

Community-based peacebuilding in turbulent contexts

An examination of the changing socio-political context and its effect on CARE's peacebuilding practices in Burundi



Master thesis
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Master of Science in Human Geography
Conflicts, Territories and Identities

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Abstract

This master thesis focuses on the changing socio-political context from ‘relative peace’ to ‘a state of civil war’ in Burundi and on the question of how this changing context has affected the bottom-up peacebuilding program (Peace Under Construction) of CARE since 2012. Humanitarian interventions are sensitive to the context in which they operate, especially in the case of violent conflict. Just few studies, however, touch upon the issue of the impact of the changing context over time on humanitarian practices. Guided by the theory of bottom-up peacebuilding and the participatory model, the Peace Under Construction program has been examined. According to the theory, a participatory model ensures conflict-sensitivity and guarantees successful and sustainable development. In Burundi the socio-political context has changed significantly, contrary to most expectations. The Burundian government that announced to run for a third, unconstitutional, term in office, has become – despite the large opposition – increasingly authoritarian. The government managed to silence almost all of the opposition and is increasingly playing the ethnic card between the Hutus and the Tutsis. Through building on the experiences of humanitarian professionals working with or in Burundi, this study concludes that the changing context and the authoritarian nature of the regime do indeed affect the program. This is of course relative, as the situation in the capital of Bujumbura is much worse than the situation elsewhere in the country. Much of the restricted humanitarian space derives not only from the current crisis but also from the donors. Communities have more fear, which affects significant elements of the participatory model such as social cohesion and participation. The restrictions on freedom of expression have called the achieved empowerment of communities into question, whereby the local authorities have been replaced by people from the ruling party. The link between the ‘bottom’ towards the ‘up’ has disappeared as a consequence of a new mandate given by the donor as well as by the Burundian government itself; social contracts have disappeared or need to be built up again. Overall the top-down and oppressive approach by the Burundian government is effective and in stark contrast with the bottom-up approach of CARE. Yet, because of the missing link with the national government, sustainability has yet to be seen. And in-between all restrictions coming from the major stakeholders, CARE’s relationship with the local NGO partners has become significantly important and upholding the principle of neutrality opens up the opportunity to continue working at the local level. Humanitarian space still exists at the local level as long as actors are not framed by the government as the ‘opposition’ and as long as the local government sees the benefits deriving from the program. Although the PUC program has achieved a lot in and outside of Bujumbura, for instance a strengthening of the capacity of peace clubs, CARE should not close its eyes for what it has NOT achieved because of the changing socio-political context. It is important to acknowledge the negative effects of the authoritarian nature of the regime in Burundi and how it undermines important and sometimes essential components of the participatory model or the bottom-up approach in general.

Change is a process and cannot be achieved overnight, lessons need to be learned and adjusted to future programs.

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List of Acronyms

ACAT Burundi	L'Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture au Burundi
APRODH	Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Droits Humains et des Personnes Détenues
CFP	Centre des Femmes pour la Paix
CHE	Complex Humanitarian Emergencies
CICAM	Centre of International Conflict, Analysis & Management
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie - Forces Pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FNL	Forces National de Libération
FOCODE	Forum pour la Conscience et le Développement
FORSC	Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile
Frodebu	Front for democracy in Burundi
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-governmental organization
JJB	Jumelage Jeunesse Burundais
MIPAREC	Ministère pour la Paix et la Réconciliation sous la Croix
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PALIPEHUTU	Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu
PDC	Parti Democrate Chretien
PUC	Peace Under Construction
RU	Radboud University
SCS	community scorecard
UN	United Nations
UPRONA	Union pour le Progres National
VSLA	Savings and Loans Groups

List of Burundian terms

<i>Bashingantahe</i>	Nominated wise men, counsellors, elders, chosen from both ethnic groups within the society and with the responsibility to guard over traditions and good behavior.
<i>Colline</i>	Colline means 'Hill' in France.
<i>Ganwa</i>	The royal family of Burundi considered themselves to be a separate group called the princely 'Ganwa'.
<i>Imbonerakue</i>	'Those who see far', the youth wing of CNDD-FDD, also known as the presidential guard.
<i>Mwami</i>	The Ganwa competed for the next kingship, also known as the Mwami.

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Map of Burundi¹



¹ World Maps, retrieved from <http://www.worldmapsinfo.com/map-of-burundi-africa.html>

Chapter I Introduction

1.1 Preface

In recent years, humanitarian aid organizations have found themselves increasingly involved in more complicated situations and thereby facing an evolving set of challenges (Dunn, 2013). Such situations have become known as complex humanitarian emergencies² (CHE). Since the events of 9/11, followed by the so-called armed humanitarianism³ in Afghanistan as part of the War on Terror, the line between combatants and non-combatants has become more blurred. The result has been that attacks on UN and humanitarian personnel increased over the past decade (Mac Ginty, 2012), and that aid organizations are more often denied access to the crisis scene (Bayode, Mbohwa & Akinlabi, 2015).

In fact, the number of violent incidents against aid workers in 2012 shows an increase of almost 400 percent since the year 2000 (Bayode et al., 2015). That number rose even more in 2013, during which 155 aid workers were killed, 161 were seriously wounded and 134 were kidnapped – mainly a consequence of the escalating conflicts in Syria and South Sudan (Stoddard, Harmer & Ryou, 2014). According to Stoddard, Harmer and Toth (2013, p. 8), kidnapping is considered to be “the new normal” for aid personnel. These attacks are not coincidental incidents; instead they represent deliberate targeted attacks against humanitarians, presenting a challenge to the principles that underlie humanitarian actions (Fast, 2010). They will “lead to a continuation of the shrinking and undermining of the humanitarian space granted by warring parties to humanitarians” (Abiew, 2012, p. 204). Yet, according to Collinson and Elhawary (2012), there has never been a ‘golden age’ of humanitarian space⁴.

The situation in Burundi, a small country in east central Africa, shows another perspective on humanitarian space. During Burundi’s transition after the civil war in 2005, the UN and other

² According to Dunn (2013, p. 6), “a complex humanitarian emergency (CHE) is defined as a disaster that comes at least part due to human design. CHE is usually used to describe a disaster that involves multiple components such as large-scale displacement of people in the context of conflict, war, persecution, economic crisis, terrorism, political instability, or social unrest”. Lautze et al., as cited in Dunn (2013, pp. 6-7), add that “...complex emergencies are characterized by the absence of distinction between war, peace, and crime. A CHE is, then, generally not a clearly defined war between two state actors, each of whom abides by the international laws of war”.

³ Jackson (1993, p. 582) states that “the doctrine of armed humanitarianism transforms the negative ethics of non-intervention into a positive ethics of intervention in which human rights are primary and no longer secondary normative considerations. That would mean that states are no longer protected by their sovereignty and thus enjoy no peremptory right of non-intervention”. Thereby “it does not have the right to invoke the principle of non-intervention, because it has failed to prove its capacity to be sovereign” (Sakellaropoulos & Sotiris, 2008, p. 220).

⁴ According to Herrero (2014, p. 1), humanitarian space refers “to both the physical environment and the room for maneuver of humanitarian workers to operate without fear of attack and interference by parties to the conflict”.

humanitarian organizations were located in a highly protected environment characterized by strict security guidelines. Despite the fact that the security threat in most parts of the country had decreased significantly by 2006, the security guidelines remained unchanged. These strict security measures – therefore – often became an obstacle to collaboration and access, hence to humanitarian space (Zeebroek, 2006). Nevertheless, the ten years of relative peace since the end of the civil war allowed humanitarians to change their programs from emergency relief to long-term development programs (Green, 2015). However, the contemporary situation has changed. Recent developments show signs that Burundi might again be in (or at the eve of) a state of civil war. Protests against Hutu President Nkurunziza’s third term in office began in April 2015 and since then more than 400 people have been killed and more than 200,000 people have fled the country (Ruble, 2016).

Following these events, some humanitarian partners have left the country (Green, 2015); and by the end of 2015 two humanitarian workers have been killed (Aid Worker Security, 2016). Though, it has to be noticed that these were not targeted attacks, but that both workers were ‘drinking a beer at the wrong place, wrong time’ (Source 6, 11-4-2016). In fact, foreigners have not yet been the victim of targeted attacks (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Gerhardt, Cordaid 24-4-2016). Nevertheless, one could argue that the situation in Burundi is becoming more complex: aid workers face more risks and humanitarian organizations have to make more complex decisions (Dunn, 2013). Additionally, different modalities of interventions are required, as situations of ‘conflict’ and ‘peace’ tend to be approached as entirely different situations (Cramer, as cited in Van Leeuwen, 2013). The situation on the ground often proves to be complex and filled with unexpected realities (Duffield, 2002). Hence, humanitarians that implement development strategies, but also the development strategies themselves, are sensitive to the region in which they operate, especially in a context of conflict.

During conflict, all involved actors – internally as well as externally – follow their own agendas; this might impact the character and duration of the conflict, but also the prospects for lasting security and development (Beswick & Jackson, 2011). The agenda of humanitarian agents comes close to the idea “that in extreme cases of human suffering external agents may offer assistance to people in need, and in doing so should be accorded respect and even ‘rights’ while carrying out their functions” (Vaux, 2006, p. 240). Overall this raises several questions: How are humanitarian agencies in Burundi – that so far have applied their programs in the context of relative peace – able to implement their programs while the socio-political context is changing? How are they able to deal with the increasing security risk, if there is any? How do their practices interact with the dynamics of the conflict in Burundi and what are the mechanisms behind this interaction? In order to answer these questions, and to demarcate a research question, this study will first discuss the literature regarding humanitarians.

1.2 Humanitarian Agencies

In his study, Weiss (1999, p. 12) argues that “the assumption that politics and humanitarianism can be entirely separated [...] is a fiction”. Humanitarian agencies are considered to be part of the ‘conflict-ridden context’, whereby they might exacerbate the conflict and war economy (Abild, 2010). In other words, the actions of humanitarian agencies will have political effects on the situation (Barnett, 2005). Humanitarians must acknowledge the political nature of their work in the context of complex emergencies (Stein, 2001; Lischer, 2003; Barnett, 2005). “Humanitarian action has unavoidable political consequences, irrespective of whether it has political objectives at the outset” (Collinson, Elhawary & Muggah, 2010, p. 13). Therefore, humanitarian practices will be considered as part of the context in which there is little to no such thing as a separate non-political space. Yet, according to Goodhand (2002), little is known about the interaction between humanitarian aid and the dynamics of conflict and peace. Therefore, the ‘how-to-engage-question’ – or in other words, the interaction in a changing context from ‘relative peace’ to a ‘state of civil war’ – will be the central theme in this thesis. In this context, the practices of the humanitarian NGO ‘CARE’ will be examined in the case of Burundi.

1.2.1 ‘New Wars’, ‘new context’

Humanitarian practices should be seen within the contemporary context of conflicts. Scholars generally recognize that since the end of the Cold War the nature of political conflict has changed (Kaldor, 1999; Le Billon, 2001; Axworthy, 2012). Wars are much less characterized as ‘proxy’, in which the belligerents enjoy the backing of one of the superpowers. These ‘old wars’ are getting behind us and today’s conflicts – the so-called ‘new wars’ – are regularly fought within states rather than between states. Perhaps incorrectly, however, these new wars are often purely categorized as either ‘ethnic’ or ‘civil war’ (Kaldor, 1999; Longley & Maxwell, 2003). In general, new threats such as genocide and terrorism have increasingly become more common (Axworthy, 2012). Also Burundi has its genocidal landscapes. Military strategies have been used to seek political control over civilians and in time large numbers of people have been systematically killed for political or military ends (Stein, 2001).

Due to the decrease of foreign assistance to the conflict parties, belligerents have become more dependent upon private sources for sustaining their war activities; which correspondingly entails the new political economy of war (Le Billon, 2001). Whenever a country is in a state of war, new opportunities will be offered to the belligerents that would not have been possible in a situation of peace (Kaldor, 1999). According to Duffield, as cited in Longley and Maxwell (2003), the new wars are at least partly about activities such as gaining access to resources and getting control over markets, labour and access routes, thus reconfiguring the system to the benefit of the victors. Generally, the

new wars challenge the conflict management strategies of the international community (Wolf, Deitelhoff & Engert, 2007).

In addition, Axworthy (2012, p. 3), states that the new globalized and borderless world “is an environment which demands a new paradigm of understanding and response”. Political conflicts have become more chronic and permanent and therefore require more than just short-term solutions by humanitarians. Humanitarian agencies have the potential to also contribute to long-term development, in which case they would have to address the root problems of conflicts (Longley & Maxwell, 2003; Barnett, 2005). Kaldor (1999) even argues that there is a need for international intervention to protect the innocent people, despite the fact that it might challenge the idea of sovereignty. Collinson et al., as cited in Longley and Maxwell (2003, p. 7), state that:

“The transformations that conflict brings about in the wider political economy are mirrored in the varied, profound and often irreversible changes that are brought about in people’s lives at the local level. [...] the adaptations and diversification in people’s livelihoods and coping strategies need to be matched by diversification and adaptation in the humanitarian response.”

1.2.2 In the eye of the storm

As outlined in the previous paragraph, the changing context should be approached differently from a humanitarian perspective. According to Longley and Maxwell (2003), applying solely short-term solutions to chronic problems might raise a host of issues. Moreover, the struggle to address human needs in the changing context places NGOs gradually more in the front lines (Lange, 2004). This was also the case in Burundi, where the UN was kept out of important regions by the military (Stein, 2001). Overall, humanitarian agencies do play a significant role in humanitarian relief and development, as “it is NGO personnel who are providing relief and assistance to the victims of conflict in the space vacated by states and international institutions” (Stein, 2008, p. 18). Their argument is based on the notion that intervention to prevent people from dying is inherently good; otherwise doing nothing would be morally wrong (Ibid.). However, Schafer, as cited in Longley and Maxwell (2003), assumes that there often is a mismatch between humanitarian development and the context of the ‘new wars’. Although humanitarian work is inherently good, it has become subject of various sorts of criticism during recent years. Usually these criticisms are directed at the unanticipated consequences of humanitarian interventions and according to Stein (2001, p. 19) humanitarians “now find themselves in the eye of the storm”.

