



**Parahyangan Catholic University**  
**Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**  
**International Relations Study Program Bachelor**  
**Program**

*Terakreditasi Unggul*

*SK BAN-PT No. 1853/SK/BAN-PT/Ak-PNB/S/V/2023*

**Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human**  
**Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in**  
**Rwanda**

Undergraduate Thesis

Written by:

Kezia Natalia Wattie

6091801116

Bandung

2024



**Parahyangan Catholic University**  
**Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**  
**International Relations Study Program Bachelor**  
**Program**

*Terakreditasi Unggul*

*SK BAN-PT No. 1853/SK/BAN-PT/Ak-PNB/S/V/2023*

**Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human**  
**Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in**  
**Rwanda**

Undergraduate Thesis

Written by:

Kezia Natalia Wattie

6091801116

Supervisor:

Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Drs, M.A., Ph.D.

Bandung

2024

Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik  
Jurusan Hubungan Internasional  
Program Studi Hubungan Internasional Program Sarjana



**Tanda Pengesahan Skripsi**

Nama : Kezia Natalia Wattie  
Nomor Pokok : 6091801116  
Judul : *Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in Rwanda*

Telah diuji dalam Ujian Sidang jenjang Sarjana  
Pada hari Kamis, 25 Januari 2024  
Dan dinyatakan **LULUS**

**Tim Penguji**

**Ketua Sidang merangkap Anggota**

Dr. I Nyoman Sudira, Drs., M.Si.

: 

**Sekretaris**

Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Drs, M.A., Ph.D. :



**Anggota**

Anggia Valerisha, S.IP., M.Si.

: 

Mengesahkan,  
Pj. Dekan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik



Dr. Orpha Jane, S.Sos., M.M.

## DAFTAR PERBAIKAN NASKAH SKRIPSI

Nama : Kezia Natalia Wattie  
Nomor Pokok Mahasiswa : 6091801116  
Program Studi : Hubungan Internasional  
Pembimbing : Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Drs, M.A., Ph.D. (19930532) Pembimbing Tunggal  
Hari dan tanggal ujian skripsi : Kamis tanggal 25 January 2024  
Judul (Bahasa Indonesia) : Menilai Relevansi Persemakmuran Bangsa-Bangsa Melalui Penegakan Hak Asasi Manusia di Rwanda  
Judul (Bahasa Inggris) : Assessing the Relevance of the Commonwealth of Nations Through Human Rights Enforcement in Rwanda

1. Perbaikan Judul Skripsi menjadi (**Judul harus ditulis lengkap menggunakan huruf besar kecil/Title Case**)

Judul (Bahasa Indonesia)

Judul (Bahasa Inggris)

2. Perbaikan Umum (meliputi : cara merujuk, daftar pustaka, teknis editing) :  
pemikiran utama untuk pemilihan topik dipertegas. LBM dan IM dalam perkuat anomali/research problem.

3. Perbaikan di Bab 1 beberapa konsep diperjelas: freedom of press, democracy, civil society condition. pilihan metodologi dipertegas, termasuk cara analisa datanya.

4. Perbaikan di Bab 2 pergunakan konsep dalam deskripsi, demokrasi di rwanda perlu di bahas.

5. Perbaikan di Bab 3 pergunakan poin teori dalam analisis., kontribusi perlu fokus pada kebijakan, strategi dan implementasi (proses)

6. Perbaikan di Bab 4

7. Perbaikan di Bab 5

**DOKUMEN INI TIDAK PERLU DITANDATANGANI LAGI**

Bandung, 25 January 2024

Ketua Program Studi,

kaprodi\_hi.fisip@unpar.ac.id  
2/8/2024 5:56:01

Marshell Adi Putra, S.IP., MA.

Penguji,

nyoman@unpar.ac.id  
1/25/2024 13:38:01

Dr. I Nyoman Sudira, Drs., M.Si.

Penguji (Pembimbing),

purwadi@unpar.ac.id  
2/8/2024 5:43:04

Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Drs, M.A., Ph.D.

Penguji,

anggia.valerisha@unpar.ac.id  
1/25/2024 13:38:15

Anggia Valerisha, S.IP., M.Si.

## STATEMENT LETTER

I, the person signed below:

Name : Kezia Natalia Wattie  
Student Number (NPM) : 6091801116  
Study Program : International Relations  
Thesis Title : Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in Rwanda

Hereby declare that this thesis is written as a result of my own academic research and is not a writing previously submitted to obtain an academic degree by other parties. The works of other writers utilized in this thesis are appropriately cited in accordance to the rules of academic writing.

I make this statement with a full sense of responsibility, and I am willing to accept any consequence in line with the applicable rules if my statement is later found to be incorrect.

Bandung, January 8<sup>th</sup> 2024



Kezia Natalia Wattie

6091801116

## ABSTRACT

Name : Kezia Natalia Wattie  
Student Number : 6091801116  
Title : Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in Rwanda

---

This thesis aimed to describe the process in which the Commonwealth of Nations contributed to advancing the socialization of human rights values in Rwanda as a Member State. Taking into account the role that the media had in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, freedom of press was chosen as the human rights focus of this thesis in order to see its possible progress and persistent challenges in Rwanda, followed by the extent to which the Commonwealth contributed to that outcome. Looking at the bigger picture, this research intended to contribute to the discourse regarding the work of international organizations, focusing on their capabilities to trigger and aid changes in a Member State's *status quo* that defies the values of said organizations.

This study employed the qualitative research method, where secondary data such as books, journal articles, and online news articles were utilized to formulate its content. Furthermore, the theoretical framework used is the Spiral Model of Human Rights Change proposed by Sikkink, Risse, and Ropp. The theory elaborated on five stages of human rights socialization: 1) repression and activation of the advocacy network, 2) denial, 3) tactical concessions, 4) prescriptive status, 5) rule-consistent behaviour.

The research found that the Commonwealth contributed to the promotion of press freedom in Rwanda mainly by providing external pressure to the government and acting as a forum for Member States to discuss and declare their commitments in human rights enforcement. Even so, there were two main problems found pertaining to the Commonwealth's contribution: First, lack of proper documentation on their strategies and program implementations as an international organization. Second, lack of reforms and strong actions from the Commonwealth itself. The organization needs to be more active to make their presence known and reemphasize that the organization is worth maintaining.

