Political-Bureaucratic Relations in Rwanda: A Collaborative Affair?

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Abstract

Purpose: This study tests the recently advanced 'collaborative model' of political-bureaucratic relations in the case of Rwanda. This model has been at the root of many developmental success stories, yet this the first study to empirically test this model post-formulation. Thus, this study ascertains the model's presence and functioning, and observes how it manifests itself in one of Africa's most rapidly developing countries.

Methodology: This case study uses a theory-testing process-tracing method to examine the presence and functioning of the theorised model in empirical reality. Data is retrieved from government documents, books, third party reports, previous academic works and selected news articles.

Findings: The collaborative model is deemed to be present in the case. Rwanda's elites are committed to development and have gone to great lengths to create a capable state. Yet this study finds that bureaucratic autonomy, a vital feature of the model, is often limited. The country's central economic ministry, which plays a key role in development and the Rwandan policy process, is a key exception.

Implications: This study argues that the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations is a useful tool in understanding developing country governance. Areas for refinement of the model include bureaucratic autonomy and the dimension that aid brings to the African context if the model is to be of value in this context.

Contribution: This study adds to a rapidly growing body of public administration literature focused on the developing country context, as well as the extensive bodies of literature concerning political-bureaucratic relations and Rwanda's governance and development.

Keywords: political-bureaucratic relations, collaborative model, Rwanda, developmental state, civil service reform.

Table of contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

EDPRS Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GoR Government of Rwanda

IMF International Monetary Fund

MIFOTRA Ministry of Public Service and Labour

MINECOFIN Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MINEDUC Ministry of Education

NPSC National Public Service Commission

PPP Purchasing Power Parity

PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

RDB Rwanda Development Board

RPF Rwandan Patriotic Front

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1. | Introduction

It is the last Saturday of the month. In Rwanda, the national holiday of *Umuganda* is being celebrated. From 8 to 11 a.m., the country comes to a halt as all able Rwandans aged 18 to 65 participate in nationwide community work. These efforts range from building houses for the vulnerable to cleaning the streets. The result is that the country's capital, Kigali, with its new state-of-the-art convention centre, is the cleanest city in Africa (Twahirwa, 2018). Although the work is mandatory and those who do not participate risk a fine, it is clear that Rwanda is blossoming after its tumultuous 20th century, culminating in a civil war and 99-day genocide against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu in 1994. Since that time, Rwanda has been able to turn it around, realising an impressive effort in post-conflict nation-building. The country has seen remarkable economic development under the leadership of President Paul Kagame. This development has been attributed to the extensive civil service reforms that the country has conducted and the economically stimulating policies that these reforms enabled (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Biedermann, 2016; Chemouni, 2017; Behuria, 2018; Jauhari, 2018; IMF, 2020a). This study presents an analysis of a topic that has received only limited attention in the case of Rwanda – its political-bureaucratic relations (Chemouni & Dye, 2020).

Political-bureaucratic relations – i.e. the relationship between political officials and appointed administrators – have been a topic of both interest and controversy throughout the history of public administration, yet the normative importance and utility of the concept have never entirely gone away (Wilson, 1887; Svara, 2006a; Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Rahman, 2008; Overeem, 2005, 2012). Seen as an essential aspect of governance, political-bureaucratic relations significantly affect key state characteristics such as the policy process and quality of government as a whole (Overeem, 2012; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). More recently, the concept has undergone a somewhat of a re-emergence in public administration literature, which has coincided with an increased interest in developing country settings. Combining the two, Dasandi & Esteve (2017) present a typology of political-bureaucratic relations for developing countries. These authors argue that a 'collaborative model' of relations, in which politicians and bureaucrats collaborate intimately to achieve rapid economic development, has been at the forefront of many developmental success stories, especially those in Asia. Considering the rapid economic development of Rwanda and the assertion by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) on

political-bureaucratic relations and development outcomes, this study sets out to answer the following research question:

Can the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations be observed in the case of Rwanda?

In doing so, this study aims to test the merits of the collaborative model of relations. There are multiple motivations to undertake this study. Firstly, the theoretical model advanced by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) is based upon numerous studies covering various countries. Therefore, the model is a composite of other success stories and has not yet proven its merit in a single-country setting. Undertaking this effort for the collaborative model is especially important given a previous analysis of the collusive model – another model in Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) typology – which saw multiple deviations when applied to a single-country case (O'Connor, Knox & Janehova, 2019). Furthermore, the collaborative model is predominantly based on Asian success stories, which raises questions about its applicability to other contexts such as Rwanda's sub-Saharan African setting – especially considering the peculiar cases that many African countries tend to constitute (Bierschenk & De Sardan, 2014; Biedermann, 2016). These form key questions that are unanswered in current literature. By applying the collaborative model to the case of Rwanda, this study answers a call by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) themselves to test their models in-depth in single-country cases. By doing so, the presence of the model can be ascertained, and its functioning examined. The outcome of this study will thus shed light on the validity of the presented model as well as any deviations that may occur in a single-country setting and in a different context than the one in which it was initially devised.

To this end, this study employs a theory-testing process-tracing methodology. This predominantly deductive, theory-centric method aims to determine whether or not a theoretical mechanism is present in a case and whether or not it functioned as expected (Beach & Pederson, 2013, p. 16), thereby testing to what extent theory reflects empirical reality. More specifically, a two-step causal mechanism is conceptualised and operationalised, after which empirical data is gathered and analysed in light of theory. This method allows for judgments to be made about the functioning of the proposed mechanism, and any deviations can allow for the refinement of existing theory (Løkke & Sørensen, 2014). The selection of the Rwandan case is based on the unlikeliness of its economic development – the nation was ravaged after the genocide, among other factors – and because its political leadership has said it wants to transform Rwanda into the 'Singapore of Africa'

(Blair & Uwiringiyimana, 2015). Singapore is perhaps the most striking example of the success of the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017), making this an intriguing case for testing this model.

This study is relevant in multiple ways. Academically, the main contributions concern the current uncertainties regarding political-bureaucratic relations in a developing country context. Developing countries have recently gained an increasing amount of attention in public administration literature, yet the lack of studies in the field focused on non-western countries persists for now (Bertelli et al., 2020). Therefore, gaining a more thorough understanding of political-bureaucratic relations in such settings is needed, as this is currently an especially underexplored aspect of understanding developing nations (O'Connor et al., 2019). The empirical analysis of Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) idea in a rapidly developing African economy is a valuable addition to this growing body of literature, especially considering the importance of political-bureaucratic relations in public administration more broadly (Svara, 2006b; Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Georgiou, 2014). Furthermore, this study adds the broader angle of political-bureaucratic relations from which to assess Rwanda and its development trajectory, contributing to the sizable and growing body of case study literature on the nation's governance and development (e.g. Hayman, 2007, 2009; Gready, 2010; Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Matfess, 2015; Biedermann, 2016; Mann & Berry, 2016; Chemouni, 2016, 2017, 2019; Ayittey, 2017; Hasselkog et al., 2017; Behuria, 2018; Chemouni & Dye, 2020).

The societal relevance of this study lies in the practical consequences that political-bureaucratic relations have on the policymaking and implementation process as well as developmental outcomes more generally (Svara, 2006b; Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Gaining a better understanding of the effect that political-bureaucratic relations can have in development and interactions with developing country governments can help practitioners in international organisations or NGOs. More specifically, it can assist in shaping better policies surrounding development stimulation in developing nations, for example through the IMF's extensive economic capacity development programme (IMF, 2021; also see IMF, 2020a). This study may also assist in shaping better reform incentives (see Peters & Pierre, 2001). Donors of aid to developing countries may, through the findings of this study, better understand political-bureaucratic relations and how these influence policymaking and the development process in these countries. Aligning aid with the presence of effective political-bureaucratic practices could incentivise governments of developing countries to reform. For example, it could lead to the adoption of political-

bureaucratic governance structures and practices conducive to economic development or more effective policymaking in general. Such efforts may be especially relevant in light of China's increasing aid donorship in Africa and the recent rapprochement of the European Union to the continent (e.g. Swedlund, 2017; Islam, 2021).

This study is structured as follows. The theory section discusses political-bureaucratic relations in the broader public administration context and discusses in-depth the features and merits of the collaborative model. Thus, this section develops the conceptual framework from which to understand this study. The theory section concludes with an overview of the contributions to the literature that this study makes. Following this, the design and methodological approach of this study is elaborated on. The research design and the choice for Rwanda as the case of analysis are discussed, after which the theoretical mechanism and hypotheses are presented and operationalised for the case of Rwanda. Following an overview of the data collection methods, the empirical findings of this study are presented. These are subsequently analysed from a theoretical perspective. This study concludes with a discussion of the findings, a concise answer to the research question, and the theoretical contributions that this study makes, followed by an overview of this study's strengths and limitations as well as recommendations for future research.

2. | Theory

In this section, the conceptual framework is presented that allows the theoretical analysis of the findings of this study. It concludes with an overview of the contributions to theory that this study aims to make.

2.1 | Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 | *Public Administration and Political-Bureaucratic Relations*

In its simplest form, political-bureaucratic relations concern the relationship between (elected) political actors and appointed administrators in any given setting as well as the roles they play in the policy process (Svara, 2006a; Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Rahman, 2008; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). The relationship between politicians and administrators has been a topic of interest in public administration literature since first outlined by Woodrow Wilson in the 19th century and is seen as "one of the five great issues in the field" (Tahmasebi & Musavi, 2011, p. 130), despite its aforementioned controversial nature (Svara, 2006a; Demir

& Nyhan, 2008; Overeem, 2005, 2012). Politicians and bureaucrats are both inseparable and indispensable to one another, yet the vague nature and definition that political-bureaucratic relations received over the years mark the concept's history (Svara, 2006a; Rahman, 2008). Nonetheless, it has continuously proven to be an important idea for its normative value and utility (Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Georgiou, 2014). Recently, political-bureaucratic relations have received renewed attention in scholarly literature, as its boundaries have been more clearly defined (see Overeem, 2005, 2012; Georgiou, 2014; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). For example, more distinction has been made between the idea of a true 'dichotomy' and relations more generally. Dichotomous relations have now taken the form of a clear separation between politicians and administrators, with little interaction between the two (Svara, 2006a). Therefore, this study prefers the term 'relations' when discussing anything but the true dichotomy between spheres.

For western (developed) countries, the dichotomy is of great value to governance and service delivery quality (Overeem, 2005, 2012) and quality of government more broadly (see Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017). It is the type of relations seen in many developed countries, especially those in the Western world, and is therefore highly associated with advanced democracies and the Weberian ideal (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). It was this idea that was central to scholarly attention for a long time. For this reason, the dichotomy was long seen as the best practice approach to governance. This is also what reformers and stimulators of development in underdeveloped nations believed and attempted to apply. However, this constituted a failure to transfer such practices to the context of these underdeveloped nations (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017, p. 242), in what Booth (2015, p. 36) labels "naïve liberalism". The developing country context has shown to be very important according to Nyadera & Islam (2020), who separate findings on the topic for developed and developing nations. This evolution is reflected in more recent literature, as new ideas have emerged and gained attention concerning political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations. In this context, new theoretical models of the interaction interactions between politicians and bureaucrats have been developed (Georgiou, 2014).

