

**Paul Kagame’s Nation-Building Policies and Their Impact on Post-Conflict Rwanda: An Assessment of Achievements, Challenges, and Future Prospects**

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**Abstract**

Rwanda’s post-conflict recovery following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi has become one of Africa’s most studied examples of nation-building. Central to this trajectory is the leadership of President Paul Kagame, whose policies have sought to reconcile a divided society, stimulate economic growth, and strengthen governance institutions. Through initiatives such as Vision 2020 and Vision 2050, investment in education and healthcare, and the promotion of “Rwandanness” as a unifying identity, Rwanda has achieved impressive gains in stability, human development, and international recognition. Community-based reconciliation mechanisms and robust state reforms further reinforced social cohesion and institutional capacity. However, these

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achievements remain challenged by critics who highlight the trade-offs between stability and democratic freedoms, pointing to restricted political pluralism, media censorship, and the centralisation of power. Persistent socio-economic inequalities and the suppression of ethnic discourse also raise concerns about the inclusiveness and sustainability of Rwanda's model. This paper assesses Kagame's nation-building policies, examining achievements, challenges, and prospects. It argues that Rwanda's experience offers valuable lessons for post-conflict governance in Africa but underscores the need for greater democratic participation, equity, and institutional resilience to ensure long-term sustainability.

**Keywords:** Nation-Building, Paul Kagame, Rwanda, Post-Conflict Governance, Reconciliation, Development, Democracy

### **Introduction**

Rwanda's post-conflict recovery after the devastating 1994 genocide against the Tutsi has garnered global attention and scholarly interest. In the wake of one of the most horrific ethnic conflicts in modern history—which resulted in over 800,000 deaths in just 100 days—Rwanda confronted the immense challenge of rebuilding a society fractured by deep ethnic divisions, political instability, and economic collapse (Tothova, 2024). The nation's reconstruction necessitated not only physical rebuilding but also the restoration of social cohesion, economic transformation, and political stability (Mushimiyimana & Buheji, 2024). Central to this remarkable recovery is the leadership of President Paul Kagame, whose nation-building policies have influenced Rwanda's post-genocide path (Jones, 2022). Under his administration, Rwanda has been viewed as an African success story that exemplifies resilience, strategic governance, and the potential for transformative development even amidst profound tragedy (Rwigema, 2022).

Paul Kagame's nation-building approach has focused on fostering national unity, promoting rapid economic growth, and strengthening institutional governance (Thelma & Chitondo, 2024). His government introduced the

Vision 2020 and later Vision 2050 development plans, emphasising human capital development, infrastructure expansion, and technological innovation (Rwigema, 2022). Kagame's policies have also prioritised social programmes like community-based reconciliation initiatives and investments in health and education, contributing to Rwanda's impressive development indicators (Kamila, 2024). The government's emphasis on eliminating ethnic divisions through the policy of "Rwandanness" and the establishment of institutions like the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) has been pivotal in restoring peace and fostering social cohesion (Habimana, 2022). These efforts have resulted in notable achievements, including consistent economic growth, improved public services, and relative political stability—positioning Rwanda as a model for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa (Jones, 2022).

However, despite these gains, Kagame's nation-building project remains highly contested. Critics argue that his government's strong emphasis on stability and development often comes at the expense of democratic freedoms and human rights (Grajeda, 2021). Reports of political repression, limited space for opposition, and media restrictions have raised questions about the inclusiveness and sustainability of Rwanda's progress (Ngcayisa, 2021). Additionally, Grajeda (2021) opines that socio-economic disparities persist, and the country's heavy reliance on Kagame's centralised leadership poses challenges for long-term governance and succession planning. This study, therefore, seeks to provide an assessment of President Paul Kagame's nation-building policies in post-conflict Rwanda, examining their achievements, challenges, and prospects. By offering a balanced analysis of the successes and limitations of Kagame's approach, the study contributes to the broader discourse on nation-building in post-conflict societies and provides valuable insights for policymakers and scholars interested in sustainable development and political stability in Africa.

### **Statement of Problem**

Rwanda's post-conflict recovery, following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, has been widely regarded as one of the most successful nation-building efforts in Africa. Under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, the country has achieved significant progress in fostering national unity, driving economic growth, and maintaining political stability (Rwigema, 2022).