One form of criticism entails that the study of peace, conflict and development is sometimes severely constrained by powerful interests. Development is therefore “part of a much wider nexus of liberal governance that perpetuates the North-South dependencies of the colonial period” (Duffield, 1994; Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009, p. 172). Mac Ginty (2008) also criticizes that traditional

approaches to peace-making are limited to Western theories and approaches. The privatization of assistance through the NGOs by the major powers is also seen as a substitute for their political actions, in which NGOs get “exploited as a cover for their absence” (Hendrickson, as cited in Stein, 2001, p. 25).

In the case of Afghanistan, for instance, humanitarian aid changed the balance of power by avoiding official structures and working directly with warlords (Goodhand, 2002). In line with this, humanitarians are being criticized for too often ignoring official governments in situations of conflict (Harvey, 2013). By doing so, they might feed the war economy (Weiss & Hoffman, 2007). The war economy might pave the way for many factions to manipulate and to control the relief assistance entering the country (Duffield, 1994).

Humanitarian development can thus be counter-productive, even in such a way that it can “trigger some rebellion without deterring all state retaliation, thereby causing some genocidal violence that otherwise would not have occurred” (Kuperman, 2008, p. 75). Moreover, aid can also be ‘the cause’ of conflict, which is illustrated by the case of the Rwandan refugee crisis of 1994-96. In this case humanitarian organizations delivered food and supplies to the refugee camps – which were used as military bases – and therefore fed the people that later perpetrated genocide (Lischer, 2003). A critical side-note to this example, however, is that it can be argued to be a rather unique and incomparable situation.

1.2.3 Beyond the humanitarian thought

Sometimes the geopolitical imagination of the so-called new wars is also referred to as the borderlands and serves as a justification and legitimation to establish a will to govern these borderlands (Duffield, 2002), or in other words to ‘govern these peripheries’ (Pugh, 2004). Implied by the donors⁵ and embraced by the NGOs, during the 1990s aid was increasingly used as a tool of conflict resolution (Duffield, 2010). “For NGOs, the coherence agenda and the advent of donor-endorsed integrated working represents a major political shift [...] one is more likely to encounter donor-funded NGOs working under UN licence to build the capacity of a state, shadow its functions or extent its reach” (Duffield, 2010, p. 59). Consequently, humanitarian NGOs are getting involved in internal affairs within its field of practice, whereby also “the attitudes and beliefs of the people within them” are being transformed (Duffield, 2002, p. 1050).

Michael Pugh (2004) elaborates on this and states that external actors can be so intrusive “that the imposition is tantamount to a protectorate. International financial institutions, UN administrators,

⁵ Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2013) defines a donor as “an institution that provides grants and other forms of financial contribution (or assistance in kind) to organisations such as governments or to civil society (local and international). A donor may be a bilateral agency (eg DFID in the UK), a multilateral agency (eg the World Bank or the UN), a philanthropic organisation (eg a foundation), or an INGO providing funding for a local partner”.

NGOs, intergovernmental aid agencies, private companies, external ‘peace support’ forces, teams of monitors, outside civilian police and judges attempt to control territory, economic resources and public policy” (p. 41). Often these actions have the aim to establish neoliberal values and they might therefore serve the purpose of an existing order (Ibid.). Nevertheless, in general humanitarian agencies have accepted their ability and potential to transform societies, together with the political implications (Barnett & Snyder, as cited in Collinson et al., 2010). Thus, we can cautiously emphasize that international humanitarians are not solely focussing on relief, but are also considering effective changes to avoid future conflicts; according to Beswick and Jackson (2011) this reflects the Wilsonian approach, in which humanitarian agencies consider their principles, or the liberal principles, as ‘universal’.

1.2.4 Concerns regarding humanitarian practices

The previously mentioned ‘will to govern’ – as part of development – is interrelated with security. It is a security function for the North, in order to achieve international stability, that at the same time is also essential to development (Duffield, 2002; 2010). Not surprisingly, humanitarians are sometimes “rubbing shoulders with a single superpower [...] it is this relationship that is a primary cause of concern for aid workers today” (Vaux, 2006, p. 240). For instance, due to the fact that humanitarian aid is more closely related to the donors’ interests, suffering people with low political profile might get less help than others (Ibid.).

This said, we can conclude that humanitarians are part of the conflict-context in which humanitarians sometimes have ambitious interrelated agendas. The case of Afghanistan shows that the agenda as an extension of national interests, might lead to more insecurity for field personnel. Their actions can influence the same conflict-context or political economy of the conflict in which they engage – and vice versa. Moreover, it is now well known that humanitarian actions might have (un)intended consequences for the concerned region. For instance, military factions may hinder development projects if humanitarian actions are deemed to hinder the pursuit of their objectives, or they may alter their actions in order to benefit from humanitarian practices (Collinson & Elhawary, 2012). Hence, as a substantial amount of literature illustrates, concerns still remain regarding humanitarian practices. The latter is, therefore, not beyond the subject of examination and improvement and is central in this research. The following section will elaborate upon the research objective of this study.

1.3 From issue to research objective

Overall, the issue of a changing context from ‘relative peace’ to a ‘state of civil war’ and the challenges that this brings for humanitarians’ development practices remains relatively untouched in the literature. El Hag Yousif (2011, p. 27), stresses that studies did not focus on one “operation over an

extended period of time to understand how the operation evolved overtime and adapted to the changes in the dynamic context in which it was taking place”. The mismatch between humanitarian development and the socio-political context of the so-called ‘new wars’ (Longley & Maxwell, 2003), raises questions regarding the interaction between development practices and the dynamics of conflict and peace. There is still enough space (and certainly also the need) to examine humanitarian practices, and the challenges and difficulties caused by the changing context. Different contexts require different approaches; the changing context affects the humanitarian space and thereby challenges the conflict management of the humanitarian organization.

Burundi, as already mentioned in the preface, is a suitable and relevant case to analyse this issue. Therefore, this research will have the objective *to contribute to humanitarian development practices and the discussion in the literature surrounding humanitarian agencies, by analysing the interactions between CARE’s peacebuilding approach in Burundi and the dynamics of the recent change in the context from ‘relative peace’ to ‘a state of civil war’*. Notably, there is no intention to generalize from any given conclusion to other countries concerning humanitarian practices. However, I am convinced that several observations and mechanisms might also apply – if only partly – to humanitarian practices in sub-Saharan Africa or other regions in the world. Additional information upon this can be found in the methodology in Section 1.6. The following section will elaborate upon the research questions that contribute to the main objective.

1.4 Research questions

In order to conduct this study, I have done an internship at CARE Nederland, a humanitarian NGO in The Hague, “that seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security” (CARE, 2016). To achieve its vision, CARE’s projects either respond to immediate humanitarian needs arising from disasters or focus on more systematic causes of poverty and discrimination that threaten the lives of the poor in the longer term, or in other words they focus on ‘peacebuilding’. It is important to note that CARE has a history in working specifically on reconstruction and connecting relief and development. In Burundi, CARE’s development program (further in this thesis referred to as ‘community-based peacebuilding program’) has been initiated during a period of relative peace; now this program has to deal with the complexities of the changing context.

The central research question of the thesis is therefore:

To what extent does the changing socio-political context in Burundi – a context from ‘relative peace’ to a ‘state of civil war’ – affect the community-based peacebuilding program of CARE, and what mechanisms behind the dynamics of peace and conflict can be identified?

In order to find an answer to the central question, the following sub-questions have to be examined.

1. What is the history of the violent conflicts in Burundi?
2. What has changed in the socio-political context of Burundi, since CARE has initiated its community-based peacebuilding program?
3. What is the theoretical perspective on bottom-up peacebuilding and how is CARE's community-based peacebuilding program initiated in Burundi during a period of relative peace?
4. What is done differently in applying the program to a more turbulent context, and what difficulties, challenges and obstacles come forth from the turbulent context at the community level?
5. How does the changing context in Burundi change the way in which CARE relates to other non-recipient stakeholders with whom it is important to have relationships, such as local partners, the government, and the donor?

1.5 Scientific & societal relevance

Regarding the 'new wars', the African conflicts are no exception. Civilians have paid the heaviest price. The violent conflicts are very much characterized by 'greedy leaders' who instead of restoring justice and peace try to enrich themselves. As a consequence of fear and violence, a huge number of refugees and internally displaced people have been forced to flee from their homes. Okumu (2010) states that it is in this context that humanitarians are operating; therefore, they have to function under 'very complicated conditions'.

Also in the case of Burundi, humanitarians have settled their development programs in times of relative peace; this has paved the way for a transformation of their programs from short-term relief towards long-term development projects. However, their programs are now placed in a totally different context, since recent activities show signs that Burundi might again be in a state of civil war. In addition – adding to the relevance – and according to Collier (2008, p. 27), "civil war is development in reverse". In his book, *The Bottom Billion*, Paul Collier describes the so-called 'conflict trap', in which countries are stuck in a cycle of conflict recurrence, due to the stagnated economic growth. Since its independence, Burundi has experienced various episodes of violent conflict, and hence is arguably stuck in the so-called 'conflict trap' (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005; Mercier, 2015). This would mean that Burundi will remain prone to civil wars. Thereby – as mentioned before – both the people as

well as their development strategies are sensitive to the environment, especially in the context of conflict.

“Humanitarian agencies are likely to face very different challenges according to the different faces of ‘stabilisation’ in different political contexts. [...] These contexts will include situations of acute fragility [...] where the establishments of governing authority at any level requires all international actors to assume complex political risks and seek uncertain political bargains with a variety of local, national and international political actors.” (Collinson et al., 2010, pp. 21-22)

Getting a clear and in-depth understanding of how CARE engages in an environment of growing instability – while it has initiated its community-based peacebuilding program during a period of relative peace – contributes to the contemporary debate on humanitarian agencies and the theory of community-based peacebuilding. Much of the literature is based on the impact of humanitarian aid and its practices, or solely emphasizes the new wars in which it has to operate. However, just a few studies touch upon the issue of the *impact of changing political stability* overtime on *humanitarian practices*, not to mention, the *long-term development programs* that have been initiated during *relative peace* (Longley & Maxwell, 2003). Overall, there has been much less “examination of how INGOs adapt their development approaches in order to operate most effectively within this context” (Ware, 2011, p. 31).

Are these programs still appropriate?; Do humanitarian agencies experience new challenges?; Are current relations with actors in the field still in accordance with the humanitarian principles?; Which lessons can be learned from experiencing such a changing context?; How do donors respond to these unstable events?; Are humanitarian programs well prepared for such changing events? Hence, the effects of a changing context from peace to civil war on humanitarian actions is still underexposed in the contemporary literature. Additionally, by studying the way in which humanitarians engage with and respond to their surroundings, I will develop more knowledge concerning the humanitarian arena in which they operate (Hillhorst & Jansen, 2010) and contemporary peacebuilding practices. This includes the everyday dynamics between humanitarian action and the changing political environment; I will make an attempt to identify the mechanisms behind these dynamics. By doing so, more evidence can be found regarding the challenges and difficulties that humanitarian NGOs, and particularly CARE, face when these organizations are confronted with a changing socio-political context.

Moreover, identifying the new challenges, difficulties, dynamics and mechanisms will prepare CARE for future changes in the humanitarian field. Their approaches to the humanitarian field will be illustrated, which can also strengthen their operations. Any engagement in the changing context might face tough decisions concerning all possible issues (Collinson et al., 2010). Assuming that Burundi is stuck in a ‘conflict trap’, any improvement in humanitarian programs becomes even more relevant.

Not only for the humanitarian programs themselves – but more importantly – for the people that are in need of humanitarian intervention in (post-)conflict situations. In other words, this research can contribute to enhancing the donor policies and humanitarian practices in the field, both in a situation of peace and conflict. The societal relevance, therefore, overlaps with the scientific relevance. The next section describes the research strategy and data analysis method that has been used in this study.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Research strategy

Within the limits of this thesis, Burundi will serve as a single-case study. Burundi – as a case – seems to be suitable, considering the recent developments within the country. The changing context, in which the transformation from ‘relative peace’ to a ‘state of civil war’ is going on, is most specific and to some extent also extraordinary. Ironically, despite the negative change in Burundi, this study is an opportunity to find new or confirm existing knowledge and theory in the literature. In other words, it gives an opportunity to study a complex social phenomenon (Yin, 1994). A case study, where the case is used as a specific illustration, is a methodological strategy that attempts to understand and get in-depth knowledge about an issue or problem within a bounded context (Creswell, 2007). However, in Section 1.4 it has been mentioned that this research does not have the intention to generalize its results. This is due to the fact that the context is different from other cases. According to Creswell (2007), there is a general rule among qualitative researchers in that they should be “reluctant to generalize from one case to another” (p. 74). Yet, information may provide “general structures or relations that can be used to generate or modify models or hypotheses” (Harvey, as cited in Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010, p. 232). Notably, within the case of Burundi an attempt will be made to analyse a larger period of time (timeline), whereby both humanitarian actions during times of relative peace and a state of civil war will be examined.

Furthermore, a central and most important aspect of a single-case study is *triangulation* (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007; Yin, 2010). This entails that multiple sources of information, such as interviews, documents and reports, will be used to strengthen the validity and trust-ability of the thesis content (Creswell, 2007; Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). This research will therefore be of qualitative nature. Although the study of documents and reports will make an important contribution, the outcome will mostly be dependent on data gathered through interviews. This is what makes a qualitative research ‘original’ and ‘explicit’. Or in the words of Yin (2015, p. 9), “events and ideas emerging from qualitative research can represent the meaning given to real-world events by people who live them, not the values, preconditions or meanings held by researchers”. Moreover, qualitative research embraces contextual conditions (e.g. cultural and environmental) that are difficult to address by other social science research methods (Ibid.). Qualitative research attempts to develop theories,

because existing theories cannot capture the complexity of the problem that is observed (Creswell, 2007). Regarding this thesis, a part of the objective is to understand the context in which CARE operates; therefore this study requires qualitative research. In addition to the latter, statistics on the other hand, provide solely a general picture of trends, associations and relationships. It does not tell why people respond in the context as they did; it leaves out the issue of for instance gender differences (Ibid.). The next section will explain the data collection methods that has been used for this research.

1.6.2 Data collection & analysis procedure

As mentioned before, “the data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 231). Notably, this research has been conducted throughout an internship at CARE, a humanitarian NGO active in Burundi. CARE – to which I am most grateful – has provided me with the environment and opportunity to get access to necessary and valuable sources. The work I have done regarding my ‘internship assignment’ made it much easier to get in contact with the local program implementers in Burundi. The ‘community-based peacebuilding’ program in Burundi was initiated during a time of relative peace in 2012, and aimed for a sustainable outcome. Taking this as a starting point, I analysed the practices of this program within the timespan of the changing context until July 2016. This is also the month in which the program came to an end. In the methodology section above I mentioned the use of two data collection approaches: desk research and semi-structured interviews. Throughout my research and within the work I have done, I can add one more approach to this: observation. With the latter approach I could confirm most of the research results; more importantly, I could fill up one of the constraints of this research, which is that I could not go into the field. Later in this section I will delve more into the observations; first I will elaborate upon the desk research I have done.