2.1.2 | *The Collaborative Model*

The typology provided by Dasandi & Esteve (2017), who focus on political-bureaucratic relations in developing settings, fits this trend well. According to these authors, two important dimensions determine political-bureaucratic relations in developing countries:

separation and autonomy. These two dimensions result in the typology that can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. *Typology of political-bureaucratic relations*

		Autonomy of bureaucrats	
		Low	High
Separation of bureaucratic and political spheres	High	Intrusive	Integrated
	Low	Collusive	Collaborative

Source: Dasandi & Esteve (2017, p. 232)

In this typology, separation refers to the separation of the political and bureaucratic spheres. More specifically, it concerns the types of functions that bureaucrats and politicians perform. Therefore, the demarcation of functions and responsibilities between the two spheres is central to this dimension. In cases where the separation between the spheres is high, roles are demarcated clearly, and politicians and bureaucrats each have and know their tasks, without significant interaction or muddling of tasks or careers (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; also see Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017). Administrators still contribute to policymaking but assert that politicians shy away from administrative affairs (Svara, 2006b). Conversely, in low separation situations, there is a dilution of tasks and responsibilities between politicians and bureaucrats. The division of tasks is more muddled, while the two spheres interact much more directly, and the absence of career separation is less likely (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Bureaucratic autonomy, meanwhile, refers to the autonomy that bureaucrats enjoy during their work – it is the ability and freedom to turn preferences into actions without constraints[1] (Maggetti & Verhoest, 2014). Therefore, the number and nature of the mandates bestowed upon the bureaucracy is the primary determinant of autonomy (Fukuyama, 2013). High autonomy is considered key to good governance, as it allows bureaucrats to freely determine the most effective way to achieve politicians' policy goals (Fukuyama, 2013; Maggetti & Verhoest, 2014; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Low autonomy grants much less freedom and gives bureaucrats considerably less discretion in applying their expertise.

Dasandi & Esteve (2017) write that the collaborative model of relations is often associated with developmental states – i.e. states that (attempt to) deploy both political and administrative resources to achieve economic development (Biedermann, 2016;

[1] Autonomy is therefore perhaps better referred to as 'bureaucratic independence' from political interference to avoid conflating it with autonomy from other forces such as societal pressures (Chemoni & Dye, 2020, p. 8).

Mianzokouna, 2018). Rwanda has been described as an example of such a developmental state (Biedermann, 2016; Mann & Berry, 2016; Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018; Mianzokouna, 2018; Williams, 2019), while examples of successful developmental states in recent history include Japan (Johnson, 1982; Wong, 2004), China (Rothstein, 2015), and Singapore (Low, 2001; Liow, 2012). According to Dasandi & Esteve (2017), these states (as well as all 'Asian Tigers') have all employed the collaborative model of relations. These authors therefore argue that it is the most interesting in a developing country context, as the nations mentioned above have been described as exceptional regarding their economic development (Wade, 2018). Therefore, the question is how the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats can enable developing states to achieve rapid economic development and transformation. Dasandi & Esteve (2017, p. 233) sum up the key characteristics of the collaborative model as follows:

- "*Core group or "cadre" of developmental elites consisting of senior politicians and bureaucrats.*
- *Unusually high degree of bureaucratic influence in proposal and design of policies.*
- *An esprit de corps among the political and bureaucratic elites based on development objectives.*
- *Shared class and education backgrounds of political and bureaucratic elites.*
- *Coherent and meritocratic bureaucracies.*
- *Movement between bureaucratic and political positions.*
- *Bureaucracy subsumed within dominant political party.*"

Thus, a state with these features does not abide by dichotomous or Weberian structures as political and bureaucratic actors are not separated from one another – a common occurrence in developmental states (Leftwich, 1993, 1995). At the forefront of states with collaborative relations is a relatively small group of 'developmental elites', which are high-ranking members of both the political and bureaucratic spheres that usually flock around the head of the government. These elites are developmentally committed and set the regime's and broader government's principles (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; e.g. Rothstein, 2015). Thus, the political and bureaucratic elites share many values and objectives, essentially constituting an *esprit de corps* centred around reaching development goals. This commitment is a feature of almost all developmental states and a vital component of the collaborative model. Such an *esprit de corps* is fostered through multiple processes. Most important is the promotion of values such as nation-building and development. This is

fostered by the presence of a stable political sphere, in which long tenures ensure that values and developmental objectives become shared over a longer period of time[2] (Biedermann, 2016; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Other contributing factors are a shared class or education background of the political and bureaucratic elites and the political leadership imposing measures to curb corruption in the wider civil service. However, these latter two points are subservient to the points mentioned above (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017).

Naturally, the elites of any regime cannot singlehandedly enable economic development. They require a capable bureaucratic apparatus to fulfil technocratic duties and implement developmental programmes (Clark, 2000; Cingolani, Thomsson & De Crombrugghe, 2015; Chemouni, 2017, 2019; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). To this end, governments of countries that employ the collaborative model go to great lengths to create an administration that is both meritocratic and coherent, which is often relatively uncomplicated as bureaucracies in developmental states tend to attract the country's best graduates (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Indeed, the necessity of meritocratic recruitment is in line with existing theory and is a central Weberian characteristic (see Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017). The recruitment method in the civil service is also a central determinant of political-bureaucratic relations (Almendares, 2011; Dahlström, Lapuente & Teorell, 2012; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2019) and state capacity more generally (Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Brierly, 2021). In developmental settings, recruitment by merit and long-term career perspectives and rewards can be an important part of creating coherence and tends to stimulate the creation of a policy environment conducive to economic growth (Evans, 1992; Rauch & Evans, 2000). A further benefit is the deterrence of corruption that meritocratic recruitment provides, making it a vital aspect of this model (Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Meyer-Sahling, Mikkelsen & Schuster, 2018; Oliveros & Schuster, 2018).

The combination of shared values between political and bureaucratic elites and the creation of such a potent, coherent, and meritocratic bureaucracy allows for more autonomy to be delegated to the bureaucratic sphere (Carpenter, 2001; Maggetti & Verhoest, 2014). However, such autonomy is only granted within the bounds of the developmental vision; the bureaucracy is expected to align with these objectives (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). This constitutes a breach of the Weberian norm, which prescribes neutral and impartial

[2] Long tenures and a strong political sphere are hallmarks of the collaborative model. Therefore, states with such a model of relations tend to be less democratic (see Wade, 1990).

administrators (see Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017). Yet in the collaborative model, civil servants' values, interests, and motivations play an important role. Bureaucrats must be committed to making developmental progress in the context in which they operate, which can be fostered in two ways. Firstly, the *esprit de corps* can be instilled in the wider civil service through promoting the same commitment to nation-building, reaching development objectives, and integrity (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Secondly, meritocratic recruitment and career progression can also contribute (Rauch & Evans, 2000; Biedermann, 2016; Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). This is because a merit-based administration encourages professionalism, efficiency, and greater integrity (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018; also see Wilson, 1887). This also aids in fostering trust and collaborative relations between the spheres and creates a sense of 'loyalty to the mission' of their organisation, which extends to the overarching mission of the country (Svara, 2006a, p. 133).

Another feature that is often seen in the collaborative model in practice is the movement between political and bureaucratic positions and the lack of separation between political and bureaucratic tasks, which is emblematic of collaborative efforts between the two spheres. However, this directly opposes much of the consensus on political-bureaucratic relations in developed countries (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Wilson (1887) already held the belief that administration is ideally separate and outside of the sphere of politics. The questions that the two spheres face are different, he argued, to which Weber added that administrators ought not to act to the (dis)advantage of politics and political parties – fundamental features that are not present in this model (see Cornell, Knutsen & Teorell, 2020). The lack of such a separation of careers is likely to create perverse incentives among the civil service as it can create muddled accountability systems, argue Dahlström & Lapuente (2017). In turn, the lack of a well-functioning accountability mechanism leaves governments vulnerable to corruption and general ineffectiveness (Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018). The above especially sheds light on the importance of the *esprit de corps*, ensuring that the government as a whole is committed to reaching development targets rather than giving in to the flaws that tend to be present in a low separation context. It also shows how taking strict anti-corruption measures – although not always present – can be an essential aspect of making collaborative relations function well (see Dasandi & Esteve, 2017).

The efforts of the collaborative model, as described above, are thus focused on achieving rapid developmental progress. Frequently, the key policies that are implemented in such cases concern strengthening the private sector – a central aspect to developmental

success (Biedermann, 2016; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; Mianzokouna, 2018). The prominence of market-oriented policies is necessary for post-colonial developmental states as these often lacked a robust private sector, hence the need to develop one using the primary tool of economic development that these states did have – the bureaucracy (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Thus, this is an integral part of the efforts of the collaborative model. In order to optimally implement such policies and to achieve development more generally, there is often a need for a strong economic ministry (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Biedermann (2016, p. 141) describes this as an "insulated specialist economic [bureaucracy], highly trained and largely insulated from the cloying demands" of outside interests or politicking (also see Wade, 1990; Evans, 1998; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Such a key ministry thus often forms the conduit through which developmental efforts are coordinated.

In sum, the collaborative model is hallmarked by a close working relationship between political and bureaucratic spheres. This relationship is fostered by creating a shared commitment to development – the *esprit de corps* – and a coherent, meritocratic bureaucracy. These features allow the political sphere to entrust the bureaucratic sphere with the significant autonomy that is central to this model. As Dasandi & Esteve (2017, p. 234) write, this often leads to a situation in which politicians take a backseat and leave the day-to-day operations to the bureaucratic sphere rather than involving themselves actively in the policymaking process (also see Leftwich, 1995). Importantly, this bureaucratic autonomy only exists because the political leadership allows it, as the political sphere remains the dominant of the two (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). While thus not Weberian or dichotomous, the model encourages development through various features and processes and thus manages to be successful nonetheless (also see Cornell, Knutsen & Teorell, 2020). The collaborative model is therefore the most effective model of relations devised by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) to encourage economic development in developmental settings, which becomes especially evident when compared to the other models in the typology of table 1:

- Collusive model countries are marked by total political domination over the administration. This includes recruiting procedures and extensive rent-seeking activities, both of which are incredibly harmful to state capacity and detrimental to economic development (see Evans & Rauch, 1999; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Choi & Storr, 2019; O'Connor et al., 2019).
- The intrusive model does have a more coherent and neutral bureaucracy, but often sees struggles for control between political and bureaucratic spheres (see Hirschmann,

1999). Reform is therefore difficult. Intrusive model countries also see frequent and competitive elections and changes in leadership, meaning that long-term developmental aspirations are challenging to create and maintain.

- Lastly, the integrated model is associated with advanced democracies and features many characteristics that are conducive to economic growth and government effectiveness (Evans & Rauch, 1999; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017). However, this does not necessarily apply to developing country contexts (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; Nyadera & Islam, 2020). Therefore, the integrated model is often found in 'post-collaborative' states in which the bureaucracy is no longer the main driver of growth[3].

Therefore, it is highly unlikely that these three other models presented by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) could enable rapid economic development in developmental settings. The main question of this study therefore is how the collaborative model functions in empirical reality.

2.2 | Contributions to Theory

The theory above shows what is currently known, explains the collaborative model and the most prominent peculiarities of this model in relation to the existing – albeit western-oriented – body of literature. Thus it presents the conceptual framework necessary to understand and analyse the findings of this study. Naturally, this study aims to contribute to existing theory, with its main aim being to fill gaps in the literature concerning political-bureaucratic relations, especially in developing country settings. Firstly, this study serves as a first in-depth analysis of the collaborative model by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) and the first analysis of the typology in a developing African state. The contributions made by testing this idea are numerous. For one, the application by O'Connor et al. (2019) of the collusive model to Kazakhstan showed some incongruences between the collusive model they test and the case in question. Analysing one of the other models is therefore an important exercise to test its validity. Furthermore, this study can serve as a preliminary step into uncovering a tangible link between specific 'models' of political–bureaucratic relations and development outcomes (see Dasandi & Esteve, 2017, p. 243). The collaborative model, which was developed through an analysis of previous studies of successful developmental states, shows important findings regarding political-bureaucratic relations and differing

[3] This is a state in Rwanda's development process that it is not close to reaching yet (see IMF, 2020a).

rates of development. Despite this and the interesting notion of collaboration that the model provides, it has not been applied to a case since its emergence.

