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Rwanda: Development towards Authoritarianism?

By Chinmay Rayarikar

Submitted to the International Studies Program, Trinity College
Supervised by Dr Garth Myers and Dr Seth Markle

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Abstract

Since the culmination of the Genocide of 1994, Rwanda has become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, while also showing great improvements on human development indicators. This has made Rwanda a brilliant example of post-conflict reconstruction. At the same time, the nation-state has been led by a single party government that works under a framework of a nominal multi-party democracy. While a large part of Rwanda's post-conflict development has been made possible by the government in power, this paper argues that Rwanda is developing towards a completely authoritarian state structure. Development is concentrated in very few regions of the country, votes are occasionally rigged, large amount of power is concentrated in a few hands, and there is a constant war that is partly sponsored by Rwanda. All of these factors have a central figure above them: President Paul Kagame. While the West continues to praise Rwanda for the remarkable strides it has made on human development indicators and in liberalising its economy, it fails to ignore the many serious issues that plague the nation-state. Rwanda's story of development cannot be sustained if structural changes are not implemented in Rwanda in the near future.

Preface and Acknowledgements

I first started taking a serious interest in Rwanda while I was studying as an exchange student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. This interest was spurred by an article on something called developmental authoritarianism in Ethiopia and Rwanda, published in the journal *African Studies*. The author, Hilary Matfess, wrote about the high rates of growth that these states achieved in recent years, while having an authoritarian state structure. Both these states intrigued me a lot, and I decided to visit them last year, partly encouraged by cheap flight tickets. Since then, I have closely followed Rwanda and the incredible changes that have taken place there, and this paper is simply a detailed and well-researched write-up on what I observed in Rwanda, and the many inconsistencies in its seemingly amazing developmental story. I do not want this paper to add to the vast amount of literature that criticises governments in Africa. I simply wish to show the much more sinister side that Rwanda's developmental story successfully hides.

Like many things in my life, this paper would only have been possible due to a lot of help and advice I received from people at Trinity College and outside. Dr Garth Myers has been my academic advisor since my first year at Trinity. Not only did he inspire me to study about development in East Africa, he also provided many insights on development policy. Dr Seth Markle provided me helpful advice on how to address such a complex issue and suggested many readings for going about this topic. Dr Vijay Prashad's thoughtful critique of writing style and structure in parts of this paper shaped the way I write, probably for the rest of my life. Dr Xiangming Chen's insights into urbanisation in the global South was critical in shaping the section on urban development. Others from the Trinity College community include my fellow classmates and alumni, in no particular order: Tracy Keza, JP Palmer, Serena Seaman, Sanjay Thapa, Camryn Clark, Paroma Soni, George Denkey, and Kyaw San Min. Many others, in various institutions, provided me with hours of conversations and debates that shaped the thoughts that went into writing this paper. These people include, but are not limited to: Yash Kothari at Boston University, Parikshit Sharma at Bowdoin College, Elias Tuomaala at

Harvard University, Krish Aurora at SOAS, Guillaume Picard in Buenos Aires, and Aneesa Khan at College of the Atlantic. Lastly, and certainly not the least, my parents in Mumbai showed great interest in what I was writing about, and their support and encouragement was critical in completing this project.

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Introduction

“A cockroach cannot bring forth a butterfly.”¹ This was the first line of an editorial published in *Kangura*, an important monthly newspaper published in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994. This newspaper had ties to Hutu extremists and the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (NRMD), which was the ruling party at that time in Rwanda. It effectively served as an anti-Tutsi propaganda piece for the NRMD, but its editors were independent and frequently critical of the NRMD for being too moderate in dealing with the supposed problem of the Tutsis. *Kangura* served to play an important role in creating anti-Tutsi sentiments across Rwanda in the years that immediately preceded the Rwandan Genocide. The editorial from which the opening sentence is quoted from is one such example. The “cockroach” was meant to be the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), headed by the current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. The RPF was an armed group at that time, and was fighting to end the violence against Tutsis in Rwanda.

The comparison to a cockroach couldn’t have been further away from the truth. The RPF’s efforts to rebuild a nation destroyed by genocide are now considered to be an overwhelming success. This group of so-called “cockroaches” were able to lead Rwanda into prosperity and turn the devastated nation around into becoming a post-conflict economic miracle. No other nation in Sub-Saharan Africa, other than exceptions like Mauritius and Botswana, has seen the same kind of improvement in socioeconomic conditions in such a short period of time.² Unlike Botswana and Mauritius, where economies completely changed after decolonisation, Rwanda’s economic structure has essentially remained the same, and its primary export is still coffee, as it was two decades ago.

¹ ‘A Cockroach Cannot Bring Forth a Butterfly’, *Kangura*, February 1993, 40th edition, <http://www.rwandafile.com/Kangura/k4or.html>.

² Abdi Ismail Samatar, *An African Miracle: State and Class Leadership and Colonial Legacy in Botswana Development* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999).

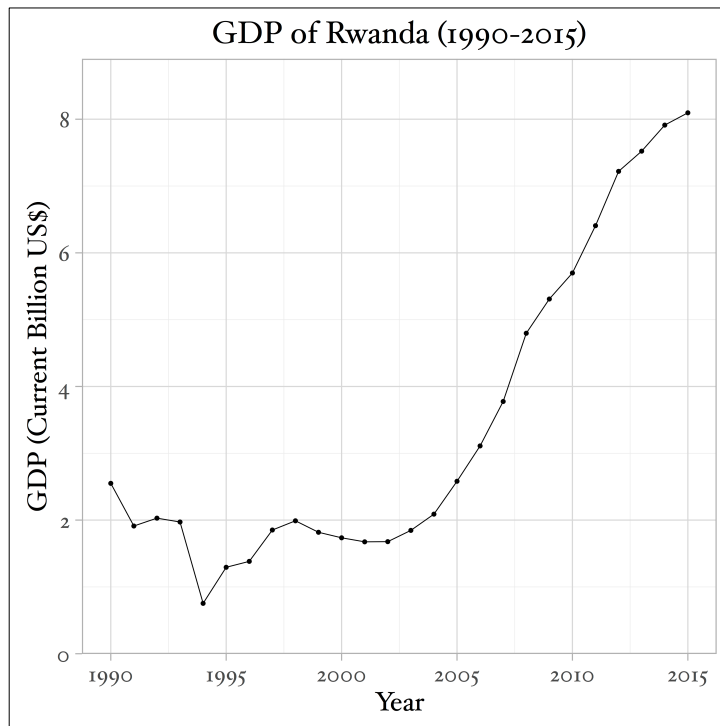


Figure 1: The Rwandan economy has been growing at an extremely high rate since the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. (World Bank Data, 2016)

Rebuilding a devastated nation-state after a tragedy of this scale is extremely hard, if not entirely impossible. Contrary to expectations based on other states in Sub-Saharan Africa, the new government that took over power after the genocide managed to completely turn around from this situation of destruction, and loss of human life and capital. After bringing the Rwandan Genocide to a quick end, the RPF, with Paul Kagame's leadership, gained control

of power in Kigali. They undertook a massive effort to rebuild infrastructure, kick start the economy, improve socioeconomic conditions, and redevelop social cohesion within the troubled nation. This period of rapid development continues to this day with the same intensity. Rwanda has seen great improvements on indicators, and has sustained a GDP growth rate averaging around 8% per year.³ Figure I shows this dramatic increase clearly.

It is evident that this development took place under the aegis of Kagame and the RPF under him. It would very likely not have happened if someone else was leading the nation. Even critics of Kagame in Rwanda cannot deny that their nation has changed for the better. One of these critics, who also happens to have close ties to senior RPF leadership, said: "In Kagame, we are lucky to have a visionary and a great leader. No one can say that all of this

³ UNDP, *Work for Human Development, Human Development Report 2015* (New York, NY: United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

would have been possible without him. Some aspects of life in Rwanda are just much better than before. No one ever imagined that.”⁴ Kagame has placed himself at the centre of this economic miracle. Considering all of this, there seems to be reason enough for Rwanda to be hailed as a model for development. Kagame and the RPF engaged in recreating the structures of the state that were destroyed. By ending the genocide and securing Rwanda, the RPF government ensured their monopoly over the legitimate use of force.⁵ The state was strengthened and civil society was allowed to grow, albeit with some restrictions. Power became centralised in Kigali and a new constitution was adopted in 2003 to address many of the shortcomings of previous constitutions of the postcolonial period. An entirely new state emerged in the ashes of the genocide.

No success story is without its flaws, however. And Rwanda’s is no exception to that unwritten rule. Some of the issues it now faces have a high potential to scar the much-publicised image of Rwanda as the poster child of development. Firstly, President Kagame enjoys almost unhindered power within the government; and the Office of the President plays an important role in overseeing all activity in the offices, ministries and other institutions that form the government. Secondly, Rwanda supports a destabilising war in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), enabling it to maintain peace internally at the cost of war in the regional neighbourhood. Thirdly, journalists are constantly targeted in Rwanda, greatly diminishing the quality of reportage coming from this fast-changing nation-state. Furthermore, urban development in Rwanda is not without its problems: its showcase capital Kigali displays characteristics of authoritarian planning, while other cities are vastly underfunded and underdeveloped. Further, Kigali serves as an urban spectacle while distracting attention from the vastly poorer parts of Rwanda. Lastly, some large business groups that operate in Rwanda are owned by close associates of the RPF. Since this party is

⁴ Anonymous interviewee, in conversation with the author, September 2016.

⁵ Hans Heinrich Gerth, C. Mills, and Max Weber, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 78.

the ruling party, this blurs the line between the government and the private sector. The rise of Paul Kagame and his power because of economic growth, along with the merging of the state with private enterprise, and support for war outside its borders hints towards Rwanda's government gradually morphing into a fully authoritarian regime.

I have used a wide variety of literature in this paper. The paper deals with recent development in Rwanda, and, as a result, many of the sources used are from newspapers from both Rwanda and abroad since not many large volumes have yet been written on this topic. There are a few sources, however, that appear more frequently than others in this paper and are worth reviewing at this stage. Published in 2012, Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond's *Rwanda, Inc.* is an exciting tale of a new nation-state making massive developmental strides. As the title of the book suggests, a significant part of this text focusses on the similarities between Rwanda's administration and the way in which a corporation is run.⁶ This book is not shy in its praise of Kagame and the RPF government in power. It correctly details many major developmental milestones Rwanda has achieved under the RPF government of Kagame. Unfortunately, that is the only accurate part of the book. It is surprising to see that the book hardly even mentions the countless issues that the Rwandan government faces. Composed of eleven chapters and an introduction, *Rwanda, Inc.*, reads more like a corporate self help guide than a serious study of Rwanda's development. Some of the chapter names that are particularly relevant to argue my point are: "Rwanda's CEO", "The Rwanda Model", and "Opening the Door to Foreign Direct Investment". The foreword for this book is written by Joseph W Saunders, the chairman and CEO of Visa Inc., a corporation with significant investment in Rwanda. This book is certainly worth a read when studying the recent changes in Rwanda, since it concisely sums up many of the positive changes that have taken place there. However, the reader has to be careful with taking this on face value because

⁶ Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World*, 1st ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

of the absolute failure on the part of the authors to highlight the authoritarian aspects of the RPF government in Rwanda.

A great, detailed, read on just one of the few issues addressed in this paper is Anjan Sundaram's *Bad News*, from 2016.⁷ This book provides a deep insight into repression of the media in Rwanda. Sundaram's experience in Rwanda as a teacher tasked with training the last independent journalists in the country provided him with a first hand look into the way in which the RPF tries to suppress criticism. Not only are journalists critical of the government within Rwanda operating under great risk to their lives, some who are abroad also receive constant threats. Many of those who were trained by Sundaram are now in prison or have been physically attacked. Despite directly addressing only the issue of media repression, this book takes a broader look at the authoritarian Rwandan government. Sundaram does not fail to address the hypocrisy of the West when it comes to Rwanda: the program he taught at was funded by the British government in order to maintain at least some form of a free press, while, at the same time, top British politicians embraced the Rwandan development story and were more than keen to provide any financial assistance to Kagame. This text is a disturbing eye opener, as Sundaram details the stories of his students who are constantly on the run to escape from Rwandan government agents.

As mentioned in the preface, an important work that inspired me to study about Rwanda is Hilary Matfess' *Developmental Authoritarianism and the New Politics of African Strong Men*.⁸ In this article from 2015, Matfess studies the structure of the state in contemporary Ethiopia and Rwanda, and argues that in high-growth post-conflict economies like these, traditional typologies of African states are not applicable. The author suggests a new model to categorise states, applicable to Ethiopia and Rwanda, called "developmental

⁷ Anjan Sundaram, *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*, First edition (New York: Doubleday, 2016).

