

**Between State-building and Peace-building in post-genocide Rwanda:
The ‘peacebuilders contract’ and implications for political settlement.**

Introduction

This paper is divided into 3 main sections. It will begin by outlining the main trends in Rwanda-donor relationships since 1994. This will highlight the shift in Rwanda’s aid profile in terms of two dimensions- firstly the move away from Francophone donors, and secondly the growth of budget support, as a means of supporting country ownership of development policies and developing state finance systems, from key donors including the UK. The second section will explore how the aid relationship between Rwanda and key bilateral donors has evolved, using the notion of a sovereign frontier to capture the understandings on the part of donors and the Rwandan government which shape Rwanda’s interactions with donors and by extension its political development. Building on this notion of sovereign frontier, the third section introduces the notion of a peacebuilders contract, assessing if Barnett and Zeucher’s concept adequately captures the ways donor-Rwanda relations have developed. It will relate these complementary understandings of state-donor relationships in fragile/conflict affected states to the donor-favoured concept of political settlement, exploring what kind of settlement has resulted from the dynamics identified in earlier sections. Finally, the paper concludes that though notions of settlements and frontiers suggest some fluidity and possibility of change or revision, the specific ways these relationships have developed in Rwanda- especially those between regime and state, state and donors, state and civil society, have contributed to a hardening of the parameters within which political action and debate occur. This suggests that though politics in Rwanda may have ‘opened up’ and become more inclusive compared to the pre-genocide period, progress has been hampered by measures put in place to deter disunity and ethnic division, measures which simultaneously contribute to entrenching the position of the ruling regime and a stagnating political settlement.

Rwanda-donor relations since 1994

Rwanda’s contemporary relationship with donors is heavily influenced by the actions and inaction of external actors, both states and international organisations, during the 1994 genocide (Newbury, 1995; Vetlesen, 2000; De Heusch, 1995; Melvern, 2004). Melvern’s account of the role of the international community (2004) is highly critical of the United Nations, its force in Rwanda (UNAMIR), the UK, France and the US. Inaction during the Rwandan genocide has come to be recognised as a specific policy choice and criticised as such. As is clear from pro-Government media in Rwanda and author interviews with Rwandan Government officials, there remains a degree of hostility towards the UN and individual states who they believe should have stepped in to prevent the genocide.¹ France in particular played an active role in Rwanda in the months and years prior to and during the genocide, and this has directly impacted its relationship with the post-genocide regime. The former colonial power in the region, Belgium, along with the UK, UN, and US are others who have also been heavily criticised for their actions, and inaction, during the genocide.

¹ Interview with Protais Musoni, Rwandan Minister of Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance Community Development and Social Affairs, Rwandan Patriotic Front. Kigali, 08/03/06; See also ‘Strange UN Force in the DRC’ *The New Times* (Kigali) November 14-16 2005, p9; ‘VOA or Voice of Terrorists?’ *The New Times* (Kigali) November 14-15 2005, p9.

France

France enjoyed a close relationship with the Rwandan government prior to 1994. In the years leading up to the genocide, leading French politicians built up a close relationship with the Habyarimana regime, providing military equipment and training for the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) (Vasset, 1997). However, it was French Government policies during the course of the genocide that most seriously affected their relationship with the post-genocide regime. It has been argued elsewhere that many perpetrators and planners of genocide were allowed to flee Rwanda under cover of the (Security Council mandated) French-led 'Operation Turquoise,' which established a safe zone close to the Zairian border (Dallaire, 2003: 452; McNulty, 1997). Rwanda's President, Paul Kagame, has also accused French military personnel in Rwanda during the genocide of actively fighting with the Rwandan army and genocidal militias (Gourevitch, 1996: 173). The role of the French Government in the genocide, was both highly visible and roundly condemned. France's aid to Rwanda, in the form of bilateral Official Development Assistance, declined immediately after the genocide (Baare *et al*, 1999: 11), reflecting the displacement of their client regime and mistrust of the transitional authority led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).² This declining relationship created opportunities for other states to form close ties with the new regime. This was made somewhat easier not only by the French Government's declining engagement with Rwanda, but also by a similar trend in relations with the former colonial power, Belgium.

Belgium

When the 1994 killings began, Belgium was one of the few European states that offered troops to the UN mission in Rwanda. However, as UNAMIR commander Romeo Dallaire reflects, the colonial legacy meant that this came with its own problems (Dallaire, 2003: 84). The Belgian soldiers with UNAMIR were explicitly targeted by the Rwandan regime after Habyarimana's assassination. This was part of a strategy which aimed to force the UN mission to withdraw, abandoning Rwanda's Tutsi and moderate Hutu. The strategy proved successful and, after the deaths of 10 of their peacekeepers on April 7th, Belgium withdrew its contingent and campaigned for UNAMIR to be recalled from Rwanda at the height of the genocide. A Belgian parliamentary commission report has since found that 'with hindsight, the international community, and some of its components, including Belgium, failed in April 1994' (Belgian Senate, 1997: Point 4.13). Rwanda also succeeded in soliciting a public apology in 2000 from Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt. Relations between Rwanda and Belgium have begun to recover since this symbolic gesture.³ Although France and Belgium could be considered the natural powers to become involved in Rwanda after the genocide, given their historical ties, the new Government's resentment of them precluded such a relationship. Rwanda therefore sought closer relationships with other states, including Anglophone and Nordic states, which were previously less involved in the state but who also share a portion of the international guilt for failing to prevent or end the genocide.

