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From Conflict to Cohesion

Navigating the role of perceived external threats in shaping Rwandan military
professionalism

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Abstract

After the Rwandan genocide ended in 1994, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) have continuously posed an existential threat to Rwanda. This paper examines how this external threat has been perceived by the Rwandan government and subsequently responded to through military development measures. In addition, the objective is to evaluate whether these measures have positively or negatively affected military professionalism by analyzing four principles developed by Samuel Huntington. Michael Desch's theory on threat environments lays the foundation for the additional theory employed in this paper. The author adopts a qualitative single-case study, in which government publications form the basis for the material, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the measures between 1994 and 2024. The paper finds that the perceived external threat has prolonged the collective memory of the genocide and prompted the Rwandan government to adopt several measures that have effectively professionalized the officer corps. However, the Rwandan government has simultaneously employed a skewed historical narrative to legitimize continued domestic militarization.

Keywords: Professionalism, officer corps, perceived external threat, liberation struggle, militarization

Word count: 10 000

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ALiR	Army for the Liberation of Rwanda
CMR	Civil-Military Relations
COP	Citizens Outreach Program
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
IPT	Interpretive Process Tracing
MINAFFET	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
OGS	Office of the Government Spokesperson
RDF	Rwanda Defence Force
RDFCSC	Rwanda Defence Force Command and Staff College
RMA	Rwanda Military Academy
RPA	Rwanda Patriotic Army
RPA	Rwanda Peace Academy
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front

1. Introduction

In post-genocide Rwanda, the specter of external threats looms large, shaping the trajectory of its military and the dynamics of professionalism. This paper embarks on a journey to unravel the complex security environment in which Rwanda is situated, focusing particularly on the perceived external threat posed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Democratic Forces of the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and their impact on the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF). The genesis of the external threat can be traced back to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994 when one million Hutus sought refuge in the Kivu province in the eastern DRC and began militarizing civilians and ex-genocidaires. The subsequent Congo Wars, violent turmoils and attacks perpetrated on Rwandan territory illuminate the challenging security environment and continued threat Rwanda navigates.

Drawing primarily upon government publications, this paper examines the evolving nature of the external threat, from its inception in 1994 to the present day. In doing so, the purpose is to provide an in-depth analysis of the measures taken as a result of the perceived external threat, and their effects on military professionalism over an extended time frame. Furthermore, testing the employed theories by Samuel Huntington and Michael Desch challenges their relevance in a contemporary context. This thesis finds that while Rwanda has had somewhat of a unique approach to military development, the perceived external threat has prompted the military to become highly professional and well-trained. In addition, Rwanda is a case of *objective civilian control*, which challenges previous literature.

Previous research on military development in post-genocide Rwanda has paid attention to domestic factors such as army integration and the political nature of the RDF. The literature also examines the political motivations behind the increased involvement in international peacekeeping missions. While most literature argues that the RDF is a highly professional and skilled military, less attention is paid to the effects of a perceived external threat. In addition, the concept of professionalism has not been tested against Huntington's theory, a seminal theory in the Civil-Military Relations literature. It is in this research gap this paper positions itself. By examining professionalism in relation to Huntington's theory, previous literature is challenged. The value of this research lies in testing theories that claim to be universal in a contemporary context. Additionally, labeling a military as professional opens doors such as being involved in peacekeeping missions, that otherwise probably would not have been the case. Therefore, this paper poses the following research question:

- How does the proximity of an external threat from the DRC and FDLR affect military professionalism in Rwanda?

The paper begins with a historical examination of the ethnic division between Hutus and Tutsis and the causes of the current perceived threat. Afterward, a literature review that presents two fields of research regarding the Rwandan military: international peacekeeping missions and army integration. The literature review additionally discusses the research gap in which this paper is positioned and the value of conducting this research. In the subsequent chapter, the theoretical framework presents the two employed theories developed by Samuel Huntington and Michael Desch. Next, a methodology chapter presents the case study, the Interpretative process tracing method and lastly the collected material. After the methodology, five subchapters present the allocated results. The first subchapter discusses how the threat has been perceived throughout the analyzed years. This is followed by four subchapters in which each of Huntington's principles are discussed separately. The subsequent results discussion analyzes how the principles should be understood simultaneously and answers the research question. Finally, a concluding chapter highlighting the main findings and the implications of this research.

2. Historical context

The Rwandan genocide in 1994 was instigated by the assassination of the Hutu president Habyarimana, marking the beginning of 100 days of systematic murdering and sexual violence perpetrated by the Hutu majority against the Tutsi minority. The ethnic schism between Hutus and Tutsis traces its roots to the colonial era, during which the Belgians transformed the socioeconomic demarcation into a rigid ethno-classification system, wherein ethnicity was delineated patrilineally and ascribed at birth. The Tutsis were viewed as the aristocracy, while the Hutus endured systemic discrimination. This transformation occurred in 1933 and laid the foundation for decades of power struggles (Hintjens, 1999: 249-250).

Rwanda was under the Tutsi dominion until 1962 when the Hutus seized power, marking the beginning of independence and continued turmoil. The decades of violence materialized between April to July 1994, when an estimated 800,000 Tutsis perished in the genocide. In July 1994, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) triumphed against the genocidal forces, culminating in the establishment of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) as the ruling political party. After the genocide, one million Hutus fled to eastern DRC's Kivu

Province, in fear of persecution (Prunier, 1995: 12). While most of the refugees were civilians, approximately 65,000 were ex-militiamen and soldiers complicit in the genocide (Emizet, 2000: 165).

To take revenge on the *genocidaires*, RPA soldiers were sent to the Kivu province to kill and repatriate the Hutus. Meanwhile in the refugee camps, civilians and ex-militiamen had begun militarizing to launch attacks on the new Tutsi government in Rwanda (RPF), which they perceived as illegitimate (Prunier, 2009: 26). The purpose was to make Rwanda ungovernable (Emizet, 2000: 165). The Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALiR) was founded in 1997 from within the camps by previous *genocidaires* and civilians seeking to reinstate a Hutu government in Rwanda (Holda, 2023: 46). In Rwanda, concerns circulated that ALiR sought to continue the genocide as Tutsis became the victims of several attacks. The RPA responded to the attacks by killing high-ranking commanders, splitting the militia into two subsections.

