exclusion from education (Spowage, 2018, pp.173-177). Students and teachers alike have been explicit that the medium of instruction makes education more difficult. One student told Ron-Balsera that, once education ceases to be delivered in Kinyarwanda, ‘the curriculum becomes too difficult to understand’ (quoted in Ron-Balsera, 2011, p.278). Teachers have been clear that ‘content heavy’ subjects (such as history and science) are more difficult to teach through English (Pearson, 2014, p.47). Problems that arise from the use of English are compounded by the fact that teachers feel pressure to ensure that the classroom remains monolingual in English: one interviewee told Pearson that they felt ‘obliged’ to use ‘100% English’ (ibid, p.49). This teacher was among those who had identified translanguaging as a useful coping strategy (see also Kagwesage, 2013, p.72; Tabaro, 2013, pp.15-19), but he felt unable to use any Kinyarwanda or French when a more senior teacher was in the room (Pearson, 2014, p.49). Johnson (1997) and Yip (2003) have both found that, in the context of Hong Kong, monolingual teaching through English limited participation in lessons, as well as students’ comprehension of core concepts. Similar studies have yet to be undertaken in Rwanda, but the interviews and analyses provided by Kagwesage (2013), Tabaro (2013), and Pearson (2014) suggest that the use of English may cause similar problems there.

It is important to stress that the linguistic difficulties posed by the use of English interact with financial barriers in the Rwandan education system. Evidence suggests that children are generally required to pay less for school if they are poorer, and more if they are wealthier. However, this is not a measure of equity: the PTA contributions that children must pay are

often used to finance teacher salaries, and, as a result, schools attended by wealthier children can generally attract better-qualified teachers. Moreover, these schools are able to hire teachers who are more competent in English (IPARR, 2012, p.37; Spowage, 2018, pp.176-177). As a result, teachers who are able to manage the language policy are stratified according to pupils' access to economic capital. In schools in Kigali's wealthy Kicukuru district, an observer rated 25.45% of teachers as having 'good' English, and 58.18% as average; for schools in a poor district of southern Rwanda, these figures were 6% and 8% respectively. It is worth noting that even in wealthy schools, at least in Kicukuru, only a minority of teachers understand English well. But the most striking figures relate to the number of teachers with 'poor' English competence: 16.36% of teachers in the wealthy district, compared to 76% in the poor district (IPARR, 2012, p.53). Thus, even when children are able to pay to attend school, their relative access to economic capital can determine the quality of education they receive, and the likelihood of their passing English-language exams. This is particularly significant when we consider that Ron-Balsera argues that linguistic issues contribute to large numbers of students dropping out of school or repeating years (2011, p.278). There are, then, grounds to view the language policy as a direct barrier to the progress of poorer children.

The fact that access to education in Rwanda is far more limited for those who have little access to stable capital has particular implications for social reproduction. As Apple points out, it is overly simplistic to view schools as institutions that either reproduce the extant social structure or serve to challenge the inequality of power and knowledge; rather, they do both to a greater or lesser degree (2017, p.1). There are children who improve their circumstances through education, which is crucial to the reproduction of Rwandan 'social mobility' discourse. Students who succeed are, by extension, emblematic of the success of the education system. Yet, as I have argued, education in Rwanda is characterised by structural inequality, and it works to reproduce the extant social structure at large. While

access to education is now undoubtedly greater than under Habyarimana's or Kayibanda's government, the overall trend is one of considerable attrition at each level of the education system (see Figure 2). In Althusser's view, this attrition is crucial for the reproduction of the 'capitalist relations of exploitation' (2014, p.144). Of the French system in the 1960s, he states:

Somewhere around the age of fourteen, an enormous mass of children are dumped 'into production', to become workers or small peasants. Another segment of the school-age population sticks with it and somehow manages to go a bit further, only to fall by the wayside and find jobs as lower-level supervisory personnel or junior managers, white collar workers, minor or middle-level civil servants, and petty bourgeois of all kinds. A last group makes it to the summit, either to sink into intellectual underemployment or semi-unemployment or to fill the posts of agents of exploitation or agents of repression, professional ideologues (priests of all kinds, most of whom are convinced 'secularists'), and also agents of scientific practice (Althusser, 2014, p.145).

Althusser's dissection of the French system draws our attention to the impossibility of the promise that all children will benefit equally from the Rwandan 'renaissance'. Rather, children will play different roles in the economy, and, given the financial barriers in place, it is likely that these will correlate with socio-economic background. While a lack of consistent data means it is difficult to be exact, the enrolment figures suggest that a large majority of students leave the education system before secondary school. And as might be expected, in Rwanda one's employment depends on one's education. Agriculture remains Rwanda's largest sector. Data collected from 2005-2007 showed that 87.7% of those who had graduated primary school worked in agriculture, as did 19.1% of those who had finished secondary school (NURC, 2008, p.19). More recent data, from the *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (EDPRS) offers some insight into the general composition of production in Rwanda. Those who have little education are likely to be farmers and informal workers, and represent 60% and 17% of the working age population respectively (GoR, 2013, p.61). Workers who are more educated are likely to work in the private or public sector, but these only account for 4% and 3% of the working age population respectively (ibid, pp.61-62). The remainder

are students and the unemployed (ibid, p.62). The fact that so few Rwandans are employed in the private and public sectors suggests that the roles where English may be useful (or required) are relatively few in number. However, there is a large labouring class, which is reproduced in part because of the economic and linguistic barriers that keep poorer children out of school. Thus the prioritisation of English represents an education system focussed on a skill that few will need in their daily economic lives. The promise of the education system, then, is both engaging and false at the same time.

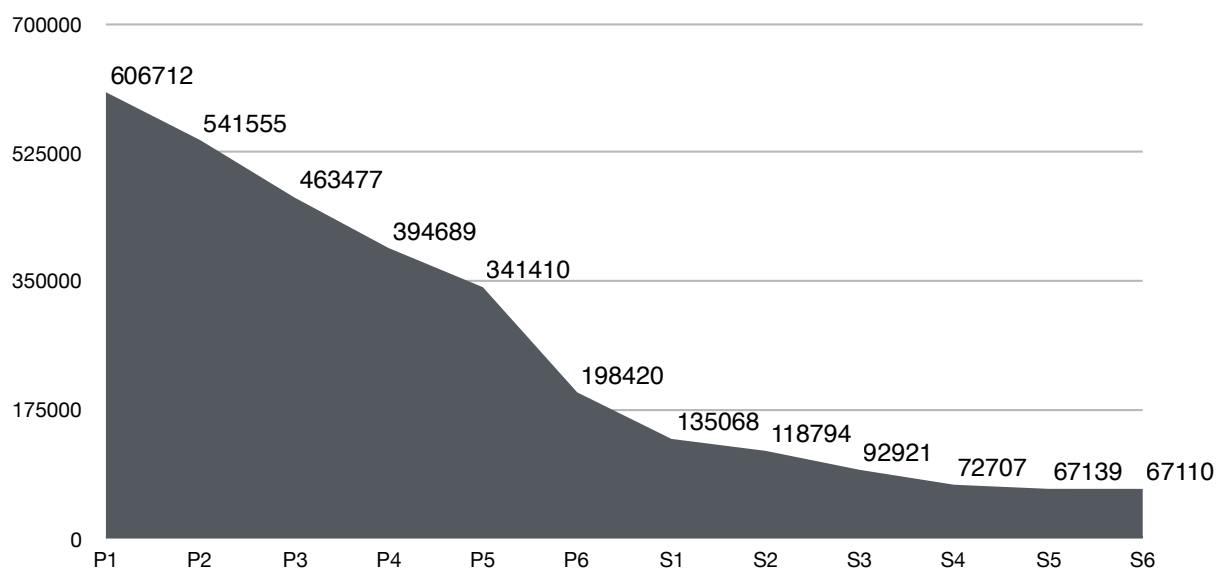


Figure 2 Rwandan enrolment figures for 2016. Data from GoR (2018)

To claim that the abolition of official school fees has allowed all Rwandans to access quality education is to deny the fact that progress through the education system is limited to a class with access to stable income. And we must take this into account when assessing the post-2008 linguistic market. For as a rule, the greater a child's access to economic capital, the more likely they are to become competent in English. Generally speaking, then, the language remains restricted to a well-educated class. Unfortunately, there are no recent studies of speech abilities to provide a more precise picture. However, according to the 2012 labour force survey - the last to give data on language of literacy - 7.29% of the population were literate in English, 9.37% in French, and 66.11% in Kinyarwanda (NISR, 2014). The same

survey shows that 4.99% of the population is literate in both French and English, 4.38% in French alone, and 2% in English alone (ibid). These figures should be treated with caution, as they are self-reported, and 'literate' is defined as being able to 'both read and write with understanding' (GoR, 2016, p.x). Nevertheless, they demonstrate that literacy in English, as well as French, remains highly restricted.

The changes to the education system have a direct effect on the distribution of linguistic legitimacy. Bourdieu is clear that the education system plays a 'decisive' role in the inscription of the legitimate language (1991, p.48). And while English-speakers were increasingly in control of the state from 1994, for fourteen years the education system gave equal weight to both French and English. The 2008 policy, however, represents a decisive shift which couples English with education, and helps to ensure that the children of the well-off learn to speak English. The importance of education in the Rwandan 'renaissance' contributes to the strength of the school system as an arbiter of linguistic legitimacy. For as Bourdieu argues, in order to 'induce holders of dominated linguistic competences to collaborate in the destruction of their instruments of expression ... it [is] necessary for the school system to be perceived as the principal (indeed, the only) means of access to administrative positions' (ibid, p.49). In the name of 'development', the post-genocide government has cast education as the mechanism by which it will 'raise the people of Rwanda out of poverty' (GoR, 2000, p.27), thereby casting the school system not only as the sole mechanism of access to administrative positions, but as the only route to partake in the Rwandan 'renaissance' (despite the apparent lack of jobs that require English).

One way of understanding the language policy, then, is as part of the conflict between English-speaking and French-speaking élites. French, associated with the former, largely Bahutu, élite (see Samuelson and Freedman, 2010), is no longer given space within the State education system. A consequence of this is that children whose parents were educated in French lose an advantage. Williams points to the case of a student whose mother spoke

French, and gave ‘coaching’ to her daughter under the old education system. But when English was introduced, the student’s mother was no longer able to coach her, and, in the student’s view, this hampered her performance on the P6 exam and reduced her opportunity to learn (Williams, 2013, p.55). Conversely, children of the English-speaking élite are placed at a new advantage: ‘[t]he Anglophone elite will be assured of replicating their access to power with such policies’ (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010, p.205). However, this can only be a partial explanation. For one thing, the literacy figures suggest that it is more common to be literate in both French *and* English, as opposed to either one language alone. If these figures are accurate, more than half of Rwandans who are literate in French or English are literate in both (6.38% of the population is literate in one of the two languages, while 4.99% is literate in both). Another important point is that private schools are still able to teach through French, as are hybrid ‘private-public partnership’ schools (Assan and Walker, 2012). As such, members of a French-speaking élite who are able to pay for private education have the option of sending their children to French-medium school. Thus I argue that we need to understand the policy not only as a mechanism for reproducing the élite, but also for manufacturing the consent of ordinary Rwandans. To argue this point, I turn to the ‘language of prosperity’ and the ideological politics of the language policy as part of RPF hegemony.

4 THE ‘LANGUAGE OF PROSPERITY’ IN RPF HEGEMONY

Thus far, my focus has been on the general operation of the education system in Rwanda, including the barriers that it constructs and the way in which it reproduces the extant social structure. But if we consider the education system through a Gramscian lens, a more complex function comes into view. It is clear that the children who are best placed to succeed in the education system are those with relatively wealthy parents; the corollary that these are the children most likely to prosper economically and to take over powerful positions in the

institutions of civil and political society is important. The resulting situation might be described as a form of 'elite closure', where 'the elite knows and makes heavy use of the official language [while] the official language remains foreign (and unusable) to large parts of the rest of the population' (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p.152). But a crucial question remains: how does such a system interact with a broader structure of hegemony, or the acquisition and maintenance of power by consent and coercion? In this section, I attempt to show that, in Rwanda, English is discursively constructed as the 'language of prosperity'. Moreover, I argue that this is a politically important fact, because it offers ideological support to the RPF.

The Rwandan school system is not educating all children, and, within the framework of the 'technocratic' State, this is either a technical failing, or, as I observed earlier, the fault of the children themselves. This is clear from Paul Glewwe's argument that it is 'not the case that governments and schools know how to improve educational outcomes but choose not to do so because such actions would not be in their interest' (2002, p.436). Glewwe's assessment appears to be rooted in a view of the state as a technocratic actor 'with a narrow focus on how to improve economic effectiveness and efficiency' (Bryld, 2003, p.703). But Bryld observes that within this logic:

politics is not seen as a part of the state. When the state is identified as a rational actor guided only by the common interests of all its citizens, the definition becomes unrealistic. In authoritarian régimes the state usually responds to the ruling élite, and in democracies it responds to the parties in power. The state can never act apolitically, as the technocratic label would imply (Bryld, 2003, p.703).

Bryld is clear that we cannot understand State policies through the lens of technocracy. And, however unlikely, Glewwe's assertion may be partially true, insofar as the Rwandan government may not know how to make the system work in the interest of more children. But in fact it is precisely the apparent 'failings' of the Rwandan education system that serve an important social function in naturalising the dominance of the educated élite, and in inculcating support for the neoliberal framework that underpins it.

As I noted previously, a number of scholars have argued that the Rwandan government

is able to gain legitimacy on the basis that it is a successful agent of development. Rwanda's profile is carefully orchestrated, with the 'Rwandan establishment' 'crafting a preferred image of the country' (Ingelaere, 2010, p.54). Commentators frequently point to visual indicators that Rwanda is becoming a 'modern' society. Reese is typical in highlighting the 'surprisingly' well-manicured green spaces in Kigali, the clean and abundant supermarkets, the modern buildings, and the 'aesthetically pleasing and well built' houses that '[pepper] the rolling hills' (2014, p.112). But when celebrating the structures that imply a greater standard of living for some Rwandans, Reese does not acknowledge that the government has imposed a minimum size for newly built homes, which effectively prohibits poor, young people from building shacks to live in (Sommers, 2012). Fines are used to penalise citizens who are deemed unhygienic, those who wear dirty clothes in public, and those who partake in non-modern practices such as cooking using anything other than a 'modern' stove, or consulting a 'traditional healer' without authorisation (Ingelaere, 2010, p.52; Gettleman, 2013). Kigali has no 'homeless youth sleeping on the sidewalks or huffing glue to kill their hunger', because 'vagrants and petty criminals' are sent to a 'rehabilitation centre' in Lake Kivu (Gettleman, 2013). The positive image legitimises the government: Reese ultimately categorises Kagame as a 'benevolent' leader with a 'dictatorial flair' (2014, pp.114-115). This well-maintained public image is in part the result of tight controls on the Rwandan media.