⁸ Hilary Matfess, 'Rwanda and Ethiopia: Developmental Authoritarianism and the New Politics of African Strong Men', *African Studies Review* 58, no. 02 (September 2015): 181-204, doi:10.1017/asr.2015.43.

authoritarianism". There are five major characteristics of the developmental authoritarian state. Firstly, a major social rupture brings to power the authoritarian government. In Ethiopia's case, this event is the long civil war against the Derg, while in Rwanda, this is the Genocide of 1994. Second, there are varying degrees of restrictions on free speech and association. Thirdly, the government has a strong control over the economy, whether directly, as in Ethiopia, or indirectly, as in Rwanda. Fourthly, there is a militaristic mobilization of people to aid in the developmental effort. Lastly, the relationship of governments in developmental authoritarian states with the West is conflictual, and often contradictory. Both states are recipients of Western developmental aid and support, while being criticized for their dismal human rights and lack of political freedoms by the West.⁹ While this article comes as a refreshing change from the vast amount of literature that singularly characterises African states as simply being neopatrimonial entities,¹⁰ it still uses many of the usual sources that are used to criticise the Rwandan government, such as the Washington, DC think-tank Freedom House. Further, Matfess writes in her conclusion that developmental authoritarian states such as Rwanda will continue to remain authoritarian and will most likely not transition towards democracy anywhere in the near future. However, Matfess fails to answer clearly why that will remain the case, instead choosing to solely focus on characterising this new model

⁹ Matfess, 'Rwanda and Ethiopia', 181.

¹⁰ The term neopatrimonialism is derived from Max Weber's concept of patrimonialism, where all power in a state is concentrated with a leader and their close associates. This formed a key part in Weber's theories of the state in Europe in the late nineteenth-century in many of his writings. In 1973, Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt published *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism*, a text that described neopatrimonialism as a structure where a traditional patrimonial system is coopted into a Western-styled bureaucratic administration. Many scholars later went on to use this term to describe postcolonial states, and blamed neopatrimonialism for the failures of the state in the global South, especially in Africa. In fact, the term has been overused to describe all kinds of state failure on the continent, and, consequently, has received lots of criticism for the term's inability to accurately capture the diversity of states that is present within the 54 nation-states present in Africa. Worth mentioning is Swedish-Malawian scholar Thandika Mkandwire's 2001 article *Thinking about developmental states in Africa*, which has a section devoted to the futility of using the term neopatrimonialism. While this has been the mainstream scholarly thought on states in Africa, I have decided to include this explanation only in the footnotes because it will not directly add to the story of Rwanda's embrace of authoritarianism.

in much more detail. Regardless of these shortcomings, this article succeeds in creating a viable new model of state structure that is able to address the limitations of the other theories of the state in Africa that have been prevalent for long.¹¹

While not used much in this paper, an essential read for a background on the extremely complex origins of the Rwanda Genocide is Mahmood Mamdani's 2002 volume *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*.¹² Starting in the colonial pre-colonial period, Mamdani details the ways in which the Hutu and Tutsi identities were formed over time and ultimately culminated into the genocide. This paper does not go in-depth into the causes of the genocide, but to truly get a sense of Rwanda's political history, this book is mandatory reading. Mamdani's research on this issue is detailed and unafraid to write about the role that Belgian colonial policies played in the creation of a divide between Hutus and Tutsis. Mamdani also addresses how Rwandan politics in the postcolonial period was unable to heal the growing gap between the two largest ethnic groups in the country, while populist rhetoric used by politicians ultimately led to the Genocide of 1994.

Other literature of note that deals with the more specific aspects of this paper includes Tom Goodfellow and Alyson Smith's paper titled *From Urban Catastrophe to 'Model' City? Politics, Security and Development in Post-conflict Kigali*, from 2013.¹³ This paper looks at the transformation of Kigali from being a conflict-torn city to a highly securitised model city. A major focus of this paper is on the securitisation of the city, and how the image of the city being safe and secure is crucial for the image of modernity that the RPF government is trying

¹¹ Three relatively recent articles that propagate neopatrimonialism as a cause for the failures of the state in Africa are Pierre Englebert's *Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa* (2000), Brandon Kendhammer's *Getting Our Piece of the National Cake: Consociational Power Sharing and Neopatrimonialism in Nigeria* (2015), and Nicolas van de Walle's *The Impact of Multi-Party Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2011). Further details on these can be found in the bibliography at the end.

¹² Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹³ Tom Goodfellow and Alyson Smith, 'From Urban Catastrophe to "Model" City? Politics, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Kigali', *Urban Studies* 50, no. 15 (1 November 2013): 3185–3202, doi:10.1177/0042098013487776.

to create. In doing so, the authors argue, the RPF projects the image of modernity over Rwanda. This paper is critical of the RPF government, and questions the sustainability of the developmental story of Rwanda. At the same time, the authors acknowledge the rapid changes for the good that have taken place in Kigali, in particular, and Rwanda, in general.

A major source for anyone wanting to keep up to date with the Rwandan story of development is the news media. While many large Western media houses have constant features on Rwanda, the best source for news from Rwanda are local newspapers. Since Rwanda adopted English as the official language, many newspapers that were published only in Kinyarwanda are now also available in English. The biggest English-language newspaper in Rwanda is *The New Times*. This newspaper is very close to the RPF and has been criticised for being RPF owned. In fact, Kagame himself is known to have criticised the newspaper for its sycophancy to him and his party.¹⁴ Despite this major flaw, *The New Times* can be a fairly reliable source to keep a track of current events in Rwanda. On the other end of the spectrum are many Congolese newspapers that regularly publish articles extremely critical of Rwanda's government. These would include *L'Avenir* and *Le Congolais*, both of which are primarily in French. Internationally, *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian* occasionally publish articles on Rwanda that usually deal with only two themes: issues with elections and voting, and unbridled praise for some new government initiative.

The tale of Rwanda turning around is one of wonder, as much as it is of fear of what the future holds for the nation. The shining sun of development in Rwanda forms shadows that hide a dark side. Economic predictions do show that Rwanda will be continuing on this trajectory of growth into the future.¹⁵ However, simple economic predictions seem to miss the underlying political and economic factors that are slowly turning the new Rwandan state to embrace authoritarianism. It is true that this growth will most likely continue; but whether

¹⁴ 'President Paul Kagame under Scrutiny', *The Economist*, 5 August 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/16750119>.

¹⁵ IMF, 'IMF Staff Completes Review Mission to Rwanda (No. 16/151)' (IMF Communications Department, 5 April 2016), <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2016/pr16151.htm>.

it will ever take place under a government that respects and welcomes different political opinions, or one that maintains power through the oppression of dissenting political views, is a matter that is unclear for now. Rwanda, it seems, is developing towards complete authoritarianism.

The Rise of Paul Kagame and Rwanda

To understand contemporary Rwanda better, it is necessary to know some of the events that propelled Kagame and the RPF into power. The single most important of these events is the Rwandan Genocide. The Genocide of 1994 led to the deaths of more than 10% of the nation's population, all within a period of exactly one hundred days. This massacre took place between 7 April and 15 July of that year, and killed around a million people, though estimate figures range from 800 thousand to 2 million.¹⁶ The massive scale and rapid rate of violence led to a complete destruction of infrastructure and the economy. This violence permanently damaged the social and cultural fabric of Rwanda. There was nothing in Rwanda that was not affected by what took place. A whole generation in Rwanda grew up with the trauma of the genocide. Many saw their friends and family being murdered in front of their eyes. Others were permanently displaced due to the reckless violence.

The roots of the genocide can be traced back to the era when Rwanda was still a colony of Belgium. It was during this time that the distinction between Hutus and Tutsis was created by Belgian pseudoscientists. They worked in a field known as “scientific racism”, which worked as an easy excuse to justify imperialism and oppression in the early 1900s. Similar theories have been used all around the world in history, from justifying slavery in the United States to asserting the dominance of the Aryan race in Nazi Germany. Scientific racism was a field of study closely related to eugenics, and the Belgians used it to determine that Tutsis were genetically closer to Caucasians, and therefore, superior to the Hutus.¹⁷ This meant that the Tutsis were now allowed into bureaucratic jobs for the colonial government since they were “evolved” enough, while the Hutus remained economically marginalised. Along with access to government jobs, the Tutsis were also favoured when it came to opening businesses

¹⁶ Filip Reyntjens, ‘Estimation Du Nombre de Personnes Tuées Au Rwanda En 1994’, ed. Filip Reyntjens and Stefaan Marysse, *L’Afrique Des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 1996-1997*, 1997.

¹⁷ Edith R. Sanders, ‘The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective’, *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969): 521–32.

in cities, leading to a higher concentration of Tutsis in urban areas than was already present. Historically, before colonisation, the divide between Hutus and Tutsis was entirely an economic one. The distinction between the two groups was fluid, and it was possible for someone to change positions based on how much wealth they owned at any time. The Belgians decided to formalise this difference creating certain parameters for classifying people into the two groups. Those who owned more than ten heads of cattle were considered to be Tutsi, while the rest were Hutus. This came to be known as the ten-cow rule.¹⁸ By categorising people into these two permanent groups, the Belgians were able to reaffirm their theory that the Tutsis were superior, since they were the group that had more economic resources.

By giving preferential treatment to Tutsis over Hutus, the Belgians transformed identities linked to economic class into those of lineage. Someone whose parents were Tutsi also became Tutsi by lineage, and not because of how much wealth they had. This created a small urban elite that inherited a lot of wealth, while a large part of Rwandan society was marginalised and limited to working in agriculture. It was no surprise, then, that Rwanda's first election after independence brought the Hutu supremacist Paramehutu party into power, which also quickly declared itself as the only legal political party in Rwanda, just like the NRMD would a few years later. After a long period of political instability and change, Juvénal Habyarimana's NRMD came into power in 1978 after a military-led coup d'état.

Just like the Paramehutu, the NRMD leadership also stressed the dominance of Hutus in the social, political, and economic spheres of Rwanda. Unlike the Paramehutu, however, the NRMD openly advocated violence against Tutsis, without realising that the Tutsi still had significant control over economic resources in Rwanda. This led to a massive exodus of Tutsis into Uganda. They organised to form the RPF, which then invaded Rwanda in 1990 to start the Rwandan Civil War. The RPF comprised mostly of Rwandans who had fled to Uganda and had military experience from fighting in the Ugandan Bush War of the 1980s.

¹⁸ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 99.

The Arusha Accords were signed in 1993 between the RPF and the then Rwandan government to cease fighting and allow Tutsis to return home from Uganda.¹⁹ However, extremists within the NRMD, and other groups linked to it, continued the extrajudicial harassment of Tutsis. When the plane carrying Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down over Kigali on 7 April, 1994, the RPF was quickly blamed for it and the massive pogrom against the Tutsis began.

The next 100 days saw all of the violence of the genocide taking place. Tutsis were being attacked everywhere in Rwanda. Those who were Hutus and sympathised with any Tutsis were attacked as well. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was unable to do anything to stop these killings. Despite the repeated requests from UNAMIR's commander, the Canadian general Roméo Dallaire, the UN refused to send any reinforcements to help prevent the catastrophe that would unfold. Dallaire had enough intelligence to show that a large scale genocide was about to take place. However, the UN Security Council refused to assist in any way, until it was much too late.²⁰

France was directly involved in the genocide; it assisted Habyarimana's military with advanced weaponry and created special training camps that were targeted towards fighting guerrilla groups like the RPF. A French parliamentary commission report from 1998 that assessed the role of France in the genocide shows that France sold and gifted the Habyarimana government a total of 137 million francs worth of armament in the period before the genocide.²¹ Another aspect of this involvement was France's interest in maintaining a Francophone Rwanda, since that would allow France to assert itself in the Rwandan cultural

¹⁹ AB Nyakyi, 'Letter Dated 23 December 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General', 23 December 1993, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB469/docs/DOCUMENT%2017.pdf>.

²⁰ Roméo A. Dallaire and Brent Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (London: Arrow Books, 2004), 146.

²¹ Craig Whitney, 'Panel Finds French Errors in Judgment on Rwanda', *The New York Times*, 20 December 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/20/world/panel-finds-french-errors-in-judgment-on-rwanda.html>.

sphere. This would make it easier for France's neo-colonial ambitions in the East African region. Since the RPF was formed in Uganda, and most of its leadership spoke English, France worried that an RPF victory would convert Rwanda into an Anglophone nation. This would mean that France would lose one of the only French-speaking countries in an overwhelmingly English-speaking East Africa.²² In 2009, the change that France feared actually took place, and now Rwanda's only two official languages are Kinyarwanda and English.²³ France also established a military intervention called Opération Turquoise, that established a safe zone within Rwanda. This supposed peacekeeping mission was marred by allegations of French troops instigating violence and protecting those who had been the perpetrators in the killings. The French mission also rescued Habyarimana's remaining cabinet and his wife, and sent them to France for safety.²⁴

On 4 July, the RPF took control over Kigali, though the violence still continued in the areas to Rwanda's northwest. Kagame capitalised on the fact that the government troops were more concerned with trying to kill unarmed Tutsis than they were with fighting the oncoming RPF forces.²⁵ This is what allowed Kagame and the RPF to take over the whole of Rwanda fairly quickly even though they lacked the number and the technological superiority that the government troops had. Immediately after securing the whole of Rwanda, the RPF began to secure its borders with the then Zaire, where most of the surviving leaders of the genocide fled. Since Kagame came into power by leading a heavily armed group, his authority was not challenged by anyone outside the RPF. Within the party, those who did not agree with him were asked to leave. This massive military victory allowed Kagame to gain easy control over

²² Linda Melvern, 'France and Genocide: The Murky Truth', *The New Times*, 11 August 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140714201715/http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/index.php?i=13619&a=8617&icon=Results&id=2#>.

