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**‘Rwanda's Role in Global North External Migration Management
Partnerships: Lessons for Refugee-Deporting and Third-Party Refugee-
Receiving States’**

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Abstract

The central research question guiding this thesis is: 'How do Rwanda's domestic, regional, and geopolitical policy interests explain its involvement in external migration governance arrangements initiated by countries in the Global North?' This question follows from Rwanda's involvement between 2014 and 2024 in (realised and proposed) external migration partnerships with Israel, Denmark and the United Kingdom. To answer this question and its supporting sub-questions, the study applies perspectives from postcolonialism studies, history, international relations, public administration, and refugee and migration studies, including migration diplomacy.

This thesis argues that Rwanda is not a mere recipient of Global North migration policies. It asserts that Rwanda has been actively leveraging global migration governance partnerships to serve its political interests and achieve domestic, regional, and international objectives, which often have little to do with the rights, interests, or aspirations of (refugee) migrants. These policy aims can be summarised as a focused effort to care for itself and its population by every means necessary.

By voluntarily acting as a third-party refugee-receiving country for people-in-migration who are unwelcome in Global North states, Rwanda perpetuates the racialised practices of European colonialism. This is evident in Rwandan narratives concerning the (alleged) migration crisis in Europe since 2015, migrants' rights and aspirations, the role of smugglers, and Global North migration deterrent measures, all of which resemble rhetoric prevalent in Global North countries. As a postcolonial migration state willing to accept refugees under Global North migration externalisation regimes, Rwanda shows little interest in the motivations of past and potentially relocated migrants. In contrast, asylum refugees are treated as pawns in an approach to migration that complements, supports and reinforces Europe's migration defence systems.

This thesis points to the need for a deepened academic and societal analysis of Rwanda's migration policy. Understanding the motivations of refugee-receiving third countries is crucial for fostering informed international cooperation, ensuring a fair share of responsibility and equitably sharing the burdens and costs associated with the reception and protection of people on the move, in line with both the letter and the spirit of the UN Refugee Convention.

Keywords: postcolonialism, colonial durabilities, genocide, refugeehood, migration management, Transactional forced migration, externalisation, narratives, and migration diplomacy.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DGIE	Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ETM	Emergency Transit Mechanism
GMD	Governance of Migration and Diversity
GOR	Government of Rwanda
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LAF	Legal Aid Forum
LDC	Least Developed Country/ies
MEPD	Migration and Economy Development Partnership
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Minema	Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (Rwanda)
Minaffet	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Rwanda)
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
TFM	Transactional Forced Migration
RC	Refugee Council (UK)
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The international refugee protection system relies on global cooperation to prevent any single country from shouldering an unduly heavy burden (UNHCR, Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, n.d.). However, currently, asylum responsibilities are not distributed equitably. In 2023, the 45 Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which represent less than 1,4% of the global gross domestic product, hosted over 21% of the world's refugees (UNHCR, Global Trends Report, 2023, p. 21). Meanwhile, Global North countries increasingly shift migration management responsibilities, including refugee reception and protection, to states in the Global South, a practice referred to as 'externalisation', 'offshoring', and 'outsourcing' (Laganà, 2018; De Haas et al., 2020). This results in politically and economically established Global North states offloading their obligations to less established states in the Global South.

This study explores Rwanda's role as a third-party refugee-receiving country and examines its motivations for collaborating in external migration agreements.

Over the past decade, Rwanda has emerged as a third-party refugee-receiving country, engaging with Israel, Denmark, and the UK in (realised and envisaged) collaborative external migration partnerships. Between 2014 and 2018, Israel deported thousands of unwanted immigrants to Rwanda under highly informal arrangements (Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, 2015). Through the 2022 Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP), the UK aimed to send asylum claimants to Rwanda to seek asylum there. This policy was designed to deter unauthorised immigration into the UK, especially people arriving by boat (Gower et al., 2022). In 2022, Denmark and Rwanda signed a joint statement about the establishment of a programme through which people seeking asylum in Denmark may be transferred to Rwanda for their asylum application to be considered there and to find protection and settlement in Rwanda (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda, 2021). In July 2024, the newly elected UK government cancelled the UK-Rwanda deal (Francis, July 6, 2024). The arrangement with Denmark has not (yet) been implemented. Nevertheless, European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands, have expressed interest in forming similar partnerships with Rwanda (Laganà, 2018; NOS Nieuws, February 14, 2023; O'Carroll, March 6, 2024). Rwanda continues to position itself as a partner in external migration governance arrangements and vows to be committed to addressing "the global migration crisis" (Republic of Rwanda, July 8, 2024). It is, therefore, crucial to understand Rwanda's role in this global context, especially considering the academic discourse on migration externalisation.

As Laube (2021) finds, existing research on migration externalisation focuses primarily on the policy objectives of the Global North. Many studies (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Collyer & Shahani, 2023; Kent et al., 2019; Landau, 2019; Rashe & Kohlenberger, 2021; Spijkerboer, 2023), frame migration externalisation partnerships within a context of unequal power dynamics, portraying countries in the Global South as passive recipients or victims of Global North policies. The agency of Global South states in externalised migration management has received considerably less attention, creating a gap in the academic literature.

This is not to suggest that current research lacks value for understanding the motivations of third-party countries like Rwanda. On the contrary, concepts such as ‘cooperative migration deterrence’ (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Hathaway, 2015; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017) and ‘migration defence’ (Kent et al., 2019) offer helpful lenses. The term ‘migration deterrence’ refers to how Western states utilise agreements with other states for migration governance far beyond their borders, aiming to discourage people from migrating to Western destinations. The term ‘migration defence’ (Kent et al., 2019) describes migration externalisation in harsher terms: whereas deterrence-based migration policies impact migrants’ motivations, defence-based policies constrain migrants’ capabilities through enforced and militarised state power. The extraordinary defensive measures against migrants taken by Europe in 2015–2016 exemplify the migration defence concept, actions of a militarised nature taken despite it being a period of peace (*ibid*). Stock et al. (2019) describe the externalisation of migration management as a battlefield where actors fight over mobility, settlement, resources and governance. In these diplomatic and geopolitical negotiations, Rasche and Kohlenberger (2021) see that refugees are reduced to mere pawns. This is echoed by Karadağ (2019), who, referring to the EU-Turkey deal, sees how the political manipulation of mobility disempowers migrants and exacerbates their vulnerabilities. Landau (2019), in turn, argues that Europe’s defence-based migration measures restrict the freedom of movement of African migrants, robbing them of their global membership and political rights and excluding them from global postmodernity.

Nevertheless, migration research has largely overlooked the policy motivations of Global South states (Laube, 2021). Karadağ (2019) observes that the externalisation of European borders is often defined as a new colonial mechanism. She calls for a more nuanced academic approach that treats countries outside Europe as geopolitical subjects in their own right, despite possibly asymmetrical relationships with EU countries. In this vein, this thesis challenges prevailing narratives that portray Rwanda as a mere passive recipient and victim of Global North initiatives.

This study builds on analyses that describe Rwanda as leveraging externalisation agreements to achieve domestic and geopolitical objectives. For instance, Palmer (April 28, 2022) asserts that

Rwanda seeks to engage powerful states to realise the persecution of individuals implicated in the 1994 genocide and to reel in funds that may be spent with little scrutiny. Amuhaya and Ochola (2022, 2023) suggest that Rwanda aims to mitigate political pressures and potential blackmail related to accessing Pegasus spyware to monitor political opponents and to attract labour skills at low costs. Other reports suggest that these agreements could enhance Rwanda's international image, leading Western countries to be less critical of Rwanda's human rights record and its military and economic activities in Eastern DRC (Devermont & Yayboke, 2021; Mascini & Sie Dhian Ho, 2023).

The central research question guiding this thesis is: 'How do Rwanda's domestic, regional, and geopolitical policy interests explain its involvement in external migration governance arrangements initiated by countries in the Global North?' The following sub-questions are explored:

1. How have Rwanda's colonial and postcolonial experiences, including refugeehood and the 1994 genocide, shaped its foreign policy and approach to international migration management?
2. In what ways does Rwanda's participation in migration management arrangements with Global North countries reflect or challenge postcolonial power dynamics?
3. How has Rwanda used migration diplomacy to enhance its relationships with countries like Israel, Denmark, and the UK and to strengthen its status as a refugee-hosting nation?

The study applies perspectives from postcolonialism studies, history, international relations, public administration, and refugee and migration studies, including migration diplomacy. It incorporates primary data collected during a four-week field visit to Rwanda in May 2024.

The research aims to provide insights for policymakers and practitioners across the Global North and South, offering a deeper understanding of the motivations and strategic considerations behind externalisation arrangements and the dynamics between refugee-deporting and third-party refugee-receiving states. By shedding light on the agency of Global South states, this study contributes to discussions on equitable migration governance that strengthens the strained international refugee protection regime.

Reading Guide

Chapter 1 (Introduction) outlines the research problem, the societal relevance of this study, previous academic research and knowledge gaps, as well as the study's case and methodology, including the research questions. Chapter 2 provides details on the external migration management partnerships between Rwanda, Israel, Denmark, and the UK, along with the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM). Chapter 3 introduces the analytical framework. Chapter 4 further elaborates on the research design,

methods, and considerations regarding ethics and positionality. Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings. Chapter 6 offers conclusions, discussions, and notes on the limitations of the inquiry. Chapter 7 formulates recommendations. The appendices include details on documentary materials, respondents, the operationalisation of the analytical framework, interview guidance, and the research permit from the Rwandan government.

Chapter 2 – Migration Partnerships Involving Rwanda

This section examines migration management partnerships involving Rwanda, Israel, Denmark, and the UK. In these arrangements, Rwanda serves as an external, third-party recipient of migrants deemed unwelcome in their destination countries. Migrants are forcibly removed, making relocation to Rwanda non-voluntary. The informal arrangement with Israel lacked a formal Memorandum of Understanding or a treaty, unlike those with Denmark and the UK. The Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) is fundamentally different due to its voluntary nature and involvement of UNHCR.

Israel Deporting ‘Infiltrators’ to Rwanda

From 2013 to 2018, Israel and Rwanda operated a coercive deportation scheme targeting asylum seekers from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan. These individuals, labelled ‘infiltrators’, faced a choice between indefinite detention in Israel or deportation to Rwanda (or Uganda) (Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, 2015). By June 2017, around 1,400 people were deported to Rwanda, from where many were subsequently expelled, reportedly with Rwandan government involvement and without UNHCR involvement. They encountered severe hardships during their onward journeys, including detention and drowning in the Mediterranean (Green, 2017; Walsh, 2022). Critics contend that the scheme infringed upon international refugee laws (International Refugee Rights Initiative, 2015). It was characterised as ‘constructive refoulement’, where adverse conditions are fabricated to compel asylum seekers to leave ‘voluntarily’, resulting in further ‘chain refoulement’ as Rwanda pressured them to return home or continue fleeing (Bar-Tuvia, 2018).

