

Ambrozy, Maria Teresa (2022)

Interrogating Education Policymaking in the Rwandan Developmental State: The Politics of Changing the Language of Instruction and the Higher Education Merger

PhD thesis. SOAS, University of London

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00037746>

<https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/37746>

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***Interrogating Education Policymaking in the Rwandan Developmental State:
The Politics of Changing the Language of Instruction
and the Higher Education Merger***

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

YEAR 2021/2022

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Abstract

This thesis explores the extent to which Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-led policymaking and policy-implementation in the education sector can be accurately portrayed as successful within a wider Developmental State model. By analysing the perspectives of Rwandan elites towards policymaking and policy-implementation of two educational policies, namely the shift in the Medium of Instruction and the Higher Education Merger, this thesis examines the overall effectiveness of the developmental project in Rwanda.

Drawing on forty-five interviews and other field-based data over a five-year period, the thesis explores narratives around political intentions and their consequences concerning the two focal policies, which are situated in the broader political environment in Rwanda. This thesis examines the extent to which educational policies, particularly decisions, priorities and results, reflect the imperatives of the developmental RPF leadership or those of the wider population. In doing so, it draws conclusions about the nature of the Developmental State model and highlights a number of implications for understanding state-society relations in Rwanda.

Overall, this thesis identifies significant tensions within the Rwandan state around the ideals and realities of Rwandan development. Ultimately, it is argued that the Developmental State model prolonged the time in which developmental goals were realised, unnecessarily complicating efforts to address education policy challenges and undermining the effectiveness and societal reach of developmental interventions in the education sector. Empirically, the research contributes to current debates about the nature and impact of the Developmental State in Rwanda. As such, it offers an alternative perspective that goes beyond generalised notions of authoritarianism, development and their interplays.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to the Rwandans who, with their often-personal stories and views, helped to widen my understanding of their country. They include both interviewees and ordinary Rwandans - acquaintances, colleagues and lifelong friends. The hospitality, friendship and engagement of everyone whom I met on my journey was always exemplary. Additionally, many of the statements made for the purpose of this research were done so at a considerable risk to those who participated and, therefore, the trust that I was granted on both a personal and professional level is truly humbling.

Throughout this project, Rabin Michael Schudrich and Dr David Harris have proved remarkable friends, and provided me with an abundance of intellectual and practical support.

Perhaps the most important name on this list is that of my supervisor, Professor Phil Clark, whose care, confidence and determination in seeing me through this thesis has been incomparable to any other support I have experienced in the whole of my professional life. At every step of this journey, it was a privilege to share and debate my experiences of Rwanda with him.

Finally, I would like to thank my family.

To my dad, who supported me for much longer than he thought he would when his child first entered the educational system. To my mum, who transferred onto me all her appreciation of education, knowledge and curiosity. I hope I will be able to do the same for my daughters.

To Andrew, whose unswerving support, dedication and love got me to see the end of this thesis. Without his encouragement, patience and understanding, I would have given up a long time ago.

When this thesis was completed, my two daughters, Agatha and Astrid, were four and three years old, respectively. Giving birth to them whilst in the midst of my work allowed me to find a new meaning and purpose in my life. Any anomaly and complication appeared insignificant when compared to the greater desire of wanting my girls to be proud of their mum.

And last, but certainly not least, this thesis is dedicated to my son, Pawel, who spent his entire childhood witnessing the development of this project. I thank him for every holiday he has had to spend away, the difficult and, at times, unexciting journeys to Rwanda and all the sacrifices that he has made along the way. His consideration and patience were always beyond a child of his age. It was a long journey during which we both had to learn the price for persistence. Therefore, this thesis is as much his, as it is my, success.

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Acronyms

APROSOMA: Association Pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse

DFID: Department for International Development

EAC: East African Community

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EU: European Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GoR: Government of Rwanda

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

MINALOC: Ministry of Local Government

MINECOFIN: Ministry of Finance and Economy Planning

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education

MRND: Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement

PARMEHUTU: Parti du Mouvement de l'émancipation Hutu

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RADER: Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais

RDB: Rwanda Development Board

REB: Rwanda Educational Board

RENCP: Rwandan Education NGO Coordination Platform

RGB: Rwanda Governance Board

RoR: Republic of Rwanda

RPA: Rwandan Patriotic Army

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

TPFL: Tigrayan People's Liberation Front

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation USD: US Dollar

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On 26 January 2019, Meghan Nimwiza, representing Kigali, was crowned that year's Miss Rwanda. The jury's choice stirred considerable public debate and prompted Ange Kagame, the Rwandan President's daughter, to comment on Twitter:

A girl who sounds articulate in Kinyarwanda is being humiliated for not being able to express herself in a foreign language. The judges repeating a poorly worded question in a language someone does not speak 3 or 4 times doesn't make it make sense (AIKN, 2019)

It was broadly believed that the Miss Rwanda crown should have been awarded to the hugely popular candidate, Josiane Mwiseneza (Mbonymutwa, 2019), from the rural north of Rwanda. While it is generally accepted that these contests are, as in many parts of the world, heavily politicised, in this case it was Josiane's inability to communicate in English – one of Rwanda's three official languages – that ensured her defeat. While palpably intelligent and articulate in Kinyarwanda (Mbonymutwa, 2019), Josiane struggled to answer some of the jurors' questions posed in English (RwandaTV, 2019, 45:20-46:48). While Josiane experienced a disappointing loss that evening, it was not hers alone. From the video recording of the contest, it is clear that very few of the contestants felt comfortable answering questions in English. Even more startlingly, some members of the jury were unable to ask their questions effectively in English (RwandaTV, 2019, 17:01) and had to resort to speaking in Kinyarwanda.

Traditionally, Miss Rwanda contestants are in their early twenties, all having completed compulsory primary and secondary education, with the majority achieving a certificate,

degree or diploma. Since 2008, the official language of instruction in Rwandan primary and secondary schools has been English. Therefore, officially, these girls should have had no less than ten years of education conducted in English. So, what happened? Why, after all these years, was Josiane unable to communicate in English? A range of views addressing this question were proffered in response to Ange Kagame's tweet:

Welcome to the World!! Colonialism is when they conduct Miss Rwanda in foreign languages. This shows how we are still colonised mentally. Colonialism killed us mentally. Which is the worse? (Musoni, 2019)

This is like a job interview...you won't get some jobs for being/sounding articulate in Kinyarwanda only... That is why we have more than one official languages in Rwanda. Let's not point fingers...let us blame this on our poor education system (PLAY ON RECORDS, 2019)

Am sorry!! i dont agree with most of people here... we are still a country with a long road to go... si miss should be someone who can stand in front of the world and defend our country with the most popular languages wettter its english or French (Claudel, 2019)

The problem is the poor quality of education given in Rwanda in government schools and government aided schools (Uwihirwe, 2019)

Sorry everyone but this is an African problem, if it was an ordinary Italian or Chinese with little exposure to English we could all celebrate them and rate them highly for trying, we always regard English proficiency as intelligence, we end up locking out those naturally bright (msalaba, 2019)

Totally agree, embarrassing these girls won't help. But on another note #missrwanda is exposing a much deeper problem in our education system if we aim to be a service based economy, we need to go back to the roots of the problem to understand where we are failing@OLPC_REB_Rwanda (K A N A N U R A, 2019)

It's upon the government of yo father to work on that issue again it's very embarrassing especially Rwandans ladies to not even express themselves in english or French yet u (first family) were taken to other countries to study English... you busy promoting vist Rwanda campaign (Noel, 2019)

My sister actually that is real english we speak here in Rwanda all of us we didn't get the chance to study in USA + Poor education #thisisrwanda (kazeneza, 2019)

Especially in a country whereby the authorities even the president cannot hold a speech 100% in local language... Now Ange gonna block me... Double trouble (Ramirez, 2019)

These responses could just as well be responses to a number of issues that Rwanda faces today – from its colonial past and the tragedy of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, right through to its current foreign and domestic affairs. The responses also highlight that the controversy surrounding the choice of language of instruction is not restricted to institutional offices or classrooms, but also has repercussions for the broader Rwandan society. An analysis of some of these issues is presented in this thesis.

Drawing on many of the themes outlined above, this thesis aims to analyse the level of effectiveness of the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) policymaking and policy-implementation within the education sector.

The decision to switch the national medium of instruction from French to English is generally accepted as one of the key features of Rwanda's post-genocide developmental project (Pells et al., 2014, pp. 304–305; Williams T.P, 2017, p. 552). To varying degrees, this policy affected every member of Rwandan society – from school children to users of public services, administrators and state officials. It is also one dimension of the national developmental project where the consequences are difficult to conceal. This is because, alongside its successes, the challenges that the Language Policy faces are evident in both official and private domains. These indicators include the proficiency of school children and prospective employment applicants in English, as well as its everyday usage in public institutions and informal settings. In 2015, when most of the fieldwork data for this thesis was gathered, the majority of senior Rwandan officials interviewed were positive about the progress of English

in education institutions across the country. Some officials went as far as stating that “there is no problem with use of English” (Interview 15. ML) among Rwandans.

Four years later, however, as the 2019 Miss Rwanda competition plainly showed, the challenges to everyday Rwandans’ command of English are vast. Of course, this situation does not limit itself to a single public entertainment event and certainly not to a handful of young women. Therefore, the key question is whether the above anecdote is simply a glitch in the wider system or illustrates deeper problems in Rwanda’s overall developmental project. Fashioned on a Developmental State model, ambitious political reforms introduced by the RPF government are publicly justified on the basis of improving the daily lives of all citizens. The Developmental State model in Rwanda is characterised by strong state intervention and control over the economy, usually accompanied by extensive regulation and planning in all state sectors. As clearly outlined by Rwandan officials and key governmental outlets, the importance of education is core to these reforms (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 552). However, as explored in the opening anecdote and in later empirical chapters, the implementation of the Rwandan Language Policy (and the Higher Education Merger, which will also be discussed in detail) has produced significant policy problems and societal tensions. As will be examined in later chapters, some aspects of these education policies have had detrimental effects that extend far beyond the education sector and have magnified endemic socio-political challenges in the Rwandan developmental state.

1.2. The Rationale of the study – research question and objectives

In recent decades, the economic success of Asian Developmental States has drawn widespread praise from politicians and academics alike. Developmental States were first defined by Johnson (1982) and refer to a governance model based on state-led

macroeconomic planning and pursuing the socio-economic development of everyday citizens (Amsden, 1989; Chang, 2007; P. B. Evans, 1995; R. Wade, 2018). Following the perceived success of these states, interest in their model generated attempts to recreate Developmental States in other parts of the world (Edigheji, 2010). While researchers often point to the limitations of the Developmental State model (P. Evans, 2008), policy-makers around the globe insist on recreating some features of the Developmental States within their own countries.

Rwanda, with its ambitious post-genocide elite, stands as an important example of such attempts, and its salience is two-fold. First, looking at the desperate situation which the country found itself in following the civil war and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, coupled with its traditions as a strong state, it appeared that Rwanda might be favourably placed to develop a model of governance and economic recovery similar to the one adopted by Developmental States in Asia. Second, in view of the broad range of economic and pro-developmental reforms over the last 25 years, Rwanda has gained recognition from a number of international bodies, which have pointed to an unfolding “miracle” (Behuria & Goodfellow, 2018) comparable to the “East Asian miracle” (World Bank, 1993). In December 2014, for example, the International Monetary Fund stated that “Rwanda’s economic performance since the turn of the century has been remarkable” (IMF, 2014, p.2). In June 2019, the World Bank highlighted that:

The genocide against the Tutsi is the inescapable backdrop to the remarkable achievement of the country. (...) Since 1994, Rwanda has been celebrated for the remarkable social, political and economic renaissance that has taken place despite the daunting challenges. (...) The result has been a more than three-fold increase in per capita income since the 1990s coupled with major progress in human development and poverty reduction (...) (World Bank 2019, p.11)

Additionally, the European Commission depicts Rwanda's progress thus:

Rwanda has recorded strong results in terms of social and economic development over the past two decades. Poverty levels decreased from 60.4% to 38.2% between 2001-2017. Rwanda also achieved all but one of the MDGs, making significant gains in areas such as education, increasing the years of free education up to 12 and improving enrolment rates for primary education (European Commission, n.d.)

This positive image of Rwanda – based on consistent economic growth and a favourable developmental environment – is often contradicted by reports of the growing inequality in Rwandan society. These reports highlight that the Rwandan “fast moving train of development” (Campioni & Noack, 2012, p. 5) leaves the majority of the country's rural population behind – unable to participate in, and to benefit from, the described development. Some critics, mainly in academia (Ansoms, 2009; Purdekova A, 2011; Reyntjens, 2013) and human rights organisations (Amnesty International, 2010; Human Rights Watch 2021), focus on the ways in which the authoritarian government addresses societal problems, including challenges relating to the functioning of politics, governance and civil society. Leaving these often-polarised debates aside, it is important to understand the nature and function of the Developmental State within the specific Rwandan context. While trying to avoid making prior assumptions about the Rwandan state, it is imperative that individuals who are part of the state machinery are allowed to share their observations and experiences relating to the nature and effectiveness of the Developmental State in Rwanda. Therefore, the main question of this thesis is:

The Rwandan State has been portrayed as authoritarian. However, Rwanda's leaders prefer to describe their policies as compatible with a Developmental State model. The question that arises from these disparate views is: to what extent do the country's policymaking and policy implementation in the education sector align with the RFP-led vision of the Developmental State?

This question will be addressed through the analysis of two key policies within the education sector, namely, the *Introduction of English as the Medium of Instruction* and the *Higher Education Merger*, described in further detail below. As highlighted by the introductory anecdote, the success of these two policies remains questionable. By way of examining some of the challenges faced during the introduction and implementation of the two policies – as well as answering the overarching research question – this study poses four sub-questions:

- I. To what extent do the policies undertaken by the Rwandan Government reflect the priorities of the developmental RPF leadership or the needs of Rwandan citizens?
- II. What priorities determine policy-implementation within the Rwandan Government and how have these come to predominate?
- III. What are the consequences of policymaking and implementation within the education sector, and who are their intended, and actual, beneficiaries?
- IV. To what extent are policymaking, implementation, and their consequences in line with the Developmental State model, and in what way do these help to understand the Rwandan state and Rwandan society?

The first three questions correspond to the discussion in the empirical chapters of this thesis (Chapters 5-7). The fourth question is partially answered in each of the fieldwork chapters and, ultimately, feeds into the final chapter (8), where empirical conclusions are made.

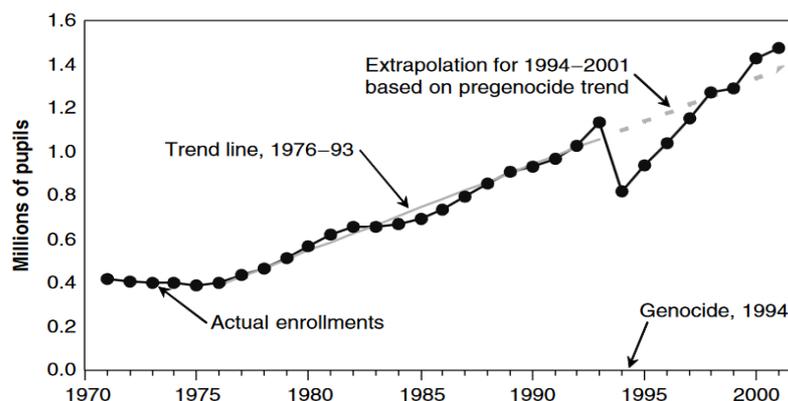
1.2.1 Background of the Study and Case Selection

In 1994, following the civil war and genocide, Rwanda's education infrastructure was severely damaged. Over three-quarters of primary schools and 35% of secondary schools were physically destroyed, with most of their equipment and materials either damaged or looted. In addition, more than half of Rwanda's 19,000 schoolteachers were killed, with more having fled or been displaced (Eriksson, 1996, p. 56). Higher education institutions also suffered acutely during the conflict, with the "state university (...) specifically targeted by the massacres and (...) enormous destruction. Only 18.54 per cent staff remained four years later, in 1998" (Obura, n.d., p. 49), with 153 university staff members having died, 106 disappeared and 800 fleeing the country (Obura, n.d., p. 114).

Despite these challenges, one year after the genocide, out of the one million children of primary school age, 800,000 were enrolled in education (Eriksson, 1996, p. 56). As outlined in Figure 1 below, this higher-than-expected number increased further in the following years.

Figure 1

Enrolment Trends in Primary Schooling in Rwanda, 1971 – 2001



Note. Reprinted from World Bank (2003 p.32)

Alongside the inadequate school and university facilities, and the shortage of qualified teachers and academics, a new challenge arose with the influx of students, especially those children of Rwandan refugees who had fled the country during the post-colonial period. These were predominantly returnees from Uganda and Tanzania, who spoke mainly English and Swahili, and had been embedded in different education systems across the region (Eriksson, 1996, p. 56).

Notwithstanding these challenges, Rwanda continued to make significant efforts towards improving and promoting access to education. From early on, this success was attributed to the government's "commitment to education and its ability to initiate a national programme" (Eriksson, 1996, p. 59). Early post-genocide activities were dictated by rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, while later agendas followed international trends and developmental needs, consolidating education as a high government priority. Since the end of the genocide, the Rwandan education system has experienced a number of important changes. The two most important reforms concern the policies that constitute the focus of this thesis, namely, the Language of Instruction and the Higher Education Merger reforms. Both were hailed by Rwandan officials as responding to the needs of the developmental project and signifying the Developmental State that Rwanda had become (Chapter 5).

The two educational reforms on which analysis presented in this thesis is based comprise:

1. The reform that was called by the October 2008 Rwanda Cabinet Resolution, which saw the introduction of English as Medium of Instruction in all public schools at all levels (RoR, 2008). Throughout this thesis, this policy is referred to as "the Language Policy" or "the Policy changing the Medium of Instruction".

2. The 'Prime Minister's order N°218/03 of 02/12/2013, Determining the Supervising Authority of the University of Rwanda and its category, the organisation, functioning and responsibilities of its organs' (RoR, 2013). Throughout the thesis, this reform is referred to as "the Higher Education Merger".

As mentioned above, the first policy is highly visible and has had a wide impact on the lives of individuals and groups across the country. As the policy was introduced in 2008, most people whom one comes across in Rwanda have an opinion concerning it. Furthermore, the policy has been linked to a number of ongoing political, and even ethnic, debates taking place both inside and outside of Rwanda (see Chapter 5).

To provide a space for more open discussion and to give a chance for interviewees to make suitable comparisons, the second policy (the Higher Education Merger) was also raised in interviews. When the main fieldwork for this research took place in 2015, the policy that saw all state-run higher education institutions in the country merge into a single University of Rwanda had only recently been announced. Consequently, many respondents' comments regarding the unfolding changes were full of uncertainty, lacked clarity and showed a limited understanding of the forthcoming changes and challenges. As a result, many of the statements and interpretations were poorly informed, lacked objectivity and were expressed in a highly emotional manner. Ultimately, while treated with caution, these statements constituted an important part of the analysis, and, as such, are highlighted in the empirical chapters (5-7). While the authenticity of these statements is not questioned, they did require secondary sources to validate the relevant claims.

Furthermore, in integrating comments, observations and interpretations of the policymaking choices made by Rwandan officials and the way these two policies were enacted, this thesis provides a unique insight into the workings of the Rwandan state. Moreover, it highlights the capabilities as well as the limitations of the Rwandan state in implementing the Developmental State model. It makes critical observations about the intricacies that officials at different levels confront and shows how they are both enabled *and* constrained in dealing with similar challenges within the framework of state institutions. These validated perspectives are presented alongside the dominant political narrative which the interviewed officials provided concerning the idea of Rwanda as an example of an effective Developmental State in Africa. Ultimately, this approach is central to the analysis, whereby the existing theoretical knowledge of the classic Developmental States is subjected to specific Rwandan conditions.

1.2.2. Novelty of Research

This research represents the first substantial examination of the nature of the Rwandan state through a critical analysis of the interplay between policymaking and implementation within the education sector. Employing an applied social constructivist framework and using interviews of Rwanda's elite as the main research method, the thesis seeks to connect the analysis and observations relating to policymaking and policy-implementation to broader debates about the developmental nature of the Rwandan state. Furthermore, it maps the complex array of forces, events and practices that interact with pro-developmental processes, demonstrating how these processes might be interpreted and adapted. Thus, the study will contribute to existing knowledge in at least three key areas:

1. By developing a set of variables and data for investigating the ways in which Rwandan politics is defined and prioritised, thereby highlighting the significance of political processes in balancing, or reinforcing, divisions, be they political, social or ethnic.
2. By identifying and deploying concepts that enable a more comprehensive understanding of the associations within the Rwandan state, the Developmental State model, policymaking, policy emulation, and post-conflict political communities.
3. By exploring links among three key concepts – policymaking, the African state and the Developmental State – through the analysis of data gained from the Rwandan education sector case studies and highlighting possible comparisons to the wider literature on Developmental States in Africa and beyond.

1.3 Analytical Framework

This section situates the analysis undertaken throughout this thesis within a specific conceptual framework. This framework supports the use of a particular research methodology that facilitates answers to the overarching research question. As such, the analytical framework works in two ways. First, it connects the theoretical assumptions made in this research with existing knowledge and broader assumptions around the phenomenon of the state. Second, by making critical links to this broader knowledge, it creates a structure that helps to support the specific concepts and claims made within this research. In other words, it will provide a conceptual lens for a detailed analysis of the Rwandan state.

The African State

Many theoretical approaches have been applied to define and analyse the African state. Questions about the role, nature and position of the African state have been continuously posed over recent decades. The answers to these questions are varied. For the purpose of

this research, two key debates around the African state are relevant for the later exploration of the Rwandan education sector.

The first relates to the general attitude towards the African state and its position within the broader political literature. As such, it aims to address whether the African state can be analysed through existing frameworks of the state or whether, as a concept, the African state requires distinctive frames of analysis. For a long time, the study of the African state stood apart from general political studies, suggesting it had its own unique set of characteristics and criteria. Undoubtedly, there are common characteristics across many African states (Doornbos, 1990, p. 180); however, the analysis of African societies and states is not benefitted by their exclusion from broader, contemporary political studies (Bayart, 1992, p. 59). Consequently, much of the controversy surrounding African states relates to when the particular analysis of the African state took place. While changes in academic studies of the African state are numerous, the trends that relate to certain historical periods are easily distinguishable. A good example of this is the discussion around Dependency Theory and the way in which the failures of today's African states are examined in the academic literature. Until the mid-1990s, most scholarly analyses focused on viewing the colonial era and its legacies as responsible for a great number of the problems faced by African states today. It was only with the work of authors such as Ekeh (2021), Young (2004), Bayart (2000) and Chabal (1986) that we noticed a more nuanced approach to the issue of colonialism and a call for a broader and more meaningful analysis of the miscalculations made in Africa after the formal departure of the colonial powers:

(...) it is now generally admitted that the social experience of colonialization was shared by both white and black actors, and was suffused with a whole series of

“refractions” or “reverberations” between Africa and Europe (Bayart, 2000, p. 223)

An important element of these debates – with significance for the discussion in this thesis (see Chapter 3) – concerns the link between ideological imports of western concepts of the state and politics, and the processes of “Africanisation of politics”. As summarised by Chabal and Daloz:

What happened after independence was the Africanization of politics, that is, the adjustment of imported models to the historical, sociological and cultural realities of Africa. This is still going on today: the so-called democratic transitions are being reinvented locally. The dialectical process between modernization of African forms of identity and the administration of political systems from the West has been complex, painful and chaotic (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 51)

The more moderate of these processes argues for the adoption of the “hybrid structure” (Erdmann & Engel, 2007, p. 104) in analysing the African state, where two different forms – *modern* and *African* – coexist. The more critical approach argues that principles upon which the current African state is constructed, with notions of government, accountability and legitimacy, are characterised by the paradigm of “rejection of the transplanted state” (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 10). As such, Chabal and Daloz argue that rather than being based on western counterparts, concepts that relate to state and politics in Africa are ultimately complemented by cultural, and often contradictory, characteristics. The consequence of this is that they function differently within the African context:

The result is that the political system thus established, while formally reminiscent of its origins, is re-shaped by local conditions to such a degree that it comes to be used for thoroughly different purposes (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 10)

This discussion has an important significance for issues analysed in this thesis, as it presumes only limited absorption of liberal reforms in Africa.

Second, a question indirectly connected to the previous debate is whether it is feasible to take common political theories and apply them to the African state context. Such a concern implies that the discussion around the African state is no different from the general discussion on the universal notion of the state. If this is the case, then the roots of analysis need to be traced to the discussion between the Weberian notion of the state, where the state is portrayed as a “human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within the given territory” (Webber 1991, p.78), and notions of the state, as represented by authors such as Tilly (1992; Tilly et al., 1975) and Brownlie (2008), who emphasise that the notion of the state should be based on what the state does rather than what it is expected to do. The views of these authors have been subsequently developed; here especially the views of Migdal present an important critique of the exaggeration of the historical autonomy of the state and argue for a “state-in-society” approach (J. S. Migdal, 2001). This view reconceptualises the state by putting into doubt its autonomous and unitary character. Here, the key argument is that the African state should not be analysed within its own theoretical bubble and that analysts should avoid posing questions that predispose answers towards the inadequacies or failures of African states. In this way analysis of the African state deploys the same set of analytical tools as of any other state (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982).

The first debate is important to this thesis as it focuses on unique African characteristics and the history of the African state. The depth that this debate brings to understanding the African state is key as it allows the researcher to analyse the possibilities and limits of the transference of other forms of statehood. However, while acknowledging the above discussion and, at times referring to ideas specific to the African continent and its history, this

thesis adopts the general view of the state. In doing so, it uses the classic definition of the state, as derived from the definition of “state-in-society” mentioned above (P. Evans et al., 2010; J. S. Migdal, 2001; Weber, 1991). This moves the perspective of the “state as a freestanding organization” to one that is characterised by a “process-oriented view” (J. S. Migdal, 2001, p. 232).

Mention of the state within this thesis refers to an organisation of administrative, policing and military groups and institutions that are headed by an executive authority, which claims a monopoly when it comes to the legitimate use of violence within its given territory. This definition presumes the state to be multidimensional and incoherent, with the levels of authority, legitimacy, sovereignty being elusive (J. S. Migdal, 2001, p. 263). Furthermore, while it is important to recognise the mutual bond between state and society, the idea of the state being an “organization” implies that it cannot be reduced to individuals. By highlighting authority and legitimacy, this definition includes the existence of a government that controls the state apparatus. By incorporating this definition, this thesis attempts to follow in the footsteps of previous researchers (Chemouni, 2016; Goodfellow, 2012), who have based their analysis on similar definitions (Chemouni, 2016, p. 21), and allowed their empirical data to shape and deepen their understanding of state and politics in Rwanda.

Developmental project and the Developmental State

Developmental discourse is replete with elusive buzzwords. In its broadest sense, the word *development* is used as a way of conveying “the idea that tomorrow things will be better, or that more is necessarily better” (Rist, 2007, p. 485). The vast literature available on the subject has not distilled a definitive definition for *development*. Despite its ambiguity, *development*, as an idea, is firmly rooted in modern economic and political discourse. By comparing it to

Durkheim's claims of absolutism of religion, Rist argues that development is considered an "indisputable truth" acting "as an essential password for anyone who wishes to improve his or her standard of living" (Rist, 2007, p. 487). One of the most striking problems with the use of the word *development* is the almost unquestionable positive power that it confers. When used as part of a narrative or discourse, it is always perceived as a priority that supersedes other concerns. Indeed, when it comes to developmental strategies or developmental activities it is difficult to gauge what has actually been *done* or to determine the quality of the assumed development (Cornwall, 2007, p. 471).

This thesis refers to development in two ways: as a developmental project and the Developmental State. The term "developmental projects" encompasses a broad array of developmental processes and practises.¹ The term "developmental projects" is understood as more comprehensive than the definition for the Developmental State, and can cover a wide range of social and political goals. Developmental projects can describe a variety of actions undertaken following particular historical periods, such as, "(...) community development in the post-colonial period, 'modernisation' in the Cold War period, and 'basic human needs' and 'integrated rural development thought the 1970s'" (Leal, 2007, p. 540). Furthermore, in the current neoliberal period, individual developmental strategies – often broad and vague – are bound to global practices, with many of them driven by international organisations and donors (Leal, 2007, p. 542). They are generally discussed within the remit of "sustainable development" (Carney et al., 2003), "participatory development" (Cooke & Kothari, 2013; Cornwall et al., 2005; Leal, 2007), "capacity building" (Eade & Oxfam Ireland,

¹ To distinguish between the two, throughout the thesis the term developmental project will use small letters, while Developmental States will use capital letters.

2000), “human rights” (Sen, 1999; Sengupta, 2000; Uvin, 2007), “good governance” (Mkandawire, 2007) as well as “poverty reduction” or “poverty alleviation” (Toye, 2007).

The term *Developmental State* will be used in a narrower sense than developmental projects, as defined by international political economy scholars, and will refer to the state model that is based on state-led macroeconomic planning. Chapter 3 will provide an extensive analysis of the history and theory of those states commonly classified as classic Developmental States. In contrast to the ambiguity associated with the term “development” or the broader understanding of “developmental project”, Developmental States have assigned characteristics that are often presumed to be applicable to only a handful of countries in East Asia (as outlined above). Moreover, since the mid-2000s, the Developmental State has been assumed to offer an important political model that can be used as an alternative state model in advancing economic development across countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa (Woldegiyorgis, 2014).

Policy Emulation

In 1996, Dolowitz and Marsh defined policy emulation as “knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and/or place [that] is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place” (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 344). While relatively straightforward and comprehensive, this theory is not the first to draw attention to the process of policy emulation (for other key publications see: C. Bennett, 1991; D. P. Dolowitz, 1998; R. Rose, 1991). Karl Marx, referring to changes in Germany and England in the 19th century, wrote that “the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future” (Marx et al., 1969, p. 87), drawing attention to the processes of one country

learning from another (Giddens, 2021). Even today, Marx's comment is often seen as a key point in debates on the extent and possibilities of policy emulation. Various authors argue that the stages of development cannot be prescribed and do not follow an automatic or uniform process (Dobb, 1964; Gerschenkron, 2015). The approach undertaken in this thesis assumes that, given today's globalised neoliberal tendencies, along with conditionalities imposed by more developed countries on those perceived to be lagging behind, the space for policy emulation and innovation within political institutions is limited (Mkandawire, 2009; R. H. Wade, 2003). Despite these challenges, while often imperfect, policy-makers across the world, as well as in Rwanda, are often keen to learn from the examples of others. These attempts need to be acknowledged as valuable attempts (Chang, 2010, pp. 82–83) at identifying a political model that may be applied as a state model in Africa. The challenges confronting those who wish to engage in policy emulation are numerous. While some of the problems facing Africa (see Chapter 3), and specifically Rwanda, will be discussed later (Chapters 5-7), a number of the key challenges are addressed below.

Perhaps the most important question to ask here is what is the purpose of policy emulation (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 351). In this regard, Chapter 5 will outline a number of explanations and inconsistencies around why the discussed policies were enacted and the problems they aimed to address. This leads to an analysis of available policy solutions, including those borrowed from beyond Rwanda. Here, the lack of appropriate data (Elkins & Simmons, 2005, pp. 42–43) and an inadequate understanding of the information received, inevitably hampers the ability of policy-makers to effectively judge whether these solutions can address specific societal problems (R. Rose, 1991, p. 5).

Furthermore, there are questions about the agents involved in the process of policy emulation. Here, three important issues are at play. The first is whether policy emulation is a voluntary or coercive process (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, pp. 346–353), with the former assuming direct or indirect practices where “intergovernmental and international organizations encourage exchanges of ideas between countries” (R. Rose, 1993, p. 105). The second issue is the strategic motivation driving those actors involved in policy emulation, be it “inside and outside government” (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 343). Finally, and critically, is the issue of which specific policies are being emulated, and the extent to which they are adapted and incorporated into the cultural, political and historical realities of any given country (discussed further in Chapter 3). In the case of Rwanda, it is important to analyse how two opposing concepts, namely the Rwandan government’s stated self-reliance on home-grown solutions while at the same time borrowing from the best practices around the world, shape our understanding of Rwanda’s policymaking environment.

Neoliberalism as a concept

Many authors consider the theoretical literature around the concept of neoliberalism as unclear, chaotic, with some describing definitions as “ill-defined” and “a central point of confusion in understandings of politics and policymaking since 1970” (Mudge, 2008, pp. 703 and 724). Invariably, these definitions vary depending on which academic field the author represents (for economists’ perspectives see: Chang 2003, Ferguson, 2010; for political, social science and anthropology-based perspectives see: Crouch, 2011; Ong, 2006; Wacquant, 2012). The concept can also differ depending on the analytical needs of a particular research project (see for example: Liow, 2012), or, indeed, any other perspectives that may be deemed crucial (see for example: Mudge, 2008; Turner, 2008). In some instances, neoliberalism is also

referred to without being properly defined (Boas T.C & Gans-Morse J, 2009). In all its interpretations and re-interpretations, neoliberalism, with its “old roots that lay partly in Anglo economics and partly in German schools of liberalism” (Mudge, 2008, p. 707), is built on a key premise in which the market takes the superior role in substantiating trade and industry strategies over other modes of organisation and carries with it the notion of determining politics. In contrast to the Developmental State model discussed above, where growth and development are initiated and led by the state, within neoliberal states it is the private sector that leads and actively brings growth strategies to fruition. Thus, states that conform to the neoliberal model can be characterised by three key processes whereby their economy becomes deregulated, liberalised and privatised. The aim of such changes is that the:

(...) function of the state becomes one of regulating and facilitating an abstracted market driven by its own laws; [a process which oversees creation of] rationally efficient policies and institutions insulated from raids of predatory alliances and the demands of vested interest (Robinson et al., 2005, p. 172)

References made in this research conceptualise neoliberalism through its understanding of the links between politics and policymaking. This approach derives from Mudge’s distinction of the three interconnected “faces of neoliberalism”, namely intellectual, bureaucratic and political, where:

(...) underpinned by the well-trodden system of economic thought and faith in the promise of the ‘market,’ intellectual-professional neoliberalism’s advance by self-conscious knowledge-producing elites constitutes a simultaneously moral, political and professional project (Mudge, 2008, p. 724)

In her own critique, Mudge warns of the existence of “*many-liberalisms*” that may lack coherence (especially in political language and policies) and may be characterised by the different levels of acceptance by political elites. Because of this inconsistency and the many

critical (and often conflicting) debates surrounding the concept, neoliberalism is not proposed in this empirical research as a key variable or a dominant analytical framework. Having said this, African neoliberalism initially appeared as an externally driven concept aimed at providing an alternative to “excessive and inefficient state intervention in the economy” (Harrison, 2005, p. 1303). However, later (largely external) interventions highlighted the limits of neoliberal solutions in Africa (Mkandawire, 2010, pp. 63–64). Given the embeddedness of neoliberalism in many African states, attempts have been made to redefine the ways in which the state and markets can continue to work for mutual benefit (Harrison, 2005, p. 1316). This process continues to be a part of important struggle for many African states, which are still grappling with which developmental state model to pursue.

What is important to note is that none of the respondents in this research mentioned neoliberal perspectives, concepts or doctrines explicitly when analysing the discussed policies or the Rwandan state. This might underscore the theoretical debate about the inadequacy of neoliberalism as a concept:

There is no contemporary body of knowledge that calls itself neoliberalism, no self-described neoliberal theorists that elaborate it, nor policy-makers and practitioners that implement it (Venugopal, 2015, p. 179)

However, neoliberal ideology needs to be understood given the function it has in explaining a number of phenomena within contemporary economics, social and political relations. Therefore, it will be referred to throughout this thesis, especially in the empirical chapters (5-7). Studies on neoliberalism conducted by Liow (2012) and Behuria (2018)² provide a reference

² Neoliberalism as a concept was brought to this analysis by two key papers. First one, by Eugene Liow (Liow, 2012) analysis of Singapore, a classic model Developmental State, and how it is embarking on the process of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation. Consequently, as argued by Liow, in the case of Singapore, it is possible to distinguish a new hybrid state in the

point for these aspects of Rwandan policymaking and governance. As will be discussed in the Conclusion of this thesis, in the case of Rwanda, the existence of contradictory models of state and governance does not prevent them from functioning within the same space. At times, these seemingly incompatible models create a new type of state, such as a Democratic Developmental State (Mkandawire, 2010), Patrimonial Developmental State (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012) or Neoliberal Developmental State (Behuria, 2018). Given that these new states are characterised by disorder, inconsistency and internal tensions (Behuria, 2018, p. 428), they are able to promote multiple claims to diverse audiences.

1.4 Main arguments and structure of the thesis

This thesis constructs four main arguments. First, in the Rwandan educational sector, there is a major disjunct between the developmental narrative and reality. While the empirical chapters provide a detailed discussion of the causes of this tension, it can broadly be described in two ways. The first relates to the inconsistency between what is envisaged by the Rwandan government's agenda and the realities of everyday life for ordinary Rwandans. The second concerns the functioning of government officials and state institutions. Internal

form of the Neoliberal-Developmental State. In the second paper, partially inspired by Liow's new state category, Prithvi Behuria (Behuria, 2018) undertakes analysis of Rwanda's financial sector and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and advocates for the existence of a Neoliberal Developmental State in Rwanda. As shown by Behuria, construction of this new state model is underway in Rwanda through the process of "incoherent emulation for different purposes". While both papers provide a number of invaluable references, there are two central points that have direct link to the analysis provided in this thesis. First, referring to Liow's analysis, is that none of the state models, in the case of both Singapore and Rwanda, are an "absolute either – or" and that the existence of each model is a "matter of degree" (Liow, 2012, p. 259). As such, each aspect of policymaking, governance and state warrants a separate and detailed discussion. And second, Behuria's work refers to the existence of "contradictory tensions" (Behuria, 2018, p. 422) that bring these different state models together. Those contradictory tensions that Behuria observes in the case of the functioning financial sector and RDB in Rwanda, will be outlined in Chapters 3-5 of this thesis, as part of the discussion on policymaking and policy implementation within the education sector in Rwanda.

cohesiveness and high levels of efficiency that are often attributed to government officials are, in reality, limited by hierarchy, short-termism and detachment. As will be argued in Chapters 5-7, in both cases, alignment between vision and reality, efficiency in operation and synchronisation, remain an ambition, rather than a prevailing reality.

The second argument is that, irrespective of declarations made by government officials, educational reforms are not delivering equal change for all Rwandans. In this respect, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that new policies, such as those analysed in this thesis, are being implemented in an imbalanced socio-historical and structural environment, ensuring that many Rwandans are unable to access the benefits of the new pro-developmental policies.

Third, the key characteristics of the policymaking and policy-implementation processes in Rwanda, namely speed, unpredictability, randomness and indecisiveness, greatly hamper the effectiveness of developmental these recent reforms. This can be seen in both the nature of the educational solutions provided, and the deference with which these new policies are embraced by the key stakeholders and wider population.

Finally, although often portrayed as pro-developmental, Rwandan elites and institutions lack a number of characteristics that could allow the Rwandan state to maximise its potential as an effective Developmental State (Chapter 3). Here, of critical importance, is an unequal commitment to the developmental project, with Kagame remaining the key driving influencer and enabler of many developmental processes. This, along with numerous neo-patrimonial links and loyalties, hampers the state's ability to effectively mobilise and strengthen the

existing bureaucracy – one that could help in developing more effective ways to address gaps between the policy agenda and the realities of everyday life.

The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an overview and justification of the research methodology used in this thesis, both theoretically and in practice. In reviewing the wider qualitative literature which informed the research design the author's own position was considered.

Chapter 3 consists of two parts. The first discusses the theory and features of classic Developmental States. It lists a number of key characteristics that, throughout the empirical chapters, will be analysed in relation to the Rwandan state. The second part identifies ways in which Developmental State features are either copied, emulated or recreated in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa, as a way to situate the Rwandan case within trends across the continent.

Chapter 4 serves as a historical background to the Rwandan case study. While its main focus is on presenting the historical trajectories of the Rwandan state, it also focuses on key issues relating to political power, governance, society, education, identity, conflict and economics. Taken together, all of these issues provide an essential background to the findings derived from the empirical chapters.

The subsequent three empirical chapters of this thesis are directly informed by the outcomes of the conducted interviews, and highlight the importance of particular elements of policymaking, policy-implementation and diverse consequences within the education sector in Rwanda.

Chapter 5 focuses on policy planning and the decision-making processes. It makes an important connection between the way the Rwandan government and institutions function, identifying how the decision-making criteria are set, who the policy-makers are, and what their principal drivers and values are.

Chapter 6 examines the implementation of the two focal education policies in Rwanda. It addresses the question of responsibility for the implementation of particular policies – focusing on both actual and perceived accountability. This chapter also examines the communication between implementers, issues around the equality of the implementation methods and the extent to which these methods link to the particular needs of the population.

Chapter 7 analyses the Rwandan government's justification of the consequences of the discussed policies and, more generally, highlights several distinctive nuances of the developmental project in Rwanda. In doing so, it brings together discussions around the policymaking and policy-implementations of the focal educational policies. By defining a number of internal and external audiences that the Rwandan government needs to address, it links the policy processes to a range of home-grown, developmental, and neo-liberal solutions. Consequently, this chapter provides an important context for identifying how these, at times conflicting, needs influence initial policy demands, power relations, and the broader notions of the Developmental State in Rwanda.

Chapter 8 concludes by highlighting the ways in which the research objectives of this thesis have been met. It examines the theoretical relevance of the empirical findings and answers

the research question by contributing to debates over the distinctiveness of the state model in Rwanda. Finally, this chapter proposes avenues for further research.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1. Introduction

At the beginning of her chapter, Susan Olander (1995, p.133) observes that “social scientists rarely study up”. She continues her claim by highlighting the importance of studying the elite class and argues that a lack of research into this category of actors “contributes to obscuring and therefore maintaining their position in society” (Olander 1995, p.133). One of the issues around this lack of engagement, she states, is the insufficient understanding of methodologies concerning the study of elites. Three of her observations – rarity of studies that involve elites, the importance of similar studies, and general misconceptions about “how” (and “whether”) it is even possible to study elites – are especially relevant in the case of research involving Rwanda.

With this in mind, the following chapter serves two purposes. First, it lays out the overall methodology of this research, highlighting how the process of research design, data collection and data analysis need to constantly build on each other and constitute a never-ending part of the research process. Together these aspects of the methodology anchor the researcher in a particular way of thinking, and also question and challenge core assumptions and ideas. Second, this chapter shows how (given extensive time and preparation) it is possible to conduct research about Rwandan elites. The chapter discusses the strategies used to gain access and to develop rapport, while maintaining objectivity during the interview process, as well as identifying a number of shortcomings and difficulties that the author encountered along the way.

The chapter's conclusions will underline how, with hindsight, this research could have avoided delays and could have benefitted from more strategic planning. What is clear is that this research is situated within the specific context of Rwanda, which is, itself, part of the broader field of development research. As such, this field is bound up in the "historical and contemporary experiences of (neo)colonialism, imperialism, power and inequality" (Hammett, Twyman, Graham 2015, p.6). Therefore, it is important that our own ideas of the place and people that we discuss in our research is informed by our own experience in the field. This can help us to effectively refine our (research) questions, our methodology and as such allow the overall research design to be improved.

2.2. Ontology, Epistemology and Paradigms

The central research question of this thesis precipitates a qualitative understanding of the relationship between the education policies pursued and the emulation of Developmental State models within the African state. Thus, the methodological narrative of this chapter begins with a general argument that all research should have a clear ontological (the nature of being) and epistemological (the nature of knowing) foundation. Dealing with both the ontological and epistemological premises of research is key as "it influences what is produced by the research process" (Morris 2009, p. 210). This not only defines all elements of the enquiry, including the formulation of relevant questions and determining research design, but also helps to justify the tools used in the research, looking, specifically, at what is considered to be evidence, and how this is gathered and, subsequently, interpreted (Patton 2002, p. 134-135 and Grey 2004). As Gergen and Gergen (2003, p. 60) rightly point out:

[E]very method of research carries with it assumptions about the nature of the world. To select a method, then, is to constrain a way of understanding. In effect, a choice of research method is also a choice about the way we shall understand the world

The underlying concerns that define the researcher's ontological and epistemological position are outlined through a set of "paradigms." As Patton explains, a paradigm is:

(...) a worldview – a way of thinking about and making sense of the complexities of the real world. As such, paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners. Paradigms tell us what is important, legitimate, and reasonable" (Patton 2002:69)

Approaching qualitative research from this perspective emphasises that knowledge is historically and culturally situated and constructed. Additionally, this way of approaching qualitative enquiry has implications for the way we define 'truth' (Gergen and Gergen 2003, p.16; Morris 2009, p.210). The truth, and what we understand it to be, depends on our paradigm and how it is verified by evidence and analysis. The key here, as will be highlighted in the section dealing with data analysis, is that in understanding "paradigm" as a conceptual framework of methodology or epistemology, we are both limiting *and* regulating what is considered to be a "worthy problem" (Kuhn and Gergen 2004:8). In this way, we are not only defining the direction of a particular enquiry, but also the problems that are likely to be excluded: "because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools and paradigm supplies" (Kuhn in Gergen 2004:8).

Inevitably, the choice of paradigms influences how we approach the relationship between knowledge and power (Foucault & Gordon 1980). This is important as it highlights different ways in which knowledge production can be reproduced and can keep reinforcing asymmetrical and/or emancipatory powers (and understandings), in terms of examining

implicit assumptions and posting alternate/counter hegemonic discourses (Bourdieu & Nice 1977, Freire & Freire 1973).

The concerns around “truth” and “power” were key features when considering the design of this research. The first, important, discussion is about what “truth” is and how it is perceived. In contrast to how “truth” is perceived via positivist paradigms, the issues of “truth” in this research were approached via the constructivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 2005, Bryman 2001). As such, constructivism holds that “people have agency, and their observed behaviour is guided by subjective meaning. This implies that social phenomena are not only produced through social interaction, but they are constantly in a state of revision” (Morris 2009, p. 210). The implication of adopting the constructivist paradigm in this research is significant, as it prescribes how the truth is understood. It is not, as positivist paradigm dictates, a “truth” that “is out there” (Morris 2009, p. 211), and that simply requires the researcher to uncover it. It is a “truth” that is realised through discovering the “meaning” that actors use in order to make sense of their world. Sarantakos (2012, p. 37-39) points out that the “truth” approach via the constructivist paradigm cannot have an objective meaning, which is independent of the actors in question. It is, therefore, important to highlight that while thorough this thesis I was interested in specific issues, and while the themes for the interviews were set, their semi-structured nature of the interviews was key. It allowed the interviewee to share and explore what they perceived as “truth,” rather than making the researcher an arbiter as to what the “truth” is (Hay 1997, p.48³). In this sense, my aim was to take the stance of postmodernist sensibilities, which, as Tierney and Lincoln argue (1997, p.IX), are “suspicious of discourses” and look at “facts [that] do not exist independently of the medium through which they are

³ Hay argues argument/discussed the role of “supreme arbiter”

interpreted” (May 2011, p.28). Thus, it can be said that the knowledge achieved here is not so much discovered as constructed (Denzin & Lincoln 2003, p. 305 and Hay 1997⁴).

Considering the ontological position of this research, whereby the researcher looks for meaning and particular interpretations behind interviewee conversations, justifies the use of semi-structured interviews as a valid research method. However, the fact that, in the case of this research, the interviews were conducted with elites, adds additional complexity to the issues of power balance and the ways in which knowledge production may have been influenced – a challenge discussed in further detail in the following sections.

2.3. Interviewing – semi-structured interviews with elites.

Given the type of qualitative data that was sought, semi-structured interviews were conducted as a primary means of collecting data. The main advantage of this type of interview was that it provided a better opportunity for the “knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues” (Denzin & Lincoln 2018, p.579). In the case of this research, semi-structured interviews allowed a greater space for interviewees to respond to questions and for the researcher to direct and focus the conversation on topics that were deemed important to the research question. It also allowed interviewees to adopt their own strategy when approaching the interview⁵. This enabled them to share their experiences, draw on comparisons, and raise issues and perspectives which were more inductive to them: “These types of interviews are said to allow people to answer more on their own terms than the standardized interview

⁵ This was important as part of maintaining power balance between researcher and interviewees; or more precisely researcher’s tactics of ‘giving in’ – a strategy that was consciously adopted by the researcher to ease the responded into discussion; for more please see section 2.5

permits, but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the focused or unstructured interview” (May 2011, p. 135).

These approaches ranged from storytelling to direct answers, comparisons, jokes and, on one occasion, even quoting song lyrics. By allowing this and, at times, even encouraging it, vital knowledge was gained in two ways. First, it enhanced trust between interviewee and interviewer, thereby making respondents feel more comfortable about sharing information. Second, it allowed the interviewer to generate a greater understanding of the respondents’ motivations.

In this way, and following on from postmodern conceptualisations, interviews were seen as a dialogic and performative process that have the goal of understanding “how people enact and construct meaning” (Denzin 2001, p.43). However, the process of interviewing cannot be seen as neutral and, as Fontana and Fey (2003) argue, interviews are “active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Fontana and Fey, 2003, p.62).

These approaches expose a number of issues that need to be taken into account concerning the interviewer and the knowledge that they produce. The most important among these is that of “imbalances of power” (Liu 2018, p.1) which can exist between interviewer and interviewees, and also within the “interview situation” (Denizn & Lincoln 2018, p.588). It is the interviewer who controls the interview, as it is they who are responsible for initiating the exchange, designing the questions, terminating the interview and critically analysing the answers. While the researcher’s dominance is clear in the situation of the interview, it is

important to highlight that the situation becomes more complicated in the case of interviewing elites. While it is clear that in studies focusing on non-elites, it is researchers who “have the position of expert”, in elite studies, those who are being studied are the ones “in the know” (Mikewicz 2012, p.483). Similarly, Burnham emphasises that “elite interviewing is characterised by a situation in which the balance is in favour of the respondent” (Burnham 2004, p.205; also see others Bygnes 2008, Leech 2002). Here, the power-balance regarding the quality of received knowledge – including the degree of truth, the possible agendas of politicians, as well as rules around the process of interview – need to be carefully scrutinised. A number of authors (Burnham 2004, Homan 1991, Ostrander 1995) point out that these challenges often deter researchers from designing research projects that require engagement with the most powerful people, as the latter are especially skilled, not only in pushing their own agenda, but also at deflecting interviewers’ questions. The complexities arising from some of these issues and the way they were approached for this research will be discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

2.3.1 Access to Interviewees

One of the main issues in conducting interviews for this research was gaining access to elites (Sabot 1999, Ostrander 1995, Thuesen 2011). In this sense “access to interviewees” is understood in the broadest sense and does not only involve the ability to contact or communicate with particular respondents but includes issues around creating a positive relationship with gatekeepers (Liu 2018, p. 6), gaining trust and building a rapport with respondents, while, at the same time, maintaining a critical distance and managing cross-cultural differences (Mikecz 2012, p. 482).

Discussing the above-mentioned issues within the context of this research is complicated, depending on which group of respondents is involved. The challenge of interviewing Rwandan elites highlighted differences over how each individual elite group needed to be approached in terms of access and relationship building. At the start of the research, the assumption was that interviewing junior officials and gaining access to them would be the easiest. However, it became clear early in the process that, due to the closeness that the author developed with a number of researchers and academics prior to fieldwork in Rwanda, maintaining a critical distance and acquiring their unbiased and “honest opinions” (Mikecz 2012, pp. 483-484) would be difficult. This, inevitably, gave rise to questions around subjectivity and objectivity during the interviewing process (May 2011, pp. 139 - 140). The questions the author was required to ask herself were: what role will my previous knowledge of an interviewee have and what type of material will be collected? Is my role as interviewee one of impartial scientist or is it more of a friend? How will this influence the interview? (for similar discussion see May 2011, p. 140)

Given that before the official data collection, the author spent a considerable amount of time debating the Rwandan State and Rwandan politics with many individuals who, it was hoped, would be included in this research (such as junior level officials) these questions became of the utmost importance. The individuals mentioned above were aware of my personal opinions and, similarly, I knew of their views before data collection. By means of testing, an initial attempt was made to determine whether it would be possible to maintain objectivity, given the closeness between (potential) interviewees and interviewer. The testing was done by implementing “rehearsal interviews” on a five Rwandan colleagues, where I trialled my questions and different ways in which I could take each interview forward. What was

immediately evident was that it was neither possible for the interviewer to maintain complete objectivity when asking questions, nor for the interviewee to answer them without trying to pursue some assumed agenda. This, obviously, jeopardised the credibility of the gathered information (Denzin & Lincoln 2003, p. 35). Recognising this early on, the author was able to correct this and change the strategy. While a number of individuals, who the author can refer to as *colleagues*, were part of this research, the final composition of the interviewee group was limited to individuals whose views on crucial problems raised by this research had not been discussed beforehand. The author, additionally, made a decision to exclude a number of other individuals and *friends* as, otherwise, the objectivity of the gathered data could have been jeopardised. However, a good proportion of friends, who were not included in this research, managed to support the author with the data collection process by recommending other respondents and, at times, providing much needed contextual explanations and verifying certain facts and pieces of information.

Issues around gaining access to senior and medium level officials in Rwanda, who at the initial stage of data collection were considered to be one homogenous group of “high-level elites”, was similar (in terms of challenges and benefit) to those described in theoretical literature on the subject (Burnham 2004, Lilleker 2003, Richards, 1996). The right to access required the author to engage in a lengthy, and sometimes complicated procedure. The process of networking, identifying appropriate individuals and, finally, gaining access to high level officials in Rwanda was spread over three - four years. The start date can be traced to the author’s first visit to Rwanda in 2011. The purpose of this visit was to facilitate and manage a Study Visit (for details see Ambrozy & Harris, 2016) of twenty postgraduate students who were enrolled in a Masters course at the University of Bradford entitled “African Politics”. As

part of scheduling this visit, the author made contacts and requested meetings with a range of high-level officials in Rwanda. At the time, such meetings were perceived as beneficial by Rwandan officials and a good opportunity to “promote processes” and “vision” (Nsanziimana, 12 July 2012) taking place in the country to a wider, international audience. As such, a positive response to these meetings was very much in the interest of Rwandan elites, seen by them as an opportunity to promote their own political agenda. From the author’s perspective, these experiences were crucial to accumulating an understanding as to how best to obtain access to high level officials. Most importantly, this helped me to familiarize myself with the official protocol, as well as become familiar with a good number of gatekeepers (on the importance of making “good impression and relationship with the gatekeepers” see: Liu 2012, p.6), be they secretaries, assistants, or advisers. This was advantageous, as being perceived ‘as someone whom we know’, the author was later able to receive a degree of support from particular gatekeepers who went beyond their responsibilities to facilitate this research⁶.

Later on, during the Study Visits (in 2011 and 2012), when the actual meetings between officials and the Masters students were taking place, these initial steps allowed the author to narrow down the topics that officials were likely to discuss more openly, as well as to identify people who were likely to take part in the research. For example, meetings with representatives of the police, military and Ministry of Justice of Rwanda were always carefully pre-arranged and any “question and answer sessions” were limited to students being able to ask only those questions that were officially communicated prior to the meeting. A similar situation, involving the same individuals or representatives of the same institutions repeated

⁶ On one occasion a secretary of Senior Official “track-changed” my letter requesting for a meeting, as she argued “her boss will like it more if it’s written in this style”.

itself again on the Study Visit in the following year. Ultimately this became a strong indication that the prospect of carrying out research on policymaking and policy implementation in Rwanda on themes relating to security, safety or any aspects of legal issues remained highly problematic.

In contrast, a number of high and medium level officials that I met during Study Visits were keen to share their phone numbers and email addresses. At the end of the second Study Visit to Rwanda in 2012, I had the contact details of over thirty individuals who might have been clustered in this research as senior and medium level official. They included a broad spectrum of officials from a range of sectors in Rwanda. From here on, the process of managing some of these contacts, using the semi-professional “keeping warm”⁷ strategy, began. This included regular “thank yous” and “keeping in touch” communications with gatekeepers and the politicians themselves.

Following this, through effective networking and keeping different communication channels open, the issues of identifying interviewees and setting up individual interviews was relatively straightforward. Once the meeting was accepted, Rwandan officials were unlikely to cancel, delay and/or postpone. Also, what is important, once details, such as the content and format⁸ of the interview were agreed, they were always followed. The only exception to this was in 2014, when the acquisition of the Research Permit (see section 1.4) became an obstacle to

⁷ Additionally, to my background in diplomacy, I also have a professional background in marketing and communication. In marketing terms “keeping warm strategy” is based on few elements - be quick wit follow up communication, keep communicating regularly, make messages relevant to recipient & repeat.

⁸ Approximately one week before the interview, interviewees were informed about the questions and they were informed about open nature of these questions. Usually, approximately two – three days before the interview, I was confirming that the expectation is for an open discussion around these questions rather than pre-scripted answers.

setting up and conducting interviews. While this is discussed in more detail later on in the chapter (section 2.7) it is important to stress here that once the Research Permit requirements were met in 2015, all officials were happy to continue with meetings and interviews as agreed beforehand.

As stated earlier, it was important to address the concerns surrounding the imbalance of power between interviewee and interviewer. Zuckerman observes that senior level officials “appreciate being treated as individuals” (Zuckerman 1972, p.174), something that was observed in the case of interviewees in Rwanda. These individuals valued the researcher having prepared for the interview. They appeared to gauge this in the early part of the interview, when the interviewer seemed to know or showed interest in the respondent’s personal story, their achievements or their current role. While they valued being asked open questions, they also appreciated it when follow up questions were targeted at their own area of expertise. While they were keen to provide cues that would allow a degree of probing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2004, p.193)⁹ – in contrast to other groups of respondents – their refusal to answer questions they felt uncomfortable with was explicit and definitive. This situation, while rare, was a significant indication of unequal power relations and of the interviewee emphasising his higher rank over that of the interviewer’s. In response, and to maintain a balanced relationship, it was important for the interviewee to continuously gauge and guide how the interview unfolded. At times, it was practical for me to give in and allow the interviewee to take this stance. In other instances, it was important to either challenge respondents by “contesting the elite’s inclination to ‘just talk’” (Ostander 1995, p.145), or

⁹ Three kinds of probing were used: “steering probes”, “depth probes” and “housekeeping probes”

change the form the questions took.¹⁰ Ultimately, as May argues, it is “engagement, not disengagement [that] is a valued aspect of dynamic interviewing” (May 2011, p.148).

2.3.2 Strategy for conducting interviews with three different groups of respondents

The main technique implemented in data gathering was the interviewing of Rwandan elites who were directly involved in the education sector. These elites included officials and academics as well as journalists, students and administrative staff, who were based in educational settings. Purposive sampling, and later snowball sampling techniques, were used to identify respondents. Purposive sampling was an important part of the preparation for the official fieldwork. It was based on the analysis of secondary data, that is, information gathered from previous visits to Rwanda and unofficial discussions with Rwandans who were involved in the education sector. In the second phase, when the interviews were conducted, a snowballing technique was used, where respondents were asked if they would identify individuals from whom they felt the researcher could glean additional information. Through this approach, the author was able to engage with respondents who were key to the focal education policies and were willing to share their individual perspectives.

However, in implementing the snowball technique, two problems arose. First, it tended to identify people who share similar views and characteristics. This had to be taken into account when deciding whether to follow up on a particular lead. The second issue was linked to the way in which some senior officials saw their role, not only in pointing towards particular individuals, but also acting as facilitators of the meeting. This raised concerns around power,

¹⁰ On two occasions, after changing the format of the question, interviewee provided answer (although previously he categorically refused to engage with the issue)

accountability and hierarchy. While these issues are discussed in more detail in the next section, it is important to note that, due to complexities created by a few high-level officials who attempted to use their authority to pressure junior colleagues to engage with this research, the sampling technique was limited to identifying respondents classified as lower-level officials.

During the course of the fieldwork, interviews were conducted with representatives of three categories:

- *Senior Government Officials*

This included nine senior officials from the Rwandan government and Higher Education Institutions. A number of respondents were interviewed more than once, normally with a gap of several years. This allowed the interviewees to acknowledge a shift in their position in response to new policies and developments. This was especially important when discussing the Language Policy. The majority of these individuals had been engaged at the “decision-making level” relating to the policies discussed.

As mentioned before, a number of unofficial meetings and discussions with senior officials were not directly relevant to this study. However, they did have significant impact on the ideas and perspectives developed during the course of this thesis. All of these meetings happened behind closed doors. Some were conducted as part of the Africa Study Visits, while others took place as informal discussions following official meetings with students. The most important among these meetings was with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in March 2011. Matters discussed by the author and the ten students who took part in the closed-door meeting with Kagame related to post-conflict reconstruction, policymaking and leadership. As such, the perspectives

presented by Kagame were important and, consequently, shaped the ideas developed in this thesis.

- *Medium Level Officials*

This group comprised thirteen officials from a range of governmental and academic backgrounds. The majority of these individuals were engaged at the “implementation level” of the discussed policies, with some recognising their role in shaping different elements of the decision-making processes. This group represented a broad range of institutions and perspectives. It was by far the most difficult category to systematise. The complexity surrounding this particular group stems from their diverse roles, along with the issues of agency and authority that the respondents held within their units and the wider education system. For example, a Director within the Ministry of Education appeared to be less influential within the overall Ministerial machinery than a Director within a smaller institution such as the Rwanda Education Board. In the end, what emerged as a useful technique, especially with officials in this group, was to ask each respondent how they would describe their own role, using the classification set out in this thesis. On all occasions, their own assessment matched the classification the author had made prior to the meeting. The importance of delineating this group of actors is twofold. First, in the words of many members of this category, they constitute a group whose key role is to implement governmental policies, and as such, in terms of power relations, they sit between “senior politicians and the reality of everyday challenges” (Interview 17. ML). Second, individuals in this group form, or were assumed by the author to form, the Rwandan bureaucracy, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, is critical to the functioning of a Developmental State. With this in mind, analysing the degree of deference and autonomy

among the Rwandan authorities will be important for examining the perspectives of mid-level officials (Chapter 6).

- *Junior Level Officials*

The last group of interviewees in this research comprised 22 academics, educators and individuals from across the country such as students, parents, journalists and foreign workers (both African and non-African) involved in the education sector. They were seen as key recipients and stakeholders of the education policies that were introduced. For example, while it can be easily demonstrated that the Language Policy has an impact on Rwandan society, for the purpose of this research, members of this group were assumed to be the main recipients of this policy. This is because they were the first implementers of the policy and were often responsible for preparing the first group of teachers and trainers to use English as mode of instruction in Rwandan Schools (this was especially relevant for academics from the College of Education). Ultimately, their comments were predominantly based on their experiences of using language as an instrument of teaching. In the case of the Higher Education Merger, academics (along with students) are the main recipients of this policy and, therefore, prone to any changes that are introduced. While this policy may have a greater impact in the future – as it is likely to define the available skills sets and broader capacity of the Rwandan state at the time of data gathering – its central focus was on the impact it had on the functioning and effectiveness of academic work and performance.

2.4 Approach undertaken to data collection and interviews in this research

Within the context of this thesis, each interviewee has been assigned to one of the three groups mentioned above. By doing this, it should be possible for readers to identify a number

of trends in the perspectives shared by particular groups – either vertically or horizontally. This categorisation was done while maintaining the anonymity of all individuals involved in this research.