Policies focused on reconciliation, infrastructural development, and governance reforms have been instrumental in repositioning Rwanda as a model for post-conflict reconstruction (Helal, 2024). The government's emphasis on "Rwandanness" as a national identity, substantial investments in human capital, and a developmental governance approach have garnered international praise, making Rwanda an important case study in post-conflict nation-building (Munana, 2025).

However, Kagame's nation-building model is not without controversy. Critics argue that Rwanda's prioritisation of stability and economic growth has come at the expense of political pluralism, democratic freedoms, and human rights (Nyenyezi & Geens, 2020). The suppression of political opposition, restrictions on press freedom, and the centralisation of power raise concerns about whether Rwanda's governance structure accommodates diverse political perspectives (Mann & Berry, 2016). Additionally, while Rwanda's economic transformation has been widely lauded, persistent rural-urban inequalities and disparities in wealth distribution challenge the narrative of inclusive development (Cottyn, 2020). Furthermore, the government's insistence on national unity through the suppression of ethnic identities has raised questions about the depth and sustainability of reconciliation efforts, with scholars like Ouafaa (2021) and Grajeda (2021) suggesting that underlying ethnic tensions remain unaddressed. These issues cast doubt on the long-term viability of Rwanda's nation-building process, particularly in the absence of open democratic participation and broader societal inclusivity.

Despite the extensive scholarship on Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, existing literature, such as Rwigema (2022) and Halidu et al. (2023), largely focuses on its economic and governance successes, with limited critical engagement on the potential trade-offs between stability and political freedoms, as well as the long-term implications of Kagame's governance model. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive assessment of Kagame's nation-building policies, examining their successes, limitations, and prospects. In doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on post-conflict governance and the complex relationship between stability, democracy, and development in Rwanda and Africa as a whole.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Nation-building is a multifaceted and dynamic process through which states seek to construct and consolidate a cohesive national identity, foster political stability, and promote socio-economic development (Okeke et al., 2022). It is a deliberate effort by state actors to unify diverse populations within defined territorial boundaries, ensuring the long-term viability and stability of the state (Kamrava, 2020). More importantly, Okeke et al. (2022) note that nation-building often involves both tangible aspects—such as the development of institutions, infrastructure, and economic systems—and intangible dimensions like the promotion of shared values, cultural identity, and collective purpose.

In line with the foregoing, the concept of nation-building is closely tied to state-building but remains distinct in its emphasis on the social and cultural integration of citizens (Wimmer, 2015). While state-building focuses on the establishment of effective governance structures and administrative capacities, nation-building is concerned with fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty to the state (Babalola & Okafor, 2024). This is achieved through strategies like inclusive political participation, equitable distribution of resources, national education programmes, and the cultivation of symbols and narratives that reinforce national unity (Alesina et al., 2020). Hence, the success of nation-building often hinges on the extent to which diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups feel represented and integrated within the national framework (Berisso & Sorsa, 2025).

Inherently, scholars have approached nation-building from various theoretical perspectives, including modernisation theory, which links national cohesion to socio-economic development (Udeh, 2017), and social contract theory, which emphasises the role of governance and citizen engagement in building a unified state (Ibrahim & Nurudeen, 2022). Others, like Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," as cited in Bergholz (2018), highlight the role of shared narratives and cultural production in shaping national identity. These conceptual foundations provide a lens for understanding the complex interplay between political leadership, policy formulation, and the broader goals of unity and development. As a result, nation-building remains a continuous and evolving process, influenced by historical contexts, political choices, and societal dynamics.

### **Contextualising Post-Conflict Rwanda**

Rwanda's post-conflict trajectory is deeply shaped by the catastrophic events of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, which left the nation socially fragmented, politically unstable, and economically devastated (Ingelaere & Verpoorten, 2020). Within a span of 100 days, over 800,000 people were massacred, and the country's institutions, infrastructure, and social cohesion were brought to the brink of collapse (Mayersen, 2015). This period of unimaginable violence not only decimated Rwanda's population but also entrenched deep ethnic divisions, creating long-lasting trauma and a critical need for national healing and reconstruction (Reydams, 2021). The genocide's aftermath, as observed by Ingelaere and Verpoorten (2020), presented Rwanda with the immense challenge of rebuilding a society fractured along ethnic lines, restoring governance structures, and revitalising an economy in ruins.

