

# Why did Rwanda join the British Commonwealth? Explaining Rwanda's Foreign Policy

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## Abstrak

Artikel ini bermaksud untuk memahami keputusan penting Rwanda dalam politik luar negerinya untuk bergabung dengan Persemakmuran Inggris. Rwanda adalah negara Afrika yang bukan merupakan bekas koloni Inggris. Tetapi negara ini memutuskan keinginannya untuk bergabung dengan Persemakmuran Inggris tahun 2009. Dengan menggunakan teori pengambilan keputusan kebijakan luar negeri, artikel ini berpendapat bahwa pergeseran kebijakan luar negeri Rwanda ini disebabkan oleh transisi politik dalam politik domestik Rwanda, kondisi ekonominya di Rwanda. zaman pasca-genosida serta konteks internasional yang mencakup posisi geografis Rwanda dan peran Inggris dalam membantu pembangunan negara Rwanda setelah genosida. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan menggunakan data sekunder berupa buku, artikel, jurnal, e-news, laporan dan sumber perpustakaan lainnya.

**Kata Kunci:** Rwanda, Politik Luar Negeri, Pergeseran orientasi, Persemakmuran Inggris

## Abstract

This article aims to examine Rwanda's foreign policy decision to join the British Commonwealth. Rwanda was former French colony and has historic association with Francophone countries. But the country decided to join the British Commonwealth in 2009. Using theory of foreign policy decision making, it argues that the shift of Rwanda's foreign policy was caused by the political transition in Rwanda's domestic politics, its economy condition in the post-genocide epoch as well as the international context which included Rwanda's geographic position and the role of the United Kingdom in aiding Rwanda's state-building in the aftermath of the genocide. This research uses qualitative method and uses secondary data such as, books, articles, journals, e-news, reports and other library sources.

**Keywords:** Rwanda, Foreign policy, shift, La Francophonie, the British Commonwealth

## INTRODUCTION

This article investigates the Rwanda foreign policy decision to join the British Commonwealth in 2009. Rwanda was a German colony until the end of the World War I. Under the Versailles Treaty Article 119, signed on June 28, 1919. Germany had to give up any claims over its colonies to the Allied powers. Belgium then confirmed the mandate over German former colonies territories under the Charter of the League of Nations (Záhořík, 2017). During the Belgian administration in Rwanda, a distinction was set between two indigenous groups where the Hutus were determined to be the forced labor and the Tutsis were in charge to supervise the Hutus' works. In the Late 1950s towards its independence, the Hutu leaders initiated a Hutu Manifesto which led both Hutu and Tutsi into a conflict—ended up with the overthrow of Tutsi's monarchy (Totten, Bartrop, & Jacobs, 2008). This conflict caused the Tutsis fled into exile from Rwanda and the Hutu immediately took over the Tutsi monarchy then proclaimed the provisional government as a republic after Belgium granted them independence on July 1, 1962.

After its independence, the new government of Rwanda under Hutu decided to maintain French—the language used by the Belgian

administration during the colonization era—to be Rwanda's official language beside Kinyarwanda. The establishment of French as Rwanda's official language originated the close relations between Rwanda and France. Since 1962 to 1996, French had been broadly used as the language of higher education, administration, public services, and official documentation, complementing Kinyarwanda as the national language. Subsequently, Rwanda had been dominated by the Hutu-Francophone people (Nyirindekwe, 1999).

In 1970, Rwanda along with the other French-speaking countries joined *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), an organization made up with French speaking countries all over the world, established by France on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1970. This organization consists of 57 member states, three associate members and twenty observers (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2013). The establishment of this organization had strengthened the French influences in its member states, specifically African countries. This organization aimed at promoting peace, democracy, and human rights, enhancing the solidarity among member countries as well as preserving French language and the

linguistic diversity across the world (Turner, 2006).

Despite Rwanda and the other African countries had been under French strong influences for a long period of time, there has been a decline of French influences in Rwanda (Uchegara, 2014). Rwanda as one of the French-speaking countries started decimating the influences of France in terms of culture and language. Rwanda had started turning away from using its former colonialist's language since the genocide tragedy in 1994. It started promoting English to its people and applied for membership on the Commonwealth in 1996.