In conducting desk research an attempt has been made to be as varied as possible. By that is meant that different sources of literature have been used to collect information, such as documents (personal letters, agendas, progress reports, narrative reports, evaluation reports), archival records (organizational reports) (Yin, 1994), existing literature (books, journals), media (newspapers, internet) and policy documents (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). Through the literature I could get a clear image of the history of violence in Burundi, humanitarian practices and the underlying theories. The literature in general was significant in specifying the research questions, objective and theoretical framework. Moreover, it supports a large amount of arguments made by the interviewees or the other way around (Clifford et al., 2010). Recent media reports have been significantly important in helping to define the changing context. However, finding relevant media reports and academic literature was sometimes challenging, due to the modest interest in Burundi by the international community. Only few media sources reported on the current situation, just as the academic literature that mostly focuses on other countries in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, such as Rwanda. Nevertheless, I have managed to build a strong foundation for this study.

Furthermore, I have conducted semi-structured interviews between April and May 2016 in The Hague and Nijmegen with professionals working for humanitarian agencies in Burundi. Most interviews were held through Skype, rather than face-to-face. These agencies include NGOs such as CARE, Cordaid, Oxfam Novib, Zoa, NIMD, The Hague Academy for Local Governance and La Benevolencija. I also interviewed professionals from local partner organizations such as MIPAREC and JJB. Additionally, I also interviewed one academic from the CICAM department of the Radboud University. The professionals I interviewed had different positions, ranging from Security Advisors to Country Directors, but they were all working in or with Burundi. The list of the people I have interviewed can be found in the section ‘List of interviews’ on p. 83 of this thesis; important to note here is that most of the interviewees have indicated they want to be anonymous. The semi-structured interviews included questions that were specifically formulated in advance. Yet, these questions served more as a guide, whereby I looked for clarification and elaboration regarding certain answers. The interviewees were asked for their experiences and thoughts about the context in Burundi, their programs, the way they work with communities and the way they interact or interpret relationships with key stakeholders; all in light of the changing socio-political context and its effect on their practices. The people in the field, and in particular those who work for local partner organizations, could give an elaborated insight in the changing socio-political context, that sometimes has not been captured by the international media or academic literature. All interviews started with a personal component and I have tried to ask all interviewees the same questions. Because of this I was able to compare the answers with each other, which strengthens the analysis; the answers also suggested sources of corroboratory or contrary evidence. The list of interview questions can be found in *Appendix I*.

All interviews have been recorded (with permission). This gave me more space in terms of focussing on the interviewee instead of on writing notes. The conversations have been transcribed directly after the interviews in a program called *Atlas.ti*. Within this program I organized the information by identifying certain categories and patterns; this process is also known as coding. The codes were based on the research questions and theoretical framework, taking into account that this process can be circular (Clifford et al., 2010). The identified codes have been packed together to general ‘family’ themes, such as ‘context’ or ‘stakeholders’ (Creswell, 2007). During the interviews the questions have been slightly altered, also depending on the background of the interviewee. Despite the use of an interview protocol, each interview was different and therefore required small changes in the interview questions.

As mentioned at the start of this section, ‘observation’ was added to the data collection approaches. For my internship I had to organize an international learning event in The Hague. This event was organized for the local implementation partners of CARE in Burundi that have initiated the Peace Under Construction program; the same program as the one that is central in this study. During an eight days conference in The Hague, people from the local partner organizations as well as

employees from the CARE Burundi office could learn and share their experiences about the community-based peacebuilding program in Burundi. The theme of the conference was – similar to the title of this thesis – ‘community-based peacebuilding in turbulent contexts’. Their experiences and lessons learned, in light of the changing context, confirmed much of the results I had gathered up to that point (23 May – 1 June, 2016). During the eight days I have spent with the local Burundians, they shared impressive and most interesting stories about the current state in Burundi; stories you would normally not get your hands on in The Netherlands. I have to stress that I was fortunate to participate in this learning event in which I indeed ‘learned’ a lot, and from which I could strengthen the content of this study. In many respects I consider this as a reasonable alternative to the fact that the situation in Burundi did not allow me to travel to Bujumbura. The following section will briefly describe the (other) limitations of this study.

1.6.3 Limitations

The first and largest limitation was that I was not allowed to go into the field for interviews. As mentioned in the previous section, this limitation is partly covered by the observations and small-talks with local Burundians during the eight-days learning event in The Hague. Most interviews have been held by Skype; Skype has therefore opened up the opportunity to talk with people in the field. Although interviews can provide valuable information of either the context in Burundi, as well as the challenges and difficulties people face in the field and organization, one should take into account that there is a possibility that interviewees may not be 100 percent honest. Interviewees might have felt restrained because of the sensitive subjects and security risks that sometimes go hand in hand in Burundi. Furthermore, they might feel restrained because it is difficult to self-reflect on a program in which people have spent large amounts of time with the aim to bring about positive change. I therefore have interviewed people from different organizations, rather than only CARE employees, and people with different functions to find similarities among answers and to prevent certain biases. I also have reassured the interviewees in advance that they have the option to remain confidential to give them more comfort. Finally, and important to mention, is that empirical evidence throughout this study is mostly based on anecdotal evidence and not on quantifiable evidence.

1.7 Outline of the study

Following the introduction of this thesis, each chapter will focus on a specific sub-question mentioned in Section 1.4. In Chapter II, the first sub-question will be answered. A brief description of the history of violence in Burundi will be given. An analysis of the history of violence will add to the understanding of Burundi nowadays. In Chapter III, sub-question 2 will be answered. Chapter III fits well with Chapter II and gives a brief description of the changing socio-political context. It gives a better understanding of the current situation in which NGOs, and in particular CARE, have initiated

their peacebuilding programs. Chapter IV focuses on the third sub-question and delves into the theory of peacebuilding, particularly community-based peacebuilding. Furthermore, it positions the peacebuilding practices of CARE in contemporary peacebuilding theory. The theory discussed in Chapter IV be used throughout Chapter V and VI for a better understanding of CARE's peacebuilding practices and the underlying assumptions.

Chapter V focuses on the fourth sub-question and elaborates the challenges, difficulties and obstacles encountered in working with communities. In Chapter V it becomes clear to what extent the program has changed due to the changing socio-political context in Burundi. The classification of the content of Chapter V as well as Chapter VI is based on the answers given by the respondents and to the significant concepts from the community-based peacebuilding theory. Furthermore, Chapter VI considers the relationships with key stakeholders and the extent to which these relationships have changed due to the changing socio-political context. The analysis in Chapter VI is related to the community-based practices, and therefore adds value to the local perspective on peacebuilding activities. In Chapter VII, the findings of this research will be summarized and a final conclusion will be given. And most important, an answer to the overall research question of this study is formulated. In addition, an overview will be given of some of my recommendations for further study related to peacebuilding in general. And finally, I will give my reflection on this study.

Chapter II Historical Context: Recurring episodes of violence

This chapter will elaborate on the historical context of Burundi. In order to understand why Burundi is the Burundi we know now, it is of great importance to know its history of recurring episodes of violence and how it managed to recover from a fierce civil war (1993-2005/6). This chapter will also serve as a stepping stone for the following chapter in which the contemporary changing socio-political context will be explained, in which Burundi is slowly abandoning its 'post-conflict status'. First this chapter will briefly discuss why Burundi is often 'forgotten' and it will shortly describe Burundi's pre-colonial ethnic composition. Then it will describe Burundi's colonial experience, the post-colonial experience and the Arusha peace negotiations up until the elections in 2010. Moreover, this chapter is necessary in order to understand recent events in Burundi and how humanitarian aid has developed over the years.

2.1 An often forgotten Burundi

Burundi is a very small and poor landlocked country in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, neighboring Rwanda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its society can be distinguished in three ethnic groups; the Hutu majority making up around 85 percent of the population, the Tutsis representing around 14 percent of the population and the Twa, a minority that makes up around one percent of the population (Tesfay, 2014). The history of violence in the Great Lakes Region goes back to the colonial times. It is exactly this period that has left its scars in Burundi's contemporary society. Ever since its independence from the Belgian rulers in 1962, Burundi has gone through different, seemingly unending cycles of 'ethnic' conflicts between the Hutus and Tutsis (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005). These events are most likely a result from the colonial policies that have left "an institutionalized antagonism between Hutu and Tutsi populations" (Van Leeuwen, 2013, p. 122). According to Charles Gerhardt, former Country Director of Cordaid in Burundi, violence can be traced back to even Burundi's pre-colonial experience:

"Burundi is a country in a region where the situation has been restless for years or maybe even hundreds of years. [...] violence is very strong inherited in the culture. People here had conflicts before there were even genocides, due to the relative overpopulation. Well, it is a very beautiful hilly country, but only certain regions can be cultivated, while the population keeps growing. Hence, the population density is very high." (Gerhardt, Cordaid 24-4-2016)

Whether the latest events in Burundi fall under the umbrella of 'ethnic conflict' is highly debatable. In 2015, the people were generally unsatisfied about the government, its policies and in particular President Nkurunziza's third term in office; the latest insurgencies that bring both Hutus and Tutsis on

the same side of the line are therefore better framed as ‘political’. However, the government is once again increasingly trying to play the ethnic card (Ndikumar, *MIPAREC* 12-4-2016; Ndayiragije, *CARE* 19-4-2016; Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Van Leeuwen, *RU* 25-4-2016; Andrews, *ZOA* 4-4-2016).

The events in Burundi are closely linked to politics and conflicts elsewhere in the Great Lakes Region, especially to those in Rwanda (Watt, 2008). “Conflict in one state often sparking violence in the other” (Tesfay, 2014, p. 2). Burundi and Rwanda are sharing the same culture, almost the same language and the same division of the population into Hutus, Tutsis and Twa. Therefore Burundi is often called Rwanda’s twin. There is, however, one large difference; until the 1990s, Rwanda’s post-colonial landscape was dominated by the Hutus, whereas in Burundi this landscape was dominated by the Tutsis (Curtis, 2014). Burundi is therefore better framed as Rwanda’s ‘non-identical Siamese’ twin (Watt, 2008). Yet, despite the interrelated events and because of Rwanda’s notoriety, “Burundi is often forgotten” (Ibid, p. ix). Until today, the events in Burundi have been largely unreported or unexplored in English-language media reports or scholarly analyses (Ibid.). However, the events in Burundi are – due to the interrelatedness – just as important as the events in the other countries of the Great Lakes Region. “Any solution or problems in these countries have regional implications” (Oudar & Lopez, 2015, p. 3).

2.2 Pre-colonial ethnicity

Despite all pre-colonial similarities, such as the same language, same culture, worshipping the same god and honoring the same king, Burundians rather describe the Tutsi and Hutu groups as different ethnic groups. The ‘ethnic’ division is not a matter of social class, but rather a matter of different professional practices (labor) and appearances. The latter, however, is difficult to determine due to centuries of intermarriage. Nevertheless, Burundians are labeled in either one of the ‘ethnic’ groups similar to the ethnicity of their father (Watt, 2008).

Another division – which is often considered to be more important than the ethnic groups – is the social stratification along clan lines (Watt, 2008). Clans sometimes belonged to both ethnic groups as they contained both Hutus and Tutsis (Oudar & Lopez, 2015). While both ethnic and clan divisions existed under the pre-colonial monarchy, their differences have been deepened by post-independence politics (Watt, 2008). Social cohesion under the monarchy was promoted by the *bashingantahe* (nominated wise men, counsellors, elders) chosen from both ethnic groups within the society and with the responsibility to guard over traditions and good behavior. It was during this time that violence was not pertinent along ethnic lines – at least not to the extent of the post-colonial decades; however violence was largely used by the crown whenever its power was threatened (Daley, 2006).

“Burundi has that dynamic which you also see in other African countries, you have the breeders and farmers. You have traditionally oppositional groups, the Hutus and the Tutsis,

which both arise from the same tribal group. However, and in particular during the Belgian colonization, these groups lost some of their identity [...]. The Belgians have put a 'H' and a 'T' in the passports of the Burundians and therefore messed up the whole society. This is an important element in history.” (Gerhardt, Cordaid 24-4-2016)

2.3 Colonial experience

Unlike other countries in Africa, Burundi's shape on the map stabilized after the year 1850, and formed together with Rwanda the kingdom Ruanda-Urundi in the late 19th century. The royal family of Burundi considered itself to be a separate group called the princely 'Ganwa'⁶; this group was in competition for the next kingship (the Mwami). In their system, both Hutus and Tutsis lived together relatively harmoniously on the same *collines* for centuries. This system was hardly an utopia, “just as peasants were exploited in Europe in the Middle Ages, there was certainly a degree of repression” (Watt, 2008, p. 25). The *bashingantahe* – as mentioned in the previous paragraph – were the guardians of tradition and good behavior at local level, and were able to solve inter-personal conflicts on their *colline*. Usually, when a local conflict occurred it was between different Ganwa princes to enlarge their control over land. For expanding power to other regions, they needed support from both local Hutus and Tutsis; the conflicts were therefore not based on Hutu-Tutsi rivalry (Ibid.).

The first colonial administration in Burundi was 'dominated' by the Germans from 1890 until 1916. “When the colonialists arrived they found what appeared to be a stratified society which fitted nicely into their prejudiced world view” (Watt, 2008, p. 28). Germany at that time thought that both Rwanda and Burundi had similar power structures, and the power holders were solely Tutsis. As a result “they imposed the same ruling structures in the two areas, favoring the Tutsi and Ganwa social group” (Oudar & Lopez, 2015). What they did not realize is that Burundi, unlike Rwanda, had a rotating power system; both Hutus and Tutsis played an important role in Burundi's power structure (Watt, 2008). The Burundian king was considered to be neither Hutu nor Tutsi, but embodied the nation. Even though the Burundian pre-colonial set-up was very similar to that of Rwanda, it was more stable and significantly more inclusive (Uvin, 2009). In general, the German presence was minimal and the kings continued to rule in much the same way as before. The Germans did, however, bring a devastating epidemic, which destroyed cattle and killed half of the population on the Rusizi plain (Ibid.). Germany – and later on also Belgium – controlled Burundi through indirect rule; the colonial authority was just an extra layer on top (Uvin, 2009).

