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Post-Genocide Rwanda: The challenges for a post-ethnic civil society and the potentialities for good governance

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Post-Genocide Rwanda:
The challenges for a post-ethnic civil society and the potentialities for good governance

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Why take interest?

• Is of great interest in contemporary world.
  – E.g. used by global institutions (WB, UN, etc.) to measure performance of governance and so to determine donations to countries;

• Substantial funding flows across Africa in CS:
  – Bilateral Govts. and Private Corporates, e.g. Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, etc.);

• Limited academic studies specific to Rwandan civil society
## Theoretical background

### Faith in Civil Society?
- Evaluates (as accountability tool for) political institutions
- Is conducive to transition from authoritarianism to political democracy
- Shapes good governance
- Creates civil participation in public policy formation processes

Bibic and Grazino 1994, Mafunisa 2004

### Critical of Civil Society?
- Represents a future world political order and suppresses nation-state orientation
- Replaces community identity given the reality of limitless global CS (focusing on political groupings and associations)
- Aims to “reconstruct, re-imagine, or remap world politics”

Lipschutz 1992, Baker 2002

Apolitical, community-evolved, and independent institutions to bridge constituencies and government; and promote their interests in policy formation & service delivery.
A brief history of CS in Rwanda

**Pre-Genocide:**

- Social fabric of Rwanda is not a set of dispersed and unconnected homes. It is made up of *local communities*:
  - i.e. spheres of collective memory and creation of consensus.
  - Families react with a ‘*community spirit*’, when facing external interventions or local tensions.
A brief history of civil society in Rwanda (Next)

**Post-Genocide:**

- Genocide, war, and refugee movements:
  - have profoundly perturbed the social fabric,
  - destroyed old community networks and ‘trust’ in them
  - paralyzed (in immediate effects) their ability to act in face of common adversity.
A brief history of civil society in Rwanda (TODAY)

- Strong organizational structure at national level:
  - National CS platform unit (overseeing +50 umbrella entities)
  - Over 300 associations enrolled under the MINALOC
- Mostly, CS confused with Media, Private Sector, Cooperatives, and other parastatal institutions
- Kaiser & Wafula said CS has failed in EA region due to genocide, and mass movements of people in the region.
Building CS in Rwanda: the role of international organizations

- Strength of *civil society* is marker of *good governance* for private donors and for WB, UN, other Multi-lateral institutions:
  - E.g. Substantial funding flows from USG, Norway, Sweden govts (MCC/USAID, Urban Institute, PIMA, SIDA, CARE, etc.)
  - Most support is institutional & technical capacity building

Connect with the traditional ‘communitarism’?
Trends connecting civil society and good governance

Kenya - Civil Society & Govt. Effectiveness Trends 2005 - 2008

Rwanda: Civil Society & Govt. Effectiveness Trends 2005 - 2008

SA: Civil Society & Govt. Effectiveness Trends 2005 - 2008

Uganda: Civil Society & Govt. Effectiveness Trends 2005 - 2008

SOURCE: Global Integrity; Mo Ibrahim Foundation
Problematising current CS in Rwanda

Re-potentialities for success of CS enforced in Rwanda:

• Is there all capacity to produce sustainable results despite massive funding & current GoR’s political will?

• Will “community agency” prioritize CS over community resilience and public safety values?

• Can CS virtues work better even in an environment sensitive to ethnicity and bad history? (e.g. Total Freedom vs public safety)

• Is CS contributing to reconciliation and unity?
In post-genocide Rwanda, can this “transnational” civil society create good governance?
Initial Conclusion

• CS being proposed is too rigorous for Rwanda to create quickly aspired results

• Conceptual framework of CS being employed in Rwanda will create unintended results due to that:
  – is inauthentic (grassroots driven, fully independent, representing genuine constituencies)
  – is transnational driven (fully external funding, and little in context of local state-society relations)
  – State-captured (coopted)
  – Is within Rwandan exceptionalism (ideological, and history)
Thank you!

Murakoze!