To strengthen the objectivity, consistency, validity and reliability of the research, the author used multiple sources to check various points raised by the respondents. This was done by holding unofficial discussions, reviewing the available literature and widely accessible media outlets and identifying key themes and issues. This was followed by a semi-structured approach using follow-up interview questions which were more defined, and which augmented the earlier data and information. At each level of interviewing, it was important to account for the possibility of artificiality, exaggeration, as well as other issues that may have influenced respondents' answers. For example, as highlighted in the empirical chapters (5-7), a number of individuals denied there were any problems with the implementation of the Language Policy. As discovered later, each of the individuals was promoted to a new position within a short time of making their comments. This and similar inconsistencies and contradictions were addressed and properly acknowledged within the analysis. In some instances, the respondents themselves acknowledged inconsistencies and contradictions within their own responses at the time of the interview, while in other cases they (at times emotionally) dismissed a probing line of questioning, often disregarding more objective accounts or evidence that was presented to them. Again, all of these instances, at times including the tone and emotions which accompanied them, are accounted for within the analysis. It is believed that they provide an important perspective about the wider environment in which the current government and officials in Rwanda operate and, as such, are part of the examination of the policymaking and policy-implementation processes.

The responses to questions (see: Footnote 4) posed during fieldwork varied. A small group of interviewees read from pre-prepared answers and were reluctant to engage in any conversation or to answer any follow-up questions. A second group consisted of individuals who agreed to follow-up questions but used these as a way of narrowing the discussion and returning to the issues specifically identified. The third, and by far the biggest group of interviewees, loosely referred to the questions presented to them, but also happily engaged in a much wider discussion, highlighting some of their own observations. This last group of interviewees replied to follow-up questions and engaged in more in-depth discussions. In the case of senior officials, important connections were made with the discussions that the author had had with them previously, thereby demonstrating that their own perspectives on different issues had changed or stayed the same. The attitude of individuals towards policymaking and policy-implementation was not indicative of their professional position or which of the three groups of respondents they were assigned to. The openness of individual speakers depended mainly on their level of familiarity and trust with the researcher (author) of this thesis, the researcher's supervisor or the Higher Education Institution (SOAS) that the researcher represented¹¹. This situation had a significant ethical implication that needed to be taken into account. These were linked mainly to the motives of particular individuals, as well as preconceived ideas connected to what they thought the author was hoping to hear. Irrespective of these issues, the author was able to secure interviews with a wide range of officials in Rwanda and to gather a range of important perspectives concerning the discussed education policies and broader developmental transitions taking place in Rwanda.

¹¹ Some respondents agreed to accept the invitation for the interview as they trusted the credibility and objectivity of the supervisor of the thesis, Professor Clark or they had personal knowledge and experience of studying/working in SOAS.

Finally, it is important to note that primary data collection was complemented by secondary data as a way of adding credibility. These secondary data sources included the coverage of key media outlets (including social media), the international community and NGO reports, archive material and other documents. Essentially, this additional documentation helped to clarify and to reinforce a number of points made during the interviews, while pointing to the evolving discursive nature of Rwandan politics, as well as state and societal processes. In this way, data analysis became an on-going process, built before, during and after the fieldwork.

2.5 “Who are you and what gives you right to do this research?” A discussion on researcher positionality

The above questions were asked by one of the interviewees at the early stage of data collection. They were posed as part of a broader opening statement by a middle level official (Interview 17. ML), who did not perceive them as being a light-hearted introductory icebreaker but saw them as a legitimate way of checking my (*i.e.* the author’s)¹² competence, knowledge and positionality within their research. Mainly due to its unexpectedness, the questions appeared difficult and, initially, unjustified. What was unique about these questions, however, was that they did not relate directly to the research, but rather to me, personally. They questioned my ability to speak English¹³ and whether the fact that English was not my native language gave me the right to ask about language change in Rwanda. The interviewee questioned whether my age and gender made me be too young to discuss “such advance” (Interview 17. ML) issues around education. In the following statement he also

¹² As this second related to authors’ positionality, in this section I will make a conscious attempt use first person, as oppose to an impersonal 3rd person used within the academic writing.

¹³ English is author’s second language

emphasised seniority both with regards to the age and position of many individuals that I aimed to approach for answers for this research. Finally, his querying highlighted that I represented a British university and, as such, it was possible that my views were embedded in a Western style of thinking, which affected how I perceived both Rwanda and Rwandans. In that moment, the only logical approach was to answer all these questions as honestly as possible. At this point, it is difficult to know whether it was my honesty in sharing the story of who I was (rather than providing a generic or prescriptive reply) or the content of my answers, which made the interviewee accept my replies and engage with me in one of the longest and most profound discussions in this research (Interview 17. ML). What became clear from this exchange was that who we are as researchers and authors matters. This is true, not only on the theoretical level where it impacts on the truths and knowledge that we produce, but also for the people we interview. On many occasions, by sharing my story and, often, openly identifying my own limitations and shortcomings, I was able to increase the trust between the interviewees and myself.

Within the context of the interviews which I conducted in Rwanda, another important aspect of trust building was the process of “storytelling,” which was part of almost every interview conducted. Initially, I regarded this part of the interview as being slightly pointless, and I questioned myself as to: “how many times do I have to listen to the story of how the genocide started and how Rwanda, as a State, emerged after it?” However, while, on the surface, these stories contained many repetitive details, they displayed a means by which the interviewer was trying to welcome me into their own world. The stories were their way of communicating with me on a personal level rather than an academic one, as they provided information as to where they came from, how they saw things, how they approached their roles, and how they

created their understanding of the world around. Learning to appreciate these stories was one of the ways I grew as a researcher. Additionally, by learning how to relate my, often very different, story – with regards to age, gender, ethnicity, class, education, language and/or life experiences – I could situate myself much more closely to the people I interviewed. While, on many levels, I was different to my respondents, there were also many experiences we had in common. As with many of my interviewees, I was a parent, I had to work to support myself in completing my university degree, I was an immigrant whose family was scattered throughout various countries, I spoke more than one language, and so on. Interestingly, being aware of my story and who I was allowed me to be more sensitive to certain issues faced by my respondents, and helped me identify my limitations as well as those within the interviewing process.

Another important challenge was that of the language (Hammett, Twyman, Graham 2015, pp.55, 151) used to communicate with the interviewees. As both Lee (1993) and May (2011) highlight, language is an inseparable part of the researcher's identity and, as with race, class or gender, may have a critical impact on the dynamics and power balance between interviewer and interviewees. The issues that are of importance here are how, and the degree to which, disclosure, mutual comprehension and understanding, trust, and intrusiveness occurs (Smith 1996, pp. 30; 240-245). A consideration of the above concerns was an imperative when it came to the designing of this research.

I considered that, given the research question and the attempt to focus the discussion on a more in-depth study of the Developmental State in Rwanda, it was important that both

interviewer and interviewee were able to speak freely. It was with this in mind that, of all the interviews, only one was conducted in French (Interview 4. SL) with the use of a translator¹⁴.

Given the fact that the majority of my interviewees were people of a similar status and education to my own – they spoke English as their first or second language and were university educated – comprehension and the style of discourse were not problematic. This was true even when metaphors, comparisons or abstract ideas were used. Going even further, my position as a non-native English speaker often allowed me to develop, what Smith calls, “in-between forms of understanding” (Smith 1996, p. 165).

Regarding comprehension, another reason interviewees sought to engage me in their own, and Rwanda’s history, was to establish my understanding of Rwandan history (as mentioned above) and the broader issues around education in Rwanda. The first was important to ensure that topics that could be seen as trespassing into greater political and historical conflicts would not be discussed, and that conventions around taboo subjects would be followed. This mainly related to emphasising the use of “Rwandans” whenever citizens or politics were discussed and using terms of “Hutu” and “Tutsi” strictly when referring to history. The second issue, aimed at establishing my level of knowledge of education in Rwanda, was connected to the degree to which “technical language” (Zuckerman 1972, p. 170) could be used. This included the use of specific terminology, acronyms, as well as references to individual policies, documents and individuals. Having identified my ability to follow their way of talking,

¹⁴ While it was an unusual case, the respondent, did understand English as on three occasions he requested translator to be more precise in his translation and he did not wait for interviewees questions to be translated from English to French. His choice of French was mainly dictated by the fact that he “didn’t feel fully confident in talking in English about things that mattered to him so much” (Interview 4. SL)

interviewees tended to relax and used “vocabulary more closely approximated [to] their usual one” (Zuckerman 1972, p.170).

It is also worth noting that a great source of reflection on my own positionality towards the interviewees and interviews is included within the “situational notes” which I made along each interview. While the aim of creating these notes was to reflect on the dynamics of each individual interview, a substantial part contains detailed information about my own position and the broader context of the interviews. Ultimately these notes consisted of not only technical details, but often also comments about the way I related to a particular interviewee, how I felt, what I found surprising or funny. For example, speaking with an interviewee for whom English was not his native language, I was able to exchange anecdotes about difficulties in learning and the time that it took to master a new language. Similarly, with another interviewee, who had recently returned from London, we were able to share our observations about domestic British politics and exchange opinions about the challenges facing the aviation industry and our own uncomfortable experiences of travelling from Europe to Africa.

A range of challenging and awkward moments were also recorded. Many of these were due to the cultural dynamic between my, at times direct and loud, approach to communicating and the more subtle ways in which Rwandans talked – they were usually much quieter and less emotional. Since my first visit to the country, I was aware that Rwandans, especially educated elites, perceived a balanced method of communicating as being a sign of maturity, a feature that is highly respected among Rwandans. Nevertheless, encouraged by the warm welcome and hospitality of my host, I would sometimes relax too much and allow myself to sink back into my behavioural habits, falling into the trap of asking questions that were either

too personal or articulated in a very direct, and inappropriate, manner. While, usually, a pointed stare and silence from my respondent would be enough for me to reflect on my conduct, I once experienced a situation where I repeatedly asked the same, inappropriate, question three times. To my embarrassment, my interviewee was left without a choice and needed to state explicitly: “that the question is too direct and, in some ways, inappropriate” (Interview37. JL/A). Thankfully, the situation was redeemed immediately by the interviewee himself, as he continued to “repair” the question and made it more acceptable to Rwandan cultural norms.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data collection and data analysis were tightly interlinked in the research process. Early analysis and reflection on particular elements of interviews and gathered data allowed for adjustments in how subsequent interviews were conducted. In general, the interviews with officials at different levels occurred at the same time. Before I was required to stop my data collection in 2014 (due to complications with the Research Permit), I had managed to interview respondents at all governmental levels. While some lower-level officials were happy to continue interviews without me presenting the Research Permit, I believed that this could, potentially, put them in a difficult position. I, therefore, ceased this phase of data collection and returned to it only when the official bureaucratic process was finished. As this took approximately twelve months, I tried to use this unexcepted break to my advantage. I transcribed all the interviews conducted until then, along with making the detailed “situational notes” mentioned in the previous section. In later stages of the research, these notes turned out to be a remarkable help as they often allowed me to identify particular

interviews more easily, as well as connecting and conceptualising some comments in a more effective way.

The rigour and validity of the data was maintained throughout the process of categorisation and prioritisation (see ideas by Guba and Lincoln, 1981, pp.85-103). After transcribing the notes and field observations, a number of data categories were created. In this early stage of data gathering categories were most often created around “most commonly repeated” words and phrases. Ultimately, the process of creating categories involved delineating recurring themes in all interviews. These first categories included: “nature of Rwandan politics”, “responsibility for policies”, “impact on individual people”, “policy benefits”, “policy challenges”, “quality in education”. As a next step, a “traffic light” system was applied to these categories to underline the context in which information was acquired: green when the respondent mentioned the issue themselves; yellow when the issue was mentioned following general probing; and red when an individual needed to be led to the answer, or if the given issue was mentioned subsequent to a follow-up question. This way of sorting out helped to show the importance that respondents attached to a particular issue. This approach highlighted that certain issues were more significant than others depending on which group of interviewees was being considered.

Following the initial categorisation, a category of “others” was created. “Others” consisted of quotes, ideas and comments which looked like they don’t fit anywhere and don’t form a coherent, broader category. Initially the category of “others” gathered a large amount of data. Later on, data was assigned to one of the main categories or to a new category of “individual” (for data appeared less than 3 times). Further to this categorisation, a systematic

check was conducted. This check was further verified by comparing, against transcribed and handwritten notes.

The second stage of the process included analysing the categories and checking whether they formed a systematic and defensible concept. The issues considered within each category to determine if a systematic and coherent concept was present included: similarity, simplicity, logic and relatedness.

Some categories could not be easily considered as concepts because some issues within categories were representing opposing or disparate views about the same issue. For example, the category “reasonability for policies” included a variety of issues and often very conflicting perspectives which were perceived differently depending on which interview group particular interviewee belonged to (*i.e.* senior, medium or junior level official). To allow this data to be assessed as a coherent concept, comments and ideas needed to be analysed in further detail to identify new and previously not obvious concepts. For example, the category “reasonability for policies” had within it the concept of hierarchy, that was identified when the data presented was considered in relation to the position and role that a particular individual had within the hierarchy of the Rwandan state. This process of analysis to identify non-obvious concepts strengthened the answer to the research question posed in this thesis.

Analysis of the first round of fieldwork completed in 2014 allowed me to identify a number of categories and concepts. After the second round of fieldwork was completed in 2015, the range and detail of these categories and concepts were developed further. Only at this point was a decision on the relevance of the list of categories and concepts completed.

After completing the second round of fieldwork, the process of categorisation and classification was re-applied to the new data and all findings were merged to create one database. The next step in analysing data involved the prioritisation of categories. Here, a few considerations needed to be made. The first, and most obvious, was the number of times an issue was mentioned. Here, it is important to mention that the author distinguished between issues mentioned frequently against those that appeared credible and logical. For example, the two most frequently mentioned issues were the success of the education system in Rwanda – exemplified by the number of students enrolled in education – and the challenges of providing quality education. While the first issue was a widely popularised government slogan, it did not become a key category but rather was noted as a widely shared view. Compare this to “quality of education,” which was considered the biggest challenge. The inconsistency with which interviewees understood what “quality” meant prevented their statements coalescing into a single category and a key concept. The most interesting categories were defined as “unique” due to the author’s disbelief and surprise of it. It related to a respondent’s comments about the “silent ways” of deference (Chapter 7) to governmental regulation.

Determining the completeness of each concept required a careful consideration of various topics and issues raised. The practicality of this process varied. Sometimes an individual comment was used directly as a concept in the final version of the thesis. The two best examples here include understanding of “quality of education” as well as issues which were clustered as “successes and challenges of education system”. In other instances, categories were dismantled and ultimately created three separate concepts within the thesis. Here good

example is around what was initially clustered as “nature of Rwandan politics” and what ultimately appears within the thesis as three separate concepts of “speed”, “surprise-politics” and “trial & error”.

There were also topics and categories that did not find their way to this thesis. This included issues that were mentioned sporadically, that did not constitute shared concerns or were considered by the author as being outside the scope of this research. The last of these was mainly because it was impossible to verify the credibility and validity of the particular data provided, due to the exclusion of certain, potential, groups of respondents. Examples of this include category of “university admission” and “university scholarships and bursaries”. Although they were mentioned by a large number of the respondents, the information was regarded as insufficient as many of the discussed issues lacked the perspectives of Rwandan students (who were not part of this research design).

The categories that emerged from this analysis were shared, verified and their credibility checked by a group of interviewees (Interviewees: 7 SL; 16 & 17 ML; 21, 23 & 37 JL/A), who were contacted at the early stages of the writing up process (Interviewees: 7 SL; 16 ML; 21 & 37 JL/A) for a follow-up discussion. As such, the categories, broader concepts and ideas presented in this thesis have been considered and validated by this group of interviewees to sufficiently reflect their opinions.

As mentioned before, throughout the process of data analysis, and later during the writing up stage, it was important to critically reflect on how the themes, categories and concepts were emerging and what the author’s role, as an interviewer, was in attaining particular

information. Being conscious of the balance of power and authority, as well as demonstrating a sensitive attitude towards ethical, political and cultural considerations were an inherent part of the author's questioning. Additionally, an active evaluation of my position as researcher after the first data collection was concluded in 2014 allowed me to be more aware of my position when the second round of data collection was completed in 2015.

To summarise, during the process of data analysis, I would evaluate and re-evaluate multiple modes of data, namely, behaviours, ideas and various narratives, as well as different recordings, such as pre- and post-interview communications, interview notes and transcripts. In this way, research analysis was an ongoing process of critical reflection, focused on subjectivity, power, representation and interpretation (Clarke 2003).

2.7 Ethical issues in research conducted in Rwanda

The issues discussed in the thesis were often sensitive – both for the interviewed participants as well as for the Rwandan government. Therefore, it was important to take into account all matters necessary to protect the anonymity of individual participants. Furthermore, issues of power, consent, confidentiality, trust, the avoidance of undue influence on the participants' responses, consistent implementation of boundaries and mutual expectations, along with issues of my own cultural assumptions, and, in two cases, the utilisation of translation, had to be addressed. All of these issues were considered, while taking into account safety and accountability to individuals, as well as official protocols and regulations.

Research Permit

This research was undertaken with the approval of the official Rwandan research regulatory body, while permission to conduct official research and interviews was granted by the Ministry of Education, under permit No: MINEDUC/S&T/241/2014. When the crucial part of the fieldwork for this thesis started in March 2014, the Ministry of Education of Rwanda tightened its regulations around permits and official oversight of foreign researchers, and implemented a new (and, at the time, often chaotic) process of granting research permits for anyone who wanted to conduct interviews in Rwanda. In March 2014, after conducting a number of interviews with lower-level officials and academics, the author was informed that, given the enforcement of new regulation, it was now impossible for a researcher to conduct interviews with mid- and senior level officials in Rwanda without first gaining clearance from the Ministry of Education. This was particularly stringent when interviewing officials within the education sector. On almost all occasions, prior to setting up meetings with senior officials, I was requested by prospective respondents to show that I had been approved by relevant authorities to conduct interviews. It soon became clear that the extent of the procedures and documents necessary to comply with the required procedure would take a significant amount of time and was not feasible within the timeframes of the 2014 visit. In the end, acquiring the research permit took almost one year and, subsequently, the fieldwork for this thesis was completed in March 2015.

To obtain this permit, I was required to submit a list of topics that would form the line of questioning¹⁵. While these questions formed the basis of the application for the official

¹⁵These official questions included the following:

- General Theme: *1. What would you see are the biggest achievements of the Rwandan education system?*
- Language Policy Theme: *2. In 2008 there was a change in the language that is officially used in schools - can you tell me from your experience how this has worked (or not)?*

research permit, they were also a significant part of the invitation that was sent to officials requesting them to participate in the research.

It is important to stress that the data, including quotes and observations used in this thesis, were made over the course of five years. An official fieldwork visit, for which the research permit was obtained from the Rwandan Ministry of Education, was completed in March 2014 and March 2015 (except two interviews that took place in 2013). However, in March 2011, March 2012 and March 2013, a number of discussions and meetings took place where issues critical to this thesis were discussed. Forty-one individuals took part in multiple discussions, as well as interviews for the official fieldwork in 2014-15. The details of each of the conversations is comprehensively highlighted by dates in the interview outline (Annex 1). After the official research permit was granted by the Rwandan Ministry of Education, all of the afore-mentioned respondents agreed for their retrospective comments to be used in the thesis. A similar arrangement, spread over a few years, allowed the building of trust with key individuals. Additionally, it helped with validation, comparison and, in some instances, reflection on changes in the views presented by some of these officials, which helped deepen and bolster the analysis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Before undertaking interviews, all respondents were assured that their responses would be anonymised and that individual interviews would not be tape-recorded. In many instances,

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- Institutional Merger Theme: 3. *Could you tell me from your perspective what are the pluses and minuses of the Higher Institution merger?*
 - History Curriculum Theme: [asked only if appropriate to the speaker's experience] 4. *How did the changes in the History Curriculum impact on your work and which part of the History Curriculum do you feel makes a good representation of Rwandan history (and which parts don't)?!*

interviewees reiterated their request for anonymity during the interview and, for the majority of respondents, this was a key condition to their consenting to participate. Furthermore, the guarantee of anonymity helped interviewees overcome their obvious unease and any tendencies towards self-censorship, and minimised the possibility of creating problems for them once this thesis, or parts of it, were published.

To allow the reader to follow some of the observations made by the author, interviewees were classified into three groups, with references to these groups being made throughout the thesis. Respectively, the acronym, SL, equates to a Senior Level Official or Senior Government Official, and refers to an informant with the rank of Minister or equivalent. The acronym, ML, denotes a Mid-Level Official and refers to an informant with the rank of Director or equivalent. Finally, JL, Junior-Level Officials refers to an informant on the level of academic (A), lower-level officials and others (O).

Except for one interview in London, all interviews were conducted in Rwanda; mainly in Kigali, but also in Butare (Huye) and Ruhengeri (Musanze). The location of each interview is highlighted in the Appendix 1, along with the date when the interview took place¹⁶. Besides the interviews, informal observations and quotes were also made following meetings, relating mostly to meetings with officials during the Africa Study Visit (in 2011 and 2012) and at the Kigali International Forum on Genocide, which took place between 4 and 6 of April 2014, as part of the Kwibuka20 Anniversary celebrations in the Rwandan Parliament in Kigali. All meetings are appropriately referenced in Appendix 1.

¹⁶ To verify the replicability of the research and the quality of the data sources, a list providing detailed information about each informant was provided to the thesis examiners and destroyed after thesis defence.

Sensitivity and integrity

A key advantage of the proposed research was that its central theme was not deemed by the Rwandan authorities as being as sensitive as other research that has been undertaken, such as topics around the genocide against the Tutsi. Consequently, the issues which are of particular concern to the Rwandan authorities, namely ethnicity, reconciliation or historical accuracy, were not at the forefront of this analysis and were not included within the initial line of questioning. Accordingly, the Rwandan authorities did not consider the proposed research likely to raise controversy or have a negative impact on the Rwandan Government's internal or external reputation. At the same time, the research plan presented to the Rwandan authorities anticipated that a number of high-level officials would be approached to comment on issues relating to Rwandan policymaking and policy-implementation. This prompted various requests for clarification from the Rwandan authorities, including proof of affiliation with a reputable Rwandan institution, a detailed list of names and positions of ministerial and government officials who would be approached for an interview, a detailed list of questions and topics that would be discussed, along with a recommendation letter from the supervisor of this research and any Rwandans who could comment on the author's character and views. My response to these demands was twofold. First, despite the complications and length of the entire process, the procedure was met with full respect and compliance. Second, to maintain independence throughout the research agenda, all the information provided to the Rwandan authorities was general and allowed for a high level of flexibility and interpretation in the post-fieldwork phase. Furthermore, the credibility of the author was also supported by the endorsement of some officials within the University of Rwanda and by the thesis supervisor. This, ultimately, helped accelerate the process of establishing institutional trust between the researcher and ministerial officials. The patience,

understanding and frequent communication with individuals involved in the bureaucratic process of obtaining a Research Permit allowed for the establishing of important links that aided networking and the obtaining of access to key ministerial officials.

It is important to note that the list of officials who were requested to be approached for comment on issues raised in this thesis was not interfered with or limited by the Rwandan authorities. Furthermore, the list of officials submitted for the Ministry of Education's approval included only a specific group of officials (as outlined above), and did not include other respondents, namely staff members within the University, or staff members from the affiliated educational institutions and others.

Interviews were conducted in various official and less formal settings such as cafes, private gardens and hotel lobbies. In all but three cases, interviews were conducted without the presence of third parties. In those three exceptions, one involved the presence of a translator, one the presence of an assistant who was taking notes during the meeting (Interview 2.HL) and in the third, there were two other officials present, who appeared to be staff members of the interviewed official. Only in the third instance (Interview 14. ML) did the answers presented in the interview appear to be pre-written and were easily identifiable as being part of the official governmental narrative. In the case of this interview, the answers given were short and did not go beyond the prescribed questions. This was by far the shortest (lasting 30 minutes) and most generic interview of all those conducted. Given the setting in which the interview took place, along with the interviewee's unease with talking in English (and unwillingness to use a translator), more open and probing questions were not pursued. Important to note here is that the name of this particular official was suggested by one of the

ministers in the Ministry of Education. Later on, it was confirmed that this particular interviewee was contacted by the office of the Minister and requested to comply with the invitation to participate in this interview. Following this, the snowballing technique of identifying respondents was abandoned with those individuals who were identified by Ministry officials. While it was not possible to verify the situation prior to this meeting, I considered this interview an important illustration of the ways in which authority and deference can shape research in official settings in Rwanda (for more see Chapter 5-6). The interviewee accepted the interview invitation involuntarily to comply with the request of the superior official, but, ultimately, significant engagement with the questions and the content of the research was lacking.

Post-interviews, the data obtained from respondents was not shown, discussed or tampered with by any party. This was essential for maintaining the integrity of the empirical findings. As such it remained within the author's remit to interpret findings independently and without any outside pressure (P. Clark, 2013; Fisher, 2015; Jessee, 2012; S. Thomson et al., 2013). What is crucial to add here is that the data and comments made by the interviewees drove the content of this thesis and informed the eventual findings of this enquiry. In this way, it can be seen that the material presented in this thesis was determined fully by the interests of the Rwandans themselves.

2.8 Conclusion. Alternative approach to assess quality in qualitative research.

The design of this research, including selecting the topic, studying case studies, the choice of appropriate methods, rigour, credibility, reflexivity, as well as ethical matters, entailed a lengthy process. While it was controlled by the researcher, it was often influenced by

observations, discussions and engagements made in Rwanda a few years before the actual data collection began. In the light of this, I found a comment by Tracy, in her article on the application of a universal criteria to judge the integrity of qualitative studies, especially salient. Tracy writes that:

(...) many students (and senior scholars, for that matter) engage qualitative projects without knowing which theories will eventually situate their research (Tracy 2010, p. 839)

As a response to this, Tracy produced a simple “go to reference list” that could be used and applied to validate the feasibility of any research. While her proposition is valid and, in the longer term, has many benefits for research, the perspective that the author of this research has been keen to advocate is one outlined by Patton:

My practical (and controversial) view is that one can learn to be a good interviewer or observer, and make sense of the resulting data, without first engaging in deep epistemological reflection and philosophical study. Such reflection and study can be helpful to those so inclined, but it is not a prerequisite for fieldwork. Indeed, it can be a hindrance. Getting some field experience first, then studying philosophy of science, has much to recommend it as a learning strategy. Otherwise, it's all abstraction (Patton 2002: 69)

The error that the author of this research made was to do the exact opposite of what Patton calls for. Driven by preparatory training in philosophy and research methods prior to going to Rwanda, the author was exercised by the idea of developing the “perfect research design”. Looking back at these initial designs, what is evident is that those early attempts had two things in common: first, they were very artificial; and second, they were heavily influenced by the perspectives and views of my initial supervisor before I changed universities.¹⁷ As such, I realised that I was trying to make philosophical and theoretical assumptions about a

¹⁷ Professor Phil Clark who oversaw completion of this thesis was the author's second supervisor and agreed to supervise this thesis after my Research Methods training and after moving from my first university to SOAS.

population and place I didn't know. Additionally, I was making these assumptions based on what I was guided on as being "good" and "attractive" in the sense of academic achievement. The focus of these initial ideas was not on what was important or what was in agreement with my world view and my conscience. Admittedly, these early designs are technically adequate – there provided constructive links between ontology and epistemology, the research questions were set correctly, and the methodology and ethical considerations were well argued. However, after visiting Rwanda, it was apparent that none of these was going to help me interpret that particular context. The topic of the research, as well as the research questions, were neither as relevant as I had assumed nor as timely, significant or interesting (either to me or to the Rwandans I met). Instead, the issues of research rigour and ethics were far different from anticipated and the author found that the challenges to her own understanding of the world and herself as a researcher were emerging drastically. The final version of this research could not be further from the initial design. The process of research design would have been much more effective if it had occurred in a very different order. The first two years of research training, when it was required of the author to come up with a research design and study the broad and detailed scholarly literature around philosophy, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, could have been much more effectively replaced by studying the eight-page long article by Sarah Tracy "Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Research". From the perspective of this author, the main strength of Tracy's assessment and her eight criteria is not, as she tries to argue, around its universal applicability, but rather its simplicity. In one table (Tracy 2010, p.830) and thirty bullet points, which act as a quick reference point, Tracy highlights everything that a qualitative researcher needs to aspire to.

While the author's position towards research was, to a degree, greatly informed by literature on historicising academic qualitative research and, more specifically, the ideas around Norman Denzin's eight 'moments' and the metaphor of "bricoleur" research (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, 2018), these did not always provide a comprehensive or easy go-to guide on qualitative methodology. While they offered a feasible way to position and critique problematic claims of truth made by positivist literature, they also required the criteria for goodness to be *"tied to specific theories, paradigms"* (Tracy 2010: 839). In hindsight, given that coming up with a design for this research was a (lengthy) process with a number of important changes ("ups and downs") made along the way, adoption of Tracy's criteria from the start would have been of great benefit to the journey which this thesis, and its author, ultimately took.

Chapter 3

Developmental States – Classical Developmental States in East Asia & Emulation of the Model in sub-Saharan Africa

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the scholarly debates regarding Developmental States, starting from its most narrow definition through to looking at the evolution of the concept and, finally, analysing its applicability within the African context. In doing so, this chapter provides essential background for further discussion on the nature of the Developmental State in Rwanda.

Perspectives on, and approaches to, Developmental State debates are depend on the adopted definition, context or academic discipline. Debates can be centred round a narrow definition of the Developmental State and, therefore, be limited to a handful of cases in East Asia (Öniş, 1991; Weiss, 2000), but they can also include a broader definition that allows more countries to be labelled as “developmental”. Furthermore, consideration can be based on a historical perspective, different academic disciplines (Stubbs, 2009) or looked at from the viewpoint of the Developmental States’ achievements (see for example:(Doner et al., 2005; Doner & Hawes, 1995; Stubbs, 2009; Weiss, 2000).

This chapter does not aim to provide a detailed review of these debates or to present an exhaustive explanation of Developmental State theories. Considering the rich body of literature on Developmental States, the scope of arguments addressed throughout this chapter is limited to aspects considered to be most relevant to this thesis, which can help facilitate the analysis of the Rwandan State, which will follow in Chapters 5-7. The premise of

this chapter is to expand the label of *Developmental State* beyond the classic typology and handful of cases in Asia. This counterposes the more orthodox “developmentalist” approach, which reserves this definition for only a handful of cases (see for example: Cumings, 1984; Weiss, 2000) As will be illustrated, it is the lack of a clear agreement around conceptual approaches to Developmental State theory and the confusion of its definition that generate some of the difficulties in understanding and emulating this state model.

Additionally, it is argued throughout this chapter that even if all the characteristics of classic Developmental States are not equally presented in the cases of African states, the attempts made by a number of them are worthy of recognition. At the same time, the transference of Developmental State conceptually can only happen by pointing out limits, challenges, inconsistencies and, in some cases, failures of the Developmental model being adopted in Africa.

The first part of this chapter highlights key characteristics of classic Asian models of Developmental States in its most narrowly-defined version, namely those adopted in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. It is important to emphasise that both the way in which these Developmental States currently function and the modern development theory have evolved considerably (Acemoglu, n.d.; Elhanan Helpman, n.d.; Meier et al., 2002; Romer, 1994) from the initial classification of the concept.

However, given the timeline and the stage of development that the states in Africa find themselves today, analysis in this thesis will focus on archetypal cases of Developmental States. Additionally, it was highlighted by the interviewees that classic Developmental States are the ones that the current examples are being drawn from:

We need to go back to the roots, to the beginning – to how these states took off. What were their priorities, their first policies? It's good to be aware of some negative lessons, but what we really need to study, is the roots on which these states were created (Interview 6. SL)

The second part of this chapter looks at the application and prevalence of the Developmental State model in Africa. While at times generic, the analysis focuses on evaluating key features of Developmental States in Africa, incorporating discussions about the unique features of African state theories, as well as specific potentials and challenges of developmentalism. Discussion in this part of the chapter draws on examples of countries that are seen as Developmental or display developmental ambitions. These will include Ethiopia, Mauritius, Botswana, and in a limited form, Kenya and South Africa. This investigation will provide the basis for a more detailed discussion of various characteristics of the Rwandan state, but, more importantly, it will expose the need for a more nuanced approach to the Developmental State theory with respect to the African continent.

3.2 Classical Developmental State in East Asia – origins of the concept

The ideological and theoretical debates around the concept of the state is one of the most fundamental concerns of political analysis (M. Mann, 1984; J. Migdal, 1997; R. C. R. Taylor et al., 1996). The theory of the state – its purpose, what and who it should represent – remains one of the most disputed in political science. Ultimately, questions about the state can be modified and answered in a number of different ways, depending on which particular aspect of state function, role or feature is to be analysed.

Within this broad debate, the concept of the Developmental State needs to be viewed through often-contrasting interpretations of state power that lead to questions around the state's role and responsibilities (Stubbs, 2009; Yeung H.W.-C, 2017). Developmental States

are assumed to encompass a broad classification of those states where “governments try to actively ‘intervene’ in economic processes and direct the course of development rather than relying on market forces” (Beeson, 2007, p. 141; Caldentey, 2008, p. 28). Looking at this broad definition, it is clear that the idea of a state having an active role in promoting economic growth and development is not a new concept. Friedrich List, the 19th century German economist, argued that the role of the state is fundamental to economic growth. According to List, economic advancement is interpreted as a:

(...) perfectly developed manufacturing industry, an important mercantile marine, and foreign trade on a really large scale, [that] can only be attained by means of the interposition of the power of the state (List, 1966, p. 178).

In this sense, recognising that economic growth and development are one of the basic concerns embedded within the functions of the state means that the label “Developmental State” could be relatively easily applied to almost any state in the world (Beeson, 2007).

While acknowledging the above argument, the distinctiveness of the Developmental State is two-fold. First, contrary to previous definitions about the state and development, states that are accounted for within the concept of the Developmental State are explicitly called as such based on a theoretically systematised concept (Leftwich, 1995, p. 403). The process of theoretical systematisation mentioned above was initiated in the 1980s by Chalmers Johnson (1981, 1982), who initially outlined the concept of Developmental States in relation to a study of Japan. Essentially, Johnson’s analysis concentrated the prevailing narrative around the level of the state’s engagement in stimulating economic growth and situated it at the centre of the process of constructing and coordinating development in Japan. Second, the systematisation, as initially offered by Johnson, had clear geographical limitations and refers

to “analyses of the economic success of East Asia’s “miracle economies” (Stubbs, 2009, p. 1) and, according to some authors (Weiss, 2000, p. 22), is strongly advocated for use only in relation to four classic Developmental States, namely Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

Applying the above parameters of analysis, the concept of Developmental State is seen as relatively new in the field of political science. At the same time, when looking at Johnson’s (1981,1982) initial work, it is clear that no exhaustive definition of the Developmental State is given. Rather, Johnson highlights four features of the Developmental State that make them distinctive from previously outlined concepts. These four features include:

(...) developmental state bureaucracy; a political system that provides bureaucracy with relative autonomy, allowing it to be proactive and efficient; highly developed mechanisms for state intervention in economy; [and] the existence of organizations or institutions that control key industrial sectors (C. Johnson, 1982, pp. 306–324)

Soon after Johnson’s work on Japan was published, these four elements became key indicators and a basis for further analysis of states in East Asia, where similar economic growth “miracles” could be observed. At the same time, each subsequent analysis added a new understanding and new elements to the definition, ultimately, doubling the number of characteristic features of Developmental States. Key publications in this regard include case studies of South Korea (Amsden, 1989; Koo, 1984), Taiwan (Gold, 2015; R. Wade, 1990) and Singapore (Lim, 1983; Rodan, 1989).

The extent to which, and whether any other, countries could be labelled Developmental States remains debatable. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis (Chapter 1), some authors go as far as asserting that only the four cases mentioned above justify the

Developmental State label (Weiss, 2000, p. 22). Other authors offer a much broader interpretation and argue that a Developmental State can be identified in every case where the “the consequences of its [state] actions promote rather than impede transformation” (P. B. Evans, 1995, p. 44), or that it is a state “with a dutiful and credible commitment to development” (Levi-Faur, 2012, p. 10). What adds to this complexity is the fact that, in many instances, references, similar to those made by interviewees in this research of what the Developmental State stands for, are limited to the version presented by a particular government or given official. As will be presented in the second part of this chapter, in this particular context it is much more important from the viewpoint of individual actors, what the state “does” rather than what “it is” (Brown & Fisher, 2020, p. 186).

As the definition of Developmental States remains disputable (Leftwich, 1995; Stubbs, 2009, Levi-Faur 2012) and, irrespective of which definition would be accepted, it is important to highlight that:

(...) much like many other adjectives describing the state, the concept of the ‘developmental’ state was rather thin on theoretical definitions and thick on characterizations (Levi-Faur, 2012, p. 6).

The list of accepted characterisations differs depending on the author, the discussed case study and the particular phase of maturity that the Development State is in (Leftwich, 1995; Stubbs, 2009, Levi-Faur 2012). The approach undertaken in this chapter, and more broadly in this thesis, is to look at the Developmental State model that is commonly referred, or seen as more relevant, to the respondents in this study. As such, Developmental States need to be identified by characteristics specific to 20th century East Asian countries within their post-World War II context (for similar approach in analysis see Woldegiyorgis, 2014 study of Ethiopia) . As such, the key features that define the concept of the Developmental State in

the next section include: the importance of history and experience; the economy of the Developmental State; the existence of developmental leadership and elites; the relationship among autonomy, embeddedness and non-state interests; an understanding of legitimacy based on performance; the existence of insulated and autonomous bureaucracy; and, the managed corruption and existence of a weak civil society.

In the first part of this chapter, these key features will be illustrated by examples from the classical case studies mentioned above. In the second part of this chapter, they will guide further analysis of the state in Africa and, later on, will support analysis of the Rwandan case study (empirical Chapters 5-7).

3.3 Features of the classical Developmental State

3.3.1 Importance of history and experience

As numerous authors argue (Cumings, 1984; Leftwich, 1995; Weiss, 2000), the origins of Developmental States have to be found, not only in the design, but also in the historical experiences of these states. Generally, strong institutional state practices (either independent or colonial), were already well established. With time, these practices allowed for the effective design of today's "economic miracles". Thus, Developmental States were built upon pre-existing foundations, including:

(...) strong state protection for nascent industries, adoption of foreign technologies, and comparative advantages deriving from cheap labour costs, technological innovation, and "lateness" in world time (Cumings, 1984, p. 2)

Although the same pattern of historical development is not equally applicable in all four of the discussed countries, three of them – Japan, Taiwan and South Korea – did develop interconnectedly. The changes and growth that took place in Japan later had an important

impact on Taiwan's and South Korea's experiences, thereby transforming the concept of Developmental States into a historical, as well as regional phenomenon:

Thus, if there has been a miracle in East Asia, it has not occurred just since 1960; it would be profoundly ahistorical to think that it did. Furthermore, it is misleading to assess the industrialization pattern in any one of these countries: such an approach misses, through a fallacy of disaggregation, the fundamental unity and integrity of the regional effort in this century (Cumings, 1984, p. 3).

What is also acknowledged in the scholarly literature is the fact that the direct motivation for the Developmental State model did not arise from the ambition of the states' elites, but was rather associated with the dramatic situation of East Asian countries after the Second World War:

In the case of the East Asian states the events of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath generally dislocated the region's communities and severely weakened the economic and political networks that had dominated regional societies (Stubbs, 2009, p. 6)

Following the war, the discussed East Asian countries found themselves in an uncertain situation. External threats, whether real or perceived, which included the threat of communism, colonisation, reliance on foreign debt and poverty, became a strong incentive for a weakened society to accept a bureaucratized "rational capitalist" developmental model. In essence, the legitimisation of this system took place in an environment of internal and, more importantly, external insecurity, accompanied by a weak civil society, thereby reinforcing the idea that:

A weak society makes it much easier for a strong state to develop, not only a talented autonomous bureaucracy capable of planning and implementing an industrialization strategy, but also an effective coercive institutional capacity that is able to maintain domestic social order and provide any necessary territorial defence (Stubbs, 2009, pp. 6–7)

The importance, strength and necessity of the described historical *stimulus for the growth* and its association with a durable Developmental State is also highlighted by authors looking at states characterised by high economic growth in other parts of the world. In some instances, the lack of a dramatic past that could match the ones discussed in the case of Asian countries is considered responsible for a deficit in commitment to the demands of constructing Developmental State. As such, it has been outlined as one of the key reasons behind the failure of the process of emulation of this kind of state in other locations (Schneider, 1999, p. 302).

3.3.2 Economy behind Developmental States

Definitions of the Developmental State put economic advancement, and the way in which particular states are able to foster similar growth, at the centre of theoretical discussion. This is a key element that distinguishes a Developmental State from other kinds of states. Woo-Cumings (Woo-Cumings, 1999) explains, on the back of Johnson's 1982 account of Japan (Johnson 1982), that it is:

(...) an interventionist state that was neither socialist [...] nor free-market [...] but something different: the plan-rational capitalist developmental state, conjoining private ownership with state guidance (Woo-Cumings, 1999, pp. 1–2)

The *plan-rational* aspect of the analysis is a distinctive feature of the original theorisation of the Developmental State. It is directly linked to economic planning and the way the state functions and positions itself regarding international financial markets. This interventionist role of the state goes well beyond rectifying market failures and is specifically involved in shaping the whole economy into what the state wants it to do. However, this shaping requires that similar state interventions are met with an active participation and response from the private sector (Caldentey, 2008, p. 30).

According to Johnson's analysis (1981, p. 308), the "plan-rational", which is deemed as Japan's unique representative feature, clearly distinguishes a Developmental State from other types of states. Here, Johnson distinguishes two other kinds of states - Soviet states which he defines as being "plan ideological" with their roots in Stalinism, and "regulatory states", such as the post-war American state, with its roots in the New Deal. Following Johnson's logic, the developmental role of the state precedes any other aspect or function that a given state is trying to match, including "a regulatory state, a welfare state, an equality state, or whatever other kind of functional state society may wish to adopt" (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 306).

However, economic planning is approached differently from one Developmental State to another. Among East Asian countries, Japan is widely considered as leading the way and being central to the expansion of the Developmental State model, with Taiwan and South Korea seen as following its example.

Another important element that differentiates "plan rationality" from "market rationality" (which is symbolic of the American capitalist model) is the difference between evaluation standards. Johnson draws an important distinction between "efficiency", which he assigned to the American way of thinking, and "effectiveness" which he assigned to the Japanese miracle model. In certain sectors, the "Japanese continue to tolerate their inefficient and even inappropriate [...] structure, at least in part, because it is mildly effective" (C. Johnson, 1981, p. 22). This difference in policy priorities, between effectiveness and efficiency, plays an important role in how legitimacy is perceived in a Developmental State. This topic will be discussed in more detail later.

However, in all of the discussed cases, even if positioned at the centre of attention, the economy is not a *goal* in itself but is rather the *means* by which the state strives to achieve the broader aim of becoming competitive and self-sufficient (Castells, 1992, p. 57). What Johnson calls “the rationality of choice of the developmental model” (C. Johnson, 1982), is, in his analysis, derived from the particular situation in which the Japanese state found itself, something that was outlined in the previous section. His argument, although acknowledging various cultural and social imperatives, underlines certain ‘situational imperatives’ that include, among others, “late development, a lack of natural resources, a large population, the need to trade, and the constraints of the international balance of payments” (C. A. Johnson, 1982, p. 307). Consequently, the formation of the Developmental State that puts its economy first among priorities, is not a choice but, rather, a necessity. Other options would render the state dependent on external support with a likelihood of enduring poverty, which would, inevitably, have a negative impact on the fabric of society.

3.3.3 Leadership and the developmental elite

According to Johnson, the historical continuum, on which the Developmental State succeeds, is overwhelmingly driven by the commitments of developmental elites (1982). In his study of Japan, Johnson asserts that the continuity of “state industrial policy” is maintained through the commitment of people who execute roles in leadership positions in all prominent public spheres – including politics, banking, industry and economic administration. Johnson emphasises that the persistence that made the Japanese miracle possible was “not only historical and organizational, but also biographical” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 309)

Promotion of the developmental vision and formulation of an appropriate economic strategy by a capable and committed leadership is considered to be central to the success of the Developmental State model in East Asia (Mok, 2006, p. 91). As highlighted in the literature, while requiring strong popular support, a successful developmental leadership is often highly elitist and, therefore, limited to a handful of people (Chang, 2010; R. Wade, 1990).

On many levels, however, it is not purely the commitment of the elites to the developmental project that lies behind the success of Developmental States, but also the roles and positions which political elites assume within the state apparatus. These roles carefully balance the prerogatives of state leaders and state bureaucracy. Summarising his discussion on the structural determinants of the Developmental State, Johnson says that:

(...) the most striking characteristic of the capitalist developmental state is an implicit political division of labour between the tasks of ruling and the tasks of reigning. The politicians reign and the bureaucrats rule. (...) Both sides have important functions to perform (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 154)

What is crucial to the successful cooperation between politicians and bureaucrats is an understanding of mutual responsibilities and limitations. While the decisions made by the bureaucrats are legitimised and ratified by the politicians, the bureaucrats have the freedom to “formulate developmental policies, draft and administer the laws needed to implement the policies, and make midcourse adjustments as problems arise” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 154; Öniş, 1991, p. 115). This two-way relationship, which is one of the significant elements of the state’s capacity, is not possible, and cannot bring about the desired results, without the existence of internal cohesiveness, where states are able to act as “corporate entities with broadly collective goals” (Chibber, 2002, p. 952).

Finally, pro-developmental leadership, as described above, which is represented by visionary, elitist individuals who limit their own circle of power while enjoying high levels of popular support, is prone to be authoritarian (P. B. Evans, 1995, p. 12). To clarify, it is not advocated here that this is a prerequisite, or a conditionality, of Developmental States. However, past experiences and an understanding of the way in which a pro-developmental leadership is supposed to function, fuels the belief that a “strong regime with political will and a non-negotiable approach to domestic governance” (Brown & Fisher, 2020, p. 186), is necessary.

3.3.4 Insulated and autonomous bureaucracy

Based on the analysis above, success of the Developmental State is, essentially, based on the effective implementation of the *plan-rational* system. The changes essential for the implementation of similar system within the Developmental State are managed by bureaucrats. This happens in an inverse manner to the *market rational* system, where any changes are made via parliamentary assemblies, new legislations and electoral competition. The existence of a strong executive branch and weak legislative is generally agreed to be one of the main prerequisites of a Developmental State (Abe, 2006; Amsden, 1989; C. A. Johnson, 1982; R. Wade, 1990); as Abe quotes after Murakami: “developmentalism is a political and economic system based on nationalism, which tends to limit parliamentary democracy” (Abe, 2006, p. 8)

It is important to mention that the bureaucracy with its ideal form, as outlined below, was possible and described specifically with relation to Japan. Other Developmental States in Asia (immediately after World War Two) had a rather “poor human capital base” (Chang, 2010, p. 92) and needed to invest heavily in, what was at the time, low quality personnel. This observation will be especially important in the discussion around human capital in current

pro-developmental states in sub-Saharan Africa. Here, while the state is often applauded for its ambitious developmental and political vision, it is also acknowledged, or excused, that the failure to deliver this vision is due to the lack of qualified individuals. In relation to Rwanda, this will be discussed in Chapter 6 and 7.

Bureaucracy that maintains the highest level of engagement and influence, is seen as a key to the success of the classic Development States. As Johnson (1982) emphasises, in the case of Japan, “most of the ideas for economic growth came from the bureaucracy” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 24) . The autonomy afforded to bureaucrats in Developmental States is unparalleled. One of the greatest strengths of Japanese industrial policy is its ability to deal with discrete and complex situations with limited need for enacting new laws or involving lawyers. In Johnson’s view, allocating “discretionary and unsupervised authority in hands of bureaucracy” allows for the critical power of a Developmental State (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 316). The second critical feature of bureaucracy in a Developmental State is its internal cohesiveness, which is based on its ability to “act as corporate entities” and whose function is based, predominantly, on broad collective goals rather than on the “sum of the individual strategies of their functionaries” (Chibber, 2002, p. 952).

Following on from this, a crucial factor that makes such a bureaucracy effective in its manoeuvring, is its incomparable networking abilities. Evans (1995), for instance, points at the internal and external importance of these. In the case of the Japanese state, there is a clear distinction on how similar networks work, internally and externally. Internal networks are essential to the coherence of bureaucracy, while external ones serve to connect the state and civil society. This “maze of ties” that connects ministries, institutions and particular industries, is at the centre of Japanese industrial policy (Evans 1995: 49).

In the cases of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, these networking abilities are assumed to have a similar source, being directly linked to the elitist status enjoyed by bureaucrats. In South Korea, for instance, state bureaucracy “has traditionally been able to pick its staff from among the most talented members of prestigious universities” (Evans 1995:51). Similarly, Wade (1990) finds in Taiwan that familiarity and the common background of bureaucratic staff is an essential factor in joint ventures:

The combination of party ties, common educational background, and most importantly, long-standing working relationships with colleagues, make for an uncommon amount of personal and professional empathy among top officials. This, in turn, helps to create a broad consensus among them on the general goals of Taiwan’s economic policies (R. Wade, 1990, p. 217)

Bureaucrats, as a group, enjoy a highly privileged social status. In Japan, this status is compared to that of “governmentalized class” or a “service nobility” (Johnson 1982: 36). Another two issues that are vital in the construction of an effective bureaucracy are having a meritocratic recruitment and a predictable career ladder (P. Evans & Rauch, 1999). The first increases the likelihood of competence and is an important motivating factor for individual office holders. The second increases competence in a long run, improves coherences and, by offering a proper salary, a stable long-term career, which, in turn, increases the chances of an individual staying loyal to any given institution and insulates them from corrupt practices (P. Evans & Rauch, 1999, p. 752).

It is also clear that Japanese bureaucracy has achieved its prestigious status based on the country’s history, heritage and institutional structures. This status was preserved and extended over time. In light of perceived shortcomings and incompetency displayed by certain political forces (Johnson 1982; 45) various responsibilities were shifted to the

bureaucracy. This process of systematic engagement and increase in its duties served to enhance both the size and reputation of Japanese bureaucracy.

This long-standing continuity takes place in stark contrast to the systems based on “appointive bureaucracy”, where an individual’s tenure has an important impact on their commitment to the position and institution that they work for. As Schneider (1999) puts it, “bureaucrats in appointive bureaucracies have no job security and are thus constantly looking towards their next jobs and their next boss” (292). Continuous changes and re-appointments mean that bureaucracies are not properly rooted into the dense connections of industrial networks. Schneider concludes:

The appointive bureaucracy (...) undermines bureaucratic autonomy and generates high levels of circulation (...). Officials in an appointive bureaucracy rarely have time to develop the long-term relations of trust and reciprocity with business that characterise Developmental States in Asia because officials move to another job in another area of the state or the private sector whenever ministers or Presidents’ change (Schneider, 1999, p. 304).

In this way, two important concerns arise from the identified differences in the selection and establishment of bureaucratic actors in East Asian Developmental States and other countries where bureaucracy is based on *appointive bureaucracy*. The first relates to commitment and loyalty among bureaucrats towards bigger developmental projects. The second relates to the levels of politicisation among appointive bureaucrats. Together, these two issues have serious potential consequences for the way that Developmental State functionality is perceived. In states with appointive bureaucracy (as Schneider illustrated in his analysis of Brazil and Mexico), intensified politicisation makes administrative reforms of bureaucracy harder and more politically costly. In the long run, this leaves elites and power holders with the difficult dilemma of how to balance representation and central control (Schneider, 1999, p. 297).

For the purposes of this thesis, comparable challenges will be examined with respect to the way that bureaucracy functions in Rwanda, where the status and prestige of civil servants is high, but the appointive nature of the system makes particular individuals partially detached from their roles, thereby threatening coherence, continuity and effectiveness of the entire group. This will become an important element of discussion in Chapter 6.

3.3.5 Legitimacy and performance

It can be argued that ideology impacts significantly on legitimacy, especially within Developmental States. Castells (1992) claims that the very essence of the Developmental State is derived from how successful it is in achieving “developmental legitimacy”. For him, a Developmental State is one that:

(...) establishes as its principle of legitimacy its ability to promote and sustain development, understanding by development the combination of steady high rates of economic growth and structural change in the productive system, both domestically and its relationship to the international economy (Castells, 1992, p. 56).

In essence then, leaders and elites of early, classical Developmental States do not enjoy or pursue legitimacy in the same way as highly democratic societies do. They neither seek an electoral mandate, nor do they seek to base their power on civil society embracement. In Developmental States, “legitimation occurs from the state’s achievements not from the way it came to power” (Johnson 1999; 52-53).

Finally, the issue of legitimacy in Developmental States is closely associated with the nature of the relationship between state bureaucracy and privately-owned business. This is significant because major weaknesses and possible failures of the developmental system are

often linked to the way this relationship is managed. As Johnson (1982) argues, this is part of an ongoing struggle encountered by Developmental States, and a problem that is unlikely to go away. The balance of this association can be managed by the development of different methods and mechanisms for accountability. In Japan, there were three principal ways in which the state tried to resolve this problem, namely: self-control, state control and cooperation. The strength of these, which are not in any way perfect solutions, is once again based on the prerequisite that “forced development remains the top priority of the state” (...) and “therefore they are preferable than either pure laissez-faire or state socialism” (Johnson 1982: 310).

3.3.6 Autonomy, embeddedness and non-state interests

Autonomy of the state is one of the key features of Developmental States. But the meaning of this concept is nuanced and needs careful consideration. On one hand, the idea of the *autonomous state* may refer to the state of affairs where societal forces do not significantly shape governmental goals and policies. On the other, autonomy may also mean the ability of the state to formulate collective goals instead of allowing office holders to pursue their individual interests (Evans 1995: 45). Evans argues that in the case of Developmental States, autonomy is different in character from what autonomy is usually understood to mean:

It is not just “relative autonomy” in the structural Marxist sense of being constrained by the generic requirements of capital accumulation. It is an autonomy embedded in a concrete set of social ties that bind the state to society and provide institutionalized channels for the continual negotiation and renegotiation of goals and policies (Evans 1995: 59)

When discussing autonomy, Evans does not separate it from the concept of *embeddedness*, by which he implies “a concrete set of connections that link state intimately and aggressively to particular social groups with whom the state shares a joint project of transformation”

(Evans 1995: 59). Therefore, carefully selected and meticulously managed business and social groups are allowed to assist in shaping the state's goals. This is, of course, possible only as long as goals are kept in line with the overarching developmental agenda. What Wade (1990) calls "guidance of the market" is a way in which the state steers and allocates "investment methods which combined government and entrepreneurial preference" (27). In summary then, Evans' "embedded autonomy" advocates that bureaucracy understands the needs of the private sector while, at the same time, it needs to be suitably detached from private sector interests in order to protect its integrity.

As part of the role undertaken by Developmental States with regards to businesses and industries, the state often strongly interferes, directly or indirectly, in the management of non-state interests. This approach towards state management of non-state interests is not a new phenomenon. Johnson (1982) compares the way these links are developed in Japan and US by giving an example of how, in the case of the former, relationships are developed and maintained between government and business in the American national defence industries (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 312). Concluding his argument, Johnson points out that the main difference, in the case of the Japanese Developmental State, is that Western countries – however believably – see close relationships between governments and private business as exceptional. In the case of Developmental States, close relationships between governments and private business are considered to be the norm, especially when "leading industrial sectors during high-speed growth" (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 312).

The "embedded autonomy" that characterises classical Developmental States in 20th century East Asia was developed in specific circumstances and is based on a narrow base in which states operate. As will be outlined in the second part of this chapter, Evans later on (B. P.

Evans, 2010) revised his concept of “embedded autonomy” to fit to the 21st century Developmental States, having in mind the case study of South Africa.

3.3.7 Managed corruption

One of the alleged strengths of Developmental States is their apparent ability to control corruption. While this may be one of the goals of the bureaucratic elite, the reality is much more nuanced. In many ways, states that are categorised as classical Developmental States, such as Japan and South Korea, include corruption as part of their cost-benefit analysis and perceive it as an unfortunate, but to some extent avoidable, consequence of industrial policy:

(...) it is very difficult to do cost-benefit analyses of the effects of industrial policy, not least because some of the unintended effects may include bureaucratic red tape, oligopoly, a politically dangerous blurring of what is public and what is private, and corruption (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 30)

The discussion around corruption within Developmental States incorporates a classification of corruption and makes a distinction between two types. The first is identified as “petty corruption” and includes “gifts from businessman, golf club fees, dinner parties, junkets” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 68). In Taiwan, for example these practices are accepted within the realms of officialdom (R. Wade, 1990, p. 286). The second category of corruption is perceived as a major abuse of the office. It is directly associated with “patterns of cooperation between the government and big businesses” and, on a number of occasions, has ended in a series of major governmental corruption scandals. This abuse of office can also include “incidents of wholesale payoffs by the government to business interests with preferential access to advance knowledge” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 69).

While “petty corruption” is considered as incidental and draws quick public condemnation, the “major abuse of office” is a serious issue viewed as an imperfection of the system.

However, even in the case of major corruption scandals, the offence is not considered equally bad in all cases, as it also depends on who is involved in a particular scandal:

As long as these [corruption] scandals occur primarily among politicians and not among bureaucrats, and as long as development effort is proceeding to the benefit of the society as a whole, these scandals will be tolerated as unfortunate but not too serious imperfections of the overall system. However, if they occur among the bureaucrats, they signal the need for quick surgery and reconstitution of the system (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 317)

Therefore, the emphasis is again on bureaucrats to be beyond reproach, as their virtue and integrity becomes a measure of the success of the overall state project. As discussed before, given the responsibility and the role within the Developmental State, the way that bureaucrats are appointed and managed is subject to detailed consideration in an effort to limit incidents of disloyalty and corruption.

3.3.8 State-society relations and a weak civil society

Next to strong pro-developmental elites and autonomous bureaucracy, a weak civil society is deemed almost a prerequisite, or natural consequence, in the design of an effective Developmental State. In contrast to a pluralistic liberal democracy, where multiple interest groups enjoy equal and free access to the state, in a Developmental State: “(...) restricted and preferential access to the state by organized groups in civil society is an inherent and integral feature (...)” (Öniş, 1991, p. 119).

However, the theory of the Developmental State does not suggest that the state is completely indifferent to forming relationships with social groups. Instead, the ways in which relations are developed between the state and society happen more strategically, with clearly defined objectives that bind both sides. The reason for cultivating these relations is linked to the

embeddedness of civic groups within state institutions and bureaucracy. As Evans (1995) describes it, these relations constitute:

(...) a concrete set of connections that link the states intimately and aggressively to particular social groups with whom the state shares a joint project of transformation (P. B. Evans, 1995, p. 59)

However, even when these *business-like* relations are developed in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea (albeit in varying degree), the relationship between state elites and interest (business) groups is not one of equal partners. In all cases, state elites remain the “*unambiguous senior partner*” (Öniş, 1991, p. 119), with a much more privileged position. Despite the uneven relationship, there are benefits for certain actors and business groups. In Taiwan (where the state guides and determines which industrial policies and industries should be key to state transformation), a number of groups that are dependent on strong industrial development have an interest in cooperating with state actors. In return, the state has the responsibility of bringing specific interest groups into being (P. B. Evans, 1995; R. H. Wade, 2003).

Another way in which the state controls different interest groups is by shaping their goals, tailoring them to fit bigger developmental agendas. Their function is then transformed into becoming “*dependent auxiliaries of government*” (R. Wade, 1990, p. 228), rather than independent organisations that represent the views of its members. Therefore:

This type of political system enables leaders to articulate a public philosophy and broker political demands within the framework of that philosophy. In particular, it enables them to exercise much influence over public investment decisions and policy choices (R. Wade, 1990, p. 228)

When a Developmental State explicitly targets different interest groups for cooperation, it incurs another, greater challenge, namely which groups it chooses to disregard. Here, especially, the almost unanimous and systemic exclusion of labour from any political process

is pointedly visible. This is well illustrated in the case of South Korea, where different ways of participation and control are employed to generate the desirable regulation over lives and behaviours of workers. As Kohli argues, similar tactics, while not helping to create a free society, contribute to “productivity gains and, more important, enabled the state to single-mindedly pursue economic growth” (Woo-Cumings & Kohli, 1999, p.134; for more see also: Woo, 1991).

The fact that “groups without access to the system will, on occasion, take to the streets to call attention to their dissatisfaction” is deemed a simple “consequence of this type of political system” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 316). However, Johnson admits that when protests go beyond demands for political participation, the state cannot continue to ignore such groups indefinitely. Therefore, he argues, these situations are to be expected and are often anticipated by politicians. At the same time, he emphasises that as long as developmental projects are succeeding and are demonstrably equitable, then “political leaders should be able to deal with these problems symptomatically”. Only, occasionally, will government request and call upon bureaucrats to alter priorities “just enough to calm the protesters” (316). In a powerful way, the reliance on legitimacy and the accompanied strategic appeasement of civil society, points toward an intertwined relationship between social and national wellbeing and the economic performance of the state.

As the evolution of the Developmental State in East Asian countries illustrates, economic progress has immediate consequences for the shape of societies. Initially in Japan, but subsequently also in Korea and Taiwan, rising affluence and stronger education “make for large middle classes, which demand democracy” (R. Wade, 1990, p. 343). When such changes occur at the same time as external security threats diminish, the governments’ arguments for

tight controls are weakened, thereby heightening the risk of tension building between the state and different social groups. This is one of the most important challenges facing Developmental State elites. A Developmental State that encourages the aspirations of its society needs to be prepared for change. Experiences through the 1980s and 1990s show that promotion of rapid economic growth led to a quick expansion of the middle class, and also to the strengthening of the role of societal forces – a process which “slowly reoriented the political relationship between the state and society” (Stubbs, 2009, p. 12).

3.4 Education – a key investment of classical Developmental States

In outlining key characteristics of the Developmental States in East Asia, we can see the commitment and determination of East Asian states towards achieving successful economic growth. As shown above, and from other research in this area (Asher & Newman, 2001; Kwon, 1997), the welfare system, including accessibility and delivery of welfare provisions, social spending and policy interventions are typically not a priority for classical Development States. The only area within public discourse and public policy that is an exception to this is education:

(...) the Tiger governments have put strong emphasis on developing education as an investment for providing their economies with a high-quality labor force and well-educated professionals (Mok, 2006, p. 64)

From this perspective, education is often highlighted as one of the prerequisites and one of the most important reasons underlining economic development (Appelbaum & Henderson, 1994) of East Asian states. Comparable comments, while not always factually correct¹⁸, were made by respondents of this research, who would argue that introducing educational policies

¹⁸ The argument made by one of the respondents implied that ‘introduction of English’ as a common language for students in Singapore, was of the key prerequisites of the successful development (for full comments see Chapter 5). Research behind introduction of English in Singapore highlights that the initial reason behind it was not ‘economic’ but ‘unifying’ – aiming at ‘promoting social and political stability’ between multi-ethnic society (Morris, 1996, p. 106)

needed to precede successful development (Interview 6. SL). Before discussing some significant details in the way education functioned in classic Developmental States, it is important to highlight that, apart from being seen as an *economic investment* in this initial phase of development, education had another important role, which was to serve as a nation-building platform, creating a distinctive sense of “national solidarity and identity” (Morris, 1996, p. 96). The challenge of nation-building and state formation are part of the skill building programme, where “citizen formation skills” are given an important (if not more important) space for the “cultivation of specific technical skills” (Green, 1999, p. 64). As such, East Asian Developmental States see their education system as a mechanism by which they “cultivate the social attitudes and personal skills which are conducive to both, cohesive and orderly citizenship and to disciplined and cooperative labor” (Green, 1999, p. 64). While such a process was less critical in cases where there was a more homogenous society, such as South Korea or Taiwan, they became crucial for the multi-ethnic society of Singapore, from which lessons are often drawn for African Developmental States, including Ethiopia and Rwanda. Analysis of the school curriculum in Singapore shows that education has been used as a “harness to minimise ethnic conflict and promote political and social stability” (Morris, 1996, p. 106). As part of it, the teaching of English in schools was introduced as a unifying national language.