The idea of Commonwealth is quite similar to *La Francophonie* as both associations aim at maintaining the global unity through shared language, history, and culture within its former colonies. However, Rwanda's very first application to Commonwealth was rejected since it did not meet any of Commonwealth membership criteria. Then in 2008, Rwanda established English as the official language (McCrummen, 2008), resent its application on Commonwealth membership in 2009 and officially become the member of the Commonwealth even though Rwanda never had a historical connection with British imperialism (Pflanz, 2009). Why did Rwanda shift its foreign policy from a member of La

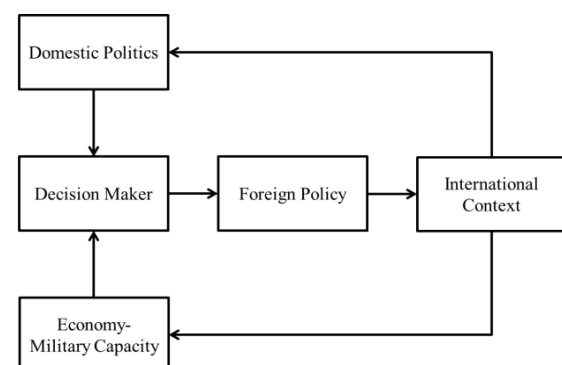
Francophonie pivot to the Commonwealth in 2009?

## THEORY

### Determinants of Foreign Policy

This article investigates the Rwanda foreign policy decision to join the British Commonwealth in 2009. To explain the shift in Rwanda foreign policy orientation from Francophonie to British Commonwealth, this paper uses decision making theory developed by William D. Coplin (1963). There are three determinants that influence the decision-makers in foreign policy decision-making process, i.e, domestic politics, economy-military condition, and international context (Coplin, 2003). Coplin provides a framework in order to give a clear image and explanations on the role of the three determinants as well as their relations in foreign policy decision-making process.

Figure.1  
Scheme of Foreign Policy Decision-making Process



Source: Coplin, (2003).

The scheme of foreign policy decision-making process above shows that the determinants of one country's foreign policy have interconnected one another. There will only be a foreign policy decision-making when there is a demand from one country's domestic politics. Along with the domestic politics, the economy-military condition, and international context are also taken into considerations as these three determinants will later become the input for the decision makers to formulate its foreign policy.

## ANALYSIS

### Rwanda - France Initial Relations

The cooperation between France and Rwanda started after getting liberated from Belgium on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1962, following the withdrawal of Belgium as well as the emergence of the new regime of Rwanda which had been dominated and replaced by the Hutu people who established a republic instead of monarchy. Referring to Rwanda's historical colonization background, it did not have any obvious reasons to benefit from having cooperation with France (Camus, 2013). Otherwise, in October 1962, President Grégoire Kayibanda of Rwanda and President Charles de Gaulle of France signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation. As a matter of fact, France had been

supporting Rwanda on the early time towards its independence. It had supported Rwanda for democratization and initiated for Rwanda's independence at the United Nations (UN) before it finally got its official independence as well as sponsored Rwandan membership in the United Nations (Quilès, 1998).

Since the first time Rwanda and France started their cooperation, a close relation between both had been gradually evolving (Kuperus, 2016). In the late 1962, another more specific treaty was signed. Rwanda was incorporated into *La Francophonie* or *Françafrique*, the association of former French colonies in which France—as the former colonist—tended to have interests in economic cooperation instead of political and military cooperation (Willis, 2014).

The establishment of French as the official language of Rwanda was benefitting the position of France as the cultural and linguistic roots were already embedded since the presence of Belgian's colonization there. It was notable that the role of Belgian rules had benefitted France in the future and created connection between France and Rwanda. Since then, there had been the presence of France in every aspect of Rwanda. In 1964, France appointed and sent an ambassador to be in charge in French Embassy for Rwanda in Kigali and the permanent

cooperation mission settled in 1969 (Willis, 2014). The mission was to encourage and maintain Rwanda's reliance on France in all aspects; technical, language, culture, and economy as well as to make the presence of France in Rwanda stable and permanent (Quilès, 1998).