In 2000, the subsections joined the FDLR, which had been working for the same purpose and was founded under similar circumstances in the refugee camps (Holda, 2023: 47). The FDLR sporadically gained access to weapons and training from the Congolese government. The RPF has continuously perceived them as an existential threat to the regime and Tutsis living in the DRC (OGS, 2024). This has forced the RPF to take actions in response. News media and the U.S. government have warned Rwanda and the DRC to avoid a full-scale war and the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from eastern Congo, indicating an increase in violence during the last few years (Voice of America, 2024; Africa News, 2024).

Since July 1994, the RPA has developed in various ways. It was at first a guerilla army but in 2002 rebranded to the currently named 'Rwanda Defence Force' (RDF) (MOD, 2012). The RDF mainly consists of men but has since the 2003 constitution focused on including women (Holmes, 2014: 330). Both Hutus and Tutsis are included in the RDF, but in a stratified manner (Jowell, 2014: 280). Furthermore, conscription has never been a part of the recruitment system.

3. Literature review

The literature on post-genocide Rwanda is extensive. Following is an examination of two of the most central topics within this literature related to military development in Rwanda: international peacekeeping missions and army integration.

Since 2004, the Rwandan military has been increasingly involved in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions (Beswick, 2010; Beswick, 2014; Jowell, 2014; Jowell, 2021; Donelli, 2022). The literature repeatedly questions why the RPF emphasizes the importance of sending troops to conflict-ridden countries. (Donelli, 2022: 8; Jowell, 2014: 285; Beswick, 2014: 220).

The Rwandan government motivates the increased involvement through the failure of the international community to stop the genocide in 1994. This has prompted a moral obligation to uphold African peace and security by intervening in regional conflicts (Beswick, 2010: 746). The literature problematizes this motivation by arguing that the involvement in peacekeeping missions can improve military professionalism and gain legitimacy from Rwandan society and the international community. As a result, donor states such as the United Kingdom view Rwanda as mature and developed. In return, Rwanda is provided with various necessities such as military training (Beswick, 2010: 747). The moral obligation can therefore be seen as a front for political goals.

The second field of research has focused on the integration of the RDF into Rwandan society (Jowell, 2014; Wilén, 2016; Purdeková et al., 2018; & Kuehnel; Wilén, 2018). The literature is consistent in the findings and conclusions and usually discusses how the RDF wants to be perceived as a people's army, savior and friend in an attempt to make society "overcome the fear of the military" (Purdeková et al., 2018: 166). The discussions usually focus on a few policy decisions taken by the government. Developing the civic and political education camps, *Ingando*, in the mid-1990s constituted the first policy. Ingando is run by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and teach civilians and the military to possess a national identity and the ideals and norms of the RPF (Purdeková et al., 2018: 166-167; Wilén, 2016: 91; Jowell, 2014: 282). This fosters an omnipresent military that has respect from society.

The second policy decision was the development of a military bank in 1997 (LSE blog, 2014; Purdeková et al., 2018: 164; Wilén, 2016: 88). Because of the immense financial problems at the end of the genocide, there was a risk of the soldiers quitting their jobs if they were not being paid. However, the RPF needed to retain their military for security. Therefore, the MOD instituted the bank 'Zigama Credit and Savings Society' which guarantees soldiers monthly pay and favorable loans. Albeit not to the extent in some other African countries, the RPF still encourages the military to engage in side businesses such as running cafés (Purdeková et al., 2018: 164; Wilén, 2016: 88). This is mutually beneficial for the individual soldiers and the state. While the former receive an additional income, they remain occupied with non-political activities. An occupied military benefits the state because it is less likely to

intervene in the political sphere. The increased presence in peacekeeping missions can also be explained by this line of reasoning because the soldiers are kept occupied, are well-paid by the UN and gain international legitimacy.

The third policy decision relates to the aforementioned discussion on international peacekeeping missions, during which the RDF has an opportunity to show its excellence in practice. Resultantly, the RDF acquires experience and increases professionalism and legitimacy from Rwandan civilians as liberators and a people's army (Jowell, 2014: 288; Wilén, 2016: 93; Jowell, 2021: 3). The literature usually concludes by stating that the RDF is a cohesive, professional and integrated military that has a high international standard. An issue with the literature is its uncritical perspective regarding the sources the authors use. They tend to cite each other or themselves, which undermines the possibility of new perspectives being presented.

3.1 Research gap

While the concept of professionalism is prevalent throughout the above literature, it lacks a clear theoretical framework and is used as if the reader has previous knowledge of its meaning. Professionalism can be defined in several ways, each of which has implications on whether the military is professional or not. Professionalism is central to this paper as it poses a solution to the civil-military *problematique*, further explained later. Another research gap is the scarce attention paid to the effects of the FDLR in Rwanda. Purdeková et al. (2018) mention the threat but do not analyze how it has been perceived by the Rwandan government. Instead, the authors state that it has justified increased militarization (Purdeková et al, 2018: 168).

This paper employs the foundational understanding of professionalism, which was coined by Samuel Huntington in 1957. Although two of the aforementioned articles (Wilén, 2016; Jowell, 2014) mention Huntington, they test it against unspecified variables or when it seems fit, leading to inconclusive and varying results. If professionalism is not defined, it becomes increasingly difficult to arrive at any conclusions because it is imprecise what is researched. Furthermore, the literature is somewhat contradictory. While most authors imply that the RDF is professional, Jowell (2014) argues that there are characteristics that, according to Huntington, would make it unprofessional. Employing a theoretical framework to analyze professionalism fosters a straightforward approach because the theory is based on four principles that can be analyzed accordingly.

Analyzing Huntington's theory in this context adds to the literature by challenging previous articles that argue that the RDF is professional. Can the RDF be labeled as professional when Jowell (2014) asserts that *subjective civilian control* is present? The value of discussing these issues is twofold. First, it should not be taken for granted that a military is professional, especially not when the concept is used with insufficient explanations. Otherwise, Rwanda can continue using its moral obligation argument to intervene in other countries without being questioned about the real political motivations. Second, testing Huntington's and Desch's theories against the case of Rwanda clarifies their relevance in a contemporary context.

4. Theoretical framework

4.1 Civil-Military Relations and Samuel Huntington

This paper employs Samuel Huntington's theory in his book *The Soldier and the State* (1957). The book marked a historical moment in the study of Civil-Military Relations (CMR) when it proposed a new solution to the *problematique*. Although it was published close to 70 years ago and is based on militaries in the Cold War zeitgeist, his theory has been adopted by CMR scholars ever since (Feaver, 2009: 626). Scholars of CMR analyze how countries develop their military and how it functions in relation to civilians, civilian leaders (politicians) and society in general (Brooks, 2019). They seek to understand and develop theories around the *problematique*: who guards the guardians? The *problematique* can be understood as: "because we fear others we create an institution of violence to protect us, but then we fear the very institution we created for protection" (Feaver, 1996: 150).

