

Thesis proposal

TOPIC: EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL UNITY AND
RECONCILIATION PROGRAM IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUES OF GENOCIDE IN
RWANDA

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1.0 Introduction

1-1 Problem Statement

Rwanda's Genocide of 1990s was one of the most devastating tragedies that have happened in the recent past. In less than one hundred days, marauding gangs killed over one million citizens in a campaign of death and destruction. Given the scale of the bloodbath, the genocide has had a serious impact on social, economic, and political development of Rwanda. The international community failed to intervene during the genocide and even the small United Nations force withdrew, leaving the vulnerable people to the mercy of the Interahamwe, the Hutu gang that masterminded the genocide. After the crisis, the international community had lent its support, but Rwanda itself is determined to avoid such violence in the future and has instituted measures for that. The people of Rwanda therefore have made significant progress in addressing their own challenges.

Reconstructing social, economic, and political fabrics of war torn Rwanda government to avoid resurgence into extra conflicts is considered is a complicated process that requires comprehensive national approaches. Unlike other countries, Rwanda has, actually, taken advantage of such post conflict reconstruction programs in order to develop within its specified integrated politics of inclusion. For example, the country has outlawed propagation of ethnic hatred and other forms of exclusion based on tribe. Rwanda in this regard is truly unique, as it has tried to address the perennial source of conflict, which is ethnic rivalry. Some of the domestic programs the government had initiated to foster greater inclusion include developing infrastructure, instituting electoral reforms, and implementing electoral reforms to reduce

poverty. Concerned addressed the genocide directly, the most important reforms are the formation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and Gacaca system of justice. The paper articulates an in-depth analysis of those programs, while shedding the light of their success or failure, along with illustrating the challenges faced and offering recommendations for better performance.

Keywords: Rwanda - genocide – post-genocide – The National Unity and Reconciliation Programs

1-2 Significance of the Study

Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis caught the world by surprise; hence, the world could not mobilize and stop the bloodshed sooner. For many years, ethnic rivalries and mistrust dating back to colonial simmered beneath the surface. When the right opportunity availed itself, the result was an explosion that shocked the world. Since the genocide, Rwanda had made considerable progress. However, the question in the minds of most people is whether such genocide can occur again. Whether genocide occurs in future or not depends on current efforts to reconcile Hutu and Tutsi communities through National Unity and Reconciliation Program. For the future of the peace in Rwanda and the wider great lakes region of central Africa, Exploring the effectiveness of the National Unity and Reconciliation Program in Addressing the Issues of Genocide in Rwanda is crucial.

1-3 Questions of the Study

The study will seek to answer the following research questions.

- I. Have the National Unity and reconciliation programs been successful in cultivating sustainable peace in Rwanda
- II. What are the components of the National Unity and reconciliation programs?

- III. Have the people of Rwanda supported National Unity and reconciliation programs in its efforts
- IV. What are some of the successes and setbacks to realization of the goals of National Unity and reconciliation programs?

1-4 Aims and Objectives

The following are the aims and objectives of the study:

- Assess progress toward sustainable peace in Rwanda
- Efforts towards reconciliation in Rwanda have taken several dimensions, including traditional methods. The study aims to explore various facets of restoring peace in Rwanda
- The genocide created enmity and distrust among the people. Naturally, such feelings have affected reconciliation. The study seeks to understand personal feelings toward efforts to cultivate peace given the history of violence between the dominant tribes living in Rwanda.
- Reconciliation has definitely achieved some progress, but also encountered setback. The paper seeks to explore the successes and failure achieved so far, including the lessons that can be learned as the country presses forward with reforms.

2.0 Literature Review

The official policy of pursuing national reconciliation in Rwanda, though endorsed in 1994 after the genocide, did not start until 2007. The body tasked with spearheading the reconciliation was The National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation. The main goal of reconciliation is fighting genocide ideology and ethnic divisions that fan conflicts. Although Rwanda has suffered from massive conflicts in the last several decades, it is clear that all common citizens, regardless of their tribe, have common interests. When the violence spiraled

out of control, all citizens suffered. National reconciliation is pegged on emphasizing on these commonalities. In the past, divisive leaders focused on differences, but under the new regime and reality, the emphasis on what brings people together, their common interests, their desire for peace and security, education for their children, and developing Rwanda. All these ideas of national reconciliation and bring people together are further articulated in government governments and development blueprints such as 2003 Constitution and Vision 2020 development plan. National reconciliation is a collective process that brings all the stakeholders together and the common people to discuss peace and foster it at grassroots level. Furthermore, justice in Rwanda has been pursued through a traditional justice system known as gacaca. Government policy paper articulates national reconciliation thus: “Unity and reconciliation in Rwanda... It requires every citizen to change their mind completely; hence the country will have unity spread all over the nation, where Rwandans will be free and the country which is always eager to have a better future for every Rwandan”.

The National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation has produced tangible goals for the people of Rwanda. The country has achieved some measure of stability and peace. Importantly, it has confronted its past and especially the older exclusion based on ethnicity. Rwanda now belongs to all inhabitants regardless of their tribe or race. This has created a powerful incentive for people to live and peace and focus on social economic outcomes. Gacaca system on its part has allowed people to confront the atrocities of the past and perpetrators of violence have been punished. The main problem with the unity discourse is that it is top down, flowing from the national government and the people. People at the grass roots level have not been properly involved in reconciliation. Dissenting voices have been silenced. The Hutus claim that their voices have been silenced and the justice dispensed by the government is victor’s justice and the

Tutsi rebel army that stopped the genocide committed atrocities against the Hutu. By failing to include all people and giving a chance for all voices to be heard, the government could be creating conditions for resentment that might erupt in the future.

3.0 Methodological Approach

Research design is an important part of the research process. The design determines whether the data collection method will be qualitative or quantitative. The main research designs used in research are survey, experimental, observational, historical research, and case study. The best method that will answer research questions for this proposal is historical research and case study.

3.1 Sample Requirements & Sampling Options

The sources selected will be based on reliance. The number of sources for review will be 25.

3.2 Data Collection Details

The sources selected will be read information coded in broad terms of themes. From the themes, the results will be analyzed.

3.3 Data Analysis

Once the information is coded in broad terms of themes, the researcher will conduct further analysis. The findings will be captured in the final project report. In addition, analysis will be presented in visual form using tables, charts, and graphs.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

All the sources used will be either from peer reviewed studies or reports of reputable organizations that have worked directly in Rwanda. Other sources such as movies, personal memoirs, news reports, books on the subject, will be considered.

3.5 Ethical issues

It is important to protect the identity of sources. In the case where secondary sources are used, all the sources will be listed in the bibliographical section. Historical research also includes collecting data from the field and where data is collected; identifying information of the respondent should not be released as doing so would amount to endangering their lives. The respondent should be informed about the nature of the study and its objectives so that they can decide whether to participate or not. It is unethical to coerce people to participate in a study using lies and misrepresentation of the nature and objectives of the study.

4.0 Results and Analysis

The results will be analyzed using tables, charts, and graphs and then presented in a written form in the final project report.

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