### **Rwanda and Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie**

*Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie* is the product of globalization as it bridges France in maintaining its relations with former colonies and the other French-speaking countries, particularly Rwanda (Refin, 2015). Through the cooperation in *La Francophonie*, France and Rwanda could tighten their relations and mutually benefit each other. In their cooperation, Rwanda received aid and assistance provided by France. In return, France could have business investment in Rwanda. However, this kind of relation is viewed as a neocolonialist relation as it would only get Rwanda more contingent with French influences (Verschave, 2000).

It cannot be denied that the mutual benefits gained by France and Rwanda through this organization have been maintaining a good relation between both countries. In diplomatic cooperation, *La Francophonie* has been providing Rwanda a platform to build

any other cooperation with the other *La Francophonie* member states all over the globe in five different continents. As a French-speaking country, the use of French as the official language has been benefitting Rwanda to be the vehicle in improving a multilingual society as French has been one of the official languages in the United Nations. Besides, it encouraged Rwanda to play a strategic role in the United Nations (Mbonyinshuti, 2018).

### **Rwanda-France Diplomatic Crisis**

In conducting their diplomatic cooperation, President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Mitterrand of France had built such a close personal relation as Rwanda had always been considering the presence of France in every aspect of its political, economic, and military provisions. Despite Rwanda and France had been close allies since the Hutu government of Rwanda had taken the office, their relation was strained in the early 1990s. It was started with the return of Tutsi people from exile with the intention to overthrow the Hutu government and take over the regime. It culminated in the assassination of Hutu-Rwandan President, Habyarimana, which triggered the occurrence of genocide tragedy in 1994 that had killed approximately 800.000 Tutsi lives (Lal, 2007).

Contrasting to the Hutu, Tutsi people who had been fleeing into exile—to Rwanda's neighboring countries such as Uganda and Tanzania—were contrary and not in line with France's previous determination as it had been with the Hutu government. Since Uganda and Tanzania were the former colonies of British Empire, it required the Tutsi refugees to adapt with the language, values, and customs of the Anglophone people in those countries. This kind of situation had shaped the behaviors of these Tutsi refugees to have such a tendency and inclination on British influences and leave the French influences instead.

The Tutsi people in Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took over the Hutu Rwandan regime and automatically had control over the Rwandan political direction which was to deliberately start turning away from French determinations. Since the Tutsi seized power in Rwanda, its relations with France had been totally changed into an unhealthy strained relation. The Rwandan new regime continued to press France for justice as they believed that France complicit in the genocide by providing the Hutu a clear support on the Tutsi massacres. However, France kept ignoring and rejecting the allegations, even the accusation was never been examined to the court. Instead, France assigned

Jean-Louis Bruguière, the appointed French judge to investigate the 1994 genocide tragedy. In November 2006, after an eight-year investigation, Bruguière finally presented his findings (Bruguière, 2006). Bruguière alleged and accused Rwanda back for the assassination of Habyarimana by issuing an international arrest warrants for Kagame's nine allies who were suspected involving in Habyarimana's aircraft shot down, an initial tragedy that enraged the Hutus and triggered the genocide (USA Today, 2006).

Responding to the French allegation, the Rwandan government outrageously expelled Emmanuel Ndagijimana, Rwandan Ambassador to France in Paris back to Rwanda and deported Dominique Decherf, the French Ambassador to Rwanda (The New York Times, 2006). Through the ambassador expulsion and deportation, Rwanda had officially cut its diplomatic ties with France on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006. In April 2007, Rwanda applied to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the dispute as France had been violating the international law regarding international immunities in general and diplomatic immunities, as well as violating Rwanda's sovereignty. Thus, Rwanda demanded France to forthwith annul its international arrest warrants (International Court of Justice, 2007).

Subsequently, Nicholas Sarkozy, the new elected President of France in 2007 started to normalize France-Rwanda relations. Through a moderately long process of diplomatic relation normalization, Rwanda finally restored its relationship with France in 2009. Sarkozy argued to his officials that there was no reason that they should be caught up in the controversies of their predecessors (Moncrieff, 2012).