The expansion and functioning of the education system within each of the discussed states in East Asia is not homogenous. The differences relate to how, when and why different policies were introduced, the extent of state engagement in curriculum design, how funding for education was structured and how it evolved over time (Morris, 1996). While each of these accentuate important differences that arise largely from socio-political variations in each of these countries, there are also some significant similarities as to how education was

approached. Due to space constraints and the limits of this thesis, only two of these will be discussed below.

The first and most important issue relates to the “sequential nature of educational expansion” (Morris, 1996, p. 100). While the position of education, in its entirety, is critical for developmental projects, the ways in which particular levels of education were approached was strategic. The first stage was characterised by a very high level of gender-equal access to primary schooling, which subsequently translated into high levels of literacy and numeracy across the entire population. The outcome of this process was “the easy availability of literate and numerate women as well men for the work-force at the time of rapid industrialisation” (Morris, 1996, p. 100). Consequently, following changes in the economy, along with the requirements and expectations of a growing educated class, secondary and tertiary education was expanded. A similar rapid expansion presented many of the countries with a number of challenges relating to the quality of provision, supply of teachers or/and issues of employment for school leavers. However, due to the sequential nature of this expansion, these challenges were managed in a more balanced and systematic way.

The second issue relates to the heavy involvement and control exercised by the Developmental State in curriculum design and assessment. This intervention ensured the uniformity of provision at the primary level and encouraged a system of meritocracy and reward in the attainment of higher level and technical education. Key to the success of this system was the ability of the government to ensure that the rate of earnings and possibilities of employment were matched to the levels of educational attainment (Morris, 1996, p. 105).

Again, the characteristics presented here are not exhaustive of all the realities and individual policies within the education system in classic Developmental States. What they outline is an ideal that guided these particular states, and, as such, it did not remain unchallenged. In the late 1970s the Singaporean government needed to address problems around resource wastage, ineffective bilingualism and low literacy rates (Mok, 2006, p. 66). In South Korea an over-focus on quantity of students required the government to introduce changes to its education sector, transforming it from “supplier-oriented” to “learner/consumer-oriented” (Mok, 2006, p. 68), while in Taiwan, after a period of “top-down” monopolistic control in education, the government had to deal with more pluralistic reforms in the late 80’s (Mok, 2006, p. 68).

Finally, a general criticism aimed at all current Developmental States concerns the level of government commitment to education. On the one hand, the present spend on education remains the largest area of public expenditure in the majority of East Asian states, which could be easily interpreted as a commitment to education. On the other, Mok (pp.220-222) warns that this supposed commitment to education is only evident in the area of “funding and regulating” and not necessarily in the area of “provision”. He stipulates that the attention should move from “policy rhetoric” to “policy reality” where questions on policymaking within the education sector need to be asked, such as the consequences of policy-implementation, and the extent to which the results and consequences of policies are expected and intended.

Asking and answering all possible questions relating to East Asian countries is beyond the scope of this research. However, the direction of investigation outlined above is central to enquiries in the empirical chapters (5-7), which will be conducted with respect to the education sector in Rwanda.

3.5 On Policy – definition, approaches to researching and emulation

The following section aims to highlight relevant theoretical discussions relating to policy, its definition, models, as well as other aspects that are relevant to this research. The section is organised as follows. First, the section opens with providing the definition of how the policy is understood in this thesis. It then situates policy within the specific analytical framework (or model) and provides the justification as to why this approach was used. Ultimately the section discusses the most significant aspect of policymaking process in this research, namely decision-making.

The second section focuses on discussing a range of approaches relevant to researching educational policy, including policy enactment, critical policy sociology approaches and work on policy borrowing in comparative and international education. Specific features that are discussed in this section are directly relevant to the work done in this thesis.

Finally, the third section looks at policy emulation and links it directly to the discussion around the Developmental State. As such it tries to map the possibilities and limits of policy emulation, including debates over whether emulation of the Developmental State model is at all possible.

3.5.1 Policy – definition, models and relevance

This thesis uses the most basic definition of policy, viewing it as “formal or authoritative decisions that establish a plan of action for the community [...which] takes place within a ‘polity’, a system of social organisation centred upon the machinery of government” (Haywood, p.53). While restrictive in how this definition approaches the questions of values

(Easton, 1981), the informal ways in which policies can be made (Crick, 2000) and broader political conceptions that influence policy (Farrelly, 2003), this simplified approach allows a focused analysis throughout this thesis, as explained below. The content of this thesis is broadly systematised according to the particular stages of what is commonly known as the Policy Cycle; a popular model that, as Howlett and Ramesh (2003, p.11) discuss, is used to “simplify the public policy-making process by disaggregating it into a series of discrete stages and sub-stages”.

As such, this definition echoed the way interviewees in this project broadly approached policy making:

(..) you have to go to the beginning and see step-by-step how things were done. First, what was the actual problem [...] once this is identified you go to ask, what are alternatives [...] and only then you decide how to go about doing it all (Interview 17. ML)

(...) you don't just change things overnight, policymaking is all about a process – steps that need to be taken, one by one, sequentially (...) (Interview 39. JL/A)

The Policy Cycle assumes that each policy decision follows an orderly and coherent process, often summarised in five stages, namely: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, p.13). This model assumes a fundamental lack of complexity and therefore constitutes a linear process, where one stage neatly follows another. Of course, the reality in which public policies are determined is far more complex. As identified by various critics of the Policy Cycle idea, the model assumes both that policymakers behave rationally and logically and that there is no scope for deviation when the policy making process involves skipping or revisiting certain stages (see Howlett and Ramesh 2003, pp.14-15, for a list of disadvantages of Policy Cycle).

This critique, together with alternative models such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier, 2010; 2014) or Multiple Stream theory (Kingdon, 2003), suggest a much more nuanced approach. Regarding these alternative models, interpersonal networks and personal beliefs (in case of the former) and “opportunities for change” (in case of the latter) are accounted for as highlighted below.

In essence, the Advocacy Coalition Framework model focuses on policy formulation activities and the role of different actors. It specifically concentrates on analysing the way in which different actors share their common beliefs in ‘articulating and promoting specific definitions of problems and means to solve them’ (Howlett, McConnell and Perl 2016, p. 66). As a framework for analysis, it therefore focuses on “the role of ideas, learning and coalition behaviour in policy-making” (Howlett, McConnell and Perl 2016, p. 66). A second model is Multiple Stream theory, which aims to study policymaking via several independent ‘streams’ of events and actors that are interacting with each other in order to define and control policy agenda. As such this model accounts more effectively for “occasional chaos and the sometimes highly contingent nature” of policymaking (Howlett, McConnell and Perl 2016, p. 66).

While the discussion between different scholars around relevance of all these models leads to a number of questions (Pump, 2011; Cairney, 2013; Waible and Sabatier 2018), accounting for all of them is beyond the scope of this research. What is important here is to highlight that the definition of the policy used in this thesis neither aims to diminish the complexity of policy-making process nor to dismiss additional factors that the policymakers encountered in this research confronted when deciding on the principal educational policies in Rwanda.

The key benefits of using the Policy Cycle model as an analytical tool in this thesis are twofold. First, as mentioned, this definition helps to break the policy-making process into several identifiable, logical (Howlett, McConnell and Perl 2016, p. 66) stages. The simplicity and straightforwardness of these stages on a few occasions helped both the interviewer and interviewees to share the levels of understanding of issues around policymaking. Additionally, the Policy Cycle model “permits the examination of the role of actors and institutions involved in policy creation, not just those governmental agencies formally charged with the task” (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, p.14).

Additionally, it is important to highlight that the main objective of this thesis is not to analyse efficiency and nuance in relation to the public policy setting in Rwanda. Therefore, the definition of policy used in this thesis was key to setting clear analytical boundaries by “emphasising only a limited range of relevant casual and explanatory factors” (Howlett & Ramesh 2003, p.8). The definition used thus aims purely to function as a reference point, as a way of locating concepts and issues that were discussed by interviewees themselves. In summary, even though there are more nuanced models of analysing policy as outlined above, the more streamlined Policy Cycle model, while being fairly narrow and unnuanced, was used in this research as it mapped well onto how the respondents in this thesis discussed policy and policymaking.

It is also important to emphasise regarding the policies that were discussed, numerous respondents emphasised the decision making process as a key issue. Also when looking at interview transcripts, respondents spent incomparably more time discussing decision-making processes than any other element of policymaking. This trend follows the considerable

interest among both academics and policy-makers around issues relating to decision-making processes within public policy. One of the earliest definitions of decision making was given by Clough (1963):

(..) the process that involves a problem to be solved, a number of conflicting objectives to be reconciled, a number of possible alternative courses of action from which the 'best' has to be chosen and some way of measuring the value or payoff of alternative course of action (Clough, 1963, p.5).

Later authors have argued along similar lines, arguing for instance that "decision making involves the selection of a course of action from among two or more possible alternatives in order to arrive at a solution for a given problem" (Trewartha and Newport, 1976, p.39). Therefore, in essence, decision-making in both organizational and political contexts is conceptualised as the process of identification and selection among alternative pathways to achieve a desired result (DeLeon, 1983; Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001; Kreitner and Kinicki, 1995; McShane and Travaglione, 2003). A review of different theories (Held, 1999; Fernandes and Simon, 1999; Jones, 1995; 2001) reviews that general decision-making sequences can be broadly identified as: identification of the problem; collection and analysis of data; search for alternative modes of action; identification and application of choice criteria; evaluation of alternatives that ultimately facilitates making rational decision.

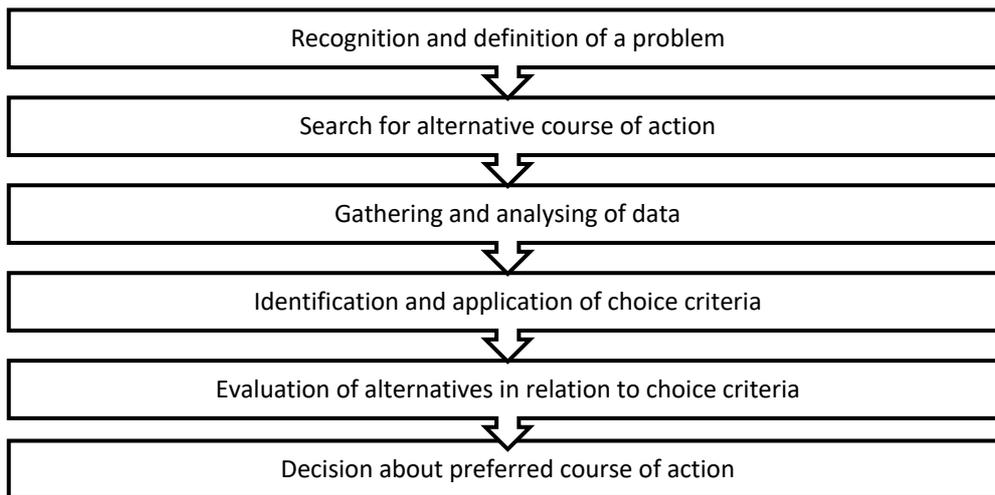


Figure 2. Sequential series of steps in decision making process

While this sequence of steps in decision making process may seem over-simplified and rational, it is important, not as a means of advocating or criticising policy making in Rwanda, but to identify the individual stages which may have been included in the process. In the case of the discussed policies, it was not the individual actors, processes, effects (Hall, 1993) or solutions (Takayama, 2007) that influenced the way in which policies and policy making were perceived in Rwanda. Instead, it was a mix of all these components, which were, furthermore, compounded by a lack of coherence, (and communication) and top-down hierarchy.

3.5.2 On Education policy – from policy enactment, through critical policy sociology approaches to policy borrowing in comparative and international education

The education policy field includes numerous strands, depending on the different academic backgrounds of particular authors. The two key areas explored in this thesis are policy enactment and critical policy sociology approaches, on the one hand, and policy studies literature borrowing from comparative and international education on the other. Discussing these approaches is likely to also acknowledge authors who cannot be classified within the

aforementioned areas, while highlighting more instrumental approaches to researching education policy that could potentially contribute to the strategies used in this research.

In recent years, critical policy sociology has been increasingly acknowledged by educational policy researchers as a useful methodology for education policy analysis. The underlying assumption of this approach allows policy researchers to analyse how social, political and economic issues relate to one another and influence educational politics. While it is beyond the scope of this project to fully evaluate all aspects involved in this research strategy, this section focuses on presenting the specific elements that are most relevant for analysing education policymaking in Rwanda.

The first key issue for educational policy researchers following the policy sociology approach is values. As such, values can be present as an object of study: to decide on policy, policymakers need to “negotiate a complex field of meaning and understanding” as ultimately “the making of meaning is fundamental to social action, and meaning is therefore always negotiated in social life; values are never fixed but rather are contingent on the mobilization of meaning in specific situations” (Levinson, Sutton, Winstead 2009: 779). Educational policy researchers who adopt values as their key object of study focus on manifestations and implications of values within particular educational policies.

Another important theme in this respect concerns how researchers adopting a policy sociology approach deal with their own values. What is often called an “ethically reflexive sociology” (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006) focuses researchers on making reflective accounts of how their position and individual involvement in social and fieldwork relations shaped their

data collection, data analysis and writing. While the author of this research did not consciously choose this approach, as presented in Chapter 2, constant reflexivity was an important aspect of all stages from research design, data collection, data analysis to the final writing of the findings.

The second issue of concern that is adopted in this research, which loosely follows a policy sociology tradition, is the idea that policy and the policy process are seen as a “struggle between contenders of competing objectives” (Taylor, 1997, p.26). As such, policies are associated with a process of negotiation and are intended to serve “a political purpose” (Taylor, 1997, p.26). This approach is broadly in line with the definition of policy as ‘a cycle’ (section 3.5.1) adopted in this thesis (for more see Ball, 1994).

Likewise, to explore how particular interests and values behind a given policy became dominant, political sociologists emphasise the need to analyse educational policy from a historical perspective. Here, specifically Stephen Ball’s concept of “policy trajectory” links both to “policy understood as a process” and to specific historical events (Ball, 1997, p.266). As such, “the trajectory perspective attends to the ways in which policies evolve, change and decay through time and space and their incoherence”. Ball goes further to stress that “many contemporary problems and crises in education are, in themselves, the surface manifestation of deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in education policy” (Ball cited by Grace, 1995, p.3). The overall approach in this thesis recognizes the merit in Ball’s prescription and therefore assigns a significant amount of space to discussing different aspects of educational policy through specific historical lenses.

A final important component of the critical policy sociology approach is the application of a multidisciplinary policy analysis, with two core characteristics. The first aspect, which aims to break away from “taken-for granted assumptions, norms and traditions” within educational research and political studies, focuses on drawing from a broader field of studies – and ultimately cross referencing to other policy areas (Young, 1999, p.678). The second aspect advocates the use of multiple research methodologies in different qualitative and quantitative combinations (Taylor, 1997). While the approach adopted within this study of Rwandan educational policy did not emerge directly from critical policy sociology, the issue of drawing from different policy areas proved highly beneficial. In particular, it allowed the researcher to show how the governmental approach towards educational policies fit within broader, Developmental State strategies adopted by Rwandan policymakers. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to strengthen findings, showing that the challenges facing educational policy making are parallel to those in other policy domains. This brings us to the next strand of the discussion, namely comparative education. Here, the most interesting issue, which can be linked to the question of policy borrowing, is that of the “underlying aims” or research “message” (Audl and Morris, 2014, p.130). Here, two ideological perspectives are identified as being “between user-oriented, or applied, and a theory-oriented, or ‘academic’ comparative education” (Audl and Morris, 2014, p.130). It is not unexpected that texts and proposals which are explicitly policy orientated, come up against academic scrutiny that is both thorough and methodical. A significant critique of such texts is the ways in which they are constructed and the objectives they are meant to serve, especially when they are based on statistical indicators and educational achievements (Audl and Morris, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Rappleye, 2020). In the broadest terms, research, which is not academic, is assumed to function predominantly in order to provide legitimisation to

national reforms, to focus on the expected educational results (which are defined by league tables) and to lack academic rigour.

The impact of the “user-oriented” applied approach on education is currently substantial, compounded by globalisation and the neoliberal perspective. This pertains as much in the UK and US (Achieve, 2007; McKinsey and Company, 2007) as it is in other parts of the world (see for example: Takayama, 2010; Waldow, 2009; Carney, 2009). As this research is concerned with how post-conflict Rwanda approaches the process of rebuilding itself, it is important to look at the impact of policy-oriented approaches within comparative education and policy borrowing on developing nations and states. Gita Steiner-Khamsi summarises her discussion around practices relating to knowledge sharing between high- and low-income countries, as an example of limiting “choice that is given to governments of low-income countries that depend on loans and grants from international donors” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006, p.675). By this, Steiner-Khamsi highlights sharing “best practices” that are imported into Third World countries, a process which is especially problematic not because of “cultural, social and political dimensions of transfer” but rather because of the neglect of the “economics of borrowing” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006, p.676). Steiner-Khamsi argues that policy borrowing from wealthy nations by ones that operate on more modest budgets is often “nonsensical” as the problems that these policies try to address are “entirely different” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p.331).

Ultimately, as the result of policy processes, developing countries have commonly become overly concerned with their outcomes and “are looking to demonstrate participation in global education-economic discourse” (Auld and Morris, 2014, p.152) that is also sometimes linked

to attempts to obtain loans and grants from international donors. These processes, sometimes referred to as “ideological transfer” (Hamilton, 1998), have a detrimental effect on the educational priorities, aspirations, and long-term trajectories of particular countries. At the same time, Rappleye, Yuki and Sachiko point out that the increased number of global organizations and international partners, along with quickly progressing globalisation, creates the situation where:

(..) local actors and, by extension, local contexts are no longer so ‘local’ under conditions of globalisation: they are now able to connect to the wider world to search for policy and practice solutions (Rappleye, Yuki and Sachiko, 2011, p.2).

These debates around education policy are particularly relevant for this study, given the Rwandan government’s search for the best external (but non-European) models (Chapter 4), its aspiration to become a world leader in education (Chapter 4) and its focus on meeting global requirements expressed through statistics and indicators (Chapter 6). Crucially, these features not only pertain to the Rwandan education sector but to the majority of Rwandan policymaking domains (Behuria, 2016a). As such, this reflects core features of the Rwandan State.

Another relevant issue of debate arising from literature around borrowing and lending in education is “erasing traces of borrowing” (Spreen, p.2004). The idea here is that after policy implementation, policy actors reshape the policies and present them as made locally. The data presented in this thesis shows that, according to the prevailing narrative among high level officials, the way that policies were implemented and (supposedly) reshaped to fit local conditions ultimately turned these policies into “Rwandan policies”. In this way, it could be

argued that borrowing was selective, and the borrowed parts amounted to “bits and pieces of the reform, while gaining immunity from other aspects” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p.334)

3.5.3 Policy emulation: is Developmental State model transferable?

As mentioned earlier, the issue of which East Asian countries can be labelled as Developmental States remains an ongoing dispute among academics specialising in the field of political science (Stubbs, 2009). Depending on what criteria are being used, the adopted analysis can be more or less orthodox regarding which countries should be included within the boundaries of the definition. The majority of discussions around Developmental States are based on the extent to which each of the analysed countries conforms to a very distinctive set of features that are commonly agreed to characterise Developmental States – the main ones having been discussed in previous sections.

Whereas it is important to adhere to an agreed set of features that guide the discussion on Developmental States, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed analysis on the scale of this debate. It is also important to note that, even if a given country does not fully adhere to the strictest definition of Developmental State, it does not stop its leaders from attempting to implement the model, be it in full or partially. Here, the discussion around “policy transfer, policy emulation, lesson drawing or policy convergence” is of particular interest to those authors of comparative politics and public policy (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 343). The main consensus in this area of analysis is that it is one of the most difficult analytical undertakings to make informed judgements on any country’s engagement in emulating the policies of another. For analysis to be relevant one needs to go beyond evaluating a single element or an individual policy (Fourie, 2014a, p. 545) and examine a

broader view and range of political practices and solutions that are being adopted in any given country. As such, Bennet declares that policy-makers must explicitly demonstrate how they use the information and knowledge they have gained from foreign experiences:

In order to attribute sequential adoption to cross-national learning, one must be able to provide evidence of the utilization of information about the policy experiences of early innovators by policy elites in countries that act later (C. Bennett, 1991, p. 32)

At the same time, political transfer or emulation does not require, and even more so, it does not advocate for, an unreflective *copy-paste* approach to any given political challenge. In the case of solutions that could be applied to the developing world, the emphasis on reflexive, rather than a *one-size fits all* approach is strongly encouraged. The alternative, as highlighted by Evans, is likely to fail in the same way as “neoliberal, one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter approaches to building effective markets have failed” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 37). At the other extreme, Dorowitz and Marsh argue that it is also appropriate to use the term *policy emulation* in cases where explicit negative lessons have been learned and “lessons may be drawn about how not to proceed” (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 344). It is clear then, that policy transfers need to take into account history, culture and the already existing power setting in the recipient country. Taking these into account, it could be said that the Developmental State model cannot be transferred into any setting without due consideration.

It would be wrong, therefore, to expect the Developmental State model to be transferred to any location without being modified, adjusted or, alternatively, assuming the role of a benchmark or ideal that countries wish to be guided by. As mentioned before, for a policy to be described as transferred or emulated, it needs to be demonstrated that policy-makers

consciously and deliberately drew on foreign examples when setting up certain policies or institutional designs (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 344; Fourie, 2014b, p. 544) This understanding of policy emulation allows for an important extension for the meaning of such processes. Therefore, in the case of the debate around Developmental States, the process needs to include those states and officials where the strict definition of Developmental State (whether it be its policies or solutions) is not properly understood, known, or is being consciously reformulated to be used for different purposes (Brown & Fisher, 2020).

The process by which political borrowing takes place, can occur in different ways and can range from copying, emulation, hybridisation, synthesis and inspiration (R. Rose, 1993, pp. 132–134). While it is important to remember these distinctions – which are based on decisions taken by actors inside (and at times outside) – the government incorporation of different lessons into a given political system can also be focused on different objectives. Bennet argues that there are five aspects of policy which could be transferred, and these include: “policy goals, policy content, policy instruments, policy outcomes and policy style” (C. J. Bennett, 1991, p. 218). Dolowitz and Marsh (D. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 350), on the other hand, perceive Bennett’s categories as too narrow and add to it the importance of emulating “policy administrative techniques, policy institutions, policy ideology, policy ideas, attitudes concepts, and negative lessons”. As such, the concept of policy emulation is both broad and, to a certain degree, messy. Inevitably, engaging in research that involves this concept warrants both caution and flexibility.

In summary then, the theoretical assumption of this thesis is that a broader definition of the Developmental State, along with approaching policy emulation as a diverse and inconsistent process, allows for a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of practical policy lessons (Chang,

2010, p. 83). Ultimately, it forms the basis for analysing the shape of the Developmental State in sub-Saharan Africa, and, later on, through looking at two educational policies, namely the Language of Instruction and the Higher Education Merger, it allows us to make more general observations about the nature of the Developmental State in Rwanda.

3.6 Developmental States in sub-Saharan Africa

It would be difficult to find a study on any issue relating to the African continent that does not discuss the continent's historical experience. Even when analysing the most recent events in a non-academic setting, we are urged to put them into a historical context, one that allows us to get fuller understanding of the current situation and the reasons behind it. The consequences of not following this process deprives the African people of their dignity and diminishes their historical experience and diversity of viewpoints:

(...) if you want to dispossess the people, the simple way to do it is to tell their story and to start it with secondly [...] Start the story with the failure of the African state and not with the colonial creation of the African State and you'll have an entirely different story (Adichie, 2009)

As it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse the historical trajectories of every African state that is discussed, the starting point in the following section is set at the time when the *one-size-fits-all* and neoliberal solutions, which are broadly deemed as unsuccessful in building effective markets in developing states in Africa, failed. This approach is consistent with the opinions of some authors (Brown & Fisher, 2020; B. P. Evans, 2010; L. Mann & Berry, 2016; Mkandawire, 2001; Routley, 2014), that the "large scale global reaction to the failure of neo-liberalism in the developing world" (Woldegiyorgis, 2014, p. 12) is behind the emergence of the Development State paradigm in sub-Saharan Africa. In the context of this history, where post-colonial African governments were, up to that point, pressured into implementing

externally driven economic solutions, the adoption of Developmental State models can be seen as a positive move. As such, the voluntary emulation of Developmental State solutions in Africa, initiated and defined by particular governments, could be interpreted as being part of the process by which Africans take back ownership of their policies and destiny. It is, indeed, part of the narrative presented by a number of pro-developmental African leaders, including the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, who supported the new “renaissance” build on developmentalism, not only for Ethiopia, but for the entire continent (Woldegiyorgis, 2014, p. 13). A similar narrative, constructed around the idea of self-determination and self-reliance, is also present in those narratives justifying the setting up of a Rwandan Developmental State. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 5-7. However, the basis of this narrative is also critiqued by other authors (Hayman, 2011; Waldorf, 2017) who, like Brown and Fisher (Brown & Fisher, 2020), argue that the underlying objective of these narratives is much more tactical. In essence, they claim, it is a strategy adopted by some African governments to provide donors with “language through which donors can justify – to themselves as well as to the outside – their lack of engagement on democratization and human rights in a profoundly authoritarian states” (Brown & Fisher, 2020, p. 186).

Indeed, one of the most profound criticisms of African states that label themselves Developmental are their authoritarian tendencies, which are characterised by strong leadership, political suppression of domestic critics, limited civil liberties, democratic backsliding and human rights abuses (Hagmann & Reyntjens, 2016). At the same time, criticism of the Developmental States’ leadership in Africa is both widely acknowledged by all the actors involved as well as being tolerated by international donors and partners as part of a trade-off (Brown & Fisher, 2020, p. 186). To take this critical narrative further, some authors

emphasise that the concept of the Developmental State is only understood within its limited form (as being representative of a “strong regime with political will”), and only by a handful of people within particular African countries (Brown & Fisher, 2020). This view tends to be used as proof that the existence of an African Developmental State is a facade that allows particular leaders to consolidate their autocratic power, while limiting social space and engagement in the democratic processes.

Acknowledging this criticism, the analysis will now turn to discussing certain characteristics of the concept of the Developmental State in Africa. In doing so, it will draw on examples from a number of countries that are either labelled as Developmental or demonstrate the capacity and commitment to be Developmental. In the following sections, Ethiopia, and here especially led by Meles Zenawi’s Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime (Clapham, 2017, pp. 69–71, 92–102), will be considered a prime example of the African Developmental State. This is due to the large volume of literature highlighting the similarities, commitments and critiques of the Developmental State in Ethiopia (Brown & Fisher, 2020; Chang & Hauge, 2019; Clapham, 2018; de Waal, 2013; Woldegiyorgis, 2014) and, also, because of the interests that respondents in this thesis showed to solutions and policies adopted by the Ethiopian government. Other examples, which will mostly examine individual policies and distinctive solutions, include the cases of Botswana (Hillbom, 2012; I. Taylor, 2012), Mauritius (Meisenhelder, 1997), South Africa (Edigheji, 2010) and Kenya (Fourie, 2014a).

3.6.1 Importance of history and experience

One of the key similarities that can be seen between Developmental States in East Asia and Developmental States in Africa is the history and accompanying experiences of struggle and

suffering. As mentioned in the first part of this chapter, it was less of a choice and more of a necessity that drove East Asian countries to embark on developmentalism.

The range of histories and the scale of the experiences that one needs to include when talking about *Africa*, irrespective of configuration and context, will always remain an obvious and gross simplification. The diversity of the continent, from its landscapes, to traditions, ethnicities, cultures and religions is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. A similar diversity is also visible in the range of societal structures across the continent. The pre-colonial organisation of vast parts of the continent is summarised by Bayart as “the civilized art of living fairly peaceably together not in states” (Bayart, 2000, p. 233). While, this observation is largely accurate, in many instances we cannot talk about the complete lack of structures (for more with relation to history of Rwandan state see Chapter 4) and organisations in many parts of the continent: “(...) the idea of the state, which is debatable as a term for most of the monarchies of the continent, has many forms that have changed with time (Bayart, 1992, p. 69)”. This is an important reflection, as the narratives presented by the leaders of many Developmental States in Africa eagerly search for an era in their own history that would allow them to make, often over-idealised, references to the period when their leadership and societies were empowered to make their own decisions. The connection here is obvious, and by making it, elites attempt to connect the concept of self-determination of the new Developmental State with a period in their own history that can resemble similar freedoms. This, ultimately, allows the reframing of a painful history of dependence, colonialism and suffering, and a return to the values and principles that are at the core of a *truly* African identity.

With that backdrop, the experiences and crushing consequences of the colonial era in Africa are widely known and have been discussed in more detail by numerous authors (some of them include: Chipman, 1989; Thomson, 2010; Young, 1983). And while Bayart tries to convince us that “colonization as a generic term subsumes a vast variety of historical situations” (Bayart, 2000, p. 221) and, therefore, “the variation of the colonial impact is (...) more complex than is often thought” (Bayart, 1992, p. 69), it remains indisputable that the trajectory of challenges, which post-independence states in Africa faced, was directly dependent on how colonisation unfolded in each country. Although a number of differences are evident between colonial experiences across the continent (Bayart, 2000, p. 221), it would be wrong to deny that African history and African experiences have had a similar impact on their citizens as the experiences of Asian states had on their population in the aftermath of the World War Two. As in, the histories of these countries created societies and states with strong sense of necessity and commitment towards developmental and economic growth.

3.6.2 Economy behind Developmental States in Africa – long-term planning & intervention

Mkandawire (Mkandawire, 2001) highlights three reasons why African states needed to re-define their engagement in economic development. The first ideological reason is the “dramatic ascendancy of neoliberalism”, which resulted in the demise of a theoretical narrative against state intervention in economic matters and brought discussion on the role of the state back onto the political agenda. As such, the move had a significant impact on the aid business and donor communities and opened a debate on alternative ideas about states and governance. The second reason was, at the structural level, linked to two processes, namely, globalisation and the failure of neoliberal solutions to bring development to African states. Both of these issues forced “all governments to rethink and restructure the state-

market relationships” and in this respect, African states were no different. Eventually, this process led to the recognition of a more profound role for the state that was willing to “pay greater homage to *market forces*” (Mkandawire, 2001, p. 294). The third reason is connected with the growing criticism towards governments in African countries. Externally, many of these governments were perceived as being at the centre of “Afro-pessimism and anti-Thirdworldism”, a mood that was aimed at criticising particular governments for the failure of political reforms, which had been introduced in previous years.

As such, the economic policies of the earlier neoliberal era, which had been based on ideas of limited government, market dominance, monetarism and individualism, were deemed as being unsuitable to the social and economic realities of developing economies and societies in sub-Saharan Africa.

In countries which are considered Developmental in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, *i.e.* those whose governments are seen as being actively involved in the design of, and having control over, markets, we can identify two features associated with the economy. The first is the construction of a plan, or vision that aims to drive the country’s developmental projects. The second concerns specific state interventions, including policies and strategies that are identifiable as aims towards strengthening the Developmental status of the state.

The first feature, the existence of long-term plans, otherwise called *Vision* documents, is one of the main foci of many African governments that lay claim to the label of Developmental State. These documents are seen as “the embodiment of (...) bureaucrats’ desire to steer country along a predefined course towards wholesale societal transformation” (Fourie, 2014b, p. 548). The essence of these documents is their endeavour to overcome short-term

thinking. Following the example of East Africa Developmental States, *Vision* documents try to instil the mentality of a long-term trajectory, where the prospects of a particular country can be seen as a continuum that reaches into the future, beyond the tenure of one elected government. The structure of these documents is based on defining specific stages through which individual economies reach their desired goal. For most of the countries in question, the ultimate goal is to advance economic growth to the level of achieving middle-income status by a certain date. As an example, the Kenyan Vision 2030 policy aims to transform Kenya “into a newly industrializing, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030” (Republic of Kenya, 2008) and Ethiopia’s Country Strategic Plan (2020-2025) aims for the country to achieve middle-income status by 2025 (Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019). Chapter 5 and 6 will provide more details regarding Rwanda’s Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 (RoR, 2020) documents. The policies and solutions that are promoted in these documents are tailored for the particular country; however, as a broad generalisation, they often advocate the creation of a modern economy that is more reliant on industry, technology and services; this will be discussed more specifically in the case of Rwanda in Chapter 5.

The design of strategy documents fashioned along similar plans and visions is a positive step that clearly indicates the developmentalist orientation of contemporary sub-Saharan African states. At the centre of any criticism of these documents, however, is their application and relevance to the realities of everyday citizens in those countries. Specifically, reproach can be aimed at overly ambitious goal setting, questionable state capabilities, as in case of Ethiopia (Woldegiyorgis, 2014), and/or bigger societal challenges, as in case of Kenya (Fourie, 2014b, p. 550) and South Africa (B. P. Evans, 2010, pp. 37–38).

The second issue that is usually derived from the practical application of similar plans and visions is the quality of the introduced policies and the level of state intervention. While, in the case of Developmental States in East Asia, state involvement is key to the economic success of the country, it is important that the balance of intervention is carefully maintained and that markets are, essentially, free from interference. Here Ethiopia, where governments are seen to actively intervene and regulate markets, is an important example of a country where the interventionist tendencies of the state are deemed by some commentators as overreaching and, even, *unfriendly*:

Following the pattern of logic under which the Ethiopian government is functioning, it is very difficult to assume that current Ethiopia is an example of a market-friendly developmental state. The Ethiopian government (...) is not effectively operating to fulfil the requirements for an open market-oriented developmental state. The Ethiopian political and economic environment seems to be confounded and appears to be operating like a centrally-planned economic system (Desta, 2011, p. 8)

Another challenge in the design of specific policies points to local contexts and the way certain policies affect the population and the broader developmental project. Here a good example is again presented by Ethiopia, where the policy emulation around land reform did not yield the assumed results. A situation mainly caused by a disregard towards country specific factors. The impact of the reform through which the state assumed control of the land in Ethiopia had different and more negative impact than in some Asian countries, where the government owns almost all the land in the country (see discussion about Singapore in Chang, 2010, p. 82). In Ethiopia, by increasing tenure insecurity, the government has hampered long-term investments and discouraged productivity (Ali et al., n.d., p. 25).

The final aspect involves caution regarding the *actual*, as opposed to the *presented*, success of policies implemented by Developmental States. As outlined earlier, and as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, there are multiple reasons, be they internal or external, why African governments are keen to perpetuate the narrative of success in implementing developmental policies. However, *success* does not always mean *quality*. Here, the policies in the discussed education sector are significant and require special consideration. Comparatively speaking, (as will be analysed later with educational policies in Rwanda in Chapter 7 and other Developmental States in Africa) the success presented by indicators and statistics in relation to education is not matched by the quality of provision:

In the past two decades one of the areas the [Ethiopian] government has made a remarkable and rarely contested achievement is in the expansion of education. At all levels of education access has significantly grown (...) One issue often raised is that emphasis has been exclusively on expanding access and does not regard quality of education (...) (Woldegiyorgis, 2014, p. 17)

The issue of *quality*, however, needs to be understood as a bigger challenge and not only a problem associated with one policy or one sector. This challenge corresponds directly to the way that Developmental States decide and implement their solutions and policies. As such, the difficulty lies not only in implementing quick solutions, but also to the degree that each of these solutions are relevant and have the ability to effectively address particular problems. This is not only one of the key challenges to 21st century Developmental States in Africa, that will be discussed later in the chapter but, also, one of the main conflicts that will be analysed in relation to education policies in Rwanda, as discussed in the empirical chapters (Chapters 5-7).

3.6.3 Visionary elite

The existence of pro-developmental elites and leadership in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa is an important and positive element that works to benefit the construction of the Developmental State. While some authors warn that, as an ideology, “developmentalism” could be seen as a way of maintaining the status-quo and reproducing the political hegemony of existing elites (Ake, 1996; Brown & Fisher, 2020), it is important to highlight the positivity and, in many ways, almost natural and home-grown preoccupation with development that many first generation African leaders had (Fourie, 2014b, p. 559; Mkandawire, 2001, p. 295). Here, two classical examples include Tom Mboya in Kenya, and Ethiopian President, Meles Zenawi.

The inability or failure of these leaders to fully implement their vision is equated with the “lost opportunity” of making African miracles work (Fourie, 2014b, p. 560). However, what it does show is that the commitment to development, whether understood as the “politics of nation building” or the “economy of nation building” (Mkandawire, 2001, p. 296) is not an alien concept to many Africa countries.

Furthermore, while these earlier national leaders advocated capitalist and more neoliberal solutions that were often associated with foreign influence and control, current leaders are pursuing more autonomous development agendas, based on self-reliance and self-confidence. As shown in the cases of Ethiopia and Rwanda (Brown & Fisher, 2020; Hayman, 2009), the role of international organisations and donors shifts from being external pressure groups, which dictate agendas, to becoming more like partners, who can join in realising the priorities devised by particular governments. In this way, the leaders of many of the discussed

pro-Developmental countries preoccupy themselves with building their legitimacy on delivering or, at least being seen to deliver, developmental benefits to their own society.

3.6.4 Bureaucracy and the challenge of neopatrimonialism

A competent, independent, autonomous and efficient bureaucracy that can make and implement policies is widely considered one of the key prerequisites, as well as, one of the biggest challenges to Developmental States in Africa. Before turning to discuss the challenges to the functioning of bureaucracy in Africa, it is worth highlighting one of the most effective examples of bureaucracy on the continent, namely Mauritius. The important aspect here is the fact that Mauritius gained independence in 1968, having its own indigenous capitalist class, as well as a relatively well-educated middle class that owned land. Later, strengthened by its tradition of cross-ethnic and multi-class alliances, Mauritian powerholders created a small, efficient and relatively autonomous state bureaucracy. Since the mid 1970s and 1980s, Mauritian bureaucracy has selectively engaged with the economic advice of international financial institutions and successfully balance it against the state's own planning and interventionist agenda (Meisenhelder, 1997, pp. 280–281, 287–288). The Mauritian example is, however, one of the very few exceptions and, unfortunately, does not reflect the scale of the broader problems of state capacity across the African continent. In the discussed Developmental States of Africa, the range of problems that hamper the development of a similarly resilient bureaucracy is vast. Several of these will be discussed below.

The most important and most common in Africa is the prevalence of traditional, ethnic ties in many political settings. As illustrated best with the case of Ethiopia, one of the key challenges for the creation of an effective bureaucracy is that of ethnic federalism in political and administrative appointments. Instead of being based on meritocracy, recruitment to the civil

bureaucracy is based on ethno-language criteria and ethnic quota. In the long run, this undermines the possibility of building competent institutions and increases the danger of politicising ethnic identity (Taye, 2017). The underlying assumption of systems based on ethnic quota, as seen in Ethiopia, is that particular officials are expected to operate in accordance with their ethnic affiliation and are not being guided by wider objectives or political necessities. In this way, even if an individual is willing to engage with the Developmental State's objectives, he/she remains part of a patrimonial, clientelist or neo-patrimonialism relationship (Bratton & Van de Walle, 2002; Clapham, 1982; D. T. Kelsall, 2013; Mkandawire, 2001; Van de Walle, 2007). These relationships are constantly "challenged and invaded from above and below by informal relationships" (Erdmann & Engel, 2007, p. 106). In a similar political system (and not only as in Ethiopia, which is based on official ethnic federalism), the relationship between public and private is blurred, and any administrative decisions are made based on official, formal rules as well as informal ones. For most Africans, and especially ones in positions of power, the relationship between the "traditional" and "modern" or, as defined by Ekeh (1998), by "primordial" and "civic" creates a constant tension. This uniqueness of modern African politics highlights constant confrontation which impacts on issues of morality and ethics. As such the "good man" is often considered to be the one who is able to channel "part of the largesse from the civic public to the primordial public"; in essence, then, it becomes respectful, moral and legitimate "to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public" (Peter P. Ekeh, 1998, p. 108)

To varying degrees, patrimonial links are acknowledged in the majority of states that claim the label of Developmental in Africa, including Ethiopia (Chang & Hauge, 2019, p. 16) Botswana (I. Taylor, 2012, p. 469), and Kenya (Fourie, 2014b, p. 559). In a few examples,

Kelsall (D. T. Kelsall, 2013, p. 46) points to the coexistence of these hybrid ways, where neo-patrimonialism is seen as compatible with strong economic performance, and calls them *developmental patrimonialism*. In recent years, the concept itself has been used to support a new form of Developmental State in Africa, namely Developmental Patrimonialism, of which Ethiopia and Rwanda can be seen as examples. This new concept, further developed by Booth and Kelsall, attempts to capture both existing patrimonial relationships, as well as new developmental ambitions within African states. As such, it highlights the necessity of central control over rents and the adoption of a long-term developmental strategy:

In certain conditions a strong, centralised, patrimonial structure, is a way of achieving an acceptable, growth-promoting balance [...]. We can think of it as a rough and ready mechanism for coordinating the creation and allocation of different types of rents [...]. Rent-centralisation is not sufficient in and of itself to create the conditions for economic growth. Aside from a number of other facilitating factors, rent-creation, rent-seeking, rent-distribution, and rent-utilization (here in after simply “the rent process”) must be oriented to the long-term’ (T. Kelsall et al., 2010, p. 7)

Booth and Kelsall emphasise the potential usefulness of this institutional mix as being more realistic and practical for policy-makers in Africa, observing that patrimonial ties could be seen as beneficial to the developmental project. They argue that similar arrangements may present an opportunity for cost-effectiveness by providing access to resources necessary for investments, as well as political security and stability, while offering protection from “*damaging forms of corruption*” (T. Kelsall et al., 2010, p. 26).

Routley effectively challenges the idea of the durability of such states by pointing to difficulties that they may have in maintaining continuum and sustaining developmental gains. She sees it as a challenge that patrimonial developmentalist relationships present to the process of building and sustaining strong institutions:

They are successful in conducting developmental roles for a time, but they do not build the developmental structures or institutions required for these practices to obtain some sustainability (Routley, 2014, p. 168)

Without getting into further discussion about the merits and challenges of this concept, it is important to highlight that continuation of these features within the discussed states has significant consequences and often results in producing institutions that are undisciplined, incoherent, inefficient and deeply corrupt. At the outset it is, therefore, clear that the functioning of African bureaucracy is challenged in ways that significantly impact the effectiveness of the Developmental State. In this sense, autonomy and the separation of bureaucracy from external influences is much more complex than in the case of Asian Developmental States.

3.6.5 Legitimacy – from “strengthening constraint” to performance

“Performance legitimacy” based on leadership seeking recognition through economic development is at the centre of the Development State concept. In the case of the discussed African countries, the most challenging aspect in the process of realisation of this kind of legitimacy is the issue of whether economic development actually happens and whether its achievements are equally shared or are, at least, visible to the country’s population. In this sense, the Ethiopian government provides an interesting example (parallels to the Rwandan case see discussion in Chapter 6 and 7). Being a minority Tigray government, the Ethiopian leadership initially derived its legitimacy based on the legacy of the liberation struggle and the “collective memory which is fading away” (Woldegiyorgis, 2014, p. 20). The idea behind this concept is that the legitimacy of the ruling elite or leader is based on his claims of ending violent conflict and introducing peace and stability. The bigger the struggle or conflict, the bigger the “credit of legitimacy” can be given to a particular “liberation movement” (Clapham,

2012). On the other hand, the fragile nature of this type of legitimacy is due to the fact that it is often not embedded within the network of interdependent relationships and, ultimately, it does not possess the appropriate support base. While it is often described as temporary legitimacy, or as noted above, legitimacy acquired “on credit”, it also presents an interesting opportunity. A government that has gained political power based on the liberation struggle will sooner or later be under pressure to engage with a process that will force it to build a broader political support base. This “strengthening constraint” (Clapham 2017: 67) was actively promoted by the Ethiopian Government in 2005, when the pro-developmental narrative became dominant in official discourse. Here a number of parallels can be drawn about the way in which the current Rwandan Government has built its legitimacy, what will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

At this point, it is important to highlight that while legitimisation based on the public backing of high-profile developmental projects exists in Ethiopia, it is significantly limited. To mitigate their shortcomings and to restore the government’s position and credibility, the ruling elites use a range of strategies, including, for example, appeals to Meles “legacy of visionary leader” and “father of peace and development” (Fantini, 2013, p. 7). The obligation of the Ethiopian government to build its legitimacy through such narratives rather than through the actual delivery of development is two-fold. First, the actual economic achievements are only partial, especially when comparing them to the figures included in over-ambitious developmental plans. As such, growth is not taking place at the predicted speed and the provision of services is seen as inadequate (Mosley, 2016). Second, there is a strongly popular perception that the benefits derived from this growth are not equally shared among the entire population, which, inevitably, questions the relevance of neo-patrimonial links:

Perceptions are widespread that control of the EPRDF and a disproportionate share of the benefits of the growing economy have gone to ethnic Tigrayans, whose Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) formed the core of the EPRDF when it overthrew the military dictatorship in 1991 (Mosley, 2016)

In various ways, this notion of legitimacy in countries eager to claim the label of Developmental States is continuously hindered by the neo-patrimonial legacy. Hybrid relationships formed to provide legitimacy continue to be intertwined with a range of traditional and modern loyalties that do not cease and which require continued consideration (Chabal & Daloz, 1999).

Furthermore, issues of legitimacy are additionally hampered by a range of challenges that are discussed in other sections, (and in the case of Rwanda in other chapters) namely, the growing income gap, continued dependence on foreign aid, an imbalance between urban and rural areas, inefficient bureaucracy and the lack of a private sector, which all add to popular mistrust in the accountability and transparency of local leaderships.

3.6.6 Autonomy, embeddedness vs Democratic Developmentalism

“Soft authoritarianism” is what, according to Johnson, allowed East Asian countries to maintain the equilibrium of relationships between the state and various interest groups. By employing a range of tactics, be it suppression, ignorance or incorporation (embeddedness), these authoritarian governments were able to protect and enable the autonomy of its bureaucracy (R. Wade, 1990, p. 375), thereby, allowing it to effectively engage in the delivery of economic growth.

In many states of Africa, authoritarian governments are seen as a prerequisite for the successful adoption of the Developmental State model. From this perspective, democracy,

due to its short-termism, is perceived as being problematic for the implementation of long-term agendas and visions (D. T. Kelsall, 2013, p. 27). This is not to say that democracy is an irrelevance to these governments. In many instances, internal and external pressure – not the least of which is the conditionality of foreign aid – obliges the governments of the discussed countries to maintain the façade of following democratic processes (for more about this with relation to Rwanda see Chapter 7). This includes even those states, such as Ethiopia, Botswana, South Africa or, the one discussed in this thesis, Rwanda where “electoral systems which are de facto (if not de jure) dominated by one party” (Routley, 2014, p. 166). This combination of democratic obligations and developmental imperatives pushed the Ethiopian Government of Meles Zenawi to promote a strategy of Democratic Developmentalism. A strategy which enabled the Ethiopian Government to create a model whereby:

(...) a political regime in which a developmental party remains in power for a long time by consecutively winning free elections which permit multiple parties, under which policies that punish rent seeking and encourage productive investment are implemented with a strong state guidance (Ohno, 2009, p. 4)

Similar models, aimed at solving the problem of short-termism associated with the democratic electoral process, endeavour to enhance the possibility of governments attaining *performance legitimacy*. The issue that arises here is regarding embeddedness or the symbiotic relationship between states and productive domestic sector/industrialists, which, in the case of classic East Asian States, was epitomised in a narrow coalition between the state and private sector. When looking at the example of Ethiopia, the opinions about the existence of embedders is two-fold.

The first is the argument presented by Evans and repeated by Routley around the existence (and necessity) of a “21st century version of Developmental State” that will be based on a “broader-based coalition”. While the concept will be discussed in more detail in the final

section of this chapter, the idea is that in order to succeed, the 21st century Developmental State, given its circumstances and geopolitical setting, needs to be different than the classic East Asian states. To demonstrate this new relationship, Routley (Routley, 2014, p. 165) points to the relationship between smallholder farmers and the developmental bureaucracy in Ethiopia.

The second perspective is more critical and argues that the Ethiopian state is over reliant on state-owned enterprises and foreign firms as actors in the markets and, therefore, there is an absence of any meaningful relationship or alliance between state and private sector. As such, the argument here is that in contrast to developments in classic Developmental States in Asia, the nurturing of an internationally competitive domestic private sector is not transpiring and, as such, the domestic private sector in Ethiopia is virtually non-existent. This is seen as a major threat to the sustainability of economic growth (Chang & Hauge, 2019, pp. 21–22) and the Developmental State project.

3.6.7 Note on corruption in Africa

As discussed in the first part of the chapter, one of the key features of Developmental States is their managed approach to corruption. The two issues that were outlined in relation to corruption in classic Developmental States in Asia was the existence and particular form of acceptance, of certain types of corruption (petty corruption); and a difference in attitude towards major corruption depending on the status of the person committing the crime *i.e.* a bureaucrat rather than a politician offender was seen as more of a risk to the system.

The problems of corruption in African states are numerous and compromise a multi-layered dilemma. As with many parts of the world, Mbaku distinguishes between political and

bureaucratic corruption when writing about corruption in Africa (Mbaku, 2007). The first type is understood as an abuse of the laws and institutions for political gain (building political parties or supporting a particular politician in leadership contests), while the second one, which is the more endemic and damaging, is defined as “misuse of public office for private gain” (Mbaku, 2007, pp. 11–13). The forms of corruption differ and can include anything from nepotism, embezzling public funds, using public position for gaining private gains, encouraging and benefiting from bribes, and so on (Mbaku, 2007, p. 18,22,24). Also, as often corruption happens in secret, the full scale of it is difficult to assess. As such, it remains a challenge that is further augmented by leadership and governments that lack the commitment to genuinely engage in bringing about accountability and transparency. Given Africa’s historical and institutional setting, and its complex web of neopatrimonialism links, many forms of corruption may be perceived as positive. This may relate to the idea of taking from “public spare and returning to primordial spare” (Peter P. Ekeh, 1998, p. 108), but it also incorporates other instances, whereby, “buying their way in” private sector representatives or even individuals from marginalised groups can be seen as having a positive impact on policy design (Mbaku, 2007, pp. 89, 100).

The consequences of corruption in Africa are severe. The countries deemed most corrupt, namely Nigeria, Ghana, DR Congo and Cameroon, are the same ones that lack efficient and legitimate institutions that do not follow the rule of law (Mbaku, 2007, pp. 38–64, 51, 2017, pp. 316–324). Ironically then, most of the elements that are prerequisites for successful Developmental States are the same ones that are hampered by prevailing corruption. Indeed, looking at literature which examines the existence of Developmental States in Africa, the prevalence of corruption is often listed as one of the obstacles that jeopardises any fragile

achievements. As such, bureaucracy in Ethiopia is seen by some as a weak monopoly of one ethnic group that is purely an extension of the ruling party, and which threatens transparency and accountability and creates an “infesting ground for corruption and rent seeking behaviours” (Woldegiyorgis, 2014, p. 19). In Kenya, since the 1970s, reliance on factionalism and the politics of patronage, along with a culture of short-termism and a fragmentation of bureaucracy has amplified corruption within the political environment. The result is the obstruction of many of the developmental lessons and initiatives (Fourie, 2014b, p. 561). In South Africa, endemic corruption is being fuelled by “wilful disregard for objectives and values” (Butler, 2010, p. 194) that were aimed at promoting high standards of professional ethics, and which now threaten further deterioration of institutions and state capacity.

With this backdrop in mind, Rwanda presents a different story, whereby its leadership is seen as being committed to fighting corruption (Bozzini, 2016; Oyamada, 2017), with pledges of accountability and transparency being unmatched anywhere else in the continent. A more detailed evaluation, along with some complexities and critiques around the issue of corruption in Rwanda will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 7.

3.6.8 Civil society as a crux of the 21st century Developmental State

The character of Developmental States in Africa, along with their authoritarian tendencies, visionary and committed leadership and strong executive, is almost predisposed to promoting a weak civil society. Furthermore, by introducing the concept of “embedded autonomy” even in the context of authoritarian rule, theorists argue that pro-developmental governments require “developmental coalitions” in order to sustain economic growth politically (Mkandawire, 2010, p. 71). As such, it is assumed in literature that state bureaucracy in classic

Developmental States will pursue developmental projects while maintaining their autonomy from local influences and local politics.

Mkandawire makes a strong case when he criticises some reinterpretations of the concept of autonomy. These, according to him, “confuse autonomy with capacity” (Mkandawire, 2010, p. 72). Instead, he claims that it is “social embeddedness” that can help a state translate its autonomy into effective capacity and allow for the creation of “developmental coalitions”. He makes a distinction between narrow based, and broad/mass-based coalitions, while also emphasising the possibility of constructing similar coalitions via democratic means. As such, quoting after Mann, Mkandawire argues that what matters in Developmental States is the: “capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm” (Mkandawire, 2010, p. 71).

Mkandawire’s argument about the presence and relevance of constant alliances, pacts, coalitions and networks between the state and various social actors, namely interest groups, labour, peasants and foreign investors, is seen as a crucial ingredient in the process of accumulation and growth (Mkandawire, 2010, p. 72). In many ways, Mkandawire’s thinking corresponds to Evans’ idea of “encompassing embeddedness” in that he highlights that the state-society ties are at the centre of constructing successful 21st century Developmental States (B. P. Evans, 2010, pp. 49–50). This particular discussion on Developmental States is a striking departure from the previously argued relationship between state and society. Evans argues that, in contrast to 21st century states, classic Development States in Asia had an unusual class structure and operated within a set of global realities that “allowed them greater autonomy and enabled their capable public bureaucracies to build forms of embeddedness consistent with transformative project” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 48).

While discussing the possibility of creating a Developmental State in South Africa, Evans advances a strong argument that, in its 21st century manifestation, the state needs to be a Democratic Developmental State. In this instance, Evans' idea is not the same as the one promoted by Meles Zenawi, as its main precondition focuses on capacity expansion rather than being a "bit developmental and a bit democratic" (Fantini, 2013). Following on from this, Evans, arguing after Sen, concludes that expansion of human capabilities is not the only obvious *goal* of development, but also the most essential *means* of development (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 44). As such, the 21st century Developmental State needs to envisage more engagement and input from societal actors. This, for Evans, is as crucial to "capability-expanding strategies as engaging firms is to industrial strategies" (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 49). Such successful strategies would be based on the accumulation of information examining collective priorities at the community level and considering whether the proposed solutions and policies correspond to the shared preferences of those they are supposed to serve (for more on this with regards to Rwanda see Chapter 6). To create effective ways of working, the states must facilitate the organisation of counterparts in civil society, where common, coherent goals could be *co-produced* by public agencies and the communities themselves. Achieving this would require avoiding the danger of blind *top-down* relationships with communities, where laws and policies are dictated from the capital to the periphery. This is a criticism that is often levelled at Developmental States such as Ethiopia (Woldegiyorgis, 2014) or Rwanda (Chapter 6).

While, as Evans argues, such an undertaking is a "very politically demanding task" (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 49), "social returns to the expansion of the human capabilities are substantially higher than the private returns" (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 50). The key challenge, therefore, for

the 21st century African Developmental State, both theoretically and practically, lies in creating a “developmental welfare state” (Mkandawire, 2010, p. 71) that is characterised by a high-growth strategy, whose “structural features link high growth with broadly shared returns – in part because it is naturally “labour-intensive’ strategy” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 52).

3.7 Conclusions

The discussion presented in this chapter shows that the concept of the Developmental State is an “ephemeral buzzword” (Routley, 2014, p. 173) and, depending on its application, may be used in both positive (Chang, 2010) and negative contexts (Brown & Fisher, 2020). It is also clear that the Developmental State model does not need to be applied in full. Fashioned on East Asian states, many governments in Africa are adopting long-term plans and, while many of them may be imperfect, they have the potential for changing mindsets and turning attention to policy solutions that have a broader and longer-lasting impact.

Likewise, emulation and borrowing of some Developmental ideas and solutions needs to happen in any pre-design order and may remain “part of a flexible, creative process of exploration and experimentation” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 37) that, hopefully, help to define more successful state models. In this spirit, Chang pushes the argument even further, convincing us that “looking at a more diverse range of experiences allows us to draw more detailed and nuanced lessons” (Chang, 2010, p. 83).

The only stipulation that is demanded by authors looking at emulation of Developmental States, and for that matter, any other state model is the capacity to remain “continually reflexive” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 37) of the regional, historical, and geo-political situation of recipient states. The exploration and reflexivity around the Developmental State in this

chapter, touched upon the existence of two new versions of Developmental States that could be applicable to some states in Africa – Developmental Patrimonialism and Democratic Developmentalism. However, Democratic Developmentalism may appear virtually impossible as a successor to the Developmental State in the 21st century, without changing one of its key components, namely state-society relations.

Taking all of the above into account, the analysis of East Asian and African states as presented in this chapter requires clarification. Throughout this chapter, the versions of Developmental States in East Asia and wannabe Developmental States in Africa, systematically generalised and simplified a range of historical, economic, political and social processes. Each generalisation and simplification that was made masked numerous critical differences that characterise each individual state discussed in previous sections: the Japanese economic miracle started after World War II, while Singapore remained a British colony until 1961; South Korea and Taiwan are ethnically homogenous, while Singapore formally operates four official languages and its population is multi-ethnic; and, while South Korea and Taiwan have significant rural areas and a big agricultural sector, Singapore is essentially a city state. Given these differences, the application, reinterpretations and variations of particular solutions and policies in each of these Developmental States are countless. The list of disparities between the discussed Africa countries is, perhaps, even longer. These differences relate to both the traditional aspects of the African state as well as new, implanted Developmental State ideas. While, at times disputed, these generalisations remain useful as they allow the bringing together of a number of analytically significant similarities (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p. 8). After outlining analytical differences and similarities, it is now prudent to turn the discussion to

Rwanda – the African state widely recognised as a forerunner in successfully attaining Developmental State status.

Chapter 4

History of Rwanda

4.1 Introduction

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and its repercussions remains one of the most defining events in Rwanda's history. The one hundred days between April and July 1994 will be remembered, both by Rwandans and the international community, for "one of the most abhorrent events of the twentieth century" (United Nation, 1999). Since then, both the appalling atrocities of the genocide and the failure of the international community to act have provoked an enormous body of literature (Lemarchand, 2013) that explores the causal factors underlying the Rwandan genocide.

As such, analysis of Rwandan history provides an important backdrop to properly understanding current events, and a number of the decisions that have been undertaken by the present government. The genocide divides the country's history into two parts. In general, events, stories and policies that have occurred recently are referred to as having either taken place before or after the genocide. These two periods, and any references made to them, are loaded with many widely accepted, often unspoken, phrases, ideas and meanings.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the history of Rwanda and situate it as a framework for the discussion of education-related policies in the empirical chapters (5-7). This helps to identify key processes that are rooted in the past, and that relate to the nature of the Rwandan state and its relationship with wider society. In the first section, the process of state construction and the radicalisation of ethnic politics as causal explanations for the escalation of social divisions that led to the Rwandan genocide, will be discussed. In the second section,

the discussion will focus on how this history became an integral part of the post-conflict reality. Using this approach, the first two sections of this chapter will provide the context and essential historical background for further detailed discussion (in the last section) on the post-conflict environment in Rwanda. The shape and organisation of the education sector during different historical periods will be an important element of the debates undertaken.

There is a rich body of literature available on the Rwandan genocide; however, this chapter focuses only on those aspects relevant to the core themes of this thesis. As such this chapter does not aim to provide a detailed account of Rwandan history or the events of the Genocide in Rwanda, but rather offers a critical evaluation of some of the causal narratives that are pertinent to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of pre-genocide and post-genocide Rwanda. Therefore, this chapter focuses more on processes that led to genocide and the impact that genocide had on the country's reconstruction, rather than on particular facts and events of the genocide itself. In so doing the chapter supports commentators who are calling for a greater understanding of the causes of the Rwandan genocide as rooted in the country's history and politics, reproduced through the prolonged sociological processes of state, society and identity (re)construction. Throughout the course of this chapter, the argument is made that a narrow focus on the localised circumstances of the genocide, without an awareness of the broader interlinked processes of identity and politics, can lead to problematic conclusions about the causes of the genocide. As this can lead to an incorrect understanding of Rwanda's current affairs, it is important, therefore, to recognise the causes of the genocide in Rwanda as deeply rooted in historical and sociological processes. These can be best explained through examining both particular features of change as well as the continuity in the process of State development, politics and the relationship of identity formation.

I begin the chapter by presenting a historical background and then identifying the trajectories of involvement of political actors and state institutions in the preparation and implementation of the genocide. Following on from this, the discussion will focus upon the process of radicalisation of ethnicity and politics in the wake of the killings by examining their most viable and manifested forms within the genocide propaganda. This, in turn, allows for an examination of the social aspects of the genocide crimes and the impact that they had on people's perception of the state and its institutions. As a consequence of this investigation, the last section of this chapter presents ways in which the post-genocide, post-conflict Rwandan government deals with the complexity of political and social challenges it has had to face. The formation of, and changes within, the education sector forms part of an important debate that is happening alongside the main political and social changes in Rwanda. At a micro-level, it often mirrors the wider state and societal processes.

4.2 The Pre-Colonial and Colonial Origins of the Rwandan State

The Pre-Colonial Period

Against the background of previous discussions on the concept, and specifically the origins, of the state in Africa (Chapter 1 and 3), Rwanda, with its long history of achieving a "human community that (successfully) claimed the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within the given territory" (Weber, 1991, p. 78), stands out as unique. The origins of the first Rwandan political organisations can be traced back as far as the seventeenth century, to the founding of the Nyiginya Kingdom (Vansina, 2004, pp. 48–49).

The formation, expansion and workings of the Nyiginya Kingdom were shaped during various periods of conquest (Lemarchand, 1970, p. 19) and local coalitions, as well as numerous highly

effective structural agreements and policies (Vansina, 2004, pp. 134–149 and 196–197). The expansion and systematic consolidation of the early Rwandan Kingdom lasted until the arrival of Europeans. Monarchical authority over these vastly populated territories was based on political, military, social, economic and spiritual control by the King (called *mwami*) and his Court. The King and his extensive political apparatus controlled a society based on a complex clientship system called (*u*)*buhake* (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 111–113). This highly sophisticated social system was based on eighteen clans and stretched across the entire territory of the Kingdom, encompassing different strata of population, including ethnic groupings. During this time, and right up to the 19th century, the notion of Hutus, Tutsis and Twa represented a variety of different meanings from distinguishing herders and land cultivators, to categories that characterised the aristocracy in the King’s court, to the labelling of “combatant” and “non-combat groups” (Vansina, 2004, pp. 134–139).

The main changes that redefined these notions and transformed the Tutsis and Hutus into categories of occupation or class took place in the second half of the 19th century. This transformation occurred alongside the process of hierarchical differentiation in Rwandan society. This process was underpinned by the introduction of new, exploitative institutions by the Court:

The absolute division between Hutu and Tutsi, institutionalised by the daily practice of *uburetwa*, rapidly displaced the older social class consciousness, in spite of the fact that this consciousness itself resulted from a political phenomenon rather than from a pure notion of the class (Vansina, 2004, p. 136).

However, even then, these groups did not become fixed categories and, therefore, cannot be defined as separate in the primordialist sense (primordialists tend to define ethnicity through a number of fixed factors, such as: “a group name, a believed common descent, common

historical memories, elements of shared culture, such as language or religion, and either actual, or historical sentimental attachment to a specific territory” (for more, see: Smith 1981 cited in Conteh-Morgan, 2004, p. 198). In the case of Rwanda, by intermarriage, the accumulation of wealth or by losing property, the socio-political status of particular individuals could change, subsequently transforming their designation to one or the other group.