Keywords: Commonwealth, Press Freedom, Rwanda, Human Rights, International Organizations

## ABSTRAK

Nama : Kezia Natalia Wattie  
NPM : 6091801116  
Judul : Kontribusi Persemakmuran Bangsa-Bangsa dalam Penegakan Hak Asasi Manusia melalui Kebebasan Pers di Rwanda

---

*Tesis ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan proses di mana Persemakmuran Bangsa-Bangsa berkontribusi dalam pelaksanaan sosialisasi nilai-nilai hak asasi manusia di Rwanda sebagai Negara Anggota. Melihat peran media dalam terjadinya Genosida di Rwanda tahun 1994, kebebasan pers dipilih sebagai fokus hak asasi manusia dalam tesis ini dalam rangka melihat kemajuan serta tantangan kebebasan pers di Rwanda, diikuti dengan penjelasan terkait sejauh mana kontribusi Persemakmuran Bangsa-Bangsa dalam kondisi tersebut. Dalam konteks yang lebih luas, penelitian ini bermaksud untuk berkontribusi pada studi tentang peran organisasi internasional, dengan fokus pada kemampuan mereka untuk memicu dan membantu perubahan status quo Negara Anggota yang bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai organisasi tersebut.*

*Studi ini mempergunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, di mana data sekunder seperti buku, artikel jurnal, dan artikel berita daring digunakan untuk menyusun isinya. Lebih lanjut, kerangka teori yang digunakan adalah Spiral Model of Human Rights Change yang dikemukakan oleh Sikkink, Risse, dan Ropp. Teori tersebut menguraikan lima tahapan sosialisasi hak asasi manusia: 1) represi dan aktivasi jaringan advokasi, 2) penolakan, 3) konsesi taktis, 4) status preskriptif, 5) perilaku yang konsisten dengan aturan.*

*Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kontribusi utama Persemakmuran terhadap peningkatan kebebasan pers di Rwanda adalah dengan memberikan tekanan eksternal kepada pemerintah serta bertindak sebagai forum bagi Negara-negara Anggota untuk berdiskusi dan menyatakan komitmen dalam penegakan hak asasi manusia. Meski demikian, ada dua permasalahan utama yang ditemukan sehubungan dengan kontribusi Persemakmuran: Pertama, kurangnya dokumentasi yang menyeluruh terkait strategi dan implementasi program mereka sebagai organisasi internasional. Kedua, kurangnya reformasi dan tindakan tegas dari Persemakmuran sendiri. Organisasi tersebut perlu bertindak lebih aktif agar kehadirannya diketahui dan sebagai penekanan bahwa organisasi itu layak dipertahankan.*

*Kata Kunci: Persemakmuran, Kebebasan Pers, Rwanda, Hak Asasi Manusia, Organisasi Internasional*

## FOREWORD

Praise be to God Almighty for His guidance, grace, and kindness allowed the author to finish this research entitled the **Contribution of the Commonwealth of Nations in Human Rights Enforcement through Freedom of Press in Rwanda**. This writing serves as the Final Thesis for the author to receive a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations at Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung. The author would like to express her utmost gratitude to all the parties involved for their support and help in making this milestone possible.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the process in which the Commonwealth of Nations as an international organization contributed to the socialization of human rights values in Rwanda as a Member State. The theoretical framework used in this research is the Spiral Model of Human Rights Change proposed by Sikkink, Risse, and Ropp, which elaborated on five stages of human rights socialization: 1) repression and activation of the advocacy network, 2) denial, 3) tactical concessions, 4) prescriptive status, 5) rule-consistent behaviour.

The author hopes that readers can find this research useful, not only as a requirement to finish her undergraduate study, but also as a general reading material that can bring new insights and perspectives. Moreover, the author acknowledges there are still loopholes and imperfections within this writing. Hence, the author is open to any criticism and inputs expressed by any party in order to motivate her to conduct better research in the future.

Bandung, February 7<sup>th</sup> 2024

Kezia Natalia Wattie



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, thank **God** for His kindness. From Him, I continue to receive the love I feel I do not deserve. The turbulence of life gave me some distance from Him, yet I feel like He continuously spares me from lots of worst-case scenarios. I am forever thankful for His authority, guidance, and grace. Furthermore, I would like to dedicate this to **myself**. You often fight the demons you face on your own. Through thick and thin, somehow you are still here and you managed to achieve this milestone. If you ever read this again in the future, I want you to know that it *will* get better. You have been through times when encouragement seemingly held no weight against the devastation happening inside you, but you never ceased to give it all you have. Either you win or you learn, and you only fail when you give up. Always remember: *even if others may not understand you, at least you understand yourself*. Thank you for being you.

To Mom, **Dr. dr. Yuanita Asri Langi, Sp.PD, K-EMD, FINASIM, dosen pembimbing kedua**; Dad, **Ir. Reinhard Hendrik Moga Wattie**, my biggest supporter; siblings **Reywulan Gracia Meralda Wattie (alm.)** and **Ezra Aditya Waraney Wattie**, thank you for your prayers and patience. To my grandparents: Oma **Patmah Langi**, Opa **William Langi (alm.)**, Opa **John Wattie**, Oma **Bestintje Lahiwu**, and Oma **Nelly Linuh (alm.)**, thank you for showering me with love and continuing to look upon me with pride. To **Kristi Intan Airin Sangari**, you beautiful human; **Krisan Valerie Grace Sangari**, you're so random sometimes; fellow adventurers **Pingkan Prisilia Istra Langi, Lingkan Olivia**

**Astri Langi, Cyndi Erey Sondakh, Freyti Tumanduk;** and also to the lovely **Gladys Wojciechowska-Langi;** thank you for ensuring me that I am never alone. To the entirety of the **Wattie-Linuh-Lahiwu** and **Langi-Patmah** families, I apologize for the inability to mention each one by one, but I am deeply thankful for your prayers and support.

To my supervisors, **Mireille Marcia Karman, S.Sos., M.Litt.** (Mba Mire) and **Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Drs, M.A., Ph.D.** (Mas Pur), thank you very much for your input and encouragement throughout the writing of my thesis. Your guidance was essential in its formulation and I could not have completed this research without you. I hope I did not cause too much trouble and I apologize for any wrongdoings I did in the process. As an extension to that, I would also like to thank all the lecturers and staff of the **Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, International Relations Study Program** at Parahyangan Catholic University. With gratitude, allow me to specifically mention: **Sylvia Yazid, S.IP., MPPM., Ph.D.** (Mba Syl), **Elisabeth Dewi, S.IP., M.A., Ph.D.** (Mba Nophie), and **Prof. Sukawarsini Djelantik, Dra., M.Int.S., Ph.D.** (Mba Suke). Thank you for the kindness you gave me during a difficult time in my studies, and I apologize for my shortcomings. It was a pleasure to be a part of *Gedung Tiga* for five and a half years. Although the path was not easy, the warmth and breeze of UNPAR made everything worthwhile.