Therefore, this study serves as a first analysis of the collaborative idea by judging its validity and examining whether the mechanisms supplied are present when a single country-case is empirically analysed. In doing so, it also assesses how well the tenets of the model hold up in a different context, as Rwanda's sub-Saharan context differs significantly from the Asian context in which this model has thus far almost exclusively been seen (see Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Such an analysis of this promising and relevant idea is currently a noteworthy absence in the literature on the topic. Finding empirical evidence that points to the validity of Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) idea as well as its applicability to a different context would mean that a solid foundation is provided for future research on using this idea and typology. It would also constitute a significant boost to the understanding of political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations. Deviations from the model in the case of Rwanda, either in the limited presence or total absence of important characteristics or the prescribed mechanisms, could furthermore allow for the identification of areas of refinement in this theoretical idea (Løkke & Sørensen, 2014). In this regard, Bertell et al. (2020) write that the building and testing of theories in public administration are especially crucial in developing country settings, further adding to the theoretical contribution of this study.

Gaining a more in-depth understanding of how political-bureaucratic relations can shape a nation's governance and developmental efforts thus constitutes a contribution on a key topic in developing country governance (see Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2019; Nyadera & Islam, 2020). Finally, this study also contributes to Rwanda country literature. The sub-Saharan country has been the case of interest in many studies because of its political leadership (e.g. Matfess, 2015; Reyntjens, 2015; Hasselkog et al., 2017), its general nation-rebuilding effort following the genocide (e.g. Gready, 2010; Hausman, 2011; Murindahabi, 2016; Chemouni, 2016, 2017), and naturally its rapid economic development (e.g. Hayman, 2009; Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Ayittey, 2017; Chemouni, 2019). In doing so, this study aims to shine a light on an underexplored aspect of Rwanda's development and the functioning of its government (see Chemouni & Dye, 2020), thus increasing the understanding of the country's developmental path.

3. | Methodology

With a clear view of the existing theory and the contributions that this study aims to make, this section outlines this study's methodology, starting with an explanation of the research method. Thereafter, an explanation concerning the selection of Rwanda as the case of analysis is given. Following this, the theoretical model is operationalised for this specific case, and the hypotheses of this study are presented. This section concludes with an explanation of the methods of data collection.

3.1 | Theory-Testing Process-Tracing

This case study makes use of a theory-testing process-tracing method to determine how the existing literature concerning political-bureaucratic relations and developmental outcomes holds up in the case of Rwanda. This method is appropriate considering the advanced level of development of the theoretical idea under analysis, which is well-rooted in scholarly literature (Beach & Pederson, 2013, p 164). Yet there is still the need to test this developed model in-depth, considering questions surrounding the applicability of the presented models to single-country cases and in different contexts than the one in which it was predominantly developed. Therefore, a case study is in order to more thoroughly understand the empirical viability of the new ideas concerning political-bureaucratic relations and to come to an assessment of the external validity of these ideas (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Løkke & Sørensen, 2014). While theory-testing case studies tend to be rare (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Toshkov, 2016), such a method is thus appropriate to test this model's validity and empirical functioning.

The theory-testing process-tracing method used in this study predominantly deductive[4], and is described in Beach & Pederson (2013). It consists of a three-step process to come to an answer to the research question. Firstly, it (1) conceptualises the hypothesised causal mechanism based on existing theory, making clear the context in which this mechanism functions. Secondly, (2) this hypothesised causal mechanism must be operationalised, defining what empirical, observable manifestations the mechanism should contain if the mechanism is present in the specific case of analysis. Thirdly, (3) empirical

[4] While mostly deductive, theory-testing has inductive elements which manifest themselves in the operationalisation of the theorised mechanism in empirical reality as well as the empirical expression of the mechanism, such as what evidence ought to be found to consider the mechanism valid (Beach & Pederson, 2013, p. 16).

evidence is collected in order to be able to make causal inferences. This step shows whether the mechanism that is hypothesised was indeed present in the case or if it was missing. It also allows the researcher to determine if the mechanism behaves as predicted, or whether some aspects function differently than theory suggests (Beach & Pederson, 2013, pp. 14-15; Toshkov, 2016, p. 290).

This type of process-tracing is theory-centric, meaning that it is the theorised causal mechanism that is being traced rather than empirical events or narratives. The current theory around political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations allows for such a largely deductive method while still making significant theoretical contributions on the subject, as outlined previously. However, an inherent limitation of theory-testing process-tracing is that while it allows for the testing of the presence or functioning of the theorised mechanism, it cannot determine its (relative) explanatory power or its necessity (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Toshkov, 2016). Therefore, this study does not attempt to determine the importance of political-bureaucratic relations via-à-vis other explanations for developing country growth, nor does it aim to prove or disprove the necessity of the presence of the theoretical model in relation to rapid economic growth in developing countries. Rather, the sole aim of this study is to determine whether or not the theoretical mechanism put forward by Dasandi & Esteve (2017) is present and whether it functions as expected. For this purpose, a theory-testing case study is especially suitable (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Toshkov, 2016). Finally, this study cannot escape the inherent limitations of case studies, most notably the limited potential for generalisation that the method suffers from. Nonetheless, findings can be made that will potentially prove useful in explaining other cases or the larger body of literature on the topic (Toshkov, 2016, pp. 304-305).

3.2 | Case Selection

The choice for Rwanda as the case of analysis has multiple motivations. Firstly, the case is a typical case as outlined by Seawright & Gerring (2008). A typical case is suitable considering the goals of this study, given its use for examining causal mechanisms and making judgments about a given theory by determining its functioning in empirical reality. Rwanda constitutes such a typical case considering Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) assertion on developmental outcomes and their collaborative model on the one hand and Rwanda's rapid economic development on the other. Therefore, the country is seen as emblematic of a country that could have developed with a collaborative model based on existing theory.

Thus, it also constitutes a most-likely case, which is crucial when taking a theory-testing approach concerning relatively new theoretical ideas such as the collaborative model in a single country-case (Toshkov, 2016, p. 285). Therefore, this case and method allow for judgments to be made about the larger body of theory. In this case, Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) developed models in particular (see Elman, Gerring & Mahoney, 2016).

Rwanda was chosen for multiple other reasons. Since the Rwandan genocide of 1994, Rwanda has embarked on a total post-conflict nation-rebuilding effort (The Commonwealth, 2016). In this process, the country has seen extensive civil service reforms that have touched almost every aspect of its public sector (Biedermann, 2016). These reforms have enabled the successful implementation of economically stimulating policies and have thus played a significant role in the development of the nation (e.g. Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Biedermann, 2016; Chemouni, 2017; Behuria, 2018; IMF, 2020a). This economic development is intriguing largely due to the economically disadvantageous position Rwanda found itself in, to begin with. For example, the country is landlocked – a significant economic handicap (MacKellar, Wörgötter & Wörz, 2000; Faye et al., 2004). It was furthermore one of the poorest countries in the world even before the 1994 civil war and genocide, which ravaged the country and further affected its already weak economy[5] (Braeckman, 1997; MINECOFIN, 2000; Lopez & Wodon, 2005; Reyntjens, 2015; Hodler, 2019). Its position was highly precarious. Yet it has recently emerged as one of Africa's most rapidly developing nations[6] (Ayittey, 2017; Jauhari, 2018), with its growth visualised in table 2. This is an intriguing case considering these significant disadvantages and the country's impressive development, as the use of good policy ought to be crucial for getting around said disadvantages (Bigsten & Yanagizawa, 2005, pp. 49-50; Kigabo, 2010).

Table 2. *GDP/capita of Rwanda in purchasing power parity (PPP); 2017 international dollars (constant prices) at five year increments, starting 1990.*

1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
982.1	767.0	963.2	1152.1	1459.5	1900.4*	2263.5*

*Estimated
Source: IMF (2020b)

[5] To illustrate this, Hodler (2019) describes the Rwandan genocide as "one of the most intense events of political violence since World War II" (p. 15), with Reyntjens (2015, p. 19) describing Rwanda's economy as "shattered".
[6] Rwanda's GDP growth has been at an average of 8% annually since 2001. It is also one of the few African nations to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals (Ayittey, 2017).

Secondly, overseeing many of these reforms has been President Paul Kagame, who has held office since 2000. Kagame has, on multiple occasions, made clear his intent to transform Rwanda into the 'Singapore of Africa' (Blair & Uwiringiyimana, 2015). From a political-bureaucratic relations perspective, this is especially relevant because Singapore is perhaps the most poignant example of the success of a collaborative model (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017), and because of the role of the public sector and government intervention through policymaking that the 'Singapore model' embodies (Huff, 1995). Therefore, Rwanda is a most likely case, which is key considering the chosen research method (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Toshkov, 2016). Furthermore, some preliminary and context-specific research on 'bureaucratic independence' in the Rwandan energy sector has been conducted by Chemouni & Dye (2020), which made numerous observations that contest important points of Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) model. For example, it was found that bureaucrats in their observed case were able to act particularly autonomously, which constitutes a major contrast to the collaborative model of relations. Therefore, taking a broader view of this incongruence in the literature and determining whether the collaborative holds up in the bigger picture is an important exercise.

Some limitations inevitably arise from this choice of case selection. Firstly, Rwanda is still at a rudimentary point in its development. Its GDP/capita (PPP) ranks it 168th worldwide, behind Afghanistan and Zimbabwe (IMF, 2020b). While it is a rapidly developing economy, as explained, it is still an impoverished nation and nowhere near the development levels of other nations that have been observed with collaborative relations. Furthermore, questions have been raised about the sustainability of Rwanda's growth (Reyntjens, 2015; Ayittey, 2017), which may also show in its political-bureaucratic relations, therefore affecting this study's generalisability. Finally, its post-genocide context makes it a unique case, which may also affect the generalisability of this study beyond the point of basic case study limitations (e.g. Toshkov, 2016). In light of the above, it is nonetheless a suitable case to test the merit of the collaborative model on.

The starting point of this study is the end of the 1994 genocide, which marks the start of the current Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) regime as well as the start of the country's nation-rebuilding efforts. Analysing anything before this point would not be relevant, as the civil service reforms enacted after this genocide have touched almost everything in the Rwandan public sector, leading to a wholly renewed system according to Biedermann (2016; also see Hausman, 2011; The Commonwealth, 2016; IMF, 2020a). The process-tracing analysis ends in the spring of 2021 in order to include both the greatest quantity and

the most recent available data. Naturally, the development of Rwanda is an ongoing process, and situations can continue to change beyond this point. Yet the 1994-2021 period is a substantial timeframe to come to conclusions about the idea under analysis, as the theoretical model needs time to manifest itself, yet considering the consistent and continuous nature of Rwanda's development, it is likely already visible if present (see Beach & Pederson, 2013, p. 165).

3.3 | Operationalisation

To determine to what extent the collaborative model of relations in successful developmental settings reflects empirical reality in the case of Rwanda, this idea must be operationalised for the specific case under analysis. This section presents the theoretical mechanism and presents what evidence is needed to either accept or invalidate the hypotheses that have been constructed based on the theory section. To do so, the likelihood that certain pieces of evidence are found needs to be considered upfront, as stronger inferences can be made the more unexpected the evidence is based on existing theory (Beach & Pederson, 2013). Based on the theory section, the operationalisation of the analysed theory in the case of Rwanda can be seen in figure 1. This conceptualisation consists of actors engaging in activities in a two-step causal chain, as is the case in theory-testing process-tracing methods (Beach & Pederson, 2013). The first hypothesis mainly concerns itself with the first step of the causal mechanism, whereas the second hypothesis more closely examines the second step, although neither is specifically tailored to either step.