The Rwandan government has established a significant degree of control over both the media and public discourse more generally. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that the RPF increased its control over the media from 1994-2008, and Sundaram (2016) observes that this has only become more extensive in the years since. In his account of the press in Rwanda from 2009-2013, Sundaram details the coercion of journalists who deviate from an official line on events in Rwanda, and provides a list of sixty journalists 'who have faced difficulties after criticizing the government' (Sundaram, 2016, pp.181-192). This speaks to Ingelaere's observation that the government pursues a number of strategies that encourage a 'high

degree of self-censorship' among ordinary Rwandans, producing what is effectively a 'rehearsed consensus' about life in Rwanda (2010, p.53). Ingelaere calls this the 'dominant and dominating discourse in post genocide Rwanda', and he demonstrates that it lauds the RPF as a force that stopped the genocide and reassembled the single, non-ethnic Rwandan 'family' (see also Purdeková, 2008). The rehearsed consensus continually asserts the need for the RPF, as it represents the governing party as a necessary defence against the supposed tendency of Rwandans towards 'genocide ideology' (Ingelaere, 2010, p.53; see also Chapter 2). Within this context, it is crucial to consider not only how the Rwandan media presents the language policy, but also whether a similar narrative is diffused through education.

In the Rwandan media, the 2008 policy is often presented as a technocratic, apolitical decision made within the framework of a developmental state. The 'language of prosperity' is frequently invoked in order to construct this narrative. Writing in *The New Times*, Olzacki proclaims that the transition to an English-language classroom is 'yet another of those brilliant initiatives by this government designed specifically to earn Rwanda a place as a global player in business ... thus bringing substantial funds and developing a middle class' (2015).⁷² Indeed, on the basis of Rwanda's education policy Olzacki describes the country as 'the new phoenix rising' (2016). He thus represents the policy as a rational economic decision for the good of Rwandan citizens. Ndabaga, again in *The New Times*, writes that 'the use of English as a medium of instruction is just an excellent calculated move in the right direction' (2008). As he puts it, there 'is a need to work and communicate with the rest of the world', and learning through English will 'avoid producing half-baked graduates who cannot compete internationally' (ibid). While there is certainly some truth to the claim that English is used extensively in international business, such justifications of the policy ignore the possibility

⁷² *The New Times* is not officially owned by the Rwandan government, but it is clear that government holds significant influence over what it publishes. Armijo argues that, because *The New Times* produces strongly pro-government content, it receives preferential advertising treatment, and is allowed to use the official government press (the only such press in Rwanda) (Armijo, 2008, p.129). The paper is reportedly owned by several high-ranking officials in the RPF (ibid, p.129 n.174).

that it plays a politically important role. To discourage a political reading of the policy, Ndabaga asserts that '[i]t is clear from these arguments that knowledge and economic development should be separated from linguistic emotions and sensational tendencies that are typical of French Assimilation system' (2008). In this view, to suggest that the language policy is anything less than a developmental necessity is to bow to the 'sensational tendencies' of French education. Olzacki and Ndabaga construct the policy as 'just' a development tactic, 'calculated' by government experts to attract money and create a middle class. The way that English can function as a barrier to children in school is not addressed, and it is argued that the policy will benefit individuals by allowing them to enter a nascent middle class and become competitive graduates.

There is one online newspaper which is consistently critical of the language policy. *The Rwandan* is legally registered in France (ICANN, 2019), but is worth mentioning both for its focus on Rwanda and for the fact that it has a number of readers in Rwanda (though far fewer than *The New Times*).⁷³ One editorial in *The Rwandan* criticises the education system for producing students who will follow the RPF 'blindly', and who are unable to speak either French or English well enough to qualify for jobs (*The Rwandan*, 2015). They point out that there are too few teachers who are proficient enough to teach through English and criticise the absence of French from the policy (Mutarambirwa, 2014). Indeed, one writer argues that the replacement of French with English created a system that would disenfranchise Bahutu students, and reserve law, medicine, accounting, and politics for the Batutsi élite, to 'allow them to continue their dominance over the country's politics and economy' (Mukasine, 2015). These articles highlight what is absent from official discourse: the specific promises held out by the education system, which may not be available for many students; the fact that

⁷³ There are no studies that map the readership of these two outlets over any period of time. However, in April 2019, *The Rwandan* received approximately 41,354 hits in Rwanda, when that figure was 281,630 for the *The New Times*. In addition, visitors spend an average of 3m 23s on *The Rwandan*, but 14m 11s on *The New Times* (*SimilarWeb*, 2019a; 2019b). While traffic to each website fluctuates, this suggests that *The New Times* is a more influential publication within Rwanda.

schools are ill-equipped to allow a majority to graduate within an English-medium system; and the fact that the policy may play a role in privileging the Batutsi élite over Bahutu students.

It is now necessary to turn our attention to the ideological role that is played by the education system. Gramsci and Althusser both consider the school to be an important institution for ideological persuasion, with the former placing it in civil society and the latter characterising it as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus (Gramsci, 1930 [2005], p.53; Althusser, 2014, pp.144-147). The reason that Althusser considers the school to be so important is that no other ISA ‘has a *captive audience of all the children of the capitalist social formation ... for as many years as the schools do, eight hours a day, six days out of seven*’ (2014, pp.146, italics in original). In this view, the implementation of basic education in Rwanda takes on a new significance. For the majority of children are now neither uneducated (in the sense of unacquainted with formal education), nor ‘educated’ (in the sense of having made sufficient progress through the system to benefit significantly), but semi-educated. This is an important distinction, because the achievement of near-universal primary enrolment entails that almost all Rwandan children have some engagement with a prominent mechanism of ideological interpellation. Certainly, Rwanda’s education system does not have a ‘captive audience’ for as long as that of Althusser’s France, but its reach is increasing, particularly at the primary level.

Through a reading of Althusser and Gramsci, we can understand how a process of ideological persuasion might work for students who enter the school system. For Althusser, lessons are either ‘packaged’ in the dominant ideology, or they represent the ideology in its pure form (as ethics, civics, and philosophy) (ibid, p.145). He holds that even the groups of students who leave the education system early are ‘by and large, a few errors and miscarriages aside, practically provided with the ideology that suits the role [they are] to play in class society: the role of the exploited ... agent of exploitation ... agent of repression ... or

professional ideologue' (2014, pp.145-146). In fact, we must nuance this point somewhat, as Althusser suggests a process of direct transmission, wherein children are simply 'provided' with ideology. This is problematic: as Willis shows in *Learning to Labour*, children are not simply 'passive bearers of ideology', but agents who reproduce the extant social structure 'only through struggle, contestation, and a partial penetration of those structures' (Willis, 1977, p.175). Gramsci's position allows us to further refine the point. As Ives notes, Gramsci rejects the idea that the masses are 'duped' by ideology (2004b, p.80). Indeed, his definition of the material ideological structure as everything that 'directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion' (Gramsci, 1930 [2005], p.53) suggests the possibility that ideological persuasion can fail, and that it is a process of influence, rather than transmission. This influence can help to form what Williams views as the essential bedrock of hegemony: a 'sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move' (Williams, 1977, p.110). It is necessary to ask, then, what reality the education system presents Rwandan children with, and how it helps to influence their beliefs about language and power.

Timothy Williams argues that 'social, political, economic, and historical conditions and processes' directly influence the subjectivity of Rwandan children (2017, p.10). These broad circumstances shape students' 'awareness, expectations, and perceptions of possibility' (ibid). Williams demonstrates how a group of children learnt to think about their position and their futures in Rwandan society through experiences in the education system. As Althusser (2014) would suggest, one thing that they learnt was the justification for their position in the production process; that a good education promises a good job, whereas less education limits one's opportunities. Students learnt to situate education within the government's development project, through which framework they became aware of particular 'doors that education opened' (Williams, 2017, p.2). Williams observes that for one student this 'instilled in him a perception of possibility. And yet his experience at school made clear just how out

of reach these possibilities were for him' (ibid). The school system first made him aware of the 'developmental state', and the opportunities that were supposedly available through education, before the student realised that attaining only basic education foreclosed them (ibid). Indeed, Williams finds that this is common among the children who attend basic education school. He shows that they learn over time that government-funded schools are perceived as inferior to private boarding school. By extension, students learn that they will be considered inferior, with one stating that a graduate from a private boarding school would always be a more attractive candidate for a job than somebody who was educated in a basic education school (ibid, p.110). Learning about the prestige attached to different schools translated into understanding one's place in the production process: 'schools of basic education meant one should not aspire to become president, a pilot, a doctor, or go to university - but rather young people should aspire to be able to read road signs, to work at a salon, to avoid subsistence-based agriculture' (ibid, p.176). Socioeconomic background necessarily interacts with this; one student who could not afford to remain in school told Williams '[i]n primary school I used to think about being an airplane pilot ... [i]n Senior 1, I wanted to become a doctor. Now I think I might like to be a driver' (quoted in Williams, 2017, p.2). Education, then, becomes the arbiter of employment, and even children who can afford basic education schools learn that they will not gain the qualifications or have the prestigious background necessary to enter particular professions.

Students' attitudes towards education interact with how they come to think about English. Williams's evidence suggests that children learn to view English as the legitimate language, and that they come to recognise it as a form of cultural capital. He argues that, for Rwandan students, the ability to speak English mediates 'intellectual prowess', as those who are able to speak the language are viewed as particularly intelligent (Williams, 2017, p.175). This echoes Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's description of the Kenyan education system in the 1950s, where 'English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences, and

all other branches of learning' (1986, p.12). Similarly, Williams shows that Rwandan children come to view English as particularly important, with proficiency in English as 'the student ideal' (2017 p.143). In Williams's study, students understood English through the framework of the national development plan, with most of the young people expressing 'enthusiasm for the government's intended trajectory for the country [and wanting] to become educated and learn English' (ibid). Thus, in education, children learn that English has value. Specifically, the language becomes a salient symbol of intellectuality, and it is recognised that English confers cultural capital upon its speaker. This is particularly important in a context where students wish to 'not be considered someone who [is] uneducated' (ibid, p.176). Ultimately, Williams argues that the ability to speak English naturalises 'the dominance of Rwanda's political elite' (ibid, p.175). An understanding of legitimate language allows us to clarify this point: students learn to view English as the intellectual achievement of a particular restricted group, within a framework where educational success is represented as the unproblematic arbiter of opportunities (without recognition of the constraints on that success). In this view, the occupation of privileged positions by English-speakers is cast as natural; pushed to its logical conclusion, this suggests that the anglophone have a right to govern the non-anglophone.

It is crucial that many children do not only learn to view English as important, they learn that it is inaccessible to them. The basic education schools that Williams visited were 'not equipped to allow them to learn English', and so the 'English policy presented one of the most poignant issues that produced uncertainty and frustration within young people' (Williams, 2017, p.143). In Williams's terms, the policy 'reverberated in [students'] ability to meaningfully engage with their studies, and by extension, informed their subjectivity' (ibid, p.175). As one student (who had made it to Senior 3) put it: '[t]he biggest challenge I face is that I don't know English, and it is the language we use in all subjects' (quoted in Williams, 2017, p.139). As this suggests, even by secondary school most students had very little

competence in English (2017, p.140). Students often recognised the barriers that they were facing: they knew that English impacted their ability to learn, and they recognised that students who could afford 'good' schools received a better education because their teachers could understand English (ibid, p.141). But for poorer children, the language 'led to an educational experience characterised by frustration'. Their progress was restricted by English. Williams points to a Primary 6 examination, in which most students provided English answers that were 'nonsensical' (ibid, p.140). The teacher told him that these were capable students, who would pass if the exam was in Kinyarwanda (ibid, pp.140-141). In sum, they learnt that English was desirable, and that education offered opportunities, but that their education would not give them the necessary skills in English, and that they would be unable to achieve their goals. Or, put another way, despite the fact that English obstructed their ability to learn, students still viewed it as desirable and wanted to learn it. It is important to ask why.

If we interrogate the motivations that stakeholders in education have for supporting the English language policy, it becomes clear that their reasons often cohere with those propagated in official discourse and the media, specifically the notion of the 'language of prosperity'. Assan and Walker have observed that, whether true or not, many Rwandan parents believe that their children will have access to better jobs if they are able to speak English (2012, p.189). And in her study of attitudes to the English medium policy, Hilaire Habyarimana found that 84% of learners agreed that English was the language of economic opportunity, with the majority of learners believing that 'knowing English will promote their social and economic standing by providing them with power and opportunities to enrich themselves because they have access to good jobs and money' (2015, p.115). Here, the stability of the representation of English as the 'language of prosperity' is clear: this commonly held belief echoes Eclectikwn's assertion that colonised subjects could access 'wealth, improvement, and power' by learning English (1846, p.7). Tabaro's findings were

similar, and in his study Rwandan students cited access to jobs as their primary motivation for learning English (2015, p.82). The extent to which students associated English with access to jobs is particularly striking, given that only 7% of Rwandan workers are employed in the public or private sector, and therefore only a small minority of children can expect to find jobs that require English. However, some students also suggested that the benefits of learning English included ‘business and economic advancement’ and ‘country development’ (that is, the macro-economic development of Rwanda) (ibid), which indicates that they expect the general diffusion of English to expand the Rwandan economy, create business opportunities, and, perhaps, create more jobs. Given that the notion of English as a ‘language of prosperity’ helps to legitimise the language policy and, by extension, the government, it is clear that these personal attitudes to English are politically important.

The point is not that the opinions of stakeholders are wrong; indeed, they may hold true for specific people, and, importantly, they demonstrate an awareness of the political economy of English both in Rwanda and in the contemporary world system. Several students in Tabaro’s study were aware that English is a pre-requisite for certain forms of employment, and noted that job interviews for such types of work are routinely conducted in English (2015, p.83). One student pointed out that educational success was contingent on English, because ‘when you do not know English you can’t pass the exam’ (ibid). Students are ‘eager’ to learn what they perceive as an ‘international and global language’ (ibid). And some students capture the ambiguity of their situation, with two telling Tabaro that English was very important, but that they are unsure it would necessarily provide what both referred to as a ‘better future’ (ibid). But nevertheless, the fact that students are generally sure of ‘how important English will be in their life’ (ibid, p.82), suggests a common acceptance that it is beneficial to have English in the education system. The role of Gramsci’s ‘material structure of ideology’ in influencing these views is crucial, given that the system teaches children that English is not only legitimate, but that it offers prosperity. In Munyankesha’s survey of

language attitudes in Rwanda, he shows that those without any formal education are most confident that Kinyarwanda would suffice as the language of education, while those with any level of education felt it was more important to retain European languages in the system (2013, pp.120-121). As this suggests, it is clear that language policy in education influences children to view the value of languages differently, as part of a broader ideological process.

