

International Conference

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AID AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Rwanda, Twenty Years on in Comparative Perspective

Antwerp, 27-28 June 2014



IOB

Institute of Development Policy and Management
University of Antwerp

International Relations, Aid and Authoritarianism

Rwanda, Twenty Years on in Comparative Perspective

CONFERENCE THEME

Interactions between democratic governments and authoritarian regimes make up an important part of international relations at a global level. For both types of actors, these relations pose particular challenges. From the side of the democratic government, engaging with authoritarian regimes comes with the risk of legitimising and strengthening the political position of their leaders. This may induce domestic critiques of the democratic government's perceived support to autocrats abroad. As a result, in particular since the early 1990s, democracy and rule of law promotion have become part of most democratic states' foreign policy discourse. At the same time, those states' agendas are driven by other considerations and concerns, such as stability and security. Furthermore, they have gradually come to realise that liberal peace-building and state-building are complex and time consuming goals, particularly in fragile post-conflict environments, and that trade-offs between democratic and economic development objectives emerge. From the side of the authoritarian regime and its leaders, engaging with democratic states raises problems as well. They risk interference with what they consider to be domestic affairs. Furthermore, they may fear falling victim to double standards used by the democratic governments in their foreign policy. Yet, publicly opposing democratisation and rule of law may delegitimise them internationally. Smart reactions may involve the establishment of new alliances and partnerships against what can be framed and denounced as neo-colonial interventions.

Over the past twenty years, these challenges have been particularly prominent in aid relationships between donor countries and recipient governments. Paradigms abound and policies come and go, some with major attention to political dimensions of aid as potential levers for political liberalisation, others with a seemingly a-political focus on technocratic governance performance.

RWANDA AS A CASE-STUDY, AND IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Twenty years ago, in early July 1994, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) took power after winning the civil war and putting an end to the genocide. After brief initial rhetorical adherence to the principle of broad-

based inclusive governance, the dominance of the RPF in all political, military and economic spheres soon gave rise to a de facto one party State, a dictatorship according to some (Reyntjens 2013), a case of visionary developmental patrimonialism according to others (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012). Despite its dismal record of human rights abuses, both domestically and in neighbouring DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rwanda – itself very critical vis-à-vis the aid industry has been cherished as an aid darling for many years. Over the last decade, aid on average amounted to over 20 percent of GDP and almost 50 percent of the national budget. This raises the question how democratic states, including through the use of aid instruments as part of their overall foreign policy vis-à-vis Rwanda, have engaged with the Rwandan government, and how the gap between their pro-democracy and pro-rule of law discourse and their actual policy as implemented on the ground can be explained and, perhaps, justified. It also begs the question how, as part of its overall foreign policy, Rwanda uses its bargaining capital to define its relations with donors. This conference seeks to understand the Rwandan case by placing it in the wider context of international (aid and other) relations with authoritarian (post-conflict) regimes and addressing this issue from a comparative perspective.

Programme

Friday, June 27 (incl. coffee breaks)

9.00-9.30 Registration & Welcome

Opening: Filip Reyntjens (University of Antwerp)

9.30-10.40 Session 1. State, Governance and International Relations: State of the Art

Moderator: Filip Reyntjens (University of Antwerp)
Keynote Speaker: Joseph Wright (Pennsylvania State University, USA)
Discussant: Nadia Molenaers (University of Antwerp)

Friday, June 27 (continued)

10.40-12.30 Session 2. Rwanda: a "Donor Darling"?

Moderator: Filip De Maesschalk (University of Antwerp)

Presentations:

- Zoë Marriage (School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), UK), "Aid to Rwanda – Unstoppable Rock, Immovable Post."
- Prithvi Behuria (SOAS/University of London, UK), "Straddling the Fault Line in the Aid Game: Rwanda Between a Darling and a Developmental State."

Discussant: Peter Moors (Director general for Development Cooperation, Belgian Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation)

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-16.30 Session 3. Governance in Rwanda

Moderator: Stef Vandeginste (University of Antwerp)

Presentations:

- Jean-Paul Kimonyo (Senior Advisor, Office of the President of Rwanda), "The Political Dimensions of Rwanda's Policy of 'Good Governance'."
- Danielle Beswick (University of Birmingham, UK), "State building after Military Victory: Insights from Minority/Rebels Victory in Rwanda and Majority/Government Victory in Sri Lanka."
- Nina Wilén (Royal Military Academy Brussels, Belgium), "Transformational Leadership or Cult Dynamics in Rwanda? Why Rwanda Remains a 'Donor Darling'."
- Benjamin Chemouni (London School of Economics, UK), "Explaining Variation of Governance Patterns between Rwanda and Burundi: Elite Vulnerability and Institutional Choice."

Saturday, June 28 (incl. coffee breaks)

9.30-12.30 Session 4. Rwanda's Image

Moderator: Bert Ingelaere (University of Antwerp)

Presentations:

- An Ansoms (Université Catholique de Louvain) and Esther Marijnen (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), "The Politics behind the Statistics: Commenting on Rwanda's Pathway out of Poverty."
- Silke Oldenburg (University of Basel, Switzerland), "Rankings, Regulations and the Radio – Rwanda's Media Policies 20 Years after Genocide."
- Anna Berglund (Lund University, Sweden), "Rural Development from a Peasant Perspective."

Discussant: Marijke Verpoorten (University of Antwerp)

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-16.00 Session 5. What Donors Say, What Donors Do, And Why?

Moderator: Stef Vandeginste (University of Antwerp)

Presentation:

Karen Del Biondo (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany/Ghent University), "Conflicting Goals: How Democracy Promotion Clashes with Donor Interests and Development Policy."

Panel discussion:

- Douglas Carpenter (Deputy Head of Division – Central Africa and Great Lakes; European External Action Service)
- Thijs Van Laer (11.11.11.)
- Ambassador Frank De Coninck (Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Belgian Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation)

16.00 - 17.00 Closing & drinks



PRACTICAL INFO

Registration

WHERE TO REGISTER

online

Click here to register online

MORE INFORMATION

katleen.vanpellicom@uantwerp.be

joelle.dhondt@uantwerp.be

REGISTRATION FEE

€65 (incl. 2 lunches, coffee breaks and conference documentation)

A maximum of 80 persons can be admitted.

Venue

INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (IOB)

University of Antwerp

Promotion Hall

Lange Sint Annastraat 7

B-2000 Antwerp, Belgium

WHERE TO STAY?

- [Mercure Hotel Antwerp](#)
- [Hotel Columbus](#)
- [Hotel Keyserlei](#)
- [Hotel Prinse](#)
- [Park Inn by Radisson Antwerpen](#)



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