The socio-political landscape of post-conflict Rwanda was marked by a fragile state struggling to maintain order and address the legacy of violence (Tothova, 2024). The collapse of state institutions, coupled with widespread displacement and the breakdown of social trust, created an urgent need for political stability and national reconciliation (Ahluwalia, 2015). Hourmat (2015) further posits that the return of refugees and the reintegration of both victims and perpetrators of the genocide added further complexity to the process of rebuilding, as the state was tasked with fostering unity while balancing the demand for justice, the need for security, and the imperative of social cohesion (Ouafaa, 2021). This context laid the foundation for the far-reaching policies and strategic interventions that would define Rwanda's nation-building efforts in the years to come.

Economically, the genocide's impact was equally devastating, as agricultural production, the backbone of Rwanda's economy, was severely disrupted, leading to food insecurity and widespread poverty (Hodler, 2019). Furthermore, the destruction of infrastructure and the loss of human capital crippled development prospects, while the collapse of financial systems further exacerbated economic instability (Semeels & Verpoorten, 2015). Thus, Ziani and Boudouda (2023) note that rebuilding the economy required not only immediate recovery efforts, but also long-term strategies aimed at fostering sustainable growth, reducing poverty, and addressing inequality.

Consequently, this period of crisis underscored the need for visionary leadership and comprehensive policies to steer Rwanda towards stability and development.

### **Paul Kagame's Nation-Building Policies**

Paul Kagame's nation-building policies in post-conflict Rwanda reflect a deliberate and multifaceted approach aimed at reconstructing a society shattered by genocide and laying the foundation for long-term stability, development, and unity. Since assuming leadership in 1994, Kagame has implemented a series of strategic policies focused on political reform, economic transformation, and social cohesion—all designed to foster a sense of collective identity and propel Rwanda towards sustainable development (Helal, 2024). Thus, Halidu et al. (2023) observe that his leadership style, characterised by pragmatism, vision, and results-driven governance, has played a central role in shaping Rwanda's post-genocide recovery and positioning the country as a model for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa.

In line with the foregoing, Ouafaa (2021) mentions that a cornerstone of Kagame's nation-building efforts has been the promotion of national unity and reconciliation. In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, ethnic divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi populations threatened to undermine any efforts toward peace and stability (Munana, 2025). In response, Kagame's administration introduced policies aimed at erasing ethnic distinctions and fostering a singular Rwandan identity. The establishment of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) and the use of community-based justice mechanisms, like the Gacaca courts, were pivotal in addressing the crimes of the genocide while promoting restorative justice and communal healing (Ugorji, 2019). Thus, Ouafaa (2021) observes that the government's emphasis on the concept of "Rwandanness" sought to transcend ethnic identities, encouraging citizens to prioritise national identity over historical divisions.

In the political sphere, Kagame's policies have focused on consolidating stability and strengthening state institutions. Constitutional reforms and the establishment of a decentralised governance framework have been aimed at promoting effective service delivery and increasing citizen participation in local governance (Semina & Bachir, 2024). Rwigema (2025) adds that efforts to combat corruption and enhance transparency have also been

central to Rwanda's governance model, contributing to the country's reputation for efficient public administration. However, Kagame's political approach has been controversial. Critics such as Grajeda (2021) and Nyenyezi and Geens (2020) argue that the concentration of power in the executive and the limited space for political opposition have raised concerns about the inclusiveness and democratic nature of Rwanda's political system.

Economic development has been another key pillar of Kagame's nation-building strategy. Through initiatives like Vision 2020 and its successor, Vision 2050, the government has pursued an ambitious agenda of economic transformation, aiming to transition Rwanda from a low-income, agrarian economy to a middle-income, knowledge-based society (Sharangaba & Szczepaniak, 2019). Investments in infrastructure, technology, education, and healthcare have further driven remarkable economic growth and improvements in human development indicators (Dinika, 2022). Kagame's administration has also prioritised the development of the private sector, entrepreneurship, and regional integration, positioning Rwanda as a competitive player in East Africa and beyond. Despite these gains, challenges such as income inequality and the concentration of development benefits in urban areas remain pressing issues (Rwigema, 2020).

Furthermore, social development policies under Kagame's leadership have focused on expanding access to education, healthcare, and social welfare (Halidu et al., 2023). The introduction of universal primary education and community-based health insurance schemes has significantly improved literacy rates and health outcomes (Williams, 2017; Chemouni, 2018). Efforts to promote gender equality and empower marginalised communities have also been central to Rwanda's social development agenda, with the country gaining recognition for its high representation of women in political and public offices (Nlyonzima & Bayu, 2023). These policies reflect Kagame's commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable society, though questions remain about the extent to which these gains are evenly distributed across the population.