### **Rwanda-British Relations**

The British Empire did not have either explicit political or financial interest in Rwanda. However, since its inception in 1986 it had been playing a prominent role as an external bystander in Rwanda as it had such an indirect political and military relation with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which made up with Tutsi-Rwandan refugees who were casted out from Rwanda. In 1959, following the successful overthrow of Tutsi monarchy by the Hutu there was approximately half a million Tutsi Rwandan fled into exile. More than 80,000 of them were seeking for asylum in Uganda and the rest were to other British colonies in Africa (Cameron, 2012). The huge number of Tutsi refugees in the exile had prompted the emergence of Rwandan diaspora communities which later led them to plan strategies to return to

Rwanda (Mann, 2005). The Tutsi Rwandan had been the ally of Uganda not referring to their existence as sovereign states as they were not. Instead, the relation was built between a group of Rwandan refugees and the guerilla force of Ugandan hinterland which had a common vision; to get recognition from their home countries and to take over each state's existing regime (McKnight, 2015).

Britain had granted Uganda liberation in 1962 yet still maintained a tight relation post-independence. Britain played a prominent role in 1971 and 1986 Ugandan coup which led Yoweri Museveni to take over the regime. The Ugandan coup was done by Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), which was bolstered by the role and support of 500 Tutsi refugees in Uganda (Waugh, 2013). They were recruited by Museveni himself to be involved in the Bush War and among those 500 Tutsi refugees, Paul Kagame—Rwanda's current president—was one of the very first Tutsi to be recruited by Museveni and became the spy chief. After the Bush War successfully won by the NRA in 1986, the Tutsi refugees started to plan the same strategy as what had occurred in Uganda, they established a militant organization with guerilla movement which later known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) (McKnight, 2015).

In 1988, the young Tutsi refugees of Ugandan army with strong youth eager and enthusiasm planned an open secret strategy which was an invasion to Rwanda (Kuperman, 2004). Paul Kagame, as one of the RPF young soldiers who had been involved in supporting Museveni in Uganda did have an interest which was to get Museveni's in turn support to take over Kigali and established an Anglophone country. Britain and the United States implicitly gave the RPF approval in military endeavours. In Uganda, the British forces provided the RPF a military training which base in Jinja (Destexhe, 1995). Meanwhile, Paul Kagame as the representative of RPF received military and intelligence training from the United States in Fort Leavenworth Command and General Staff College in Kansas in 1990 (Gribbin, 2005). Furthermore, Kagame was also sent to the United Kingdom for strategic military training (Otunnu, 2017).

In October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)—the armed troops of the RPF—invaded Rwanda from the Southern Uganda. The RPF demanded the Rwandan government to accept the return of Tutsi refugees to Rwanda, enforce human rights and the rule of law as well as adopt the new constitutions which limited the power of the president (Watson, 1992). Yet the Rwandan Hutu government

succeeded to resist the attacks as President Habyarimana instantly internationalized the conflict with the military assistance of France (Mwambari, et al., 2017). The African experts believed that the RPF invasion would never arise unless there was an approval and assistance of the Pentagon's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) (Cameron, 2012) as the role of both agencies had been strongly engaged in Rwanda during that period of time (Madsen, 1999).

The interest of British in Rwanda was represented by Uganda which had been the asylum for Tutsi refugees and had been training the RPF to support Museveni in overthrowing Uganda's regime under Obote. British supported Uganda because it might impact its economic interest in Uganda. Rwanda under President Kagame had an inclination on the British sphere of influences as it applied for Commonwealth membership in 1996.

### **Rwanda's Decision to Join British Commonwealth**

After the death of President Habyarimana and the genocide ended in 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took over the control, made President Pasteur Bizimungu and his Vice President Paul Kagame seized in



power. In 2003, Paul Kagame replaced Bizimungu and got elected for a seven-year term in Rwandan presidency. Under Kagame's regime, the new Rwandan constitution was designed to be more democratic with liable political system, proper enforcement of human rights and rule of law as well as equality and unity. The new constitutions which had made significant improvement in Rwanda's political and economy stability led the RPF to start dominating the legislative and executive of Rwanda's government. The goal of RPF was to rebuild its nation after the genocide and create a harmonious society. The reputation Paul Kagame as a progressive leader in international community had been arising as Rwanda's efforts to rebuild their country after a hideous genocide was very constructive (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2009).

