

Problematizing State Capacity: The Rwandan Case

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The Weak African State

- ▶ Great deal of consensus that many of the problems of development and fragility in Africa are due to state weakness.
- ▶ Louis Lombard coins the term the PK-12 state in her ethnography of state absence in the CAR.
- ▶ This consensus bolstered by many disparate pieces of evidence
 - ▶ Low levels of “observed state capacity” - e.g. tax revenues/national income
 - ▶ The role of the state in successful development experiences (East Asian miracle, Johnson, Amsden, Wade)
 - ▶ Historical studies (Brewer on England, Soifer on Latin America)
 - ▶ Econometric evidence: Evans and Rauch (1999); e.g. Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, Robinson (2015) on Colombia; Dell, Lane and Querubín (2018) on Vietnam.

The CAR state ends at the PK-12 Market in Bangui



The Weberian Tradition

- ▶ Nearly all of this work takes off from Weber's distinction between "rational-legal" state and a "patrimonial" state.
- ▶ A rational legal state is an efficient bureaucratic "iron cage".
- ▶ A patrimonial state is based on personal connections and exchange of favors/rents for support.
- ▶ The dominant consensus sees the weakness of African states as stemming from their patrimonial organization (Turner and Young, 1985, Bratton and van der Walle, 1997, etc.).
- ▶ The policy conclusion is that to develop, African states have to become more "Weberian" in the sense of becoming more rational-legal. (For example, optimism arises from finding pockets of such rational-legal authority at work - Rasul and Rogger).

The Rwandan Case

First Claim

- ▶ In this paper we question this consensus through the lens of Rwanda.
- ▶ **Our first claim** is that even though the Rwandan state looks weak on observed “Weberian” criteria, in fact it has a great deal of capacity.
- ▶ This is perversely evident during the 1994 genocide when the state implemented a plan which killed possibly 800,000 people in three months.
- ▶ It is also evidence in the subsequent Rwandan growth miracle. Rwanda does indeed have a developmental state, but it operates in the absence of state capacity as traditionally measured.
- ▶ How?

Segmentary State Capacity (SSC)

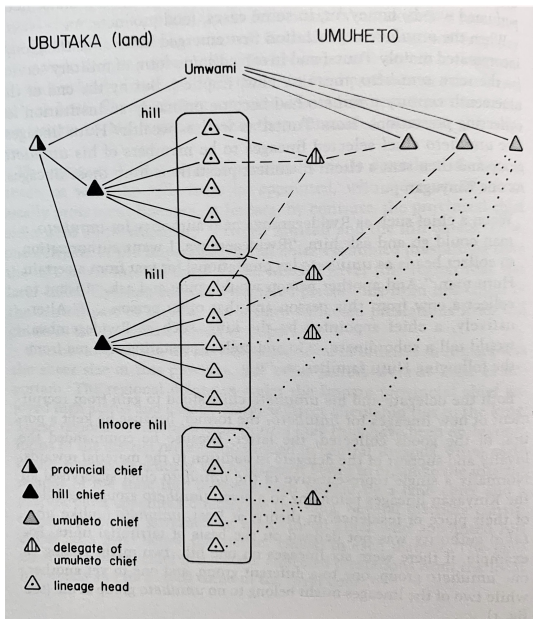
Second Claim

- ▶ **Our second claim** is that the key to understanding the capacity of the Rwandan state is precisely a non-Weberian feature: the state is connected to society by dense social networks.
- ▶ Africanists have interpreted these networks as patrimonial and purely redistributive - undermining the capacity of the state.
- ▶ But the Rwandan case makes clear that these same networks can be used to implement state policy - killing during the genocide; increasing productivity and public good provision after 1994.
- ▶ The existence of these networks is a consequence of the historical construction of the state and their persistence is well documented (continuity between hill chiefs and burgomasters).

What is a Segmentary State?