Together, these nation-building policies have driven Rwanda's post-conflict recovery and positioned the country as a beacon of resilience and development in Africa. However, the centralisation of power and ongoing concerns about political freedoms and human rights highlight the complexities and contradictions inherent in Kagame's governance model. As Rwanda



continues its journey of nation-building, the sustainability and inclusiveness of these policies will remain critical to the country's long-term stability and development.

### **Achievements of Kagame's Nation-Building Policies**

Paul Kagame's nation-building policies have transformed Rwanda into one of Africa's most celebrated post-conflict success stories. Under his leadership, the country has made significant progress in terms of political stability, economic growth, social development, and international recognition (Halidu et al., 2023). These achievements reflect the effectiveness of his strategic governance model, which emphasises national unity, institutional efficiency, and long-term development planning.

One of the most significant achievements of Kagame's policies is the restoration of political stability and security in Rwanda (Helal, 2024). In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, the country faced the daunting task of rebuilding a state torn apart by ethnic violence and institutional collapse. Through effective governance and the consolidation of state power, Kagame's administration established a secure and stable political environment (Chemouni, 2023). The introduction of community-based justice systems, such as the Gacaca courts, played a crucial role in promoting reconciliation and reducing the backlog of genocide-related cases (Ndaisaba, 2024). This approach not only addressed the need for justice but also fostered communal healing and social cohesion.

Economic growth and development have been another cornerstone of Kagame's nation-building success. Rwanda has experienced impressive GDP growth, driven by policies focused on economic diversification, infrastructure investment, and private-sector development (Rwigema, 2021). The Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 development plans laid out clear strategies for transforming Rwanda from an agrarian economy into a knowledge-based, middle-income country (Sharangaba & Szczepaniak, 2019). Investments in education, technology, and entrepreneurship have fuelled innovation and created new economic opportunities (Aubert, 2018). The expansion of tourism, particularly through initiatives such as branding Rwanda as a premier destination for eco-tourism and business conferences, has further boosted the country's economic profile (Alphonse et al., 2023).

Social cohesion and reconciliation represent another vital achievement of Kagame's nation-building agenda. The government's emphasis on national unity through the policy of "Rwandanness" has helped reduce ethnic tensions and promote a collective national identity (Ouafaa, 2021). Institutions such as the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) have played a critical role in fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse communities (Hitayezu, 2021). Similarly, a programme like muganda, which is a monthly community service initiative, has strengthened civic engagement and social solidarity, reinforcing the sense of shared responsibility and nationhood (Ndikemana, 2023).

Additionally, Rwanda's investment in human capital development has yielded significant improvements in education and healthcare. The introduction of universal primary and secondary education policies has expanded access to quality education, leading to higher literacy rates and better educational outcomes (Halidu et al., 2023). Community-based health insurance schemes and the expansion of healthcare infrastructure have improved public health indicators, with notable reductions in child and maternal mortality rates (Chemouni, 2018). The government's commitment to gender equality has also been widely recognised, with Rwanda consistently ranking among the top countries globally for women's representation in political and public offices (Nlyonzima & Bayu, 2023).

Internationally, Kagame's nation-building efforts have earned Rwanda a reputation for good governance, efficiency, and development innovation (Halidu et al., 2023). The country's active participation in regional and global organisations has positioned it as a key player in African diplomacy and peacekeeping (Ntuyahaga, 2024). Accordingly, Balinda (2016) observes that Rwanda's ability to attract foreign investment and development partnerships is a testament to the credibility and effectiveness of Kagame's policies.

These achievements underscore the transformative impact of Kagame's nation-building approach, turning Rwanda into a model for post-conflict recovery and development. However, the sustainability and inclusiveness of these gains remain crucial considerations as the country navigates its future trajectory.

### **Challenges Confronting Kagame's Nation-Building Model**

Despite the remarkable achievements of Paul Kagame's nation-building policies, Rwanda's post-conflict recovery remains fraught with significant challenges. These challenges raise questions about the sustainability, inclusiveness, and long-term implications of his governance model. While the country has enjoyed political stability and economic growth, the approach used to achieve these gains has often come at the expense of democratic freedoms, human rights, and social equity (Grajeda, 2021).