² Telephone interview with Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development (1998-2003). 24/05/07.

³ Personal Comment, Mrs Rosemary Museminali, Rwandan State Minister for Co-operation, Rwandan Patriotic Front. Kigali, 02/02/06.

The UK

Although the UK Government now enjoys a close relationship with the post-genocide Rwandan regime, it has also been accused of knowledgeable inaction during the genocide.⁴ The British Government has however suffered less criticism than other states mentioned and is regarded differently by the RPF led government. British inaction is acknowledged by the post-genocide Rwandan regime, but the Major administration's inaction is often identified with the broader inaction of the international community, the UK is rarely singled out for individual criticism. This has allowed subsequent UK Governments to assume the position of a self-proclaimed 'critical friend' to Rwanda since the genocide (DFID, 2004: 17). The UK has less negative historical baggage in its relations with Rwanda as it was not a major actor in the state, prior to or during the genocide (Browne, 2006: 77).⁵

Aid trends since 1994

From 1994-7 the international community's primary response to the Rwanda crisis came in the form of aid disbursed by multilateral institutions for humanitarian purposes. This included aid committed to relief for refugees and perpetrators of genocide who had fled in their millions over the Rwandan border into Zaire, much to the anger of the new Rwandan regime (Gourevitch, 1996). The sympathy and sense of responsibility seen in public apologies of Western leaders, and expressions of regret and 'never again', have formed part of the basis for the Rwandan regime's aid relations with key donors. The UK along with Sweden, the Netherlands, the EU and International Financial Institutions have shown particularly great faith in the post-genocide regime, both before and after the 2003 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Rwanda has shifted from being perceived as a destroyed state in 1994, to being depicted as a remarkable model of rapid development and a 'good performer.' To understand this shift it is necessary to further examine the impacts of genocide on donor-recipient relations, and to recognise how the Rwandan regime has positioned itself in relation to the current debates on good governance.

As Baare *et al* point out: 'Aid from OECD members immediately following the 1994 genocide doubled, although...the states most tied to the pre-genocide regime, France and Belgium, reduced their aid from 1991-3 levels' (Baare *et al*, 1999: 11). The doubling of OECD aid reflects the enormity of the humanitarian crisis that enveloped Rwanda and neighbouring states as a result of the genocide. The reductions by France and Belgium were early signs of the shift in Rwanda's aid portfolio, taking the Rwandan Government away from its former patrons and towards donors that had been previously less involved in the country. As a post-conflict state Rwanda held particular attraction for some donor states, particularly the UK given a close relationship between the Rwandan leader, Paul Kagame, and then UK Secretary of State for International Development, Claire Short (Marriage, 2006: 481). The post-genocide relationship between the Rwandan regime and the UK Government was cemented under Short's tenure at DFID. Her advocacy for high-level engagement with Rwanda is considered instrumental in convincing other donors to support Rwanda after the genocide.⁶ This advocacy, and the ability to attract 'non-traditional' donors, has been crucial for the Rwandan Government in building up its post genocide aid relationships, and is greatly

⁴ Melvern and Jackson argue 'reports (in the early stages of the genocide) were either left unread or interpreted as inaccurate or overly pessimistic. Nevertheless, their existence makes the British Government's claim of genuine ignorance (of the genocide) untenable' (2004: 18).

⁵ Interview with Judy Walker, Senior Social Development Advisor, DFID Rwanda. Kigali, 28/10/05.

⁶ Interview with Arne Strom, Counsellor for Development Cooperation to the Swedish Embassy. Kigali, 03/03/06.

assisted by Rwanda's notable achievements since 1994 in governance reform, security and economic development.

DFID's Country Plan for Rwanda (2008) describes Rwanda's progress since 1994 as 'remarkable,' highlighting a drop in poverty rates from 70% to 54% of population, improvements in health and education and average economic growth of 6.4% per year (2008:3). It also comments that the government provides strong leadership, and that the UK intends to continue to disburse a significant portion of its aid to Rwanda as budgetary support (DBS).⁷ The move from programme support to putting funds directly into a Government's budget is a highly political act. Interviews conducted with representatives of DFID and the Swedish administration suggested that the decision to move to DBS reflects trust.⁸ The switch is however often presented as a technical decision, based on efficiency and common sense, and thus is largely depoliticised. It is also regarded as a modality which supports statebuilding by enhancing country ownership of development policy and strengthening financial accounting systems (Grävingsholt, Gänzle and Ziaja, 2009: 10). The level of faith that such a shift requires in the recipient however has led international human rights observers, interviewed in Rwanda by the author, to suggest that donors are strengthening the Government at the expense of civil society.⁹ Despite these concerns, the RPF-led Governments since 2003 have proved effective in implementing reforms and adjustments in the economic sphere. The World Bank Country Representative attributed this to successful Government economic programmes and the involvement of IFIs, NGOs and other international programmes in Rwanda.¹⁰ The rehabilitation of Rwanda's infrastructure and public services has also progressed remarkably since the genocide.

