Kigali Genocide Memorial (KGM) and Peace Building: A Descriptive Study in the Context of UNESCO’s Anthropological Perspectives

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Abstract: This research was carried out on “Kigali Genocide Memorial (KGM) and Peace Building: A descriptive study in the context of UNESCO’s Anthropological Perspectives”. The objective of our study was focusing on determining how KGM is contributing to the peace building and the UNESCO’s anthropological perspective with the attention to the kinship between people buried in KGM and successive generations.

This research to be successful different methods and tools were used. As methods we used the analytical method; historical, statistical; qualitative and quantitative. As techniques, we used the interview, questionnaire and documentation. The data were collected and interpreted basing on quantitative and qualitative approach.

About the results of this research, the 100% of our respondents reported that KGM is a symbol of peace building. The 90.3% reported the necessity of knowledge of their relatives who are buried in KGM through a scientific identification DNA. The 86.7% of respondents confirmed the necessity of UNESCO’s intervention in conservation of kinship between people buried in KGM with their relatives throughout generations.

As a matter of fact, we came to conclude that KGM contributes to peace building and UNESCO should shape an improved perspective of peace building improving the conservation of the memory through generations that is kinship.

Keywords: Peace Building, KGM, Genocide, UNESCO, Anthropological Perspectives, Forensic Anthropology, DNA, Kinship


1. INTRODUCTION

Public memorials and monuments attract millions of visitors each year and, in town squares and villages throughout the countries, it is common to find memorials honoring fallen soldiers and victims during war and genocides, the town’s founder, or a significant event in the community’s history. In this line, memorial sites play a great role in conservation of humankind’s memory through remembrances about what happened and its value in the life course. Genocide memorial sites also conserve bodies and sometimes the materials used in the period of genocide. The crucial example is KGM where victims are buried not to be lost by the time but to remain as facts of the history.

What do we know about KGM in terms of what it contributes about the peace building? While numerous studies have been conducted on historical facets of memorial genocide sites, insufficient attention has been paid to the larger questions related to human life like the kinship between people buried in KGM and successive generations. This leads to the following inevitable question: What are UNESCO’s anthropological perspectives?

This research is very pertinent as it is the first to treat the matter at hand and also complete other researches related to the contribution of Memorial sites.

To answer the mentioned questions above, it has been fixed the following objective that shaped this research: to determine how KGM contributes in Peace building, determining UNESCO’s anthropological perspectives which can fill the kinship gap.

2. METHODOLOGY

To fulfill this research, data were collected using mainly interviews and questionnaires and was often analyzed using descriptive analysis in survey research. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used too.

A population of this study was 600 people who visited the KGM, among them a participative sample was selected with which we questioned and worded. Therefore, a sample size of 83 people was calculated using the A. Bouchard’s formula below:

\[
nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n}
\]

Given \(N\) the height of finished universe
\(n\) the height of sampling for the finished universe
\(96\)

Note that 96 is a number used by A. Bouchard which represent the height of a sample for finished universe. As we work at the finished universe, the formula is applicable to our study as developed below:

\[
nc = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}} \quad \Rightarrow \quad nc = \frac{n}{\frac{N + n}{N}}
\]

\[
nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n}
\]

For finding a number of individuals who received questionnaires, we have to replace data in the formula as follow:

Then, for the population \(nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n}\)

Then, for the population \(nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n} 57600/696\)

\[
nc = \frac{600 \times 96}{600 + 96} = 82.75 \approx 83
\]

The sample has been selected randomly from the population as there was not fixed criteria of respondents.

For this research, the interview\(^3\), has been addressed to 5 people among them 4 workers of KGM and the person in charge of Memorials and commemoration in CNLG (Commission Nationale de lutte contre le Genocide). The interviewers were chosen basing on that they are knowledgeable and interact usually with these who visit the Memorial.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following are the results of this research:

3.1. Contribution of KGM in Peace Building

For decades now, peace building is viewed as a nonviolent way to resolve an injustice. Therefore, peace building process doesn’t overlook violence prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconciliation or trauma healing\(^4\).

\(^3\) A face-to-face conversation between an interviewer and the interviewee, is conducted for the purpose of obtaining information (Day, R., 1996:38)

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Beyond being a process, in the context of Rwanda, peace building encompass all measures taken by the government, among them the creation of genocide memorial sites, to reduce risk of lapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

Genocide Memorial sites are the ways for peace building. Intrastate wars and genocides result in devastating losses and leave deep and lasting scars on those who survive. Making space for civilians to share their experiences of violence and to have them publicly acknowledged can be important parts of (re)knitting the social fabric.

