

Heart of Caution

An Analysis of Post-Conflict State Building in Rwanda

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When one imagines the small African nation of Rwanda, it is difficult not to think of the brutal genocide that occurred over a period of about 100 days beginning in April of 1994, a national tragedy that resulted in the massacre of 20% of the national population. While the nation may be trying its best to redesign a new image for itself, it is clear that the genocide has left a lasting mark on Rwanda's history and has strongly influenced international and scholarly perceptions of the country for decades.

Upon my visit to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, in the summer of 2012, I was surprised to find that the images of the Rwandan people that resonated with me most were not reminders of the genocide, but rather the dedicated efforts of children and young adults who had begun to appreciate Western cosmopolitanism in unique ways. This was evidenced in their acquisition of English from a young age, their motivation to pursue technological education, and their love of American pop culture. Furthermore, I noticed that the ethnic conflict that ravaged the nation not even twenty years ago was completely invisible or at least well-hidden today. Nonetheless, I found that the atrocities of the genocide and the militarized aftermath were still represented in Rwandan culture, whether it was through museum displays, drama exercises, school textbooks, or press releases.

In this essay, I will demonstrate how the Rwandan state is seeking to overcome its violent past through the establishment of a "post-ethnic" society that, with the help of Western powers, is becoming more exposed to the globalized world. I will also elaborate

on current Rwandan president Paul Kagame's extensive plans to transform the national economy from a struggling and predominately agricultural system into one that fully supports the growth of technological innovations, particularly those related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This construction of what I will define as a "pseudo-technocracy" has been effective in shadowing the atrocities of the past, providing the stimulus for educational reform from the primary to the graduate school level, and integrating Rwanda into the global economy. Nonetheless, this plan could also potentially place Rwanda in a controversial position because of its continued alliances with Western countries and implied reliance on conflict minerals in neighboring Congo to finance major national endeavors. Throughout this essay, I will evaluate the political, economic, and cultural implications of Rwanda's ongoing national transformation since the 1994 genocide.

The Rwandan Genocide: Causes and Effects

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 was a devastating massacre that left nearly one million people dead. This tragic event decimated the country's population and tarnished the national image of Rwanda. However, there are many misconceptions and unanswered questions with regard to the genocide that prompt us to ask ourselves about the true causes and effects of this tragic event. A few of these common misunderstandings include the nature of historical tension between the two predominant racial groups, the level of governmental disorganization, and the perpetrators of the assassination of Rwandan President Habyarimana, which served as a catalyst for the violence. I will attempt to further address and clarify some of these concerns by

emphasizing the European (particularly Belgian) colonial influence on the political and societal dynamics of Rwanda in advance of the nation's independence in 1962. I will also highlight some secondary causes of the mass killings that were connected to the Western supply of arms and the spread of hostile media.

Colonial Concerns: The Transference of Belgium's Ethno-National Divisions onto Rwanda

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the Rwandan people were organized into three ethnic groups. The rural Twa hunter-gatherers were the first group to initially settle on Rwandan land, and they are identified as pygmies. The farmer and herder Hutu arrived in the Great Lakes region of present-day Rwanda and Burundi at some point between the fifth and eleventh centuries. Finally, the dominant land-owning Tutsi began to migrate to the region from the Horn of Africa near the fourteenth century.¹ While the Twa (1% of the national population) tended to dwell deep into the forests and had little interaction with the other groups, the Hutus and Tutsis started to establish economic partnerships. The Tutsis were advantageous for their possession of cattle and combat skills, so it was not difficult for them to peacefully yet assuredly assume a higher

¹The history of the relationships among these three groups is still largely unknown today due to their complex and paradoxical nature. Drawing upon various historiographies in the Kivu (geographical regions surrounding Lake Kivu, including parts of Rwanda and the DRC), historians found that the groups could not be labeled as "tribal." Furthermore, there was a paradox with regard to the eighteen major "descent-based clans" because members of each clan were composed of multiple ethnic identities. This was because the Rwandan clans, despite the ideology of clan membership, were not viewed as biological descent groups. Rather, social identities within the clans were more linked to political associations (similar to a hierarchical caste model), and earlier identities were not discarded but become "subordinate identities." In fact, Rwandan philosopher Alex Kagame, and, later, Marcel d'Hertefeldt, discussed the idea that "all Rwandan clans are Tutsi in origin" as clan identities "have expanded with the extension of Rwandan cultural norms associated with the royal court" (Newbury 2009: 189-191).

political, economic, and social position over the Hutus. Furthermore, the Hutus and Tutsis began to form feudalistic client-patron agreements known as “ubuhake,” which indicated that Hutus could personally and militarily serve Tutsis in exchange for the use of cattle and land. All Hutu land was considered property of the Tutsi king, known as Mwami ([East Africa Living Encyclopedia](#)).

Other than the economic differences between them, the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, who would become vehemently opposed to one another in later years, actually shared much in common.² These similarities included their Christian faith, their common language of Kinyarwanda, and their regional cultural practices (Kolstø 2007: 153).

However, the idea that the Hutu and Tutsi (and Twa) were organized into distinct ethnic groups was an observation made by the English colonial agent and explorer, John Hanning Speke, who identified and named Lake Victoria in 1859. He described how the Tutsi elites appeared more similar to “noble Europeans”, with their generally greater heights and thinner noses, in addition to their “intelligence and a refinement of feelings”, which was perceived to be superior to the tastes of the “common negroes” (Melvern 2000: 8).³ One can see how the Europeans were already beginning to distinguish and favor one subtly distinctive social class over another in Rwanda, which would only become more severe as the colonial powers switched hands over the years.

²Historical narratives indicate that, before the arrival of the Tutsi, the Hutu were known as “abantu,” a word meaning “human beings.” They later became identified as “Hutu,” the “Tutsi word” for “servant” or “slave” (Malkki 1990: 38-39).

³In further research, a missionary named Francois Menard described the Tutsi individual as “European under a black skin,” while Richard Kandt, a German living in Rwanda, claimed that the Tutsis possessed a “sublimity of their speech, (a) tasteful and unobtrusive way of their dress” (Eller 1999: 201).

The German colonists assumed their influence over Rwanda and neighboring Burundi from 1894-1918. They, like the Englishman who came before them, were interested in the small physical differences between the dominant Tutsi minority and the subordinate Hutu majority classes.⁴ However, the Germans were not highly involved in shaping the politics of Rwanda, as they found the established precolonial kingdom and distinct social classes to be considerably advanced and well functioning (Straus 2006: 207). In 1912, the Germans expanded their land holdings in Africa by assisting the Tutsi monarchy in acquiring Northern territories. However, after World War I, a League of Nations mandate forced Germany to relinquish its East African colonies to Belgium, who would proceed to hold administrative control over the territory of Rwanda-Burundi. British investigative journalist Linda Melvern argues that this change in power gradually altered the character of indirect rule established by the Germans to one of direct rule by the Belgians, as the Belgian administrators diminished the power of the anti-colonial Rwandan king by deposing him in 1931 and replacing him with his more compliant son (Melvern 2000: 9-10).⁵

⁴According to Philip Gourevitch, the Belgians “dispatched scientists to Rwanda, who brought scales and measuring tapes and calipers and they went about weighing Rwandans, measuring Rwandans’ cranial capacities, and conducting comparative analysis of the relative proturbences of Rwandan noses.” Their results seemed to confirm that the Tutsis naturally possessed more “noble” and “naturally aristocratic dimensions” than the “coarse” and “bestial” Hutus. On the “nasal index,” for example, they found that the median Tutsi nose was found to be “about two and a half millimeters longer and nearly five millimeters narrower than the median Hutu nose” (Moghalu 2005: 11; quoting Gourevitch 1998).

⁵Former King Mwami Musinga’s son, Mutara Rudahigwa, was known in Rwanda as “king of the whites,” not only because he was perceived to be in an administrative position to the Belgians, but also because he “who wore more western suits, drove his own car, and converted to Christianity in 1943 as part of a Belgian policy for encouraging mass conversions” (Melvern 2000: 10).

From a labor standpoint, the Belgian treatment of Rwandans (and the Congolese) was known to be exceedingly cruel, even by European colonial standards.⁶ On the surface level, a militaristic style of governing by Belgium controlled the work environment in Rwanda. The Rwandans had to dedicate up to half of their working hours to growing coffee or suffer the punishment of a whipping or an imposition of severe taxes (van Ufford 2009: 3). Furthermore, the infamous “tutsification” of Rwanda by the Belgians created a growing rift between ethnic groups that were previously distinctive yet amicable. Many around the world are still concerned that Belgium has not done enough to acknowledge or rectify the psychological damage that the colonial leaders caused in Africa.⁷ The brutal exploitation of the Rwandan people for their resources no doubt altered the relatively peaceful and cooperative working environment initially established by the Hutus and Tutsis.

The administrative changes did not stop here, as the Belgians also made the adoption of Christianity compulsory for the Tutsi elite, carved out chiefdoms and appointed Belgian administrators at each societal level, ensured educational opportunities (including French language acquisition) for the male descendants of chiefs, established an African civil service composed of Tutsis, and created a class and ethnic identification

⁶Martin Ewans describes how King Leopold II was a constitutional monarch in Belgium but an autocrat in the Congo. The local Congolese people were forced to meet certain quotas for procuring rubber, and a failure to do so could lead to situations involving hostages or village slaughter; the populations of these rubber-producing areas declined sharply, through “flight...malnutrition, and disease that followed” (Ewans 2003: 169).