However, since 1994 attempts by donors to become involved in issues of a political nature, such as how to address the needs of different ethnic groups in the aftermath of genocide, have been rejected by the Rwandan Government. Political and security elements of donor programmes, even before the 2003 Rwandan elections, were muted at best (Baare *et al*, 1999: 33-4). Following the failures of the international community during the genocide, the RPF-led Government has made it clear that issues of ethnicity and security are 'off-the-table' as far as donors are concerned. Despite dependence on aid, the regime has fiercely guarded its independence in decision-making. It is unwilling to allow donors to influence policies regarded as crucial to Rwandan security, particularly those relating to interventions in Zaire/DRC (Prunier, 1997) and 'de-politicising' ethnicity. Donors have generally proved willing to overlook these areas of non-cooperation due to Rwanda's progress in other areas. This is a situation reminiscent of that before the 1994 genocide, of which Uvin argues: 'international generosity was partly related to the very positive, generally accepted image of Rwanda as a model developing country, in which government and citizens were actively, wisely and successfully committed to development (1998: 40). The current donor faith in Rwanda's overall political trajectory, 'heading in the right direction', is similarly based on

⁷ 'The UK is Rwanda's largest bilateral budget support donor, Over two-thirds of its aid is provided this way. 'In 2008, this represented around 6% of the Rwanda Government's annual budget' (DFID, 2009b: 1).

⁸ Telephone interview with Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development (1998-2003). 24/05/07.

⁹ See also: 'Government, donors killing civil society in Rwanda' *Newsline* (Kigali) March 7-12 2006, p12.

¹⁰ Interview with Mohamed al-Houssayni Toure, Country Manager, World Bank Rwanda. Kigali, 17/11/05.

the regime's demonstrable achievements.¹¹ It has had a significant influence in shaping the political settlement in Rwanda, particularly the relationship between Rwandan government and civil society (Beswick, 2010). However it has also heavily affected the development of the broader 'sovereign frontier', a concept used by Harrison to depict the space within which sovereignty and sovereign power over particular spheres is defined by an array of actors including state, civil society and donors. The sovereign frontier envisages a potentially much greater role for donors in shaping the political settlement or the 'rules of the game' which define politics in a given setting. The following section therefore explores Rwanda's sovereign frontier in more detail, after which the paper further extends discussion of the donor-state relationship through the analysing the concept of a 'peacebuilders contract' in the Rwandan case and concludes by outlining its implications for Rwanda's political development.

The development of Rwanda's 'sovereign frontier' since 1994

Harrison conceives of sovereignty as a non-linear quality. His notion of a 'sovereign frontier' describes a 'space within which different actors can work to define sovereignty in different ways, and it produces a less severe delimitation of one territory from another' (Harrison, 2004: 25). On a conventional map of a state, such as Rwanda, the borders of the state mark the extent of its juridical statehood, the territory over which in theory the Rwandan Government retains sole legal and administrative control (Jackson, 1992). Sovereignty is the legal framework that theoretically affords a central administrative power, the state, sole dominion over a defined geographical territory. However, the Rwandan Government has seen its ability to exercise absolute sovereignty over its territory eroded and/or supplemented by the extension of other forms of state and non-state power and interests, such as the economic and political influence of donors, on their territory. Rather than considering such involvement by donors as a violation of the sovereign 'line' of a state, Harrison's proposal of a sovereign frontier 'allows us to consider the 'content' of sovereignty-its construction, discourse, the interplay between actors- more fully...' (Harrison, 2004: 26). It also reflects Bayart's argument that trying to separate domestic and external politics in Africa is highly problematic, emphasising the need for his work to 'by-pass[es] a sterile distinction between the internal dimension of African societies and their insertion into the international system' (Bayart, 2000: 232). Both Harrison and Bayart therefore emphasise the ways in which external and international processes and policies are affected by, and impact upon, each other. Harrison's notion of the sovereign frontier depicts an area of negotiation in which different actors and ideas are in competition. The frontier may become somewhat stabilised when one set of actors or one idea, such as good governance, becomes the primary point of reference for the most influential actors, and this could reflect what in donor literature has become referred to as a 'political settlement'. In Rwanda's case two of the key sets of actors in defining the sovereign frontier are the country's main donors and the Rwandan Government.