Consequently, Feaver (1996: 151) argues that there are two factors worth considering when developing a military. First, the military needs to be sufficiently powerful and effective to win in a war. Developing a new military would be too time-consuming if a war is imminent. Furthermore, a weak military is worse than no military because it seemingly poses a threat to other countries but is incapable of defending against an attack, undermining its responsibility to provide military security. Since the military needs coercive power, military equipment is crucial. This results in the second factor, namely the risks of the military using arms against the civilian leaders and population. Ergo, it poses a threat to the very country that developed the military (Feaver, 1996: 151-153). Striking a balance between the civil and the military is of crucial concern for countries in their search for security.

Huntington's solution to the problematique was to maximize military professionalism. He argued for a professional and apolitical officer corps that is subordinate to civilian leaders. Four principles constitute the theory: objective civilian control, expertise, responsibility and corporateness. These operationalize the concept of professionalism and are explained in the subsequent subchapters. This theory forms the basis for the dependent variable, military professionalism. Professionalism should be analyzed along a spectrum rather than be seen as a dichotomy. Hence, a military is more or less professional, depending on how the principles are complied with. The principles themselves should also be analyzed along a continuum. Furthermore, it "is not the result of a single event but is a culture that must be constantly reinforced, refined, and perpetuated" (ACSC, 2024).

Huntington's theory was rebutted by Morris Janowitz in 1960. Janowitz (1960) did not oppose the necessity of a professional military but rather argued that contemporary militaries will always be politicized and influenced by society. Although Janowitz's theory has been influential, it lacks evidence (Feaver, 1996: 165). In addition, despite rebutting Huntingtonian professionalism, Janowitz fails to provide a new approach to achieving civilian control but rather falls back on his predecessor's perspective. Therefore, Huntington's theory is employed. Cohen (2002) argues that Huntington's theory is the 'normal theory' to which everyone else has to position themselves. Since Huntington coined professionalism, it forms the basis for future researchers attempting to expand upon the literature. The theory follows clear criteria and offers a structured framework which facilitates its application to various contexts. To discuss how militaries professionalize is commonplace globally, even in the African context and by the Rwandan government (ADF, 2018; MOD, 2019 & Donelli, 2022).

Although Huntington developed his theory mainly in relation to the U.S. military, this paper does not measure the level of professionalism in Rwanda to that of the U.S. because the latter is not an ideal type that every other military strives to imitate. Furthermore, the principles of professionalism are neither temporal nor linear. They can be applied to and tested against militaries worldwide at any point in time. However, this does not mean that Huntington's theory is correct. Analyzing Rwanda's military on its own terms and applying the theory exclusively to Rwanda gives rise to an analysis distinct from the Cold War period and the U.S. context.

4.1.1 Objective civilian control

The principle of *objective civilian control* outlines the military's institutional role and its relationship to the political sphere. A professional military eschews political involvement and is subordinate to its civilian leaders (Huntington, 1957: 83). Subordination means that it is the politicians who set the goals and purposes of the military, while the military decides upon how the fighting itself should be conducted. Civilian control decreases as military officers become increasingly involved in politics. The officer corps must be politically sterile and “stand ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state” (Huntington, 1957: 84), even though it is a “decision which runs violently counter to his military judgment (Huntington, 1957: 72). It is exclusively the officers that must refrain from politics because they are the policymakers within the military.

By giving the civilian leaders the power to decide the goals of the military, national security is improved because the military is unlikely to wage war against its own country. Politics and the military develop a social contract in which the latter is given a certain amount of autonomy, in exchange for not intervening in politics. When military officers abide by this principle, professionalism is fostered. In contrast, when officers disobey civilian leaders and become politicized, *subjective civilian control* is engendered and professionalism is negatively affected (Huntington, 1957: 83). The military should be a political tool that civilian leaders have at their disposal (Huntington, 1957: 83).

Michael Desch (1999) added to Huntington's theory by arguing that objective civilian control can be positively affected and has a higher likelihood of being attained under certain threat environments. Countries either face international (external), domestic (internal), both or neither threats. A threat is either high or low, depending on its imminence. Objective civilian control is positively affected when the external threat is high and internal threat low because the military and the civilian government become increasingly unified and turn the focus outward (Desch, 1999: 6). Hence, an external threat can be beneficial to avoid the politicization of an officer corps. When faced with an internal threat, the government risks losing its power because the military can use its arms to impose power and govern the country (Desch, 1999: 12-13). Desch's theory posits that high external threats were prevalent during the Cold War but that they are absent during periods of peace. Meanwhile, the importance lies in how an actor perceives threats. Even though Desch perceives the current post-Cold War world as a period of peace, if an actor perceives the threat as high, the actor will take steps that correspond to this perception. Desch (1999: 15) further argues that

countries in the ‘Third World’ are rarely faced with external threats but rather by internal threats. There is consequently an increased likelihood of military intervention in politics in such countries. However, is that the case in Rwanda that seemingly faces a high external threat? In this paper, Desch’s theory analyzes the independent variable: the threat environment in Rwanda.

A prominent counterargument against the principle of objective civilian control emphasizes the tautology of political activity and professionalism (Brooks, 2021). The argument proceeds as follows and takes the perspective of an officer. Because I see myself as a professional, I am per definition apolitical. Resultantly, the actions I take as a professional must therefore not be political (Brooks, 2021: 20). This leads to military officers alleviating the sense of self-scrutiny and the definition of political activity is dismissed. The tautology argument also points out the fallacies with the connection between objective civilian control and professionalism. Objective civilian control is achieved when the officer corps is professional. Meanwhile, professionalism is also increased when the officers abide by objective civilian control. Huntington’s theory is hence a circular argument in which both professionalism and objective civilian control can lead to one another. This paper acknowledges these rebuttals and agrees that the theory has fallacies. However, since the purpose of the paper is to test the theory rather than to prove its correctness, it still is valuable.

4.1.2 The concept of profession

Huntington (1957: 8) perceived the officer corp as a certain type of ‘profession’ distinct from regular vocations. It has three defining principles: *expertise*, *responsibility* and *corporateness*.

