National Reconciliation Initiatives: South Africa, Burundi, Kenya

by

Jocelyn Mercado

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by

Jocelyn Mercado

APPROVED:

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Dr. Moses Tesi

Department of Political Science and International Relations

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Michael P. Federici, Chair

Department of Political Science and International Relations

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Philip E. Phillips, Associate Dean

University Honors College

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# **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the national reconciliation initiatives in South Africa, Burundi, and Kenya for ten years after a formal establishment of peace. National reconciliation is the process where changes are in made in behavior and attitudes through political leaders (government or opposition) to promote peace. The African Research Bulletin was used to code the reconciliation indicators: symbolic acts, judicial acts, normative statements, and strategic policy statements. In addition, I assessed which types of initiatives are more frequently used within the three countries and if those indicators helped the countries not to re-enter into the cycle of conflict. This research contributes to peacebuilders’ and researchers’ understanding of reconciliation and which national reconciliation initiatives are more effective in sustaining peace. It is anticipated that one-sided violence will continue to rise; therefore, it is a necessity to equip political leaders of post-conflict countries on how to properly commemorate the dead and console survivors.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

From 1989 to 2005, Uppsala found that out of the 412 cases of one-sided violence, 143 took place in Sub-Saharan Africa (35%), which is more than any other region in the world (Uppsala University & Human Security Report Project, 2006). One-sided violence includes non-state armed groups, governments, genocides, politicides, and any campaign that intentionally harms unarmed civilians UCDP/HSRP, 2006). The Rwandan Genocide was one of the worst genocides in history; “500,000 to 800,000 people were slaughtered in the 1994 Rwanda genocide within a matter of months (UCDP/HSRP, 2006). This was five times more than all other cases of one-sided violence since 1989 (UCDP/HSRP, 2006). Many people are unaware that the first recorded genocide in Africa was not in Rwanda but in Burundi in 1972 (Lemarchand, 2011). Even to this day, Burundi’s conflicts do not receive attention the way that its Southern neighbor does.

The killings do end at some point, which makes finding ways to put societies back together crucial. The United Nations has a term for this type of work—peacebuilding—measures designed to reduce tension or build confidence between opposing states or political, religious or ethnic groups, to prevent the start or resumption of armed conflict (UCDP/HSRP, 2006).

Peacebuilders are faced with many difficult situations that hinder the process of reconciliation. For instance, the International Court of Justice has no practical way of warranting criminals; a majority of these criminals have never been punished and are left to roam freely (Goldhagen, 2009). In Liberia, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for their country (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). However, the people overseeing the process produced unsatisfactory work when they only submitted a draft report and not a final product. The commissioners provided no evidence of why they chose prosecute those individuals. Many of the people who were listed were not once mentioned in the report findings (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). In Burundi, the UN and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission partnered together, but, since 2007, have yet to publish a report because they cannot come to an agreement on what framework and mechanisms to utilize (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013).

After apartheid, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created. When the commission discovered that the prior government, the African National Congress, and other liberation forces were guilty, they could not receive punishment because the commission had promised many of them amnesty as an incentive to come forward (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). However, the positive outcome was that the South African constitution was rewritten to include some of the most progressive human rights of that time.

In Kenya, multiple institutions were set up after the political violence that followed the general election of 2007: the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence, the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission; and the Independent Review Committee (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). The collective findings of these groups resulted in a list of twenty prominent political and business leaders that was handed over to the International Criminal Court (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). The ICC judges moved forward with allowing further investigation and prosecution, but they had to dismiss many of the cases based on a lack of evidence (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). There is a variety of ways how Sub-Saharan African countries have handled reconciliation after conflict. It is a matter of perspective of whether they had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the countries.

This thesis applies the framework used by Karen Brounéus in her research article “Analyzing Reconciliation: A Structured Method for Measuring National Reconciliation Initiatives” to study reconciliation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Karen Brounéus is a professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University. She created a method to analyze the “public statements and behaviors of those in power” in Rwanda and Mozambique during their post-conflict eras (Brounéus, 2008, p. 293). Brounéus (2008) solely studied reconciliation initiatives at the national level because these events affected the most people. She recognizes that just studying the national level is an incomplete assessment of reconciliation. There is a need for studies on how individual and social levels respond to reconciliation. Then the next step would be to compare the findings and compile them into effective reconciliation initiatives that would address all three dimensions. Brounéus is aware that each country has its unique circumstances but knows how beneficial it is for researchers to find “key features from a mass of facts” (2008, p. 293).

Brounéus defines reconciliation as: “a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviors into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace” (2008, p. 294). It is important to highlight that reconciliation is a process; this thesis does not look for fulfilled healing but rather for the presence of relationships being rebuilt and the progress towards “sustainable peace” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 294).

