

Report No: ACS29873

Republic of Rwanda

Rwanda's Anti-Corruption Experience: Actions, Accomplishments, and Lessons

June 2020

EA1G1

AFRICA



Standard Disclaimer:

This volume is a product of the staff of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive Directors of The World Bank or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of The World Bank concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Copyright Statement:

The material in this publication is copyrighted. Copying and/or transmitting portions or all of this work without permission may be a violation of applicable law. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank encourages dissemination of its work and will normally grant permission to reproduce portions of the work promptly.

For permission to photocopy or reprint any part of this work, please send a request with complete information to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, USA, telephone 978-750-8400, fax 978-750-4470, <http://www.copyright.com/>.

All other queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to the Office of the Publisher, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA, fax 202-522-2422, e-mail pubrights@worldbank.org.

Contents

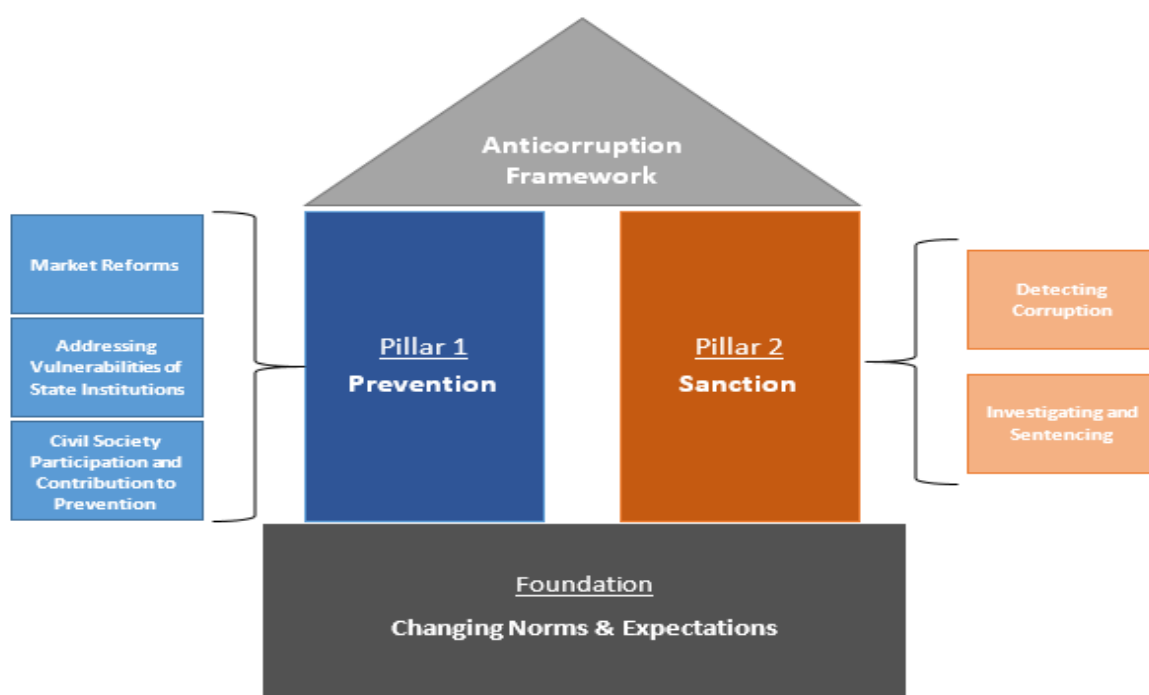
Executive summary	4
Acknowledgments	8
Introduction	9
Context	11
What was done? Rwanda’s anticorruption efforts.....	13
<i>Foundation: Transforming social norms and expectations—zero tolerance and altering perceptions of corruption</i>	<i>14</i>
Signaling zero tolerance	14
Transforming citizen’s expectations of the state	17
<i>Pillar 1: Prevention</i>	<i>19</i>
Pursuing market reforms	19
Reducing the vulnerability of state institutions	22
Sensitizing the community	24
<i>Pillar 2: Sanctions</i>	<i>25</i>
Detecting corruption	25
Investigating and sentencing.....	27
Why does Rwanda stand apart?.....	29
<i>Leadership of reform</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Coordination of engagement.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Complementary investments in state capacity</i>	<i>34</i>
What can be learned from Rwanda?	38
<i>Using sequencing and design—the “big push”—to change expectations.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Achieving scale—coordinating through information exchange and joint actions</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Framing the effort—addressing corruption as a dimension of state building</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Building in adaptation—enabling evolution in the pursuit of concrete outcomes.....</i>	<i>41</i>
Looking ahead: consolidating success and addressing challenges	42
Bibliography	46

Executive summary

In 20 years, Rwanda has moved from a high level of corruption to a level on par with middle-income countries. Its success in reducing administrative corruption—the type of corruption captured in international corruption assessments—is unprecedented for a country at Rwanda’s level of economic development, and it starkly contrasts the dismal experiences in fighting corruption that other countries emerging from conflict and violence have had. While administrative corruption has not disappeared, it has decreased substantially and evolved from an accepted practice to one that is regarded as illegitimate and, once identified, one that is punished. Rwanda’s establishing a rule-based law-abiding public sector is a remarkable development achievement and deserves to be highlighted in its own right as well as for the lessons it can offer other countries struggling to contain corruption from a starting point of limited public sector authority and competency, shallow private sector markets, and fractured and fragmented civil society.

This study examines Rwanda’s anticorruption journey. It applies a holistic framework for anticorruption to better understand and appreciate the activities and factors that have been part of Rwanda’s approach (figure 1).

Figure 1: Holistic framework for fighting corruption in Rwanda



Rwanda’s approach to anticorruption bears the clear stamp of its recent history. Since the late 1990s top government officials have seen the fight against corruption as essential in stopping the cycle of violence that previously culminated in genocide. The perception of corruption as endangering society underpinned the government’s zero tolerance for corruption policy. That perception is also reflected in the link between corruption and injustice that factored into the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman to lead the anticorruption movement.

Shifting cultural views on the morality of corrupt practices has been integral in government efforts to alter societal views on acceptable behavior. In light of cultural norms of reciprocity that stress sharing wealth and taking care of family and community, the government has emphasized that corruption causes harm to others, damages communities and the resources they rely on, and brings shame to the family and community. The government has made enormous efforts to communicate these messages, with ubiquitous public information campaigns that continue across communities and locations. The government has also shifted expectations of the state by raising awareness of citizens' rights and how the state should function toward its citizens.

While changing norms and standards formed the social foundation for anticorruption efforts, preventing corruption and sanctioning misbehavior have been the twin pillars of the fight. The first set of market reforms in the early 2000s severely curtailed opportunities for corruption. Liberalization of trade and foreign exchange regimes removed price distortions and eliminated opportunities for arbitrage and rent seeking. Corruption opportunities have been further curtailed by improving the application of business regulations and eliminating unnecessary rules and processes. At the same time, the revision of Rwanda's public procurement rules and the creation of the National Tender Board (now Rwanda's Public Procurement Authority, enabled Rwanda to establish greater transparency and standardization in the state's contracting with the private sector. Rwanda's steady and spectacular rise in Doing Business rankings is a testament to these achievements, even as the economy remains dominated by the state.

The government has continuously worked to prevent corruption by identifying and reducing vulnerability to corruption. Operating across institutional boundaries, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Auditor General, and the Parliamentary Accounts Committee have developed an iterative process for determining where the risks of administrative corruption are highest; providing clear instructions on remedial actions for ministries, agencies, and other administrative units; and following up to ensure action has been taken. Administrative and individual fines have been levied against officials and institutions found to be remiss in their responsiveness. Organizational competencies have expanded, as individual institutional mandates have been adjusted to enhance the overall effectiveness of the anticorruption work. Anticorruption efforts have increasingly benefited from the application of modern information technology in verifying asset declarations, integrating financial management information systems, and managing the procurement process.

Individuals and communities have been marshalled to prevent corruption. Repeated public information campaigns have stressed the importance of reporting suspected corruption. Annual village-level events across the country remind communities to remain vigilant—and clearly convey that the government expects citizens to be the first line of defense against corrupt individuals.

Work to prevent corruption has been mirrored by sustained efforts to reduce impunity for corrupt actions and to shame those who engage in corrupt practices. Rwanda's anticorruption drive has continuously included prosecution of corrupt acts. A steady stream of officials at all levels of government have been criminally or administratively sanctioned based on investigations and prosecutions by the National Public Prosecution Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman, working in close coordination with the Rwanda Bureau of Investigations. Public announcements of

sanctions, including extensive information on the individual and his or her misdeed, has ensured that punishments are widely noticed and that offending officials are extensively shamed.

Several critical factors have boosted the effectiveness of anticorruption efforts. Most important has been the consistent and engaged leadership of reform at the highest political level. Presidential attention and clear ownership of the anticorruption agenda have been sustained for 20 years. Political leadership has provided the space for organizational and administrative leadership to emerge in key accountability institutions and create a core group committed to establishing public sector integrity. Emphasizing collaboration has enabled organizations to work together while dampening competition for authority and power. Quarterly meetings of coordinating bodies, such as the National Advisory Council to Fight against Corruption and Injustice, have assisted in aligning organizational practices to overcome bottlenecks in confronting corruption. Whenever momentum lagged, the government consistently opted to push ahead with new reforms and to sanction officials.

Finally, anticorruption efforts have benefited from complementary reforms to establish a strong and competent state. An effective public financial management system has reduced opportunities for theft of public monies and increased the risk of detection. A disciplined and motivated civil service has narrowed the number of public officials and improved their public standing. And performance contracts have created incentives for managers and leaders across government to resist corruption by showing them how it undermines their ability to meet ambitious performance goals.

Rwanda's success in reducing administrative corruption could hardly have been predicted. Like other surprising anticorruption success cases—Botswana, Georgia, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore—Rwanda was seen as deeply corrupt. These countries varied in their approaches to fighting corruption, but they all used local resources to fashion reforms that achieved results.

Rwanda's path to reduced corruption is particularly noteworthy given the repeated failure to deter corruption in other countries emerging from conflict. Rwanda's approach diverges from good governance models for addressing corruption, which often stress transparency, participation, and growing private sector markets as drivers of change. While these factors are strongly associated with low-corruption jurisdictions, efforts to confront corruption in postconflict countries using these points of entry have struggled to gain traction. Rwanda's experience may encourage a reconsideration of the sequencing of reforms and of the degree to which transparency, participation, and market reforms can drive a transformation of governance and integrity in challenging environments with weak state capacity, fractured civil society, and a thin private sector.

Rwanda's prioritization of changing cultural norms around corruption, as well as its commitment to a problem-driven, outcome-focused approach to anticorruption, may offer lessons for other similar situated countries. So, too, may the manner in which it simultaneously undertook complementary reforms in ways that confronted corruption both directly and systematically.

Rwanda's success has been driven by a government-controlled top-down approach. The comprehensive efforts have featured government-defined roles for communities, individuals, and the private sector. In most other countries that have greatly reduced corruption, sustained success has been driven by coalitions of government, civil society, and the private sector. Their efforts have

redefined the role of the state and the manner in which the state functions, often with an emphasis on expanding transparency, participation, and platforms for engaging with and contesting government activities. Many of these factors have played a subsidiary role in Rwanda, where the focus has been on increasing internal discipline of state officials. While a number of multi-stakeholder consultative bodies have been established, including the National Council to fight against Corruption and Injustice and Corruption Advisory Councils at national, district, sector, and cell levels, the general weakness of these bodies has limited the extent to which they have served to identify priorities and drive changes in government actions or approaches. Anticorruption momentum might be hard to sustain if bottom-up processes of preventing, identifying and denouncing corruption do not emerge.

Acknowledgments

This study has been produced by a team led by Joel Turkewitz (Lead Public Sector Specialist) that included Benjamin Chemouni (lead author, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge), and Aghassi Mkrtchyan (Senior Economist) working under the guidance of Nicola Smithers (Practice Manager, Governance Global Practice). The team benefited from comments and inputs from Gael Raballand (Lead Public Sector Specialist), and research and administrative support from Andreas Fiebelkorn (consultant), Dimitrie Mukanyiligira (Program Assistant) and Alice Umuhoza (Team Assistant).

This study would not have been possible without the participation and engagement of our Rwandan colleagues who led the anticorruption reforms. In particular, the team thanks: Johnston Busingye (Minister of Justice and Attorney General), Senator Juvénal Nkusi, Obadiah R. Biraro (Auditor General), Tito Rutaremara (former Ombudsman), Jeannot Ruhunga (Secretary General of the Rwanda Investigation Bureau), Angelique Habyarimana (Deputy Prosecutor General, National Public Prosecution Authority), Marie-Immaculée Ingabire (Chairperson, Transparency International Rwanda), Jacques Fiscal Birasa (Director of Special Unit to fight against Corruption, Office of the Ombudsman), Theoneste Karenzi (former Deputy Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee), Clément Musangabatware (former Deputy Ombudsman in charge of fight against corruption) and Tharcisse Karugarama (former Minister of Justice).

The team wishes to acknowledge the guidance provided by Assam Alam (Regional Director, EFI), Carlos Felipe Jaramillo (Country Director), Yasser El-Gammal (Country Manager, Rwanda) and the contribution of peer reviews: James Anderson (Lead Governance Specialist), Abel Bove (Senior Governance Specialist), Bob Rijkers (Senior Economist), and Sahr Kpundeh (Country Manager, Zambia).

Introduction

Corruption has been pervasive and persistent in poor countries. World Bank research has shown a strong association between poverty and corruption.¹ Most of the world’s poor people live in countries that are—and have persistently been—in the bottom half of the control of corruption index. Most of the countries where poor people live had similar corruption indicator values in 1996 and in 2013.²

Few countries have taken the journey from a highly corrupt state to one where corrupt acts are becoming the exception. Georgia and the Republic of Korea have demonstrated the development impact of radically improving governance. Rwanda is now one of the best and most recent examples of success in the fight against corruption in the last decades. In the 1990s administrative corruption in Rwanda was endemic and the country was often classified as a highly corrupt jurisdiction.³ Today Rwanda is among the least corrupt countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (measured by the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index), and the quality of its governance is on par with higher income countries. Despite this success, the literature on Rwanda’s experience confronting corruption remains scarce;⁴ analysts have focused more on designing and implementing public sector reforms such as modernizing public administration and adopting e-procurement (see, for example, Beschel et al. 2018 and Chemouni 2019). There has been limited information on what Rwanda has done to confront corruption, what has been accomplished, and what factors have led to its success.

Rwanda’s experience with corruption deserves attention and analysis. Its achievements are exceptional given its recent history of violent conflict and its status as a low-income country. It is one of the rare examples of a poor country that, in only a few years, dramatically reduced the level of corruption. And its experience could yield broader and original lessons for understanding what works against corruption. Rwanda’s insistence on public sector integrity has been a cornerstone of its development strategy. Its consistent commitment to holding officials to account for achieving development outcomes is a counterpoint to the more episodic and less successful efforts to stamp out corruption in neighboring countries. At the same time, the limited role of civil society and public participation in reducing corruption and the continued state dominance in the economy set Rwanda apart from “good governance” models for success in fighting corruption. While fully replicating Rwanda’s anticorruption program may not be possible, the country’s experience nonetheless provides precious insight into the dynamics of transforming governance and much to emulate regarding the substance, sequencing, and leadership of change.

