

Strategies of survival and identification of sources of trust within the society in Rwanda

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The study is focused on analysis of behavioral strategies of victims, who survived the genocide in Rwanda after the 6th April 1994. Generally, the study of atrocities is complicated by several factors. Besides, difficulties in gathering reliable data, there are changes of memories within a period of time that make the study hard. Last, it is too much stress put on victims in producing explanations of crimes. By using qualitative analysis of behavioral strategies, the author comes up with a solution how to overcome these obstacles. The data for the analysis were taken from several published collections of testimonies.

The author presents the following hypothesis. In time of increased danger, people usually rely on strategies based on their historical memory. The way they behave reveals sources of security and trust which are present within the society. Through focusing on strategies of survival it is possible to overcome the risk of analyzing distorted testimonies, because it is supposed that the analysis is oriented on specific part of testimonies (Where did they go? How did they behave?), which are not distorted to such a degree by compliance effect.

Analysis of these testimonies reveals more complex conception of victims' behavior. The study results also go against simplifying explanations of Rwandan genocide. There are clearly seen differences in strategies used in Kigali and outside the capital city. The emphasis is placed on how information was gathered and the typology of people, who helped victims. In the next part, the sources of more complex organized resistance of victims are analyzed. The traditional blood pacts or family ties showed to be important for successful individual strategies of survival. These relations helped people to seek assistance even among the attackers.

In conclusion, the strong and weak aspects of proposed research strategy are discussed and possibilities of application and contribution of this method are offered. This method offers a way to identify key sources of interpersonal trust in society, which are important for further reconciliation process.