One of the most widely criticised aspects of Kagame's nation-building model is the suppression of political opposition and the limited space for democratic pluralism (Ngcayisa, 2021). Thus, Chemouni and Mugiraneza (2020) explain that Rwanda's political landscape has been characterised by the dominance of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), with little room for dissenting voices. Opposition parties and critical journalists often face intimidation, legal restrictions, and, in some cases, imprisonment or exile. This environment of political repression undermines the principles of participatory governance and raises concerns about the inclusiveness of Rwanda's political system (Rwigema, 2025). Nyenyezi and Geens (2020) consequently posit that the centralisation of power in Kagame's hands, while credited for maintaining stability, has also led to accusations of authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic institutions.

Human rights concerns further complicate Rwanda's nation-building narrative. Reports from international organisations have documented instances of media censorship, arbitrary arrests, and restrictions on civil liberties (Matfess, 2015). Musafiri et al. (2024) state that the government's strict control over political discourse and public expression has stifled debate and limited the ability of citizens to participate fully in governance. This approach, while justified by the state as necessary for maintaining order and national unity, has created an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship that contradicts the ideals of an open and democratic society (Reyntjens, 2016).

Another significant challenge is the tension between national unity and the suppression of ethnic identity. The policy of "Rwandanness", aimed at fostering a single national identity, has been praised for reducing ethnic divisions but criticised for silencing discussions about historical grievances and ethnic representation (Sebahutu, 2023). Schimmel (2022) opines that

by discouraging the acknowledgement of ethnic differences, the government risks overlooking the specific needs and experiences of various groups, potentially deepening feelings of marginalisation and exclusion in the long run.

Economic disparities and uneven development present further obstacles to Rwanda's nation-building efforts. Despite impressive national-level economic growth, wealth and development benefits have not been evenly distributed (Dawson, 2018). Harrison (2017) explains that rural areas continue to lag behind urban centres in terms of infrastructure, education, and healthcare access. The concentration of economic opportunities in Kigali and other urban hubs has widened the gap between urban and rural populations, posing a threat to social cohesion and long-term development (Baffoe et al., 2020). Furthermore, Rwanda's reliance on Kagame's personal leadership style and centralised governance also raises concerns about the country's future political stability. The lack of strong, independent institutions and the concentration of power in the executive create vulnerabilities in the event of a leadership transition (Behuria, 2025). Hence, Osimen et al. (2025) note that the absence of a clear and inclusive succession plan could destabilise the progress made over the past decades, making the sustainability of Rwanda's nation-building efforts heavily dependent on Kagame's continued presence.

Finally, while Rwanda's international image as a development success story has attracted investment and global admiration, it has also created a gap between external perceptions and domestic realities. The emphasis on economic performance and security often overshadows the ongoing struggles for political freedom, social justice, and human rights (Mann & Berry, 2016, 2018). This divergence between international recognition and internal criticism reflects the complex and often contradictory outcomes of Kagame's nation-building approach. These challenges underscore the delicate balance between stability and freedom, growth and equity, and unity and diversity in Rwanda's nation-building journey. Addressing these issues will be crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability and inclusiveness of the country's development trajectory.

### **Future Prospects and Sustainability of Rwanda's Nation-Building**

The future of Rwanda's nation-building efforts under Paul Kagame's leadership presents a complex interplay of opportunities and challenges. While the country's impressive post-conflict recovery has positioned it as a model of development and stability in Africa, questions remain about the long-term sustainability and inclusiveness of these gains. The durability of Rwanda's progress will depend on its ability to strengthen democratic institutions, foster inclusive governance, address socio-economic inequalities, and manage political transitions effectively (Rwigema, 2025; Halidu et al., 2023).

One of the key determinants of Rwanda's prospects is the need for political reform and the deepening of democratic practices. While Kagame's centralised leadership has been instrumental in maintaining order and driving development, the concentration of power in the executive poses risks for political stability in the post-Kagame era (Nyenyezi & Geens, 2020). Establishing stronger checks and balances, expanding political pluralism, and allowing greater space for opposition and civil society will be essential for building a resilient and participatory political system (Ngcayisa, 2021; Grajeda, 2021). Without meaningful political reform, the risk of instability and discontent could undermine the progress achieved so far (Chemouni & Mugiraneza, 2020).