Proposed Danish-Rwandan Cooperation

In April 2021, Denmark and Rwanda signed agreements concerning asylum, migration, and development assistance, declaring the global asylum system to be dysfunctional and advocating for a new approach (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2021). In June 2021, Denmark enacted legislation to transfer asylum seekers to third countries, thereby outsourcing its asylum responsibilities (Skydsgaard, 2021). A joint statement issued in September 2022 revealed Denmark’s objective to deter migration through this scheme (Skydsgaard, 2022). The agreement has yet to be implemented. The Danish Refugee Council condemned the plan for instrumentalising development aid to the detriment of refugees in need, asserting that it would not deter migration (DRC, 2022).

The UK-Rwanda Deal

In 2022, the UK and Rwanda established the Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) (Prime Minister’s Office et al., 2022). The policy was designed to deter unauthorised immigration by removing asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda to have their claims processed there

(PoliticsJOE, 2022). The deal was formalised by a treaty in 2023 (Home Office et al., 2022; BBC News, June 13, 2024). It faced criticism for being an ineffective deterrent, racist, inhumane and against international refugee law (Al, 2023a, 2023b; Bare, 2023; Black, 2022; Gower et al., 2022; UK Refugee Council, November 30, 2023; UNHCR, 2024). In 2023, the UK Supreme Court ruled Rwanda unsafe due to refoulement risks (UK Supreme Court, 2023). The UK government abandoned the scheme in July 2024 (Francis, July 6, 2024). Some UK politicians, including former foreign affairs minister Cleverly, however, continue to advocate for its reinstatement to deter illegal migration (Nevett, September 2, 2024).

Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

The ETM, signed in September 2019, is a tripartite agreement between Rwanda, UNHCR, and the African Union. It governs the evacuation of refugees from Libya to Rwanda on an emergency, voluntary, and temporary basis (UNHCR, April 22, 2024). UNHCR is responsible for the determination of refugee status. The current agreement is extended until the end of 2025. By September 2024, over 2,400 refugees had arrived at the Gashora Transit Centre, and more than 1,800 had resettled in North America and European countries (UNHCR, September 2024).

Chapter 3 - Analytical Framework

The roles of refugee-expelling Global North states and third-party refugee-receiving states in the Global South within migration management partnerships are subject to various interpretations. Some academics argue these partnerships reflect persistent postcolonial power imbalances, with formerly colonised Global South countries seen as playthings of the migration policies of former colonisers (Collyer & Shahani, 2023; Kent et al., 2019; Landau, 2019; Rashe & Kohlenberger, 2021; Spijkerboer, 2023). Others highlight the agency of postcolonial states in migration governance, portraying third-party refugee-receiving countries as more than passive recipients of Global North policies (Karadağ, 2019; Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021).

This thesis explores Rwanda's role as a formerly colonised postcolonial refugee-receiving third party in external migration partnerships with selected Global North countries (e.g., Israel, Denmark, and the UK). It focuses on Rwanda's agency in managing migration to serve domestic and geopolitical objectives, as discussed by this inquiry's respondents.

Situating Migration Management in Postcolonial Power Relations

Migration scholarship frequently emphasises how wealthier, former colonial powers implement externalisation policies to prevent refugees from entering their territories. These deterrence efforts involve enlisting less developed, formerly colonised states as third-party hosts. Global North countries leverage diplomacy, financial incentives, and training to conscript these nations for their migration control (e.g. Gammeltoft-Hansen & Hathaway, 2015).

One notable example is the UK-Rwanda deal. Collyer and Shahani (2023) argue that the UK's migration policies reflect colonial-era practices of directed migration and refugee dispersal, continuing a pattern of "colonial power play". Akanga and Hughes (2022) similarly critique the deal as outsourcing and abdication of the UK's asylum responsibilities, perpetuating colonial dynamics. These perspectives depict Rwanda as a passive recipient of postcolonial Global North power, an interpretation that extends to Rwanda's agreements with Israel and Denmark.

Yet, Rwanda's political narratives challenge this characterisation. The ruling party, RPF-Inkotanyi, condemns the colonial legacy of division and conflict under German and Belgian rule. Its manifesto pledges to restore pre-colonial cultural values and national unity, and eliminate the causes of mass displacement:

'The colonial masters left a legacy of distrust, hatred and conflict until some Rwandans [were] even accused of being foreigners and were exiled. Instead of attempting to restore unity among Rwandans, both regimes that governed Rwanda after its independence [...] decided to

carry on the segregation legacy until it resulted in the 1994 genocide. The first objective of the RPF-Inkotanyi is to restore unity among Rwandans, [...] restore the Rwandan culture which deepens love for Rwanda and Rwandans, gentleness, moderation, integrity, respect and harmony, [...] and eliminate all causes for fleeing the country' (RPF-Inkotanyi, n.d.).

Despite the RPF-Inkotanyi's anti-colonialist stance, scholars note the persistence of colonial influences in Rwanda's governance. Purdeková and Mwambari (2021) highlight "colonial durabilities" in Rwandan policies, and Menelaou (2022) sees Rwanda as replicating its former colonisers' behaviours, demonstrating a "postcolonial syndrome". Post-genocide governments have emphasised nation- and identity-building, crafting a new "Rwandanicity" and rewriting Rwanda's history, idealising pre-colonial traditions of unity and reconciliation (Purdeková & Mwambari, 2021). These authors argue this political project perpetuates colonial myths around identity and enforces top-down identity construction. Menelao (2022) further critiques the colonial-style authoritarian governance of post-independence Rwandan administrations, including Kagame's, noting their tendency to marginalise certain populations.

Long and Mills (2008) contend that Rwandan elites have adopted Western narratives to secure legitimacy with former colonial powers. Since 1962, Rwandan governments have embraced Western economic development narratives, deepening dependency on the West through International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans (*ibid*). While Kagame's administration denounces colonial influence, it continues collaborating with international organisations and Western governments (RPF Inkotanyi, n.d).

Mobilisation of Rwanda's Agency

Since independence, postcolonial influences have shaped Rwanda's political and economic landscape, perpetuating unequal power dynamics. Nonetheless, Rwanda asserts itself as a sovereign geopolitical player, seeking to increase its international presence through 'transactional' initiatives, including promoting gender equality and participating in international peacekeeping (Purdeková & Mwambari, 2021; Long & Mills, 2008; Menelaou, 2022; Beloff, 2021). Scholars view Rwanda's migration deals as transactional strategies to build relations with Global North countries while negotiating foreign policy trade-offs (*ibid*). The 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement exemplifies this transactional approach, balancing the curbing of Syrian refugee inflow into Europe with financial aid and political concessions to Turkey, thus improving Turkey's international standing (Karadağ, 2019). Rwanda's involvement in migration externalisation mirrors this strategy to negotiate favourable terms with the Global North.

Transactional Forced Migration (TFM) refers to states negotiating the removal of unwanted migrants, allowing both sides to benefit; Global North states seek to curtail migration, while Global South

states leverage migration issues to achieve their foreign policy goals (Adamson & Greenhill, 2023). As in colonial times, contemporary TFM deals are framed as necessary solutions to political problems. TFM deals are informal and use misleadingly humanitarian language, prioritising state interests over migrant welfare and human rights obligations (*ibid*). The arrangements between Rwanda, Israel, Denmark, and the UK fit the bill. The UK-Rwanda deal shows how the UK aimed to deter Channel crossings and strengthen the UK's influence in the mineral-rich Great Lakes region, while Rwanda sought international legitimacy (*ibid*). Marketed as humane, TFM serves as a diplomatic tool that weaponises migrants. By prioritising state interests, TFM marginalises those migrants that states claim to assist. This reflects a colonial legacy of exploitation, excluding migrants from decision-making and echoing forced migration practices, including the slave trade (*ibid*).

Migration is increasingly important in diplomatic relations, alongside trade, war, conflict, and human rights (Laube, 2021; Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019). Within the migration diplomacy paradigm sits the 'refugee rentier states' concept, which describes how states extract revenue for hosting refugees (Tsourapas, 2019) and may use strategies like 'blackmailing', where they threaten to expel refugees unless compensated (as seen with Turkey), or 'backscratching', where they promise not to return refugees in exchange for compensation (Sahin-Mencütek & Tsourapas, 2022). As Laube (2021) notes, compliance with externalisation measures does not signify passive acceptance, countries often negotiate 'reversed conditions' for their own interests.

The cases of Somali refugees in Kenya (2015-2016) and Afghan refugees in Pakistan (2019) illustrate the refugee rentier state concept (Micinski, 2021). Both countries leveraged the threat of deportation to extract aid and gain international legitimacy. Contrary to Tsourapas's model, which links refugee rentier states to neighbouring powers, Pakistan and Kenya demonstrate that states can leverage hospitality in a broader international context (Micinski, 2021). Micinski (2021, p. 530) states, "[h]ospitality can make states important, and when states become more important, they can demand more from their friends." Economic and strategic interests often drive motivations for hosting or repatriating refugees, revealing a gap between human rights discourse and state behaviour (Sahin-Mencütek & Tsourapas, 2022).

Migration Management as a Tool for Achieving Political Objectives

Rwanda's current foreign policy is shaped by three key beliefs among elites and government officials: the perceived abandonment of Rwanda by the international community between 1959 and 1994, the concept of *agaciro* (national dignity and self-reliance), and the obligation to ensure human security for all who identify as Rwandan (Beloff, 2021). These tenets drive Rwanda to bolster state security, reduce foreign aid reliance, and engage in economic diplomacy. Beloff (2021) further suggests that

Rwanda works to redefine its identity away from a postcolonial beggar state, a genocide victim, and an aggressor in the Congo wars with a poor human rights record, towards a fully sovereign state that mobilises its agency and is seen to uphold neoliberal beliefs and human rights norms.

Kingston (2017) describes how the Rwandan government invests in nation-building and constructing a new identity. Returning refugees and former genocide perpetrators must attend civic education camps aimed at reconstructing their Rwandan civic identity, which is defined by social hierarchies related to genocide and displacement. The government does not accept alternative views of Rwandan national identity that conflict with this narrative (*ibid*).