⁷The Belgian state of denial of the atrocities that the Belgians permitted and enforced in Central Africa was expressed in the media and in schools from 1908-1960. The Belgians described the situation in an inappropriately patriotic light, indicating how the Belgians had “brought the light of Christianity and civilization to a savage and heathen continent” (Ewans 2003: 170).

system by which Rwandans had to literally become card-carrying Hutus or Tutsis (Melvern 2000: 10-11).⁸ The favoring of the Tutsis by the dominant governing class of French-speaking (Walloon) Belgians suggests that they were interested in drawing attention to the small distinctions between the Hutu and Tutsi classes in a similar way that the Belgian population was significantly divided ethno-nationally among the Walloons and the Flemish. With these harsh measures in mind, it is no wonder that the originally minor differences among the Tutsi elites and the majority Hutu populations eventually became much more distinguishable and significant during the Belgian colonial rule of Rwanda.

Despite all of these administrative changes, ethno-nationalist sentiments did not immediately begin to emerge in Rwanda. After all, it took some time and careful consideration for the Hutus to feel the need or the courage to rise up against the minority elites in power. As the process of decolonization spread throughout the world in the mid-twentieth century, the Tutsi elites advocated for independence and were largely supported by the United Nations (UN). However, the Hutu people saw the prospect of Rwandan independence as the ideal opening for the national Hutu majority to finally assume power

⁸Rwanda was important to the Belgians not only because of its territory and resources, but also because it became an indirect power player in the global battle to assure the growth and sustainability of the French language, or the kingdom of “La Francophonie.” Fearing that the presence of the French language in Africa may become eclipsed by the growing Anglophone power throughout the continent, the French-speaking colonial elites fought diligently to protect their language. Rwanda became a key asset to the French-speaking elite minority of Belgium, as it lay on the political fault line separating the Francophone and Anglophone sections of East Africa (Melvern 2000: 24). Thus, one sees how the French-speaking Belgians’ fight to assure their linguistic dominance essentially spread from their own nation to the colonies of Africa.

within the parliamentary system. In this moment of tension, the Belgians conveniently shifted their alliance to the side of the Hutu population.⁹

Due to a failure to reach a compromise, a Tutsi-led assassination attempt of the Hutu emancipation movement (PARMEHUTU) leader, and the successful alleged Tutsi assassination of Hutu politician Dominique Mbonyumutwa, a battle broke out between the Hutus and Tutsis in 1959, which resulted in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and the exile of 150,000 Tutsi to bordering African countries (Bellinghen 1990: 161).¹⁰ Due to added pressures from the newly established United Nations, Belgium's ethno-national loyalties continued to shift in favor of the Hutus. Belgium minimally helped support the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy during this "Hutu Revolution," and they relinquished their colonial control of the territory in 1962 (Straus 2006: 21).¹¹ This extreme change in support by Belgium contributed to the reversal of the dominant governing rule in Rwanda, which would represent a starting point for the increased tensions that would arise between the Hutu and Tutsi groups.

⁹This dramatic shift in alliances was established for a number of reasons. First, and perhaps most importantly, the UNAR party of mostly Tutsi members came out against the Belgian authority, claiming that it was the Belgians who stressed the negligible ethnic differences among the Hutu and Tutsi people (Eller 1999: 222).

¹⁰ PARMEHUTU stands for *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu*, which translates to the "Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement."

¹¹With Rwandan independence came a government dominated by Hutu leadership. In March 1961, the UN Commission for Ruanda-Urundi made a perceptive indication in their report that "A radical dictatorship of one party has been set up in Rwanda, and the developments of the last 18 months have consisted in the transition from one type of oppressive regime to another. Extremism is rewarded and there is a danger that the Tutsi minority may find itself defenseless in the face of abuses" (Lemarchad 1970: 194-195; quoted by Eller 1999: 225).

While the Belgians may not have played an active or intentional role in provoking the tragic genocide in Rwanda, their insistence on transferring what seemed to be their ethno-national divisions onto the Rwandan people certainly contributed to the increasingly hostile relations between the two groups.¹² It was not only the politically dominant, French-speaking Walloons who influenced divisions in Rwanda, but also individuals of the Dutch-speaking majority in Flanders. The Flemish Catholic missionaries who traveled to Rwanda to convert Rwandans to Christianity tended to sympathize with the majority Hutu struggle to successfully overturn a government dominated by the Tutsi minority elite. This alliance between the Flemish missionaries and the Rwandan Hutus developed into the political support and protection of the Hutus within the Catholic Church. Thus, while the Hutus may not have been offered the same colonial educational opportunities as the Tutsis were, they did have access to the Church, and many of them garnered success as members of the clergy (Moghalu 2005: 12).¹³

¹²Pål Kolstø actually hypothesizes, and ultimately disproves, the idea that the contentious relationship between the Hutus and the Tutsis (much like that of the Flemish and Walloons) could be epitomized by the Freudian idea of the narcissism of minor differences. Freud described this as “a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion between the members of the community is made easier” (Freud 1930: 114). The essential paradox of this phenomenon is that seemingly minor differences, such as slight phenotypical distinctions or linguistic preferences, seem virtually catastrophic in the imagination of those who defend their group as superior. This seems like a legitimate argument for what has been occurring between the groups in Rwanda and Belgium, respectively, although Kolstø rightly assumes that other key factors, such as economic competition, power plays, and “status anxiety” must also be considered (Kolstø 2007: 166).

¹³The early dominance of the Hutus within the Catholic Church would play a key role in the mobilization of the Hutus in later years.

One sees how the growing Belgian ethno-national divisions became mirrored in Rwanda through the Walloon and Flemish respective favoring of the Tutsi and Hutu groups.¹⁴

The political climate that emerged after Rwandan independence in the early 1960s was particularly divided. According to political scientist Scot Straus, there were essentially four key groups in Rwandan politics. On the Hutu side, these included the Hutu moderates, the mainstream Hutus who had some support from the army, and the Hutu hardliners, who were supported by ultranationalist, far-right groups and much of the military and media. The Tutsi rebels were represented by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and were associated with left-wing nationalism.¹⁵ Finally, international actors such as the 2500 United Nations peacekeepers and diplomatic corps also remained in Rwanda to maintain regional stability (Straus 2006: 42). The strong Hutu and Tutsi divisions in radical Rwandan political parties would come to a head in the mid-1990s.

¹⁴Ironically enough, the ethno-national situation in contemporary Rwanda appears almost tame compared to what is occurring in its former colonial power of Belgium. The current Rwandan constitution favors the recognition of the collective “Baturwanda” people, rather than the separation of Hutu and Tutsi identities. While one cannot say that peace and democracy in Rwanda is certain, it is evident that they are trying to effectively create what anthropologist Liisa Malkki would call a “mythico-history” of their culture, which now apparently favors educational opportunities for all citizens, guaranteed aid for the families of genocide victims, and the adoption of English as the second language for all schoolchildren. Thus, while Rwanda is essentially attempting to embrace a cosmopolitan identity in the aftermath of decades of ethnic difference that resulted in genocidal tragedy, the already cosmopolitan European nation of Belgium is experiencing the reverse effect of being ineffective in calming the nonmilitant ethno-national battles that are being waged within their borders.

¹⁵The central individuals who comprised the RPF grew up as refugees in war-torn Uganda during the early 1980s. Once the war was won in the Luweero region, they became the enforcers of law and order, which eventually provoked them to inflict damage upon the then insurgent local population. Thus, these men had grown up in an atmosphere of constant civil war violence and found necessity and even normalcy in fighting the Hutu armies and civilians (Prunier 2011: 13).

The Mystery of the Presidential Assassination

Besides the degree of historic ethno-national tensions in Rwanda, another major issue that is still debated is who shot down the airplane carrying Rwandan President and Hutu leader Juvénal Habyarimana and the new Burundian President Ntayarima on April 6th, 1994.¹⁶ It was this significant event, which was broadcast throughout the country, that was the major catalyst of the genocide. While the event itself is more reflective of an effort made by radical politicians and militia groups than it is of the nature of the Rwandan people, it is nonetheless important to see how the long-term antagonisms of the Tutsis and Hutus in political and social spheres contributed to a disturbing climate among extremist factions, which strongly impacted international perceptions of Rwandans.

The most common assumption for who killed the president is the RPF, as it is obvious that the tensions were high among the Tutsi and Hutu political groups and one can assume that the RPF wanted to put an end to this rivalry altogether. Clearly, the genocide was not the outcome they had anticipated, but it is possible that they would have wanted to make a clean end to Hutu rule and resume their power over the country again.¹⁷ The other theory is that, because this president was not as intent as his successor on carrying out policies that were discriminatory against Tutsis, it was the Hutu hardliners who assassinated him in the hopes that they could take over the government

¹⁶One year prior to this assassination, President Melchoir Ndadaye of Burundi was killed in a military coup. The mass violence that perpetuated after this event prompted the migration of 400,000 (predominately Hutu) Burundi refugees to Rwanda. Many of these refugees would become genocidaires (Midlarsky 2011: 277).

