



# THE LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH SPACE FOR THE STUDY OF RWANDA

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# THE LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH SPACE FOR THE STUDY OF RWANDA

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## ABSTRACT

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Rwanda's recent stability and development are praised by many international leaders such as former U.S. President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, as well as global institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, the praise is not universal, with organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International condemning Rwanda's lack of political and social development. The contrasting opinions on Rwanda's development since the 1994 Rwandan genocide, also referred to as the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis, foster a unique space for academic study. However, this space is limited by divisions within the academic community, which ultimately affect young and upcoming researchers, as well as Rwandan perceptions of knowledge gathering. Scholars focusing on Rwanda often fall within the spectrum of opinion on whether Rwandan public policies should be interpreted as part of its development or as a continuation of state authoritarianism and human rights violations.

This paper first identifies the major divisions and scholarly opinions and how this division affects new and upcoming researchers. The polarisation of the study of Rwanda and the relatively standard narrative with regard to the accomplishments of the Rwandan Government, influence how Rwanda interacts with established and new academic researchers. The seriousness of the continuous division fosters a condition of study that is perpetually heavily polarised, before active research can be conducted and analysed. Additionally, it is leading to a change of Rwandan perception away from foreign-based researchers towards domestic researchers.

## INTRODUCTION

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Post-genocide Rwanda engages political, development and social academics and researchers in order to better understand how this small African nation fell prey to genocide and has rebuilt itself since. Rwanda became best known because of its 1994 Rwandan Genocide, also referred as the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis, which witnessed the butchering of over 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus in just 100 days (Prunier 1995, 143, 213, 263). While the nation is often praised by international institutions and other states for its rapid social and economic development, high usage of foreign aid and policies against corruption since the end of the genocide (Zorbas 2011, 103, 109-10), its government, composed of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) alongside its leader, President Paul Kagame, is often mired in controversy, sparking debates within the academic community.

This research explores the current divide within the academic community. While others, such as Fisher (2015, 134-145) and Hintjens (2014, 133-149), provide a detailed analysis on the groupings, this study focuses on how the academic divide affects young and upcoming researchers and is leading to a change in the perception Rwandans' own interactions with foreign researchers. Early career scholars need to appease both, Rwandan elites, in order to gain fieldwork access, and the academic community, where the current anti-Rwandan Government norm is more salient. To illustrate a growing change in Rwanda-based research, this article first introduces the major divide within the current academic literature on Rwanda. This includes the standard narrative, which negatively interprets Rwandan public policy as violating human rights for the purpose of maintaining President Kagame and his RPF political party's control. The current academic divide influences young and upcoming scholars in how they should perform their study on Rwanda, and affects Rwandan perceptions of foreign researchers as well. Such perceptions have significant importance for the future study on Rwanda, as a growing number of Rwandans, whether in the government or in the general population, view foreign researchers with suspicion and distrust. These perceptions will ultimately lead to a significant drop in access to information on Rwanda. Thus, this changing attitude will continue to seriously negatively impact the information and knowledge on Rwanda for future researchers.

This study heavily relies on existing scholarly literature on Rwanda, as well as semi-structured interviews with unnamed Rwandan officials, in order to showcase their perceptions of foreign researchers. These interviews were conducted during four periods. The first occasion was during and after the celebration of Rwanda Day on September 22-23, 2012, (Musoni 2012). Rwandan Government officials visited Boston, USA to meet and discuss Rwandan public policies with Rwandans and non-Rwandans labelled as 'Friends of Rwanda'. The second was between January and June 2013 in Rwanda. The third was a five-month period between July and December 2014 in Kigali, Rwanda. The final collection of data occurred in August 2016. During each time, interviews were conducted with leading members of the Rwandan Defence Force and non-military or security government, institutions such as the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), the Senate, the Ministry of Education, the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Informants were asked questions focusing on their individual perceptions of international politics, as well as foreign research on Rwanda. Each was given the opportunity to have their

names retracted from all publications related to this research. Their testimonies provide a more inclusive understanding of how the Rwandan Government views its relationship with foreign academics. The majority of this study's data stems from information collected during various fieldwork periods since 2008 and utilises triangulation methods to uncover major themes and Rwandan perceptions. In particular, triangulation was used to test the validity of the principles uncovered while conducting fieldwork, with relation to the current political academic literature on Rwanda. While most of the active research and analysis for this article was done during the above-mentioned periods, it also includes wider reviews and conclusions that emerged during my PhD research at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

