Remembering Rwanda:

Patterns of post-conflict scholarship (1994-2014)

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Abstract:

The 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide prompted a flurry of commentary and scholarship recalling the 1994 tragedy, its aftermath and reflecting on what has been learned about genocide prevention and conflict transformation. This paper reviews seminal works across two decades of scholarship to examine how post-conflict analysis has sought to understand an event that many still describe as ‘incomprehensible’. In the first five years, the Rwandan genocide emerged as a grand signifier of the ‘failure to prevent’ while scholarship consolidated the empirical evidence of the events. Research leading up to the tenth anniversary produced a deeper level of understanding of agency and aetiology of the genocide. In the third phase, the genocide was increasingly situated in a deeper historical and regional context and scholarship shifted its focus to the normative theme of transitional justice. Contemporary research has produced a more critical literature challenging the Rwandan ‘success story’ and exploring the complex politics of reconciliation and memory. This retrospective of Rwandan genocide scholarship reveals a progressive pattern of scholarly change. Similar patterns might be observable across the field of post-conflict analysis that could help guide current and future research strategies.

Selected Stream(s): Global governance,

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What now? As usual the Europeans have understood nothing. The great needs are justice and cash, *in that order* ... If justice and money do not come, then death will return.


Neither the United Nations Secretariat, nor the Security Council, nor Member States in general, nor the international media, paid enough attention to the gathering signs of disaster. Still less did we take timely action.

Kofi Annan, *Action Plan to Prevent Genocide* 2004

You Rwandans, you’ve have changed the world. Your history of devastation has become our history of collective failure. We have scrambled to try to do better. We know what is possible; because you will never, and you should never, let us forget.

Samantha Power, *20th Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide*, 2014
Introduction

This paper reviews seminal works in Rwandan studies across two decades of scholarship since the tragedy of the genocide in 1994 to examine how post-conflict analysis has sought to understand an event that many still describe as ‘incomprehensible’. Demonstrating how Rwandan studies has remembered and responded over this period in different ways, this paper explores how post conflict analysis evolves over time. It shows how many of the most enduring works have been produced by area specialists who have sought to understand the facts, causes and stories of those involved in all aspects of the genocide. The genocide has come to be regarded as a grand signifier of ‘collective failure’ at the international level, but it has also created a legacy in global governance and international law. In particular, tragic events of April to July 1994 have brought about the first conviction of an individual for the crime of genocide and the event overall has been constantly used as a justification for the international community’s responsibility to protect.

The analysis begins with a brief account of the international context of the international relations of Africa that preceded the genocide. It then explores seminal works in four phases correlating with five-year intervals. The commemorations at the end of each anniversary have been important for generating commentary, scholarship and often political declarations that were characteristic of the period. The first phase (1994-1999), established an enduring narrative of outrage at the ‘failure to protect’ but it also consolidated a more accurate empirical account of the facts of the crisis. Research leading up to the tenth anniversary (2000-2004) produced a deeper level of understanding of agency and aetiology of the genocide and its relationship with regional warfare. In the third phase (2005-2009), the genocide was increasingly situated in a deeper historical and regional context and scholarship shifted its focus to the normative theme of transitional justice. The fourth phase (2009-2014) has produced a more critical literature drawn from
newly available evidence and challenging the neoliberal ‘success story’ promulgated by the Rwandan government.

The twentieth anniversary in April this year has revealed new evidence and interpretations of the complex and contested politics of reconciliation and memory. A significant amount of new evidence has only recently become available. For example, General Romero Dallaire's situation reports (SITREPS) 1993 and 1994 warning of impending violence were only released recently in early 2014 by the United States National Security Archives. Dallaire himself did not write his definitive account of the genocide until the tenth anniversary and he continues to draw upon his knowledge of Rwanda to address the world wide phenomenon of child soldiers. Other comprehensive works reviewing the negligence of the international media have only been published in recent years, while new prosecutions of perpetrators harbouring in Europe and allegations about what the Western powers knew about the genocide in 1994 have only surfaced in recent months. Qualitative data from witnesses and perpetrators continues to emerge and has generated an important new wave of scholarship countering the predominant ‘elite-driven’ analysis of the genocide. This most recent wave of post-conflict scholarship has gained greater access to a generation of everyday experience that reflects on the tragedy and its aftermath. It also reveals broader patterns of genocide prevention and conflict transformation analysis and provides an opportunity to evaluate how post-conflict analysis develops and evolves over time.

Many of the themes that emerge in the Rwanda case resonate with broader genocide studies. Scholars focus on the relationship between local events and global significance, on the politics of memory and trauma and of questions of elite-driven or everyday participation. Over time, the complex political narratives surrounding memory and amnesia become more important as certain aspects of the story fade and others are revealed. While the primary focus of this inquiry is on international meanings, it also examines how these acts of remembering are transposed and translated to and from the

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local to the global context. Susan Sontag has written elegantly on these dynamics to demonstrate how ‘remembering is an ethical value in and on itself’\(^9\) and to understand how incidents of violence experienced at the local level can come to acquire global significance:

The memory of war, however, like all memory, is mostly local... But for a war to break out of its immediate constituency and become a subject of international attention, it must be regarded as something of an exception, as wars go, and represent more than the clashing interests of the belligerents themselves. Most wars do not acquire the requisite fuller meaning.\(^{10}\)

Political and ethical tensions should always be considered when the international community remembers the global significance of an event such as the Rwandan genocide. The guiding questions for analysing post conflict scholarship should also be attuned to ethical and political positions as they inform debates about knowledge, justice and agency. This retrospective of Rwandan genocide scholarship reveals epistemological patterns and ontological debates in the scholarship and commentary on the Rwandan genocide at four points of remembering. Scholars engage in strategies of counter-narrative to redress prejudices and simplifications of the context. While holding elites responsible, they seek to build a better understanding of the common or popular experience. Most of the personal testimonies were not physically (or emotionally) available until time has passed. Other analytical perspectives emerge after periods of more extensive debate and reflection. Significantly, there is now a clear divide between most of the established post-conflict Rwandan scholars who continue to dig and reveal new interpretations official narrative of the Rwandan government to ‘turn the page’ and ‘move on’.