After a short period of German rule, the Belgians took over the country as a result of World War I in 1916 (formal recognition in 1923). The Belgian version of ruling involved much more interference in local affairs (Watt, 2008). They started to exploit ethnic divisions, whereby “the

⁶ The Ganwa are not recognized in the constitution as a separate group, thereby most people consider them to be Tutsis (Watt, 2008).

Ganwas and Tutsis were seen by the colonial power as the ruling group while the Hutus were naturally destined to obey, and all Hutu authorities were dismissed” (Uvin, 2009, p. 8). Even though the formal political structure remained intact, the colonial influence definitely altered its nature. The political, social and economic relations became increasingly biased against the Hutus. And just a few powerful Ganwa and Tutsi had access to higher education (Watt, 2008; Uvin, 2009). On top of that, the administration introduced the identity card which indicated the ethnic origin; this only deepened the divisions (Watt, 2008; Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). As a consequence of a 1945 reform all Hutu chiefs were discarded from the administration (Table 1). The general consensus about the effect of colonial rule in Burundi is well summarized by Patricia Daley (2006, pp. 664-665):

“The advent of colonial rule led to the transformation of socio-political boundaries into rigid ethnic identities. In Burundi, colonialism transformed the political culture and destroyed the national consensus. Colonial social and administrative policies created and supported a new racial and ethnic hierarchy through the introduction of racist ideology and its application to pre-existing patterns of social differentiation.”

Table 1: Ethnic origin of chiefs in Burundi, 1929-45

Year	Ganwa		Tutsi		Hutu		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1929	76	57	30	23	27	20	133	100
1933	36	78	7	15	3	7	46	100
1937	35	80	8	18	1	2	44	100
1945	25	71	10	29	0	0	35	100

Source: Lemarchand as cited in Ndikumana (2005, p. 3)

Another consequence of the ‘indirect rule’ by the Belgians was the dissolution of the traditional structures of the *bashingantahe*; the *bashingantahe* were replaced by the Tutsis and therefore turned into biased native courts (Daley, 2006). The overall exclusiveness of the system triggered ethnic solidarities to challenge the regime in place. This change of events is an important element for understanding the coming episodes of violence in the post-colonial decades. According to Ndikumana (2005, p. 5):

“Ethnic diversity became an instrument for political competition in the pursuit of economic and political advantages. It follows that conflicts are caused not by ethnic diversity per se but by inequality in the distribution of access to national resources and political power across ethnic groups. When the political system discriminates along ethnic lines, then ethnicity becomes a vehicle of conflict.”

In 1947 the United Nations began to pressure Belgium to democratize Burundi, ultimately leading to the first pre-independence elections in September 1961. The election was easily won by a nationalist party, UPRONA (*Union pour le Progres National*), founded by Prince Louis Rwagasore in 1958. He was seen to be well suited to lead the country towards independence, as he favored unity over diversity, and charismatically could unite Hutu and Tutsi anti-colonialists. Symbolically he was important since he was a Tutsi married to a Hutu. In order to counter the anti-colonialist movement, the Belgian administration helped in creating the PDC (Parti Democrate Chretien), a party that was not in favor of immediate self-rule. Nevertheless, with the PDC unable to win the elections, its leadership planned – with the tacit approval of the Belgian administration – to assassinate Prince Rwagasore just three weeks after he became Prime Minister (Daley, 2006; Watt, 2008).

“The historic significance of Rwagasore’s murder is enormous: it is truly a day on which doors were closed for Burundi. [...] During the next four years, Burundian politics was extremely unstable and gridlocked. The main parties became divided internally, the Hutu – Tutsi division became much more important, government after government fell, extremist positions increased.” (Uvin, 2009, pp. 4-5)

2.4 Post-colonial experience

In the political instability after Rwagasore’s assassination, Pierre Ngendandumwe was elected as the first Hutu Prime Minister. He was married to a Tutsi woman and, like his predecessor, he was a unifying factor. He soon became the second tragedy of Burundi, as he was killed by a Tutsi refugee (Watt, 2008). In the following elections the Hutus won a majority; yet, despite these election results the king decided to appoint a Tutsi instead of a Hutu Prime Minister (Daley, 2006). This resulted in an attempted coup d’état by the Hutus, which forced the king to flee the country, marking the end of the monarchy in 1966. At that time the army – under control of Captain Michel Micombero – was predominantly Tutsi, and responded to the coup d’état with an exemplary retribution against the Hutus (Uvin, 2009). The year 1966 was not only the year that marked the end of the monarchy, it was also the year in which Michel Micombero appointed himself as the first military president of Burundi (Watt, 2008). Burundi became a single-party state with UPRONA being transformed into a Tutsi party (Daley, 2006).

For almost 40 years of its post-colonial period, Burundi was characterized by Tutsi military regimes, first by Michel Micombero (1966-76), followed by Jean-Baptiste Bagaza (1976-87) and Pierre Buyoya (1987-93 and 1996-2000) (Daley, 2006). In 1972, a group of Hutus staged a failed coup, causing the killings of 2,000 to 3,000 of Tutsis in and around the capital city of Bujumbura. The Tutsis – increasingly driven by fear – answered by eliminating around 200,000 to 500,000⁷ Hutus, the

⁷ Exact number of the killings in this period differ from article to article.

majority of which were educated and wealthy Hutus (Oudar & Lopez, 2015). “Reprisals against Hutu uprisings were excessively brutal and often of genocidal proportions” (Daley, 2006, p. 667). Yet, “no-one in Burundi was punished for the massacres of 1972” (Watt, 2008, p. 37). The ‘fear of Tutsis’ became a constant trauma, and this trauma was held by the thousands of refugees that fled the country to Tanzania and Rwanda. With a culture of impunity and the international community that did not take notice of the events, the first seeds were planted for an eventual revenge by the Hutus (Ibid.).

After the killings in 1972, a non-violent period followed until 1988 (Ndikumana, 2005; Tesfay, 2014). According to Ndikumana (2005), the 16 years of relative calm allowed the rebuilding of a Hutu intelligentsia, both abroad and at home; at the same time their demand for power sharing increased. In 1988, the ‘Parti pour la Liberation du Peuple Hutu’ (PALIPEHUTU) – founded in the refugee camps in Tanzania and Rwanda in 1972 – began mobilizing rebel groups in Burundi. These rebel groups killed hundreds of Tutsis, to which the military answered with indiscriminate massive reprisals. This time an estimated number of 20,000 Hutus have been killed in a military operation aimed at ‘restoring order’ (Ndikumana, 2005; Uvin, 2009; Tesfay, 2014). Unlike the previous massacres, the killings in 1988 hit the international headlines and the slaughters could now be seen on international television. President Buyoya could not risk more massacres, and therefore started “the opening of a national debate on ethnic divisions, and the ensuing opening of the political process that would eventually culminate into democratic elections in 1993” (Ndikumana, 2005, p. 15).

Between 1991 and 1993, President Buyoya wanted to show the world that he was sharing power. He could now escape from the pressure coming from the changing world. Yet, he refused the ideas of democratization and kept most of the power in his own hands. Nonetheless, this created a visible Hutu bourgeoisie, and Hutus starting to get better jobs and more access to education. Also civil society organizations (CSO) could come into the open, and in 1992 the first NGOs were established (Watt, 2008). Despite some changes and reforms, the Hutu rebels expressed their dissatisfaction with the reform process by confronting the military head on (Ndikumana, 2005); followed by another ‘old style’ military repression, killing approximately 1,000 Hutus in 1991.

Buyoya thought he had done enough for the people and was therefore confident to call for presidential elections on June 1, 1993. He was also aware that he had to stay in the lead against the opposition party Burundi Democratic Front (Frodebu⁸) led by Melchior Ndadaye, who was gaining ground rapidly. Eventually, it was Ndadaye who won the elections in 1993. This led soon to another huge tragedy in Burundi’s history; after 100 days in power President Ndadaye was killed in another coup d’état (Uvin, 2009). The coup d’état formally failed, due to international outcry, after which aid was withdrawn. Nevertheless, while the news of the death of the president was spreading, violence erupted all over the provinces, marking the start of a civil war (Watt, 2008). It is estimated that the

⁸ According to Uvin (2009, p. 9) both, parties – Uprona and Frodebu – were “clearly identified along ethnic lines, even though they were theoretically bi-ethnic.”

first few days after the president's death 50,000 Tutsis (and some Hutus) have been killed, followed by indiscriminate revenge killings by the military (Watt, 2008; Tesfay, 2014).

According to Ndikumana (2005) this war is better characterized as a distribution war, rather than solely a Hutu-Tutsi conflict. He gives three key reasons for this: one is that President Ndayaye announced military reform in order to make the armed forces more multi-ethnic, whereas the military has always showed strong opposition to relinquishing power. Second, he replaced former government officials, leaving lots of Tutsis without a job (which explains the wide support for the coup d'état). Third, a massive return of Hutu refugees, demanding jobs and the restitution of their properties was a major threat to the Tutsis that had looted the property of the Hutus (Ibid.). "The multiplicity of belligerents demonstrated that political rivalry matters probably as much as – if not more than – ethnic rivalry" (Ibid., p. 16). Unlike the decades before, this time no side managed to acquire the upper hand (Uvin, 2009). "It was a period of intense political rivalry between and within the ethnic groups, as the government, faced with a rebellious army, was unable to control the violence and chaos perpetrated by the militias" (Daley, 2006, p. 671).

During the mid-1990s, the internal divisions within the political class became clear, as some members of Frodebu split to form a more radical rebel group, *Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD), which later formed a major military wing, *Forces Pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (FDD). Another major military group, the *Forces National de Libération* (FNL), was formed by the PALIPEHUTU (a political party founded by Hutu refugees in Tanzania in 1980). The CNDD was repeatedly split into a faction led by Nyangoma (CNDD-Nyangoma) and another one led by Peter Nkurunziza (CNDD-FDD). Peter Nkurunziza would become Burundi's president. Each rebel group took it up against the Burundi army. However, due to disagreements about negotiation settlements, the situation escalated into a Hutu-on-Hutu conflict, the FDD ending up fighting the FNL (Daley, 2006; Uvin, 2009). By the end of 1999 the rebellion was at its height, with both the CNDD-FDD and FNL as main actors in a majority of the provinces. "Optimism was in short supply" (Watt, 2008, p. 66).

2.5 Towards the Arusha Peace Accords

"It must be possible for the people of Burundi to materially distinguish between the destructiveness of conflict and the benefits of peace."

Nelson Mandela, Burundi peace talks mediator

The first peace negotiations were initiated in 1996, led by the president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. Seventeen delegations took part, ten of which were mainly Tutsi and seven mainly Hutu. In order to form a stronger, unified voice in the negotiations, the seven main Hutu parties formed a bloc, the G7

(e.g. Frodebu and CNDD); in response, the main Tutsi parties became the G10 (e.g. President Buyoya) (Watt, 2008). In 1999, Julius Nyerere died, and his successor as peace negotiator, Nelson Mandela, brought the peace negotiations to Arusha, a northern town in Tanzania. This eventually resulted in the signing of the Arusha Peace Accords in August 2000 (Daley, 2006; Watt, 2008). According to Van Eck, as cited in Tesfay (2014, p. 6):

“One of the major limitations of the Arusha Agreement is the exclusion of the main political and military parties involved in the Burundian conflict from the peace process such as the current ruling party CNDD-FDD and FNL. The agreement did not include many of the issues raised by the parties that remained unresolved, creating resentment and opposition against the agreement.”

This is acknowledged in an interview with Van Leeuwen (RU 25-4-2016), who states that it is problematic that the current ruler (CNDD-FDD) did not participate in the Arusha negotiations. It is unknown to what extent the CNDD-FDD is committed to the contents of the Arusha Accords. One of the important issues is truth and reconciliation; how to deal with perpetrators of atrocities from one’s own political party? Hence, “the final words have not yet been spoken” (Ibid). Or in other words, “if the tribunal idea is scrapped and impunity continues to reign supreme, Burundi’s demons may never be laid to rest” (Watt, 2008, p. 194).

In May 2003 – as agreed in the Arusha Accords – President Buyoya stepped down after having headed a transitional government for 18 months. This opened up space for an agreement between the new transitional government and the CNDD-FDD regarding a ceasefire (Uvin, p. 16). Additionally, “this paved the way for further transitional processes, such as an integrated defense force and a new constitution”⁹ (Oudar & Lopez, 2015, p. 16). Along with the new constitution, a new government was elected, led by Hutu President Pierre Nkurunziza in 2005 (Daley, 2006). Despite the new government and due to the unwillingness of FNL to negotiate, peace remained elusive and fighting continued unabated. It was not until September 2006 that the newly elected CNDD-FDD government signed a peace agreement with the FNL (Uvin, 2009). According to Watt (2008), the most telling reason for people to vote for the ex-rebels was their desperate desire for peace, otherwise the war might start up again with the CNDD-FDD all over the country.

Nevertheless, “the government clearly sees itself as a fresh break in Burundi’s history: a government representing the majority of the people, inclusive and negotiated, and connected to the ordinary people in ways in which no previous government was” (Uvin, 2009, p. 24). Ethnicity was more openly addressed within society, the media became much stronger, extremists on all sides lost

⁹ According to Van Leeuwen (RU 25-4-2016), in the Burundian case the reintegration of the army and police is often considered to be successful, but at the same time he encountered and experienced that demobilized soldiers find themselves still loyal to former military structures. This challenges the liability of the reintegration. “This is not surprising [...] they spend years together in the bush” (Ibid.).

their influence and a lot has been achieved with the newly integrated Forced Defense Nationale (FDN) (Ibid.). Although peace has been achieved on a political level, violent crime seems to be increasing and conflicts over land make up 80 percent of recent court cases (Watt, 2008). One of the roots of the former problem, in particular, is the ongoing governments' negative record of corruption and human rights. This makes it difficult for donors to generate aid funds for those Burundians who desperately need it; they rather spend their money elsewhere.

“The long suffering Burundians, most of whom live on less than \$1 a day, will see a wealthy and corrupt elite and no peace dividend for themselves. [...] This will lead to political discontent and massively increased crime and banditry.” (Watt, 2008, pp. 207-208)

In addition, it was argued that the 2010 elections could lead to a democratic setback. The opposition was marginalized and pulled out of the elections, allowing the ruling party CNDD-FDD a major electoral victory (Tesfay, 2014). Nevertheless, CNDD-FDD was still considered to be legitimate, as they found a way forward in areas like health care and education. In the economic field the government had achieved less. “In terms of civil society, freedom of media, human rights, let’s say, it could have been worse; even though these areas were under a lot of pressure” (Source 1, 13-4-2016).