## DIVIDE WITHIN THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

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Hintjens, Fisher and Rutazibwa (2014, 291-302) provide a clear understanding of the division within the non-genocide researchers, which consists of scholars not focusing on studying the 1994 Rwanda Genocide and instead researching on Rwanda's agriculture, political and economic development as well as internal social dynamics.. This includes researchers and scholars focusing on Rwandan political, economic, social and military affairs. Hintjens provides perhaps the simplest explanations of the distinction between the two sides of academic opinion. Fisher (2015, 134-145) expands on Hintjens by discussing the various research methodologies used for Rwandan study. Additionally, he examines the complex relationships between Rwandan officials and foreign researchers and questions the role of Western researchers in Rwanda. He refers to the government's power over Western researchers with regard to their ability to gain access to information and observes that Rwandan officials do not believe that foreign researchers have the 'right' or 'authority' to write on Rwanda (Fisher 2015, 139-142). The question of who has this authority is extremely important, as officials have established methods that can either make research relatively simple or really difficult. This is explored further in a following section. Rutazibwa (2014, 295-7) adds a unique insight by examining the necessity of the decolonisation of Rwanda studies in order for the country to be better understood through its own development model rather than in perspective of Western norms.

One side of the literature produces the standard narrative found within the academic community on Rwanda: this consists of a majority of scholars who view the current RPF-dominated government as relying on authoritarianism and ethnic divisionism, and committing human rights abuses within and outside of Rwanda. Notable scholars of Rwanda, such as University of Antwerp's Professor Filip Reyntjens (2004; 2013), political scientist Rene Lemarchand (2009) from the University of Florida, Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Colgate University Susan Thomson (2012; 2013), International Development Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham Danielle Beswick (2010; 2011; 2012), Smith College's Professor Catharine Newbury (1998), and many others, have written and crafted the standard narrative of Rwanda's lack of growth and progress in terms of human rights and political development in perspective of a universal liberal standard. Some scholars hold their opinions as an absolute, which makes it difficult for them to engage in an open academic debate on Rwanda. A notable example is the conference titled *Rwanda under the RPF* which was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2013. The argument

between Professor Reyntjens and Rwandan Senator Tito Rutaremara was extremely divisive, with each accusing the other of participating in human rights violations. Reyntjens was accused by Senator Rutaremara of assisting in the formulation of former Rwanda President Juvenal Habyarimana's Constitution. He responded to the allegations by accusing Senator Rutaremara for participating in massacres in Rwanda during and after the Rwandan Civil War (1990-1994) and during the Congo Wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2003). Some observers privately commented that they did not believe that the round of accusations and lack of academic debate was the fault of the conference's organisers and convenors. Rather, the collapse of professionalism stemmed from the divisive nature of the study of Rwanda.

Opposite this standard narrative of Rwanda, is the literature of scholars who hold positive opinions of Rwanda's political, social and military development. They often praise Rwandan Government policies that have helped in rebuilding the post-genocide collapsed economy through agricultural reform, promoting women's empowerment and stabilising the nation (Hintjens, 2014). Some of these researchers include: Clark (2013a), Crisafulli and Redmond (2012), Ensign (2010), Kinzer (2008) and Waugh (2004). It is important to note that authors such as Melvern (2011), Kinzer, Crisafulli, and Redmond are not seen universally as academic scholars or researchers. Rather, they are seen as either journalists or non-academic researchers, which hinders the acceptance of their studies by a larger public. Journalistic accounts are problematic in the appraisal of the pro-Rwandan Government community because of a tendency among journalists to tell a certain story without testing the validity of their observations or beliefs. While their literature does contain some important insights and knowledge it is, nonetheless, non-academic: the quality of information, research and writing might be at a level comparable to academic scholarship, but analysis is relatively weak, lacking the critical engagement typically found among academics. This stems from the amount of training academics have to undertake in order to be able to prove the validity of their arguments in peer-reviewed materials. Additionally, some writers, such as Crisafulli and Redmond, write overly positive materials that praise Rwandan Government policy instead of critically analysing these policies and providing a more balanced account. Their book *"Rwanda, Inc. How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World"*, suggests that they developed a predetermined conclusion about Rwanda before their research began. There are multiple quotes from informants as well as conclusions that are not properly analysed or compared with other scholarly literature. While the majority of scholars seem to fit within this polarisation, there are some who try to take the middle ground between the two groups. Writers such as Campioni and Noack (2012), Samset (2011, 265-283) and Wilen (2012, 1323-1136) try to showcase Rwanda's progression but also illustrate some of the problems that still exist.