A professional has *expertise* in its profession, which is attained through lengthy education and experience by gaining specialized knowledge and skills. The history of the profession’s intellectual nature and understanding the broader tradition in which it is situated is crucial. Only when this knowledge is acquired can a professional apply the skills. Education is provided by research and education institutions and should take part in two phases. The first phase teaches the theoretical and cultural background and the second phase emphasizes specialized skills and knowledge (Huntington, 1957: 9). A military officer is an expert in the management of violence.

Huntington further posits the importance of *responsibility* by comparing the officer to professors, doctors and lawyers. These have a crucial role in a functioning society and their

client is the population. The professional has a monopoly on its exercise, such as a monopoly on violence. It is crucial that the professional conducts its profession in a responsible manner to provide military security to society, which is the officer's main responsibility (Huntington, 1957: 63). The officer is also responsible for abiding by the decisions made by the civilian leaders, which renders objective civilian control and increases military security. If the responsibilities are neglected, the professional must cease to practice its profession. Maintaining an ethical framework and unwritten norms is vital to avoid and mitigate conflicts with other professionals or their clients (Huntington, 1957: 9-10). This military ethic is only adhered to the extent as the military is professional. Hence, if the officer corps' ethical articulations are widespread, it is highly professional.

Corporateness expresses itself through the group sense professionals share among themselves. Professionals are a part of a collective unity that identify themselves through the prolonged education, traditions, the similarity of occupation and the responsibility they have towards society. Professionals must not apply their expertise to other areas where it does not belong (Huntington, 1957: 10). Officers express corporateness through their uniforms, hierarchies in ranks and oftentimes live and work distinct from society. It is crucial to distinguish between enlisted soldiers and officers because the former is not an expert in the management of violence but rather in the application of violence (Huntington, 1957: 17-18). If hierarchies are absent, less educated soldiers could have too large of an influence, potentially undermining military security. Furthermore, it would render military professionalism impossible. Lastly, societies that have developed their military to the extent that an officer corps emerges should also be a society in which the officers eschew the political arena (Huntington, 1957: 85).

5. Methodology

5.1 Case study

This paper employs a case study which can be defined as “the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George and Bennett, 2005: 2). Single-case studies give rise to an in-depth examination of a specific event, not feasible in multi-case studies (Ozcan et al., 2017: 6). The time frame of analysis begins in July 1994, since it marked the end of the genocide, and ends in March 2024, which is the latest date when the collected material was

published. Although this might seem as an extensive period, it is crucial to include the events directly after the genocide. Otherwise, important material and measures taken might be excluded.

A qualitative single-case study is the most suitable option for this paper because of three reasons. First, to conduct an in-depth analysis on military professionalism requires a plethora of information. Keeping in mind the limited number of words, comparing several cases would prompt a shallow analysis. Hence, conducting comparisons is beyond the scope of analysis. Second, Yin (2014: 47) argues that single-case studies are valuable when testing a well-established theory, which is one of the aims of this paper. Third, single-case studies are relevant when the case is representative or has features that can be seen as commonplace (Yin, 2014: 48). The chosen case gives rise to two such characteristics: the perceived external threat and the measures taken to professionalize the officer corps.

Single-case studies are usually critiqued on their lack of generalizability, which means that the findings are difficult to apply to other contexts (Firestone, 1993). However, generalizability is not the main purpose of such studies, prompting the critique less relevant (Yin, 2014: 43). Instead, high interval validity, namely to what extent one is confident that there is a causal relationship between the researched independent variables and the dependent variable, is pursued (Slack & Draugalis, 2001: 2173). High interval validity is crucial to a single-case study because there is a risk that other possible explanatory causes are dismissed. This would undermine the reliability of the paper and make the analysis unviable.

5.1.1 Case selection

There are two main arguments for conducting this research. First, it is a post-colonial country that after the genocide had to re-build its infrastructure, government and more importantly, the military. The effects of an external threat on this development have not been sufficiently researched and especially not in accordance with Huntington's theory. Employing this theory adds another layer to the study of post-colonial and post-genocide countries. Furthermore, discussing newer developments in Rwanda provides a more spatial and contemporary analysis of events that have affected and currently affect the RDF. Second, the two employed theories are expressed in a universalist fashion and not exclusively focused on a certain region of the world but rather in its entirety. But how do they function in a post-colonial and post-genocide country that faces a perceived external threat, which Desch (1999: 15) argues is rare in global south countries?

5.2 Interpretive process tracing

This paper uses an Interpretive process tracing (IPT) method to analyze the collected materials. Process tracing is a tool to uncover how certain processes lead to particular outcomes and is commonly used in research spanning over longer time periods (Norman, 2015: 4). As a result, “more nuanced, comprehensive and accurate accounts can be formulated of how mounting social and political tensions produce particular outcomes” (Norman, 2015: 4). Furthermore, an IPT method studies how certain institutions, such as the RPF, perceive particular situations. This paper uses the method to analyze causal patterns between the perceived threat environment and the measures taken by chronologically describing their adoption.

IPT is valuable because it gives rise to an in-depth and fine-grained analysis that explains a single case on its own terms over a longer time period. In addition, process tracing has the advantage of opening for an analysis that tests “hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case” (Bennet & Checkel, 2012: 10). Emphasis must be placed on ‘might’ because there is a risk that other, not analyzed, independent variables influence the dependent variable. Causal mechanisms only might therefore explain the case.

5.3 Materials

The collected primary sources are government publications by the Office of the Government Spokesperson (OGS), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MINAFFET). These are published in English and are statements about security postures, threat warnings and attacks perpetrated by the DRC/FDLR. This paper uses these publications to analyze how the RPF perceives and constructs the external threat and what measures have been taken to develop the RDF. Publications are selected if they exclusively discuss the DRC/FDLR, new military actions or policy decisions that affect the RDF. Besides these publications, the government websites mainly report on politicians who attend various meetings. These are dismissed due to their irrelevance. Another primary source is the three military academies in Rwanda. Two of the schools maintain their own websites, while a 72 page document describes the third. The material is valuable because it provides information on whether what the schools claim to teach is in line with Huntington’s ‘concept of a professional’. The information includes the schools’ values and the length of training. This paper analyzes 16 government publications in

total. Secondary sources, such as research papers and books, add to the material by being used to analyze and challenge how previous literature has studied the topic.