This study analyzes how Rwanda fought administrative corruption in the public sector over the last two decades. Administrative corruption refers to “the intentional imposition of distortions in the prescribed implementation of existing laws, rules, and regulations to provide advantages to

¹ Khemani et al. (2016) shows a strong correlation between poverty level and control of corruption index value, which captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as capture of the state by elites and private interests.

² Khemani et al. (2016). This is the latest date for which these data are available.

³ For example, the World Bank’s governance indicators placed Rwanda in the 27th percentile for the control of corruption in 1996. On corruption in the early 1990s in Rwanda, see Kimonyo (2017) and Reyntjens (1999).

⁴ Baez-Camargo et al. (2017), Bozzini (2014), Chemouni (2017), and Pillay and Khan (2015) being the exceptions.

either state or non-state actors as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private gains to public officials” (World Bank 2000: xvii).

This study does not address state capture, nor does it analyze the political economy of corruption or assess the overall nature of governance in Rwanda, as these lay outside the scope of this work.⁵

The focus on administrative corruption in the public sector is dictated by the difficulty of assessing, observing, and measuring corruption relating to state capture and by emphasis that Rwandan officials have placed on reducing corruption in the everyday workings of the public sector. The study does not provide a broad examination of governance. While it may touch on some dimensions of governance such as voice and accountability or the rule of law, it only analyses them through their relationship to corruption. Consequently, this study does not draw any general conclusions on governance in Rwanda.

The list of Rwanda’s anticorruption actions is extensive and varied, while the design of anticorruption efforts and implementation mechanisms has been remarkably consistent.

Individual anticorruption steps have been joined together to form pathways to change. This study highlights the pathways that Rwanda created as it reduced opportunities for corruption while establishing a civil service with high integrity standards and rule-based governance. It identifies what Rwanda has done to confront corruption, how reforms have evolved over time, and the accomplishments and challenges that have been produced based on Rwanda’s distinct approach.

The study is based primarily on face-to-face interviews conducted in December 2019 with key individuals in and close observers to the fight against corruption. They include current government officials as well as former officials who provide a historical perspective. People outside government, such as members of civil society organizations and business leaders, were also interviewed to provide their perspectives and triangulate officials’ accounts. The main findings resulted from a consensus between both groups, supplemented by analysis of the existing literature and policy documents.

By documenting Rwanda’s efforts, this study informs policymakers and development partners of the main features and lessons of Rwanda’s success in confronting corruption. It is intended to be an input for World Bank teams, development partners, and officials and policymakers intent on reducing corruption in their own countries and keen to understand Rwanda’s success and its relevance to their own challenges. Overall, this study increases awareness of Rwanda’s anticorruption experience, given its importance in Rwanda’s own development and its relevance to international anticorruption efforts.

The study is organized as follows. The first section describes the evolution of corruption in Rwanda to provide context for anticorruption efforts. The second section then discusses those efforts, with a focus on transforming norms and standards, on prevention, and on sanctions. The third section presents the main factors of success. The fourth section identifies the lessons that can be drawn from Rwanda. And the fifth section reflects on the remaining challenges in the country’s anticorruption journey.

⁵ State capture refers “to the actions of individuals, groups, or firms in both the public and private sectors to influence the formation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other government policies (i.e., the basic rules of the game) to their own advantage by means of the illicit and non-transparent provision private benefits to public officials.” (World Bank 2000: 1-2)

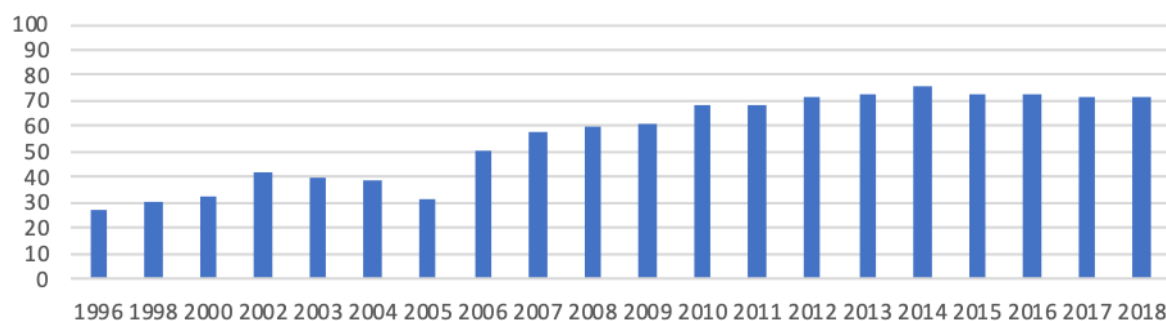
Context

Rwanda’s anticorruption record is especially remarkable given the inhospitable context at the start of reforms. Four years of civil war culminating in genocide in 1994 had left the state destroyed. Most civil servants had been killed or fled abroad. Government coffers were empty, and the genocidal government took the central bank reserves when it fled to Congo. The new civil servants, many of whom had returned from the diaspora, had limited experience with the state and its procedure. For months, they were paid only in kind, with flour and cooking oil. State collapse was paralleled with economic collapse. Between 1990 and 1994 GDP per capita had been halved, and 80 percent of the population lived below the official poverty line. Rwanda became the second poorest country in the world and had the shortest life expectancy (World Bank 2019a). So, the initial conditions were extremely conducive to corruption: endemic poverty, a hardly paid civil service, and destroyed state institutions.⁶

From these adverse initial conditions, the reduction in corruption in Rwanda over the ensuing two decades has been both fast and significant. By 2018, Rwanda ranked 48 (out of 180 countries) in control of corruption on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, placing it fourth on the continent, after Seychelles, Botswana, and Cabo Verde and representing a vast improvement from 121 in 2006 (Transparency International, 2019). Rwanda’s rank is on par with that of middle-income economies, and the country is a clear outlier given its development level. Rwanda has shown equally impressive improvement on Worldwide Governance Indicators control of corruption index (figure 2) (World Bank, 2019c). In 2019 the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index classified Rwanda as the 40th least corrupt country in the world (out of 126), making it the second least corrupt in Africa and the least corrupt low-income country (World Justice Project, 2019). According to the 2011 World Bank Enterprise Survey, firms in Rwanda were 3.4 times less likely to pay a bribe than firms in Sub-Saharan Africa and 4.8 times less likely to do so than firms in low-income countries (World Bank 2011). Perception indexes and surveys reflect a dramatic decrease of the incidence of corruption in Rwanda, especially between 2005 and 2011 (see figure 2). Corruption has since remained an illegitimate transgression of sanctioned behavior rather a core element of governance.

Figure 2: Rwanda’s performance on the control of corruption index, 1996–2018

Percentile rank among all countries



Source: Control of corruption, World Bank’s World Governance Indicators - Percentile rank among all countries, World Bank (2019c)

⁶ On Rwanda’s broader context and development trajectory since the genocide, see McDoom (2011) and World Bank (2019a, 2019b).

Corruption perception indexes, despite their limitations, and qualitative case studies all underline the success of the fight against corruption in Rwanda (Baez-Camargo et al. 2017); Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Sebudubudu, Khatib, and Bozzini 2017).⁷ One recent study goes as far as stating, “The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that petty corruption as a normalized practice has been eliminated in Rwanda” (Baez-Camargo and Gatwa, 2018): 26).⁸ Rwanda’s trajectory puts it on par with a limited number of countries that have substantially reduced corruption over the last 30–40 years, including Estonia, Georgia, and the Republic of Korea (Mungiu-Pippidi and Hartmann 2019). Only Georgia, an upper-middle-income country, reduced corruption faster than Rwanda between 1996 and 2018, as measured by the Worldwide Governance Indicators control of corruption index (World Bank, 2019c). The 2016 Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index, which assesses whether public servants and politicians are held accountable,⁹ found Rwanda to be at the level of upper-middle-income countries, ahead of Morocco, Tunisia, Vietnam, and China. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

Although this trajectory is impressive, it does not hide the fact that corruption still exists in Rwanda. Interviews with law enforcement officers, civil servants, businesspeople, and regular citizens still yield examples of recent encounters with corruption. Ethnographic studies, such as Rollason’s (2019) exploration of the moto-taxi industry in Kigali, reveal that corruption remains part of daily life, especially for individuals who interact with sectors prone to corruption, such as the traffic police. Some 18.5 percent of people surveyed for Transparency International Rwanda’s (2019a) Rwanda Bribery Index had encountered corruption in the last year, a significant value, especially considering the tendency to under-report corruption in a zero-tolerance context such as Rwanda. The point of this study is thus not to claim that corruption has disappeared in Rwanda. It is to analyze the drivers behind its significant decrease and its transformation from an accepted practice to one that is regarded as illegitimate and, once identified, one that is punished.

Rwanda’s progress in anticorruption went hand in hand with sustained growth and poverty reduction. GDP per capita has grown at 5.5 percent a year on average since 2006, second only on the continent to Ethiopia. The poverty rate fell from 77 percent in 2001 to 55.5 percent in 2017 (based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day) (World Bank, 2019b: 5). The state played an important role in Rwanda’s spectacular economic recovery. The government’s results-oriented approach to service delivery and zero-tolerance approach to corruption have made Rwanda a highly favored recipient of development assistance, which has been the main source of its development finance.

Rwanda’s growth model relies heavily on the public sector both in terms of large public investments—amounting to about 15 percent of GDP on average since 2013 (World Bank 2019b)—and in terms of resource allocation against the background of weak private sector and market development. A recent study explains that “the state is the main investor in Rwanda, which has one of the highest public-sector investment-to-GDP ratios in the world” (World Bank 2019b: xv).

⁷ Concerns about the accuracy of corruption perception studies are heightened in jurisdictions like Rwanda, where public information and transparency are limited. See Olken (2009) on corruption perceptions indexes. Pillay and Khan (2015) rightly point out that enforcement bodies in Rwanda lack statistical data on types, nature, and causes of corruption.

⁸ As is common in this field and because limited data and information, there are questions on possible grand corruption issues due to the nature of state-business relations (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; Bozzini 2014; Gökür 2012).

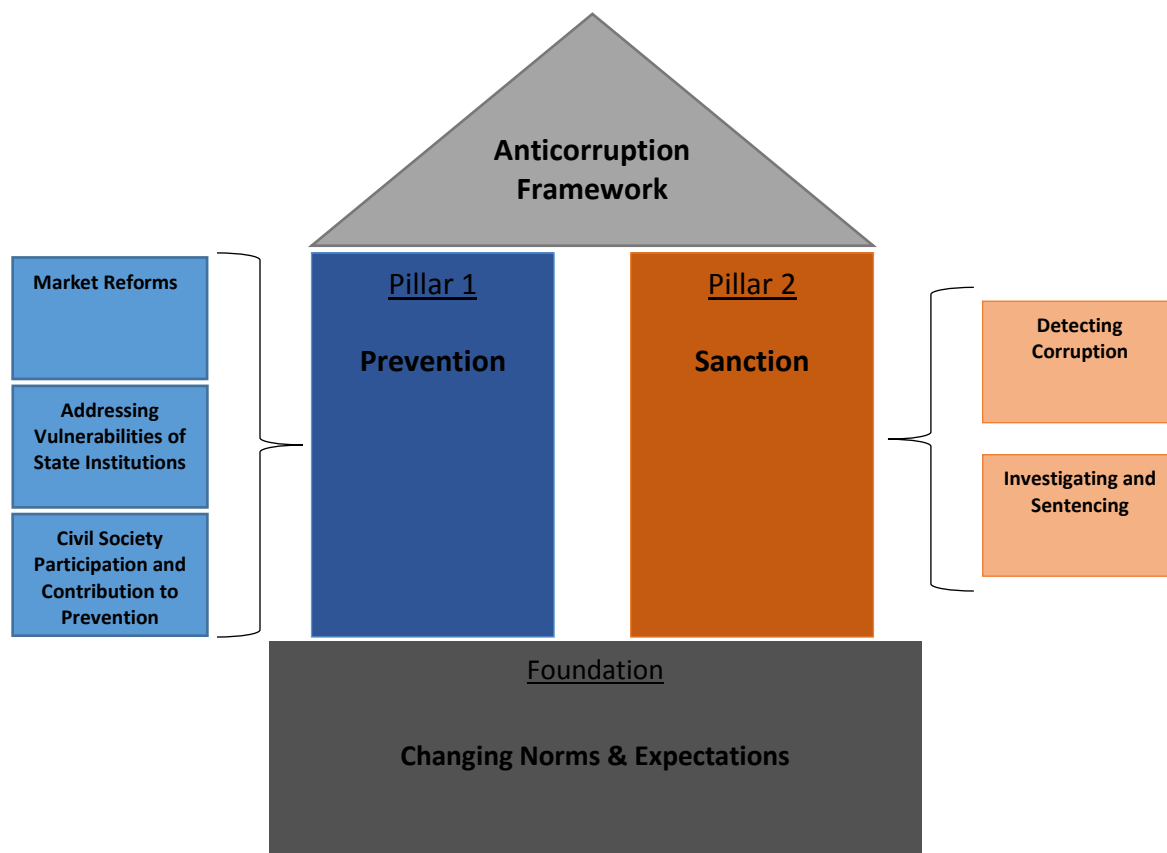
⁹ It also includes conflicts of interest and ethical misconduct.

Rwanda’s model emphasizes centralized resource allocation to achieve outcomes aligned with government priority preferences for sector and spatial development. “Signature” policies are recognizable, for example, in how the government promotes agriculture and enterprise sectors through proactive and interventionist policies that often involve state-owned enterprises. They are also obvious in the unique characteristics of Rwanda’s urbanization and public investments in infrastructure, which are geared toward achieving the government’s long-term vision rather than stemming directly from market signals and existing endowments and scarcities (World Bank 2019b). This role of the public sector sets Rwanda apart from other countries with a successful anticorruption track record.

What was done? Rwanda’s anticorruption efforts

Rwanda’s anticorruption efforts succeeded because they simultaneously tackled three dimensions: transforming social norms about corruption and expectations regarding acceptable official behavior (the foundation), preventing corruption from taking place (pillar 1), and sanctioning individuals and institutions for corrupt practices (pillar 2; figure 3). This approach made integrity an imperative while establishing a strong institutional and legal framework that was fit for purpose.

Figure 3: Rwanda’s holistic approach to addressing corruption



Foundation: Transforming social norms and expectations—zero tolerance and altering perceptions of corruption

The foundation of the government’s efforts has been a 20-year campaign to make corruption officially and socially unacceptable. To do so, the government has signaled that any corrupt acts, however small, will be punished and has tried to redefine the standards that citizens should expect from the state.

Signaling zero tolerance

The government has worked to shift expectations within the public sector and society about the consequences of corrupt behavior through a zero-tolerance approach. It signaled early on the credibility of its anticorruption commitment by showing that reforms were not mere window-dressing. This took the form of anticorruption pushes at key moments.