In summary, in contrast to other African states, the Rwandan state was not created by colonial powers and so it can recall the traditions and history of its well-functioning, centralised and effective pre-colonial kingdom to a broad range of complex, social relationships. This has not only emotional meaning but also a significant impact on the way authority, legitimacy, sovereignty, along with peace and unity (*The New Times*, 2018) are evoked by the current Rwandan government. By tactically focusing on this period, mainly through the history curriculum in schools, the pre-colonial period is often romanticised and idealised by the Rwandan government. It is presented as being an example of the time when the country enjoyed prosperity and when society was bound by a “symbiotic” relationship based on “mutual benefit” which was (*The New Times*, 2007) built on the system of clans. The existence of clans and the importance assigned to them within the current education system (Warshauer Freedman et al., 2006) is one of the key arguments used by the educational narrative to claim that ethnic divisionism was a later, foreign concept that did not originate in Rwanda.

European Colonial Rule

European rule in Rwanda can be divided into three main periods that broadly correspond with the influence of the Catholic missions, German colonisers and Belgian colonial rule between

1916 and 1962. The assumptions on which the Europeans formed their views on Rwanda were based on the false premise that:

The Europeans who arrived in the 1860s saw, above all, aristocracies in power. As we already know, the Europeans later racially classified these formations. But despite (or because of) the immediate importance of religious objects, they primarily missed the cultural dimension, that of beliefs and rites involved in kingship. What escaped them, in other words, was how this institution, ultimately, took root in the popular imagination. The abuses of the powerful were revealed, but not the motives for why people supported them. The coloniser, of course, was more interested in division and moralising than in trying to understand (Chrétien, 2006, p. 201).

Over the centuries, the Catholic Church gained an incontestable monopoly in Rwanda. Its influence and position are, until today, an important aspect of everyday reality. The first missionaries, known as the White Fathers (Des Forges, 1969, p. 179), arrived in Rwanda in the nineteenth century. Their poorly informed strategies were initially based on the idea that “Christianity will not become universal in a country until it is officially adopted by the chiefs [...]” and that:

(...) the way to win them [i.e., the chiefs] will consist above all in taking their power seriously...You will not neglect to make them realise that the Christian doctrine is completely favourable to their authority since it teaches that they are the true representatives of God on the temporal plane (Des Forges, 1969, p. 179)

These strategies were additionally underpinned by ideologies derived from the adoption of the Hamitic hypothesis, which stressed the foreign, but also more superior and meaningful origins of Tutsis as a group (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 79–87; Sanders, 1969, pp. 521–532). In essence, the Hamitic hypothesis linked Tutsis to another African group believed to be descended from the Biblical Noah and proclaimed to have been destined to become the aristocracy and rulers over other indigenous populations in Africa. The adoption of this

hypothesis gave impetus to perpetuating the new understanding of the difference between Tutsi and Hutu in a more racial, rather than ethnic, manner (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 87–106).

The Germans, who colonised Rwanda for less than twenty years and with a minimal presence in the country, adopted *indirect rule* without interfering with the authority of the King and the existing elites. In contrast, the Belgians who exercised indirect rule in Rwanda from 1916 introduced a number of administrative and governance reforms. On the one hand, these reforms contributed towards creating the modern Rwandan state, by introducing the basis of professional administration. On the other, through the process of “modernising, simplifying and ossifying of an ancient, rich and complex society” (Prunier, 1995, p. 36) the Belgians, ultimately, structured the social order. Consequently, the divisions between the minority of “supreme humans” and “natural rulers” (Gatwa, 2008) – the Tutsis - and the majority population – the Hutus, were reinforced. Additionally, through the implementation of these reforms, the Belgians interfered with the formation and composition of the traditional chieftaincy. By eliminating and simplifying the chieftaincy system, the three separate types of chiefs (land, cattle and military) were replaced by one single chief who was assisted by sub-chiefs and chosen exclusively from the Tutsi minority group. Through this reorganisation, the traditional system that provided balance between these groups became part of the officially legalised reality of the colonial state. Accordingly, identity cards introduced in 1933 by Belgian authorities determined and prescribed those people who officially belonged to the “race of rulers” and those who did not. In essence, Belgian colonial rule transformed the socially-based and, at times, unclear groupings of the Rwandan population into rigorously set and racially specific categories (Mamdani, 2001, p. 88) that deepened inequalities within the Rwandan society.

Education in Pre-Colonial Rwanda

The first European-style school is understood to have been opened in Rwanda by the White Fathers in 1905 in Nyanza (Mamdani, 2001, p. 89) as part of the bigger evangelisation and educational mission of the Catholic Church in Africa. Rudimentary schools attached to every mission were seen by the local population as a source of “guaranteed long-term as well as immediate benefits”:

Rwandans from all levels of society saw the missionaries as dispensers of much coveted trade goods. The ordinary people sought beads and cloth, while the notables wanted such novelties as umbrellas or dog collars. The exchange of produce or livestock for these items was always easier and, sometimes, possible only for those who stood well with the Fathers. At Zaza, such good relations depended on mastery of religious knowledge: those who brought produce to exchange for cloth could carry out the trade only if they could also recite the Lord’s Prayer (Des Forges et al., 2011, p. 65).

On a popular level, the White Fathers’ schooling was applauded as a major accomplishment. However, when considering elites, particularly the Court and notable Tutsis, its success was much more debatable. It is clear that, initially, the Rwandan Court did not have much regard for Western-style, church-led education. Based on evangelism, the White Fathers’ education was branded as being “poisonous” as it openly aimed to break the “grip of [spiritual] superstition” of the Rwandan Court (Des Forges et al., 2011, pp. 161–162) . This was seen as being a direct attack on the local traditional, customary and religious belief system. Ultimately, the tactics of misleading, avoiding and deceiving used by Rwandan chiefs in order to avoid participation in the religious schooling system, came to the attention of the Belgian administrators. Recognising the problem of the close association of schools with the Catholic Church’s doctrine, the Belgian administrators opened their own secular school in Nyanza in

1919. Using a mixture of persuasion and force, Belgians managed to execute their orders and persuaded the sons of chiefs and notables to participate in education.

Rwandan elites were, subsequently, offered a different education from the one offered in rudimentary schools:

(...) the Tutsi's were introduced into "civilised" French-medium education, but the Hutu were confined to a "nativized" second-rate Kiswahili-medium education (Mamdani, 2001, p. 112)

This strategy was directly linked to the Hamitic hypothesis. On this basis, the White Fathers made the assumption that Rwandan Tutsis were "born rulers" and, therefore, required an elite education in order to become "capable of undertaking and implementing progress" (Mamdani, 2001, p. 89). Introducing similar double standards in education significantly contributed to the perception of inequality and the process of solidifying divisions between both ethnic groups (King, 2014, p. 43). Privileged education, along with the concentration of labour, land, wealth and access to state administration in the hands of Tutsi elite fuelled resentment from majority Hutu population. While Tutsis "saw advantages (...) and saw themselves through the eyes of the Europeans as a (...) higher class" (King, 2014, p. 44), the exploitation and victimisation of Hutus contributed to solidification of their group identity.

The situation started to dramatically change at the end of colonial period. Due to an ideological shift that the Catholic Church went through post World War II, those members of the clergy arriving in Rwanda after 1945 had very strong "*anti-racist ideological currents*" (Mamdani, 2001, p. 113). Their ideological and social outlook made them be more generally disposed to identify with the problems faced by of the Hutu masses (Lemarchand, 1970, pp. 135–144). Significantly, this change marked the beginning of a drastic shift in opening up

better education opportunities for the Hutu population. The best proof of this is the significant increase in the numbers of Hutus admitted to Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida, a prestigious secondary school, after 1956, and the fact that the first Rwandan University graduate (from le Centre Universitaire de Kisantu in Kinshasa, Congo in 1955) was a Hutu (Mamdani, 2001, p. 112). Structurally, by the end of the colonial period, the education system was organised to the level of having a systematised school year, with established national examinations and standardised textbooks (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 551).

4.3 The Post-Colonial State in Rwanda – The First and Second Republic

“Hutu Revolution” and First Republic (1962-1973)

As mentioned in the previous section, shortly after World War II, the Belgian authorities, partly due to mounting pressure from the United Nations and changes of attitude within the Catholic Church (Prunier, 1995, pp. 41–45), initiated a major policy shift, resulting in an increased political representation for the majority Hutu population. This political and ideological change, accompanied by an atmosphere generated by the belief that the departure of the Belgian colonists was unavoidable and imminent, opened a political space for the development of the first Rwandan political representation. The first dominant political parties were broadly created along ethnic lines, with the Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU) and Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse (APROSOMA) representing the majority Hutus population, and Rassemblement Democratique Rwandais (RADER) representing the interests of the Tutsi monarchists (Prunier, 1995, pp. 47–48).

In November 1959, the tense political atmosphere in Rwanda was further deepened by a series of sectarian incidents, leading to an outbreak of violence between militias representing

different political factions. With popular participation, the situation quickly developed into a major Hutu uprising in various parts of the country (Straus, 2006, p. 21). The initial violence, mainly directed towards the Tutsi administration, was shortly countered by Tutsi reprisal attacks which claimed several hundred lives.

As an integral part of the peace-restoring process, the Belgian colonial administration sided with the Hutu political movement and promised to appoint over 300 Hutu chiefs and sub-chiefs to replace the Tutsi authorities (Lemarchand, 1970, p. 173). This action allowed the PARAMEHUTU radical political party, oriented towards Hutu domination, to solidify their power and achieve overwhelming victories in both the communal elections of 1960 and the parliamentary elections of 1961. Gregoire Kayibanda, founder of PARAMEHUTU, was proclaimed the first president of the new Republic in May 1962. By this time, the number of Tutsi refugees who fled the country in the face of political instability and violence amounted to around 120,000 (Prunier, 1995, p. 61). The majority of these refugees resided in neighbouring countries from where, in subsequent years, they carried out cross-border incursions into Rwanda. Consequently, in 1987, descendants of the first and following waves of refugees living in Uganda formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel force that would have major impact on the future of both Rwanda and the entire region.

Almost immediately after Rwanda gained Independence in 1962, the political definition of democracy was adjusted to fit with the existing political realities and interests. At the core of this thinking were the overriding characteristics of “Hutu democracy”, adopted both by the legislature and, state-society relations. It was widely accepted that Hutus were the “majority people” (Chretien, Jean-Pierre, 2007, p. 56), and were given rights befitting an indigenous group living within the borders of the State. According to the democratic ruling of the time,

Hutus also had “the right to rule” (Mamdani, 2001, p. 190; Prunier, 1995, p. 81). In essence, this built upon the very assumptions that underpinned the colonial period. The Tutsi population was seen in this equation as a different and foreign race; they found that their position within Rwandan society had shifted from being minority rulers to one in which they were denied the legitimate space to exist (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 190–191). This thinking was translated into law by the adoption of a quota system that broadly excluded Tutsis from public life. The quota system assumed that:

(...) there were officially 9% of Tutsis in Rwanda and so there could be no more than 9% Tutsi students in the schools, 9% Tutsi clerks in the civil service or even 9% Tutsi in any given sector of employment (Prunier, 1995, p. 60).

Shortly afterwards, the failed promises of the “Hutu revolution”, illustrated by accusations of corruption and nepotism on the side of the government, started to become indicative of popular discontent towards Kabyibanda’s regime. Those most vocal in their discontent were the group of Hutu elites from the north who were marginalised by Kayibanda and his southern entourage who had monopolised power since Rwanda’s independence.

As Lemarchand (Lemarchand, 2009) suggest, the intra-Hutu tensions between northern and southern groups have been key to understanding the position in which the Tutsi minority repeatedly found themselves in the following years. As part of their strategies for resolving any differences, be it political or economic, the Tutsis and their social position were used as part of a *scapegoating strategy*, with the government being able to easily “minimise differences with northerners by reminding them of the common enemy” (Des Forges, 1999, p. 40). Similar tactics, based on ethnic manipulation and almost always accompanied by outbreaks of violence, were used by the Rwandan government on numerous occasions over the next 30 years. Consequently, the rhetoric in the pre-genocide propaganda of the early

1990's "of the common enemy" against which all Hutus needed to unite, was not a new concept.

Second Republic (1973 – 1994)

On 5 July 1973, seizing the opportunity afforded by popular discontent and social disorder, Juvénal Habyarimana, a northerner, and Minister of Defence and the Army Chief of Staff, took power through a bloodless coup. Initially, Habyarimana was seen as a progressive politician and was welcomed by the Rwandan people. Immediately after taking charge, Habyarimana banned all political parties and formed the Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Developpement (MRND) as the only party in the country. He imposed dictatorial rule on the population by putting all administrative and political decision under his direct control (Prunier 1995, pp.76-77).

A combination of Habyarimana's strong leadership and effective state institutions and administration delivered an impressive range of developmental projects (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 144–145; Newbury & Newbury, 2000, p. 873). These were reinforced by donor-led aid and the position that Habyarimana's regime enjoyed in the international arena (Uvin, 1997, p. 48). However, as subsequent years show, the situation that, according to some authors (Prunier, 1995, p. 76), was initially welcomed as an improvement, did not change much, especially in relation to social dichotomies between different regional, social and ethnic groups. Furthermore, the disparity between politicians and peasants was increasing. Habyarimana's approach towards economic development was based on *planned liberalism*, and assumed that "peasant living standards could be improved even while encouraging an unrestrained private sector and permitting rapid class differentiation" (Newbury & Newbury, 2000, p. 872).

Criticism of this approach highlights how developmental growth, which was encouraged by these ideas, increased disparities between rich and poor, and between Kigali and rural areas. While it was the peasant communities who, “through control over land, labour, transport and local commerce” (Newbury & Newbury, 2000, p. 872), served to generate the income for the privileged elites, the rural masses benefited least from the unfolding economic progress. Policies introduced by Habyarimana’s government did not address the major structural and societal differences that had been advanced by policymaking in previous decades.

Soon afterwards, Habyarimana’s developmental project began to experience serious economic fragility. Due to the fall of coffee prices in the mid-1980s and the introduction of structural adjustment programmes by the World Bank and IMF in the early 1990s, these insecurities translated into increased economic difficulties, which led to a greater financial burden on the population and, consequently, a reduction in social services (Mamdani, 2001, p. 146; Uvin, 1998, p. 54).

More precisely, during Habyarimana’s regime, the crucial grievances that were not addressed – and which may have resulted in a more constructive outcome had they been – were those regarding the Tutsi political refugees who resided mainly in Burundi and Uganda. As Mamdani (2001) summarised:

(...) the Second Republic’s greatest failure was that it was unable to even pose the question on how to integrate the Tutsi diaspora within the postcolonial polity (p.155)

Different attempts and responses to the problem of the refugees failed to maintain focus and never actually gained substantive support. One of the last attempts to resolve the issue can be summarised as follows:

A World Congress of Rwandese Refugees had been held in Washington DC in August 1988 and it had passed very strong resolutions about the 'Right of Return;' these had been transmitted to the Rwandese government which had remained undaunted, as usual in such case. In February 1988, President Habyarimana had created a joint Rwando-Ugandan commission to look into the problem of Rwandese refugees in Uganda, but it had never done any serious work. For RPF boys, this did not matter: they had set themselves on another course of action: the systematic penetration of key sections of the NRA so that when the time came, they could move a small well-equipped Banyarwandamanned segment of the army into Rwanda and make a dash for Kigali (Prunier 1995, p.74).

Generally speaking, the political strategies of the Habyarimana government lacked the impetus to change deeply-rooted social problems, both in relation to the Tutsi minority and the South-North divide within the Hutu population. Over the years, the divide between the southern and northern Hutus became an evident element in the political landscape in Rwanda. In essence, the shift in Hutu influence from the south to the north resonated in the shift from First to Second Republic:

It is in the sense that the centre of the First Republic was said to gravitate around a factional competition between two sets of regional elites, from Gitarama prefecture in the centre and from Ruhengeri in the northwest. With the coup of 1973, the centre of the competition and control was said to have gravitated to the northwest. By the late 1980's, the political elite of the Second Republic came mainly from two northern prefectures, those of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri [...] (Mamdani 2001, p.151).

This situation had a significant impact on narrowing the political space. As a consequence, Tutsis were marginalised and, within the Hutu camp, voicing any opposition was discouraged and deemed problematic. As such, the political environment was not one that encouraged the (externally-imposed) re-introduction of a multi-party system in the early 1990s. Here again, the political liberalisation efforts undertaken by Habyarimana between 1989 and 1992 did not achieve what they intended in the first place. It could be argued that one of the main challenges in this regard, was its timing, which was not seen as the most appropriate for

democratisation: “the country was at war, the economy was deteriorating, and ethnicity was re-emerging as a polarizing dimension” (Adelman & Millwood, 1996, p. 23).

However, the extent of some of the pro-democracy reforms that started to emerge during the 1990s, and some of their unexpected consequences, went well beyond any possible scenarios imagined, as “in part, multi-partyism became a cloak for particularist interests, encouraged ethnic mobilisation and fed political fiefdoms that usurped the civil administration (...)” (Adelman and Millwod 1996, p.23). This enhanced the popularity of extremist groups:

(...) more significant was the effect on Hutu extremism. The combined pressures for peace negotiators and democratisation provided a double-bored attack on the existing power-holders. When political forces later polarised, the extreme Hutu fringe translated this into an absolute struggle with only final solutions (Adelman and Millwod 1996, p.23).

Thus, a negligence of the rural masses and polarisation of wealth - which benefited only the elites in the capital (Newbury & Newbury, 2000, p. 875) - along with the territorial divide within the Hutu political circles (that later translated into a political and pro-democracy split) are important factors in understanding the first days of the genocide. What is striking is that a number of inequalities and regional divisions, together with certain sentiments and popular imaginations, continue (albeit in a different context) in today’s Rwanda. The context and understanding of the regional divides and the link that these have to broader political community and central state institutions are important elements of analysis in empirical chapters (5-7).

Education in post-colonial period. Educational Reform of 1979

The numerous modifications in the Rwandan education sector shortly after independence did not represent a significant departure from the structures and curricula set during colonial

times. In the first year after independence, primary education was attended by approximately 60 percent of the school age population (Hoben, 1989, p. 14). As one of the government's top priorities, primary education became free and obligatory in early 1960's. However, apart from altering some aspects of the syllabus in the social sciences and re-structuring specific elements within the secondary school programme, the main curriculum used in schools was broadly left unchanged. At the same time, next to formal education, Rwanda saw a growing number of "communal or specialised educational centres" (Hoben, 1989, p. 15). These centres were popular and widely promoted among the Rwandan population. They were well placed to support practical and vocational training, thereby filling gaps for those skills required in the daily life of various communities.

Having made education more widely accessible, the priority for the government of newly independent Rwanda was to establish its own national university. Soon afterwards, thanks mainly to Canadian support, the Université Nationale du Rwanda (UNR) opened its doors to "49 students in Butare in 1963" (Hoben, 1989, p. 14). While this was an important step in widening opportunities and enhancing the possibilities for education in the country, the real transformation in the Rwandan educational sector took place after 1973, during Habyarimana's regime. At the time, the commitment of the Second Republic's government towards education was exceptional for an African state. Both the budgetary spend, as well as the political prominence given to the government functionary responsible for leading the education sector in Rwanda, serve as good indicators. At that time the Rwandan government spent nearly a quarter of its budget on education, making it one of the three highest spenders in Africa, while the Head of Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire

(MINEPRISEC), in of charge of primary and secondary education, was perceived as one of the most prominent political figures in the country (Hoben, 1989, p. 58).

Underscoring this commitment was the scale of the Educational Reform, initiated in 1979. The objective of this reform was to reorganise both the structure and curriculum of education. This lengthy process, planned and executed within seven years, was dedicated to re-evaluating every aspect of the educational curriculum and analysing every structure from the “ministries to the schools” (Hoben, 1989, p. 17). The main achievements of this reform included clarification of the status of schools in Rwanda (including identifying the differences among public, private and subsidised schools) and the systematisation of access to education, along with setting the criteria for admission into secondary schools and university. More practical changes resulted in the complete modification of the entire school curriculum, involving the process of re-writing of school curricula, textbooks, and teacher manuals. As basic education was now being taught in Kinyarwanda, with French being introduced steadily midway through primary education, many of the textbooks required translation. Ultimately, the key feature of this reform was to adapt the educational curriculum – linguistically, culturally and traditionally – to Rwandan conditions, thereby shifting away from Belgian colonial influences. As this reform was not yet fully in place by 1986 (Hoben, 1989, p. 20), the main focus remained on primary education. With its broad base and extended curriculum, it was aimed towards preparing students for vocational training and employment. A new element was the introduction of a six year-long vocational and technical education post primary school.

Secondary school education remained expensive and highly competitive (mainly due to the boarding aspect of secondary schooling). Compared to primary schools, secondary schools

received limited state funding and, therefore, remained affordable to only a few wealthy Rwandans. Additionally, rigid ethnic and regional quotas meant they were accessible only to a limited number of students, which added to their exclusivity and, in the long term, helped to maintain high standards.

4.4 Standing between the Past and Today. On the State violating its Popular Trust

The Rwandan genocide needs to be understood as the failure of a number of interlinked internal and external factors. The root of these failures can be linked to both a specific socio-historical context and in relation to the vital role played by the failed state in the genocide process. One of the consequences of the imbalanced historical relationship between ethnicity and politics, and also of how the two ethnic groups fared in the aftermath of the genocide, was that a new understanding of ethnicity in post-genocide Rwanda needed to be established. Post-genocide victimisation and criminalisation of Rwandans, especially in relation to politics and the state, created a unique reality that could not offer up quick and definite answers to social questions.

The complete material devastation of state institutions, along with the mass migration of the predominantly Hutu population and return of mostly Tutsi refugees after the genocide, added yet another layer of complexity. Over the decades, and leading up to 1994, the Rwandan state became ever more pervasive and highly centralised, adopting a dictatorial method of subjugating the masses and defining every element of popular discourse along ethnic lines. In essence, the state excluded one of its groups, that is, the Tutsis, from any public dialogue, thereby refusing them the right to legitimately exist as citizens within the public sphere in Rwanda.

The authoritarian style of government that emerged before the genocide allowed the Rwandan state to permeate most aspects of social life; a situation that was unusual in Africa. This was so profound that it allowed the almost complete control over and manipulation of intimate relations within communities and even at the family level (Mamdani, 2001; Straus, 2006). In the face of economic and political challenges, it is not unusual for governments worldwide to seek to influence these relationships, with the stated objective being for the benefit of its population. The Rwandan State, however, chose to act against its sovereign “responsibility to protect”. The level of this negative relationship between the state and society, and the strong hold of the government over its population is evidenced through the high impact of the genocide propaganda and, from this, the popular engagement in violence. Furthermore, the behaviour of the population and the reputation of the state institutions that traditionally safeguard them, were damaged in such a way that it would take many years to repair. Ethnic hatred and the overall atmosphere of social and political approval of the situation was so deeply seated in people’s understanding of their society, that it cut through the most morally responsible and liable institutions:

The principal and the inspector of schools in my district participated in the killings with nail-studded clubs. To teachers, colleagues with whom we used to share beers and student evaluations, set their shoulders to the wheel, so to speak. A priest, burgomaster, the subprefect, a doctor – they all killed with their own hands...They wore pressed cotton trousers, they had no trouble sleeping, they travelled around in vehicles or on light motorcycles...These well-educated people were calm, and they rolled up their sleeves to get a good grip on their machetes (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 62).

Consequently, the most fundamental and often intimate relationship between social and public institutions was completely devastated.

Many of the actions and policies undertaken by the current Rwandan government are claimed to be influenced by the events of the genocide. The desire of state architects to not allow history to repeat itself on one hand and the complexity of social divisions, left Rwandan officials with no other option than to propose initiatives and solutions which are often unpopular and questionable at least by some groups of population. The trajectories undertaken by the post-genocide government in Rwanda resolved to construct a specific model of state, which it was hoped would address the most fundamental challenges that have been described above. The landscape, that is, the social environment, external pressures, internal conditions and power relations which are all constitutive of the environment in which these pro – developmental changes are taking place will be the main interest of the last section of this chapter.

4.5 Post-Genocide Rwanda

4.5.1 Rwandan Leadership. RPF, Kagame – from rebels to politicians

The post-genocide reconstruction of Rwanda, with its ideas, visions and practicalities have been diligently defined by a small and distinct group of people who form the core of the country's leadership. The majority of these individuals are "closely linked by shared exile and family ties. Most came from two refugee camps in Uganda and many went to school or university together" (Dorsey, 2000, pp. 328–329). Additionally, many of them, being part of the RPF, had an early shared military experience of fighting against the genocidal forces in 1994. Prunier's telling characterisation of the RPF as a fighting organisation shed some light on the way it later on fashioned itself as a political party:

Discipline was very much a concern, and the RPF was run as an extremely tight ship, where soldiers stood at attention, saluted their officers, and strictly obeyed orders (Prunier, 1998, p. 131).

This ethos of a tightly organised and strictly controlled military organisation that characterised the RPF, was ultimately transformed into a principle, and an unspoken mode of operation for the newly-established political party. For many individuals in the RPF, Paul Kagame was not only a political figure, but, to some extent, remained a general and commander-in-chief who warranted respect, discipline and order. In this context, both Paul Kagame and those led by him in the RPF provide an interesting case of transformation from being a military group to becoming a political force. In many ways, Paul Kagame's makeover from being a warlord to President corresponds directly with the story of the RPF itself:

Kagame's personal transformation from rebel to statesmen parallels a similar shift in the RPF from vanguard movement to ruling party (Waldorf, 2017, p. 75).

The uniqueness of this transformation is predominantly based on the fact that it did not happen according to the template of how rebel-to-party conversions should take place (Zeeuw, 2008). In the case of Rwanda, due to its distinct history, the nature of Kagame's authoritarian leadership, as well as the internal workings of the RPF, the transformation looked different, and was very much determined by a Rwandan context:

Structurally, the party did not fully demilitarise and only partly reorganised. Attitudinally, the party adapted its political goals to appeal to the Hutu majority but did not democratise its decision making (Waldorf, 2017, p. 87).

In essence, the RPF fused part of its "military and political wings" (Reed, 1996, p. 498). This process was beneficial to the RPF as it allowed the party to avoid internal conflict that often tore apart other, similar, organisations in Africa. Furthermore, by deriving its political line from the military wing, the RPF was able to sustain morale and command strict internal discipline (Reed, 1996, p. 498). This entire transformation was designed to suit localised Rwandan circumstances, specific power relations and a vision of the future that was shared

by the victorious post-genocide Tutsi elite. In practical terms, it is precisely because of these unchanged features that the party under Kagame's leadership was able to bring safety and stability and, later, to also introduce swift developmental recovery across the country. The authoritarian style of Kagame's leadership can be attributed to his military heritage (Golooba-Mutebi & Booth, 2013, p. 17). With all its benefits and drawbacks, this legacy clearly helped the RPF's "extraordinary ability to monopolise power" (Waldorf, 2017). The reality and impact of RPF's influence is unquestionable, and effectively made Rwanda a party-state, which includes "involvement of a top-down hierarchy answerable to the presidency and overseen by insiders" (Jones 2012: 237). Elsewhere it has also been described "as a highly centralised organisation, with a bare minimum of internal democracy" (Rudasingwa, 2013, p. 169). The RPF remains institutionally integrated with the Rwandan army, in that it:

(...) remains the institution which is, firstly, the core institution for implementation of state policy, secondly, the key space for the socialisation of the elite and, thirdly, a link to the citizenry (Jones, 2014, p. 240)

In essence, today's Rwanda cannot be properly analysed without understanding its leadership's past, this issue will become of key importance for discussion within empirical chapters 5-7. Since the 1994 genocide, the country has been de facto ruled by Kagame, and the RPF as newly defined political leaders, whose triumphant military success bestowed upon them a victors' legitimacy. As in other similar settings, a victors' legitimacy turned out to be an important component in the process of establishing authority, governance and control. Soon after taking power the RPF faced additional challenges that were connected to the realities of the Rwandan situation. The main challenge of the leadership lay with its structure and the fact that it consisted of a small group of Anglophone Tutsi refugees from Uganda. Due to being "a double minority in the country" (Straus, 2019, pp. 518–519), the new elite was

confronted with significant difficulties (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 7) around gaining broader public support. It became evident that one way of dealing with these challenges was to be derived from introducing economic development. As both Golooba-Mutebi and Booth argue, a commitment to an “inclusive, and non-discriminatory” (Golooba-Mutebi & Booth, 2013, p. 13) national development was the key ingredient of political settlement in Rwanda. Engagement in economic development allowed the RPF to strengthen their political position (L. Mann & Berry, 2016, p. 121). Therefore, the decision made by Rwandan elites to invest in economic development needs to be understood as a strategic, as well as a political choice. Similar decisions were based on specific ideas that had been shaped by unique experiences and beliefs:

The RPF’s experience of violence cultivated a core belief among the leadership that ethnicity is dangerous, violence is legitimate, a strong state is necessary to maintain security – and that ultimately Rwanda cannot rely on the international community for support (L. Mann & Berry, 2016, p. 132)

Up to the present time, these views reflect the RPF’s political philosophy. Continuity of strong military and security services is perceived to guarantee public safety and stability. In addition, ascribing to economic developmental processes, the RPF is seen to be boosting Rwanda’s capabilities. As it will be detailed in Chapters 5-7, this directly corresponds with the RPF’s ethos of self-reliance and bringing a dependency on aid to an end. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, while the mantra of economic development is one that is extensively promoted across Rwanda in many different forms, its engineers and masterminds are part of a strict elite, closely associated with an inner circle of Kagame supporters. The logic of this strategy was and partially continues to be, to diffuse the RPF’s military power by distributing the most profitable opportunities, as well as to allocate the most lucrative positions within the private sector to former army officers. This allowed for a smoother transition from the

armed services to civilian life and ensured loyalty towards the RPF (Behuria, 2016a). In this way, the most profitable businesses and ventures in Rwanda came to belong to RPF members, who were understood to be “empowered to build country’s economic potential” and by this “fortify the regime’s political legitimacy” (L. Mann & Berry, 2016, p. 132).

4.5.2 The Government of National Unity – commitment to power sharing or systematic closure of democratic space?

Due to internal and external legitimacy concerns that emerged in the aftermath of the genocide, the RPF had no other option than to initiate a power-sharing government based on the Arusha Accord (Prunier, 2009, pp. 42–43). As mentioned in the previous section, it was clear for the RPF’s leadership that, domestically, “liberator’s credit” (Rafti et al., 2007, p. 19) was not enough to gain the necessary approval of the wider, predominantly Hutu, population. It was also clear that the “genocide credit” (Straus, 2019, p. 520) would not be enough to satisfy the demands of the international community. The need to provide clear direction to the new government, along with a compliance with internationally-agreed peace terms became a key issue in unlocking financial assistance (Eriksson, 1996, pp. 40–41). Therefore, as part of the “Arusha Agreements” in July 1994, a Government of National Unity was created. The new president Pasteur Bizimungu was an RPF Hutu. Out of twenty-one ministries, eight went to the RPF and the rest were distributed among other parties. As Prunier summarised, this government looked “like a small miracle in a sea of madness” (Prunier, 2009, p. 7). The important element was the fact that, in terms of ethnicity, fifteen of the new ministers were Hutu and six were Tutsi. This was a strategic decision aimed at enhancing the new government’s legitimacy “with a restive Hutu populace and with international donor community” (Waldorf, 2017, p. 81). Perspectives about the composition and nature of this

new government vary. The 2002 International Crisis Group described the RPF's power-sharing as a "(...) façade of pluralism" and hailed it as showing an "official absence of political opposition" (International Crisis Group, 2002, p. 10). Others, such as Prunier, pointed to this new government as being a "genuine government of national unity [that was] fully in the spirit of the Arusha Peace Agreements of August 1993" (Prunier, 2009, p. 7). In practice, the government was both. On one hand, the necessity of the social, geopolitical and international situation forced the RPF to be compliant with the Arusha Agreements and demonstrate its willingness to share its political platform with other parties. On the other hand, the reality of the RPF's overwhelming advantage was clearly visible. The official and unofficial ways in which the RPF was practically in control of state institutions are well documented:

While the Rwandan government (GoR) presents itself as a champion of national unity and equal opportunity, de-emphasising ethnic identity and ostensibly opening positions throughout society to those of skill and merit, political authority in the country does not yet reflect this ideal (...) Some major positions are held by Hutus, but their actual authority often appears limited, and they are widely perceived to be "twinned" with more powerful Tutsi colleagues (WikiLeaks, 2008)

Ultimately, the functionality and perspectives of the Government of National Unity provide a good lens through which to analyse a range of other pro-democracy activities in Rwanda. The aim of similar pro-democracy activities ought to be an incorporation of all voices and individuals within public life, irrespective of their ethnicity, background or origins.

As will be shown below, similar activities can be considered from two (often polarised) perspectives. The first is that of an idyllic façade, that presents a utopian version of the state of democracy in the country. This appearance is sustained by the government's propaganda, and is promoted, especially for external and international consumption, by the government-controlled media and government officials. The second maintains that the reality of power-

sharing and ethnic inclusion are much more complex processes. This can be seen when considering matters that are usually undisclosed. In such cases, these matters can only really be understood by those individuals who are, not only informed, and trusted, but who are also well-embedded within Rwandan life:

(...) I am Hutu. But I am *'good'* Hutu. At least for the officials. I have access to things, like scholarships and different opportunities like that. Because I'm good for diversity. Because of me, they can't say that it's not only Tutsi who have access. I am an orphan, I didn't know my parents, but I know that they opposed killings [meaning: Genocide killings in 1994] and they died because of that. The *'moderates'*, they called them. This way I'm a good Hutu [laughter] I bet you thought all this time that I'm Tutsi, but it's ok... It works well for me. You see that is the difference – you know me long time and you didn't know. If you would be from here, just hearing my name would tell you exactly who I am and where I came from. No one talks about it much, but you just know. We know. For us it's really important but not because of someone's past or if they are good person or not – but usually it tells you about how to behave with this other person, what and how to talk about things...and even sometimes it guides you on which language to use (Interview 21. JL/A)

As strongly hinted in the quote above, one of the key reasons for maintaining the perfect appearance of inclusion and diversity is Rwanda's heavy reliance on international assistance. In the immediate period after the genocide, inclusion was a key precondition for this assistance, and soon after, it transitioned into a donor-driven pressure driving the democratisation process. As part of this, the rules linked to power-sharing became carefully embedded in the process of designing the Rwandan constitution and in setting up elections. Here again, power-sharing and democratisation, understood to be part of key political processes, can be analysed from two opposing perspectives. Golooba-Mutebi, Booth and, to some degree, Chemouni (Chemouni, 2016) identify a number of elements within the electoral and constitutional system, reflecting the "genuine inclusive nature of the Rwandan ruling coalition" (Chemouni, 2016, p. 53). According to Golooba-Mutebi and Booth (Golooba-Mutebi & Booth, 2013, p. 12), these provisions are systematised within the "constitutional

and legal framework with a number of remarkable features". The same characteristics that are praised above are disparaged by Reyntjens (Reyntjens, 2013), whose highly critical analysis is based predominantly on Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports. Precisely the same elements that are put forward as uniquely positive, such as, the "extended national consultation process" (Golooba-Mutebi & Booth, 2013, p. 12) around the new constitution, are contested as being "highly supervised" and not really providing space for an honest and open "debate on the future of Rwanda" (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 29). Similarly, Golooba-Mutebi and Booth emphasise the progressiveness and diversity of some political parties in Rwanda, which they claim "reject the suggestion that they are mere satellites of the RPF" (Golooba-Mutebi & Booth, 2013, p. 12). At the same time, Reyntjens' analysis of political parties in Rwanda concludes that they do not represent a viable opposition, and that they have, in fact, "practically ceased to exist" (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 28). Furthermore, Reyntjens' characterises elections as a means of being the RPF regime's strategy for consolidation of political power. His examples include a range of undemocratic tactics that were widely exploited, and that include: targeting, arrests, disappearance of opposition party leaders (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 28), restrictions placed on freedom of expression (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 29), fear and intimidation of voters (Reyntjens, 2013, pp. 30, 34, 37), irregularities in the voting process (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 35), the use of fraud and non-transparent procedures (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 37, 39). Ultimately, Reyntjens' argument is that since 1994 the RPF has engaged in the steady and systematic process of "closure of democratic space" (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 33). While articulated less forcefully, similar arguments have also been put forward by other researchers who have observed that the space for political debate in Rwanda is, indeed, narrowing:

(...) given the environment in which elections are conducted in Rwanda. The extent to which they have offered free choice to voters or presented a real opportunity to challenge the vision of the ruling party for Rwanda's political development, is debatable (Beswick, 2010, p. 233)

Elections took place, but they served to tighten political control rather than broaden the political space. A steady flow of laws and regulations were used to severely restrict civil liberties and political freedoms. Rwanda thus shows that post-conflict peacebuilding without democratisation is fully possible (...) (Samset, 2011, p. 277)

The official governmental response, led by Kagame, towards claims around the lack of democratisation and political space has been approached in four different ways. First, by emphasising the lack of readiness of Rwandan people, Kagame says, there are "no illusions about how far we still have to go" (Rundell, 2010, p. 37). Second, by building its argument around the historical trajectory of the country, it tries to prove that the situation is much better today than it was in the past. Third, by outrightly dismissing any critics by calling them unappreciative, the government claims they are full of hate against the RPF, or have sympathy with the *génocidaires* (meaning being under the influence of FDLR propaganda) (*New Times*, 2011). Finally, the government routinely dismisses criticism around democracy and political freedoms by highlighting the uniqueness of Rwandan experiences and perspectives:

Dr. Golooba, who has done extensive social research in Rwanda, noted that it's imperative to view the Rwandan situation in its unique context. To him, people view the political space issue from different standpoints (...) (*The New Times*, 2010)

Maybe let's talk about democracy, and not western democracy, because is there something called democracy without putting the western thing? (...) Whatever they practise, - be it Britain, France, the United States, that is their business. I am African, I'm Rwandese, and there must be universal principles and values that people want to identify with (Shaban, 2017)

In recent years, the necessities and priorities around economic development have also been put forward as an excuse for the lack of genuine pro-democratic reforms. Development is of

foremost importance and surpasses any other issues, including those of political freedom. In Kagame's own words, Rwanda's problems will disappear once the "medicine of prosperity" (Rundell, 2010) is effectively applied and properly embedded. This logic is slowly becoming widely accepted both inside Rwanda and by its international partners. For over two decades now, this argument, augmented by fears around the stability and peace in the country, along with the post-genocide guilt of the wider international community, allowed the GoR to build its image of a "donor darling" (Hayman, 2011). As some authors point out, the Rwandan Government use of a pro-developmental narrative to cover up its failings resulted in donors becoming increasingly unresponsive to any political changes occurring in the country. This, in turn, helped the regime strengthen its anti-democratic position:

(...) attempts by donors, and prominently UK, to aid stability as a precursor to development and greater democracy have conversely helped create an entrenched political settlement. Through silence, inaction and reducing its potential tools for influencing the Rwandan government, the UK has effectively minimised its ability to support the positive trajectory it seeks to promote (Beswick, 2011b, p. 1927)

Taking all these perspectives together, even without attempting to reconcile the most extreme views, it is impossible not to question how similar situations impact upon the relationship among the State, its leadership and broader society. In its 2002 analysis, the International Crisis Group (ICG) signalled that similar situations are likely to have negative consequences, especially given the growing inequality and distance between the state and its leadership:

If the RPF continues to be both the judge and the jury in political life, the wall between the leaders and those they govern will only loom larger, accentuating the lack of understanding and the risk of violence (International Crisis Group, 2002, p. 26).

The idea of distance and alienation of the state and its institutions, along with the quality and active participation in both political life and developmental projects, will be some of the focal points of analysis in empirical chapters (5-7).

4.5.3 On Rwandan Developmental Indicators - from survival to “Singapore of Africa”?

Immediately after the genocide, the economic situation in Rwanda was recognised by international organisations as requiring “emergency relief”¹⁹, in essence calling for the rapid implementation of any activities and initiatives that could save lives. This grave situation was exacerbated by the material devastation of the country, which was in a state of enduring structural and organisational chaos. Plundered banks and businesses, non-existent state institutions and public services, unavailable health and medical supplies, devastated agriculture with crops and livestock lost, and destroyed infrastructure (Eriksson, 1996) were only some of the challenges facing the new Rwandan government. While the majority of these may be accounted for as being consistent with the destruction of a post-conflict environment, the situation in Rwanda was additionally worsened by the disappearance of the former government, which had fled to Zaire with all the money from the Central Bank (Prunier, 2009, p. 5). This, along with the stain of genocide crimes, left government institutions, including the civil service, judicial, health and education sectors in a state of collapse and disarray (Eriksson, 1996, pp. 33–41). The material and economic devastation of the country was complete, leaving very little left to build upon.

When analysing the progress that Rwanda has made over the last twenty-five years, from the starting point above, the only accurate comparison that may be made, is the one that

¹⁹ For full definition see ReliefWeb Glossary of Humanitarian Terms <https://www.who.int/hac/about/reliefweb-aug2008.pdf?ua=1> p.25

describes it as an “economic dynamo” (Matfess H, 2015, p. 197). As stated before, development that was evident to international donors, as well as being acknowledged by Rwandans in their everyday lives, was an crucial feature of the RPF’s exertion and struggle for legitimacy. Because of this, the RPF’s idea of development was directly aligned with a process of economic recovery. Before turning to a discussion on the scale of Rwandan success, it is important to bear in mind that, until recently, Rwanda remained highly dependent upon international aid – “to the tune of half of its national budget” (Marysse et al., 2007, p. 454). It is widely accepted that similar assistance is key to creating a supportive environment and opening up possibilities in terms of economic development. As mentioned before, externally over the last two decades, the Rwandan Government appears to have made an impressive effort to build and manage its status of “donor darling” (Marysse et al., 2007, p. 453). So often praised by donors, the efficiency of the Rwandan Government in the area of good governance has been transformed in recent years and currently extends to the way officials in Kigali navigate their relationship with international partners:

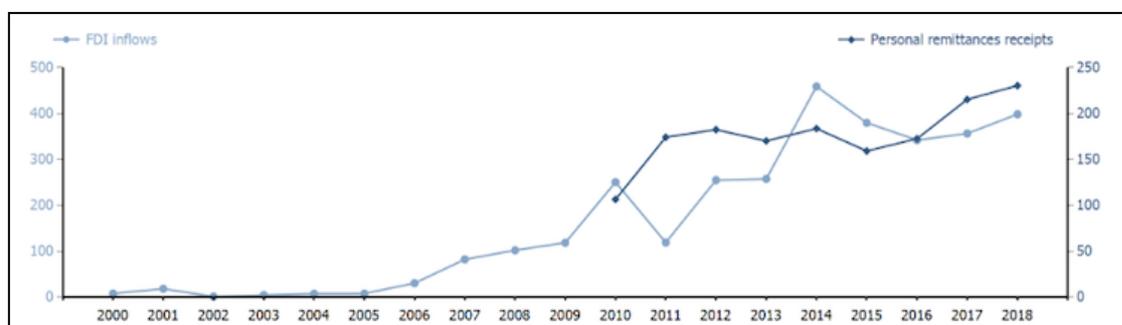
(...) Rwandan Government has enhanced its control over donor inputs through a ‘traffic light system’ that scores donors on the degree to which they provide budget support and on their use of the government’s own financial systems. While this may indeed reduce duplication and avoid certain transaction costs, it also enhances the government’s control over the allocation of aid money and loosens the ties of donors with projects on the ground (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012, p. 430)

As highlighted by another author and several interviewees for this research, the “Rwandan government makes a firm point of not allowing donors to set the agenda” (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 166). “Doing things, the Rwandan way” (Interview 7. SL) is a characteristic that is often echoed by Rwandan officials as proof of the elites’ autonomy and independence. It remains undeniable that the huge amount of aid that Rwanda received in the 1990s (Marysse et al., 2007, p. 440), contributed to developing an environment in which the post-genocide

Rwandan government was able to effectively initiate economic recovery. The scale of progress that was achieved as part of the recovery is often illustrated in political narrative and academic literature by a number of indicators, rankings and statistics. More complex problematisation has been conducted through an in-depth analysis of specific policies, explicit trends and differences across the country or by examining evaluations that target individual people or specific communities. As a more comprehensive analysis of two educational policies will be undertaken in empirical chapters (5-7), this section will focus on introducing some of the key indicators, thereby offering only one official, and very general dimension, of development in Rwanda.

The most significant challenge in post-genocide Rwanda was the ability to attract foreign investors. A failure to attract external business would have had a detrimental impact on the entire developmental project. As highlighted in Figure 3 (below), despite mounting problems and challenges, post-genocide Rwanda was steadily successful in attracting external investments and increasing the amount of foreign remittances.

Figure 3
Financial Flow Trends (millions of USD\$)

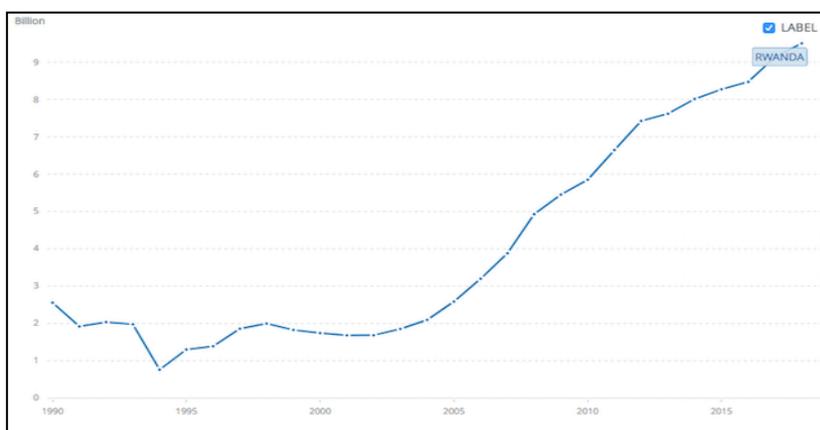


Note. Reprinted from UNCTADStats <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/countryprofile/generalprofile/en-gb/646/GeneralProfile646.pdf>

The steady flow of foreign investments, along with a well organised system of state institutions, was crucial to the growing economic process. Initially, this structured way of

organising development in Rwanda was cited in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (A. Evans et al., 2006), that included a number of developments relating to economy and financial recovery, and which were introduced as early as in 1997. However, the overarching aims, and ambitions of the Rwandan government were summarised in its “Vision 2020” document (RoR, 2000). Having been updated a number of times (RoR, 2012), this document, until recently (for more see Chapter 8) served as a bedrock of Rwandan development and was a key publication at the time when discussed two educational policies were introduced and implemented. The aim of Vision 2020 was to provide “a framework for Rwanda’s development, presenting the key priorities and providing Rwandans with a guiding tool for the future” (RoR, 2000, p. 2). Its key target was to increase annual per capita income from 290USD to 900USD and, therefore, transform Rwanda into a middle-income country by 2020. As part of the process of achieving this goal, Rwanda was also expected to reduce poverty from 64% to 30% and increase average life expectancy from 49 to 55 years. In terms of achieving all these objectives, Rwanda made exceptional progress. Growth indicators remain impressive and Rwanda recorded an annual growth of over 6% nearly every year since 1994

Figure 4
Rwanda GDP (current USD\$)



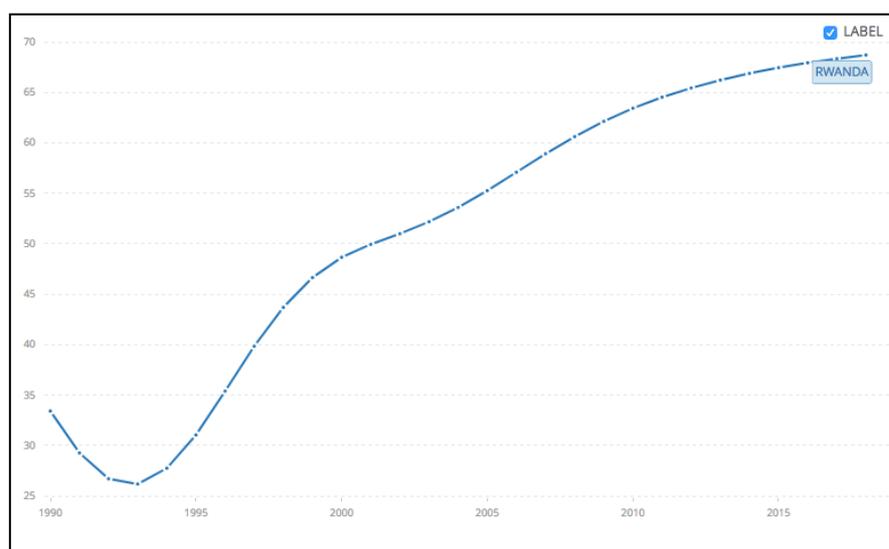
Note: Reprinted from World Bank Data, 2020

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2018&locations=RW&start=1990>

The life expectancy indicators also show an impressive, positive result (Figure 5, below).

Figure 5

Life expectancy at birth, total (years) – Rwanda



Note: Reprinted from World Bank, n.d. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=RW>

Economic progress and achievements, in line with the goals of Vision 2020, were summarised

by the IMF thus:

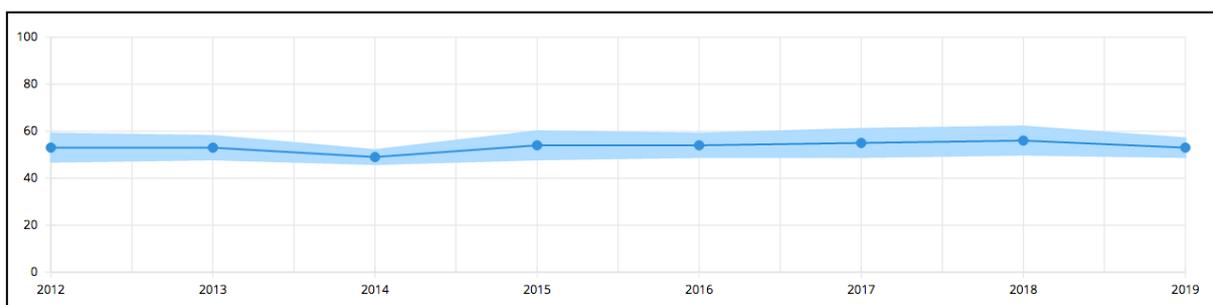
Rwanda continues to make notable progress in sustaining high and inclusive growth. (...) Real GDP growth outpaced expectations, averaging 10.3 percent in the first half of 2019 (IMF, 2019)

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide the measurements and indicators showed a reduction in poverty levels and were taken as a positive sign for the future. It is only recently, when data regarding poverty reduction have been examined in greater detail, that a more complex and confused picture has become apparent. At this point, the most accurate way of studying poverty data in Rwanda is to look at two different methods of interpretation. Some academics explain the difficulties in reporting poverty levels by pointing to a range of issues and challenges around data-reliability and accuracy of reporting which, they say, is problematic

in Rwanda, as it is other African countries (Jerven, 2013a). Others, who are more critical of the RPF government (An Ansoms, 2017), remain convinced that there is intentional manipulation and distortion of data regarding poverty, with some authors going as far as to hint at efforts to “deliberately fool the world and its own population” (Reyntjens, 2015). The challenges around poverty reduction and inequality remain high on the government’s agenda and are continually highlighted as the main problems facing the country. A more detailed dialogue on statistics, perceptions and the complex impact that all these issues have on the life of ordinary Rwandans will be part of the discussion in Chapter 7.

Another important feature of Rwanda’s economic performance is the strong commitment of the country’s elite to fight corruption. In the Corruption Perception Index compiled by Transparency International (Figure 6, below), Rwanda ranked 51 out of 198 countries in the world (Transparency International, 2019). Despite fluctuations of between 1-5 places over the recent years, this ranking is an important achievement. It conveys, not only a message about reliability and trustworthiness to international partners, but it is also seen as directly benefiting adoption Developmental State model by instilling the notion of accountability among state officials and state institutions.

Figure 6
Corruption Perception Index. Rwanda Score over time.



Note. Reprinted from Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index, 2019
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/index/rwa#>

From formal (Interview 7 SL; 13, 19 ML; 23, 36 JL/A/O/) and informal conversations in Rwanda, it is evident that corruption is perceived as a negative concept at all levels of society. Finally, the last indicator that is particularly important to the government are the World Bank's Doing Business quantitative indicators. In essence, these represent both the simplicity and facilitation of Rwanda's business environment, while also highlighting its achievements in the area of good governance. In 2010, the World Bank emphasised Rwandan efforts in 'Doing Business' by moving it from 143rd place to 67th place, setting it up for becoming a forerunner in terms of facilitating an environment for making business:

For the first time since Doing Business started tracking reforms, a sub-Saharan African economy, Rwanda, led the world in reforms. Rwanda has steadily reformed its commercial laws and institutions since 2001. In the past year it introduced a new company law that simplified business start-up and strengthened minority shareholder protections. Entrepreneurs can now start a business in two procedures and three days. Rwanda has also enacted new laws in order to improve regulations to ease access to credit. Other reforms removed bottlenecks at the property registry and the revenue authority, reducing the time required to register property by 255 days (The World Bank, 2010)

This change is one of the most important for Rwanda, as it desperately seeks to attract private investors and encourage entrepreneurship amongst its own population.

On the face of it, looking solely at the indicators that have been presented, economic progress in Rwanda can be said to characterise a "miracle growth" (Behuria, 2018, p. 424). As it is in other instances, similar indicators have been used by politicians and, to some extent, academics to make far-reaching assumptions and sweeping generalisations about Rwanda and its progress. While Rwanda and its elites are widely acknowledged for their commitment to development and economic progress (Chemouni, 2016, p. 51), the specific nuances of individual policies and changes remain problematic.

The role, functioning, and motivations of those governmental institutions responsible for the implementation of the developmental agenda is at the centre of analysis in empirical chapters 5-7. These chapters specifically examine issues relating to motivation, quality, consequences and impact, as well as, the durability and the perceived *cost* of governmental policies. The discussion that is initiated in the following chapters potentially has an important consequence for the next phase of the developmental project. Trying to build on its success, the Rwandan government has already announced a new strategy that builds on and replaces, Vision 2020. The aim of this new strategy is to transform Rwanda into an “upper-middle income” country by 2035 and high income by 2050 (RoR, 2020). This ambitious plan serves to ask some important questions about the attributes, character and quality of the developmental foundations of current Rwandan State.

4.5.4 Safety, continuity and construction of new societal order

The physical and material damage in the immediate aftermath of the genocide was further exacerbated by the challenges initiated by the mass displacement of the civilian population. Over two million people (out of country’s population of around 7 million) fled into exile in Zaire for fear of prosecution and/or reprisal killings (Prunier, 2009, p. 5). At the same time, approximately seven hundred thousand Tutsi refugees (Prunier, 2009, p. 5), in a largely disorganised fashion, started their return to Rwanda from neighbouring countries, mainly Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. Against this backdrop, the killings and violence continued in both directions. Reports of continuing pockets of resistance were matched with reports of massacres committed on the local Tutsi population in several parts of the country. The social tensions across the country remained high. These were as much a problem of a larger societal order as they were a specific challenge to victims and perpetrators having to find a way to

coexist in the same communities. With over 300,000 children without parents and 150,000 houses destroyed (Prunier, 2009, p. 5), with virtually no infrastructure and very inconsistent international relief assistance, everyday survival became a challenge for individual people.

At the same time, it was clear early on that the majority of challenges related to safety and survival could not be resolved by emergency relief efforts alone. The situation was much more complex and required a systematic and organised effort and was unlikely to be resolved without setting up an effective administration and leadership. The need for establishing a new government became an uppermost priority. Given the recent history of ethnic imbalance and violence, the questions and challenges facing this new government mounted quickly – its objectives, legitimacy and capacity needed to be carefully considered. In terms of its society, it was clear that the greatest test for the new government was how to deal with a very different and changed country:

Post-genocide Rwanda is dramatically different from pre-genocide Rwanda. The genocide has transformed the social, political and economic landscape of Rwanda. It has also profoundly affected the existing political and cultural institutions. But, above all, it has undermined the social trust that binds people together (Eriksson, 1996, p. 40).

The Government of National Unity as described in first section of this chapter, took it upon itself to create an environment in which safety and security could be restored. In its spirit, “national unity” became a broader narrative as well as a key strategy of the Rwandan government. The formal origins of this strategy are embedded within the Rwandan policy of National Unity and Reconciliation (NURC), established by an Act of Parliament in 1999. It was expected that this policy would address one of the most urgent, social problems in post-genocide Rwanda – the issue of communal coexistence between the perpetrators and victims of the genocide. The aim of the policy was to move towards a society free of ethnic divisions;

one where all the citizens of the country would be simply called and referred to as Rwandans, rather than Tutsi, Hutu or Twa. At the heart of this policy was educating, or more precisely re-educating, Rwandans “on matters relating to national unity and reconciliation” (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission 2016 (NURC)²⁰. A similar re-education was undertaken by encouraging and, later, making it compulsory to participate in debates and discussions relating to peace, national unity and reconciliation. The principle and general idea of this policy appears the most sensible and logical solution for the ethnically torn and deeply bruised Rwandan society.

However, as with other issues, the reality was more complex. While the theory behind this idea appeared to be the best solution for Rwandan society, the double meaning of the entire narrative was soon exposed. The new social order and peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups in Rwanda was to be based on the (largely) RPF’s own opinions and interpretation of history. Most importantly, the history of the genocide was carefully managed and packed into a simple and easy to follow story aimed at becoming the officially approved version of the past. According to this narrative, prior to colonialism, the Rwandan people constituted “an imagined community” with society consisting of “united people [who lived in] harmonious coexistence” (Waldorf, 2017, p. 85). Following colonisation, it was the colonisers who intentionally divided Rwandans along ethnic lines, while the genocide was caused by a bad government, who allowed its population to act upon “deep-seated and seething ethnic hatred that Hutu have for Tutsi” (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 335). In the process

²⁰ For information about the background and mandate of the commission please see: <https://nurc.gov.rw/index.php?id=83>

of creating this history, the labels of perpetrators and victims became allocated to Hutus and Tutsis respectively:

(...) all Tutsi (whether they were in Rwanda during the genocide or not) are innocent victims or “survivors” and all Hutu (whether they participated in the genocide or not) are guilty perpetrators (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 333)

This allocation of labels is important, as it goes much deeper than just being a descriptive concept, or a provocative point of historical discussion. This way of interpreting and understanding the two sides of the conflict and genocide, was at the heart of the law promulgated in 2008, which was aimed at fighting divisionism and genocide ideology (see more: *Rwanda. Law No. 18/2008 of 2008 Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology*). This law characterised the crime of genocide ideology as:

(...) any behaviour manifested by facts aimed at dehumanising a person or a group of persons with the same characteristics in the following manner:

- 1° threatening, intimidating, degrading through defamatory speeches, documents or actions which aim at propounding wickedness or inciting hatred;
- 2° marginalising, laughing at one’s misfortune, defaming, mocking, boasting, despising, degrading creating confusion aiming at negating the genocide which occurred, stirring up ill feelings, taking revenge, altering testimony or evidence for the genocide which occurred;
- 3° killing, planning to kill or attempting to kill someone for purposes of furthering genocide ideology (RoR, 2008, para. 3)²¹

Lack of clarity and the existence of loopholes in the law (Mukamana, 2020, p. 12), drew much criticism and, in 2012, the Rwandan government drafted an amendment to it; one aimed at clarifying the “Genocide Ideology”:

Genocide ideology shall be any deliberate act, committed in public whether orally, written or video means or by any other means which may

²¹ The word ‘deshumanizing’ as used in the original document was corrected into ‘dehumanising’ by the author

show that a person is characterized by ethnic, religious, nationality or racial-based with the aim to:
1° advocate for the commission of genocide.
2° support the genocide

The punishment for violating this law was a “term of imprisonment” and a “fine” (Mukamana, 2020, p. 11; Waldorf, 2011, p. 56). As with the 2008 law, the introduction of this new one has drawn much criticism. The most critical being the 2010 Amnesty International Report entitled: “Safer to stay silent. The chilling effect of Rwanda’s laws on ‘genocide ideology’ and ‘sectarianism’”. The report accuses the law of being vague and creating confusion (Amnesty International, 2010, p. 17). Despite the 2012 amendment’s attempt at clarifying any ambiguity, it is clear that, in many ways, the law is not fully understood by ordinary citizens and requires constant clarification. For example, in 2003:

Rwandan lawmakers provided some guidance to citizens who were uncertain about the underlying genocide definition, when they replaced the notion of “Rwandan genocide” by “genocide against the Tutsi,” making it clear the law would protect the emerging worldwide consensus according to which the Tutsi had been the genocide victims. (Bachmann et al., 2020, p. 7).

Waldorf observes that, while there is an “urgent need for strict laws to counter hate speech and incitement to genocide in [Rwanda],” in the case of the above law, it is “so broadly drafted that it is easily manipulated for personal and political reasons” (Waldorf, 2011, p. 59). Furthermore, a number of academics noted that the RPF government’s version of the genocide would not allow for discussion or dialogue about any “violence against Hutu civilians during the war that preceded the genocide, during the genocide, and after the genocide” (Straus, 2019, p. 512). In another step, aimed at getting rid of any ambiguities, or – as explained by the government – in order to prevent genocide denial and revisionism (United

Nation, 2018), the government, in 2007, changed the name of the 1994 Genocide to “Genocide against the Tutsi” (Waldorf, 2017, p. 86).

The final step undertaken by the government to distance itself from its ethnically divisive past was adopting a new version of the history curriculum. Concisely put, the aim of this new curriculum was to emphasise the peaceful coexistence of all Rwandans during the pre-colonial period and build on this by presenting the history of the genocide as being approved by the former Hutu-dominated government’s propaganda. This highly romanticised version of the pre-colonial past (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 333) aims to provide a reference point to the sort of life to which Rwandans as “one nation” (RoR, 2003) should attempt to attain. This broad narrative, with its persuasive ideas, was followed by a range of practical steps and undertakings – from relatively symbolic ones like the adoption of a new flag, anthem and emblems in 2001 to more ambitious ones, including the administrative restructuring of the country in 2006 (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 333). The ideas integrated within the notion of “national unity and reconciliation” are also important aspects of the government’s understanding (even if not always straightforward) of the Gacaca courts (P. Clark, 2010, pp. 221–224, 334). As Clark explains, the establishing of Gacaca courts, which were at the heart of the Rwandan post-genocide justice system, came about through discourse and analysis conducted by the NURC:

(...) the newly established NURC was charged with conducting a detailed grass-roots analysis of the perceptions of the national population concerning justice and reconciliation broadly and specifically gacaca proposal. The result of these debates and analyses was the enactment of the Gacaca Law in January 2001 (P. Clark, 2010, p. 63).

While many of the above examples came about in response to past experiences and activities, the work of the NURC is constantly an ongoing effort; even to this day. The public engagement

in activities that aim at reinforcing unity and reconciliation is, for many ordinary Rwandans, part of their routine. This is especially true of annual commemorations of the genocide, held during national mourning week in early April. During this time, all business is stopped at noon and for the rest of the day Rwandans are obliged to participate in locally organised debates, discussions and commemorations that aim to “remind Rwandans of the pernicious effects of ethnic divisionism” (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 333). This practice is repeated for seven consecutive days. Participation in this, and other commemorative events, is obligatory and enforced by local authorities, including the army and police (Chapter 7). Partaking in these activities is understood as being key to maintaining social harmony and unity:

Implicit in the government’s perspective is a belief that certain modes of public participation – expressed in its regular linkage of ‘collaboration’ and ‘reconciliation’ – are necessary if groups in conflict wish to relearn how to coexist (P. Clark, 2010, p. 310).