Rwanda had been rebuilding its nation and the output was sufficiently progressive as the genocide tragedy was not an easy thing to deal with. Through its progressive improvement, Rwanda attempted to join the British Commonwealth in 1996 following Mozambique's successful step in the previous year. Unfortunately, its application was rejected as it did not meet the membership criteria of Harare Declaration. However, Rwanda had finally become the official

member of the Commonwealth in 2009.

The issues of Commonwealth membership had been arising since the join of Mozambique to this association. There had to be a strong motivation of a country without any historical connection to British Empire could be accepted to the Commonwealth. The potential member, in this case, Rwanda did not meet the formal criteria as established on the Harare Declaration 1991 when it applied in 1996. It had been striving to improve its nation to be taken into considerations even though it had faced critics from many parties.

In order to meet the criteria of Harare Declaration 1991 and Kampala Declaration 2007, Rwanda endeavored and made efforts adapting to the determined eligibilities. It has undoubtedly acknowledged Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of the Commonwealth as it is a must for member states to recognize the Queen as the Head of the Commonwealth, established English as its official language, enforced the human rights, equality, and democracy (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2009).

### **The Shift in Rwanda's Foreign Policy**

#### ***Determinant: Domestic Politics***

The background of President Paul Kagame as Rwanda's main political actor determines the direction of Rwanda's foreign policy. The decision maker remains influenced by four types of influencers: bureaucrat influencer, partisan influencer, interest influencers, and mass influencer. This research analyzes the background and the role of President Paul Kagame as the decision maker as well as the bureaucratic influencer himself in the decision-making process of Rwanda's foreign policy which generate Rwandan political transition.

The fact that Paul Kagame was a Tutsi-monarchy descent yet casted out from his monarch reign had triggered his eager to bring his people back to where they belonged. As a kid living in exile, Kagame and his fellow children refugee had been through a difficult time. They attended an outdoor school near their refugee camp organized by the elderly to get primary education. In that outdoor school, they learned English and started to adjust with the Ugandan cultures (Waugh, 2013). Kagame accomplished the equivalent third grade and was able to go to a well-regarded Rwengoro Primary School at the age of nine. Then he continued to attend one of the best schools in Uganda, Ntare School for his secondary education. This school was also attended by Yoweri Museveni, Ugandan rebel who

recruited Kagame to his guerilla army to take over his guerilla army to take over Ugandan regime (Kinzer, 2008).

In the early 1970s, Kagame was declining in academic performance as his father passed away and his best friend, Fred Rwigyema got departed for being involved in a clandestine mission to overthrow Ugandan President, Idi Amin. Losing two important people in his life had led him to be rebellious and tend to fight those in school who underestimate Rwandan people. He finally got suspended from Ntare School and moved to Old Kampala Secondary School (Kinzer, 2008).

At the age of twenty, Kagame unintentionally reunited with Fred Rwigyema, his childhood friend. Rwigyema at that time had become a soldier under Museveni's commands. By his military training and experiences, Kagame and the other Rwandan exiles began having military training and preparations. They also joined the rebel army of Museveni and successfully toppled down Idi Amin's tyranny regime in 1979. In 1981, Museveni established National Resistance Army (NRA) aimed at overthrowing President Milton Obote's regime and succeeded in 1986 (The State House of Uganda, 2012).

After successfully overthrown Obote's regime, the Rwandan refugees

of National Resistance Army (NRA) with the dream to bring their people back home left the NRA and established their own revolutionary movement, Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Subsequently, the RPF planned an invasion to Rwanda in 1990. Since that year, Rwanda started having a political transition. In 1993, RPF had already controlled several Rwanda's territories until 1994 when the conflict culminated in RPF finally gained victory. The triumph of RPF had been leading them to seize power and the manifestation of political transition which was dominated by the Hutu-Francophone then replaced by the Tutsi-Anglophone.