The period from 1990 to 2003 can be considered, following Harrison's categories of stages of sovereign frontier development in other African states, as one of 'conflict instability.' The exodus of Rwandan Hutu after the 1994 genocide, including many perpetrators of the genocide, into neighbouring states and beyond posed a significant security challenge for the new Government. Facing insurgent attacks in the North and West, from rebels based in Uganda and Zaire, the first priorities of the RPF lay in defeating the threat to Rwanda's Tutsi minority and securing its own position of authority in the transitional Government. A senior

¹¹ Personal Comment, Hilary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development. Leeds (UK), 29/01/07.

official in the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs described these initial years as focused on 'dealing with vulnerability.'¹² In 1996 Rwanda invaded neighbouring Zaire in a bid to repatriate the refugees, sparking off a civil war in which Laurent Kabila deposed President Mobutu, with Rwandan and Ugandan assistance. In 1998 the war reignited as Rwanda and others reinvaded, citing Kabila's inability to police, or even wilful encouragement of, rebel groups in the East. Security of the state, most particularly Rwanda's Tutsi population, and the RPF was therefore paramount. However, as a post-conflict state Rwanda was heavily dependent on aid and had lost much of the human capital needed to rebuild society and social services.¹³ The influx of international aid is discussed above and well documented (Baare *et al*, 1999; Uvin, 2001). Pottier and Browne suggest that the RPF actively sought to encourage relationships with states that had little traditional involvement in Rwanda; Browne describes Rwanda since the genocide as a 'jousting field for donor influence' (Browne, 2006: 65). This is a reflection of international guilt at doing so little to prevent genocide, but also an indication that the development community values qualities displayed by the Rwandan Government as conducive to implementing their development agendas. Following Bayart's paradigm of extraversion (2000), the Rwandan regime can be considered adept at speaking the language of good governance. This has allowed it to displace a prior cadre of donors, most pertinently France and Belgium, in favour of others less tied to the previous regime. During this period from 1994-2003, the RPF dominated Rwandan politics through a transitional government. Following the RPF victory in Kigali, which effectively ended the genocide, Kagame became Vice President and Minister of Defence while a RPF Hutu, Pasteur Bizimungu, assumed the presidency. By ending the genocide, and through its control of the military (formed primarily from the Anglophone rebels Kagame had led), the RPF has enjoyed a dominant position in Rwandan politics since 1994. In 2000 Kagame became President after the arrest of Bizimungu on charges of divisionism (Reyntjens, 2004).

This points to the second and current phase of Rwanda's sovereign frontier. Since 2003, Rwanda has ceased to be defined as a post-conflict state by donors and has held presidential and parliamentary elections. Santiso, highlighting the links between good governance and democracy, argues: 'there is increasing recognition that international assistance for strengthening good governance can only have limited impact unless the country's society and particularly its leaders have a genuine political commitment to democracy' (Santiso, 2001: 19). The holding of elections is often evoked as a sign of commitment to good governance and democratisation, but such a view is criticised by Reno, Bayart and Hibou for failing to acknowledge patterns of power and authority operating outside this circumscribed system (see Reno on warlordism, 1998; Bayart on extraversion, 2000; Hibou on privatisation, 2004: xvi). Similarly, Bayart argues elsewhere that elections can be used to entrench a particular status quo and benefit the ruling elite (1993: 167). Elections could therefore perhaps be more accurately seen as a sign that a developing state elite is willing to accept good governance and democratisation, linked under the broader rubric of Neoliberalism, as points of reference for its relations within the sovereign frontier. The start of this phase, Harrison's 'embedding Neoliberalism', is in Rwanda's case therefore indicated by holding of elections and the official withdrawal of its troops from DR Congo in 2003. Both were considered indicative of a move away from conflict instability to a stable relationship with donors predicated on good governance.

¹² Personal Comment, Mrs Rosemary Museminali, Rwandan State Minister for Co-operation, Rwandan Patriotic Front. Kigali, 02/02/06.

¹³ Interview with Arne Strom, Counsellor for Development Cooperation to the Swedish Embassy. Kigali, 03/03/06.

We have established that the sovereign frontier is an arena of debate and compromise between a government and other actors who seek to exercise, or influence the exercise of, what would traditionally be considered sovereign power. With donors increasingly convinced that aid is most effective when enhancing existing trajectories of good governance, good performers, leaders and elites within such states become highly valued as partners. Rwanda's President and leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, Paul Kagame, is seen as a key element of Rwanda's development, providing both vision and, perhaps more crucially, action to implement good governance reforms. Both Kagame's regime and its major donors therefore arguably have a vested interest in the Rwandan regime's continued tenure of power. This affirms Harrison's contention that the sovereign frontier is characterised in part by 'an underlying concern with the state's ability to maintain stability and order' (2004: 128). In the case of what he terms 'governance states,' those which are seen to have 'internalised' prevailing development logic and are therefore incentivised by donors to continue on Neoliberal good governance trajectories (2004: 77), he argues that each 'has accrued an enhanced capacity to act within its own national territory, the better to execute neoliberal policy reform...' (2004: 119). This reflects a further observation, that the RPF benefited greatly from its defeat of the genocidal forces and its subsequent military and political dominance of Rwanda: 'the course of civil war permitted united political organisations [in Uganda and Rwanda] absolute victory and therefore a free hand in reconstituting state organisations and setting the rules by which they operated' (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi and Putzel, 2006: 3) This is a key aspect of the peacebuilders contract and will be returned to in the following section.