Furthermore, regarding the post-2005 period one of the interviewees stated (a view that is generally shared by the other interviewees):

“The years after the Arusha peace agreement and certainly after the elections in 2005, Burundi was on the right track. The Arusha accords managed to find answers on most elements of the conflict, in terms of sharing positions between political parties and ethnic groups. I believe it had a great influence on Burundi. Especially on the population, [which] is taking more distance from ethnicity, the source of division. Burundi was also one of the countries in Africa with large pluralism of media [that] was independent and professional, and civil society [that] effectively could fulfill [its] role; overall they [the Arusha accords] offered the government a good balance.” (Source 1, 13-4-2016)

2.6 Reflection on Burundi’s history

In pre-colonial times, Burundi did experience violence. However, unlike the most recent decades, violence was not pertinent along ethnic lines; at least not to the extent of the post-colonial decades. The Tutsis and Hutus lived relatively peaceful and harmoniously together for centuries and key government positions could even be fulfilled by both of them. The existing structures were about to change by the colonial administrations. First the Germans, and second, and most significantly, the Belgians implemented policies that favored the Tutsis over the Hutus. They created a system of ethnic

discrimination, marginalizing the Hutus. After Burundi became independent from the Belgian rulers, a 40-year Tutsi-based military rule followed. These decades are characterized by various episodes of violence, ethnic cleansings and some even use the word ‘genocide’ (Oudar & Lopez, 2014; Curtis, 2015). Around the time of the last civil war from 1993, the world was changing and started to get involved in Burundi’s peace negotiations, led by Nelson Mandela. Through a long and complex process of peace negotiations, the CNDD-FDD under Pierre Nkurunziza, managed to win the elections in 2005. From that moment on the situation started to change positively in Burundi, and the conditions from the Arusha agreement got implemented and violence became less prominent. Despite (according to some) unfair elections in 2010 (Oudar & Lopez, 2014; Jobbins & Ahitungiye, 2015), Pierre Nkurunziza could start his second term in office as President of Burundi. Notably, between 2005 and 2010, but also after the elections in 2010, there are still sporadic incidents of violence. Although the situation has improved significantly, the people of Burundi are still very much traumatized and the main perpetrators, the ‘big fish’, have not ‘yet’ been prosecuted (see Table 2, *Appendix II*, for an overview of the most important events in history).

Lastly, a point that is not the focus of this thesis but which is important to realize nevertheless, is that any episode of violence cannot be simply framed as a Hutu-Tutsi rivalry, as an ethnic conflict; this simplistic view fails to capture important elements in the Burundian history and social structure and the way in which ethnicity has been used as an instrumental tool by elites (Tesfay, 2014).

“A more accurate description of the Burundian conflict takes into account political and economic ambitions, ethnic divisions, regional divisions, urban-rural divisions, and the link to the conflicts in neighboring Rwanda & DRC, & the problem of politicized military. Thus, the real cause of conflict in Burundi is economic and political rather than ethnicity. It is due to inequality in access to economic and political power across ethnic groups in the country.”
(Tesfay, 2014, p. 65)

Chapter III The changing socio-political context in Burundi

In 2012, CARE initiated its Peace Under Construction (PUC) program in Burundi. It was during that time that Burundi was considered to be a free society, in which the media could report what it wanted to report, civil society could be very active and critical, and people go out on the street and say what they wanted to say (Anderson, 2016; Source 1, 13-4-2016; Source 9, 3-5-2016; Spearing, 2016) – “Of course not to the extent we are used to in The Netherlands, but several times more than countries such as Rwanda and Congo” (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Nowadays the situation has become a cause of concern, which is reflected in various indexes. According to The World Press Freedom Index (2016), Burundi has dropped eleven places on the world ranking list on freedom of the press since 2015, and is now ranked only 156 out of 180 countries. Additionally, the Freedom House (2016) has indicated a significant and negative decrease in the score for ‘political rights’, ‘civil liberties’ and ‘freedom’ since 2015¹⁰. This chapter will elaborate upon the socio-political context of Burundi and how this context has changed since CARE has initiated its program in 2012. The focus of this chapter will not be on CARE’s program itself. First, this chapter will briefly discuss the eve of the crisis and why it has been triggered. It will then describe how the government has changed its attitude and became more repressive. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the current issues of the youth militia, *Imbonerakure*, ethnicity and underlying structural problems.

3.1 Towards the current crisis in Burundi

“Among all diplomats that we know, nobody, really nobody, thought it would get out of hand this bad in Burundi. I thought that there would be some unrest, unrest you would see with a lot of elections in Africa, but not that it would take such an extreme form. Also, nobody knew it would take this long. We are having a political crisis now for already a year, and at this moment, nobody can see light at the end of the tunnel.” (Source 10, 9-5-2016)

The current political crisis erupted after President Pierre Nkurunziza – from Burundi’s ruling party Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie / Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD/FDD) – announced that he would run for a third, ‘unconstitutional’, term in office on 25 April 2015. According to Daley and Popplewell (2016), this was not unexpected by those who follow Burundi’s politics. Already a few months before Nkurunziza’s announcement there were regular demonstrations; these demonstration have either been forbidden or suppressed, and therefore did not run out of control (Source 1, 13-4-2016).

¹⁰ According to the Freedom House (2016), since 2015 Burundi’s political rights rating declined from 6 to 7, its civil rights rating from 5 to 6, and its freedom rating from 5,5 to 6,5 (1=best; 7=worst).

Violence took a real turn when the president officially announced to compete for a third term in office. With this decision the president ignored the clear two-term limit (two times five years) predetermined in the Arusha Accords and the constitution of Burundi; knowing that the Arusha Accords are ‘very precious’ to the Burundian people (Tesfay, 2014; Jobbins & Ahitungiye, 2016; Oakford, 2016; Source 1, 13-4-2016). Consequently, civil society, media and opposition parties decided to mobilize the population – and in particular the youth – to demonstrate against the third term candidature. The opposition boycotted the elections, and even people from within the ruling party opposed Nkurunziza’s decision, because it was against the constitution and the Arusha agreement (Source 2, 15-4-2016; Ndayiragije, *CARE* 19-4-2016). In response, the government used a lot of violence, and key leaders from opposition parties and civil society – active in the demonstrations – have been killed or taken prisoner (Oakford, 2016).

Not only the majority of the opposition that was active in demonstrations, also the people who were afraid of their security fled to countries such as Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Congo (Source 3, 15-4-2016; Oakford, 2016). Additionally, one of the interviewees claims that more than 1,000 people have died in the current crisis, more than reported by the media and UN reports that claim that around 400 to 500 people have been killed¹¹ (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Source 7, 22-4-2016). People that have been arrested or that have disappeared are not taken into account, and until today – even though new reports are lacking – people are still being killed on a weekly basis¹².

3.2 A failed coup d’état in May 2015 and thereafter

On 13 May 2015, the military decided to ‘normalize’ the situation by staging a coup (Daley & Popplewell, 2016). According to Ndayiragije (*CARE* 5-5-2016) the impression was given that the coup was backed by the military as a whole, yet the military was divided, and there was still a significant group loyal to the president. The prime backers of the coup could, therefore, not take over the national radio and television station (RTNB). What they did manage, however, was the destruction of the government-linked radio station Rema FM (Vircoulon, 2016). Nevertheless, the coup leaders decided not to fire upon their colleagues loyal to the president and aborted the coup. “Three of the coup leaders, General Cyrille Ndayirukiye and police commissioners Zenon Ndabaneze and Hermenegilde Nimenya were arrested and charged with ‘attempting to overthrow the state’. The principal leader, Godefroid

¹¹ Notably, there has never been an intentional incident against humanitarian workers, or ‘white noses’ for that matter, despite a few robberies. Whenever humanitarians got involved in violent incidents, it is solely a matter of being at the wrong place at the wrong time (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 14-4-2016).

¹² During the first week of June 2016 in The Hague, I spend some work-related time with a civilian from Bujumbura. While we were talking, the man received a message that his neighbor had been killed by militias; he responded by saying: ‘this is life in Burundi’. Even though stories like this are often not reported in the media, they are still taking place and people are still getting killed because of the current crisis.

Nkurunziza, a general and former chief of intelligence, evaded capture” (Daley & Popplewel, 2016, p. 3).

The day following the coup, loyalist forces regained control of the city and destroyed a number of private radio stations including Bonesha, RPA, Isanganiro and Radio Renaissance (Nkengurutse, 2015; Source 3, 15-4-2016; Ndayiragij, CARE 5-5-2016). In August 2015 several arrest warrants were issued against journalists, who were prosecuted for the support of the putschists (Vircoulon, 2016), and several civil society organizations have been banned (Source 3, 15-4-2016). These organizations had been instrumental in organizing the opposition against Nkurunziza in and around the capital of Bujumbura. Many of the civil society organizations in Bujumbura focus on “combating governance and human rights violations and see themselves as a watchdog that is responsible for holding the government to account” (Daley & Popplewel, 2016, p. 4). The broad civil society coalition was formed by FORSC (Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile), FOCODE (Forum pour la Conscience et le Développement), APRODH (Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Droits Humains et des Personnes Détenues) and ACAT Burundi (L’Action des Chrétiens pour l’Abolition de la Torture au Burundi). In general these organizations have played a key role in coordinating the manifestations prior to the elections in 2015. Since the coup a majority of civil society leaders has been prosecuted; this was due to the suspension of their activities, arrest warrants, intimidation, frozen bank accounts or because they were being forced to flee the country. According to one of the respondents, the government began a total war against critical society and the ‘free’ media (Nkengurutse, 2015; Source 1, 13-4-2016).

Furthermore, in response to a question about the current situation on the streets, one of the interviewees answered:

“You can easily guess by looking at people’s faces but also when greeting them on the streets. When you say, ‘how are you’, the answer is ‘as in Bujumbura’. All the opposition leaders and human rights defenders were threatened and compelled to flee to neighboring or far away countries where they have been in exile since about a year already. Voices in Bujumbura have all been silenced since anyone who criticizes the government is subject to arrest and disappearance. There are daily night killings, while each morning people step up dead bodies on their way to work or school. At least there is an average of four people found dead every day in Burundi. It is a traumatizing situation where people live under threat and fear of death and just shut up fearing of being the next victim.” (Source 7, 22-4-2016)

Recently the situation in Burundi has become more quiet; there are no street protests anymore and there is no ‘open’ or ‘public’ resistance against the government, yet there is still resistance. This is a significant consequence of the extreme repression by the government; people had to flee the country, and the people that remain are too afraid to express themselves. This does not mean that there is no

discontent; on the contrary, political and economic discontent has increased and is still growing (Source 6, 20-4-2016). According to a Project Manager from a partner organization operating in Burundi, resistance is now operating underground; there is invisible resistance of young men who were involved in the demonstrations. Sometimes they organize themselves with guns and sometimes they launch targeted grenade attacks against the police (Source 3, 15-4-2016; Source 5, 19-4-2016). In the meantime the government is telling the international community that it is open for dialogue with the opposition; however, it states that it does not want to talk with terrorists, and everyone in the opposition is framed as a terrorist. Overall, it seems that the repression has been effective, the government has managed to position itself in a way that it can crush the opposition whenever it arises (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Therefore, Burundi is moving more towards a ‘police state’, or, as others would say, an ‘authoritarian state’ (Vircoulon, 2015; Source 12, 18-5-2016; Freedom House, 2016).

3.3 Fear for the Youth Militia

According to Daley and Popplewell (2016, p. 6), “a characteristic of Burundi politics is the establishment and arming of youth militias by political parties”. The *Imbonerakure* (‘those who see far’), the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD, also known as the presidential guard, is effectively silencing everyone not expressing consent (Oudar & Lopez, 2014). The *Imbonerakure* are used as a ‘strong arm of the law’, and can be considered as a parallel commando going through police and military structures (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Remy Ndayiragije (*CARE* 5-5-2016) states that the youth from the *Imbonerakure* are easily recruited by the ruling party; they approach jobless youngsters, paying them 20,000 Burundian Francs (€10 per month), and giving them a gun and a police uniform to kill innocent people. Another interviewee says: “the police behaves like in a Western movie, in which death commandos can shoot at any moment to any suspected person while it is a sunny day and people are passing by” (Source 7, 22-4-2016).

The reason for mentioning the *Imbonerakure* is that they are responsible for a lot of fear in Burundi, fear that can easily reach beyond Bujumbura. For instance, according to rumors the youth wing from the ruling party was preparing a nightly attack in the province of Kirundo. As a result lots of people from that region fled to Rwanda; the situation was intensified by the rumors (Nkengurutse, 2015; Anderson, 2016; Source 3, 15-4-2016). “The context now is really characterized by fear, fear of what will happen with those groups who are forming plans to attack the county” (Source 3, 15-4-2016).

“Anyone who has travelled much in Africa will be struck by the quietness and order in Burundi. [...] This reflects the self-control of Burundians, who tend to keep their thoughts to themselves, to face tragedy stoically and to be publicly very polite. [...] These excellent qualities have their down side: false rumours circulate fast, creating fear, hatred and, on occasion, cold blooded killing.” (Watt, 2008, p. 11)

However, fear is to be expected, giving the fact that the *Imbonerakure* are “patrolling neighborhoods with clubs spiked with nails and painting red marks on the houses of those they intend to target” (Daley & Popplewel, 2016, p. 6). Subsequently, the police and military institutions are losing credibility and confidence from the population, since they do not arrest people on grounds of law. People feel that they can be arrested at any time, even when they have not committed any offense (Source 3, 15-4-2016). Yet, pro-government people enjoy the repressive military regime; they consider the regime as their protectors and they might even give information about suspicious people (Ibid.). In general:

“The people have surrendered. There is a new saying in Burundi in general, and Bujumbura in particular, that ‘in Burundi you walk on the street with your death beside. You know when you leave your house, but never know if you will come back home.’ Life is uncertain here and people are afraid.” (Source 7, 22-4-2016)

Notably, from the 140 security incidents that have been documented by an INGO over a two month period, 80 incidents took place in Bujumbura (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Bujumbura is the heart of the country and most people, including the important political actors, live in Bujumbura (Oakford, 2016; Source 3, 15-4-2016). Bujumbura is by far the epicenter of the violent incidents; yet it is not exclusive, there are also incidents in other parts of the country (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Spearing, 2016). According to Van Leeuwen (*RU* 25-4-2016), there are different realities in Burundi: it may very well be the case that violence is escalating in Bujumbura, while in other parts of Burundi it remains peaceful. It is therefore important that the international community is careful in its framing and simplifying the conflict in Burundi, with words such as ‘genocide’ and ‘ethnic conflict’ (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Van Leeuwen, *RU* 25-4-2016; Source 10, 9-5-2016). Now the question remains about what role ethnicity plays in the current crisis?