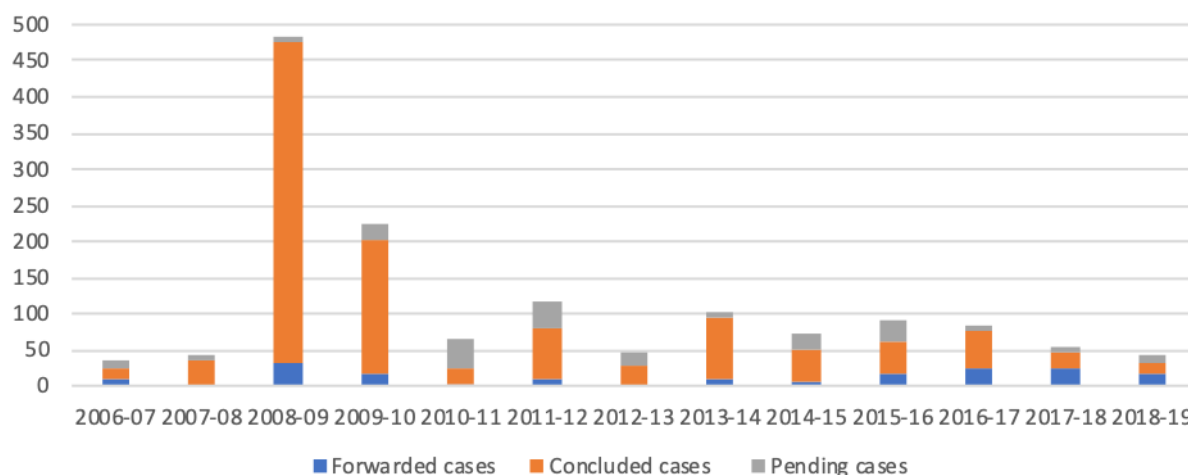
The creation of the main anticorruption and accountability institutions (Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Auditor General, and National Tender Board) in the late 1990s and early 2000s “began with a strong act: ministers [suspected of corruption] were fired, MPs [Members of Parliament] were indicted,” according to Marie-Immaculée Ingabire, chairperson of Transparency International Rwanda. These included the Minister for Social Affairs, the Minister at the Presidency, and the State Secretary for Agriculture in 1999. Accusations of corruption against the President at the time, Pasteur Bizimungu, and the Prime Minister were made, and the latter had to resign (Reyntjens 1999, 2000). As former Minister of Justice Tharcisse Karugarama summarized it, “The enforcement of these new laws and institutions was tricky. So, getting people locked up and prosecuted [in the early 2000s] was a signal.”

Another anticorruption push occurred in 2008–09 as a result of frustration among the president and some citizens that not enough was being done against corruption. Ingabire from Transparency International Rwanda explained that, as institutions were reinforced, “people adapted their strategy to be corrupt.” According to Theoneste Karenzi, former vice-chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, in the Cabinet “there was the realization that people were not punished adequately, and the period brought to the fore many issues. The President was frustrated and kept asking in his speech ‘why not enough is being done?’” In particular, the Office of the Auditor General was getting better, producing reports that were more credible and damning every year, but the consequences were limited for the people and institutions identified. “People started to say that the report of the OAG [Office of the Auditor General] was the routine, that it was useless: bad things happened, then people apologized, but that was it,” said Ingabire.

While zero-tolerance policies are often enforced only at the start of a government and fall by the wayside once the government becomes entrenched, Rwanda’s government reinvigorated its efforts, relying on the unfaltering support of the presidency (Chemouni 2017). This led to the arrest of several police and army officers, several ministries’ permanent secretaries, two directors general in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and 12 directors of prisons and the investigation or arrest of several dozen mid-level civil servants in various ministries (see, for example, Reyntjens

2009).¹⁰ The anticorruption push led to an increase in cases processed by the Office of the Ombudsman, but most cases in 2008–10 were concluded, meaning that they were insufficient evidence for prosecution (figure 4). Yet, the number of investigations opened constituted a strong signal about the commitment to holding people accountable for corrupt acts, even when those people were associated with the current government.

Figure 4: Cases of corruption processed by the Office of the Ombudsman, 2006–07 to 2018–19¹¹



Source: Ombudsman annual reports.

In Rwanda signaling of zero tolerance does not take place exclusively, or even primarily, in anticorruption campaigns. It has been achieved predominantly through repeated engagement by the President on the issue in national forums like the annual National Dialogue (Umushyikirano) and continuous communication to the public of arrests—for example, through the publication of a convict database (see below). Publicizing high-profile corruption cases is also central to the signaling strategy. As explained by a senior official in the justice sector, anticorruption in Rwanda pays special attention to people with power and responsibility in order to send a strong signal to the whole population. It is thus unsurprising that, as Colonel Jeannot Ruhunga, head of the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, summarizes it, “When we catch a big fish, we are very happy.”

Signaling of zero tolerance is also visible in the efforts of the police and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau to identify corruption in their own ranks. The Rwanda National Police’s Inspectorate of Police Services and Ethics established in 2013 includes an Anti-Corruption Directorate and an Ethics Center. It also has a toll-free number to report cases of corruption (Lamarque 2017). Many stories circulate in Rwanda about how the police identify corrupt officers. For example, several respondents (not from the police or the Investigation Bureau) asserted that the police use plainclothes officers to offer bribes and catch corrupt officers red-handed. Other respondents maintained that traffic officers are asked to leave any personal cash in their locker before their shift and can be searched after their shift for any cash on their person, which would result in their instant dismissal. While this

¹⁰ As explained above, this provided the conducive context that allowed the Office of the Ombudsman to expand its power of investigation.

¹¹ This figure solely reflects corruption cases handled by the Office of the Ombudsman, and does not capture those actions taken by the police, RIB, or the National Public Prosecution Authority.

could not be verified, it at least reveals the public perception that the police are committed to rooting out corruption in their own ranks. Lamarque’s (2017: 150) confirms this, stating that “junior officers in Rwanda did not have the reputation for personally profiting from their position. Corruption (*rushwa*) was so heavily stigmatised that the slightest suggestion, even inadvertent, of attempting to bribe a police officer carried inherent risks. As one respondent attested: ‘if you even show them money, they can arrest you.’” Between 2015 and 2017 at least 430 people were arrested after trying to bribe the police.¹²

The fight against corruption within the police translates in regular waves of arrests or dismissals (table 1). These actions do not seem restricted to junior police officers. For example, the dismissal of 198 officers in 2017 included a superintendent, four chief inspectors, 23 inspectors, 38 assistant inspectors, 65 noncommissioned officers, and 67 constables.¹³ The frequency of dismissals, rather than outright arrests, can be explained by the fact that neither the police nor the Rwanda Investigation Bureau hesitates to use administrative sanctions in order to ensure that officers are disciplined when the regular judicial process takes too long. Administrative sanctions still follow due process. For instance, the 2017 dismissals were approved by the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet.¹⁴

Table 1: A nonexhaustive list of police officer firings because of professional malpractice or gross misconduct (including corruption), 2006–18

Year	Action
2006	120 police officers fired for corruption ^a
2007	314 police officers fired for corruption ^a
2008	141 police officers fired for corruption ^a
2009	73 police officers fired for corruption ^a
2011	Police officers fired for corruption and other unethical conduct by Cabinet decision ^b
2012	48 police officers fired for corruption, 77 charged with corruption ^c
2013	49 police officers charged with corruption ^c
2014	74 senior police officers, including the two directors of intelligence in the Criminal Investigations Department, fired by presidential order ^d
2017	198 police officers fired ^e
2018	189 police officers fired ^d

a. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/12831>

b. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/31891>

c. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/67739>

d. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/rwanda/News/Rwanda-sacks-senior-police-officers-amid-corruption-allegations/1433218-2428434-h9m4u7z/index.html>

e. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/207738>

¹² <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/225187>; <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/204806>

¹³ <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/207738>

¹⁴ Ibid

Transforming citizen's expectations of the state

The government has also shifted citizens' expectations of the state by raising citizens' awareness of their rights and how the state should function toward citizens. Tito Rutaremara, the first Ombudsman, explains that this was one of the main drivers behind the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman: "The goal was to punish but especially teach people about their rights."

Teaching citizens about their rights was the goal of the 2012 decision that every government institution should adopt a service charter. Charters spell out the kinds of services citizens can expect and the timeline for receiving them.¹⁵ But charters were not envisioned solely as a customer care measure; they are also tools to enhance transparency and accountability in the interaction between citizens and the state. As explained by the Public Service Minister at the time, Anastase Murekezi, in 2012, service charters "will help curb many cases that have been persistent in the service sector, like corruption, because a person will now know when a service is provided. Many local leaders have a tendency of prolonging certain services looking for bribes."¹⁶ Service charters are displayed in administrative buildings and on governmental institutions websites.¹⁷ They emphasize that no gift is required to obtain a public service. For example, the charter of the immigration services states: "Help us help you: We expect that you [...] do not offer us gifts, money or other favours." The goal is to reduce the supply side of corruption by redefining citizens' expectation of the state.

Institutional reforms have been complemented by a systematic effort to change social norms around corruption. Sensitization in Rwanda is not solely about raising awareness or informing citizens of the law. It is embedded in a wider discursive strategy that seeks to profoundly alter how corruption is perceived socially. This was made necessary by the fact that in Rwanda—as in many countries—norms of impartiality in treating citizens can clash with a moral economy condoning a culture of gift giving to service providers or obligations to treat family members, friends, neighbors, and other members of one's social network preferentially (Baez-Camargo et al. 2017). Marie-Immaculée Ingabire, chairperson of Transparency International Rwanda, explained that, while these norms still exist today, they were very powerful in the early 2000s: "Rwandans did not understand what corruption was. It was totally normal to give something for a service. Favoritism was normal. I said once on the radio that favoritism was corruption; I was told I was crazy: How can you not help someone who is a friend, who is family? People practiced corruption without realizing it."

In addition to changing expectations of the state, the government has also sought to transform normative perceptions around corruption itself. The first step in the process is establishing a direct link between corruption and morality. To do so, the government has harnessed traditional values linked with honesty in the Rwandan culture and promoted them during *itorero*, civic education camps organized regularly for professional and social groups in society (students, nurses, drivers, public servants, diaspora members, and the like). Values such as *ubunyangamugayo* (integrity) are

¹⁵ In 2017 the Rwanda National Police adopted a charter spelling out the rights of those seeking police services, and in 2018 the Rwanda Investigation Bureau adopted a charter spelling out the obligations of officers to service seekers. Both agencies were assisted by Transparency International Rwanda.

¹⁶ <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/49557>

¹⁷ In addition, names and phone numbers of civil servants who provide services are often displayed on their office doors to foster their accountability towards citizens.

also exalted on a list of Rwandan traditional values displayed throughout the country, on a small cement stela in administrative districts and cells, and on the walls of some police stations (Lamarque, 2017).

Finally, the government has widely used “naming and shaming.” The most spectacular manifestation of this strategy is the list of individuals convicted for corruption that, by law, the Office of the Ombudsman has to publish on its website and in newspapers every quarter.¹⁸ In addition to name, sex, and profession, the list includes their date of birth, their parents’ names, and their area of residence—to ensure that the community can be made aware of their corrupt deeds—as well as the court that sentenced them, the crime they committed, and their sentence. The lists reveal the severity of punishments. For example, among the 109 people convicted between August 2018 and January 2019, a driver “giving an illegal benefit of 2,000 RWF” (2.14 USD) was sentenced to 2.5 years imprisonment and received a fine of 10,000 RWF (10.7 USD). A farmer “giving an illegal benefit of 10,000 RWF” was sentenced to four years in prison and received a fine of 50,000 RWF (53.5 USD).¹⁹ Besides the convict list, naming and shaming also take the form of public arrests of officials for corruption, which are featured in the media, as mentioned above. The Ministry of Public Servants and Labour also publishes a list of civil servants who were involved in mismanagement, embezzlement, and corruption, while the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority publishes the names of companies blacklisted for corruption.

Given the importance of sound public financial management, being singled out in government audits also has a humiliating effect on officials. As Ingabire of Transparency International Rwanda explained, “The OAG report is now a big thing; it is really name and shame for the government.” This is reinforced by the role of the Public Accounts Committee, which has been increasingly assertive in highlighting government shortfalls. The committee seems as much about ensuring governmental accountability as about making it visible. Its public sessions are sometimes broadcast live on radio or national television and can be quite spectacular. In October 2014, after repeated attacks from Members of Parliament, the National University of Rwanda’s vice rector for administration and finance broke down before the committee. As a consequence, some officials have regularly tried to avoid the unpleasant exercise and the committee’s sessions are avidly followed by the press (Chemouni 2017).

Official discourses thus depict corruption not only as a reprehensible act but also as an evil subsuming many other problems. This is epitomized by the Assistant Commissioner of Police’s comments to the press in 2015 following a series of corruption-related arrests: he depicted corruption as a “violation of human rights,” as a “vice [that] fuels injustice, inequality and deprives people of their right to a certain free service and slows down or affects service delivery,” and as something that “discourages donors and destroys investor confidence, strangling development, progress and prosperity.”²⁰ Overall, by highlighting what citizens should expect from the state, by naming and shaming those who go against those expectations, and by tying anticorruption to a set

¹⁸ Due to resource constraints, the list is published every year on average.

¹⁹ http://ombudsman.gov.rw/IMG/pdf/persons_definitively_convicted_for_corruption_from_august_2018_to_january_2019.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/204806>

of moral values, the government makes corruption not only an illegal deed but also a serious moral failing .

These efforts have paid off, with numerous examples of a shift in norms and standards around corruption. An official in the Office of the Ombudsman explains that “before, when someone was corrupt, people said ‘Wow, thumbs up!’ Now they say ‘He is embezzling money that constructs our schools.’” As Deputy Prosecutor General Angélique Habyarimana said, “People now know that corruption is taboo.” As a businessman in Kigali summarized, “Here, if you are corrupt people wonder ‘what’s wrong with this guy?’.”

Efforts to change norms thus seem to have reversed the relationship between social network and corruption from an instrument for accessing preferential treatment to a peer mechanism for upholding anticorruption norms. This echoes the research of Baez-Camargo et al. (2017: 29) on corruption in the health sector in Rwanda, which suggests “strongly held values based on notions of reciprocity can take on a different meaning when an individual’s (corrupt) action has negative consequences for the group. Reciprocity in this context is transformed into a motivation that keeps people from hurting each other by avoiding illegal actions whereby a culprit in a crime of corruption would bring shame to the family and the community.”

Pillar 1: Prevention

While changing norms and standards formed the foundation for Rwanda’s anticorruption effort, the fight against corruption has been pursued primarily through a balanced two-pillar strategy to prevent corruption from taking place and to sanction public officials who engage in corrupt practices.

Prevention has been a three-pronged effort in Rwanda. It consists of pursuing market reforms, reducing the vulnerability of state institutions, and sensitizing the community to corruption issues.

Pursuing market reforms

As Rwanda achieved peace and security in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the government embarked on so-called first-generation reforms to strengthen the foundation of the market economy and improve the business environment. Among key reforms were the liberalization of trade and exchange regimes, which removed vast price distortions and the resulting incentives and opportunities for corruption. Interest rate controls were removed in 1996; a flexible exchange rate regime was then introduced, and most limitations on foreign exchange, including for import and export operations, were eliminated. Establishing a regulatory agency for utilities, the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority in 2001, was a major step toward improving service delivery and strengthening utilities’ financial performance while introducing transparent tariff-setting mechanisms and prioritizing cost-recovery by reducing losses caused by mismanagement and corruption.

The extensive privatization of state enterprises in the banking and nonbanking sectors in the early 2000s also demonstrated the government’s intention to reduce the state’s role in the economy and create a space for the private sector to drive investment and growth. In 2007 the government started using the Doing Business report to identify and learn from good practices in business

regulation and to monitor improvement (Traore et al. 2013). The Doing Business Steering Committee, bringing together representatives from various ministries, was created in early 2009 to lead the reform efforts at the cabinet level. Below the steering committee a technical task force comprising six working groups focusing on business entry, licensing reform, legislative changes, taxes and trade logistics, construction permits, and property registration was created (box 1). Improvements in registering property, starting a business, getting credit, and paying taxes were impressive (figure 5), and in 2020 Rwanda ranked 38th out of 190 countries, making it the second-best performer in Sub-Saharan Africa after Mauritius.²¹ Streamlining administrative procedures reduced the opportunity for corruption as “greasing administrative wheels” became less necessary.