¹⁷A French magistrate inquiry that investigated this theory for six years ultimately concluded that this theory was correct, although it still cannot be proven and the RPF continues to deny any involvement (Straus 2006: 45).

and ensure a radical stance against Tutsis.¹⁸ Thus, the motivation behind both theories is similar: rather than a rapid mobilization of racial groups into a “tribal war” that culminated after centuries of hatred, as is often assumed, the genocide was most directly provoked by a radical political faction that wrongly imagined a quick and easy way to end the current government in power and begin anew. We may never know who shot down the plane, but it is worth noting the two major opposing theories because it reveals the high level of mistrust toward two notable political parties in Rwanda. To this day, there are significant concerns that current Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who is a member of the RPF, may have been tied to the assassination plot.

Selective Inaction: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Militias and Media

In addition to the long-term progressive estrangement of the Hutu and Tutsi and the catalytic event of the president’s assassination, there are two other secondary factors that allowed the genocide to be carried out with such devastating effects. The arming of the militias within both left-wing and right-wing political factions and the spread of hate media messages on Rwandan radio stations no doubt fueled the violence in the streets. Western countries such as Belgium and the United States played key, albeit distant, roles in the conflict with regard to providing weapons in the past to the Rwandan militias and refusing to jam the airways of the radical radio stations.

¹⁸Although President Habyarimana continued to enforce strict ethnic quotas that significantly inhibited Tutsis from advancement, Rwanda’s first president, Gregoire Kayibanda, had later taken a much harsher stance during his term from 1962-1973 (Straus 2006: 23). Under his influence, there were a number of anti-Tutsi massacres, which President Habyarimana was likely trying to avoid during his presidency despite his ultimate allegiance to the Hutus.

The 1994 violence in Rwanda was fueled by advanced armies equipped with weaponry. Gory details of the tragedy were often covered in international news media, especially the use of machetes in murdering citizens. However, what is not often discussed is how these militia groups were established. Linda Melvern explains that these militias were “like the Hitler Youth...attached to political parties, compris(ing) the uneducated and unemployed of the country’s youth, taken from the streets and from local football teams and given rudimentary training in the use of weapons” (Melvern 2000: 44).

Before the genocide, these youth militia groups participated in minor yet disruptive activities such as vocally chastising anyone who spoke out against their parties or causing raucous at political meetings. The rebels had to be recruited and trained, and the men who ran these camps were the Belgian-trained chief Leonard Nkundiye and the American-trained Lieutenant Colonel Innocent Nazabanita (Melvern 2000: 44). Melvern states that the arms used by the Rwandan military and Hutu rebel groups, who were the main perpetrators in the genocide and swore to wipe out the Tutsis, were supplied by nations such as France, Egypt, and South Africa.¹⁹ Furthermore, France and Egypt negotiated arms deals with the Rwandan extremists by allowing them to pay for the weapons with funds taken from international financial institutions such as the World

¹⁹These transactions were made in 1990, when the RPF were expanding to overturn the Hutu-led government in what would become the Rwandan Civil War. In the UN report on “The Arms Project,” it was discovered that Egypt sold \$6 million worth of weapons to Rwanda in March of 1992. France served as the main supplier, providing a variety of advanced weapons, motored vehicles, and six helicopters. Other contributions included \$2.3 million worth of military sales from the United States from 1981-1992 and numerous light weapons, including 20,000 grenades and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition provided by South Africa ([Human Rights Watch](#) 1994).

Bank (Melvern 2000: 5).²⁰ Thus, the genocide in Rwanda represents one of many unfortunate examples of how the supply of weapons to an extremist group to fight one war could indirectly contribute to mass devastation in future violent conflicts.

Another indirect yet important factor in mobilizing the genocide was the spread of hate speech on various media sources, especially the radio. In a country where 60% of citizens were illiterate, the radio represented an important and popular tool for spreading local news (Robbins 1999: 272).²¹ The most influential private radio station during the genocide was known by its abbreviation RTLM (*Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines*), which was created by Hutu extremists under President Habyarimana's MRND party in 1993. The station initially gained popularity not for its political messages but for its music programs and "western-style talk radio format" (Internews 2006; quoted by Cotton). However, in the months prior to the genocide, the anti-Tutsi propaganda rhetoric began to creep in further on the RTLM airwaves, as the "Hutu Ten Commandments" demanded no mercy for the Tutsi and "violence-provoking songs" were broadcast as often as twenty times a day (Temple-Raston 2002; Dalliare 2004: 261; Kirschke 1996: 90; quoted by Cotton). Once President Habyarimana was assassinated, RTLM wasted no time in launching a call to action to defeat the Tutsi.

The radio became the primary mechanism by which Hutu extremists could devalue the Tutsis on air with slanderous terms, with RTLM broadcasters calling them

²⁰The World Bank was fully aware of these transactions that led to the militarization of Rwanda, but they did not disclose this information to the UN Security Council (Melvern 2000: 5).

²¹According to Christine L. Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves in their article "The role of radio in the Rwandan genocide," Rwandans were known to "spend all their time with a receiver stuck to their ear" (Kellow and Steeves 1998: 118).

“snakes” and “cockroaches” that needed to be exterminated while also spreading the misinformation that the Tutsis were also genocidaires who had been “plotting the extermination of the Hutu” (Physicians for Human Rights UK 1994: 10; quoted by Piipparinen 2009: 14).²² RTLM infamously broadcasted a message on April 6th, the first day of the genocide, which indicated that “Tutsis need to be killed” (Keane 1996: 10; quoted by Piipparinen 2009: 23). In moments like these, RTLM moved from being a radical radio station to being an instigator of the mass violence. As BBC journalist in Rwanda Ally Mugenzi reported, “RTLM acted as if it was giving instructions to the killers. It was giving directions on air as to where people were hiding” (Smith 2003). It is clear that the media in Rwanda played a powerful role in directing the violence from a distance.²³

Although the United States and other Western nations assisted Rwanda in the early 1990s when they supplied the RPF with arms, many frowned upon the fact that these nations were unable to or refused to provide aid to the Rwandans during the genocide. As mentioned earlier, the Belgians were quick to pull out their troops from Rwanda. Furthermore, America was hesitant to send aid because of the lack of a

²²Scott Straus breaks down the propaganda tactics made by the MRND (Hutu party that President Habyarimana belonged to) as follows: using scare tactics to portray the RPF rebels as inhuman individuals who committed mass atrocities against the Hutus; drawing upon ethnic nationalism to label the Tutsis as minority foreigners who would jeopardize the power of the majority Hutus; employing chauvinistic rhetoric to declare that the Hutus had to “unite and be vigilant against the enemy,” and stereotyping Tutsi civilians as “accomplices” of the RPF (Straus 2006: 29).

²³The role of the radio in the Rwandan genocide is often noted in reports of the events and even in contemporary works of art. American playwright Erik Ehn wrote a series of plays on genocides, one in particular that was based on the Rwandan genocide called *Maria Kizito*. In this play, a character called “Radio” serves as “both exciting purveyor of song but also as the incarnation of the hatred of murderers... accomplish(ing) his destructive deeds through the manipulation of sound” (Skloot 2008: 20).

strategic interest in Rwanda and also the fear that there would be another situation like the one that had occurred a year before in Somalia, during which 18 American soldiers who were sent on a peacekeeping mission were killed by Somali militias (Moghalu 2005: 19). The United States' refusal to act on smaller measures related to media was more surprising. In the "media trial" against RTLM and other sources of hate media that took place after the genocide, it was noted by the court that the United States had the opportunity to send a mission to jam the airways but refused to do so. A Pentagon lawyer remarked, "silencing (RTLM) would have violated the American principle of freedom of speech" (Moghalu 2005: 21). Later in this essay, I will discuss how America's inaction during the genocide in this case and others may play a large part in the reason that the U.S. is more inclined to aid Rwanda today.

Rebuilding After Genocide: Politics of Silence and Technology

Since Paul Kagame assumed the role of de facto president of Rwanda in 2000, Rwanda has been quick to pass reforms that are redefining the nation in nearly every sense.²⁴ The country's ten provinces have been decreased to four (Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western). Beginning in 2001, plans for a new national anthem, flag, and language (English) were implemented. But, most importantly, President Kagame hopes Rwanda can become better integrated into the global economy through technological growth and innovation. In his speech to Carnegie Mellon University in 2011, upon his announcement of the new Carnegie Mellon graduate technology program in Rwanda, he claimed that technology was the perfect industry for the Rwandan people to contribute to because, while they do not have the most abundant natural resources, their large population of young people can learn the tools and trade of technology and help to transform Rwanda into the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capital of Africa.^{25 26}

With these large-scale plans to expand the ICT industry in Rwanda, it seems to me that the nation is on its way to becoming economically dependent on technology. It is

²⁴The first president of Rwanda following the genocide, Pasteur Bizimungu, was of Hutu descent. Paul Kagame and others accused his cabinet of being mismanaged, corrupt, treasonous, and tax-evading. He resigned in 2000, and Kagame, his vice-president and the leader of the RPF, assumed the presidency.

²⁵Scot Straus and Lars Waldorf argue that, while small landholder agriculture was a dominant industry for Rwanda before the genocide, it could not be sustained in the long run due to “the country's growing population, decreasing size of landholdings, and declining soil fertility” (Straus and Waldorf 2011: 10).

