

Ownership for the Taking? Challenges and Possibilities for Rwanda in Taking Ownership

Amalie T.K. Schmidt¹

¹Roskilde University, Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde, Denmark

amthko@ruc.dk

Ownership has become a key-word in development assistance during the last decade, but the term is controversial because it is vague and can mean different things. For donors it can mean commitment to implementing policies and for recipients it means control over the formulation of policies. Based on sovereignty the paper defines ownership as control and treats this form of ownership as a goal in itself. However, since the donors have a different definition of ownership, the hypothesis of the paper is that aid-dependent countries are having trouble taking control over the formulation of their policies in the areas where donors have a heightened interest. In order to test this hypothesis and attempt to move beyond a simplified idea of donors dictating policies, the paper focus on Rwanda and its relations with donors. The chosen donors are the IMF and the World Bank as bilateral donors tend to follow suit. Rwanda is chosen because it is reputed to have strong ownership and is therefore a critical case which will provide us with a better understanding of the possibilities and challenges for aid-dependent countries in taking ownership. Based on fieldwork in Rwanda, the paper scrutinises the process of taking ownership for the Government of Rwanda, in some of the areas where the IMF and/or the World Bank have strong interests. Interviews will be conducted with both World Bank staff, government officials and NGO's. The paper concludes with thoughts on how the term ownership influence the relationship between Rwanda and the IMF/World Bank.