The collaboration between the EU and Turkey from 2015 to 2016 exemplifies how the externalisation of migration reflects Europe's hegemonic, or 'neo-colonial', position over other countries (Karadağ, 2019). It is equally important to 'decolonise' the study of border externalisation, which requires considering countries outside Europe and their counter-discourses and strategies as geopolitical subjects in their own right. Instead of viewing Europe as the sole powerful actor, we must acknowledge that these other countries also play constitutive roles in shaping border engineering processes (*ibid*). The prevailing Eurocentric perspective on migration governance practices in post-colonial contexts within the Global South begs re-evaluation. While it is important to recognise the enduring impacts of colonial and imperial rule, we should also position postcolonial states and postcolonial state-building in the Global South at the forefront of contemporary migration management (Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021). Postcolonial Global South states often rely on migration control policies to address challenges from the colonial era related to citizenship, nation-building, and territorial sovereignty. In this way, the 'postcolonial state' transforms into the 'postcolonial migration state' (*ibid*).

In summary, the perspectives on postcolonialism and agency outlined above provide theoretical lenses for understanding Rwanda's engagement in international migration management, particularly concerning Israel, Denmark, and the UK, as discussed by the respondents in this inquiry. This discussion centres on the postcolonial context in which Rwanda operates, how it designs its migration management, and the objectives it seeks to achieve. The characteristics of this postcolonial setting are critical in examining the extent to which colonial legacies influence Rwanda's approaches to migration management. The ongoing influence of Western powers is evident in Rwanda's identity construction, authoritarian governance, and economic dependency. This raises questions about Rwanda's autonomous agency in managing migration: Is Rwanda's willingness to accept migrants deported by Global North states a sign of compromised autonomy, subordinated by the interests of wealthier states? To comprehend how Rwanda shapes its governance of migration, an understanding

of migration diplomacy, transactional forced migration, and refugee rentierism is essential, as defined by authors such as Adamson and Greenhill (2023). Furthermore, to understand what Rwanda may aim to achieve by collaborating in external migration management with Global North states, it is beneficial to consider its domestic and geopolitical objectives. Beloff's (2021) analysis of Rwanda's foreign policy offers a useful analytical tool in this regard.

Chapter 3 - Research Design, Methods & Operationalisation

This study explores the case of Rwanda's engagement in international migration management, particularly concerning Israel, Denmark, and the UK, by using qualitative research, and applying the following sub-concepts: 1a. Rwanda is a refugee-receiving state conscripted and enlisted by refugee-deporting states to achieve containment of migration in the latter's interest; 1b. Rwanda's role in external migration management arrangements is defined by 'colonial durabilities' and the 'postcolonial syndrome'; 2a. Rwanda's agency manifests through Transactional Forced Migration (TFM); 2b. Rwanda's agency manifests through migration diplomacy and refugee rentierism; 3a. Rwanda as a sovereign state aims to achieve its foreign policy objectives; and 3b. Rwanda as a 'postcolonial migration state' uses migration to achieve its political objectives of nation-building and identity re-engineering.

Case Construction for Qualitative Research

This thesis is based on qualitative research as described by Barglowski (2018) and is informed by a body of social theory that underpins the research questions. A qualitative study needs to answer the question of "What is this case a case of?" and clarify which broader social pattern it represents for the results to have validity and generalisability (Barglowski, 2018, p. 155). Here, I shall attempt to outline that question for this inquiry: Rwanda is chosen as an example of a third-party refugee-receiving country in the Global South, distinct from typical countries of origin or transit countries for migrants heading for Global North destinations. The analysis is based on the perspectives of representatives of the Rwandan political elite, as qualitative research "... [i]s interested in how actors construct and interpret the world surrounding them, and how these interpretations affect their actions, identities and everyday experiences" (Barglowski, 2018, p. 154). While the focus is mainly on the envisaged Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) between the UK and Rwanda, the thesis also examines other 'empirical incidents', namely Rwanda's engagements with Israel and Denmark as examples of the external migration management deals with Global North countries.

Barglowski's (2018) three-step approach centres around the 'site of a study', the 'unit of analysis', and specific 'empirical incidents'. Following Barglowski, I have selected Rwanda as the inquiry's principal 'site' due to its status as a third-party refugee-receiving country. The views of representatives from the Rwandan administration and political elite regarding Rwanda's motivations for engaging in external migration management serve as 'units of analysis'. Rwanda's engagement with Israel, Denmark and the UK are the specific 'empirical incidents' under review.

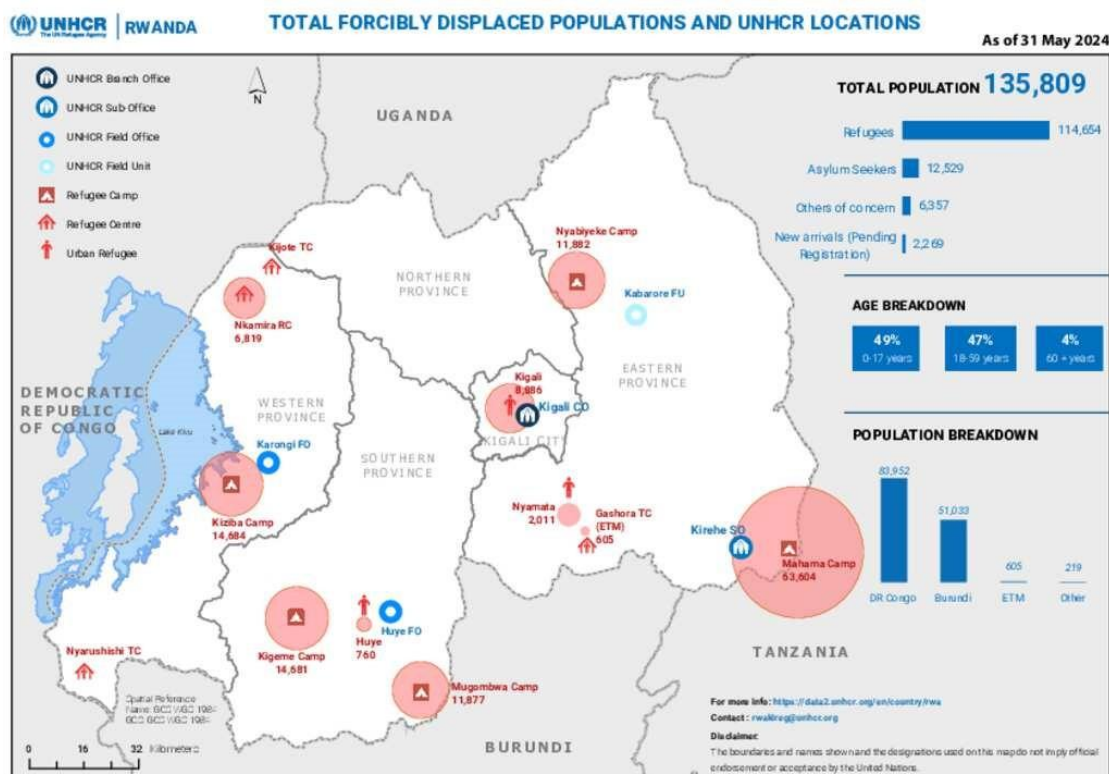
Data Collection Methods

This thesis combines primary empirical data with knowledge from secondary sources. Through committed data collection, I gathered “plentiful data” to “creatively solve” the “puzzle” of my inquiry (Staller, 2021, p. 3). Primary data were collected from interviews and field visits. The secondary data include academic literature from postcolonial studies, international relations, public administration, and refugee and migration studies sourced from academic databases (Migration Research Hub), search engines (Google Scholar), and key journals, including the Journal of Migration and Border Studies and the International Journal of Refugee Law. Additionally, I reviewed documentary materials such as policy documents and reports from media and international organisations. See Appendix A.

Field Visits

In spring 2024, I spent a month in Rwanda, working out of Kigali. I visited two refugee accommodations: Mahama Refugee Camp in Kirehe District and Gashora Transit Centre in Bugesera District. At Mahama, I interviewed the Camp Manager and toured the camp, which accommodates over 63,000 people. At Gashora, I engaged with the Camp Manager, UNHCR, and DGEI staff, toured the facility, and spoke with women awaiting resettlement after being evacuated under the ETM.

Figure 1. Map showing forcibly displaced populations and UNHCR locations in Rwanda
Published on 18 June 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/109371>.



Interviews

Barglowski (2018) finds that purposive nonprobability sampling is most suitable for qualitative research. Exercising my best judgment as a researcher and aiming to cover the diversity and differences in the empirical field through comparisons and contrasts (*ibid*), I selected my sample of respondents based on my knowledge of the population, its elements, and the purpose of my study (Babbie, 2021).

The Rwandan political elite forms the ‘population’ from which ‘elements’ are selected for interviewing. This thesis loosely defines the ‘Rwandan political elite’ in terms of their membership of the RPF and/or their explicit or apparent adherence to the RPF party line and the official Rwandan political ideology of post-genocide national unity. I take a cue here from Beloff (2021), who interchangeably uses descriptors such as RPF, Rwandan government, Rwandan state, decision-makers, policy-makers, and Rwandan elites in his analysis of Rwandan elite perceptions of global engagement. Participants, comprised of state and non-state actors, were chosen as relevant information holders based on their function and position within the Rwandan administration or in other organisations. I targeted Rwandan state actors for insights into the official Rwandan government (refugee) migration management policies and practices and with Rwandan and international, non-state actors for their perspectives on the official line. Through snowball sampling, I identified my ‘population’ with guidance from several connectors, including the Dutch embassy in Kigali, academic Jonathan Beloff, and Butoto Bigiri Naum of the regional development NGO Ugeafi. More information on the participants is in Appendix B.

The interviews took place in Rwanda, with two exceptions: an interview with the Rwandan ambassador to the Netherlands in The Hague and a telephone interview with UNHCR-Rwanda. All respondents participated voluntarily and signed a customised consent form. No one asked me to withhold information. Of the 19 participants, there were eight State Actors and 11 Non-State Actors. Notably, one NSA self-identified as a member of the ruling RPF-Inkotanyi. I conducted 13 one-on-one interviews and several group conversations in various locations, including government offices, the office of the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda, and a private residence. Details are in Appendix B.

I approached the interviews as an interaction between my respondents and myself (Babbie, 2021) based on a general inquiry plan with open and closed questions. As an interviewer, I ‘travelled’ alongside my respondents, asking questions to encourage them to share their lived experiences (*ibid*, 2021). Insights from the initial explorative interviews informed the later ones, recognising that words are not just descriptive or neutral (Van Ostaijen, 2024). See Appendix D for details.