²³ Chris McGreal, 'Why Rwanda Said Adieu to French', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2009, Online edition, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2009/jan/16/rwanda-english-genocide>.

²⁴ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2nd ed (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1999), 235.

²⁵ Dallaire and Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 422.

the state and secure his position within his party. This continues to play a key role in Rwanda to this day.

What takes place after this is what left everyone surprised. Rwanda changes at a rate never seen before. Improvements in healthcare are astounding: some health indicators for Rwanda are even better than most of Western Europe. For instance, the rate of vaccination against the HPV virus.²⁶ Rwandan educational institutions are slowly becoming regional hubs for advanced research. Rwanda's capital and largest urban centre, Kigali, continues to grow into a city known to have wide avenues, clean streets, and large parks. Kigali managed to escape from the urban issues that are endemic to most cities in Sub-Saharan Africa: crime, housing shortage, informal public transportation, and poor infrastructure.²⁷ This is a big achievement, considering that this city and the regions surrounding it also saw some of the most intense fighting between the RPF and government forces during the genocide.

The government has also managed to maintain great relations with aid donors from around the world, making Rwanda a “donor darling”. This is a term commonly used to refer to states that receive foreign aid without many conditions being set on them by donors.²⁸ In Rwanda's case, this is because of Kagame's strict oversight over how every little bit of money is spent to ensure there is no wasteful spending. Not only does Rwanda attract foreign aid, it also attracts investments of all kinds, as the government pushes towards privatisation. The government's plan on rapidly developing the information and communications technology sector is on track, while foreign technology players have slowly begun to invest in Rwanda. Most importantly, Rwanda ranks very highly on the Corruption Perception Index, and is reputed to have a highly functional and efficient bureaucracy.²⁹ These are just some of the

²⁶ Agnes Binagwaho et al., ‘Achieving High Coverage in Rwanda's National Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme’, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 90, no. 8 (1 August 2012): 623–28, doi:10.2471/BLT.11.097253.

²⁷ Goodfellow and Smith, ‘From Urban Catastrophe to “Model” City?’

²⁸ Matfess, ‘Rwanda and Ethiopia’, 181–204.

²⁹ Paul Muggeridge, ‘Which Countries Have the Most – and Least – Efficient Governments?’, *World Economic Forum*, 13 July 2015, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/07/efficient-government/>.

many aspects of Rwanda's success story. Accompanying these successes are the serious issues that pose a risk to undo all of the development that has taken place in Rwanda since the genocide.

The State is Kagame

In a conversation I had a few months ago, someone mentioned an incident of a French tourist arriving at Nairobi's airport in the 1980s. He was detained for wearing a shirt that read, "L'etat c'est moi", a statement that roughly translates to "the state is me", and has often been wrongly attributed to Louis XIV. The tourist was detained since it appeared as though his shirt was criticising the then Kenyan President. At that time, Daniel arap Moi was the President of Kenya, and was one of the many authoritarian leaders of Africa in the 1980s. Of course, when some security official who could understand French realised what the shirt said, the tourist was released without any trouble. The irony here is that at that time in Kenya, the statement on the French tourist's shirt actually held true. The state was indeed President Moi, who towered over any action that the Government of Kenya, or other institutions, took in those days. In fact, Moi managed to remain in power for an incredibly long period of 24 years, from 1978 to 2002. During this period, Moi strengthened his power and influence over Kenyan institutions, and entrenched his position in patron-client networks, before being constitutionally barred from running for another election. He stepped down from his position without much resistance, surprising everyone by doing so.

In Rwanda, President Paul Kagame plays a similar role in being at the centre of the Rwandan state. His leadership in the civil war against the previous regime in Rwanda, and his party's role in ending the 1994 Genocide automatically put him at the helm of the devastated nation. Officially, however, Rwanda's first president after the genocide was another senior RPF leader, Pasteur Bizimungu. Despite someone else technically being the President of Rwanda, Kagame was the one with whom all the power was actually concentrated. Bizimungu resigned in 2000 over dissatisfaction with the way in which Kagame stifled dissent.³⁰ His resignation meant that the Tutsi-dominated RPF lost its senior-most Hutu leader.

³⁰ 'Analysis: Why Bizimungu Mattered', *BBC World News*, 23 March 2000, Africa edition, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/688587.stm>.

Just like Moi, Kagame's government has been accused of stifling opposition on multiple occasions. The RPF justifies this by claiming that "extremists" can quickly destabilise Rwanda's fragile peace that has been so hard to achieve after the genocide. In the words of Paul Kagame: "Rwandans will not tolerate voices that promote a return to the ethnic divisionism that precipitated the genocide 18 years ago. To that extent, we place limits on freedom of expression in a similar way to how much of Europe has made it a crime to deny the Holocaust. Aside from that, Rwanda is a very open and free country."³¹ Unlike Kenya's Moi, however, Kagame could not be constitutionally barred from running for President yet another time. In December 2015, the government held a referendum that could potentially allow Kagame to remain as the President of Rwanda till 2034. This referendum passed, with more than 98% of the electorate voting in favour of extending term limits.³² Even if this referendum was not rigged, Kagame would likely not have lost. However, his win would certainly have had a smaller margin. This shows that despite all the negatives, Kagame continues to enjoy popular support.

The referendum election is not the only election in post-genocide Rwanda that has bestowed upon Kagame and his allies a huge majority. In fact, every election in Rwanda after the genocide has seen them win, and by a huge margin. This makes one wonder if it's merely good policies and effective governance that made these results possible, or whether there is indeed systemic suppression of political groups in opposition to Kagame. Adding on this are signs which point towards vote rigging. The first multi-party elections in Rwanda in 2003, saw Kagame win 95% of the vote. Journalists have noted that there were certainly instances of voter intimidation in this election, including soldiers looking over ballots being cast in certain

³¹ Tony Metcalf, 'Exclusive Interview: Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda', *Metro US*, 17 December 2014, <http://www.metro.us/news/exclusive-interview-paul-kagame-president-of-rwanda/tmWlhC---55DRqlWXS12I/>.

³² Tracy McVeigh, 'Rwanda Votes to Give President Paul Kagame Right to Rule until 2034', *The Guardian*, 19 December 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/20/rwanda-vote-gives-president-paul-kagame-extended-powers>.

districts that Kagame was not expected to win.³³ Seven years later, in 2010, when the next presidential election took place, allegations of suppressing opposition were made yet again. This time around, the allegations were even more serious. Two out of the three other contenders in the presidential race were disqualified for not submitting the correct documentation when registering to run for the election. A senior opposition leader was found murdered under suspicious circumstances.³⁴ A Rwandan dissident and a critic of Kagame, General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, was shot while in exile in Johannesburg. He miraculously survived the attempt on his life, but this led to a period of extremely strained relations between Rwanda and South Africa.³⁵ “It’s like there’s an invisible eye everywhere,” claimed opposition party member Alice Muhirwa, in an interview with the *New York Times*.³⁶

Kagame has certainly acted as a stabilising figure in the period immediately after the genocide ended and has helped to create a new government and constitution. He also created a strong and transparent bureaucracy, and focused on maintaining good relations with foreign assistance donors. Essentially, Kagame became the face of Rwanda to the world. Within Rwanda, he became the figure that was able to create this new nation that magnificently rebuilt itself. Kagame’s omnipresence in the lives of Rwandans easily enables him to portray himself as a visionary and a leader.

One of the ways in which Kagame is able to develop a cult of personality around himself and the RPF leadership is through the indoctrination of specific groups of people around the nation in targeted camps, known as the *ingando* solidarity camps. These camps are mandatory for all students who have just graduated from high school, and for older Rwandans

³³ ‘Kagame Won, a Little Too Well’, *The Economist*, 30 August 2003, sec. Middle East and Africa.

³⁴ ‘Voting Ends in Rwandan Election’, *Al Jazeera*, 9 August 2010, Online edition, sec. Africa, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/08/20108943239684905.html>.

³⁵ ‘S Africa Recalls Rwanda Diplomat’, *Al Jazeera*, 7 August 2010, Online edition, sec. Africa, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/08/201086123114774190.html>.

³⁶ Jeffrey Gettleman, ‘The Global Elite’s Favorite Strongman’, *The New York Times Magazine*, 4 September 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/08/magazine/paul-kagame-rwanda.html>.

who have been accused of associating with groups that criticise the government or for those who were involved with the genocide.³⁷ These accusations are often arbitrary, and the accused are usually Hutu.³⁸ In an interview I conducted with a student who recently attended an *ingando* solidarity camp, I learnt that Kagame views this program to be a vital element in educating the young in the nation. This student, on the condition of anonymity, told me that in addition to learning about ethnic unity within Rwanda before colonisation, those who attend the program learn about the role that the RPF played in liberating Rwanda and restoring order after the genocide. While the program does not directly extoll Kagame, it does focus on how the RPF worked tirelessly to bring Rwanda and its development to the levels it is at now. At the end of the program, Kagame personally presides over a convocation ceremony for those who successfully complete the program.³⁹

The *ingando* camps are certainly an easy way in which a large, and mostly young, section of the society is indoctrinated into believing that the RPF is the only political party that matters in Rwanda. There is no discussion of other contemporary political groups, especially not the ones that oppose the RPF. What is really interesting here is that hardly anyone outside of Rwanda knows of these camps, and finding official information on them is extremely difficult. I first read about them while scrolling through an old website used by Human Rights Watch created in the late 1990s or the early 2000s. These camps see participants engaging in a military style regimen. In fact, some camps have military style uniforms for their participants, and encourage the participants' beliefs in Rwandan unity and patriotism.⁴⁰ These camps have been compared to the military camps that the RPF used to

³⁷ Chi Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18 (2005): 201–24.

³⁸ 'Kagame Won, a Little Too Well'.

³⁹ Anonymous interviewee, in conversation with the author, November 2016.

⁴⁰ Andrea Purdeková, 'Rwanda's Ingando Camps: Liminality and the Reproduction of Power', Refugee Studies Center, Oxford Department of International Development, *Working Paper Series*, no. 80 (September 2011), <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/working-paper-series/wp80-rwandas-ingando-camps-2011.pdf>.

train recruits in during the early 1990s. Though it is unlikely, considering that most of the participants are fresh-out-of school teenagers, a Congolese newspaper has also claimed that these camps served as recruitment grounds for the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group that operated in Eastern DR Congo.⁴¹ This news story quotes an Associated Press report that describes a few young Rwandans fleeing to Uganda to escape forced conscription through *ingando*. However, I was unable to find the original AP report. While it is said that the *ingando* camps have not been militaristic in nature in recent years,⁴² these camps still play a very important role in indoctrinating young people in Rwanda and reaffirming the RPF and Kagame's position in Rwandan society.

In conversation with scholar Chi Mgbako, a senior RPF leader claimed that the *ingando* camps were based on a historical Rwandan concept of local elders leaving the quotidian world to go into isolation and solve problems of national concern. However, on deeper examination, she found out that there actually was no strong evidence to suggest that such a concept ever existed in Rwandan history.⁴³ These camps seem to solely exist for the purpose of indoctrination, while hiding under the guise of having a historical meaning. One of the students she interviewed commented, "We were given the right to criticize the government, but I found nothing to criticize, and students at the *ingando* I attended never criticized the tactics of the government. I found that most students were impressed by the achievements of the current government."⁴⁴ Another former participant interviewed by Mgbako in 2004 was more critical and clearer on what the purpose of these camps really was: "Ingando . . . is about RPF political ideology and indoctrination."⁴⁵

⁴¹ 'Rwanda's Ingando Camps Recruiting For M23', *Le Congolais*, 17 June 2013, Online edition, <http://www.lecongolais.cd/rwandas-ingando-camps-recruiting-for-m23>.

⁴² Hilary Matfess, 'Rwandan Bonsais: Are Rwanda's Post-Genocide Youth Programs Paving the Way for Future Unrest?', *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 23 January 2014, <http://fpif.org/rwandan-bonsais/>.

⁴³ Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps' 208.

⁴⁴ Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps' 217-218.

⁴⁵ Mgbako, 'Ingando Solidarity Camps' 201.

Rwanda is unique in that there is certainly a large section of the population that supports Kagame and the RPF. This is because of tangible economic growth that most Rwandans have managed to benefit from since the end of the genocide. The critic of the government whom I've quoted before also said, "Even if actually free and fair election were to be held in Rwanda, Kagame would maintain his majority easily. That's because most people have been brainwashed into believing how great his presidency has been."⁴⁶ Personally, I saw an example of this brainwashing in the comments section of an article written in the online news magazine, *Quartz*. David Himbara, Kagame's former economic advisor, wrote, "A dictator who can't be questioned; an elite that dominates the economy; and an atmosphere of anxiety—these are not the formula for economic growth. In Africa as elsewhere, people do their best work in an environment of freedom, not fear."⁴⁷ These concluding lines had a reply attached to them by a reader who supported Kagame. He accused Himbara: "In the past years David Himbara has praised the current Rwandan government for its economic achievements and now, with his hidden political agenda, he is tarnishing the Rwandan image to justify his serious mistakes of the past." I've seen similar comments defending Kagame on many online pieces that are critical of Rwanda. While these comments only represent a small section of the Rwandan population that has access to the internet, they do show outspoken support for him and his party. This level of support for Kagame will make systemic change in Rwanda a difficult process, raising serious questions about its future as a stable state.