Another mechanism that aims to employ compulsory re-education in order to promote national unity and reconciliation are *ingando* camps. As explained by Thomson, there are two types of *ingando* – “ingando solidarity camps” and “ingando re-education camps”:

Many of my ordinary Rwandan informants understood the solidarity camps as a form of political indoctrination for those who occupy, or will occupy leadership positions while they saw re-education camps as a form of social control to keep Hutus out of public life (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 334).

While these camps were initially created in order to facilitate the reintegration of Hutu genocidaires and Hutu ex-combatants, today *ingando* focuses heavily on educating university students (J. Clark, 2010, p. 139). As previously explained, the purpose of these camps, whether in their earlier or current form, was to educate the population and explain the officially-approved version of Rwandan history. The aim was to instil and equip citizens with a doctrine of change, that reinforced the message “that there was no place in Rwandan

society for ethnic divisions of the past” and that “we are all Rwandans now...” (P. Clark, 2010, p. 106). It was the belief of the Rwandan government that by employing these re-educating tactics it was fulfilling its responsibility and that it could successfully instil in people those values that were necessary to live “harmoniously and prosperously” (P. Clark, 2010, p. 104).

Messages of “peace and unity” were being widely promoted, while any discussion about ethnicity was strictly forbidden. Similar discussions, unless they followed the official script, were labelled as being an act of “ethnic divisionism” (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 333). Ultimately, anyone found guilty of promoting or engaging in any form of ethnic divisionism faced prosecution and imprisonment. As mentioned before, one of the failings of this policy was the issue of ambiguity around what fell under the label of ethnic divisionism and exactly what constituted a breach of the law:

The 2008 law [Law No. 18/2008 of 2008. Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology] defines genocide ideology in sweeping terms. (...) The law is deliberately vague: it was passed despite serious concerns raised by a donor-driven Joint Governance Assessment about the draft law’s conformity with “the principles of legality, intentionality and supporting freedom of expression.” The law also purposefully conflates criminal defamation (and host of lesser offences) with genocide. (Waldorf, 2011, p. 55).

At the same time, the Rwandan government dismissed claims about the law’s vagueness and did not have doubts regarding the misconduct of individuals who were guilty of trespassing the law. These same individuals were usually portrayed as posing a threat to the existing political and social order. Indeed, according to some, more animated Rwandans, these individuals pose a serious risk to national security²² to the entire Rwandan state. As such, they are assumed to pose challenges to the status and legitimacy of the current political leadership

²² Remarks made by Alice Karakezi, University of Rwanda on 4.04.2014 at the Kigali International Forum on Genocide on the theme: ‘After Genocide: Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility’ at Kwibuka20 in Rwandan Parliament. Author’s personal notes.

(for examples read more about cases of Faustin Twagiramungu and Victoire Ingabire in: Waldorf, 2011). In August 2010, in reference to the case of Ingabire, President Kagame spoke to a crowd in Kirehe District, in Eastern Rwanda, saying.

Some foreigners say there is a woman who is fighting for Hutu rights and they want us to listen to that woman because she represents the majority, but which majority is that?

Which majority are they talking about, because the majority is you people and Rwanda doesn't belong to Hutu, Tutsi or Twa – it belongs to Rwandans (Waldorf, 2017, p.90 after Rwanda News Agency)

The nature of activities included in the national unity and reconciliation narrative, along with the methods and contents that it promotes, was and continues to be met with scepticism, both within Rwanda and externally. While, due to censorship and fear, it is difficult to find many examples of domestic opposition, the examples of external criticisms are more prevalent. Examples of similar silent opposition within education sector will be discussed in Chapter 6. One challenge that this narrative faced was highlighted by Waldorf, who pointed at the double standards introduced by the Rwandan government itself. On one hand, the government forbade any ethnic divisions, and on the other, its political and propaganda tactics are full of examples where divisive methods are used. A prominent case of this is President Kagame himself who “frequently [uses] ethnic language” (Waldorf, 2017, p. 86).

Additionally, the government's version of history is over-simplified and carefully, and politically manipulated. In this way, reconciliation and unity was and continues to be, in many ways, an artificial and political exercise that remains short in installing a true and meaningful reconciliation. The history presented by the government was one that “ordinary Rwandans parrot in public even if they disagree in private” (S. Thomson, 2011a, p. 337). Going even

further, the magnitude and scale of the falsification of history was and remains clear and known to Rwandans:

(...) Rwandans know. They do not forget. If one meets someone who lost family members in 1994, in the mid-1990 or the late 1990's, they know all too well what happened. They also know that if the RPF committed the crimes, then they should not speak outwardly or too loudly about the violence that occurred, at least inside Rwanda (Straus, 2019, p. 516).

The version of unity and history officially presented in Rwanda is inherently political, it connects both the stories that are being told and the way how they are told (Straus, 2019, p. 519). Moreover, whatever does not serve the interests of the officially approved narrative is often silenced. This situation created a range of challenges to the state-social relations, some of which will be explored in more detail in empirical chapters (5 -7).

4.5.5 Education System in Rwanda – importance and actors

Importance of Education in Rwanda

As outlined in the first part of this chapter, education in Rwanda has long and rich history; one that is closely aligned with the history of the Rwandan state. Over the years, the education sector was shaped by structural changes that formed the Rwandan state and also became a platform on which many of these changes were introduced. Over the long period of Rwandan history – from Rwandan Kingdoms, through colonialism, independence and post-genocide – reconstruction shaped the way that education was designed and how it functioned. The best examples of these are (as described in first section of this chapter) the ways in which the schools and their curriculum were structured, and by whom; along with the issue of who was targeted as the main recipients of education and who was permitted to attend schools. The education sector was very often used by consecutive rulers, governments and politicians to introduce new, often controversial, ideas and ideologies. This was as much

a reality of colonial education that instilled ideas of ethnic divisionism (for more discussion see Chapter 6), as it is the truth of today's curriculum, that promotes a version of history to suit the current political regime.

The historical importance of education, along with its significance within modern-day state structures and Rwandan society, makes it a vital part in the lives of every citizen. One in which everyone has a stake and finds it difficult to distance themselves. This was especially evident when interviewing politicians and civil servants, who often after sharing officially approved perspectives on a given issue, would turn to discuss more personal stories from the lives of their children, grandchildren, neighbours and colleagues. It is also well understood across all levels of Rwandan society, that education is important, and largely acknowledged as a vital part of the country's economy and developmental efforts. It interconnects all units and sectors of society, irrespective of geography, local histories, financial or professional status. In an effort to achieve its objectives, it requires the fostering of cooperation between individuals and institutions on all levels – from members of the President's Cabinet to ordinary citizens. This creates a situation where individuals perceive changes, policies and decisions around education as having a significant impact on their daily lives and, therefore, see it as being close to them. Everyone in Rwanda, seems to have some opinions about the changes occurring in Rwandan schools, and often within the Rwandan Higher Education Institutions.

Who is who in Education?

At the time when the fieldwork for this research was conducted, the official structures and key power holders of the current educational sector in Rwanda included, the President of the Republic, the Cabinet, and four key ministries, namely those of Education (MINEDUC), Finance (MINECOFIN), Local Government (MINALOC) and Finance (MINECOFIN). These were and

largely remain directly assisted by a range of closely linked institutions and organisations, including the Rwanda Educational Board (REB), the Rwandan Parliament, and a number of external organisations, such as UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Rwandan Education NGO Coordination Platform (RENCIP).

The President of the Republic plays a key role in identifying and defining priorities in the education sector. As in other areas of policymaking, a number of policies regarding education are directly instigated by President Kagame. Officially, suggestions made by the President are branded as "ideas" that are later on scrutinised by Parliament. However, in reality, President Kagame's ideas are implicitly treated as orders (Interview 6. SL) that need immediate implementation. In this way, President has a strategic role in setting the agenda for policymaking in the area of education. Additionally, as all ministers ultimately respond to the President, he also has profound authority in how policies are implemented.

The Cabinet of Rwanda consists of Ministers and officials who have been appointed by the President. Cabinet Ministers meet regularly, and issues relating to education are predominantly represented by the Minister of Education. However, what is important to note, is that at the time of this research three Ministers of State, namely those in charge of Primary and Secondary Education, ICT, and Technical Vocational Education and Training.

The Minister of Education has overall responsibility for any issues linked to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). These broadly include the "development, reviewing and guiding the implementation of education sector policies and strategies" (RoR. MINEDUC, n.d.), and covers all levels of education from primary to higher education. The Ministry of Local Government

(MINALOC), with its all-encompassing mission of decentralisation in the area of governance (RoR. MINALOC, n.d.) has a critical role in implementing education policies and, specifically, in the management and administration of schools. While their accountabilities remain in the area of education, education officers in various sectors and districts are employed by local government. The Ministry of Finance (MINECOFIN), with one of its key goals being to “foster greater evidence-based planning and performance-based budgeting” (RoR. MINECOFIN, n.d.) is responsible for ensuring that budgets for education are in line with the wider priorities which are set for the state budget.

Policies and strategy in education sector

The origins of decision making, along with the remit for official institutions involved in the Rwandan education sector, are far from explicit or straightforward. The number of political actors who have access and the ability to directly impact on those decisions which are undertaken is constantly changing. This situation is further exacerbated by the very cautious approach displayed by Rwandan authorities, and the one-way nature of government propaganda in any discussions relating to politics and policymaking. This often creates a situation where it is largely impossible to verify the origins of a particular policy or the official process that given decision went through. As one of the respondents for this research summarised, in order to get to the truth about the policymaking “you need to find someone who has nothing to lose and it’s almost impossible to identify this sort of individuals within the government” (Interview 6.SL). As he concluded later on, even if you manage to “bump onto the truth” you will not be able to effectively (read: academically) verify it. While researching the two educational policies that are central to this thesis, it became evident that

it is impossible to draw a definitive map of the political processes through which either of these policies went through.

It also became clear that these official processes are not as important to the respondents as a whole host of other ideas, stories, and anecdotes – both positive and negative – relating to the policies and individuals in positions of power who are part of the political settlement in the area of education. They are the ones who are actively shaping people’s perceptions, attitudes, opinions and, in some instances, emotional responses towards the state and society.

4.6 Conclusions

In a necessarily selective manner, this chapter outlines Rwanda’s historical dynamics and certain political processes which are relevant to this thesis. The importance of this chapter is three-fold.

First, a key part of this research was to give a voice to Rwandan’s themselves, and also to situate their perspectives within the context of Rwandan history. Within the arena of African political science, it would be unacceptable to deny that Africans are “political and historical entities” in their own right (Bayart, 1992, p. 56). In this regard, Rwandan history, and especially its strong state traditions, are unique. Additionally, in light of the extensive formal (Interview 6. SL) and informal discussions, this history, with all its positive and negative aspects, is a matter of real concern to ordinary Rwandans.

Second, as highlighted in the previous chapter, a significant feature of classic Developmental States is their unique historical experience. This experience has empowered certain East Asian societies with the “strength and necessity” (see Chapter 3) to continue their challenging path

towards achieving economic growth. Looking at Rwandan history and the resilience with which Rwandans deal with the challenges their complex history has imposed upon them, it is difficult to find another society in sub-Saharan Africa better equipped with the “strength and necessity” to carry the burden of creating, and developing, an African Development State.

And finally, it is not possible to understand Rwanda’s developmental project and its current course of policymaking without setting them within a proper historical context. The key themes of this chapter, namely strong state traditions, importance of education, the intricacies of ethnic identity, experiences of refugees, as well as those aspects found within a culture of obedience, fear of authority and the pressure to perform (structured around numbers and indicators) form the basis of discussion in subsequent empirical chapters (5-7).

Chapter 5

'English is not a language that they live in'. **Analysing Education Policymakers and Policy Drivers.**

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the drivers behind the two focal educational policies – the Language Policy and the Higher Education Merger. By highlighting the diversity of factors influencing the policymaking process in Rwanda, this chapter explores the nuances and complexities of the political context in which priorities and policy decisions are made by the Rwandan Government. It focuses on macro analysis and aims to ascertain the motives and key players behind the making of the two policies in question. Due to the controlling nature of the Rwandan State and its elites, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the fullest reasons that drive particular policy ideas and specific political choices. Although the Rwandan Government follows a pre-determined official policy process when presenting and approving new legislation, it is also known that the reality of such processes is often “far less clear and linear” (Gready, 2010, p. 644). From the comments made by respondents in this research (Interview 5, 8. SL), it is understood that, in the case of the discussed policies, formalities were bypassed at the initial stage, and some decisions were made between a small number of elites behind closed doors. This shows that authorisation of new policies is a secondary procedure and the initial input and stakeholders’ debate, leading to their approval, are limited. In this light, what is important is the degree of understanding, acceptance and support that these new political and developmental ideas and policies have – both among officials who implement them and among policy recipients. As highlighted earlier in Chapter 3 the creation of broad based coalitions and creation of “effective state-society linkages” (B. P. Evans, 2010, p. 49) may be one of the key prerequisites of creating successful Developmental States in 21st

century. As will be discussed later in this thesis, a lack of coalitions and appropriate engagement in the discussed policies (from relevant stakeholders) was already seen as having a negative impact when it came to attaining the full benefits of the discussed policies. Ultimately, disillusion, boredom and disengagement with the developmental processes are likely to limit the gains that Rwanda is trying to achieve. This discussion is progressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

The main argument of this chapter is that domestic, regional and international ambitions shape the individual and official agendas behind policymaking in Rwanda. As such, motivations behind policymaking are not dictated by one, specific priority, but seem to address a number of often uncoordinated ideas. Ultimately, the chapter presents key characteristics of the policymaking environment that are specific to the Developmental State project in Rwanda.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the domestic drivers behind the process of policymaking, and specifically, on analysing the tension between different ideological motivations within the RPF government. Many of these motivations are framed within the developmental discourse that aims to move Rwanda forward from its tragic past to a more self-reliant, modernised and stable future.

The second section examines the ambitions of the Rwandan government, which are aimed at improving its economic and developmental position within both regional and international arenas. It sketches the aspirations and tactics used by Rwanda's elite in becoming a regional and global player. In doing so, the study shows the extent to which Rwandan officials put

pragmatism, as well as the specific experiences of individuals, at the centre of their decision-making process.

In the third and final section, the chapter turns to discussing key methods employed by policy influencers. Here, the “speed of change” that is characteristic of Rwandan policymaking is accentuated in the discussion about the interplay between individual and governmental motivations. It identifies ways in which ideas and priorities become either dominant or are dismissed within the Rwandan policymaking environment. This first of three empirical chapters serves as an introduction to further analysis of fieldwork material and a number of problems, which are emphasised as part of policymaking, and that will ultimately have important repercussions on both policy-implementation and policy outcomes (Chapter 5 and 6). As it will be ultimately highlighted (Chapter 7) these observations inform an overall understanding of the nature of the Developmental State that the Rwandan government continues to emulate and implement.

5.2 Domestic motivations – RPF ideology of looking forward and developing the nation

This section discusses three issues concerning the internal drivers involved in the making of the discussed policies. Initially, the section positions education, as well as the two policies, in the wider developmental framework within which the Rwandan State functions. The second section analyses the extent to which the Language Policy should be seen as an example of policy emulation of an imported model. Consequently, this section highlights the limits and inconsistencies associated with the process, specifically the discrepancies between the application of “homegrown solutions” and reliance on external policy practices. The third section looks at whether alternative approaches, namely the extension of a mixed option or

phased approach, could have been more beneficial to addressing the policy problem. The last section makes a range of important observations on why Kinyarwanda was not considered a viable option as a language to be used in schools. This, given its popularity, highlights significant tensions within Rwanda, predominantly around issues of tradition and modernity.

Education within the policy framework of Rwandan Developmental State

As discussed in Chapter 3, among the other public provisions, education has a unique position within classic Developmental States. In this respect, the Rwandan Government is seen as attempting to follow a similar direction. As mentioned in Chapter 4, in 2000, the overarching aims, and ambitions of the Rwandan government were summarised in its “Vision 2020” document. At its launch, Vision 2020 set out a direction and provided the building blocks for all governmental agencies (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012). Education was listed in the document as one of the key areas requiring investment and improvement. Although Vision 2020 makes references to education and its role in improving general welfare (RoR, 2000, pp.16,24) as well as gender equality (RoR, 2000, p. 23), it also clearly defines the practical purpose assigned to education in Rwanda:

Absolutely crucial for achieving VISION 2020, will be to properly link education policies with sector development and labour policies. It is crucial to understand that the investment needed for the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors, will not be effective without a skilled labour force (RoR, 2000, p.16)

The message reiterated throughout the document is that the primary role of education is to provide the Rwandan state with a workforce capable of carrying out the necessary economic and developmental changes that the government envisages will take place across the country.

This distinctive function is an important part of the way in which education is understood by policy-makers and policy implementers. Consequently, and especially at the highest political levels, education is rarely perceived as the privilege of an individual but rather as a tool for achieving the objectives set by the Developmental State (for similar observations, see Honeyman, 2016). The needs of the individual, as well as any difficulties and anxieties they may face when a given policy is implemented, are secondary issues. They cannot, and should not, distract from the greater developmental project that has been established for the benefit of all. An example of this can be seen in the following interview:

Question: What would you like to do when you complete your PhD?

Answer: What do you mean? It's not like I can decide what I want to do – I will go where they ask me to go. I am in education for a long time. I know how things work, and I have good position; people respect me for what I do. The easiest thing would be just to make the most of it. But it's not how it works here. PhD is an asset that it's not just your own. If government, if the state decides that they need you...well...you just do what you are being asked (Interview 32. JL/A).

In interpreting the obligations that arise with regards to fulfilling the role that education has in realising “Vision 2020”, the Rwandan Ministry of Education states that:

All Rwandans will be able to read and write and have diverse professional and technical skills. Rwanda will be endowed with an education system that is well adapted to the socio-economic problems of the country, and ICT skills will be widespread (MINEDUC, n.d.) [Retrieved 15 May 2019]

Within the context outlined above, the two educational policies that are central to the discussion in this thesis appear to correspond with the transformational agenda of the developmental processes undertaken by the RPF government.

The first policy discussed, that of changing the language of instruction to English, is an externally validated alternative, which is crucial to the transformation and progress of the country in the aftermath of the genocide:

It was part of transformation. Almost natural way from where we were in the end of the genocide and where we want to be in as the modern state in 2020 – simply we needed to put English as one of the instruments of this process (Interview 6. SL)

The second policy can be viewed in a similar light. Ordered by the Prime Minister in 2013, the Higher Education Merger was perceived as strategic to the higher education sector. By merging all existing public higher education institutions and establishing one single public university (the University of Rwanda – UR), the government’s aim was to enhance the quality and competitiveness of higher education, thereby fulfilling its obligation under “Vision 2020”.

While both of these policies can be analysed as part of the government’s transformational agenda, when discussing domestic motivations behind the policymaking, respondents chose to focus most of their attention on the Language Policy. Therefore, while the Higher Education Merger will be debated, the majority of the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, will concentrate on Language Policy.

5.2.1 Models not from the West

The unique nature of the methods and practices employed in policymaking in post-genocide Rwanda arises from a range of approaches — from home-grown solutions to externally-driven models. In this regard, the adoption of new policies, as well as the definition and identification of the rationale behind them, is no different. On one hand, while Rwandan officials emphasise that their own practices are developmental, they are eager advocates of “traditional best practices” (Hasselskog, 2018, p. 316). On every level at which discussions were held there was

a strong, and widely popular, pride in doing things “the Rwandan way” (Olzacki, 2016). On the other hand, this eagerness for self-determination is matched with Rwanda’s keen attempts to emulate and borrow from external models. This specific combination is, conceptually, an interesting way in trying to resolve practical solutions, while also being a source of tension that characterises the current policy making domain in Rwanda. Additionally, it is important to note that many of the objectives Rwanda needs to be compliant with are often externally defined by Western countries, international organisations and donors (Chapter 7). However, this does not necessarily mean that they are externally controlled or that external control is extended to the policy process. As Hayman argues:

(...) reforms may be donor-driver and donor-founded, with donor involvement in planning, but this does not mean donor-controlled. The government has often explicitly excluded donors from certain policy debates (...) (Hayman, 2009, p. 171)

With respect to specific external influences in the area of policymaking, senior officials were quick to highlight their fascination with Asian Developmental States. In a manner similar to other sub-Saharan countries (Fourie, 2014a; Routley, 2014), it was clear that these models, rather than examples based on Western democracies, had major, pragmatic implications, and provided the basis for drafting the Vision 2020 document. As discussed before (Chapter 3), similar documents summarising countries “long-term national plan or ‘vision’” (Fourie, 2014a, p. 545) are not new to the African continent. The approach and specific policies presented in many of these documents are based on comparable plans adopted by early Asian Developmental States. While in the case of Rwanda, the most common parallels are with Singapore, emulation of individual policies and strategies may include a number of states in the region. In this case, methodological rigour in following the academic classification of

Developmental State models is not a main concern (Interview 7. SL), and ideas are also often borrowed from countries such as China and Malaysia (Fourie, 2014a).

In this vein, Rwanda's Vision 2020 document provided a strong narrative and placed the stress on developing a "knowledge-based economy", and strengthening the areas of "technology, engineering and management" (Vision 2020, p.15). The underlying principle was that these would help to run and maintain certain professional areas, which are listed in the document: "from medicine and agriculture to industry and telecommunications" (Vision 2020, p.15). In essence, it was a means for the Rwandan government to draw on lessons and models presented by:

The development experience of the East Asian "Tigers" and envisage that this dream [of raising the people of Rwanda out of poverty and transforming the country into a middle- income economy] could be a reality (RoR, 2012, p. 24)

At the same time, aspirations arising from following East Asian models are not limited to adopting individual policies. They also relate to attempts at recreating other aspects of classic Developmental States, namely the narrative used to justify particular policy steps or behaviour, which officials deem justifiable during the policymaking process. Additionally, the political narrative that promotes the possibility of Rwanda becoming a middle-income economy (as achieved by classic Developmental States in East Asia), is also used as a way of excusing difficulties that ordinary Rwandans face, such as those that follow introduction of new technologies, that is difficulties are excused as being part of the process of development (Interview 6. SL). In this light, technological improvements are perceived as being key to the introduction of a knowledge-based economy.

This element is emphasised more strongly in the 2012 version of the Vision 2020 document, where the role of entrepreneurship (for more details see: Honeyman, 2016) and vocational training, along with a “new world of opportunities” within the ICT sector (following the laying of the fibre optic cable network) are regarded as key elements in the developmental success of the country (RoR, 2012, pp. 10–11, 18). Sections of the Vision 2020 document that mention technological advancement and the introduction of a knowledge-based economy, provide direct guidelines to policies and strategies implemented within the education sector. Partially, and indirectly, these guidelines also appear to underpin thinking behind the two discussed policies, the shift in the Language of Instruction and the Higher Education Merger.

While this ambitious approach towards technological improvement has a large number of advocates, it has also attracted significant criticism, both from authors writing about Rwanda (Purdekova, 2012) and interviewees in this research (Interview 22, 41. JL/A). This criticism is mainly based on the fact that the actual transformational plans are not grounded in the realities in which the majority of the country’s population lives:

Livelihoods of nearly 90% of our population is based on agriculture. And it is not sophisticated agriculture. I can’t see how people, who were for generations involved in working on coffee or tea plantation, will suddenly retrain to be IT specialists (Interview 9. ML)

While agriculture remains a major challenge for the Rwanda developmental project (Ansoms, 2011), the revised Vision 2020 document outlines a number of other constraints in fulfilling its developmental objectives. These mostly relate to the quality of staffing required to make the Rwandan “knowledge and skills based” projects a reality (RoR, 2012). These challenges are clearly identifiable at all levels of education and are key drivers behind the two discussed educational policies. First, the empowering of Rwandan higher education institutions, and the

need to provide them with the necessary tools and staffing that would, eventually, allow them to create an effective and efficient graduate work force, became an important priority, arising, almost directly, from Vision 2020. In a number of interviews, these issues were raised as key reasons for the Higher Education Merger. Second, policy switching to English as a mode of operation was seen, not only as an ambitious international or economic priority, but as a developmental prerequisite.

While the Higher Education Merger was discussed in less detail, on numerous occasions senior officials brought up the Language Policy as having clear references to developmental success as experienced by Asian Developmental States, specifically Singapore (Morris, 1996, p. 106). Their interpretation was based on the need to systematise the use of a single language across the country to facilitate “implementation of suitable - foreign investments and opportunities” (Interview 7. SL) that would help to fulfil a long-term developmental reality, as set in Vision 2020. Their interpretations were both far-reaching and much broader than the tangible and realistic concerns of academics and were closely associated with the government’s growth-related strategies. This notion, reiterated by several senior officials, is summarised in the following statement:

The way that the English language change was decided was based on the outcome of actual visits that were made to various countries in a search for a model that Rwanda could follow – one similar visit was undertaken to Singapore [at this point interviewee points out at the book in front of him authored by Lee Kuan Yew titled: “From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965 – 2000”] - all is in this book. When in Singapore, our President Kagame asked what is the one single factor that had main influence in transformation process – he singled out introduction of English as being the most crucial element of the process (Interview 6. SL)

This statement, as with all other related accounts, needs scrutiny. Nonetheless, what is significant is that this interpretation – the need for change in the language used across

Rwanda – was not equally shared among all respondent groups. At the senior and strategic level, this policy was seen as a step that laid the foundations for the implementation of a broader developmental plan based, predominantly, on an imported Asian model. Ironically, however, while the idea itself is seen as part of a bigger developmental strategy, its implementation is far from being strategically planned. This is evident from analysis of strategic documents relating to the education sector at the time:

The language shift was announced in 2008. Yet, the 2008 – 12 Education Sector Strategic Plan - the document used to guide the priorities (and budget) of the sector – offers no indication of the language change (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 91)

At the same time, for lower-level officials and academics, the idea of employing this solution in Rwanda was met with pragmatic scepticism:

Yes. I know about this idea that it all started because of countries in Asia. They did similar shift. But I'm not sure if we can compare our situation with theirs. Did they have similar financial constraints that we did? Did they have similar diversity in languages and educational systems that we did? And were their questions of language as emotionally loaded as they are in our case? (Interview 34. JL/A)

It's nonsense, don't you think? You don't need to look far into history to be able to see that it all worked differently for countries like Singapore. I wonder if this policy wasn't enacted so quickly to avoid objections and criticism that it was likely to raise. But then...many policies in Rwanda are announced and enacted this way, so maybe it's no different. (Interview 39. JL/A)

With respect to the Language Policy, the evidence regarding the transferring of policy goals from one political system to another (in this case from Singapore to Rwanda) are substantial. What is also important to note is that this transfer was problematic in several ways. First, the policy transfer was limited purely to the policy goal, or policy idea, and did not include other important elements, like policy content, policy instruments, policy programmes, institutions or negative lessons learned in the country that it was borrowed from (D. P. Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 5). This, inevitably, had significant implications for the implementation phase of the

policy (as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Second, the scepticism voiced by a number of interviewees above, put into question the feasibility of this particular policy and the local Rwandan conditions in which it was being enacted. These comments sit well with the findings of the successful policy emulation literature which argues that “emulation can produce innovation” (Westney, 1987, p. 224) only if the local and national circumstances and differences are being considered. Finally, as will be discussed in next section, the emulation of the English Language Policy does not sit comfortably with strategies, such as using “homegrown solutions” or doing things “the Rwandan way”, to resolve local problems. Thus, adopting both an external model and choosing English (a language that is unfamiliar to majority of Rwandan population), has contributed to creating, among many Rwandans, feelings of double foreignness of the entire policy.

5.2.2 Mixed options – what’s considered best is not always practical

Article 5 of the Constitution of Republic of Rwanda states that Kinyarwanda, French and English are the official languages of Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda 2003), with Kiswahili added in 2017. Analysing historical data and the usage of “language-in-education policies” (Pearson, 2014), it is clear that Kinyarwanda, French and English were used at different levels of the educational system at various times. As reported by Pearson (2014, pp. 40–41), the changes introduced by post-colonial governments responded to, and reflected, different socio-linguistic situations within the country. The best example of this is, perhaps, the reform of 1991, which saw the re-establishment of French in education. At the time, this was undertaken in recognition of the poor command of that language among students (Pearson, 2014, p. 41).

Similarly, adopting a mixed approach to teaching in schools and higher education institutions, with French and English given equal value, was another change dictated by societal situations and post-genocide conditions in the country. Due to the large numbers of Rwandans returning from Anglophone countries such as Uganda and Tanzania in 1996, this mixed approach was introduced in schools (Niyitanga, 2003). Within Higher Education institutions, depending on a student's background, she or he could opt to study mainly in English or in French, while being required to choose additional language classes that were not their main option (Interview 32. JL/A).

As highlighted by several respondents, this mixed approach increased the possibility of students becoming bilingual. It allowed relatively equal linguistic access to education, irrespective of whether a particular student had a French- or English-speaking background. Students could continue their education into university without distinguishing between the language of their studies and the language of their socio-linguistic setting at home. Many respondents saw the benefits of this system, especially when considering the bilingual potential of students:

French and English were working well and was equally present in Rwanda before the official change of the language. Francophone students had to take courses in English and vice-versa. This was enriching our students' experience. We had bilingual potential. We should have built on this (Interview 16. ML)

This way of approaching the Language Policy, although not very popular among interviewed individuals, negated the need to choose either language. Interviewees within the academic group argued that the use of both languages had additional benefits, not only from a linguistic perspective, but also culturally and socially. Initially, this view was shared by official sources

who recognised the unique position that Rwandans would have with their tri- and bi-lingual abilities (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010, pp. 209–210).

At the same time, however, the practical capabilities of the Rwandan education system to maintain a bilingual structure was disputed by many senior and middle level officials who claimed that it was simply not affordable in the long term:

The issue was that it wasn't only about language – it was about teachers, curriculum, textbooks and so on and on. At the University, you couldn't afford to have two languages, because it was like having two educational systems at the same time and it also costs a lot of money (Interview 17. Middle Level Official)

As highlighted by another senior official:

There is a clear answer why it was needed. English was introduced to answer questions of capacity – we simply can't have two systems running in two different languages. It's absurd (Interview 7. SL)

Thus, the use of a mixed approach, whereby English and French would have equal roles, was not deemed a viable option and did not form a substantial part of discussions undertaken as part of this research. However, the concept of using both languages was brought back into the narrative whenever particular respondents tried to identify better ways in which English could have been introduced and implemented as the main language throughout the education system. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Several respondents suggested that continuing with a mixed approach and then introducing phased tactics, with French slowly being taken out of the system, would be fairer to students and more effective in the long term:

It's getting better and better, but you see the question with language reform is actually, not whether it's good, but whether it could have worked better. I believe if we would plan the implementation better, it would be much, much more successful. The mixed approach needed changing, but we could have used it as a

mechanism for slow process of phasing out French and replacing it with English. It probably didn't look very attractive at the time, because you wouldn't have quick change and quick results, but long term we would have avoided many of the problems that we had and that we are still having (Interview 17. ML).

The question that arises in this section is the one around perceived practicality. For senior and middle level officials, the policy problem they were dealing with, especially with relation to adopting one language in Rwandan schools, required a quick solution. They saw the answer lying in their ability to introduce a rapid policy change. While this reasoning is understandable it is also important to ask whether a more balanced approach, with a well-designed transition period, would not work more effectively. As one interviewee highlighted (Interview 39. JL/A), at the time when the policy was introduced, academics were broadly in agreement that a systematic approach, whereby French would be phased out and slowly replaced by English, would be much more beneficial in the long term. It is possible is that a similar approach, for example, extending a mixed approach to teaching and introducing a phasing out system, could have other benefits, including fewer policy changes, cost savings, and overall improvements in the quality of education.

5.2.3 Difficult balancing between history & modernity (on Kinyarwanda)

The initial decisions around the introduction of English as a medium of instruction marked a departure, not only from using French as the official language of education and in public Institutions, but also Kinyarwanda. Examining the prevalence and familiarity of languages used in informal settings across Rwanda, with an estimated 99% of the population using Kinyarwanda (Sibomana, 2014, p. 19), its exclusion appears illogical. Kinyarwanda also functions as a "bridging language" for English- and French-speaking Rwandans (Rosendal, 2010b, p. 245). Additionally, while Kinyarwanda is not officially the language of teaching in

schools and higher education institutions, it is clear from several studies that it is widely used to help students (Pearson, 2014, p. 50) understand the content of their lessons

(...) It is clear that Kinyarwanda is used to make sense of the content subject (...) Since it is a language that students are conversant with, they resort to using it (...) in order to facilitate the understanding of the academic subjects (Kagwesage, 2013, p. 4)

Further research into this issue shows that, with regards to English, students show a limited understanding of texts specified by the curriculum, and that the lack of a “natural environment” (Legère & Rosendal, 2011, p. 78) for learning and speaking English is a significant short- and long-term challenge. This issue was highlighted by one of the interviewees:

The problem is that our students...they speak English for the duration of the class. They do well when they are in school, but then, they are out the doors, they go back to their homes and their communities – they go back to their life in Kinyarwanda. English is not a language that they live in. In the end, it is all artificial. It definitely influences their thinking, understanding and communication. It's not easy to become fluent if you speak language for 45 minutes during the class time. Even if you have five or six, or ten classes in the week, you will find it difficult, and to be honest, I'm not sure how this could be resolved either short- or long-term (Interview 1. SL).

Furthermore, Kinyarwanda has an important role in Rwandan historical and social contexts. As such, Kinyarwanda (as with many native languages in other African countries) is essential to developmental projects, especially those that require the participation of broader groups of Rwanda's population:

(...) African languages can ensure, beyond everyday communication, technical communication in structuring frameworks for project developments in agriculture popularisations, trainings, education, health etc. And specifically, during radio broadcasting, for projects directly involving the population (Rurangirwa, 2012, p. 172).

In this case, the argument is that while “education has long been a key part of development agendas” (Paulson 2011: 8), in itself, it is not a sufficient condition for ensuring “human and national economic development” (E. Williams & Cooke, 2002, pp. 308–309). What is needed is an *effective* education, especially at the primary level. Within it, the ability and need to communication is deemed paramount:

(...) in much of sub-Saharan Africa, the teaching is largely teacher-dominated (...) the singular disadvantage in a teacher-dominated class who do not understand the teacher or the textbooks (...) (E. Williams, 2011, p. 4)

The discussion over development and effective education is closely related to the discussion and understanding of what constitutes quality education. The dichotomy in understanding this concept will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, but it illustrates that priorities and pressures are often placed disproportionately in those areas that can easily deliver and quickly show positive policy outcomes. In comparison, a change in Language Policy that results in thousands of children learning English within three months appears more impressive than engaging in a long-term project aimed at the delivery of *effective* education. However, while this detailed discussion is important, the detailed discussion of policy consequences serves to illustrate the nature of policymaking, policy implementation and their implications for the RPF’s attempts to emulate a particular version of the Development State model.

Finally, Kinyarwanda must also be considered in its role as a symbol of national unity among Rwandans. The government’s appeal for “national unity” routinely recalls and praises pre-colonial periods, when the perceived unity of all Rwandans was in line with the cultural community (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 51–52; Vansina, 2004, p. 16,62). This strategy of national unity, described in more detail in Chapter 4, is central to the RPF’s attempts to overcome key

historical and societal problems in Rwanda arising from ethnic divisionism and conflict. Strategies based on strengthening a sense of unity and nationalism are not new and have been used in other parts of the continent in the past, with neighbouring Tanzania being the nearest example. In this context, Julius Nyerere's concept of Ujamaa, which formed the basis of his social and economic development policies in the early 1960s, spoke of Swahili as being central to the process of the "ideological and political unification of the nation" (Blommaert, 2014, p. 202). Similarly, in Rwanda, the notion of a common religion, traditions and language – presented in official discourse as the three components of historical and cultural integration – are often used by the current government as proof of the existence of one Rwandan state and one Rwandan nation. This discourse has been at the heart of post-genocide propaganda and, for the last twenty years, is a key to the state's system and ideology:

[...] we enjoy the privilege of having one country, a common language, a common culture and a long, shared history which needs to lead us to a common vision of our future (RoR 2008, August 13, p.4)

Given the clear and strong stance taken by the official agenda, the policy changing the Language of Medium of Instruction to English is deemed by some observers as being "counterproductive to social cohesion" (Legère & Rosendal, 2011, p. 77).

Despite its role and numerous benefits, Kinyarwanda was not considered by any of the respondents to be a viable option for becoming an official medium of instruction. In the majority of cases, the reference to Kinyarwanda was not made by the speaker but was brought up by the interviewer. In all cases, it was dismissed as an option that would not "fit the purpose" (Interview 25. JL/A). Kinyarwanda was purported to be an archaic solution that would not stand up to the realities of the modern globalised world – an argument that, ultimately, became the prevailing justification for shifting to English. The attitudes of

interviewees were echoed by the lack of acknowledgment given to Kinyarwanda in the official decision made at a Cabinet meeting in 2008, when only English was acknowledged as requiring “immediate attention”:

(...) the Cabinet meeting has requested the Ministry of Education to implement an immediate programme to teach in English in all primary schools, secondary schools and in all public institutions of higher learning and those supported by the Government (RoR, 2008, Nov.).

At the same time, soon after English was introduced as the main medium of instruction in public institutions, Kinyarwanda continued, and in some instances even gained prominence, in unofficial settings (Rosendal, 2010b, pp. 256–257). My own observations, as well as consultations with colleagues who have engaged in research in Rwanda over the last six years, indicate that everyday communication (in the market, on the streets, in the taxi) has been dominated by Kinyarwanda. Government attempts to supersede Kinyarwanda with English are met with a contrary reaction:

You can see that there is confusion. People are not clear if it is fine to use French or not. And for many their ability to speak English is not yet there. You need to communicate; you need to choose language; and people choose Kinyarwanda. There is the issue of political correctness, but more importantly – you can be understood everywhere and by almost everyone (Interview 37. JL/A)

Similar conclusions are echoed by other researchers:

As far as the impact of English on the role of Kinyarwanda and the attitudes of people towards other languages is concerned, the study has indicated that (...) [English] does not threaten Kinyarwanda at all, because the latter is a lingua franca and is widely spoken in families, schools, offices and elsewhere in Rwanda, and across borders (Kayigema & Mutasa, 2014, p. 242).

Rwanda [meaning: Kinyarwanda], was on the other hand, used more extensively than in the pre-1994 era, both as a shared code for so-called Anglophones and Francophones, and as a default language when the language proficiency of the addressee was not known (Rosendal, 2010b, p. 256)

Looking at the proportions, French and English are used only by a narrow group of Rwandans, usually in prescribed, official settings. The tension between using French and English is one that does not affect the use of Kinyarwanda. Outside of Kigali, Kinyarwanda remains the preferred choice of language among the ordinary population, especially those who do not have a need or opportunity to engage with the re-designed curriculum. However, for those who are learning within the new education system, the situation appears challenging, with a number of children reportedly “lagging mastery of Kinyarwanda” while being “confused in their learning” (The EastAfrican, 2017)

Noticeable in this case is friction between competing aspirations. Firstly, there is a drive to revive Rwandan traditions. As discussed before this includes a unifying single national history, language and religion. Competing with the revival of traditions is a second aspiration of modernity. When these frictions are considered at a policy level, elites tend to implement solutions that are seen as modern and forward looking. However, behind these two aspects there is also another more personal dimension that justifies the intensity and drive behind the process of introducing English. As with similar issues in Rwanda, a partial answer can be found in its most recent history and appears to be as much ideological as practical. As mentioned before (Chapter 4), the majority of the current Rwandan elite grew up in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, and came back to Rwanda with the wave of 850,000 expatriates after the 1994 conflict. Most of them grew up in English-speaking countries, and many were not fluent in Kinyarwanda or French (Rosendal, 2010a, p. 96). As one respondent in this interview highlighted, everyone in Rwanda has to learn some language:

I need to learn English. It's very poor, especially when I try to speak. That's the thing here in Rwanda – everyone needs to learn a language. But it is easier to learn English if you already know French and Kinyarwanda. I think it is more difficult to

learn Kinyarwanda if you grew up knowing English. And there are few colleagues who have a lot of work to do. Even here, in this Ministry [refers to Ministry of Education] (Interview 4. SL)

The inability of many expatriates to communicate in Kinyarwanda was well understood early on: in 1993, one of the articles of the Arusha Peace Accords stipulated that “lack of knowledge of Kinyarwanda or French shall not constitute an obstacle to employment and discharge of duties within the public sector” (Rosendal, 2010a, p. 97). As a consequence, in a number of spheres, including social and professional groups, the language used by individual members was impacted by the change of the dominant language employed by that particular group. One of the best examples is the Rwandan army and police, where English is the dominant language. As Rosendal explains:

This change is due to the officers’ backgrounds: the majority of them were educated in Anglophone countries (Rosendal, 2010a, p. 108)

What is apparent, is that the Rwandan Government promotes and encourages the use of English and, while the value of Kinyarwanda both as a traditional symbol and as a mode of informal communication is widely accepted, making it part of official communication is considered unsuitable. The reasoning behind this clash with the broad consensus found in the literature (Negash, 2011, p. 12; E. Williams & Cooke, 2002, p. 307) around the benefits of teaching in the mother tongue, especially in the early years of education. In 1999 the UNESCO declaration emphasized the important link between the use of mother tongue and early education. Recently, UNESCO reemphasized this view:

(...) education, based on the first language or mother tongue, must begin from the early years as early childhood care and education is the foundation of learning (UN, n.d.)

Furthermore, when the cries defending the role of Kinyarwanda in early years education were initially made by local educators, they were broadly ignored by policy-makers:

Teachers were baffled by it. And it wasn't just about their abilities of speaking in English or textbooks, that weren't there. It was much bigger. When kids come to schools, when they start, they think in Kinyarwanda - their entire world is constructed in this language. It's not useful to start learning; bringing new ideas into your understanding and changing your language at the same time. It's just counterproductive and really, really difficult to do. (...) Yes, we [respective staff in Collage of Education] all made it clear that we don't agree with this. And, no, we never received any replay – either dismissal or validation of our concerns. (Interview 34. JL/A)

Eventually, following local and international pressure, in 2011 the Rwandan government amended the Language Policy and permitted the use of Kinyarwanda in primary education for children in classes 1-3. Here again, this decision was not a part of a strategically designed policy change. Some authors (Pearson 1994; Williams 2020; Rosendal, 2010b; United Nations, 2003) emphasised that the change was predominantly driven by external influences, namely concerns raised by international educators and organisations. However, when considering comments made by respondents for this research (Interview 1, 4 SL; 9 ML; and 34 JL/A), the impact of internal debates amongst local teachers and educators is likely to have added substantial pressure regarding the importance of Kinyarwanda in early education. For example, direct communication with one of the above authors (Anonymous, personal communication, 17th Sept.2021), suggested that, because there was not “any great documentation on why the 2011 change happened” it is possible that different factors were at play in deciding the above policy amendment.

The fact that this policy amendment was possible reiterates three important features of the Rwandan Developmental State. First, the importance of the criticism and acknowledgement given to external partners shows that the Rwandan elite wants to be perceived as a “mature

player” (Interview 7. SL) within the international system. In their relationship with the international community, the Rwandan elite wishes to be perceived as complying with the norms and practices as set by their international partners. Second, the significance assigned to local critique – as voiced by respondents of this research – needs to be included as a way of showing that Rwandan politicians can, (at least partially) backtrack on their policy choices. This inevitably, writes itself into one of the key themes of Rwandan policymaking, namely the “trial and error” method; according to which, policies are enacted and when found insufficient or faulty, they are appropriately amended. Third, the existence of this amendment outlines ways in which senior officials operate. On the one hand, it shows the level of both internal and external criticism and pressure that they may encounter. On the other, it also shows that, if proved wrong in their policymaking choice, they are (even if reluctantly) likely to change their mind. As a caveat to this debate, it is important to note that the *change of mind* mentioned above happens within the limits of what RPF elites recognise as being a problem, and it is also likely that any changes made will be partial or conditional. The strongest proof of this is that Rwanda is currently in the process of switching the language in which primary school children are taught (for the third time) back to English (Williams, 2020). This mode of policymaking and policy-amending is likely to be especially difficult for policy implementers and stakeholders, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. At the same time, this approach also shows an unwavering commitment of the RPF elites to the Developmental State model; a feature that is deemed one of the key prerequisites for the success of classic Developmental States as outlined in Chapter 3.

5.3 International motivations – regional aspirations and global ambitions

This section discusses three areas of external motivations that helped guide the choices made with respect to the discussed education policies. Initially, it focuses on the international ambitions of the Rwandan government and, specifically, the connections with global practices and international organisations, particularly the UN and the World Bank. The section then discusses regional aspirations, including Rwanda's role and engagement with East Africa and the East African Community (EAC). It examines links with particular behaviour and the motivations of the policy-makers on two levels – the private and the official. Finally, the section concludes by addressing issues around Rwanda's desire to break with its Francophone past. The perception that France has a diminishing role as an economic power, along with the difficult relationship the country has with the current Rwandan government, provides a partial explanation as to why the French language is being systematically phased out from the official domain.

5.3.1 To meet the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals & become world-class

The UN Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 gave member states, including Rwanda, an important impetus towards defining their educational goals and ambitions. The Millennium Declaration, adopted at the Summit, outlined a number of ambitious ideas that were subsequently translated into eight goals, which were to be achieved by 2015. Among the eight, two goals concerned education:

- Second Millennium Development Goal – aimed at achieving universal primary education by ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

- Third Millennium Development Goal – aimed at promoting gender equality, and empowering women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 (United Nations, 2010)

By this time, education in Rwanda had already received substantial government attention (World Bank and IMF, 2002, p.23), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided an ideal way of accentuating efforts in this area. Consequently, as part of achieving the above objectives, Rwanda made significant progress towards achieving the second MDG, as outlined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):

Rwanda has come very close to the indicator of 100% primary enrolment rate, and that is on course to achieve both 100% rates for completion and literacy rates for 15-24 years old (UN, 2014, p.13)

When documenting this progress, the UNDP report highlighted a range of political steps aimed at ensuring that similar progress within the area of education was possible. Key to this was the policy introducing free primary education in 2003 (UN, 2014, p.38). As evidence shows (Honeyman, 2015, pp. 22–23), following implementation of this policy, both rates of enrolment and completion of basic education significantly improved.

Although the issue of achieving the MDGs, and in particular the number of pupils who accessed primary education, is not directly associated with the research question posed by this thesis, the consensus on this key success of the Rwandan educational system is, by far, the most commonly shared opinion among all the respondents interviewed for this study. In all interviews and discussions undertaken as part of this research, only on two occasions (Interview 11. ML; 32. JL/A) did respondents fail to highlight access to education as a key

achievement of the Rwandan government. What is also clear from the fieldwork material is that access to education brought new challenges (discussed in more detail in the following chapters). These findings echo the closing statements of the MDG Final Progress Report, compiled in 2014 (UN, 2014, p.39), which stated that Rwanda faced a number of challenges, and was compelled to focus on the quality of education provided, rather than on boosting student numbers. The impact and endurance of some of these challenges render questionable many of the decisions taken within the education sector at that time. The impact of these policies on individuals, especially in rural areas, is an important part of the analysis in Chapters 6 and 7. Initially, the main challenge that the educational system faced, was the provision of trained educators who could respond to the needs of rapidly growing classrooms. Therefore, enacted in 2008, the policy introducing English as a primary medium of instruction (MINEDUC Rwanda, 2008; Samuelson & Freedman, 2010) was not only a bold and rushed move, but it took place within a very stretched educational system, which, due to external conditionalities, was dealing with a wide range of challenges.

Outside, and within Rwanda itself, the official justification of this move, as communicated in official reports, speeches and the media, was that of improving Rwanda's strategic position and enabling it to join the international community more effectively:

In 2008, the Rwandan government ordered education to be provided in English. In 2009, Rwanda joined the Commonwealth of Nations, the international union of mostly English-speaking former British colonies (The Economist, 2012)

When referring to international motivations, or pointing to these as key factors within the decision-making process, the overwhelming majority of individuals interviewed expressed their approval for the government policy of introducing English as the medium of instruction. This endorsement can be seen as encouraging, especially given the already complicated

landscape within the education system. Comments justifying the switch to English often used similar arguments and seemed to be formed using generic ideas. They used comparable phrases and often echoed comments made by the media and government officials. The official justification was well-communicated and proportionally spread across the country, among people of different socio-political backgrounds. Examples of such comments included: “we need to be closer to the world economy and international markets” (Interview 15. ML). These were made, not only by senior officials (Interview 2, 5, 7. SL) based in Kigali but also by farmers from remote villages in Ruhengeri (in the Musanze District), who remain far from central government and international agendas (Interviews 31, 21, 23. JL/A/O). However, when trying to understand in more detail why certain individuals appeared to support this policy, it became clear that each respondent had different perceptions regarding the real, assumed and imagined priorities that lay behind this particular policymaking and, especially, in understanding what being part of the international community meant. Some respondents referred to the importance and conditionality of international aid (Interview 10. ML), while some were driven by ambitions of Rwanda becoming an “equal player among partners within International Community” (Interview 2. SL). Others believed that being part of globalised world could offer them and their children better opportunities in life (Interview 19. ML). These discussions also highlighted the diverse range of actors who prevail at the same time as the increasingly changing political environment in which similar decisions were undertaken in Rwanda. These issues will be discussed later in the last section of this chapter.

Global ambitions and far-reaching strategic motivations are also underlined by politicians and elites as being key motivators in enacting the Higher Education Merger. The discussion here

was predominantly based around making international comparisons to other higher education institutions, global rankings or the perceived prosperity of bigger universities.

As they are seen as being directly associated with the Rwandan developmental strategy (RoR, 2012), it is important to emphasise that this ambitious discourse dominated among senior officials. Their ultimate ambitions were clear: they hoped for Rwandan higher education institutions to have an active role as the “global centre of innovation and expertise” (Interview 2. SL). This was combined with the opinion “that bigger universities have better reputation[s]” and that, consequently, existing smaller institutions “wouldn’t be able to build as good a reputation as Rwanda needs” (Interview 7. SL). At the time of the introduction of the Higher Education Merger, this view was also broadly advocated in the Rwandan and wider African media:

One of the advantages of merging higher learning institutions will be the efficient use of the available equipment and human resources,” the Minister observed, adding that the single university will help to improve its standing on the global ranking of universities by Unesco. Eric Didier Karinganire reports that the minister also assured that the program would not only make sure there is proper management of human and capital resources, but also the quality of higher learning education would increase, making their institution more competitive in all levels (Walubengo, 2012)

Rwanda's government is considering merging public universities whose performance is below par, to bring them under a single management and boost their credentials globally (Kyama & Kabeera, 2011)

(...) when universities are being ranked internationally there is a criterion that is applied, like the number of academic staff and their level of qualification, student population, and the number of publications among others (The EastAfrican, 2013)

The justification behind this policy was presented within the framework of a wider good, “geared towards increasing efficiency and quality of higher learning education” and “world-class higher learning institutions” (Kwizera, 2013). This move was promoted by policy officials

to the public by connecting it with external success and to similar restructuring in other countries, such as the US, South Africa and the UK (Kwizera, 2013). Therefore, as with the Language Policy, (discussed in previous section), the externally driven motivations concerned with the “external image of Rwanda” (Interview 7. SL) are strongly at play in this case.

5.3.2 Economic and market-oriented ambitions - joining neighbours and becoming a regional leader

The “world-class” and international ambitions were, even for the respondents themselves, a somewhat romanticised goal and one they believed would remain unattainable in their lifetime. Indeed, the notion that a merged University of Rwanda would become an institution with international, competitive standards was outrightly ridiculed by some academics and low-level officials:

People were saying that when we merge university we will be like new-California. They have one university and so should we. [Laugh] It’s just a joke, it’s ridiculous, but people were saying things like that (Interview 39. JL/A)

At the same time, respondents endorsed the idea that both policies, especially the Language Policy, would have a quick and positive effect on getting Rwanda closer to its neighbours and the East African Community. With the country having been a member of EAC since 2007, Rwandan leaders presented the switch to English as an almost natural and logical step:

The switch to English as a medium of instruction (MOI) in 2009 was a high-level decision made to connect Rwanda into the East African Community, a political decision which came from the highest level of GOR (Upper Qurtile, 2015, p. 26)

Officially the change is to reposition Rwanda as a member of the East African Community, an organisation made up mostly of English-speaking countries, such as neighbours Uganda and Tanzania (McGreal, 2008)

Similarly, according to some respondents, the introduction of English as the dominant language had major strategic regional benefits. It opened the country up to East African markets and business (Interview 15. ML), proved Rwanda's commitment to its post-genocide unification efforts by bringing the country closer to its neighbours (Interview 4. SL); and, on a social level, was even perceived as being "cool" (Sibomana, 2014, p. 24):

The only hope for Rwanda is if we are important part of East African Community. English is basic to this, because of all main partners – Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania – they all speak English (Interview 5. SL)

If you want to be part of a group and you want to be treated seriously, treated with respect – you need to compromise. Give something from yourself. Rwandans need this. We need to have a serious voice and we want to be respected by all our partners, and especially, by our neighbours. When you think about it, language change is not such a bad price to pay (Interview 6. SL)

Commitment to the East African Community is seen by the majority of respondents (at all levels) as an important feature in Rwanda's progress. Not being part of it, or not having an important role in it, is not considered a viable option. However, it is not only a strategic choice, as shown below, the reasoning goes much further and has deep and, often personal, resonance.

This personal reasoning again, goes back to the refugee experiences shared by Rwandan elites and adds a new dimension to the earlier discussion. The experiences of war and genocide, together with the difficult, and often unclear, role that Rwanda's neighbours played during this period (Lemarchand, 2009) are important features of the historical narrative, along with refugee experiences among the majority of individuals who were interviewed for this thesis.

We have long history with our neighbours. Some of us still have families out there. We have some close friends in Tanzania. Friends that you can rely on in the worst of times. Sometimes they became more than your family. Family should stick

together. So, we need to be together in this project [read: East African Community]. It won't succeed if we are not all committed to it (Interview 32. JL/A)

Although the comment above points to a positive reason behind the attachment to other East African countries, the “refugee link” (Interview 11. ML) is usually made between the struggles of life in a refugee camp and the need to overcome them. These opinions, which fuel and justify the need to improve an individual's life, have been voiced at the highest level of the Rwandan leadership. In March 2013, President Kagame delivered a keynote speech in which he associated the “responsibility of rebuilding the country” with his personal story of being a refugee:

I grew up in refugee camps for thirty years, I experienced injustices of every kind. What was always at back of my mind was that we could not continue to live this kind of life. We had to sort it out, there is no one else who was going to sort it out for us. We were reduced to the kind of level where you had to give everything you had, including possibility to lose your life to be able to regain it. The driving factor in my mind was to try to do what is right. Our vision was to bring together the people of the country, for them to value each other and work with each other for their country. (President Kagame speaking at Everest Capital Emerging Markets Forum in Miami in 2013. *Source*: Paul Kagame, 2013; The New Times, 2013)

Stories about refugee experiences are often connected to stories about poverty. Stories that speak of the refugee experience are a major component of the RPF elites' reasoning and, as such, will be a recurring feature in this thesis. They are used in order to justify the decisions made by the developmental government. Ultimately, as will be discussed later in the thesis, they have also been used to justify the hardships that people may have to endure when facing governmental policy choices and policy-implementation (Wu Qin 2019). Even though these stories recall a difficult subject, they are often used as narratives of heroism and self-reliance, that will be discussed in Chapter 7. Policy choices, as well as implementation of both the discussed policies are often characterised by daily challenges that the wider population is experiencing (Purdekova, 2012). In the case of the Language Policy this could be anything

from an inability to communicate in public offices or hospitals, to being denied access to a school, incidences of belittlement or even outright dismissals. In the case of the Higher Education Merger, difficulties include the uncertainty of one's professional position, the reluctance to relocate and changes in family and community life. The response by senior officials to such concerns can be summarised as "childish moaning" (Interview 7. SL) and unimportant "complaints of minority" (Interview 2. SL). For them, the level of these "discomforts" (Interview 15. ML) are incomparable with the alternative lives that Rwandans would have to endure if they do not put up with them. These alternative lives, in the minds of the interviewed officials, include poverty, backwardness and, in relation to their personal experiences, even the harshness of refugee existence. Therefore, it is not "worth paying too much attention" (Interview 2. SL) to these complaints, as dealing with them could lead to the disruption and a potential derailing of the wider developmental project, which would otherwise bring benefits for all Rwandans (not just the minority). In essence, there are two main interconnected issues at play here. First, as presented predominantly by senior officials, the refugee experience provides them with a superior and more personal understanding of what "hardship" means. In this way, it provides them with the legitimacy to judge and dismiss any inferior notions of adversity. Second, the joint experiences of being a refugee and being able to find a safe place to live (however difficult) within the borders of one's neighbouring states, highlights the necessity and importance of investing in regional alliances.

The theme of heroism associated with refugee experiences, while attempting to provide a broad and inclusive social narrative, is also impersonal. When contemplating the "benefit for all" scheme, one would assume that particular individuals would see aspects of their own lives, careers and future as improving, but the comments of respondents very rarely included

personal anecdotes or stories. This was clear when discussing the Language Policy with middle and senior level officials. Here, comments made about choosing English as a mode of instruction stand in contrast to the ones concerning the use of French. Regarding the choice of English, almost every case, begins with a statement indicating that it was the “right choice” (Interview 2, 6, 7. SL; 25, 39, 34. JL/A). Most of the arguments focused on the *strategic* and *international* aspects of English. This, of course, is the standard way in which politicians and individuals in high positions approach issues, but at the same time, it is uncommon to hear similar narratives from academics and ordinary people. While we could discuss whether these viewpoints might be regarded as genuine or, rather, as an expression of governmental propaganda, it is important to recognise them as sincere beliefs that Rwandan people from many walks of life, hold:

English is hard. It’s just hard. But that’s for the good, for our people and for our country. We went through so much – I’m sure we will be able to make the most of it (Interview 14. ML)

In comparable accounts, the beneficiaries of the new Language Policy are not clearly defined but are constantly referred to as plural and impersonal entities – it’s “the country”, “the state”, “people”, “next generations”, “Rwanda”, “Rwandans”, “those who will come later” (Interview 7, 13, 10, 18, 25. S/ML/JL). Ironically, the positive changes, such as the benefits of joining the East African Community or the Commonwealth, are not connected to the direct wellbeing of one’s children. If they are accounted for in the discussion, they are generally presented as the ones who “will need to (like us) join in the struggle and who will need to carry the burden and understand that it’s for the bigger good” (Interview 25. JL). Again, as mentioned previously, the discussion around generic and personal challenges and an individual’s past blurs and is often hard to disentangle. Even when senior officials sympathise

with the challenges faced by individuals in light of these new policies, their own personal experiences push them to see the answers as all-encompassing solutions, which are more ambitious and, in their minds, longer lasting. These responses were made despite the usual, unspoken tension between the personal and impersonal understanding of hardship and heroism.

5.3.3 French refusal – moves us backwards

The Belgian and French presence in Rwanda, as discussed in Chapter 3, is an important part of Rwandan history. While many of the historical facts in Rwanda's relationships with Belgium and France can be described as tragic, the use of the French language is often associated with an attachment to French literature or education, and for many Rwandans remains a positive (as well as over-romanticised) aspect of their cultural heritage:

Academics, especially Francophone, were opposing language switch. They said it's not about words or about being practical. For them it was about culture and who we are as society. They were saying that they don't want to kill the language of "Voltaire" (Interview 16. ML)

[Interviewer:] You are the only senior official who chose to speak in French with me. Even if it would be beneficial and easier for others, they all chose to use English.

[Interviewee:] I don't need to pretend and prove anything. I was educated here. My family never left. My mum spoke to us in French. My teachers spoke to us in French. I read books in French; I dream in French. It's who I am and it's part of my culture. And yes, before and during the genocide I was called rude and most offensive names in French, but I also heard the most beautiful things that you can hear were said to me in French. Nothing will change that (Interview 4. SL)

During my first visits to Rwanda in 2011 and 2012, the importance of the French language was an undeniable fact of everyday life for many Rwandans. People did not shy away or, rather, were not able to hide their Francophone backgrounds. This was as true for taxi drivers as it was for academics and officials. With time, however, French started to become an

uncomfortable option. Each subsequent visit (2013, 2014 and 2015) found fewer and fewer people who chose to communicate in it or to refer to it when talking about their own backgrounds. In the last set of interviews for this research (completed in 2015), the only people who mentioned the French language were Anglophone academics who referred to their French-speaking colleagues in the third person, and the difficulties they would encounter during the process of language switch. The reluctance to talk about the importance of French or using evasive statements were, in almost all cases, an indicator of one's background. In most cases, Francophone academics or officials would avoid mentioning French when discussing language choices. The explanation of this came from a few Anglophone academics who summarised it by saying that "if you are against English as language – you are against the policy" (Interview 15. ML).

The balance between being critical of the choices introduced by a particular policy and the government that introduced them, is not an easy one to make. The concern over being perceived as critical of the government and its political agenda was noticeable whenever the relationship with France was mentioned in a conversation. Similar questions were dismissed with sharp statements, along the lines that:

(...) there is nothing to discuss, everyone knows, it's all about France, but there is really no need to discuss it any further. It will be better if we move on (Interview 5. SL).

In this manner, any positives attached to the French language were seen as a criticism of the policy, which, in turn, was equated with criticism of the government's decision to distance itself from its previous relationship with France.

The official position, on the other hand, was the dismissal of French in two ways. First, it was portrayed as a discontinuity with Rwanda's painful post-colonial and genocidal past, and second, it was presented as being disadvantageous from a developmental point of view. The perception of French being the "choice of the past", "not forward-looking option" or "developmentally disadvantageous" (Interview 4. SL; 25 JL/A) was a common theme, frequently repeated.

Nevertheless, a number of arguments in favour of the French option were made by some respondents (Interview 8, 17 ML; 39, 23, 29, 30 JL/A/O), usually at the beginning of the discussion and typically initiated by the interviewer. In the end, albeit with a different level of conviction, every respondent dismissed the French language as a worthwhile consideration. In one regard, this outright dismissal puts up a barrier because it presents an obstacle to understanding the reasoning behind why French was not considered a viable option. While the respondents refused to consider French, they did not provide convincing arguments to support their position. However, they did speculate on the outcomes that might have been possible if French had been considered. What is interesting is that all interviewees, when allowing themselves to consider the possibility of continuing with education in French, focused on the impact that it might have had on an individual's educational experience rather than the strategic developmental trajectories of the country. This was in contrast to the argumentation behind the English language that was discussed before, where there was very little discussion around personal circumstances. Without being guided, all respondents relayed stories of people who had spent their time and money on French-based education, only to find that their investment was not fully worth the price they paid. This included

academics investing in their own professional development and parents paying for their children's education:

You know in one village, the whole community got together to collect money to send this smart kid to medical school. Every family, every grown up contributed and the kid did exceptionally well. When the English-reform was introduced he was about to join upper-school and suddenly he was the last in the entire class, because he didn't understand anything (Interview 39. JL/A).

Examples describing the harsh realities that students encountered because of the withdrawal of French from schools were given, not only in the interviews, but also in more informal settings. Although the outcomes of this change were often emphasised as being "significant", "negative" and even "destructive", in informal settings, few felt comfortable discussing the actual reason for the dismissal of the French language. In this particular case, discussions were relatively brief, and most respondents smoothly changed the topic. The avoidance of this issue was so profound as to invite speculation that it was based on fear, framed within the wider social context in which the dismissal of French language was included.