Data Analysis

I conducted qualitative content analysis on the primary data using Atlas.ti, which helped to reduce the volume of data and uncover patterns and meanings (Schiller, 2024). I coded the audio transcripts using a customised codebook based on the operationalised analytical framework. My approach to coding was abductive; I began with an established analytical framework but adapted iteratively based on new insights and recognised patterns during my preliminary data analysis. The codes included terms such as colonialism, deterrence, ETM, genocide, MEDP, racism, refoulement, refugeehood, and xenophobia, as well as concepts such as ‘migrant agency’ and ‘Rwanda’s objectives to partake in schemes’ (ranging from ‘fame & reputation’ to ‘seat at the international table’).

I have analysed my data in good faith, but I recognise that different samples or codes could yield different outcomes.

Operationalisation of the Analytical Framework

To operationalise the analytical framework, I have combined the perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 into three interconnected concepts that highlight different aspects of Rwanda’s role in external migration management: 1) Rwanda’s role is defined by postcolonial power relations; 2) Rwanda is a geopolitical subject in its own right; 3) Rwanda mobilises its agency to achieve its own objectives. As a next step, I define sub-concepts that are operationalised in terms of how the respondents in this inquiry portray Rwanda as: 1a) a passive recipient and a victim of sponsoring states’ policies and interests; 1b) actively mirroring colonial deportation strategies and adopting Western migration narratives; 2a) engaging in transactional collaboration with refugee-deporting states; 2b) employing strategies of blackmailing and back-scratching; 3a) aiming to achieve particular geopolitical and economic benefits and revenues; 3b) aiming to achieve specific political objectives of identity re-engineering and nation-building. This operationalisation serves as a tool for analysing the collected empirical data. The complete operationalisation table is in Appendix C.

Ethical Considerations

Privacy

Three participants requested anonymity and are referred to as a Rwandan journalist, a Rwandan country manager of a European development organisation, and a European Project Manager from another European development organisation. UNHCR-Rwanda asked me to withhold the names of staff participating in the Gashora group conversation. I also anonymised the Minema and DGIE staff.

Positionality

As a student and researcher, I recognise that my positionality influences my perspectives. Being a white Dutch citizen born in the Netherlands, I benefit from unmerited privileges shaped by this country's colonial history. Eurocentric and colonial epistemologies have inevitably influenced my academic training. I earned my first degree in Contemporary History of Asia from the University of Amsterdam in 1992, where I studied under Professors Jan Pluvier and Raymond Feddema, who stood for integrating scholarship with political action. My professional career includes working with the UN and several non-governmental organisations: from investigating the position of the Batwa minority in the Rwandan genocide with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) (Overeem, 1995) to working for the High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in post-genocide Rwanda, from focusing on the African Great Lakes region with Oxfam Novib, to working with SOMO in the field of business & human rights. These experiences have deepened my interest in historical processes, justice, and equity. However, my understanding of Rwanda's complex and dramatic experiences remains limited. I have been aware of my positionality throughout my thesis research, particularly during interviews and field visits. I have tried to prioritise participants' voices through reflexivity and data triangulation. I have sought peer feedback and adapted my approach based on insights gained.

Limitations

No reply

I aimed to interview more 'elements' from the selected 'population' to strengthen my case. Despite multiple attempts to contact them, I received no responses from the Rwandan ambassador in the UK, members of the MEDP Monitoring Committee, IOM Rwanda, the School of Life Afghanistan in Rwanda, and several Rwandan academics.

Permit required

A Minema research permit was required for interviews with government officials and UNHCR Rwanda staff. Despite requesting the permit before travelling to Rwanda, I received it just days before returning to Amsterdam. This stopped me from conducting more interviews and visiting other refugee accommodations.

Restricted freedom of speech

The MEDP and similar schemes are the object of heated debates and critique, which underscores the sensitive nature of this inquiry. The political and societal climate in Rwanda offers little room for critical or dissenting voices (Freedom House, 2023; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2024). I expected respondents to approach the topic of this inquiry with caution. Indeed, some respondents declined to

answer specific questions, referring me to their superiors at Minema. For example, they did not want to discuss the involuntary aspect of the MEDP and Rwanda's collaboration with Israel.

Chapter 4 – Empirical Findings

This chapter presents the empirical findings of this inquiry, aligned with the analytical framework from Chapter 2 and its operationalisation in Chapter 3.

Respondents' key observations are presented for Concept 1, 'Situating Migration Management in Postcolonial Power Relations'. These include reflections on Europe's ongoing colonial-era racism, Rwanda's sovereignty, Europe's migration crisis, migrants' aspirations and capabilities, deterrence, and refoulement. For Concept 2, 'Mobilisation of Agency', respondents' remarks on Rwanda's leadership, its promises to be a reliable partner in migration management, and its threats to expel refugees are grouped. Lastly, for Concept 3, 'Migration Management as a Tool for Achieving Political Objectives', respondents' remarks on the benefits of external migration deals are compiled. The three sections each conclude with some analysis connected to the applied theoretical concepts.

Situating Migration Management in Postcolonial Power Relations

European approaches to immigration informed by colonial-era racism

Respondents point to the persistence of colonial-era racism and its influence on rising anti-immigration sentiments in Europe today. They link this to European migration policies (OJPN, GRN, DUP). One respondent expresses concern over the spread of the 'great replacement' theory, which claims that African and Muslim immigrants threaten the essence and identity of Christian Europe (OJPN). Respondents criticise British and European migration policies pertaining to Rwanda from this perspective. One respondent condemns the overall 'demonisation' and 'dehumanisation' of migrants (DUP), while another describes the MEDP as "(a)n extremely racist policy" and "(a) morally very questionable deal" (GRN).

Sovereignty

In reflecting on Rwanda's colonised past, respondents highlight the country's current sovereignty in managing migration partnerships with sending states, including former colonisers. They highlight Rwanda's independent decision-making processes and differentiate between the reasons behind sending states' decisions to remove migrants from their territory and Rwanda's approach to accommodating such deported migrants (OJPN, DUP, PH, GRN). Regarding the MEDP, respondents assert that Rwanda should not be questioned about the UK's racist migration policy or be asked to judge the UK's motivations (GRN, OJPN). Most respondents see Rwanda's role as assisting migrants rather than resolving migration issues for the UK or the EU (GRN, OJPN, DUP, PH, NN-2). One respondent notes, "The UK has tried to deal with [illegal immigrants] in its way...Rwanda has its way

of dealing with this" (PH). Another adds, "I can understand that there are people who are upset because they believe that Rwanda came to the rescue of the British Conservative Government, helping them carry out their bad policies, but that is not our goal" (OJPN). In contrast, respondents find that Rwanda is rescuing refugees from the oppressive, racist systems of the Global North (GRN, DUP, NN-2).

Dismissing critique of the MEDP

Respondents acknowledge that the MEDP and similar arrangements face extensive legal, political and societal challenges in the UK and internationally. However, they argue that this does not concern Rwanda. Instead, respondents believe that these criticisms reflect European discomfort with Rwanda's constructive role in migration matters (GRN, DUP). While condemning the colonial and racist roots of Europe's migration policies, they also claim that the UK-Rwanda deal complies with international law and the UN Refugee Convention (OJPN, DUP, PH). One respondent finds that the West's desire to dictate how Africa should operate reveals its inherent racism (GRN). He adds that when an African country performs well on human rights, like Rwanda on migrants' rights, it is such a counter-intuitive paradigm shift that the West cannot appreciate it. He says, "The UK refuses to accept more Black or Arab migrants and readily detains darker-skinned undocumented individuals. This highlights a moral contradiction for a wealthy, colonial nation that once thrived on exploiting Black and brown lands but now rejects Commonwealth citizens. Rwanda, a tiny, poor, post-conflict country at the heart of Africa, exposes this hypocrisy by offering refuge to those mistreated by the UK, which claims to teach the world moral values" (Nyiringabo, November 17, 2023).

Migration 'crisis'

Respondents widely agree that due to the large influx of irregular migrants, Europe faces a deep migration crisis (DUP, OJPN, NN-2, AK). They maintain that illegal African migrants present a strain on European societies (OJPN, DUP, NN-2, AK). One respondent, for example, finds that migrants unfairly rely on European taxpayers' money (NN-2). Respondents state that this situation is untenable and that Europeans understandably refuse to continue to bear this burden (DUP, NN-2). One respondent formulates, "There is a failure in the system, and Africans are causing it" (NN-2), and most respondents support this sentiment.

Only a few respondents point to Europe for exacerbating the situation by reducing legal pathways and blocking safer routes for migrants. One directly links migrant suffering in Libya to EU push-back policies preventing Mediterranean crossings, for example (DUP).

Genuine refugees?

Several respondents share views on what they consider to be genuine refugees, claiming that most African migrants to Europe are merely economic migrants (AK, DUP, OJPN, NN-2). One respondent suggests that migrants fabricate persecution stories to get access to Europe (NN-2). Another rejects civil and political rights violations or lack of press freedom as grounds for people to seek asylum, stating that only war and conflict are relevant reasons for fleeing. He goes on to ridicule people who have fled Rwanda, "[j]ust because they wanted to insult President Kagame and felt restricted doing so in Rwanda" (GRN). Respondents moreover claim that African migrants hold misconceptions about Europe, fostering unrealistic dreams of an easy life and "eating for free" (NN-2). They speak of ignorant African migrants who arrive in Europe lacking skills, language proficiency and awareness of the European culture and then unreasonably complain about the discrimination they encounter in Europe (NN-2, DUP, OJPN).

Migrants' aspirations and capabilities

Respondents reflect on why Africans and other migrants embark on perilous journeys to the Global North. Migration is seen as influenced by various push-pull factors, but traffickers are seen as a particularly significant driver (OJPN, DUP, NN-2). One respondent notes, "There is this whole movement of human traffickers who are going deep into Africa, to villages, to encourage people to go to Europe" (OJPN).