Indeed, genocide memorial sites reveal themselves as a meeting lieu to remember and interiorize the past. By learning for the past, the memorials invite us to reconcile and build peace. Unacknowledged wounds can present an obstacle to peace building in both present and future generations.

At the KGM one encounters stories that bear testimony against animosity and violence of the time; these narratives coupled with the facts served a loud message for peace building and still today it remains an alert than ever.

Different reasons that push people visiting KGM have been revealed during this research. Considering the statistics, 13.2% reported the confession; 84.3% reported increasing the need of peace building. Analytically, the primary characteristic of KGM where many of its activities consist in presenting what happened in Rwanda during the genocide against Tutsi of 1994 through exhibitions, audio, photos and videos. Many of these who have not witnessed the event or were too young, visit the site mainly with the purpose of getting a historical idea about the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. In fact, this site has a strong historical aspect to enhance peace building.

Peace building occupies a noble place in the spirits of all who visit KGM; all the days of the year, particularly during 100 days mourning period that starts on 7th April every year, people are willing to visit the site with the purpose of remembering and peace building. Remembering their killed fellows was supported by 98.7% of respondents as one of the reasons pushing them to visit KGM while 95.1% of them valuing the dignity and human values contributes in peace building.

Those responses attest that KGM plays a great contribution when it comes in conserving, valuing the rests of our victims of genocide and in increasing humanity within the visitors.

The peace building values of unity and reconciliation received a low score due to the laborious work of the post-genocide. It is seen that nowadays, the unity and reconciliation improved and that people visit KGM with a new insight of its contribution. But, this is not to deny the contribution brought by this site in increasing unity and reconciliation.

3.2. UNESCO and Anthropological Values Conservation

Since the conclusion of World War II, the effort to preserve important sites of national and cultural heritage has been a priority for hundreds of nations around the world. According to UNESCO, “Anthropological, specifically cultural heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value.”

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention addresses cultural sites of outstanding universal value, from a historical, aesthetic, scientific, ethnological or anthropological perspective, and highlights the need for authenticity.

So, UNESCO is particularly engaged in the following areas: firstly, to promote a better understanding and recognition of the culture, history and heritage of people through research, education, media, along with inclusion in curricula, ensuring that school books and other pedagogic material accurately

reflect the historical facts about the genocides to prevent falsification and stereotypes derived from this history. Secondly, recognize the memory of the victims of these tragedies and their descendants through the establishment of sites of memory testifying to this past. And thirdly, encourage the international community to honor this memory in different forms. In all these three ways, the UNESCO manifests its outstanding role in towards the conservation of anthropological values that cannot be comprehended outside the memoire conservation and remembrance.

The second of the ten criteria of the selection of a Word heritage site states that a heritage site must: exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design. Therefore, bearing testimonies and facts of the 1994 genocide committed against Tutsi, this makes the KGM a worthy heritage site to be recognized by UNESCO.

As Reyntjens explained, Genocide Memorial is ever more a consideration in peace building. Understanding the KGM and its perspective in peace building in correlation with the UNESCO’s anthropological values is a tremendous point of this research. Hence, heritage conservation is an integral part of UNESCO. In some form, conservation of material heritage is a function observable in every modern society.

3.3. Anthropological Value and Peace Building

The Theory of Basic Human values, developed by Shalom H. Schwartz, is an important theory in the field of anthropological research. The theory of basic human values tries to measure Universal Values that are recognized throughout all major cultures.

Anthropological values or Human values are the virtues that guide us to take into account the human elements when one interacts with other human beings. These values can be summarized into two categories such as anthropological values and developed as: respect, remember, reconciliation and tolerance, caring for others and the planet, dignity, conservation of the past, honest, wisdom, sharing a sense of belonging, integrity and love.

Respect refers to the mutual consideration that we give each other; respect for life, respect for the self and others. Remember refers to the worthy and importance that we have about object which deserve to be remembered also attract our attention. With reconciliation and tolerance, people need to stay united and in peace; reconciliation implicates the value we put upon our relationship.

Socially and culturally, we need others ‘care to survive and to consider personal dignity and worthy if we are ready to interact. Conservation of the past refers to the protection of our cultural traces and none can live outside the wisdom, integrity and love. We belong to the same universe and that’s why these values are anthropological.

The essence and existence of memorial sites, particularly Genocide memorials are found upon the idea of keeping live what happened and by visiting people may develop or innovate their values. Positively, people who visit the kind of these sites enter in the number of these who prone “Never again”.