William Long and Peter Brecke were the first researchers to systematically study reconciliation at the national level (Brounéus, 2008). Karen Brounéus disagreed with their methodology to observe “reconciliation events” rather than “reconciliation initiatives.” Long and Brecke studied 430 cases, and only 11 cases had a qualifying reconciliation event (Brounéus, 2008). Furthermore, out of those 11 countries, only seven did not see a resumption of conflict (Brounéus, 2008). In the remainder of the disqualifying countries, 91% returned to a cycle of conflict (Brounéus, 2008). Long and Brecke concluded that their termed “reconciliation events” was successful, but Brounéus was hesitant because their operational definition was very delimiting (Brounéus, 2008). Brounéus (2008) indicates “reconciliation initiatives” did not serve as a proxy for reconciliation, as it had been in Long and Brecke’s study. She noticed that “peace is frail, and reconciliation events will be frequent—but reconciliation may still be distant” (2008, p. 295). It is important to separate the terms so that a false sense of hope is not given when the reconciliation event or initiative could be a “sign of instability” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 309). Long & Brecke found that reconciliation is an “emotionally driven problem-solving behavior” and further explored the psychology deeper (as cited in Brounéus, 2008, p. 294). What differentiates Brounéus method is that her framework purposefully does not measure emotions as they are very difficult to study empirically. She strictly narrowed it to “observe the public statements and behaviors of those in power” (p. 291).

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature on reconciliation efforts after one-sided mass violence in Africa is limited. Among the more prominent works are: Max 2008, Verhoeven 2011, Thomassian 2011, Corntassel and Holder 2008, and Blatz et al. 2009. According to *African Studies Journal,* one of the most successful legal processes to deal with one-sided violence was a grassroots mission called *gacaca* that brought justice to Rwandan communities (Rettig, 2008). To determine whether reconciliation is successful or unsuccessful is a matter of perception and the framework that the researchers use. However, it is a big step that these countries have taken the initiative in setting up these institutions to deter lingering hostilities. This progress should be commended.

Verhoeven (2011) and Thomassian (2011) found that legal processes mattered because they reconcile past grievances by showing that violence is not tolerated and is punishable. Corntassel and Holder (2008), and Blatz et al. (2009) found that a verbal statement from government and non-government officials helps victims feel acknowledged, and then in return, they want to proceed peacefully. They also found that a non-verbal public apology (memorial) is an excellent way to commemorate the dead and to serve as a warning for future generations (Tyner et al., 2014).

# **METHODOLOGY**

This thesis analyzes national reconciliation initiatives in three sub-Saharan African countries: South Africa, Kenya, and Burundi. Brounéus defines national reconciliation initiatives as: “the formulation or demonstrations of either an attitude or behavior by national political leaders (be the government or opposition) that is consistent with reconciliation (2008, p. 298). A prominent expert in conflict, John Galtung created a model showing conflict as a triangle with three corners: “conflict attitude, conflict behavior, conflict incompatibility” (as cited in Brounéus, 2008, p. 297). Therefore, reconciliation is a change in those corners of conflict. Brounéus dismissed measuring emotions (conflict incompatibility) and used her framework to focus on addressing the other two of the corners. She categorized reconciliation attitudes and behaviors into four indicators. Normative statements and strategic policy statements are used to measure attitudes, while symbolic acts and judicial acts are used to measure behavior. All the actions and statements are categorized into one of the four categories; if there is an overlap, it is only counted once. This research does not measure intentions, emotions, sincerity, or effectiveness. It categorizes the actions and statements. In line with the Brounéus framework, the time period studied in all three countries is ten years after the formal establishment of peace. No statistical testing was conducted as the sample size was not sufficient.

The audience of the thesis are the peacebuilders and researchers working with post-conflict states and looking for methods to reconcile the past, reduce tension, or regain trust to prevent the resumption of armed conflict.

## *Coding*

Tables 1 and 2 were retrieved from Karen Brounéus (2008) research article and provide the definitions for indicators.

Table 1. *Definitions of Reconciliation Behavior Indicators*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Symbolic Acts | The actor does something more than he or she is expected or has to. A gesture indicating goodwill, openness, genuine motivation to break with the past (e.g., excuses, ceremonies, rituals, memorials, power sharing). |
| Judicial acts | The setting up of truth commissions national trials for war criminals, arrest, indictments, judicial processes against person in leading positions and instigators, investigations, specification of war crimes, writing dossiers, setting up commission of inquiry to identify criminals |

*Note.* From “Analyzing Reconciliation…" by Karen Brounéus, 2008, *Journal of Peace,* p. 299

Table 2. *Definitions of Reconciliation Attitude Indicators*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Normative Statements | Discourse, ambience, perception of what kind of atmosphere should be present. Opinion is stated for reconciliation. A general picture of society is painted, a “generational vision” |
| Strategic Policy Statements | Clear strategy that has been decided on communication of decision or intention. Specific suggestion for reconciliatory change (e.g., a peace agreement, *inviting* to power sharing). |

*Note.* From “Analyzing Reconciliation…" by Karen Brounéus, 2008, *Journal of Peace*

*Psychology*, p. 300

The key signal of behavior (symbolic and judicial acts) is that a “concrete action” takes place (Brounéus, 2008, p. 299). The attitude category qualifies any “political statements that are made to convey a shift in attitude regarding structural reform and vis-a-vis former enemies” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 300). This thesis does not take into account the genuineness of an attitude shift as that would be complicated to decipher. However, it is reasonable to measure the appearance of attitudinal shifts. Brounéus allows that the “act or statement per se does not have to include a direct reference to reconciliation” it can be implied (2008, p. 300).