It is worth considering that, in influencing stakeholders to view the English language policy as an apolitical, technocratic, development-focussed decision, the ideological structure also encourages the internalisation of specific values. Althusser refers to these as ‘themes’, which together ‘sum up’ ‘the essential “values” which the domination of the class holding state power needs in order to make the exploited and the agents of exploitation and repression, as well as the agents of ideologization, “go”’ (2014, p.138). France, Althusser suggests, is ‘summed up’ by the values of nationalism, liberalism, economism, and humanism. Ives’s reading of Gramsci suggests a similar understanding: that ideas such as property rights are not isolated, but must be analysed as part of a broader system of thought which accompanies them, in which ‘fundamental beliefs and values may not even be explicit or conscious’ (2004b, pp.80-81). Underlying Rwandan language policy, and the ‘language of prosperity’, we can detect a theme of individualism, in which one’s own grasp of the English language is expected to allow one to prosper. And within the specific Rwandan rearticulation of the ‘language of prosperity’, the language policy has been buttressed by the notion of national development, and the principles of neoliberal globalisation which position the education system as an institution whose agenda should be set with reference to the global market (see Ron-Balsera, 2011; Spowage, 2018). Of particular significance for understanding the ideological politics of English in Rwanda is the representation and conceptualisation of the policy as a decision that was made by a technocratic, developmental State. Neither linguistic legitimacy nor the conflict between ‘francophone’ and ‘anglophone’ élites is addressed within the narrative of the ‘language of prosperity’, and accordingly one important

strategy for the acquisition and maintenance of power is cast as a benevolent, economic decision. The language promises a mythical solution to the pressing problems of powerlessness and poverty, one that does not pose a fundamental challenge to the socioeconomic system in Rwanda. The account provided here has attempted to show that we must be skeptical of such claims if we are to understand the political role played by English in Rwandan education.

5 CONCLUSION

It is clear that the RPF remains hegemonic in Rwanda, given its two recent successes in the 2015 referendum and the 2017 election. At each event, the question put to the voters was whether to ratify the RPF and President Paul Kagame for a third term. The purpose of the referendum was to gain democratic approval to amend the constitution and allow Kagame to run again. This move was condemned by human rights groups, and analysts viewed the referendum as a foregone conclusion (Gettleman, 2015; Ingelaere, 2017). On December 18th, 2015, 98.3% voted to allow the amendment. In 2017, after an election process that was ‘not a contest for power’ but ‘the ritual confirmation of power in place’ (Ingelaere, 2017), Kagame was re-elected with 98.79% of the vote.

The success of the RPF in the recent elections is partly a matter of coercion. A report published by *Amnesty International* asserted that two decades of ‘[a]ttacks on the political opposition, independent media, civil society, and human rights defenders have created a climate of fear in Rwanda and set the scene for the [2017] elections’ (2017, p.24). The report argued that it was assured that ‘would-be government critics practice self-censorship’ (ibid), and it is telling that three people attempted to announce their candidacies in the elections but were disqualified. The best known of these, Diane Rwigara, attempted to run as an outspoken critic of the government, but was disqualified and charged with forgery and

‘offences against state security’, crimes that carry a minimum of twenty years in prison (Muvunyi, 2017). In addition, her mother was accused of ‘inciting insurrection’ through audio messages sent on the messaging service WhatsApp (Maclean, 2018). Rwigara spent thirteen months held in jail while she was on trial, before finally being acquitted in December 2018 (ibid). But while both Rwigara’s experience and the restrictions of civil liberties since the genocide illuminate the coercive strategies of the state, an understanding of ideology and hegemony allows us to elucidate the importance of consent - at least in the sense of the absence of dissent - in supporting the dominance of the RPF.

The language in education policy is politically important because it forms part of the material structure of ideology, and in that role confers greater legitimacy upon the RPF government. This is partly because it contributes to constructing English as the legitimate language, thereby casting the English-speaking group at the highest levels of government as legitimate rulers. In this view, we must recognise that the barriers in the education system produce a small number who are competent in English, and a much larger number who know only some English. The latter group, in a framework that posits English as the arbiter of prosperity, remains poor because of the simple fact that they are unable to speak the ‘language of prosperity’. And moreover, because wealth is related to one’s ability to progress through education, and to the quality of English instruction that one can access, the poorest in society are reinforced in their inferiority by their lack of English competence. English is made a focal point of Rwanda’s education system and development plan, but it generally remains the preserve of a privileged minority.

This chapter highlights an important point about language policy. At least in some cases, language policy is treated as a technocratic response to particular needs. But, as Elena Shohamy (2006) has pointed out, it also serves political agendas. In Rwanda, it is necessary to engage with theories of ideology and the notion of the representational archive in order to appreciate the legitimacy role played by language policy. For the construction of English

as a 'language of prosperity' holds out a promise which may not be realisable, but which legitimises the RPF by casting it as a technocratic, benevolent actor, albeit one whose superiority is manifest in English competence. The representational archive helps to naturalise the dominant position of English while obscuring the reality that competence in the language will not be a panacea for the poverty of the agriculturalist Rwandan majority. Moreover, if we follow Althusser and Gramsci, to buy into the 'language of prosperity' may also be to accept its particular Rwandan articulation, along with the values that underpin it. In this view, support for the English policy can also function as support for neoliberal economics and the treatment of globalisation as a development strategy.

The importance of 'the language of prosperity' in Rwanda highlights the connections between Rwandan language policy, global capitalism, and its history. In this respect, the analysis in this chapter reinforces the notion that language is a historically-conditioned institution. The construction of English as 'the language of prosperity' has deep roots, though its versatility is indicated by the way it has been adapted with reference to Rwanda's specific situation and relation to the global economy. In terms of this specific discourse, at least, the representational archive of English is shaped by local contexts, but also by global and historical currents. Much as Foucault argues that to understand prisons, the historian must 'br[ing] together and ma[ke] visible' the 'strategic connections' between a whole range of discursive elements and related practices (Foucault, 1980, p.38), so too must we analyse the connections within the representational archive of a language if we are to understand the social and political role it plays.

Alongside Chapter 3, this chapter has sought to enrich our approach to the politics of language by focussing on discursive construction and utilising the integral model of language. From the starting point of 'disinvention', and by focussing on the processes that produce discrete languages, we are able to view English (for example) as a discursive construct. Precisely because discourse gives meaning to phenomena, languages are produced as more

than mere tools, but as particular kinds of social constructs that are meaningful. Thus, I have attempted to show that languages are produced with particular characteristics, which can be an important aspect of the politics of language. By focussing on the specific ways in which representational archives produce the linguistic construct, we are able to appreciate the ideological role that can be played by languages: that is, how languages can legitimise and naturalise particular agendas. The final part of this thesis, Chapter 5, considers the Rwandan case study in the context of the global spread of English. It develops theoretical reflections on how a greater engagement with Gramscian political theory might help us to produce a more sophisticated understanding of 'global English'.

Part Three: Rwanda in Context

Five: ‘Global English’: Theoretical Reflections on the Rwandan Case Study

1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter attempts to shift focus from the case study of Rwanda in order to develop some theoretical reflections on the case study. Specifically, I will consider these in relation to our understanding of the ‘global English’ phenomenon. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, the dominant approach to ‘global English’ continues to be fundamentally liberal in character. It suggests that the decision to afford a particularly prestigious position to English is freely made by individuals and countries, within a framework of economic rationalism that renders the purported benefits of the language self-evident. In Pennycook’s view, it continues to represent the spread of English as essentially a natural, neutral, and beneficial phenomenon (2017, pp.7-9). Thus the liberal account of ‘global English’ is generally presented as apolitical, and rarely gives any serious consideration to either the political underpinnings or practical consequences of ‘global English’. The Rwandan case study highlights the limits of such a perspective. My analysis has demonstrated that the transformation of Rwanda in the eyes of commentators from a ‘francophone’ to an ‘anglophone’ country, has not been realised in terms of the actual linguistic capabilities of the population. And, significantly, it has shown that this purported language shift is a deeply political phenomenon both in its motivations and its effects. This is closely related to the fact that, in Rwanda, English is connected with social class in complex ways: on the one hand, English is a medium of linguistic capital, which implicates it in the formation of the ruling class, while on the other the construction of English in Rwanda serves to rationalise the exploitation of an impoverished class that has been unable to acquire the ‘language of prosperity’. In this chapter, then, I will consider how we might construct a preliminary

framework for understanding 'global English' that is able to recognise the importance of the ideological politics of English at the local level, and the attendant role that English plays in the acquisition and maintenance of state power. I will return to Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, and build on critical approaches to 'global English' in order to outline a Gramscian perspective on this problem.

In debates around 'global English', there remains disagreement as to the role played by individual States. Pennycook, for example, argues that the State is relatively unimportant. Instead, he emphasises the role of 'transcultural flows', by which he means the 'ways in which cultural forms move, change, and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts' (Pennycook, 2007a, p.6). His focus is on the way in which 'transcultural flows' diffuse hip-hop around the globe, alongside particular forms of English. Thus, he argues that the spread of hip-hop is linked to spread of English, but that individuals adapt and appropriate both hip-hop and English in particular ways that relate to specific contexts. Pennycook's observation that transcultural flows play a significant part in diffusing knowledge of English cannot be denied, but his research underemphasises the role of the State in relation to 'global English'. Precisely because his focus is on the way in which speakers refashion both hip-hop and English in relation to identity formation, from his perspective, 'English ... cannot be usefully understood in modernist states-centric models of imperialism or world Englishes, or in terms of traditional, segregationist models of language' (2007a, p.5). His contention is that we need a framework that not only surpasses the paradigms of 'linguistic imperialism' and 'world Englishes', but makes use of a novel model of language. While this is true, Pennycook dismisses the State too readily. As I argue throughout this chapter, individual States play a critical role in effecting 'global English'. One obvious point is that English's claim to 'global' status relies on the decisions made by individual States, as demonstrated by Crystal's argument that a language 'becomes global' when countries in which it is not spoken by a majority decide to give it a special status (either as an official language or as a prioritised

language in education) (2003, pp.4-5). The decision to give the language a special status is made by the State. Thus Rwanda's claim to being an 'anglophone' country derives from State policies which prioritise English, despite the fact that the majority of Rwandans do not speak the language. The implication is that, while African countries are routinely categorised as 'anglophone', 'francophone', or 'lusophone', such definitions may belie sociolinguistic reality but reflect State policies.⁷⁴ Because the language of government, and the declarations made by the State in favour of one language or another are decisive factors in the overall picture of a 'global' language, we must give them due consideration.

In fact we require an understanding of 'global English' that can account for the importance of individual States in upholding the phenomenon itself, and acknowledge the class-based politics of English that are highlighted by the Rwandan case study. The liberal account is insufficient for this purpose. For example, in Van Parijs' *Linguistic Justice for Europe and the World* (2011), the author argues that a massive investment in ELT would enable 'not only the rich and powerful, but also the poor and the powerless to communicate, debate, network, cooperate, lobby, demonstrate effectively across borders' (Van Parijs, 2011, p.31). Van Parijs' optimistic vision of an egalitarian spread of English neglects to broach theoretical questions about whose English is most highly valued. For instance, scholars such as Rey Chow have raised that concern that 'non-native' speakers of English are perceived as lesser than 'native' speakers in a world where 'having an accent is tantamount to leaving on display - rather than successfully covering up - the embarrassing evidence of one's alien origins and migratory status' (Chow, 2014, p.58), but these issues are not dealt with in Van Parijs' account. His approach to 'global English' also neglects to ask how local class structures might interact with the expansion of ELT. It does not account for how local political structures might

⁷⁴ I have made this point elsewhere in relation to so-called 'francophone' Africa. Adebajo notes that as few as 15% of people living in 'francophone' Africa are believed to speak French (1997, p.148). Accordingly, we must take seriously the notion that '[t]o speak of "francophone" Africa ... is to define diverse countries on the basis of the elite that rules them' and sets State policy (Spowage, 2019, p.12).

mediate, prevent, or foreclose communication and to what effect. Nor does it question the presumption that if individuals speak the same language, it necessarily becomes a significant, democratising force. Clearly, it is necessary to take a more politically-informed perspective.

There have been important critical objections to the liberal view on ‘global English’ since the early 1990s. In Marnie Holborow’s view, the first was Robert Phillipson’s *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), before which applied linguistics had ‘tended to studiously avoid overt political references’ (Holborow, 1999, p.54). Phillipson (1992) argues that English has spread around the world largely as a result of calculated designs put in place by parastatal agencies in the UK and US, with his most detailed example being the British Council. Certainly, Phillipson’s theory opened new avenues, and in the first section of this chapter I will outline some of its key insights, but I will also critique its treatment of Gramsci, hegemony, and ideology. Other critical contributions have included Holborow’s own *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language* (1999), and Selma K. Sontagg’s *The Local Politics of Global English: Case Studies in Linguistic Globalization* (2003). The former produces a Marxist reading of ‘global English’, and highlights its connection with globalised capitalism and the power of capital, while the latter draws on five case studies to produce a theory of ‘linguistic globalization’. In this chapter I will focus on Phillipson’s theory, in part because his is the dominant (though widely critiqued) critical account of how ‘global English’ actually spreads, and in part because it makes a sustained attempt to understand how ‘global English’ might emerge out of international politics, or international relations.

I will argue in the first section of this chapter that although Phillipson provides some key insights into ‘global English’, his use of political theory is not entirely consistent or particularly sophisticated. Moreover, I will demonstrate that his model of ‘linguistic imperialism’ is brought into question by the Rwandan case study. In response, I will argue that a more sustained and complex engagement with Gramscian political theory will allow us to sketch an account of ‘global English’ that can accommodate both Phillipson’s key

insights and the issues foregrounded by the Rwandan case study. My approach makes two assumptions that should be addressed here: that political theory can be relevant and useful in the study of 'global English'; and that Gramsci's political writing, though largely developed in an analysis of an individual State, can produce fruitful insights for the study of international politics.