Despite these clear flaws, most of which are very well documented, the international community continues to praise Rwanda and there seems to be no shortage in development assistance available to Rwanda. One of the reasons for this is clearly the fact that Rwanda's record on development is almost spotless in terms of achieving targets. It remains one of the

⁴⁶ Anonymous interviewee, in conversation with the author, September 2016.

⁴⁷ David Himbara, 'Why I Quit as Rwandan President Paul Kagame's Economic Advisor: His Tyranny and Lies', *Quartz*, 16 January 2015, <http://qz.com/327694/why-i-quit-as-rwandan-president-paul-kagames-economic-advisor-tyranny-and-lies/>.

few states in Sub-Saharan Africa to have actually managed to meet most of its Millennium Development Goals.⁴⁸ Rwanda has the seen best improvements in infant and maternal mortality rates, as a result of its effective, but developing, health infrastructure.⁴⁹ Kagame uses the Rwandan Government's reputation of efficiency to demonstrate how a state can be successfully run. This has earned him many fans, from Bill Clinton to Tony Blair. Another tactic frequently used by Kagame to let his authoritarian streak not be questioned is bringing up the West's inaction during the Rwandan Genocide. The fact that such a large-scale massacre was taking place in full view of the world, and that hardly anything was done to control it, does allow Kagame to have less interference in how he runs Rwanda. There were clear signs that the genocide was about to take place, yet the United Nations or any nations of the West refused to intervene. This now translates into Kagame being able to effectively exploit this collective Western guilt about the fact that Western militaries entirely refused to get involved in ending the violence when they were fully aware what was going on in Rwanda. This gave Kagame much more leeway than he would have had normally if he had been President of another nation. When Bill Clinton visited Rwanda in 1998, his speech was telling of this fact. "We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe haven for the killers. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide."⁵⁰

The suppression of opposition shows Kagame's political dominance, while the *ingando* solidarity camps are an example of how he dominates over Rwandan society. These are just two of the ways in which Kagame has entrenched himself in the daily lives of Rwandans. A visit to Rwanda would demonstrate this omnipresence even better. I was able to see this on

⁴⁸ 'Millenium Development Goals: Rwanda, Final Progress Report: 2013' (New York NY: United Nations Development Programme, December 2014).

⁴⁹ 'An African Trailblazer: How a Poor Country Brought Health Insurance to 91% of the Population', *The Economist*, 17 September 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21707226-how-poor-country-brought-health-insurance-91-population-african>.

⁵⁰ William Jefferson Clinton, *Text Of Clinton's Rwanda Speech* (Kigali, 1998), <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/text-of-clintons-rwanda-speech/>.

my own during a trip to Rwanda. There were many billboards with a picture of Kagame that had messages about unity and peace, or bumper stickers on most cars that declared the car owner's support for either Kagame or the RPF. It was also interesting to see Kagame's photographs in all government offices, and even privately owned places, like shops and restaurants. The *New York Times*' Jeffrey Gettleman writes of Kagame's ability to instil fear in not only regular Rwandans, but also his close staff members. Kagame is known to administer beatings on his staff for not following orders exactly as he wanted. At the same time, most people in the cities and villages of Rwanda refuse to even talk about what they feel about his presidency.⁵¹ While the lack of any opposition party has certainly made many miracles on the developmental front possible for Kagame and the RPF, some Rwandans still live in a state of perpetual fear because of their political opposition to Kagame. This poses a major challenge for Rwanda's future, since a large majority of people will never be able to fully participate in Rwandan politics. This will allow Kagame to gradually expand his power without any checks and balances and move Rwanda another step closer to authoritarianism.

⁵¹ Gettleman, 'The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman'.

The War in Eastern Congo

With the end of the Rwandan Genocide, many of the anti-Tutsi Interhamwe militia troops, who were backed by the NRMD, were pushed into the eastern parts of Zaire (now DR Congo) by RPF forces. They were harboured there by the Mobutu Sese Seko government, extremely infamous for its rampant corruption and lack of interest in running the state. Wishing to remove the threat of any future risks posed by the Interhamwe *génocidaires* in neighbouring Zaire, RPF's Rwanda obviously wished for regime change in Zaire. However, little did the RPF know at this time that their planned invasion of Zaire would turn into a long drawn-out war which would involve the militaries of almost 20 states in Africa. Rwanda played the largest role in helping form and supporting the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). The AFDL invaded Zaire in 1996 in order to overthrow the Mobutu government. It was headed by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and was supported by Uganda as well. Uganda's concerns with Zaire dealt with an armed group known as the Lord's Resistance Army that Sese Seko supported through the help of Sudan, and operated to destabilise Yoweri Museveni's recently formed government in Uganda.⁵²

After the successful overthrow of Mobutu soon after, the alliance fell apart as Kabila, the new Congolese president, forced all Rwandan and Ugandan troops to leave DR Congo. The expulsion of Rwandan and Ugandan troops was not acceptable to either of these two states, and Rwanda managed to mobilise Congolese Tutsis to take up arms against their government. Though Rwanda officially states that there are no active Rwandan troops in DR Congo, numerous reports confirm Rwanda's active involvement in arming and training rebel groups formed of Congolese Tutsis. Uganda supported Rwanda in this involvement, and later began arming its own rebel groups to try and destabilise the Congolese government. It is unclear what the exact reasons for this aggressive intervention on the part of Rwanda were,

⁵² Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 82.

especially since this was immediately after the genocide and Rwanda's limited resources could have been used for much-needed reconstruction within its territory. It is possible that Kagame perceived a threat of an immediate regrouping and attack from Hutu forces in DR Congo.⁵³ Another possible reason for this is that this intervention could be a part of a larger project to create a Greater Rwanda, based on historical borders of the Rwandan kingdom, before colonisation.⁵⁴ Rwanda's, and its ally Uganda's, role in the war enabled the Congolese government to portray them as aggressors. This allowed them to get extensive support from other states in Africa, primarily Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, while Rwanda and Uganda received mild international criticism. Many armed fringe groups were "adopted" by all sides involved in the conflict, such as the M23 rebels in the Virunga region of DR Congo that borders Rwanda. The details of what happened next are equally gruesome, but distract from the larger story of Rwanda's movement towards authoritarianism. It is important to know that in all of this conflict, Rwanda under the RPF played a central role.

A relatively small power struggle spiralled into a massive conflict that is still going on today and has led to the deaths of at least 3 million people, and displaced many more. Even more horrifying is the extremely large number of cases of sexual assault being reported in Eastern DR Congo. Rape was used as a weapon by all parties involved in the conflict. It is estimated that more than 40% of all women in Eastern DR Congo have experienced sexual assault since the beginning of the war.⁵⁵ The intensity of the conflict is much less now, and the Rwandan and Congolese governments maintain full diplomatic relations. Still, death and displacement have become a perennial feature of Eastern DR Congo. While Rwanda's exact reasons remain unclear and are up for debate, it cannot be denied that Rwanda is an aggressor

⁵³ Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 69.

⁵⁴ Timothy Longman, 'The Complex Reasons for Rwanda's Engagement in Congo', in *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, ed. John F Clark (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 132.

⁵⁵ Jill Trenholm et al., 'The Global, the Ethnic and the Gendered War: Women and Rape in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', *Gender, Place & Culture* 23, no. 4 (2 April 2016): 484–502, doi:10.1080/0966369X.2015.1013440.

in a long and bloody war that has led to the deaths and displacement of millions of people in the Great Lakes Region.

One possibility for Rwanda's involvement in the war is that Rwanda benefits from exporting minerals that are mined in DR Congo and are secretly slipped through into Rwanda by RPF backed armed groups. This generates revenue for the RPF, and would explain why the continuation of this war is essential for Rwanda. While there is no overwhelming evidence to prove Rwanda's exact economic benefits from minerals that are mined by workers under inhumane conditions, there are many allegations against Rwanda on this subject. A study conducted by an American non-profit shows that the numbers for Rwanda's mineral mining capacities and mineral exports simply don't add up.⁵⁶ Some of these minerals, such as gold and coltan, are in high demand in the global economy. Since trade in blood minerals is illegal, any information on this subject is very hard to find, since the RPF or their buyers will not want this illegal trade to stop. This is strongest possible reason for Rwanda's involvement in this war.

Rwanda's internal peace and stability comes from being an aggressor in a major conflict just outside its borders, while militarising inside its borders in the name of maintaining peace. The Rwandan military is heavily armed, as author Marc H Ellis writes, "...under the guise of innocence for past suffering."⁵⁷ Ellis' quote here is from an article titled "Is Rwanda the Israel of Africa?" This is an interesting comparison to make, since Rwanda and Israel are actually closely linked with one another. Israel is not only a major investor in Rwanda, but Israeli defence firms are important suppliers to the Rwanda Defence Forces as well.⁵⁸ Military

⁵⁶ Sasha Lezhnev and John Prendergast, 'Rwanda's Stake in Congo: Understanding Interest to Achieve Peace' (Washington DC: Enough Project, October 2013), <http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Rwanda%E2%80%99sStake%20in%20Congo%20-%20Understanding%20Interests%20to%20Achieve%20Peace.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Marc H Ellis, 'Is Rwanda the Israel of Africa?', *Mondoweiss*, 24 September 2013, Online edition, sec. Exile and the Prophetic, <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/09/rwanda-israel-africa/>.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey Gettleman, 'In Africa, Benjamin Netanyahu Looks for Friends, and U.N. Votes, for Israel', *The New York Times*, 6 July 2016, Online edition, sec. Africa, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/07/world/africa/israel-africa-netanyahu-uganda-kenya-rwanda.html>.

exercises between Israel and Rwanda have also started taking place. Politically, Kagame and the RPF use the same language that Israeli politicians use when justifying the use of force and authoritarian methods of governance, despite evidence that Israeli weapons were used to carry out the killings during the genocide.⁵⁹ Recently, Kagame became the first African leader to speak at the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a powerful pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States, in Washington, DC.⁶⁰ It is no surprise, then, that Rwanda and Israel follow similar paths when it comes to intervention and occupation in the regions immediately outside of their respective territorial borders.

Kagame managed to improve the lives of his citizens, while completely destroying the lives of others just outside of Rwanda. The previous section explores Paul Kagame's and the RPF's power and dominance over all aspects of life within Rwanda, while this section demonstrates their powerful presence outside of Rwanda as well. Unfortunately, this has led to the destruction of the lives of millions in Eastern DR Congo, and forced many to live in an almost perpetual state of conflict.

⁵⁹ Gili Cohen, 'Israeli Arms Exports to Rwanda During 1994 Genocide to Stay Secret, Supreme Court Rules', *Haaretz*, 12 April 2016, Online edition, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.713907>.

⁶⁰ Amir Tibon, 'Rwanda President Paul Kagame to Speak at AIPAC's Annual Conference', *Haaretz*, 17 March 2017, Online edition, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.777896>.

The War on Journalism

This paper opens with a quote from a newspaper called *Kangura*, which played an important role in inciting violence during the years that led to the Rwandan Genocide. *Kangura* once published an issue with the cover that translated to, “Which weapons are we going to use to beat the cockroaches for good?”⁶¹ Once again, the Tutsi are compared to cockroaches; this was a comparison commonly used by *Kangura*. Similar to *Kangura*, there were other media outlets in Rwanda during the early 1990s that propagated the message of a Tutsi-free Rwanda for the Hutus, openly calling for violence on Tutsis. Much like how certain media outlets in the United States managed to spread hate speech and possibly affect the results of the 2016 Presidential Elections,⁶² Rwandan media outlets before the genocide were able to form a very negative perception of Tutsis within the eyes of some Hutus. *Kangura*, however, was nowhere near the *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTL) in contributing to the genocide. This radio station aired details on where Tutsis were living, and was crucial in inciting people to target them. Journalists in Rwanda were pressured and threatened into spreading the ideology of the ruling Hutu political class. Those who did not confirm to this were eliminated. When the genocide began, journalists who were in favour of the RPF or were against the NRMD were targeted and many were killed. Fast-forward to present day Rwanda, nothing seems to have changed for journalists other than the ideology of the ruling party. Journalists are still coerced and threatened into writing in favour of the RPF and the party’s leadership. 23 years later, the only change is the ideological; journalists have switched from spreading hatred against Tutsis to spreading the gospel of Rwanda’s peace, modernity and development.

⁶¹ ‘Tutsi: Race of God’, *Kangura*, November 1991, <http://www.rwandafile.com/Kangura/>.