I cannot even begin to mention all of the great friends I met at UNPAR. To the two most amazing women, **Sarah Ferindita** and **Razita Puti Syahzani,** thank

you for staying with me. We went through numerous phases and challenges during our college years and I'm glad we found our way back to each other. Our friendship may not be as ideal as how we want it to be at the moment, but rest assured that I will always be here for you. I hope we'll continue to grow together as we navigate life, and I hope we'll have another group outing soon because I missed the first one *hehe*. To **Ray Rega Lohanda**, thank you very much for helping me and checking up on me. I'm glad we are able to connect more and talk about our progress, dreams, and worries. You are a wonderful friend and I am thankful to be by your side. I'm always here for you and I'm excited to see what you do next. To **Annisa Aqiilah Harnel**, thank you for listening to my stories and reminding me that there is always a way out of the darkness. I know you also have your fair share of challenges, yet you spared some of your time to support me. It means a lot, and I can only hope you also find whatever answers you are looking for. To **Valencia**, *the* girl boss. Thank you for all your kind words and thank you for being a good example of strong work ethics, maturity, and perseverance. Distance and life often bring us apart, but I look forward to connecting and spending more time with you. Good luck with everything!

To **Archangela Rachel, Ruth Latreia, Muhammad Naufal Hanif, Rana Tria Airlani**, and Kak **Fransiska Andita**; it has been a while since we've met and talked. I acknowledge how my struggles impacted you and I'm sorry for the pain I caused. I am deeply thankful that you stuck with me through the chaos. Wherever you are now, I hope you are doing well. I am always rooting for you. To UNPAR for Harvard World MUN 2019: **Togu Alexander, Margareth Prillyanti, Jasmine**

**Feivel, Mutiara Christy, Indira Jauza, Esther Zebua, Nadiva Manopo, Mega Yanti, Albert Sutjianto, and Irena Putrika (alm.);** thank you for the adventure. Looking back at it again, it was definitely one of the highlights of my college life. I'm grateful for the trust and opportunity I was given to be a part of the team. I'm sure all of you are thriving on your own paths, and I am happy to see it.

To **Benzar English Community (BEC)**, Eben Haezar Senior High School Manado. **Ma'am Alisa Eman;** thank you for your trust, and thank you for saving my life. **Sir Tonny Triantoro;** thank you for your guidance. **Ma'am Jane Wullur;** thank you for your contagious happiness. **Sir Apris Marinda;** thank you for your help and motivation. And to **my students**, my lovely pupils, I'm grateful we have become the family we are today. Thank you for the trust, support, and happiness you've given me. You have pulled me from the brink of giving up countless times without you even realizing it. I hope we can continue to grow together and support each other. Keep being yourselves because you are all wonderful people. To many more "sufferings" (*hehe*) and adventures to come. Also, to **Ma'am Deevy Manoppo;** where do I even begin? Thank you for being my mentor and my second mother. You never stopped believing in me, even in times I did not believe in myself. I am blessed to have a teacher so nurturing like you.

Other than Benzar English Community, to which I was fortunate enough to be entrusted, I would also like to thank my teachers at **Eben Haezar Junior High School 1** and **Eben Haezar Senior High School Manado**. Although my days as a school student have long passed, their prayers and encouragement continue to help

me and form me into the person I am today. I thank Eben Haezar Senior High School, alongside the **Eben Haezar Foundation**, for their never-ending support and the trust given to me as the coach of BEC. It is my honour to contribute to Eben Haezar through the community and I strive to keep doing my best to help the students reach their full potential. I wish for all the growth and success Eben Haezar deserves.

To **Rebecca Teisha Indriawan**; you're a champ, *fren*. Thank you for sticking with me through thick and thin; through the dark times, silly times, and crazy times. We have been through a lot together, and I would not trade our friendship for anything in the world. You are kind, strong, and independent. I hope you will never forget that. I am still here because of you and I will always be here for you. Let's stay and persevere together, shall we?

To *Sekian Sekawan*: **Almeita Lioni Latumeten, Nikita Ribka Maya Siwu, Natalia Kristin Tampang, Tabita Aryane Massie, and Florene Theonie Maria Ruth Lenzun**; we've come so far, from the times we'd go to watch movies regularly to nowadays when it is difficult to plan lunch together. Thank you for all the fun times we've had and thank you for your support all these years. Seeing our growth reminds me of how time has passed, but I am glad to still have you by my side. I couldn't be more proud to see everyone doing their own thing and I wish for all the best things you deserve going forward.

I will remember my time at UNPAR as the tipping point of my growth. I had to learn to stand up for myself, know what I want in life, be more gentle with

myself, and just live life and let go. It was difficult to move forward in an “unideal” way; I took a semester break, it took longer for me to graduate, and by twenty-three years old (which, at this point, basically feels like twenty-five *a.k.a.* the quarter-life crisis already) I don’t have everything figured out yet. I feared feeling alone and left behind, but I am very thankful to have encountered wonderful friends, especially my juniors, who were kind and made me feel included. I wish I could fit each and every one of their names, but I guess mentioning some of them will do for now; **Ryu Muhammad Reinald, Rizky Adi Kurniawan, Nabila Zulfa Zakiani (alm.), Adinda Saskia, Vincentius Prima Navali, Christina Noviyanti Wijaya, Nivy Irawan, Yoshe Angela, Emir Rifqi Saleh, Antonio Adinda, Muhammad Raffi Setiabudi, Muhammad Adli Adian, Rivai Ramadillah Sigit, Ainsha Nurashanti, Quentino Adzandra Junandar, Jason Thaddeus, Angelica Putri Isabel, Matthew Marcellino, Muthia Zahira Rachman, Dinda Rahma Aulia, Ita Hanami Wijayakusuma, Raja Cakrawala Rimba, Gracia Evelin Pakpahan**; thank you very much.