- ▶ Concept introduced by Southall (1956) in his seminal study of the Alur state in Uganda/DRC.
- ▶ It was a hybrid state which fused (minimal) centralized state institutions with lineage and descent groups.
- ▶ Southall (1988) defined this as a state in which
the spheres of ritual suzerainty and political sovereignty do not coincide. The former extends widely towards a flexible, changing periphery. The latter is confined to the central, core domain (p. 52)
- ▶ Vansina notes about the traditional Rwandan state that
“there was no central administration in the country except for the ritualists. The administrative structure of the realm was formed only by the conscription of the whole population into armies, on the one hand, and by the chains of patron-client relations whose supreme patron was the king, on the other”. (p. 95)

The Construction of the Rwandan State



The Connection to Weberian Capacity

Third Claim and main empirical contribution

- ▶ It is Vansina's "chains of patron-client relations" that were mobilized to kill in the genocide, often exploiting their traditional institutionalization such as the *umuganda* system of communal labor.
- ▶ They have similarly been mobilized by the RPF government to boost development since 1994.
- ▶ The case study literature is overwhelming on both points.
- ▶ In principle SSC could be mobilized to raise taxes and develop Weberian capacity.
- ▶ **Our third claim** is that this does not happen since the historical and ethnographic literature emphasizes that the social contracts which creates segmentary states strictly limited the domains in which the state could operate.
- ▶ The main empirical contribution of the paper is to show that in fact there is no correlation between a proxy for SSC and any type of measure of observable Weberian capacity.

Measuring Segmentary State Capacity

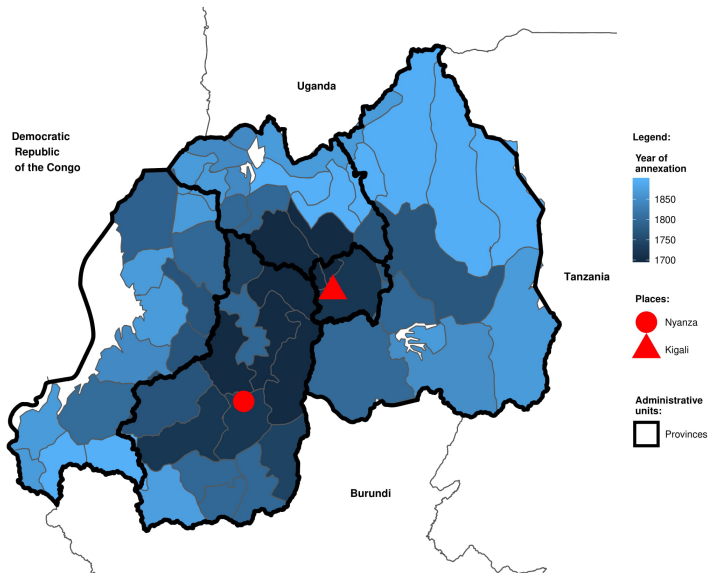
We use two samples for our empirical work:

- ▶ A sample of all *communes*, $n=142$, an administrative unit
- ▶ A contemporary sample of Rwandans, $n=420$, in 21 villages on either side of a historical outer border of the expanding Nyiginya state (100 years exposure difference)

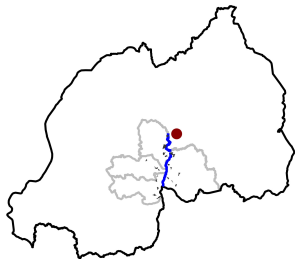
We measure segmentary state capacity by length of exposure to the segmentary state:

- ▶ Earlier incorporation meant stronger integration of military commanders and provincial chiefs as highest segment
- ▶ These are Vansina's 'chains of patron-client relations'
- ▶ Heldring (2021) shows that this measure correlates with violence in the genocide
- ▶ We use years exposed before 1897 (colonization) in our *commune* sample and an indicator for longer exposure in the village sample