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African Stories in a Post Cold War Context

Africa does not feature as a central player in most accounts of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. In geopolitical, geo-economic and ideological terms, the continent appeared to have lost much of its purpose because the ‘third’ world was conceptually dependent upon Cold War categories of a first and a second. African states that had established ideological and economic dependencies struggled with the sudden evaporation of political, military and economic support from the superpowers. As Prunier noted, the end of the Cold War removed Marxist-Leninism that had been, at an organisational level, the great source of inspiration of for African elite.11 These changes were compounded by other economic pressures such as drought and a collapse in important commodities of coffee and tin.

Indirectly, however, Africa was serving an important reflexive purpose in the discourse of the post Cold War period. Embedded within triumphal notions of the New World Order and the ‘end of history’ was a deep anxiety surrounding the ‘problem’ of an apparent resurgence of ethnic conflict in the post Cold War period.12 Establishing a tone for the last decade of the twentieth century, George Bush’s (Sr) vision of a New World Order offered a prescription for resolving ethnic conflict and ensuring that ‘the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, [would govern] the conduct of nations’. The United States would lead the international community in a united struggle to send belligerent tyrants back to the ‘dark ages where they belong’.13

Almost as soon as Bush proclaimed the emergence of a New World Order, commentators responded with the counter claim that the post Cold War era was more appropriately characterised as a New World Disorder.14 In the context of this grand narrative of international order, ethnic conflicts in Africa and elsewhere served as a pervasive and necessary image of the global ‘other’. Forces of fragmentation came to be seen as the reflexive response to globalization in this emerging World Order/Disorder dialectic.
One of the most famous dystopian images of post-Cold War ethnic conflict was Robert Kaplan’s 1994 essay ‘The Coming Anarchy’. Drawing heavily upon the case studies in six cities in West Africa, Kaplan argued that the explosive combination of environmental degradation, poverty, crime, the collapse of the modern nation-state, and the transformation of war, were creating the conditions for a coming upheaval that had the capacity for ‘destroying the social fabric of our planet’. His survey begins with a description of the restless ‘hordes’ of young men behaving like ‘loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting’. Kaplan argued that the collapse of order in West Africa served as a preview, or even ‘the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal collapse… [and] suggests what war, borders and ethnic politics will be like a few decades hence’. Far from being on the margins, Africa’s ‘failed states’ had been reconfigured as a dystopian image of the future.

One example where the new world order/disorder dialectic was played out was the United Nations mission in Somalia (UNISOM) and US Operation Restore Hope. Under the glare of a new phenomenon dubbed the CNN Effect, US military attempts to bring order among the warlords in Mogadishu ultimately failed and profoundly undermined the political will among member states to support United Nations missions. The US experience in Somalia played a significant role in dampening enthusiasm for ‘interventionism’ in other troubled African states and this was decisive in the case of Rwanda.

A different kind of African story that captured global attention in the early to mid 1990s was unfolding in South Africa. Here, a heroic narrative of change and renewal was occurring with the release and election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa (1994 to 1999). In the early months of 1994, world attention was primarily focused on upcoming elections in South Africa and there were serious concerns that white South African extremist groups might revolt and drag South Africa into a civil war. Mandela’s
charismatic leadership however was hailed as a major stabilising force when he was elected on 27 April 1994.

These conflicting narratives of the African continent informed the international imagination and were important precursors for understanding the context of neglect and lack of political will to respond or prevent genocide in Rwanda during the early months of 1994. The United Nations and other institutions of global governance were aware of the growing tensions in Rwanda and among its neighbours. Moreover, it has now been clearly revealed that diplomatic observers of the Arusha Accords were acutely concerned about the tensions especially in the area of re-integrating the Tutsi led RPF into the Hutu dominated RPA. As we shall see, the recently declassified SITREPS from General Dallaire were clearly warning of the high prospect for mass atrocities from 1992. In April 1993, UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur B.W. Ndiaye also addressed the ‘genocide question’ directly in his report on Rwanda as follows:

The question whether the massacres described above may be termed genocide has often been raised. It is not for the Special Rapporteur to pass judgement at this stage, but an initial reply may be put forward. Rwanda acceded to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on 15 April 1975.

The Ndiaye Report is instructive on how the United Nations was itself undergoing a steep learning curve on the nature of traditional peacekeeping missions; namely, to monitor and peace agreements between contracting parties rather than to intervene on humanitarian grounds. The Special Rapporteur’s recommendations that followed from his evaluation on the ground were almost entirely focused on addressing the problem through the lens of an inter-state peace settlement.

Over two decades, the global significance of the Rwanda genocide has been that it has emerged as a grand signifier for the international community’s ‘failure to protect’. Most notably, it has served as a powerful symbol, normative justification and ‘preface’ for the Responsibility to Protect framework. At each of the five-year anniversaries that
will be examined in this paper, this trope has been recited. In international criminal law, the legal response to Rwanda has produced significant milestones such as the first prosecution for the crime of genocide in 1998 and reinforced the case for a permanent International Criminal Court that came into force in 2002. In some ways, the Rwandan genocide has ‘changed the world’ by shaping global governance over the last twenty years. In other ways, the deeper struggles that caused the genocide in the first place continue to be neglected by the West.

Within Rwanda, President Kagame has maintained authoritarian control over a post ethnic Rwandan national discourse and there have been strict efforts to overcome the colonial legacy and cycles of Hutu and Tutsi revolutions and reprisals since independence in 1960s. To the Rwanda government’s credit, it has been confronted with extensive challenges of justice and economics have both been addressed in dramatic ways. By 2000, Rwandan jails held 120,000 people accused of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. In 2001, a system of domestic village based Gacaca courts were established as a form of transitional justice to deal with these matters more expeditiously. The courts have attracted considerable criticism on the grounds that they do not provide formal legal representation and had high acquittal rates. Economically, the current Rwandan government emphasises the need to ‘turn the page’ on its traumatic history and promotes an economic ‘success story’ of growing at 8% over the last few years in relentless pursuit of a vision of transforming Rwanda into a ‘middle-income country’ by 2020. While the Rwandan government seeks to maintain a coherent narrative, the post-conflict scholarship reveals a more complex and critical story.
**PHASE I  The Failure to Protect: Telling the Story (1994-1999)**

The earliest extended publications and reports on the Rwandan genocide were produced by human rights watchdogs such as African Rights, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The medical journal *The Lancet* was particularly effective in its early response to the crisis and published significant accounts documenting the scale of the trauma and the immediate epidemiological analysis. In the previous year there had been a number of UN Resolutions calling on the parties to restrain from violence and establishing UNAMIR, and it is now much clearer just how extensive UNAMIR Commander General Dallaire’s warnings had been. While the United States publicly denounced the violence and responded in the form of legislation and funding, the response was clearly inadequate if not negligent.