Within the academic literature on Rwanda exists an evident polarisation on how to research, analyse and decide the effectiveness of Rwandan public policy since 1994. While there are a number of scholars who focus their writings to provide analysis without bias, the majority of scholars have uniformly crafted a negative perception of Rwandan development. Their standard narrative is forced upon early career researchers, who are called to choose their stance along the spectrum of Rwandan study. The literature and this coerced self-classification by the researcher inevitably create pre-fieldwork biases, which impact and shape how upcoming academics understand Rwanda prior to conducting their research. Perhaps, most importantly, it creates a question for upcoming researchers to consider,

namely: how will their understanding and knowledge collection be conducted and interpreted by their fellow existing and new academic peers? A central issue for them is whether they will follow the standard, primarily negative, narrative, which might hinder the research process, or whether they will put themselves at risk of becoming alienated from the academic community by drawing non-conventional conclusions relying on Rwanda-based fieldwork data, or even writing positively about the government. The current trend of new scholars and students following the standard narrative seems to be leading Rwandans towards shifting their opinions about foreign researchers and whether to cooperate with them or not.

## DIFFICULTIES FOR DEVELOPING SCHOLARS

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Young researchers on Rwanda face great difficulties, as they need to distinguish their research as authoritative and find an audience within the current divided academic community. If they choose to write against the anti-Rwandan Government opinion (the current RPF alongside President Kagame), they need to find supporting networks to establish themselves as credible researchers and be viewed in major publications and at conferences as independent from government influence. This often creates difficulties in collecting and properly analysing data. Thus, many young scholars wish to follow the current standard narrative on Rwanda, as it is beneficial in securing future career possibilities. Conforming to the standard narrative is unintentionally aided by the Rwandan Government, which already limits available space for scholars to conduct research. The lack of space for research unofficially confirms the standard anti-government narrative. Jesse (2012, 266-74; 2013) writes on the difficulties researchers have in gaining access to performing their research in Rwanda. She writes that while some researchers are predisposed to be biased about the RPF's control over the government, many attempts to gather their data without prior biases. However, the institutional mechanisms to gain proper permissions, including research permits, are difficult to obtain. This leads to frustration and, unintentionally, it influences researchers to harbour an anti-Rwandan Government opinion prior to starting their research. Rwandan officials have furthermore negatively impacted how foreign researchers gather information and craft the conclusions of their research on Rwanda.

An example of government restrictions causing harm can be illustrated by my attempt to gain a research permit to continue conducting research on Rwandan foreign policy. One unnamed Rwandan official within the Ministry of Education commented on how nervous s/he felt for granting me permission to interview government elites, despite having received approval from those officials. The fear stemmed from uncertainty on whether I was or could potentially become a critic of the regime. If, indeed, I was a critic, the official could get into trouble with some unknown higher government or political official for having previously granted me access to conduct research in the country. Whether their topic is political, post-genocide reconstruction, economic development or social redevelopment, foreign researchers are put under pressure by Rwandan officials. This has increased since *Remaking Rwanda: State building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (2011), which, Clark (2013) comments, enraged Rwandan officials after its publication. Thomson (2013, 3-28) is the most notable example, as she writes of her sentencing to an ingando educational facility while

performing research on Rwanda's post-genocide social reconstruction. Foreign researchers in Rwanda, whether they experience the same treatment as Thomson did, still fear their research being influenced by government restrictions. Some, such as Clark, argue that Rwandan intimidation of foreign researchers is not as simple as researchers being watched, restricted or harassed just because they are from outside Rwanda. He argues that research in Rwanda can be conducted without hindrance if special attention is placed on respecting the opinions of Rwandans. He suggests that research methodology, particularly interview questions, should be 'discreet, patient and respectful in the field', as well as allowing the researcher to 'build close relationships with local respondents, researchers and (where possible) government officials' (Clark 2013).

