3-4-2011

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

Fiacre Bienvenu
African & African Diaspora Studies Program, Florida International University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/africana_student_pres

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/africana_student_pres/10

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the African and African Diaspora Studies at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in African & African Diaspora Studies Program Graduate Student Scholarly Presentations by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.
Post-Genocide Rwanda: The challenges for a post-ethnic civil society and the potentialities for good governance

March 4-5, 2011

By: Fiacre Bienvenu
Graduate Student
African & African Diaspora Studies
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
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
Problematizing 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)
Murakoze!

Thank you!