Respondents acknowledge that migrants aspire to reach the UK or other Global North destinations, not Rwanda (OJPN, DUP). One notes, "It would be naive to think that people are volunteering to come here...there is a forced component to their relocation" (DUP). Rwandan human rights lawyer Louis Gitinywa affirms that migrants dream of Europe and do not want to stay in Rwanda (De Vries, June 29, 2023). At the same time, respondents diminish migrants' motivations and capabilities to make the right decisions. One respondent questions, "Why would people leave an African country that is peaceful, that has never had war, just to go to Europe to clean toilets?" (OJPN). Another comments, "They don't want to come to Rwanda...but it is not like they are watching football in London; no, they are sitting in a detention facility, hoping that their situation be regularised in the UK, which is not going to happen. So, they might as well come to Rwanda" (GRN). He adds, "After all, everybody came from Africa. It's only normal that they come back" (GRN). One respondent firmly states that migrants' motivations are irrelevant to Rwanda, "The reasons for people to go to the UK or any other country, oh, you know, people have many, many reasons, most of them are the same for the people we already host here in Rwanda. They look for peace, stability and safety; we already provide that for hundreds of thousands of people" (PH). Others assert that it is not up to a refugee to decide where to go and where to claim asylum, as expressed in this comment, "It is not a matter for

that person to say 'This is the country where I will feel safer, so, I choose to go to his country'. No! It is not up to you to choose where you want to go or which country provides you safety" (PH).

Most respondents believe migrants will fare better in Rwanda, praising the proposed MEDP reception centre, Hope Hostel in Kigali, rather than languishing in refugee centres or living as undocumented individuals in London or Amsterdam (AV, DUP, OJPN, NN-2, GRN). One respondent argues that Rwanda is unfairly depicted as a dangerous, dystopian dictatorship similar to Afghanistan. He laments, "I have not seen one article in the Western media that describes Rwanda as a place where you can have a glass of juice and an academic conversation like we are having now" (GRN).

Only two respondents hold differing views on migrant agency and the latitude of destination states to expel immigrants. One urges Rwanda to prioritise the protection of refugees from Burundi and Congo instead of forcibly relocating migrants to Rwanda as part of migration externalisation schemes (FH). Another suggests that Rwanda should concentrate on repatriating its own refugees, particularly those from the DRC and Mozambique, rather than accepting more refugees from other countries (NN-1).

Deterrence

Respondents express humanitarian concerns about migrants drowning in the Mediterranean or the Channel while trying to reach European destinations; however, they prioritise migration deterrence over other measures. They see Rwanda's agreements with the UK and Denmark as effective and pragmatic deterrents, arguing that the real deterrent lies in the dangers of the journeys and the hardships migrants experience in racist Europe rather than in relocation to Rwanda (DUP, OJPN, PH). One respondent says, "The Channel crossings are the deterrent, not Rwanda. Rwanda provides safety and opportunities, as demonstrated by the ETM and the Sudanese medical students" (DUP).

Refoulement

Respondents reject the idea that Rwanda's external migration management arrangements constitute refoulement. One explains, "We are assisting the UK not to do refoulement. Refoulement for us is to force somebody who requests safety to return to his or her country of origin [and this is not what the MEDP is about]" (PH). Respondents say that migrants unwilling to stay in Rwanda are free to leave. As one respondent says, "If migrants want to leave, they can try again to go to the UK, Germany, or wherever. We will not oblige anyone [to stay here]. The decision is theirs. It is not our problem" (PH).

Few respondents address Rwanda's collaboration with Israel. Those who do are critical of it. One describes it as Israel's illegal deportation of Ethiopian and Eritrean asylum seekers to Rwanda, noting it served as a model for Rwanda's current approach to external migration management (AK). Another compares it to the historical UK deportations of undesirable individuals to Australia, where return to the UK was barred (FH).

In conclusion, most respondents are critical of the colonial and racist attitudes they perceive to underpin migration policies in the Global North. However, they do not find that these policies rub off on Rwanda, nor do they see Rwanda as a passive recipient of these policies; instead, they see that Rwanda offers constructive solutions to global migration challenges. Respondents, in this sense, do not directly confirm theories as offered by, for example, Gammeltoft-Hansen and Hathaway, Spijkerboer, or Collyer and Shahani, that emphasise how weaker states in the Global South are conscripted as playthings of more powerful states in the Global North in the latter's migration deterrence efforts. Respondents rather portray a Rwanda that corresponds to the perspectives of, for example, Karadağ, Sadiq and Tsourapas, who highlight the agency of Global South states. Nevertheless, there also arises an inadvertent portrayal of a Rwanda that echoes colonial deportation strategies where respondents' remarks align with Western narratives that frame migration as a crisis caused by fortune-seeking Africans. Respondents' remarks on migrant aspirations, smugglers, deterrence and refoulement closely mirror Western anti-immigration rhetoric. Here, respondents confirm the perspectives offered by Purdeková, Mambari and Menelao who highlight how Rwanda follows colonial logic regarding identity and nation-building.

Mobilisation of Rwanda's Agency

Game-changing leadership

Respondents commend President Kagame's leadership as former Chair of the African Union, highlighting his proactive response to the plight of migrants in Libya and Rwanda's role in the ETM (DUP, OJPN, ASM, AV, FAR). One says, "There was much handwringing. Everyone agreed that something needed to be done, but no one was doing anything—so Kagame proposed evacuating them to Rwanda, and that is what happened" (DUP). Despite Rwanda's modest size and resources, many believe Rwanda can offer better solutions to global migration issues (AK, PH). One respondent underscores the importance of established agreements, stating that Rwanda's role in international migration management will remain significant even if the UK or Denmark decide to withdraw from their commitments, "We don't see the value in stopping something that works. But, If they do wish to discontinue the process, we will take our solutions elsewhere" (DUP). They emphasise that Rwanda has the right to be included in global refugee reception and protection discussions, highlighting Rwanda's innovative solutions (PH, AK).

Respondents take pride in Rwanda's potential to tackle global challenges related to irregular migration and asylum (AK, DUP). One says, "The MEDP will be a game-changer in migration deals, completely changing how irregular migration and relocation of migrants are addressed" (DUP).

Rwanda aims to inspire international replication of this model, promoting the MEDP as a benchmark for future partnerships with European countries and Global South nations, other respondents say (DUP, PH, GRN). Respondents further emphasise that Rwanda is willing to collaborate with any country and government, regardless of political ideology (ASM, DUP, PH). Respondents are uninterested in discussing the background of the migration crisis Europe is reportedly facing and the causes behind the perceived failure of the international refugee protection system, stressing the need to move forward (DUP, PH).

However, one respondent firmly rejects the MEDP, "The UK is... more rich, more big, more advanced, more everything than Rwanda. So why don't they take responsibility instead of sending migrants to this landlocked, struggling, and most densely populated country in Africa? We say no. It is the UK's responsibility to handle and process those people. Do not send them to a third country" (FH).

Promising to be a reliable partner

Respondents portray Rwanda as a reliable partner in external migration management, describing the country as approachable, willing, committed and dependable – qualities that suggest Rwanda will fulfil its promises (DUP, PH). One respondent assures, "Regardless of how the UK chooses to handle the situation on their end, we can ensure a safe, humane reception and dignified reception for those migrants on our end" (DUP).

Threatening to expel refugees

Respondents do not explicitly discuss how Rwanda might use the threat of refugee expulsion as a foreign policy tool. However, one respondent does refer to the "controversial" repatriation of Rwandan refugees from the former Zaire and Tanzania in 1996(NN-2). Although this respondent is knowledgeable about the topic, he does not mention the threats and military action deployed by the Rwandan leadership during these operations, as described by various authors, including Whitaker (2002). More recent threats of refugee expulsion were evident in January 2023, when President Kagame threatened to deport thousands of Congolese refugees arriving in Rwanda, stating that the country could not continue to be a "dumping ground for refugees". This statement came in response to international accusations that Rwanda was responsible for the fighting in the neighbouring country (VOA, 2023, January 10; AI, 2023b). However, respondents in this inquiry do not address this information.

Moving away from the international refugee protection system

Respondents see the international refugee protection system as broken. They advocate for a departure from current standards and practices rather than a renewed commitment to existing rules. (OJPN, DUP, PH, AV). One respondent sees the UK-Rwanda partnership as foreboding a shift away

from traditional methods of addressing refugee issues, "The normal way of doing things is no longer providing solutions. We are trying new approaches through which we can provide more options for the future" (PH).

In conclusion, a common narrative emerges that positions Rwanda as a promising and reliable partner in external migration management. Respondents notably refrain from labelling Rwanda as a "refugee rentier state", as Tsourapas would have it; they do not actively entertain the notion that Rwanda engages in blackmail or back-scratching through strategic promises or threats, as theorised by Sahin-Mencütek and Tsourapas. Through the backdoor, however, Sahin-Mencütek and Tsourapas' strategies re-enter: respondents commend Rwanda for its innovative approach and support it in diverging from the traditional global refugee protection system – an approach that can arguably be seen as a *threat* to that system. Furthermore, respondents emphasise Rwanda's reliability in migration partnerships – a position that can arguably be heard as a solid *promise* to refugee-deporting countries. Respondents further counter the notion of Rwanda's exploitation by wealthier nations as advanced by Gammeltoft-Hansen and Hathaway and emphasise the collaborative and transactional nature of past and potential partnerships. Here, respondents align with authors who theorise on forms of transactionalism, such as Purdeková and Mwambari, Long and Mills, Menelaou, and Beloff. The difference is that most respondents describe the migration partnership as supposedly yielding benefits for all involved, brushing over disadvantages.

Migration Management as a Tool for Achieving Political Objectives

Monetary benefits

Respondents highlight the monetary benefits of external migration deals, expecting funds from refugee-deporting countries to cover all costs associated with hosting deportees, including infrastructure, health and education (DUP, FAR, NN-5, NN-6, AK). Some believe these funds will attract additional development funding from other sources (DUP, ASM). At the same time, one respondent attempts to clarify that it is not solely about money, recalling Kagame's initiative to help evacuate refugees from Libya before the international community had made any funds available, "They always lend us these financial motivations as the primary motivation, but our history shows this is not correct" (DUP).

One respondent, in contrast, jeers that the funding provided by collaborative migration deals will undoubtedly fall short of covering all expenses for hosting refugees in the longer term (NN-1). He expresses concerns about corruption and nepotism in Rwandan elite circles, saying there is a real risk

of “money laundering,” which will jeopardise the proper allocation of funds made available by sending states (NN-1).

Brain gain

Respondents view migration agreements as a way to drive broader economic development in Rwanda, largely through the contributions of migrants, who are seen as valuable human capital (DUB, AK). They see migrants as resilient, resourceful and enterprising individuals who can fill gaps in key sectors of the Rwandan labour market, particularly in health care (GRN). Respondents believe that deportees from Europe are highly educated. These migrants will not compete with locals for jobs as they will create their own jobs (NN-2, GRN). One respondent dismisses the fear of immigrants disturbing the labour market as a racist European frame, “I don't know a country where migrants have become a problem. I can give you historical facts. Migrants built the US. The Indians that Idi Amin chased from Uganda today own the entire real estate in London. Among the migrants [that Europe wants to relocate], I'm expecting to see a Steve Jobs and an Elon Musk” (GRN). The UK and Europe are mocked for failing to recognise this: “(T)he UK is sleeping, while Rwanda is ready to capitalise on this huge labour resource” (GRN). Another respondent explains that Rwanda is not interested in immigrants who are unemployed or reliant on social benefits. Relocated migrants are expected to integrate into Rwandan society and actively contribute to the economy (OJPN).