I hold that it is necessary to engage with political theory if we are to understand how 'global English' functions as a global-political phenomenon. In this, I follow Peter Ives, who insists on the importance of political theory for understanding linguistic phenomena in general, and 'global English' specifically. He notes that 'global English' is 'a world historical phenomenon that presumably has massive political consequences', and yet that the importance of the rise of 'global English' as a political event is rarely considered in depth by scholars (2006, p.122). He argues that political theory has the capability to advance our understanding of the global spread of English, but notes that political science in general has 'been severely remiss in its contributions' to debates on language (2010, p.516; see also Ives, 2006). Although there are exceptions to this - Ives points to the work done by Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, and it is worth adding Helder de Schutter, Thomas Ricento, Stephen May, and Ives himself - where political theorists have attempted to grapple with 'global English', it has more often been within the context of an individual State, and particularly in connection with language rights, rather than understanding the mechanisms that underpin the spread of English (see for example Patten, 2001; Kymlicka and Patten, 2003; De Schutter, 2007). Part of the reason for this may be that there are doubts about the relevance of political theory in relation to the 'global English' debate. In this regard, Ives points to Janine Brutt-Griffler's argument that 'political terminology' (including the terms '*imposition, dominance, subordination, hegemony*') is routinely employed to explore the spread of English around the world, yet is 'not particularly apt from the linguistic standpoint' (2002, p.10, italics in original). In Ives's view, political theorists are 'tacitly accepting' Brutt-Griffler's underlying argument

that ‘political theory should leave “global English” to applied linguistics’ (2006, p.123). In fact, approaches such as that of Phillipson (1992) are able to show the uneven and problematic nature of the spread of English precisely by engaging with political theory, and more recent work such as Ricento, Peled and Ives's *Language and Political Theory: Building Bridges, Assessing Breaches* (2015), has underlined that there is much to be gained from productive dialogue between linguistics and political theory. Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate this point with regard to ‘global English’.

The influence of Gramsci's thought is already visible in current work on ‘global English’. However, Ives (2006; 2019) notes that, for the most part, Gramsci is only invoked in this discussion through his concept of ‘hegemony’. As a response, Ives implores scholars of ‘global English’ to refrain from using ‘hegemony’ in isolation, and argues that connecting the concept with Gramsci's wider thought will produce novel and important insights that impact the debate. As he puts it, focussing solely on ‘hegemony’ can create ‘an obstacle to Gramsci's richer insights into a more Marxist and historical-materialist understanding of the politics of language’ (2019, p.59). But at a practical level, in order to use Gramsci's concepts to investigate global phenomena, it necessary to rethink them somewhat. If ‘global English’ is conceptualised as a political phenomenon, and our interest is in how individual States come to contribute to its creation, then we are thinking on the broad terrain of international relations. This need not be reducible to inter-State relations; in fact, as we will see, it is precisely a benefit of a Gramscian approach that it provides a basis to consider ‘global English’, individual ‘anglophone’ States, and the social formation beneath those States as intrinsically linked. Robert W. Cox has contributed significantly in this respect, and he has consistently argued that Gramsci's concepts can offer critical insights in the study of international relations, and facilitate new ways of thinking about global politics (see especially Cox, 1983; Cox with Schecter, 2002). For Cox, Gramsci's understanding of state power can be usefully adapted to understand the ‘world order’, provided that we have license to view

Gramsci's concepts as he himself did: as 'elastic' ideas that attain 'precision only when brought into contact with a particular situation which it helps to explain' (Cox, 1983, pp.162-163). Used in this way, Cox demonstrates that a number of Gramsci's ideas, including 'hegemony', 'passive revolution', and 'trasformismo', can produce a nuanced analysis of power on the global stage.⁷⁵ It is these Gramscian concepts, along with Cox's own research on the 'nébuleuse', that I will use as a framework for comprehending 'global English'.

The structure of this chapter, then, is as follows. First, I will critically assess Phillipson's theory of 'linguistic imperialism'; I will highlight where it offers useful insights for our understanding of 'global English' but also how it is unable to account for Rwanda. I will go on to critique Phillipson's use of 'hegemony' and 'ideology', and argue that his theory does not exploit the full potential of these concepts. Then, in the second section, I will introduce Gramsci's concepts of the 'passive revolution' and 'trasformismo', and attempt to demonstrate how these ideas can help us to understand the spread of English, and how the ideological politics of English in Rwanda relate to the larger question of 'global English'.

2 POLITICAL THEORY IN THE IMPERIALIST MODEL OF 'GLOBAL ENGLISH'

Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992) offers the most canonical critical understanding of the macro-level development of 'global English'. He sets out his goal as 'to ascertain whether [English] has been actively promoted as an instrument of the foreign policy of the major English-speaking states' (1992, p.1). Phillipson structures his investigation with

⁷⁵ Cox also suggests that the other Gramscian concepts used in this thesis - the integral State, the war of manoeuvre, and the war of position - can be useful in such an analysis. In addition, he argues that Gramsci's concept of the 'historic bloc' is valuable in this endeavour. In Cox's terms, the 'historic bloc' is a revolutionary 'intellectual defence against co-optation by trasformismo' (1983, p.167). Cox argues that the term refers to a non-hegemonic class that begins to establish its own hegemony over other subordinate groups, and that might eventually mobilise itself in a war of position against the hegemonic group (ibid, pp.167-169). The concept of the 'historic bloc' would certainly be relevant for analysing resistance to global English, but as that is not the topic of this study it is not explored in further depth here.

reference to theories of imperialism; he is informed by the work of Hobson (1902), Lenin (1917), and Williams (1977), alongside other, unspecified theories that, according to Phillipson, ‘encompass the political, social, and ideological dimensions of exploitation, and integrate all these strands into a coherent whole’ (1992, pp.44-46). Thus Phillipson counters liberal arguments with an explanation of ‘global English’ that does not focus on individual choice, but rather on structures put in place by governmental and transnational organisations that constrain choice. His theory operates with a division of the world into a dominant ‘centre’ (the powerful western countries and interests) and dominated ‘peripheries’ (poorer regions, and especially post-colonial countries) (ibid, p.52). Phillipson envisages power as radiating from the ‘centre’, as he defines imperialism (via Johan Galtung) as ‘a type of relationship whereby one society (or collectivity in more general terms) can dominate another’ (Galtung, 1980, p.107, cited in Phillipson, 1992, p.52). I will shortly argue that this position needs complicating, but it is first important to explain how Phillipson envisages the role played by the ‘centre’.

The theory of linguistic imperialism is a refutation of the liberal-egalitarian perspective. Phillipson is clear that not all languages are equal. He argues that languages can receive two different kinds of support: ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’. ‘Structural’ support refers to the material backing that is given to languages, realised by the institutions that are connected with them, while ‘cultural’ support refers to ‘attitudes’ or ‘pedagogic principles’. The comparison between English and Kinyarwanda in Chapter 3 of this thesis is a good example: English was supported by a £18.5m project to create the *New English Dictionary*, and it was constructed as the language of civilisation, whereas Kinyarwanda was codified in a short time by missionaries and represented as a ‘rudimentary’ language. These inequalities are central to Phillipson’s theory, as he states that a ‘working definition of English *linguistic imperialism* is that *the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages*’ (Phillipson,

1992, p.47, italics in original). At the base of Phillipson's theory is the notion that languages are structurally unequal. He roots his notion of 'linguistic imperialism' in a longer history, placing the spread of English since the beginning of British imperialism alongside Nebrija's plan to standardise and spread 'Castilian' in the name of Queen Isabela of Castile (1492), the establishment of the Académie Française (1635), and the founding of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (1970) (1992, pp.31-33). In the case of English, Phillipson's focus is largely on the creation of 'structural' inequalities: he examines the ways in which American and British institutions (his prime example being the British Council) have been charged with the mission to disseminate English throughout the globe (ibid, pp.137-172). Indeed, he demonstrates the wealth behind the spread of English, noting that in 1989/1990 the British Council's budget totalled £321,000,000. This figure has only grown: in 2018/19, the British Council had a total expenditure of £1,219,658,000, most of which (£704,653,000) was spent on 'developing a wider knowledge of the English language' (*British Council*, 2019, p.88). Languages, Phillipson reminds us, are never on an equal footing.

Another key contribution of Phillipson's research is to draw attention to the ways in which the spread of English might benefit the 'centre' countries, both economically and in terms of diplomacy. Phillipson argues that 'when state backing was put into boosting ELT, the motives were various [but] national political and economic interests were paramount' (1992, p.151). He thus dispels the idea that the English Language Teaching (ELT) industry is merely a cultural and educational enterprise, and cites the Director-General of the British Council in 1987/88 as saying 'Britain's real black gold is not North Sea oil but the English language. It has long been at the root of our culture and now is fast becoming the global language of business and communication. The challenge facing us is to exploit it to the full' (quoted in Phillipson, 1992, p.49). It is true not only that officials in the 'centre' have viewed English as a resource to be exploited, but also that the spread of English has translated into actual material benefits. In later work, Phillipson cites Lord Neil Kinnock as stating: '[t]he

English language teaching sector directly earns nearly £1.3 billion for the UK in invisible exports and our other education related exports earn up to £10 billion a year more' (2006, cited in Phillipson, 2008, p.260). A more recent report, commission by *English UK*, found that in 2015 ELT brought £1.2 billion in export revenue, supported 26,000 jobs, and that students coming to the UK to take English courses brought another £1.1bn to the economy and £194 million to the exchequer (Chaloner, Evans, and Pragnell, 2015, p.4). The ELT industry also creates large markets throughout the world from which the US and UK are well-placed to profit: one report noted that the ELT market in India was worth \$2.75bn in 2012, and predicted that it would grow to \$4.65bn by 2015 (ICPL, no date, p.3). Moreover, from the inauguration of the British Council to the present day it has been argued that the spread of English worldwide would accrue political benefits for Britain (Phillipson, 1992, p.138; *British Council*, 2019).⁷⁶ But while Phillipson's investigation of the role played by the 'centre' in the spread of English yields incontrovertible evidence that British and American actors are actively engaged in the propagation of the language, his use of political theory requires further scrutiny. In particular, we must consider his depiction of hegemony and ideology, and how this frames his understanding of 'peripheral' states.

In the conclusion to *Linguistic Imperialism*, Phillipson states that there has not been a 'master-minded plan' to promote English around the globe (1992, p.307). Rather, he gives an account of a spread of English from the 'centre' to the 'periphery' whose impetus is explained with reference to a limited conception of 'hegemony' developed as part of his theory of imperialism. Phillipson refers to Gramsci, but, as Ives (2019) notes, neglects to cite him, and instead draws his definition of 'hegemony' primarily from Raymond Williams. Phillipson states that 'hegemony' 'refers to dominant ideas that we take for granted' (1992,

⁷⁶ Specifically, the *British Council* (2019) highlights the value of teaching English abroad, and encouraging international students to study English in the UK, in terms of soft power. The Chief Executive, Sir Ciarán Devane, observes that '[t]he British Council has been described as an exemplar in cultural and educational engagement' and argues that it fosters 'trust, exchange and long-term relationships with the UK' (*British Council*, 2019, p.4). This general argument is commonly employed in *British Council* reports and other documents.

p.72). Using this definition, he argues that:

Because of the investment in teacher training and publications, and because of the acceptance of ideas which legitimate a dominant role for English, [the dominant position of English in former colonies] comes to be accepted as the natural state of affairs rather than a choice which reflects particular interests (Phillipson, 1992, p.72).

Here, 'hegemony' is taken to refer to processes that are more usually considered to belong to the realm of 'ideology': those that naturalise and legitimate social phenomena. Phillipson does not explicitly recognise hegemony as an ongoing process that involves dynamics of coercion and consent. The quote cited above tells us that structural support helps to naturalise the dominant position of English, and it suggests an element of consent in its reference to the 'acceptance of ideas', but it fails to ask other key questions. For example, does this legitimisation entail that people consent to the hegemony of English? And, crucially, who is able to give consent to English and for whom is it a coercive imposition? Indeed, Phillipson does not engage with Gramsci's wider thought, which makes clear that there is always room for resistance in relation to hegemony, and that ideology is but one strategy of hegemony (c.f. Ives, 2004b). Instead, he characterises the distinction between hegemony and ideology as follows:

The advantage of hegemony over ideology is that whether or not ideology is taken as intentionally distorting, it tends to have about it some notion of contrivance, of deliberate manipulation, and at the same time of having an identifiable source, of being devised to forward a particular interest (Dale, 1982a, p.147, cited in Phillipson, 1992, p.73).

In the view taken by Phillipson and Dale, the distinction is necessary because 'ideology' is a strategy with a clear genesis encumbered with notions of intentionality, whereas hegemony is less loaded and more nebulous. By using 'hegemony', Phillipson hopes to side-step criticisms that are often made of 'ideology': that it puts too much emphasis on falsehood or on the intentional mystification of reality (see Eagleton, 1991). As Ives puts it, Phillipson 'uses "hegemony" to distinguish his analysis of "global English" from a conspiracy theory' (2019, p.62). And, in doing so, he blurs the distinction between hegemony and ideology, to

the point that the unique potential of the former concept is lost.

If we closely consider several examples of Phillipson's use of the term 'hegemony', we are able to outline his interpretation of the concept. One issue with Phillipson's understanding is that it neglects to consider the processes that actually produce hegemony. Gramsci is clear that hegemony uses a range of strategies to manufacture consent, and therefore involves ideological exercises such as the propagation of a particular viewpoint through the institutions of civil society ([1930] 1996, p.53). For Phillipson, however, 'English linguistic hegemony' simply refers to 'the explicit and implicit values, beliefs, purposes, and activities which characterise the ELT profession and which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language' (1992, p.73). He derives this definition from Williams's notion (cited earlier) that hegemony 'constitutes a reality for most people in society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of society to move in most areas of their lives' (1977, p.110, cited in Phillipson, 1992, p.72). But Phillipson ignores the nuance of Williams's argument, namely that hegemony itself is a 'system of meanings and values' that is 'constitutive and constituting', the argument being that part of the work of hegemony is to 'constitute' reality in the sense of conditioning it and giving a particular shape to it. For Phillipson, hegemony merely 'constitutes' reality in the sense that it is reducible to lived experience. This is a simplified view that cannot take account of the larger hegemonic and ideological structures that are critically important in Gramsci's account. Moreover, Phillipson's account of hegemony is not entirely coherent. The definition of hegemony as lived experience contrasts with an understanding that he puts forth elsewhere, in which he implicitly recognises the role of hegemony as the establishment of consent, but fails to differentiate it from ideology. He suggests that 'non-authoritarian' hegemonic leadership is that which is able to 'tap the emotional commitment of citizens, who sympathize with overall goals which are reproduced and renewed in the media, religion, and other sites of civil society', presumably in contrast to leadership that relies on the use of

coercion (ibid, p.74). In Phillipson's language, this is how a 'hegemonic political philosophy' works, and '[a]n ideology of the superiority of a language' is similar (ibid, p.75). However, the precise character of this similarity is not addressed, and as a result we see hegemony and ideology collapse into one another, converging to mean something like a 'naturalised and legitimised world-view'. In a summary of how 'hegemony' relates to 'linguistic imperialism', Phillipson states that:

The English language and English language teaching are hegemonic if they uphold the values of dominant groups, and if the pre-eminence of English is legitimated as being a 'common sense' social fact, thus concealing whose interests are being served by the dominant ideology and dominant professional practice (Phillipson, 1992, p.76).