⁶² Olivia Solon, ‘Facebook’s Failure: Did Fake News and Polarized Politics Get Trump Elected?’, *The Guardian*, 10 November 2016, Online edition, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/10/facebook-fake-news-election-conspiracy-theories>.

The scale at which media outlets were influential in inciting the genocide is actually tremendous. We shall briefly look at the history of how these media outlets, specifically *Kangura* and the RTLM, became influential during this period. At the same time, we need to consider that the failures of the media were not limited to Rwanda itself when it came to covering the genocide. Most foreign media outlets barely gave any coverage to the genocide. Despite facing threats, a few foreign journalists remained in Rwanda, filing stories that would be destined to appear at the end pages of newspapers. Former *New York Times* correspondent Stephen Kinzer writes: “The limited space that most of the world’s media devotes to Africa was taken up during those days by reports about the inauguration on May 10 of Nelson Mandela as the new president of South Africa.”⁶³ Choosing between a story of hope in South Africa, and horror in Rwanda was an unfortunately easy choice for many editors. Further, events in the United States during this period included the OJ Simpson trial, the suicide of Kurt Cobain, and the Tonya Harding scandal, all of which involved popular celebrities who would get more readers, viewers and listeners to media companies. To further prove this point, a relatively recent *New York Daily News* article from 2016 lists the major happenings of 1994. This includes news on OJ Simpson, Kurt Cobain, and Tonya Harding, but has no mention of the Rwandan Genocide.⁶⁴ In a way, these companies were also indirectly responsible for the atrocities of the genocide as their inability to cover Rwanda contributed to further inaction by the West during this tragedy. Their role is nowhere comparable to that of *Kangura* or RTLM, but they cannot be let off without being mentioned.

The name *Kangura* translated to “Wake Others Up”. This newspaper’s history cannot be told without explaining another Rwandan newspaper of that era that inspired the name for *Kangura*. In 1988, a newspaper called *Kanguka* was formed in Kigali. It called itself the

⁶³ Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda’s Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 165.

⁶⁴ Keri Blakinger, ‘O.J., Cobain, “Friends” and All the Other News from 1994 That’s Still Dominating Today’s Headlines’, *New York Daily News*, 4 March 2016, Online edition, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/news-1994-dominating-today-headlines-article-1.2553411>.

“First Independent Newspaper of Rwanda”. *Kanguka* was an important newspaper in criticising the Juvénal Habyarimana led NRMD government. The name *Kanguka* meant “Wake Up”. The newspaper never really sided with the RPF, but was sympathetic to their cause. Since the RPF was viewed as a dangerous and violent organisation, it would have been politically hard for the editorial board of *Kanguka* to justify their support for them. They do often suggest making peace with the RPF, as seen in one of their editorials titled: “Mwahaye Inkotanyi ibyo zishaka zikaduha amahoro!” This translates to, “Why not give the Inkotanyi what they want, so that we can have peace?”⁶⁵ The word “inkotanyi” literally means activists, but refers here to the RPF. The author of this 1991 editorial piece, Emile Kanamugire, was later killed in the genocide, along with many other journalists who were known to be sympathetic to the RPF.⁶⁶ *Kangura* was able to emerge because of *Kanguka*. Neither of these newspapers were accessible to everyone in Rwanda primarily because of a very low literacy rate in rural areas. However, that did not prevent the incendiary ideas in *Kangura* from spreading quickly and easily in the urban centres.

What also aided *Kangura* in spreading anti-Tutsi sentiments was the radio station RTLM. The RTLM was one of the most powerful anti-Tutsi propaganda machine that Hutu supremacist groups had in their control. Since radios could spread a message to far more people than a newspaper, it’s crucial to write about the radio as a means of propaganda in Rwanda. In fact, the radio was called the “eighth great power” in a speech by the Nazi Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels.⁶⁷ Interestingly, in the same speech from 1928, Goebbels opens by mentioning Napoleon calling the press the seventh great power. During my research for this paper, I read a lot about the RTLM’s impact in inciting the Rwandan

⁶⁵ Emile Kanamugire, ‘Mwahaye Inkotanyi Ibyo Zishaka Zikaduha Amahoro!’, *Kanguka*, 1991, https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/9316/iwacu_pub_kanguka_no48.pdf.

⁶⁶ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Reporters sans frontières (Association), and UNESCO, eds., *Rwanda, Les Médias Du Génocide*, Collection ‘Hommes et Sociétés’ (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 389.

⁶⁷ Joseph Goebbels, ‘Der Rundfunk Als Achte Großmacht’, in *Signale Der Neuen Zeit. 25 Ausgewählte Reden von Dr. Joseph Goebbels* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1938), 197, <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/goeb56.htm>.

Genocide. However, I did not find anything that really captured the scale of the radio station's impact. Recently, I stumbled upon an extremely detailed analysis that measured the impact of the RTLM in encouraging violence against Tutsis. According to this paper by Yanagizawa-Drott, approximately 10% of the overall violence during the genocide can be attributed to the RTLM. This translates to around 51,000 perpetrators of this tragedy being inspired directly or indirectly by this radio station.⁶⁸ This incredible study confirms and quantifies the role of the media in shaping anti-Tutsi opinion and inciting violence during the genocide. The severity of the RTLM's broadcasts was noted during the trials that took place after the genocide. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda sentenced three of the founders of RTLM to life imprisonment in 2003 because of their role in perpetrating the Rwandan Genocide.⁶⁹

Having being viciously targeted since the group was formed, the RPF leadership that is in power in Rwanda now has a complex relationship with the media. On paper, it looks like the Rwandan government has done a lot to foster and train journalists. Since so many journalists were killed during the genocide, it was especially important for Rwanda to rebuild the media sector and encourage journalism. On the ground, the reality is much different. Journalists critical of Kagame's rule are often arrested, tortured, and imprisoned, even for the mildest form of criticism. It really is hard to get reportage that can be trusted, especially from areas far from urban centres like Kigali. While this raises overall questions about the integrity of media reports from Rwanda, it also points to the authoritarian government that Paul Kagame presides over.

After the genocide, the RPF worked closely with the West in rebuilding infrastructure and restarting the economy. Having seen the devastating effects of media on spreading

⁶⁸ David Yanagizawa-Drott, 'Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129, no. 4 (November 2014): 1947–94, doi:10.1093/qje/qju020.

⁶⁹ Martin Peters, 'Rwandan Hate Media - 10 Years on', *BBC News*, 5 April 2004, Online edition, sec. BBC Monitoring, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3601369.stm>.

violence, the RPF focussed on training and professionalising journalists. Before the genocide, there was no journalism school in Rwanda. Most journalists were either trained by the media house they worked for, or went abroad for training. The National University of Rwanda, in Butare, established a School of Journalism and Communication in 1996.⁷⁰ Considering that this was merely two years after a devastating tragedy, the establishment of the journalism school must have certainly been a priority for the RPF. The school also had a partnership with a journalism school in Canada, from where faculty members would visit to teach. In 2013, all the universities in Rwanda were reorganised and merged into the University of Rwanda.⁷¹ This was when the School of Journalism and Communication was moved to Kigali, where it now is located. While this move may have simply been administrative in nature, it also serves the purpose of allowing the government to keep a closer eye on what is being taught to Rwanda's journalists. Apart from having links with Canada, the school has other connections to the West as well. The school follows a four-year liberal arts program, only really focussing on journalism in the last two years of studies, not dissimilar to undergraduate study in the United States. Further, a welcome message on the school's website from the dean states: "A number of donors such as the EU and UNESCO have also been so generous to address our journalism equipment needs as well as capacity building for our staff and students."⁷² While it is unclear how the EU and UNESCO exactly helped the school, it is more than evident that there is a lot of influence from the West in the way in which it is run.

In addition to the School of Journalism and Communication, there are also other programs that are funded by the West which aim to improve the quality of journalism in

⁷⁰ Terje S. Skjerdal and Charles Muiro Ngugi, 'Institutional and Governmental Challenges for Journalism Education in East Africa', *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 28, no. 1-2 (January 2007): 176-90, doi:10.1080/02560054.2007.9653365.

⁷¹ Emmanuel Rutayisire, 'Institutes of Higher Learning to Merge with University of Rwanda', *The East African*, 16 August 2013, Online edition, sec. Rwanda Today, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/Rwanda/News/Institutes-of-higher-learning-to-merge-with-University-of-Rwanda/-/1433218/1956454/-/vclsloz/-/index.html>.

⁷² Joseph Njuguna, 'Message from the Ag Dean' (School of Journalism and Communication, n.d.), <http://www.sjc.ur.ac.rw/?q=message-ag-dean>.

Rwanda. This is where we begin to see the cracks in the seemingly normal attempts at re-establishing journalism in Rwanda. Anjan Sundaram, a senior journalist with experience in reporting in DR Congo came to Rwanda in 2009 for a period of five years to help train and organise some of the few remaining independent journalists in Rwanda. The program that he was teaching at was funded by the British government and the European Union. In his book *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*, Sundaram provides a detailed account of how these journalists were under attack by the government in Rwanda. He describes many of his students as having injuries because of torture by the police. His account painstakingly details the methods used by the RPF to silence journalists who were critical of the government. Sundaram writes about killings, tortures, secret police, public shaming, and prison sentences without trial. All of these were tactics used by the Rwandan government to intimidate, humiliate, and, sometimes, simply eliminate voices that spoke against the RPF's rhetoric of development, progress and modernity. The book ends in a rather chilling manner when Sundaram lists the journalists in Rwanda who were silenced in some form or the other between 1995 and 2014.⁷³ The author makes it very clear that the twelve-page long list only includes journalists, and is not exhaustive in any way. There certainly are many more journalists who have been silenced in Rwanda.

There is another issue that occurs throughout the book. Sundaram constantly criticises the West for supporting the RPF government. As mentioned before in this paper, the RPF does receive a lot of support from organisations and governments in North America and Europe. What is interesting is that in the case of journalistic freedom, the West seems to support the government by providing assistance to institutions like the School of Journalism and Communication. At the same time, it provides funding for programs that aim to organise and train independent journalists critical of the government. Western agencies seem to be providing funding for two completely contradictory causes. This is certainly not

⁷³ Sundaram, *Bad News*, 181-192.

the only time that has happened with Western involvement in Rwanda. A 2001 article in the *Telegraph* that describes former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as the “cheerleader-in-chief” for Kagame also writes about two Rwandan exiles living in Britain being warned by the Metropolitan Police because of an imminent threat on their life.⁷⁴ These contradictions seem to have become an essential part of normalising the authoritarian government in Rwanda.

Coming back to the issue of journalists being silenced, a line from a previously cited article describes the School of Journalism and Communication as being “...a school where journalists could be moulded into professionals incapable of extreme partisanship...”⁷⁵ Having looked at the Rwandan government’s interference in journalism, the above description of the school seems very far away from the truth. The RPF has effectively gone down the path of the NRMD when it come to journalistic freedoms. While the language used in Rwandan media today may not incite violence, journalists certainly face the same kinds of restrictions and threats that they used to before the genocide. Rwanda’s largest newspaper, the *New Times*, seems to have absolutely no content that portrays anyone in the RPF in a negative light. Earlier in this paper, I quoted a source in Rwanda, who wishes to remain anonymous, claiming that even if Rwanda had completely free and fair election, Kagame and RPF would still win because most people are “brainwashed” into believing that his presidency has worked wonders for the nation. This control over the media is an effective tool in ensuring that “brainwashing” takes place. This unbelievable level of control points towards the Orwellian state that Rwanda has quickly turned into.

⁷⁴ Robert Mendick, ‘Tony Blair, Trips to Africa and an Intriguing Friendship’, *The Telegraph*, 12 November 2011, Online edition, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/tony-blair/8885987/Tony-Blair-trips-to-Africa-and-an-intriguing-friendship.html>.

⁷⁵ Skjerdal and Ngugi, ‘Institutional and Governmental Challenges for Journalism Education in East Africa’.

The Urban Spectacle

Rwanda has one major international airport, located in Kigali. This rather lavish airport is surprisingly well connected for a city with only a bit more than a million residents. In addition to having daily flights to airline hubs on the Africa continent, such as Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Johannesburg, Kigali International Airport also has direct connections to many major transit destinations around the world, including Amsterdam, Brussels, Doha, Dubai, Istanbul, London, and Mumbai. As per 2011 figures, 47.2% of all tourists visiting Rwanda enter the nation from this airport, and this number has been growing steadily as the airport gets better connections.⁷⁶ For almost half of all tourists entering Rwanda, the airport is their first experience in Rwanda. On the road to the city centre from the airport, one cannot help but notice the futuristic looking buildings that are spread around Kigali, especially the massive dome of the Kigali Convention Centre. For such a small city, Kigali seems to have many feathers in its cap.