3.4 Playing the ethnic card

After the crisis of 1993, people in Burundi wanted to move on with their lives; Burundians served as a good example of how peace can arise, how people can trust each other again and how ethnic differences can be overcome (Source 9, 3-5-2016). Regarding the current crisis, “the Burundians themselves say it is not an ethnic conflict, despite messages from the media” (Ibid.). According to Levy Ndikumana (*MIPAREC* 12-4-2016), there are no ethnic divisions nowadays; both ethnic groups are suffering together and the situation is therefore more a political problem. However, the *Imbonerakure* (composed mostly out of Hutus) are sometimes specifically targeting Tutsi members, in order to create confusion and to disorient people in Bujumbura.

“A carefully structured peace deal that ended the most recent war in 2005 had defused many of those tensions, creating an ethnic balance across the military, government and even state-owned firms. Groups such as the Imbonerakure are outside those formal power structures and undermine them.” (Graham-Harrison, 2016, n.p.)

By doing so, the CNDD-FDD – through the *Imbonerakure* – is trying to transform the political issue into an ethnic problem (Anderson, 2016). Until today the people in Bujumbura say that they do not have any problems with the Tutsis and they do realize that it is a political issue, hence there is great social cohesion between Hutus and Tutsis at the community level (Ndayiragije, CARE 5-5-2016). This was particularly visible during the demonstrations, in which the Hutus and the Tutsis marched together (Source 7, 22-4-2016). In addition, Spearing (2016, p. 15) states,

“whilst conflict is ongoing, it is no longer primarily characterized by ethnic divisions. Tensions are now fueled by seeing no change rather than by ethnic tensions (Donor informant). The quest for power is now founded on complex allegiances involving both primary ethnic groups. Political parties and government bodies at all levels are ethnically mixed (from the two dominant groups).”

According to Gerhardt (*Cordaid* 24-4-2016), the current crisis is really a political conflict, it is about who is controlling power and who can keep the power and how people can share power. Gerhardt believes that the crisis is slowly turning into a national political crisis, in which, however, the government is increasingly using the ethnic card (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Anderson, 2016). Despite a general agreement that it is primarily a political conflict, Geoff Andrews (*ZOA* 4-5-2016) states that there are some signs that power is increasingly becoming centralized in the hands of Hutus. Recently, four senior military commanders have been killed, and only the local people did acknowledge that all four of them were Tutsi. The police and the military in the streets are increasingly of one ethnicity, the Hutus. Therefore, Tutsis have reason to become fearful for what the future holds (*Ibid.*).

In addition, Van Leeuwen (*RU* 25-4-2016) mentions that within the context of Burundi, you should not immediately think in terms of Hutus against Tutsis, it might as well be an internal matter at the military barracks, or discontent about a promotion, or issues about a girlfriend. Overall, all interviewees agree that it is a political conflict, a conflict with mainly discontent about the third unconstitutional term and the government in general, instead of an ethnic conflict. They also acknowledge, however, that the ruling party and other key actors are increasingly using the ethnic card, and that there are some (albeit still small) signs that the power is increasingly centralized in the hands of Hutus. It is therefore uncertain how the conflict will develop and whether ethnicity again becomes a significant issue. Hence, and despite the current political nature of the conflict (Anderson, 2016),

“there are growing fears in Burundi that ethnicity will emerge as a major fault as the political crisis progresses” (Daley & Popplewell, 2016, p. 7).

3.5 Structural background of problems

Before finishing this chapter, it should be noted that various underlying structural problems have been mentioned in the interviews, problems that should and cannot be ignored in understanding the current situation. One is that the Burundian population is heavily traumatized by the civil war from 1993. According to Gerhardt (*Cordaid* 24-4-2016), the Burundians have never told each other the truth – like, ‘you have done this to my family’, ‘you stole that ground from me’, ‘you have raped my wife’ – and ‘now we can move forward’. This is ‘sometimes’ done at the local level, but at the national level this is ‘not done’, allowing the ‘small’ and ‘big fish’ to escape from trial. “Burundi has never undergone a wide-reaching truth and reconciliation process” (Spearing, 2016, p. 15). Up to the present day, the Burundian people are struggling with this issue (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). While in light of the Arusha Accords, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been planned, its realization has been delayed (Spearing, 2016). The commission is basically non-functional, due to the turbulent context. Besides, it is too dangerous to talk about politics at the national level; as mentioned before, some of the previous perpetrators are now important ruling party members (Ndikumana, *MIPAREC* 12-4-2016). Hence, “legacies and trauma of decades of conflict remain unresolved, communities are socially divided and mistrustful, underlying grievances remain unresolved” (Spearing, 2016, p. 15).

Burundi was once amongst the poorest, and is now considered by the IMF as the poorest nation in the world, with the worst levels of child malnutrition and security. The conditions are even getting worse and hunger is increasing among the population, in particular in Bujumbura, where there are far fewer opportunities for employment as there used to be. Overall, this can contribute to a further destabilization of the situation in the city (Andrews, *ZOA* 4-5-2016). According to Daley and Popplewel (2016, p. 7), “economic marginalization has also contributed to rising tensions. Increasing costs of living and a crippling petrol crisis have made life more and more difficult for ordinary Burundians”. Even though the Burundian society has potential as such, there is no economic development; there is just nobody that invests in this country. “If Burundi would be stable, so to speak, then we could build up a tourist industry, building hotels besides the beautiful lake” (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). Yet, economic stagnation has a negative effect on for instance the services, quality of education and health care. It also increasingly affects peace and security (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Source 11, 10-5-2016). “The majority of Burundians remain poor and have limited opportunities or access to services. At the same time, they are aware of falling beyond their regional peers” (Spearing, 2016, p. 15).

Lastly, “a major source of conflict that is feeding into the wider political protest is that over land” (Daley & Popplewel, 2016, p. 7). Burundi has a very high population density of 400 people per

square kilometer and as a consequence of the return of over a million refugees after the 1993 war, there was, and still is, a significant competition over land. Sometimes the problems heat up, sometimes they decline; it all depends on whether the influx are returnees, people that have fled the country. Many people that return find their former lands occupied, sometimes by the state, by members of the elite or by peasant neighbors (Daley & Popplewel, 2016; Source 6, 20-4-2016). Thereby, “displacement and returns of displaced people and former combatants are another ongoing source of tensions as community need to find ways to integrate these individuals” (Spearing, 2016, p. 15). “It is an ongoing and very important challenge for this small country” (Source 6, 20-4-2016).

3.6 Reflection on Burundi’s changing socio-political context

In 2012, the socio-political context was relatively stable in Burundi. Since the elections in 2010 there were some sporadic incidents of violence, but not to the extent of incidents we see in the present day. After the president announced he would compete for a third term in office, the context started to change. Civil society, media and opposition parties organized protests in the streets of Burundi, to which the government responded violently. A failed coup in May 2015 triggered the government to become more repressive, and it turned itself more into a ‘police state’. With help from its youth wing, the *Imbonerakure*, it effectively silenced all opposition. Civil society is basically non-existent, the media offices are literally destroyed and people disappeared, got killed, or were arrested. The fear, resulting mostly from the *Imbonerakure* in combination with false rumors, forces people to flee to neighboring countries. There is a ‘total war’ against free media and opposing civil society, any space in terms of talking about politics has been restricted to a level of ‘zero tolerance’. It seems that the government is successful in controlling the opposition, as there is hardly any left; therefore the government can possibly stay in power for the coming years. However, there is some form of ‘invisible’ resistance, only nobody really knows where, who, and how much there is. Notably, most of the violent incidents take place in Bujumbura and to a lesser extent in other parts of the country. Within Burundi, despite its small size, there can be different realities in terms of safety and security. Furthermore, while we cannot dismiss ethnicity from the analysis, it seems that the conflict is now solely a political problem. The Hutus and Tutsis are both victims of the system, they demonstrated together, and do now both realize they do not have any problems with each other. Nevertheless, the ruling party and some other extremists are increasingly playing the ethnic card, as well as homogenizing some of the institutions. This gives reason for fear about what the future will bring and whether the conflict will turn into an ethnic conflict. Concluding from recent talks with Burundians, the situation is far from solved and till today people get killed. Not to forget that Burundi is also struggling with a traumatized population, a stagnating economic development and local land conflicts.

Chapter IV A theoretical perspective on community-based peacebuilding

This chapter will elaborate on the evolution of the peacebuilding discourse and highlights the theoretical perspectives that are relevant for CARE's bottom-up peacebuilding program in Burundi. An answer will be given to the following sub-question: *What is the theoretical perspective on bottom-up peacebuilding and how is CARE's bottom-up peacebuilding program initiated in Burundi during a period of relative peace?* It is of great importance to understand how the theoretical perspectives on peacebuilding have developed over the last couple of years and therefore to understand how the peacebuilding activities of CARE in Burundi are positioned in the theoretical analysis. The theory will be used to make sense of the information obtained from the interviews and subsequently will contribute to answering to the main research question. First, this chapter will briefly discuss why civil society has become important in peacebuilding and why INGOs have taken the responsibility to initiate this approach. Secondly, this chapter will discuss why adapting a conflict-sensitive approach should be a central priority in development. Thirdly, a description will be given of the different levels of humanitarian interventions – also known as tracks – that can be adapted by humanitarians. Furthermore, the participatory development model will be introduced, which is believed to be a solution for mainstreaming a conflict-sensitive and sustainable approach. The fifth section will highlight the key stakeholders that play important roles regarding CARE's program. Lastly, this chapter will elaborate upon the community-based peacebuilding program of CARE, as this program is the central focus in this thesis.

4.1 From top-down to bottom-up peacebuilding

In the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, there was a significant increase in the number of inter-state conflicts. Due to the shift from 'old wars' to 'new wars' – as addressed in Chapter I – then UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali introduced the term 'peacebuilding' in his *An Agenda for Peace* report. In this report a new framework was introduced to manage international armed conflicts (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). The international community was increasingly confronted with the complexities of the peacebuilding¹³ efforts, including the significant failures of Rwanda and Somalia¹⁴.

¹³ According to Doyle and Sambanis (2000, p. 779), "peacebuilding is an attempt, after a peace has been negotiated or imposed, to address the sources of current hostility and build local capacities for conflict resolution. Stronger state institutions, broader political participation, land reform, a deepening of civil society, and respect for ethnic identities are all seen as ways to improve the prospect for peaceful governance. In plural societies, conflicts are inevitable. The aim of peacebuilding is to foster the social, economic, and political institutions and attitudes that will prevent these conflicts from turning violent. In effect, peacebuilding is the front line of preventive action."

¹⁴ According to Pronk (2012), "the relevant institutions did not have the capacity to prevent an outbreak of violence in countries such as the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda and Sudan. It was simply too much at the same time. The major

The latter ‘negative’ experiences triggered a new international discourse; a discourse in which peacebuilding efforts “attempt to engage more at the ‘grassroots’, with ‘civil society’, and avoid ‘state-centric’ approaches. [...] New wars require new approaches, it was argued, at the level of civil society” (Heathershaw, 2008, pp. 10-11). The importance of civil society in peacebuilding efforts is emphasized by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006, p. 1):

“Since at least the early 1990s it has become clear that a functioning participatory democracy is a prerequisite for sustainable development. A vibrant civil society is considered as precondition to go beyond ‘formal’ democracies, to achieve long lasting attitude changes and to overcome resistance by former, undemocratic leaders and elites. An active civil society and civil engagement are widely accepted as critical to boost the accountability of governments towards their citizens, to strengthen public policy decisions and to increase the effectiveness of development interventions. [...] From this perspective, citizens, communities and civil society organizations are perceived as key actors in overcoming existing conflict lines, factionalism and organized violence.”

In addition, state-centric democratic peacebuilding approaches could not escape criticism about their public and undeniable failures (e.g. Rwanda and Somalia). As a result, civil society approaches through NGOs proved to be a popular alternative among donors (Heathershaw, 2008). “The preference for NGOs was due to their perceived political independence, flexibility and effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries, in contrast with bureaucratic state apparatuses” (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006, p. 10). Therefore, peacebuilding approaches have made their entrance in contemporary development assistance through NGOs.

Additionally, as mentioned by Heathershaw (2008), peacebuilding does not entail a single discourse of a singular liberal peace. The latest shift towards civil society, also known as ‘Peacebuilding-via-civil society’, is merely one from the three peacebuilding discourses as identified by Heathershaw¹⁵. However, despite the different discourses, most analyses simply discuss a single discourse, the one of the ‘liberal peace’ (Ibid.). Nonetheless, according to Koster (2011, p. 25):

“Civil society peacebuilding is based on the idea that peace should take root in every level of society and that peacebuilding activities should therefore be carried out at the grassroots level, or „bottom-up”. These activities focus on relationships between and within societies („people-

powers in the Security Council of the United Nations were reluctant to share their intervention power and to make the resources available for peacekeeping”.

¹⁵ Heathershaw (2008) identifies three peacebuilding discourses: peacebuilding-via-democratic reform, peacebuilding-via-civil society and peacebuilding-via-statebuilding.

to-people”), on the local capacities of a society and its participation on the road to peace, and on the achievement of justice.”