That is, for Phillipson, English is 'hegemonic' if it is naturalised, legitimised, and in service of dominant groups. The complex questions of coercion and consent, which are at the heart of Gramsci's notion of hegemony, are absent from Phillipson's understanding of the concept. Indeed, his reading does not reflect the most useful, sophisticated aspects of Gramscian theory. There are significant consequences to this. For example, when Phillipson argues that 'English has a hegemonic position in many former colonies' (1992, p.72), the reader is led to understand only that English is in a dominant, naturalised position. Certainly this is a profoundly important point, but precisely because Phillipson does not extend his analysis through a Gramscian reading of hegemony, he produces a simplistic view of English as merely an imposition from the 'centre' to the 'periphery'. Indeed, he neglects the potential of 'hegemony' to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the relationship between English and networks of coercion and consent that operate at both local and global levels. Thus 'linguistic imperialism' does not recognise the role of coercive strategies and the manufacture of consent in constructing support for the dominance of English. Rather, it views English as 'hegemonic' only in the sense that it is dominant and naturalised, and so Phillipson precludes the consideration of how the global dominance of English might be enmeshed with local hegemonies, and, ultimately, obscures the way in which dominant groups within the

‘periphery’ benefit from the spread of English.

The question of how peripheral élites fit into the framework of linguistic imperialism is answered via Phillipson’s articulation of ideology. Phillipson argues that the central design of linguistic imperialism is to control people by means of ideas. Specifically, he argues that ‘[l]anguage is the primary means for communicating ideas’, and that therefore a shared language is a necessary pre-requisite for establishing an ‘ideological chain’ between the ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ countries, through which the ‘centre’ countries can diffuse their ideologies (1992, p.53).⁷⁷ Indeed, this is key to Phillipson’s understanding of the political benefits that the ‘centre’ countries accrue from the spread of English. He posits the spread of English as establishing the foundations for a continuation of the dominance by the ‘centre’ of the ‘periphery’, arguing that an ‘increased linguistic penetration of the Periphery is essential for completing the move away from crude means, the sticks [defined as ‘impositional force’] of colonial times, and even the more discreet means of the neo-colonialist phase of asymmetrical bargaining, to neo neo-colonialist control by means of ideas’ (ibid).⁷⁸ Phillipson cites examples of officials who have clearly conceptualised their mission to spread English in global-ideological terms. For example, the former director of the US Information Agency characterised the organisation’s mission in 1963 as: to ‘further the achievement of US foreign policy objectives ... by influencing public attitudes abroad in support of these objectives ... through personal contact, radio broadcasting, libraries, television, English language instruction, and others’ (Coombs, 1964, p.60, cited in Phillipson,

⁷⁷ The term ‘ideological chain’ comes from Valentin Vološinov’s *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1930). Phillipson (1992) neither cites Vološinov, nor uses the term ‘ideological chain’, but there are key similarities between Phillipson’s understanding of ideology as a link that connects individuals and is mediated by language and the ‘ideological chain’. Vološinov argues that the ‘ideological chain stretches from individual consciousness to individual consciousness, connecting them together’, with social interaction filling the consciousness with semiotic (ideological) content ([1929] 1973, p.11). Phillipson echoes this, to an extent, suggesting that the spread of English connects speaker to speaker, in a process that allows the ‘centre’ to fill the English-speaking ‘periphery’ with its preferred ideological content.

⁷⁸ Of course, this account underemphasises the crucial role played by ideas alongside ‘impositional force’ in the colonial period, and portrays an unrealistic onward march from brute force colonialism to modern, sophisticated ideational control (see for example Mudimbe, 1988; Ranger, 1983).

1992, p.156). On the basis of such sources, Phillipson suggests that the idea underpinning English linguistic imperialism was that the 'global linguistic scene could be influenced by active engagement in consolidating English as a world second language, and this would help the capitalist system to adapt to and dominate a changing world' (1992, p.152). This is an important point, but again it needs to be nuanced. Phillipson's key finding here is that people involved in the 'global English project' conceptualised their own mission this way; it does not follow that the spread of English has necessarily worked in that way. Thus, while it is vital to consider how the spread of English interacts with ideology, this relationship cannot be overly simplified. Pennycook, for instance, argues that if hip-hop is a force in the spread of English around the world, it is likely to be accompanied not by culturally dominant American ideas but rather by those associated with African Americans who are marginalised in American society (2007a, pp.1-5). This may not translate to support for the marginalised, but equally it cannot be assumed that the ideological implications of the spread of English will necessarily favour dominant ideological positions in the UK and US. English can be a vehicle for the diffusion of neoliberal ideology, as I have argued in this thesis, but its spread cannot be reduced to an ideological imposition from 'centre' to 'periphery'.

Phillipson's understanding of the 'ideological chain' underpins his conceptualisation of the role played by 'peripheral' élites in the global spread of English. Precisely because he uses the concept of ideology to represent the spread of English as a simple imposition from 'centre' to 'periphery', he reduces the role of local élites and neglects the complex reality that is highlighted by a political case study of a single 'periphery' country. Phillipson is clear that 'those in power in the periphery' have 'internalized' the norms that are 'dictated by the dominant centre' (1992, p.52). In this way, he avoids considering the roles played by élites in facilitating the spread of English, and the ways in which they might benefit from the situation. He does not make it explicit that élites might actively support the spread of English, but implicit in his account is the idea that if élites do support English it is as a result

of ideological indoctrination by the centre, accomplished through linguistic penetration and the links between 'centre' countries and 'peripheral' élites (ibid). This may not be wholly inaccurate; as Phillipson rightly notes, many 'peripheral' élites are educated in 'centre' countries and continue to have strong links with the 'centre' (ibid). But there is no recognition of the ability to contest or resist ideology, or of more complex Gramscian ideas about how ideology fits into broader cultural-political questions about power and social class. Thus one critical issue with Phillipson's language of 'internalized' norms is that it relies on the notion that 'centre' norms do not benefit 'periphery' élites; in other words, that their support for English could only be the result of a form of indoctrination. Such an approach is insufficient to explain the prioritisation of English in Rwanda, as political motivations, the struggle for hegemony, and global capitalism have all been factors in the creation of the 1996 and 2008 language policies. Thus, while Phillipson successfully demonstrates that the position of English in countries around the world is underpinned by specific forces and agendas, he ignores the vital issue of how English interacts with élite interests throughout the globe, and how the specific distribution of material wealth and power in those states can be understood as part of the picture of 'global English'.

I argue that this treatment of 'peripheral' élites constitutes a fundamental flaw in the theory of 'linguistic imperialism'. For while Phillipson usefully demonstrates that politics and economics, at the global level, are key influences on the spread of English, his model fails to link the global to the local, and as a result it cannot adequately account for the processes by which English is adopted or prioritised in 'periphery' countries. 'Linguistic imperialism' echoes the liberal account of 'global English' in one important respect: it is unable to account for class politics at the local level. Holborow makes just this point, and observes that it 'is local ruling classes that are agents and beneficiaries of capitalist development, a fact that Phillipson's theory fails to explain' (1999, p.77). That is, 'periphery' countries are not merely subject to the capitalist expansion of the 'centre' - an expansion which, in Phillipson's view,

is aided and abetted by linguistic imperialism - rather such expansion is often driven by local ruling classes. Holborow also points out that Phillipson's characterisation of the 'periphery' countries is overly optimistic. In her view, '[p]ost-colonial Africa is testament ... to the stifling impoverishment that local wealthy elites have forced upon their populations' (1999, p.77). In contrast to Phillipson, she observes that 'it is local ruling classes who are responsible for educational and linguistic policies that suit their own interests, with or without the advice of specialists from the "centre"', and concludes that '[i]n short, local ruling classes come to articulate ideologies that operate in their own interests, and are not just the ventriloquists' dummies of their Western masters' (ibid, p.78). Phillipson's theory, which rests on the notion of English radiating from the 'centre', fails to take this into account. It provides a flat, classless view of the 'periphery', and, as we will see, suggests that the élite is simply duped by Western ideology rather than engaging in more complex questions about why 'peripheral' élites might (sometimes literally) buy into English.

There are important insights to be drawn from Phillipson's model of 'global English'. He draws our attention to the fact that the spread of English offers disproportionate benefits to specific countries, with the UK and the US in particular benefitting significantly from the global ELT industry. But where he draws on political theory to conceptualise the spread of English around the world, Phillipson studiously avoids any consideration of class or local politics and power struggles, instead simply characterising the 'periphery' as a relatively inert receptacle for designs from the 'centre'. His understanding of imperialism underpins this, and his articulation of 'ideology' and 'hegemony' fails to engage with either concept in a sufficiently nuanced manner, and accordingly limits their utility for analysis. Phillipson's theory represents an important riposte to the dominant liberal approach, but the fact that 'linguistic imperialism' is unable to account for the realities of language, class, and power in Rwanda indicates that we need a more nuanced political model of 'global English' that recognises Phillipson's contributions but attempts to engage with political theory in a more

sustained and sophisticated manner. In the following section, I will offer a preliminary sketch of such a model, one that considers ‘global English’ in light of the insights drawn from the Rwandan case study.

3 A GRAMSCIAN APPROACH

In this section, I will detail some theoretical reflections on the Rwandan case study. In doing so, I will engage with Gramscian theory to suggest an improved framework for understanding ‘global English’, one that is able to account for the local ideological politics of English, and the role played by English in local class hierarchies. In contrast to Pennycook’s (2007a) account of the spread of English via ‘transcultural flows’, this approach maintains that local State structures, and the institutions of the Gramscian ‘integral State’, are crucial factors in the ‘global English’ question. Precisely because Gramsci meditated on the political importance of culture in his carceral writings, his approach to understanding the Italian State is a useful basis for a political understanding of how States throughout the world come to partake in the ‘global English project’. The approach taken here is less simplistic than the theory of ‘linguistic imperialism’; it acknowledges that the spread of English holds out particular benefits for actors in the ‘centre’, but does not assume a homogeneous ‘periphery’ that is imposed upon. Rather, on the basis that in Rwanda the diffusion of English directly benefits the ruling class, I suggest that we might best understand ‘global English’ as the product of a coalition of interests, or a process of ‘trasformismo’.

It is useful to situate the account that follows in the context of Robert W. Cox’s Gramscian approach to international relations. For Cox (1983) Gramsci’s concepts are useful for analysing power at the international level. He observes that Gramsci refused a ‘narrow or superficial view’ of the State as merely, for example, the arena of foreign policy. Rather, he argued that it was crucial to understand international relations with reference to the integral

State, including both political and civil society. For Gramsci, the State is the basic unit of international relations, but it is also the terrain on which hegemonies are constructed - and both of these points must be accounted for in an understanding of international relations (Cox, 1983, p.169). Thus hegemonies, political society, civil society, and local class struggle are all imbricated in a larger international structure. Gramsci asked:

Do international relations precede or follow (logically) fundamental social relations? There can be no doubt that they follow. Any organic innovation in the social structure, through its technical-military expressions, modifies organically absolute and relative relations in the international field too (Gramsci, 1971, cited in Cox, 1983, p.169).

By 'organic', Gramsci refers to something that is systemic. Thus, he argues that a systemic change at the local level forces some modification to the international structure. He did not, however, argue that the social basis of the State was unaffected by international relations, as the latter could have both passive and active effects on local political relations (Gramsci, 1971, p.176). Either level can affect the other, but changes in the social structure of individual States play a determining role at the international level. In Cox's reading, Gramsci was also acutely aware that '[t]he economic life of subordinate nations is penetrated by and intertwined with that of powerful nations', and that this constrains the freedom of States in a relatively subordinate position (1983, p.169). The State itself, then, both conditions and is conditioned by international relations, much as it shapes and is shaped by the society it rules over. This means that there is a useful parallel to be drawn with 'global English'. Phillipson (1992) has demonstrated that, at the international level, particular forces encourage the spread of English around the world, and in this process the international level can be seen to impact upon the local level. But 'global English' cannot solely be seen as a phenomenon that arises from changes at the international level, because its existence, however contested, is also a consequence of changes in local formations; for instance in the prioritisation of English beyond Phillipson's 'centre'. Thus a Gramscian perspective can form the basis for a more nuanced understanding.

Gramsci only wrote sparingly of international relations, as most of his work consisted of analyses of individual States (Cox, 1983, p.162). For instance, the concept of ‘hegemony’, as outlined in the introduction to this thesis, was largely developed through the examination of the Italian State. However, ‘hegemony’ stands as testament to the valuable perspective that Gramscian ideas can bring to bear on new contexts, as it is now often used to discuss power relations in, for example, literature, education, film, and cultural studies (Ives, 2004b, p.2). For the discussion at hand, it is necessary to adapt Gramsci’s theory of ‘hegemony’ to analyse the ‘global English project’. Put simply, I argue that we can view English as the focus of a specific kind of hegemony, in which coercive forces work alongside the manufacture of consent to ensure the dominant position of the language. A useful starting point for the adaptation of Gramsci’s thought is Cox’s elaboration of how ‘hegemony’ can be used in the study of international relations (1983, pp.170-173). Cox argues that in certain periods of history, there has been a single State that has been ‘hegemonic’. In the world order, such a State founds and protects a system that benefits its own interests, and is able to do so on the basis of coercion and consent. In this view, Britain fulfilled a hegemonic role between 1845-1875, when it ‘held the balance of power in Europe’ and ‘ruled supreme at sea’, and was therefore able to enforce obedience to its vision of the global system (ibid, p.170). In Cox’s account, a hegemonic State garners consent to its dominance at the international level in much the same way as a local State manufactures consent within its territorial boundaries: it projects its interests as being compatible with the interests of other States, which, accordingly, consent to the world order (ibid, p.171). In reality, as Gramsci would observe, global hegemony is not merely a process negotiated between States. It relies, for example, on global connections in ‘civil society’, ‘which bring about links among social classes’ of distinct countries (ibid). In this way, Cox reconceptualises the categories used in Gramsci’s analysis. Where Gramsci generally discusses hegemony as a process negotiated by classes or groups in a particular society, Cox articulates it as a transnational process. Indeed, as his account

develops, Cox introduces Gramsci's notions of the 'passive revolution', 'trasformismo', and the 'historic bloc', while sustaining his focus on integral States and the social formations that underpin them as constituent parts of a world order. Cox's account forms the basic outline of my approach to 'global English'. Simply, I will suggest that we can understand Rwanda, both in terms of the integral State and the social formation that conditions it, as a constituent part of a global hegemony of English. In this view, hegemony allows us to ask how the continued spread of English is empowered by coercion and consent.