Receiving deported migrants from Europe is compared to Rwanda's welcoming of Sudanese refugees. In April 2023, as the war in Sudan escalated, universities, including the University of Medical Sciences and Technology, closed. Rwanda responded by admitting students to the University of Rwanda. The first 200 students arrived in August 2023, followed by another 108 in December 2023. Students expressed in the media that they aimed to spend one to two years in Rwanda to complete their studies, with plans to return to Sudan to help in rebuilding their country once the war is over (Mbonyinshuti, 2023, August 3; Rwema et al., 2023, August 9; Tembasi, 2023, December 7).

Respondents in this inquiry discuss this initiative as a humanitarian effort by the Rwanda government to refugee students and as a strategic move to address Rwanda's need for skilled medical professionals (NN-2, GRN, DUP). Notably, respondents overlook the students' stated aspirations to return to Sudan.

Some respondents express opposing views. One states, “If people are brought to Rwanda against their will, even if they have brains, their brains will not be functioning by the time they are here. Some may even become suicidal, and some will try to return to Europe. They won't even have time to use their brains” (FH). Others speak of Rwanda's poverty and lack of opportunities, especially for educated Rwandans (NN-1, NN-2, AK), suggesting that relocated migrants could be a burden on

Rwandan society. There are also ethical concerns that Rwanda's economic and geopolitical interests are prioritised over migrants' well-being (NN-3, LC).

Image building and alliances

Many respondents indeed emphasise Rwanda's geopolitical and strategic interests in forming diplomatic alliances with influential Western nations, including the UK and France, through migration engagements. By addressing global migration issues cooperatively, Rwanda aims to enhance its reputation as a responsible international actor and gain a more significant role in global governance (DUP, OJPN, PH, GRN, ASM). This approach is evident in Rwanda's active engagement with organisations like the Commonwealth and the Francophonie (NN-1).

Respondents point to various reputation-building strategies, including becoming a hub for international tourism and business conventions, contributing to peacekeeping missions, and securing sponsorship deals with football clubs Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal (NN-1, NN-3). One respondent says, "They will attract funding for development projects; there is always a win-win outcome in this kind of deal. It positions Rwanda as a big player internationally, despite its size" (ASM).

Conversely, some respondents say Rwanda is using its geopolitical leverage to silence human rights critics and divert attention from military actions in the DRC (NN-1, NN-3). One respondent warns that the primary drivers are image, reputation, influence, and control (NN-1).

Strengthening Rwandan asylum and migration systems

One respondent sees Rwanda's participation in global migration management as a way to strengthen its asylum and migration systems, including improving refugee law and Refugee Status Determination mechanisms (AK).

Burden sharing

Respondents further attribute Rwanda's willingness to serve as a refugee-receiving third country for sponsoring states to its sense of responsibility. Compared to neighbouring countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, Rwanda's approach to accommodating refugees is not unusual. Respondents define Rwanda's role in relation to the region's many conflicts and wars as a form of responsible burden-sharing (PH, AK).

Rwandan refugeehood experiences

Respondents emphasise that Rwanda's historical experiences with displacement deeply influence the country's welcoming approach towards relocated refugees. Many Rwandans, particularly among the elite, the RPF, and the government, including President Kagame, were internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees between 1959 and 1994. Many others became refugees in the aftermath of the

1994 genocide. As a result, respondents believe that Rwandans have developed a sense of empathy for refugees, knowing for themselves what it is to be a refugee (NN-2, OJPN, AK, AV). One respondent says, "Do you know why refugees are not a burden here? It is because so many Rwandans have personal or family histories of becoming refugees. That's why no one can hate refugees" (AV). Another says, "Rwandan leaders understand the suffering of refugees better compared to those who have never lost their citizenship" (ASM).

One respondent describes Rwanda's current asylum and migration policies as a form of "vengeance of fate and history" (GRN). Between 1959 and 1994, many Rwandan refugees in exile encountered hostility and were denied the right to return home. The Rwandan leaders at the time maintained that the country was too small and lacked the resources to support returning refugees. However, Rwanda is now demonstrating how refugees can be supported and integrated into society (DUP, GRN). Many respondents speak in glowing terms about the present peaceful cohabitation between Rwandan host communities and refugees from Burundi and the DRC, suggesting this will be the same for migrants forcefully relocated to Rwanda (NN-2, GRN, AV).

The impact of the 1994 genocide

The genocide against the Tutsi has profoundly shaped Rwanda's recent nation-building project and foreign policies. Several respondents argue that the international community's failure to intervene during the genocide is driving the current Rwandan government to assert itself on the global stage (GRN, NN-1). The government's goal is "to ensure that the lives of the Rwandan people matter" (GRN). Additionally, respondents claim that the impact of the 1994 genocide has made Rwandans very sensitive to the plight of those whose safety and existence are threatened (GRN, DUP, AV, AK). Respondents view initiatives such as collaborative migration management and the hosting of relocated refugees through this lens.

Honouring traditional values

Respondents relate Rwanda's modern asylum and migration policies to its DNA-embedded values of hospitality and community, claiming that xenophobia has historically been absent. Postcolonial, post-genocide Rwanda is once again embracing these traditional values (OJPN, GRN, NN-2). They believe these values are central to the nation's core identity.

Some respondents draw parallels to pre-colonial practices that allegedly emphasised inclusivity and shared responsibility, such as the traditional judiciary system *gacaca* and village assemblies. They cite these institutions as having been successfully revitalised to address Rwanda's post-genocide challenges related to justice and reconciliation (NN-2, ASM).

Healing wounds to rebuild Rwanda

Some respondents see Rwanda's participation in externalised migration arrangements as a way to overcome internal divisions and cultivate a new cosmopolitan identity (GRN). Hosting refugees from diverse cultural and national backgrounds, respondents argue, is seen as a way to address the ethnic divisions rooted in colonial and genocidal histories. One respondent says, "What we want is to have a world where you have white people, black people, Arabic people, everyone, because it will facilitate us to clear out definitively these divisions, this world-famous ethnicity that we had before, those Tutsi, Hutu and Twa, which are not even true. We want to hide it definitively. To open this country to everyone. We say Rwanda is for everyone who wants to be Rwandan and live here. That is our aim" (AV)

The desired transformation of Rwanda, particularly Kigali, into an international hub through the influx of refugees is another aspect of this narrative. Respondents portray refugees as contributors to Rwanda's economy and as catalysts for promoting a vibrant, multicultural culture (FAR -J-F-JM). One respondent says, "If you bring in 100,000 graduates from across Africa and you pump them into Kigali, it's brilliant. Kigali will become an international city, just like Amsterdam, where you find people from various places. We want that!" (GRN).

By contrast, some respondents express concerns about integrating non-African refugees, such as those from Afghanistan or Syria. They point to cultural and linguistic differences as barriers, juxtaposing this with the more straightforward hosting of Burundian and Congolese refugees, who have more in common with Rwandans (LC, AV). Others caution that tensions may arise if locals perceive relocated refugees receiving better treatment (NN-1, ASM, FH). Additionally, some challenge the narratives about ingrained hospitality and non-xenophobia, arguing they are selectively applied to advance political agendas (NN-1, NN-3).

In conclusion, respondents indicate that Rwanda seeks to achieve specific objectives through its participation in global migration management. They highlight an interplay of economic, geopolitical, and humanitarian benefits and interests with an emphasis on identity and nation-building.

Respondents' remarks align with the views of Rwandan writer Scholastique Mukasonga (2022), who argues that welcoming relocated migrants reflects Rwanda's traditional values and helps to heal the collective wounds caused by historical experiences of exile and violence. Respondents do not subscribe to Adamson and Greenhill's theory of Transactional Forced Migration but rather gravitate towards Beloff's perspectives who suggests that Rwanda is redefining its identity away from a postcolonial beggar state, a genocide victim, and an aggressor in the Congo wars with a poor human rights record, towards a fully sovereign state that successfully mobilises its agency (2021).

While the majority perceive this approach positively, as it demonstrates Rwanda's proactive role on the international stage, some respondents voice concerns about the ethical and practical implications of both past and potential external migration arrangements.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions & Discussion

This chapter presents the key conclusions of this research, placing them within broader discussions on migration governance. It addresses both the sub-questions and the central question of this research, linking empirical findings to theoretical perspectives.

Sub-question 1: How have Rwanda's colonial and postcolonial experiences, including refugeehood and the 1994 genocide, influenced its current foreign policy framework and approach to international migration management? To address this question, I have employed a selection of perspectives, including the concept of 'colonial durabilities' presented by Purdeková and Mwambari (2021), Menelao's 'colonial syndrome' (2022), and Beloff's foreign policy 'tenets' (2021).

The empirical data reveal a shared narrative portraying Rwandans as warm and humanitarian towards refugees, shaped by their own historical experiences of forced displacement. This perspective references colonial and postcolonial historical events, such as the exile of Tutsi Rwandans between 1959 and 1994, the significant exodus of Hutu Rwandans in 1994, and the subsequent reintegration of returnees. This aligns with a state-led narrative that frames Rwanda's openness towards migrants as a lesson learned from its traumatic past, which can help overcome internal divisions in Rwanda. Furthermore, Rwanda seeks to project an image of pre-colonial hospitality, embedded in its cultural DNA, free from xenophobia and racism. In summary, colonial and postcolonial experiences significantly clearly shape Rwanda's foreign policy and its approach to international migration management.

Sub-question 2: In what ways does Rwanda's involvement in migration management arrangements with Global North countries reflect or challenge postcolonial power dynamics? To address this question, I examined perspectives from Purdeková, Mwambari, Menelao and Beloff, alongside analyses by Karadağ (2019) and Laube (2021) regarding Global South policy agency. I explored whether Rwanda is perceived as a passive recipient of the Global North's policies and interests or as an active player replicating colonial deportation strategies and adopting Western migration narratives.