**Symbolic acts** are an “official acknowledgment of an expression of remorse for past wrong (Brounéus, 2008, p. 301). The following is an example of symbolic act documented in Brounéus study:

At the end of April 2000, Emmanuel Habyarimana, a Hutu and a senior army officer in the FAR (former Rwandan Armed Forces) was appointed as Defense Minister. Analysts in Kigali saw the appointment of a Hutu as head of the army as a positive gesture towards reconciliation. (ARB, 2000; May 13967)

**Judicial acts** are the most requested indicator that the international community and victims push for to bring justice to crimes committed. Brouneus (2008) points out there are two types of justice—retributive and restorative—she cautions that there needs to be a balance of both in every situation. Brounéus examples of retributive justice are Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, tribunals, and trials, ways in which the truth is exposed. Restorative justice is more controversial, for instance, “giving perpetrators amnesty to avoid disturbing a fragile peace” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 301). The following is an example of judicial act documented in Brounéus study:

On 13 September 1995, a joint UN-Rwandan Commission of Inquiry was set up in order to identify RPF soldiers to be punished for having reacted in an excessive manner during fights with Hutu militias. (ARB, 1995; Sept. 11992)

**Normative statements** occur when a top-tier politician “discloses an ambiance, a perception of what kind of atmosphere should be present in society between former enemies for reconciliation” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 301). Normative statements portray a long-term “generational vision” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 301). This thesis does not evaluate the “moral and ethical” nature of the statements, but rather the “general picture of society is painted” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 301). The following is an example of a normative statement documented in Brounéus study:

On 8 December 1994, General and Vice- President Paul Kagame said in London: ‘we reject any idea of amnesty for the sake of national reconciliation. Bringing those responsible to justice is essential. I don’t understand what reconciliation would mean unless some of those responsible were brought to justice. Justice would help bring about reconciliation. (ARB, 1994; Dec. 11693)

**Strategic policy statements** are political strategies that may or may not move reconciliation forward. The two defining characteristics that are needed in a strategic policy statement is that it is specific and concrete (Brounéus, 2008). The statement will plan a structural change that will detail how former rivals will coexist with each other (Brounéus, 2008). Usually, these statements are a good first preview of what needs to happen to see reconciliation. Brounéus states that when a strong symbolic act and a strategic political statement are partnered, there is a higher chance that change will occur and it is not just “cheap talk” (2008, p. 302). The following is an example of strategic policy statement documented in Brounéus study:

‘On 8 December 1994, General and Vice-President Kagame said in London: the 2500 ex-FAR soldiers that had returned to Rwanda could be reintegrated into the new 40,000 strong army at a later stage. (ARB, 1994; Dec. 11694)

## *Source*

Brounéus emphasized the importance that all the data needed to be collected from a consistent source. The two sources that Brounéus relies on is the Regional Survey of the World (RSW) and the Africa Research Bulletin (ARB). However, due to funds, the RSW will be dismissed from this thesis. Blackwell publishes the Africa Research Bulletin which are monthly reports of the economic and political development of African countries (Brounéus, 2008). The Africa Research Bulletin gathers information from “hundreds of reports from the local press, Websites, and radio, as well as the international organization and news agencies” (Brounéus, 2008, p. 299). This periodical relies heavily on the press, and there is a possibility that the information could be skewed during times when the freedom of the press is restricted. Having at least one source that provides “systematic and consistent” reporting is crucial to the credibility of this thesis. All information gathered from the African Research Bulletin will be documented word for word.

## *Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were formulated by Brounéus (2008) to be applied to case studies researching the effects of national reconciliation initiatives in post-conflict states:

**Hypothesis 1**: *More reconciliation initiatives may indicate less reconciliation.*

**Hypothesis 2**: *Informal and local reconciliation initiatives may be more effective for producing actual reconciliation than formal and national reconciliation initiatives.*

**Hypothesis 3**: *Reconciliation initiatives being more sensitive to all parties are likely to be successful after a negotiated agreement than after the victory.*

# **SOUTH AFRICA**

Stuart Kaufman (2017) categorized what took place in South Africa between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s as a civil war. It is reported that 20,000 people died during apartheid (Kaufman, 2017). However, within a short period of time of the last final months of apartheid 14,000 people were murdered (Bruce 2014).