The seminal works published in the period between 1994 and 1999 that I will examine in more detail are all motivated by the overarching theme of moral outrage associated with the failure to protect. Each also seek to make sense of the events by searching for facts and truths that might help to understand how such a tragedy could unfold. The books selected here are Gerard Prunier’s *The Rwandan Crisis* (1995), Philip Gourevitch’s *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with our Families* (1998), Allison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story* (1999) and evidence from the UN International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda.

For Prunier, the key to understanding the tensions between Hutu and Tutsi that preceded the genocide lay in the understanding the complex interweaving of race, class, repression, ideology and ‘fake’ revolutions. Cautioning against the European tendency for simplistic understandings that could undermine attempts to understand the crisis and develop appropriate responses, Prunier was less sympathetic towards Africanists.

With the Rwandese genocide, its causes and its probable consequences, one is struck by a feeling of predictability, a social equivalent of the psychological

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mechanisms of Greek tragedy... Rwanda has indeed been a time-bomb waiting for
the right moment to be detonated.\textsuperscript{33}

Prunier is an astute analyst of state power and the politics of representation. He
documents how the state manipulated sentiments of fear, resentment and anger to create
conditions for the genocide. In line with other analysts, this countered the prevailing view
that the Rwandan genocide and civil war was caused by ancient or tribal hatreds.
Strategic manipulation of emotion was central to state power and critically important in
mobilizing mass violence.

\textit{[G]enocide happened not because the state was weak, but on the contrary because
it was so totalitarian and strong that it had the capacity to make its subjects obey
absolutely any order, including one of mass slaughter.}\textsuperscript{34}

This theme of counter-acting preconceived ‘dark continent’ assumptions about Africa
being driven by ‘tribalism’ in weak or ‘failed’ states was also developed by other analysts.
Such scholarship was important given the prevalence of these views among the
international elite. Significant Western leaders in the international community such as
John Major, Bill Clinton, Warren Christopher and Boutros Ghali had all characterised
African conflicts in terms of ‘ancient animosities’ or equated them to natural disasters
such as epidemics or fires burning out of control. These images undermined arguments
about state responsibility and complicity.\textsuperscript{35} In a 1995 report \textit{Playing the Communal Card},
the authors argued that those authorities that orchestrated the genocide in Rwanda self
consciously promoted such tribal discourse to discourage international intervention to
make the violence appear the result of ‘spontaneous, uncontrollable rage’. The report
argued that this emphasis was explicitly designed to manipulate Western observers and
take advantage of the ‘susceptibility of foreigners to explanations of “ancient tribal
hatreds” among Africans’.\textsuperscript{36}

Gourevitch’s \textit{We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families}
(1998) was a highly influential text written by a persuasive investigative journalist. The

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title is drawn from a letter written on April 15, 1994 and sent to Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's operations. The pastoralists who had taken refuge in western Rwanda were not provided sanctuary and Gourevitch uses this example to develop a powerful narrative of moral outrage at the failure of those in positions of leadership who were complicit or criminally negligent during the massacre. More recently, Gourevitch extended his critique of local elites and launched an assault on global governance. He argues that the failure of the United Nations stems from deeper problems of ‘corrupted humanitarianism – of humanitarianism in the service of extreme inhumanity’. The strong moral positioning in Gourevitch’s writings has exposed him to accusations of being a myopic apologist for Kagame’s regime. Des Forges and Lemarchand have been among the most distinguished and vocal of these critics.

What is missing from Gourevitch's account is the how and why of the killings. It is one thing to describe the horror, another to explain the motivations that occasioned the carnage. ... The absence of attention to the history of the country creates a portrait of a genocide that is insensitive to the complexity of the circumstances. In essence, Gourevitch's story reduces the butchery to the tale of bad guys and good guys, innocent victims and avatars of hate.

Des Forges’ *Leave none to tell the story* (1999) remains one of the most important and credible accounts of the Rwandan genocide. Drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of the available evidence, she sought to produce a definitive account of the empirical facts of the Rwandan genocide. The analysis is significantly informed by earlier reports of Human Rights Watch and there is a clear analytical argument rejecting images of ‘ancient’ or ‘tribal’ hatreds. On the contrary, Des Forges reveals evidence of Hutu elites consciously ‘playing the communal card’ as a strategy of warding off international involvement and her evaluations of the failure to respond to early warnings about...
weapons stockpiles and political risk have been further confirmed as more evidence has become available.

On the question of the death toll, Des Forges arrived at the figure of around five hundred thousand. In the United Nations and most commentary, the figure of 800,000 deaths is more common. Des Forges’ more conservative estimate has, however, been re-affirmed by rigorous statistical analysis based on a clearer reading of census data and regional population sampling.\textsuperscript{41} It should be noted that the Rwanda government refers to an official death toll figure of over a million. Clearly death toll figures are likely to be subject to political debate and will remain contentious. For the purposes of this review, it is interesting to note that credible post-conflict scholarship tends toward more conservative estimates. Des Forges acknowledges that such estimates need to be understood within their political and ethical context:

Establishing a reliable toll of those killed in the genocide and its aftermath is important to counter denials, exaggerations, and lies... The necessary data have not been gathered but speculation about death tolls continues anyway, usually informed more by emotion than by fact... Establishing the number of persons killed in the genocide will not help much in assessing the number of people involved in their execution.\textsuperscript{42}

The final example worth mentioning in this first phase is the empirical evidence produced by the United Nations International Criminal Court of Rwanda (UNICTR). In the realm of international criminal law, prosecutions relating to the Rwandan genocide have produced important legal milestones, shifted understandings of accountability and facilitated permanent institutional change. While the ICTR had its problems and critics, one of its overall legacies has been to ‘invert’ the Nuremberg principle of accountability by insisting that ‘all human beings not only have duties but rights under international law’.\textsuperscript{43} Together with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Arusha process reinforced the case for a permanent International Criminal Court which

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came into force in 2002. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) brought about the first prosecution of an individual for the crime of genocide and produced many other precedents for crimes against humanity and rape as a war crime. It is worth mentioning in particular the landmark case of Jean-Paul Akayesu. A former teacher, and Democratic Republican Movement politician, Akayesu rose to the position of Burgemaster (Mayor) of Taba commune. In October 1998 the Arusha tribunal found him individually guilty of the crime of genocide. The following summary lists his crimes.