There also appears to be agreement between Rwanda and its major donors that good governance dominates the framework for their relations within the sovereign frontier. The language of good governance is echoed in published donor plans for Rwanda and in Rwanda's own development plans (DFID, 2004; DFID, 2006; Government of Rwanda, 2002). Rwanda has accepted good governance as a framework for its future development, and this is therefore a relatively stable feature of its sovereign frontier. The regime's willingness to speak the language of good governance and implement some donor inspired reform should not, however, be seen as a revocation of any contradictory goals. As Bayart points out with regards to the 'discourses' of democracy, often associated with ideas of Neoliberal good governance, this is often: 'no more than yet another source of economic rents, comparable to earlier discourses such as the denunciation of communism or imperialism at the time of the cold war, but better adapted to the spirit of the age. It is, as it were, a form of pidgin language that various native princes use in their communication with Western sovereigns and financiers' (Bayart, 2000: 226).

The 1994 genocide is also a considerable influence within Rwanda's sovereign frontier, constituting a resource for government and donors alike. Rwanda takes the baseline of the 1994 genocide to showcase its progress in post-conflict reconstruction. It also uses the same point of reference to highlight the international community's lack of authority over Rwanda given its past failings. At the same time, donors are always aware of this past failure, and of its effects on their standing in Rwanda. A frequent refrain of donor sources interviewed in Rwanda held that the RPF had lost faith in donors and the international community more broadly in 1994. In the case of the UK, continued support for the Rwandan regime, even during difficult circumstances such as Rwanda's invasion of DR Congo, was necessary to

build up trust and thus potentially retain some degree of influence.¹⁴ The 1994 genocide is therefore another point of relative stability within the sovereign frontier, influencing relations between donor and recipient and unlikely to recede for the foreseeable future. To summarise, the sovereign frontier is framed by the language of good governance and relations within the frontier take the 1994 genocide as a primary point of reference. Furthermore, both Government and donors recognise the importance of the continued tenure and political will of the RPF regime. A sovereign frontier stabilises where there is broad stated agreement between a state and its donors on the goals of development and the strategies for reaching them. The final point within the sovereign frontier on which both parties again seem in broad agreement is security, for the Rwandan regime, the Rwandan people and the region more broadly. This is partly a reflection of the priorities of the Rwandan Government and its donors, but also a reflection of their domestic constituencies.

Since the declaration of a ‘war on terror’ in 2001, many donors have become increasingly vocal on issues of stability and security in the South. Unsurprisingly, given the experience of genocide, subsequent insurgency, and wars in central Africa, security is also a priority for the Rwandan regime. It is a primary goal partly due to a desire on the part of donors for stable and predictable relations with the Rwandan regime. UK Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn told the Rwandan *New Times* in 2006: ‘Rwanda shows what can happen when you have that most fundamental of all things. Peace.’¹⁵ This reflects once again the adage, now taken as a truism in development policy circles, that development cannot take place without security, and that security cannot be assured without development. The perceived mutually reinforcing character of the two has led to donor attempts to support increased security being subsumed under the broader rubric of development.¹⁶ This highlights a tendency to characterise Africa’s underdevelopment as both cause and result of the continent’s insecurity. The ways donors discuss the paradox in the Rwandan case indicates that rather than being an irresolvable circular cause and consequence, in which both security and development are equally important and necessary, there is a definite sense of security being the more important side of the equation. This is also reflected in Harrison’s analysis of governance states, which ‘have a strong degree of stability or have achieved a striking restabilisation after periods of seemingly intractable civil conflict’ (2004: 42). The provision of relative order and stability is a feature of such states, and certainly of Rwanda, which donors value. This marks it out as a state donors can invest in, following World Bank and DFID maxims concerning the need for security in order to have development. Relative security is a remarkable achievement given that the 1994 genocide extended across the country and that an insurgent campaign continued in the North East until 1998.¹⁷ It also demonstrates the regime’s keenness to cast itself in opposition to negative images of African statehood, as a partner in both development and security.

Since 1994, Rwanda has established a sovereign frontier with donors that makes several requirements of them. Through strategic reminders donors are encouraged to ‘know their place,’ acknowledging, sometimes publicly, past genocide complicity or failures. They are also advised that this precludes their having an input on matters of ethnicity and security in contemporary Rwanda. They are required to have faith in Rwanda’s eventual transition to a

¹⁴ Telephone interview with Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development (1998-2003). 24/05/07.

¹⁵ ‘Rwanda’s Giant Stride: A Promising Walk’ *The New Times* October 31-November 1, 2005, p13.

¹⁶ As Abrahamsen shows with regard to UK aid since 9/11, some donors are keen to incorporate security sector reform into development policy (2004: 680).

¹⁷ Interview with Andrew Butare, Country Representative, Christian Aid. Kigali, 16/02/06.

more inclusive and human rights focused democracy, and to direct their criticisms of Rwandan policy to the regime privately, or keep them to themselves altogether. As Pottier observes, it is as though ‘Observers have lost the right to judge what goes on in Rwanda. Today, reality is what Rwanda’s political leaders, as moral guardians, tell the world what it is’ (Pottier, 2002: 207). In return for this Rwanda follows economic prescriptions of donors and IFIs. It pursues some elements of good political governance, such as holding elections, efficiently. Furthermore, Rwanda now performs an important role in African security by engaging in conflict management and peacekeeping in Africa. There is arguably a significant danger in donors choosing not to engage the Government on difficult and contentious issues. Such actions send clear messages to those seeking to challenge government in a peaceful and democratic way, a key element of more inclusive political settlements and responsive statebuilding. The Rwandan Government has largely been successful in setting the agenda by clearly indicating which areas of policy are not up for discussion with donors. Observers have commented on the prime example of this tendency- an unwillingness to compromise or be influenced in matters of security by the donors, partly because they did not do enough to prevent or halt the 1994 genocide (Baare *et al*, 1999).