The National Party government enforced racial segregation by passing suppressive laws against the black community (UCDP, 2018c). For many years the minority white population had a choking grip on the rights of the black community. Apartheid was implemented in 1910, but it did not escalate into its intensity for which it is known for until 1948 (UCDP, 2018c). The South African government sent their military to help neighboring countries squash any communist, socialist, or black majority groups in order for those movements not to spread into their country and endanger the apartheid (UCDP, 2018c). Three opposition groups rose from this difficult time: African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). For ten years, from 1970 to 1980, the three opposition groups pushed back against the government (UCDP, 2018c). During that time period, their tactics were similar to the civil rights groups in the United States by organizing “campaigns of civil disobedience and demonstrations” (UCDP, 2018c). Their efforts were met with seven years of armed conflict because the government retaliated. Subsequently, the number of killings rose when the ANC started using guerrilla and terrorist warfare against the government. As the violence grew the laws against the black community became more repressive. While ANC was occupied with battling the government they also warred against the Inkatha Freedom Party.[[1]](#footnote-1) The one-sided violence was produced from the Inkatha and ANC massacring civilians in the struggle to gain political control over territory (UCDP, 2018c). For many years the country was dangerous from the volume of the tortures, rapes, police violence, assassinations, necklacing, and witch burnings that were happening. The number of people that were affected in each crime varies. For instance “necklacing” was a punishment for traitors where they would place a car tire around someone’s neck fill it with gasoline and set it on fire (Kaufman, 2017). There were 399 people who died from being necklaced from 1984 to 1989 (Kaufman, 2017, p. 505). Another example of the violence is in 1985, 586 people were killed by police brutality, where the police would shoot blindly into demonstration crowds, or kill them when they would be put in police custody (Kaufman, 2017, p. 505).

The turning point was when President F.W. de Klerk freed the prominent ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison in February 1990 (Kaufman, 2017).[[2]](#footnote-2) During the early 1990s, the National Party would slowly surrender and negotiate with the African National Congress (UCDP, 2018c). The negotiations between these parties did not stop the violence but made a huge political difference when the National Party consented to host free elections. However, the four year transition period to democracy was anything but peaceful, the two rebel groups (Inkatha and ANC) continued to fight each other.[[3]](#footnote-3) White activist groups saw the instability between the two rising parties as an opportunity to find different ways to undermine their power as a last resort to preserve apartheid (UCDP, 2018c). Police brutality escalated during this time to help weaken rebel groups as they were fighting each other.

Eventually, the ANC was able to blame President F.W de Klerk for the fighting between the Inkatha and ANC (Kaufman, 2017). When President de Klerk received all the blame, he lost the political support he needed for a power-sharing deal, and instead a provision for democratic majority rule was passed.

The South African conflict ended in 1994 when the African National Congress won by electing Nelson Mandala as president; this event signaled to the world that apartheid was over. In the “Results” section I analyze South Africa’s national reconciliation initiatives that took place for the next ten years after April 1994.

# **BURUNDI**

In Eastern Africa the tension between the Hutus and Tutsis has periodically erupted. In 1961, the United Nations predicted a civil war when they observed the minority group (Tutsi) holding all the major government offices (Cliff, 2018). The Belgian colonial government delegated the Tutsi the majority of the political power because they “looked more like them [the colonizers] … they found it reasonable to suppose them closer to Europeans in the evolutionary hierarchy and therefore closer to them ability” (Cliff, 2018, p. 724). In 1972 a genocide swept the country and left many wounds open and a hatred that would erupt later (Lemarchand, 2011). The 1993 elections was a perfect opportunity for the pent up animosity to unleash. A civil war resulted from the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1993 (Chretien 1996). Three years prior, the struggle to democratize the country by the Liberation of the Hutu People had stirred intrastate conflict and set the stage of deadly national attacks (UCDP, 2018a). In June 1993, it was a monumental victory for the politically unrepresented Hutu people when Melchior Ndadaye was elected president (Wolpe 2011). In addition to the presidency, the Hutu’s made a drastic political shift when they overtook 85% of the parliamentary seats, and 88% of the governorships (Cliff, 2018). Ndadaye had been in office for three months when he was assassinated by a Tutsi army officer (Chretien, 1996; Wolpe, 2011). The Hutus were outraged because they had tirelessly spent the last three years trying to democratize the system and once they had finally achieved representation, their representative was killed. Many actors were trying to obtain complete power; the political parties were internally fighting amongst each other and battled the external rebel groups (Cliff 2018). Hutu rebels were the first to attack and killed thousands of Tutsi; when the Tutsi led national army retaliated, they did as much damage (UCDP, 2018a). The rebels barricaded roads and bridges and distributed gasoline and machetes to young fighters to start a war (Chretien, 1996). They overtook hospitals and killed many innocent patients and took whole families and chopped up their bodies (Chretien, 1996). The ethnic divide was enflamed by having schools ethnically segregated, as well as filling the airwaves with resistance messages to send the Tutsi back to Egypt (Chretien, 1996).