**Figure 1: Conviction of Jean Paul Akayesu:**

**United Nations International Criminal Court of Rwanda (UNICTR) 1998**

A common theme to emerge in the seminal works from this first phase of post-conflict scholarship is that they are often concerned with story-telling. Combating preconceived notions of African statehood as a source of ignorance and a potential cause for the failure to respond, the authors all appear determined to build understanding of the events of the genocide through narratives and counter-narratives. From the outset, organisations such as Human Rights Watch and area specialists such as Prunier challenged the ‘weak state’ motif directly. Gourevitch showed how local administrators and elites were criminally

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responsible and then accused global humanitarian elites for their complicity. Des Forges revealed the role and responsibility of the Rwandan state but also the United Nations for failing to respond to early warnings. The ICTR demonstrated how an individual could be found guilty of the crime of genocide and, in doing so, established a legal precedent for future prosecutions.

In many of these works, the motif of ‘story telling’ is explicit in their titles. While normative arguments about rights and wrongs are evident in all of these texts, the more enduring works in this phase of post-conflict analysis tend to be focused on building a more comprehensive (and often conservative) empirical account of the events. In the first five years following the crisis, the scholarship had begun to formulate answers to these empirical questions and build an understanding of who, where and how many. What is less developed, are more complex accounts of how and why.

**PHASE II  Aetiology, Agency and Accountability (2000-2004)**

In the period leading up to the tenth anniversary of the genocide, post-conflict scholarship on Rwanda produced a deeper level of understanding of the causes (or aetiology) and began to debate questions of agency. Substantial works emerge that provide a deeper historical understanding of the cycles of violence that preceded the 1994 tragedy and a greater geographical appreciation of the regional dynamics of the Great Lakes region is also evident. The genocide is also more commonly framed in conjunction with the civil war. Publications form international relations scholars are more prominent in this period as analysts seek to understand the normative debates on the responsibility of external powers and lessons that can be learned about humanitarian intervention. Significantly, in this regard, the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect emerges in this period. Related to this, the period also witnessed significant development in early warning genocide modelling.

Mamdani is a good example the sort of analysis that moves beyond questions of ‘who and where’ towards questions of ‘why and how’. In particular, the work seeks to redress three silences in many accounts of the Rwandan genocide.

1. **History** of the cycles of violence and genocide pre-1994
2. **Agency** – Not just a small military elite from above but also mass killing carried out ordinary Rwandans supported by local educated elites (teachers, doctors, nurses)
3. **Geography** – Understanding the regional (Great Lakes) dynamics of the crisis.

Previous works had tended to explore the complex strategies to generate fear and resentment among ordinary Rwandans through an elite driven model. In addition to arguments that attribute the main responsibility on ‘elites’ and ‘the state’, Mamdani sought also to understand the role played by ordinary citizens. Mamdani examined the deep reasoning and feelings that were necessary for the rationalisation and internalization of genocide that he estimated included around half a million ordinary Rwandan participants.

Whether or not we think of genocide as being ‘rational’, we need to understand how it was made thinkable: we need to realize that it is the “popularity” of genocide that is its uniquely troubling aspect.
In this sense, Mamdani insisted that the genocide must always be understood as being integral to the broader civil war. Hutu fears of a Tutsi invasion were promulgated by a virulent propaganda campaign, but they were also furnished with a deeply interanlised history of oppression and contemporary facts. Ordinary Hutus knew that Kagame’s Tutsi army was attacking Rwanda from the Ugandan border. Mamdani asserted that the reasoning, emotion and behavior of ordinary Hutus should not then be understood without a deep appreciation of these historical and geographical dynamics. While it is important to counteract simplistic post colonial imagery of African conflicts being caused by ‘ancient hatreds’, Mamdani nevertheless shows how internalized colonial identity categories of race, tribe and ethnicity did play an important and necessary role in these rationalisations. Mamdani characterises the dominant theme in terms of ‘native’ Hutus repelling Tutsi ‘invaders’.

In its motivation and construction, I argue that the Rwandan genocide needs to be understood as a native’s genocide. It was a genocide by those who saw themselves as sons- and daughters – of the soil, and their mission as one of clearing the soil of a threatening alien presence. This was not “ethnic” but a “racial” cleansing, not a violence against one who is seen as a neighbour but against one who is seen as a foreigner; not a violence that targets a transgression across a boundary into home but one that seeks to eliminate a foreign presence from home soil, literally and physically. Rwanda was a ‘native’s genocide’.