The first of Gramsci's concepts that I will relate to 'global English' is the 'passive revolution'. This idea is rooted in Gramsci's understanding of the process of revolution, and the implications that different kinds of revolutions have in terms of statecraft. According to Thomas (2009), the French revolution was Gramsci's strongest influence in this regard. For Gramsci, the French Revolution of 1789 was truly 'revolutionary' in the sense of effecting radical and permanent change. For one thing, the victory of the Jacobins placed the principle of popular sovereignty at the heart of French political life, which in turn irrevocably shifted the balance of French statecraft as leaders placed a greater emphasis on governing by consent. Moreover, Gramsci argued that, while previous ruling classes 'did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own' (Gramsci, [1930-1932] 2007, p.234), the bourgeois class was able to continually expand, up to a point, by 'absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level' (Thomas, 2019, pp.141-143; quote from Gramsci, [1930-1932] 2007, p.234).⁷⁹ Thus, it acted as an organism that could ostensibly incorporate the entire nation. In these two senses, the 1789 Revolution was unprecedented in its involvement, actual or rhetorical, of the popular masses. The system that the revolution produced fell into crisis, however, in the mid-late nineteenth century, as

⁷⁹ This is not to say that Gramsci was uncritical of the Jacobin revolution. But he believed that 'the Jacobins represented the "future needs" not only of the French bourgeoisie, but of the entire nation ... [w]hile they represented the bourgeois class's interests, given the historical conditions, they were revolutionary for the peasantry too' (Ives, 2004, p.105).

signalled by the European revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune (1871). ‘The working classes’ revolt, their refusal to be subsumed pacifically into the expansive state of the bourgeoisie, demanding instead political forms adequate to their own emergent class project, indicated the limits inherent in such a contradictory project that sought to elevate and educate, but only on its own terms’ (Thomas, 2009, p.145). Gramsci held that the response of the bourgeois state was to enter a ‘defensive mode’, which contrasted with the function of the State after the French Revolution of 1789 because political change now proceeded with the minimal involvement of the masses. He recognised this type of political change as a ‘passive revolution’, from which the masses were largely or wholly excluded.⁸⁰

The ‘passive revolution’, then, is characterised by political change that happens without the involvement of the people at large. For Gramsci, this was the main strategy of the ‘defensive’ bourgeois State. The State progressively limited the engagement of the masses, at first by incorporating the ‘leading figures of the subaltern classes and oppositional social movements into a consolidating state apparatus and its “representative” organs in civil society’ (Thomas, 2009, p.151). This was a form of ‘trasformismo’ (explained in greater detail below), in which subaltern and oppositional groups were partially brought into the State apparatus. By ‘pacifying and incorporating’ figures within potentially subversive groups, the State was able to neutralise threats, without resolving the underlying tensions that arose in the socio-political configuration (ibid, p.147). By such means, Thomas argues that the bourgeois class ‘actively sought to deny other classes the opportunity to assume the initiative’, that is to take over a decaying social order, and instead it attempted to preserve its waning power ‘through the prevention of the emergence of competing (organised and institutional) perspectives’ (ibid, p.151). For Gramsci, the ‘passive revolution’ was not just specific to

⁸⁰ Gramsci drew the term ‘passive revolution’ from Vincenzo Cuoco’s analysis of the short-lived Parthenopean Republic of Naples (both established and abolished in 1799) (Gramsci, [1930-1932] 1996, p.232). The Parthenopean Republic was established by members of the aristocracy, who sympathised with the aims of the French Republic. In Cuoco’s view, it failed because the bourgeois revolutionaries had been too preoccupied with explaining Enlightenment ideas to the masses; instead, he argued, the bourgeoisie should have led the revolution without attempting to ‘change the world-view of the people’ (Ives, 2004, p.103).

France, but was also characteristic of Italy, as well as ‘other countries that modernise the State by means of a series of reforms or national wars, without passing through the political revolution of the radical Jacobin type’ ([1930-1932], 1996, p.232). Gramsci worked with the concept of ‘passive revolution’ extensively in his reflections on the Italian Risorgimento (see Gramsci, [1929-1930] 1992, pp.136-151), and it is in the Italian context that he connects ‘passive revolution’ to the practice of ‘trasformismo’. Before I outline the latter concept, however, it is useful to clarify the value of the concept of ‘passive revolution’ in relation to Rwanda.

‘Passive revolution’ offers us a way to consider Rwanda’s role in the ‘global English’ phenomenon. It is useful to refer once more to Cox’s Gramscian theory of international relations. Cox argues that when a State becomes globally hegemonic, its social institutions, culture, and technology become ‘patterns for emulation abroad’. In this way, he argues, the ‘expansive hegemony impinges on the more peripheral countries as a passive revolution’ (1983, p.171). In this regard, there is a crucial question that Cox does not answer: who is thought to be ‘passive’ in this specific passive revolution? That is, does the international hegemonic State force other States to adopt its model (that is, without the involvement of the ruling élite), or does the international hegemony foment a passive revolution at the State level, where ‘emulation’ takes place without the involvement of the local masses? In the context of a hegemony of ‘global English’, the Rwandan case study suggests the latter scenario. The expansion of English in Rwanda bears the hallmarks of a passive revolution. This is particularly clear in the context of the 2008 language policy. The shift to English constituted a significant structural change, as it effectively restricted the public education system to teaching through a single language. The policy, passed at a meeting of the Rwandan cabinet, was made without the input of the masses. Indeed, the reality that the shift was experienced as a passive revolution is indicated by the routinely cited fact that, for teachers, it was ‘sudden’ and a ‘shock’ (see for example Samuelson and Freedman, 2011; Pearson,

2014). We can develop this point through Gramsci's argument that 'passive revolution' was achieved by the 'defensive' State which progressively limited the involvement of the masses. The restrictions that the RPF imposed on the media, for instance, reduced space for public debate and for the publication of perspectives that ran counter to governmental discourse, or the 'rehearsed consensus' (see Ingelaere, 2010; Sundaram, 2016). And, as Myers-Scotton (1993) has demonstrated, situations wherein the élite is differentiated from the masses on the basis of language serve to limit access to political positions. If we recall that countries where English is not a majority language but is nonetheless given a special status are considered to be the bulwarks of the language's claim to 'global' status, Rwanda's passive revolution has particular implications. First, it belies claims that post-colonial 'countries' as a whole, rather than select groups of élites, 'choose English' (Crystal, 2003, p.79). Second, it suggests that certain post-colonial countries can only be considered to be 'anglophone' participants in the 'global English' phenomenon if one is willing to ignore the fact that the majority of citizens cannot speak English. In this view, it may be the case that the existence of 'global English' (as a phenomenon in which English is spoken around the globe) can only be demonstrated with reference to local élites. Thus the rise to power of the RPF in 1994 began a process by which Rwanda was transformed, at least in the rhetoric of global commentators, from a 'francophone' to an 'anglophone' country,⁸¹ regardless of the limited practical impact that the post-genocide language policies have had on the English competence of the typical Rwandan. This point can be developed if we consider Gramsci's notion of 'trasformismo' in greater depth.

Gramsci develops his concept of 'transformismo' through an analysis of the Italian state. In his view, after the Risorgimento, Italy was in a state of constant passive revolution. The country was unified at the level of political organisation, but culturally, linguistically, and economically it remained a patchwork of regions that differed greatly from one another.

⁸¹ By way of example, Crystal's (2003) account gives Rwanda as evidence of English's claim to 'global' status.

Graziano argues that ‘the only method used throughout Italian history to try to “master” the political, economic, and social contradictions of the country’ has been ‘trasformismo’ (2010, p.92). The use of the term ‘master’ is instructive here, for ‘The Moderate Party (‘the major ruling bourgeois party’ (Ives, 2004b, p.103)) did not successfully resolve Italy’s contradictions, but instead sought to manage them by limiting the involvement of the masses in politics. As Ives puts it:

In the process known in Italian as *trasformismo* (literally, transformism), the Moderates deflated the power of their main adversaries, the Action Party, by incorporating its leaders – political, cultural and economic – into its own governing networks. This strategy, in effect, allowed the Moderates to lead without engaging the masses precisely by absorbing leaders most closely connected to the masses (Ives, 2004b, p.103).

This was governance by a system of alliances, and from the 1880s Italian governments ‘co-opt[ed] emerging interest groups, or those previously excluded from power (the southern elites, above all)’ in ‘fragile and temporary’ coalitions that allowed them to secure power (Graziano, 2010, p.27). In this way, potentially dissenting groups such as the Catholics, the Socialists, and the democrats, practiced ‘a more or less open collaboration with power’, and formed part of a ‘sort of “single party”’ that was ‘at times surreptitious, at times official’ (ibid, pp.27-28). In the process, they were ‘transformed’ into forces that were supportive of the dominant group.

The process of *trasformismo* had the impact of moving Italian political parties towards a centre ground. There was:

a convergence of the liberal right and left toward the centre in order to isolate and reduce the intrinsically subversive extreme wings. The seditious elements that the transformist operation was designed to curb were on the one side the Catholic Church and on the other the far left - republican and socialist. The country having been unified without (and against) them, they were not only strangers to the system, naturally enough, but also its declared enemies (Graziano, 2010, p.93).

The ideological convergence implied by *trasformismo* is indicated by Raffaele Romanelli’s critique of the Italian Sinistra (‘Left’). The Sinistra was a parliamentary group, which after

1873 was led by Agostino Depretis, a well-known political transformist. After 1876, when an agreement between Depretis and the economic liberal factions of the Destra ('Right') led to parliament withdrawing its confidence in the Destra Prime Minister, Marco Minghetti, Romanelli claimed that the Sinistra became a 'single party of the bourgeoisie' (quoted in Graziano, 2010, p.92). Indeed, in Gramsci's view, trasformismo brought even the 'extreme' wings into a centre-ground.⁸² He argued that there were:

Two periods of transformism: (1) from 1860 to 1900, "molecular" transformism; that is, individual political figures molded by the democratic opposition parties were incorporated one by one into the conservative-moderate "political class" (characterized by its aversion to any intervention by the popular masses in state life, to any organic reform that would replace crude dictatorial "dominance" with a "hegemony"); (2) from 1900 onward, transformism of whole groups of extremists who crossed over to the moderate camp (the first event was the formation of the Nationalist Party with ex-syndicalist and anarchist groups that culminated in the Libyan war, followed by interventionism) (Gramsci, 2007 [1930-1932], p.257).

Trasformismo, then, served to ally representatives of different interests groups to a 'conservative-moderate' position that, from a political perspective, ensured the stability of the State.

Trasformismo worked not by absorbing entire interest groups into the political centre and the de facto 'single party of the bourgeoisie', but rather by incorporating a particular stratum of those groups. This is a point that Gramsci develops with reference to Southern Italy after the Risorgimento. The transformist state did not involve the peasantry or the working class in its attempts to unify Italy; rather, it created strategic alliances 'with traditional ruling groups, especially the Piedmont leaders and their armies, but also the northern industrialists and southern landowners' (Ives, 2004b, p.103). In doing so it appealed to traditional social structures to underwrite the new, national structure.⁸³ This also allowed the process of trasformismo to prevent organised resistance. In Gramsci's view, the South was

⁸² It is worth noting that Gramsci uses the term 'extreme' in a precise, rather than evaluative sense, referring to those parties that are considered to be outside of the political centre.

⁸³ As Ives points out, this was a routine technique of the colonial state (2004, p.103). See, for example, Genova (2004) on how the colonial administration in French West Africa both invented new forms of hierarchy and drew on traditional hierarchies by incorporating pre-colonial leaders into its administrative structure.

a 'semi-colonial market' for Northern industry. The region was oppressed and exploited, but Gramsci argued that discontent in the region was 'taken care of' by the State through two measures. The first was the police system, which systematically repressed mass resistance movements and undertook the 'periodic slaughter of peasants'. The second was the transformist system, which incorporated 'the most active Southern elements into the ruling classes through special "judicial" white collar privileges, etc.' (Gramsci, [1929-1930] 1992, p.131). Thus, the network of 'active Southern elements' that might have resisted Italian bourgeois hegemony was incorporated into the ruling class. Without this group, Gramsci argued that 'the discontent could not take on a political aspect and since it exhibited itself only in chaotic and riotous expressions, it fell into the "sphere" of the "police"' (ibid). *Trasformismo*, then, precluded a popular Southern political movement because the incorporation of potential political leaders into the ruling class rendered Southern discontent incapable of the sort of political expression that might allow it to make an impact on Italian hegemony or the Italian State. Any assumption that Southern elements incorporated into the State would work in the interests of the South was, in Gramsci's view, fundamentally wrong. Through *trasformismo*, 'the system which could have organized Southern discontent became an instrument of Northern politics' (ibid). Because the masses are 'decapitated', rather than being 'absorbed into the ambit of the new state' (ibid, p.133), the process of *trasformismo* entails the political neutralisation of potentially subversive elements. Gramsci is clear that this dissolves the solidarity of a particular group or class; the 'active Southern elements', like the Southern landowners, may nominally represent the Southern masses, but they are in fact detached from them.⁸⁴ This is a vital point.

In decapitating oppositional groups, *trasformismo* plays an important role in hegemony,

⁸⁴ It is worth noting here that where Gramsci discusses 'classes' in relation to *trasformismo* he does not refer solely to materialist class categories (such as the proletariat and the bourgeoisie), though these do figure in his thought. Rather, he discusses classes that might be understood as cultural and material: the Catholics, the Socialists, and the Southern masses, for instance.

by manufacturing the consent of a potentially subversive group. It is worth referring to a particularly well-known passage from the *Prison Notebooks*. Here, Gramsci states that ‘a class is dominant in two ways, namely it is “leading” and “dominant”. It leads the allied classes, it dominates the opposing classes. Therefore a class can (and must) “lead” even before assuming power; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but it also continues to “lead”’ ([1929-1930] 1992, p.137). A number of scholars believe that here Gramsci is discussing rule by hegemonic consent as opposed to coercion: Mouffe, for instance, argues that ‘[t]here is no doubt’ that the reference to ‘leading’ allied classes is a reference to hegemony with a level of consent (1979, p.179). On its own, the passage appears to presume a fairly simple dichotomy between allied and opposing classes, and rule by consent or coercion accordingly. The concept of ‘trasformismo’ nuances this point, precisely because it suggests a mechanism for the State to transform an ‘opposing’ into an ‘allied’ class. In part this is because of the language Gramsci uses to describe ‘trasformismo’, which frequently refers to ‘alliances’; in part, it is because the State does not dominate a class that has been subject to trasformismo, but rather appears to lead it. For Gramsci was clear that trasformismo in Italy prevented oppositional political groups from forming. He argued that the Italian government had:

placed itself above the parties not in order to harmonize their interests and activities within the permanent framework of the life and interests of nation and state but rather in order to disunite them, to separate them from the great masses, and to gain “a force of nonpartisans who are attached to the government by paternalistic bonds of a Bonapartist-Cesarist type” (Gramsci, 1996 [1930], pp.105-106).⁸⁵

Thus, for Gramsci, Italian trasformismo both dissolved and reconstituted particular bonds that attached the ‘heads’ of groups either to their own group or class, or else to the moderate government. The precise nature of this process is unclear, but Gramsci argued that trasformismo permitted ‘the formation of a ruling class ... with the absorption of the active elements that arose from the allied as well as from the enemy classes’ (Gramsci, [1929-1930])

⁸⁵ It is not clear from the original text who, if anyone, Gramsci is citing here.