These papers cannot adequately encapsulate the gratitude I am feeling. I am thankful for all the lovely people I encountered and all the thrilling opportunities I had during my time in UNPAR. So, thank you UNPAR; thank you Ciumbuleuit; thank you Bandung, the witness to my adventures. Here’s to the next one.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRAK</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF PICTURES</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Problem Identification.....	5
1.2.1 Description of the Problem .....	5
1.2.2 Scope of the Problem .....	8
1.2.3 Research Question.....	8
1.3 Research Purposes and Contribution .....	8
1.4 Literature Review .....	9
1.5 Theoretical Framework .....	12
1.6 Research Method and Data Collection.....	22
1.6.1 Research Method.....	22
1.6.2 Types of Data and Data Collection Technique .....	23
1.7 Thesis Organization .....	23

<b>CHAPTER II: THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS AS AN ORGANIZATION PIONEERING HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE 1971 TO 2022 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 The Establishment of the Commonwealth .....	25
2.2 The Modern Commonwealth and Its Operations .....	27
2.3 Core Values of Human Rights in the Commonwealth.....	31
2.4 Sub-organizations and Programs Responsible for Human Rights Advancement in the Commonwealth .....	35
2.4.1 Freedom of Information (FOI) .....	37
2.4.2 Access to Justice (ATJ) .....	38
2.4.3 International Advocacy and Programming (IAP) .....	39
 <b>CHAPTER III: THE CONDITION OF PRESS FREEDOM IN RWANDA PRIOR TO THE 2009 COMMONWEALTH MEMBERSHIP .....</b>	 <b>41</b>
3.1 Early Establishment, Occupations, and Conditions Leading to the Rwandan Genocide .....	41
3.2 The Rwandan Genocide and the Media as a Catalyst .....	45
3.3 Democracy in Rwanda .....	48
3.4 Rwanda’s Regulations on Press Freedom .....	50
3.5 Condition of Press Freedom in Rwanda Leading Up to Commonwealth Membership .....	52
 <b>CHAPTER IV: CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS IN PROMOTING FREEDOM OF PRESS IN RWANDA FROM 2009 TO 2022 .....</b>	 <b>58</b>
4.1 Contribution of the Commonwealth in Phase 1 of the Spiral Model: Repression and Activation of Advocacy Network.....	58
4.1.1 Persistent Freedom of Press Violations in Rwanda .....	58
4.1.2 Activation of the Transnational Advocacy Network: Response from International Groups.....	61



4.1.3	The Commonwealth’s Involvement: Normative Presence and a Poor Example .....	62
4.2	Contribution of the Commonwealth in Phase 2 of the Spiral Model: Denial .....	70
4.2.1	Moral Persuasion: The Pressure from the International Advocacy Network to Protect Freedom of Press in Rwanda .....	70
4.2.2	Response from the Global Civil Society .....	73
4.2.3	Denial of Press Freedom Violations from the Rwandan Government.....	75
4.2.4	Institutionalization of Press Freedom Protection in Rwanda.....	76
4.2.5	The Commonwealth’s Involvement: A Follower, But Not an Instigator .....	77
4.3	Contribution of the Commonwealth in Phase 3 of the Spiral Model: Tactical Concessions .....	79
4.3.1	Rwanda’s Ratification of International Human Rights Agreements .....	79
4.3.2	The Commonwealth’s Absence and Rwanda’s Issues In the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase of the Spiral Model .....	80
<b>CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>85</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>		<b>90</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 2.1	Table of Commonwealth Members.....	28
Table 2.3	Notable Documents in the Commonwealth pertaining to human rights.....	32
Table 3.1	Several Cases of Press Freedom Violations in Rwanda (before 2009).....	54

## **LIST OF PICTURES**

Picture 2.2	Structure of the Commonwealth of Nations.....	31
-------------	-----------------------------------------------	----

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	: African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ATJ	: Access to Justice
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
CDR	: Coalition for the Defense of the Republic
CHRI	: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
CHOGM	: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CJA	: Commonwealth Journalists Association
CPJ	: Committee to Protect Journalists
FOI	: Freedom of Information
HRU	: Human Rights Unit
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
IAP	: International Advocacy and Programming
ICCPR	: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICTR	: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IJRIS	: International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science
MHC	: Media High Council
MRND	: <i>Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement</i> (National Revolutionary Movement for Development Party)
NHRIs	: National Human Rights Institutions
OAU	: Organisation of African Unity

OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RMC	: Rwanda Media Commission
RPF	: Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	: <i>Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines</i>
RURA	: Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRC	: United Nations Human Rights Committee

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

When it comes to human rights and freedom of press, the two topics are inherently interconnected where the freedom of press is a part of human rights. Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated every person holds the right to freedom of opinion and expression which includes the ability to give and take information from the media.<sup>1</sup> Journalism, which is the activity of writing and publicizing news thus enforcing freedom of press, is a human right because it ensures the free flow of information where people are able to form educated opinions and choose the best actions for their individual and collective well-being. As journalists utilize the media as a platform to report factual events and incorporate their opinions, they are responsible to publish their reports truthfully in order to shape an accurate public understanding of global issues.<sup>2</sup>

The enforcement of human rights and freedom of press globally is surely helped by international organizations as they institutionalize cooperations between states and conduct monitoring, guidance, and

---

<sup>1</sup> “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=Article%2019>.

<sup>2</sup> Kresentia Madina, “Press Freedom Is Human Rights,” Green Network Asia, May 3, 2023, <https://greennetwork.asia/featured/press-freedom-is-human-rights/>.

assistance programs for human rights enforcement.<sup>3</sup> The contemporary awareness regarding the need for global governance can be traced back to the 1990s, specifically after the Cold War ended. The Commission on Global Governance, comprised of notable international figures at the time, published a report stating how the conclusion of the war provided an adequate environment for global cooperation.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, people realized there were changes and new issues in the world that cannot be solved by states independently, hence numerous international organizations emerged as platforms to cooperate in order to solve them.<sup>5</sup> In the present time, there are approximately 300 (three hundred) intergovernmental organizations that exist according to National Geographic.<sup>6</sup>

One international organization that currently exists is the Commonwealth of Nations. The organization is comprised of 56 countries as of 2022, most of which are former territories of the British Empire. The governing entities of the organization are the Commonwealth Secretariat which focuses on intergovernmental relations, and the Commonwealth Foundation which focuses on non-governmental affairs. The organization is known to be the oldest of its kind, first established in the 1920s preceding

---

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Neuman, "International Organizations and Human Rights – the Need for Substance," *Harvard Law School Human Rights Program* (Cambridge: Harvard Law School Human Rights Program, n.d.), [hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Gerald-Neuman\\_HRP-19\\_001.pdf](http://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Gerald-Neuman_HRP-19_001.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Jessica Unterhalter, "Commission on Global Governance," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Commission-on-Global-Governance>.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Karns, Karen Mingst, and Kendall Stiles, *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*, 3rd ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015), 1–4.