In 1994, the new president of Burundi’s plane was shot down and the present instability of the country was aggravated (Cliff, 2018). Ironically, he was in the plane having a meeting with the Rwandan president on how they could bring peace to their respective countries (Cliff, 2018). Unfortunately, this event took both countries down a dark path, with Rwanda igniting a genocide and Burundi intensifying the civil war that was already present.

Cliff (2018) notes that a reason that Burundi’s death toll is disproportionate to the toll of Rwanda’s genocide is due to the effect that Burundi refugees had on the conflict in the neighboring country. A flood of Burundi refugees escaped the ongoing Burundian civil war and became terrorists in the Rwandan genocide instead of being violent in their own country. The purpose of this comparison is not to elevate one conflict but to show how refugee crisis can impact other countries.

Meanwhile, in Burundi, the country’s population was being ethnically “purified” with days in the cities called “jounées ville-morte [dead city days]” dedicated to killing Hutus (Chretien, 1996, p. 209). In common areas, such as marketplaces, multiple grenade attacks and assassinations were common. The country as a whole was in turmoil for a long duration, and it is estimated that between “October 1993 to end of 1995 more than 100,000 people perished in an ethnopolitical crisis” (Chretien, 1996, p. 206).

The road to peace for the country of Burundi was long. In 1994, the Uprona (Tutsi) Party and Frodebu (Hutu) Party tried to create a power-sharing strategy in order to generate a ceasefire (UCDP, 2018a). The plan failed and the assassinations that followed suit sparked more violence. Many other negotiations were drafted, but the two that were ultimately successful were the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000 and the Burundi Power-Sharing Agreement of 2004 (Cliff, 2018). These documents detailed agreements that required fair representation of both parties, guaranteed political roles for women, and established refugee protection plans (Cliff, 2018). During the early 2000s, most of the rebel groups had signed the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (UCDP, 2018a). It took six years to see any of the changes implemented and meanwhile the interstate conflict continued (Chretien 1996). In 2005 Pierre Nkurunziza, a Hutu president was elected as a way to incentivize the last rebel groups to come to the table (UCDP, 2018a). Finally, the last rebel group the Palipehutu (FNL), signed the peace agreement on September 6, 2006 (Wolpe 2011). In the “Results” section I analyze Burundi’s national reconciliation initiatives that took place for the next ten years after September 6, 2006.

# **KENYA**

Kenya has a history of mass-killings perpetrated by the individuals, groups, and the state from December 12, 1963, to February 28, 2008 (Katuu, 2009). The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2018b) has noticed a trend that intrastate armed conflict in Kenya has been declining since 1982 but that the number of nonstate conflicts has increased. Shadrack Katuu (2009) made a keen observation that the Kenyans are peaceful people but have a negative habit of reacting violently when election results are contested as this had also taken place in the 1992 and 1997 election. This thesis focuses on the election violence that happened on December 2007; it is important to note that this violence was categorized as nonstate conflict (UCPD, 2018b).

Until 2002, Kenya had been under a corrupt authoritarian president that used the military to severely suppress dissenters which caused tension to rise (UCDP, 2018b). It took nearly thirty years before Daniel arap Mio was banned from reelection (UCDP, 2018b). His successor was not any more promising, Mwai Kibaki broke his campaign promise to only serve one term and to end corruption (Snow 2009). The night that Kibaki was elected president, five of the eight provinces of Kenya erupted into physical violence (Katuu, 2009). As soon as they announced the winner the government went into immediate lockdown and “without legal grounds, banned public rallies and live news broadcasts and official shoot-to-kill orders for ‘looters’”, a majority of the violence was aimed at a selective group of people, the Kikuyu (Snow, 2009, p. 17). The police killed 405 innocent people in shooting of terrorized crowds (Snow, 2009). As the days continued, more than 1,000 people were killed after the election of 2007 (Katuu, 2009).

The reason for such an upheaval was because there was blatant evidence that the election had been rigged. The Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya, Mr. Samuel Kivuitu was found and ambushed by Paramilitary General Service Unit troops and forced on TV to declare Kibaki as president (Snow 2009). There is a law that gives Kenyans 24 hours to dispute election results, and then 48 hours for the commission to respond. The Party of National Unity (Kibaki’s party) cut off that 72 hour period and made Mr. Kivuitu announce the winner prematurely. Mr. Kivuitu later confessed that he did not know who won the election because most of the polling locations had faked their results or had not even reported them (Snow 2009).