The realization that development efforts should take the ‘conflict factor’ into account, was made public by Mary Anderson in her book *Do No Harm* (1999), in which it becomes clear that emergency-relief and long-term development programs can unintentionally contribute to conflicts (Heathershaw, 2008; Verkoren, 2008). In other words described by Ware (2012, p. 62), who states that “careless development can exacerbate conflict by fueling long-held fears and provoking unintended negative reactions”. Subsequently, this realization has led to the following discourse that:

“Organizations involved in peacebuilding therefore argue for a shift in emphasis (and financial means) from development projects to peace building and conflict prevention, since a relatively small effort that would help to avoid violent conflict could save large investments in development and prevent enormous expenditures for peacemaking, peacekeeping, and the alleviation of dramatic humanitarian problems that result from large scale violent conflict.” (Verkoren, 2008, p. 43)

Hence, according to Ware (2012, pp. 61-62), it seems that a shift in thinking came around “with the recognition that development has the capacity to contribute proactively to conflict prevention and peacebuilding if the root causes of conflict are understood and explicitly addressed, and societal capacity to manage differences without violence is strengthened”. Despite the change in terminology used in the word rhetoric of INGOs, such as bottom-up peacebuilding, and the general recognition that this approach is necessary for achieving sustainable peace, this does not take away the chance that INGOs might do harm in the region or country in which they initiate their program. This brings us to the importance of the context in which INGOs work, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

4.2 ‘Mainstreaming’ Conflict sensitivity

It is generally recognized by development agencies that each and every context is unique, and that there is no one-size-fit-all template for development. What works in one country may not work in another country, therefore development programs must be adapted to the unique context of a country. Development agencies must therefore look beyond the categorization of ‘fragile states’, as this does not imply that there is a similar context (Stokes, as cited in Ware, 2012). Development programs situated in conflict-prone or fragile contexts, with a lack of conflict sensitivity, might result in unintended negative effects or they might miss a better contribution to peace (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2004). Therefore, conflict-sensitive approaches are increasingly mainstreamed in

peacebuilding efforts; the conflict-sensitive approaches “systematically taking into account both the positive and negative impact of interventions, in terms of conflict or peace dynamics, on the contexts in which they are undertaken, and, conversely, the impact of these contexts on the interventions” (Ibid., p. 1). In this thesis ‘conflict-sensitivity’ is defined as:

“Understanding the [conflict] context in which it operates; understand the interactions between its operations and the [conflict] context; and act upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on the [conflict] context and the intervention.” (Lange, 2004, p. 11)

According to the OECD, as cited in Ware (2012), the vital aspects of conflict-sensitive approaches include: strengthening governance and civil society, facilitating dialogue and cooperation, developing mediation and participatory processes, and promoting human right and democratization. Moreover, being sensitive means that humanitarian organizations understand contextual factors and the interaction with its peacebuilding program. Otherwise, if contextual concerns are not a central priority, it may be difficult to preserve the long-term benefits from peacebuilding programs; this is now widely acknowledged to be essential to sustainable development programs (Ware, 2012). In addition to the previous argument that bottom-up peacebuilding efforts are more effective through INGOs, INGOs also have the potential of better access and broader mandates to operate in difficult ‘conflict’ and ‘fragile’ contexts under their humanitarian principles. INGOs have the ability to potentially work more effectively in these contexts, because “INGOs work predominantly with local communities and civil society more than government departments, and a focus on alleviating extreme poverty rather than on addressing macroeconomic development concerns” (Ware, 2012, p. 68).

4.3 Positioning peace work approaches

Society can be divided into various levels or ‘tracks’, and each level can be approached with different peacebuilding strategies. The first level, ‘track one’, is the highest level of society including military, political and religious leaders with high visibility (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006). According to Verkoren (2008) track one activities are used to prevent or end warfare and may include diplomacy or high-level mediation. Strategies on this level are in most cases implemented by states and international organizations, however NGOs with sufficient and good ‘high level’ relationships are sometimes involved as well. In general, after any settlement, peacebuilding on this level focuses on strengthening “institutions and structures that strengthen the government and make it accountable to its citizens. Strengthening government legitimacy and building up the judicial system, army, and police forces are all generally considered elements of a long-term peacebuilding strategy” (Verkoren, 2008, p. 52).

Notably, peace agreements at ‘track one’ level may lack societal support, because the agreement fails to address deep-rooted issues. Therefore, ‘track two’ peacebuilding approaches aim to bring in prominent individuals from the society into the peace process, in order to build a broader base (Verkoren, 2008). It concerns the following individuals: leaders respected in sectors, ethnic or religious leaders, academics and intellectuals, humanitarian leaders of (local) NGOs and leaders of political parties (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006; Verkoren, 2008). Peacebuilding activities at this level are often conducted by NGOs, and sometimes in cooperation with organizations like the UN. Activities range from “consultations, workshops and dialogues in which representatives of different sides in a conflict are involved. [...] institutional development of local NGOs, media, and other potential checks and balances” (Verkoren, 2008, p. 53).

Lastly, ‘track three’ peacebuilding – the grassroots level – focuses on the majority of the population at the grassroots, ‘the ordinary people’ (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006; Verkoren, 2008). The activities at this level are usually carried out by NGOs, and sometimes in collaboration with local authorities and the national government. The focus at this level includes issues as inter-communal hatred, discrimination, unequal opportunities, poverty, and trauma. The interventions reach a wide range of peacebuilding approaches, such as peace education, the reintegration of former combatants, training of community mediators, local peace commissions and community dialogue projects, just to name a few (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006; Verkoren, 2008). CARE Nederland – an international NGO that is the central focus of this study – is carrying out its activities in all tracks, but mainly track two and, particularly, three. Later on in this chapter we will look in some more detail at the kind of programs it has initiated in Burundi in 2012. Strikingly, many people are solely familiar with the role of the United Nations and individual countries in the field of peacebuilding; when it comes to the role of NGOs in peacebuilding, people know much less. However, their role is just as important as has already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs of this chapter, nevertheless emphasized in another quote:

“peacebuilding cannot only be a top-down process. ‘Track two’ and ‘track three’ strategies are needed as well. NGOs are well placed to engage at these level. Compared with governmental and intergovernmental agencies, they are closer to the communities in which peace ultimately needs to take root and can enable ordinary people to articulate their needs and make their voices heard.” (Verkoren, 2008, p. 56)

4.4 The participatory model

In his recent doctoral dissertation, Anthony Ware (2012) highlights the recognition that in bottom-up peacebuilding practices elements of the participatory development model are the basis for successful and sustainable development. The model requires empowerment through participatory development

activities, embedded within the local context. According to Chambers, as cited in Ware (2012), participation empowers the most marginalized, powerless and poor to achieve a better life for themselves. The participatory process is particularly important in conflict-affected contexts where levels of trust are low, and where the process should include marginalized groups such as the poor, youth, minorities, the aged, the disabled, the landless, and displaced persons (Haider, 2009). More than that,

“it also calls for partnership with local civil society in implementation of programs in communities, and alignment between the priorities of agencies and with government departments, all in order to allow recipients and partners to exercise control over program design and implementation, ensuring development is contextual and sustainable.” (Ware, 2012, p. 69)

Besides participation, the participatory model also revolves around important concepts such as empowerment, ownership, partnership, accountability and transparency, which are all widely accepted as the minimum requirements for successful and sustained ‘bottom-up’ peacebuilding activities that are sensitive to the ‘conflict’ context (Ware, 2012). For instance, effective empowerment can be achieved through different activities, among them capacity-building, capacity development, training in human rights and advocacy, and so on (Ibid.). All of which, including the other important concepts of the participatory model, are assumed to be a solution for mainstreaming a conflict sensitive approach. Various reasons explain why the participatory approach is more likely to be sustainable: one is a better identification of development needs, second is that less reliance is needed on external inputs, and third there will be a better management of the project through community decision-making (Dale, as cited in Ware, 2012). In addition, the idea is that when external funding has ended, local initiatives will continue to function. Yet, in light of the context and in particular the ‘conflict’ context, there are significant forces working directly against empowerment; participation will be influenced by the political, economic and social forces that of that context. Lastly,

“INGOs, as outside agents, need to actively contextualize the way they relate to the other stakeholders, in ways that participation and partnership alone do not facilitate. [...] INGO staff and facilitators have a significant and highly contextual role in creating such a safe space for participants, and/or in making contextualized decisions on behalf of disempowered communities.” (Ware, 2012, p. 73)

Seeing the participatory model as a separate entity can lead to ignoring those stakeholders that can break or make the success of any bottom-up peacebuilding approach. Stakeholders – not only from within the country, but also from outside the country – might benefit (or not) or have a stake (or not)

in the peacebuilding program, which means that they can also affect any activity as a consequence from the changing socio-political context. The other way around, stakeholders that are key and can be considered as part of the program, are influenced by the changing context as well, and hence can indirectly affect the program. For instance, peace cannot only be sustained with track one approaches, track two and three are necessary as well. This thesis will attempt to take into account other relevant stakeholders, to be identified in the following section.

4.5 Key stakeholders

According to Suzuki (1998), there are tensions within INGOs regarding the advocacy of the so-called field-workers and the organization-oriented staff. Field-workers are in need of more flexibility towards the local context, unlike the organization-oriented staff, who seek more consistent polity across the whole organization. The different views result into the accusation that models are being imposed on locals from outside (Ware, 2012). This is in contrast with the ideals of participation. Thereby, the relationships with other stakeholders – other than solely the community – are also seen as important for facilitating conflict sensitivity. “In other cultural and political contexts the way people are valued, knowledge is transferred, change is handled, decisions are made – even leadership style, ethics, values in relating to people, relationships, exclusion, gender and power – can all be very different” (Jackson, as cited in Ware, 2012). Nevertheless, they all might directly or indirectly impact development, or peacebuilding in this matter. Consequently, local NGO partners or INGOs sometimes take on roles such as dealing with power dynamics both in the field as well as in the international environment (Ware, 2012).

Regarding ‘the relationship with other stakeholders’, they are also considered to be the local partner organizations, or in other words, the project implementers. On behalf of conflict sensitive programming, INGOs are required to “actively facilitate the full participation in planning and evaluation of local partners who have a degree of legitimacy [...] and are perceived as representative within the communities they work with” (Lange, 2004, p. 30). As mentioned before, and particularly in the context of conflict, there is the possibility that the partners’ local legitimacy and its position in power structures may become an issue (Ibid.).

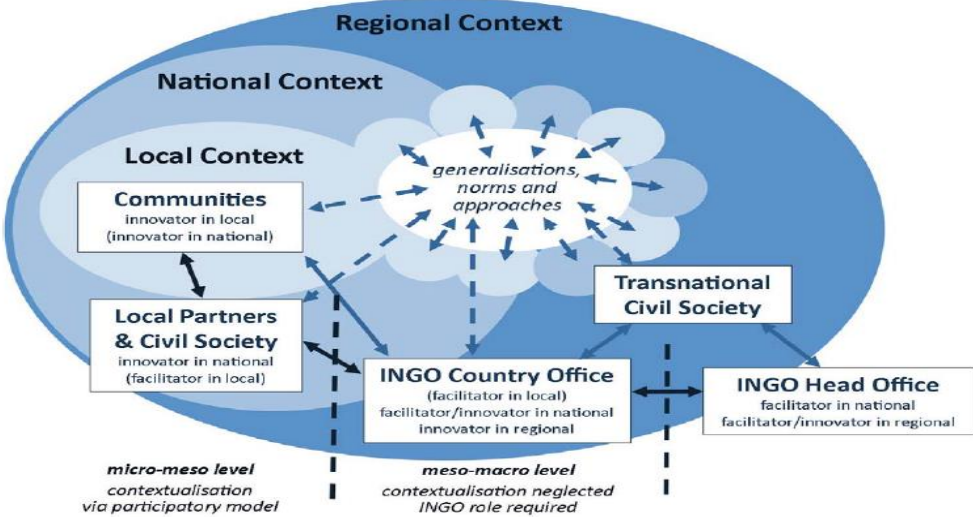
Furthermore, other key stakeholders are the government, donors, other INGOs with which they cooperate, and the agencies’ own board/individuals that are crucial to the legitimacy of the organization’s practices (Lange, 2004; Ware, 2012). The government is directly related to the conflict context, and is therefore an essential actor to build a relationship with in terms of gaining access to areas relevant to the development project (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). Donors, in their turn contribute funds to the organization’s program and therefore influence the program outline (Lange, 2004). They have the ability to affect the organization’s conflict sensitive approach (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012). Regarding the agencies’ own board, the dichotomy between the field-

workers and the organization-oriented workers has been emphasized. The difficulty of empowering people can be found in conflict zones, where:

“local power seek to marginalize and control, and the poor lack awareness of macro-contextual factors [...] to challenge normative development agency orthodoxy, especially where local participants are placed awkwardly between domestic political objectives and those of INGOs with donor conditions imposed by states their own government is in conflict with.” (Ware, 2012, p. 77)

Anthony Ware (2012) has illustrated (Figure 1) the roles different development actors play in their practices regarding conflict-sensitive peacebuilding approaches. This model “has the potential to facilitate contextualization at the micro-mesa level, through local knowledge and decision-making taking into consideration unique cultural contexts and (sometimes local power dynamics)” (Ibid., p. 85). The other way around, a change in the local/national context may influence practices all the way to the INGO head office. The responsibility of empowerment – or other roles – will then be taken by actors that are more distant from the local context. Taking into account that all roles, from local to regional, ensure context-sensitive development.

Figure 1: The roles of various development actors in context-sensitive development



Source: Ware (2011, p. 86)

4.6 The community-based peacebuilding approach of CARE in Burundi

“Due in part to the horrors of Rwanda, international reaction to the crisis in Burundi incorporated a strong peacebuilding component as a deliberate strategy to prevent an escalation of targeted intercommunal violence” (Jobbins & Ahitungiye, 2016, p. 206). Most initiatives were led by INGOs,

which – in the mid-1990s – turned out to major peacebuilding programs. The focus was specifically on supporting grassroots dialogue to build relations across ethnic lines. Other themes revolved around forms of dispute resolution (Ibid.). Despite the undeniable progress that has been made by the international community, development programs have faced significant challenges ever since they got initiated. Although aid is meant to fight fragility, it is often fragility that has been hindering aid and cooperation (Desrosiers & Muringa, 2012). Furthermore, to put the practices in place and in mind, this paragraph will briefly describe the program CARE has initiated in Burundi (and South Sudan) in July 2012.

The program initiated by CARE is called ‘Peace Under Construction’ and it received a grant under the Reconstruction tender from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In order to implement the program, CARE is collaborating with La Benevolencija (with particular focus on media broadcasts on the prevention and resolution of violent conflict) and The Hague Academy for Local Governance (focusing on capacity building of authorities) (Slutzky, 2014). In Burundi, CARE implemented its program through its Country Office together with four Burundian civil society partners: Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile (FORSC), Ministère pour la Paix et la Réconciliation sous la Croix (MIPAREC), Jumelage Jeunesse Burundais (JJB), and Centre des Femmes pour la Paix (CFP). The overall aim of the Peace Under Construction (PUC) program in Burundi is to create sustainable peace and stability in vulnerable communities through women and youth empowerment in three areas in Burundi – Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural and Kirundo (CARE, 2016). According to CARE (2016) Burundi struggles with ineffective community structures in preventing and resolving violent conflict, a weak and inefficient government and unequal rights for minority groups. The PUC program has addressed these issues through three specific aims and with different approaches.