<sup>6</sup> "International Organization," National Geographic, n.d., <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/international-organization>.

lots of its counterparts.<sup>7</sup> It was founded by Canada, India, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa through the principles stipulated in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and further enforced in the Statute of Westminster of 1931. The membership is voluntary and recommendations are not legally binding.<sup>8</sup> Their mandates are to strengthen civil society by achieving the main goals of democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainability, people-centered development, and promotion of arts and culture.<sup>9</sup> Though historically rooted in the British Empire, in present times, any state can apply to become a member of the Commonwealth. The general process of reviewing and accepting new members include an assessment by the Secretary-General, consultation with existing Member States, formal application, and an agreement declaring the states' willingness to adhere to the organization's values.<sup>10</sup>

One of the countries that joined and is not a former British colony is Rwanda. Rwanda is an African state that became a part of the organization in 2009.<sup>11</sup> The admission of Rwanda as a Commonwealth member was a milestone that garnered attention and objections from several human rights

---

<sup>7</sup> Hessel Duncan Hall, "The British Commonwealth of Nations," *American Political Science Review* 47, no. 4 (December 1953): 997–1015, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951121>.

<sup>8</sup> "Our History," The Commonwealth, n.d., <https://thecommonwealth.org/history>.

<sup>9</sup> "About the Commonwealth," CPU Media Trust, n.d., <http://cpu.org.uk/about-the-commonwealth/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Joining the Commonwealth," The Commonwealth, n.d., <https://thecommonwealth.org/about/joining>.

<sup>11</sup> "Why Ex-French Colonies Are Joining the Commonwealth," *BBC News*, June 28, 2022, sec. Africa, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61967842>.

groups due to the country's problematic human rights track record.<sup>12</sup> A prominent human rights violation that happened in Rwanda is the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, dubbed "one of the most notorious modern genocides"<sup>13</sup> which killed approximately 800,000 (eight hundred thousand) Tutsis and moderate Hutus.<sup>14</sup> One of the factors considered to be an accelerator to the genocide is the role of *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM), a Rwandan radio station that broadcasted throughout July of 1993 to 1994. The radio program, amongst the general media ecosystem at the time, was notorious for spreading hatred and propaganda that worsened the inter-ethnic relationship in the country. In addition to devaluing and demonizing Tutsis, RTLM's speech focused on victimizing and glorifying Hutus. The contents of their radio shows encouraged Hutus, who suffered from injustice, to pursue a just and homogeneous society devoid of Tutsis.<sup>15</sup> As the media was seen as a contributor to the genocide, the current ruling party governing the state, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), is applying multiple restrictions on freedom of press.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Pascal Fletcher, "Commonwealth Admits Rwanda as 54th Member," Reuters, November 30, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5AS1C5/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Rwanda," University of Minnesota (College of Liberal Arts, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, n.d.), <https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/rwanda#:~:text=Although%20the%20genocide>.

<sup>14</sup> "Rwanda Profile - Timeline," *BBC News*, September 17, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093322>.

<sup>15</sup> Gustave Adolphe Messanga and Marios Yannick Duclair Tajeugueu, "The Role of Radio-Télévision Libre Des Mille Collines in the Rwandan Genocide: An Analysis from the Theoretical Perspectives of Intergroup Threat and Aggression," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 5, no. 9 (September 2021), <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2021.5918>.

<sup>16</sup> Anton Harber, "Legacy of Rwanda Genocide Includes Media Restrictions, Self-Censorship," *Committee to Protect Journalists*, December 2014, <https://cpj.org/reports/2014/12/legacy-of-rwanda-genocide-includes-media->



## 1.2 Problem Identification

### 1.2.1 Description of the Problem

In 2021, American non-profit Freedom House gave a score of 38 out of 100 in terms of Freedom of the Net in Rwanda. The coverage elaborated problems of heavy content censorship, both enforced by the government and self-enforced by writers out of fear and intimidation. Although freedom of press and access to information are recognized in Article 38 of Rwandan Constitution, journalists continue to face threats of arrest, imprisonment, and possibly even death for independent and critical reporting against the government.<sup>17</sup> To name a few, example cases include: the arrest of two *Umurabyo* newspaper journalists Agnes Uwimana Nkusi and Saidati Mukakibi due to their articles criticizing government corruption<sup>18</sup>; the content blocking, arrest, and travel ban of Robert Mugabe, editor of online news site Great Lakes Voice due to his engagement with human rights improvement efforts<sup>19</sup>; and the alleged politically motivated killings including the beheading of opposition party member André Kagwa Rwisereka and shooting of

---

restricti/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20International%20Media%20Support%20organizatio  
n%2C.

<sup>17</sup> “Freedom of the Net 2021: Rwanda,” Freedom House, n.d., <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-net/2021>.

<sup>18</sup> “African Commission Finds Rwandan Authorities Violated Journalists’ Right to Freedom of Expression,” Media Defence, August 12, 2020, <https://www.mediadefence.org/news/african-commission-finds-rwandan-authorities-violated-journalists-right-to-freedom-of-expression/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Rwanda: Authorities Bar Journalist from Travel to the UN Internet Governance Forum,” Freedom House, December 19, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/rwanda-authorities-bar-journalist-travel-un-internet-governance-forum>.

*Umuvugizi* magazine editor Jean-Léonard Rugambage in the lead up to the 2010 presidential election.<sup>20</sup> The pressure of staying in line with the government transcends state borders, as 35 Rwandan journalists were forced into exile<sup>21</sup> and one of them, Charles Ingabire, was shot and killed in Uganda in 2011.<sup>22</sup>

The concern for Rwanda's condition was brought up since the beginning of the state's application for Commonwealth membership. In August 2009, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) published a report to assist the Commonwealth Heads of Government in making a decision on whether or not to admit Rwanda into the organization. The report aimed to make sure the Commonwealth values were upheld and there is prospect that it would flourish in Rwanda. The report stated that Rwanda did not satisfy the existing standard and there were significant doubts on the government's commitment to human rights improvement. Even so, CHRI acknowledged Rwanda's growth and potential to build fruitful cooperations with Commonwealth members. Therefore, CHRI suggested the Commonwealth Heads of Government to handle Rwanda's application rather than fully reject it. Supporters of Rwanda's admission believed the Commonwealth could provide the

---

<sup>20</sup> Peter Beaumont, "Deadly Attacks on Rwandan Opposition Spark Warning by UN," *The Guardian*, July 18, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/18/attacks-rwandan-opposition-un-warning>.

<sup>21</sup> "Rwanda," Reporters Without Borders, n.d., <https://rsf.org/en/country/rwanda>.