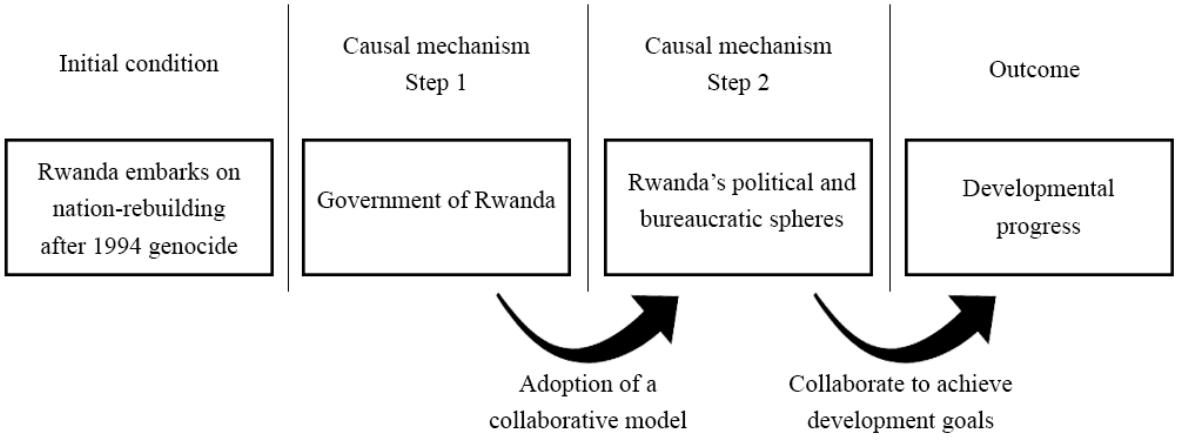

Figure 1. *Causal mechanism of theory in the case of Rwanda*

Before discussing the hypotheses of this study, it is essential to note that Dasandi & Esteve (2017) write that the typology they advance consists of models that are, in essence, "broad categorisations" (p. 233). Therefore, care must be taken not to reject the model on the basis of minor inconsistencies between theory and empirical reality. In constructing the hypotheses and operationalising the model for the case of Rwanda, the best efforts have been made to determine the key aspects of the collaborative model so that no erroneous or hasteful conclusions are made. With this important point touched upon, this study now presents the first hypothesis (H1). This hypothesis is as follows:

H1: *Rwanda's political and bureaucratic spheres adopted a collaborative model of relations with a clear and explicit emphasis on economic development*

This hypothesis concerns the presence of the critical aspects of the collaborative model and the manner in which these manifested themselves in the case of Rwanda. In this study, the political sphere is operationalised as the realm of officials such as the President, members of the Cabinet, and parliamentarians, whereas the bureaucratic sphere is the realm of appointed administrators in e.g. ministries or agencies (Svara, 2006a). The theory section has outlined essential aspects of political-bureaucratic relations and revealed that the extent to which recruitment to the civil service is meritocratic or political is a key determinant of political-bureaucratic relations. Therefore, any findings that recruitment in Rwanda's civil service is systematically non-meritocratic would challenge this hypothesis directly. This is especially the case if encountered in organisations that are considered crucial to development, as this ought to have the largest effect on developmental outcomes (Evans, 1998; Chemouni & Dye, 2020, p. 5). Any evidence pointing to political recruitment in less developmentally crucial organisations is therefore considered less critical for the decision concerning H1 than in organisations that do play a significant role in development. In any case, it is highly unlikely that such evidence is found considering Rwanda's state effectiveness (e.g. Booth, 2015; Biedermann, 2016) and the extensive literature on the importance of meritocratic practices for general government quality and development (Dahlström et al., 2012; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017; Brierly, 2020).

Another finding that would considerably challenge H1 would be that (senior) bureaucrats have little to no input in setting policy directives. Extensive political interference in policymaking would indicate low autonomy, something known to happen in African postcolonial settings yet contradictory to the collaborative model (Shazi, 2016;

Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Again, such evidence would be much more resounding in developmentally important organisations. Finally, the collaboration between the political and bureaucratic spheres is also based mainly on a shared *esprit de corps* focused on development, which is found in almost all successful examples of developmental states and forms an important part of enabling collaborative relations. Therefore, the failure to find that such a commitment to development is present also challenges the theoretical basis of H1. The same goes for the finding that there is an absence of a core of developmental elites from both the political and bureaucratic spheres. These would indeed be very unusual findings, as the RPF has been Rwanda's dominant, hegemonic party for decades (e.g. Reyntjens, 2015), and an RPF government has overseen the entirety of the nation-rebuilding and development process. Finally, as collaborative relations are often adopted in large part to create a strong private sector, the lack of a focus on this topic would be problematic.

The second hypothesis (H2) of this study concerns how the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has created the central economic development programmes that have led Rwanda's quest for economic development and transformation. In this case, it concerns the four consecutive Poverty Reduction Strategies that have run since 2002, which have played a vital role in the country's development (Chemouni, 2017; IMF, 2020a). Given the central role these programmes have had in Rwanda's economic development, it is important to determine how the political and bureaucratic spheres have created them. It is therefore seen as a separate hypothesis as the two spheres adopting collaborative attitudes and a 'joint mission' for development does not inherently imply that this actually contributed to the economic development of the country. If evidence is found that collaborative relations were also at the root of these key programmes, it would substantially bolster the validity of the collaborative model of relations, which is why H2 is separated from the more general view taken in H1. Therefore, H2 is as follows:

H2: *Collaborative interactions between Rwanda's political and bureaucratic spheres played an essential role in shaping key economic development programmes*

Several findings would threaten this hypothesis. Central in examining to what extent H2 reflects empirical reality is the autonomy of the bureaucratic sphere. If it is found that the bureaucratic sphere of the GoR did not have considerable autonomy in creating these programmes but rather these were created through extensive political interference, thus lacking bureaucratic input, the notion of collaborative relations would be hard to accept. Given the technocratic nature of such tasks and the success of these programmes, this

finding is unlikely to be made, however. The same is true concerning the implementation of these programmes in the form of tangible policies – if there is little autonomy for bureaucrats to apply their expertise in determining the most efficient and effective ways of delivering on the programmes' goals, this would threaten the theoretical base of H2. The nature and number of the mandate(s) involved with these programmes is therefore essential (Fukuyama, 2013). Another (albeit less) problematic finding regarding H2 would be that there is no key 'hegemonic' economic ministry in the GoR that is responsible for creating these programmes as the presence of such a ministry is an often observed characteristic of collaborative model states (Wade, 1990; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017).

3.4 | Data Collection

This study uses both primary and secondary data to answer the research question by either accepting or rejecting the two hypotheses. Primary sources include information and reports provided by the GoR, which are freely available on the internet. Examples of such sources are evaluations provided by ministries (e.g. MIFOTRA[7], 2007; MINECOFIN, 2015), official country gazettes (e.g. GoR, 2013), website articles (e.g. GoR, 2020) as well as agendas and programmes such as the Vision 2020 and economic development strategies. These publicly available reports, plans, and evaluations will shed light on the strategies adopted by the government concerning economic development. Documents from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) are especially important in this regard, as its name implies – especially given the key role often attributed to a key economic ministry in successful developmental states with collaborative relations.

Furthermore, there is a vital role for secondary sources in this study, as developing nations often suffer from a lack of publicly available information (Bertell et al., 2020). Rwanda is no different. Secondary sources consulted in this study are previously conducted academic studies on Rwanda's bureaucracy, civil service reforms, policymaking process, and economic development. Working papers and books are also consulted, and appropriate care is taken when using and interpreting information from these sources. There are also many reports on Rwanda's development, strategies, and the functioning of the government from organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF; e.g. IMF, 2020a) and other independent institutions, which are also consulted. Finally, a small number of news articles are consulted. Thus, using both primary and secondary sources enables this study to

[7] MIFOTRA is the Rwandan Ministry of Public Service and Labour.

confidently accept or reject the hypotheses and provide a valid and reliable answer to the research question.

4. | Findings

This section provides the findings of the research, utilising a theory-testing process-tracing method. As mentioned previously, this method does not trace series of empirical events, but rather the theorised causal mechanism itself (Beach & Pederson, 2013). Therefore, only those events relevant to testing the presence and functioning of the mechanisms of the collaborative model are relevant to this study, which is reflected in this section. The theoretical analysis of the findings takes place in the analysis section.

4.1 | Consolidating Political Hegemony and Initial Administrative Struggles

The RPF started the consolidation of its power directly following its military victory in the 1994 crisis. The party's leaders, many of whom were outsiders who grew up as refugees and participated in the armed struggle, decided to transition the presidency from a traditionally ceremonial position to one of dominant executive power and installed an RPF member in the office (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 1; Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). The party did and still does engage in power-sharing, meaning that numerous non-RPF members are appointed to Cabinet positions. This arrangement is needed in the country's sensitive post-genocide context, yet the RPF has been sure to retain all *de facto* power (Reyntjens, 2013; Waldorf, 2017). Further consolidation of its power followed, leading to the closing of the Rwandan political and social spaces[8] (Straus & Waldorf, 2011). While political power was thus secure, the Rwandan bureaucratic apparatus had ceased functioning almost entirely (Hausman, 2011). Almost half of Rwanda's public sector staff had either fled or been killed[9] (IMF, 2020a, p. 15), and issues were compounded by the proliferation of bad governance since long before the genocide (Chemouni, 2016). Therefore, the Rwandan public sector had endured both long-standing structural issues and the shock of the genocide, leading to

[8] The formation of new political parties was prevented and existing political competition was largely repressed (Reyntjens, 2013). Civil society was also targeted and neutralised as a threat (Reyntjens, 2013) as well as the press, which to this day prefers to report positively on the GoR (Sobel & McIntyre, 2019). For a more in-depth analysis of how the RPF consolidated power, please be referred to Braeckman (1997) for the events directly following the 1994 crisis, and to Reyntjens (2013) for a more complete overview.

[9] To illustrate the situation: in July 1994, only seven staff members showed up at the MINECOFIN (Chemouni, 2019, p. 3). The government buildings that were still standing lacked even the most basic necessities such as chairs or paper (Chemouni, 2016, p. 47).

the need to create a new system of administration and government from scratch (Biedermann, 2016; The Commonwealth, 2016; IMF, 2020a).

Consequently, government ministries were "desperate for staff", resulting in a hiring spree in which formal recruiting procedures were non-existent (Hausman, 2011, p. 1; also see Chemouni, 2017). Recruitment was non-systematic and non-meritocratic, and many RPF political appointments took place (Reyntjens, 2013, p. 21). As all ministries of Rwanda could hire at will, the civil service counted ca. 40,000 staff in 1997, up from ca. 25,000 after the genocide. However, the quality of staff had deteriorated significantly due to the scarcity of well-educated staff and the lack of formal procedures and general control in hiring (Chemouni, 2016, p. 174). In the late 1990s, the GoR started efforts to create a professional and capable administration (MIFOTRA, 2004). A civil service census led to a major personnel cut in 1999, which cut the least qualified workers (Hausman, 2011). Other reforms also took place, such as the merger of the Ministries of Planning and Finance in 1997, as the GoR tentatively started the nation-rebuilding process with economic development as the primary target (Chemouni, 2019, p. 12). Nevertheless, the GoR was still not in a position to truly stimulate economic development, which is reflected in table 3. Growth rates were inconsistent and the growth that did take place post-1994 constituted rebounding from the severe economic shock of the civil war and genocide[10] (see Lopez & Wodon, 2005; Reyntjens, 2015, p. 19; Hodler, 2019). Therefore, significant changes still needed to be made to create a state apparatus capable of stimulating development.