A potential shortcoming with the material is the skewed picture presented in the publications. Government authorities, especially in authoritarian countries such as Rwanda, have a tendency to censor and regulate publications and exclude perspectives that are in opposition to their viewpoint. Exclusively using such sources can result in a one-sided interpretation of certain situations. However, without understanding how Rwandan political and military leaders perceive and construct the threat, it is impossible to analyze the measures taken as a result. In the end, the value of government publications is that they relay the political thought of powerful actors and provide evidence of how the RPF perceives certain situations. As with any primary source, the publications must be read and presented critically to avoid functioning as an extension of government propaganda.

Most of the government publications began being published in 2017. This means that there is a gap in material from 1994 until then. During that time frame, this paper asserts the threat environment on official publications made by, for example, Human Rights Watch and MONUSCO. These websites discuss joint cooperations with the RDF against the FDLR and how RPF authorities have discussed the threat in official meetings. Although the publications were made after 2017, they also discuss how the threat has affected Rwanda prior to their publication.

This paper limits its scope of analysis to the RDF, meaning that militia groups such as the M23, which allegedly is supported by the RPF, is dismissed. The M23 was founded in 2012, is active in the Kivu province and primarily fights against the FDLR (Schwikowski, 2024). Despite their influence in the region, the militia group is disregarded because of two reasons. First, it would remove focus from the RDF officer corps and prompt a more shallow analysis. Second, since it is a militia group, its professional training and structure is impossible to determine based on the limited information available. Hence, the discussion would be more speculative than analytical.

6. Results

6.1 Perceived external threat

The perceived external threat was prevalent almost directly after the genocide as Rwandan soldiers were sent to the Kivu province and Hutu refugees began militarizing. In 1996, the

perceived high external threat became increasingly tangible as the first Congo War broke out. The Congo Wars lasted until 2003, illuminating the perceived external threat during these years. The wars in the DRC were justified by arguing that Hutu groups in eastern DRC still posed a threat and that the regime was hiding Hutu extremists (Global Conflict Tracker, 2024).

The threat has historically been perceived as increasingly imminent when faced with an attack. This is illuminated by looking at how Rwandan authorities discuss the number of soldiers the FDLR possesses. In February 2001, president Kagame stated that the FDLR was composed of 10,000 soldiers. When the FDLR attacked Rwanda in May 2001, Rwandan authorities increased the number to 40,000 (Human Rights Watch, 2001). The Minister of Defence further increased it to 100,000. This is not surprising as the FDLR's stated mission is to "use military pressure to open "inter-Rwandan dialogue" with the current Rwandan government" (MONUSCO, 2024). By stating that the FDLR is composed of a certain number of soldiers, the RPF legitimizes a more vigorous response.

The threat environment changed in 2003 as the FDLR refocused to fight the civil war in the DRC until 2009. In March 2005, the FDLR issued a statement saying that their soldiers would return peacefully to Rwanda and cease all military actions (IRB-CISR, 2007). However, only 1,500 of approximately 22,000 soldiers were sent back. In 2009, a joint cooperation between the RDF, MONUSCO and the Congolese army aimed to undermine the FDLR, indicating a continued perceived threat (MONUSCO, 2024).

Government publications by the MOD, OGS and MINAFFET attest to the perceived threat by providing evidence of how the DRC/FDLR takes pervasive actions. The publications have increased significantly in numbers since 2022. For example, in a document by the MOD named "DRC fires rockets into Rwanda" published in June 2022, the ministry states that the rockets follow a series of attacks perpetrated previously the same year resulting in casualties and soldiers being kidnapped. In November later that year, a soldier entered Rwandan territory and shot at defense guard towers (MOD, 2022). Similar documents have since been published numerous times.

The OGS has since 2022 published six articles stating how the DRC is spying on and violating Rwandan airspace. The most telling publication is the document 'The FDLR are still a threat' in which they argue that the FDLR spreads genocidal ideology, amasses wealth to build its offensive capabilities, is a part of the Congolese military and plays an existential threat to Rwanda (OGS, 2023). It is important to emphasize 'existential' because it provides evidence that the RPF perceives, or at least constructs, it as a high external threat. Lastly, a

MINAFFET article from February 2024 notes that the DRC and the FDLR attacked the Kivu province, where many Congolese Tutsis reside (MINAFFET, 2024). The publication also states that the DRC/FDLR has for thirty years constituted a serious threat and contributed to instability in the region. Furthermore, the DRC presents a growing threat to Rwandan national security and supposedly aims to invade Rwanda. The article ends with stating that “Rwanda reserves the right to take any legitimate measures to defend our country, so long as this threat exists” (MINAFFET, 2024). These measures allude to military nature.

6.2 Objective civilian control

Ingando was developed when the RPF seized power in 1994 and teach a certain type of history and politics to reconcile society, encourage people to overcome the genocide and make Hutus accept their role in the atrocities (Purdeková, 2011: 28). Rwandans are propagated into believing government policies and the importance of defending and admiring Rwanda. While there are a plethora of issues pertaining to teaching such lessons to civilians (Purdeková, 2011: 28; Thomson, 2019), it is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, focus is placed on military officers who also have attended Ingando (Jowell, 2014: 282).

Indoctrinating officers with these lessons have contrasting effects on objective civilian control. One perspective is that it increases the likelihood of military officers being subordinate to civilian leaders because they are more likely to trust that the RPF’s policies are beneficial for the state. In addition, previous research has indicated that Ingando has increased cohesion, military consciousness and led the RDF to “work for the same purpose, the security and welfare of Rwandans” (Jowell, 2014: 283). Attending Ingando creates a unifying force that leads officers to share the same ideology in which the self-interest of the individual officer is subordinate to the missions of the state (Wilén, 2016: 91). Although the establishment of Ingando was motivated by the genocide, the perceived external threat prolongs and reinforces the collective memory of the genocide. A valuable example is provided in the government publications, which state that the FDLR is constituted by ex-genocidaires (OGS, 2023 & OGS, 2024). Therefore, teaching the officers the importance of keeping Rwanda safe and abiding by the policies made by the RPF remains pivotal. In turn, objective civilian control is positively affected.