The US\$300 million Kigali Convention Centre is not the only structure in Kigali that draws a second look.⁷⁷ The Paediatric Cancer Centre, designed by renowned architect David Adjaye is expected to be complete later this year, on a massive suburban site to the south of the city. The recently opened Marriot Hotel is a massive structure that dwarfs the older Kigali Serena Hotel. There is construction taking place everywhere, and new projects get built quickly. In *Rwanda Inc.*, a book about Rwanda's post-conflict rise, the authors describe these changes at the very beginning of the book: "There is a joke among residents and frequent visitors to Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, that if you blink twice, you will see a building that wasn't there just the other day. What seems like pure exaggeration became a reality for

⁷⁶ 'Highlights of Tourist Arrivals in Rwanda January-March 2011' (Kigali: Rwanda Development Board, 2012), http://www.rdb.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/tourism%20conservation/Arrival_Statistics_2011_1st_quarter_version_2_.pdf.

⁷⁷ Bryan Kimenyi, 'Kagame Launches Kigali Convention Centre', *The New Times*, 8 July 2016, Online edition, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2016-07-08/201523/>.

us over numerous trips made to this tiny landlocked country in eastern Africa. Each time we arrived, there was something else to see.”⁷⁸ Kigali has become the sign of Rwanda’s transformation. It is the place where Rwanda defies its bloody past, and projects an image of modernity and progress into the future. It is Rwanda’s urban spectacle, but it is also a distraction: it distracts one away into believing the flawless story of Rwanda’s development.

Before the Rwandan Genocide, Kigali could not really be described as being a spectacular city. In fact, for a long time in its history, it was very small. A section of the Natural History Museum in Kigali shows old images from the city’s past and juxtaposes them with images of modern day Kigali. The contrast is not only striking, but also shows just how many more people there are living in Kigali right now. Areas that were completely barren in the old photographs now are full of houses, shops and streets. Hills covered with forests now have apartment complexes built on them. While census data isn’t available at regular intervals

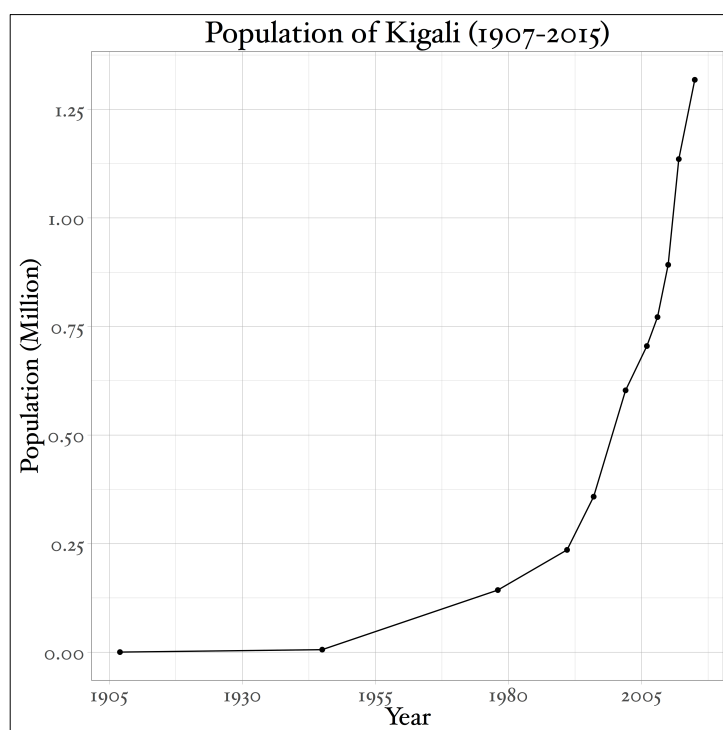


Figure 2: The population of Kigali only began to grow after independence, but saw drastic increases in the period after the Rwandan Genocide. (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2015)

until the 1990s, it is clear to see that Kigali’s population has grown exponentially in the period after the genocide, as shown in Figure 2. In addition to being the centre of the Rwandan economy, Kigali also served as a place that was relatively safe to live in during most of Rwanda’s post colonial history.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Kigali was a small village with no more than a few hundred people living there; more precisely,

⁷⁸ Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.* 1.

there were 357 inhabitants in 1907.⁷⁹ There was nothing special about Kigali when compared to any of the thousands of other villages and towns in Rwanda. An interesting figure by the name of Doctor Richard Kandt arrived in the village of Kigali in 1907. He was, at that time, the German colonial resident in Rwanda, a position given to the senior most colonial official in the colony. His story is central to Kigali's establishment as a capital city.

Despite being born into a Polish family, Kandt was an important part of German society and practised as a doctor in Bavaria. Fascinated by the writings of other European colonists in Africa, he spent some years studying Kiswahili in Berlin, before deciding to leave Europe. Like many other European travellers in the continent at that time, Kandt arrived in Africa to find the source of the River Nile. His ship reached Dar es Salaam in modern day Tanzania in 1897, then a part of German East Africa. He went towards the West from Dar es Salaam in his search for the source of the Nile, and eventually reached what is now Rwanda. On his way, he also met the King of Rwanda in the monarchy's capital in Nyanza.⁸⁰ Kandt claims to have found the source of the Nile in the Nyungwe Forest, which now is a large conserved area in southern Rwanda.⁸¹ He lived for four years near this location, in a small village that he called "Bergfrieden", or "Peaceful Mountain" in German. In 1902, he returned to Germany and impressed German government officials by his work. After he published a book about his journey in 1904, he was officially appointed as the colonial resident.⁸²

Kandt was sent back to Rwanda in 1905. This time he went to establish a colonial administration office. While it is unclear whether he arrived in 1906 or 1907, Kandt set up a

⁷⁹ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014', Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (Kigali: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, August 2015).

⁸⁰ Gerald Mbanda, 'The Legacy of Dr. Richard Kant', *The New Times*, 9 October 2014, Online edition, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2014-10-09/181744/>.

⁸¹ Richard Kandt, *Caput Nili: eine empfindsame Reise zu den Quellen des Nils*, trans. Reinhart Bindseil, 1. Aufl (Bremen: Europ. Literaturverl, 2011).

⁸² Mbanda, 'The Legacy of Dr. Richard Kant'.

small German base in Kigali with minimal staff in that period.⁸³ Since people from Rwanda were not dependent on employment at the administration centre, this did not contribute to a growth in the population of the city, which was really a village at that time. During this time, he also promoted planting coffee in Rwanda, which continues to be the largest export from Rwanda today.⁸⁴ Kandt returned to Germany in 1913, one year before the start of the Great War in Europe in which he would eventually die. He served as a doctor in the German military, and suffered gas poisoning on the Eastern Front against Russia in 1917. One year later, complications from the poisoning developed into tuberculosis to which he would succumb. Kandt died in April 1918 in Nuremberg at the age of 50.⁸⁵ Keeping in mind that Russia only minimally used chemical weapons in the war, it is very possible that Kandt died because of accidentally being poisoned by German chemical weapons.

While Kandt was fighting in Europe, the Belgians had invaded Rwanda from Congo in 1916, as a part of their East Africa offensive. Having very few German colonial officials, and almost no military presence, Belgium had no issues in taking over Rwanda quickly. After the end of the Great War, the Treaty of Versailles formally ceded Rwanda to Belgium as a part of Ruanda-Urundi, a combined territory that used to be the north-western corner of German East Africa. Further, Article 22 of the treaty classifies Ruanda-Urundi it as a Class B Mandate territory under the League of Nations, which meant that Belgium would have to develop this territory to the point it can become independent.⁸⁶ This development never took place, and Belgium merely used this colony to extract resources, primarily the coffee that Richard Kandt introduced to Rwanda.

⁸³ 'KNOW YOUR HISTORY: The Story of Kandt and How Kigali Came to Be the Capital City', *The New Times*, 14 January 2015, Online edition, sec. Education, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-01-14/184924/>.

⁸⁴ Mbanda, 'The Legacy of Dr. Richard Kant'.

⁸⁵ 'Deutsches Kolonialblatt' (Berlin: Königliche Hofbuchhandlung, May 1918).

⁸⁶ 'Treaty of Versailles, 1919', 28 July 1919, <http://search.ebscohost.com/direct.asp?db=aph&jid=266C&scope=site>.

For Kigali, the Belgian takeover meant that it would no longer remain a centre of administration. The Belgian colonial administration was headquartered in Bujumbura (then called Usumbura), which now is the capital of Burundi. However, the administrative centre for the Rwanda part of the Belgian Mandate was in Butare in southern Rwanda. The Belgians renamed the town to Astrida, in honour of Queen Astrid of Belgium. The name would change back to Butare after Rwanda's independence in 1962. Butare was chosen as a site for the administration centre because it was close to Bujumbura, the colonial capital, and Nyanza, the capital of the Rwandan monarchy which was the traditional centre of power. The Belgians had a much larger presence in the colony than the Germans, partly justified by the League of Nations mandate requiring Belgium to build a system of administration that could then be handed down to the Rwandans on their subsequent independence. This meant that even a regional colonial office, like the one Kigali would have a larger number of employees, both Rwandans and Europeans. A 1945 survey shows that the population of Kigali was 6,000.⁸⁷ Clearly, the city had grown after Belgian colonial takeover.

The next time Kigali's population was counted was more than a decade after Rwanda's independence, when Kigali officially became the capital of independent Rwanda. The 1978 National Census shows that Kigali's population was 143,175.⁸⁸ This is a massive change over a period of 33 years. Assuming the census data is mostly correct, this translates to a population growth rate of 9.95% per year during this period. Over the next few decades, this rate of growth continues to get bigger, as can be seen in the chart in the beginning of this section (Figure 2). More recent data shows that 28.9% of Kigali's population is comprised of people who moved in to the city in the last 5 years, firmly establishing Kigali as Rwanda's largest city and economic centre.⁸⁹ There are not as many push factors that cause this migration as there are pull factors.

⁸⁷ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014'.

⁸⁸ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014'.

⁸⁹ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014'.

The praise that present-day Kigali receives is unequivocal in comparison to any other capital city in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kigali is widely known to be a very clean city, as having many forests and green spaces, there's also a massive arts scene in Kigali that has grown since the genocide. Plastic bags are not allowed anywhere in Rwanda, though a small black market of plastic bags is emerging.⁹⁰ On the last Saturday of every month, most Rwandans, including Kagame, come together in their local communities and collectively take part in community improvement activities that are known as *umuganda*.⁹¹ Usually, this involves work like planting trees and cleaning up the neighbourhood. All of this contributes towards Kigali's image of modernity. As a city that has very few attractions of importance for tourists, Kigali has worked towards changing that image as well. Promoting its arts, culture, excellent museums, and great food, the city is certainly getting more interest by tourists. For long, the main tourist attraction in the city was the Genocide Memorial, a place for remembrance of the horrific past. Now, as times change, Kigali is attracting more tourists and, more importantly, jobs in the tourism industry. There are even short tourist guides to Kigali now, which show that Rwanda's fast changing capital has a lot to offer.⁹² Partly due to a low supply of hotel rooms, but also because Kigali is a relatively expensive place for tourists, nightly room prices in a standard luxury hotel in Kigali start at around US\$230 per night, same as they would for a comparable room and hotel in cities like New York or London.

Modern Kigali is the brainchild of the RPF and Kagame. After the devastation of the genocide, the RPF had a chance to rebuild it from scratch. Having being given an almost clean slate to work on, every policy decision made about Kigali allows the RPF to project its power

⁹⁰ Émile Clavel, 'Think You Can't Live without Plastic Bags? Consider This: Rwanda Did It', *The Guardian*, 15 February 2014, Online edition, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/feb/15/rwanda-banned-plastic-bags-so-can-we>.

⁹¹ Eugene Kwibuka, 'Umuganda Is Essential to Our Development, Kagame Says', *The New Times*, 1 November 2015, Online edition, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-01/194003/>.

⁹² Kit Buchan, 'Rwanda Reborn: Kigali's Culture, Heart and Soul', *The Guardian*, 11 April 2014, Online edition, sec. Travel, <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2014/apr/11/rwanda-kigali-reborn-culture-heart-soul>.

and ideology over Rwanda. This led to the creation of the urban spectacle: this beautiful and clean city that is not only great to live in, but also has many amazing things to see and do. The spectacle is enhanced when Kigali is compared to capital cities of Rwanda's neighbours. An often recurring characteristic feature of these other capitals is that they are undisciplined, while Kigali has often been described as disciplined. Interestingly, this is a word that was also used to explain why the RPF was able to prevail and take over power during the genocide.⁹³ This discipline is made possible through deliberate control exerted over the city by the party in order to completely dictate how the urban spectacle is created and managed. This control by the RPF manifests itself in one important form: control over the space and built environment. Consequences of controlling space make it easy to indirectly control the place as well. Simplifying from geographer Edward Relph's seminal work *Place and Placelessness*, space in this context means the physical built environment, while place refers to the meaning ascribed to that space.⁹⁴

This section has many examples of how the space of Kigali is controlled by the RPF. The clean roads, the green spaces, the futuristic buildings all serve to show that Rwanda is progressing rapidly. Some of these are merely symbols, having very little practical utility for most Rwandans. One such example is the previously mentioned Kigali Convention Centre, which is estimated to be the most expensive building to be built on the African continent, far outstripping the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt that was built at a cost of US\$220 million.⁹⁵ Symbolisms aside, there are more direct ways in dictating the built environment. Kigali has a very strict zoning plan, and has an online system that is required to be used by anyone who

⁹³ Donatella Lorch, 'Rwanda Rebels' Victory Attributed to Discipline', *The New York Times*, 19 July 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/19/world/rwanda-rebels-victory-attributed-to-discipline.html>.