Table 3. *GDP/capita of Rwanda in purchasing power parity (PPP); 2017 international dollars (constant prices), 1994-2000.*

1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
581.6	767.0	865.7	950.1	943.3	879.5	963.2

Source: IMF (2020b)

4.2 | Creating a Capable Developmental State Through Reforms

In 2000, Paul Kagame, the leader of the RPF, took office as President. Having already held significant power since the end of the civil war[11] (Braeckman, 1997; Prunier, 2009;

[10] The pre-1994 peak Rwandan GDP/capita (PPP); 2017 international dollars (constant prices) was 1,176, achieved in 1986 (IMF, 2020b).

[11] Former Rwandan president and future political rival Pasteur Bizimungu (1994-2000) even felt that he was merely a puppet for Kagame during his term (Renée, 2008, p. 95).

Reyntjens, 2013), he was in a key position to continue the country's rebuilding process. To this end, the 'Rwanda Vision 2020' development agenda was created and published in July 2000, four months after Kagame took office. The agenda was to be the blueprint of a new Rwanda and resulted from widespread public consultation with stakeholders, including ministries, development partners, and the private sector as well as civil society (MINECOFIN, 2000; Chemouni, 2016; Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). The main goal of the Vision 2020 was reconciliation through shaping a new Rwanda, creating a knowledge-based middle-income nation through private sector-led development (MINECOFIN, 2000). The MINECOFIN presented six pillars of importance towards achieving this goal, including good governance and the creation of a capable state as well as private sector-led development.

4.2.1 | *Merit in Rwanda's Administration*

Several key factors were identified to achieve the ambitious goals of the Vision 2020 agenda, and the creation of a capable state was a crucial target. Rwanda's senior government officials were committed to creating a meritocratic administration, according to Chemouni (2016, p. 173), as non-meritocratic recruitment was a contributing factor to the recent violence in the country (Chemouni, 2017). This commitment is indicated by the creation of a detailed merit-based hiring procedure in 2002 and the enshrinement of meritocratic recruitment in the 2003 Rwandan Constitution (see Chemouni, 2017). The as of yet still bloated and capacity-lacking administration was also tackled, as another personnel cut in the country's bureaucracy occurred in 2006, similar in scale to the 1999 cut[12] (Hausman, 2011; also see MINECOFIN, 2000). The less qualified staff was targeted again, and this cut was comprehensive and extensive; ministries that employed ca. 8500 staff in 2002 only employed ca. 500 as of 2008, and the percentage of civil servants with a university degree had risen from 6% in 1998 to 79% in 2005[13] (Wyatt et al., 2008; Hausman, 2011). Further bloating of the administration after these cuts was prevented by strict monitoring of the number of civil servants that public sector institutions could hire, ensuring that the

[12] Two more minor personnel cuts took place in 2004 and 2009 (Hausman, 2011), and later in 2014 (KT Press, 2014).

[13] In 2014, following yet another analysis of gaps and redundancies in the public sector, MIFOTRA Minister Uwizeye said the qualified staff with the required expertise would be retained, further showing commitment to meritocratic standards (KT Press, 2014).

administration was kept as lean as possible (Chemouni, 2016, p. 168; Baez-Camargo & Batwa, 2018, p. 16).

Following the 2006 cut, the GoR created the National Public Service Commission (NPSC) in 2007. This Commission was tasked with standardising and overseeing recruitment in the country's civil service (Hausman, 2011; Chemouni, 2017). Goals and responsibilities included ensuring equitable and transparent recruitment, compliance by public institutions, and promoting professional conduct (NPSC, 2013). During this time, the standard recruitment for civil servants years included radio, newspaper, and internet announcements of vacancies, followed by a written exam for all applicants. Only when an applicant attained the required score on this exam were they interviewed (Friedman, 2012). Following a generally positive NPSC report in 2013 (see NPSC, 2013), the GoR established new general statutes for the public service in 2013, reaffirming the importance of meritocratic practices (GoR, 2013, pp. 40-41). These strict practices also apply to top positions in ministries. In Rwanda, high-level civil servants (such as director-level) are appointed by the Cabinet. Yet the Cabinet is limited to only those applicants who reach the target score on the exam, which often comes down to just one applicant for these high-level vacancies (Chemouni, 2016). In this way, even the small political influence in appointing civil servants is limited.

Despite some limited reports of non-meritocratic practices in hiring[14] (see Chemouni, 2016, 2017, 2019), the meritocratic recruitment reforms have been largely successful. Chemouni & Dye (2020, p. 21) describe Rwanda's civil service as "cohesive and insulated from societal pressure, largely following meritocratic recruitment", and Biedermann (2016) describes it as highly effective, meritocratic, and showing long-term career perspectives and rewards (also see IMF, 2020a). Despite this, the Rwandan administration struggles with the attraction and retention of talented staff (MIFOTRA, 2007). Rwanda's best graduates are often drawn to the private sector or NGOs, who offer better remuneration and incentives (MIFOTRA, 2007, p. 27; Malunda & Musana, 2012; Behuria, 2018). Private sector development has led to companies and privatised institutions raiding the bureaucracy of expertise, leading to a lack of staff and capacity for ministries. This issue is further

[14] There are two observed deviations in this regard. Firstly, it sporadically occurs that people fill some positions in ministries because they are not part of the RPF in an act of balancing (and thus not purely on merit), but this does not occur in key ministries (Chemouni, 2019).Secondly, there are reports of inflated scores being given to preferred candidates (such as family members) in the interview phase or not hiring anyone if the preferred candidate did not apply. However, these occurrences are limited (Chemouni, 2016).

compounded by the attraction of talented staff by international organisations, a common occurrence (MIFOTRA, 2007). Therefore, there are cases in which the bureaucracy was forced to hire staff who did not have the required level of education (Friedman, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, relatively high turnover rates have led to a staff that lacks institutional memory (Malunda & Musana, 2012; Murindahabi, 2016), although turnover is much lower at higher levels of the civil service (Malunda & Musana, 2012).

4.2.2 | *The Commitment to Development*

As the previous section indicates, Rwanda's elites were committed to development. However, the source of this commitment is not development for development's sake, but rather the need for legitimation. The RPF took power after a military victory and is a majority Tutsi-ruled party reigning over a significant majority Hutu population. Therefore, it lacked democratic legitimacy and was a vulnerable position overall (Downie & Cooke, 2011; Reyntjens, 2013, 2015; Chemouni, 2014). These elites required a legitimation strategy, and opted for economic development – the Vision 2020 (and subsequent Vision 2050) development agendas therefore constitute much more than an economic development and transformation vision. Rather, they are the ruling elite's legitimation strategy (Chemouni, 2016; Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018; Keijzer, Klingebiel & Scholtes, 2020). According to Reyntjens (2015), this strategy has worked so far. However, any noticeable slowdown in development carries risks for renewed tensions in the country, and therefore risks the professional survival of the country's elites and potentially the survival of the ethnic Tutsi minority and the state itself (Downie & Cooke, 2011; Reyntjens, 2015; Chemouni, 2017; Chemouni & Mugiraneza, 2020). Therefore the RPF, in large part through the background and experiences of its leaders, holds the duty to the nation in very high regard (Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). Measures were taken to instil this sense of commitment in the civil service, as it was and is a crucial component of making the GoR's legitimation strategy succeed.

The most prominent measure in this regard is '*imihigo*'. Under this policy, all bureaucratic personnel, including top-level public officials, must sign a yearly performance contract that bounds them to reach specific targets – the policy has been in place in some form since 2006 (African Development Bank, 2012; Chemouni, 2014; Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018; IMF, 2020a). The choice for the *imihigo* name of this practice was chosen with purpose, as it means 'promise' or 'pledge' and draws from a practice dating back to pre-colonial chiefs and warriors (Scher, 2010; Kamuzinzi, 2021). As Kamuzinzi (2021, p.

113) writes, the traditional sense of the word is to reach outstanding achievements through "self-commitment to participate in a collective initiative", which was often done in the face of exceptionally demanding tasks (African Development Bank, 2012, p. 6). When signed by institutional representatives in the President's presence to commit an organisation to a goal, it takes the form of an oath (Kamuzinzi, 2021). A failure to deliver on this oath results in a penalty and potentially dismissal, whereas good *imihigo* evaluations can warrant a pay bonus or a medal (Chemouni, 2016, p. 187; Kamuzinzi, 2021). For the GoR, this strict and symbolically important policy ensures a competitive spirit in the administration and gives a greater grip over the pace and quality of programme implementation (African Development Bank, 2012; IMF, 2020a; Kamuzinzi, 2021). Concerning the greater development mission, Chemouni (2014, p. 257) describes the policy as "a great advertisement machine" for the RPF government, as it fulfils a projection function for the elite to signal their commitment to development[15].

The creation of a sense of commitment to development in the political and bureaucratic spheres is further exemplified by the zero-tolerance anti-corruption measures implemented by the GoR (Bikorimana & Sun, 2019). The RPF has fought against corruption since the start of its reign, as top officials believed it to be crucial to building a capable state and preventing further violence (Biedermann, 2016; World Bank, 2020). While meritocratic recruitment and high pay in the civil service constitute important prevention measures, the most notable measures concern disciplining. There are extensive judicial and social consequences even for minor transgressions[16], which is emblematic of the RPF's commitment to the country (Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). Apart from judicial penalties, the socio-cultural dimension has thus been a large part of the GoR's efforts, as altering the perceptions around corruption has been a major part of its strategy (World Bank, 2020; Nicaise, 2021). Accompanying these measures are mechanisms that ensure accountability and transparency in the civil service (The Commonwealth, 2016, p. 43), creating a system in which the use of public office for private gain can be detected and prevented or punished (IMF, 2020a; World Bank, 2020). Through these measures, a climate of integrity is created in the Rwandan administration as corruption and patronage practices are unforgivingly

[15] For an illustration of the extreme lengths the GoR has gone to communicate its commitment to development, see Chemouni (2017).

[16] Even minor transgressions lead to jail time, and the names of those convicted are made public leading to social humiliation (Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). Dismissal is common for potential vulnerability or simply the suspicion of transgression (IMF, 2020a, p. 18).

struck down[17]. When combined with *imihigo* and the position of the country's elites, it is clear Rwanda's efforts stem from what The Commonwealth calls "political will from the top to the lowest levels of governance" (2016, p. 37; also see Behuria, 2018).

4.2.3 | *Private Sector-Led Development*

Another key target and reform was the adoption of private sector-led development, as laid out in the Vision 2020. The GoR does not want to provide any services that the private sector can provide more effectively or efficiently. Therefore, it has engaged in privatisation efforts and actively stimulates private sector development (MINECOFIN, 2000; The Commonwealth, 2016, p. 39; Behuria, 2018). In this context, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) was creating to secure more investment in the private sector, something the anti-corruption measures also assisted in (Chemouni, 2016; RDB, 2021). The stimulation of entrepreneurship among citizens has also been an important goal of the GoR, much like becoming an attractive destination for foreign businesses. This has been realised through extensive measures to ensure business-friendliness – the country ranks as the second most business friendly country in Africa (Biedermann, 2016; Lisimba & Parashar, 2020; World Bank, 2021). The GoR itself has also invested heavily in the private sector, which includes companies owned by the RPF itself (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Biedermann, 2016; IMF 2020a). The profits that these companies make are not pocketed by RPF top political cadre. Instead, they were reinvested into the economy or other aspects of the country, such as education or healthcare (IMF, 2020a, p. 18). These efforts are exemplary of the GoR's private sector-led development approach, the elite's commitment to development, and the need to communicate this to the public (see Chemouni, 2017, 2019).