The difficulty of interacting with locals within Rwanda might stem from a general negative perception of the academic community. While conducting research, I encountered difficulties with informants who feared that my research might be overly critical of the regime or depict extremely negatively some particular public officials. Rwandan informants' fear of the consequences of my research, as well as their perceptions of foreign researchers, will be discussed in the following section. However, it is important to note here that ordinary Rwandans, including government officials, are aware of the divide within the academic community and the choices young researchers have to make concerning the standard negative narrative.

Another important factor to be considered by early career scholars is the possibility of being perceived by fellow academics as being too close to the RPF, President Kagame or other structures of the Rwandan Government. Researchers who receive access can be perceived by others as forming pro-government conclusions in order to remain 'liked' by the government, as opposed to conducting unbiased research. Clark's relationship with Rwandan Government officials is a notable example. His fellow scholars discredit his objectivity and professionalism because of his personal relationships with Rwandan officials. One accusation states:

Clark betrays a surprising ignorance about the difficult living conditions in the Rwandan countryside and everyday resistance to RPF rule. If you hobnob with government elites – many of whom benefit from and have a decidedly rosier perception of the authoritarian regime than does the country's impoverished majority – you cannot see the many dark sides of the supposed Rwandan success story apparent since the 1994 genocide.

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The emphasis on the association between Clark and some government officials suggests that he has published only positive illustrations of Rwandan public policies. However, this accusation is mono-sided, as it must be considered that he has previously published pieces that criticised the Rwandan Government, such as a commentary on the 2010 Rwandan elections. This allegation of Clark's blind support of the Rwandan Government conflicts with his past criticism of Rwanda's political system (Clark 2010).

## CHANGING RWANDAN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FOREIGN RESEARCHERS

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The divide with regards to how to conduct research in Rwanda introduces not only challenges for young researchers, but affects Rwandan perceptions of foreign researchers coming to Rwanda as well. During the fieldwork research periods in 2013 and 2014, I confronted many government officials with the fact that foreign researchers face difficulties in gaining access in Rwanda and officials' fear of possible repercussions. Many did admit that the government, whether as RPF government officials or mid- and low-level bureaucrats, hold a negative opinion about academics, which has affected their opinions about researchers. Some expressed belief in Rwanda's need to reengage with academics in order to provide a better depiction of Rwandan public policies. However, many still expressed distrust stemming from three central factors. The first factor relates to the continuing effects of international abandonment experienced by many Rwandans. This holds true for the former Rwandan refugees who resided in the surrounding region and compose a significant portion of the leaders and bureaucrats of the current Rwandan government. Combining several historical events experienced by Rwandans, mostly Tutsis, a theme of abandonment by the international community becomes evident. The most notable events include: the ethnic-based violence in 1959; the forced immigration of Tutsis just before, during and after independence in 1962; the several pogroms during the First (1962-1973) and Second (1973-1994) Republics under Hutu-ethnic supremacy; and finally, the 1994 genocide (Prunier 1995, 41-90). During each period, the international community either ignored or simply was not concerned about the violence and divisions within Rwanda (Uvin 1998, 40; 2001, 187). The 1994 genocide, most known in Rwanda's bloody history, holds particular importance, as many Rwandan government officials lost family members during the genocide and witnessed its immediate effects following their invasion of the country at the end of the Rwandan Civil War. While Rwanda was never ignored by academic researchers during its history, the involvement of scholars in politics in the past, as well as the ostensible abandonment of Rwandan refugees prior to 1994 cause distrust amongst the current elites.

As previously noted, current officials perceive Reyntjens as a participant in the drafting of former President Habyarimana's 1978 constitution, which reinforced ethnic divisionism and the refugee status of mostly Rwandan Tutsis (Prunier 1995, 74-88). While there were some researchers studying Rwandan refugees, such as Prunier in 1986 (1995, 131-158) and Watson (1991), the exiled population was largely ignored by foreign scholars. This had an effect on current Rwandan officials, who interpret the lack of academic research on the refugee camps as abandonment by the academic community. Their perception is based on a historical lack of concern among academic researchers, who showed interest only after the genocide. Additionally, they are suspicious about scholars who were interested in the refugees but fled after the genocide.