⁹⁴ David Seamon and Jacob Sowers, 'Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph', in *Key Texts in Human Geography*, ed. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin, and Gill Valentine (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008).

⁹⁵ Jeff O'Neal, 'Bibliotheca Alexandrina: The Great Library of Alexandria Reborn?', *BookRiot*, 27 March 2013, <http://bookriot.com/2013/03/27/bibliotheca-alexandrina-the-great-library-of-alexandria-reborn/>.

wishes to get a construction permit. The zoning codes are incredibly detailed and have restrictions on everything imaginable, including rules on what paint to be used on a perimeter wall, and how big the numbering outside a house could be.⁹⁶ After ensuring that their construction plan fits the zoning code, a developer in Kigali has to get a construction permit that controls the construction process that sets out what materials to use in the construction and what the best practices would be. This long-winded process effectively means that any new construction in Kigali follows a plan built according to the RPF's vision. To make this story even more interesting from here, it is important to mention that the largest construction companies that are registered in Rwanda are owned by holdings firms that are closely connected to the RPF. This will be looked at in more detail in the next section.

Space is not simply controlled by new construction in an urban area. Controlling space also involves destruction. Some, such as geographer David Harvey, go so far as to say that modernity is, “always about ‘creative destruction,’ be it of the gentle and democratic, or the revolutionary, traumatic, and authoritarian kind.”⁹⁷ The same Natural History Museum in Kigali that has images juxtaposing the old and new Kigali to show the city's growth, also has images that show how populated areas of the city were systematically depopulated during this growth that Rwanda has been experiencing. Many central areas of Kigali had a large number of people living in informal settlements. Obviously, these settlements would contradict the image that the RPF would have wanted its modern city to be associated with. The quick solution was to move thousands of people to the periphery of the city and provide them with cheap government built housing, while depriving them of the centrality that their previous homes had.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Shrijan Joshi et al., ‘Kigali City Master Plan Report’, Master Plan (Singapore: Surbana International Consultants, May 2013).

⁹⁷ David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1.

⁹⁸ Killian Doherty, ‘The Metamorphosis of Post-Genocide Kigali’, *Failed Architecture*, 19 May 2014, <https://www.failedarchitecture.com/the-metamorphosis-of-post-genocide-kigali/>.

Yet another way in which space is controlled is through securitisation. This is a very broad concept that can take manifest in various ways. When I arrived in Kigali in April 2016, it was right on the day that marked the 22nd anniversary of the beginning of the Rwandan Genocide. 22 years after the genocide, I was surprised to see a very large number of armed military troops deployed all along the streets of Kigali. They were not marching, nor were they deployed to stop any rally or event, and neither was there any important VIP movement that needed to be protected. They were simply there to intimidate anyone who could potentially cause an issue on the day commemorating the genocide. At the same time, the Rwandan National Police was carrying out its routine roles: controlling traffic, stopping cars that were speeding, and guiding foreigners like me to the correct bus. I never thought seriously about this until recently, when I read Tom Goodfellow and Allyson Smith's excellent paper on the securitisation of Kigali, which will be discussed soon.⁹⁹ On another front, Kigali has been deploying CCTV cameras in many locations around the city to help curb crime in a city that is already known for its low crime rate. These cameras came into the spotlight when, in 2011, a woman was caught stealing US\$400 at the Kigali International Airport. She was able to get convicted simply because of the cameras that were installed there.¹⁰⁰ After this news was reported, many wrote to their local newspapers expressing their support for installing more cameras and how they can be useful in ensuring that crime levels remain low in Kigali. One of the letters even goes as far to hint that CCTV cameras are a prerequisite for Kigali to become one of the "developed cities like Moscow and Tokyo..."¹⁰¹

The link between controlling space and controlling place is a bit complex. The seeming modernity of Kigali that is manifested through its built environment builds certain emotions in the minds of those who live and work there. The structures that the RPF built in Kigali

⁹⁹ Goodfellow and Smith, 'From Urban Catastrophe to "Model" City?'

¹⁰⁰ Eric Kabeera, 'Woman Arrested for Stealing US\$ 400 at Airport', *The New Times*, 4 August 2011, Online edition, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2011-08-04/33662/>.

¹⁰¹ Augustine Nshuti, 'CCTV Cameras Deter Crime', *The New Times*, 5 August 2011, Online edition, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2011-08-05/33679/>.

help in imposing its power and show that the party is indispensable for modernity to be achieved in Rwanda. In simpler terms, when someone likes the space and the built environment of Kigali, they also validate the RPF being in control because modern Kigali is built by the party. In that sense, the control over place is a consequence of the control over space. The deployment of armed troops is another way in which the space is controlled. And it has its effects over place as well, in that it gives the impression that Kigali is a very safe place. The authors of *Rwanda Inc.*, for instance, seem to have absolutely no issues with all the military deployment in Kigali. In fact, they welcome it, as they write about how gun toting troops on street corners signify safety and security.¹⁰² Goodfellow and Smith, more critically, write about the many ways in which Kigali is securitised in order to enable the RPF to “achieve the secure and orderly development it considers so central to its development objectives and political survival.”¹⁰³ More importantly, they show how place is affected by securitisation, when they mention that the processes of securitisation “effectively limit the capacity for urban groups to organise in ways that might be politically more threatening to the government.”¹⁰⁴

Now that we have established how controlling space effectively also means controlling place, we need to rewind a bit to clearly see how this is connected to the creation of the urban spectacle. The control that the RPF has over the city’s space and place is key in ensuring discipline in the city’s population and urban form. When the RPF is able to take credit for ensuring discipline, a quality that the RPF values, it can then claim to be the force behind the city’s modernity and the urban spectacle. When compared to cities like Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, or Bujumbura, Kigali stands out as being this disciplined city that could be “tamed” only by the RPF. When that link is made, it is clear to see how Kigali serves to become an urban spectacle made only possible because of the efforts of the RPF.

¹⁰² Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.* 11.

¹⁰³ Goodfellow and Smith, ‘From Urban Catastrophe to “Model” City?’

¹⁰⁴ Goodfellow and Smith, ‘From Urban Catastrophe to “Model” City?’

One important factor that helped the RPF in creating the urban spectacle of Kigali is the city's urban primacy. Primacy refers to the ratio by which the largest city in a region is larger than the next largest city. In the case of Rwanda, Kigali is around 16 times larger than Butare, the second largest city. Kigali's population falls at around 1.3 million, while the population of Butare is around 85 thousand residents.¹⁰⁵ This means that compared to any other part of Rwanda, Kigali is disproportionately the centre of economic activity. This also explains why so many people want to move to Kigali. The primacy makes it easier for the RPF to simply focus all investment in and around Kigali while mostly ignoring the rest of Rwanda. This helps enhance the status of Kigali as the urban spectacle, while distracting away from the many issues that face the rest Rwanda.

Butare, Rwanda's second largest city, and the former Belgian colonial capital is far away from Kigali when it comes being a modern city. In fact, compared to Kigali, it seems world behind. When I visited in April 2016, I saw only one paved road in the city, and other than a small market and a few shops, economic activity seemed to be primarily centred around agriculture and the University of Rwanda campus. It seems untouched by the story of development and modernity that the RPF likes to spread to the world. Considering that the second largest city in Rwanda is in this shape, smaller cities will probably be even worse off. Kigali's ability to dominate over the rest of Rwanda means that Rwanda's development has been very uneven. An interesting comparison can be made here. Chen writes about China's urban hierarchy in which he describes that urban development in China has been fairly equal within cities of each region in China. This happened despite certain cities being pushed by the Chinese government towards liberalisation. While there are differences in between regions, there is not one city that is developing faster than the others within a region with the exception of Shanghai.¹⁰⁶ In Rwanda, that is far from the case. This is, in part, because the

¹⁰⁵ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014'.

¹⁰⁶ Xiangming Chen, 'China's City Hierarchy, Urban Policy and Spatial Development in the 1980s', *Urban Studies* 28, no. 3 (June 1991): 341–67, doi:10.1080/00420989120080391.

governments in power before the genocide did not focus on ensuring equal urban development in all parts of Rwanda, causing Kigali to grow disproportionately larger. However, even to this day, this focus on Kigali continues under the RPF.

This can be clearly seen in official statistics published by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. While Rwanda's total poverty rate for 2011 was at 44.9%, Kigali's poverty rate was only 16.8%. 63.8% of houses in Kigali had a cement floor or better, while the same figure for Rwanda as a whole is far away at 21.1%. Almost three quarters of Kigali's households have access to electricity at 73.3%, while only 19.8% of Rwanda as a whole has access to electricity.¹⁰⁷ Similar discrepancies continue on most quality of living and poverty indicators that are available, showing that development in Kigali is merely a spectacle and is not representative of Rwanda as a whole. Other figures show that almost half of all banking activity in Rwanda takes place in Kigali (80-90%), while the city only has 11% percent of Rwanda's population.¹⁰⁸ Another report shows that 63% of all industrial activity in Rwanda is located in and around Kigali.¹⁰⁹ What do the Kigali Special Economic Zone, the swanky Innovation City, Africa's largest solar power plant, and the only railway station in Rwanda that is under construction, have in common? They are all located in Kigali. While Kigali's master plans show spaces being set aside for a new airport and bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes, the rest of Rwanda does not have any form of public transit. Interestingly, the consulting company that produced the master plans and zoning codes for Kigali is called Surbana Jurong, which is owned by Temasek Holdings of the Government of Singapore. Rwanda, an authoritarian state that is a multi-party democracy in theory, plans its urban development with the help of a company that is owned by Singapore, another authoritarian state that is supposed to be a multi-party democracy in theory.

¹⁰⁷ 'Rwanda Poverty Profile Report: 2013/2014'.

¹⁰⁸ 'Rwanda: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix', IMF Country Report (Washington DC: International Monetary Fund, 2004), 70.

¹⁰⁹ 'Rwanda State of Environment and Outlook Report' (Kigali: Rwanda Environment Management Authority, 2009), 55.

Creating modern cities that are meant to be spectacles is not something unique to Rwanda. This is, in fact, something very frequently used by authoritarian regimes. One of Harvey's most important works, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, is about the creation of the modern city of Paris by the authoritarian regime of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. Here modernity is brought to Paris to further authoritarianism. From creating wide roads for facilitating the movement of troops, to building a massive basilica (Basilique du Sacré-Cœur) to assert the power of the Catholic Church over the bloody yet hopeful history of the Communards of Paris, the city's modern form is a manifestation of authoritarian repression of people.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the massive Nazi Party rally grounds outside Nuremberg created a spectacle of Nazi modernity, with its awe inspiring halls and fields, and the manner in which the audience was assembled in an extremely orderly fashion. Italy and Spain also have similar architecture built in the period of the early 1930s to the middle of 1940s under fascist rule. All of these aimed to create an image of modernity, while reinforcing the idea of a nation making progress. This took place with the backdrop of atrocities on those who did not confirm to this authoritarian modernity. What the RPF is doing in Kigali is not different.

The RPF's strategy to promote Kigali seems to be working well for now. Those who are strongly in favour of agglomeration economies will probably also be fine with the primacy of Kigali. At this point, however, it must be noted that the rest of Rwanda is far behind Kigali on most development indicators. Kigali, in itself, cannot develop its services and industries after a point if it cannot find a market in the rest of Rwanda. The urban spectacle of Kigali may make the RPF's story of development and modernity seem like a reality, but it hides the truth that the rest of Rwanda, with most of the population, is far away from being anything close to Kigali. Yes, Kigali was naturally poised to be an economic centre because it was the largest city when Kagame and the RPF took over. However, instead of working towards addressing the disparities between Kigali and the rest of Rwanda, the RPF moved towards

¹¹⁰ Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*.

rapidly urbanising and investing in Kigali which simply heightened development in the city at the cost of the rest of the nation. Kigali can remain the modern capital, but the RPF will pay a heavy price for ignoring the rest of Rwanda.

The Corporate Republic of Rwanda

Since the genocide, Rwanda has been portrayed as the perfect model of embracing liberal economics in the global South. In fact, in conversations with journalists, Kagame has “demonstrated his passion for private-sector development, free markets, and capitalism.”¹¹¹ The government has often been compared to a large private firm, with Kagame being its CEO. It is unsurprising that the lines between the government and the private sector get a bit blurred when the government is functioning like a large company. But it does get more interesting when parts of the government, specifically the RPF, actively intervene in the private sector of Rwanda. This happens while the RPF tries to pass off as a non-interventionist party. This intervention that takes place is not through direct government policy, but through RPF owned private companies that operate in Rwanda. This should justifiably lead one to question whether Kagame is indeed passionate about the private sector and the free market or not.