The findings suggest a dual perspective. On one hand, Rwanda acknowledges the enduring colonial and racist attitudes that shape migration policies in the Global North. On the other hand, Rwanda is not merely a victim of these dynamics, it positions itself as a sovereign actor with agency in global migration governance. Rwanda is portrayed as having significant potential to lead in offering constructive solutions to global migration issues. This challenges the notion of passive compliance with Western migration policies. Rwanda actively mirrors colonial migration narratives and deportation strategies. The discourse surrounding Europe's 'migration crisis' is replicated, attributing

blame to the high influx of fortune-seeking Africans, which is said to create an untenable situation in Europe. There is a lack of interest in migrants' aspirations, their capabilities to make life decisions are minimised, and the internationally recognised rights of people on the move are treated with relative disregard—all in the name of promoting pragmatic solutions. The role of smugglers is exaggerated, deterrence is oversimplified, and the risks of refoulement are ignored. The humanitarian and altruistic nature of Rwanda's role in hosting deported refugees is emphasised, while the dehumanising realities of deportation and the varied forms of refoulement are overlooked. Rwanda's role in external migration management resonates with Western colonial-era rhetoric and practices. This transcends simplistic dichotomies of Global North-Global South, former coloniser-formerly colonised, and colonial-post-colonial, among others. As Adamson and Greenhill (2023) highlight, states can choose how to engage with return regimes, externalisation, and outsourcing, pointing out that, for instance, Fiji and Timor-Leste rejected Australia's outsourcing proposals. Ultimately, Rwanda operates within a spectrum of coloniality, not as a conscripted victim forcibly enlisted by more powerful states, but as a conscious actor with internalised colonial logic.

Sub-question 3: How has Rwanda used migration diplomacy to shape its relationships with countries such as Israel, Denmark, and the UK and to strengthen its role as a refugee-hosting nation? To answer this question, I have drawn upon perspectives on migration diplomacy, particularly those from Laube (2021), Adamson and Tsourapas (2019), Sahin-Mencütek & Tsourapas (2022) and Micinski (2021). Specifically, I have examined whether Rwanda engages in transactional collaboration with refugee-deporting states by employing strategies of blackmail and back-scratching and/or aims to achieve particular geopolitical and economic benefits and revenues.

Findings indicate that Rwanda is perceived as an equal partner in external migration management partnerships with the Global North, engaging in transactional and mutually beneficial arrangements through migration diplomacy rather than being coerced. Rwanda is not perceived to engage in blackmail or back-scratching through strategic promises or threats. The country critiques the failures of the global refugee protection system. Rwanda is seen as rightly critical of the outdated rules and standards — which can be interpreted as an outright threat to the refugee protection system. Rwanda is described as a reliable and even indispensable partner in external migration management arrangements with Global North partners; this perspective reflects a clear *promise* of siding with and collaborating with countries that wish to deport undesired migrants, regardless of legal or normative obstacles. Another element of *threat* that transpires from Rwanda's narrative is that there are substantial global challenges with migration. The situation in Europe is untenable, and Europe cannot resolve it without partners in the Global South. Rwanda can play a pivotal role in implementing solutions. Underestimating Rwanda's capacities or dismissing it as unsafe or ill-equipped to

contribute to resolving international migration issues stems from colonial racist notions. This critique of the West is a stick Rwanda knows how to wield. Through such implicit but robust threats and promises, Rwanda is leveraging its collaboration in external migration schemes as a bargaining chip in diplomatic and political negotiations with the Global North. As Sahin-Mencütek and Tsourapas (2022) suggest, Rwanda fits the model of a 'refugee rentier state' engaging in rent-seeking behaviour within migration governance.

With regards to the central question of this research: How can Rwanda's domestic, regional, and geopolitical policy interests explain its interest in participating in past and potential external migration governance schemes initiated by countries in the Global North?' In addition to the perspectives and the operationalised queries already mentioned, I have contemplated whether respondents in this inquiry portrayed Rwanda as aiming to achieve particular geopolitical and economic benefits and revenues and/or specific political objectives of identity re-engineering and nation-building.

What emerges is a variety of motives, interests and stakes that Rwanda pursues by participating in external migration schemes. On the domestic level, the political project of nation-building and identity re-engineering. On the regional level, Rwanda's role in external migration schemes can be seen as a decoy for the country's continued meddling in the DRC, militarily and economically. Also, ostensibly caring for global refugees through the ETM and other programmes deviates critical attention from the plight of the estimated 250,000 Rwandan refugees that are abroad, particularly in the DRC. On the geopolitical level, it is about carving out a space on the global scene and taking a seat at the international table. The gained diplomatic diplomacy is used to prevent the Rwandan population, that is, the Tutsi minority, from ever again falling victim to domestic or regional violence.

The conclusion is that Rwanda is showcasing how 'colonial durabilities' operate, as theorised by Purdeková and Mwambari (2021); Rwanda copies and perpetuates 'colonial' narratives and behaviour regarding African migrant populations. Rwanda, in this sense, is suffering from Menelaou's 'postcolonial syndrome' (2022) in how it replicates authoritarian approaches to governance and disregards the interests and rights of migrants who risk deportation to Rwanda, as well as the views of Rwandan host communities. Both groups are excluded from decision-making processes, while they are the first to suffer the consequences of the policies. With migration used to achieve policy objectives, Rwanda fits Sadiq and Tsourapas's (2021) concept of the 'postcolonial migration state'. Rwanda is actively engaged in 'migration defence', showing no concern for the impact this has on migrants' capabilities (Kent et al., 2019) and how it restricts their freedom of movement and political rights (Landau, 2019). According to Karadağ (2019) and Rasche and Kohlenberger (2021), migrants are

disempowered, reduced to pawns and weaponised in Rwanda's diplomatic and geopolitical relations. Rwanda's involvement in external migration management, cloaked as it is in references to traditions of hospitality and cohabitation, is myth-based rather than norms-based, as international standards are easily put aside, which proves the points made by Purdeková and Mwambari (2021).

This thesis contributes to understanding the governance dynamics surrounding external migration arrangements between refugee-departing states and third-party refugee-receiving states across the Global North and South. The literature's dichotomy of weaker, formerly colonised Global South states and more established, formerly colonising Global North states overlooks the complexities of migration externalisation. Rwanda, often depicted as a less developed postcolonial Global South state, actively participates in global migration governance. Rather than serving as a passive recipient of external pressures from the Global North, Rwanda strategically navigates its role, shifting from norms-based to myth-based policymaking and constructing new diplomatic and geopolitical realities in the process. This challenges prevailing analyses of Global South agency in migration governance, which seem to lag behind the realities demonstrated through Rwanda's arrangements with Israel, Denmark, and the UK from 2014 to 2024. Rwanda's blend of humanitarian rhetoric and transactionalism showcases pragmatism and opportunism that transcends conventional theories on power hierarchies and agency. Rwanda's behaviour can be summarised as "Fake it till you make it", reflecting strategic deception and the construction of influence, credibility, and leverage on the global stage.

This research faced limitations, including unresponsive participants, late receipt of the research permit, restricted freedom of speech, and self-censorship. Although I would have preferred to engage with even more individuals, I am confident that 19 respondents constitute a sufficient number of 'elements' from the 'population' under review. The Minema research permit was only received on May 22nd; fortunately, I managed to visit Mahama refugee camp and Gashora Transit Centre on May 23rd and 24th respectively. I had the chance to visit both places with minimal oversight. Freedom of speech is limited in Rwanda, and the topic of migration management is rather sensitive. By clarifying my role as a Master's student and the purpose of this inquiry as gathering information for my thesis, I largely succeeded in instilling confidence in my respondents.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations

Based on this inquiry, I propose the following recommendations:

- Research on migration externalisation should integrate insights from postcolonialism, history, international relations, public administration, diplomacy, law, and refugee and migration studies.
- Research should examine the political, economic, and strategic drivers behind migration externalisation in both refugee-deporting and third-party refugee-receiving countries across the Global North and South, particularly focusing on the state-centric displacement management performed by authoritarian regimes. This includes assessing nation-building, identity politics, geopolitical interests, and mechanisms such as refugee rentierism, migration diplomacy, and transactional forced migration.
- Academic analytical frameworks should adapt to shifts in migration diplomacy and transactional forced migration within global migration governance.
- Research should further explore Rwanda's motivations, diplomatic strategies, and policy narratives, as well as those of other third-party states involved in migration externalisation arrangements.
- Research must consider and identify ways to circumvent limitations on freedom of speech, press, and academic inquiry, as is the case in Rwanda.
- Research should prioritise scholars from the Global South and engage 'people on the move' and host communities, placing their experiences at the heart of the analysis.
- Research should serve as a basis for political and societal action, challenging the legal, ethical, and policy implications of migration policies and narratives.
- The Dutch government should commit to rights-based, ethical, humane, and evidence-based migration policies, acknowledging the complexity of migration issues, and respecting the letter and spirit of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol, related refugee protection instruments, international and European human rights standards, and relevant rulings by the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice. Ministers Faber (Asylum and Migration) and Klever (Foreign Affairs and Development Aid) should firmly reject migration externalisation approaches similar to those of Israel, Denmark, the UK, and Rwanda. Proposals to deport asylum seekers for their claims to be processed in Rwanda or other third-party countries should be dismissed. The Netherlands should engage in international dialogues on migration governance within the EU and UN.

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Appendix A - List of Documentary Materials

This list includes media reports and documents from non-governmental, governmental, and intergovernmental bodies.

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Appendix B - List of Participants & Interview Details

This list presents details of the participants and details on the interviews, in chronological order of the interviews: including names of participants, initials as used in this paper, function, organisation, State Actor (SA) or Non-State Actor (NSA), type of interview, type of meeting, location of the interview, type of location, and date of interview.