On the contrary, if officers detach from these lessons, there is a risk that they use its military power against the RPF. This occurred in 2009 when three officers were arrested following an alleged coup attempt against the government (Kouyate, 2009). This is only one

of many similar occurrences where officers are either murdered because of or charged with alleged illegal activities such as coup attempts, prompting it to be a strategic tactic by the RPF to crack down on military officers that it perceives as a threat to the state or in opposition to its policies (Jalloh, 2021; Beswick, 2012). By doing so, the RPF mitigates the risks of losing its grip on power, prolonging its influence in Rwanda. The alleged coup attempts also indicate how officers abide by their own interests, hence undermining Huntington's (1957: 72) argument that the military must abide by the civilian leaders, although the policy decision runs counter to the officer's own interests.

Objective civilian control is further affected by the political involvement of officers. When the RPF seized power in 1994, it was mainly led by military elites from Uganda (Jones, 2012). President Kagame, who has governed Rwanda since 2000, was one of them. He is praised as having played a leading role in the liberation of Rwanda and he keeps close ties with the officer corps by having regular lunches in their canteen (MOD, 2019: 17). Since Kagame also is the commander-in-chief, he holds the strategic leadership over the RDF, which undermines the autonomy the military officers should have in deciding upon how to conduct the fighting itself (Jowell, 2014: 283). Until 2003, military officers were extensively involved in domestic politics. This has since decreased and the RPF is increasingly focused on professionalizing the military (Jowell, 2014: 284). If officers want to join the RPF, they must retire from the military. For example, every Minister of Defence since 1994 is a retired officer.

The Rwandan constitution of 2003 facilitated the de-politicization of the RDF by prohibiting "soldiers, police officers and members of the National Intelligence and Security Service {...} from being members of political organizations" (Rwanda Const. Article 60). The constitution seemingly promotes apolitical soldiers. An issue with the constitution is its scarce definition of a soldier and whether it also includes officers. If officers are not prohibited from engaging in politics, objective civilian control risks being undermined. Meanwhile, there is little indication that officers have been directly involved in the RPF after 2003.

In contrast, officers are extensively involved in Ingando, which has a clear political bias. Therefore, the RDF is not politically sterile. Instead, Ingando illuminates the very political nature the RDF possesses and highlights the internal focus of the RDF. This results in a politicized officer corps whose professionalism is negatively affected. The internal focus also entails contributing to Rwandan societies through various construction activities and healthcare. The recurring government publication 'Rwanda Defence Force. The Bedrock of

National Transformation’, highlights the domestic contributions of the RDF, through Army week and the Citizen Outreach Program (MOD, 2017). The contribution aspect of the RDF is included in the constitution (Rwanda Const. Article 173).

Ostensibly, the purpose is to provide an image of a military that takes the interests of the population rather than as a tool of the elites. This has been a common problem in post-independence African countries and causes a fear of the military (Kuehnel & Wilén, 2018: 156) By contributing to society, the RDF shows their mission to protect the population. The current Minister of Defence even describes the RDF as “a people’s military {...} assuring Rwandans of peace and security” (MOD, 2019: 7). Meanwhile, the domestic contributions problematize the external focus Michael Desch argues a high external threat would foster. Furthermore, militaries should be used as political tools (Huntington, 1957: 83).

6.3 Expertise

Prior to 1999, the level of expertise among the officer corps was low. Officers were either Tutsi refugees or civilians who had ended their university studies to join the liberation war. Their military training is hence unknown or insufficient. After the genocide, professionalizing the military was rendered impossible due to financial challenges. Furthermore, the purpose of the RDF prior to 2002 was to regain national sovereignty and not to train professional officers (MOD, 2019: 20). Since 1999, the RDF has developed significantly. The name change from the RPA to the RDF in 2002 aimed to move from a guerilla force to a conventional military, which is a common tactic by post-conflict countries to depart from a conflictual past and professionalize (Kuehnel & Wilén, 2018: 159).

The RDF has developed three military schools to improve its professional training. The Rwandan Military Academy (RMA) was established for officer cadets in 1999 and its purpose is “To train and educate cadets in the values of military profession and academic excellence” and “To be a center of excellence for educating and training cadets to become leaders of character, broadly educated and professionally skilled” (RMA, 2019: 2). Courses are held during a one-year period and claim to teach values such as loyalty, patriotism and respect. In the end, students are granted a bachelor’s degree. To become an expert in the management of violence, it is mandatory to attend the RMA. Cadets are taught both theoretical and practical skills. Furthermore, maintaining high ethical standards is crucial (RMA, 2019: 11). All of these aspects have striking similarities to what Huntington demanded of how a professional officer corps should be trained.

The Rwandan Peace Academy (RPA) opened in 2010 and trains future officers to attend international peacekeeping missions. Two of the core values are excellence and professionalism. When the UNDP visited the school, they noted that the “institution’s courses will aim to engage in relevant research and exchange of regional and global expertise and knowledge” (UNDP, 2022). 2756 military officers have been trained since the school opened (RPA, 2024).

The RDF Command and Staff College (RDFCSC) was inaugurated in 2012 and is an upgrade to the RMA (RDFCSC, 2024). Responsibility, patriotism, loyalty and duty are among the core values of the school. To further their expertise, military officers are mandated to attend either one of two courses taught here.

The perceived external threat has prompted the development of these academies and the RPF to realize the importance of having an effective military at its disposal, because if the Rwandan military was weak it would provide the DRC/FDLR with an opportunity to intervene. Although Rwanda has been attacked numerous times, a full-scale war has been avoided. The perceived external threat also provides the officer corps with practical knowledge through combat experience, such as the joint mission against the FDLR in 2009. Being active in the field has taught officers lessons that are impossible to teach in training. Furthermore, the current perceived risk that the DRC invades Rwanda spurs officers to stand ready against a tangible threat. It is crucial to remember that this perceived threat is based on the RPF’s perspective, which is illuminated in the government publications. As a result of this perception, Rwanda becomes increasingly militarized and the RPF’s hold on power is prolonged (Purdeková et al., 2018: 168). This militarization has prompted analysts to call Rwanda a ‘securocracy’ (Sidiropoulos, 2002: 83).

6.4 Responsibility

Throughout military school and at Ingando, officers are taught to admire and protect Rwanda, as well as the values of patriotism and loyalty. These academies lay the foundation for an officer corps that aims to fulfill its responsibility to protect Rwanda because a ‘rally around the flag’ and cohesiveness is fostered. In turn, professionalism is positively affected.