In a post-genocide society, security can be extremely broadly defined, to the point where aspects of identity such as ethnicity and ethnic awareness are becoming criminalised. This has specific benefits for the RPF dominated Government (see Beswick, 2010). Security matters as defined by the Government are very difficult for donors to raise, falling under a rubric of subjects on which the regime tries to prevent internal debate and external influence. The Government has had significant success in managing the presentation of the history and course of genocide in Rwanda and the concept of ‘genocide ideology.’¹⁸ This has created a monopoly over how the political reconstruction problem in a divided society is defined and thus which strategies are acceptable for tackling it. Through unwillingness to engage the Government on these issues, or providing insufficient support for the rights of civil society to do so in a freer environment, donors are arguably contributing to this situation. The question remains, why do donors accept these limitations on their dialog with the Rwandan government and how do they reconcile these compromises with long terms goals such as peacebuilding, statebuilding, security and development? One way of explaining the apparent paradox is through the concept of a ‘peacebuilders contract’, which ‘is intended to capture why peacebuilders begin with grand notions of transformation but adopt strategies that reinforce the existing state-society relations’ (Barnett and Zuercher, 2009: 9).

The political settlement in post-genocide Rwanda- product of a peacebuilders contract?

Subscribing overwhelmingly to the view that development and security are mutually reinforcing, and that both are best guaranteed by a system of liberal democracy, donors consider themselves as more or less a part of state building and peacebuilding dynamics in developing states. Insofar as they claim to be supporting processes which tackle underlying causes of conflict in society and provide inclusive forms of security, they can be considered ‘peacebuilders’. Barnett and Zuercher have attempted to explain why such actors often have grand ambitions for peacebuilding when entering into relationships with developing state elites, but end up narrowing these aims and supporting processes which reinforce the status quo of state-society relations and the dominance of the ruling elite.¹⁹

¹⁸ This is a key part of the RPF architecture of control in Rwanda, for more information on the sue of the genocide ideology charge to discipline political behaviour see Beswick, 2010.

¹⁹ Their analysis incorporates two case studies- Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

The peacebuilders contract reflects some of the dynamics highlighted in Harrison's depiction of the sovereign frontier. Both see donor-recipient relations as the product of particular kinds of pressure on each set of actors. Donors require 'good examples' of reform to demonstrate the validity of their prescriptions for economic and political development. Recipient states require resources with which to maintain their position by either generating legitimacy, such as through provision of public goods, or dealing with would-be challengers through co-option or elimination. As Barnett and Zuercher (2009) demonstrate, given the range of outcomes pursued or desired by each set of actors, a 'status quo' situation becomes the most mutually beneficial result. Status quo does not indicate that 'nothing changes' on the level of policies and practises, but rather that though reforms may be pursued by elites, and praised by donors, these do not challenge the fundamental, often informal, rules of the game or 'political settlement' (DFID, 2009a: 5) governing politics. As they indicate: 'this contract reinforces the status quo even as it leaves open some possibility for reform. In other words, the reforms that do take place will unfold in a way that protects the interests of local elites' (2009: 35). This is likened to '*symbolic peacebuilding*' in which '(The) actor, or organization, wants to maintain the stream of material and normative benefits required for its legitimacy and survival, but fears that full compliance will be too costly. Consequently, it adopts the myths and ceremonies of the organizational form, but maintains its existing practices' (2009: 35).

The reluctance of the UK to censure Rwanda over its policies towards DR Congo provides an illustration of the willingness by donors to compromise stated objectives, in this case regional peace and security, to ensure the continuation of a productive relationship in other areas. From 1998-2003 the close UK relationship with Rwanda survived a series of 'sticking points', including invasions of neighbouring DRC and the release of a UN report accusing Rwanda of exploiting DR Congo's mineral wealth, primarily due to a close personal relationship between Clare Short and President Kagame (Dowden, 2002).²⁰ Interviewed by the author in 2007, Short emphasised that these events posed significant problems for the UK, particularly given its 10 year commitment to budget support for Rwanda. She disclosed that after each incident, high level discussions between the UK and Rwanda had led the UK to 'hang in there' and continue support despite pressures to suspend aid.²¹ This account acknowledges the importance of leadership and personal relationships. Kagame's personal assurances were cited as a vital part of the UK decision to continue giving aid in the face of international criticism. Rwanda has therefore retained good performer status in spite of perceived transgressions.

Political space is a second arena where donors have been willing to compromise on stated goals- in this case a vibrant civil society and inclusive political settlement- to maintain a good working relationship with the Rwandan regime. Donors attest that to enhance vertical accountability, from the Rwandan government to its citizens, there is a need for: 'strengthening the role of civil society, private sector organisations and the media in scrutinising government performance, providing policy feedback and recommendations, and advocating change' (JGA, 2008: 18). However, the RPF has faced significant criticism over its unwillingness to tolerate dissenting views on Rwanda's political reconstruction since the late 1990s, this intensified during and following the 2003 elections. Reluctance to allow a freer political environment and open up space for debate may be understandable given the

²⁰ Telephone interview with Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development (1998-2003). 24/05/07.