The country formed an ethnic cleansing campaign to split up the country by ethnic lines. Kenya’s largest ethnic group, The Kikuyus were targeted as they were President Kibaki’s ancestral tribe (Snow 2009). One of the most gruesome episodes took place at the Kenya Assembly of God Church in Eldoret where they were sheltering many Kikuyu refugees. During the service 300 armed men surrounded the church (Snow 2009). Those who tried to escape were chopped into pieces with machetes. Then the men burned the church to the ground with 35 women and children inside (Snow 2009). There was turmoil all over the country, but the killings were the densest in the Rift Valley and the list of crimes amassed: “waves of ethnic cleansing and reprisal campaigns followed, rife with murder, pillage, arson, and sexual violence” (Snow, 2009, p. 118). Kikuyus were not the only ones targeted, but the Kisiis were driven out of more than 20 towns (Snow 2009). There were “politician employed militias” that were sent to persecute the Kisiis because they had voted against the president. Not only were many lives lost but a massive refugee crisis followed where an estimated 300,000 to 600,000 people were displaced. The fighting and militias raids had made many towns uninhabitable (Katuu, 2009). Never had Kenya experienced the scale of mass emigration in all of its history that the election of 2007 had caused.

In January 2008, the conflict ceased when former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan intervened. Annan directed a power-sharing deal with the parties and enacted different organizations to help the reconciliation process (African Union Panel of the Wise, 2013). The “Results” section of I analyze Kenya’s national reconciliation initiatives that took place for the next ten years after January 2008.

# **ETHNIC TERRORISM**

When studying South Africa, Burundi, and Kenya, it is vital to discuss the role that ethnic terrorism plays in these countries. A common issue that is present in all three countries is that a small minority politically controls a large majority of people and violence ensues. In South Africa, the National Party enforced apartheid against the black community and severely repressed their rights. In Burundi, the former colonist had set up a system where the minority politically controlled the majority. When a bloody civil war broke out, Tutsi schools were segregated hate speech was circulated. Kenyans detested the candidate who won the election of 2007. As a result, they terrorized the Kikuyu tribe because they were ancestor tribe of the candidate.

Oftentimes weak incumbents resort to the strategy of encouraging political violence through a “sub-national ethnic group to advance its political goals” (Snow, 2009, p. 118). Snow (2009) discusses the strong connection between ethnic terrorism and conflicts such as politicides and genocides. When a person cannot rely on the state for being impartial, a person must for their own safety resort to exaggerating their ethnicity as tradeoff for the strong militias protection. It should be a warning sign when countries begin to pit different types people against each other through discrimination and persecution. Daniel Byman has a fascinating discussion on how to identify ethnic terrorist groups (as cited in Snow, 2009). Most obvious characteristic of an ethnic terrorist group is they are in direct opposition of the state (Snow 2009). There is a misconception that ethnic terrorist groups are trying to achieve “religious or secular utopia” (Snow, 2009, p.19). Rather, they are seeking to shape political events to their advantage by “electrifying and manipulating communal identity” to create hostile environments (Snow 2009, p. 119). They are trying to advance their political agenda and set the territory under the control of one set of leaders (Snow 2009). To an ethnic terrorist, achievement is being able to brag about who can kill the most people (Snow 2009). They try to increase their intensity and momentum by outdoing the reaction from the last attack. Defensive actions become the fuel to their violence, which poses a question for the international community: does giving attention to ethnic terrorist make situations worse?

The “bottom billion” countries have the highest risk as ethnic terrorism thrives in these environments (Snow 2009). These struggling countries try hard to raise new democracies that promise peaceful transitions of power that will respect the rights of the losers (Snow 2009). More often than not the losers do not have the stamina to accept the results and instead violently contest the results: “In this sense, political violence unleashed by incumbents is analogous to terrorism: it is a “’strategy of the politically weak’” (Snow, 2009, p. 116). There seems to be a mindset that is spread during these times that opposite sides cannot reach a compromise or accommodate the other side. It seems as the only option for a party to win is to widen the gap and spark a violent outbreak between the ethnic groups. People who are moderates are seen as traitors, and their opinions are aggressively silenced (Snow 2009). It is politically popular to pretend to be moderate on identity issues but then have a sudden shift and desperately violate human rights to win elections (Snow 2009).

In comparison, the United States is successful because it does not have ethnic militias. The concept of having armies that are solely composed of one type of race is foreign to modern American political thought. In the United States militaries enlist all different kinds of races together. If this was not the case, there is a possibility that the United States could have the same fate as many Sub-Saharan countries. It is crucial to spread unify and homogenous labels in politics such as “*we* are all Americans, or *we* are all Tennesseans” if the U.S wants to preserve its peaceful union.

# **RESULTS**



The coding results for the national reconciliation initiatives during ten year period in South Africa (1994-2003), Burundi (2006-2015), and Kenya (2008-2017) are shown in Table 3.

South Africa is the country with the most reconciliation initiatives. This is not surprising as Nelson Mandela was seen as the “Father of Reconciliation” and the national reconciliation initiatives that his government pioneered set the tone for other countries to follow. South Africa had three times more initiatives than Burundi, and twice as many than Kenya. The combined total of between all three countries was 280 national reconciliation initiatives, and that is further broken down to 182 behavioral actions and 99 attitudinal statements.