The second reason for Rwandan distrust stems from what is perceived as past betrayal by academics and researchers. This includes scholars who come to Rwanda solely in order to enhance their careers, with little desire to help change existing governmental, educational and private sector bodies or to share their knowledge with Rwandans. Within the current Rwandan academic environment, early career researchers tend to adopt the critical standard narrative, crafting their conclusions to fit already established criticisms prior to or during fieldwork. Many Rwandan officials privately comment that they have encountered several young or established scholars with predetermined conclusions prior to their meetings and



interviews. They consider that these researchers are criticising Rwandan public policy only in order to place themselves within the current standard narrative and are not forming critical perspectives on the basis of research conducted in Rwanda. In addition to this criticism of researchers' biased approach to Rwanda, there is also the opinion that criticism of Rwandan public policies is orchestrated for the sake of criticism. The tendency of criticising for the sake of criticising departs from the desire to solve existing problems. One official described the difference: "I do not like meeting with Western professors [academics] as they try to attack rather than engage. They then leave. They do not care about helping [to] improve Rwanda. They just want to gain what they want through criticising seemingly everything we do and then leave. Why don't they talk to us differently to tell us their views and how we can improve [our policies] with respect?"<sup>1</sup> This type of engagement has the effect of many Rwandan officials believing that foreign researchers travel to Rwanda to find faults to confirm the standard narrative, rather than to help the country's development.

A final factor to be considered is that negative perceptions of Rwanda among foreign researchers are fuelled by the criticism that the current government is inexperienced in governance. While Rwanda gained independence in 1962, the current government formed only after the genocide in 1994 (Prunier 1995, 23; Pottier 2002, 14-6). While the power structure of the RPF's dominance of the Rwandan Government began after the 1994 genocide, it took years for the internal government structures to be rebuilt. Even more so, it could be argued that the government became functional in 2003 after the drafting of a new Constitution to replace the previous one that had been drafted during the Arusha Accords in 1993 (Kinzer 2008, 228; Republic of Rwanda 2003). Choosing as beginning year either 1994 or 2000 is relatively insignificant, and does not change the fact that the current government has had a relatively short history. In the present context, many bureaucrats are still developing their skills in properly executing the policies set forth by their ministries. Much of the existing academic literature seems to assume that state development and current governmental systems have existed for much longer periods. This issue is not unique to Rwanda, as it is noted by Western institutions, governments and academics with regard to other developing states, especially in Africa. Ayoob (1995) discusses the perception of third world states best in terms of political development and the need for Africa to go through the growing pains of state formation and development. It is very difficult to compare the treatment of Rwandan academics with other non-European and non-North American researchers, as there is a relatively small pool of non-Western researchers. However, the number of Rwandan researchers is growing, and they are being seen in a more positive light by Rwandan leaders and government workers when compared to their Western colleagues.<sup>2</sup>

One Rwandan mid-level official provided an illustration of how the government's short history has impacted the formulation of public policies. He commented, "Look, this government [power holders as well as bureaucratic institutions] is 20 years old [since the end of the 1994 genocide]. If we compare that to human beings, we are barely adults! We are going to make mistakes and be stubborn, as we are still learning what to do and how to act."<sup>3</sup> This remark suggests an expectation that the country will change and will experience

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous Rwandan state official, interview, August 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous Rwandan research coordinator at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, interview, August 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous Rwandan State Governance employee, interview, May 2013

successes, improving after negative policies. Here is the assumption that with the passage of time, and with knowledge gained from successful or unsuccessful public policies, the government will improve. Thus, foreign researchers should not take the present conditions to signify continuing trends. Rather, they should focus on analysing changes and shifts in public policy. A Rwandan civilian explained this dynamic by stating that “Rwanda is experimenting with home-grown solutions. What we are now will not be tomorrow, as we will become better, thanks to seeing what works. But Western academics come here, attack and seem to expect that [this] is all what we will be”.<sup>4</sup> His observation reveals again why government officials might distrust academic criticism. Rwanda’s development is still ongoing, which is not considered by academics when they criticise government public policy. This does not necessarily mean that Rwandan officials and bureaucrats wish to ignore critiques of the RPF, President Kagame and the overall government. Rather, they want foreign researchers to provide those critiques in a helpful manner and with awareness of the historical events that shaped the nation.