4.3 | Political-Bureaucratic Relations

According to Booth (2015), Rwanda has thus succeeded in creating a settlement that allows policies to be created in a long-term, strategic perspective in an effective and practical problem-solving manner. The measures discussed previously have laid the foundation needed for the ongoing process of the country's economic development and set the stage for political-bureaucratic interactions in the GoR. Yet interactions between the country's

[17] See Bozzini (2014) and World Bank (2020) for a comprehensive overview and timeline of Rwanda's anti-corruption efforts.

political and bureaucratic spheres interactions have not always been consistent, as there are significant differences to be found within the GoR and between the different ministries.

4.3.1 | *Political-Bureaucratic Interactions and Bureaucratic Influence*

Rwandan political actors actively involve themselves in the policymaking process of the GoR. This active involvement – overruling the bureaucratic sphere and neglecting bureaucratic expertise – results from the concentration of power around President Kagame and other high-level party officials, resulting in a narrow circle of ruling elites with significant influence on government policy (Chemouni & Dye, 2020). The members of this limited group are RPF-faithful with substantial political power, which leaves the bureaucracy in a position of relative weakness, unable to use its expertise (p. 19). This issue is further exacerbated by a structure internal to the RPF that 'mirrors' that of the government. Clusters around policy areas such as social affairs and the economy exist in the form of commissions, which function as influential think tanks even though its members often lack technical expertise (Chemouni & Dye, 2020, p. 14). The authors state that the political officials in these commissions often aim to impress the President but do not understand the constraints associated with achieving their lofty goals. Policymaking formally follows the procedure shaped by the Ministry in Charge of Cabinet Affairs, which in theory grants significant policymaking influence to the bureaucracy through employing a method very similar to many developed countries (Friedman, 2012; also see Gready, 2010, p. 644). Nonetheless, politicians can thus still force through their will without the input of bureaucrats. Indeed, the ability of many Rwandan ministries to influence policy is minimal (Chemouni, 2019, p. 24). Therefore, the energy policies studied by Chemouni & Dye (2020) were overambitious and flawed.

Another such example is the sudden decision to switch the language of instruction in Rwandan education from French to English in 2009. The suddenness of this change has meant that the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has struggled with the quality of education ever since (Chemouni, 2019; Williams, 2019). Therefore, this RPF primacy and internal party structure mean that bad decisions can go unchallenged, as bureaucratic expertise is ignored or overruled, leading to significant issues. Chemouni & Dye (2020, p. 14) describe this as "the ascendency of the party over civil servants". Indeed, Hasselkog et al. (2017, p. 1817) have described Rwanda's policymaking process as "clearly a political matter". These authors note that Rwanda's top political leadership is actively involved –

both as a collective and as individuals – in the process of initiating and shaping the direction of policies, for both good and bad. This is further compounded by the annual leadership retreat – or *Umwiherero* – of the GoR, which is a crucially important part of Rwanda's political year and policymaking process. It is a key driver of the GoR's agenda and always produces significant resolutions that are implemented in the following year (Malunda & Musana, 2012; Chemouni, 2016; Hasselkog et al., 2017; GoR, 2020). Yet the retreat is often used as a way to pressure both ministers and top civil servants. Top RPF political leadership is generally actively involved in policymaking through this retreat and uses the opportunity as a means of 'encouraging' top bureaucratic leaders to reach their set goals (Hasselkog et al., 2017). Bureaucrats this way often find themselves in a weak position and unable to exert influence (also see Chemouni, 2019).

4.3.2 | *The Distinct Role of the MINECOFIN*

However, GoR political and bureaucratic interactions unequivocally show a different nature in creating important economic development agendas and programmes. The GoR has abided by the Vision 2020 (now Vision 2050) agenda for the duration of its development thus far, and from these agendas stem the nation's specific economic development programmes. These are the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) from 2002-2006 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) 1, 2, and 3 programmes subsequently since 2006[18]. These programmes provide broad guidelines and general priorities for policymakers for creating concrete policies to reach the goals outlined in these overarching programmes (Bigsten & Lundström, 2004; MINECOFIN, 2007, 2013, 2015). Other than the name suggests, these programmes concern much broader topics than intra-national poverty and see economic development as the best way out of poverty – overall development is therefore the main focus of these programmes (Hayman, 2007). Thus, these were and are the central economic development programmes of the country (Murindahabi, 2016; Chemouni, 2017; IMF, 2020a).

The first of these programmes was the PRSP, and it was prepared using several assessments from the MINECOFIN (e.g. MINECOFIN, 2001) as well as consultations by other ministries who offered policy proposals for their sectors (MINECOFIN, 2002, pp. 10-12). Nonetheless, bureaucratic input in creating this programme was limited, as a crucial aspect of the formulation of the programme concerns its funding. The PRSP and subsequent

[18] This study disregards the interim-PRSP which ran from 2000-2002.

EDPRS programmes are part of an overarching framework by the IMF, World Bank, and other development partners, making it a largely donor-funded effort. Bigsten & Yanagizawa (2005, p. 49) write that the GoR, being largely dependent on aid in its development process[19], depends on the requirements of aid/financial organisations or donor countries to receive this aid (Marriage, 2016, p. 44; also see Bigsten & Lundström, 2004; Hayman, 2007; Grimm, 2013; IMF, 2020a). Government structures for managing this programme and general aid flows were very flawed and mostly ad-hoc, with overlapping responsibilities, limited resources and poor oversight limiting the bureaucracy's ability to affect the formation of these programmes (Hayman, 2007; MINECOFIN, 2015). Furthermore, low bureaucratic capacity below the absolute top level caused limited bureaucratic influence in the policy feedback process (Bigsten & Yanagizawa, 2005, p. 48). Therefore, the PRSP was predominantly shaped by donor demands, was marked by lacklustre internal input from the GoR, and had a weak analytical base (Bigsten & Yanagizawa, 2005).

The influence of the GoR increased from the PRSP onwards, however, as the country has actively taken more ownership of it development process, working towards increased self-reliance and reducing aid dependency[20] (GoR, 2006; Abbott & Rwairahira, 2012; IMF, 2013; MINECOFIN, 2015). The GoR made clear its intent with the Rwandan aid policy, introduced in 2006 at the end of the PRSP. In this policy, the GoR remarks that their preferred external assistance is unearmarked budget support, as support on individual projects is often poorly aligned and "undermines government systems rather than strengthening them" (GoR, 2006; from Chemouni, 2016, p. 195). The PRSP is exemplary of what the GoR meant by this, as strategies in this framework are often criticised for the overbearing involvement of donors (Swedlund, 2013). A central role was created for the GoR's bureaucracy, and it has managed to get and retain a significant level of coordination and control over donors (Chemouni, 2016, p. 195; MINECOFIN, 2015).

The GoR has managed this through improving internal practices in coordination and responsibilities, giving the country's bureaucracy more influence in the creation process. This resulted in new technical working groups and bureaucratic rules and practices

[19] Rwanda's 2020/21 national budget consisted of 39.3% external financing (KPMG, 2020). Although this number has been slowly decreasing, it remains one of the most aid dependent countries in the world (fifth globally in 2012 according to Abbott & Rwirahira (2012)).

[20] President Kagame has on multiple occasions shared his worries regarding the level of Rwandan aid dependency. He has mentioned that it is both undesirable and impossible for Rwanda to rely on development aid long-term, and has gone so far as to say that aid robs Rwanda of its dignity. Thus he says aid should support what Rwanda intends to achieve itself, rather than what donors' goals are (see Okereke & Agupusi, 2015).

regarding donor engagement (Hayman, 2007; Chemouni, 2016). Every major policy area has a sectoral working group in which donor interactions occur, which are always chaired by a ministry official (Hasselkog et al, 2017). The GoR's (2006) aid policy also stipulated extensive working rules to improve aid management and efficiency, and gave the MINECOFIN extensive responsibilities. Furthermore, the minister of the MINECOFIN chairs the aid coordination forum, which deals with the most important policy choices (Hasselkog et al., 2017). Thus, it is now often Rwandan actors that take the lead on aid-dependent policies. Donors are often only involved at the closing stages of the policy process when their technical expertise is valued. Yet this input often relates more to refining the policy's details rather than its actual content or goals (Hasselkog et al., 2017). There have furthermore been instances in which the central bureaucracy has (pro)actively lobbied donors (Chemouni, 2016, p. 198; 2019, p. 15). Thus, despite Rwanda's significant reliance on aid, the GoR nonetheless "retain[s] considerable power over policy and its implementation" (Hayman, 2007, p. 12; also see Hasselkog et al., 2017).

The MINECOFIN plays a central role in this regard, as it has been granted privileges and tasks that other ministries do not possess. While the formulation of the EDPRS programmes is primarily a joint effort by donors, the Cabinet (including the President), limited personnel from other ministries, and the MINECOFIN, the latter explicitly takes the lead role (see Hasselkog et al., 2017; Chemouni, 2019). As the EDPRS plays a crucial role in the RPF's legitimation (*ibid.*), RPF-influentials remain involved in informing economic EDPRS growth targets (Chemouni, 2019), and political officials also interact with donors directly (Hasselkog et al., 2017). Yet contextual factors play an essential role in whether politicians or bureaucrats interact with donors, according to Hasselkog et al. (2017). In this regard, the MINECOFIN has been given substantial autonomy as its (high-ranking) bureaucrats interact with donors regularly, and the ministry has become the centrepiece for the EDRPS programmes and the 'overseer' of sector strategies and coordination (GoR, 2006; Hayman, 2009, p. 590; Chemouni, 2019). The ministry has a specialised EDPRS department and several affiliated bodies that carry significant responsibilities on planning, budgeting, mobilising donor support, monitoring aid flows, and accountability (GoR, 2006; Ansoms, 2009, p. 292). The Central Bureau for Public Investments and External Funding is most notable in this regard, which is the strategic institution that manages the influx of

external resources[21] (Hayman, 2009; MINECOFIN, 2015; Chemouni, 2019). The MINECOFIN's role is best illustrated by a 2015 MINECOFIN report, which states the following:

> "*The long-term strategy (Vision 2020) defines goals and targets and the medium-term policy ([the EDPRS]) provides a plan for implementation. The [MINECOFIN] coordinates and designs these plans within a consultation process with stakeholders*." (MINECOFIN, 2015, p. viii).

Thus, the MINECOFIN "manages the entire system" of aid coordination and management (MINECOFIN, 2015, p. viii), and is largely responsible for designing and coordinating substantially donor-funded development programmes such as the EDRPS. Thus, political interference in this process is fairly limited, mostly to the occasional setting of targets by high-ranking politicians and naturally the eventual review and judgment by the Cabinet and President of the EDPRS. The rest of the legislative branch hardly ever deviates from the RPF party line, and neither do non-RPF ministers (Chemouni, 2019).

Besides its extensive influence in formulation, the MINECOFIN also has considerable autonomy in implementation (Chemouni, 2019). Considering the 'guideline' nature of these programmes (*ibid*.), the specific policies used to achieve the targets of the EDPRS are, in theory, down to the bureaucracy to determine. The role of the MINECOFIN proves to be crucial here, as MINECOFIN bureaucrats work in the broad frameworks to create the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, including budget ceilings for ministries (MINECOFIN, 2015; e.g. MINEDUC, 2018). This happens in collaboration with MINECOFIN officials and occasionally staff from the presidency (MINECOFIN, 2015; Chemouni, 2017, 2019; e.g. Ministry of Health, 2018). The Cabinet must then approve these plans. Following implementation, the MINECOFIN and affiliated bodies also have major monitoring and accountability tasks (MINECOFIN, 2015; e.g. MINEDUC, 2018). For example, MINECOFIN specialists have the final decision on indicators used to evaluate ministerial performances. To this end, the MINECOFIN created the Monitoring & Evaluation framework for the EDPRS programmes. The from this M&E are then fed back into the design of later development policies and programmes (MINECOFIN, 2015). This

[21] Another MINECOFIN affiliated institution, the External Finance Unit, also plays an important role – not in donor engagement, but rather in coordinating aid flows (MINECOFIN, 2015). Another important institution is the RDB, which focuses on stimulating private sector growth (and is a very influential institution in its own right according to Chemouni (2019)). However, it interestingly falls under the Office of the President (RDB, 2021).

authority is crucial, as evaluation is an crucial aspect of Rwanda's aid framework – accountability is key in securing aid flows (Bigsten & Yanagizawa, 2005; Hayman, 2009; Chemouni, 2016).