<sup>22</sup> "Rwandan Exile Journalist Gunned down in Kampala," Reporters Without Borders, December 2, 2011, <https://rsf.org/en/rwandan-exile-journalist-gunned-down-kampala>.

state with the incentive and resources to improve its human rights condition.<sup>23</sup>

The Commonwealth expressed the organization's support for the values and moral code of the United Nations.<sup>24</sup> The 2003 Commonwealth Latimer House Principles highlighted the importance of freedom and protection of "independent and vibrant media", as they are essential in ensuring government accountability and transparency.<sup>25</sup> Supposedly as the organization that is responsible for enforcing these values, the Commonwealth should allocate their resources to assist states in solving their issues. On the other hand, as a Commonwealth member, there is responsibility for Rwanda to adhere to these standards. The cases above demonstrate how the Commonwealth's values stand in contrast against the condition of press freedom in Rwanda. The cases and challenges mentioned reflected the road ahead for the Commonwealth. Despite being a member for thirteen years up to the point of this research, improving human rights enforcement, specifically freedom of press in Rwanda that is on par with international standards proved to be a

---

<sup>23</sup> Yash Ghai and Lucy Mathieson, "Rwanda's Application for Membership of the Commonwealth: Report and Recommendations of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative" (New Delhi: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, August 2009).

<sup>24</sup> "The Commonwealth," Commonwealth Health Online, n.d., <https://www.commonwealthhealth.org/health-in-the-commonwealth/the-commonwealth/#:~:text=The%20Commonwealth%20is%20committed%20to.>

<sup>25</sup> "Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance" (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, n.d.), <https://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Commonwealth%20principles%20on%20freedom%20of%20expression%20and%20the%20role%20of%20the%20media%20in%20good%20governance.pdf>.

challenge. Noting that the Commonwealth is not legally binding and upholds human rights as one of their core principles, expectations arise regarding how the organization can aid their situation.

### **1.2.2 Scope of the Problem**

This research used relevant data in describing the Commonwealth's contribution for freedom of press in Rwanda, starting from the state's admission in 2009 up to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022. The reason for the timeline was to see the progress of freedom of press under one Head of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the reason for the time limit is because the accession of King Charles III as the new monarch marks a new era for the United Kingdom as a founding father of the organization. Following the Queen's death, several articles were published questioning the future of the British monarchy alongside its instruments, including the Commonwealth of Nations.

### **1.2.3 Research Question**

How did the Commonwealth of Nations contribute to the human rights enforcement in Rwanda, specifically the Freedom of Press?

## **1.3 Research Purposes and Contribution**

This research sought to describe the process in which the Commonwealth advanced the socialization of human rights values,

specifically the importance of press freedom in Rwanda. Moreover, this research was expected to present a possible progress or persistent challenges of press freedom in Rwanda, as well as to elaborate the actions and extent to which the Commonwealth had a part in that outcome. Looking at the bigger picture, this research intended to contribute to the international discourse regarding the endeavors of international organizations, focusing on their capabilities to aid and trigger change in a Member State's *status quo* that defies the values of the organizations themselves.

#### **1.4 Literature Review**

Several researchers have written about the ability of international organizations in promoting compliance and change to their Member States. Representing a positive outlook on international organizations' contribution is a 2011 book by Thomas Weiss entitled "*Thinking About Global Governance: Why People and Ideas Matter*". Weiss's book went into great detail regarding how the international political landscape has shifted throughout the years, with the presence of international organizations and global media drawing more influence and playing their part in policy making. International institutions are described as forces of good that puts pressure on governments to implement greater freedom and sustainable development for their people. Furthermore, their formation serves as a

medium for the global civil society to document progress and challenges of political activities, highlighting government accountability.<sup>26</sup>

On the other side, several arguments reflecting a more critical view of international organizations were also written. The first one is an article entitled “*Restating the Realist Case: An Introduction*” by Benjamin Frankel. In alliance with the realism view of international relations, Frankel re-emphasized the centrality of states in the global system and pointed out that international institutions are merely a vessel to reflect and achieve the interests of Member States. The article also mentioned about the condition of anarchy in the international political system that enables and somewhat encourages states’ pursuit of power and security. Pertaining to the power of intergovernmental organizations and whether or not they matter, Frankel implied it would be very difficult for said organizations to overpower the interests of states that want to pursue for their own prosperity.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, while acknowledging the growing number and influence of international organizations, Stanley Hoffman, through his 1956 article “*The Role of International Organization: Limits and Possibilities*”, stated that people who are optimistic internationalists should at least acknowledge two major challenges: First, the future forces that may somehow “weaken” states can only be helped, not created, by international organizations. In other words, the primary actors would always be states,

---

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Weiss, *Thinking about Global Governance: Why People and Ideas Matter* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 185–204.

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Frankel, “Restating the Realist Case: An Introduction,” *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996): 9–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419608429274>.

international institutions cannot fully dictate states' actions, and power politics would always exist. Second, the existence of many international organizations cannot solve the issue of security. The most that these institutions can do is provide restraint and be a medium of cooperation.<sup>28</sup>

From the writings above, it is clear that the current body of literature researching the process in which international organizations contribute to freedom of press specifically is sparse. Moreover, the author believes that the Commonwealth, as an intergovernmental organization consisting of former British colonies, is currently not sufficient enough in contributing to the freedom of press in Rwanda. The *status quo* of each Commonwealth Member States' compliance to international human rights norms can differ, but the situation in Rwanda still poses a significant challenge. Noting the unresolved and existing problems such as the authoritative government, repressed opposition, and unlawful torture<sup>29</sup>, the Commonwealth is seen as not successful enough in encouraging change in the country. In order to compliment the existing research done on international organizations and human rights socialization, the author shall contribute deeper analysis specifically in Rwanda using "the spiral model" of human rights change under the theory of constructivism. The reason why Rwanda is of significance to the author in this research is because analyzing Rwanda can

---

<sup>28</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, "The Role of International Organization: Limits and Possibilities," *International Organization* 10, no. 3 (August 1956): 357–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818300007785>.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth Roth, "Rwanda: Events of 2021," Human Rights Watch, n.d., <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/rwanda>.

provide an understanding of the impact the Commonwealth has over a state with no prior ties in the context of the former British Empire. With this, the author aims to give a clear description of how the Commonwealth played a part in the enforcement and protection of press freedom in Rwanda.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

To properly understand and analyze the materials in this thesis, several concepts and theories will be employed. The first definition is on contribution; Generally, the Cambridge Dictionary defines contribution as something that is given to help achieve something or make something successful together with others.<sup>30</sup> In the context of international organizations, this can be understood as the work of said bodies alongside other parties in international relations to help tackle global issues. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlighted the benefits and general mechanisms of how international organizations work, in which they become platforms for discussions on current and possible future issues, develop policy instruments, find resolutions in disputes, establish common languages, and provide comparability and merge of inter-state approaches.<sup>31</sup>

Other than that, it is also important to highlight the point of view from which the freedom of press is defined in this thesis. As the

---

<sup>30</sup> “Contribution,” in *Cambridge Dictionary*, n.d., <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/contribution>.