The international geopolitical discussions surrounding the decision to change the language of study from French to English left out an important matter which has not so far been addressed in this thesis, namely whether the abolition of French could be perceived as part of ethnic divisionism. Rwandan history highlights a strong connection between France and the pre-genocide Hutu-dominated Rwandan government (Prunier, 1995, p. 89). The fact that, until the time of switching language to English, "95 percent of schools [taught] in French pupils from the age of nine" (Assan & Walker, 2012, p. 179), begs the question as to whether there is any reason to suspect a link between the drivers behind Language Policy and traditional ethnic divides.

While not discussed openly, other governmental policies were perceived to have been constructed specifically to target the Hutu population. One example of an “almost policy”, was the announcement made in 2007 by the Government of Rwanda that it was considering new legislation to limit the size of Rwandan families (Ndaruhuye et al., 2009; *Rwanda Moves to Limit Family Size*, 2007; Westoff, 2013). It proposed that three children per woman should become the standard. However, the accounts of some Rwandan public officials (Interview 7. SL) make it clear that the public response to this announcement was very strong. The issues linked to family planning were deemed as being especially sensitive in Rwanda – mainly as one interviewee explained, because it was perceived as being a direct attack by the minority Tutsi population (who also tended to have smaller families) on the majority Hutu population (who also tended to have bigger families) (Interview 21.JL/A). Official literature shows that this policy was never passed, citing comments relating to “sensitivity around family planning and cultural attitudes towards losses experienced during the genocide” (Ndaruhuye et al., 2009). The plan for this policy, therefore, was never presented to parliament, and, instead, other family-planning solutions were subsequently approved.

In the case of discussed policies, similar, ethnically motivated targeting was never mentioned as part of policymaking. The above comments were made when the interviewee was prompted on whether he thought that any of the discussed policies may have been guided by *other* drivers, not yet mentioned in this chapter. The above comments were presented as a way of explaining that if the policy would be perceived as targeting any ethnic group, it would be met with significant opposition. While a number of comments, both direct and indirect, were made with relation to the unequal benefits and consequences of policy-implementation (this will be discussed in section 5), on the level of policymaking the respondents did not view

the Government's motivations as deliberately aimed at any ethnic group. At this level, the decisions were seen as made without being properly considered and researched, rather than being driven by negative intentions:

No, I don't think it [the Language Policy] is intended to harm anyone. There are merits in the intentions, that's clear to everyone (Interview 17. ML)

5.4 Whose motivations? Government, political actors, “whispers” and individual people – how do they know what is right?

Following on from the discussion around policy drivers, this section focuses on actors involved in policymaking. Specifically, it focuses on establishing whose motivations are dominant, the level of preparation and research that is being conducted, and the position of ordinary people with regards to the policymaking process. Rather than looking at the official sources behind these decisions, this section will consider opinions voiced by interviewees regarding who had the most influence when it came to initiating decisions around the Language Policy and the Higher Education Merger.

This section is structured as follows. First, it acknowledges the existence of a “knowing entity” and “policy whisperers”, that are considered to be shaping the Rwandan policy agenda within the education sector. The idea of a “knowing entity” provided respondents with an impersonal body that allowed them to distance themselves from discussing inconsistencies and inaccuracies during the policymaking process. Meanwhile, “policy whisperers” are regarded as external actors who, thanks to their experience and proximity to the President, are unofficially, capable of influencing policy agendas. The second section shows the limits of stakeholder engagement within the policymaking environment in Rwanda. The argument here is that features that are characteristic of Rwandan policymaking, namely a lack of

background research, its speed and its experimental nature (“trial and error”), hamper stakeholders’ ability to engage with the process of policy design. Finally, the last section explores the relationship between policymakers and ordinary Rwandans. While the discussion in this section is developed further in Chapters 6 and 7, here it highlights a distanced attitude that Rwandan elites display towards individuals who are either unable or unwilling to fully engage with developmental changes.

5.4.1 “Knowing Entity” and “Policy Whisperers”

In the case of both policies, the rationale behind governmental choices between particular policy alternatives was never challenged directly. Even when crucial aspects of the decision-making process were questioned, or at times ridiculed by respondents, it always ended with them conforming to the principle that the decision is a “good one”, and one taken in “the national interest” (Interview 5. SL). This stood in striking contrast to the criticism around the implementation process. Policy-implementation, along with its consequences, will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. However, it is important to note that, instead of criticising policymaking decisions, interviewees saw the implementation process within a context whereby they were able to dispute both policy decision and policy choices in a relaxed atmosphere. The need for this parallel framework is clear when closely analysing the interview material. Furthermore, similar situations, where lower-level officials and implementers are criticised for the shortcomings of senior officials who are involved in planning a particular policy, is not limited to education sector within research on policymaking in Rwanda (Chemouni, 2016).

This needs to be seen as part of a broader issue, which provides an important perspective on how the state deals with dissatisfaction voiced by its citizens. Many respondents believe that

it is not the senior decision makers, but officers who implement the policies, those who can be easily named and are known to everyone, who are responsible for any shortcomings. In this way, the legitimacy and reputation of senior policy-makers are maintained:

Did you ever watch our President talking to his Cabinet? He doesn't stop himself from naming things as they are. He demands answers. It often gets intensive, and you can see he is angry. He is angry for the Rwandan people. And why? (...) Because he experiences shortcomings of the implementation first-hand. If Transport Minister says that roads are in good conditions, the President comes back at him with the exact location of the road where he found potholes when he was on his last trip. These are the sort of things that impact daily lives or Rwandan people. So, it is clear that decisions on top are made with the best interest and for Rwandan people. The problems start later on – where things are implemented. (Interview 29. JL/O)

Following the quote above, every respondent answered the question of why the Language Policy was introduced, or rather “why it had to be introduced” (Interview 25. JL/A), using a similar format. While their understanding of what prompted the Language Policy differed, each respondent's point of view was preceded with the statement “that the policy was needed” (Interview 11. ML) and the individual “agreed with it and was not opposing or disputing the logic and its general objective” (Interview 9. ML). This statement was often repeated throughout the interviews. It was evident that the interviewees needed to ensure they were properly understood and that they would not appear critical of the officially adopted narrative. Lack of disagreement with the authorities suggested the prevalence of both fear (for more see Chapter 7) and, also, obedience towards these authorities. This cultural feature appears common within Rwandan society, with literature elsewhere providing empirical reflections and theorising regarding what is known as the “blind obedience to authority” (Hintjens, 2008, pp. 80, 98).

Going further, the structure of responses also illustrates that probing the fairness and rationality of the Language Policy was uncomfortable for individuals within particular groups, especially middle-level officials, and those with Francophone backgrounds. Whether individuals agreed with it or not, they strongly opposed the idea of questioning it. Hesitancy in challenging the judgment of those in authority who made these decisions was the strongest standpoint exhibited by all interviewed individuals. This was especially profound in cases where the interviewee strongly disagreed with the rationale and content of the policy itself. In several cases, individuals refused to engage with the significant contradictions and inconsistencies in their presented opinions. As one interview highlights:

[Interviewee]: There are big problems with the logic behind the whole thing. You see, this entire thing was not well-thought through. We had a system, which was working and was widely accepted.

[Interviewer]: But as you said, you think this policy was needed?

[Interviewee]: Yes. It was needed. Like you see, something was needed, but if you ask me personally, was it this that we have now? How it happened and how it was introduced was needed [pause] well, I don't know if that this was exactly the thing that was needed. [Long pause]. What I'm trying to say is that I may not know that, but it's possible that there was logic behind it. There must have been (Interview 9. ML)

This brings us to the viewpoint aired in many of the discussions, whereby the government was portrayed as a united entity capable of logical thinking and equipped with an ability to know things.

Government has its ways of identifying what would be good for you – what subject you should study and what career will be best for you. They know what their future investments will be and what profession will guarantee you an employment. You need to trust that they know what they are doing. They are the one who see the 'big picture' (Interview 32. JL/A)

These responses, which are important in understanding attitudes towards the government, may be attributed to two factors. First, they allow individual actors to stop short of providing comprehensive answers and permit them to genuinely and unquestioningly believe in the plan that they are part of. Second, it also allows individuals to refrain from having to provide any answers or comments that could be understood as critical of the government.

To summarise the reasons for the general lack of criticism towards the Government, we might associate the above issue with the lack of freedom of expression in Rwanda. Literature on Rwanda often links this to the difficulties that individuals have in discussing the past, especially the genocide period:

(...) genocide ideology accusations and prosecutions have further chilled freedom of speech and promoted self-censorship in an already repressive atmosphere (Waldorf, 2011, p. 60)

The perception of this “repressive atmosphere” is at times directly connected to a decreasing political, social and economic arena that ultimately “prohibits people from complaining” (Longman, 2011, p. 37). Such a prolonged atmosphere often perpetuates people’s beliefs that they cannot be guaranteed safety, if they decide to speak out: “in Rwanda, issues of safety for free speech are serious, and in some cases, free speech may be impossible to guarantee” (Freedman et al., 2011, p. 305). Clearly, this may explain, at times, the reluctance of the respondents to criticise or debate certain issues.

However, accepting such arguments (on the respondents’ insistence) as sound reasoning, not only, for government policy, but also as an epistemological study of conformity, would diminish any need for further discussion around this issue. By acknowledging that the presented arguments, even if at times incoherent, are based purely on fear would be to close

the discussion without allowing individual perspectives and ideas to be heard. Going further, this would simplify the complex landscape of diverse power relations that characterise the Rwandan geo-political sphere. As mentioned above, it is clear that, although political pressure is placed on individuals to conform to the system, within this, power is disaggregated, and divergent views and attitudes still emerge.

Therefore, without dismissing ideas relating to the culture of obedience or lack of freedom of expression (which are addressed elsewhere), it is important to consider other arguments. After analysis of the fieldwork material, it appears that, on some level, inconsistencies in the views and attitudes mentioned above originate from different sources. These include a diverse understanding of which particular problem the policy was formulated to address, a lack of appropriate communication surrounding the reasons why the policy was implemented, and the role that particular individuals or institutions were supposed to play in the policymaking and policy-implementation processes. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7. However, what analysis provides is an image of the government that is far from being a strong, coherent and unified entity that speaks with one voice – as popularised both internally and externally by the Rwandan government, and so often acclaimed by the wider international community.

Another important aspect related to the government being perceived as a “rational entity” (Interview 16. ML) is the extent to which it involves only those few individuals who make, or are able to influence, decisions at the highest levels of the Rwandan government.

We are sitting in the room. It was called a ‘Review Committee.’ We are seating at the big table – we are on one side and President and his entourage are on the other side. At the time, I didn’t recognise everyone, and of course I can’t reveal names of all present. We have pleasant introduction and then President asks what

do we need to make it work? What do we need to make Rwandan University a success? I took a chance. I thought I don't have much to lose. I said that University needs autonomy. It needs to make its own decisions. That is what universities have – they are above divisions and have their own sovereignty. I got a strange look for saying that – somewhat confusion mixed with surprise. And then one of the men leaned over the President and whisper something into his ear. Then, both stood up and had short conversation on the other side of the room. Then President came back to the table and said, how about Tuesday next week? At first, I wasn't sure what it means, but then he clarified: how about getting your autonomy on Tuesday next week? (Interview 3. SL)

The above comment illustrates the speed with which decisions are made in Rwanda. A recurring feature in many similar accounts is the involvement of people within the closed circle of the President who suggest, explain or advise on state matters. While in this case, the “whisperer” remains unnamed, there was a name individual identified by a number of interviewees (Interview 6, 3. SL; 15. ML) who supposedly had the most significant impact on policy discussion – here specifically the Higher Education Merger – while he remains anonymous in this thesis, he was interviewed as part of this research (Interview 2. HL)

It's not a secret. If you want to know how it happened, go and talk to [name anonymised]. Everyone knows that he was the one who whispered the idea to Kagame's ear (Interview 6. SL)

The existence of people having an insider's knowledge was openly admitted when a certain public official was unable to answer more detailed questions around the policy, or when the interviewer asked who a good person would be to approach to discuss a particular policy, should a follow-up be required. The anonymised individual mentioned above was perceived as the main architect of the Higher Education Merger. He was interviewed for the purpose of this research twice – in 2011, and in 2015. Although he did not comment on his role in the process of policymaking for the Higher Education Merger, during the most absorbed part of our discussion, he presented the most ardent defence for the rationale behind it among all those individuals interviewed.

What is powerful in this case, is not whether the arguments presented by this individual were pragmatic and realistic, but whether he really managed to push through this agenda and to what extent it was driven by his own, personal, goals and ambitions. Irrespective of whether a key individual was behind the implementation of this particular policy, the perception of influence that this individual holds reveals an important aspect of power relations. This underscores the notion of backstage power agents, who need to be involved in particular policymaking decisions at the highest levels. In the discussed case, two issues were identified as being at play which allow this specific individual to wield this influence. First was his experience, position and links within higher education, both in Rwanda and internationally. This experience allowed him to be viewed by many Rwandans as an expert on issues relating to higher education. Second, in many ways more significant was his alleged “close [proximity] and access to Kagame” (Interview 6. SL). Often, individuals such as the Professor are without a political mandate and do not represent any official governmental group or institution. This, in turn, points to the existence of inner political circles, which are most likely the desirable destination for policy influencers and strongly suggest the presence of neo-patrimonial ties within the Rwandan government. The complex and predominantly detrimental effect that perseverance of neopatrimonialism has on success and continuity of Developmental States was previously highlighted in Chapter 3.

5.4.2 Stakeholder engagement – lack of research and speed of a change

Recognition of potential problems and the identification of possible policy alternatives are often considered the most difficult elements of the policymaking process (Heymann, 2008). Regardless of the political system or the issues at hand, decision-makers are often faced with problems that are not clearly defined and require closer analysis and attention. Therefore,

engaging the appropriate stakeholders, along with a careful explanation and communication of the main reasons behind policies, are some of the key issues that policy-makers are typically interested in. This, in turn, allows policy-makers to make informed decisions about the possible constraints and limitations that a given policy may have and, therefore, make its implementation more successful. It is feasible to assume that policies that are potentially contentious such as those discussed in this thesis would have a significant consultation process and intensive research period preceding their announcement.

As discussed in the previous section, the rationale behind adopting the two policies was hardly ever questioned. At the same time, the background processes and implementation of the policies were fiercely disputed, and their shortcomings rarely denied, even by senior officials. Interestingly, at this level of critique, issues raised regarding policy-implementation also included problems which arose with the language of choice policy. Again, this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, as an important element in relation to the processes of policy-implementation. The following section will discuss four processes highlighted by respondents, namely, “background research” and “policy alternatives”, “speed of introduction and implementation”, “trial and error” and considering alternatives. These issues were often highlighted simultaneously in both discussed policies, and comments were often made to a wider policymaking culture in Rwanda. Therefore, direct quotes will appear interchangeably and will be used to emphasise a particular process, rather than to discuss each educational policy separately.

Background research and policy alternatives

The lack of research and background debate was stressed in the case of both policies. In the example of the Language Policy, respondents often questioned the origins of the policy and the possible implications for Rwanda:

We know English is right for the future; no one will dispute that. But what does it mean for us here? What such policy will do to our society and to where we are? I'm not sure it was all properly considered and measured before policy was implemented (Interview 8. ML)

We did what others did, I get that. And yes, long terms it brought a lot of benefits for many people. But did we learn from the countries that did similar switch? Did we do proper analysis and examination into these cases? I don't think so (Interview 9. ML)

Being a newer policy, comments about the merging of educational institutions were often made in an emotional manner, and predominantly by academics and lower-level officials:

As of centralisation of the University – what was the research and planning done for making decision that it will work? It's all a big question (Interview 37. JL/A)

Academics vented their frustration about the absence of debate, lack of understanding and feelings of being side-lined:

Cards were not played right with the stakeholders of the process (...) there was no debate, no consultation, no one took time to explain things (Interview 22. JL/A)

Policy alternatives and the required background research should be considered alongside the problem that is addressed by each of the policies. Although alternatives to the Higher Education Merger policy were not presented or discussed directly, on a number of occasions the lack of a plan for policy-implementation did come to the surface. A few respondents went even further, indicating that changes were being made to this policy before it was even fully introduced. That was seen as being directly linked to the content of the policy and related it

to the initial, confusing announcement that not all institutions would be part of the merger, and to more technical and structural alterations that came about during the implementation process:

What is funny in all of this – they didn't yet finish doing what they assumed at the beginning. They didn't manage to yet centralise everything, and they are already 'decentralising' some bits (Interview 39. JL/A)

These issues often added to the uncertainty of the main stakeholders and led to an emphasis on negative aspects and concerns, as one of the senior officials highlighted:

There is need to encourage change in a positive way. When it all started, staff at the HE institutions was at lost and it all related to two things. One - there was a lot of criticisms based on personal grounds, 'I have home here and I don't want to move', and second – one, that we could have done much more about, was about fears and confusion around the plans and structures, you know, things like security of people's jobs and what restructure really means to them (Interview 3. SL)

Speed of introduction and implementation

It was notable that many respondents who spoke of the lack of relevant research and appropriate discussion around policymaking, also commented negatively on the speed at which decisions were being made:

When you want to decide about something important, you look around, you ask questions, you analyse similar cases and, most important, you take time to make up your mind. None of this happened in here. It all came from nowhere. One day it's not there and the next day – here it is, go and make it work (Interview 37. JL/A)

Others put it more directly, simply stating that: "with all good intentions that were behind it – this policy was hurried" (Interview 16. ML) or: "there wasn't a lot of time for preparation of this policy" (Interview 17. ML).

Comments on the “speed” of the decision-making process were often accompanied by remarks relating to the implementation process. As will be more broadly discussed in next chapter, the issue appeared especially challenging for those academics who were responsible for executing the changes that both policies were designed to achieve:

The quick policymaking, and quick implementation was part of the perception of 'we-can-get-on-with-it.' But the speed of all of it wasn't right. If the speed is not right – you can't do anything about quality of the delivery. It will be compromised (Interview 8. ML)

Surprisingly, senior officials did not raise any arguments against decisions around these two policies being “rushed”. Going even further, a good number of senior officials expressed the opinion that making political decisions in a sector, such as education, requires a detailed and thorough analysis of many variables, and that this should not be undertaken in a hurry:

It is a cross-cutting issue, and it links to all levels in education – we need to be getting more accurate data and we need to get better in reading and analysing this data. And finally, we need to give ourselves more time to make conclusions on what is really going on (Interview 2. SL)

While supportive of the policy ideas, the sense of urgency and speed in the decision-making process was rigorously critiqued by low-level officials and academics. Their comments were often entangled with their overall perception of how policies were set and introduced in the entire sector:

People were questioning 'why' we have to do it like that. You see, they didn't question policy, but 'why this way'. But I think 'this way' - impatient and hurried are part of our daily routine. It's actually how things are done here (Interview 39. JL/A)

Trial and error

Senior officials refused to accept that the “shortcomings” of the policy could be perceived as arising from the rushed nature of the decision-making process. They argued that the way in which decisions on the two educational policies were made, was not different to how other governmental decisions were made. This manner of policymaking can be termed as a hurried policy of “trial and error” after one respondent stated that “this is a classic example of the policies of “trial and error” – simply, if we fail, we change policy” (Interview 7. SL).

The basis for this hurried approach towards policymaking was also clearly voiced by President Kagame, who justified it by stressing that in Rwanda:

(...) Here in Africa, we like to talk. Everyone has something to say. It’s good to talk. Give them time to talk, but not months or weeks. We don’t have time like that (...)
(Kagame, 2011, *Personal Notes from Meeting 1*)

This urgency of having policies in place, even if inefficient, is often vindicated by senior elites as arising from historical and developmental necessity. It may be summarised as the need for catching up with the rest of the world. The message was as fresh in 2018 as it was in 2011:

I have a feeling that 2019 will be even better. But it does not just happen, we have to put in the work and go as fast as we can. Let us not waste any time (Top Africa News, 2018)

An important element that emerged on the back of these discussions was the desire for decision makers to generate ideas that proved their ability to think innovatively and demonstrate original ways of tackling problems. Concerns in this regard revolved around the degree to which these new ideas were dictated by the needs of the population and the extent to which they exemplified the advancement of other, intangible or personal interests:

It’s part of this thing that we have in Rwanda: ‘Introduce it and if it doesn’t work adjust it.’ We focus a lot of energy to ‘not-sticking-to-the-template.’ But I don’t

think there is enough thought put behind all of it, not enough planning, research and so on. Whose purpose does it all serve? (Interview 23. JL/O).

5.4.3 Individual people and policy-makers

The impact that both educational policies have on individual people is long-lasting. Insecurities brought about by both policies were and, to a great extent, are still impacting on people's lives. Various challenges can be identified at all levels and across the entire country, from the youngest children to the most senior academics, from peripheral primary schools to the most important institutions in Kigali. Detailed analysis of the impact of the implementation processes of these two policies will be a focal point our discussion in Chapters 5 and 6. However, at this point of the analysis, it is important to see how everyday citizens were perceived through the prism of the policymaking process.

The most illuminating way in which to understand how individuals were viewed by policy-makers in Rwanda can be found in the edited volume of "Rwanda Fast Forward", (Campioni & Noack, 2012) where Maddalena Campioni and Patrick Noack summarise the Rwandan developmental project as "steaming ahead at breakneck speed", where "(...) willing or reluctant, the population is being pulled along". Later in the book, they recall meeting with the Rwandan High Commissioner to the UK, Ernest Rwamucyo, in the Houses of Parliament, who "equated Rwanda to a speeding train set on the rails of growth and development, which is unable and unwilling to stop or slow down" (Campioni & Noack, 2012, p. 5).

On a number of occasions, similar comparisons and anecdotal illustrations of the development project were employed by respondents during our conversations in Rwanda. When used in relation to the discussed educational policies, they provided ideal opportunities for asking about those people who would not be able to "keep up with the speed of the train"

– those for whom the speed of decision making (along with the implementation process) would turn out to be too challenging. The prevailing perception was that individuals would be able to adjust to the policies, mainly because they were used to changes occurring quickly, and because they knew that there was a need to compromise and that, ultimately, “governmental policies are introduced in national interest – in their interest” (Interview 25. JL/A).

Recognition that there might be individuals who could not keep up was usually dismissed by diminishing the scale of the problem (i.e. the number of people who may not be able to cope) and, ultimately, concluding that the “entire nation cannot be captives” (Interview 25. JL/A) of people who do not want, or cannot, move forward. This way of perceiving policies in the very early stages – either at the point of policymaking or during early policy-implementation – almost unavoidably created a group of people who would be victims of these changes and who could, potentially, be left behind.

Inevitably, as mentioned before, when it came to people who were likely to be positively impacted by both policies, on the level of policymaking there was an overwhelming prevalence of positive generalisations. It was believed that the “people”, “Rwandans”, “nation”, “generations”, were likely to “get on” with the proposed changes, and there did not seem to be any purpose in identifying the needs of particular social groups or individuals.

The main departure from this generalisation occurred only when policy-makers and senior officials were requested to identify if there were likely to be any people who would be unhappy with these policy changes. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individual stories were brought up when talking about Language Policy and individuals with Francophone

backgrounds. It was suggested that the Francophones would be seen as “unhappy” (Interview 39. JL/A), parallel when discussing the merging of educational institutions, officials were “guessing” that it would be “academics from the National University of Rwanda” (NUR) (Interview 3. SL) who will cause them the most trouble about the Higher Education Merger.

Ultimately, concerns voiced by these individuals were dismissed as not being relevant or adequate. Francophone academics were accused of being “stuck in the past” (Interview 7. SL), while staff of NUR, who, it was presumed would be unhappy about the Higher Education Merger, were accused of having a “lack of perspective and not seeing bigger picture” (Interview 15. ML). The most common opinion was that those individuals who raised any questions were unlikely to be able to understand the scale and importance of the developmental project that they were part of:

There could be many reasons why people are unhappy. Family, house, salary. But they will forget about it – they need to understand and see what perspectives and alternatives they are given (Interview 17. ML)

No. No. It may be harder for some people than for the others, but they understand. If they don’t understand – if your research shows that people are still not fully ‘on board,’ let us know. It will mean that we have a job to do [pause] that we need to improve the way how we talk about our ideas, how we communicate why it is important what the government is trying to do. How I see it [pause], the main reason why people can be unhappy is if they don’t understand that it is all done for them and their children to have Rwanda that we all deserve (Interview 2. SL)

In this way, policymakers, by simply negating people’s ability to understand the benefits of the developmental project, refused to acknowledge that any concerns could be legitimate. Here it was clear, that it was not fear or anxiety that were the main reasons that people were reluctant to speak against the policies. Instead, the most prevailing attitudes were those of indifference, apathy and irrelevance:

There was nothing to say. There was really also no time to say anything. This policy was agreed over-night, and no one was really asking about anything. On the other hand, does it really matter what I think? There are serious issues with this policy, but what is done is done (Interview 8. ML)

We had a meeting and I tried asking questions. But I was made fun of. Like because I'm old, I don't understand what is happening. I won't be asking questions again (Interview 37. JL/A)

It is not my role to make policy. It's government's role. I have my job and I just need to do my very best to meet my targets.' (...) 'No. I wouldn't ask questions. Asking questions, it's like telling others that they don't know how to do their job (Interview 17. ML)

5.5 Conclusions

The evidence presented in this chapter indicates incoherence and a diversity of drivers involved in policymaking in Rwanda. Internal and external priorities, formulated within a narrative of constant “catch-up” that many Rwandans feel necessary because of their history, often confused respondents when it came to identifying real-life problems that a given policy was supposed to address. Furthermore, the complex situation – be it historical, social or political – behind each of the drivers, created a range of tensions that became symptomatic of Rwanda's overall policymaking environment. The main cause of tensions discussed in this chapter, is the ideal of providing Rwanda with policies based on “homegrown solutions” versus those derived from external models. Of equal importance here, is the debate between employing traditional African solutions or using more modern, Western ideas within the policymaking domain. The conflict that accompanied the replacement of Kinyarwanda by English as the national language of instruction was a clear illustration of this process. Additionally, the presented analysis highlights that, when it came to making decisions, the problems and multitude of ideas that needed to be addressed were not adequately researched or properly understood. While a certain level of misunderstanding among

policymakers and policy-implementers may be overlooked, the degree of inconsistencies in understanding these policies, is palpable. An inadequate understanding of the dominant priorities, along with the lack of transparency around the genesis of particular policies, appears to have a significant and negative effect. This, as indicated in the last section of this chapter, is further compounded by specific features that characterise the Rwandan policymaking process, namely “speed of change” and the practice of policy “trial and error”. Whilst it has been highlighted here on the level of policymaking only, it becomes a serious impediment when continued at the level of policy-implementation. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

“It felt (...) like a melting pot”.

Analysing Implementers and Implementation Process in Education.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the challenges and consequences of the policy-implementation of the Language Policy and the Higher Education Merger. The key aim is to highlight specific themes that characterise Rwandan policy-implementation, along with their consequences for the actors involved, as well as for the wider society. The key themes, namely “speed” and “trial and error”, after being identified as part of the policymaking environment, are still present and add complexity when it comes to policy-implementation. Ultimately, these are supplemented by another feature of Rwanda’s policymaking process, namely “surprise politics”. Taken together, these features create a challenging environment for policy-implementers, both in terms of the system in which they operate and the consequences of the policies they must confront. While often recognised as unintentional, the impact of some of these consequences go beyond the domain of education and towards broader ethnic and geographical divisions within Rwandan society.

As in the previous chapter, the analysis here does not aim to account for a chronological sequence of particular events and processes. Instead, the narrative of this chapter follows the fieldwork data and is structured by specific concerns, observations and the voices of individuals who were part of, or witnessed close up, the policy-implementation.

Issues discussed in this chapter, such as the ambitions and indifference of politicians and, to some extent, civil servants to the challenges faced by regular citizens, appear to be a common

feature amongst politicians and officials around the world. However, when these are coupled with distinctive features of Rwandan policymaking, as outlined above, they create a new, and often challenging, reality.

This chapter begins by identifying key elements that characterise the implementation of the two focal policies. This is followed by a section that highlights how the implementation affected the actors directly involved in particular policies. The final section highlights the intended and actual beneficiaries of the implementation processes by outlining a number of old and new divisions between different groups in Rwandan society. This last section is crucial, as it highlights both continuity and change within the Rwandan identity process and makes significant observations about the wider socio-political situation in the country. Building on that, the conclusions offer a summary of key features analysed throughout the chapter, building towards Chapter 5, which looks at how the government tries to justify the outcomes of these policies in terms of its wider developmental agenda.

6.2 Nature of the Policy-Implementation Process

6.2.1. Speed and inadequacy. On how policy-implementation is restrained by the policymaking process.

The previous chapter highlighted several issues around the policymaking process in relation to the discussed educational policies. Many of these issues had a direct impact on the way that the policy-implementation process unfolded. The first, and most important issue, the speed of change discussed in Chapter 5, was further augmented by the fact that neither of the two discussed policies was part of any long-term strategy (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 557).

The result of this was that the implementation process of both policies, and especially the Language Policy, was seen by many individuals as even more abrupt than the decision making process (Rosen, n.d.; Samuelson, 2013). Samuelson writes regarding the implementation of the Language Policy, saying:

...the transition took place very quickly, within a two-year period (2008-2010). In 2008, secondary and university students were told that they must pass their examination in English by July 2009. (...) Francophone teachers were required to study English in their free time and were expected to pass English competence exams if they wished to keep on teaching. For the generation of teachers who were trained in French and for the current cohorts of students who had been studying in French while learning English as a subject, the prospects of making smooth and rapid transition to English-medium education without detriment to livelihood and educational prospects were doubtful and highly stressful. (Samuelson, 2013, p. 224)

Similar views have been expressed by other authors (Pearson, 2014, p. 43). In the view of many observers, the lack of an adequate implementation strategy was followed by rushed implementation activities. Additionally, individual respondents openly questioned whether a coherent implementation plan was even intended for either of the policies. All interviewee groups shared doubts regarding the execution of these policies and typically felt that “the whole thing didn’t happen in a synchronised and coordinated manner” (Interview 39. JL/A). One of the authors mentioned above went as far as to brand the English Language Policy a “policy without a plan” (Pearson, 2014). Indeed, as further investigations have concluded, instead of the implementation plan or strategy, what tends to be identified by respondents is a broad range of “many different responses” (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 91) or “implementation activities” (Interview 16. ML) that have been introduced in an ad-hoc way and which, until recently, delivered mixed results.

Many of the activities highlighted by respondents attracted the interest of external actors, particularly international organisations, which saw themselves as important players and participants in the forthcoming processes, especially those linked to the implementation of English as national language of instruction. The need to provide effective training, to supply teaching materials or to redesign the curriculum, was seen by a number of external partners as an opportunity for deepening their involvement in the Rwandan education sector. Several interviewees saw that involvement as fuelling the inadequacy of the implementation strategy:

Education is full of people trying to do good. From those who want to paint walls in our schools to those who would like to take over entire system and tell us how to run it. I don't think you have that many ideas in any other sector as you have in education. Everyone has something to say, everyone is an expert. And it feels as we are always trying to accommodate everyone. I'm not saying that it's not good. It is all useful and helpful; but it doesn't necessarily help in coordination and knowing what is going on (Interview 18. ML)

While collaboration with external stakeholders will be discussed in Chapter 7, it is important to note that their involvement in the implementation process may have had a significant impact on the way these two policies were implemented. Many of the "implementation activities" mentioned above were introduced while working alongside external actors and organisations. On one hand, some respondents perceived the involvement of outside actors as detached from a Rwandan-specific context and blamed their participation for deflecting from Rwandan home-grown solutions (Interview 17. ML), while on the other hand, long-standing engagement by some big donors, predominantly DFID (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 553), were referred to in positive terms:

(...) Of course, we would like to be self-sufficient. On many levels that is our objective. And in comparison with other East African countries, we are not doing

bad. But there are some important partners that we work with. And it's not all about budget support and donations. We see working with some countries and some organisations, and in this case DFID and British Council are good examples, as being decisive to the development and sharing of good practice (Interview 7. SL)

These varied perspectives again highlight one of the key tensions within the policymaking and policy-implementation system in Rwanda. The narrative that is often shared by RPF elites is the creation of a new post-genocide Rwanda on the basis of home-grown solutions. At the same time, many of the practical steps undertaken in order to implement the policies are based on practices deployed abroad. This conflicts with what many officials tried to argue was “a Rwandan solution to dealing with the problem of language in Rwandan schools” (Interview 22. JL/A) and did not write itself easily into the wider narrative of Rwandan self-reliance. Here, respondents' mixed and at times contradictory comments illustrated the disparity between the pro-Rwandan narrative and externally influenced pragmatism. For several of the respondents, accommodating these two notions proved to be challenging.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 5, a number of other challenges that arose at the policymaking level had an important impact on policy-implementation, including a lack of appropriate research, an inadequate understanding of existing realities, rushed decision making processes, and unrealistic objectives and time frames (see more discussion in Chapter 5).

What became clear from the interviews is that the biggest criticism of both policies originated from the fact that all the implementation activities, whether initiated internally or externally, were rushed and carried out in an uncoordinated way. Some of the interviewees considered the “hit-and-miss” nature of the implementation activities as the main reason for many of the

shortcomings with regards to the outcomes of the policy. Ultimately, the additional speed with which particular activities were performed, as well as the timescales for accepted outcomes, appeared to the majority of stakeholders to be unrealistic and unworkable.

This situation was exacerbated by ongoing challenges connected with inadequate central government support, inefficient training efforts and the initial lack of clarity surrounding institutional backing. In 2013, Williams emphasised that:

The English policy presented one of the most poignant issues, and it produced a degree of frustration for students and school administrators. Most young people I met with, expressed a strong commitment to becoming educated, but, without a solid grasp of English, most students felt they were hard-pressed to do well. Given that school-issued textbooks were in short supply, students notebooks assumed the function of textbooks. Their notes were their transcription of their teacher's own transcription from a textbook (...). This transmission of information was challenging for students learning English (...). Most young people I met with, expressed enthusiasm for the government's intended trajectory for the country. They wanted to become educated and to learn English. Yet, they felt that their school did not have the capacity to equip them to learn English well (T. P. Williams, 2016, p. 19)

On one level, policy-implementation is perceived as a routine task – where middle and low-level state administrators simply enact the decisions of policy-makers (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 450). However, as outlined above, while this may be the routine way in which the process unfolds, the reality is usually much more complicated.

The fact that policy-makers did not address some key issues had a major impact on subsequent stages of the process, when both of these policies were implemented. Again, an important point that was raised by respondents on numerous occasions, was the lack of appropriate research (Interview 8, 16, 11 ML; Interview 21, 39, 34 JL/A). In the case of Language Policy, the vital issue was an inadequate understanding of the challenges that the rollout of the policy would have in different parts of the country. In the case of the Higher

Education Merger, questions were raised about the initial costs (Interview 16. ML) and whether projections were made regarding the financial input required for the creation of a new, centralised institution. The challenges likely to arise because of these unanswered questions had a detrimental effect on officials who had to manage the consequences of these inadequacies, namely the people responsible for the implementation process. The consequences arising from these ambitious policymaking decisions, which were outside the control of those people responsible for the implementation process, had a direct impact on job security for the individuals who were held accountable for policy-implementation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1979; Sabatier, 1999). This is an important issue as, together with problems discussed in next two sections, this situation fuels the feeling of detachment, insecurity and powerlessness among implementers i.e. middle level officials. This is the same group of people who, as shown in Chapter 3, in classic Developmental States, provide a backbone to the changes and improvements unfolding in the country.

6.2.2 Chaos and inadequateness. On the long-term consequences of policy-implementation.

“Could the implementation of these policies work better?” (Interview 39. JL/A), was a question posed by one of the academic interviewees as a way of highlighting the shortcomings of the implementation process. Similar questions were raised among mid- and lower-level officials and academics, whereby alternative solutions to the challenges faced by the Language and Higher Education policies were suggested. Many of the issues, concerning both of the discussed policies were well grounded and presented with balanced and well-articulated arguments. In most instances, respondents offered practical and constructive criticism. The importance of this is twofold. First, it stands in stark contrast to those depictions of Rwandans as being overly obedient, and Rwanda as a country where criticism

is not allowed (see previous discussion in Chapter 5). While the attempt here is not to argue that obedience is non-existent in Rwanda, it is important to examine this claim more carefully. While it was clear that none of the respondents was ready to openly criticise central government policymaking, they were, nevertheless prepared to criticise policy-implementation. What this indicates is that criticism, at varying degrees, is considered acceptable within the broader policymaking and policy-implementation environment. Second, it is also a strong and clear sign of the readiness of middle level officials or implementers to provide critical and beneficial input towards the policymaking process – a feature that was previously outlined as being a key element to the success of Developmental States in Asia (Chapter 3).

Because of this, it was unexpected that when the same concerns (as highlighted by lower and mid-level officials) were brought to senior officials, they were usually dismissed outright. This shows that, while middle level officials were in many ways capable, their input was being halted by those above them. In the view of many senior officials, these concerns raised were driven by personal grievances that “often had nothing to do with the policies itself” (Interview 5. SL). It was broadly considered that similar complaints were unjustified, short-sighted and immature (with the last one being seen as particularly demeaning in Rwandan culture).

Again, as mentioned earlier, many respondents did not dismiss the idea of introducing English as a mode of operation or of merging the higher education institutions. Indeed, their concerns rarely related to their personal circumstances, or the impact of any policy changes on their professional position. More than that, their concerns rarely pertained to the current situation or even the institutional enactment of the policy. Instead, their main reservations

were related to the impact and long-lasting consequences that the inadequate implementation processes may have:

The question that matters is - could this policy have worked better? Could this whole thing work better? This [Introduction of English as a mode of operation] was clearly one of these reforms that should have been thought through as a transitional process. (Interview 39. JL/A)

Interviewees who talked about either of the two discussed policies did not have extreme or rebellious intentions – they did not mean to obstruct or disobey the policies, although this objective was occasionally implied by senior officials:

It's like a little rebellion here. I think they [academics from the National University of Rwanda] have rota, you know a schedule; each takes different day and they all keep coming back to complain about something else. If they could, they would probably camp outside my office (Interview 3. SL)

On a fundamental level, they saw the merits of the reasoning behind both policies. What they were concerned about was the long-lasting effects of implementation on the general reputation of the Rwandan education system. Here, specifically, one of the key concerns raised was regarding the level of confusion experienced by teachers and academics and the damage that it could cause to their reputation. The contempt that some of them were experiencing was a major concern:

[She] came from school few days ago and said that they had a replacement teacher for few hours that day. She made some unpleasant comments about this teacher. She said they [other students] shared some comments about him. So, I had a good talk with her. In the end, she was not very impressed with the teacher because of the quality of his English. Similar comments and perceptions are not uncommon. Young people, who are raised by English-speaking parents are usually more fluent in English than majority of our primary school teachers. This adds to teacher's confusion and fuels the ignorance or disrespect of some students (Interview 34. JL/A).

A similar issue, linked to reputation, was raised concerning the damage that the Higher Education Merger would do to some already well-regarded institutions:

I'm not sure how things will move forward. We have some really good partnerships in Europe, in Americas. A lot of these partnerships are worked out through cooperation of individual academics. They start with two people working together for many years (...) only then they grow to include bigger units and centres. If things get pull apart and people are moved around, I'm not sure if these things will survive. And that's a shame, because we worked on some of these for a very long time and they were meant to last for years to come (Interview 27. JL/A)

Another shared concern over the implementation of the two discussed policies was the lack of planning and the conflict between the quick execution of the policies versus their long-lasting consequences. The majority of respondents who shared similar thoughts emphasised their support for the idea that comparable changes, as brought by the two discussed policies, should have been introduced via a phased system (see similar discussion in Chapter 5), in well outlined and defined stages. The shared opinion was that by having such an approach, it would be possible to provide teachers and academics (in the case of the Higher Education Merger) with an appropriate time to prepare for the change, which would, ultimately, help in delivering a higher quality education:

When I did my degree, I used to study in French, and I used to learn English as my second language. Given that in my area of work English was very important, I knew I had to master it. I think if you would approach the change this way – you provide basic education in the language that student is comfortable with, and you steadily increase the amount of English even if you do it with a heavy load, but in phases, so everyone can plan and prepare. I think this would work better. Also, the justification is important. Why? It is important because it motivates students (...) it would be easy enough to show students from given discipline why knowing English is important for them (...) (Interview 36. JL/A)

The details of what a phased approach would mean in practice varied, depending on the respondents and the policy that was discussed. Some insisted on maintaining similar time frames but supported the designing of a more structured and nuanced approach to the

implementation phase, while others advocated extending the time when the two parallel systems would run side-by-side, with one being slowly phased out. In Higher Education ideas included a partial merger of higher education institutes, with some units becoming more centralised than others. The former, in the view of the respondents, would help teachers and academics maintain their respect and integrity while they were transitioning from French to English (Interview 39. JL/A). In the case of the Higher Education Merger, it would help to fully incorporate the identity and esteem of different higher education colleges within the new, and centralised, University of Rwanda (Interview 16. ML).

While, as discussed before, the Higher Education Merger was a relatively newer policy, the consequences of the implementation process were not as advanced as with the Language Policy. However for a number of respondents, it was becoming evident that the rapid and haphazard way in which English was introduced would put a significant strain on the entire educational system for many years. Some of those interviewed highlighted that:

(...) if we would have coherent and systematic plan in which English would be introduced, you know in phases, over five or even ten years; today, already today - we would be in a much better situation. As it is now, the progress is not as it should be, and I can't see the way how it will be fixed any time soon (Interview 23. JL/O)

Clearly, this response indicates that the chaotic policymaking, followed by the poor implementation process, was likely to cause long-lasting and negative outcomes. These negative consequences highlight the important implications of these processes on the nature of Developmental State that is being implemented in Rwanda. In the view of the respondents, the resolution of problems that were meant to be addressed by the introduction of both the discussed policies, was delayed. This, in turn, raised the question of

quality throughout the education sector. When the fieldwork for this thesis was completed, this debate (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7), was taking place predominantly among practitioners, academics and middle level officials only, and was largely ignored by senior level official and politicians.

6.2.3 Communication and transparency

The ways in which stakeholders become involved in the policymaking process, or are informed about different policy initiatives, is as important as the policy development itself. The ways in which decisions are communicated, and the extent to which stakeholders can voice their support for, or concerns over, policy-implementation, are important factors that can potentially determine their commitment to the implementation process (Moran & Rein, 2008; Peters, 2010). Almost forty years ago, Ruth Levitt wrote:

The value of consultation is explicitly recognised in much policymaking now. Especially where the issues tackled by the policy are less than clear cut, or where instruments and enforcements may be difficult to keep simple, consultation with interested parties features prominently. At least it serves to acknowledge the difficulties and emphasise the collective involvement in formulation and implementation. It can lengthen the time before action can occur, but this is often price worth paying when greater degree of support and consent for the policy may be obtained (Levitt, 1980, p. 205)

Although communication around both policies followed a similar pattern, this section will specifically focus on analysis of the Higher Education Merger. When the fieldwork for this research was being conducted, the challenges that accompanied communication around this policy was high on the agenda of almost all lower-level and academic respondents.

More recently announced than the Language Policy, comments regarding the communication of the decisions made about the introduction of the Higher Education Merger were critical

from the outset. Across different institutions and different campuses, academics said they found out about the Higher Education Merger after it was approved, with most complaining they were not part of any consultation process. In fact, in many cases, they had no idea that such a policy was even being considered:

There was an absolute lack of communication – some people found out about the whole thing from TV. Pretty much when it was done, over and happening (Interview 37. JL/A).

Even after the policy was announced, communication remained chaotic. Consultation on matters relating to the implementation process were also absent. Many individuals asserted that they did not know any details relating to the policy until late on:

People were very confused about why it's actually happening while it was actually happening. What's the thinking behind it? (Interview 32. JL/A)

Staff kept asking: Can someone please tell me what is happening? (Interview 16. ML)

The questions raised at this stage of the process rarely related to major strategic matters. They were predominantly concerned with simple, routine issues around whether, and how, the Higher Education Merger would impact particular academics and their day-to-day life. What would a new centralised University look like? What management would be in place? Where would the University be located, and what changes could be expected across different departments and campuses? Such questions, and the fact that no answers or meaningful consultations were provided, inevitably increased anxiety over job security for hundreds of academics. Such concerns were heightened by questions raised by current and prospective students, who were faced with a range of insecurities linked to their studies. These ranged from issues around admission, availability of accommodation and scholarships, to the possible disruption of courses and staff changes. Academics considered this situation highly damaging.

While they felt unable to think calmly about their own futures, they were, simultaneously, unable to address students' concerns over the future of their education. As one interviewee summarised it, he felt "stuck between unknown about the future of [his] family and worry about the future of [his] students" (Interview 32. JL/A).

Similar views were repeated by several respondents, indicating a lack of appropriate engagement between policymakers and the stakeholders involved in the process. This issue was commonly connected to a lack of convincing arguments in favour of the merits of the policy and the implementation procedures. The absence of both engagement and appropriate communication with the stakeholders was at the heart of misinterpretations and mistrust surrounding the policy and served to foster strongly negative opinions before it was even fully implemented. Academics perceived that the way the policy was communicated created divisions and disadvantages within particular groups, which were contradictory to the unification that the policy was trying to achieve:

With policies it often feels like it's about creating divide and disadvantage – like you have two evils and you simply choose lesser evil (Interview 39. JL/A)

For some respondents, such comments were a prelude to recognising that the effects of implementation activities ultimately perpetuated old divisions and reinforced new ones in Rwandan society, a theme that will be fully discussed in the last section of this chapter.

At this point, academics simply acknowledged that one of the reasons they did not receive an answer was because many of their superiors did not have the relevant information on how this policy should work or how it would be introduced. Ultimately, these issues increased anxieties concerning their future and the role they would have within the newly-merged institution:

People have the right to information; they should be somehow consulted; or at least information should be shared. For weeks and weeks, we knew nothing, except the initial announcement that it's happening (Interview 37. JL/A)

As such, academics perceived the lack of communication and transparency around the introduced change as a way of excluding them from an important debate about the future of their profession and higher education in Rwanda. The feeling of injustice was widely expressed:

I think many people felt in some ways offended and upset. Clearly, their expertise and many years of experience in working in the college were deemed as useless. I think many of us would like to be heard and have our opinions and ideas valued (Interview 34. JL/A)

Furthermore, the way in which the communication and consultation processes regarding the newly approved policies were undertaken, excluded important stakeholders. As will be discussed in the following sections, rather than engaging them in promoting policy outcomes, this exclusion tended to put them in direct opposition to the newly agreed laws. Additionally, it denied stakeholders the opportunity to comment on crucial aspects of the policies. One can only speculate that had their opinions been taken on board earlier, the policies might have been better delivered.

The main consequence of the lack of consultation and coordination was to fuel people's dissatisfaction and feelings of disengagement:

Changing discontent into satisfaction is not an easy task – if there would be more planning and more communication, they could have limited the amount of fall-out and criticism that they are getting and have to deal with from people (Interview 41. JL/A)

Negative views about the consultation process hampered the way in which people approached the Higher Education Merger policy and the subsequent changes. As will be

discussed in the following sections and in Chapter 7, a consequence of this was that the situation had an important impact on people's attitudes towards the discussed policies. Lack of consultation with stakeholders and the failure to bring them on board early in the process resulted in many individuals becoming disillusioned, disinterested and, in many cases, actively opposed to the unfolding changes. The methods by which information was shared at the initial stage and then, again, once the policy was put in place, fueled people's concerns. In the opinion of many academics and University staff, many concerns could have been avoided if people had been consulted, or at least informed about the policy, at the earlier stages of the process. This would have served as a way of bringing people on board and engaging them with the proposed changes rather than creating another, unnecessary, level of complication.

While this section focused on the Higher Education Merger, similar tactics – where communication around policies overlooks and, to a great extent, ignores the concerns of key stakeholders – appear a widespread feature of the policymaking design in Rwanda. Discussions about the way that announcement and communication relating to the English Language policy took place revealed similar sentiments, namely that stakeholders, from language specialists to regular teachers, felt unappreciated, ignored and, to a great extent, detached from embracing the implementation activities.

6.3 Impact on Actors Involved in Implementation & Policy Making

6.3.1 Impact on senior level officials. On how responsibility is filtered down.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, senior officials often admitted that the initial policy decision was not based on well-grounded research. At the same time, they would comfortably dismiss any suggestion of adverse effects this may have had on the

implementation efforts. The position they adopted enabled them to leave all responsibility for the implementation process to low level governmental agencies and educational institutions. None of the senior officials made a connection between unworkable goals, the timeframes set and the unfeasibility of the implementation process. When discussing the Language Policy, one senior official said:

Yes, we need to make more to ensure adequate research with regards to the policy processes. Yes, there is definitely a lot of space for improvement. A lot of work still needs to be done (...)...I, actually, have serious issues with my colleagues who were responsible for implementation. I don't think we did a good job of implementation in this area. And there is still a lot of work that needs to be done around getting English to the level where it should be (Interview 2. SL)

There was also a group of individuals who denied any existence of difficulties with how the Language Policy was working, and how it was implemented. As became clear later, this group consisted of people who, in a short time after the fieldwork was completed, had been promoted to new, more senior positions. These individuals not only dismissed any challenges relating to the implementation process, but they denied the existence of any problems concerning the policy or challenges in using English:

There are no problems with English. I'm not sure what is the purpose of asking any questions about it. Policy ordered us to change language from French to English. Policy was enacted and it is now done and finished. We can't be continuously going back to it. It's done. We need to focus on what the next thing is (Interview 15. ML)

This approach to the Language Policy did not allow space for further discussion. This degree of impatience towards the question, and any suggestion that things could be different or improved, plainly pointed at the agenda that this particular individual had. The attitude displayed by these individuals exposed their desire to be perceived as being on top of the changes taking place both in their unit and in the education sector as a whole. This, again,

points to the broader issue around the levels of high pressure felt to perform (for more see Chapter 7) – one that is highly prevalent among civil servants in Rwanda. The forward-looking approach was so overwhelming that it bordered on being detached from reality. While not exclusive, and usually displayed at different levels, such detached ideas were communicated predominantly by all individuals at the senior level.

The detached attitude of senior officials is an important issue, as it has a significant impact on medium level officials who, within the policy making process, bear the weight of responsibility for the implementation of the discussed policies. It also helps to look beyond the portrayal of (at times) over-idealised “ambitious elites”. While ambition, in itself, stands as a virtue, a detached ambition may become a source of ridicule.

To illustrate this, it is useful to look at one of the more ambitious ideas presented in detail by one of the Ministers within Ministry of Education, namely the programme set up to provide “one laptop per child” (Karuhanga, 2008). The aim was to roll out the programme across the whole country, to resolve some of the challenges associated with both literacy and the use of English. The originality of this and similar ideas is regularly cited as simple solutions that can be implemented swiftly (Interview 2. SL). What is noteworthy about all of these, is that they are presented in a way that makes the particular official appear detached from the challenges on the ground. In the case of the “one laptop per one child” programme, Minister was not able to provide a convincing answer as to how children would deal with the challenges of maintenance and the lack of appropriate energy supply in many rural areas. He dismissed such concerns as being “of secondary importance” (Interview 2. SL).

Ambitious and daring are two key characteristics shared by the senior official interviewees. As discussed in Chapter 4, developmentally-oriented ambition is an important feature of the

elites required for the construction of a successful Developmental State. While these positive attributes represent the type of impressive state system that Rwanda is aspiring to, they are often superseded by a number of predicaments. As mentioned above, a key issue is the inability to accept or admit real-world challenges. Many of these officials saw themselves as the idea makers, who did not need to be concerned by the operational and technical details of the implementation process. This perspective was so powerful that any challenge to the ideas expressed by senior officials was regarded as inappropriate and, inevitably, discouraged. As a result, when a particular idea became law or policy, it would soon be regarded as an order that needed to be strictly followed.

Perceived as bold and visionary, policy planners in Rwanda are applauded for their role in defining new agendas and policies, while middle level officials are obliged to come up with ways with which to turn these ideas into reality. The top-down nature of this relationship is probably one of the biggest dissimilarities between the classic Developmental State (Chapter 3) and the Rwandan state. It is clear that the relationship between policymakers and policy-implementers is far from emulating any form of embedded-autonomy or aligning with the “politicians’ reign and bureaucrats rule” (C. Johnson, 1982, p. 154) expectation of Developmental State theorisation. Furthermore, what is important to note is that senior officials in Rwanda are duty-bound to report to their superiors, such that their accountability is predominantly to the person directly above them. In this type of power system, middle level officials appear more forward in acknowledging a sense of “being torn” (Interview 8. ML) – on the one hand understanding the demands of regular people and, on the other, acknowledging the challenges of policy-implementation and the pressure put upon them by their superiors:

(...) You want to move the nation forward, you are doing it for people, but your day-to-day job is measured by your boss. He will look at the quality of your work and he will measure it against all the objectives and plans (...) (Interview 8. ML)

Similarly Pearson, in her analysis of the way in which the national language policy was introduced, points to the “mandatory nature” of the policies introduced in Rwanda. In essence, she argues that policy is dictated from the top, and individuals are legally obliged to follow it (Pearson, 2014, p. 44). Pearson’s observations, along with comments from respondents in her research, exhibit similar sentiments to those in the data collected for this research, and which were shared by academics and middle level officials:

You may like it or not. It doesn’t matter. A law is a law. If it was decided to be this way, you must do it this way (Interview 15. ML)

Teaching in English is not an option – it’s an obligation. It’s individuals’ responsibility to the government and to the country...[pause]... and in front of the law (Interview 17. ML)

Here we see that, once again, the way in which communication is handled becomes important. Going back to observations of how information concerning the Higher Education Merger was communicated emphasised another important issue, namely that middle level officials and academics not only felt excluded from the consultation process, but, more significantly, felt that the change was dictated in a top-down manner:

The main issues are caused because people who are proposing policies don’t try to convince people and answer their legitimate concerns; they just preach to people – that is the essence of all frictions (Interview 23. JL/O)

Likewise, a number of academics recognised that the way policies were being dictated, that is, without being properly thought through and analysed, added to the friction between them and their immediate superiors. This, in turn, strengthened overall resistance and increased

damaging perceptions at all levels, from senior managers to staff and students. Academics voiced their criticisms, highlighting that:

Resistance is not good in any innovation. At some point, you stop distinguishing between what is rational and good, and you just approach everything as being negative. It's not good for anyone. Not for us, not for management and, most of all, the overall atmosphere is not good for students (Interview 37. JL/A).

At the same time, the response of senior officials is one of evasion – whereby apparent, comparable, criticism was not viewed as being part of their immediate responsibility:

The objective was clear. We explained why it needs to be done quickly and we supported all implementation efforts. The issue then is clearly with units responsible for implementation. It is not part of our concern to keep everyone happy. And in every transformation, every change, you will find individuals who will be unhappy with the way how things are being done (Interview 2. SL)

Opinions on where responsibility lies, how the policy should be implemented, the ways in which it can be improved, and by whom, are complicated. While this complexity does not necessarily rule out the possibility of similar processes succeeding, it makes it unclear how all the actors involved should proceed. Due to the blurred lines of responsibility and the peculiar attitudes of both senior and middle level officials towards the ownership of the policies, and especially the implementation process, these undertakings became more difficult. This unclear connection between senior and middle level officials in Rwanda highlights a key departure from how the relationship between ruling elite and bureaucracy is depicted in classic Developmental States. As outlined in Chapter 3, the close relationship between politicians and bureaucrats is seen as an essential component of successful Developmental States.

6.3.2 Impact on middle level officials. About the implementers.

Ultimately, implementation is seen by most of the respondents, across all categories, as fundamentally the responsibility of middle level officials. This level includes a range of individuals – from ministerial and ministry-related administrators to governmental officials. Analysing the objectives of the Language Policy and the Higher Education Merger, it is evident that the success of the entire implementation process is not a prerogative of one person or one department but rather split between different officials and different departments.

On different levels, and with varying resources, the institutions directly involved in the implementation of the Language Policy include the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), the Ministry of Finance (MINECOFIN) and the Rwanda Education Board (REB). The overall responsibility for development, setting strategy and providing supervision rests on a number of individuals within MINEDUC. MINECOFIN deals with approving finances and transferring money to the local units responsible for the implementation of educational policies. The coordination of specific activities associated with the implementation of the Language Policy, along with organising national exams and the development of the new curriculum, is the domain of the REB (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 554). In the case of the Higher Education Merger, both MINEDUC and MINECOFIN (Interview 6.SL) were involved, having parallel roles as in implementing the Language Policy. The details of specific time frames and implementation activities were agreed by the Higher Education Council and newly appointed Senior Management of the University of Rwanda. Given the number of institutions involved in enacting these two policies, the challenges in cross-institutional communications might have been anticipated.

What is striking is that within the same institution – whether MINEDUC or REB – key individuals involved in the implementation of one of the policies did not always communicate with one another. A similar observation about challenges in cross - departmental communication was made by Behuria concerning the Rwandan Developmental Board (RDB) (Behuria, 2018, p. 430). Similarly, to Behuria’s observations, respondents to this research highlighted that a decision made by one unit was not usually considered in terms of the broader impact that it may have on other areas, or for the policy as a whole:

Of course, there are some challenges around implementation of HE merger. But they are rather in the areas of 'infrastructure', but I wouldn't really know about them. They are part of the job of Director of Infrastructure [points into direction of the office next door]. Infrastructure has really not much to do with quality, so why would I be getting involved in any of these issues? (Interview 8. ML)

In this way, the sense of responsibility that middle level officials feel towards the implementation process is far from one of ownership. While, on the one hand, they enthusiastically defend the political decision made at the senior level, on the other, they do not feel that the overall implementation of these policies is part of their portfolio. The unspoken assumption is that the success (and administration) of the policy is, and should be, held at the higher level. Again, this differs from the practice in classic Developmental States (Chapter 3), where ownership of the policies is shared equally, and where politicians provide the necessary support for activities which are designed and executed by bureaucrats. In Rwanda, mid-level officials accept only partial responsibility for implementation, which is also restricted to narrowly defined boundaries. Furthermore, in accordance with the specific ministerial or institutional unit to which they belong, middle level officials regard themselves as only being accountable for the area they have been assigned to:

(...) the culture of individual institution, the way they do, and approach things, is not making things easy. Cross cooperation is either limited or doesn't exist at all (Interview 9. ML).

This often meant that, when confronted with a specific aspect of the implementation process, particular individuals recalled their exclusive expertise and, therefore, outlined the boundaries of their influence and authority. Additionally, they stressed the importance of maintaining these boundaries. Furthermore, none of the middle level officials saw it as part of their job to question how their actions and work fitted into the bigger picture:

I can say what is the best way to approach students' grades – how to effectively and efficiently mark their exams. I can provide my opinions and comments on the range of issues that links with this specific area (...) I don't need to get into the trouble of analysing other matters (Interview 17. ML)

Yes. I have my ideas. In private I can discuss these. They are my own, personal perspective. Each of us is entitled to these. But there is the difference between what is private and what is professional. Professionally you keep to what is within your remit (Interview 13. ML)

The persuasiveness with which the argument of keeping separate agendas for different offices was made was unusually strong. It was explained through the lens of fear of making mistake, and originated from a person's inability to understand, in-depth, the intricacies of any given field or area of expertise other than their own. Therefore, moving outside of someone's comfort zone, even if this would lead to greater cooperation and productivity between units or different operational areas, is not perceived favourably. Rather the opposite is the case, as the majority of respondents emphasised that it may actually be seen as a negative action, as a way of encroaching on someone else's responsibilities. Trying to push the boundaries of one's accountabilities is seen as pointless and potentially even damaging. For, apart from adding to the workload, it may also lead to individuals being dragged into an area of expertise and influence that is not within their domain:

If I ask questions about infrastructure, I will be asked to comment and suggest and add to the discussion that is not my own. It wouldn't serve any purpose and it would only add me things to worry about. And I can't do or influence anything in this area anyway, so why to do it? (Interview 8. ML)

You don't want more on your plate than you can chew. You need to keep to your job and do it to the best of your abilities. You need to remember that you don't know full picture of what others are doing and sometimes by interfering you may actually cause more harm than to help. It can be destructive and dangerous to your role and career (Interview 13. ML)

It is evident that calling for accountability, which does not stem from those responsibilities assigned to an individual's position, is perceived as risky. Being drawn into an area of work where one does not have a full understanding of the existing power relations and, more importantly, one has no control over the issues raised, can easily have adverse consequences. This logic is strongly embedded among mid-level officials, who see avoidance as a strategy for retaining their position and influence.

Here, the combination of two crucial factors is at play. First, the ongoing pressure to perform (as will be discussed in Chapter 7), coupled with the fear of underperforming are important components when it comes to individuals meticulously detailing their responsibilities. Second, the speed and way in which policies and rules keep changing adds an additional level of worry. The way things are done today may not be acknowledged or accounted for if the new context or new realities are introduced. This, in turn, creates a level of disillusion in the continuity of the developmental process, and policymaking as a whole. This second element is additionally augmented by another feature of the Rwandan system that was already mentioned in Chapter 3, namely the appointive nature of the system. A perception of fear and inability to influence higher up agendas is additionally amplified by the fact that bureaucrats are not able to predict when and to what destination their next professional

move will take them. In contrast to classic Developmental States, the appointive nature of Rwandan officials deny them opportunity to build coherence, continuity and therefore significantly hampers their effectiveness.

Furthermore, in contrast to classic Developmental States, the Rwandan state does not operate in a synchronised manner based on the mutual reliance between policymakers and bureaucrats. Instead, by analysing the ways that policymakers and policy-implementers cooperate, we see a hierarchical system coordinated in a top-down manner, with an inflexible and disillusioned bureaucracy involved in blindly implementing orders from above.

The entire focus of Rwandan bureaucrats, with respect to the policies discussed, was on their aspiration to perfect those tasks for which they were responsible. This, in turn, was also deemed to be the reason why there was no need for them to think about the broader connections between the various activities that could, ultimately, improve the coherence of the implementation process:

(...) if you are in the government and you are being given a task, there is no reason why you would question it or say something against it. Anyway, you don't know all elements, therefore, there is no reason to question anything. You do your bit, best that you can, and you should just believe in a greater, bigger plan made by others at the top (Interview 8. ML)

The sense that one should “believe in others” in the comment above also underpins why no one actively questions the status quo. In this respect, one’s commitment to fulfilling, without questioning, precisely bound duties, is considered a virtue:

(...) it wouldn't be useful to question any decisions that are made by senior officials. If the request comes – it's here. And I have to deal with it. Why would I ask questions? What for? My job is to show results, putting different elements together is a job of people 'higher up,' not mine. If it's not your role to ask

questions, it would be unwise to do so. It's not how mature people act. It's not how professionals act (Interview 13. ML)

In contrast to the emotional remarks made by low level officials and academics, some middle level officials commented on the impact that particular policies may have on the educational sector and everyone involved in it. Whether the discussion revolved around the speed of policymaking, communication or any other aspect relating to the qualitative way in which policy could be measured, the answers were usually provided in a dispassionate manner, with a strong sense of conformity to "how things are done here":

We are the country of surprise politics. I remember there was one of these situations. Our officials [provides the name of the Unit] had their limousines. This was their privilege. They just always had them. And one morning, someone shows up with a piece of paper. Cars are being taken away (...) there and then. Drivers were left standing without cars and without job. Few minutes later, the official that supposed to be driven somewhere, shows up and expects to be taken for his meeting. So, no one knew – not the drivers, not the official [pause] But you see, no one was surprised or troubled by that. That is how it is here. That is the system (Interview 17. ML)

It's weird that there are even questions like that. I mean about speed or impact. English or Higher Education Merger are not the first, and definitely not the only, policies brought about in this way. What it is – people just pay more attention to these policies as there was more talking about it and you could hear more about these two in the media. The truth is that this is just the way we do things in Rwanda (Interview 15. ML)

The perspectives presented by interviewees in the last two sections point to yet another important overarching theme in Rwandan policymaking. On the one hand, at the senior level, we can see ambitions, often detached individuals who are engaged in adventurous policymaking (Interview 2, 7, 5. SL). On the other, we have fearful implementers who quietly await the next *surprise* that will be pushed at them. These specific features are not limited to the discussed policies, or to the educational sector as a whole. They represent a wider policymaking environment that is characteristic of the current developmental project in

Rwanda. When analysed through the prism of the model Developmental State, this lack of empowerment and engagement with implementers and bureaucrats presents the greatest disparity between the Rwandan state and East Asian states (Chapter 3).