²¹ Telephone interview with Clare Short, UK Secretary of State for International Development (1998-2003). 24/05/07.

role Rwandan political parties played in the genocide. Indeed, the 2008 Joint Governance Assessment of Rwanda, carried out by key donors and endorsed by the Rwandan government recognises these tensions:

[M]anaging diversity in an inclusive manner also poses governance challenges. It requires clear and agreed upon rules and parameters that provide the space for debate, discussion and differences of opinion. At the same time some restrictions on freedom of expression are required to prevent ethnic discrimination and sectarianism, but these controls need to be carefully crafted and applied within the framework of the rule of law so as to guarantee political pluralism. (JGA, 2008: 17)

However, the ‘rules and parameters,’ though perhaps understandable, provide hard constraints on political activity and expression. The RPF is frequently accused of using a combination of legislation and ‘shadow methods’ to discipline and deter critics of government policy (Beswick, 2010). Notably, detractors have highlighted the government’s use of the charge of ‘genocide ideology’, broadly defined, to silence critics. The ambiguity as to what constitutes genocide ideology or divisionism is particularly problematic. Whaites (2008: 9) highlights the importance of rule through law for statebuilding, or ‘the way in which the state makes known to its people the state’s expectations of their behaviour.’ He describes it as a key complementary component to the issue of security, ‘the state making known the conditions under which enforcing security might be used and thereby engendering some predictability of state behaviour.’ As argued earlier, security in a traumatised post-genocide context can be defined extremely broadly, and the genocide ideology charge has been applied in a diverse range of contexts, both formally and informally. Even the JGA admits that this legislation, in its 2001 and then-awaited 2008 re-drafted version, is problematic, stating:

It is doubtful whether they fulfil the requirements of legal certainty meaning that the offence is sufficiently clearly drafted to allow a person to know whether or not their conduct would amount to a breach of the law. The absence of a requirement of intentionality (i.e. that the offender intended to cause harm) in the provisions adds to the problem of vagueness and leaves the provisions open to abuse and less effective in tackling the problem that they are designed for (2008: 33).

Ambiguity as to whether certain types of political behaviour and rhetoric would be considered evidence of genocide ideology or divisionism, deters political activists from engaging the government on sensitive issues such as ethnicity and security. Donors have proved unwilling to challenge the RPF on its disciplining of political opponents and its censoring of civil society, despite their central position in financing and making possible Rwanda’s reconstruction (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi and Putzel, 2006: 30). International aid has been described as ‘pivotal’ to reconstruction efforts, ‘[W]ithout assistance it is difficult to imagine how the Kagame-led coalition could have made the gains in state consolidation achieved so far (Ibid, 2006: 30). But the backdrop of the genocide in Rwanda’s sovereign frontier leaves donors reluctant to push for political reform for fear that pressure ‘to reintroduce political competition could threaten the stability of what remains a precarious polity’ (Ibid). This does however send signals to civil society that the international community is more interested in stability than greater political competition and open-ness. As Uvin commented of pre-genocide Rwanda ‘people look carefully at the actions and inactions, the trends and discourses of the aid system. All of them, including inaction, send messages and constitute political acts’ (1998: 237).

The RPF therefore dominates Rwanda by virtue of ending the genocide but also benefits significantly from international support and recognition. As Harrison's analysis suggested donors require good examples to prove the validity of their reforms, so the political dominance of the RPF can be considered beneficial for both the Rwanda regime and key donors and is therefore rarely challenged within the sovereign frontier. This analysis suggests that a peacebuilders contract is an accurate way of portraying Rwanda's relationship with key donors since the genocide. It is a relationship built on compromises which add up to a continuation of specific forms of state-society relations, specifically meaning political space is highly circumscribed and that this enhances the power and entrenches the position of the ruling party. This may well provide stability in the short term, as Bratton and Chang point out, 'autocratic regimes with one dominant party are usually more stable and effective than autocratic regimes that permit contenders for power to be politically active' (2006: 1071). However this runs counter to the observations made by DFID on the importance of inclusive and resilient political settlements underpinned by accountability (2009a: 22). Inclusive settlements are characterised by continuous negotiation between state and society, particularly through mechanisms such as civil society, of the form and content of politics. Similarly, the OECD-DAC characterises positive state building as that which 'involve[s] reciprocal relations between a state that delivers services for its people and social and political groups who constructively engage with their state (2008: 1). This is a form of settlement not well served by such a dominant ruling party. Though the RPF has taken steps towards openness in recent years, by for example lifting a ban on other parties campaigning at the grassroots level prior to 2008 elections, the framework for political behaviour is relatively entrenched. A brief examination of approval ratings for the RPF led government and its initiatives since 1994 is a useful illustration of this.