The way in which Kagame runs the government is through heavy control over all senior bureaucrats and ministers. There is absolutely no tolerance for corruption in Rwanda, and Kagame is known to have sent some of his closest allies to jail for being involved in corruption. From Kagame’s viewpoint, corruption has a “devastating effect on building trust and legitimacy in government.”¹¹² This plays an important part in portraying Rwanda as a business friendly place. On being asked why he chose to invest in Rwanda, Chaim Motzen, the co-founder of an Israeli solar-power firm, said, “Rwanda has an excellent business environment – no corruption – and that played a role.”¹¹³ In addition, Kagame oversees a system of performance targets for government bodies, known as *imihigo*. All governmental bodies in

¹¹¹ Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.*, 16.

¹¹² Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.*, 93.

¹¹³ David Smith, ‘How Africa’s Fastest Solar Power Project Is Lighting up Rwanda’, *The Guardian*, 23 November 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/23/how-africas-fastest-solar-power-project-is-lighting-up-rwanda>.

Rwanda, from ministries to local rural governments, have to sign a contract with the Office of the President to achieve specific goals every year based on performance indicators. These performance indicators usually measure social and economic development. The governmental bodies are allowed to set their own targets for their contracts, giving them the freedom to work based on their circumstances.¹¹⁴ This allows the government to keep track of what it is doing well and what it is not. However, not surprisingly, it also gives Kagame direct control over smaller governmental bodies that should technically not be directly reporting to the Office of the President. Rwanda is indeed run like a large firm, and it does seem appropriate to compare Kagame to a CEO. In fact, some people do just that. The chairman of the Private Sector Federation of Rwanda, Faustin Mbundu has said, “We call him the CEO of Rwanda...He runs the country like a business.”¹¹⁵ What remains to be seen is whether actual private firms are really free to do business in Rwanda.

In addition to having a CEO-like grip over the government, Kagame has a close group of advisors that he has personally appointed. This group, known as the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC), was formed in 2007 to assist Kagame in policy formation, not unlike a board of directors in a company. The PAC meets twice a year, once in Kigali and once in New York. The members of this group include both Rwandans and foreigners who have had significant experience in working in Rwanda. While Crisafulli and Redmond write that this group comprises of experts in all fields that concern Rwanda’s development, most of the foreign members of this group they mention are actually only business leaders who head firms that are involved in a variety of different sectors ranging from education to pharmaceuticals to finance.¹¹⁶ Many of them have investments or financial interests in Rwanda, which could certainly affect the advice they provide to President Kagame due to conflicts of interest.

¹¹⁴ Bruno Versailles, ‘Rwanda: Performance Contracts (imihigo)’, Political Analysis, *Country Learning Notes* (London: Overseas Development Institute, April 2012), <http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/1349767/18085928/1336475381627/Rwanda+performance+contracts.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.*, 92.

¹¹⁶ Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.*, 97-99.

There is indeed some level of diversity in the PAC, but a large number of its members are simply involved in business and do not have any experience in policy formation. If this group does play as big a role as is claimed in helping form Rwanda's policy, the Rwandan government may soon simply become an extension of the private sector and start forming policies that only stand to benefit businesses and foreign investors.

When it comes to benefiting domestic businesses, however, we do not need to look into the future. A closer look at some of the largest companies operating in Rwanda today reveals an interesting pattern: the RPF controls a majority of shares in various holding companies, most prominent of them being Crystal Ventures Limited (CVL). CVL's diverse portfolio ranges from infrastructure to aviation to financial services, in both Rwanda and abroad. CVL was originally a part of the RPF's Production Unit which worked to secure donations for reconstruction, and now acts as the party's investment arm.¹¹⁷ The RPF-led government clearly prefers CVL owned companies to work in certain sectors of the economy, while choosing to completely liberalise markets in others.¹¹⁸ The basis by which the RPF decides whether to get involved in a certain sector of the economy or not is obviously not publicly available. However, by simply looking at CVL's portfolio, I noticed that the companies that CVL owns are usually those that can make a large profit without needing much reliance on achieving economies of scale, such as infrastructure. The other holding company that the RPF owns, called Horizon Group, also similarly invests in the infrastructure and construction sector. As expected, the websites for either CVL or the Horizon Group do not mention anything about their links to the RPF. Large state-owned holdings companies from other parts of the world, like Singapore's Temasek Holdings, do not seem to have any

¹¹⁷ D. Booth and F. Golooba-Mutebi, 'Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda', *African Affairs* III, no. 444 (1 July 2012): 379-403, doi:10.1093/afraf/adso26.

¹¹⁸ Pritish Behuria and Tom Goodfellow, 'The Political Settlement and "Deals Environment" in Rwanda: Unpacking Two Decades of Economic Growth', *Effective States and Inclusive Development Working Paper*, no. 57 (10 April 2016), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2771633.

concerns with openly associating with the government. Could this be indicative of the fact that Rwanda's government has something to hide?

CVL has been criticised for going against the government's pro-liberalisation strategy, because even though it is technically a private firm, it is practically controlled by the Rwandan government. Crisafulli and Redmond argue that, in fact, RPF-owned businesses like CVL invested in certain sectors when no one else would, to be able to attract other investments.¹¹⁹ They demonstrate this through an example of CVL's temporary partnership with MTN, a South African mobile service provider, to set up Rwanda's first mobile network, called Rwandacell. A few years after setting up this company, CVL simply sold their stake and left the market. The reason for leaving the market was supposed to be the fact that Rwanda's mobile network market had become robust enough to attract new investments. Behuria argues that the CVL's primary goal is only to generate profit for the RPF. Cases like Rwandacell, where the RPF invests to create a market, are exceptions rather than the norm.¹²⁰

The role of RPF-linked business groups not only serves to further capitalist development in Rwanda, but also strengthens the power that the RPF has in controlling the economy. Further, it allows the RPF to operate under the facade of being a government that encourages economic liberalisation and privatisation. This greatly helps it in attracting foreign donors and positive attention of the liberal presses. The Italian fascist leader, Mussolini, has been misquoted as having said, "Fascism should more properly be called corporatism, since it is the merger of state and corporate power."¹²¹ There is no written evidence of him ever having said that, and there are doubts on whether this is exactly how the translation to English would look like, since certain words do not translate very well from

¹¹⁹ Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.*, 182.

¹²⁰ Pritish Behuria, 'Between Party Capitalism and Market Reforms – Understanding Sector Differences in Rwanda', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, no. 03 (September 2015): 415–50, doi:10.1017/S0022278X15000403.

¹²¹ Daniel Bier, 'Fake Quote Files: Benito Mussolini on Fascism and Corporatism', *The Skeptical Libertarian*, 7 February 2013, <http://blog.skepticallibertarian.com/2013/02/07/fake-quote-files-mussolini-on-fascism-and-corporatism/>.

Italian. What is important in this context, however, is that Rwanda and CVL do seem to fit that misquoted definition of fascism. The state and corporate power go hand in hand in Rwanda, and that gives a great deal of leverage to the RPF over the economy of Rwanda.

As mentioned above, there may be some marginal benefit in the RPF's control over these companies, in the form of encouraging investments. However, the fact is that the profits go to RPF, a political party, and not the Government of Rwanda's treasury. From a certain perspective, the RPF makes money at the cost of the Rwandan taxpayer since the profits earned by private holding firms like CVL, could have instead gone to a parastatal that would have been owned by the Government of Rwanda, and not a political party. In addition to diminishing Rwanda's rhetoric of being friendly to the market, this should also raise questions on whether Rwanda's high rankings on the Corruption Perception Index are justified since the government's decisions probably are in the interest of benefiting the RPF linked companies. More recently, Rwanda has once again been ranked second in Africa in the World Bank's Doing Business 2017 report, a close second to Mauritius. In the global rankings, Rwanda is ahead of Brazil, India, China, and South Africa, which are four of the five states that comprise the BRICS.¹²² According to the methodology used for generating the rankings for the report, states that have a better rank usually have lower regulations and no government intervention in the free market. In Rwanda's case the part about the lack of government intervention does not really hold true. One can only assume that there is a bias in favour of Rwanda in the World Bank, because of its "open to investments" stance, and the fact that its government is known for working very efficiently. Even when claiming to foster capitalist development and the free market, Kagame's Rwanda fails by having indirect economic intervention in the Rwanda, allowing the RPF greater control over the economy that what is possible through pushing for government policies.

¹²² World Bank Group, 'Doing Business 2017', 14 (Washington DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2017), <http://www.doingbusiness.org/-/media/WBG/DoingBusiness/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB17-Report.pdf>.

Conclusion: Rwanda in the Future

Rwanda's growth has amazed everyone. It is indeed a major feat that the RPF was able to accomplish. However, there are very clear flaws in which this development has taken place. While it is hard to deny that the lives of most Rwandans have improved tremendously for the better, this growth cannot be said to be sustainable. The biggest risk that Rwanda faces is the high likelihood of a succession conflict after Paul Kagame dies, unless he willingly steps down as a president. Kagame needs to gradually start letting go of the power that he has concentrated with him to ensure that a proper succession takes place once he is no longer the President, whether he steps down willingly or dies. Kagame and Rwanda have all the resources to start de-concentrating power and strengthen governmental institutions to work independently. The RPF and the state are almost synonymous, because of the RPF's complete domination over the Rwandan political sphere, and Kagame has the ability to change this in his capacity as the President of Rwanda.

To many Rwandans, Kagame is a liberator who has delivered on his promise of a better, stronger nation to them. To many Congolese, he's a foreign invader who has kept a war going on for decades and led to the deaths of millions. As power gets concentrated in the hands of the President, the likelihood of Kagame's successor being able to effectively use it becomes less plausible. Worse still, the likelihood that Kagame abuses his powers for personal gain grows massively as well, as systems of checks and balances get dismantled. The referendum to allow for Kagame to run for more terms as a President has been criticised all over the world, and certainly within some circles in Rwanda as well, and for a good reason. Kagame's centrality to Rwanda might also become this developing nation-state's downfall in the near future.

The instability that Rwanda has created across the border in DR Congo, will ultimately strain Rwanda's resources and deal a lot of damage to its currently spotless international reputation. This is already affecting development assistance from abroad, with the United States marginally reducing military aid to Rwanda because of its involvement in

DR Congo.¹²³ If this continues, it will force Kagame and the RPF to adopt even more authoritarian measures within Rwanda to deal with a sustained loss of capital, investments, and international support. Related to that is the question of whether the Congolese war changes perceptions of Rwanda for foreign investors and aid donors. If that does happen, no amount of PR campaigns will help the Rwanda salvage its reputation as a business friendly destination for investments, unless Rwanda is able to do what states like Israel have done: skilfully manage their international reputation while hide war and oppression at home.

More important now than ever before, the press in Rwanda has been reduced to a few media outlets that completely toe the line of the RPF. Journalists and media houses that dare to speak against the RPF or Kagame are swiftly taken down through a variety of methods. The most common method for this involves physically and verbally threatening journalists and their families. While some level of criticism by the media is allowed, and even encouraged, many journalists live in fear for their lives for exposing incongruences in what the government says and what actually happens on the ground. This lack of criticism aimed at the government allows for many of the other atrocities that the RPF is involved in to go unnoticed and unquestioned. In the future, this will have a negative impact on Rwanda's currently spotless global image as investors and aid donors realise that many events that put Rwanda in a negative light are not even being reported on at all.

As development in Rwanda becomes increasingly concentrated in and around Kigali, most of Rwanda's population that lives outside of the capital still survives in high poverty levels. Even physical infrastructure outside of Kigali is in poor shape, and this provides for a stark contrast to the gleaming modern city that Kigali has become. There are obviously no fancy airports and tall buildings outside of the city, but nor is there adequate electrification or sanitation infrastructure. Rwanda's development story is actually only a development story for Kigali. The city essentially serves as a large urban spectacle that overshadows the lack of

¹²³ Gettleman, 'The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman'.

development in the rest of Rwanda. How will this small nation-state continue its remarkable progress if it ignores an overwhelming majority of its population?

Rwanda's image of embracing capitalism is not clean either. Rwanda is far from having anything resembling a free market, despite what the World Bank or the Rwandan government strongly assert from time to time. My own concern here is not that there is no free market present, as much as it is that the market is used to drastically expand the RPF's control over Rwanda and its economy. Additionally, business groups like CVL, that are backed by the government, get preferential contracts to execute projects that play a role in the Rwandan development story. Instead of being publicly owned entities, these companies have close ties with the RPF and by giving contracts to these companies the leadership of the RPF essentially pays itself and their associates. The RPF not only exerts almost complete control over the Rwandan economy, its actions also amount to corruption and nepotism.

Rwanda's institutions are weak without the President's support, and the development of its people is limited to certain areas only. It will be wrong to assert that sustainable development is impossible under an authoritarian government like the one in Rwanda. However, the presence of an authoritarian government does allow for certain policies and decisions to take place that may not be in the interests of everyone. Especially interesting in the future will be Kagame's next 7-year term as President of Rwanda. He is expected to win the 2017 Presidential Elections, and his next term will be a litmus test to determine whether Rwanda's success story is indeed a model to be emulated, or whether Rwanda has been turning into a completely authoritarian regime all this while, masquerading to be a multi-party democracy. If the current trajectory of events continues, as demonstrated here, Rwanda's embrace of authoritarianism will lead to complete disorder within Rwanda and the larger Great Lakes Region of Africa.

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