

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This undergraduate thesis attempts to investigate the foreign policy shift of Rwanda as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to join the Commonwealth in 2009. This chapter will briefly discuss about the initial history of Rwanda which later lead them to joining the Commonwealth and will predict the answer of the research questions by constructing hypothesis based on the determined theoretical framework.

A. Background

Rwanda had been through such a long journey in its history—from the colonization era to the modern civilization, struggled for its liberation to be the present Rwanda. During the colonization era, the Western European countries were competing for preeminence. They were struggling for power, competing to be hegemonic and supreme over others, striving to demonstrate their national preeminence through the acquisition of untitled territories and through the embedment of their ideas to the other regions around the globe. The most dominating powers at that time were France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Britain, Germany, and Belgium (Iweriebor, 2011). In 1884, following the Berlin Conference, Germany colonized an untitled territory—known Rwanda today—as part of German East Africa (GEA) protectorate along with Burundi and Tanzania. The German’s colonization in Rwanda ended in 1916, when Germany was defeated in the World War I (Twagilimana, 2015).

Under the Versailles Treaty Article 119, signed on June 28 1919 Germany gave up any claims and demands on its former colonies to the Allied Powers. On April 18 1923, Belgium confirmed the mandate over Germans' former colonies territories under the Charter of the League of Nations (Záhořík, 2017). During the Belgian administration in Rwanda, a distinction was set between two indigenous groups where the Hutus were determined to be the forced labor and the Tutsis were in charge to supervise the Hutus' works. In the Late 1950s towards its independence, the Hutu leaders initiated a Hutu Manifesto which led both Hutu and Tutsi into a conflict—ended up with the overthrow of Tutsi's monarchy (Totten, Bartrop, & Jacobs, 2008). This conflict caused the Tutsis fled into exile from Rwanda and the Hutu immediately took over the Tutsi monarchy then proclaimed the provisional government as a republic after Belgium granted them independence on July 1 1962.

In its independence, the new government of Rwanda decided to maintain French—the language used by the Belgian administration during the colonization era—to be Rwanda's official language beside Kinyarwanda (Nyirindekwe, 1999). Since 1962 to 1996, French had been broadly used in governmental institution, administration, public services, higher education, and official credentials, complementing Kinyarwanda as the national language (Nyirindekwe, 1999). However, the granted independence of Rwanda did not end the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi; it culminated in genocide in 1994. In the aftermath of the conflict, English was introduced as a supporting language in Rwanda due to the necessity of the huge number of refugees returned from exile in East African countries (Uganda, Burundi, and Zaire) and a number of expatriates who were from

English-speaking countries came to Rwanda (Rosendal, 2009).

In 1970, Rwanda along with the other French-speaking countries joined *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), an organization made up with French speaking countries all over the world, established by France on 20th March 1970. This organization consists of 57 member states, three associate members and twenty observers (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2013). The establishment of this organization aimed at promoting peace, democracy and human rights, enhancing the solidarity among member countries as well as preserving French language and the linguistic diversity across the world (Turner, 2006). French has been spoken by 274 million speakers worldwide in five different continents (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2013). The establishment of this organization was indeed a form of France's strategy to stay hegemonic in its former colonies. However, it was not merely due to France's interest since the former colonies of France, especially African countries also initiated to maintain a kind of good relation with its former colonialist for their future cooperation purposes.

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

The Commonwealth is an association of 53 sovereign member states of which territories used to belong to the British Empire (The Commonwealth, 2018). The idea of Commonwealth is quite similar to *La Francophonie* as both associations aim at maintaining the global unity through shared language, history, and culture within its former colonies. However, Rwanda's very first application to Commonwealth was rejected since it did not meet any of Commonwealth membership criteria. Then in 2008, Rwanda established English as the official language (McCrummen, 2008), resent its application on Commonwealth membership in 2009 and officially become the member of the Commonwealth even though Rwanda never had a historical connection with British imperialism (Pflanz, 2009).

B. Research Question

Based on the description on the background, in order to have more advanced understanding on the shift of Rwanda's foreign policy as the part of *La Francophonie* to join the Commonwealth in 2009, the author addresses the research question as follow:

Why did Rwanda as the part of La Francophonie apply and join the British Commonwealth?