Box 1: Key reforms that boosted Rwanda’s global Doing Business ranking

Rwanda ranks in the top 40 for five of ten Doing Business’s dimensions—and in the top 5 for two of those dimensions, registering property and getting credit. Protecting minority investors, trading across borders, and dealing with construction permits remain Rwanda’s weaknesses. These are linked to the country’s nascent capital markets and small stock exchange, locational disadvantages affecting transport costs, and rigid application of Kigali’s master plan.

Rwanda’s journey toward improving its Doing Business ranking began in 2005, when the country ranked 139th. Several elements of a successful reform program were present, including political commitment at the highest level and a broadly appropriate set of macroeconomic policies that created room in the budget to invest in reform and gained strong support from the donor community. Since 2006 Rwanda has implemented 26 major reforms for improving its investment climate.

Starting a business is a key dimension in which Rwanda has made major progress. In 2006 hundreds of new notaries were introduced, making it faster to start a business. Before, only one notary was available countrywide, and the high volume of requests meant a long wait to register a new business. Since an overhaul of the company law in 2009, entrepreneurs no longer need to use a notary; they can use standard forms instead. An online system for publishing registration notices has replaced the requirement for physical publication. And a new one-stop shop has streamlined business registration by reducing the number of interactions required from nine to two. The time required to start a business fell from 18 days in 2004 to 3 days in 2012, and the cost from 235 percent of income per capita to four percent.

A series of changes have also improved conditions for getting credit. In 2005 the public credit registry expanded its database of financial institutions and improved the content of its credit reporting system. In 2009 a new secured transactions law was introduced, allowing a wider range of assets to be used as collateral and permitting out-of-court enforcement proceedings. In 2010 the legislature passed a law regulating the distribution of information from credit bureaus. This led to the country’s first private credit bureau, which provides wider coverage than the public registry because it includes information from utilities. In December 2011 the public registry stopped issuing

²¹ While progress have been tangible, all is of course not perfect. Rwanda ranks 114th out of 190 countries in protecting minority investors. And while the Rwanda Revenue Authority has improved communication with private companies using information technology, lack of predictability due to frequent legal changes and imprecise interpretation of the law remains a significant issue in the relationship between the state and the private sector (World Bank 2018a).

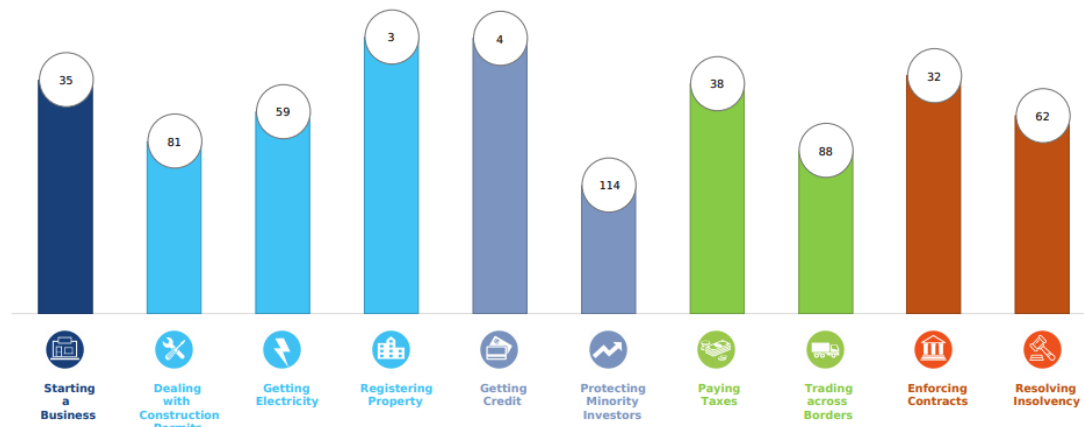
credit reports, and now only the private bureau shares credit information. The public registry still collects information from regulated financial institutions but only for supervisory purposes.

Rwanda has also made it easier to transfer property. In 2008 Rwanda eliminated mortgage registration fees and shifted from a 6 percent transfer tax to a flat rate. In 2010 the government decentralized the Office of the Registrar and Land Titles and created five branches throughout the country, purging the backlog of cases in Kigali. It also introduced strict time limits for some procedures, including issuing tax clearance certificates, the lengthiest part of the process. As a result, the number of days needed for property registration has dropped from 371 to 7, and the cost has dropped from around 10 percent of income per capita to 0.1 percent.

Since 2005 the government has greatly strengthened contract enforcement by establishing more commercial courts and creating the Business Law Reform Cell, whose review of 14 commercial laws proved crucial in the approval of important legal reforms. The government further enhanced the court system in 2008 by creating lower commercial courts. Consistent with its emphasis on bringing in the skills and expertise needed to ensure the success of the reform process, the government also hired non-Rwandan expatriate judges to help local judges run the new commercial courts during the first three years of operation. Moreover, the Capacity Strengthening Program and the Institute for Legal Practice are training judges, legal officers, and lawyers to work in a mixed legal system, where the civil law tradition dominates but common law and customary law tendencies are also evident.

Source: Traore et al. 2013.

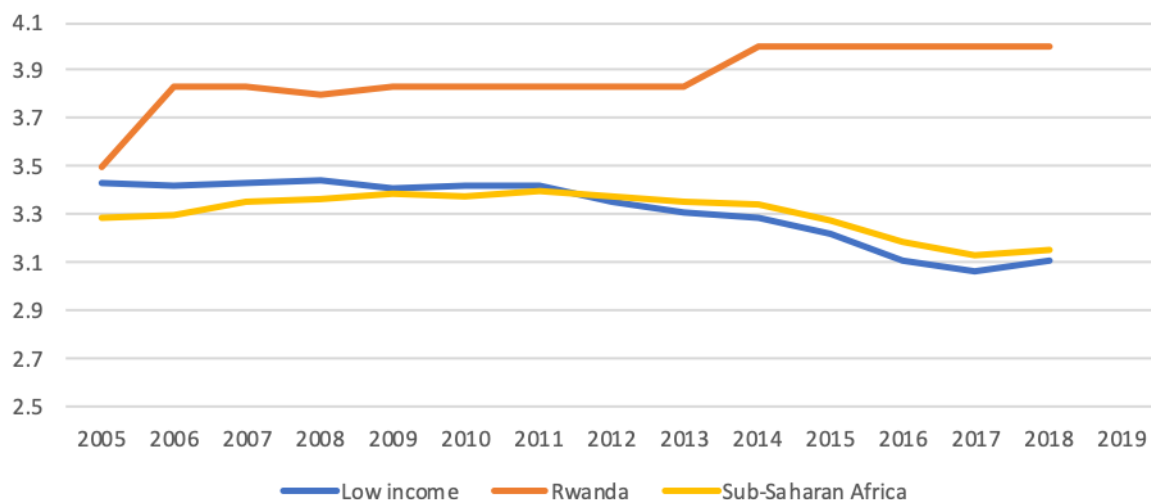
Figure 5: Rwanda's ranking among 190 countries in Doing Business dimensions, 2020



Source: World Bank Doing Business ranking (World Bank, 2020).

Market reforms have been accompanied by prudent macroeconomic management. Inflation has been kept under control, and the exchange rate has been stable, thanks to careful management of foreign exchange reserves and to sheltering of public expenditure from the impact of electoral cycles (figure 6); Chemouni 2019).

Figure 6: Country Policy and Institutional Assessment scores in the economic management cluster for Rwanda, low-income countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa, 2005–19 (1, low, to 6, high)



Source: World Bank (2019d).

The role of the state remains important in the economy, going beyond regulations and service delivery. The wave of privatization in the 2000s was followed by the establishment of new state-owned enterprises and quasi-public companies, including some owned by the military in late 2000s. The authorities promoted this as part of an overall enterprise development strategy to accelerate economic modernization and promote private investment (Behuria 2012). Ambitious transformation objectives led to the state’s growing role in the economy in the following decade, as prioritization of modern sectors where Rwanda had no prior revealed advantages—such as air transportation, conference tourism, and financial services—placed a premium on nonprice resource allocation steered by the government (Behuria and Goodfellow 2019). The state continues to play a dominant role in the economy through state-owned enterprises, despite favorable Doing Business indicators, which is explained by the government’s ambitious plans for enterprise development, as well as the need to centralize the rent for allocation of investment resources toward achieving these ambitious objectives. But there is no strong evidence to suggest that the growing role of the state has weakened anticorruption momentum, as state-linked actors seem to operate under the strong accountability framework (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012).

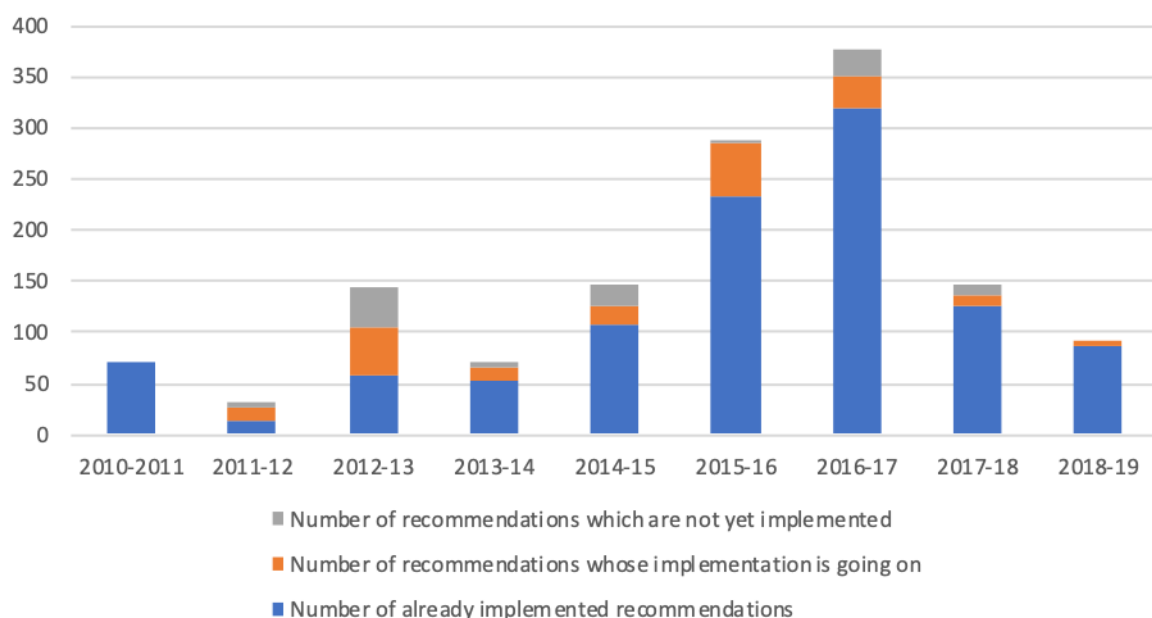
Reducing the vulnerability of state institutions

Procedures to identify and address corruption vulnerabilities within the state—and the development of institutional competencies and capacities to undertake those procedures— have helped prevent corruption. The Office of the Ombudsman has been at the forefront of this effort. It was created in 2003 to fight injustice, due to the perception that the country’s cycle of violence was rooted in injustice that had been expressed and promoted by a deeply corrupt state leadership. The first Ombudsman, Tito Rutaremara, explained, “The idea of an Ombudsman [...] came [as a reaction to] the genocide. People asked for an office to fight injustice [...] to protect them against the state.” The government determined that the Swedish model of ombudsman most closely approximated this idea of fighting injustice. However, given the perceived relationship among injustice, corruption, and

bad leadership, Rwanda’s Office of the Ombudsman had a unique mandate from the start, combining the “classic” role of mediator between the state and citizens, the role of an anticorruption agency, and an asset declaration monitoring agency.

The main missions of the Ombudsman’s Preventing Corruption and Related Offences Unit are analyzing and reducing corruption risks in the state. The unit conducts in-depth audits of the internal controls of governmental institutions and provides recommendations to decrease the likelihood of corruption. Robust mechanisms ensure that those recommendations are taken seriously. The Office of the Ombudsman monitors the response to its instructions (figure 7). Its annual report to Parliament details the progress in implementing its recommendations and singles out institutions that have performed poorly. When a recommendation is not followed, Members of Parliament can summon an institution for explanation, and the Office of the Ombudsman can request administrative sanctions by the Prime Minister’s Office against the civil servants responsible.

Figure 7: Implementation status of Office of the Ombudsman recommendations, 2010–11 to 2018–19



Note: Status refers to recommendations made the previous year
 Source: Office of the Ombudsman’s annual report.

The Office of the Ombudsman’s risk analysis is guided by a broad range of public information sources. The Preventing Corruption and Related Offences Unit uses Office of the Auditor General annual reports, citizen complaints, media reports, and tips from informants to target specific sectors (such as sport as in 2013 or education as in 2019) or geographic areas (such as a given province) deemed particularly vulnerable to corruption.

The Office of the Auditor General is also involved in preventing corruption by auditing governmental fiduciary systems and issuing recommendations in its annual report. The recommendations are also closely monitored by Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee, which reviews their implementation status and can conduct fieldwork to verify the status and summon

officials to explain in public sessions (see below). Lack of implementation can result in administrative sanctions for the officials involved. At the local level, districts are also incentivized to take the Office of the Auditor General report seriously because their performance contracts (or *imihigo*), signed with the President of the Republic, include a target on the percentage of Auditor General recommendations implemented.

Vulnerabilities have also been reduced by a set of rules on conduct by state officials. The rules are included in the Leadership Code of Conduct, which aims to uphold the standards of leaders and reduce possibilities of corruption. The rules prohibit leaders from engaging in public tendering or in commercial activity and require them to clear overdue debt and declare any gift received worth more than 50,000 RWF (gifts worth more than 100,000 RWF are not allowed). The Office of the Ombudsman regularly briefs new leaders on the code to ensure compliance and sensitizes all new Members of Parliament. Until 2019, enforcement was mainly through verification of a sample of questionnaires that leaders filled out each year with information on their commercial activities, debts, and the like. Questionnaires were also analyzed to check whether respondent's activities were incompatible with their official role or prohibited. Since then, the Office of the Ombudsman has adopted a targeted approach focusing on particular leadership problems. For example, in 2019 the office tackled public leaders keeping a position of Director General in a company by cross-checking the list of leaders with the company list from the Rwandan Development Board, which registers companies. It also reviewed the list of individuals who had benefited from a state loan for education but not reimbursed it and asked leaders on the list to reimburse the state. Finally, the Office of the Ombudsman also sensitizes the population about the Leadership Code of Conduct so that, as a senior official explained, "they know how a leader should behave and can denounce them if needed."