As it is illustrated by respondents, the 100% of them confirmed that KGM contributes in peace building through valuing the dignity and human values. The results from the research show that the KGM should play a great contribution to Rwandan society where by in the future, if forensic

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anthropology is applied, survivors and their descendants will know their relatives through DNA analysis and the creation of electronic kinship database.

Analyzing the results above all respondents in general agreed that genocide memorial plays a great contribution in valuing the dignity and human values of people buried in. Before genocide memorial sites were constructed the victim bodies were demolishing in rubbish holes here and there, there wasn’t any occasion to remember and honoring them.

The gap of the use of forensic anthropology in kinship conservation, confirmed the respondents, requires to Rwandan government as well as UNESCO to allocate a special budget and this should build the long term peace through many generations.

3.4. The Need of a Forensic Anthropology

In a scope of 25 years since 1994, in Rwanda, mass graves are still discovered and Genocide survivors who lost their beloved didn’t get an idea where their killed parents, children, relatives and friends are buried. All the time new mass graves are found, survivors of the genocide showed up at one of the graves in the hopes of identifying missing family members16.

For different traditions and beliefs to bury and honor a dead relative means more and many believes that mourning ends when we have found and buried our beloved ones.

In his article Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning, and the Life of Things, Peter Stallybrass17 tried to establish the relationship between coping with the loss of a loved one with find something that used to belong to him including the body. He urged that even clothes of a dead relative retain something of the bodies that once animated them even after those bodies are gone. And then, if the mutable nature of these items can sometimes overwhelm, they also, in a sense, contain their own antidote.

Therefore, the use of archaeological techniques for forensic investigations has been advocated by enlightened forensic investigators for the past two decades18, although frequently under the rubric of forensic anthropology. Increasingly, however, archaeologists and not just archaeological techniques are used in forensic work.

The light behind the use of one of forensic anthropology pathways were performed to investigate mass graves resulting from alleged human rights abuses. The objectives were: to collect narrative and physical evidence that assists in establishing the accountability of those responsible and bringing them to justice; to assemble information instrumental in identifying the victims in order that the remains might be returned to surviving relatives; to create a record that will stand up to historical revisionists; and to expose such atrocities to world opinion and provide an international standard that will deter such atrocities in the future. The cumulative effect of such investigations is to give voice to the victims, imparting their stories from the grave19.

Indeed, mass graves are complex cultural features that require careful attention to detail in excavation and documentation if the data collected are to be admissible as evidence in a court of law or for personal identification in humanitarian situations.

DNA identification can contribute more in peace building in the way survivors can be sure of where theirs are and if an electronic monument is created the kinship can be extended to future generations.

The photography has been used to conserve photos and images that are drawing what happened during genocide in 1994 and faces of dead victims that are buried in. Seeing how they were beautiful and handsome and how they have been savagely massacred, remind visitors how all human being deserve to live.

Audio and video records are tools adopted by KGM to conserve testimonies related to Genocide. One respondent underlined that within audio and video most of all anthropological values are conserved. He mentioned that this category of tools contains video and audio songs sung during the genocide, testimonies and documentaries about Genocide committed against Tutsi in 1994.

Art craft such as wooden images, fashioned material representation are tools privileged to represent the reconciled Rwanda after Genocide; while documentation and books are good tools to conserve anthropological values. Various books have been written by Rwandans and foreigners about Genocide committed against Tutsi in 1994.

Interviewed people confirmed the necessity to research for a kinship so that victims of the 1994 against Tutsi buried in KGM may be linked to their relatives through DNA test and to keep the records electronically constituting electronic village. The respondents corroborated that UNESCO and Rwandan government should integrate in KGM modern forensic anthropological techniques such as DNA test, Carbone 14 experiment in order to determine the proper identity of bodies buried that it conserves.

4. CONCLUSION

KGM attracts millions of people around the world. Using questionnaire, interview and documentation we found out that KGM contributes in peace building. The 100% reported increasing historical knowledge and can work for peace building; The 90.3% reported remembering should go with the knowledge of theirs who are buried in KGM whereby they should be satisfied if recognition technique under forensic anthropology may be for a big relevance. Further, concerning the idea of kinship, the results confirmed that valuing the dignity and human values, conserving human traces can, after centuries, conserve even the kinship through DNA extraction and making a kind of electronic village of people buried in KGM and all their descendants throughout generations.

Needless to say, this research is not, and indeed could not be exhaustive because it requires a large enterprise that no research can hold once. So that, we suggest the following as areas for further researchers: Determining the techniques used in identification and conservation of people buried in KGM through forensic anthropology and required software to conserve the kinship for future centuries and millenaries.

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