Several of the officers trained at the RMA have been interviewed on why they chose to enlist. “There is nothing more humbling than serving your own country in uniform; it raises a feeling of worthiness and a sense of achievement that cannot be found elsewhere” (RMA, 2019: 34). This officer is particularly proud to be apart of the RDF “that stopped the

1994 Genocide against the Tutsi has created in me that sense of feeling worthy, it is a feeling of significance that can be felt by all cadet trainees” (RMA, 2019: 34). Another officer says that “The RDF doctrine is rooted in the liberation struggle of Rwanda. We, the youth of this nation, are challenged to come and step into the shoes of those who initiated the journey” (RMA, 2019: 30). “This surely recounts the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) youths that liberated our country and it makes us guardians of past achievements” (RMA, 2019: 44). The interviews provide a one-sided perspective of what it means to be an officer and those with opposing viewpoints are not interviewed or excluded from the publication.

Praising the liberators and remembering the legacy from the liberation struggle emerge as a common theme in the interviews. Interestingly, neither the interviewees nor the RMA publication mention the current perceived threat. Instead, responsibility is largely founded in and legitimized through the supposed liberation struggle during the genocide. Referring to the genocide as a liberation struggle illuminates how the RPF creates a certain historical narrative through which military security and militarization becomes pivotal. Furthermore, liberation is seen as a journey that must be perpetuated. This is also attested to by the Minister of Defence who states that “We must however recognise that liberation is a process and a long journey” (MOD, 2019: 7). Although not explicitly mentioned, the perceived external threat can function as the underlying factor why the publications are released but the narrative from the genocide is employed for their justification. For example, the FDLR is continuously described as a ‘genocidal militia’ (OGS, 2024), which functions as a tactic to prove the imminence of the threat instead of relying on the sporadic attacks perpetrated by the FDLR. Therefore, the genocide looms through militias such as the FDLR.

The level of responsibility is also governed by the subordination to civilian leaders. After the de-politicisation of officers in 2003, subordination has increased significantly. However, the alleged coup attempts indicate that some officers hold grievances against the government. These allegations demonstrate a lack of responsibility among some officers. If professionals disregard the responsibilities, they must retire (Huntington, 1957: 9). However, when the government had to arrest and later fire the officers, it indicated that the officers disobeyed this principle. The ‘RDF ethics and values’ guideline attempts to deepen the level of responsibility by stating that the RDF is guided by a professional ethos deriving from the three core values of Patriotism, Honor and Valor (MOD, n.d). Huntington argued that written norms are vital to avoid unnecessary conflict with peers, making this guideline a useful tool.

6.5 Corporateness

The corporate spirit among officers is directly affected by the previous principles. The required education to become an officer includes a bachelor's degree from the RMA, which means that it is impossible to become an officer without sufficient qualifications. This results in a division of ranks between those who are experts in the management of violence and regular soldiers. Hierarchies also extend beyond the officer/soldier dichotomy. There are in total 16 Army Insignias used to divide members of the RDF into various ranks (MOD, 2024).

Throughout the previously presented interviews, a shared sense of responsibility to protect Rwandan sovereignty has penetrated the officer corps. Although the interviews have a one-sided perspective, they indicate a professional corporate spirit. Furthermore, this responsibility might be a result of the indoctrination occurring at Ingando. It might also be a result of the perceived external threat by encouraging the development of professional military academies and fostering responsible officers.

While the above factors indicate a high professional corporateness, Army Week and the COP have contrasting impacts on corporateness, according to Huntington's theory. On the one hand, they constitute traditions which give rise to a shared sense of community among the RDF, benefitting corporateness. In contrast, professionals should not engage in other professions, such as healthcare. By engaging in these traditions, the military becomes involved in society and not distinct from it, negatively affecting corporateness.

In the government publications, no attention is paid to how the perceived external threat has affected the domestic contributions. Instead, it was the aftermath of the genocide that prompted the importance of rebuilding society (RMA, 2019: 50). Institutionalizing the COP and Army Week hence functions as a positive way to contribute to society and as a reminder of the atrocities during the genocide. Although the perceived external threat is not mentioned in the publications, it might function as a reminder of the possible effects of another atrocity and hence be the underlying reason why the RPF publishes such documents.

7. Results discussion

The results chapter presented several measures aimed at developing the Rwandan officer corps. These have been a result of both the genocide and the perceived external threat. While some measures have positively affected professionalism, others have had contrasting effects. How should we interpret these juxtaposed factors in conjunction with one another?

Furthermore, how do we square them with Michael Desch's and Samuel Huntington's theories?

The perceived external threat from the DRC/FDLR primarily emanates from the aftermath of the genocide and has been instrumental in justifying measures to promote cohesion and professionalism. The continued existence of the perceived external threat has reinforced the tensions and prolonged the struggles during the 'liberation war', which repeatedly has been a strategic historical narrative used by the government to legitimize certain measures. The first measure taken, post-genocide, was to establish Ingando which has fostered cohesiveness and loyalty to the state. However, it presents challenges to professionalism by blurring the lines of military autonomy and civilian control through indoctrinating officers with the norms and beliefs of the RPF. Additionally, officers lose their political unbiasedness by participating in and teaching at Ingando.

While instances of alleged coup attempts are not a result of the external threat, they further highlight the fragility of civilian control and the potential for officers to act against the government. The development of military academies has aimed to professionalize the officer corps, promote subordination to civilian leaders and to mitigate the risks of such instances. The academies have nurtured thousands of officers with the pride of being an officer, which they attest to in interviews (RMA, 2019). Furthermore, having Kagame, a supposed hero during the genocide, as their president and commander-in-chief, benefits subordination. A valuable example is an interview with an officer who stated that "Kagame is leading by example {...} If he says that we have to reach this and this target, we have to do it, within this period, exactly" (Kuehnel & Wilén, 2018: 161). Similar statements are made by several officers, highlighting the high praise they hold their president to. This pride is largely grounded in continuing the legacy of the heroes during the liberation war in 1994. The historical narrative of a liberation war has been central in many interviews and government publications. Meanwhile, these must be read through a critical lens and understood as having a particular reasoning behind their publication. This paper argues that the publications should be seen as propaganda and aim to provide a negative image of the FDLR as a genocidal militia with strong support by the DRC. Playing on the history of the genocide aims to prove the imminence of threat and justifies the measures taken. Meanwhile, the Rwandan officer corps is presented as professional, standing steadfast against the perceived threat and ready to die for its country. In the RMA publication, the officers attest to their willingness to continue liberating Rwanda, legitimizing its existence and further militarization.