²⁶One of the professors at Carnegie Mellon Rwanda, Michel Bézy, recently wrote a blog post on the emerging influence of ICTs in Africa, emphasizing that the innovations would not merely be given to them by Western countries, but would rather be used as blueprints for projects to be developed in Africa by Africans (Bézy [2] 2013).

in this vein that I define the current state of Rwanda as a “pseudo-technocracy,” as plans are moving forward but are not yet actualized for the country to be dominated by a technocrat class. In this passage, I will evaluate this ambitious and transformative goal of the Rwandan government to establish Rwanda as the ICT capital of Africa, drawing upon more recent articles on the nation’s progress since 1994, in addition to my own observations on Rwandan society from my visit to Kigali in August 2012.

Becoming a “Post-Ethnic” Tech Hub: An Overview of Rwandan Economy and Society

The 2003 Rwandan Constitution is essentially a design for a national republic without societal or ethnic prejudices. The second line of the preamble indicates that the Rwandan people desire to “...eradicate ethnic, regional and any other form of divisions,” and Article 11 prohibits discrimination based on factors such as “ethnic origin, tribe, clan, or colour” (Rwandan Constitution 1-5: 2003). To reinforce this ideal, the government is encouraging all civilians of Rwanda to embrace an “ethnic” identity called “banyarwanda,” the unified national group of Rwandans that includes yet nominally ignores all ethnic groups. In this example of what anthropologist Liisa Malkki might call a “mythico-history” of Rwanda, the government hopes that this emphasis on national unity will evoke what they argue is a return to the peacefully coexisting state of precolonial Rwanda (Hilker 2010: 14).

I would term this re-identification ideal as the creation of a “post-ethnic” society, as it is a reimagined society that ignores the preconceived ethnic distinctions such as “Tutsi” and “Hutu.” The people of Rwanda are no longer judged or categorized by ethnicity on any official documents, and thus they now comprise a singular national

identity that does not take ethnicity into consideration. Despite Rwanda's peaceful and cooperative precolonial relations, it obviously seems like a utopian ideal to attempt to establish such a society not even twenty years after a massive genocide that was, on the surface, rooted in ethnicity. Later in this essay, I will discuss how the dream of a "post-ethnic" society is being achieved on some level yet still facing definite obstacles in the expanding sector of education.

Although the government is attempting to overcome (or erase) its influence, the Rwandan genocide clearly had a devastating effect on national politics, economics, and society. With 20% of the population killed and a recorded GDP growth of -49% in 1994, it was evident that the shocking and tragic events of the genocide would plague the country for some time. Despite this, the environment in Rwanda has been changing rapidly for the better since 1995. Although nearly 50% of the population is below the poverty line and total foreign debt owed is reaching one billion, GDP growth has averaged 7%-8% since 2003 and inflation is now in the single digits (CIA World Factbook). While around 90% of the nation's labor force has been invested in subsistence agriculture throughout the past century, the government is developing new plans to expand other industries, particularly in technology and education.²⁷

²⁷Although Rwanda's economic dependence on agriculture has been high, it has not always benefitted the country. One Rwandan blogger explains that the drought and collapse of world coffee prices in 1989, coupled with excessive erosion over time, have severely affected the agriculture industry and therefore contributed to increasing national poverty (Amakuru 2010).

Building Networks: An Overview of ICT Expansion in Rwanda

In addition to the ongoing effort to promote societal equality, the Rwandan Constitution also lists technological growth as an important national goal. The eleventh line of the preamble states that Rwandans are “determined to develop human resources...to promote technological advancement and the social welfare of the people of Rwanda” (Rwanda Constitution 2: 2003). Based on their more recent developments, it appears that President Kagame and the post-genocide government are anxious to achieve this goal by transforming Rwanda into what could arguably be the “Silicon Valley of Africa”. In 2000, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Rwanda published a 20-year plan called Vision 2020, which ultimately outlines how Rwanda will be transformed from an agrarian society into a technological one in four phases of five years each. Masimba Tafirenyika highlights one component of this new national vision in her 2011 article, “Information Technology Super-Charging Rwanda’s Economy”:

A luxury commuter bus pulls up by the [curb] to pick up passengers. A young woman quickly jumps in, retrieves a smart card from her wallet and swipes it against a machine next to the driver. A buzzer approves the swipe and the woman takes a seat by the window... The smart-card ticketing system is known as twende. Its introduction in the capital, Kigali, early this year by Kigali Bus Services is the latest in a string of technological advances that are unleashing rapid changes in the economy and transforming Rwanda into a regional hub for business communications and information technology. The innovations are altering the way Rwandans communicate, pay for goods and services, and go about their daily lives (Tafirenyika 2011).

After a mass genocide that nearly destroyed the country not even twenty years ago, the emergence of Rwanda as a regional tech capital may seem a bit far-fetched for most people around the world. But Tafirenyika goes on to explain other key ways in which Rwanda is becoming technologically transformed. The Rwandan government began three five-year “National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Plans,” which included designing and implementing policies favorable for establishing ICT

projects in the first phase from 2000-2005, laying down a \$95 million, 1,380 mile fiber optic telecommunications cable network to increase access to high-speed broadband services in the second phase from 2006-2010, and, in the current and final phase from 2011-2015, allowing Rwandans to explore and help improve these new technology services.²⁸ Because of this faster network, the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency (RURA) is working with cell phone operators to lower the price of mobile devices from \$14 to \$3.50, which RURA believes will help increase the number of cell phone owners from the 2010 count of 2.4 million Rwandans (one in four people) to 6 million by 2015 (Tafirenyika 2011).²⁹ Though the plan may be ambitious, it is evident that the Rwandan government is making no hesitation in transforming the national image from a place of genocide into a regional tech hub.

One cannot doubt that the Rwandan technological developments have led to national progress, one example being Ookla's NetIndex November 2012 report that Rwanda now has the fastest Internet speed in all of Africa at 7.28 Mbps (Musoni 2012). However, an important question that one may ask in the midst of all of this is, "Why?"

²⁸This massive network of underground cables travels through all of Rwanda and into other parts of East Africa. It is a major change from the previous reliance on "microwave-based connectivity", which could be easily damaged by weather conditions and other small factors (*IT News Africa* 2010). According to Romain Murenzi, the Minister of Technology and Research in the office of the President, this costly and expansive development was paid for by "the business sector" in Rwanda (Barigye 2008).

²⁹The Rwandan government sees cell phones as advantageous devices not just for young, upwardly mobile people, but also for those in medical or financial need. The UN Population fund states that Rwanda is donating cell phones to thousands of health workers so that they can "send emergency alerts, call ambulances and provide updates on health issues to local clinics via text messages," and farmers can use an e-Soko ("e-market") program to receive text message updates on average crop prices (Tafirenyika 2011).

President Kagame has made several speeches at leading tech universities such as MIT, Stanford, and Carnegie Mellon over the past decade to spread his message of technological innovation and progress in Rwanda to the U.S. During each of these visits, he made the assertion that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry was the key for Rwandan growth following the genocide, as the nation could overcome its horrific past and overall lack of natural resources by becoming integrated into the global economy through technological expansion. Furthermore, in his 2009 *Huffington Post* blog post, “Information Technology Means No More Excuses,” he makes the pivotal statement:

Rwanda has embraced competition and technology as forces for positive change. The former compels us to be creative and invest, and the latter enables us to have high hopes...and removes the excuse, forever, of those who might cloak themselves in the shibboleth, “We did nothing, because we did not know” (Kagame 2009).

In this message, President Kagame indicates that the move toward an ICT-oriented economy is more than just a good business decision, as it allows Rwandans to gain access to resources, education, and potential upward mobility.³⁰ While the aforementioned integration of these new ICT innovations, such as the vast broadband network and smart-card ticketing system, are important components in transforming the atmosphere and culture of Rwanda, the manner in which these new tools are further designed and implemented is through the corresponding component in the plans for the new Republic of Rwanda: nationwide educational reform.

³⁰President Kagame further indicates a primary way in which the growing ICT sector in the region has been funded over the past decade – “between 1995 and 2005, over twenty five billion U.S. dollars were invested in Sub-Saharan Africa” (Kagame 2009).

While the plans for attracting young people in Rwanda to the technology sector are well underway, it is important to analyze who will be participating in this economic shift. Since the genocide ended, the majority of the socioeconomic elites in Rwanda are Tutsis who were born in Rwanda but grew up as refugees in other African countries. Thus, after years of waiting out the initial political shifts, these well-educated Tutsis are returning to Rwanda and seeking careers in the business and technology industries in Kigali. The upside to this is that these sectors are growing rapidly in Rwanda, but the downside is that there are increasing regional and ethnic divides between the predominately rural Hutus and the city-dwelling Tutsis, as the latter have the opportunity to more directly contribute to and benefit from the national economy (Prunier 1997: 7; quoted by Hilker 2010: 10). It is apparent that the government is working to design a history for the nation that embraces a united Rwandan identity rather than a division of Hutus and Tutsis, but, in order to best convey this, it is important for one group to not be preferred over another in terms of educational financial aid and career opportunities.

Primary First: An Introduction to the Rwandan Educational System Today

The Rwandan educational system is in many ways designed like Western school systems. There are five hierarchical school levels – pre-primary (1 year), primary (6 years), lower secondary (3 years), upper secondary (3 years), and university degree (4+ years). Public and private schools options are available, although the majority of students enroll in public schools. Students are educated in the local dialect, Kinyarwanda, during their primary school years, and they learn English or French at the secondary and university levels (U.S. Embassy). Standardized tests results are used to help admissions

in senior secondary and tertiary school levels to select accepted students (tests include the SAT, TOEFL, and GRE). How the education levels differ is rooted in the total enrollment rates.