### ***Determinant: Economic Condition***

Rwanda in making its foreign policy to pivot to the Commonwealth must have considered its economy condition and must have foreseen that the foreign policy will be strategically beneficial for its economy. The economy condition of a country is an essential aspect in foreign policy decision-making process as economy determines whether a country could survive or not. The economy condition or economy capacity must be taken into considerations to secure the country and achieve the national interest (Coplin, 2003).

The 1994 genocide tragedy had impoverished Rwanda as it eroded the private and foreign investment. There

had also been lots of infrastructures and property destructions with physical and psychological damages (Collier, 2008). As shown on the graphic above, Rwanda's lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was in the year of 1994 when the genocide took place yet it gradually improving from time to time under the administration of Kagame until the present time. Rwanda has been one of the fastest growing economies in Central Africa as it has tremendous significant progress in the stabilization and reconstruction of Rwanda's economy. The country increased its GDP growth to eight percent per year between 2001 and 2014 (Ayittey, 2017).

In rebuilding its nation, Rwanda had actively sought for any opportunities for its economy development. It sought a gateway to get into the East Africa Community market cooperation—consist of Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda—as regional integration has been one of Rwanda's national development strategies (Sodipo & Musiitwa, 2012). Since Rwanda is lacking natural resources, it depends heavily on trading to survive the country.

In 2007, Rwanda sent its application to the Commonwealth. Rwanda's application was followed by its economic interest. It intended to pursue economic benefits as the

Commonwealth constituted in the World Trade Organization. It was expected that its membership in Commonwealth, Rwanda could facilitate it to play an influential role in the global trade (Pflanz, 2009). The Commonwealth is not a regional organization or association, yet Rwanda might harness its membership in Commonwealth to strengthen its relations with other African Commonwealth member countries which situated in the regions in order to integrate their economic developments. Rwanda's membership in both East African Community and in Commonwealth might double-benefit Rwanda as both organizations would offer different opportunities to participate in the global trade and in the international economic cooperation.

### ***Determinant: International Context***

The International context of one country does influence its foreign policy decision-making process. International context is the external factor that may influence the behavior of one country in determining its foreign policy directions. It requires the geography of a country, the diplomatic relations with other countries and the international demands. This research analyzes the geography location of Rwanda and the presence of the United Kingdom

which magnificently determine Rwanda's foreign policy.

Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in Africa, with an area of 26,338 km<sup>2</sup> and the population of 11,901,484 people by 2017. Geographically, it is in the central-eastern of Africa, bordered by Democratic Republic of the Congo in the west, Tanzania in the east, Uganda in the north, and Burundi in the south. This country is made up with four provinces with Kigali as its capital city. Rwanda is a landlocked country lacking natural resources, dominated by mountains and plateaus of the great watershed between the Nile and Zaire River basins (CIA World Factbook, 2017).

Since Rwanda is a landlocked country and located in the center of Africa, it is surrounded by countries on its every edge. Those countries are Francophone; Burundi, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Anglophone; Uganda, and Tanzania (Sinclair, 2012). The geography of one country's and the party in its surrounding would indeed influences its behavior to keep up with its surrounding in terms of both competitive and cooperative strategies; preserve the peace, security and stability in their regions. In this case, the geography of Rwanda as well as the fact that Rwanda's neighboring countries is the member of

Commonwealth has urged Rwanda to create a closer link with its surrounding since there is no single country in the world adequately self-sufficient to fulfill its national needs (Kimanuka, 2007). Even a superpower state must cooperate with other countries to maintain its existence. Therefore, Rwanda as a small developing country lacking natural resources needs to cooperate with other countries specifically its neighboring countries in order to survive.

Since Rwanda had been the part of *Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie* (OIF) since 1970s, it has been having access to build relations and cooperate with the other Francophone countries all over the world, particularly in Africa as this organization is becoming a platform for French-speaking countries to collaborate. The same way Rwanda's participation in the OIF, its membership in the Commonwealth would provide Rwanda another platform to easily build cooperation and reach other countries around the globe in different continents which Rwanda does not meet in the OIF. Regarding its international context, the application of Rwanda to the Commonwealth is a form of its strategies to get into another active access to participate in the international stage as Rwanda had been close allies with the United

Kingdom and the United States which have vigorously been active in promoting the idea of democracy, human rights and peacekeeping (Arieff & Terrell, 2018).

