

RESISTANCE TO REFORMS:
settlement and agricultural reforms in post-genocide Rwanda

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Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i Freds- och utvecklingsforskning vid Institutionen för globala studier, Göteborgs Universitet, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsnämnden läggs fram för offentlig granskning fredagen den 3 oktober 2014, klockan 13.15 i sal 302, Annedalsseminariet, Campus Linné, Seminariegatan 1A, Göteborg.



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

Abstract

Hahirwa, G. Joseph (2014). Resistance to reforms: settlement and agricultural reforms in post genocide Rwanda.

PhD Dissertation in Peace and Development Research, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, P.O. Box 700, 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden.

Language: English, with summary in Swedish.

ISBN: 978-91-628-9138-1

<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/36673>

In this thesis I explore the phenomenon of resistance to settlement and agricultural reforms in post-genocide Rwanda. The aim of the thesis is to understand how farmers experience the implementation of settlement and agricultural reforms and how they react to and resist them. To achieve this aim, three broad research questions were framed as follows: how do farmers experience the implementation of settlement/agricultural reforms; how do farmers react to settlement/agricultural reforms and; which of the farmers' reactions can be considered acts of resistance.

The study was based on multiple approaches involving focus group, qualitative interviews and participant observation and was carried out between 2010 and 2012. The findings of this thesis show that most of my interviewees experience the effects of coercive power and a top-down approach of the implementation of the reforms. In addition to this, many faced problems with their economic capacity to afford the costs of reform implementation. The thesis also shows the importance farmers attribute to their cultural heritage and property.

The thesis reveals that although some farmers occasionally use overt resistance and refuse to comply with certain decisions that disregard their context-based priorities, many farmers use covert resistance to express their discontents with forced relocation, imposed new crops and an agricultural system using expensive chemical fertilisers instead of local manure. Moreover, the findings show that despite the fact that resistance to reform implementation often led to coercive measures, there were a number of cases where instead of intensifying coercion, farmers' resistance has to some extent increased the flexibility of the reform implementers.

Keywords: Resistance, power, reform(s), implementation, settlement, agriculture, genocide, Rwanda