

Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations

POLITICS AND POLICY:

An analysis of the policy environment and motivating factors behind
the English Language Policy in Rwanda.

Claire Nogie

B. Biomed. Sci, Grad. Dip. Ed, Grad. Cert. Counselling, M.A.

This thesis is presented as a partial fulfilment to the requirements for the
Postgraduate Certificate in Research Preparation (Humanities).

Word Count: 14982

December 2009

Declaration

I have read Macquarie University's policy on plagiarism and I am familiar with its contents. I know that plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty. I have avoided all forms of plagiarism in this thesis and have referenced all quotations and ideas borrowed from others.

Claire Nogie

Unit: IRPG 850

Student ID: 41568841

Synopsis

This thesis aims to examine the motivating factors behind the English Language Policy in Rwanda. This policy was implemented in late 2008 and represents a shift in the linguistic landscape of Rwanda from an era of trilingualism to bilingualism. Subsequently, French is no longer the medium of instruction in education or the language of choice in business and government. This policy reflects the various policy networks and elite in Rwanda and is anchored in the policy environment of the state

.

Chapter 1 provides some initial insights into the background of Rwanda's history and the English Language Policy. It presents a conceptual framework for this research by examining three theories, namely Elite Theory, Policy Networks and the policy environment which are highly applicable to the Rwandan context.

Chapter 2 examines the history of Rwanda from pre-colonial times to present day. This confers an understanding of the policy environment and particularly the changing elite, ideologies and policies of the state.

Chapter 3 explores public policy with an emphasis on the public motivations behind the English Language Policy in Rwanda. It analyses the motivations of globalisation and geostrategic pragmatism, the reasons given by policy-makers for the design of this policy.

Chapter 4 addresses the hidden motivations behind this policy, namely the anti-French sentiment in the Rwandan state due to the explicit involvement of French actors in the years leading up to and during the genocide of 1994.

Chapter 5 asserts that the English Language Policy was written as a result of both the public and hidden motivations of elites in positions of power in Rwanda. Furthermore, it formulates recommendations for further research.

Acknowledgements

There are several people I would like to thank for their advice and support throughout 2009 as I have undertaken this research thesis. Firstly, a huge thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Pieter Fourie, for keeping me on track, encouraging me to refine each section of this work and for providing meticulous feedback on all the drafts I sent through.

To my husband Nathan, thank you for your continued support, encouragement and love throughout yet another course I've undertaken. You cheer me on to pursue my love of learning and my passion for humanitarian education in Rwanda.

To Cel, my best friend who also happens to be an English teacher, thank you for your many words of encouragement, cups of teas and chats about the journey of writing a thesis. Thanks for helping me with all the little bits of grammar.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my friends and teaching colleagues in Rwanda, who have faced much adversity in life and though now are in their 30's and 40's, are endeavouring to learn the English language.

Glossary

BC – British Council

CHOGM – Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

EAC – East African Community

MINEDUC – Ministry of Education

OIF – Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie

PARMEHUTU – Part of the Hutu Emancipation Movement

REAP – Rwanda English Action Program

RPA – Rwandese Patriotic Army

RPF – Rwandese Patriotic Front

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNAMIR – United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda

UNAR – Union National Rwandaise

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Declaration | ii |
| Synopsis | iii |
| Acknowledgements | v |
| Glossary | vi |

Chapter One: Introduction

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1.1 | Background of the research | 1 |
| 1.2 | Elite Theory and the role of elites in Rwanda | 3 |
| 1.3 | Policy Networks | 5 |
| 1.4 | Understanding the policy environment | 7 |

Chapter Two: The Political Origins of Ethnic Identity in Rwanda

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 2.1 | Rwanda's historical narrative | 8 |
| 2.2 | Rwanda in Pre-colonial Times | 9 |
| 2.3 | The Years of Belgian Colonisation | 11 |
| 2.4 | Decolonisation and Independence from Belgium | 14 |
| 2.5 | Rwandan Politics in the early 1990s and the genocide | 16 |
| 2.6 | Current Political System of Rwanda | 19 |
| 2.7 | Conclusion | 20 |

Chapter Three: The English Language Policy in Rwanda and the Policy Environment

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 3.1 | The Background of Language in Rwanda | 22 |
| 3.2 | Public Policy and the Policy Environment of the State of Rwanda | 23 |
| 3.3 | Rwanda says 'au revoir' to French: The English Language Policy | 24 |
| 3.4 | The State Decision and Policy-Makers | 26 |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|----|
| 3.5 | Globalisation, the driving force of the English Language Policy | 27 |
| 3.6 | Conclusion | 32 |
| | | |
| Chapter Four: | The Underlying Factors behind the English language policy | |
| 4.1 | The anti-French sentiment of the state | 35 |
| 4.2 | Bilateral relations between France and Rwanda prior to the genocide | 36 |
| 4.3 | French government involvement in the genocide | 37 |
| 4.4 | Some implications for Rwanda in the Francophone sphere | 40 |
| 4.5 | Conclusion | 41 |
| | | |
| Chapter Five: | Conclusion | 42 |
| | | |
| References | | 47 |
| | | |
| Appendices | | |
| Appendix 1. | Map of Rwanda and the neighbouring states | 56 |