Like all other aspects of life in Rwanda, the educational system suffered greatly in the immediate aftermath of the genocide.³¹ However, statistics from the World Bank and UNESCO indicate that national literacy rates and the number of children enrolled in schools are now at record highs. In 2009, both the male and female youth (ages 15-24) literacy rates averaged at about 77% (UNESCO 2009). Pre-primary schools are new to the nation, as they were introduced in 2008; in 2011 it was reported that 111,875 students were enrolled in 1,471 schools. Primary schools are, as of 2009, compulsory and free, and in 2011 there were 2,341,146 pupils enrolled at 2,543 primary schools, indicating a 127.3% gross enrollment rate (MINEDUC 2011). Secondary school education is less expansive, but it is also not compulsory. For the 2011 school year, there were 1,362 secondary schools, 486,437 students, and a gross enrollment rate of 35.5% (MINEDUC 2011).³² Finally, there are 31 higher education institutions in Rwanda (seventeen public and fourteen private), which currently enroll over 73,500 students in undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs (MINEDUC 2011).³³ While enrollment rates are

³¹Schools, like most other locations, were very unsafe during the genocide. In addition to lootings, primary and secondary schools suffered from the murder or fleeing of teachers (East Africa Living Encyclopedia).

³²Admission to upper secondary school (final three years) is rather competitive. Students must take an entrance exam before being admitted. 144,695 students were admitted into the upper classes in 2011 (MINEDUC 2011).

³³The U.S. Embassy indicates that private institution enrollment totals are growing at over 35,500 (nearing the 37,900 total for public institutions), which is due to the increasing number of part-time students (U.S. Embassy via MINEDUC 2011).

increasing steadily on all levels of education, it is clear that there is work to be done to provide more resources for the secondary and tertiary education levels.

On a higher administrative level, the Rwandan government established the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in 2012. Their mission statement indicates their objective to “transform the Rwandan citizen into skilled human capital for socio-economic development of the country” through means such as increasing literacy rates and promoting science and technology (MINEDUC 2012). Some of their current initiatives include the MIT-based One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Project, which they hope to integrate into all primary schools in the nation so that students can access laptop technologies from an early age, and the Rwanda Educational Commons (REC), a USAID-funded program that focuses on expanding teachers’ access to ICT resources so that they can better educate students about technology.

Besides outside funding sources such as USAID, The World Bank indicates that 4.8% of Rwanda’s public expenditures were allocated to education in 2011 (mostly on the primary level), and the IPAR Equality Education Interim Report states that household investment in schooling has been increasing past 20% since 2008 (World Bank 2011; Paxton 2012). In a nation where the poverty level is at nearly 50%, it is important that these new educational initiatives be made affordable for the Rwandan families as well as the government.

New Tools, Same Lessons: Problems to Overcome in Rwandan Educational Reform

In addition to more surface issues such as funding and enrollment rates at each school level, there are obvious social and logistical factors that Rwanda must take into

careful consideration in its educational reforms. Despite the major improvements in education throughout Rwanda, there remain some major concerns that were also prevalent to some extent before the genocide, especially with regard to access to education, lesson content, teaching methods, and the quality of instruction for all Rwandans.

Before the genocide, access to education and the levels of degree attainment varied greatly based on factors such as class and ethnicity.³⁴ Since the government comprised of a majority of Tutsis assumed power in 1994, a number of educational reforms have been made to increase access to education (especially primary schools for students aged six to nine) throughout the nation. As previously indicated, The World Bank statistics reveal that enrollment and completion rates, in addition to the number of qualified teachers and gender parity in enrollment, have increased significantly in all grade levels, especially the primary school level. In a developing country in Africa, particularly one that has suffered such devastating losses, it is positive to see that the government is choosing to make education a top priority in the attempt to recover from the genocide and help foster new generations of individuals who can contribute to the establishment of a diverse, intelligent national culture and an economically productive society. However, if the government desires to move in a “post-ethnic,” ICT-oriented direction, it is necessary that proper resources and skilled teachers are available at all primary and higher institutions throughout the nation, which will prove a difficult task.

³⁴Although there is a lack of quantitative evidence, some analysts suggest that these factors, coupled with the direct teaching of the history of complications between the Hutu and Tutsi groups, prompted a large number of young Rwandans to participate in the genocide (Hilker 2010: 2).

Despite its best efforts to become “post-ethnic,” Rwanda’s new educational reforms are not fully supporting this ideal. Lyndsay McLean Hilker indicates that while the FARG fund provides financial support for Tutsi genocide survivors (who, today, would be college age), these funds are not available for the majority of the population, who are Hutus (Hilker 2010: 2).³⁵ ³⁶ Furthermore, it is evident that the idea of acknowledging and overcoming a past is rather different from erasing it. In 1995, it seemed that Rwanda was in favor of the latter ideal when “the Government placed a moratorium on the teaching of Rwandan history in schools, arguing that the previous curriculum was biased” (Hilker 2010: 2). This measure reveals the refusal of the Rwandan government to allow students to discuss different points of view on their nation’s history.³⁷ The primary school students of today are children of the genocide survivors, and therefore the history that their parents lived through can essentially only be discussed within families, if at all.

It is educational measures like the moratorium on history that also contribute to ineffective teaching methods, as teachers and students are expected to participate in a learning environment that doesn’t allow much room for independent expression or the development of critical thinking skills (Hilker 2010: 2). This is further emphasized by

³⁵It was the Tutsis who generally had greater access to education during colonial times. At the respected Rwandan institution, Astrida College, “80-90% of students were Tutsi until the late 1950s, although the Tutsi were estimated to have made up 10-15% of the population at that time” (Walker-Keleher 2006: 37-38; quoted by Hilker 2010: 4).

³⁶Although primary education was declared “free and obligatory” in the 1962 constitution, there are still certain educational fees for items such as uniforms and school materials (roughly 300 FRW or \$5 annually) that parents are responsible for but often cannot pay for, thereby limiting the opportunities available to poor children (Obura 2003: 40; quoted by Hilker 2010: 5).

the fact that, as I learned when introducing a drama-based workshop to Rwandan primary school students in Kigali, there is minimal or no fine arts curriculum offered in Rwandan schools. One of the major stereotypes of Rwandan culture is that the people are overly meek and obedient. This is not always the case, but educational measures and classroom practices that inhibit student inquiry and self-expression certainly do not help to disprove this supposition. Supporting an ICT-based economy and education is a positive way for Rwanda to grow, but it is important that individual creativity is not suppressed in the process, as this self-expression is what leads to ingenuity in technology as well as other professional fields.

In addition to issues involving lesson plan limitations, there are several logistical problems that Rwandan schools must address, particularly in relation to availability of resources, teacher knowledge, and language instruction. I would argue that the new education measures implemented by the government, particularly those dedicated to the integration of technology and English language instruction into classrooms beginning in primary school, are difficult to implement because of the quality of instructors. This is not to say that the instructors are unfit to teach due to incompetence, but rather that these cosmopolitan education measures require skills and tools that current teachers and most Rwandan people in general are not familiar with. In a society where many people, particularly those from rural areas, have never even seen a computer or learned a language other than Kinyarwanda, it seems like it will take a long time for these educational measures to be properly implemented. Since 81% of Rwanda's population of just over 12 million people currently live in the nation's rural areas, it is important that these new educational initiatives reach all of the nation's children, rather than the select

ones living in the city.³⁸ But, even in schools within the capital city of Kigali, I found that there is often little or no reliable access to electricity or running water, let alone a proper method for installing computer workstations or laptop charging systems.

On a similar note, with regard to second language acquisition, the mandatory language to learn in schools (beginning with secondary school) was only recently switched from French to English in 2008.³⁹ In fact, what I witnessed in Kigali was a majority of 40+ adults who knew fluent French and a minimal amount of English, young adults who were fluent in French, and English, and children who could only speak their primary language of Kinyarwanda. On one hand, I see trilingual instruction from secondary to tertiary levels of education as a positive aspect of the Rwandan educational system. During my time in Kigali, it was not uncommon for me to meet someone in his or her twenties who knew upwards of five languages and could communicate fluently with people from all over the world who came to negotiate business in Rwanda. However, I imagine that people living in rural areas would not have access to secondary schools where bilingual and trilingual teachers were abundant, as the literacy rates in rural areas were just over 60% in 2011 (MINEDUC 2011). Furthermore, I feel that the formal introduction to secondary language education in secondary school rather than primary is counterintuitive when considering the fact that the Ministry of Education

³⁸This statistic was found in the entry for Rwanda in the CIA World Factbook, which was last updated on April 8, 2013.

³⁹This plan was executed after a failed attempt to enforce a trilingual policy incorporating English, French, and Kinyarwanda in the school curricula in the early 1990s. One major concern was that the Tutsi returnees from Anglophone countries wanted to attend schools with English as the language of instruction, whereas the majority Hutu who remained in Rwanda and the Tutsi returnees from francophone countries wanted to study French in school (Walker-Keleher 2006: 46; quoted by Hilker 2010: 12).

hopes to distribute OLPC laptops (not available in Kinyarwanda language) to all primary school students. In order to properly implement these globalized education measures, it will take time for the instructors to become fluent in the new learning material before they can effectively teach the students.