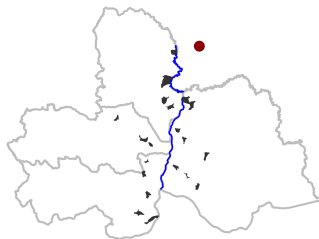
The Expansion of the Nyiginya Kingdom



The fieldwork sample



Legend:
Places
● Kigali



Legend:
Places
● Kigali

Measuring Weberian State Capacity

- ▶ Communes: Tax revenues, expenditure, and several measures of 'presence' (schools, hospitals etc.)
- ▶ Fieldwork: Government office or police station in villages, and measures of effectiveness: corruption and bureaucratic responsiveness
- ▶ In *commune* sample, we regress Weberian state capacity on segmentary state capacity, and controls
- ▶ In fieldwork sample, we use Heldring's (2021) fieldwork outcome: individual rule following. We regress this on segmentary *and* Weberian state capacity in a horserace (with controls)

Results: The Weberian and segmentary state, part I

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel I: Fiscal Capacity:</i>				
	Tax received per capita 1980	Trade tax received per capita 1980	Other taxes received per capita 1980	
State Presence (Years)	0.000770 (0.0976)	0.0906 (0.0627)	0.0902 (0.145)	
Observations	113	113	113	
R ²	0.556	0.456	0.387	
<i>Panel II: Government expenditure:</i>				
	public expenditure per capita 1980	Administrative expenditure per capita 1980	Social expenditure per capita 1980	Economic expenditure per capita 1980
State Presence (Years)	0.0505 (0.102)	0.112 (0.0715)	0.00782 (0.0750)	0.0524 (0.131)
Observations	129	129	129	129
R ²	0.484	0.452	0.317	0.280
<i>Panel III: Energy and Water:</i>				
	Energy centers 1980	Energy transformers 1980	Water installations 1980	Water pumps 1980
State Presence (Years)	0.0829 (0.116)	-0.103 (0.104)	-0.149 (0.182)	-0.0561 (0.101)
Observations	137	137	137	137
R ²	0.154	0.098	0.063	0.080
<i>Panel IV: Education:</i>				
	Primary schools 1980	Secondary schools 1980	Secondary technical schools 1980	
State Presence (Years)	-0.354*** (0.130)	-0.0310 (0.120)	-0.0177 (0.0826)	
Observations	137	137	137	
R ²	0.370	0.101	0.066	
Population 1978	Y	Y	Y	Y
Travel distance to Nyanza along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y
Travel distance to Kigali along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y
Distance to country border	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of clusters	48	48	48	48

Results: The Weberian and segmentary state, part II

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel V: Health:</i>				
	Hospital beds 1980	Maternity clinics 1980	Health clinics 1980	Other clinics 1980
State Presence (Years)	-0.0182 (0.0991)	0.0613 (0.0875)	0.335** (0.144)	0.0671 (0.0682)
Observations	137	137	137	137
R ²	0.085	0.092	0.122	0.121
<i>Panel VI: Social services:</i>				
	Social centers 1980	Reading centers 1980	Nutritional centers 1980	Orphanages 1980
State Presence (Years)	0.0415 (0.126)	0.220 (0.165)	0.00567 (0.184)	-0.123 (0.127)
Observations	137	137	137	137
R ²	0.131	0.078	0.060	0.026
<i>Panel VII: Commercial institutions:</i>				
	Agricultural cooperatives 1980	Markets 1980	Trade centers 1980	Commercial centers 1980
State Presence (Years)	-0.137 (0.117)	-0.0227 (0.132)	0.167 (0.152)	0.0494 (0.101)
Observations	137	137	137	137
R ²	0.137	0.071	0.149	0.029
Population 1978	Y	Y	Y	Y
Travel distance to Nyanza along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y
Travel distance to Kigali along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y
Distance to country border	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of clusters	48	48	48	48

This result extends back in time

<i>Dependent variable:</i>	Hospitals 1935	Hospitals 1960	Hospital beds 1980	Number of Missionary Stations 1924	Number of Missionary Stations 1935	Number of Schools 1960
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
State Presence (Years)	0.163 (0.180)	-0.101 (0.183)	-0.0182 (0.0991)	0.111 (0.0936)	-0.0690 (0.126)	-0.117 (0.108)
Travel distance to Nyanza along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Travel distance to Kigali along 1988 road	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Distance to country border	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of clusters	50	50	50	50	50	50
Observations	137	137	137	137	137	137
R^2	0.048	0.017	0.085	0.051	0.057	0.396