6.3.3 Impact on students, teachers, and regular people

Analysis of the implementation process would be limited without the possibility of incorporating the perspectives of the main recipients of the policy, that is academics, students and teachers; groups on whom political changes had the most impact. As the primary data collection did not extend to students and teachers, some of the perspectives in this section are borrowed from secondary accounts and reports. Additionally, these secondary accounts are supported by respondents' statements made during the primary data collection, mainly by individuals classified as academics, and who are recipients of both discussed policies.

Academics usually presented their criticism in the third person, carefully balancing their statements. Generally, the comments made about the Higher Education Merger, while being predominantly negative, were relatively less loaded than those about the Language Policy. Part of the reason for this was that the Higher Education Merger was at an early phase of introduction (at the time of conducting interviews), while the implementation of the Language Policy was assumed to be well advanced. Therefore, after a brief summary of some of the observations relating to the Higher Education Merger, this section will turn to discussing the Language Policy in more detail.

Academics made a number of critical comments about the Higher Education Merger. The majority of these focused on the potential impact that the proposed changes could have on their daily routines, and the demands and responsibilities placed on them. Correspondingly,

and ironically, the academics' dissatisfaction with the Higher Education Merger was repeatedly voiced by senior officials who, often unintentionally, spoke of the scale, as well as the nature, of the problems:

The culture of some individuals and some institutions is not making things easy. Implementation was hit by problems with communication. It wasn't like there was a secret or anything like that. It's just some things were announced too early – when we actually didn't know how things will be put together. This caused panic. Everyone started to ask questions for which there weren't any answers (Interview 7. SL)

It all came from Butare [read: National University of Rwanda - NUR]. They were very unhappy. It all came too fast and despite all the gains, they were convinced they will be losing the most when the merger happens [...] there was no time to shift people's thinking about how things are being done (...) I have staff from Butare, here on campus, who are really unhappy. There is no easy way to make people happy. And people from NUR felt that they are especially losing on this merger. For every 10 people who come to my office to complain about the situation [post - Merger], eight will be from NUR (Interview 3. SL)

People felt that they lost in this one. They felt that their own reputation will be lost with reputation of individual colleges. It wasn't explained, how it is actually the opposite that we are aiming at achieving (Interview 6. SL).

Therefore, criticism of the Higher Education Merger was based on personal experiences. Academics would often make comments relating to the security of their position within the newly created units, the location of their campus or the areas of responsibility within the new university structures:

If the management changes, and we know it will, will all my work and all my efforts be counted in? Will promotions be made in the same fashion? How will accountability work? How will they organise support for academic staff members? If we are based here [in Butare] and they [the Management] are based in Kigali, how will it all happen? (Interview 37. JL/A)

Many of the above complaints were phrased such that they appeared to refer to policy implementation, but were, in reality, a clear criticism of policymaking. Again, this way of

formulating particular arguments highlighted the interviewees' hesitance at voicing direct criticism of policymakers. Additionally, it is important to highlight that while early comments about the Higher Education Merger constituted personal concerns, they later focussed on process and the education system as a whole. This shift was caused not by their earlier fears coming to pass but rather a more strategic move. Academics and junior officials realised, relatively quickly, that any personal concerns raised were not treated seriously, and they were, instead, viewed as troublemakers rather than being noticed for their constructive criticism of the process:

(...) remarks, complaints – these need to be bigger than an individual. You can't just go to your superior and say I don't like this or that, because it will have negative effect on me. Your comments must be about bigger picture, bigger system, otherwise you are just seen as causing troubles, like you are stirring things up. The problem with this is that people do worry about their individual situation, and they need to have a way of voicing similar concerns (Interview 22. JL/A)

As with the comments regarding the Higher Education Merger, the most critical observations about the Language Policy outlined views that echoed the day-to-day challenges experienced by teachers, parents and students.

As summarised elsewhere, teachers and kids attending schools in Rwanda “were caught up in a complicated web of contradictions” (T. P. Williams, 2019b, p. 650). While students were expected to finish school to improve their prospects and succeed in their future careers (Honeyman, 2016), the introduction of English prohibited them from doing well and was, in the long run, associated with failure (T. P. Williams, 2019b).

At the same time, academics who disapproved of changes related to the language shift, mostly phrased their criticism in terms of the experiences of “other French speaking

colleagues” (Interview 39. JL/A). It is worth noting that similar comments were made by academics whose command of English was impeccable. Academics whose first language was French rarely commented on the language shift, instead making enigmatic, plaintive and, usually, impulsive statements. Such comments mainly focussed on the “impossibility of the situation” and the “serious reputational damage” (Interview 22. JL/A; Interview 36. JL/A) that it often had on others (i.e. French speaking colleagues/academics).

When asked about the struggles that teachers and academics might experience in their daily work, senior officials proudly proclaimed that the Language Policy was “fully embraced” and that “not even one person – academic, teacher or public officer – resigned from their job, over induction of English as Mode of Instruction” (Interview 2. SL). From comments with academics, however, it was clear that many of them were told in both official and unofficial settings that if someone was not happy with the policy that they were “welcome to resign from their position” (Interview 22. JL/A). This links back to the discussion earlier in the chapter, about individuals choosing to be silent rather than risking their position by voicing their concerns. Of course, doing so would not only mean that the individual could potentially lose their job, but that they would be taking a direct stance against governmental policy – a step which could lead to even greater repercussions. While no one officially took this step, a number of academic interviewees admitted to knowing someone who had left the teaching profession, either because they disagreed with the language shift or because they struggled during both the implementation phase and with making the switch to English. All such resignations were explained by citing “poor health, family or private reasons” (Interview 22. JL/A).

However, while some individuals (as described above) decided that resigning was their best option, the majority stayed and looked for other ways in which they could make an impact. After several interviews, it became clear that academics adopted different strategies, which they felt would help them to make the change more 'bearable.' I decided to call these strategies 'silent protest activities,' which were comparable to acts of 'everyday resistance' found in other sectors and spheres of life in Rwanda (S. Thomson, 2011b). Similar activities were perceived by academics as having a real impact on helping students to cope with the implementation activities. They show the lengths to which academics and others would go to diminish the negative impact that the language change policy had on individual students:

If my student returns exam paper and his answers are all correct but written in French, I won't fail him. If I would do that, what would I be doing to his knowledge? Knowledge is not about language and as teacher I am here to nurture the knowledge, not become 'language police' (Interview 39. JL/A)

Similar sentiments were echoed by majority of academics interviewed for this research. As acknowledging similar practices would be a direct break from the policy and, as clarified by one of the senior officials (Interview 2. SL), would be officially understood as a "violation of the law", many such comments were made very carefully:

It's very difficult. It [Read: the policy] is clearly a failure. We need to look at it as a failure. But when you look at the individual...and many of them struggle...you need to do something. I usually call a student and help him to re-write the whole paper in English. And then I mark only the paper that he re-wrote in English. I forget that the paper written in French ever existed. It's as close as I can get to be fair to myself and my students (Interview 37. JL/A)

It used to happen a lot. It happens less now, but in a way, I think the quality of written work went down in general. Students still can't express themselves in English. They will write in English, because they know that the law says that it's 'fail' if they write in French. I would always find some way to get around it. But I keep thinking about our colleagues who used to teach in French. It must have

been especially hard for them – failing students for writing in French (Interview 34. JL/A)

This kind of *secret* way of rebelling against governmental policies is not new in Rwanda and is not limited to the educational sector. In her work discussing the Crop Intensification Programme, An Ansoms points to similar “secret” practices in the agricultural sector:

[...] Our research material also revealed that authorities’ expectations often did not match local realities on the ground. Many of our interviewees strongly resented the imposition of preferential market-oriented crops per region, and attempted to circumvent these obligations by secretly cultivating their preferred crops [...] (An Ansoms, 2017, p. 56)

Those authors who describe these practices make important observations about an individual’s values, personalities and boldness. In the case of the academics and teachers described above, the responses indicate a significant commitment towards students and vocational values shared by some teachers. In describing parallel acts of “everyday resistance”, Thomson argues that it requires “some combination of persistence, prudence and individual effort to accomplish a specific goal” (S. Thomson, 2013, pp. 131–132).

Furthermore, as with those respondents in this research who pointed to individual acts by certain academics and teachers, Mutwarasibo (Mutwarasibo, 2017) and Palmer (Palmer, 2014) advocate that the issue of “everyday resistance” needs to be considered from a more nuanced and more personalised perspective. While they caution against labelling individual acts of resistance as representing the actions of a homogenous group that resists the power of the political ruling elite (Palmer, 2014, p. 233), they call for a more individualised examination of popular resistance where value-based (Palmer, 2014, p. 242), faith-based (Mutwarasibo, 2017, p. 10) and socio-professional motivations (Mutwarasibo, 2017, p. 11) are

becoming a central point of analysis. Again, in agreement with Palmer and Mutwarasibo, “values” were brought up in this research, as an explanation of academics’ behaviour:

As a doctor, your duty would be to heal your patients. As a teacher, my duty is to my students; to teaching and sharing knowledge. Failing my students is the last thing that I want to do (Interview 39. JL/A)

Although appearing brave, these examples indicate that people were disillusioned as to their ability to influence either the policy or the negative impact that it may have. In most cases, those academics who were ready to break the law unofficially, declared that they would not voice their concerns or criticise the Language Policy more publicly. Their choice of action is very much dictated by their practical concerns and the ways in which they might have a tangible impact. For them, it provides a greater reassurance that their actions will have a real-world impact. Other methods of campaigning and protesting do not seem to guarantee that they will be heard or taken into account. Additionally, it also allows academics to remain anonymous and to be seen as endorsing the officially adopted policy and rhetoric. While being very risky, such forms of defiance are common across the country and are widely accepted in many aspects of every-day life.

The most significant reason that individuals prefer to act against the policy rather than confront a government official is their perception that they are directly helping those who are the most vulnerable recipients of that government policy. Similar examples are offered by Buhigiro and Wassermann (Buhigiro & Wassermann, 2017) with regards to teaching the History of Genocide in Rwandan secondary schools. Their findings show that the “teacher’s aim was to convince learners about the importance of genocide prevention” (Buhigiro & Wassermann, 2017, p. 7), and that, as such, they saw their role of teaching about the genocide as an important task. At the same time, by claiming lack of time or scarcity of teaching

resources, teachers were able to choose which aspects of the genocide history to focus on. Often, due to a lack of confidence when answering difficult questions that might require them to stray outside the officially-approved curriculum, teachers purposely limited student engagement or avoided covering content that was deemed controversial (Buhigiro & Wassermann, 2017, p. 14). As noted by other authors:

[teachers] deliberately skip students' questions. The stated reason was that they would not like to make their own comments, but rather, they try to keep to the syllabus content (Basabose & Habyarimana, 2019, p. 143).

Ultimately, these attitudes appear to serve two purposes:

(...) we need to do our job – within the system, within the state and its laws and policies. But we can also make it a little bit better. Quietly – without rewards, recognition or 'thank you.' It's not a bravery. I'm not ashamed of it, but I'm also not particularly proud of doing it. You just need to understand that the only person losing in all, is the kid in front of view. And why does he have to be the one to lose? (...) (Interview 39. JL/A)

Following on from the comment above – and usually after speaking about the broader societal impact of the language change – a significant proportion of interviewees went on to discuss the impact on individual students. Academics often pointed to students as the group most adversely affected by these changes and the inadequate implementation activities. The most common themes in these discussions were that: “students were definitely ‘victims’ of this change” (Interview 39. JL/A) along with bleaker predictions about a “lost generation” (Interview 33. JL/A).

6.4 Intended and Actual Beneficiaries – Implementation that Divides People

6.4.1 Ethnicity vs. history and policy

One of the respondents for this research, a foreigner who resided in Rwanda, once observed that:

(...) here [in Rwanda] if you want to talk about history you talk about 'Hutu, Tutsi and Twa'; and if you want to talk politics you talk 'Hutu, Tutsi' (Interview 35. JL/O)

This somewhat simplified version of explaining ethnicity in Rwanda and its relationship to history and politics is nevertheless illuminating. Such open and direct statements are not often made and, even when the barriers of formality are broken, Rwandans are usually very careful about discussing ethnicity and, in general, avoid using the labels “Tutsi” and “Hutu” when discussing current political affairs. This hesitancy can be directly traced to the Genocide Ideology Law (discussed in detail in Chapter 4), and the concern that if one’s comments are misunderstood or their words taken out of context, possible misinterpretations may lead to difficulties and unpleasant repercussions. The exception is when individuals discuss history – then the discussion about ethnicity (including use of the above-mentioned labels) is completely acceptable. When analysing fieldwork material, it was easy to distinguish between the two, for example when interviewees discussed ethnicity through the lens of history and when they were trying to link it to policymaking. The former is usually well articulated, vociferous and full of details, while the latter is often done with half sentences, leaving space for interpretations and quiet moments. A typical example would be as follows:

Ethnicity is not bringing anything good. My entire childhood I was called names – anything from snakes to all sorts. I was basically compared to the lowest of the living organisms. And why? Because I was Tutsi. And if you were Tutsi, you had no right to be as human as the everyone else (...) (Interview 4. SL)

The same official:

English is good... [silence] it is a really good step [silence]... it's a good strategic move. You know... English is a way of getting us out from under the French influence... [silence]...I know that there are other reasons that are given [silence] and I know what people – some people who don't speak English maybe saying [silence]... some others... you know what I mean (...) (Interview 4. SL)

The author of these words, a senior official who answered questions in French, later stated that he “needs to do more to learn English” and hesitated when discussing ethnicity with relation to ongoing affairs and politics. At the same time, he felt compelled to relate a very animated version of his personal experiences of growing up – all heavily loaded with examples of anti-Tutsi behaviour and the ill treatment he had received from his Hutu peers, acquaintances, as well as from his school and the broader administrative system. While this particular example came about when the interviewee was discussing the English Language policy, comments relating to history were regularly made in relation to the Higher Education Merger:

(...) That is broadly the history – the genocide, the Tutsi, Hutu, the violence and the pain. For me really, the story starts in 1995. When we came here, when we were walking through Kigali – there was nothing here. And I kept thinking – what are they talking about? How can we build here, if there is nothing here, nothing to build on, nowhere to start (...)? But we managed to do it. We created a system – from student level to the management level. From few students to building entire University. And it's challenging. Reform brings uncertainty and challenges, but when I look back – this is what I see as biggest achievement: creation of educational system from literally 'nothing' (Interview 11. ML)

This history of Rwanda – including references to colonialism, inter-ethnic violence, refugee experience and genocide – are commonly used as a means to explain, justify and legitimise the steps undertaken by the Rwandan Government. Hayman (2009, p. 173) points to the use of historical legacy as one of three ingredients by which the RPF government creates and uses political space in order to pursue its priorities. Essentially, the current wave of politics, along with things that are: possible and impossible, allowed and not allowed, is explained through both individual and group experiences of the past.

Due to the makeup of the group that was targeted for interviews in this research, the majority of the respondents associated their struggles of being a Tutsi (most commonly being a refugee) within a variety of different settings and experiences. However, Rwandan history was also recalled by a minority of individuals who were Hutu and therefore, on the other side of the ethnic spectrum, one interviewee stressing that:

Even if you don't like something, it's happening for a reason. It's because of Rwandan history. We have to understand it as an attempt of breaking the cycle of violence and hate between people. So many of us – we all have fathers, cousins or uncles who allowed themselves to be driven by it (Interview 21. JL/A)

Following on from similar discussions, it is clear that Rwandan history, tainted as it is by ethnic struggles and antagonisms, is a key ingredient in the current political realities of Rwanda, and infuses the policy process in a more coordinated and strategic way than before:

Policy documents and government rhetoric are all set in the context of the consequences of the genocide and, if anything, this instrumental usage of the genocide has increased over time. Policy documents from 1994 to 1996 tend to refer only to the 'tragic events' of 1994, while there is a real discourse built around the genocide by 2004 (Hayman, 2009, p. 175)

Given this historical background, along with the strength of prevailing ties to the past, developmental-style policies, which aim to fight ethnic inequalities, seem to be the most rational way forward. While, undoubtedly, they help legitimise the RPF's claims to power (Cheeseman & Fisher, 2021, pp. 91–93), they also appear to offer citizens a constructive way forward. What is less straightforward is the reality – both with regards to understanding what constitutes ethnicity and belonging among ordinary citizens in today's Rwanda and, also, to the ways in which policies impact ordinary people.

6.4.2 Ethnicity that goes beyond traditional framing

The process of how ethnic reconstruction is unfolding, as well as the wider issues of belonging in today's Rwanda (Dawson, 2018, p. 2), are less well researched and not always openly discussed (Beswick, 2011a, p. 499). Even today, ethnic identities in Rwanda are often perceived as easily distinguishable and often simplified along the historical lines of "Tutsi", "Hutu" and "Twa". This apparent simplicity can be assigned to volumes of literature and ongoing discussions around the violent historical events that antagonised and, in many ways, crystallised these three groups along strict ethnic lines (see Chapter 4). Connected to this is the existence of subordinate identities (Moss, 2014, p. 445) that were promoted post-1994 genocide. This led to the identification of Hutus as perpetrators, Tutsis as victims, and, as an exception to these groups, people who could be identified as moderates, bystanders, heroes, returnees etc.

It is not the intention of this thesis to deny existence of these identities. As discussed above – individuals still routinely identify themselves with these groups and base their personal and community experiences and their sense of belonging on their particular pasts. Ultimately, it enhances an individual's ability to have their own stories and helps them find their place in the most horrific period of the Rwandan past.

However, these historically ethnic identities are not static, and undergo an ongoing process of change (Olick, 2007). A number of authors claim that these old identities are exacerbated by the government's approach of trying to impose a robust citizenship discourse around one identity of Rwandans (Beswick, 2011a, p. 492; Dawson, 2018, p. 12). In short, the process (that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4) aims to replace the concept of ethnicity with a "single recategorization model" and, eventually, a "superordinated Rwandan identity" (Moss,

2014, pp. 444–445). In many ways this change is seen as having a negative effect. According to some authors, it does not properly address the grievances and claims made by each ethnic group and, threatens “social harmony, long term coexistence and stability in Rwanda” (Moss, 2014), as well as negatively impacting on the relationship between “citizens and the authorities” (Ingelaere, 2010). What is important to note is that these issues pertain to all aspects of life in Rwanda, and also have an important resonance with regards to the focal education policies. As discussed in Chapter 5, the drivers and alternatives considered with respect to the Language Policy and Higher Education Merger, need to be understood through a complex web of interrelated processes, including history and ethnicity. As such, this has an important impact on policymaking in education.

What has emerged from this research and other works is that this unique balance between identity and politics is much more complicated. In this sense, neither being Rwandan nor referring to one’s ethnicity gives a complete picture of the complexity of the identity processes that are currently taking place in Rwanda.

Indeed, “Rwandanness” as a single form of identification (Rafti et al., 2007, pp. 20–21) provides its own challenges:

Although the government in Kigali has assessed that ethnic differences cannot be applied to the Rwandan context, the persistent tensions in Rwanda are increasingly viewed as identity-based conflict. The argument that there is only one Rwandan ethnicity is less useful than recognizing that Rwandans view themselves as belonging to different groups on the basis of many factors (...) (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010, p. 197)

At the same time, applying ethnic categorisation does not always work. When conducting research on social inequalities in rural Rwanda, Dawson acknowledged that:

(...) although ethnicity has considerable influence on the way development is experienced, generalizations about the relative power of ethnic groups do not always hold at a local level (Dawson, 2018, p. 12)

Next to historical identities, which were based on ethnic belonging, today's identity classifications in Rwanda are far more complex and are, in many ways, related to what one author calls "lived" (Wielenga, 2014) realities. These new forms, based on the daily experiences of individuals, are often more applicable to the current social environment (Wielenga, 2014, p. 123) and, therefore, for ordinary citizens, become more relevant. Even for children and young people, as highlighted by Pells (2011) "social relations [are described] as more complex than the official narrative of coexistence" and children "see divisions beyond the narrow Hutu-Tutsi binary" (p.82). Ultimately, these new forms can act in two ways: first, by reinforcing existing ethnic identities; second, by providing individuals with new methods of identification. The means by which these two scenarios come into play will be at the centre of the discussions in the last section of this chapter. It will be shown that policymaking, specifically the two discussed policies, serves to maintain the existing divisionism, while perpetuating old and new inequalities. This type of "continuity and change" (Mamdani, 1996; Wielenga, 2014, p. 123) with relation to ethnicity and, more broadly, lived-in identities, is one of the key features of today's Rwanda.

6.4.3 Policies that enact inequality

When answering questions as part of this research, respondents discussed the issue of ethnicity in different ways. As mentioned before, none of them suggested that ethnicity was a direct factor in the decision-making process in either the Language Policy or the Higher Education Merger. Nor did they point to any of the implementation actions as purposefully directed against a particular ethnic group. The issue of whether policy could have had an

impact on wider social relations was not a concern eagerly raised by any of the interviewees. As before, respondents' criticisms varied and, while policymaking appeared beyond reproach, the consequences of policy-implementation were seen as being responsible for exacerbating ethnic divides. Although highlighted predominantly when the interviewee was prompted, the divisions, including ethnic divides, were often identified as a problem when it came to implementation. This was especially evident in the case of the Language Policy:

In education, the polarisation of different groups is on many different levels. If you want to go to the ethnic divide, no one really likes to talk about it, but it's clear which group has advantage in using English (...), but I don't think it's even half of the story – the system is created in such a way that a particular 'language-group' gets advantage through the admissions process, scholarships and other options (Interview 9. ML).

The divisive outcomes of the implementation activities of both policies were raised at different levels and were often emphasised as not being purely limited to the education sector. These divisive outcomes serve to inform a broader understanding of the nature of policymaking and policy implementation in Rwanda. The majority of respondents agreed that, despite all the implementation efforts, "there are people who still feel as victims of governmental policies" (Interview 16. ML) and that "people were often divided by policies" (Interview 39. JL/A) with some providing specific examples:

It's clear that there is different prestige assigned to each language. For example, if you go to a hospital and you speak English, you will receive better service than if you speak Kinyrwanda or French. It's no one's fault. It's just how it is. If you speak English everyone will think that you are important or at least that you know important people. Everyone will want to keep you on their side (Interview 37. JL/A).

This observation demonstrates how language was being assigned a value that went beyond its linguistic role and was not limited only to the classroom or lecture theatre. In this way, the

language one speaks starts to have indirect ethno-political attributes. Even if unintended, these attitudes serve to rank one language in an unequal position to the other, whereby one becomes more superior to another. The divisiveness that is narrated through such statements includes the traditional Tutsi-Hutu divide, along with more complex inter-group divisions.

English Language of Elites and Development

Chapter 5 discussed how the Language Policy, through the introduction of English, was seen by some respondents as a strategic move by the RPF Government to distance itself from Francophone influences. Some key stakeholders interpreted this as having an important ethnic dimension. A more straightforward interpretation is that the introduction of the policy is related to the traditional dichotomy between Tutsi and Hutu, as very few Hutus are native Anglophones. However, further analysis of the data suggests that there is a significant friction within the Tutsi elite itself. As mentioned before, many critical comments about the Language Policy came from English-speaking academics with ties to the Ugandan or Tanzanian-born Tutsi diaspora. Their criticism towards their colleagues within the government highlighted the impact that the Language Policy had on French-speaking academic colleagues who had direct links to Tutsis born in Congo or Burundi:

(...) it felt unfair for our friends at universities (...). It's not their fault where they grow up and where they were educated (...). They are as smart and they are very capable but are not able to publish or even sometimes mark papers properly (...) because their English is not up the standards (Interview 37. JL/A).

I think it was all really unfair on these colleagues who had to switch from French to English. To teach subjects like Chemistry or Biology in one language all your life and then suddenly have to re-learn all this material in English (...) it is not easy at all (Interview 39. JL/A).

This new division within the “Tutsi camp” has, in recent years, become more broadly visible in Rwandan politics. This has been highlighted by other authors, who not only point at its visibility but also warn about the possible impact that it may have on social and political relations within the country (Dorsey, 2000; Hintjens, 2008).

As mentioned before, while English, French, Kinyarwanda and, since 2017, Kiswahili (Bishumba, 2017) have each had an equal role in the Rwandan public sphere, some sections of society, namely the country elites, are more comfortable with English than the rest of the population. Because of this, a number of authors see a direct link between the social and political demographics of the ruling party and the introduction of English:

Because members of the Rwandan elite are often former refugees who grew up in Uganda, English stands for political power (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010, p. 202)

The 2008 switch to English was thus consistent with an elite with predominantly Anglophone backgrounds (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 90).

In an environment where English was put forward as the language of business and economic opportunities, it is understandable that those groups mastering this language would be in an advantageous position. From my first visits in 2011 to the last ones in 2015, the English language was understood as being “the language of Rwanda’s elite and the language of the RPF leadership, as well as other Tutsi raised in Anglophone countries” (Steflja, 2012, p. 5).

As would be expected, this group, namely Tutsis raised in Anglophone countries, were the most advantaged in Rwanda and were seen to benefit disproportionately, compared to other groups within the population. While remarks similar to the one below, were made rarely and with caution, they present an ongoing reminder of the connection between current politics and the past experiences of genocide:

Kagame has to keep a sense of balance between different groups of people. It is not just Hutu and Tutsi. There is a lot of rivalry (...). It's not just some history stuff – it can flare out of nowhere. You see; each of these groups, they have their demands. People say that some in Government are there only to help President keep the balance. Kabarebe is good example; he helps to keep all army officers in line. Because they all have demands. They want something. Those who came to Rwanda after 1994, they are actually most upset about this narrative of 'we are all equal and we are all Rwandans'. They see themselves as winners and they want their reward. I think, and it's my personal opinion, that English is part of this reward (Interview 38. JL/A)

More than five years after the introduction of English as the dominant mode of communication, it was still perceived as being the language of the elite. Although English was used in schools, the majority of Rwandans applied it in a limited capacity; very often it was only used exclusively in the classroom. On a day-to-day basis, English gave way to Kinyarwanda and French, as one respondent, an English-speaking foreigner involved in the Rwandan education sector, observed:

Language change was a very bold move. It forces us to do a lot of extra work. People speak English for few hours when they are in the office or in the classroom, but then immediately they go back to Kinyarwanda or, in some, instance French. English is not a default language, and I don't think it will become any time soon. Because of that, sometimes it all feels counterproductive (Interview 30. JL/A)

Inevitably, this, creates a situation where, even if students graduate from school and are considered to be able to communicate in English, their ability to express themselves eloquently is limited. Eventually, the results of this unequal command of English are exposed by the realities of finding employment:

For one job opening, we get about 200 applications. Generally, all meeting our basic criteria of education and appropriate experience. However out of those, two-thirds are unemployable because at the interview they can't answer simple question in English. The worst is that they all think that their English is up to standard. In the end they graduated from school, passing their exams in English. It's very disheartening (Interview 36. JL/O)

This mismatch between the officially accepted, school-based command of English and the students' actual ability to express themselves, is connected to another feature which characterises the Rwandan government's implementation policies:

In Rwanda what they preach, they implement; there are no empty promises. It goes with both how policies in education are made and how they are implemented. But I think these policies are very rigid. There is no flexibility. There is no time for people to adjust, and it's not a good thing because, this way, policies leave people divided by skills, abilities and knowledge (Interview 1. SL).

The rigidity of the Language Policy is not only reflected in the way English is taught within the educational sector but can be seen more in the role that it plays in public and official domains. From the day that English was introduced, it was officially adopted in institutions and assumed to be mastered by the population. This massive gap between assumptions and reality had a significant impact on the wider society:

At one point, it felt that country is like a 'melting pot.' But this melting pot is not melting into one – at least not as everyone assumes. And these differences created between people are not always, and not necessarily, same as they were in the past (Interview 16. ML)

The rigidity with which policies are expected to be enacted, along with assumptions made about the success of implementation, makes it difficult for ordinary people to find ways to adjust to the changes. It is not only that people "are left behind" (Campioni & Noack, 2012) by policy-implementation, but if they are in a particular linguistic or ethnic group, they are also denied an effective mechanism by which to improve their standing.

Geographical Divisionism – Kigali vs the rest of the country

While the Higher Education Merger Policy is broadly less controversial than the English Language shift, the issues highlighted shortly after its introduction went beyond everyone's expectations. In particular, it exposed a challenge of a growing disparity between Kigali and

the rest of the country. The Higher Education Merger policy served to show, often in an unpredictable way, how divisiveness and disadvantage were perceived in geographical terms. The centralisation of all the higher educational institutions and setting up of the new University of Rwanda in Kigali were interpreted in several Rwandan regions as a way of transferring power from the periphery of the country to the capital. Here especially, academics who were previously associated with the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in Butare, voiced their opinions most forcefully:

It is all about what is going on in the centre. Everything is about Kigali now. Previously university had autonomy and independence. We were able to sit back and watch what was going on in Kigali. Now we are just another institution in the middle of it all. (Interview 37. JL/A)

Raising the issue of geographical location and the distinction between “them” (meaning from the capital) and “us” (meaning from everywhere else) were just two aspects of the more profound issues that were actually being discussed.

First, the distinction between Kigali and Butare as centres of power has significance in ethnic terms. Kigali is widely considered the domain of Tutsis from the Ugandan diaspora, who are often perceived as being in control of the Government and armed forces (Dorsey, 2000, pp. 327–330). Likewise, those Tutsis from the Burundian diaspora are supposedly associated with higher education institutions, and their customary domain is assumed to be in the south of the country, with Butare at the heart of it. Of course, neither diaspora is exclusive or rigid in its boundaries, but the idea that this distinction exists, and that one group perceives itself as being targeted by the other, is a significant factor in this debate:

It all seems like they want to grab it all. You know in Kigali. Because it’s the only rational answer. We are still early in the process – and maybe I’m wrong, and maybe you know, one doesn’t feel relative advantage of change at the

beginning of the process. But logically, I can't find any other explanation why they would do it, except to have it all in their hands, close to the central control (Interview 22. JL/A)

Second, the dichotomy between Kigali and the rest of the country can also be defined in a developmental sense. The importance of rebuilding and advancing Kigali (Goodfellow, 2013, p. 17) and other urban centres in Rwanda, is considered part of the post-genocide reconstruction, as well as the process of healing following "post conflict trauma and instability" (Cottyn, 2018, p. 341). At the same time, it is also seen by RPF officials as an important part of the elite-driven image (Cottyn, 2018, p. 342), whereby an orderly Kigali is deemed to lead the rest of the country by example (Goodfellow, 2013, p. 16). While being unquestionably impressive, the progress and advancement of Kigali is not comparable to that of the rest of the country (Deogratus Jaganyi et al., 2020, p. 64). While resources and strategies aimed at improving urban, and here, especially Kigali, infrastructure are undoubtedly changing the image of the cities and towns, the main criticism is that the majority of them have very "little clear relevance for poverty reduction" (Cottyn, 2018, p. 342). This opens new avenues for discussion about the importance of "the rhetoric of development and the negative effect of the same on the lowest strata of the population" (Cottyn, 2018, p. 342). While the argument around poverty may be relevant to a portion of the inhabitants of Rwanda's towns and cities, the proportion of the rural population living in poverty is significantly higher (Ansoms, 2009, p. 20; ROAPE, 2019a, 2019b), and is especially relevant when discussing the country's outlying areas. This geographical divisiveness, phrased as "the uneven representation of regions" (Newbury & Newbury, 2000, p. 858), or simply as the "rural-urban divide" (Ingelaere, 2010, p. 291), is rightly highlighted as one of the key themes in the current discussions about Rwanda's societal processes. While some aspects of this particular divide are not new, the absorption of it into the state-defined version of current

developmental reality, along with a growing gap between Kigali and everywhere else in the country, makes it a pertinent social and political challenge. As it will be shown in Chapter 7 this geographical divide will also have important implication to the quality of schooling and education.

6.5 Conclusions

Driven by fieldwork and secondary data, this chapter has presented a number of characteristics of the implementation processes of the two discussed educational policies. In presenting these policies, it was necessary to also highlight a range of underlying issues relating to the problematic policymaking process. The main argument brought up in the previous chapters regarding the “hit and miss” activities that are characteristic of both policymaking and policy-implementation, has been coupled with the challenges around the “surprise” nature of politics in Rwanda. Together, these two features form the hallmark of policymaking and policy-implementation in Rwanda and provide a particularly difficult background for all actors involved.

As argued above, it is not possible to effectively track all the shortcomings and assign them to any group of actors as accountability is obscured by a culture of avoidance, with responsibility being shifted from senior officials to middle level officials. Consequently, the response of middle level officials was to frantically defend themselves by constantly justifying the limits of their own responsibilities. As highlighted in the text, this situation does not help create a strong, cohesive and well-functioning middle class, which would be able to effectively tackle implementation challenges, similar to the role that bureaucracy plays in classic Developmental States as discussed Chapter 3.

Furthermore, individuals involved in executing implementation activities are often put in a difficult position where they need to make tough choices that have a significant impact on their reputation, position and integrity. The lack of proper communication around policymaking and policy-implementation weakens the role of managers and superiors who do not have adequate answers. Additionally, professionals, who in the case of the discussed policies are mainly academics and teachers, do not gain confidence when they are being constantly omitted from consultations about changes in their professional area. Together with the shortcomings of the implementation process, policy changes, which are not fully embraced by professionals, place many of these individuals in a difficult position where they need to choose between breaching the law and protecting their own professional integrity. For many interviewees, the choice of standing up for their own beliefs equates with not fully obeying national law. A similar lack of engagement from relevant stakeholders also hinders the effectiveness of the Developmental State in Rwanda and does not allow it to reach its full potential.

Finally, the speed of policymaking and the implementation process, along with the concepts of “hit and miss”, as well as the “surprise nature” have a negative impact by creating different groups of people who are considered to be better off due to the policy changes. These groups and individuals can identify themselves as being professionally disadvantaged by pointing at negative impacts of policies on their daily life and individual long-term life choices.

In summary, the problematic outcomes of policymaking, along with challenges of the implementation process, create a rather problematic group of beneficiaries. This again informs an overall understanding of the nature of policy implementation and therefore

highlights the existence of a particular version of Developmental State model that the Rwandan Government is attempting to emulate. On the one hand, the general developmental and ambitious trajectory of the Rwandan government should be applauded. On the other hand the introduction of critical reforms – specifically how they are approached, presented, and their impact the people – are proving to be a major concern.

CHAPTER 7

“A price worth paying?”.

Analysing Consequences of Education Policymaking Process.

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the broader narratives and Rwandan Government’s justifications for the outcomes of the Language Policy and Higher Education Merger. As such, it brings together a number of discussions and observations around the environment in which political decisions in Rwanda are made and executed. The discussion will focus on key themes of policymaking and policy-implementation that are characteristic of the Rwandan state and will position it within the wider political and developmental agenda. As it will be shown, some of these agendas and processes constitute neoliberal practices, adding to the complexity and tension within the wider Rwandan political project. The presented analysis will refer to Rwanda’s circumstances, including its history, socio-political environment and global position. The key objective is to highlight that the aim here is not to discuss the effectiveness and consequences of educational policies in Rwanda, but rather what these consequences tell us about the nature of Rwandan policymaking and policy implementation and their implications for our overall understanding of the Rwandan developmental state model.

The main argument of this chapter is that the concepts and dominant themes characteristic of Rwandan policymaking and policy-implementation in the educational sphere, as discussed in the two previous chapters, can be partially explained by how the government’s approach, or more specifically, its obsession with meeting measurable goals, influences thinking about new policies and their outcomes. A key theme that runs through this chapter is a fear of

authority and resultant pressure to perform. The chapter will also analyse how this impacts the quality of the implemented policies, as well as the level of participation and respect towards these new initiatives. Compelled by the above, and also the conditionality of international donors, the imperative of the Rwandan Government of focussing “on delivering good numbers” is, consequently, seen as the most efficient way of showcasing political effectiveness and accountability. This is often done irrespective of the complex realities, local variations, and inconsistencies within the proposed political solutions. As such, the chapter will make claims regarding how the Government tries to justify the outcomes of these policies in terms of the wider developmental agenda, as well as specific solutions borrowed from classic Developmental States (Chapter 3). Furthermore, the discussion will also raise the point that, while development is at the centre of the initiatives undertaken, some of the results accompanying both policies need to be contextualised within the neoliberal narrative.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. The first part focuses on highlighting the importance of indicators and statistics, along with its theoretical and practical underpinnings. The section will make observations about the extent, popular dissemination and overall trust in the political narrative when presented in terms of numbers. The second section will examine the cost-benefit numbers-led analysis that dominates the Rwandan political environment. An observation is made on what is perceived as a price worth paying among those who comment on the Rwandan project. This includes non-Rwandan authors remarking upon changes in the education sector and those who are part of it. The third and final section will analyse how policies are seen by the people who participate in them. While a number of issues were discussed in the previous two chapters, this section will bring these together by placing them within Rwanda’s broader political environment. Additionally, this section will analyse how

people's attitudes towards the state and authority are influenced by inconsistencies and changeability within Rwandan politics. While, undoubtedly, these can signify anxiety and fear among some individuals, the range of behaviours is much more complex and goes further than obedience, silence or the blind approval with which the average Rwandans is often labelled (Longman, 2011, p. 42).

As the last of the three empirical chapters, this chapter serves as a summary of the discussions and problems expressed by respondents in this thesis. It summarises how individuals participate in politically (and quantitatively) constructed realities and to what extent they are prepared to excuse its imperfections in the anticipation of progress and development.

7.1 Elites' obsession with numbers

7.2.1 Importance of presenting reality in numbers and statistics

The use of statistics – from data collection, organisation, display, analysis, interpretation and presentations – is not new in African policymaking (Jerven, 2013; Lampland & Star, 2009; Merry, 2011; Porter, 1995; Stone, 2002). This is particularly evident in countries that are openly committed to development or are attempting to emulate the Developmental State model. Over the last few decades these countries have become increasingly skilled at “making numbers work” and presenting arguments that support their own agendas (Jerven, 2013, pp. 104–105). Here especially, numbers serve as a good illustration for the success of developmental initiatives. They intend to show the speed, size and levels of developmental progress and improvement (Jerven, 2013, p. 5; Levine, 2006). Rwanda is no exception when it comes to the use of statistics. In terms of ideas and forecasts, its developmental projects

are guided by quantitative indicators. Ultimately, these indicators serve as templates to guide officials as to how to introduce new policies.

Before discussing the complexities of using statistics in policymaking, it is important to explain how statistics are used to share the Rwandan government's messages and sketch an idyllic vision of a successful future for its population. In Rwanda, the two most prevalent and well-known statistics are to do with reconciliation, legitimacy and political power. The Rwandan Reconciliation Barometer is an example of a Rwandan publication that is uniquely rooted in Rwandan history and society, and aims to:

(...) track the current status of reconciliation in Rwanda, through citizens' experiences and opinions, while identifying key favourable factors and challenges, in this regard (RoR, 2015, p. p. XIII)

The need for this document, along with numerous questions that might be posed around individual indicators, such as the purpose of data collection or the trust that is attached to it, underlines the nature of the socio-political environment in Rwanda. While a detailed discussion around this Barometer is beyond the scope of this research, its existence emphasises the fact that even the most complex issues can be assigned a numerical value.

While analysis about the ways in which other numerical data is provided and circulated in the public domain will be discussed later in the chapter, at this stage it is important to highlight the publication of Rwanda Governance Scorecards. As one of the flagship examples of Rwanda's "home-grown solutions" (Hasselskog, 2018), it was published in its 7th edition in 2020. Its aim was to provide a quantifiable index of achieved progress and was built around eight pillars that are important to Rwanda's governance. These include the: "Rule of Law; Political Rights and Civil Liberties; Participation and Inclusiveness; Safety and Security;

Investing in Human and Social Development; Fighting Corruption, Transparency and Accountability; Quality of Service Delivery; and Economic and Corporate Governance” (RoR, 2020, p.VIII). According to the Chairman of the Rwanda Governance Board – the institution responsible for production of this index – the Scorecard was “the nationalised self-assessment tool” (Urubuga, 2019) and was seen as the “most comprehensible and reliable document that reflects Rwandan realities” (Shyaka, 2012. *Personal Notes, Meeting 2*). As such, it is an important publication that informs and guides policymaking in the country (Urubuga, 2019) and, also, feeds into discussion in this chapter.

While these, and other, statistical documents are important for policymaking and policy-implementation efforts, the two statistics that are most widely circulated in Rwanda are associated with elections, and the speed and success of Rwandan economic growth. In the case of election campaigns, the scale of success is publicised by declaring the percentage figure by which a particular party or an individual wins. The governing RPF party consistently earns over 70% of votes in parliamentary elections and can claim to be winners by the greatest majority in presidential elections – Paul Kagame was elected to office by claiming 95.1 % of votes in 2003, 93.08% in 2010 and 98.79% in 2017 (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The impressive scale of these wins is made more so by the local media’s emphasising the high percentage (always over 80%) of population taking part in the election (Stroh, 2010). The clear message presented by these figures is the almost incontestable and popular support for the governing RPF party, its leadership and the President. At the other end of this spectrum are, what one might call, the opposition parties or opposition candidates. Their scores are often presented by single figures in an effort to demonstrate the immense disparity between the winning and losing sides. By showing, and widely communicating, this immense disparity, the

Rwandan Government tries to utilise one of the most powerful and fixed tools, i.e. numbers, to prove the widespread approval and support it has among Rwandan population for its vision, model of governance and broadly understood development. It is believed that an effective communication of this data can increase the government's claim to legitimacy, as:

The ongoing circulation of numbers enhances their legitimacy and power as they move upwards in the hierarchy of command and accumulate new networks of constituents, technologies and things. (Piattoeva, 2015, p. 329)

Obviously, the debate on Rwanda's electoral policy is not without controversy but a detailed and complete discussion on this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis (for discussion on this please see for example: Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Stroh, 2010; Waldorf, 2017). However, an important point that is made by several authors is that this data does not necessarily illustrate the government's popularity but, in fact, points to the level of political control that is prevalent in Rwanda:

Such vote tallies are not meant to be convincing; rather, they are meant to signal to potential opponents and populace that Kagame and RPF are in full control (Waldorf, 2017, p. 83)

At the same time, other authors offer a different narrative. They argue that while the authorities' manipulation of the electoral rules might be acknowledged, and serve to increase the RPF's legitimacy, they also confirm the approval of Rwanda's citizens to the continuation of an existing status quo:

[...] in the case of Rwanda, a large national constituency tends to support the maintenance of a democratic façade and is even gradually facilitating the centralisation of power and manipulation against the will of the people (Stroh 2010:12)

This broad approval of electoral tactics feeds into a prevalent narrative in both the public and official spheres in Rwanda; namely that of "winning big" (Interview 34. JL/A), "showing

results” (Interview 40. JL/A) and “proving with numbers that we are making progress” (Interview 9. ML). The individuals interviewed for this research always expressed these views with a sense of pride, often portraying Rwanda as being a global, or African, forerunner in a variety of domains.

In this way, the presentation of electoral wins by the governing party feeds directly to the: “(...) public narrative that demands to know ‘where are the results?’” (Interview 39. JL/A). From the fieldwork experience it was evident that, on all levels, Rwandans felt ownership of this narrative and believed themselves entitled to ask direct questions relating to records, numbers and indicators. This is one of the prerequisites for the effective deployment of numbers. For the data to serve as a governmental tool, the numbers need to be successfully imparted to the population, who must trust them as being a genuine representation of the given reality (Porter, 1995).

Without doubt, the existence of electoral politics – and specifically the success and recognition of its officially-elected representatives – is a vital component of aid conditionality, which ensures the continued cooperation of international donors. As highlighted by Carothers (Carothers, 1997, pp. 90–91), elections bring “attention, approval and money” from Western powers.

The second set of statistics that is directly connected with electoral achievements, is the success and speed of economic growth. According to World Bank data (World Bank, 2021), following the genocide and reconstruction of the country, and until 2018 Rwanda enjoyed an average growth of 7.5 - 8% per capita, with an annual growth domestic product (GDP) of 5% throughout the last decade (for more see Chapter 4).

In essence, the two sets of statistics – one associated with the democratisation processes in Rwanda (which includes electoral statistics) and the other linked to developmental progress – create a powerful reality which promotes two important messages. The first, which is connected to elections and the great disparity between winners and losers, creates an image of popular and unwavering trust that the people place in their government and elites. The second message provides a reference point confirming the benefits and successes that the governmental agenda, and especially its developmental project, has on society.

Thus, using a simplified statistical lens, one could summarise that, fully supported by its population, the Rwandan government is delivering on its developmental project that brings benefit to all Rwandan citizens. As will be discussed below, while the reality is much more complex, it does not stop the government from embracing and propagating its own virtual reality; one that is based on, and supported by, quantitative indicators.

As markers for this growth, a range of individual indicators can be identified in a variety of sectors. In the case of the education sector, the most celebrated statistic is the one that indicates a sharp growth in the number of people who are currently accessing education. The figures show a growth from 62.5% net enrolment in 1990 (Paxton, 2012, p.40) to 98.5% net enrolment rate in 2021 (RoR, 2021, p.40) in primary schooling. These statistics are always presented as part of the strategic vision mentioned above and are welcomed by both the Rwandan government and the international community. Access to education at all levels was viewed as the leading indicator of success by almost all interviewees:

Access to education is the biggest success. There still remain challenges in early childhood education, but it's only because we have a very ambitious target of reaching 90% (Interview 2. SL)

Biggest Achievements? Access to education on all levels and for all streams of learning (Interview 15. ML)

Numbers. After genocide there were about 2,000 students enrolled in what is called at the time 'University' – today there is sixty thousand students enrolled (Interview 6. SL)

However, the statistics above are more complex and nuanced than presented. They were not always easily defined, fully understood and openly discussed by respondents. In many instances, discussions about growth indicators and their meaning did not deviate far from the widely accessible slogans such as “being unprecedented”, “incomparable”, “second fastest in Africa” (Twinoburyo, 2018), “registering positive progress” (Mwai, 2017), showing “positive change in economic activity” (Kwibuka, 2019) or signalling “significant growth” (IMF 2017). Again, without engaging in detailed debate about the doubts and questions related to the manner by which the Rwandan government arrived at its growth figures (see discussion about the discrepancy between growth figures and poverty figures; see: An Ansoms, 2017; Reyntjens, 2015), the narrative of an “overwhelming success in attendance within the education sector” (Interview 2. SL), once again echoes the notion of overreaching success. Only by looking a bit deeper – behind the headlines – can we see the issues that actually need addressing.

Here, the higher education sector serves as a good example. While respondents happily discussed increases in the number of students in primary and secondary schools, the surge seen in higher education appeared more problematic for them. In this context, the Higher Education Merger was seen as both a consequence of the surge in numbers and a solution that would, eventually, help deal with the problems that many institutions faced:

It is clear that we are not using our resources as well as we could. As we have more and more students, we kept increasing capacities of our administrative teams. We all kept doing it in our own ways, each college and institution separately. When you look at higher education in other countries – this is exactly the other way that everyone else does it [...] It was clear that we had to centralise to become more efficient (Interview 18. ML)

I don't want to sound negative. You know, behind my doors, there are three or four people doing secretarial work. They come to work very early and they stay very late. They work hard. Genuinely hard. But at the same time [pause] somehow the things that need to be done are never done. I'm not sure what it is – is it efficiency, prioritisation, understanding – it's something and I'm not yet sure what. But when I think that similar offices used to exist in all these institutions; and as my understanding is, that they kept increasing capacity because of the influx of students. It does sound to me like an awful way of wasted resources. I think it's [the HE Merger] a good step. It will be interesting to see how things will move forward. It definitely introduced a massive shift in the way how people here approach and how they think higher education works (Interview 3. SL)

Another important issue associated with the number of students was access to trained academics, i.e. those who could both teach and conduct research:

We have increase in students' numbers. But who will teach? We need teachers who can prepare not only students at universities. We need teachers – academic teachers who can prepare future generation of primary and secondary school teachers. Those who can go and provide quality education to all these new students who now have access to education (Interview 15. ML)

It is important to note that, with respect to enquiries for this research, elites use statistics to provide a powerful framework within which individual policies are considered and implemented. While this approach appears almost universal to policymaking and implementation, the Rwandan mentality that accompanies these processes as discussed in previous empirical Chapters (5 and 6), namely “speed”, “trial and error”, “surprise politics”, along with an uncompromising way in which unpopular policies are implemented, show a number of features that could be shared with the way Developmental States operate.

Logically, if a given policy follows a strong developmental agenda and can deliver quick results – “preferably within two years” (Interview 39. JL/A), it has the mandate and approval of the Rwandan government and, through this, the Rwandan people. However, as in case of the Language Policy, statistical data, reporting and adequate research remain challenging. As mentioned in previous chapters, the principle that policymaking should be based on suitable data was broadly shared by all interview groups. Senior officials admitted that the government “needs to get better at gathering data” (Interview 3. SL), while middle level officials said that “they work with what is available to them” (Interview 19. ML), and lower-level officials and academics often went as far as questioning the data on which the given policy was based (as was discussed in Chapters 5 and 6). In the case of lower-level officials and academics, the questioning of data was not just connected with the lack of data or inappropriate data gathering methods. Instead, discussions often highlighted how the existing data was inadequate and did not represent the realities on the ground. Very often, questions about data and Language Policy would turn into a discussion about interpretation, and what was understood as “good” or “adequate” use of language, as well as what counted as “language proficiency”:

Even if you agree with what official data says and we assume that, indeed, there is 80% of proficiency in English. It doesn't show you, what does it really mean: what does 'proficiency' mean? Is it meeting any standards? And what is the cost by which we are achieving this proficiency? (Interview 9. ML)

The same respondent queried the official figures by giving an example of his real-life experience:

Few months ago, I was asked to deliver workshops for teachers in one of the provinces. I asked local officials about English proficiency of teachers who will be in attendance. He said to me that they have 90% English proficiency in their

district. When I arrived, I find two teachers, out of more than 20, with whom I can have a basic conversation (Interview 39. JL/A)

Although this account illustrates discrepancies between data reporting and the reality on the ground, this same academic did not perceive it as the fault of local officials or that it was limited to the education sector. Instead, as with a number of officials at all levels, he highlighted the pressure that exists on everyone with regards to meeting targets. “Immense pressure” as he called it, is put on all individuals involved in designing and implementing the new policies. As he concluded, it makes everyone search for “any indications or signs which could be interpreted as positive results” (Interview 39. JL/A).

As asserted in numerous accounts, the lack of clearly defined quality standards that can be translated into statistical data invites different interpretations of what is understood as improvement when it comes to the English Language Policy. In some areas of the country, academics discussed English proficiency by citing what the situation had been in the same school a few years previously, thereby, showing favourably “how far we are today” (Interview 31. JL/O). However, in other parts of the country, academics compared English proficiency according to international standards. The concern here, is that both of these interpretations are assigned equal measure. These measures, which are not properly investigated, then become the basis for future actions; as highlighted in the literature: “any system of indicators represent a cultural choice of what to measure and how to count it (...) But they simultaneously obscure and neglect important dimensions of social life and experience” (Merry, 2016, p. 373). Therefore, any improvements to the policy are unlikely to be effective. More worryingly, as discussed in earlier in empirical chapters, in case of the Language Policy, different data sets can serve to facilitate claims which deny the existence of any problems (Interview 15. ML).

Despite, or possibly because of, various difficulties and complexities, the Rwandan government has put a great emphasis on the frequency, disclosure and means by which simplified, positive statistics are reported to the population. In accordance with theoretical literature (Rottenburg, 2015, pp. 22, 73–74), the government uses a range of tools to communicate its statistics to the public. These methods of circulation are aimed at ensuring the figures become part of the Rwandan population's world and reality. By doing this, the Rwandan Government facilitates the creation of both an informed and an uninformed public. This manipulation is designed at enhancing the legitimacy of a number-driven, as well as a quantitatively-defined, reality (Piattoeva, 2015, p. 12). The result of this is that, on the one hand, the public feels empowered and readily engages in making comparisons, questioning performance and accountability, while, on the other hand, (and in most cases) it does not possess enough background knowledge and numeracy to be able to challenge the authority of the data-driven reality.

This explains the public nature in which officials are often questioned about their accomplishments in Rwanda. The best example of this being live broadcasts, in which cabinet ministers are routinely questioned about the performance of their introduced policies:

(...) implementation incentives, and the detection and correction of implementation failures and abuses, are prominent features of the policy system. This is not just because there is 'political will' at the top. There are also institutional arrangements that enforce these features. The Annual National Dialogue is one of a series of mechanisms which combine public shaming (or encouragement by comparison) with rather proactive follow-up by the President. Ministers, civil servants and local-government officials are regularly called to account and not infrequently dismissed for their performance in relation to policy targets (...) (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2014, p. 177)

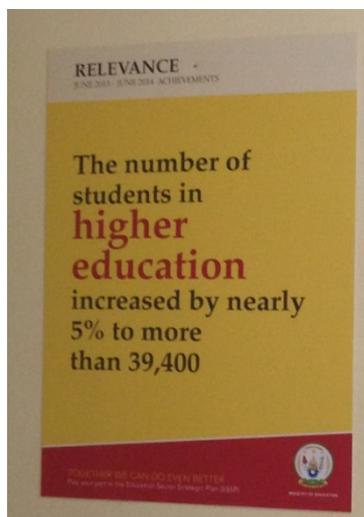
When looking at communication from this perspective, it is important to see the main strategic benefit achieved by communicating policies to the wider population as opposed to specific “policy implementers” or “policy beneficiaries”. As discussed in Chapters 6, the policy-makers limit the time that they spend communicating the discussed educational policies with individuals who are directly involved in policymaking and implementation. In doing so, there is a potential risk in allowing people who are experts in a particular field to question policy proposals. Divulging any more information and allowing an understanding of problems that the policy aims to address could lead to a questioning of the data and also the wider strategy. The potential danger here lies in what authors call the process of “re- or de-politicising of particular educational issue” (Piattoeva, 2015, p. 12). Similar politicisation can lead to a reinterpretation of numbers and proposed policies and could, eventually, initiate shifts in power relations. Such processes could end up being very problematic to a highly hierarchic Rwandan Government. As the theoretical literature reminds us: “the power of numbers, to a large extent relies on the social constructions remaining hidden” (Mugler, 2015, p. 97).

Simultaneous communications ensure that appropriate, positive information is successfully disseminated to the Rwandan people. This is done mainly via government-friendly media channels. Of great importance here is the fact that this media, including radio, TV and government-controlled newspapers, is well embedded amongst the Rwandan population and is met with popular trust. In addition, more contemporary methods of presenting events and facts in real-time media, including a range of social media platforms, are exploited; with Twitter being especially popular among Rwandan elites, officials and institutions. These communication platforms are supported by other propaganda activities, including various forms of advertising, such as printed leaflets, outdoor advertising, and banners displayed in

offices and institutions. The material in these pamphlets conveys a very clear message. They deliver simple, measurable, and easy-to-follow information about the successes of developmental projects. When compiling data for this thesis, an example of advertising successful statistics was widely on display on the walls of the Ministry of Education buildings (see Figure 7, below).

Figure 7

Photograph. Poster in the Rwandan Ministry of Education



Note. Photograph taken by author. (2015). *Photograph. Poster in the Rwandan Ministry of Education*

In summary, numbers and the ways in which they are used play an important role in supporting policymaking and policy-implementation, and in defining power relations in Rwanda. On one hand, by utilising these carefully maintained ways of communication, they offer techniques that help limit criticism – a feature especially useful in the case of contentious policies, as is shown in the case of the two policies discussed in this thesis. On the other, by enhancing popular trust in numbers, they support the government’s agenda of appearing accountable to the wider population. This in turn, helps the government strengthen its authority and enhance legitimacy.

7.2.2 Where is the obsession with statistics coming from?

The importance of highlighting the developmental achievements made by the Rwandan government can be broadly summarised as originating from two main concerns. The first is related to confirming the legitimacy of the current RPF-led government and the second to achieving international recognition, specifically, the cooperation of donors and external agencies. As discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, the current Rwandan government is composed mainly of representatives from the Tutsi minority who returned to the country after the 1994 genocide. Their initial claim to power was based on their ability to provide order and security in an ethnically torn, post-conflict, unstable country, that had been largely neglected by its international partners (Prunier, 1995, pp. 336–345). History, especially the history of the African continent, is full of examples (Clapham, 1998) where post-conflict, rebel-based governments have exploited their status as liberators in order to enhance their claim as a viable and legitimate power. While each of these movements has its own characteristics and history, the common theme is that the liberators' legitimacy weakens with the passage of time and the further the population moves away from the experiences of the conflict (Cheeseman & Fisher, 2021, pp. 91–93). While the narrative of the RPF as saviours and liberators remains strong among everyday Rwandans, it is clear that moving further from the genocide it will be difficult to sustain it at the same level, and therefore a new basis for legitimacy needed to be defined. In popular discourse, this new role is undertaken by the developmental project – its demands, ultimate goals, and most of all, its ongoing and unwavering success. These measurable accomplishments of the government's developmental policies are readily identified by Rwandan officials in all aspects of public life, whether it be education, agriculture, the health sector, or the performance of local government. As highlighted by Chemouni:

The vital need for the Rwandan ruling elite to gain legitimacy, and the general impossibility to do so based on its identity and the way in which it reached power, made it embrace a strategy of legitimation based on the delivering of welfare to citizens in a visible and impartial manner (Chemouni, 2016, p. 242)

The “embrace of strategy” that Chemouni points to is more far-reaching than just a mere application of methods, systems and procedures. Efficiency and accountability, achieved by “ambitious goals, strong commitment, hard work, firm implementation and focus on selected target” (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 164), became, for the RPF, a mission. The vital cogs in delivering the success of the developmental project in Rwanda are numbers, which include all forms of indicators, as reviewed in the previous two sections. In this sense, it is the government’s attempt to establish its developmental narrative on the knowledge that will be, presumably, based on “notions of scientific objectivity” (Rottenburg & Merry, 2015, p. 19). As such, the appeal of defining success by presenting it through numerical values lies in the persona that is given to the numbers, namely: indifference, impersonality, objectivity and universality (Davies, 2015, p. 285; Desrosières, 2011, pp. 1–3, 74–75, 335–337). These are the features that correspond to, and provide a greater scope for defining political legitimacy. In this context, numerical evidence becomes an attractive tool for officials and elites. It allows them to exercise their power through what (Gorur, 2018) calls a “non-authority, where, in a quiet, intimate way, numbers start to infer authority – one in which exercise of power is difficult to discern (Piattoeva, 2015, p. 12). Here, the importance associated with power and statistics corresponds directly to the relationship between those who created or compiled the available data and those who are entries in this data:

The accumulation of inscriptions in certain locales, by certain persons or groups, makes them powerful in the sense that it confers upon them the capacity to engage in certain calculation and to lay a claim to legitimacy for their plans and strategies because they are, in a real sense, in the know about that which they seek to govern (N. Rose & Miller, 1992, pp. 185–186)

The authority given to a particular individual or group who “compile, consult or control” the version of reality in which they can exercise power over others, is an underlying feature of political power. In the case of Rwanda, as seen in discussions on the two educational policies, there is a perception of the government being an “all knowing entity”, as discussed in Chapter 5. The trust of both lower-level officials and the wider population in the existence of a bigger plan, is based on more nuanced data and a deeper understanding of facts, and is also one of the key premises that stops individuals from questioning high level governmental decisions.

Furthermore, the issue of distance between those “who compile data and those who are govern” is made greater by directing everyone’s focus to delivering governmental targets and presenting them as “impressive results” (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 164). In so doing, the government separates itself from the rest of the population and, with paternalistic undertones, assumes moral authority. This authority is based predominantly on the notion that they, the government, know what is best for the rest of the population. This notion is again linked to the RPF’s sense of moral superiority based on their being victims/returnees from exile and the belief that they are the rightful liberators who helped end the dictatorial and impoverishing rule of the post-1959 regimes (discussed in Chapter 4, 5 and 6). Therefore, according to the leadership, in order to deliver development and ensure prosperity for the entire population, it is the people who need to change their way of behaving and thinking:

Transformational change happens at the level of mindsets...we all want a prosperous, stable, and equitable Africa and we want it as soon as possible. Everything starts with a clear and simple vision for the future that everyone understands and agrees on (Tashobya, 2016)

However, if the broader population does not agree with the vision of Rwanda advocated by the government, they will be convinced through the use of other methods, including persuasion, awards and force (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 164). As discussed earlier in the thesis, it is also widely acknowledged that at all levels of government, there will be a group of people who will lose out during this transformation; especially, at the speed at which it is happening.

Alongside legitimacy, which involves sharing indicators of successful socio-economic progress along with accountability, the second major reason why it is important for the Rwandan Government to share its success stories is due to its global standing. For Rwanda, which during the time when this research was conducted continued to receive a significant amount of income from external donors (Desrosiers & Swedlun, 2019) and agencies, it is essential that it maintains its reputation as a serious, responsible and reliable recipient country. As such, irrespective of what developmental models Rwanda wants to emulate, it cannot detach itself from, either the wider, global agendas, or the neoliberal changes and transformations taking place within the capitalist economies of the West. This latter point is especially significant as, since the 1980s, “these [neoliberal] transformations have vast implications (...) for relations between wealthy and poor countries around the globe” (Brown & Fisher, 2020; Desrosiers & Swedlun, 2019). At the heart of the neoliberal principles that guide the relationship between donor countries and recipient countries are the statistics and accountability that define performance-related funding.

However, while Rwanda’s statistics – which are based on home-grown indicators, such as the Scorecard mentioned earlier in this chapter – have an ability to be reflective of local nuances and complexities, they do not necessarily satisfy international interests. As highlighted by Merry and Wood:

A paradox of indicators is that in order to be globally commensurate, they cannot be rooted in local contexts, but in order to accurately reflect local situations, they need to be. Similarly, globally produced indicators are likely to ignore problems of translation of the kind we have discussed here, but locally produced ones are unable to paint a globally comparative picture (Merry & Wood, 2015, p. 217)

This situation, whereby data needs to serve two purposes – attempting to account for local realities and complexities and maintaining universal objectivity of measurements – is for many countries, as it is for Rwanda, an ongoing challenge. What is more, donor countries and organisations “need ‘success stories’ to legitimise their expedite on developmental cooperation”(An Ansoms, 2017, p. 49). In this respect, donor communities also need stories that are accessible, clearly defined and easy to communicate. When discussing the use of statistics for supporting development projects, Jerven echoes the findings made by Ferguson (Ferguson, 2007), pointing out that international donors are themselves guilty of assigning simplified, standardised processes that demonstrate well-defined results. Jerven criticises the way the World Bank has over-simplified the meaning of development. His findings show that, until recently, the developmental discussion at the World Bank took place in only one direction, notably as a top-down communication aimed at positioning the Bank as a “knowledge broker in development”. As a consequence, this limited the Bank’s ability to engage and learn from its clients. Thus, it could be said that certain standardised processes overlook local conditions and ignore empirical realities: “the emphasis is on agreeing upon numbers, and [...] measurement is in the back seat” (Jerven, 2013, p. 93).