The Silicon Valley of Africa (?): The Cases of OLPC and CMU-Rwanda

Upon my visit to Kigali in the summer of 2012, I had the opportunity to see firsthand the dream of ICT and educational expansion being actualized in the primary and graduate school levels. My purpose for traveling there was to work with a team of Carnegie Mellon University-Pittsburgh students to lead a two-week technological and creative arts workshop for 300 fifth grade students from one local primary school called the St. Vincent Pallotti School. The core of this program was the introduction of OLPC laptops to the students. In addition, I visited the new Carnegie Mellon University-Rwanda graduate facility, which welcomed its first incoming class of 26 students during the week I arrived.⁴⁰ Everyone in this first class of 2013-2014 is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Information Technology. While interacting with these two different groups of students, I had the opportunity to explore how new ICT and educational initiatives were being implemented in Kigali. In short, I found many of these new programs to be effective but their long-term sustainability remains questionable.

President Kagame's enthusiasm for technology and ICT growth is certainly shared by the primary school students and their families. The Rwandan government is

⁴⁰23 of these students were from Rwanda, while the other three were from neighboring countries. Thus, they were all citizens of countries within the East Africa Community.

working with OLPC to make laptop resources available to all primary schools in Kigali. On the one hand, this is a cost-effective way to introduce technology to students at an early age, as the OLPC XO laptops only cost about \$100-\$200 each and include programs that are especially designed for children. Furthermore, when helping the 10-12-year-old fifth graders learn how to use the laptops, my team of Carnegie Mellon students were impressed by how excited the children were to interact with the computers and how quickly they picked up new concepts like keyboarding and basic programming. Our advisor on the ground even instructed us to indicate the names of those students who seemed to be especially fast with developing computing skills, as they might be selected for a gifted program or at least be overseen carefully by their instructors. From this perspective, it was fascinating to see how students in a developing country like Rwanda were utilizing basic technological tools and programs that children from around the world could also access. The idea that Africa is a step behind the rest of the world was not evident in this particular case.

While the OLPC XO laptops have the potential to revolutionize the way that primary school students in Rwanda learn elementary technology skills and eventually influence the national ICT industry, it is clear that there are still some small yet significant logistical issues to resolve before the overall impact can be as meaningful as intended. For one thing, when our team from Carnegie Mellon first arrived at St. Vincent Pallotti School, we noticed that the boxes filled with hundreds of OLPC laptops were unopened and gathering dust, despite the fact that the school had owned them for several

months.⁴¹ One might think that the reason for their inactive use was a result of the teachers' lack of knowledge of how to operate the laptops, which was partially the case. However, the most important explanation was that nobody could find an efficient way to charge the laptops. With an average battery life of three hours and only two available outlets at the school, there was no way that the teachers or administrators could ensure that these laptops were charged and ready for students to use during class each day.

OLPC representatives on the ground have proposed adding more outlets in the schools, but this would certainly drain the school's electricity. According to Carnegie Mellon-Rwanda professor Michel Bézy, "the cost of recharging 900 computers every day for one month would be equivalent to the salary of one teacher," and allowing the students to charge their laptops at home is not a viable option because in-home electricity is not always guaranteed in Rwanda (Bézy [1] 2013). In a nation where many of the teachers make less than \$100 per month, the national investment in \$100-\$200 laptops when there are no proper charging systems in place at all of the schools seems futile. Overall, I think that OLPC has a lot of potential and can help Rwandan primary school students to develop important skills at an early age. Nonetheless, the effort to buy and force technology onto young people without ensuring that all of the logistics are set in place could severely impede the nation's goal in creating a new generation of ICT students.

While visiting the Carnegie Mellon Rwanda graduate facilities, I had the opportunity to see a glimpse of how a different group of students were planning to

⁴¹Even though school was not in session when we arrived, the headmistress informed us that the students had not utilized the laptops to any extent for their lessons during the school year.

employ the available resources to learn about and improve ICT technologies. But before introducing the students' ideas, it is important to understand the significance of CMU-Rwanda, the first American university to offer degree programs in Africa. The construction of this graduate campus is being funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB). According to the CMU-R website:

In October 2007, the Connect Africa Summit recommended the establishment of five Centers of Excellence (CoE) in each sub-region of Africa that would support the development of a critical mass of science and technology skills required for the development of Africa. Rwanda is spearheading the initiative for the East Africa Community (EAC) with the opening of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) CoE in Kigali...In order to fulfill this ambitious goal, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) strategically targeted Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to establish and operate a master's degree-granting program in Rwanda because of CMU's strong culture of research and innovation (Carnegie Mellon Rwanda 2013).

Carnegie Mellon Rwanda currently offers one advanced degree program. With an M.S. in Information Technology, CMU-R hopes that students will be able to contribute to a number of innovations, including the design of mobile applications, creation of cloud computing, implementation of software metrics, and understanding of crucial business and ethics skills that will help them to succeed in technological management careers. The program is no different in theory from the master's program at the Carnegie Mellon campus in Pittsburgh. The application requirements, professor quality, and even tuition costs are the same in both locations.⁴² With this in mind, CMU-R can help stop the brain drain from Africa to some extent, as the 200,000 young people who leave Africa to pursue higher education elsewhere will now have the opportunity to stay home and obtain the same quality advanced degree they are seeking abroad. CMU-R hopes to expand its

⁴²The Rwandan government is able to provide a 50% tuition scholarship for students from countries within the East African Community, and students may take out loans to cover the remaining 50%.

graduate facility to offer a master's program in Electrical and Computer Engineering (MSECE), and eventually in other fields as well.

The CMU-R classrooms, offices, and facilities are currently located inside Telecom House, a building that also happens to be the home of kLab. This is where students and entrepreneurs can work together to develop new ICT innovations in an open space environment. During my visit to the kLab facility, I saw several CMU-R students crowded around laptop screens with their latte cups or maximizing street locations on a projector displaying Google Maps. It was difficult to believe that I was at a Carnegie Mellon facility in Rwanda and not in Pittsburgh. I spoke with some of the incoming graduate students to learn more about what they planned to develop during their time at CMU. One student was designing the first-ever online Kinyarwanda – English dictionary, while another student hoped to create a personal online marketplace platform like eBay or Craig's List for Rwanda and the East African Community. It is too early for me to tell whether Carnegie Mellon Rwanda will be successful in training its students to be the technological leaders who will elevate Rwanda to the "Silicon Valley of Africa" status the government so desires for its people. Nonetheless, I am interested in continuing my research over time so that I can better evaluate the short- and long-term successes of this major initiative. I see a great deal of promise in the ideas of these students, and I look forward to seeing whether their innovations will have a great impact on the Rwandan economy and society.

The students at Carnegie Mellon Rwanda echoed President Kagame's optimism that technology could serve as the key in transforming Rwanda's national identity. From a practical point of view, CMU-R professor Michel Bézy provides insight on what

exactly it means to become the “Silicon Valley of Africa” and how Rwanda and other African nations are working (and competing) to achieve this distinction. Here is an excerpt from his March 2013 blog entry titled “Striving to Become Africa’s First Silicon Valley: Comparing Kenya and Rwanda”:

Africa has a unique opportunity to take ownership for the development of those new ICT solutions. ICT innovations for Africa will not come from the West; rather they will come from inventors and entrepreneurs in Africa who understand the challenges and needs that are unique to local environments and contexts. This market should create more value for Africa through the added value of homegrown enterprises that will develop an ICT industry in the region (Bézy [2] 2013).

Michel also explains that, once a nation within Africa can create a favorable environment for ICT technologies to grow and develop, a private sector comprised of a skilled workforce of “engineers, entrepreneurs, and investors” should take charge of developing the technology market. This is because it is difficult for new programs to flourish under strict bureaucratic control. Furthermore, he explains that Silicon Valley offers the model for African nations like Rwanda because “it is where ICT innovators resided in close proximity in an environment that...facilitated idea sharing and innovation” (Bézy [2] 2013). He states that, in order to achieve this model, a nation must invest in education (measured by literacy rates and quality of higher education); a solid business environment (measured by corruption perception index, total tax rate, and quality of infrastructure); political, economic, and social environment (measured by quality of governance, GDP/Capita, GDP growth rate, and quality of life); and the government’s overall prioritization of ICT development (Bézy [2] 2013). Rwanda is considerably strong in all of these categories, and the Rwandan government is the main creator of the aforementioned national ICT development plan, Vision 2020. With the highly developed fiber-optic network and plan to further develop Rwanda’s tech offerings, Bézy argues

that Rwanda can bolster its ICT network by training young Africans to utilize these new tools. He suggests that the Government of Rwanda ought to “better leverage CMU’s presence in the country” so that the nation can “clearly position itself in the ‘innovation market’ rather than the resale market” (Bézy [2] 2013). In this sense, he argues that it is skilled researchers and developers, not the reliance on foreign investments, which could potentially elevate Rwanda to a “Silicon Valley” status.

Old Enemies and New Alliances: Rwanda’s Post-Genocide Global Relationships

In order to best estimate what the future of Rwanda holds, it is essential to zoom outward and understand where the nation lies geographically and how its relationships have evolved with other countries around the world. Rwanda has had ongoing relations with European nations that include Belgium, the UK, and France. These nations strongly indicate their feelings about the current state of Rwanda through the undulating granting and withdrawal of foreign aid. Furthermore, the United States’ relationship with Rwanda has multiple implications. While the U.S. has been quick to provide a great amount of aid to Rwanda over the past few years, many wonder whether this significant interest in the nation stems from generous, guilty, or selfish motivations. Finally, Rwanda’s relationships with other African countries have been precarious at best. As a small landlocked country situated in between war-torn nations like Uganda and Congo, there are fears that the ongoing civil wars will come too close to the Rwandan border, especially since cross-border ethno-national militias and conflict minerals are at the center of these divisions.