Sensitizing the community

The Rwanda National Police, the Rwanda Bureau of Investigation, Transparency International Rwanda, MPs from the African Parliamentarians Network against Corruption (APNAC), and the Office of the Ombudsman are involved in preventing corruption through sensitization campaigns. These institutions have creatively used multiple channels to develop a sensitized citizenry. It is hard for Rwandan citizens to escape the anticorruption message. It is circulated through the national anticorruption campaign organized every year around International Anticorruption Day, December 9, and African Anticorruption Day, July 11, and typically includes outreach from the village to the national level, focus groups with young people, a conference with the Private Sector Federation, Women's Anticorruption Day, Rwanda Investigation Bureau's Anticorruption Day, Rwanda National Police's Anticorruption Day, anticorruption football matches, and radio talk shows.²² In addition, institutions deliver targeted messages throughout the year, through youth organizations, the private sector federation, trainings about procurement organized by the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority, and other ad hoc events. The Office of the Ombudsman also organizes anticorruption clubs in schools and cooperates with churches for sensitization around religious events. For wider communication the Office can also harness the effective decentralization of the state and its dense local government apparatuses (Chemouni 2014). Messages that need to be circulated nationally can,

²² For example, in 2015, anticorruption talk shows aired on 17 private radio stations during the annual anticorruption week: <https://ombudsman.gov.rw/en/?Click-here-for-the-full-program-of-the-anti-corruption-week>.

for example, be transmitted to the Ministry of Local Government, which then to all local authorities to be read after the monthly communal work (*umuganda*) across the country and a village roundtable program (*umugoroba w'ababyeyi*).

Opportunities for communities and citizens to actively monitor and prevent corruption have been restricted. Limits on the availability of public information relating to policies, budgets, and spending have constrained opportunities for nongovernmental groups to track misspending and misappropriation of funds. The weakness of independent journalism in the country further limits the ability of such groups to uncover improper behavior and press for change. To date, while citizens have been the recipients of government messages about corruption, their potential to serve as agents of change demanding better governance and greater integrity has been marginalized, if not suppressed.

Pillar 2: Sanctions

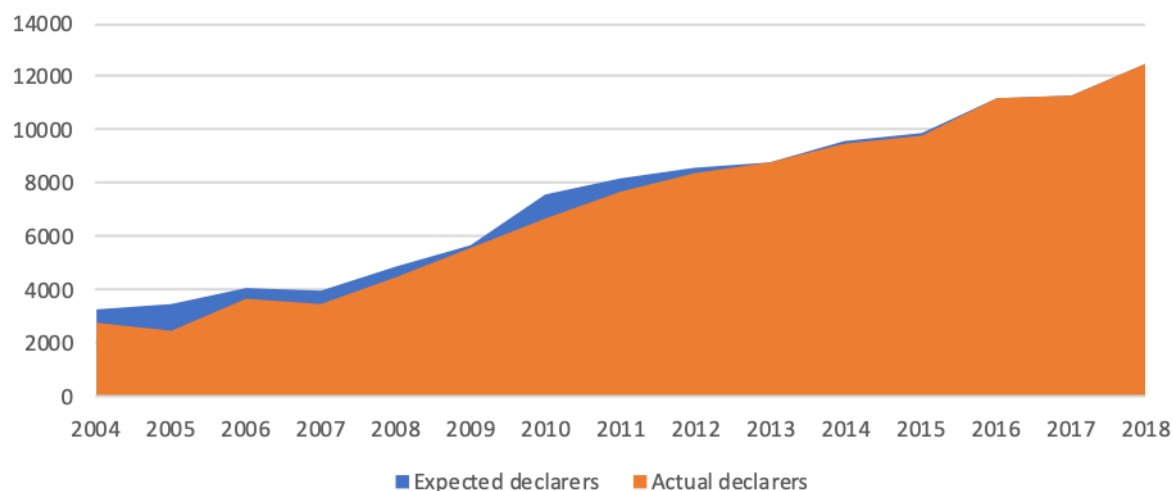
The second pillar of Rwanda's anticorruption efforts involves sanctioning individuals who engage in corrupt activities. Rwanda has invested considerable resources in establishing core competencies across the entire sanctioning process, from detecting corrupt acts to investigating and prosecuting misbehavior and recovering the proceeds of crime.

Detecting corruption

Rwanda has created strong institutional mechanisms to detect corruption. This is not the work of one agency. The main ones involved in detection are the Office of the Ombudsman and the Rwandan Investigation Bureau. Around 80 percent of corruption cases detected by the Office of the Ombudsman originate from citizen complaints transmitted by phone, through the internet, or in person, and around 15 percent of cases come from analysis of asset declarations made to the office.

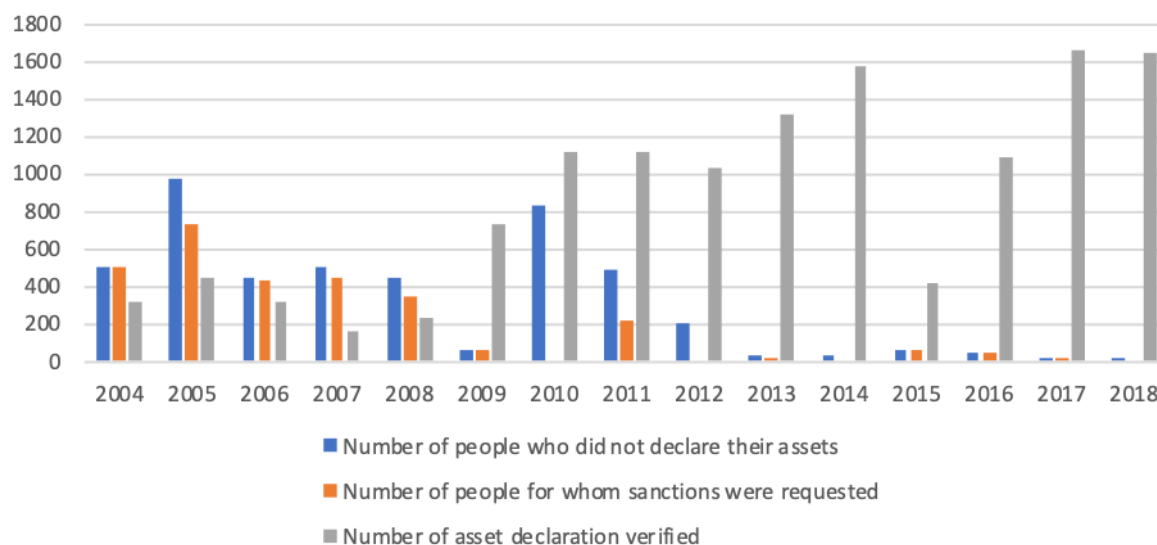
Detection is supported by officials' assets declaration, a constitutional duty since 2003 for politicians, top civil servants, and all officials who manage money. The number of officials that have to declare their assets has been legally increased over time to about 12,000. This has been paralleled by an increase in compliance (figure 8). Since 2003 the declaration process has been greatly improved through computerization. Compliance is ensured by the systematic tracking down of individuals who have failed to declare their assets. Between 2005 and 2010 individuals who failed to report assets had their names regularly published in the press. Failure to declare assets also exposes officials to a range of sanctions, including a warning letter, an official reprimand, a three-month suspension, or a salary deduction. For example, in 2016–17 the 53 individuals who did not submit their declaration on time had 25 percent of their monthly salary deducted and were compelled to account for their assets. As compliance has improved, sanctions have become less and less necessary (figure 9).

Figure 8: Number of expected and actual declarers of assets, 2004–18



Source: Office of the Ombudsman’s annual report.

Figure 9: Number of officials failing to declare their assets, number of sanctions requested, and number of declarations verified, 2004–18



Source: Office of the Ombudsman’s annual report.

In parallel, the capacity to verify declarations has also increased (see figure 9). The Office of the Ombudsman now samples about 15 percent of declarations following a risk-based approach. It targets officials in institutions that have received a poor audit from the Office of the Auditor General and that manage large sums of money. It also tracks institutions that have not been subject to verification within the past few years to ensure that no one escapes its purview. Checks for substantial variation in officials’ revenues and assets from one year to the other are made automatically. The Office of the Ombudsman plans to interface its system with the databases of the Rwandan Revenue Authority and of the Rwanda Land Use and Management Authority, which manages land titles, to automatically corroborate officials’ declaration and state records.

The Rwanda National Police and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau—the chief law enforcement agencies—are the other main organizations involved in detecting corruption. Institutions involved in scrutinizing public finances also play a role in detecting corrupt acts. For example, the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority forwards murky procurement cases to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau about five times a year, according to the authority’s director general. Similarly, corruption cases spotted by the Office of the Auditor General are systematically forwarded for investigation.

Detection can rely on a solid legal framework. A whistleblower protection law was introduced in 2012 and updated in 2017 to protect whistleblowers against retaliatory, discriminatory, and disciplinary actions.²³ The 2018 anticorruption law also took a bold step in incentivizing the denunciation of corruption.²⁴ Deputy Prosecutor General Angelique Habyarimana explains that a person who gives or takes a bribe will not face prosecution if he or she denounces the corrupt act before any investigation is open: “The idea is to recover funds and create suspicion among corrupt people.” Investigation and prosecution of corruption cases was also encouraged in 2018 when corruption was designated as a felony and imprescriptible crime, which enabled corrupt acts to be prosecuted regardless of how long ago they had been committed.

Investigating and sentencing

As with detection, investigation of corrupt cases has been modified and strengthened over time. It now is a task shared by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau and the Office of the Ombudsman. The latter has greatly reinforced its investigative power since its creation. The investigation process more generally epitomizes the pragmatic approach of the government toward corruption, not hesitating to quickly adapt institutions when bottlenecks are identified. The Office of the Ombudsman’s role in investigation has evolved since its creation. The Office originally focused predominantly on prevention, as only three officials had investigative power.²⁵ However, this proved problematic, as work was confined to identifying cases and forwarding them to the police and prosecution for investigation. As remembered by Tito Rutaremara, the first Ombudsman, “We were very frustrated to send cases to the prosecution and the person [under investigation] would get nothing, even in appeal.”

Corruption in the police and prosecution, and their lack of capacity, prevented effective investigation. Cases were also regularly leaked to the press, allowing suspects to hide evidence. Former Ombudsman Rutaremara advocated for investigation power for his office’s agents in the late 2000s to eliminate this problem. While this reform was initially resisted, according to a senior official in the Office of the Ombudsman (Chemouni 2017: 27), it benefited from “the blessing of the president,” who clearly saw the benefits. It was also helped by the general frustration in 2008 regarding the lack of sentencing of corrupt officials that had kickstarted an anticorruption campaign that year (see below). Investigation power was extended to the Office of the Ombudsman in 2009,²⁶

²³ Law n° 35/2012 of 19/09/2012 and Law N° 44 bis/2017 of 06/09/2017 relating to the protection of whistleblowers.

²⁴ Law n°54/2018 of 13/08/2018 on fighting against corruption.

²⁵ The ombudsman and its deputies.

²⁶ Ministerial Order N° 67 of 05/5/2009 granting judicial police powers to the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman.

and a new department dedicated to fighting corruption, the Special Investigation on Corruption Unit, was created the following year.²⁷

The Office of the Ombudsman is solely responsible for deciding which cases it pursues, in order to ensure its independence. Investigations can be conducted jointly with the Rwanda Investigation Bureau when each institution has independently started its own investigation.²⁸ If the Office of the Ombudsman does not have the capacity to process a case, it can refer it to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau. The law allows these institutions to resort to a range of investigative instruments, including wiretapping, rewarding informants, and lifting professional secrecy if it is an obstacle to investigation. The Rwanda Investigation Bureau can also embed undercover officers to catch corrupt citizens red-handed.

Prosecution and sentencing have also adapted to the specificity of the anticorruption fight. Since 2018, power of prosecution for corruption cases is shared between the Rwandan National Public Prosecution Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman. The latter gained did not gain this power until 2013. The dynamics behind this evolution and the 2009 reform granting investigative power to the Office of the Ombudsman agents are largely similar (Chemouni 2017): a response to bottlenecks in anticorruption efforts. While investigation had improved, prosecution became the weak link. Prosecutors did not always have the expertise to understand corruption cases, which sometimes require strong accounting skills. More important, it was suspected that some magistrates were easily bribed by suspects, which regularly jeopardized prosecution. To address the issue, the Office of the Ombudsman advocated for internalizing prosecution to streamline its work, ensure the independence of the process, and limit interference. Despite resistance from a judiciary sector reluctant to accept fragmentation of prosecutorial power, the reform was easily passed in 2013 thanks to the support of the Office of the President and of Members of Parliament, who had regularly been denouncing the backlog of corruption cases.

Sentencing for corruption cases has greatly improved over the years. First, the internalization of prosecution in the Office of the Ombudsman seems to have boosted the conviction rate to above 80 percent,²⁹ comparable to the National Public Prosecution Agency conviction rate for all crimes. In addition, sentencing has been improved by the 2018 creation of a special chamber of judges for economic crime. Finally, sentencing has been eased by a legal framework that reflects the country's zero-tolerance approach. The new anticorruption law requires a minimum sentence for all corruption crimes.³⁰ For example, soliciting or offering a bribe results in a minimum sentence of 5 years (article 4). The minimum sentences are harsher for judiciary staff (7 years) and judges (10 years; article 5). Finally, the 2018 law has expanded the definition of corruption to include embezzlement and abuse of functions. These acts have always been illegal but are now subject to the harsher sentencing framework for corruption crimes.

Sanctions have also translated to efforts to recover assets from individuals who engage in corruption. In the early 2010s institutions became increasingly effective at identifying and punishing corruption but remained weak in correcting the financial damages created for the state. For

²⁷ Prime Minister's Order No. 18/03 of 2010 establishing a new structure for the Office of the Ombudsman.

²⁸ Otherwise, the first institution to receive the case is in charge.

²⁹ As of 2018–19. Source: Private communication, Office of the Ombudsman.

³⁰ Law n°54/2018 of 13/08/2018 on fighting against corruption.

example, the statute of limitations for corruption-related crimes was 5 years. This allowed corrupt individuals to stash their ill-gained money away while in prison to enjoy it after their release. As Clément Musangabware, former Deputy Ombudsman in Charge of Preventing and Fighting Corruption, explained, many people simply vanished abroad for a while: “You just had to cross the border with the money, wait for five years, and come back. We had at least 10 cases like this the previous year.” Various stakeholders, including the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Public Prosecution Agency, and Transparency International Rwanda advocated for closing these loopholes.

A law to recover corruption-related assets was passed in 2015.³¹ It authorized the seizure, confiscation, and management of corruption-related assets and set the framework for cooperation on asset recovery between Rwanda and foreign states. The 2018 anticorruption law excluded corruption crimes from the statute of limitations, ensuring that no one in prison can enjoy money illegally obtained after their release. Convicted individuals must not only return the embezzled assets but also pay a fine of three to five times their value (article 10). Finally, the country adopted early on an anti-money laundering law in 2008, updated in 2018 and in 2020.³²

While asset recovery has greatly improved over the last year, work remains. Issues include difficulty coordinating between the Minister of justice and the National Public Prosecution Agency (which are both involved in asset recovery), lack of resources (for example, only two state attorneys are in charge of asset recovery), difficulty tracking all cases that require asset recovery, and lack of harmonization of some laws. This also explains why the overall rate of asset recovery remains quite low, at 11.3 percent over 2013–17 (Transparency International Rwanda 2019b).

Why does Rwanda stand apart?

Rwanda’s success in confronting administrative corruption is a result of the specific acts that it has taken combined with other elements that have shaped how the anticorruption effort has been operationalized. This section highlights three factors that have impacted how anticorruption has been pursued: the leadership of reform, the coordination of engagement, and complementary investments in building state capacity.

Leadership of reform

Leadership has been a crucial feature of the Rwandan experience. It took the form of a series of key practices instrumental in creating change.