Johan Pottier’s, Re-imagining Rwanda is another example of a deeper analysis of identity politics as a profound causal factor, not only in the genocide, but also in the global discourse of the ‘failure to protect.’ Pottier extends the playing the communal card line of argument to show how the post-genocide regime sought to impose a simple yet persuasive account of the ‘Great Lakes’ conflict. This official narrative was designed for easy consumption by international commentators to supplement Rwanda’s internal and regional ideological agendas. Pottier argued that the Rwandan regime’s repression of

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dissenters and reprisals of Hutus in neighbouring countries such as the Congo were obscured and international media attention has been effectively misdirected through this strategy. Pottier’s analysis shows how the global signification of the Rwandan genocide shifted international attention away from the regional dynamics of the conflict. These have not subsided over twenty years and there is a great risk that too much focus on one hundred days of genocide in 1994 as one of the most efficient incidences of mass killing in human history, distracts global attention from Africa’s world war in the Central African Republic.\textsuperscript{55}

In \textit{Accounting for Horror} (2004), Nigel Eltringham surveyed the debates in post-genocide Rwanda. The analysis relates to Mamdani’s silences of historical grievances, regional dynamics and agency. Following Pottier, Eltringham also shows how there has been a protracted tendency to accept a simplistic, mono-causal analysis of the genocide advocated by the Kagame regime. Bearing in mind this tendency for reductionism, Eltringham is wary of arguments that attribute too much weight to state power or too little the resistance of civil society. Both formulations echo colonial discourses suggesting that Rwandans are more obedient or pliable. This dilemma leads Eltringham to an uncomfortable conclusion relating to language and meaning in post conflict analysis.

\begin{quote}

The problem is that in making it more manageable we rely upon or (re)deploy the same ways of world imaging upon which the perpetrators rely.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

As scholars that delve more deeply into the political and ethical complexity of post-conflict remembering, Pottier and Eltringham and both are critical the draconian decision made by the Rwanda government to suppress or ‘ban’ ethnic identity in favour of an over-arching national ‘Rwanda’ identity. Their critique resonates with other works on the politics of memory and renewal such as Michael Humphrey’s \textit{The Politics of Atrocity and Reconciliation}, Jenny Edkins \textit{Trauma and Memory of Politics} and Elaine Scarry’s \textit{The Body in Pain}.\textsuperscript{57} Scarry had argued that pain simultaneously destroys the capacity for language among its victims and generates elaborate networks of representation and forms
of bearing witness by others. Pain deconstructs language and then rebuilds it.\textsuperscript{58} Trauma
and memory are fundamentally linked through a process of unmaking and remaking the
world and, at the mass level this is usually accompanied by national projects of amnesia
and forgetting.

Historiographical scholarship emerged in direct support of this agenda. Jan Vansina’s
\textit{Antecedents to Modern Rwanda}\textsuperscript{59} shows how there were ancient origins for the ethnic
categories but these were subordinate Rwanda’s pre-colonial aristocratic heritage in the
Nyiginya Kingdom. Vansina is unapologetic in aligning the purpose of his book with the
dominant political narrative of providing a historical foundation for an ethnicity-free
national Rwandan identity.

Perhaps the most anticipated post conflict analyses of the Rwandan genocide was the
biographical account \textit{Shake Hands With the Devil}\textsuperscript{60} written by Canadian and UNAMIR
force Commander Lt General Roméo Dallaire. The book was published on the tenth
anniversary, only after Dallaire had struggled through profound post-traumatic stress
disorder and a suicide attempt. Throughout the work, Dallaire develops an overarching
theme of humanity. The inhumanity was evident in Rwanda. The title refers to an
incident where Dallaire shook hands with a young man who was the head of the
Interhamwe militia and recalled: “He had blood on him. It wasn’t a human hand. There
was no temperature to it. It wasn’t even clammy”.\textsuperscript{61}

The other form of inhumanity refers to the profound neglect and failure of the
international community; the 191 countries that ignored the tragedy of Rwanda. \textit{Shake
Hands with the Devil} provides is a powerful indictment of the failure to protect motif.
From the perspective of a UN force Commander, it reveals the deep frustration of being
under resourced and blocked by bureaucracy. The public relations office in the United
Nations is a specific target for Dallaire’s frustrations.
In the above SITREP (declassified in January 2014), General Dallaire advised the UN DPKO on 11 January 1993 that he had met with a credible informant who was ‘prepared to provide location of major weapons cache’. The request for UNAMIR to pursue this matter was denied.

In January and February 2014, Dallaire’s situation reports (SITREPS) pertaining to the Rwandan genocide were finally released by the US National Security Archive. While many of these documents have been referred to in the literature, this year is the first time that most of this material has been publicly released in its original form. Importantly, these reports confirm that UNAMIR had credible leads on the existence and location of weapons caches and highlight how the logistics of the mission was profoundly hamstrung by not merely by indecision but an active decision not to provide assistance.
The second phase of post-conflict analysis also produced a number of significant works of International Relations scholarship focusing on questions of accountability, the failure of the international community to protect Rwandans and the dilemmas of humanitarian intervention. In *A People Betrayed* (2000) and *Conspiracy to Murder* (2004), Linda Melvern develops a systemic critique of the accountability and responsibility of the West. While these works share the strong normative position of moral outrage, they also lead towards more pragmatic conclusions. Inaction and the problem of political will can sometimes be a consequence of the absence of effective decision making resources. Melvern’s current work on early warning mechanisms with Genocide Watch’s Gregory Stanton are clearly focused on building credible data to support informed decision making as the most effective strategy to build ‘political will’. 

In international relations, the delineation between moral outrage, idealism and pragmatism are also evident. William Shawcross’ *Deliver us from evil* highlights deep flaws in the traditional peacekeeping model and its ineffectiveness for addressing the complexities of contemporary intra-state conflict. The invocation of ‘evil’, and the assumption that it is the ‘west’ that must be delivered from it, suffers from problems identified earlier in similar works. Nicholas Wheeler’s *Global Bystander to Genocide* (2002) provides an analysis from a more critical standpoint. In charting the emergence of the norm of humanitarian intervention, Wheeler also shows the inadequacies of traditional peacekeeping (monitoring of peace treaties) with specific reference to the case of Rwanda. When intervention came from the French, it was motivated by national rather than cosmopolitan interests. Wheeler’s analysis provides a wider and deeper analysis of the underlying ideas that inform international society. Grappling with a problem like the Rwandan genocide, provides an opportunity to critically examine the limits of terms such as society or community at the international level. International Relations theory is caught up in tensions between solidarist and cosmopolitan positions that are illustrated in debates about state based justifications for ‘humanitarian’ intervention. In this sense, the work is an important conceptual forerunner for what would evolve into the Responsibility
to Protect doctrine. In Wheeler, agency is understood through contending understandings of international society.