C. Theoretical Framework

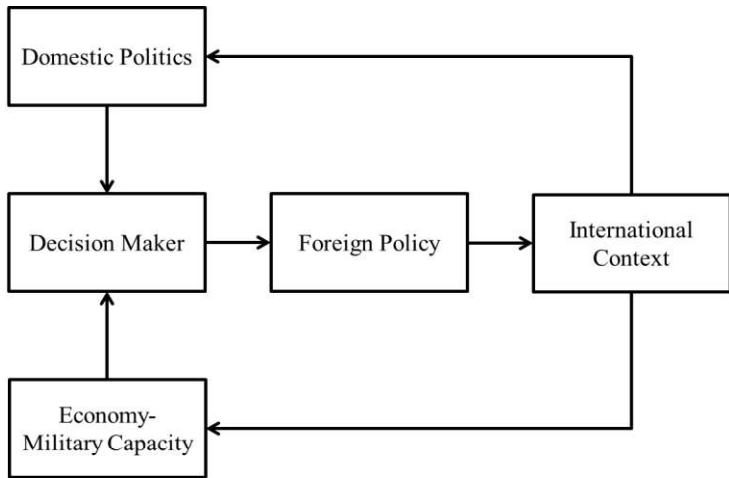
In order to answer the research question, the author uses the theory of Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process by William D. Coplin (1983).

Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process

Foreign policy is inevitable with the national interest of a country. It determines one country's relations with other countries. Different scholars define the term of 'foreign policy' in different ways. According to George Modelski, foreign policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment (Modelski, 1962). Meanwhile, Joseph Frankel defines foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve in some appreciable extent relations between one state and others (Frankel, 1968). Based on these two scholars definition of foreign policy, the author concludes that foreign policy is the decisions made by some particular actors in one particular country, projected into actions in order to influence the behavior of other countries in conducting the international relations.

According to William D. Coplin, there are three determinant factors that influence the decision-makers in foreign policy decision-making process; domestic politics, economy-military condition, and international context (Coplin, 1983). Coplin in his book describes a scheme pertaining to his theory in order to give a clear image and explanations on the role of the three determinants as well as their relations in foreign policy decision-making process.

Figure 1.1 Scheme of Foreign Policy Decision-making Process



Source: Coplin, W. D. (2003). *Introductions to International Politic: Teoritical Overview*. In M. Marbun, *Pengantar Politik Internasional: Suatu Telaah Teoritis* (p. 86). Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka Sinar Baru Algensido.

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

1. Domestic Politics

The domestic politics of one country plays a prominent role in the decision-making process either of the domestic policy or the foreign policy. It includes cultural aspects which fundamentally determine one's political behavior, and the current domestic condition in form of demands from the people that are relevant with the policy to be made. The foreign policy decision-making process itself is represented by the head of state or the head of government and influenced by the policy influencers since the decision makers themselves need profound considerations in establishing a foreign policy. The relation between the decision makers and the policy influencers is known as 'Policy Influence System'. Coplin in his book stated that there are four types of policy influencer; (1) Bureaucratic Influencer, (2) Partisan Influencer, (3) Interest Influencer, and (4) Mass Influencer (Coplin, 1983).

Bureaucratic influencers refer to individual or organization in executive body which function to help the decision maker in decision-making process (Coplin, 1983). The bureaucrat policy influencers have a straight access to the decision makers in providing information regarding the policy to be made as well as to enforce the established policy. The bureaucrat policy influencers might also be the decision makers themselves that represent their personal interests regarding the foreign policy.

Partisan influencers refer to a group of people who are in charge to represent the society or people of one country; consider people's demand and aspirations, then deliver it to the political stage to be discussed. These partisan influencers are mostly coming from political party and are having position in the parliament (Coplin, 1983).

Interest influencers refer to a group of individual with mutual goal and interest. These influencers do not only influence the decision makers' behaviors, but also influence both bureaucratic and partisan influencers (Coplin, 1983). However, when the influencers are not involved in determining the foreign policy decision-making process, they will still criticize the decision makers and drive the public opinions. These influencers are mostly the activists from any kind of interest groups or pressure groups such as Think Tanks, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Mass influencers refer to the public opinions and public mobility that are shaped by the mass media (Coplin, 1983). The decision makers are often influenced by the mass influencers in drafting the foreign policy as everyone without any particular strict limitation could have the equal wide access to the mass media. This would enable the people to freely monitor the progress made by the decision makers.

Despite the four influencers, the author would assess the role of bureaucratic influencer in Rwanda's foreign policy decision-making process which involved the main role of President Paul Kagame. The author would analyze the tie between Rwanda and France which has been started with military assistance agreement since 1975, Rwanda's post-independence. It had been all good relations until the Rwanda's genocide tragedy took place in 1994 then the new political elite which were dominated by the Anglophone Tutsi refugees returned to Rwanda taking over the control of Rwanda Hutu's government. The massacre of hundred thousands of Tutsi refugees involved France who was in charge in military assistance for Rwanda under the signed military assistance treaty with Hutu government. The foreign policy of Rwanda as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to join the Commonwealth must have been through such a fully considerations under President Paul Kagame—who is coming from the Tutsi—and the other bureaucrat officials of Rwanda as they first showed their interest to join the Commonwealth in 1996 and President Kagame has been taking the office since 2000 until the present day.