Fieldwork results

<i>Dependent variable:</i>		Rule following (% of full-compliance benchmark)					
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Early State		0.161**	0.193**	0.151*	0.194**	0.159**	0.158**
	<i>Robust s.e.</i>	(0.0761)	(0.0767)	(0.0775)	(0.0789)	(0.0760)	(0.0765)
	<i>Permutation test p-value</i>	0.028	0.042	0.003	0.0236	0.019	0.022
Local government presence							
Local government office dummy		0.0204					
		(0.0485)					
Distance to local government office			0.0394				
			(0.0468)				
Police office dummy				-0.0768			
				(0.0631)			
Distance to police office					0.0714		
					(0.0772)		
Local accountability							
Corruption					0.0891		
					(0.0694)		
Calls to reach local government							0.0346
							(0.0612)
Demographic controls		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>f(location)</i>		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations		414	414	414	414	414	414
R^2		0.039	0.047	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.039

Interpretation

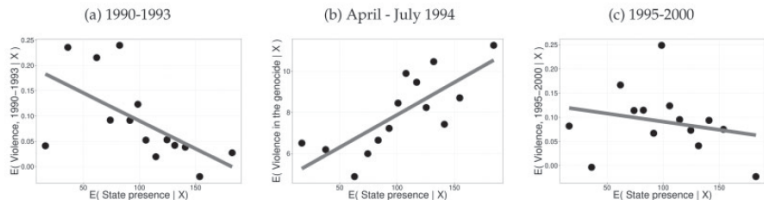
These results are consistent with the idea that state capacity is multi-dimensional:

- ▶ Rule following does not appear different in 'Weberian' villages, but where segmentary links are deeper
- ▶ Such links are uncorrelated with Weberian state capacity in a country-wide analysis

But is segmentary state capacity uniquely associated with 'bad outcomes'?

- ▶ This is the main result in Heldring (2021) and Rwandan networks are at the core of explanations of the implementation of the genocide (Straus, 2006)
- ▶ No: When the state did not organize for violence, violence is lower with higher segmentary state capacity (next slide)
- ▶ No: We argue that Rwanda's growth miracle is organized through the same networks that constitute the segmentary state

SSC before, during, and after the genocide



Source: Figure 1 in Heldring (2021)

The Rwandan Growth Miracle

Since the genocide Rwanda has grown very rapidly:

- ▶ We argue that it is again the same type of segmentary state capacity that makes this possible
- ▶ Studying this miracle, Straus and Waldorf note “post-genocide Rwanda exhibits strong patterns of continuity with pre-genocide Rwanda” (2011, p. 15).

A central case is export agriculture:

- ▶ The government has moved thousands of people, started cooperatives and stipulates crops to grow, and fertilizer to use
- ▶ Rural transformation is “an engineered facet of Rwandan society today” (Huggins, 2017, p. 72 quoting Johan Pottier)
- ▶ And the engineering seamlessly transitions from the state into local society (Huggins, 2017, has many examples), with families and firms both connected to the state and tapped into local networks being pivotal

Conclusions

In this paper, we study Rwanda's recent development, and make three central claims:

- ▶ **Our first claim** is that even though the Rwandan state looks weak on observed “Weberian” criteria, in fact it has a great deal of capacity.
- ▶ **Our second claim** is that the key to understanding the capacity of the Rwandan state is precisely a non-Weberian feature: the state is connected to society by dense social networks.
- ▶ **Our third claim** Segmentary capacity does not necessarily lead to Weberian capacity since traditional social contracts strictly limited the domains in which the state could operate.
- ▶ We substantiate these claims by showing that segmentary and Weberian capacity are uncorrelated, and that segmentary capacity matters for rule following