<sup>31</sup> “The Contribution of International Organisations to a Rule-Based International System – Key Results from the Partnership of International Organisations for Effective Rulemaking” (OECD, April 10, 2019).



Commonwealth supports the United Nations<sup>32</sup>, and noting how freedom of press by the United Nations falls under freedom of opinion and expression as mentioned in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>33</sup>, it is fair to understand that the elements of press freedom by the Commonwealth are also included in freedom of expression. The fifth point of the 2013 Commonwealth Charter on freedom of expression stated the Commonwealth's commitment to facilitating an environment of peaceful and open dialogue, free flow of information, free and responsible media, as well as the enhancement of democratic processes.<sup>34</sup> With that in mind, these elements are the ones which will be referred to in understanding the kind of press freedom the Commonwealth wants to achieve in its Member States.

In terms of the analyzing the Commonwealth's contribution toward Rwanda as its Member State, this thesis utilized the theory of constructivism. The theory started to emerge during the Cold War and continued to grow as a response to the gaps in previous theories, namely neorealism and neoliberalism. Constructivist scholars believed the aforementioned theories were too materialistic as they often emphasized on anarchy, power, and the existing international structure. Constructivists believed that ideas, norms, and social interactions form the identities of states.

---

<sup>32</sup> "The Commonwealth," Commonwealth Health Online, n.d., <https://www.commonwealthhealth.org/health-in-the-commonwealth/the-commonwealth/#:~:text=The%20Commonwealth%20is%20committed%20to>.

<sup>33</sup> "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=Article%2019>.

<sup>34</sup> "Commonwealth Charter," The Commonwealth, n.d., <https://thecommonwealth.org/charter>.

Alexander Wendt, a prominent constructivist scholar, argued that without interaction, states could not have an adequate understanding of itself and others as they do not have the knowledge to base such definitions. With that, states' identities and interests can change according to the collective understanding that came from interaction. As years went by, scholars view that Wendt's focus on inter-state relations were too confining, hence a new focus was brought up pertaining to the role of transnational networks in establishing new norms. An integral medium to this process is the existence of a global civil society where there is interconnectedness, states identities are guided by international norms, and numerous actors, including states and non-state parties, participate in non-instrumental politics. Mary Kaldor, an academic who is a proponent of the concept, stated that the main way to understand global civil society is to look at the debates and negotiations happening between individuals and centers of power, rather than merely determining which institutions are included or excluded in the group. This new understanding gives room for the expanding influence of international organizations, as they are able to facilitate dialogue where values and norms are embedded and encouraged to be implemented by states.<sup>35</sup>

A concept that emerged as a way to explain the internalization of norms is norm diffusion. Norm diffusion can be understood as the mechanisms of which certain norms travel from their original, highly

---

<sup>35</sup> David Chandler, *Constructing Global Civil Society: Morality and Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 25–56.

specific, context to another, also highly specific, context.<sup>36</sup> In parallel to constructivism as a whole, the discussion and utilization of this framework also gained traction after the conclusion of the Cold War. In 1998, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink published an article stating that “*the speed of normative change has accelerated substantially in the later part of the twentieth century,*” and international relations’ research regarding norms would see increasing amounts of interest and importance.<sup>37</sup> In line with the researchers’ prediction, states were seen to start incorporating international norms into their system. Sikkink and Thomas Risse named this process, where international norms are internalized and adopted domestically by states, as the process of socialization.<sup>38</sup>

In 1999, Sikkink, Risse, and Steve Ropp co-edited *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, and the substance of the book became influential in human rights studies. The book presented “the spiral model” of human rights change, elaborating the socialization and internalization processes through which human rights values are adopted by authoritarian states. Their core argument in the book is that those states are under pressure internationally and domestically to

---

<sup>36</sup> Carla Winston, “Norm Structure, Diffusion, and Evolution: A Conceptual Approach,” *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 3 (2017): 638–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066117720794>.

<sup>37</sup> Laure Delcour and Elsa Tulmets, eds., *Policy Transfer and Norm Circulation: Towards an Interdisciplinary and Comparative Approach*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), 241–63.

<sup>38</sup> David Chandler, *Constructing Global Civil Society: Morality and Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 32.

adhere to the human rights norms that other democratic states are already following.

“The spiral model” consists of five phases: Phase One is the repression and activation of the advocacy network. Human rights issue occurs and heightens in a state, where an authoritative government have power and the rights of the people are endangered. The aforementioned state then becomes the “target” state, i.e. the state to which the human rights socialization is aimed. The internal opposition groups, often too weak to directly speak up and trigger change, can utilize the network they have with transnational parties, which is the global civil society, to provide information regarding the human rights violations in their country. The degree of oppression in the target state influences said network alongside the flow of information between the state and the transnational institutions, and the process of norm diffusion can only move onto the next steps if the transnational network acquires an adequate amount of information regarding the human rights abuses in the state.<sup>39</sup>

The second phase of the spiral model is denial. This phase is prompted by further production and distribution of information regarding the human rights violations in the target state, of which international organizations and domestic human rights groups cooperate in compiling necessary data. Moral persuasion is also being conducted by the

---

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Risse, Steve Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17-22.

transnational network, where they remind Western countries of their own standards and encourage that they live up to them. When Western states participate in enforcing human rights norms, the pressure builds up on the target state to improve its practices.

In response to the Western states, the target state issues a denial, meaning the norm-violating government in the target state would deny the accusations of questionable practices and opposes external inquiries. This action is not simply to state a rebuttal, but to communicate that the criticism constitutes an illicit intervention into the state's domestic affairs. Interestingly, the denial against the accusations is almost never expressed explicitly, but rather by referencing the principle of national sovereignty. Moreover, the period in which this phase unfolds can vary depending on numerous factors, one being an armed insurgency. This occurrence can prolong denial from the target state because it increases the domestic perception of fear and retaliation against outside forces.

Other than that, the dynamics of "world time", i.e. different periods in history and development of international norm, in this case pertaining to human rights, suggests this stage can happen normatively as a result of the growth of human rights norms considered as new within a specific time. In this case, the denial is expected to end when better institutionalization of norms is achieved. In transitioning into the third phase, an important point to highlight is how this progress depends on the strength and mobilization of the transnational network in parallel with the vulnerability of the target

states against external pressures. This vulnerability can come from material expectations, e.g. how distributing aid becomes an indicator of human rights performance, or normative commitments, e.g. the target state wants to maintain a good reputation in international relations. It is predicted that a target state that receives significant aid from others is more vulnerable to human rights pressures.<sup>40</sup>

Phase Three is tactical concessions. Due to the increasing international pressure, the target state would find ways to try to control the amounting criticism directed towards them. A way to do that is to conduct minor changes, seemingly in the positive or compliant direction, in human rights practices. The government is acting in a purely strategic or instrumental way, hence permanent compliance should not be expected yet. These changes present an opportunity for domestic opposition groups to muster their courage and speak up against the government. The most important effect of this phase is the success of the transnational advocacy network in forcing a certain degree of compliance from the target state. With that, the focus then shifts to the domestic human rights movement, while the transnational advocacy network helps increase international attention, legitimate the existence of domestic opposition, and amplify their claims in the international sphere.