	Name	Initials	Function	Organisation	State Actor (SA) / Non-State Actor (NSA)	Type of interview	Type of meeting	Location of interview	Type of location	Date of interview
1	Olivier Jean Patrick NDUHUNGIREHE	OJPN	Ambassador	Rwandan embassy in The Netherlands	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	The Hague, The Netherlands	Embassy office	April 30, 2024
2	Andrews KANAGA	AK	Legal Director	Legal Aid Forum (LAF)	NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Cafe	May 4, 2024
3		NN-1	Rwandan freelance journalist		NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Restaurant	May 6, 2024
4		NN-2	Rwandan Country Director	European development organisation	NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Organisation Office	May 8, 2024
5	Gatete Ruhumuliza NYIRINHABO	GRN	Attorney / Governance & Advocacy Consultant		NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Private residence	May 10, 2024

6	Doris Uwicyeza PICARD	DUP	Coordinator MEDP Coordination Unit. (Previously Chief Technical Advisor & Lead Legal Negotiator MEDP)	Minaffet (Ministry of Justice)	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Bookshop-cafe	May 14, 2024
7		NN-3	European Project Manager (Economic Opportunities for Refugees)	European development organisation	NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Ministry Office	May 17, 2024
8	Frank HABINEZA	FH	President	Democratic Green Party of Rwanda	NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Party Office	May 17, 2024
9	Philippe HABINSHUTI	PH	Permanent Secretary	Minema	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Ministry Office	May 21, 2024
	Name	Initials	Function	Organisation	SA / NSA	Type of interview	Type of meeting	Location of interview	Type of location	Date of interview
10	André VUGANEZA	AV	Camp Manager	Minema	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kirehe District, Rwanda	Mahama Refugee Camp	May 23, 2024
11		NN-4	Deputy Camp Manager	Minema	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kirehe District, Rwanda	Mahama Refugee Camp	May 23, 2024
12	Prof. Aggee Shyaka MUGABE	ASM	Senior Lecturer / Researcher	Centre for Conflict Management, University of Rwanda	NSA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Kigali, Rwanda	Restaurant	May 23, 2024
13	Fares Augustin RUYUMBU	FAR	Camp Manager	Minema	SA	One-on-one interview	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024

14		NN-5	Assistant to Camp Manager	Minema	SA	Group conversation	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024
15		NN-6	Staff	DGIE Rwanda	SA	Group conversation	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024
16		NN-7	Protection Officer	UNHCR Rwanda	NSA	Group conversation	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024
17		NN-8	Protection Officer	UNHCR Rwanda	NSA	Group conversation	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024
18		NN-9	Resettlement Officer	UNHCR Rwanda	NSA	Group conversation	In-person meeting	Bugesera District, Rwanda	Gashora Transit Centre	May 24, 2024
19	Lilly Carlisle	LC	Focal Point External relations	UNHCR Rwanda	NSA	One-on-one interview	Telephone			May 31, 2024

Appendix C - Operationalisation of Analytical Framework (table)

	Main concept	Operationalisation of main concept		Sub-concept	Operationalisation of sub-concept	Coding - Terms and perceptions used by participants
1	Rwanda's role in external migration management arrangements is defined by postcolonial power relations.	Participants in this inquiry describe Rwanda's role in external migration management arrangements in the context of postcolonial power relations.	1a	Rwanda is a refugee-receiving state conscripted and enlisted by refugee-deporting states to achieve containment of migration in the latter's interest.	Rwanda is portrayed as a passive recipient and a victim of sponsoring states' policies and interests.	Colonialism, Colonial legacy, European racism, Rwanda's dependence on the Global North, Global North migration crisis, Global North and UK migration policy objectives.
			1b	Rwanda's role in external migration management arrangements is defined by 'colonial durabilities' and the 'postcolonial syndrome'.	Rwanda is portrayed as actively mirroring colonial deportation strategies and adopting Western migration narratives.	Root causes African migration to Europe, Global/European migration crisis, Deterrence, Refoulement, Smugglers,

						Migrants' aspirations and agency.
2	In the context of external migration management arrangements Rwanda mobilises its agency as a geopolitical subject in its own right.	Participants in this inquiry describe Rwanda's role in external migration management arrangements in terms of agency.	2a	Rwanda's agency manifests through Transactional Forced Migration (TFM).	Rwanda is portrayed as engaging in transactional collaboration with refugee-deporting states.	Benefits for sponsoring states, Rwanda's contribution to resolving global migration crises, Partnerships and alliances.
			2b	Rwanda's agency manifests through migration diplomacy and 'refugee rentierism'.	Rwanda is portrayed as employing strategies of blackmailing and back-scratching.	Threats, Promises.
3	In the context of external migration management arrangements Rwanda mobilises its agency as a geopolitical subject in its own right to achieve its own objectives.		3a	Rwanda, as a sovereign state, aims to achieve its foreign policy objectives.	Rwanda is portrayed as aiming to achieve particular geopolitical and economic benefits and revenues.	National self-respect, autonomy vis-à-vis donors (<i>agaciro</i>), Human security for all who identify as Rwandans, International reputation, Soft power, Seat at international table,

						Geopolitical alliances, Funding, Economic development, Brain gain.
			3b	Rwanda as a 'postcolonial migration state' uses migration to achieve its political objectives of nation-building and identity re-engineering.	Rwanda is portrayed as aiming to achieve specific political objectives of identity re-engineering and nation-building.	Nation-building, Overcoming 'ethnic' divisions, 1994 genocide, Rwanda's refugeehood experiences, Tradition of hospitality.

Appendix D - Interview Guidance

Interview guidance

Consent

- Do you agree to sign this consent form?
- Do you want to receive a copy of the signed consent form? Where can I send it to?
- Do you agree this interview to be audio recorded?
- Do you mind if I take (handwritten) notes?

Personal data

- How can I refer to you in my thesis? (full personal details or (partially) anonymised)
- What is your name?
- What organisation do you work for?
- What is your current function/position?
- How long have you been working in this function/position?
- Where are you based?
- What are the main responsibilities/tasks/activities that you undertake in your function?

Knowledge of 'refugee resettlement' schemes

- Are you familiar with the transfer of refugees from Israel to Rwanda (and Uganda) that was carried out between 2013-2018?
- Are you familiar with the evacuation & resettlement of refugees from Libya to Rwanda under the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)?
- Are you familiar with the 'UK-Rwanda deal' - under which asylum seekers who arrive in the UK by boat are to be brought to Rwanda for their asylum application to be processed in Rwanda under Rwandan law?
- Are you familiar with the resettlement of the School of Leadership Afghanistan (SOLA) to Rwanda?
- Are you familiar with other potential similar schemes under which asylum seekers are transferred to Rwanda for their asylum claims to be processed in Rwanda and/or to enjoy refugee protection in Rwanda (for example, from Denmark, or Spain...)?
 - If yes, tell me what you know about these schemes
 - What is your (organisation's) involvement with these schemes?
 - What is your role (if any)?
- In general, what are your thoughts about these schemes - based on your professional involvement and/or general information?
- There are varying views on Rwanda's role in said refugee resettlement schemes. Some analysts speak of the deportation of refugees from, for example, the UK to Rwanda. Would you agree to that term?
- Are you familiar with the terms refoulement, neo-refoulement, and the principle of non-refoulement?
- Do you think the term neo-refoulement could apply to the (envisaged) deportation of asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda?
- Do you/does your organisation consider Rwanda to be a safe country for refugees to be evacuated/resettled/deported to? Please elaborate.
- Can Rwanda offer proper reception and protection to concerned resettled refugees?
- In general terms, what are the motives of the Rwandan government in participating in these schemes?
- More specifically, what is in it for Rwanda? Is anything of the following applicable in your view?
 - Improvement of diplomatic relations with so-called sponsoring countries/organisations
 - Interdependence with sponsoring state(s)
 - Soft power

- Public diplomacy (advancing Rwanda's reputation)
 - Issues of identity
 - Economic interests
 - Financial or material incentives (equipment, machinery, or training)
 - Security interests
- What is Rwanda's executive role in the implementation of said schemes?
 - Are officials of the sponsoring state deployed in Rwanda
 - Are said schemes shared or jointly executed
 - Is Rwanda assuming a direct migration control role
 - Are international agencies established in Rwanda or assigned to effect interception?
- Would you say these schemes are imposed on Rwanda? Please elaborate.
- Some analysts decry these schemes as neo-colonialist, with refugee-receiving third countries (in this case, Rwanda) on the weaker side of the power equation. Does that apply to Rwanda in your view?
- In establishing said schemes, is Rwanda applying strategies of bargaining / negotiating / putting conditions, in your view?
- Could it be said that Rwanda's refugee reception scheme is part of its nation-state branding strategy?
- Could it be said that Rwanda's refugee reception aligns with traditional values of hospitality and coexistence?
- Could it be so that Rwanda's role in said schemes is shaped by the country's genocide trauma? If so, how do you see this?
- Could emotions of victimhood (on Rwanda's side) and/or feelings of shame and guilt (on the side of sponsoring states and organisations) come into play in establishing said schemes? If so, how do you see this?
- Some analysts decry these Western refugee outsourcing schemes as racist. Is that a view held in Rwanda too?
- The UK-Rwanda deal, in particular, is subject to ongoing political and legal scrutiny in the UK and internationally (e.g., AI, HRW, UN agencies, UK Supreme Court, etc.). How do such critiques inform your view on the UK-Rwanda scheme and similar schemes?

Looking ahead

- What are your thoughts on the impacts of said schemes in the longer term on:
 - the refugees concerned
 - Rwandan society
 - governance networks
 - Rwanda's international/regional relations
 - the international refugee regime?

Concluding

- Do you have anything to add or amend?
- Is there anything of what you have said that you do not want me to use in my thesis?

Follow up

- It seems we could have talked longer. Would you be willing to continue our exchange (in person, remotely, or by email)?
- Would you be interested in receiving my thesis once it is finalised?

Thank you very much for your participation

Appendix E - Minema Permit

Authorisation to conduct data collection in Mahama Refugee Camp and Gashora Transit Centre



Republic of Rwanda Ministry in charge of Emergency Management

Kigali, 22/05/2024.....
Ref: 0657.../MINEMA/SPIU/24

Pauline Overeem
Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Rotterdam
NETHERLAND

Dear Madam,

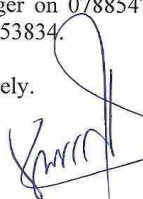
Re: Authorization to conduct the data collection in Mahama Refugee Camp and Gashora Transit Centre.

Reference is made to your letter requesting the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) an authorization to access Mahama Refugee Camp and Gashora Transit Centre to conduct the data collection on Rwanda's role in the management of migration for completing your Master's degree in Public Administration-Governance of Migration & Diversity of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam;

I am pleased to inform you that the authorization to access Mahama Refugee Camp on 23rd May 2024 and Gashora Transit Centre on 24th May 2024 is granted to you.

For any assistance you may require, you are advised to contact Mr. Vuganeza André, Mahama Camp Manager on 0788547530 and Mr. Ruyumbu Fares Augustin, Gashora Transit Centre Manager on 0788353834.

Sincerely,



HABINSHUTI Philippe
Permanent Secretary

Cc:

- Honorable Minister in charge of Emergency Management
KIGALI
- Mahama Camp Manager
KIREHE
- Gashora Transit Centre Manager
BUGESERA

P.O.Box: 4386 Kigali | Toll Free: 170 | Email: info@minema.gov.rw | Web: www.minema.gov.rw