In South Africa, judicial acts and symbolic acts were the most prominent national reconciliation initiatives. This concludes that South African politicians conducted the reconciliation process that focused on behavior shifts rather than attitude shifts. South Africa had an average of 25 national reconciliation initiatives a year until it plunged the last five years (See Appendix A). In 1997, the country’s highest recorded number of reconciliation initiatives was recorded with 31 initiatives. The least number of recorded initiatives was in 2001 and 2002 with only four initiatives present. Normative statements and judicial acts were utilized the most consistent throughout the ten year period. There were two years with no symbolic actions, one year with no normative statements, and three years with no strategic policy statements.

In Burundi, judicial acts and normative statements were both equally as prominent and utilized 15 times (See Appendix B). This concludes that Burundi’s politicians enacted a reconciliation process that combined both changes in behaviors and attitudes. Like South Africa, Burundi’s reconciliation initiatives were concentrated within the first five years post conflict. Throughout the ten year period, Burundi had an average of four initiatives a year. In 2008, two years after signing of the peace agreement the country had its highest recorded number of national reconciliation initiatives with 11 initiatives. The least number of recorded initiatives was in 2013 when only one was recorded. There were three years of no symbolic actions, three years with no judicial actions, one year with no normative statements, and six years with no strategic policy statements

In Kenya, judicial acts and normative statements were the most frequent national reconciliation initiatives. Both were not carried out in equal measure as there was a great difference between them with 46 judicial acts as compared to 16 normative statements (See Appendix C). Similar to Burundi, Kenya’s national reconciliation initiatives had a combination of behavior and attitude shifts. In line with the trend, the first five years of post-conflict Kenya saw the most reconciliation initiatives and subsequently the last years only saw a couple initiatives. During the first five years, Kenya had an average of 11 national reconciliation initiatives per year. In 2010, which was two years after establishing a power-sharing government the country had its highest recorded number of national reconciliation initiatives with 15 initiatives. Kenya had high emphasis on symbolic acts the first year post conflict, but afterwards symbolic acts were severely neglected. There were six years that there were no symbolic actions that took place, one year with no judicial action, two years with no normative statements, and six years with no strategic policy statements.

It should be noted that even though there are reconciliation initiatives taking place, this does not mean that there are no conflicts evolving or occurring during those years. After Mandela’s election, one-sided conflicts dissipated in South Africa and they remained peaceful during the duration of the ten year sample period (1994-2003). South Africa became ambitious and saw their success in achieving peace as a reason to involve themselves in the reconciliation affairs of other countries. The government received backlash for their international involvement because they were not focusing on domestic necessities. South Africa still had conflict during the ten years as white extremist groups would rise up, and there would be a quick judicial resolution to suppress any rebellion. The African Research Bulletin noticed that there was an increase in normative statements to set the ambiance of unity during the election seasons. Newspapers observed many politicians, including Mandela, saying harsh political comments during election off-season and then suddenly switching to nice normative statements during election time.

Burundi had the lowest number of national reconciliation initiatives because the United Nations drove the reconciliation process. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission pilot projects were in Burundi and Sierra Leone (ARB, 2007; June. 17129). As a result, the international community poured millions of dollars into Burundi in an effort to reconstruct the country, build institutions, and promote sustainable development (ARB, 2007; June. 17129). The United Nations and other international institutions took the spotlight, and it was as though the national government did not have to step forward. From 2009 to 2012, rebellions resulted in fights and grenade attacks. In October 2010, the government issued a statement saying that the army was more harmonious than ever before. A month later armed violence between the soldiers broke out (ARB 18584A), this supports Brounéus idea that governments engage more in reconciliation initiatives to cover up instability that is brewing. The downfall of Burundi was when President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term, which violated the constitution that was set in place by the peace agreement resolving the civil war. The consequence of defying the reconciliation progress was a suit of string killings during his re-election. In October 2015, the country was spiraling downwards—200,000 refugees were escaping the one-sided violence and 3,188 people had been arrested (ARB 20749C). The scope of this thesis ends in December 2015, and that same month the African Union deployed 5,000 troops to prevent that violence that was becoming inevitable (ARB 20824B).