Presidential leadership was central in fostering an enabling environment for reforms. The president was instrumental in providing and protecting the political space for institutions to

³¹ Law n° 42/2014 of 27/01/2015 governing recovery of offense-related assets; Law n°75/2019 of 29/01/2020 on prevention and punishment of money laundering, financing of terrorism and financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

³² Law n° 47/2008 of 09/09/2008 on prevention and penalizing the crime of money laundering and financing terrorism and Law n° N° 69/2018 of 31/08/2018 on prevention and punishment of money laundering and terrorism financing.

innovate. This was visible in his support of the Office of the Ombudsman when it sought to address bottlenecks in the fight against corruption despite the resistance of other state organizations.

Second, leadership also instilled a common understanding that bypassing formal rules governing anticorruption was not an option. The president was pivotal in this process. Many informants emphasized that political pressure and intimidation have generally been low because they are perceived as futile. For example, going to the president to protest about an investigation from the Office of the Ombudsman would not help one's case. As the first Ombudsman, Tito Rutaremara, explained, "He would just say, 'The Office of the Ombudsman is doing its job. What do you want me to say?'" Rather, going to the president came to be seen as a dangerous exercise that could backfire, especially for senior officials. In the case of Rwanda Investigation Bureau, Colonel Jeannot Ruhunga explained, "We are protected. When we catch someone small, then we get some calls of people trying to ask for clemency, telling us about their financial difficulties, etc. When it is a big fish, nothing. People know that it is serious." Theoneste Karenzi, the former Vice-Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee gives a similar explanation about the committee's ability to hold officials accountable: "We are not beating around the bush because we know we have some backing. We can ride the political will." Leaders of institutions also played an important role in fostering such an understanding of the importance of due process and accountability. Employees regularly emphasized that they were able to do their job because they could count on the backing of their boss when facing resistance from an investigated official.

The point here is not that the president is behind every investigation or even is informed about all of them, but merely that efforts to avoid investigation through personal appeals have been eliminated by the steadfast support of the president and institution heads for the anticorruption process. A senior official in the Office of the Ombudsman summarized this aptly: "Informally, the ombudsman can contact the president. He rarely does it, I think, but this gives us protection." The anticorruption "pushes" around 2000 and 2008 were also instrumental in creating this shared expectation. For example, during the 2008–09 anticorruption campaign, General Prosecutor Martin Ngoga declared that the president "continued to urge him to follow corruption wherever it led" and that "with this high degree of presidential support, [he] and his prosecutors now act[ed] with greater confidence in their investigations" (Chemouni 2017: 27). For Colonel Jeannot Ruhunga, "Leadership matters because we are not intimidated. It is a big difference when we talk to people from some countries and they say that, in their investigation, they cannot touch this or that."

Third, leadership has been crucial in promoting a culture of coordination and performance in institutions addressing corruption. The president played a significant role, regularly complaining that institutions were not working together enough. Leaders of state institutions, such as the Auditor General and the Ombudsman, have also played a critical role by building coalitions for change. As mentioned, two auditors general, Evelyn Rutagwenda (2004–11) and Obadiah Biraro, have been instrumental in advocating for and coordinating the professionalization of accountants in Rwanda (Chemouni 2017). They also built a coalition in Parliament for the creation of the Public Accounts Committee in 2011. Ombudsman Tito Rutaremara's leadership was key in expanding the power of that office in 2009.

Fourth, leading by example has been an important tool in changing incentives and norms. This includes the president's visit to the Office of the Ombudsman to submit his asset declaration. But

exemplary leadership is not restricted to him—it is a norm the government is trying to instill in the whole state apparatus and beyond.

The 2018 anticorruption law provides that individuals in position of leadership in any organization (public or private) committing corruption are automatically liable to the maximum penalty. It includes a series of rules to uphold the standards of leaders and reduce possibilities of corruption. The rules prohibit leaders from engaging in public tendering or in commercial activity and require them to clear overdue debt and declare any gift received worth more than 50,000 RWF (gifts worth more than 100,000 RWF are not allowed). The Office of the Ombudsman regularly briefs new leaders on the code to ensure compliance and sensitizes all new Members of Parliament.

Until 2019, enforcement of the Leadership Code of Conduct was mainly through verification of a sample of questionnaires that leaders filled out each year with information on their commercial activities, debts, and the like. Since then, the Office of the Ombudsman has adopted a targeted approach focusing on a particular leadership issue. For example, in 2019-2020 the Office tackled public leaders holding a position of director in a company by cross-checking the list of leaders with the company list from the Rwandan Development Board, which registers companies. It also reviewed the list of individuals who had benefited from a state loan for education but not reimbursed it and asked leaders on the list to reimburse the state. Finally, the Office of the Ombudsman also sensitizes the population about the Leadership Code of Conduct so that, as a senior official explained, “they know how a leader should behave and can denounce them if needed.”

The leadership traits so central in fighting corruption have not been restricted to the president. The general anticorruption effort has created an environment that encourages dynamic leadership at the administrative and technical levels. Leaders of several accountability institutions have taken full advantage of the shelter provided from political interference and strong signaling to create institutions that were fit for purpose. Strong organization leadership has been increasingly joined to improved technical competencies to establish a cross-institutional coalition capable of solving problems and working out the details of implementing the president’s vision of a zero-tolerance policy.

Coordination of engagement

The government has not only created relevant institutions and laws to fight corruption; it has also made them work together. The series of anticorruption reforms have slowly become more than the sum of their parts. As explained by former Ombudsman Tito Rutaremara, this comes from the awareness over time that anticorruption efforts could be easily thwarted by lack of coordination, something that the president realized early on: “He always pushed us to work together.” This situation had been problematic for the exchange of information. As remembered by an official in the Office of the Ombudsman, a few years ago, “If I were to ask information to other organizations, they would tell you to get lost [...] but now everyone understand our role, so it is a win-win.”

As a result, different mechanisms for coordination have emerged. A key one is the National Advisory Council to Fight against Corruption and Injustice. Chaired by the ombudsman, it brings

together the main stakeholders in the fight against corruption each quarter.³³ Its goal is to exchange information, reflect on the main loopholes in anticorruption efforts, and close them rapidly (box 2). The advisory council has been strengthened incrementally. It was created informally in 2009 as part of the anticorruption drives that saw the expansion of the investigative power of the Office of the Ombudsman and the waves of arrests described above. It was later legally established in 2014.³⁴

Box 2: Examples of resolution taken by the National Advisory Council to Fight Against Corruption and Injustice in 2018–19:

- Efforts to seize properties of individuals who have been convicted of corruption and embezzlement must be continuous.
- Hearings of court cases related to corruption and embezzlement must be sped up to recover quickly public funds.
- Projects abandoned or delayed must be closely scrutinized, as this might be a consequence of corrupt activities.
- Guidelines for the vetting of high-value public tenders by the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority must be improved.
- Schools with poor financial management are identified using reports from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.
- Head teachers suspected of embezzlement are identified and ways of recovering embezzled funds are explored through a collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the National Public Prosecution Authority.

Source: Office of the Ombudsman, 2019.

Its functioning has been streamlined by the creation of a permanent secretariat at the Office of the Ombudsman and of a technical subcouncil that gathers junior officials to discuss technical matters. In 2011, similar advisory councils³⁵ were created in each district and sector across the country to foster coordination at the local level as well. Besides the advisory council, coordination has been streamlined by a series of memorandums of understanding, regularly updated, between institutions. For instance, to institutionalize the transmissions of complains while protecting sources, Transparency International Rwanda signed one with the National Public Prosecution Authority in 2009 and another with the Office of the Ombudsman in 2010. Memorandums of understanding signed between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Rwanda National Police in 2014 and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau in 2019 provide a framework for sharing information, undertaking joint trainings, organizing joint awareness campaigns, and conducting joint operations.

³³ They include the Minister of local government (deputy chairperson), the Minister of Justice, the Vice President of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General, the Inspector General of the Rwanda National Police, the Head of the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, the Secretary General of the National Intelligence and Security Service, the Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority, the Auditor General, the Chief Executive Officer of the Private Sector Federation, and the Executive Secretary of the Civil Society Platform.

³⁴ Presidential Order No. 64/01/ of 12/02/2014, which determines the responsibilities, organization, and functioning of the National Anticorruption Advisory Council.

³⁵ Called District Advisory Council against Corruption and injustice (DACACI) and Sector Advisory Council against Corruption and injustice (SACACI).

More generally, coordination takes the form of many practices aimed at maximizing the mutual use of each institution's expertise. The use of the Office of the Auditor General's expertise by other institutions epitomizes this process. The Office of the Ombudsman's capacity has been lower than that of the Office of the Auditor General's, so it is not uncommon for the former to ask the latter to audit institutions for which it received complaints. Today, the Office of the Ombudsman uses the Office of the Auditor General report to plan its information and participation campaigns, anticorruption audits, and verifications of asset declaration and compliance with the Leadership of Code of Conduct. The Office of the Auditor General report is also automatically reviewed by the National Public Prosecution Authority and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau. As explained by the head of the bureau, Colonel Jeannot Ruhunga, "Analyzing the OAG [Office of the Auditor General] report is a big part of our work" in detecting corruption. In addition, National Public Prosecution Authority and Rwanda Investigation Bureau representatives attend Public Accounts Committee sessions discussing the report to, as Ruhunga explained, "listen and see if anything smells fishy."

The Public Accounts Committee has also greatly benefited from the support of the Office of the Auditor General. Each year, the office sends auditors to support Members of Parliament in their analysis of the report and guide them in identifying officials who should be called before parliament. While the office plays a pivotal role in enhancing the capabilities of others, it is not the only institution providing expertise. The Rwanda Public Procurement Authority also sends representatives to the committee to explain procurement processes and help it to hold officials accountable. The Office of the Ombudsman regularly supports prosecution by providing asset declarations of leaders that catch the attention of the National Public Prosecution Authority.

The opportunities to get away with corruption have consequently shrunk as individuals have become increasingly scrutinized from different angles by different institutions. As summarized by an official from the Office of the Ombudsman, "If we don't get a corrupt individual one way, we will get him another way." For example, a corrupt official can be caught by an Office of the Auditor General audit or by an analysis of the office's report by the Public Accounts Committee, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, or the National Public Prosecution Authority. Or the Office of the Ombudsman may pick up on it and bring to light a corrupt act through the verification of the official's asset declaration or compliance with the Leadership Code of Conduct or because it has targeted the official's institution for an awareness campaign.

An official might also be caught because the law encourages whistleblowing and allows informants to be rewarded. The law also instills suspicion between the official and the other party to corruption because the first one to turn on the other can be sheltered from prosecution. If undetected, the official will nonetheless live with a Damocles sword, as the crime is not subject to statute of limitations. Finally, if under investigation, the official will have a hard time easily disposing of the money, as accessing assets or fleeing becomes difficult. Suspected individuals can have their passport taken, be signaled to the credit reference bureau so that they cannot get a loan from a bank, and have their car impounded. As a senior official from the National Public Prosecution Authority summarized, "The corrupt ones are aware that they always have an eye above them."

Coordination has also been fostered by the different understanding of corruption and its consequences in the state. Corruption was first understood as a danger for the peace and stability of the nation. As the country recovered, anticorruption efforts have shifted to emphasize not

wasting the country's scarce resources. Achieving the government's development ambitions and goal of self-reliance have increasingly played a central role in the understanding of the fight against corruption. Corruption has also been systematically linked to a moral flaw, an insult to Rwanda's traditional values.

These different understandings of corruption and its effects have allowed various institutions to work together. As the Assistant Commissioner of Police in 2015 summarized it, "By understanding corruption's full impact and seeing it through the eyes of its effects, we are creating new weapons to combat it, and that's why we have put in place all necessary measures, including partnering with other institutions like the Office of the Ombudsman and Transparency International."³⁶ In other words, the various understandings of corruption have allowed institutions with different mandates to nonetheless identify overlapping interests in fighting corruption.

Overall, the value of the Rwandan system is to enable systemic scrutiny by a series of coordinated institutions. As multiple informants have emphasized, corrupt individuals have more and more difficulty in using loopholes since where one institution fighting corruption in Rwanda ends, another one begins.

Complementary investments in state capacity

Anticorruption measures have also been successful because they did not occur in a vacuum. They have been part of a larger reinforcement of the state that provides an extremely supportive environment for such measures to succeed. Anticorruption efforts have benefited from three kinds of state institutional investment.

The first is the development of a robust public financial management system since the early 2000s. The priority given to improving public financial management reflects the government's awareness that it needed to be able to effectively manage scarce resources to achieve its development ambitions. (Chemouni 2017). As an advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning said to Chemouni (2017: 17), in the early 2000s there was the realization in government circles that "if we [were] to achieve our [general] policy objectives, we [had] to fix public financial management." Investment in such systems quickly produced results, as reflected by the widely used Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability evaluations. Between the 2008 and 2010 evaluation Rwanda improved in all but one category and outperformed neighboring countries in all categories but one. In the 2016 evaluation performance generally improved, declining in only 3 of 28 categories. (Chemouni 2019:).

The Office of the Auditor General has played a special role in this evolution. Auditors General Evelyn Rutagwenda (2004–11) and Obadiah Biraro (2011–present) have acted reform entrepreneurs, encouraging the Ministry of Finance to tighten accounting practices, organizing training for accountants working in and outside the Office of the Auditor General,³⁷ and being instrumental in creating the Public Accounts Committee (Chemouni 2017). The office's own performance has improved, notably by expanding its capacity to audit more public finances every year (Chemouni

³⁶ <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/204806>

³⁷ Evelyn Rutagwenda was also the first interim president of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Rwanda in 2008.

2017). The fight against corruption has benefited greatly from the increasing credibility of the office's work. For example, its reports are now key in guiding the Office of the Ombudsman's vulnerability assessments, in planning its sensitization campaign, and in verifying asset declarations, as discussed above. The damning Office of the Auditor General reports around 2008 were also instrumental in kickstarting the anticorruption campaign that followed.

Stronger procurement processes have also greatly contributed to the fight against corruption. The legal framework ensures tight procedures that make corruption difficult. For example, the threshold for competitive bidding in Rwanda was as low as 2 million RWF (about 2,100 USD) in 2018, which has limited the number of corruption-prone contracts allocated using noncompetitive means.

The 2017 rollout of a pioneering e-procurement system nationwide—the first in Africa—has dramatically reduced the opportunity for corruption (Beschel et al. 2018). E-procurement, now compulsory for any bidding for central state's procurement,³⁸ greatly reduces face-to-face interactions between official and suppliers, thus increasing anonymity in the bidding process. In addition, the system ensures transparency of tendering decision by providing details on transactions, including the bidders, bid prices, contracts, and evaluation reports. Finally, the system has been crucial in fighting document forgery, especially for bank guarantee letters, as it directly interfaces with banks. While implementing e-procurement has been guided mainly by the government's concern for efficiency, it has had strong incidental effects on preventing corruption. The push for implementing e-procurement epitomizes a more general trend of generalizing online systems to streamline the functioning of the state and fight corruption by minimizing physical contacts with service providers. Such systems include the Irembo internet portal, which, for example, allows citizens to pay traffic fines, passport application fees, or register land ownership. Since 2016, Rwanda has rolled out an Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS), an automated judicial case processing and management system that aims to improve transparency of and accessibility to the justice system, thus reducing risk of corruption.