Phase Three of the spiral model is seen as a point of uncertainty because things can either move forward to consistent change or provoke

---

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-24.

further oppression from the government. On the latter side, the target state can cause harm to the people who are a part of the human rights movement, consequently holding it back. The pause is temporary because the government repression decreases their legitimacy, providing more justification to the international criticism. If the movement is not delayed, the domestic groups are expected to gain momentum and the transnational network is active in adding pressure to the government “from above”, i.e. international donors coordinate aid for human rights improvements, and “from below”, i.e. domestic groups become more powerful against government repression.

When it comes to discourse, human rights claims are likely to be the main principle behind the formulation of opposition coalitions in the target state. Furthermore, it is expected that the argumentative and instrumental elements of human rights values would come to play domestically. While several internal groups are compelled to enforce them due to their genuine belief, others might take them up because they acknowledge the widespread international support and note how it becomes easier for them to criticize the government.

Continuing from there, another important aspect to note is a tendency called “self-entrapment”. The normative process of “shaming” the target state pushes it to engage in human rights concessions, enacted by doing minor changes in its governance. When that happens, the state usually underestimates the impact of the changes and believes that they still have

significant control over domestic and international affairs. The target state continues to engage in communication and argumentation, frequently stating rhetoric without actually considering bigger transformation and adherence. As a result, the state is caught off guard when it realizes how strong the mobilization and network of human rights transnational advocacy have become, and they can no longer deny the validity of international human rights norms.

Approaching the end of Phase Three, the norm-violating government have lesser control over the domestic situation because whenever it commits violations, the domestic and transnational network is activated and begins to pressure the state. The target state then starts to take the network seriously and implement “controlled liberalization”. While this is the desired outcome of this phase, other leaders may still revolt and strengthen the repression over their people. This can result in those leaders being thrown out of power.<sup>41</sup>

Phase Four of the spiral model is prescriptive status. The commencement of this phase is marked by how human rights claims are no longer controversial, even if some violations still exist. In *The Power of Human Rights*, several indicators were listed as a guide to observe prescriptive status: the ratification of human rights conventions, the institutionalization of norms into domestic laws and systems, the existence

---

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-28.



of mechanisms that deal with human rights violations, and the acknowledgement of the validity of human rights norms by the government.

Following those indicators, several criteria were also elaborated to determine whether or not the target state has achieved the objectives of this phase: First, argumentative consistency regardless of audience's response. Second, compliance with human rights norms by the state despite shifts in material and power-related interests. Third, apology, promises of compensation, public dialogue, and reference to the norms in justifying state behavior. Fourth, the initiation of sustained efforts by the state to improve human rights conditions. In essence, the key of this phase is consistent argumentation followed by matching actions. Furthermore, an emphasis should be put on the establishment of domestic-international-transnational social structure in order for this process to be effective. This framework is important as they are the ones responsible in sustaining human rights practice and supervision.<sup>42</sup>

The last phase of this model is rule-consistent behavior. At this point of the socialization process, a problem that can arise is how international organizations and Western states start to settle when the government achieves prescriptive status. When that happens, the attention toward the target state decreases despite human rights violations still occurring. With that being said, the importance of this phase is marked by the persistent push from the domestic, international, and transnational human rights network

---

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

toward the government in order for them to continue conducting appropriate human rights practices. Furthermore, a “two-level game” may also be seen within this phase. When a domestic leader who believes in human rights is selected and intends to apply those norms, the figure may lack power against internal opponents. The leader can utilize international human rights pressures to gain influence and steer the public into giving their support to the figure.<sup>43</sup>

## **1.6 Research Method and Data Collection**

### **1.6.1 Research Method**

To support this research, the qualitative research method was utilized. According to John Creswell, the qualitative method is an approach in research meant to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups contribute into a problem.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the specific type of qualitative research used in this thesis was case study. This design is bound by time and activity, and requires the researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of certain cases such as programs, events, or several individuals. A notable benefit in using the case study design is to construct an evaluation of the implementation of said programs.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-33.

<sup>44</sup> John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014), 32.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

### 1.6.2 Types of Data and Data Collection Technique

The qualitative approach in this thesis drew upon secondary data, such as books and journal articles, from existing publications in order to validate the author's opinions and form interpretations of a phenomenon.<sup>46</sup> To adequately conduct this research, the author utilized online news articles, journals articles, books, reports, and other relevant documents accessible through the internet in order to make an informed understanding of the issue elaborated in this thesis.

## 1.7 Thesis Organization

**Chapter 1** in this thesis is the **Introduction**. The importance of international organizations and the existence of the Commonwealth of Nations as one of them would be explained as the background. Continuing from there, issues of Rwanda's admission in the Commonwealth and its persistent issues with freedom of press would be brought upon as the problem identification. The theoretical basis and research method would also be provided to complement this research.

**Chapter 2** describes **the Commonwealth of Nations as an international organization pioneering human rights**. The establishment of the organization post-British Empire would be explained, alongside the organization's values pertaining to human rights. Furthermore, the

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

implementation of those rights by relevant sub-organizations would be elaborated as well to give a clear picture of the human rights enforcement efforts from within the Commonwealth.

**Chapter 3** of this thesis elaborates on **Rwanda's history with human rights abuses**. As a state, Rwanda has a contentious past filled with ethnic tensions, which lead to the 199 Rwandan Genocide. The genocide itself would be touched upon, with a specific focus on **the role of media as a catalyst** to the genocide. This would be important in understanding why press freedom in Rwanda is a difficult matter.

**Chapter 4** is the **description of the Commonwealth's contribution in Rwanda's freedom of press advancement**. The theoretical basis explained in the first chapter would be utilized in this chapter, with the hopes of giving a clear picture about the extent to which the Commonwealth was active in aiding freedom of press in Rwanda.

**Chapter 5** is the **Conclusion**, where the descriptions from the previous chapter would be taken into consideration in answering the research question. Other than that, the overall findings would be elaborated, concluded with the author's argumentations on the Commonwealth's work for press freedom in Rwanda.