1992, p.137). Thus, a functional élite was formed on the basis of *trasformismo*, even incorporating those who were nominally representatives of subordinate groups. If the ‘absorption of the élites of the enemy classes results in their decapitation and renders them impotent’ (ibid), then *trasformismo* is a dual process: representatives are wrenched from their original class or group affiliation, and incorporated into the governing élite. Thus even if a class remains nominally oppositional, it can in fact be ‘led’, or ruled by consent, at least at the level of its most politically-formidable stratum. If this is the case, there is an important corollary: *trasformismo* of a formerly (or formally) ‘opposing’ class can entail a shift from ‘dominant’ rule to ‘leading’ rule, or from being subject to primarily coercive power to giving one’s consent to power. This has important implications for the ‘global English project’.

Trasformismo can help to answer a question that is central to issue of ‘global English’: how do countries where English causes problems for the majority come to support the ‘global English project’? In Rwanda, English serves to disadvantage the masses. For many, it is a barrier to education, and even those who learn the language sufficiently may be unable to access its putative benefits. Scholars have repeatedly made similar points in regard to other African countries. For instance, Myers-Scotton (1993) demonstrates that the dominance of English, alongside other European languages, restricts access to political positions and socioeconomic development for the masses in most of Africa. In addition, Ayo Bamgbose shows that African language policies continue to enact various forms of ‘exclusion’, in spite of strong support for indigenous language education from academics and international organisations such as UNESCO (Bamgbose, 2000, p.86-87). Moreover, as Bruthiaux (2002) argues, if ‘developing’ countries are to raise citizens out of poverty, they can only do so effectively by promoting mother tongue literacy in tandem with local economic growth. In spite of the arguments against the domination of a given European language, not only do African States maintain exclusionary language policies, but some actively enact new ones. Rwanda’s 2008 language policy is only one example here: in 2013, Burundi, Gabon, and the

Republic of South Sudan were all planning to institute new policies prioritising English (Plonski, Teferra, and Brady, 2013). Certainly, multiple factors underpin these decisions, including the fact that many parents believe that European languages offer the best future to their children (Bamgbose, 2000, p.87). But it is a critical point with regard to Rwanda that the current situation works in the interest of the State and the ruling class. For this reason, the political élite supports the prioritisation of the language, and, by making Rwanda one of the States with an English language policy, contributes to the hegemony of ‘global English’. Thus, the Rwandan case study demonstrates that a single country can consent to the spread of English on the basis that its élite benefits. In the Italian context, *trasformismo* entailed a network of alliances between the heads of social groups that ultimately supported the State. I argue that the ‘global English project’ works in a similar way. Simply, the concerns of a significant number of élites align in favour of the spread of English. Thus, the Rwandan élite has become part of a coalition of interests that establish an increasingly global consensus in favour of the prioritisation of the English language. As Phillipson (1992) demonstrates, the British Council, the UK, and the US all aim to expand the purview of English because it is beneficial for them to do so. But in this regard, Rwanda is not, as Phillipson would have it, subject to an imposition from the ‘centre’. It is simply that the interests of the Rwandan élite align with those of the UK and US States. Such an alignment of interests between élites and other parties with a stake in the spread of English produces the putative phenomenon of ‘global English’, but this does not reflect the needs of the people who are subject to legislation that prioritises English over local languages. It is vital therefore to consider how this relates to ‘decapitation’ and the practicalities of resistance.

In a Gramscian sense, the Rwandan masses are politically ‘decapitated’ in relation to ‘global English’. As noted above, Gramsci argued not that the Southern masses were somehow contented by their ‘decapitation’, but that it prevented their discontent from taking on political expression ([1929-1930] 1992, pp.125-136). The case of Rwanda starkly

highlights this point in relation to the ‘global English project’. The government argues that the prioritisation of English is a technocratic decision that will help to raise Rwandans out of poverty. But its hegemonic project involves the progressive exclusion of Rwandans from the political process, and the restriction of media freedom. Reyntjens’s *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (2012), for example, demonstrates that it is government policy to enact the ‘artificial imposition of a world vision unlinked to the daily experiences and struggle of most people’, and that ordinary Rwandans have little capacity to resist these plans (Reyntjens, 2012, p.183). It is instructive, in this regard, that in the media, arguments against the prioritisation of English are largely limited to the webpages of *The Rwandan* (see Chapter 4). Importantly, ‘decapitation’ and *trasformismo* are clearly not the only reasons that there is a lack of organised political resistance to the spread of English in Rwanda. As I have argued throughout this thesis, an important factor has been the representation of English as language that will solve specific problems, particularly poverty. This is despite that fact that, for example, a rural Rwandan farmer would be far more likely to benefit from a basic education in Kinyarwanda than in English. Not only is English virtually irrelevant for subsistence agriculture but, as Bruthiaux has shown, acquiring literacy in one’s mother tongue is significantly easier than in a second language, and it permits one ‘to step from the material into the conceptual realm where capital lives and where economic development begins’ (2002, p.286). That is, one’s economic prospects are significantly improved by becoming literate, and there is no need for this to be in English or any other European language. Indeed, Bruthiaux concludes that: ‘[i]n a world where, it is said, half the population has never made a telephone call, talk of a role for English language education in facilitating the process of poverty reduction and a major allocation of public resources to that end is likely to prove misguided and wasteful’ (ibid, pp.292-293). Factual reality belies Van Parijs’ optimistic claim that global English will allow ‘not only the rich and powerful, but also the poor and the powerless to communicate, debate, network, cooperate, lobby, demonstrate effectively across

borders' (2011, p.31), as the poor and powerless are very limited in their capacity to change the direction of State policy, to say nothing of their inability to disrupt the spread of English. In this sense, in the context of the 'global English project', the people of Rwanda are rendered politically impotent (in the style of Gramsci's analysis), because the Rwandan State benefits from the uneven distribution of English competence.

Another important question is how *trasformismo* and the 'global English project' relate to ideology. Indeed, ideology can function as a mechanism of *trasformismo*. Femia argues that Gramsci's reading of hegemony through *trasformismo* holds that the former 'rests on the ideological unity of the economic, political and intellectual élites' (1987, p.47), which is achieved through *trasformismo*. It must be recognised, however, that 'ideological unity' is unlikely to be stable; Gramsci does not portray the state and its 'transformed' élites as unified, but rather as being held together by an improvisational system of concessions and favours that secure temporary alliances. Indeed, Gramsci called this 'tendency to make ad hoc arrangements' the 'official tradition' of the Italian parliamentary system ([1929-1930] 1992, p.61). Nevertheless it is worth considering that if ideology can be a vehicle for *trasformismo* then the economic, political, and intellectual élites may be allied to one another more easily as the result of a certain level of ideological convergence between them. Certainly, Romanelli's claim that the Italian government was a 'single party of the bourgeoisie' (quoted in Graziano, 2010, p.92) suggests a group aligned, ultimately, on the basis of shared interest in particular (bourgeois) concerns. Paterson, in his analysis of global protest movements, argues that 'ideational distortion' is central to *trasformismo*, which can be defined as 'an *ideological strategy* that attempts to win over ... popular movements as a whole so that they come to consent to the dictates of existing political institutions' (2009, p.47, italics in original). It is necessary to clarify that, for Gramsci, it was the job of *trasformismo* to 'win over' élites rather than whole groups. But the invocation of ideology is useful, and suggests that material means (such as the 'white collar privileges' that helped the Italian State to

incorporate the Southern élite (Gramsci, [1929-1930] 1992, p.131)) are not the only mechanisms for orchestrating alliances. Rather, precisely because ideology is a means by which consent can be manufactured, it can organise consent from the heads of distinct groups to a given position. *Trasformismo* may, for example, present the interests of the dominant élite as compatible with those of the heads of other groups. Alternatively, as the subaltern leaders are incorporated into the political élite, their interests may begin to converge with those of the dominant élite. Gramsci's account of the Southern élite after the *Risorgimento*, for instance, demonstrates that their incorporation into the political élite meant it was no longer in their interests to be 'active [that is, resistant] Southern elements' (ibid). In this view, *trasformismo* creates an enlarged élite that shares at least some ideological ground, and which might eventually become a dominant bloc that is at least tentatively united on the basis of shared interests. The creation of this élite is part of the process that 'decapitates' the masses, because those who ostensibly represent them come to functionally support the interests of the ruling class. By returning to Robert W. Cox, we can see how this process might be realised at the level of the international system.

Gramsci's nuanced approach to politics and hegemony, alongside his insistence on the link between the local social formation and the particular character of international relations, underpins Cox's concept of the 'nébuleuse'. This can also advance our comprehension of the relation between the local State and 'global English'. The *nébuleuse* refers to the 'unofficial and official transnational and international networks of state and corporate representatives and intellectuals who work towards the formation of a policy consensus for global capitalism' (Cox with Schechter, 2002, p.33). It is a concept that is directly relevant to the workings of ideology at the global level. Cox views the formation of an international economic and political system, dominated by capitalism, as a decentralised process that involves different actors whose interest cohere in important ways. And '[t]he very looseness that the term [*nébuleuse*] implies contains the prospect of inconclusiveness and discord'

(ibid); the *nébuleuse* does not entail an ideologically united group, but rather one whose interests converge. It functions to legitimise the restructuring of life in line with the dictates of neoliberal ideology (Paterson 2009, p.45). Moreover, it seeks to diffuse neoliberalism as manifested in the ‘language of competition, deregulation, downsizing, efficiency, flexibility, modernisation, outsourcing, privatisation and restructuring’ (ibid). The result, in Paterson’s view, is that ‘a “common sense” emerges, which naturalises and legitimises the new [neoliberal] mode of production’ (2009, p.45). In his view, then, the *nébuleuse* essentially comprises ideas at the ‘individual, national and global level’ that are ‘used to justify specific relations of production’ (ibid). It thus connects global politics to national politics, and ultimately to the micro-politics that characterise people’s everyday lives. The *nébuleuse* suggests a complex convergence of individual beliefs and attitudes that form the building blocks of a global capitalist order. It also provides a useful structure for understanding the global English project.

The concept of the *nébuleuse* offers us a potential solution to some of the questions raised by the model of ‘linguistic imperialism’ and by the Rwandan case study. Phillipson (1992; 2009) has demonstrated that there are specific institutions whose goal it is to spread English, and that particular countries accrue economic and political benefits from the global spread of English. But it is clear that ‘global English’ cannot be understood as purely the consequence of a diffusion from an ‘anglophone’ centre to the rest of the world (whether conceptualised as the ‘periphery’ or the ‘outer’ and ‘expanding’ circles outlined in Kachru’s work (see Kachru, 1985)). Moreover, Pennycook (2007a) clearly shows that there are mechanisms that empower the spread of English that are below the State, including such ‘transcultural flows’ as the spread, adaptation, and appropriation of hip hop. But, at least at the level of the Rwandan State, the diffusion of English can also act as a tool for a local English-speaking élite to construct hegemony, and this allows for an understanding of one way in which the ‘global English project’ expands. It is useful to re-read Cox’s description of

the *nébuleuse* in relation to 'global English'. He states:

The development of the *nébuleuse* does not mean that the organisation of global capitalism has passed out of the hands of states over to a new supra-state global mechanism, a central committee of global capitalism that directs state policies. It means that the dominant forces at work at different levels - local as well as global - concur in giving priority to competitiveness in the global economy and in precluding interventions by whatever authority that are not consistent with this aim (Cox with Schechter, 2002, p.34).

I will address the link between global English and global capitalism shortly, but first it is worth focussing solely on the mechanism that Cox describes here. Cox rejects the notion of a centralised global power that directs policy at the level of individual States. One key benefit of this approach is that he does not presume that capitalism simply radiates from a given centre; rather, he recognises the agency of local actors who decide to prioritise competition and the principle of non-intervention in the market. There may be various reasons for this, but, in Rwanda, the neoliberalisation of the economy clearly plays a complex political and hegemonic role, in both reproducing the extant social structure and encouraging ideological alignment with the principles of RPF governance, while also responding to the norms of donor agencies (see also Ron-Balsera, 2011; Spowage, 2018). From this perspective, the local politics that impact upon decisions made at the level of the State are important factors that must be explained, without relying solely on notions such as globalisation. Cox's point is subtle: powers at different levels are aligned in their aims and interests, and they form a loose consensus in favour of neoliberalism as a form of capitalism. This may be conceptualised as a process of *trasformismo*, wherein particular factors, both ideological and material, conspire to make neoliberal capitalism a preferred option for policy makers.

On the basis of the Gramscian understanding that I have put forth in this section, it is worth considering whether we can speak of a 'global English *nébuleuse*'. Cox states:

Management of global capitalism is a multilevel process, determined at the national level by the balance of social forces within states, at the transnational level by an evolving ideology (neo-liberalism) produced by business schools, journalists and other intellectuals, at the international level by those institutions that develop

officially endorsed policy guidelines, and again at the national level by the translating of these guidelines into concrete measures of national fiscal and monetary policy (Cox with Schechter, 2002, p.33).