Recently, there has been a growing trend among Rwandan officials of increased negative perceptions of foreign scholars, leading to greater difficulties for young as well as established researchers. This, alongside Jesse’s details about complications faced by researchers, introduces a significant challenge for future research on Rwanda. There are already government members who completely dismiss the need for foreign scholars to travel to Rwanda to conduct research on it for the intended desire to disseminate information. One high-ranking official within the ruling RPF political party stressed this by stating “I see people [academics] who come here to Rwanda to learn about us and publish on us as losers. They aren’t doing anything constructive for Rwanda, so why should we bother even dealing with them?”<sup>5</sup> When confronted about why he was willing to be interviewed by me he responded, “It’s no trouble for me to tell you how Rwanda is developing and how we are attracting investors. It doesn’t mean I like doing it or will read what you write about Rwanda.”<sup>6</sup> While some officials are more than willing and want to talk to foreign researchers, the number is decreasing and they are becoming much more selective.

There are two possible scenarios of how knowledge collection and research will change in Rwanda. The first possibility is the undesirable outcome of fewer foreign researchers being able to travel or properly conduct research on Rwanda. In all likelihood, this will lead to the reinforcement of the standard narrative, as accessible data for new researchers will be from those sources. Furthermore, it will contribute to increasing the divide within the academic community, as researchers with access to Rwanda might be perceived increasingly as instruments of the government and not independent researchers. A possible second outcome may be an expansion of Rwandan researchers who can foster knowledge about their own country. There are glimpses of this pathway already, as seen through the Research, Policy and Higher Education programme of the Aegis Trust, a British-based non-governmental organisation that operates the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which provides grants for

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<sup>4</sup> Anonymous Rwandan Employee of the Kigali Genocide Memorial, interview, August 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Serge Kamuhinda, former Chief Operating Officer at the Rwanda Development Board, interview, September 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Serge Kamuhinda, former Chief Operating Officer at the Rwanda Development Board, interview, September 2016.

Rwandan researchers and enforces their ability to publish (Aegis Trust 2016). While distrust of foreign researchers is based on feelings of historical abandonment, previous experiences with scholars and the government's early stages of development, there is an increased desire to encourage the expansion of Rwandan scholars, rather than foreign scholars, to conduct research, analyse, and publish in the area of Rwandan public policies, as well as other topics such as social, political and economic development.

## CONCLUSION

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The study of Rwanda creates an extreme polarisation within the academic community. Scholars and writers are often placed within the categories of either being in favour or against Rwandan public policies and their implementation, rather than attempting their best to remain neutral in their analysis and conclusions. Scholars who write positively about Rwanda typically place the nation's development within the specific historical context of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Doing this provides the ability to credit the Rwandan Government for its accomplishments in economic development and relative domestic stability. Additionally, it provides Rwanda with the ability of having the time to grow and change to produce a stronger and better nation. Academic critics who construct the standard narrative on Rwanda view recent developments mostly in the context of a moral understanding of the importance of human rights and the authoritarianism of the current government, and what they perceive as true development. This division has not benefited Rwanda, the international understanding of the country's progress and challenges, or the new and upcoming scholars. Rather, it has hindered the ability to collect information, as new and rising researchers have to either follow the standard narrative that criticises Rwandan public policy or be possibly labelled as having a pro-RPF bias, and thus their research is not seen as credible by critics. Alongside this dichotomy, the Rwandan Government has made it difficult for researchers to gain the proper documentation to conduct their study.

While this article illustrates the polarisation of the study of Rwanda, it also illustrates why Rwandan officials distrust foreign researchers. Such distrust is causing possibly more harm than good, as restrictions on researchers helps provide justification of the negative narrative against them. However, a change with regard to what is considered by some Rwandans an acceptable way to collect and produce knowledge, is leading to an increasing number of Rwandans as researchers.

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