A 2007 survey by the Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Commission found 'unusually unanimous' approval for the RPF led government, including over 90% approval ratings for government policies on civil society and limiting freedom of expression (2007: 37-38). This may at first glance seem to suggest that the concerns discussed above, that a more inclusive settlement is being hampered by RPF dominance, are unfounded. However, such high ratings demand closer scrutiny, as the report's authors themselves acknowledge in comparing their results to a recent PEW Global Attitudes Survey, where: 'Support for the national Government was between 60% and 74% in some of the most stable and successful African countries such as Uganda (61%), Senegal (74%), and Ghana (73%)' (2007: 38). The closest country to Rwanda in terms of approval rating was China at 89%. Without further research it is difficult to assess the validity of these findings, and comparing two different surveys is highly problematic, but the high approval rating demonstrated here for the RPF is reflected in other measures. Support for the newly drafted constitution at a 2003 referendum was an extremely high 93%, and the RPF candidate Paul Kagame won the 2003 presidential elections with over 95% of the vote. These ratings could indicate nothing more than a strong and well supported government, but such a phenomena must be seen within the broader context of a relatively weak and co-opted political opposition and limitations on political activism which curtail the activities of civil society organisations particularly in human rights. Rwandan politics since 1994 is based on consensus, with an understandable aversion to adversarial politics which could divide the population on ethnic lines, but this consensus is defined by the RPF. This means in the absence of other strong and broad-based, issue rather than identity driven, political parties it will continue to be dominant but not necessarily inclusive. Whilst elections may occur and a choice of candidates is offered there is little difference in policies. This is partly due to the perhaps understandable limitations on political action and freedom of expression, but more likely results from the political manipulation and

selective application of these limits to behaviour and expression through which serious competitors have been consistently exiled or discredited (Reyntjens, 2004; Rafti, 2004). Though the RPF's dominance of Rwandan politics has allowed for considerable reforms and stability, there appears to be a consensus that 'the inclusiveness of new coalitions in power will in the long run affect their effectiveness, their popular support and their longevity' (Hesselbein, Golooba-Mutebi and Putzel, 2006: 3)

Conclusions

This paper has argued that Rwanda's relationship with donors since 1994 takes place within a sovereign frontier. This frontier is a space under continued negotiation and re-visioning but there are some constant features within it which define the relationship. The 1994 genocide is perhaps the most crucial- conferring legitimacy and 'protector status' on the RPF and delegitimising those who criticise it, but also acting as a point of reference for judging improvements in governance, security and development. It also serves to remind donors of their actions, or inactions, in 1994 and the subsequent limitations on their engagement with the government on sensitive political issues in Rwanda. The paper has argued that the notions of a sovereign frontier and a peacebuilders contract are in fact complementary. Each reflects Rubin's argument that: '[I]n a strategic environment where the goals of actors are interdependent, negotiation may lead to convergence among actors with different motivations' (2006: 184).

Rwanda needs the donors and, to present a positive example of post conflict reconstruction and for its contributions to African security initiatives (Beswick, 2007), the donors arguably need Rwanda. Both concepts can help to provide a better understanding of why peacebuilders have compromised on their stated goals and provided support, in ways which entrench the ruling party and may even preclude the growth of a more inclusive political settlement and more responsive statebuilding. Donors are keen to point out that these processes are endogenous, and that they play only a limited role, but as we have seen from the analysis here the RPF has actively pursued relationships with non-traditional donors. This reflects their need for resources with which to rebuild Rwanda after 1994, but also the fact that: 'Outsiders can confer a degree of legitimacy to new political settlements (through international recognition) and send signals of their support and good faith (Whaites, 2008: 21). Donors may play a limited role, but it is a role nonetheless and their actions or inactions send signals to key parties in the political settlement- the government, different groups within civil society, including those advocating on issues of human rights and political space as well as those working with the vulnerable and the most marginalised. They do not define the political settlement but they can influence it. In Rwanda's case, their support for the government despite its refusal to open up political space or engage with peaceful challengers has helped the regime to consolidate its position. This may provide stability, but there is currently little prospect of the emergence of serious challengers to the RPF, and for greater debate over Rwanda's future.

It has been argued that: 'the greatest risk to the consolidation of new democracies in Africa is that the architecture of the regime hardens prematurely, that is, before democratic institutions or beliefs have had a chance to take root' (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005: 323, cited in Bratton and Chang, 2006: 1072). Rwanda may have elections and political parties but it does not yet have a deeper culture of democracy, and given limitations on politics since 1994 it is difficult to see how this might emerge. The multi-donor 2008 Joint Governance Assessment suggests: 'it is likely that with time greater political competition between and within political parties will emerge' (2008: 18). This leads them to argue that: '[T]he priority

for the present discussion should be to consider whether the rules governing the political process provide an appropriate framework for this to evolve' (2008: 18), a challenge this paper has begun to take up. In conclusion, the analysis presented above and supported by others (Reyntjens, 2004) suggests that donor attempts to aid stability as a precursor to development and greater democracy may have conversely helped to create an entrenched political settlement. In such an environment, and given the traumatic history of the genocide, even if the legal framework is relaxed, and other disciplining methods are used less in order to allow greater debate and more democratic politics, citizens and civil society may well be too deterred by the past decade's experience to take advantage of those opportunities.

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