The development of military academies also reflects the RPF's recognition of the

significance of responsible officers who are experts in the management of violence has in addressing external threats. The military academies claim to teach values such as patriotism, loyalty and ethical conduct, instilling the responsibility of providing military security to Rwanda. This has been a positive development which has resulted in thousands of professionally trained officers that seemingly abide by the civilian leaders' instructions. Meanwhile, the historical narrative of the genocide and the struggle the RPF faced serves as the primary driver of responsibility but is reinforced through contemporary threats.

While the main responsibility of the RDF is to provide military security, it is heavily involved in national development through construction and healthcare. Several government publications attest to this role and justify them by stating that it is a new form of liberation struggle but rather one from "evil, poverty and social distress" (MOD, 2017: 5). The development projects give rise to traditions which benefit corporateness in the RDF and foster public trust as a military distinct from a political tool. Meanwhile, the dual role to provide national security and societal transformation questions professional boundaries and blurs the distinction between military and civilian roles.

The domestic contributions problematize Desch's theory which argues that an internal focus of a military is prompted when faced with an internal threat. Resultantly, the military would use its coercive power to control the situation. However, Rwanda has not faced an internal threat since 1994 and there is scarce evidence of the RDF using arms against its own population. Instead, the Rwandan National Police maintains domestic security while the RDF has an external security focus. How do we understand this development of the RDF and is there a causal link to the perceived external threat? This question requires a twofold answer. First, the internal focus of the RDF is dissimilar to how Desch pictured it. Desch did not posit any situation in which the military is used to contribute to society. This paper therefore argues that the internal focus is not founded in the perceived external threat but rather caused by the widespread destruction during the genocide. Using the RDF to rebuild the state while also gaining a positive image has hence become a tactic of the RPF. Second, the RDF still is highly aware of the threats its neighbor poses and has an external focus in terms of military security. This awareness has been increasingly illuminated during the past few years in the government publications. Therefore, the perceived external threat has prompted the RDF to be militarily externally focused, which is in line with Desch's theory. The RDF's dual focus consequently both affirms and challenges the role a military should have in societies. Furthermore, it problematizes Huntington's (1957: 17) belief that professional officers usually are distinct from society. They are instead omnipresent in Rwandan society.

The Rwandan case further challenges Desch's theory, which argues that countries in the global south are mostly faced with internal and not external threats. In Rwanda, the opposite has been the case. This is an important assessment because it means that it is no longer possible to generalize certain parts of the world into particular geopolitical threats. Instead, countries worldwide must navigate all types of threat environments. Arguably, this development has made Desch's theory more universally applicable by testing the effects of external threats in countries in the global south too.

While the perceived external threat has prompted an external focus, has it rendered objective civilian control? Directly after the genocide, officers were heavily involved in politics and not professionally trained. Therefore, until the de-politicization in 2003, subjective civilian control was present. Some indications of subjective civilian control still remain. Such indications include the political involvement in Ingando and the alleged coup attempts. This paper argues that the alleged coup attempts should be seen as an abnormality rather than a commonplace occurrence and not caused by the external threat. Furthermore, although Ingando has implications on the political involvement of officers, they do not constitute a serious threat to the state because the constitution effectively hinders officers from engaging in the RPF. As a result, officers do not take political decisions that affect civilians. Instead, Ingando has mostly functioned to increase cohesiveness and subordination.

Meanwhile, the measures aimed at subordinating and professionalizing the officers are in abundance and have fostered an officer corps vastly different from the one in 1994. The development of three military academies, the constitutional prohibition of soldiers being involved in politics, its extensive experience in combat, the ethical and moral framework instilled in the RDF and the feeling of responsibility in providing military security to Rwanda all indicate measures that Huntington would argue benefit professionalism and objective civilian control. Furthermore, while the RDF is involved in domestic contributions, it does not necessarily decrease professionalism. Instead, the officer corps can still be professional and effective in providing military security, at the same as it contributes to society. As demonstrated, professionalizing the officers has not been the result of a single process but rather multiple measures that have been perpetuated, refined and reinforced over thirty years. Therefore, this paper argues that the officer corps is both professional and governed by objective civilian control. While these findings agree with previous literature that discuss the officer corps as professional, it challenges Jowell's (2014) assessment that subjective civilian control is present. Instead, the external threat has prompted objective civilian control, which increases the level of professionalism further.

While comparisons have been beyond the scope of analysis, it leaves room for future research to expand upon the findings in this paper by contrasting them to military development in other post-genocide countries. This would provide a deeper knowledge of the dynamics at play. Another suggestion for future research is to compare the findings to how other countries have responded to perceived external threats, such as Israel. This provides an analysis of potential geographical differences or similarities.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has explored how the Rwandan government has perceived and constructed the external threat from the DRC and the FDLR since the end of the genocide, three decades ago. Through government publications, the imminence of the perceived external threat has been demonstrated. As a result of this perception, the RPF has taken several measures aimed at developing the RDF. Until 2003, most focus was placed on fostering cohesiveness and retaliating against the genocidaires who had fled to the DRC. At the beginning of the 2000s, the RPF changed its strategy to create a professional officer corps. Constitutional prohibition of political involvement, developing military academies, creating a national identity and a sense of responsibility to protect Rwanda are among the many successful measures and deserve the widespread international acknowledgment it receives. Furthermore, the RPF has to a large extent followed Huntington's principles of objective civilian control, expertise, responsibility and corporateness when developing the RDF. The Rwandan officer corps has hence developed into a highly professional military as a result of the perceived external threat, prompting officers to be experts in the management of violence. This posits that Huntington's theory, which was developed in a vastly different context, still holds relevance and has gone from a blueprint to reality. Despite the rebuttals of a tautological argument and the Cold War period in which it was developed, Huntington continues to exert influence on the field of Civil-Military Relations.

Meanwhile, the Rwandan government does not shy away from bolstering its professional officer corps through interviews with officers, illuminating the existing patriotism and their acts of heroism. In these, the supposed liberation struggle during the genocide has a central role. The interviews and the other government publications provide a skewed perspective on reality and should be seen as propaganda. The strategic use of historical narratives to remember the liberation struggle justifies continued domestic militarization, prolonging the RPF's hold on power. The absence of interviews with officers

detaching from such patriotic values further illuminates the strategy behind government publications, in which Rwandan officers are constructed as national heroes who fight against a genocidal militia in the DRC. A fight very much needed to continue the liberation war initiated three decades ago.

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