2. Economy-military condition

The economy and military condition of one country play a prominent role in its foreign policy-making process. It requires the country to have a sustainable economy and military capacity in order to safeguard the foreign policy to be

made. The capacity of military power and military interdependency level must be considered in decision-making process as it is one of the vital instruments of national interest and refers to one country's security as well as sovereignty. Besides the military capacity, the decision makers must consider the economy capacity measurement in terms of welfare in order to serve their country's economic growth. It should be taken into considerations that the foreign policy to be made will not cause any harm to their country and will not bring any threat from the outside towards their country's economic stability and national sovereignty. Otherwise, it must be strategically advantageous for the country's national interest.

Despite the three determinants of foreign policy decision-making process includes the economy-military capacity of one country, the author in this case, would only focus on the economic conditions rather than the military condition of Rwanda in joining the Commonwealth as there are lots of economic reasons underlie Rwanda's foreign policy. The economic condition of Rwanda had been classified as fragile since the 1994 genocide tragedy had impoverished the people and eroded its attraction for external investment into its region. Considering the neighboring countries of Rwanda who are also its trading partners, it requires Rwanda to adjust with its neighbors' behaviors as its neighbors are mostly the members of the Commonwealth in order to take a part in its surrounding economic stage.

3. International Context

There are three elements of international context which play prominent roles in decision-making process; geography, economy and politics (Coplin, 1983). Those three elements are in favor of the decision-making as they are related to the national interest. In its process, the decision-makers must consider the geographic location of their country and its surrounding, the economic cooperation, as well as their diplomatic relations with other countries. The low-power and middle-power countries tend to unite together in order to cooperate with the high-power or the superpower countries. Basically, every country is in favor of preserving the peace in order to retain the international political system in a form of world politics structure. Therefore, when a country is making a foreign policy, it requires them to consider their self-capacity and consider other countries' position in international context.

In this case study, Rwanda's foreign policy must have been through profound consideration regarding the importance and the urgency of applying to the Commonwealth for their national developments. Rwanda must have considered its position and self-capacity in the international context especially on its geography as it is surrounded by African Anglophone countries which also are the members of the Commonwealth instead of Francophone countries. The international context of one country often influences its behavior in terms of adapting with its surrounding. It might urge one country to get out of its comfort zone in

order to keep up with its surrounding in terms of both competitive and cooperative strategies; preserve the peace, security and stability in their regions.

D. Hypothesis

Regarding the description on the background and referring to the theoretical framework, it is predicted that the shift of Rwanda's foreign policy as the part of *La Francophonie* to join the Commonwealth in 2009, are due to;

1. Regarding the domestic politics, there is a shift of domestic political elites in Rwanda where the Hutu-Francophone government has been replaced and dominated by the Tutsi-Anglophone who tend to pivot to the Commonwealth.
2. Regarding the economic condition, Rwanda's policy to join the Commonwealth is a form of their strategy to get more opportunities for foreign investments;
3. Regarding the international context, the geographic location of Rwanda—which surrounded by the member countries of Commonwealth—and the role of the United Kingdom in Rwandan state-building post-genocide have influenced Rwanda to apply and join the Commonwealth. It urges Rwanda to create closer link with countries in the region to design both cooperative and competitive strategies.

E. Research Methodology

The method used in this research is qualitative method with a descriptive analytic pattern by using secondary data such as books, articles, journals, credible online news & reports, and other literary sources in order to answer the research question. The collected data must be relevant to the indication, facts, evidences and updates towards the shift of Rwanda's foreign policy as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to the Commonwealth and are expected to be able to support the researcher in verifying the hypothesis of the research.

F. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To explain the urgency of Rwanda to join Commonwealth, as Rwanda did not have any historical connection with the British imperialism.
2. To describe the foreign policy shift of Rwanda as the part of *La Francophonie* pivot to join the Commonwealth.

G. Research Limitations

The scope of the research is limited by the year of 1994 in which Rwanda started promoting English as well as showing the interest towards the Commonwealth—to the year of 2009 in which Rwanda officially joined the Commonwealth and established English as the official language in the previous year. The limitation is

determined to see the dynamics of Rwanda's foreign policy decision-making process on their policy to join the Commonwealth.

H. Thesis Outlines

This undergraduate thesis consists of four chapters, means to help the researcher to find the answer of the research question. The outlines of the research structure are arranged as follows:

- Chapter I describes the background of the issue, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research methodology, research objectives, research limitations, and thesis outline.
- Chapter II explains about the dynamic relations between the Hutu Rwanda and France—as the initiator of La Francophonie organization.
- Chapter III elaborates the relations between the Tutsi Rwanda and Britain—as the initiator of the Commonwealth, as well as the efforts of Rwanda to join the Commonwealth.
- Chapter IV analyzes the factors of Rwanda's foreign policy shift from La Francophonie to join the Commonwealth in the assessment of its domestic politics, economy condition, and international context.
- Chapter V summarizes the entire research and concludes the discussion within the whole thesis.