Foreign Intervention vs. Foreign Aid: Rwanda and Europe

Rwanda's relationship with Europe, though still strained to an extent due to an oppressive colonial history, has been generally cooperative thanks to the support of the UN, IMF, and World Bank. The primary European powers that Rwanda has exchanged correspondence with since the genocide are Belgium, the United Kingdom, and France. Each of these nations has exhibited a different policy with regard to aiding Rwanda, which are based on factors such as Rwanda's visible plan to improve its economy and foreign concerns over human rights violations and other speculations over the RPF-led government.

Beginning in 1999, Belgium approached aiding Rwanda with "cautious engagement" (Hayman 2010: 4). This system has been marked by a continual distribution of aid over time, but, rather than embracing the post-genocide Rwanda with open arms, Belgium continues to be discerning and diplomatic over human rights issues in Rwanda. While Belgium gave the equivalent of \$55 million to Rwanda in 1991, they only provided \$11 million in aid by 2001. This reduction in aid can be explained by several factors, including the RPF-led Kibeho Massacre of 1995 that resulted in the massacre of at least 4,000 Hutu refugees (although the Rwandan government only reported 330 deaths), in addition to concerns over Rwanda's potential donation of foreign aid to finance the civil war in the Congo (Hayman 2010: 6). However, once Rwanda had withdrawn troops from the Congo in 2002, Belgium increased its aid to \$21.5 million in 2002 and \$73 million in 2012, including a budget that specified its support of the growing educational sector (OECD 2007 via Hayman 2010: 7).

Over time, it is clear that Belgium's policy of "*Afrique aux Africains*" (let Africans deal with Africa) from 1995-1999 has shifted in recent years, as Belgium has attempted to improve its global perception through more active (albeit cautious) involvement in providing aid to its former colonies (Hayman 2010: 7). However, Belgium is still discerning of human rights issues when it comes to financial support; its foreign aid to Rwanda was suspended in 2012 when news of Rwanda's support of militant Congolese rebels came to light.

Rwanda's relationship with the United Kingdom has especially strengthened over time, even though there were no significant ties between the two nations before the genocide. The UK donated nearly half of its foreign aid to Rwanda and admitted Rwanda to the Commonwealth in 2009, despite the obvious fact that this nation was never a colony of the British Empire (McGreal [1] 2007). Furthermore, with the British-sponsored establishment of a Department for International Development (DfID) in Rwanda, the UK has "committed itself to becoming Rwanda's major bilateral development partner" in a large-scale effort to combat poverty (DfID 2004c: 15; quoted by Hayman 2010: 11). Nonetheless, these grand and expensive measures to provide aid to Rwanda left some British civil servants and NGOs critical of the national government for naively giving so many funds to a nation without fully understanding the implication of the Rwandan government in significant regional human rights and civil liberties violations.

As African Studies expert Dr. Rachel Hayman states, "While Belgium has treated Rwanda as something of a wayward child, to be treated with caution but maintained within its circle of core states, the UK has approached Rwanda as an orphan, abandoned

and rejected by its former friends and in need of the special attention which a ‘clean’ donor could provide” (Hayman 2010: 14). Even after it was alleged that Rwanda was supporting rebels in the Congo, the British government only froze its support for three months before announcing that it would donate roughly \$14 million through DfID to support the continued growth of Rwanda’s Vision 2020 plan (Roopnarine 2013). It is evident that the UK has invested a lot of time and money in its support of post-genocide Rwanda and has no intention of seeing these efforts fall through.

Of all of its European partners, Rwanda’s relationship with France has been the rockiest. France of course felt betrayed by the fact that Rwanda was appearing to become allied with the UK and the Anglophone community, even though the nation had been recognized as part of the Francophone community since long before the genocide began. But the strained relations go far beyond language. After all, a French judge named Jean Louis Brugière implied in 2006 that President Kagame was involved in the 1994 assassination of President Habyarimana, and the French are still bitter about the release of a 2008 report that accused France of being directly involved in the genocide (BBC News 2008).⁴³

Unlike Belgium and the United States, France has refused to apologize for any complicity in the genocide. Rather, during a French Parliamentary Commission on Rwanda, the Governments in Paris declared that they merely made “errors in judgment” (News24 2011; Whitney 1998). Furthermore, in 2007, the French ambassador to Rwanda

⁴³This is in reference to Operation Amaryllis, French President Mitterrand’s plan for a near complete withdrawal of all foreign military troops from Rwanda in the immediate onset of the genocide. In a 2008 report, an independent Rwandan commission claimed that French forces helped to plan the genocide and “directly assassinated Tutsis and Hutus accused of hiding Tutsis” (BBC News 2008).

was thrown out, and in 2012, Rwanda “refused” to approve the new ambassador due to concerns over his hostile regard for the Rwandan authorities ([News Wires](#) 2012). Despite attempts by France to improve its relationship with Rwanda, as demonstrated by French President Sarkozy’s visit to Kigali in 2010 and President Kagame’s visit to France in 2011, it is clear that relations are not as amicable as they could be.

Overall, European nations have proven the most loyal and generous contributors of foreign aid to Rwanda over the years. But many wonder whether this aid is helpful to Rwandans or is a form of neocolonialism. After all, would it be possible for Rwanda to become integrated into the global economy and embark on its Vision 2020 plan less than twenty years after the genocide without foreign aid? Rwanda is a geographically small nation of just over 10,000 square miles, but it has a growing population density of 590 people per square mile and an equally accumulating national debt approaching \$1 billion. Despite the fact that many global powers are donating aid money to Rwanda without the stipulation of being paid back, the issue still remains that Rwanda is dependent to some extent on the help of former colonial powers in order to maintain stability and eventually prosper. President Kagame rejects this notion in his recent claim that “Any assistance from [foreign powers] should not be used to determine [Rwanda’s] path but to achieve the goals Rwandans have set...we must strive for self reliance and find answers within ourselves to achieve our own goals” (Kwesiga 2013). I don’t know if the transformation from a colony into a technocracy is the best national transition, but it is clear that Rwandans will need to find ways to design and implement their own initiatives rather than simply build upon what Western nations have already established if they want to move past their reliance on foreign assistance.

A (Questionable) Helping Hand: Rwanda and the United States

Although the United States was not directly responsible for the genocide and was not a former colonizer, the present guilt for its decision to not aid Rwanda when it had the opportunity to do so is evident. Today, many American politicians and national institutions are reaching out to Rwanda to provide funds or build other initiatives. There may be a desire among Americans to help this young democracy within Africa become an example of how to succeed years after a devastating conflict, but others argue that these efforts stem from an Anglo-American guilt or other ulterior motives.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda occurred while the Clinton administration was in power in the United States. While the U.S. was not quick to assist Rwanda during the conflict, Clinton has since apologized, stating, “if we’d gone in sooner...we could have saved at least a third of the lives that were lost” (Moodley 2013). From the late 1990’s until, most recently, the summer of 2012, he has visited Rwanda on numerous occasions to apologize for the lack of U.S. support of Rwanda during the genocide and propose new ways to help Rwanda move forward through programs like the Clinton Global Initiative.

Besides President Clinton’s renewed support, the U.S. has attempted to make up for their guilt through inaction by generously providing aid through a number of different channels. According to the U.S. Department of State and USAID, the U.S. supports Rwandan growth initiatives that seek to improve rural economic stability, agricultural production, biodiversity protection, democratic engagement, educational readiness, business development, and access to medical resources. In addition to charities, U.S. private businesses have invested an estimated \$2.8 billion annually to several of

Rwanda's industries, including coffee, mining, and energy (U.S. Dept. of State 2012; USAID 2013; Evans 2005).

While many would argue that the U.S. support of Rwanda in recent years is a positive step in rebuilding the nation after the brutal genocide, some suggest that the U.S., like the UK, should take more caution before providing a great deal of aid to a country that was so recently embroiled in a violent conflict. In 1996, the U.S. was quick to join the UK in supporting the Rwandan invasion of the Congo (then known as Zaire). Chris McGreal of *The Guardian* indicates that this invasion was justified, as it was intended to clear the UN refugee camps where genocidal forces were “running cross-border raids and threatening to start a new genocide”; nonetheless, this international support of the RPF-led invasion was perhaps naively blind to the fact that the militias may also have had motives to find and kill the Rwandan Hutu militants (and their families) who had settled in the Congo after the genocide (McGreal [2] 2012).

As previously mentioned in this essay, United States refused to assist with blocking the radio airwaves that spread violence-provoking hate messages during the genocide because such a measure would inhibit the democratic freedom of speech. Ironically, the U.S. is happy to give aid to Rwanda now, even though the current RPF-led administration “does not allow any serious political opposition, independent media, or independent civil society to exist” and has not hesitated in “replacing elected local officials with appointed, nonlocal loyalists” in order to secure a one-party state in which President Kagame garnered “an implausibly high 93 per cent of the vote” in the 2010

elections (Straus and Waldorf: 10; Stanley 2012).^{44 45} Thus, while guilt and a high regard for supporting growth in Africa may be primary motivators for the U.S. to provide a great amount of assistance to Rwanda, it is important that they do not turn a blind eye to significant human rights violations by the Rwandan government. Despite its continued support of the Vision 2020 plan, it appears that the U.S. is now beginning to take these concerns into account. In light of news that Rwanda is supporting violent rebels in the Congo, an issue that will be discussed later in this essay, the U.S. announced in 2012 that it would be cutting \$200,000 in military aid to Rwanda (Bavier 2012).