The second main institutional investment that has created a conducive environment for fighting corruption is the development of a lean, professional, and target-driven civil service. This has been accomplished by successive waves of state restructuring since 1999. Reforms have continuously resulted in the exit of less qualified civil servants and the hiring of better-skilled ones. Some 5,500 unqualified civil servants were fired in 1999 (and 7,000 ghost workers were identified; IMF 2000), 3,000 in 2004, and 5,000 in 2006 (Hausman 2011).³⁹ Additional retrenchment occurred in 2013 and 2016 as part of an effort to further streamline the central administration. These frequent restructurings have kept the size of the civil service, and the wage bill, in check (figure 10).

³⁸ E-procurement is currently being rolled out for local governments.

³⁹ Many were rehired in the local administration as part of Rwanda's decentralization efforts.

***Imihigo* also feature at the central level.** Ministerial annual plans are the *imihigo* of the minister. All employees have personal *imihigo* in the form of targets on which they are assessed by their managers every year. Results can determine a pay bonus or, in the case of constant underperformance, lead to disciplinary actions.⁴¹

This commitment to a well-educated civil service, strongly incentivized to perform, has been conducive to controlling corruption in several ways. First, especially for the most senior officials, the pressure to deliver makes uprooting corruption essential, as corruption constitutes an obstacle to reaching their targets. As explained by the auditor general, when corruption is generalized, “you receive the money, and nothing happens [...] Corruption is the enemy of productivity and service delivery to the *bona fides*.” This is well-understood by mayors, as demonstrated by Transparency International Rwanda’s Integrity Pact program, which consists of enhanced monitoring of districts’ contract management, from procurement to evaluation of the population’s satisfaction regarding projects. One of the many reasons why districts have been keen to join the project, as Marie-Immaculée Ingabire, chairperson of Transparency International Rwanda, explained, was that “it helps the project on their *imihigo* to be delivered with the agreed budget and without the money disappearing.”

Second, keeping the size of the civil service in check while reinforcing merit-based recruitment considerably reduces the opportunity for nepotism and clientelism. Not only are the jobs few, but, given the pressure on the civil service to deliver, officials also cannot afford to hire someone who lacks merit.

Third, the tight monitoring of civil servants’ performance also overlaps with the detection of corruption. This is perhaps best exemplified by the ways in which the Office of the Attorney General performance audits are scrutinized by Parliament and by anticorruption institutions. “There is the common perception that bad performance is routinely detected and punished in the Rwandan public sector, which is in turn associated with the various monitoring and evaluation strategies implemented to ensure quality control and deter petty corruption” (Baez-Camargo et al. 2017: 20).

Fourth, development, made possible by a professional civil service, along with a robust public financial management system, is expected to have an incidental effect on corruption through economic development. This is the explicit logic of many officials, including Auditor General Obadiah Biraro. It is also viewed as a crucial strategy to maintaining Rwanda’s credibility with donors. In addition, improved access to and quality of services are likely to reduce corruption. Administrative corruption in Rwanda is still driven mainly by poor service delivery. According to Transparency International Rwanda’s 2019 bribery index, 54.8 percent of people surveyed said that the main reason for corruption was to speed up the process of service delivery. Consequently, better public services are likely to reduce the need to engage in bribery, gift giving, and favoritism (Baez-Camargo et al. 2017).

⁴¹ *Imihigo* clearly create a strong pressure on senior officials, but this is not necessarily the case for junior civil servants. Informants reported that *imihigo* were a useful way for them to plan their work and emphasized that managers often give employees a similarly good evaluation, probably to avoid conflict and jealousy.

What can be learned from Rwanda?

The Rwandan case is unique in many ways, but it nevertheless yields important lessons for other countries. Undoubtedly, Rwanda's development ambition, the will to break cycles of violence, and the nature of its political economy and political leadership are all idiosyncratic products of the country's history. As such, they are not reproducible. Rwanda is no different, in this respect, from the short list of countries that have made the most progress in reducing corruption over the past 40 years. That list of countries, which includes Botswana, Georgia, the Republic of Korea and Singapore is extraordinary because each country was viewed as particularly problematic prior to anticorruption reforms, and each country carved out its own distinct pathway to establishing integrity in its public sector.

Given the uniqueness of Rwanda's history and political economy, the lessons that can be drawn from its anticorruption journey do not create a blueprint for others to follow. Its reforms are neither replicable nor even necessarily desirable in other contexts, and other paths to fighting corruption undoubtedly exist. The point of this study is to examine how Rwanda has gone about tackling corruption, while looking for principles that might be useful in studying other countries. While many studies offer a good theoretical understanding of what is needed to fight corruption, they rarely provide many pointers on how theories can be operationalized, especially in poor, postconflict countries. Corruption remains endemic in countries that have recently experienced conflict and high levels of violence, and the association between corruption and fragility has become increasingly strong over time. So, lessons from Rwanda's experience may be uniquely valuable for development.

It is immediately apparent that Rwanda's anticorruption journey does not conform to standard expectations regarding the drivers of governance change. There is a consensus regarding the importance of transparency and citizen participation in confronting corruption as well as the central role of expanding markets and competition in improving governance conditions. These features are strongly associated with well-performing public sectors and low corruption environments. To date, these elements have played a relatively subsidiary role in the transition from a high level of administrative corruption to the much-reduced level that exists today in Rwanda. While competition, transparency, and inclusivity may be hallmarks of good governance, Rwanda's experience encourages a closer look at the sequencing of reform and the efficacy of relying on transparency, participation, and dynamic markets to be the driving force behind the fight against corruption in postconflict settings. Limited state, private sector, and community capacity; fragmented authority and accountability; and fractured social and public institutions may severely limit the power of "good governance" models to modify expectations, change behaviors, and strengthen accountability.

As described above, Rwanda's experience fighting corruption has combined a range of technical and institutional adaptations and evolutions with an unwavering focus on achieving results. The imperative to drive administrative corruption out of the public sector has continually overridden tendencies for anticorruption activities to fade into the background once an administration has fully accumulated power and authority. Four lessons are particularly salient to other poor countries.

Using sequencing and design—the “big push”—to change expectations

Rwanda demonstrates the critical relationship between changing expectations and changing behaviors in succeeding in the fight against corruption. Research on anticorruption often strongly emphasizes adopting specific measures to signal government commitment to fighting corruption, such as creating an anticorruption agency and prosecuting high-level officials. In contrast, Rwanda’s experience highlights the importance of changing expectations of integrity both inside and outside of government concurrently with changing practices and strengthening accountability.

A core feature of Rwanda’s anticorruption experience has been simultaneous efforts to raise expected standards for government performance and alter internal procedures and controls. In this manner, Rwanda’s experience is aligned with research that conceptualizes the fight against corruption as a collective action problem (Persson et al. 2013). According to that literature, corruption must be fought by altering the incentives that underlie the governance ecosystem rather than by modifying rules or systems. This is because there is little chance to change behaviors when corruption is understood to be the way the public sector operates and not an individual transgression. Corruption creates a situation in which “actors engage in corrupt behavior not because they morally approve of it or do not understand the negative consequences for society at large, but because as long as they expect everyone else to play foul, they perceive the short-term benefits of engaging in corrupt behavior to be greater than the costs” (Persson et al. 2013: 457). In this case, “the important thing will be to change actors’ beliefs about what ‘all’ other actors are likely to do so that most actors expect most other actors to play fairly (Persson et al. 2013: 464).⁴²

This is exactly what Rwanda has done. Through a “big push,” it has transformed expectations about corruption by reinforcing all levels of the anticorruption chain, endeavoring to transform social norms, while systematically shutting off opportunities for rent seeking and establishing capable and effective mechanisms for oversight, control, and sanctions against misbehavior. This environment has made it increasingly difficult for corrupt networks to sustain themselves and for corrupt individuals to identify collaborators and co-conspirators. Rwanda has oriented its governance ecosystem toward integrity, and this has fundamentally changed how the public sector functions and what development possibilities the country faces.

Rwanda’s anticorruption efforts have relied on a critical mass of institutions, laws, and practices that have fought against corruption from multiple angles simultaneously. They have focused on prevention and sentencing, on changing incentives and social norms. They have relied on a wide array of institutions, some specializing in anticorruption, others more directly related to markets, public financial management, and civil service accountability. They have employed discursive strategies, some putting forward tradition and morality, others justice or development. In this way, a momentum of improvement was established and enlarged over time, and change happened not only because people feared the “stick” of the law but also because their own norms of what constitutes corruption shifted.

⁴² This is not of course to say that a “principal-agent” framework is not useful to fight corruption and has not been used in Rwanda. The strict control of officials and the harsh punishment of offenders are testimonies of the relevance of principal-agent approach in understanding Rwanda’s experience. The point of the present analysis is that solving a large range of principal-agent problems simultaneously can help in solving the collective action problem of endemic corruption. In Rwanda’s case the two approaches have clearly been complementary.

The combination of reforms has made it difficult for corrupt individuals to fall through the cracks of the system or to socially legitimize their corrupt deeds. Rwanda demonstrates the importance of a package of measures that change the country's governance ecosystem. This approach stands in sharp contrast to efforts that characterize the fight against corruption as an effort comprising discrete activities selected from a toolkit of reforms by a champion.

Achieving scale—coordinating through information exchange and joint actions

A “big push” requires effective collaboration among stakeholders. Creating an exemplary institutional and legal framework is not in itself sufficient to address corruption. Rwanda's case reflects the importance of enabling institutional coordination, information exchanges, and shared action plans. In this regard, the creation of national coordination mechanisms such as the National Advisory Council to Fight Against Corruption and Injustice in Rwanda can be extremely useful. Overlapping mandates—for example, between the Rwanda National Police and the Office of the Ombudsman or between the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Public Prosecution Authority—were not problematic precisely because information flows and common incentives allowed institutions, even with overlapping mandates, to “pull in the same direction,”

Rwanda's experience fighting corruption has stressed establishing organizational arrangements that enable collective engagement. Emphasizing the interlinkages among accountability organizations is of particular importance in jurisdictions operating with limited human and financial resources and constrained authority. This factor has been somewhat lost in the primacy often given to defining organizational mandates and buttressing institutional independence. Rwanda's approach has instead emphasized building complementary organizational competencies and capabilities to create a consistent and coherent approach to public sector controls, monitoring, and oversight.

Technology has played an essential role in coordinating the fight corruption and streamlining information flows. Especially useful technologies include a judicial case management system used by the Office of the Ombudsman, the Rwanda National Police, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, and the National Public Prosecution Authority and Courts; databases that systematically verify asset declaration and compliance with the Leadership Code of Conduct; and an e-procurement system. Furthermore, by being part of the sustained effort against corruption, technology has contributed to institutionalizing change.

Framing the effort—addressing corruption as a dimension of state building

Rwanda's experience emphasizes the value of addressing corruption as a dimension of a larger state-building effort. Framing the fight against corruption as part of an effort to build a capable state is likely to be important in postconflict settings. For Rwanda, anticorruption was never an independent process but one that was tied closely with improving public financial management and fostering general accountability and professionalization in the civil service. This link established synergies with a virtuous dynamic that improved the effectiveness of the anticorruption effort and the overall reconstruction of the state. Rwanda's pursuit of integrity has been intertwined with its drive to create an effective and rule-based bureaucracy. Pursuing this objective has led to important modifications of processes and practices in government and in its interactions with citizens.

Integrating anticorruption and state building has been substantive as well as strategic. Extensive work on identifying corruption vulnerabilities within sectors has been essential in fighting corruption and defining auditing practices. Close follow-up of the OAG recommendations has shaped the broader work of the Public Accounts Committee. Far less integration of efforts would have been possible had Rwanda pursued a more traditional approach to anticorruption, with more exclusive emphasis on law enforcement and the investigation and prosecution of corruption offenses.

Building in adaptation—enabling evolution in the pursuit of concrete outcomes

Rwanda’s experience highlights the extent to which successful anticorruption efforts address a specific problem using local resources. In Rwanda this principle is exemplified by the Office of the Ombudsman, an institution whose original mandate included functions associated with an Anticorruption Agency, a classic Ombudsman, and an Asset Declaration Agency. The unique institutional construction was based on the recognition that in Rwanda, corruption was not primarily a problem of misappropriation of public resources but an issue of injustice and leadership.

While Rwanda’s reforms have clearly been informed by international experience, the principal driver has been an insistence on achieving results. Rwanda’s achievement was not only to build a solid legal and institutional framework for establishing integrity and fighting corruption but one that is outcome-oriented and designed to address specific national challenges. The ways in which institutions were created and functioned demonstrate a constant commitment to achieving results, with limited attention to creating elaborate action plans or adopting best-practice processes.

The importance of institutional adaptation has been repeatedly demonstrated in Rwanda’s pursuit of its anticorruption objective. The progression of reforms documented in this study reflect pragmatic tackling of challenges as they arise rather than by grand ex ante planning. Such planning might have been counterproductive, since implementing plan can sometimes become an end in itself, deflecting attention from the actual objective of reform and reducing the ability to recognize gaps or changes in the environment. While muddling through might be the right approach, it necessitates the political and technical space for institutions to identify and address bottlenecks rapidly. Three conditions were key to creating such space.

First, institutions adopted an entrepreneurial approach in driving change, enabling bottlenecks to be quickly addressed once identified. To do this, institutions adjusted their authority and legal frameworks to support achieving their mission. The Office of the Auditor General was instrumental in creating Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee just as the Office of the Ombudsman led the evolution of its own mandate and its procedures. Stakeholders more regularly lobbied for changing the law when legal shortcomings were visible.

Second, although the head of the government is often seen as the ultimate source of “political will” in the fight against corruption, progress in Rwanda was due equally to political power being used to “enable” others rather than being narrowly understood as one of “initiators” of reforms. Across the key accountability institutions that emerged, leaders played a pivotal role in generating the space for institutions to innovate to address challenges. The zero-tolerance approach of the leader can create the expectation that interference with or resistance to reforms would not be

tolerated, but effective implementation required a more diffuse coalition of leaders working together.

Third, establishing integrity was not pursued as an end in itself but as part of a broader approach to transforming a country. In Rwanda, this is best demonstrated by the ways in which institutions differently articulate anticorruption efforts and national objectives. As mentioned, corruption was linked with the fight against injustice after the genocide. It was understood as something to be corrected to prevent the cycle of violence from being perpetuated, which also required raising citizens' awareness of their rights. Such understandings of corruption were at the root of the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Looking ahead: consolidating success and addressing challenges

Rwanda shifted from a low equilibrium to a higher equilibrium in the control of corruption. This was made possible by pursuing market reforms to reduce the opportunity for corruption, strengthening public financial management, and addressing vulnerabilities in state institutions. This was complemented by strong institutions focused on preventing and sanctioning corruption and supported by a broad strategy to shift normative perception of corruption and transform the citizens' expectations about the functioning of the state.

The case of Rwanda is undoubtedly impressive but should not obscure the fact that corruption has not disappeared and remains common in some sectors. Transparency International Rwanda's 2019 Bribery Index found that 18.5 percent of people surveyed had encountered a bribe in the past 12 months (Transparency International Rwanda 2019a). The likelihood of bribe⁴³ was especially high in the technical and vocational education and training sector (12.8 percent), the traffic police (12.4 percent), and the justice sector (30 percent). These numbers are significant, especially given the usual self-censorship of respondents in this kind of survey. While corruption has dramatically declined in Rwanda, two key challenges remain.