Samantha Power’s *A Problem for Hell* (2002) also showed how the United States as world’s sole remaining superpower not only failed to protect and uphold standards of universal human rights, but tragically chose to neglect Rwanda. Power documents how the lack of response to Rwanda was rationalised in stark terms of national interest. As one commentator put it, ‘The United States has no recognizable national interest in taking a role, certainly not a leading role… Rwanda is in an unpreferred class’. 67 Power concludes her argument on American inaction for genocides more generally with an assessment on political will.

The real reason the United States did not do what it could and should have done to stop genocide was not a lack of knowledge or influence but a lack of will. Simply put, American leaders did not act because they did not want to. They believed genocide was wrong, but they were not prepared to invest the military, financial, diplomatic, or domestic political capital needed to stop it. 68

While not strictly within the time frame of the second phase, Michael Mann’s analysis of the Rwandan genocide in his book *The Dark Side of Democracy* 69 deserves a specific mention as an exemplary work of aetiology. In this book, Mann’s overall argument is that democracy is built upon mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that have always been violent and often ‘genocidal’. Throughout the book, Mann applies his theory on the sources of power – social, economic, military and ideological – to further his argument that the formation of democracy is often (if not always) a violent process. The chapter on Rwanda explores how these different forms of power were deployed in the by the radical majority of ‘Hutu Power’ movement. Mann’s thesis is unsettling because he argues that democratic ideas and practices are profoundly were implicated as a central driver or cause of the Rwandan genocide. Moreover, out of all of the fifteen case studies
considered in this work, Mann regards Rwanda is a ‘quintessential case’ of his thesis because it exemplifies how ‘murderous ethnic cleansing is the dark side of democracy’. Overall, the above review shows that the period leading up to the tenth anniversary was an extremely prolific period of scholarship. Post conflict analysis of the genocide shifted into a deeper examination of the causes of the crisis, debated complex questions of agency and developed a critique of the failure of the international community to prevent. Aetiological studies reveal an important political tension between oversimplification and complexity. Agency debates reveal how considerations of elite and everyday participation are mediated through memory and trauma. Accountability debates reveal the tragic distinctions between knowledge and will.


The third phase of post-conflict scholarship further developed established research themes. The ‘genocide question’ had re-emerged in the case of Darfur while the broader regional dynamics of the Great Lakes region was once again being overlooked. Most of the significant autobiographical material appears in this period. In response to overcrowded jails and a sluggish international tribunal, the focus shifted decisively to the question of transitional justice.

Established research themes concerned with empirical, aetiological, agency and accountability were extended. Greater empirical clarity and analysis began to emerge as new data and analytical tools became available. Substantial empirical research on the death toll and stockpiles was published in this period. Allan Thompson’s, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* was the first comprehensive account that brings together analysis of the role of domestic and international media. New evidence informed allegations of complicity by the UN, UK, France, and other Western powers. Cohen’s *One Hundred Days of Silence* draws upon declassified documents and testimony of

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policy makers to re-assess the tacit policy of non-intervention. In contrast to the view that
inaction was a consequence of the lack of political will, Cohen concluded that there was a
conscious strategy to not become involved and efforts to suppress or silence critics.

Aetiological analysis further situated accounts of the Rwandan crisis into broader
regional and continental dynamics. In particular, Lemarchand’s *Dynamics of Violence in
Central Africa*, Prunier’s *Africa’s Great War* and Reyntjens’ *The Great African War* re-
positioned the narrative of the Rwandan genocide into an ongoing regional struggle over
resources, identity and revenge. These works redressed the silences identified by earlier
works such as Mamdani and directly challenged the official narrative of the Rwanda
regime. This research established an important theme that has developed in more recent
analysis of the region. The accountability and question of political will was significantly developed. The period
coincided with considerable developments in policy and global governance. Rwanda
served as a poignant preface for Kofi Annan’s *Action Plan to Prevent Genocide* (2004)
and the UN World Summit in 2005 endorsing the *Responsibility to Protect* doctrine.
Other policy initiatives emerged designed to address political will such as Albright and
Cohen’s *Preventing Genocide: A blueprint for U.S. policymakers.*

Normative international relations theory was extended in works such as Jeffrey’s
*Confronting Evil in International Relations* which sought to extend the ethics of moral
agency from individuals to international society and Grünfeld and Huijboom’s more
pragmatic work *The Failure to Prevent Genocide in Rwanda* which developed Wheeler’s
analysis of bystanders in global politics.

Perhaps one of the most important contributions to post conflict analysis during this
period was Scott Straus’ *The Order of Genocide*. Drawing upon extensive fieldwork,
Straus reaffirmed, and significantly developed, the argument that the structure and logic
of Rwanda’s ‘unusually effective state’ was significantly important in making the

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genocide possible. Straus concluded that the state and the conditions of war were critically important.

In sum, the three main factors that contributed to the genocide are war, state power, and pre-existing ethnic/racial classifications. War was critical in legitimizing violence and causing the fear and uncertainty that lead some to kill. Without war, I believe genocide would not have happened. State power was also essential.\(^{81}\)

Notwithstanding the continuation of earlier scholarly debates, the dominant themes in the period after the tenth anniversary were transitional justice and a flourishing of personal testimonials. Histories of the International Criminal Tribunals were written with a particular emphasis on the administrative challenges and its historical importance in establishing the permanent International Criminal Court in 2002.\(^{82}\) Nicholas Clark’s volume \textit{After Genocide}\(^{83}\) provides a particularly good collection of essays on transitional justice and post conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Nicholas Jones’ \textit{The Courts of Genocide Politics and the Rule of Law in Rwanda and Arusha} examines the balance between justice, political culture and administration to evaluate issues such as fairness and expediency.\(^{84}\)

One of the most inflammatory developments to emerge during this period concerned the seething, and still unresolved, question of who assassinated President Habyarimana. French anti-terrorist judge Jean-Louis Bruguièr was commissioned to by the families of the French air crew to investigate claims of terrorist activity.\(^{85}\) Brugiere noted in his report the distinct lack of cooperation from President Kagame. The report went on to examine several theories that might explain who launched the surface to air missiles that brought down the plane of the Rwandan President. Brugiere concluded that the available evidence pointed directly back to Kagame and his military elite. These allegations outraged the Rwandan President who eventually agreed to extradite one of his senior military personnel so in order to ‘lance the boil’ of this conspiracy.\(^{86}\) It is not my
intention to fuel these highly politicized debates here. Nevertheless, the lack of cooperation for the Rwandan government and the overall unresolved character of the issue is likely to continue to fuel speculation.