Several factors contribute to the allocation of such significant responsibilities to the MINECOFIN, which is the institution with the biggest ability to influence policy in the GoR by some margin, barring the presidency itself (Chemouni, 2019). MINECOFIN ministers serve long terms and are chosen for their technocratic expertise – they are often former bureaucrats from the ministry itself, or an affiliated body. Thus, they take the role of "technopols", and fulfil a primarily technocratic duty despite their political role (Chemouni, 2019, p. 22). The ministry also receives extensive political sheltering, allowing for merit to be the sole determining factor in recruitment and promotion. In the MINECOFIN, meritocratic criteria play an explicitly central and visible role, even more so than in the GoR generally (Chemouni, 2019). But perhaps most importantly, the MINECOFIN operates in the crucial policy space of economic affairs in the broadest sense possible. Considering the legitimation strategy of the RPF, the cruciality of a strong, technocratic and effective ministry is most likely the leading factor behind its significant mandate and influence to Rwanda's development efforts (Chemouni, 2019).

In sum, political-bureaucratic relations in the GoR differ greatly depending on context. In general, political figures involve themselves rather actively in initiating and shaping policies, which leads to the overruling of bureaucratic expertise and freedom and the relegation of bureaucrats to mere implementers rather than policy shapers. However, this is limited when it comes to the mandate of the MINECOFIN and its affiliated bodies, as this mandate includes the formulation of key economic development programmes, as well as implementation and monitoring duties. Although there is limited political meddling even here, the ministry is generally reasonably independent and enjoys a unique position of political sheltering. Therefore, the technocratic nature of its tasks and the autonomous way in which it fulfils these has made it "the organisation through which resources are channelled, priorities decided, and the elite's ambitious developmental efforts coordinated" (Chemouni, 2019, p. 36).

5. | Analysis

This section applies the theoretical framework to the empirical findings in order to confirm or reject the hypotheses of this study. A brief overview of these findings in relation to the

theoretical model can be found in table 4 at the end of this section. Previously, it was hypothesised that the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations is present in the case of the rapidly developing country of Rwanda, as this model has been at the root of the success of previous developmental states. H1 of this study is as follows:

H1: *Rwanda's political and bureaucratic spheres adopted a collaborative model of relations with a clear and explicit emphasis on economic development*

There are findings that support H1 as well as ones that challenge it. As the collaborative model suggests, Rwanda is a less democratic country given the long RPF reign and closed political and social spaces. Yet this long reign allowed the RPF elites to take a long-term developmental perspective and to spread values of nation-building and shared values throughout the GoR. The Vision 2020/50 development and nation-rebuilding agendas as well as the EDPRS are exemplary of these efforts. These documents encapsulated the new Rwanda according to Chemouni (2016, p. 182) and were needed to legitimise the RPF regime given its vulnerable position and the risk of internal instability[22] (e.g. Downie & Cooke, 2011; Reyntjens, 2015). The RPF was in a prime position to continue patronage practices according to Biedermann (2016), yet opted for legitimation through development. These efforts exemplify the presence of the developmental *esprit de corps* among the elites as prescribed by theory, which has been instilled in the broader civil service through the *imihigo* and zero-tolerance corruption measures, ensuring commitment to the RPF's policy doctrine. The subsequent creation of a coherent, potent and meritocratic bureaucratic apparatus is also evident[23]. The country's elites went to great lengths to create such a civil service and has succeeded in this endeavour (e.g. Biedermann, 2016; Chemouni, 2016). This, and the briefly discussed extensive focus on private sector development constitute important matches to the collaborative model.

As the collaborative model prescribes, the process described above ought to allow for a close working relationship between political and bureaucratic elites, with significant autonomy being granted to the bureaucratic sphere. However, the findings show that this is

[22] This is especially interesting because Biedermann (2016, p. 142) writes that many developmental states have united through (real or fabricated) external threats. In the case of Rwanda, the main threat that drives development is internal.

[23] One minor deviation in this regard is that the GoR struggles with attracting and retaining talented staff, as the country's best graduates are often attracted by other actors. This stands in contrast to the majority of other developmental states (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017), yet can likely be explained by the rudimentary stage of Rwanda's development and the resulting continued lack of resources that the GoR suffers from.

where the case deviates from the theoretical model. Rwandan politicians and RPF-lead figures do not take a proverbial back seat and leave the day-to-day running of the country to the bureaucratic sphere. Instead, they are actively involved in both initiating and shaping the direction of policies in the vast majority of ministries – the pollical sphere thus has a dominant presence in the Rwandan policymaking process (e.g. Hasselkog et al., 2017; Chemouni & Dye, 2020). The presence of the internal RPF commissions and the influence these hold over the decision-making process shows this. The resulting neglect and overruling of the bureaucracy and its expertise directly contradict the notion of collaboration between the spheres and more closely resembles certain features of the collusive model of relations (Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). Yet the MINECOFIN constitutes a significant exception to this finding. According to Chemouni (2019), it is by some margin the institution with the biggest ability to influence policymaking in the GoR, barring the Presidency itself.

Indeed, the MINECOFIN constitutes a unique case due to its autonomous role, which the political sphere has allocated it. The ministry and its numerous affiliated bodies have great control over donor interaction, which is crucial in highly donor-reliant Rwanda. By extension, the MINECOFIN holds significant influence over not only the formulation of critical economic development programmes but also in the way in which these programmes are transformed into tangible policies and implemented, as it plays a coordinating role in the GoR. Furthermore, this ministry's role in accountability ensures that its ‘overseer’ role manifests itself in all phases of the policy process, giving it an expansive mandate (see Fukuyama, 2013). Vis-à-vis the collaborative model, it can be concluded that the hegemonic economic ministry that is often seen is also present in this case, given its “steering role” in the GoR (Ministry of Health, 2018, p. 4; also see MINECOFIN, 2015). More crucially for the notion of collaboration between political and bureaucratic spheres, the impact of the MINECOFIN’s tasks reverberate throughout the GoR’s ministries and the policymaking process. While “real policy freedom” in the GoR will be constrained by its aid dependency for the foreseeable future (Hayman, 2007, p. 20), the importance of the largely aid-funded EDPRS programmes to the Rwandan regime as well as the MINECOFIN’s influence on these programmes cannot be understated (see MINECOFIN, 2015; Chemouni, 2017, 2019).

Therefore, contrast is observed between much of the bureaucratic sphere and the MINECOFIN’s autonomous role. The question thus arises how this contrast can be explained. The key to MINECOFIN’s autonomy most likely lies in the technocratic nature of MINECOFIN’s tasks and its place in the crucial policy space of development and aid

management (Chemouni, 2019). As Hayman (2009) writes, the aid dependence of Rwanda has had a significant influence in the internal power relations of the GoR, granting more authority to the bureaucracy and especially the MINECOFIN and its affiliated bodies. This is exemplified by the differences in the 'standard' politically influenced policymaking procedures when compared to the outlier role of the MINECOFIN on the other. Thus, the recognition of the elites concerning the importance of expertise and technocratic capabilities to development is a central source of the MINECOFIN's authority and ability to influence GoR policies. To this end, the RPF has politically sheltered the ministry to allow its purely meritocratic standards to be employed in order to accumulate expertise and technocratic capabilities (Chemouni, 2019). This merit transcends even the need for a shared background between the political and bureaucratic elites, as ministers in this autonomous ministry are chosen purely for their technocratic ministries, oftentimes coming from among the ministry's bureaucratic ranks (Chemouni, 2019). This finding shows an interesting contrast to the collaborative model, which prescribes the importance of such a shared background.

Conversely, the lacklustre bureaucratic autonomy of other Rwandan ministries is harder to explain, yet Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) model itself provides a possible solution – namely the aforementioned shared backgrounds. In Rwanda's sensitive post-genocide context, the idea of power-sharing has been important, thus the Cabinet has always consisted partly of non-RPF ministers (*ibid.*). Yet this constitutes a breach of the presence of a shared background between political and bureaucratic elites prescribed by the collaborative model. The RPF political elites largely have their shared heritage as Anglophone Tutsi's and former refugees who engaged in armed struggle, exemplified in President Kagame himself (Baez-Camargo & Gatwa, 2018). The MINECOFIN has its importance to the elite's developmental project, leading to its broad mandate and autonomy. Yet these other, less developmentally crucial ministries have neither. Combined with the structural presence of non-RPF ministers in the Cabinet, the top members of the political sphere may thus be apprehensive about granting these ministries extensive autonomy. Another plausible explanation is given by Chemouni & Dye (2020), who write that top RPF political cadre aim to please the President with lofty promises. This leads to political interference, despite the observed harmful effects that this can cause. Despite these explanations[24], it can be considered peculiar that such

[24] Another contributing factor may be the influence of Rwanda's ancient state tradition, as colonial influence on the country was limited. According to Reyntjens (2013, p. 31), this state tradition helps create a strong statehood and an efficient pyramid-like structure in the GoR. The pyramid-like tradition may make high-ranking RPF-

politicking, overruling expertise, and low bureaucratic autonomy have prevailed in a state that aims to achieve development above anything else, even if such occurrences are limited to ministries that are less central to development.

While autonomy is thus a subject of discussion, the case for both low career and task separation is much clearer. As the findings show, Rwanda does not have a separation of political and bureaucratic careers. As touched upon, expert key bureaucrats from the MINECOFIN or one of its affiliated institutions are often chosen as ministers and tend to serve a long term (Chemouni, 2019). This likely assists in creating a good working relationship between the spheres, considering the ministry's central role. Chemouni's (2019, p. 22) description of the political/civil servant relationship in the ministry as "technopols" is also vital in this regard, as MINECOFIN ministers have both political and technical capabilities. Yet, the emphasis is on the latter. Thus, they function more as technocrats than politicians despite their role in the political sphere. Furthermore, the roles of politicians and bureaucrats in engagement with donors is muddled, as both spheres interact with them in a non-structured manner – i.e. politicians and bureaucrats fulfil tasks in the same stages of the engagement process in an unpredictable way (see Hasselkog et al., 2017), again indicating low role separation – the presence of which can thus be confirmed vis-à-vis the collaborative model.