The first challenge is to foster a vibrant private sector and improve the corporate governance of state-owned enterprises. While the private sector and markets benefit from Rwanda's anticorruption drive (as evidenced by Doing Business surveys), the private sector has not emerged as an important domestic constituency that could exert political pressure to sustain and advance Rwanda's anticorruption agenda. This is in line with this study's broader assessment that fighting corruption remains a top-down process. The private sector's limited role can be explained partly by the fact that the state maintains a critical role in resource allocation, pursuant to its agenda of mobilizing resources for accelerated modernization and economic transformation through investment in priority sectors (Behuria 2012; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012; World Bank 2019b). In the long run, developing a private sector-led economy will help leverage the gains from fighting corruption by fully tapping into the investment potential created by a low-corruption context. It will also help sustain the gains made by fostering the role of the private sector in demanding further anticorruption efforts.

In addition, given the importance of the state-owned enterprises in the economy (Behuria 2012;

⁴³ Defined as the number of bribes demanded divided by number of interactions with the institution.

Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012), **anticorruption efforts must translate to stronger corporate governance** (box 3). This will not only maximize the economic contribution of these companies, but also prevent the creation of undue rents and corrupt transactions. Overall, a thriving private sector and solid corporate governance for state-owned enterprises will strengthen the institutional foundations of checks and balances in the economic realm.

Box 3: Key areas for further reform in the governance of state-owned enterprises in Rwanda

- **Allowing full operational autonomy for state-owned enterprises to achieve their commercial objectives.** Ownership rights should be exercised only periodically (for example, at shareholder meetings) and through normal mechanisms (for example, voting of shares). The state should not be involved in day-to-day operations of a state-owned enterprise or its board of directors. But autonomy should not be granted until the state-owned enterprise has the necessary competencies and accountability.
- **Transactions between the government and state-owned enterprises and between one state-owned enterprise and another should take place on market terms.** If a state-owned enterprise is required to pursue a public policy objective, information on this requirement should be available to all shareholders.
- **All state-owned enterprises should regularly issue audited financial statements to the public** because the government needs reliable financial information to guide economic policy, regulation, and investment decisions; because leading international private investors that might provide additional equity or debt financing require such information; and because Rwandan citizens are all stakeholders, and regular and reliable financial reporting serves to maintain the public's trust.
- **All state-owned enterprise financial statements should follow International Financial Reporting Standards.** Doing so would be useful preparation for any state-owned enterprise interested in accessing international capital (either debt or equity investments). The government currently requires full standards for all domestic companies whose securities trade in a public market and for companies with public accountability (banks and other financial institutions). Given the importance of state-owned enterprise, extending the scope of public accountability to require them to report according to full standards seems reasonable.
- **In addition to financial reporting, state-owned enterprises should publicly disclose other important information.** That information includes: governance, ownership, and voting structures; remuneration of board members and key executives; board member qualifications, selection process, roles of other company boards, and whether the other boards are considered independent; any material foreseeable risk factors and risk mitigation measures; any financial assistance, including guarantees, received from the government and commitments arising from public-private partnerships; any material transactions with the government or government-related entities; and any material issues relating to employees or other stakeholders.

Source: Based on World Bank (2019b).

The second challenge is to increase reporting and denouncing corruption. Citizens still rarely report cases of corruption to authorities.⁴⁴ Transparency International Rwanda's 2019 Bribery Index showed that the vast majority of people who encountered corruption in 2019 (86.7 percent) did not report it (Transparency International Rwanda 2019a). More detailed data available from the 2018 Bribery Index reveals that the main reasons for citizens not reporting corruption are that the idea of reporting not occurring to them (38.2 percent), fear of self-incrimination (23.3 percent), and the perception that no action would be taken (20.7 percent; Transparency International Rwanda 2018). While the fear of self-incrimination is to be expected, the main reason (the idea of reporting not occurring to them) shows that substantial work is needed regarding the role of citizens in identifying corruption. The third reason for not reporting corruption (the perception that no action would be taken) still indicates a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of institutions. This highlights the need for a robust civil society able to amplify citizens' voices, to serve as a trusted intermediary between citizens and the state, to publicly denounce improper follow-up of corruption cases, and to hold officials accountable more generally.

The citizen engagement thus far has happened mainly on the government's own terms, as participation in forums organized by authorities. While civil society and citizens have partnered with the government in enunciating expectations for civil servants and in policing their behavior, they have hardly been a watchdog of government. Investigative journalism is hardly developed in Rwanda, and nongovernmental organizations envision their role more as helping the government deliver on its anticorruption agenda than as providing an independent voice. Consequently, "participation" in Rwanda should evolve to citizens, and civil society more broadly, independently scrutinizing government actions.

The relative absence of bottom-up dynamics to control corruption, from both civil society and the private sector, speaks to the importance of distinguishing what is required to kickstart the fight against corruption from what is needed to sustain it in the long run. The analysis suggests that anticorruption efforts were not driven by popular demands for accountability. The media, civil society, and the population at large did not appear to pressure the government to reform. The press and other organizations such as churches and youth and women's organizations have been mostly restricted to being conduits for sensitization, a relay for government messages.⁴⁵ While popular participation has been shown to be important in fighting corruption in many countries (Johnston 2014; Schatz 2013; World Bank 2003), Rwanda shows that citizens' engagement may not be a condition to dramatically decrease corruption at first. Fighting corruption can be started through a top-down approach originating in the executive branch of government. Yet, this is probably not a sufficient condition to keep corruption low in the long run. While systemic reforms driven by the top can be pivotal in fighting endemic corruption, as in Rwanda, bottom-up demands for accountability are necessary for these efforts to be sustainable.

⁴⁴ The role of Transparency International Rwanda in relaying citizens' complaints must be noted. Between 2014 and 2019 the organization received close to 10,000 complaints by phone, WhatsApp, online, and through its Advocacy and Legal Advice Centers. However, it still very much depends on donor funding and cannot yet be considered a result of sustained citizens' mobilization and engagement.

⁴⁵ Transparency International Rwanda is an exception. Created in 2004, the organization has become one of the main stakeholders in the fight against corruption through close collaboration with government institutions and donor backing.

The anticorruption momentum might be hard to sustain if more bottom-up processes of governance do not emerge (see also World Bank 2019a). This is especially true for two obstacles in the current fight against corruption, for which greater popular scrutiny seems to be the most appropriate response. The first lies in the perverse consequences of top-down, target-oriented governance. It can, under some circumstances, have diminishing returns over time, as targets decided solely at the top may not always be relevant for a local context or even become counterproductive if the citizenry does not embrace the role of watchdog of government actions or is not involved in setting context-based, realistic targets. Pressure on officials to deliver on hard-to-reach targets planned solely at the center can create incentives for cutting corners to fulfil their mandate. These can include falsifying or “technicating” (*gutecnica*) data and reports (Chemouni 2014) and mismanaging money to hide poor financial performance.⁴⁶

Speed to complete some projects may also lead to relaxation of anticorruption procedures. A case in point is the exemptions given by the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority to state organizations about competitive bidding, a practice that has increased recently (see, for example, RPPA 2018). This can be understandable, as direct procurement is used to quickly address emergencies (such as rebuilding a road after a landslide) and to rapidly procure large infrastructure projects central for the country’s development. Yet, this also increases the likelihood of favoritism and nepotism. The challenge is thus to combine strict procedures and scrutiny with the rapid government undertakings required to meet the country’s ambitious development agenda.

The second obstacle is the capacity of the state to adapt to new corruption practices. As the fight against corruption has intensified, the strategy of actors engaging in corruption has become more complex as well. For example, the risk associated with corruption, especially the fear of being denounced by the other party to a corrupt transaction or of dealing with a plain clothed police officer, has led to the development of trusted intermediaries linking briber and bribed. An example reported by informants is the development of “business providers,” who, for a “fee”, can ensure a successful bidding for state contracts. Hiding unduly acquired assets has also improved over time—for example, by laundering money through complex transactions or using a front to buy assets with funds from corruption. While this, in many ways, can be seen as the price of success, it also requires the state to constantly adapt. This study shows that it has often done so successfully.

However, adaptation is a constant struggle to avoid losing the recent, and still fragile, gains made in fighting corruption, as proven by the results of Transparency International Rwanda’s Bribery Index. As corruption practices become more complex, adaptation and detection will be increasingly difficult without active scrutiny by citizens, civil society, and the private sector. Overall, the challenge is to broaden the current role of civil society and the private sector to a separate and independent voice for communities and nongovernmental organizations to spot individual transgressions and scrutinize government actions to spur adaptation. Otherwise, the anticorruption momentum might be hard to sustain.

⁴⁶ An informant reported a case where district officials stole money from financial cooperatives in order to artificially increase health insurance payments in their district, a target on which they were assessed.

Bibliography

- Andrews, M. 2013. *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Baez-Camargo, C., T. Gatwa, A. Dufitumukiza, C. Stahl, and S. Kassa. 2017. *Behavioural Influences on Attitudes towards Petty Corruption: A Study of Social Norms, Automatic Thinking and Mental Models in Rwanda*. Basel, Switzerland: Basel Institute on Governance.
- Baez-Camargo, C. and G. Tharcisse. 2018. *Informal Governance and Corruption - Transcending the Principal Agent and Collective Action Paradigms. Rwanda Country Report*. Basel, Switzerland: Basel Institute on Governance.
- Behuria, P. 2012. "Centralising Rents and Dispersing Power While Pursuing Development? Exploring the Strategic Uses of Military Firms in Rwanda." *Review of African Political Economy* 43 (150): 630–47.
- Behuria, P., and T. Goodfellow. 2019. "Leapfrogging Manufacturing? Rwanda's Attempt to Build a Services-Led 'Developmental State.'" *European Journal of Development Research* 31 (3): 581–603.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung. 2016. *Transformation Index BTI 2016*. Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh.
- Beschel, R., B. Cameron, J. Kunicova, and B. Myers. 2018. *Improving Public Sector Performance through Innovation and Inter-Agency Coordination: Global Report Public Sector Performance*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Booth, D., and F. Golooba-Mutebi. 2012. "Developmental Patrimonialism: The Case of Rwanda." *African Affairs* 111 (444): 379–403.
- Bozzini, A. 2014. "Background Paper on Rwanda". Berlin: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies.
- Chemouni, B. 2014. "Explaining the Design of the Rwandan Decentralization: Elite Vulnerability and the Territorial Repartition of Power." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (2): 246–62.
- Chemouni, B., 2016. "Taking stock of Rwanda's decentralisation: changing local governance in a post-conflict environment." *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 1(6), pp.763-778.
- Chemouni, B. 2017. "The Politics of Core Public Sector Reform in Rwanda." ESID Working Paper 88/2017. University of Manchester, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, Manchester, UK. <http://www.effective-states.org/working-paper-88/> .
- Chemouni, B. 2019. "The Rise of the Economic Technocracy in Rwanda: A Case of Bureaucratic Pocket of Effectiveness or Pocket of Priority?" ESID Working Paper 120/209. University of Manchester, Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, Manchester, UK.

- Gökgür, N. 2012. "Rwanda's Ruling Party-Owned Enterprises: Do They Enhance or Impede Development?" IOB Discussion Paper. Antwerp, Belgium: Universiteit Antwerpen, Institute of Development Policy.
- IMF (International Monetary Fund). 2000. "Rwanda: Recent Economic Developments." IMF Staff Country Report 4. Washington, DC.
- Johnston, M. 2014. *Corruption, Contention, and Reform: The Power of Deep Democratization*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Khemani, S., E. Dal Bó, C. Ferraz, F. S. Finan, C. L. Stephenson Johnson, A. M. Odugbemi, D. Thapa, and S. D. Abrahams. 2016. *Making Politics Work for Development: Harnessing Transparency and Citizen Engagement*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Kimonyo, J.-P. 2017. *Rwanda, demain! une longue marche vers la transformation*. Paris: Karthala.
- Klingebiel, S., V. Gonsior, F. Jakobs, and M. Nikitka. 2019. "Where Tradition Meets Public Sector Innovation: A Rwandan Case Study for Results-Based Approaches." *Third World Quarterly* 40 (7): 1340–58.
- Lamarque, H. 2017. "Insulating the Borderlands: Policing and State Reach in Rwanda." PhD thesis. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies.
- McDoom, O. 2011. "Rwanda's Exit Pathway from Violence: A Strategic Assessment." Background paper for *World Development Report 2011*. World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A., and T. Hartmann. 2019. "Corruption and Development: An Overview." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Economics and Finance*. Oxford, UK: Oxford university Press.
- Olken, B.A., 2009. "Corruption perceptions vs. corruption reality." *Journal of Public economics*, 93(7-8): 950-964.
- Office of the Ombudsman (different years). *Annual Report*. Kigali: Government of Rwanda
- Persson, A., Rothstein, B. and Teorell, J. (2013), "Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail—Systemic Corruption as a Collective Action Problem". *Governance*, 26: 449-471.
- Pillay, P., and F. Khan. 2015. "Public Policy and Corruption in a Globalised World: Case Studies from South Africa and Rwanda." In K. Göymen and R. Lewis, eds., *Public Policy Making in a Globalized World*. Istanbul, Turkey: Istanbul Policy Center.
- Reyntjens, F. 1999. "Evolution politique au Rwanda et au Burundi." In F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse, eds., *L'Afrique des grands lacs : Annuaire, 1998-1999*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Reyntjens, F. 2000. "Chronique Politique du Burundi et du Rwanda 1999-2000." In F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse, eds., *L'Afrique des grands lacs : Annuaire 1999-2000*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

- Rollason, W. 2019. *Motorbike People: Power and Politics on Rwandan Streets*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- RPPA (Rwanda Public Procurement Authority). 2018. *Annual Report 2017–2018*. Kigali: Government of Rwanda.
- Schatz, F. 2013. “Fighting Corruption with Social Accountability: A Comparative Analysis of Social Accountability Mechanisms’ Potential to Reduce Corruption in Public Administration.” *Public Administration and Development* 33 (3): 161–74.
- Sebudubudu, D., L. Khatib, and A. Bozzini. 2017. “The Atypical Achievers: Botswana, Qatar and Rwanda.” In A. Mungiu-Pippidi and M. Johnston, eds., *Transitions to Good Governance: Creating Virtuous Circles of Anti-Corruption*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Traore, M., A. F. Gonzalez, C. Chaparro Yedro, J.-M. Lobet, and J. Bailey. 2013. *Doing Business 2013: Rwanda: Fostering Prosperity by Promoting Entrepreneurship*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Transparency International. 2019. *Corruption Perceptions Index*, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi>.
- Transparency International Rwanda. 2018. *Rwanda Bribery Index 2018*. Kigali.
- Transparency International Rwanda. 2019a. *Infographics for the Rwanda Bribery Index 2019*. Kigali.
- Transparency International Rwanda. 2019b. *Status of Assets Recovery in Rwanda: Promoting Rule of Law in Rwanda through Sound Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Laws*. Kigali. https://www.tirwanda.org/IMG/pdf/status_of_assets_recovery_in_rwanda.pdf.
- World Bank. 2000. *Anticorruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2003. *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People: Overview*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2011. *Enterprise Surveys: Rwanda Country Profile 2011*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2018a. *Rwanda Investor Perceptions Survey 2018*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2018b. Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2019/05/21/worldwide-bureaucracy-indicators-dashboard>, Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2019a. *Future Drivers of Growth in Rwanda: Innovation, Integration, Agglomeration, and Competition*. Conference Edition. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2019b. *Rwanda—Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Washington, DC.
- World Bank. 2019c. Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Project. www.govindicators.org. The World Bank, Washington DC.

World Bank. 2019d Country Policy and Institutional Assessment. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/CPIA/home>. Washington, DC.

World Bank. 2020. Doing Business 2020. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Justice Project. 2019. World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2019. Washington, DC.