Commonwealth could facilitate them to preserve the stability and security in the region as the ideas and common values the members states of Commonwealth are carrying would determine the way each country's behave to be more cooperative rather than conflictual in conducting international relations. As a matter of fact, Rwanda has achieved remarkable progress on security and peacemaking and has played prominent role for the stability of the Great Lakes region (The New Times, 2015).

Beside its geography, the other countries' role also influences the foreign policy of one country. The United Kingdom had been playing an essential role in Rwanda's state-building post-genocide. It viewed there was a possibility for Rwanda to be a peaceful country and potentially could create and maintain stability in its region. The UK has been committed to assist Rwanda to build a long-term peace and stability, as well as economic growth and poverty reduction. An effective government institution was built to manifest the development of an inclusive Rwanda's society. Through the Department for International Development (DFID),

the United Kingdom invested in Rwanda's basic education to generate skillful productive youth for Rwanda's future. Since 2005, the United Kingdom has contributed to the decrease the number of poverties in Rwanda until two million people and still aiding the poor people to escape from poverty through nutrition programs and safeguard the young generation to get decent educations (Department for International Development, 2015).

The contribution of the United Kingdom in Rwanda's state-building had been so huge that it influenced the behavior of Rwanda in determining its policy. In order to maintain and strengthen closer partnership with the United Kingdom, Rwanda applied on Commonwealth membership in 2007. Since Rwanda had applied for membership in 1996 and got rejected due to it did not meet the criteria, it gradually improved its nation by referring the Commonwealth criteria as the ideal national orientation (Pflanz, 2007).

## Conclusion

The foreign policy shift of Rwanda as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to the Commonwealth was led by historical background of this country which made up with indigenous ethnic groups in which the

two of them had been conflicting since the colonization era. A distinction was set by the Belgian colonist that the Hutu were the labor who did every rough works, and the Tutsi were the ruler who were in charge to supervise the Hutu's works. The set of distinction led both indigenous groups into a political turmoil which ended up with political transition two times in the late 1950s and in 1994 when the genocide occurred.

In the first political turmoil, the Hutu overthrew the Tutsi monarchy which resulting them to flee into exile in neighboring countries. then established a republic of Rwanda. Under the Hutu regime, they built a close relation with France and cooperated in every aspect, economy, politic, and military. Despite Rwanda had never been colonized by France, it got an access to join *Organization Internationale de La Francophonie* (OIF) which made up with French-speaking countries all over the world. French had become the official language of Rwanda since it got liberated from Belgium in 1962. Through the OIF Rwanda built a mutual relation with France in which both countries gained economic benefits.

However, the relation between Rwanda and France was strained when the Tutsi refugees who had been living in the exile (Uganda and Tanzania) established Rwandan Patriotic Front

(RPF) and took over the power. Under the regime of Paul Kagame, Rwanda tended to leave and decimate the French influences as its grip had been too strong in Rwanda. Kagame tend to have an inclination to the United Kingdom as they had been living in Anglo-Saxon countries for decades. English was introduced in Rwanda for the necessity of the huge number of Tutsi returnees.

Rwanda applied for membership on the Commonwealth, an association of 53 sovereign member states of which territories used to belong to the British Empire. In 2008, Rwanda established English as the official language and resent its application on Commonwealth membership in 2009. Subsequently, Rwanda became the official member of the Commonwealth even though Rwanda never had a historical connection with British imperialism.

The foreign policy shift of Rwanda as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to the Commonwealth is determined and influenced by the background of Paul Kagame as the Tutsi descent who got casted out of his home country, and later led them to the political transition, the economy condition of Rwanda post-genocide which left lots of physical and psychological damages, as well as the international context of Rwanda which included its geographic location and

the role of United Kingdom during Rwanda's state-building post genocide.

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