In light of these findings and their correspondence to theory, this study accepts H1. While it would certainly be erroneous to state that Rwandan bureaucrats are "in charge of the day-to-day running of the country" as Dasandi & Esteve 2017, p. 233) write – considering the observed widespread political interference – collaborative efforts do play a central role in Rwandan policymaking as exemplified in the crucial and autonomous role of the MINECOFIN. The fact that the model prescribes that a key economic ministry is often at the forefront of developmental efforts assists in accepting observed deviations in other, developmentally less crucial ministries. Furthermore, the developmentally crucial tasks of the MINECOFIN and its omnipresence in the GoR's policymaking process ensure that these collaborative relations – and by extension bureaucratic autonomy – have an important place in Rwandan governance. Therefore, this study argues that the main deviation from the model – bureaucratic autonomy – manifests itself more indirectly than theory perhaps describes, namely through one key ministry in the form of the MINECOFIN. Considering the

members in the political sphere unwilling to cede influence in the policymaking process, although it is important to note that this is purely speculative.

significant overlap between theory and empirical reality, this study sees fit to accept H1. However, given the deviations from theory – especially surrounding the mechanism in which autonomy is granted to the bureaucratic sphere – this acceptance comes with an important asterisk. Such an asterisk is not present in the decision concerning H2, which is as follows:

H2: *Collaborative attitudes between Rwanda's political and bureaucratic spheres played an essential role in shaping economic development programmes*

This hypothesis is also accepted given what has already been discussed. The bureaucratic autonomy the MINECOFIN has received from the political sphere in all stages of the EDPRS – which extends its influence over the overarching GoR policy process – is exemplary of collaborative efforts. This, combined with the repeating appointments of former bureaucrats to the MINECOFIN ministerial post, the great emphasis on merit in the ministry, and naturally the same *esprit de corps* measures that the rest of the bureaucracy also abides by makes the accepting of H2 a mere formality. The relationship between the political sphere and the MINECOFIN thus shows significant correspondence to the collaborative model of relations as advanced by Dasandi & Esteve (2017), more so than relations between the two spheres as a whole. The key role of the ministry in the EDPRS programmes and the aforementioned overlap between theory and practice make this relationship a microcosm of the collaborative model in empirical reality with only one deviation; the focus on merit to the very top of the bureaucracy and into the political sphere means that a shared class or education background between the minister and the political elites is not guaranteed (see Chemouni, 2019).

In sum, the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations is deemed to be present in the case of Rwanda and is especially visible in the relationship between Rwanda's top political leadership and the MINECOFIN. The main deviation from the theory concerns the mechanism through which bureaucratic autonomy is bestowed on the bureaucracy by the top political leadership. The MINECOFIN thanks its autonomy to its technocratic tasks and the crucial policy space which it occupies. The other GoR ministries, despite their meritocratic practices and the same measures surrounding the *esprit de corps*, have not been bestowed such autonomy. This indicates the need to refine this mechanism further, although some plausible explanations for this phenomenon have been given. Regarding autonomy, aid and its management also play an important role, as this appears to have been a substantial driver of the MINECOFIN's autonomy and Rwanda's development in general. This

deviation is likely explained by the predominantly Asian context in which the collaborative model was developed, as the nations who have had success with the model were not particularly aid dependent[25] (see Olds & Yeung, 2004; Easterly, 2007; Dasandi & Esteve, 2017). This in itself forms an interesting case, as many aid receiving countries do not have the capacity or the will to use the capacity to turn aid into developmental outcomes (Bräutigan, 2000; De Mesquita & Smith, 2009; Grimm, 2013, p. 81). Understanding this dimension better in relation to political-bureaucratic relations and development outcomes can be an essential aspect of further developing the collaborative model, especially in the African context, as sub-Saharan countries tend to be more aid-dependent (Moss, Pettersson & Van de Walle, 2006; Mlambo et al., 2019). Table 4 shows a brief overview of the findings in relation to the collaborative model.

[25] The only exception to this would be Botswana, which has also been observed as having collaborative relations while having been somewhat aid dependent (though not nearly to the level and duration of Rwanda's dependence (see Rakner, 1996)).

Table 4. *Brief overview of theoretical model and empirical findings*

Key features of the collaborative model	Findings in the case of Rwanda
Core group of developmental elites from political and bureaucratic sphere	*De facto* authoritarian regime with long-serving President and core influential RPF party members. Long tenures for key ministers and high-ranking bureaucrats (MINECOFIN), yet main developmental elites appear to be in the political sphere.
An *esprit de corps* among political and bureaucratic elites towards development	Vision 2020/50 & EDPRS as crucial and publicly pushed show of commitment. Development as the elite's legitimation strategy. Bureaucrats bound by *imihigo* and strict anti-corruption and rent-seeking measures.
High degree of bureaucratic influence in policy design	Significant political involvement in policymaking. Autonomy is limited in many cases, yet crucial in creating and implementing key economic development programmes and coordinating aid, which are highly technocratic tasks. Omnipresence of MINECOFIN in all stages of EDPRS and developmental policy process.
Shared class and education background of political and bureaucratic elites	Top RPF political cadre has shared background. Power sharing in post-genocide context means that a shared background with the bureaucratic sphere is usually not present. This is further compounded by the technocratic appointment of ministers in the MINECOFIN. Party affiliation can play a minor role in receiving top positions, but never at the cost of merit (see Chemouni, 2019).
Coherent and meritocratic bureaucracy	Highly meritocratic and coherent bureaucracy, insulated from societal pressures.
Movement between bureaucratic and political positions	Appointment of former bureaucrats to ministerial posts, especially where expertise is most valued. Limited politically motivated appointment in civil service in less important ministries.
Bureaucracy subsumed within dominant political party	Bureaucracy must be impartial in service delivery due to sensitive post-genocide context. Otherwise allegiance to RPF regime and its goals is fostered through *esprit de corps* and *imihigo* (see O'Connor et al, 2019, p. 374).
Private sector-oriented development through government policies	Development leans on the private sector, including RPF-owned enterprises. GoR actively promotes private sector growth.

6. | Conclusion

Political-bureaucratic relations have long been a topic of interest and controversy in public administration literature. Lately, this topic has undergone somewhat of a re-emergence, a process which has coincided with the rise in attention for developing countries in the field of public administration. To this end, new ideas of political-bureaucratic relations have emerged that focus on this context, including Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) typology of relations. This study set out to test how this typology holds up in empirical reality and constitutes the first such in-depth case study. The presence and functioning of the model has been tested by analysing Rwanda, a rapidly emerging African developmental state, as the model has been observed to have been at the root of many developmental success stories. However, the applicability of this model to single-country cases and its applicability to the African context has remained unclear. Therefore, this study has aimed to answer the research question of this study, which is as follows:

Can the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations be observed in the case of Rwanda?

This study concludes that previous theoretical ideas hold in the case of Rwanda, as the collaborative model is deemed to be present in the case. The GoR has a long-reigning autocratic regime that has forged an extremely strong and omnipresent *esprit de corps* in Rwanda's government apparatus through anti-corruption measures and the traditionally named *imihigo* policy. Furthermore, political elites were committed to building an effective, meritocratic and coherent administration and they have succeeded in doing so. There is no strict separation of political and bureaucratic, as the MINECOFIN, Rwanda's key ministry, is often headed by a minister that formerly occupied high-ranking bureaucratic positions. These ministers also have a more technocratic array of tasks rather than a political one. This ministry has furthermore been allocated significant autonomy on Rwanda's central development programmes and their implementation and monitoring, meaning its mandate in Rwandan policymaking is very broad. All of the above matches the collaborative model of political-bureaucratic relations.

Nonetheless, deviations from this theoretical model are also encountered. It mainly concerns bureaucratic autonomy and the mechanism through which it is granted to the bureaucracy by the political sphere. The MINECOFIN enjoys autonomy despite the lack of a shared background between the ministry's elites and the top RPF cadre. Its crucial tasks towards economic development prove to be a more critical determinant of autonomy. Other

ministries see much more political interference, as top RPF officials remain actively involved in policymaking. A shared background is once again not observed given the power-sharing seen in the GoR, leading to ministers from different parties leading these ministries. Therefore, autonomy, widespread political interference and a relatively weak presence of the bureaucratic sphere in the nation's developmental elites constitute the main deviations from theory. Despite these deviations, this study does not mean to discredit Dasandi & Esteve's (2017) typology or the collaborative model, as it has proven itself to be a useful tool in analysing political-bureaucratic relations in developmental settings. As mentioned before, the authors themselves note that these models constitute broad categorisations. Political-bureaucratic relations, in reality, are bound to deviate in some way from these models and be more blurry overall. This case illustrates that well.

While this study thus contributes to the current body of scholarly literature, it also has limitations. Firstly, this study suffers from the inherent limitations of qualitative case studies. For one, the results of this study are difficult to generalise, as it concerns a theory-testing study in one specific country case. This limitation is especially relevant because of the uniqueness of the Rwandan case given its post-genocide context and the effect this has had on the country's governance (e.g. Biedermann, 2016). This study's external validity may thus be affected beyond the inherent limitations of case studies (see Toshkov, 2016). Furthermore, qualitative case studies rely on the personal judgements and interpretations of the researcher. Although the utmost care has been taken to limit any resulting bias, the presence of such a bias cannot be ruled out completely. For example, the far-reaching political interference in the GoR's policymaking process combined with the other incongruences between theory and practice may have led a different researcher to take stronger conclusions and perhaps even reject the notion of collaborative relations altogether. The replicability and reliability of this research may therefore be limited.

Another limitation lies in the data collection method of this study, as its findings rely on document analysis. Although important consulted documents relied on interviews for their findings, the researcher of this study did not conduct interviews despite their potential usefulness in researching this particular subject matter (e.g. Hayman, 2007, 2009; Hasselkog et al., 2017; Chemouni, 2019; Chemouni & Dye, 2020). Unfortunately, such an approach is beyond the scope of this study. Future research on this specific topic in Rwanda may use such a method to corroborate the findings of this study definitively. Furthermore, as touched upon previously, the theory-testing process-tracing method this study uses carries limitations. While such a methodology allows testing of the presence and functioning

of a mechanism, it does not allow the (relative) explanatory power of this mechanism to be determined as this requires a comparative approach (Beach & Pederson, 2013; Toshkov, 2016). The necessity of the mechanism can therefore not be ascertained through this study. Lastly, as this study only examines the theoretically proposed mechanism, anything that lies outside of this mechanism is not included in this study. This may lead to the exclusion of important facts that lie outside this mechanism.

Several directions for future research arise from this study, as it offers multiple aspects of the collaborative model that can be developed further. The main question pertains to the mechanism in which the significant autonomy as seen in the model is extended to the bureaucratic sphere. In the case of Rwanda, the transfer of autonomy did not take place along the entire line of ministries. While the entire bureaucratic apparatus is meritocratic, coherent, and aligned with the RPF's vision through *imihigo*, only the MINECOFIN has been granted significant autonomy. The other government ministries have much less autonomy and ability to influence policy. For the MINECOFIN, the main source of autonomy appears to be both the technocratic nature of its tasks and the cruciality of the policy space in which it operates, rather than a close relation or shared background between political and bureaucratic elites. It is therefore important to further investigate and develop the mechanism through which autonomy is granted to the bureaucracy in this model, as this constitutes the most notable deviation between the current form of the model and the Rwandan case. In the same vein, the findings of this study show that bureaucratic autonomy can be limited in the vast majority of an administration. However, collaborative attitudes can still play a central role in political-bureaucratic relations, providing that it happens to manifest itself in a key ministry, which is in a position to influence policymaking in other ministries significantly. Thus, the concept of autonomy itself is also in need of further refinement in the context of this model, as it is insufficiently clear how and where such autonomy must manifest itself and subsequently how these affect political-bureaucratic relations. Here, further refinement may also be undertaken.

An entirely new avenue for further research uncovered in this study is the role that aid plays in developing country settings. As aid has proven to have been a substantial driver of changing the political-bureaucratic power balance in the case of Rwanda, further research on this topic is required to better understand political-bureaucratic relations in developing country settings. In the Asian setting in which the collaborative model was predominantly developed, aid was a minor factor, as the countries that had a collaborative model were not unusually aid-dependent in their development processes (*ibid*.). Numerous questions arise

from the Rwandan case findings. These are as follows. What effect does aid have on political-bureaucratic relations in developmental settings? Is the observed effect unique to Rwanda and its distinct circumstances or can its presence be observed in other cases? Can practitioners harness this effect to promote development, and if so, how? What features of political-bureaucratic relations affect aid effectiveness, and how? The answers to these questions could constitute significant practical findings, especially for the African context, as sub-Saharan countries such as Rwanda tend to be relatively aid-dependent.

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