During the ten year period (2008-2017) Kenya had many difficulties and conflicts. Unfortunately, Kenya was infiltrated by domestic jihadist terrorist who distracted the national leaders from the reconciling the election violence of 2007. The former enemies and apologist were never fairly addressed because they were constantly dealing with an imminent threat. Kenya relied heavily on the International Criminal Court; the judicial processes were not seen as dependable because they dragged out the cases for many years. Many of the high profile cases were dismissed, including the case on President Uhuru Kenyatta, which insinuated corruption. In 2017, the Supreme Court that was set up to make sure elections were fair, annulled the election because of possible poll-rigging. This judicial act was unprecedented and proof that the reconciliation institutions that were created were working. The problem rested with the losing candidate Raila Odinga; he had previously lost the presidential vote twice before (his first loss resulted in the mass conflict after the election of 2007). Ten years later, Odinga still could not concede maturely. He encouraged people to engage in one-sided violence both before and after the election. Odinga even went as far as attempting to commit high treason by ceremonial swearing himself in as the “Peoples President.” There was an eruption of conflict again following the election of 2017, where 58 people died and many people were displaced (ARB, 2017; August, 21535). However, the protests were smaller, and the government handled the problem better and curtailed the protest quickly. The African Research Bulletin credits the media for the violence being significantly scaled down due to self-censoring and making sure not to aggravate the crowds with their coverage as they had done in the past elections.

This study rejects Hypothesis 1 that more reconciliation initiatives may indicate less reconciliation. The two countries with the least amount of national reconciliation initiatives collectively over the ten year period re-entered the cycle of one-sided violence. South Africa had the most national reconciliation initiatives, and it did not re-engage in one-sided conflict during the ten years that followed reconciliation. However, if this thesis were to analyze the years individually, there is evidence that the years with more reconciliation initiatives were made in an effort to hide the underlying instability. This study rejects Hypothesis 2 that informal and local reconciliation initiatives may be more useful for producing actual reconciliation than formal and national reconciliation initiatives because it is not true for all three countries. In South Africa, the majority of the weight of reconciliation rested in the federal government's power, and they did not re-enter one-sided conflict again. Burundi is an example of how millions of dollars spent by the international community (formal reconciliation) for peacebuilding efforts proved to be ineffective. Kenya’s national government outsourced its reconciliation initiatives to a few formal institutions and established commissions and still re-entered the cycle of conflict. This study rejects Hypothesis 3, Reconciliation initiatives being more sensitive to all parties are likely to be successful after a negotiated agreement than after the victory. Apartheid ended with Nelson Mandela’s victory, and South Africa’s reconciliation initiatives were successful and kept the country from re-entering one-sided conflict. After many years, Burundi finally signed a ceasefire agreement and they still re-entered one-sided violence after future elections. Kenya had influential African politicians come and mediate between the opposition parties to create a power-sharing deal, and this did not prevent Kenya from re-entering into one-sided violence. In conclusion, this thesis rejects all three hypothesis on national reconciliation initiatives.

# **CONCLUSION**

Mass killings are not exclusive to the Sub-Saharan Africa region, groups all over the world have endured mass killings: Rwandans, Ethiopians, Japanese, East Timorese, Chinese, Bangladeshis, Bosnians, Balinese, Cambodians, Guatemalans, Jews, Armenians, and many more. As this thesis proves, one-sided conflict does not have to be a genocide to have harrowing effects on a country. Peacebuilders and researchers need to be concerned for the political future of countries in the twenty-first century. Max Roser (2018) reminds the world that the past was not peaceful. The death toll from conflicts in the mid-twentieth century exponentially surpassed all death tolls since the 1400s (Roser, 2018). If history repeats itself, the world needs to be prepared to see a spike in the death toll in the mid-twenty-first century. This thesis contributes to the understanding of how the international community can suggest ways for national governments to properly handle future post-conflict scenarios. Applying Brounéus’ framework to studies with larger sample sizes will move peacebuilders closer to the answer of how best to commemorate the dead and console the survivors. Peacebuilders want post-conflict states to sustain peace and not re-enter the cycle of conflict. This research concludes that not all formal and national reconciliation initiatives are effective. Reconciliation is a process of trial and error, but it would not be wise to keep re-trying certain ineffective initiatives.

From this study, the country that was most successful was South Africa, which had over one hundred national reconciliation initiatives and used initiatives that changed behavior. South Africa showed the benefit of allowing the government to independently strengthen their country from within. Once the reconciliation process has begun the key is to maintain the enthusiasm for reconciliation that was shown at the beginning. The trend in all three countries studied was they would generate many national reconciliation initiatives during the first five years and then let reconciliation fall to the wayside. Reconciliation has to be a long-term national priority. If the enthusiasm to live peacefully between former enemies is lost, then there is a high risk that these countries will re-enter conflict. Peacebuilders must stay vigilant in regularly reminding countries that going back to conflict is not an option, but rather moving forward towards peaceful future.

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# **APPENDICES**







1. This was a group led by chief Buthelezi, whose platform was more conservative than the ANC. Buthelezi received support from the government and connived with the government and police against the ANC. It sought to establish itself as a noncommunist group that the government should deal with instead of the ANC to establish majority rule. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mandela served twenty-seven years in prison for treason. His release was due to domestic and international pressure as he was seen to be the only one with the status to negotiate with the government to bring about majority rule. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. As noted above, it was later discovered that the government was sponsoring the attack on the ANC by the Inkatha. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)