From the account put forth in this thesis, it is clear that there are parallels with the management of 'global English'. The social formation in Rwanda determines how English is managed by the government, including how it is presented and legitimised. Thus, in a country with a 39.1% official poverty rate, English is marketed as the 'language of prosperity'. This representation, in turn, exists as a transnational phenomenon, and is constructed by various commentators (for example, Tsedal Neeley in the *Harvard Business Review*, who boldly claims that 'English is now the global language of business' (2012)). As Phillipson (1992) argues, organisations such as the British Council work at the international level to produce guidelines for the teaching of English, and, ultimately, such guidelines feed into educational and linguistic policy. It is certainly important that more research be conducted into the nature of such a network, but this thesis suggests its existence. Clearly, however, the spread of English cannot be reduced to a 'central committee' of English, though it is evident that particular agencies actively contribute to the phenomenon. 'Global English' is in the broad economic interest of the UK and US at least, in the specific sense that their economies benefit from the ELT industry, and Phillipson (1992) reminds us that it is the basic mission of parastatal bodies such as the British Council to make 'global English' a reality. However, *trasformismo* is helpful for highlighting that it is not simply the case that 'the demand [for English] was largely created and orchestrated by the Centre, and reflected Centre perceptions of what was needed in the Periphery' (ibid, p.301). Rather, in Rwanda, English is used as a tool of statecraft that fulfils the needs of local level hegemony. It serves material interests and plays a role in reproducing the extant class structure while creating a small English-speaking stratum of skilled labour. Moreover, it plays an ideological role through its representation as the 'language of prosperity'; this attests to the value of English, while providing an economic rationale for the prioritisation of English in 'developing'

countries where it is not at all clear that such policies will allow the masses to prosper. In the specific case of Rwanda, this allows English to act as an ideological support for the neoliberal reorganisation of the economy, and it confers linguistic legitimacy upon the ruling class. Thus the Rwandan case study suggests the complexity of the 'global English nébuleuse', as the spread of English benefits a number of powerful parties in distinct ways. This model, which avoids simplifying the politics of 'global English' by relying on a 'Centre/Periphery' distinction, allows us to recognise the interconnected roles played by the integral State and the international system in the phenomenon of 'global English'.

The notion that there is a 'global English nébuleuse' also allows us to ask questions about how the discursive construction of English interacts with the spread of the language. To view English as 'hegemonic' in a Gramscian sense necessitates that we consider how coercion and consent contribute to its dominant position. Representations of English that produce the language as a 'mythical hero' (Pennycook, 2007b, pp.100-104) or a 'global panacea' (Phillipson, 2015) are powerful mechanisms for creating consent to the dominance of English globally (in, for example, arguments that it can function as a global lingua franca) and locally (through arguments that it will solve social, economic, or political problems). This permeates social and political systems at different levels. In Rwanda, individual students and parents express their belief in English as the 'language of prosperity', and support the policy on that basis, despite the fact that English constitutes a barrier to the progression of most Rwandans through the education system, and is practically irrelevant in agriculture, Rwanda's largest economic sector. At the level of the integral State, government officials and the media represent the prioritisation of English as a sensible, technocratic decision, generally ignoring its role in the reproduction of the extant class structure of Rwanda. This draws on discursive constructions that cannot strictly be seen as deriving from Phillipson's 'centre'. While we may be able to trace the original figuration of 'language of prosperity' to Eclitkwn's 1846 pamphlet (printed in Manchester), it is now (re)produced around the globe, including by its

adherents in Rwanda. The discursive construction of English, then, plays a role in manufacturing consent to the ‘global English project’.

The ‘global English nébuleuse’ raises particular questions about global ideological politics. I argued in Chapter 4 that in Rwanda, the prioritisation of English also functions as a support for the neoliberal reorganisation of Rwandan society. This relationship is reciprocal: neoliberal logic empowers the prioritisation of English because it holds that the market should set the agenda of the education system; and the prioritisation of English empowers neoliberalism because it naturalises the control of the market over the social sphere (see Spowage, 2018). This is but one of the prevalent discursive constructions of English, including those that might be deemed as counter-hegemonic (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas’ (2003) argument that English is a ‘killer language’), each of which have complex relationships to particular ideological stances and belief systems. The discourse of English as the ‘language of prosperity’ suggests that, at least in certain contexts, the ‘global English nébuleuse’ functions as a vehicle for neoliberalism, and in that way functions similarly to Cox’s capitalist nébuleuse. It is the case, then, that the spread of English has complex ideological underpinnings and implications that must be investigated further. By viewing the apparent spread of English as at least in part the result of the ‘global English nébuleuse’, with important underpinnings and implications at the level of individual states, we can foster a more nuanced engagement with questions of social class, power, and the ideological politics of ‘global English’.

4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued for a Gramscian approach to understanding ‘global English’. This is in response to the Rwandan case study. For, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, we cannot understand the position of English in Rwanda without considering

questions about class, power, and politics. Precisely because Rwanda is part of the phenomenon of 'global English', it follows that we must consider these issues in relation to the 'global English project'.

I have argued that Phillipson's (1992) account of 'linguistic imperialism' is not sufficiently sophisticated to deal with the questions raised by the Rwandan case study. Certainly, his approach highlights important concerns about who benefits from the spread of English, and about the importance of structural inequalities in the creation of 'global English'. But it also de-politicises language policy in the 'periphery', by treating 'peripheral' governments as either technocratic or ideologically controlled by the 'centre'. I have attempted to show that a Gramscian approach to 'global English' is able to account for the links between English, class, and politics at the local level. Put simply, the concept of a 'global English nébuleuse' has the potential to integrate accounts of the politics of English at a local and global level, in order to produce a more nuanced understanding of how a consensus in favour of English emerges. Crucially, this approach is also capable of addressing the ideological function of particular discourses in the representational archives of a language (such as the construction of English as the 'language of prosperity') in organising consent to the hegemony of English.

To examine 'global English' through the concept of 'hegemony' (in Gramsci's sense), highlights the importance of the different ways in which the language is represented and constructed. The 'language of prosperity' is but one way that English is produced. Phillipson (2008) argues that English is also variously viewed as a *lingua franca*, *lingua economica*, *lingua emotiva*, *lingua academica*, *lingua bellica*, *lingua cultura*, and *lingua americana*. If he is correct, then it is vital to interrogate the distinct constructions of English, in order to understand how they relate to its hegemony. In this regard, we must ask how such constructions interact with politics and power, and, ultimately, whether they have an impact on a 'global English nébuleuse'. This is one way in which we can gain a more sophisticated

understanding of how coercion might uphold ‘global English’, and how consent is manufactured for it.

The provisional account that I have set out in this chapter will need further refining, though, importantly, it raises questions that are obscured in other approaches to ‘global English’. For instance, at what point did the ‘global English *nébuleuse*’ begin to emerge? To what extent has it been orchestrated, and, crucially, to what extent is it opposed? The specific account developed in this thesis also underlines the imbrication of ‘global English’ and global capitalism, but the link between the two requires more investigation. In light of the prevalence of the construction of English as the ‘language of prosperity’, it is also necessary to ask how closely related the ‘global English *nébuleuse*’ and Cox’s capitalist *nébuleuse* are. Does the one produce consent for the other? These are all questions that should be taken up in future work. The critical point, for our purposes, is that English cannot be seen as an ‘imposition’ on countries outside the ‘centre’, because such a view obscures local politics and class dynamics. If English is an imposition, at least in Rwanda, it is one that is enacted by a local *élite*.

Conclusions

This thesis began by asking what it means for English to be called the ‘global language’. Two key points emerged: English is considered to be ‘global’ because of the number of people who speak it, and because of the number of States that accord a special status to it. On the basis of the latter measure of ‘global English’, I have attempted to develop a more nuanced understanding of how an individual State might become part of the ‘global English’ phenomenon. Specifically, I have undertaken a case study of the politics of language in Rwanda in order to question the prevailing idea that ‘global English’ is an empirical reality that arises from a myriad of freely-made individual choices (de Swaan, 2002; Crystal, 2003; Van Parijs, 2011). By interrogating the idea that Rwanda ‘made a political decision to give the language special status’ (Crystal, 2003, p.67), I have produced a nuanced account of the political importance of English in Rwanda, which in turn has implications for our broader understanding of ‘global English’. I have been critical of the dominant explanation of Rwanda’s shift to English, which holds that the language is being prioritised in order to connect Rwanda to the global economy and, by doing so, to combat poverty. Instead, my original approach has treated language policy, and the politics of language more generally, as elements of statecraft. By situating the shift to English in Rwanda’s historical and political context, I have highlighted that, in truth, English serves complex, hitherto unacknowledged political, social, and economic functions. In this short conclusion, I will restate some of the key arguments and contributions of the thesis, and highlight some areas for future study.

In response to Peter Ives’s (2006; 2019) calls for scholars to use Gramscian political theory to understand ‘global English’, the theoretical framework for this thesis was rooted in the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci’s work offered a particularly valuable foundation for considering the politics of language in Rwanda; the concepts of ‘hegemony’ and ‘ideology’ especially, which interrogate the relations between culture and the power of the State, allowed

this project to excavate the ideological politics of English in Rwanda. Gramsci himself recognised that '[e]very time that the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore' (Gramsci, 1985, p.183). He showed that, in the Italian context, the 'questione della lingua' was intricately related to questions about hegemony, power, and cultural dominance. This thesis has demonstrated the value of Gramscian thought for investigating the politics of language. It has shown that, in Rwanda, the shift to English indexes larger concerns, about social class, hegemony, economics, and élite dominance. By taking a Gramscian approach to language, I have brought these issues into view.

One contribution of this thesis has been to highlight particular continuities throughout Rwandan history which improve our understanding of the ongoing prioritisation of English. In Chapters 1 and 2, I examined the development of the Rwandan State, and its relation to language, social class, economics, and hegemony. I demonstrated that, since the colonial era, Rwanda has been dominated by a small class that is distinguished in part by its command of a European language. This echoes the findings of other scholars in different fields: Reyntjens, for example, highlights the fact that there are many continuities between Habyarimana's regime and the post-genocide RPF government. He gives the example that both States manipulated the politics of ethnicity (the former by emphasising it, the latter by 'forgetting' it) (2006, p.1113); we might add that both manipulated the politics of language, using European languages as tools for establishing legitimacy and hegemony. From this account, it is clear that the Rwandan State does not approach language from a technocratic perspective. Its prioritisation of European languages is not simply about reducing poverty. The implication, of course, is that liberal perspectives on 'global English', which tend to treat the State as a technocratic (and/or democratic) body, fail to adequately deal with local politics. This point may have further implications for understanding the politics of language and language policy in post-colonial Africa. For, as Ayo Bamgbose (2000), Ali and Alamin

Mazrui (1998), and Kwame Kwesi Prah (2009) have observed, post-colonial African societies are generally dominated by élites who speak European languages. This thesis suggests that such contexts might usefully be investigated from the perspective of hegemony and the ideological politics of language.

This thesis made a methodological contribution by developing the integral model of language, in order to analyse how particular discursive constructions of language can play ideological roles in conjunction with State power. Here, I drew on Pennycook's (2007b) notion of the 'myths' of English, in order to argue that the differential ways in which languages are constructed through discourse are politically important. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated the importance of the representational archive in rendering particular languages as ciphers for 'civilisation'. The constructions of English as a 'civilised' language, and of Bantu languages as 'rudimentary' together play an ideological role in helping to legitimise colonialism. In Chapter 4, I incorporated this approach to language into my analysis of the politics of language in Rwanda after 2008. This demonstrated that the representation of English as a 'language of prosperity' is intimately connected to the processes that produce and consolidate RPF hegemony. Thus, Chapters 1 and 2 examined the importance of linguistic legitimacy in Rwanda, and showed that the Rwandan élite draws legitimacy from its use of European languages. Chapters 3 and 4 nuanced this point, to demonstrate that the legitimacy of English (for instance) derives not only from the social prestige of its speakers, but from a discursively-produced representational archive that constructs English as the 'language of prosperity'. In future research, it would be valuable to take this approach to an interrogation of European languages in Rwanda before 2008, and to give greater consideration to the importance of representational archives in understanding the politics of language more broadly.

Chapter 5 considered the implications of the Rwandan case study in terms of our understanding of 'global English'. One important point raised was that individual States play

a more important role than has generally been assumed. For the State may implement policies that ostensibly make a country ‘anglophone’, even if the majority of the population does not speak English. Moreover, it may do so without any intention to create an English-speaking population. In Rwanda, the transition from a ‘francophone’ to an ‘anglophone’ country has been inseparable from changes in the class that is in control of the State, and from the production and consolidation of the hegemony of that class. Importantly, this fact refutes Phillipson’s (1992) argument that English is imposed on the ‘periphery’ countries from the ‘centre’; rather, at least in the case of Rwanda, the interests of ‘centre’ governments and parastatal agencies align with those of ‘peripheral’ élites. This point highlights the fact that we require a more nuanced approach to ‘global English’, which is capable of considering the politics of language at the levels of global, local, and micro politics. In this vein, drawing on Gramsci, alongside Robert Cox, I have argued for a more sophisticated view of ‘global English’ as the product of a ‘global English nébuleuse’, a complex phenomenon whose character is determined, in part, by local hegemonies. This is a key point, and it highlights that, in order to better understand ‘global English’, it is vital that we undertake more extensive analyses of the politics of language in individual States. In this respect, it is worth recalling that Burundi and Gabon have expressed the intention to follow Rwanda in shifting from French to English (Plonski, Teferra, and Brady, 2013). Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, alongside the integral model of language, may help scholars to understand the reasons behind such a trend. And it is worth noting that a similar approach might be brought to bear on other ‘international’, or indeed ‘national’ languages, such as French, Russian, and Hindi. For Gramsci is clear that the existence of one hegemony does not preclude the existence of another; hegemonies overlap and compete in complex structures. Analysing language from this perspective may be a useful step for understanding the global linguistic order.

This study has implications for post-colonial contexts in general. The Rwandan case

study forecloses several routine explanations for the prominent position of European languages in post-colonial Africa and Asia. That is, at least in the case of Rwanda, the prioritisation of English is neither the consequence of a historic colonial link with Britain or the US, nor is it fulfilling an important role as a domestic lingua franca. Precisely because neither of these explanations are applicable to Rwanda, the context forces the analyst to engage with other questions, including political ones. Yet it may be the case that such commonsense answers to the prioritisation of European languages, premised as they are on the notion of a technocratic State, actually obscure the fact that European languages serve specific political and ideological agendas in post-colonial contexts more broadly. Further research on this point is vital, as, if Rwanda proves to be a typical context in this respect, there are wide-reaching economic, political, and social implications for citizens of post-colonial countries.

Ultimately, this thesis has demonstrated that the dominant approach to understanding ‘global English’ suffers from a number of limitations. Indeed, theories of ‘global English’ are generally insufficient in their understanding of politics. In this regard, political theory provides a valuable opportunity to improve our approach. If we are to understand how English has become so widespread, or indeed if we are to consider the political implications of ‘global English’, it is imperative that we develop a sustained, sophisticated approach to ‘global English’ as not only a linguistic phenomenon, but a political one.

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