The other major shift in raw material and expository analysis came with the publication of a large amount of testimonial material and scholarly evaluation. Prior to the tenth anniversary there had only been a scattering of significant autobiographical and testimonial publications. In cases such as Dallaire, the delay reflected the need time to address the trauma of the memories. In other cases, testimonials were published but not translated from French. Some accounts from military personnel on peacekeeping mission emerged quite early but they tended to be highly focused on the operational aspects. Apart from legal testimonies, the trend in personal reflections is that they tend to require some time (a decade) before they are available in published form. For example, survivors such as Esther Mujawayo who received trauma counseling eventually published her testimonial a decade later. Other testimonial works, such as those interviewing teenagers who had survived the genocide also emerged during this period.

The most remarkable compilation of first-hand accounts has been gathered by Jean Hatzfeld. His three astonishing books Machete Season, Life Laid Bare and The Antelope’s Strategy provide first-hand accounts of perpetrators, survivors and reconciling communities. Access to the perpetrators came while they were serving, or had served, prison sentences. Their observations comparing murder with the experience of cutting cattle and describing daily mass murder activities as ‘bush work’ are hauntingly banal. The second book focuses on survivors who tell their own stories and recollections of how they witnessed others die and how they continue to be haunted by their family ghosts. The third book explores life under conditions of reconciliation where perpetrators had returned to communities and now live alongside survivors. Hatzfeld explores the remarkable gestures of forgiveness and repentance, but the book also reveals resentment, injustice and the thresholds of human ‘tolerance’.
The reluctance of survivors, and especially perpetrators, to publish their testimonials is understandable. The delay may, however, reflect other political and social forces. The political agenda of the Rwandan regime is to ‘move on’ and not dwell too much in the past. Post-ethnic Rwandan nationalism places significant expectations on its citizens to adhere to these norms. As Kagame recently decreed, the Rwandan people may never forget but they are expected to forgive.\textsuperscript{91}

**PHASE IV Reconciliation and the Critique of Success (2010-2014)**

The fourth phase of scholarship has been primarily concerned with reconstruction, reconciliation and a distinctly more critical form of post conflict analysis. The Rwandan government and its advocates have been significant generators of reconstruction literature. Reconciliation has shifted into some interesting areas exploring memory, trauma and resilience through a range of media such as film and journalism. Critical post conflict analysis poses a direct challenge to the neoliberal Rwandan ‘success story’.

In *Rwanda Inc.*\textsuperscript{92} Crisafulli and Redmond celebrate Rwanda’s reconstruction as a ‘miraculous turnaround’ to produce a unique model of economic development and coherent governance. The book views Rwanda through a neoliberal lens and is particularly glowing in its assessment of the leadership of President Paul Kagame who runs the state ‘like an American CEO’ and has guided the country to 8% growth rates in recent years and achieved significant gains in Millennium goals. The authors praise the country’s self-reliance and strategic decision to avoid dependency on foreign aid, its goal directed approach and efforts to build a thriving private sector and technology-based economy. Rwanda’s vision of achieving the status of a Middle-Income country (like Singapore) is also widely commended.
Praise for Rwanda’s success story is widespread in the international community. Prominent analysts such as Philip Gourevitch, but also high profile decision makers including Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Bill Gates have all been enthusiastic advocates of Rwanda’s remarkable economic recovery. Booth and Golooba argue that the international community and global markets should continue to support Rwanda and encourage it along its path of setting clear economic goals and creating an effective ‘policy space’ for effective reconstruction and prosperity. Central to Booth and Golooba’s analysis is a normative assault on what they describe as ‘naïve liberalism’. They argue that Rwanda has been unfairly criticised by scholars who over-state its complicity in the conflicts in neighbouring countries.

The reconciliation scholarship has continued to explore the Gacaca courts and their effectiveness in rebuilding justice in Rwandan society. The balance here is often between notions of retribution, reparation and re-integration. Whereas earlier analysis tended to focus on the administrative challenges and procedural concerns, contemporary scholarship has shifted to deeper questions of fairness: retribution, reparation, resentment and re-integration. Social justice and safety concerns arising from the return of perpetrators into communities have attracted particular scrutiny in this field of inquiry.

There is also a significant body of scholarship emerging that addresses a range of challenges associated with sexual crimes. Research has documented the sheer scale of sexual violence and rape as a tool of genocide. The long term consequences of these attacks have attracted considerable scholarly attention. The significance of the Arusha tribunal in establishing rape as a crime of genocide has secured its place in the canon of broader comparative and historical studies such as Heineman’s *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones* (2011), de Bouwer *Sexual Violence as an International Crime* (2013) and Buckley-Zistel’s *Gender in Transitional Justice*. Specific studies of Rwanda such as Georgina Holmes’ *Women in War in Rwanda* (2014) demonstrate how the genocide, the civil war, the transition and the current reconstruction discourse are all profoundly
Holmes argues that Kagame’s authoritarian strong man image perpetuates many of the dynamics that existed prior to the genocide. Gendered analysis of the Rwandan context is now generating important longitudinal analyses about the deeper patterns and long term consequences of sexual violence and its use in war. Children of the genocide who are now young adulthood are also being studied. Importantly, Dallaire is a leading voice in this field which helps to shift attention towards widespread problem of using children as weapons of war.

Another neglected area of inquiry concerns the vexed and concealed question relating to role of women who exercised agency as perpetrators during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Sara E Brown’s important research in this area challenges discourses that simply cast women as victims of horrific abuses and torture in Rwanda through the profoundly feminist assertion that this gender-based characterisation of women is inaccurate and incomplete. Brown demonstrates how, and seeks to explain why, the empirical evidence for these facts have been obscured. While some high profile women have been singled out, Brown challenges this elite driven approach to explore the participation of ordinary Rwandan women in indirect forms of violence during, and after the genocide.