While statistically measurable development remains the flagship indicator for the success of the Rwandan project, in recent years donors have become more aware of the complexities and nuances presented in data. Analysis of the most recent edition of the Rwanda Governance Scorecard highlights that the prevailing indicators guiding developmental objectives and

recommendations in education are those that are easily measurable, namely enrolment and dropout rates, (school) infrastructure, distance to school and quality of feeding programme. Indicators that are more complex, such as those linked to the quality of education or, more precisely, to the quality of acquired knowledge, are represented disproportionately (RoR, 2020, pp.40-41). On that basis, the discussion in Chapter 5 about research and data on which policy decisions are based, along with the questions of what problems the given policies aim to address and what alternatives are available, can be seen in a more complicated light:

(...) one must know how data are gathered in order to understand how problems are framed and why certain solutions are proposed in preference to other. In this manner, policy solutions are not only framed discursively by giving shape and meaning to the problems to be addressed, but also through the seemingly mundane and technical construction of calculations that underpin knowledge on the basis of which problems and policies are drafted (Piattoeva & Boden, 2020, p. 9)

Accordingly, a number of authors analysing policies in Rwanda have begun to look more carefully at factors that are not obvious from qualitative analysis, including variations in the methodology used for data collection (An Ansoms, 2017, pp. 54–55) gaps within data (An Ansoms, 2017, p. 52), inequalities which are often hidden behind numbers (UN 2007, p.16) of course, questions concerning the manipulation of data (Fatima & Yoshida, 2018; ROAPE, 2017, 2019a).

A further dimension that came to light on analysing the data gathered for this thesis is the long-lasting consequences that are partially derived from inaccurate data gathering, data planning and data analysis. With an increasing number of students entering education, a number of interviewees registered doubt regarding the large number of graduates and their prospects subsequent to leaving education. This appeared to be a particular concern in the case of those leaving higher education:

There is a need for education planning models – which will be fashioned to the needs of the market. Having every course together [pause] merger will help with that. Official unemployment figures show that it's something like 3%, but I know for sure that it's more like 13%; but even that is very problematic – because in the end what jobs do these people get? Very few get jobs in the area that they graduated from. Majority gets a job that doesn't relate to their degree (Interview 9. ML)

This concern was echoed by a senior official:

There is a problem, of course, with educating all these students. We put them in this education system, and we produce huge numbers of graduates. In the end, do we have jobs for all of them? Do we have opportunities in business and industry? But [laughs] this is not going to be my problem. I will be probably long gone from this world when the government will have to face the toughest of the questions. (Interview 6. SL)

The Higher Education Merger was, in many ways, seen as a response to the essentially positive desire to open up access to education in Rwanda. One interviewee expressed it as an “indication of a positive change [...]”, which is dictated by “one of the biggest statistical achievements in the history of this country [Rwanda]” (Interview 17. ML), and the biggest in the education sector.

However, while it is undoubtedly a positive development to grant access to education to large numbers of students, this expansion also raises many questions. The Higher Education Merger, while trying to tackle some of the problems, continues to face new challenges. Some of these run parallel to what was branded as one of the “biggest challenges” for the education sector by all interviewees, that is the quality of education in Rwanda. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

Clearly, the issues above, especially when recognising the influence that is given to statistics in Rwanda, requires analysis of the theory (Andrews, 2008) on which particular indicators

were created. As acknowledged both in the literature and by a number of respondents for this research:

There are some serious questions that need to be asked about who is putting these numbers together, what methods are they using and to what purpose. Questions which recently started to be asked louder than before (Interview 9. ML)

7.2.3 On maintaining performance – goals setting and contracts

A related issue is the way in which individuals other than cabinet ministers who are responsible for ensuring that certain quantitative goals are achieved are accountable for them. In this respect, “quantitative forms of accountability are in high demand because they appear to have the capacity to simplify complex social phenomena” (Mugler, 2015, p. 77). Ultimately, because statistics, data sets and indicators are employed by the Rwandan government across society and in every professional and administrative domain, they need to be seen as a disciplining tool. The practical level on which this tool operates is maintained by running a prescriptive and rigid system of performance contracts (*imihigo*). Such contracts bind every citizen, from senior officials to individual family members, to a detailed list of obligations and responsibilities that each of them needs to fulfil in order to meet the basic needs of any developmental project:

Imihigo today are annual public pledges of performance, official contracts at different levels, stating what that particular administrative unit will achieve and how that fits into the broader government agenda of the state (MINECOFIN 2000). *Imihigo* started at the district level, but in 2007 were extended to all lower administrative levels [...] In 2008, *imihigo* was extended to the family level: each family head signs their own *imihigo* (Purdekova A, 2011, p. 484)

Numerical indicators of development create a system that infiltrates and binds every individual and household across the country (An Ansoms, 2017, pp. 56–57). On the administrative level, similar contracts are signed between the President, or central

government officials, and local authorities. In this way, they commit each authority to achieving the prescribed goals and objectives in every policy area. Consequently, depending on their performance with regards to the targets prescribed on these contracts, every individual in position of authority may be promoted, relegated or dismissed (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 159).

Performance contracts were about to be rolled out among higher education employees as the data collection for this research was moving towards completion. The list of responsibilities catalogued in these documents was seen as being far from manageable:

My biggest worry are research capacities, there are not nearly enough researchers who can create a meaningful academic community. The ratio of responsibilities is also not balanced. Teaching great number of students doesn't give any time to academics for engaging in research (Interview 3. SL)

This inadequacy in the numbers of researchers and academics was made worse by external factors, among them what the interviewee called an “internal brain drain” (Interview 3. SL) – whereby many educated individuals would be called on to serve in the government or other public institutions. The possibility of working for the government would often be welcomed. As a number of academics pointed out, it was not only because of the likely increase in salary. One of the main reasons for an employee of the university to consider such a switch was the thought of an easier and more manageable workload. The impossibility of carrying out all the duties and obligations that academics were bound to by their performance contracts was highlighted on a number of occasions. A few academics commented:

I'm not really sure what will happen. These contracts that they gave us to sign [pause] everyone at University knows that it's impossible to go with them; but we still need to sign them. I tried to translate what they asked us to do into hours – as it would be done on some western universities. If I

would to meet all my targets, I would have to work over 300 hours a week. And they are not joking (Interview 40. JL/A)

You need to balance in which role you will have more 'say' and more options. Governmental officials have their targets and their measurements as well, but once you are there, there are always a lot of people and a lot of reasons why things could have gone wrong. When you are here [an academic at University] it's just you and what you have to show against what you are being asked. And there is way too much asked of us. I hardly ever leave my office before 10pm and never really feel like I achieved what I've planned. Yes, maybe not yet, but eventually I would like a job with the government. You can't keep going this way when you get older. (Interview 33. JL/A)

At the time of data collection for this research, the performance contracts for academics were relatively new and their future impact was not yet clear. From the interviews and discussions that were undertaken, it was apparent that many of the individuals were becoming increasingly worried about their volume of responsibilities, especially in cases where they had more than one position in various institutions. It was clear that the situation was putting huge pressure on performance and, rather than allowing individuals to focus on their activities, the attention of everyone was turning towards achieving good numbers. Ultimately, the performance and indicators-oriented work regime focused everyone's attention on being "continually assessed and compared with others [bounding them to the reality, in which they] must continually stand out with good numbers" (Mau, 2020, p. 33).

Also, as mentioned before, in the case of cabinet ministers, scrutiny and accountability around meeting the targets set in these contracts often has a public nature (An Ansoms, 2017; Purdekova A, 2011, p. 485), and officials can be "publicly shamed" (L. Mann & Berry, 2016, p.132 and questioned even by members of the public. The ongoing monitoring of performance has a profound impact on an individual's approach to their own work and priorities. As mentioned in Chapter 6, as a way of dealing with the pressure to perform, officials keenly, and repeatedly, emphasised the limits of their own responsibilities. This was

particularly evident during discussions with mid-level officials, whose commitment to presenting results could be summarised as follows:

We are bound with our country by 'performance contracts' and all our activities are assessed. The impact of what we do is closely followed by those on top (Interview 17. ML)

The impact of performance contracts is, therefore, mixed. On one hand, the existence of measurable and clearly defined goals (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 163) provides a clear reference point and adds to the effectiveness (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 162) and accountability of the work conducted by officials, various governmental units and individuals across the country. On the other hand, the impossibility of achieving individual targets due to variations and regional differences (Hintjens, 2013, p. 96; Van Damme J et al., 2014, p. 163) along with the accumulating challenges in some communities, often results in stressful situations. These can be exacerbated by competition among regional officers (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 162), governmental units and others. This competition goes back to the tradition of comparing performances using methods of metrics and best practice. A similar way of providing feedback, based on "benchmarking" through "assessment, categorization, and rankings of performance", (Desrosières, 2015, p. 337) is prominent in every state model that is focused on measuring performance. It has been a popular tactic since the 1980s and synonymous with the neoliberal state (Farlow, 2015, pp. 243–246). As such, the use of statistics within the neoliberal framework aims to identify specific variables and ways in which various tools, within public policy, can be used to improve outcomes and help to define certain "best practices", which can be shared and implemented in other settings and environments (Rottenburg & Merry, 2015, pp. 2–5).

In the case of Rwanda, using data for setting goals in policymaking, has a significant impact on the quality of the progress that is made and policy outcomes. That ultimately becomes relevant to the interpretation of the nature of Rwanda Developmental State. Furthermore, on an individual level, the general fear of repercussions and possible consequences (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 162) appear to have a negative impact on the anxiety levels of officials, which, inevitably, influences the way in which they perceive their roles, as highlighted in Chapter 6. Rigorously defined boundaries of one's responsibilities are associated with the issue of accountability, which, in turn, is measured by carefully de-lineated developmental goals. As highlighted earlier, this may be seen to obstruct an individual's ability to see the bigger picture, hinder their ability to cooperate with officials in other units and "limits the possibility for error correction and policy learning" (L. Mann & Berry, 2016, p. 139).

7.2 Quality as the biggest challenge

7.3.1 What is quality, and what influences it?

As discussed above, statistical data is perceived by officials and many citizens as being one of the key measurements of successful policies. This approach, however, often ignores several crucial factors. To make numbers work, qualitative data needs to be afforded a value, which often leads to the simplification, generalisation and distortion of a particular event or set of circumstances (Merry, 2016, p. 371). This, in turn, can lead to the generalisation and distortion of both the challenges faced, and outcomes of any given policy. This way of policymaking, negatively amplified with the speed in which the policies are being introduced and implemented (Chapter 5 and 6), has a clear detrimental impact. As such, these negative consequences highlight the nature of policymaking and policy implementation, and ultimately point at the version of the Developmental State model the Rwandan government attempts to pursue. Rwandan respondents, as well as non-Rwandan researchers and academics, see

the above mentioned tactics as having significant consequences, as well as a meaningful effect on the quality of individual policies. These developments are not limited to any particular policy domain. Analysis of the different policies highlights a common pattern. When a problem is identified, attempts are made to find a solution quickly, one that can be implemented immediately and produce presentable values and positive outcomes. The basis of any given problem, due to regional differences, geographical variances, historical and cultural distinctiveness or local conditions, are not usually taken into account in the course of policy-implementation (Hasselskog, 2015, p. 166; Richards, 1990; T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 100). Irrespective of whether a policy solution is based on a home-grown policy or one that emulates another country, disregarding these features impacts on the quality of the outcome.

It was clear from comments made by interviewees that the quality of education is by far the biggest challenge to the Rwandan education system. The majority of respondents gave equal credence to the accessibility of education – seen as the biggest achievement, and the quality of that education – seen as the biggest challenge:

When you get sudden access to education for many – so many people you must have problems with quality. Access and quality, they are competing qualities. You can't have both at the same time (Interview 15. ML)

Teacher-student ratios are sometimes unbelievable...one teacher for 300 students. That has huge impact on quality (Interview 9. ML)

[The biggest challenge is] making sure that we ensure balance between demand & supply. The demand for education is there, now we need to supply quality in education (Interview 6. SL)

To a certain extent these statements seemed obvious and straightforward. It was also notable that, irrespective of location, when access to education was implemented hastily, it most likely had an effect on quality.

Before we turn to analyse the impact of various elements that influence the outcome of the implementation process, it is important to have a clear definition of what quality, and in this thesis specifically, quality in education, actually means in the Rwandan context. What is clear from analysing education policymaking in Rwanda, is that there are two ways in which quality in education is determined. The first is characterised by the ease with which pupils and students are able to effectively access knowledge, understand their subject matter and be confident with their ability to use the skills they have gained within the classroom environment, and beyond (for more discussion see: Crabbe, 2003; White, 1998). If we apply this concept of measurement to Rwandan education, and in particular to the acquisition of English, we find that most schools failed this test of quality as the “majority of primary students failed to meet reading and arithmetic standards” (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 86). The second method by which the quality of education in Rwanda is determined is through the performance contracts mentioned earlier in this chapter. This way of defining quality was reinforced by commitments made by the government during the 2014 Leadership Retreat, that led to identifying:

(...) nine resolutions specifically related to education. Two of these resolutions are related particularly to improving the quality of education — establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for tracking educational quality, and putting into place an education quality strategic plan with a baseline and desired targets (Honeyman, 2015, p. 26)

As previously explained, the goals identified in performance contracts and by the commitments of the 2014 Leadership Retreat need to be easily measurable, comparable across sectors and districts, and available for scrutiny by both Rwandans and the international developmental community (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 101). In this instance, the best indicator of the quality of education is the number of constructed classrooms or latrine buildings

(Honeyman, 2015, p. 53; T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 90). Issues that are more difficult to measure, such as the extent of learning, are assigned a lower priority. When this classification of quality is assigned, progress within the Rwandan education system appears to have been substantial and clearly upholds the claim of the “government [...] fulfilling its promise to deliver development to all Rwandans” (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 101).

Exactly half of respondents for this thesis – mostly senior and medium level officials – made it clear that they associated *quality* primarily with easily measurable goals, as set out by government performance contracts:

It’s all these things that you need for school to function. I know there are differences and disparities everywhere. School buildings, leaking roofs, running water, chairs, tables. That and other things [pause] even like books and pens. We don’t have enough for every child. We know that. It’s part of the challenge (Interview 13. ML)

We need proper infrastructure to accommodate all students. At all levels. You can only enhance students’ experience and improve education if you can properly accommodate their basic needs. Clearly, you can’t focus very much on learning if you don’t have things like chairs, tables and books. But we are going even further. We have this project of giving computer to every student. We want to create a nation that is interconnected. That requires us to improve our facilities and make sure there is equal access to resources and electricity [understood as: electric power] (Interview 5. SL)

The other half of respondents, consisting mainly (although not exclusively) of lower-level officials and academics, were convinced that quality could be measured by identifying which factors contributed directly to producing quality graduates. The focus here was on such challenges as ensuring an adequate number of teachers, the levels of training that teachers received, the obstacles that children had to overcome in order to regularly attend schools and the availability of appropriate textbooks and school materials (not only pens, notebooks, but also laboratories and more complex learning equipment for higher education students).

While this group seemed to grasp the complexity of the issues around quality on a more subtle level, they still remained divided as to how to measure and evaluate quality. Some members of this group based the evaluation of quality on:

[...] national examination. Results of exams show you how much children know and how they are improving and where we can still see problems [...]’ (Interview 34. JL/A)

The best measure is to look at differences in performance between regions and schools. Best measurements – that is standard for everyone across the country is the school exams (Interview 32. JL/A)

Examination results are measured in LARS [Learning Achievements for Rwandan schools]. They can tell you everything (Interview 39. JL/A)

A few respondents correlated the quality of education with the quality of acquired knowledge and the needs of the employment market:

It’s not a secret. If you take English knowledge [pause], English abilities as a sole indicator of quality. We know that, at best, we have half-educated teachers. Many of them can’t properly use language on the intermediate level – in a discussion or to explain things. If you have half-educated teachers, you can’t expect anything more than to have half-educated students. (Interview 16. ML)

I think, as country we need to do more to make sure we move private sector to engage in job production. Then, we need to be smarter and make sure that our education is fit to meet the demand of the job market. Right now, students, even if they complete their education, there is no jobs for them. The quality is not met with the demand. (Interview 19. ML)

This dichotomy in understanding what defines quality of education is one of the key issues that helps to explain the state of the Rwandan education system. Despite the commitment pledge made by officials and the country’s leadership, it is clear that the education system faces many constraints and, so far, has been systematically prevented from developing ways of improving. During the course of this research, it became clear that a number of significant factors contributed to a decline in the quality of the education policies. Many of these have

already been discussed at some length. Briefly, they include the speed of the introduced reforms; inadequate research (Chapter 5 and 6), lack of sequential and timely execution of different stages of policymaking and policy-implementation; and, lack of cooperation between different governmental units (Chapter 6). When put together, these issues make for a trying set of circumstances in which local officials, headteachers, and even more so, teachers and students are required to operate. This culminates in a situation where “quality of education system is in a perpetual state of catch up” (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 91).

Surprisingly, when discussing the quality of English education, respondents did not make a direct link between individual policies and the way in which they were introduced and then implemented. Instead, issues, such as research and the readiness for change, speed of reforms or an inability to follow policymaking and the planning processes were highlighted. Additionally, it was judged that further criticism of the current challenges, and the danger of potentially branding the policy a failure, could be perceived as disapproval of the government’s agenda. In such a landscape, the switch of language from French to English was treated as just another component on a list of challenges facing the education sector (Interview 16, 17. ML). When prompted, all respondents agreed that the “new language has impact on quality of learning” (Interview 17. ML). These supported comments made by other authors who stated that the switch to English “presented a shock (...) in the sense that its systems and actors were completely unprepared to respond” (Williams T.P, 2017, p. 557).

Furthermore, a lack of strategic planning results in a system that is “lacking in coherence and focus” (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 90). As discussed in Chapter 6, the lack of appropriate cooperation between different governmental units and officials, along with an absence of alignment of priorities and a number of different policies being introduced at the same time,

has a significant impact on resource allocation. Taken together, all of these affect the availability of funds necessary for the adequate functioning of particular projects and activities (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 92). As a result, policy-implementation activities can only be partially applied. Honeyman's comments around the implementation of the "Entrepreneurship Curriculum" in Rwandan schools can be summarised thus:

If Educational policymaking in Rwanda were on linear track, the next stop after curriculum development would be 'implementation in schools.' Of course, reality was much messier. Introduced as a policy idea in late 2007, by February 2009 the O-Level entrepreneurship curriculum had just been completed, and printed materials would still not arrive in schools for several more months. Yet, O-Level teachers had already been instructed to begin teaching the course starting in January of that year (Honeyman, 2016, p. 108)

Here, we need to highlight a significant difference between Rwandan and non-Rwandan observers of the education landscape, namely in the way they perceive the impact that "quality-compromised-consequences" may have on a broadly understood development. Non-Rwandan observers are usually highly critical about compromising the quality of newly introduced policies, often pointing to the long-term negative effects that these may have (Interview 1, SL; 33 JL/A). In contrast, Rwandans, even the most honest and pragmatic ones, often accept these "quality-compromised-consequences" as an almost necessary part of the process. The most graphic quote illustrating this trend is from one of the most outspoken respondents in this research – an academic. While being a dynamic critic throughout a very lengthy interview, and skilfully defining all of the shortcomings of the education policies and approaches taken by Rwandan government, he made the following comment on the subject of the quality of education:

There are two schools of thought around it: one says that you can educate, very well, smaller number of people and second, that you give a bit lower-quality education but for much bigger number of people. Some people also say that if you

educate a lot of people but then you don't provide them with jobs...you know, that...in the end...this is when these people will start causing troubles. Some even go as far as saying that 'educating people is dangerous.' Both of those approaches are hard to reconcile. But if I would have to choose one option of education – I would go with educating a lot of people even if this education is not of the best quality (Interview 39. JL/A)

This attitude towards compromising the quality of policy outcomes is perceived as an unavoidable price in any cost-benefit analysis. In essence, the Rwandans interviewed for this research, while pointing to quality as being the biggest challenge to the education sector, agreed that this price was worth paying.

7.3.2 Impact of *quality* in the context of education in Rwanda.

During the course of collecting material for this research, many respondents made very well-informed comments and some unique observations about the situation and difficulties faced by students and teachers across the country. This was done both in relation to quality, and to the difficulties in implementing the discussed educational policies. In a different tone, and with varying levels of confidence, the inequalities and other hardships experienced by individuals in the education sector was acknowledged at all levels. At the same time, many respondents agreed that, irrespective of individual experiences, certain things, in this case quality, were worth being compromised while the bigger goal – development – was being achieved.

As mentioned earlier, the fieldwork conducted for this thesis did not include interviewing schoolteachers and school students. At times, both groups were referred to in the third person by interviewees, without using names, locations or specific case studies. While the scale of the problems facing schoolteachers and students, as discussed in Chapter 6, is significant, in this section I will focus on one of the major challenges to the developmental

project, namely the disparity between the promise of transformational change in education and the ability of students to access and participate in a quality education that can turn their ambitions into reality.

In the introduction to his article, “The Things They Learned: Aspiration, Uncertainty, and Schooling in Rwanda’s Developmental State”, Williams recounts the story of Jean Paul, a boy from a poor background who “learned about the importance of government’s commitment to development and the importance of going to school” (T. P. Williams, 2019b, p. 645). As Williams continues, it instilled in the boy a “perception of possibility”. This possibility, in the eyes of the boy, was translated into a desire of becoming a medical doctor. Taken through the story, we learn how, step by step, the boy was failed by the education system. The main reason for this failure was the fact that Jean Paul was poor and, therefore, unable to contribute to the school fees in a “good quality” institution that would allow him to make his dreams come true (T. P. Williams, 2019b, pp. 645–646).

An analysis of the education system in Rwanda highlights the extent of the disparity between poor and rich, as discussed in Chapter 6. This disparity can be roughly summarised as the poor residing in rural areas and the rich in urban areas (Kumar, 2016). These differences are also directly aligned with the existence of bad and good quality schools (T. P. Williams, 2019a, pp. 93–99). Schools in urban areas are likely to attract children from wealthier households, where families are able to financially contribute to the running of the school. This usually translates into the schools being able to hire better qualified teachers. In these schools, children are likely to have educated parents, who are also willing to participate in the various committees and groups that shape the running of the school. In contrast, poor rural schools lack the

additional resources, qualified teachers or parents who would be in a position to effectively engage with the challenges faced by their children's education.

Of course, this explanation is overly simplified and only represents one main trend. It does not take into account issues such as the impact of private schools (T. P. Williams, 2019a, p. 94), or the existence of externally funded (foreign; NGO) institutions. Studies conducted by several other researchers (Honeyman, 2016; T. P. Williams, 2019b) highlight the students' genuine belief in the prospects that will be available to them through having an education. Initially, they see education as key to improving their status and securing a better future – a confidence that could be translated as trusting the developmental promise made by the state.

It was only in due course that children from poorer areas realised that the sort of prospects that could increase their social mobility were beyond their reach (Pontalti, 2018). This stemmed mainly from the quality of education they received and that was available to them.

In the end, children from rural areas realised that “they were not learning”:

They learned that they were in an education system that was not educating them as they hoped. They learned that they didn't need to fail the examination to be considered a failure – the school they attended conferred that status upon them. They learned that when they didn't know English, it was not necessarily because of a lack of effort but linked to the quality of their school and their families' recent history of conflict and displacement. They learned to prepare themselves to be unemployed [...]. They also learned to accept the opportunity to continue their studies as an end in itself (T. P. Williams, 2019b, p. 657).

As reported by other researchers, students were committed to the idea of education. However, with time, this trust shifted from being an aspiration to becoming resigned to a lesser evil, that of not wanting to become stigmatised as a “school dropout” (T. P. Williams, 2019b, p. 654). Ultimately, the vision of the developmental force of education, as advocated by the government, is very different to the experiences and realities of ordinary Rwandans.

What drives this situation into a further state of paradox, is the fact that school children associated the worry of becoming a dropout with a possible accusation of being:

(...) uncommitted to developing themselves or their country, an accusation that might lead one to question their commitment to the 'government's' development project and its expectation that all young people become educated (T. P. Williams, 2019b, pp. 654–655)

As summarised elsewhere: “Thus, while the ambitious ideals and rapid imposition of Vision 2020 is predicated on a promised future, it is creating a new set of tensions and challenges for young Rwandans” (Pells et al., 2014, p. 306). While this form of disappointment in the quality of the education system is the most significant, there are others that connect the quality of education with structural and organisational problems of the country. Here, once again, is an important link to the discussion earlier in the chapter, where the importance of showcasing “quick wins” in the form of easily measurable and with readily comparable figures, is elevated over the quality of acquired knowledge and education. This is of great importance as the government's attempts to introduce, simultaneously, a wide range of policies were not well synchronised or, at times, contradicted each other. One of the best examples of this is described in Honeyman's work regarding the government's promotion of “entrepreneurial” education in Rwanda where, in the spirit of developmental progress, students at all levels of education were obliged to study and actively engage in entrepreneurial activities. This was an almost impossible expectation as, due to governmental regulations (that were roughly introduced at the same time), many of the underprivileged youth found it almost impossible to actually create jobs for themselves:

(...) they were still constrained by the broader structure of Rwanda's social and economic environment. To reach their dreams of a decent livelihood, many of these students first had to practice just the sort of informal economic activity that is progressively being regulated out of existence in Rwanda (Honeyman, 2016, p. 194).

Moreover, the obstacles that relate to the quality of education do not end at primary or secondary education. As discussed in Chapter 6, even if higher education students graduate, the challenge of finding an appropriate job remains. Often the format of their course, the qualification they receive or their actual ability to apply their acquired knowledge – not least their command of the English language – is not matched by the stipulations of individual vacancies or the demands of the job market.

Here again, what is observable is the degree of tension associated with the functioning of the Rwandan state and its relationship with the wider population, as well as individual citizens. On one hand, as highlighted earlier, through the introduction of imihigo, the government binds every individual in the country to a contract that sees them as a being part of a bigger developmental project. The developmental agenda and, as demonstrated in this section, the developmental aspirations are not just well communicated and shared among the population, but in many instances, also embraced. As one of the interviewees summarised: “young people want to lead development-friendly lives as they truly believe what is promised to them” (Interview 35. JL/O). While this developmental narrative is widely shared, a neoliberal rationality is also being introduced.

Thus, it seems, that the lives of Rwandans are to be structured by policies based on a developmental ethos, whether they be home-grown solutions or ideas borrowed from Asian Developmental States. At the same time, the reality of everyday practices and outcomes by which these pro-developmental solutions and policies effect individuals are much more aligned with market forces and the neoliberal narratives of self-reliance. The notion of self-reliance is a fundamental element of national discourse in Rwanda and aims to emphasise the

“importance of solidarity in the face of external threats” (Behuria, 2016b, p. 3). As part of the broader state narrative, it is well-embedded among Rwandan elites as “achieving self-reliance was a central goal of the RPF’s liberation effort” (Behuria, 2016b, p. 3) and, as such, persist as a key ways of displaying loyalty towards national causes:

He [Kagame] has called on Rwandans to have a mindset of self- reliance and aim for social and economic independence, instead of relying on other countries. The idea of self-reliance also seems to be associated with the idea of dignity. Kagame is reported to have said that (Webster, 2015)

The neoliberal literature perceives self-reliance as part of an “upgrading discourse”, that aims at moulding individuals into citizens who are ready to “upgrade their skills”; “who are able to do enough for themselves”, and “who are highly competitive” in order to “engage in self – care and self-regulation” (Liow, 2012, p. 257). But here again, as shown by Honeyman’s analysis of entrepreneurship, the espousal of an upgrading discourse is not wholehearted. The Rwandan state, in contrast to what it would be bound to do if it was to be a fully committed neoliberal model, does not withdraw its presence but, instead, introduces strict regulations on local market competition. The relationship between the developmental narrative and reality, which is often guided by neoliberal principles, is exacerbated by contradictory guidelines and policies. The risk here, is that young people, unclear about the direction and level at which they set out to engage in their country’s transformation, will be unable to properly participate in these aspects of the developmental policies that could, effectively, improve their livelihoods.

7.4 Respect towards policies and its impact on State-Society relations

7.4.1 Country of “constantly changing policies”

Both the landscape drawn in the previous sections, as well as research on the nature and functioning of the Rwandan state (see for example Gready, 2011; Ingelaere, 2014; Purdekova

A, 2011), supports the claim that Rwandans experience extensive state presence in their everyday life (Ingelaere, 2014, p. 225). A significant tool of this presence is the aforementioned *imihigo* performance contract. There are two ways in which this state presence can be viewed. On the one hand, there is the positive side that guarantees citizens access to basic provisions such as security, education, health care and other services (Ingelaere, 2014, p. 225). While these provisions may be regarded as fundamental and standard in many countries, for an African state and, especially, post-conflict Rwanda, they represent a major achievement that cannot be underestimated. The more problematic side of this presence – branded in the literature as “state overreach” (Purdekova A, 2011, p. 493) – has a number of implications, ranging from different forms of “state fragility”²³ (Ingelaere, 2014, pp. 224–225), to constraints on civil society organisations (Gready, 2011) and different methods of “political control” (Purdekova A, 2011, p. 493).

The argument that follows from the debate around state overreach and performance contracts is that, with every aspect of every individual’s life being under very strict control, it makes it difficult for citizens to voice criticisms of the government and its policies:

As a result of this dynamic, neither religious organisations, schools, nor associations or even private sector and the family escape the state’s reach. Some of these certainly constituted an alternative source of authority, attention and ideology, but they cannot openly oppose and often are urged to align with and assist the state (Purdekova A, 2011, p. 493).

This, coupled with the fact that policies were introduced in an “ad hoc” manner and without the appropriate research and communication, encouraged interviewees to make comments

²³ In this case ‘fragility’ is not understood directly as states’ monopoly of power, legitimacy or exercise of territorial control. By using term the “stage fragility”, Ingelaere links to comments made by Herbst (Herbst, 2017) and claims that a: ‘(...) high degree of control was paramount in the execution of the type of decline (genocide) Rwanda experienced. It means that violence in the Rwandan case is also inherent in the structures of authority and state itself and has therefore a more diffuse form (...)’

about these policies being imposed on the broader society in a top-down manner. This perspective is, at times, perpetuated when cultural and regional differences are not acknowledged or properly addressed (Chapter 6). Eventually, this negligence has significant consequences for the way individual citizens see their role, and how and why they participate in particular policy-implementation activities.

In many interviews, Rwanda was not only labelled as a country of “surprise politics” (Interview 15. ML) but was given a second label of being a country of “constantly changing policies” (Interview 36, 31. JL/A). A number of interviewees believed that shifting the medium of instruction to English was a temporary measure, something that was likely to change with the next policy. They believed that, as with other policies, the government might still change its mind about it:

Yes, some people kept saying – it was French yesterday, it’s English today and, who knows, it maybe Chinese tomorrow. It’s a joke of course, but it shows you that people are used to it. None of it [policies] is around for long enough [...] it doesn’t take too long before something changes again (Interview 39. JL/A)

I know that better off families make sure that their children are equally educated in all languages English, French, Kinyarwanda and Kiswahili. There is not one language that is more important than other. They are just unsure what the future will bring and how things are likely to change. This way, they hope that their children have more options, and they are prepared for every eventuality (Interview 17. ML)

Furthermore, the two policies forming the basis for this research are examples where quick post-implementation changes took place. In both, modifications were introduced before the policies were fully implemented. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the policy switching the medium of operation to English was initially aimed at students at all levels of education. It was only after the policy was introduced and there followed criticism from international organisations and

pressure from education bodies, that the policy was changed, and Kinyarwanda re-introduced as the medium of instruction at the lower primary level:

(...) in March 2011 (three and half years into the policy), due to pressure from international organisations (e.g. UNICEF), Rwanda reverted to the prior language-in-education policy that designated Kinyarwanda as the MOI for the first cycle of primary (P1–P3) – another example that hurried policy (i.e. policy devoid of planning) can ultimately lead to policy revision (Pearson, 2014, p. 53).

The main reason for this change was dictated by the prospect of turning formal education into a foreign, detached experience for the youngest students who were not accustomed to the English language. The volume of literature and studies which detail the advantages that young children have by studying in their mother tongue is overwhelming (for example see: Batibo, 2007; Chimuhundu, 2002; Clegg, 2007; Ouane & Glanz, 2010). One would assume this would have been identified had adequate research been conducted prior to the introduction of the Language Policy, thereby enabling implementation to be more strategic. Such a move could possibly have avoided the need to make alterations to the policy in the future.

Comments similar to those made on the introduction of post-implementation changes were also made with regards to the Higher Education Merger. One of the main aims of merging all higher education institutions was to create a more efficient and centralised administration that would benefit all units equally. As one of our respondents remarked – it was broadly assumed that you can “simply close all administrative units” (Interview 16. ML) and replace them with one central hub in Kigali. As became evident, especially when it came to matters such as human resources, it was not as quick a solution as it may have first appeared. As one respondent said, “If I’m unwell and can’t work, I won’t be traveling from Butare to Kigali to present my sick note, this should have been obvious” (Interview 37. JL/A). Similarly, comments that highlighted other

inadequacies of the policy often targeted the unfinished and uncompleted version of the

Merger:

It's yet unclear how the merger will work. In some ways it's too early to say. The thing is that [...] you are also denied access to see and understand what it is actually supposed to look like. I think it's yet another trial-and-error. They didn't finish the whole thing – they didn't finish centralising and they are already decentralising some units. Just because they realised, they can't just fuse everything together (Interview 32. JL/A)

I heard that there are changes already being made. Backtracking some bits. It was all just a big concept, big idea. As always. It's how things here are done. Let's agree on a big picture, the rest will work itself out...[pause] or it will not. And we will go back to how it was. And then change again, if needs to (Interview 39. JL/A)

These and other such views did not come as a surprise to senior officials. In many ways they went hand-in-hand with the ethos of the Rwandan developmental project. In a private meeting with President Kagame in 2011 (that was partially mentioned before), he explained that this concept was necessary to move on and for the government to introduce policies quickly, even if the final version later required amendment:

(...) The key is to implement. Here in Africa we like to talk. Everyone has something to say. It's good to talk. Give them time to talk, but not months or weeks. We don't have time like that. We talk few hours and then we implement [at this point he gestured with his hand hitting the table, pause, a second later the hand starts to wobble and he continues to talk] but then, if what we implemented, doesn't work – we change it (Kagame, 2011. *Personal Notes from Meeting 1.*)

This approach is not limited to the education sector. An example of another unexpected change in a government policy is described by Ingelaere with regards to the “Bye, Bye Nyakatsi” programme, which was implemented in 2011. As part of the modernisation and rural policy, the Rwandan government's aim was to pull down grass-thatched, mud-brick or wattle-and-daub houses (*nyakatsi*) and replace them with houses with metal or, more often, tiled roofs. As part of the project, families living in such houses were supposed to be provided

with alternative accommodation. This policy was understood as fitting well with the government's development agenda and was likely to be written into a range of projects that were perceived "as a genuine and necessary step to raise the poorest Rwandans out of indigence" (Terreblanche, 2011). However, the reality of the implementation process was very different:

In practice, [...] the hasty implementation of the policy often led to the destruction of dwellings with many people being left homeless [...] Moreover, the extreme haste with which the programme was implemented is potentially problematic, because it has clearly left very little room for consultations or genuine participation by the populations concerned (UN, 2013, point 22 & 23)

Only after the first phase of implementation – when some houses had been destroyed – was the policy plan changed. Shortly after the policy was rolled out, it became obvious that there were some difficulties and regional variations that would impact on particular implementation activities (Terreblanche, 2011). To provide the appropriate aid for everyone impacted by this policy, the implementation plan resorted to categorising people and organising them into groups according to their individual needs. This example not only demonstrates the scale of state control but also exposes the limits of the effectiveness of the state's institutions and their activities, especially when its policies are executed without consultation with local stakeholders. Furthermore, it also emphasises the effects that altering inadequate policies can have:

The slight revision of the nyakatsi scheme also illustrates that extreme excesses in policy implementation are at times addressed after the fact and often under the pressure from donors. Often, however, the damage is already done, especially in the subjective realm (Ingelaere, 2014, p. 224).

The "hurt" mentioned above is an important aspect of the debate (40 JL/A) regarding the disillusion that many people feel with regards to their social situation, supposed equality

under the development project and access to the opportunities being provided. More importantly for our findings, comparable feelings of hurt, disappointment and dissolution impact on the ways and levels on which people engage with the newly announced policies. Some of these attitudes will be analysed in the next section.

7.4.2 From dragged participation to laughter – how people participate in new policies

That the Rwandan population fears their government is an idea widely propagated in the academic literature on the country (Dorsey, 2000; Ingelaere, 2014; Longman, 2011; Purdekova A, 2011). From analysis of the fieldwork conducted for this research, it is clear that there are problems which the interviewees are reluctant to broach. As became evident during the course of data gathering, the majority of these issues concerned matters that fell into what some would call a “grey area of ethnic policy” that was created in 2008 by the Genocide Ideology Law, (Waldorf, 2011), which was discussed in detail in Chapter 4. According to some of the harshest critics of the Rwandan government, this law was deliberately designed to be “broad and ill defined” in order to provide an avenue that could justify the exploitation and violation of human rights (Amnesty International, 2010, p. 7). While the scope of this research does not allow for a discussion of such allegations, it is indeed common among Rwandans to understand that any reference to ethnicity or ethnic groups is prohibited by law (RoR, 2015). Rwandan researchers often identify these as being directed through half-way-made comments, such as:

Our history, and how it is connected to Belgium and France, is widely known. When you add to that the steps made by our current government, you can see that we distance ourselves from our divisive history. You have to take it all into account. It will explain you a lot about why things are as you see them. It tells you

why people don't ask many questions. To be honest – you don't really need to ask questions. It's all clear, isn't it? (Interview 21. JL/A)

From first-hand observations, analysis of fieldwork material and the academic literature, it is difficult to deny the existence of anxiety when it comes to opposing official rules and laws. This is combined with a need to keep a distance and show deference towards individuals in positions of power. What is often called an “obedience towards authorities”, is, at times, interpreted as a traditional trait of the Rwandan population (Caspar et al., 2021). It is clear that the issue of a fearful and, at times, overly respectful society, creates a reality that is hard to navigate, both for officials and for ordinary citizens.

Given this background, one could imagine that Rwandans are forced into complete submission, and unwillingly, and unduly, follow each policy that is bestowed upon them. As discussed in Chapter 5 the Rwandan population have been described by some authors as being unwilling and reluctant, with the majority of the population being “pulled along” by policies introduced by the government (Campioni & Noack, 2012). What is not often mentioned in the literature is that it is not so much fear as the “unattractiveness” (Interview 8. ML) and “constant fluidity” (Interview 17. ML) of governmental policies that impact profoundly on the way Rwandans perceive those policies and the state that formulates them. From observations made during this research, as well as other literature, this type of disengagement from policies is far more dominant than disengagement based on fear. What needs to be clarified is the fact that, on the surface, individuals appear to participate in the policies, but the genuineness of their engagement varies. In this respect, the Language Policy was brought up several times, especially when academics discussed challenges relating to teaching English in rural areas of the country:

One of my students, who is already a teacher himself, asked me how he could engage pupils to encourage them to learn English. He said that except integrating with him, these children will not have much experience of hearing and interacting in English. They don't use it at home, they don't use it in the market – so instilling the importance and value that English brings to their life feels artificial [...] He was worried that his persuasion to learn English won't be genuine and will impact on his credibility in teaching other subjects. (Interview 34. JL/A)

I don't agree with people who say we don't need to work with older students to motivate them to learn English. It's simple. You don't speak English at home, you can comfortably navigate through your life and talk to your friends without it and as you grow older you start to realise that life at the top – in the capital – is only for the few, not everyone. And the chance is that it is not for you. What's the point then? This way your commitment, your need and desire to know English – it has no basis. That's why most young people will say that, 'they know how to speak English' – but in reality 'their hearts are not there'. There is really no revelation in this. (Interview 31. JL/O)

The manner in which studying English is approached by students is an interesting one and, to some degree, parallels the situation described in the previous section regarding the “entrepreneurial curriculum”, whereby students attended classes but refused to take part in the lesson. In some ways, the approach to English can be seen along similar lines. Students attend school and, depending on their and their teacher's abilities, they take part in the class and learn the language in its theoretical form, but they do not speak it as a language they could call their own. As a foreign academic summarised:

Our best students engage with the language while seating in the classroom. At their best they use it as a tool – just as you would use microscope in your biology class. Once you done with it you put it back on the shelf and go home. And you forget about it until next class. That is what is going on with English. As soon as they leave the class, they forget about it. They go and live their lives and only come back to it at the next class. English is definitely not a 'live-language' (Interview 33. JL/A)

The unattractiveness of the policies is sometimes expressed indirectly by using a sophisticated variety of methods. As discussed in Chapter 6, after the Language Policy was introduced, many academics and teachers found ways of circumventing regulations and unofficially

helping individual students. Similarly, Honeyman presents a good example of this when she discusses the students' resistance to participating in "entrepreneurship classes". She analyses how they use "strategic silence", "demand different ways of conducting classes", "question legitimacy and knowledge of the teachers", as well as using "protest and complain" as a way of disengaging from their classes (Honeyman, 2016, pp. 137–169). What is significant here is that, although the students are not breaking the law (they attend classes), they are actively vocal in their scepticism about the course. Students engage in protest activities in a strategic way, only targeting those courses and parts of the curriculum that they disagree with. Other mainstream subjects that the students deem as important, like Biology or Mathematics, are treated with due regard.

Finally, from a number of anecdotes, it is clear that Rwandans use their refined sense of humour to deal with challenging situations. As mentioned before, what is crucial here is that the attitudes and behaviours presented below challenge the depiction in much of the literature of everyday Rwandans as silent, powerless and subservient to the government's powers and policies. Comments made by respondents, together with situational anecdotes (see below) are an important indication of behaviours displayed by Rwandans, and add an important, more humane side, that is often overlooked by foreign researchers.

I have family in [provided the name of a village] and I went to visit one of my cousins when I was visiting last time. One of their boys is rather smart, and he got a laptop from school. I'm not sure if it came through one of the governmental projects or through one of the NGOs. He was just given it for a bit to play and learn how it works. But they have nowhere to plug it in [...] and except the boy, none in my cousin's family can read. Parents decided that this laptop looks expensive so it would be good that it doesn't break. So, they took it away from the boy and placed it on a shelf in their house. When I asked why it is out of boys' reach, they said that they think that it's the most expensive and colourful thing that they own at the moment, so it should be on display for everyone to see. Like a picture in the house of rich people (Interview 9. ML)

The story was framed as a joke and, as the interviewee informed me, it provided both him and his cousin with a good portion of laughter. What the story shows is the Rwandan-specific, humour-based approach to dealing with some of the most uncomfortable and desperate situations.

On another occasion, one of my interviewees agreed to hold an interview in a café that was located on the outskirts of the market. As the meeting was taking place during Genocide Commemoration week, it was held in the morning with an aim of being finished by noon, when all Rwandans are obliged to shut their businesses and participate in the locally organised commemoration services. As the interview was drawing to a close, we suddenly heard a few women, who until then had been selling their goods, happily shouting and throwing fruit at the soldiers who were trying to ensure that market business was drawing to a conclusion. It was an unusual sight, so I asked my interviewee about it. With a smile, she explained:

They are just trying to sell as much as they can. Government's law says that you need to close everything down by noon. That has impact on how much they can sell today. So, few of them try to distract soldiers and others are concluding their transactions [she points in the direction of few women still selling their products on the other side of the market]. That's how things really are. It's a bit of a game – how far can you push to get your way. They know they won't be arrested; they are just playing, they are not being serious criminals, and they may still make some money (Interview 31. JL/O)

Similarly, comments regarding the Higher Education Merger were often made in a light-hearted manner. Many interviewees allowed themselves to make openly sceptical and humorous observations. As quoted before (from Interview 39. JL/A), some interviewees summarised the need for this policy by openly ridiculing it, saying that “they say we will be

new California” at the same time dismissing that it is also “not the way to go about it”. Of course, it is possible that these comments were made as a reaction to the novelty of the policy and because many issues remained unclear. However, it is equally possible they were a response to the more limited impact that this policy was likely to have on the broader society and its improbable impact on different groups of the population.

7.5 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted three key findings. First, the statistical and goal-driven interpretation of reality and changes happening in Rwanda are central to the country’s developmental project. Domestically, the importance of being seen as embracing local challenges with solutions that are either home-grown, or at least well understood and accepted by the local population are key to the government’s communication strategy. On the level of decision making, the policies are fashioned based on the best practices borrowed from Developmental States and, at times, other countries. At the same time, the outcomes are often adjusted to fit the more neoliberal necessities and demands. While the first set of characteristics – commitment to home-grown solutions and the overall developmental narrative – are associated with the RPF’s claims to political power and legitimacy, the second – neoliberal elements – is connected mainly to the government’s attempts to become an important international player.

Second, coupled with other features that are specific to Rwandan policymaking and implementation, goal-driven developments, which include “trial and error”, “ad hoc” and “surprise politics” (Chapters 5 and 6), have a detrimental effect on the quality of the introduced policies. This has a substantial impact on the long-term consequences of these policies, including their successes and effectiveness.

Finally, the ways in which policies are made, then implemented, and how their limited outcomes are seen by individuals, influences popular engagement with, not only the policies themselves but also, laws, the development process and the state overall. Reactions to, and engagement with, the new policies include a range of responses – from the most serious ones, such as violation of the law (Chapter 6) through to disengagement, disrespect, and the more flippant responses of ridicule.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the classic Developmental State model is based on strong central control, clearly defined objectives, along with strong bureaucracy and a society that is committed to development. The ideas that the Rwandan government has about emulating a Developmental state model, as outlined in this thesis by analysis of the nature of policymaking, policy implementation and their implications are, to some degree, distorted by neoliberal necessities and pressures, both from inside and outside of Rwanda. Ultimately, as presented in last three empirical chapters and argued in the last few sections, the tension caused by this situation does not help either with the quality of introduced policies or with full utilisation of benefits offered by pro-developmental changes. By being unable, unclear and reluctant, individual citizens do not fully embrace the given policies, and therefore only partly engage with developmental transformations.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which, in their pursuit of the Developmental State model, RPF-led policymaking and policy-implementation in the education sector could be portrayed as successful. To achieve, the following research objectives had to be met. Chapter 5 examined the drivers behind discussed policies as well as the extent to which the decisions undertaken by the Rwandan government reflect the imperatives of Rwanda's ruling elite as opposed to those of everyday citizens. This was accompanied by an evaluation of the priorities of the policymaking and policy-implementation processes, and the ways in which those priorities have become predominant (Chapters 5 and 6). Chapters 6 and 7 analysed the extent to which the presumptive developmental imperatives of Rwanda's elite reflect the prerequisites of policy recipients and the needs of the people. In doing this, these chapters also explored the intended and actual beneficiaries of the new policies. The final empirical chapter (7), investigated the underlying reasons for the limited success of the two focal education policies. Additionally, it identified the long-lasting effects of the policies discussed, and looked at the degree to which the Rwandan population supports the policies introduced by Rwanda's developmental elite, and how much they are willing to participate in the overall developmental project.

This final chapter is arranged so that the first section summarises the conclusions drawn when the key empirical findings of this research are brought together. Along with the implications of this study, subsequent sections discuss the contribution of this work to the available theoretical knowledge and the literature on the Rwandan Developmental State. As with all

research, there were limitations to the scope of this study, and these are identified along with avenues for further study. Finally, the last section provides a brief closing note about the continuity of the Rwandan developmental project.

8.1 Summary of the Findings

As stated above, the aim of this research was to empirically answer the following question:

The Rwandan State has been portrayed as authoritarian. However, Rwanda’s leaders prefer to describe their policies as compatible with a Developmental State model. The question that arises from these disparate views is: to what extent do the country’s policymaking and policy implementation in the education sector align with the RFP-led vision of the Developmental State?

Analysis of the classic Developmental State model in Chapter 3 makes it clear that a number of conditions need to be met for a similar state to be successful. An empirical analysis of the fieldwork data provides an answer to the research questions through five empirical findings and two key theoretical ones.

The first empirical finding is connected with the nature of the Developmental State in Rwanda. From the gathered data it is clear that Rwandan elites are committed to embracing the methods, ethos and benefits that can be derived from classical Developmental States. At the same time, given the internal pressure towards legitimisation, Rwandan elites are also required to present a narrative showing that these political solutions fit the unique “Rwandan way” of dealing with local challenges (Hasselskog, 2018). Therefore, the manner in which the Developmental State model, along with its policies, is being interpreted and implemented could be best described as “The Developmental State, *the Rwandan Way*”.

The second empirical finding relates to specific themes that identify how the Rwandan Developmental State operates. The principal themes identified in the thesis highlight “speed”, “trial and error” and “surprise politics” as a way in which policies and changes are implemented by politicians at the highest level. As outlined previously in Chapters 6 and 7, these unique Rwandan themes – which are compounded by inadequate communication and the highly hierarchical way in which Rwandan officials operate – hamper the abilities of lower-level politicians and administrators to adequately address challenges they confront on a daily basis.

The third empirical finding is the existence of significant tensions surrounding how the Rwandan Developmental States operates. Here two main areas of tension were identified. The first arises between borrowing, or learning, from others and the idea of promoting homegrown solutions and self-reliance. The second tension relates to the ambitions and ideals of the Developmental State and how distant these are from the real problems that regular Rwandans face daily. These two tensions create a number of challenges, such as routine tasks of setting priorities, introducing effective processes/solutions and engaging people in an efficient/constructive way, which are especially evident in policy-implementation.

The fourth empirical finding is one of the most unexpected, and concerns how individuals, at all levels, deal with the challenges they face during policymaking and policy implementation. Chapters 6 and 7 highlight a range of behaviours that officials embrace in order to cope with everyday challenges. The aim here is not to dismiss what is commonly identified in Rwandan literature as expressions of fear of authorities and obedience to them, but to problematise

these by adding other strategies that allow particular officials to adapt to the existing realities; these include boredom, disillusion and humour. An important element of this discussion is the identification of how individuals determine their own “silent ways” of deference. These methods are linked to an individual’s willingness to identify an effective and direct way in which they can support those who struggle the most with fulfilling governmental policies and regulations.

The fifth and final empirical finding documents the persistence of old divisions and the creation of new ones among Rwandans due to an unequal share of developmental gains. While it is acknowledged that this unequal access can be traced to Rwanda’s past, it is also shown (in Chapter 6) that this imbalance impacts on people’s present access to education and development opportunities. Ultimately, this situation not only affects individuals, but it also has a negative influence on performance legitimacy (Chapter 3).

To conclude, the abilities of certain politicians and administrators are institutionally hampered preventing them from adequately addressing challenges faced when implementing new policies. These challenges link to the limited ability of Rwandan officials to learn from their own mistakes, use their critical skills and improve essential communication and cooperation between different units of the state. Linked to the discussion about the classic Developmental States in Asia, these negative effects do not help build an efficient bureaucracy, create a “broad base embeddedness” (Chapter 3) or construct a vibrant and influential middle-class in Rwanda. As a consequence, the Rwandan state system lacks the means to efficiently cooperate and does not fully harness the knowledge, expertise and experience of mid-level

officials. In this way, it is evident that this limits developmental gains and sets the Rwandan state apart from the classic Developmental State model.

Finally, the two key theoretical contributions of this thesis are summarised here: The first is the identification of different forms of state within Rwanda. One is the well-embedded, strong authoritarian state, maintaining its neo-patrimonial links, while the second is the Developmental State ambitiously pursued by Rwandan elites. This thesis highlights that these two states neither coexist nor function symbiotically, as suggested in some literature on the Rwandan State. The two states exist almost in parallel, creating, for many officials and administrators, contradictions and tensions that are not easily reconciled.

Finally, the second theoretical contribution concerns the Rwandan elite's persistent emphasis on promoting the narrative of "homegrown solutions" and "self-reliance". On the one hand, the origins of this narrative, its ideas and, in many ways commitment, can be traced back to Rwandan Independence. On the other, the state discourse that promotes the idea of self-care and self-regulation represents a neoliberal approach; one which is identified in a number of states where the purely Developmental State structure is evolving (see Liow, 2012, p.257).

By bringing these two theoretical observations together, it is clear that the state model in Rwanda is complex and incoherent. It not only encompasses authoritarian structures, developmental ambitions, but its traditional notions of self-reliance are closely aligned with the neoliberal notion of self-regulation and self-care. Echoing Behuria (Behuria, 2018, p.436), this incoherence – or as noted in this thesis, the erratic practices of the Developmental State model in Rwanda – hinder the country's development.

These observations relate to the institutionally hampered abilities of certain politicians and administrators to adequately address challenges faced when implementing new policies, such as learning from mistakes, enhancing critical skills and the capabilities of bureaucrats and administrators, along with improving essential communication and cooperation between different units of the state. Linked to the discussion about the classic Developmental States in Asia, these negative effects do not help build an efficient bureaucracy, create a “broad base embeddedness” (Chapter 3) or construct a vibrant and influential middle-class in Rwanda.

As a consequence, the Rwandan state system lacks the means to efficiently cooperate and does not fully harness the knowledge, expertise and experience of mid-level officials. In this way, it is evident that these limit developmental gains and set the Rwandan state apart from the classic Developmental State model.

8.3 Limitation of the Study

The analysis presented in this thesis focuses on the perspectives of Rwanda’s governing elite of the Developmental State. While a discussion could be had about the composition of the “elite” group that is included in this thesis, it is clear that all the individuals, even if they were not directly involved in policymaking or policy-implementation, are in the small minority of the most educated people in the country, as most of them were comfortable communicating in English. Therefore, their position within modern Rwanda needs to be described as privileged. From the perspective of the presented investigation, their main strength was the fact that they could easily draw on, and distinguish between, different ideas, concepts and enquiries relating to the research question. However, many of them lacked an understanding

of the challenges faced by ordinary people living in rural areas. This required the author to use secondary data to examine the challenges posed by the developmental policies to ordinary people and wider society. While it was beyond the capacity of this research, including the voices of the ordinary people on their perspectives of the education policies in question and the Developmental State in Rwanda as a whole could have provided an even more nuanced analytical perspective. By taking into account people's opinions, this research would have provided an important perspective on the bottom-up attitudes of ordinary people towards development, the state and its institutions.

8.4 Suggestion for further research

There are two ways in which the research conducted here could be expanded. First, further research is needed to compare the validity of the presented arguments regarding the nature of the Developmental State in Rwanda by looking at policies, institutions and processes within other state sectors. While research relating to different policy sectors in Rwanda already exists (Behuria, 2018; Chemouni, 2016; Goodfellow, 2012), only a handful of commentators approach the study by focusing explicitly on testing the developmental framework under Rwandan conditions. As outlined in this thesis, only by looking inwardly at specific structures, processes, policies and individual experiences can we gain a more in-depth understanding of the challenges and limitations of the Developmental State model in Rwanda.

Second, applying the knowledge gained from this research on the Developmental State to other cases in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, would enhance our understanding of the process of policy emulation. In many ways, Rwanda's historical experience, along with the composition and commitment of its governing elite, looks particularly fertile for the application of the Developmental State model. The long history (Chapter 4) of the centralised

state, together with the well-embedded traditions of the pro-developmental and authoritarian elite, are difficult to match in other countries on the continent. When coupled with the devastating experiences of the genocide, Rwanda provides an almost textbook example of a country where the Developmental State model should, in theory, work without any substantial difficulties. Without attaching any negative or positive validations to the changes occurring in Rwanda, as described in this research, successful emulation of the Developmental State model is limited by conditions specific to Rwanda's situation. This way of approaching the presented enquiry asks questions about how well the process of applying or emulating the Developmental State model works when subjected to conditions in other developing African countries.

8.5 Note on the continuity of the Rwandan developmental project

At the final interview conducted as part of this research, one of Rwanda's most senior politicians made a very unexpected offer of answering one question that was not in the officially approved list. During the course of this study, the main concern that arose regularly, was the continuity of the Rwandan developmental project. With this in mind, the conversation with this particular senior politician unfolded as follows:

Interviewer: I think the main thing, the main question that I have after everything that I heard, is... what would happen here in Rwanda, if let's say tomorrow, President Kagame is gone? I know, and I'm sorry for asking...it's probably a question that is a bit unfair and probably slightly pessimistic; but what would happen to the leadership, government and development as a whole?

Interviewee [without any hesitation and pause, as if he had considered the answer before]: Not at all. It's a fair question, but a simple one as well. Nothing would happen. Everything would go on as it is now. Our institutions are very strong, our systems and procedures are well embedded in the consciousness of our officials and our elites are committed and fully on board. Nothing would change. Of course, it would be a shock and one of the senior colleagues would have to step in, to fill-in for the President but, on the whole, things would be fine. You see, the wheels

on the wagon are really well attached, and a bump...even if it is a bigger one...won't be able to get them off that easily (Interview 7.SL)

This statement, and the conviction with which it was made, was the most surprising response given during data collection for this thesis. The follow-up conversation confirmed the interviewee's belief in the strength of the development project in Rwanda, and that the state system, which is being constructed and which has been discussed in this thesis, is here to stay. This statement remained an important reference point as data analysis and write-up continued upon completion of fieldwork. Individual interviews, as well as statements about individual policies and development in Rwanda, often contradicted this comment. Individual interviewees, wishing to remain loyal and optimistic about the trajectory that the country had embarked on, did not want to sound negative by undermining individual laws and policies. Contrary to this, the implausibility of their own views given the day-to-day realities, and political and institutional intricacies, made their own positions noticeably difficult and, at times, unmanageable. Often, despite their being aware of it, their position sounded illogical, irrational and, even, comical. This, in some ways, puts the above question and its answer in a new light, and demonstrates the importance of the enquiries and analysis conducted throughout the whole of this thesis.

The developmental project of the Rwandan government towards achieving "prosperity and high quality of life for all Rwandans" (RoR, 2020, p.7), continues in the recently announced Vision 2050. Vision 2050 plans to transform the country into an "upper middle-income country by 2035, and a high-income country by 2050" (RoR, 2020, p. 7)". One of the key pillars of Vision 2050 is Human Development, with "access to high quality education" being listed as one of the main priorities. Looking back, it is indisputable that since the genocide in 1994, Rwanda has achieved an impressive level of development. As outlined in this thesis, for many

people the path to this success was, and continues to be, synonymous with individual sacrifices and ongoing difficulties. Many of these challenges continue, lasting longer than expected and, at times, appear unnecessary to everyday people. As such, the tensions arising from how the state and its policies function, summarised by one of Behuria's interviewees as an attempt at "being everything to everyone" (Behuria, 2018, p. 435), continues to obscure developmental gains. While this research offers some critical comments around the effectiveness of the state and policymaking in Rwanda, these need to be put in the context of the on-going challenges of rebuilding the country after the genocide. Ultimately, it is up to Rwandans to build "the Rwanda that [they] want" (RoR, 2020), as it is they who will grapple with their difficult past, while trying to carve out their own future.

Appendix 1

List of interviews

All interviewees have been anonymised, except for three officials who agreed to be named. A full list of interviewees names and details was provided to the PhD examiners for verification before being destroyed.

The interviews are grouped according to specifications highlighted in Chapter 2:

- High Level Officials (highlighted in text: HL) - refers to an interviewee at a level of Minister or similar
- Mid-Level Officials (highlighted in text: ML) - refers to the interviewee with a director-level job in the administration
- Junior Level (highlighted in text: JL/A or JL/O) - refers to junior officials, such as academics and other individuals

Repeated interviews are highlighted by the two interview dates and the locations.

N°	Interviewee description	Categorised As	Date of Interview	Place of Interview
1.	Senior Official, Education	HL	17.03.2015	Kigali
2.	Senior Official, Education	HL	4.03.2015	Kigali
	National University of Rwanda		21. 03.2011	Butare
3.	Professor James McWha Vice Chancellor of University of Rwanda	HL	04.03.2015	Kigali
4.	Jean de Dieu Mucyo Chairman of the Rwanda Commission for the Fight Against the Genocide (CNLG)	HL	4.04.2014	Kigali
			15.03. 2011	Kigali
5.	Senior Official, Education	HL	18.03.2015	Kigali
6.	Senior Official, Education	HL	24.03.2014	Kigali
7.	Senior Official, GoR	HL	23.03.2015	Kigali
			04.03.2014	Kigali
			26.03. 2011	Kigali
8.	Official, Ministry of Education	ML	24.03.2014	Kigali
9.	Official, REB	ML	19.03.2015	Kigali
10.	Official, Ministry of Education	ML	13.03.2015	Kigali

11.	Official and Academic, NUR	ML	23.03.2015	Kigali
12.	Official and Academic, NUR	ML	3.03.2015	Kigali
13.	Official, Ministry of Education	ML	20.03.2015	Kigali
14.	Official, Rwandan Parliament	ML	05.03.2015	Kigali
15.	Official and Academic, NUR	ML	2.03.2015	Kigali
16.	Official and Academic, NUR*	ML	30.03.2014	Butare
17.	Official, REB	ML	23.03.2015	Kigali
18.	Official and Academic, NUR	ML	16.03.2015	Kigali
19.	Official, Ministry of Finance	ML	20.03.2015	Kigali
20.	Academic, Researcher (non-NUR)	JL/A	20.03.2014	Kigali
21.	Academic, Researcher (non-NUR)	JL/A	20.03.2014	Kigali
22.	Academic NUR	JL/A	31.03.2014	Butare
23.	Official, Media	JL/O	23.04.2014	Kigali
24.	Practitioner & Educator	JL/O	10.03.2015	Kigali
25.	<i>Academic, NUR</i>	JL/A	20.03.2015	Kigali
26.	Official, REB	JL/O	19.03.2015	Kigali
27.	Academic NUR	JL/A	16.02.2015	Kigali
28.	Academic NUR	JL/A	16.03.2015	Kigali
29.	Official, Ministry of Education	JL/O	18.03.2015	Kigali
30.	Academic NUR	JL/A	13.03.2015	Kigali
31.	Practitioner NGO	JL/O	08.04.2014	Musanze
32.	Academic NUR	JL/A	22.03.2014	Butare
33.	Academic, Researcher (non-NUR)	JL/A*	17.03.2015	Kigali
34.	Academic NUR	JL/A	5.03.2015	Kigali
35.	Official, Educator	JL/O	2.04.2013	Kigali
36.	Official, Researcher	JL/O	2.03.2015	Kigali
37.	Academic NUR	JL/A	30.03.2014	Butare
38.	Official, Academic (non-NUR)	JL/O	25.03.2015	London
39.	Academic NUR	JL/A	3.03. 2015	Kigali
40.	Academic, Researcher (non-NUR)	JL/A	04.04.2013	Butare
41.	Academic, Researcher (non-NUR)	JL/A	24.03.2014	Kigali

*Given their “additional” positions these individuals could have been located in either JL or ML – the group assignment followed their preference

Additional Meetings and Events references in the thesis:

Meeting 1:

Event: Africa Study Visit. Meeting with President Kagame

Speaker: President Paul Kagame

Date: 25.03.2011

Location: Kigali, Rwanda

Meeting 2:

Event: Africa Study Visit. RGB Presentation to Students.

Speaker: Chief Executive Officer Rwanda Governance Board, Prof. Anastase Shyaka

Date: 7.03.2012

Location: Kigali, Rwanda

Meeting 3:

Event: Kigali International Forum on Genocide on the theme: "After Genocide: Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility" at Kwibuka20 in Rwandan Parliament.

Speaker: Various

Date: 4-6.04.2014

Location: Kigali, Rwanda

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