In addition to Anglo-American guilt, there are mounting concerns that Western powers like the United States seek to invest considerable time and money into rebuilding Rwanda because of the nation's strategic position in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. After all, why would a major superpower like the U.S. be so quick to donate millions of dollars to a new republic with a minority-led, militaristic government, even if their motivations were prompted by guilt and a genuine interest in human development? The U.S. has not only supported educational and economic development in Rwanda, but also Rwandan rebel invasions in neighboring Congo. As I will explain further in the next

⁴⁴Lars and Waldorf further explain that, while there are multiple news outlets operating in Rwanda, journalists are subjected to harsh censorship guidelines that, if broken, could result in "violence, heavy fines, and imprisonment." Because of this, Rwanda earned Africa's worst ranking from international watchdog Reporters without Borders in 2009 (Lars and Waldorf 2011: 11).

⁴⁵The RPF influence does not stop at the national level. While I was in Kigali in 2012, I noticed military officials at every local street corner - at every marketplace, and at every school. On one level, this military omnipresence is directly correlated to the reduction in crime. However, it also inflicts upon civil liberties. As Susan Thomson, a Rwanda expert at Colgate University, asserts, "The RPF saturates every aspect of life in Rwanda. They know everything; if you've been drinking, if you've had an affair, if you've paid your taxes" (French 2013).

section, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is of critical interest to Rwanda and, to some extent, the United States, because of its vast possession of mineral resources. As the political environment in the DRC grows more volatile each day, there is reasonable speculation that establishing a positive relationship with Rwanda will help to facilitate the U.S. corporations' access to these coveted minerals. Although the U.S. appears to be making a considerable effort to become a valuable ally to Rwanda after a failure to back them in their greatest time of need, it is possible that this support is more complex than just a humanitarian gesture.

Militants, Migration, and Minerals: Rwanda and Africa

Rwanda's relationships to other African countries, particularly the DRC and Uganda, have become increasingly controversial over the years. Before the genocide, civil war in the DRC and Uganda prompted many citizens of these nations to seek refugee status in Rwanda. However, during conflicts such as the 1994 genocide, thousands of Rwandans fled to these same countries. Now, as the civil war violence intensifies in the DRC and the extensive political corruption expands in Uganda, we are seeing more of these Rwandan refugees settling back in Rwanda or other parts of Africa. Furthermore, developing reports of Rwanda's involvement in strategic military efforts and illegal economic activities within the DRC could have major effects on Rwanda's partnerships with African nations as well as Western ones.

According to *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, the ongoing conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa have contributed to "the exodus and repatriation of more than two million refugees, several hundred thousand orphans, and a vast number of single

parent- or child-headed households” ([The Encyclopedia Britannica 2013](#)). Thus, with these constantly shifting conflicts and subsequent migrations, there have been significant changes in the national demographics of Rwanda and other African countries, particularly with regard to their national Hutu and Tutsi populations. Shifts in migration as a result of the Rwandan genocide have led to what has been called the Great Lakes refugee crisis. The Great Lakes Region includes Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of DR Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. The refugee crisis has most significantly affected Rwanda, DR Congo, and Uganda.

In April of 2013, despite the ongoing fear that violent ethno-national conflict could once again erupt in Rwanda in the future, it was reported that 9,000 refugees in Uganda would be forced to repatriate back to their home country of Rwanda. In support of this measure, Rwanda’s government released a statement saying, “Rwandan refugees who hesitate to return home either lack information on the current situation in Rwanda or have developed significant ties with host countries” ([Muhumuza 2013](#)). In addition, a government official in Rwanda announced in March of 2013 that camps in Rwanda housing 43,000 refugees of mostly Congolese descent were completely full ([IRIN \[1\] 2013](#)). It is clear that these migratory shifts in the Great Lakes Region are a result of fear and necessity, but the placement of these refugees could have long-term effects on the national demographics, culture, and even stability of each individual nation.

Rwanda’s involvement in foreign affairs with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular, has been called into question over the past decades. A number of African nations have intervened at some point in the Congolese civil war since the dawn of the millennium to support either President Joseph Kabila (acting president since 2001)

or the rebel armies. Rwanda received a great deal of global criticism for its involvement in the war, a long history that Tim Stanley summarizes in his 2012 article for *The Telegraph*. Before Paul Kagame became president in 2001, he led the RPF insurrection that prompted approximately two million Hutu militants to flee to eastern Congo (then known as Zaire). Once settled there, they joined forces with then-President Joseph Mobutu to fight the Tutsis in Zaire. When the Tutsi militias (sponsored by Rwanda and Uganda) overthrew Mobutu's Zaire in 1997, Laurent Kabila became president and established what we know today as the DRC. When Kabila proved to be an unreliable ally in his inability to expel the Hutus, Rwanda and Uganda then sponsored a rebellion that eventually led to Kabila's assassination in 2001 and the death of over 5 million people by the war's official end (Stanley 2012). In 2002, a peace agreement was reached that included a provision to withdraw Rwandan troops from the DRC in exchange for the disarmament and repatriation of Congolese Hutu rebels (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013). Nonetheless, hostile relations between the DRC and Rwanda have intensified in recent years, with the Congolese government accusing Rwanda of backing rebel militia groups such as the M23 ([BBC News 2012](#)).

The ongoing Rwandan conflict with the Congo goes far beyond Hutu and Tutsi politics, as Rwanda is rumored to be supporting the (mostly illegal) mining industry in the DRC. In truth, what has made the Congo attractive since the colonial era is its vast possession of mineral resources. The competition over these minerals by Western and African powers has made the land an international hotbed over centuries of conflict. Some of these valuable minerals, including coltan and cassiterite, are essential

components in the assembly of mobile phones.⁴⁶ Thus, there is no doubt that these minerals are highly in demand, especially by African nations like Rwanda, who aim to capitalize on technology. It is becoming less of a secret that Rwandan leaders are profiting from the exploitation of minerals from this region, which is presumably a hidden source of revenue for many of Rwanda's new government initiatives (Straus and Waldorf 2011: 10). Howard W. French of *Newsweek Magazine* summarizes this history of corruption:

Through mafialike networks reportedly run by the Rwandan Army and the RPF, huge quantities of Congo's minerals are siphoned out of the country, experts say.

As early as 2000, Rwanda was believed to be making \$80 million to \$100 million annually from Congolese coltan alone, roughly the equivalent of the entire defense budget, according to Reyntjens, the Belgian expert.

Pillaging the Congo obscures Rwanda's giant military budget from foreign donors who provide as much as 50 percent of the country's budget each year. It also provides a rich source of income to the urban elites, especially returnees from Uganda, who form the regime's core.

"After the first Congo war, money became coming in through military channels and never entered the coffers of the Rwandan state," says Rudasingwa, Kagame's former lieutenant. "It is RPF money, and Kagame is the only one who knows how much money it is—or how it is spent. In meetings it was often said, 'For Rwanda to be strong, Congo must be weak, and the Congolese must be divided.'" (French 2013).

The implication of Rwanda in the complex mineral mining industry in the Congo no doubt adds to the culpability of Rwanda's involvement in the current conflict with the DRC militia groups. Despite President Kagame's firm denials of the accusations, Europe and the United States have responded with dramatic aid cuts. Kagame may deny this as well, but it is clear that Rwanda will be somewhat dependent on foreign aid if it wants to fully carry out major initiatives like Vision 2020. As Rwandans attempt to rebuild their

⁴⁶In 2001, Dena Montague and Frida Berrigan indicated in *Dollars and Sense Magazine* that the Democratic Republic of the Congo contained 80% of the world's coltan reserves, in addition to 60% of the world's cobalt and the largest global supply of high-grade copper (Montague and Berrigan 2001).

nation, it is their involvement with the growing conflicts with the DRC that may have the greatest influence on their position in the Great Lakes Region. In time, Rwanda may be known as both the “Silicon Valley of Africa” and the “Blood Mineral Capital.”

Rebuilding with Caution: A Conclusion on the Current State of Rwanda

Rwanda has overcome a great deal in recent decades, but is it truly on the right path toward national unity, growth, and independence? I think investments in education and technology are helpful ways to boost the economy and quality of life, and it is clear that Rwanda has worked to vastly improve these national sectors in recent years. Nonetheless, the method of implementation needs to have a quality and pace that does not provoke more harm than good.

The attempt to build and mend relationships with other parts of the world is beneficial for a small African country, but exploiting other African countries’ resources and becoming heavily dependent on foreign powers is perhaps not the right way to approach national development. While it is clear that Rwanda’s strategic location in relation to valuable minerals will make the nation a key player in international development within the Great Lakes Region, what is not so apparent is who will ultimately control these processes.

In the end, the growth of Rwanda could be as dependent on changing political and economic relations with the DRC as it is on international development projects like Vision 2020. The future of Rwanda is uncertain, but its decisions in the next few years could determine whether the nation becomes an African technocracy, a neocolonial puppet of the West, a cohesive democracy, or some combination of all of the above.

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