Equally important is the need for sustained economic growth that prioritises equity and inclusiveness. Rwanda's economic transformation has been impressive, but the benefits of development have not been evenly distributed, with rural areas and marginalised communities often lagging (Dawson, 2018). To ensure long-term stability, policies must focus on reducing income inequality, expanding access to quality education and healthcare, and creating opportunities for all citizens, regardless of geographic or socio-economic background (Rwigema, 2020; Halidu et al., 2023). Strengthening social safety nets and promoting inclusive economic policies will be crucial in addressing these disparities (Baffoe et al., 2020).

The sustainability of Rwanda's nation-building also depends on fostering genuine national unity without suppressing diversity. While the policy of "Rwandanness" has contributed to social cohesion, the avoidance of ethnic discourse risks sidelining important discussions on historical grievances and

representation (Ouafaa, 2021). Future efforts should focus on creating an environment where unity is built on the recognition and celebration of diversity, rather than the erasure of difference (Sebahutu, 2023). Inclusive dialogue and participatory governance will help address lingering tensions and promote a more authentic and sustainable national identity (Schimmel, 2022).

Another critical factor is the need for institutional resilience and effective leadership succession. Kagame's strong personal influence on Rwanda's trajectory raises concerns about the country's ability to maintain stability and development in his absence (Osimen et al., 2025). Building robust, independent institutions that can function effectively beyond individual leadership will be vital for long-term governance stability. Clear and transparent succession planning, along with efforts to empower new political leaders, will help mitigate the risks associated with leadership transitions (Rwigema, 2025).

International partnerships and regional integration will also shape Rwanda's prospects. The country's active role in African diplomacy and economic cooperation provides opportunities for growth and influence, but it also requires careful navigation of regional dynamics and global expectations (Ntuyahaga, 2024). Strengthening diplomatic ties, expanding trade partnerships, and maintaining a balanced foreign policy will be essential for sustaining Rwanda's development ambitions and securing its place as a key player in regional and global affairs (Balinda, 2016).

Ultimately, the sustainability of Rwanda's nation-building efforts lies in the country's ability to balance stability with openness, development with equity, and unity with diversity. By embracing inclusive governance, strengthening democratic institutions, addressing socio-economic disparities, and preparing for a post-Kagame political landscape, Rwanda can build on its achievements and chart a path toward a more stable, prosperous, and equitable future.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Paul Kagame's nation-building policies have undeniably reshaped Rwanda's post-conflict trajectory, transforming the country from the ruins of genocide into a model of stability, economic growth, and social development. Through visionary leadership, strategic governance, and targeted reconciliation

programmes, Rwanda has achieved significant progress in national unity, infrastructural renewal, and human capital investment (Dawson, 2018). The government's emphasis on reconciliation, institutional efficiency, and development-driven planning has garnered international recognition and positioned Rwanda as a leading case study in post-conflict recovery (Balinda, 2016).

Nonetheless, the sustainability of these achievements remains contested. Kagame's centralised governance has been criticised for restricting political pluralism, limiting civil liberties, and entrenching authoritarian tendencies (Reyntjens, 2019; Nyenyezi & Geens, 2020). Persistent socio-economic inequalities, particularly between urban and rural communities, undermine the inclusiveness of Rwanda's development model (Ansoms, 2011; Rwigema, 2020). Furthermore, the state's pursuit of national unity through the suppression of ethnic discourse risks leaving historical grievances unresolved, raising concerns about the depth and authenticity of reconciliation (Sebahutu, 2023).

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Rwanda's nation-building project, several recommendations can be drawn. First, there is a need to deepen democratic practices by widening political space, protecting freedom of expression, and encouraging opposition participation (Ngcayisa, 2021; Grajeda, 2021). Second, addressing structural inequalities through inclusive economic policies and investment in rural development will foster broader social cohesion (Baffoe et al., 2020). Third, balancing the ideal of Rwandanness with recognition of diversity can promote a more authentic and durable reconciliation process (Ouafaa, 2021; Schimmel, 2022). Finally, strengthening institutional resilience and preparing for a transparent succession process beyond Kagame's leadership will be crucial for political stability and governance continuity (Osimen et al., 2025; Rwigema, 2025).

By adopting these measures, Rwanda can build on its remarkable achievements while addressing the structural and political challenges that threaten the durability of its progress. Such a balanced approach will not only secure Rwanda's future as a stable and prosperous society but also provide valuable lessons for other post-conflict states seeking to reconcile peacebuilding, development, and democratisation.

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