One of the most interesting developments of post conflict Rwandan is a very strong shift towards the study of governance. Straus and Waldorf’s *Remaking Rwanda* (2011) use James Scott’s framework of “Seeing Like a State” to pursue an analysis that is overtly critical of the ‘success story’. It identifies and analyses several mechanisms of social engineering: behavioural and cultural, spatial, economic and political to critically unpack the authoritarian social engineering project of the Rwandan state. Straus and Waldorf then reflect on several normative questions such as whether or not the RPF has a right or moral responsibility to be authoritarian and what lessons might be derived from Rwanda for other post-conflict cases. One reading of Rwandan contemporary history is that the RPF may have succeeded where the UN failed. Another, following Michael Mann, is that authoritarian rule is preferable to democracy in cases such as Rwanda.
Filip Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-genocide Rwanda*\(^{100}\) is highly critical of the Kagame regime. It explores how the authoritarian state utilises the military power to affect political control and suppress dissent. Elections, political opponents, civil society and over-bearing legislation are all controlled tightly to support the ideology and interests of the Kagame regime. Rwanda’s economic, political and technological achievements have come at the price of human rights abuses. Ultimately, Reyntjens views material achievements as only a short-term gain. Failure to address human rights and social justice issues in the long run could pose far more significant problems.

The other significant trend in recent scholarship in Rwandan studies has been the shift in attention towards various the politics of representation. Several works reflecting on media representation, or lack of it, during the genocide have emerged only relatively recently. Research in the fields of film and literary studies have also provided rich analysis of the enduring questions around memory, trauma and expression. Alexandre Duage-Roth’s *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda* (2010)\(^{101}\) argues that remembering is also dismembering traumatic history and is critical of the dominant political narrative notion that Rwanda must ‘move on’ and ‘turn the page’. Similarly, Norridge\(^{102}\) provides us with a powerful continental analysis of African literature through the central motif of ‘imagining pain’. Literary analysis does not feature in much of the conventional IR analysis of Rwanda but arguably the most powerful chapter for post-genocidal Rwanda analysis is on the Yolande Mukagasana who began her resistance to the genocide by simply documenting times and dates of events during the genocide before recalling her memory of survival almost a decade later. Here the theme of memory and trauma is clearly evident and producing deeply insightful analysis. It shows how art and expression are significantly important for genuine healing a nation that has survived only one generation after a genocide.
Conclusion

The above retrospective has demonstrated how post conflict analysis of the Rwandan genocide has moved through several phases. Empirical analysis was consolidated in the first period, aetiological depth was a characteristic of the second, transitional justice and important testimonials emerged after the tenth anniversary and critical analysis of the Rwandan ‘success story’ has been the main trend in recent years.

The occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide produced a vast amount of commentary and some important retrospective scholarship was produced by the seminal authors considered in this paper. In recent years, a surprising amount of new data has become available. Contemporary post conflict analysis has a large body of earlier scholarship to build upon and is now breaking new ground to reveal elements of neglect. Comprehensive edited volumes have also emerged to consolidate this vast body of scholarship. What is particularly interesting in the current context is the widening gap between established post conflict scholars and the Rwandan state. Perhaps unwittingly, the field has become politicised.

A number of the authors of the seminal works reviewed above have produced retrospectives to mark the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary. The commentaries that have been written in recent months appear to be reaffirming earlier arguments but also leading towards some new insights. In ‘Playing the Genocide Card’, Alex De Waal has argued for the need to rethink our tendency to over-dramatise ‘genocide’ in moral absolutes such as ‘evil’. Linda Melvern and Greg Stanton make a similar appeal for pragmatism and balance. Scholars such as Mamdani, and Prunier continue to call for a wider regional perspective and are broadly critical both of Rwanda’s internal autocratic politics and its complicity in fuelling conflict in the Congo. What emerges from the preceding evaluation is that the seminal works in post conflict analysis are all engaged in some form of measured story-telling.

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It is reasonable to expect that post conflict analysis in other conflict prone areas such as Syria or Sri Lanka might adhere to a similar patterns of scholarly response. Prejudices will be met corrective narratives that aim to consolidate a better empirical account of who, where and when the violence occurred. Simplistic moncausal accounts will generate the need for deeper and broader aetiological frameworks. Questions of justice will produce institutional advice while broader questions of agency and accountability at all levels will be analysed in terms of ethical arguments and strategies to build political will. Occasionally, this may generate renewed policy resolve. Balancing questions of justice and administrative procedure will reach tipping points where the political incentives will be to ‘move on’. As history, geography and society becomes re-defined under the aegis of new forms of reconstruction, post conflict scholars will seek to understand how power is operating within the system to reveal whether the deeper causes are being truly addressed or merely covered in a temporary façade of a ‘success story’.
Endnotes

3 UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI), *20th Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide - Memorial Ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York* (New York: 2014).
5 Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Da Capo Press, 2004); Roméo Dallaire, *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers* (Random House, 2010).
10 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 29.
16 Ibid., p. 5.
17 Ibid., pp. 7, 18.
18 *Peace Agreement between Government of the Rwandese Republic and the Rwandese Patriotic Front*, (December 23); Madeleine K. Albright, "Possible Peacekeeping Operation in Rwanda (US Mission to the
19 See UN Commission on Human Rights, "Ndiaye Report," in Report by Mr. B.W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur, on his mission to Rwanda from 8 to 17 April 1993 (New York: United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1993). I am grateful to Debbie Lackerstein for drawing my attention to this report.


21 UN Commission on Human Rights, "Ndiaye Report."

12. Additional measures for protection of the right to life and restoring a lasting peace
(a) Preparations for demobilizing military personnel
(b) Preparations for the return of persons displaced by the war; mine clearance operations
(c) New identity card
(d) Public statements by the Head of State
(e) Establishment of a national human rights commission


26 Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond, Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); David Booth and Diana Rose Cammack, Governance for development in Africa: solving collective action problems (2013); Paul Kagame,


34 Ibid., p. 354.

35 I have surveyed these characterisations in Mount, "A world of tribes?.”


40 See Brown and Karim, eds., *Playing the "communal Card": Communal Violence and Human Rights*.


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91 Kagame, "Rebooting Rwanda: A Conversation With Rwandan President Paul Kagame."