The first aim is “to re-enforce existing civil society organizations as well as community-based peace groups [or peace clubs], to effectively prevent and resolve violent conflict and human rights violations, thereby promoting human security” (CARE, 2016, p. 4). This implies the training of partner organizations and the strengthening of local community structures (peace clubs) to mediate conflicts, to stimulate active women participation in peace building, and to set up early warning systems and train peace observers on how to refer cases to either the police or judiciary services. CARE started to support peace clubs, that were already in existence, in 2004 with training programs (on social cohesion, peacebuilding, advocacy and accompaniment of the vulnerable), financial support and provision of materials for solidarity actions. In the meantime peace clubs have evolved gradually and have taken on additional functions (Spearing, 2016). Moreover, through some civil society organizations radio recordings and broadcasts have been used to sensitize communities on thematic issues related to peace and violence (CARE, 2016).

The second aim focusses on “increasing capacity of the government to implement its own laws and policies designed to protect citizens against violence and human rights violations, leading to

increased government legitimacy” (CARE, 2016, p. 4). For this the PUC program has introduced the community scorecard (SCS), through which community members can score service providers, either justice, police, health or local government services, and therefore help power-holders to account and to improve their services (Spearing, 2016). The intention was, and still is, that agreements are made with state- and non-state actors on their respective roles and responsibilities in preventing and resolving violence (MDF, 2016).

Finally, “it is aimed at increasing economic opportunities of women and youth to build secure and self-reliant livelihoods in order to decrease their vulnerability to violence and create peace-dividend” (CARE, 2016). In order to improve the economic opportunities, PUC introduced the Village Savings and Loans Groups (VSLAs). The VSLAs are used to support local level cohesion and economic activities (Spearing, 2016). Moreover, CARE offers training and advice (directly and through local partners) both in administration (how to establish and run a Peace Club) and in substantive themes (e.g. human rights, governance and peacebuilding) (Ibid.). Furthermore, PUC intended to train women in entrepreneurship and income generating activities, and youth were involved in vocational training and strengthened in their capacity to access information about job opportunities (MDF, 2016).

4.7 Reflection on peacebuilding

It is now widely accepted that new wars require a new approach at the level of society, the so-called bottom-up approach. INGOs have proven to be a popular alternative to initiate such an approach, due to their political independence, flexibility and effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries. Thereby it is also recognized that whenever the root causes of conflict are understood and explicitly addressed, development has the capacity to contribute proactively to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

However, development programs with a lack of conflict-sensitivity, might cause negative effects or they might miss a better contribution to peace. It is even acknowledged that it is difficult to preserve long-term benefits from peacebuilding programs when contextual concerns are not a central priority. Mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity is therefore an essential element of bottom-up peacebuilding programs in ‘conflict’ or ‘fragile’ contexts.

Thereby, the elements of the participatory development model are believed to be the basis for successful and sustainable development; it is assumed to be a solution for mainstreaming a conflict-sensitive approach. With the participatory model the development needs are better identified, there is less reliance needed from external inputs, and there will be a better management of the project through community decision-making. It is important, however, not to consider this model as a separate entity; it can lead to the ignorance of those stakeholders that can break or make the success of the bottom-up peacebuilding approach. It concerns the following stakeholders that will be taken into account in this thesis: government, partner organizations, donors and the agencies’ own board.

CARE has initiated the Peace Under Construction program in Burundi in 2012, when there was still a period of relative peace. The program has been implemented through different civil society organizations (CSOs) in order to reach the beneficiaries. The PUC program can be positioned, in line with the theory, as a bottom-up peacebuilding approach with activities in track two and particularly track three. Furthermore, it involves a highly participatory model, in which the concepts of ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ are extremely relevant. However, just as track one needs a track two and three, track two and three need a track one as well. According to the theory, the participatory model is of course the perfect model to mainstream conflict sensitivity and to guarantee successful and sustainable development. Yet, this approach has been initiated during a period of relative peace; the question remains to what extent it is permanent given the changing context. This brings us back the main research question of this thesis.

Chapter V A turbulent context: difficulties, challenges and obstacles that undermine the community-based approach

This chapter moves beyond the literature and the analysis of the history and the socio-political context to detail and analyze the findings of the research interviews with key INGO employees working in relation with or in Burundi. The interviews particularly examine the differences in applying the program to the more turbulent context in Burundi, and by doing so also examine the challenges and difficulties that have been encountered by CARE at the community level. The following sub-question shall be answered: *What is done differently in applying the program to a more turbulent context, and what difficulties, challenges and obstacles come forth from the turbulent context at the community level?* First this chapter will briefly explain the ‘current affairs’ of participation in Burundi. Then it will discuss ‘fear’ as an significant obstacle for the participatory model. Thirdly, this chapter will delve into the difficulties and challenges related to the important relationships, advocacy, sustainability and the restricted humanitarian space. Finally, in the conclusion an answer will be given to the sub-question which is central in this chapter.

5.1 Participation in Burundi

As discussed in the previous chapter, participation is now widely recognized to be a minimum requirement in community-based peacebuilding activities. The concepts around which participation revolves, such as empowerment, ownership, partnership, accountability and transparency, involve power within relationships; participation has therefore a political dimension (Ware, 2012). Participation empowers “those who are most marginalized, powerless and poor to achieve a better life for themselves” (Ibid., p. 69). Participation entails the assumption that the ‘marginalized’ are increasingly involved in politics and that the country will be further democratized (Ibid.). “Community-based processes can facilitate governance reform by developing outlets for voice and equipping local communities with the skills and tools to carry on a range of activities beyond a particular project” (Haider, 2009, p. 7).

Furthermore, according to Diokno, as cited in Ware (2012), denying participation is the nature of authoritarianism and repression. In addition, Alston (1995) believes that it is unrealistic to expect full participatory development to succeed in a country which is fundamentally authoritarian in nature. However, Haider (2009) highlights the two cases of Afghanistan and Indonesia in which participatory development processes have been established relatively successful. For instance, in Indonesia “the establishment of participatory community processes to address shared needs provided a useful framework for negotiations and dispute mediation at the local level” (Strand et al., as cited in Haider, 2009, p. 7). The inclusion of community members and the marginalized groups “contributes to fairness, transparency and accountability, which is particularly important in conflict-affected and

fragile contexts where levels of trust are low” (Haider, 2009). These perspectives raise questions about the possibility of implementing fully participatory development approaches in an increasingly authoritarian context, such as Burundi. The following results and responses from interviews will shed light on the community-based peacebuilding practices of CARE and the realities in Burundi.

In general, through the interviews, the respondents were quite positive – in a self-reflecting manner – about their participation development practices. Most of the respondents even claimed that the PUC program initially did not change ‘that much’ because of the changing context. Instead, its relevance has increased, for instance, as one of the activities which CARE is working on is increasing the resilience of youth against political and ethnic manipulation; this has only become more important in the current crisis (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Yet, the crisis certainly did have some negative impact upon (several) other NGOs. Because of the sensitivity of their activities they have been forced to cease to function. This is due to the political crisis, rather than to the closing of humanitarian space. “Humanitarian space is still there, in the capital it is the coordination which is the major issue. [...] we [INGOs] are lacking coordination structures, and access to the government” (Andrews, 4-5-2016). These findings imply that participatory development is still functioning, yet it is counter-intuitive given the increasingly authoritarian regime in Burundi. Even though this might imply that the participatory development model is still functioning, it does not imply that the changing context did not bring challenges, difficulties and obstacles that may harm sustainability and do not deserve any further attention.

The peace clubs are built in a way that they are inclusive, and bring together all different actors at the local level regardless of their political affiliation, gender, ethnicity and religion (Source 12, 18-5-2016). The community itself selects the representatives of the peace clubs based on certain criteria, this is done during a community assembly organized by CARE and its partners. For instance, one of the criteria is ‘gender equity’, which means that at least half of the peace club members should be women. In the past, women were discriminated or excluded from decision-making processes and it was mostly men who were in charge of conflict transformation processes. Now, within the PUC program, women (and men) have been empowered and well equipped to participate directly in conflict transformation activities (Ndikumana, *MIPAREC* 12-4-2016). And since the communities have chosen their own members for their peace club, the members are highly respected and most trusted (Source 12, 18-5-2016). In order to make sure the marginalized are participating and that the peace clubs are inclusive, CARE works through local partners such as MIPAREC (Source 4, 18-4-2016). CARE’s partners work directly with and in the communities; their staff and volunteers are embedded in the communities and therefore know very well what is happening, they also have an excellent reputation in the communities (Source 1, 13-4-2016).

During the time of the demonstrations, the activities of CARE have been temporarily stopped for three months, as it was difficult or even impossible to reach the communities. After the three

months period CARE has worked together with the communities to find a solution to the problem. Consequently, the PUC program started to focus more on youth in particular (Source 3, 15-4-2016).

“Although community-based approaches are meant to be holistic and to focus on the community as a whole, it may be necessary to include mechanisms designed to specifically target marginalized groups in order to ensure their participation. This may be especially the case in conflict-affected and fragile contexts where conflict and instability has affected groups differently, rendering some particularly vulnerable. In addition, specifically targeting groups with grievances that contributed to violent conflict can contribute to stabilization and conflict prevention.” (Haider, 2009, p. 8)

The adaptation in the provinces of PUC interventions meant that it attempted to bring together youth from the political party (CNDD-FDD) as well as the youth members from the opposition parties (FNL, FRODEBY, UPRON). Through theater activities, the youth could reflect on the ‘code of conduct’ during the electoral period and thereafter. For instance, in Bujumbura a spokesperson from the Security Ministry has participated in one of the meetings to explain the role of the police during demonstrations and has advised the participants of the demonstrations to adjust a positive attitude. “It was a venue to discuss their differences and how to challenge the violent attitude of everyone who participated in the demonstrations” (Source 3, 15-4-2016). The change in focus on youth is unsurprisingly given the argument that “the so-called “youth bulges,” make countries more susceptible to political violence. [...] youth bulges provide greater opportunities for violence through the abundant supply of youths with low opportunity costs, [...] experience institutional crowding, in particular unemployment” (Urdal, 2014, p. 607).

5.2 Obstacles to the process

“We [CARE] are working on two sides; one is to consolidate what we have achieved, but at the same time also to resolve the new issues created by the situation of elections. Because of the elections there is distrust between civilians and the army or the police, there are even some people who are afraid and left the country to the neighbors. This is not a good situation.” (Ndikumana, MIPAREC 12-4-2016)

Almost all respondents expressed their concern about the increased ‘fear’ within the communities. People are afraid and therefore do not dare to engage in a lot of development activities. The money that has been spent on those people that have fled the country can be considered ‘offset’ (Source 1, 13-4-2016). The people who do not have the same political ideas as the ruling party, or who do not belong

to the ruling party, are afraid to be targeted by the police and in particular by the *Imbonerakure* (Source 3, 15-4-2016). Also, due to the sporadic explosions in Bujumbura, during the day as well as the night, people do not often go out anymore; it is uncertain when or where the explosions can happen (Source 4, 18-4-2016). Ware (2012, p. 1950) states that fear “creates a very real potential for the disempowered poor to refrain from active involvement in participatory processes, or to abstain from expressing their voice. It opens the possibility of decision-making being dominated by those connected to the regime”. In addition, Ndayiragije (*CARE* 5-5-2016) mentions that when you are not a supporter of the current regime you are considered as an enemy, hence you are running a high risk. The involvement of people that are dominated by fear is less effective and talking openly about governance has become an issue (Ibid.).

Hence – based on the current crisis – fear is one of the challenges that results in mistrust between the community members and the administrations. People are not willing to express themselves openly, nor are they comfortable in going out on the streets. Nowadays, the *‘il y a non climat de médiface Entre les Membres de la Communauté’* (a climate of mistrust between community members), reduces the space for dialogue, as communities are afraid to talk openly (Source 7, 22-4-2016). Generally, this makes it difficult to know what people are really thinking, since they do not trust the system anymore. According to one of the respondents this is a challenge for effective planning, because they [CARE] are working on the felt needs of people (Source 4, 18-4-2016).

“Community-based approaches presume that communities are functional and can participate positively in projects which is often not the case in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. While a sense of interdependence and social integration can be fostered through community-based programs, the success of community-based programs may depend on the pre-existence of these same elements.” (Haider, 2009, p. 12)

Fear and mistrust is thus far limited to the peace clubs in Bujumbura and in particular the municipalities of Musaga, Kinama, Kayosha, Mugongo and Manga (Source 7, 22-4-2016). In other provinces the communities are still expressing themselves openly. “Last week I was having a meeting with a peace club and the local community, and the local administration official passed by without worries, he did not even come to listen to what we were saying, it was all fine” (Source 4, 18-4-2016). Yet, Haider (2009), states that violent conflicts and fragility weaken and sometimes even destroy the social fabric of societies. Therefore, it has to be seen whether the conflict will spread towards the rural areas of Burundi, and whether it will bring fear to other communities as well.

5.3 Generating relationships

“It is now very difficult to operate in Burundi, not when it comes to health care or clear direct services to the population, but with everything that is somewhat sensitive. For instance, when you talk about conflict transformation, different ‘sensitive’ subjects will be addressed. However, it may still be possible on condition that you are very well embedded in the local communities and that you have a good standing with the local government and provincial government in the given region, be it yourself [CARE] or you partner. [...] These relationships have not become difficult but important.” (Source 1, 13-4-2016)

According to one of the respondents, during the time before the elections, participation of local communities was ‘really’ effective, as there was relatively no risk for the community members to act upon their felt needs (Source 3, 15-4-2016). However, since the elections, the government has replaced the local administration in CARE’s intervention communities with new mayors from the ruling party (CNDD-FDD). The local officials were put in place to get a better control of NGOs (Source 4, 18-4-2016). The new authorities have not been informed by their predecessors about the running programs (Source 3, 15-4-2016). It has therefore become more important to keep close communication with the local government officials, and to build a good relationship with the government whenever possible, in order to reach the poor and vulnerable people (Source 4, 18-4-2016).

“All staff was recommended to present the project to the authorities and to invite them to participate or to follow up project activities organized at the colline, commune or provincial level, so that they could see the contribution of the project to community development.” (Source 3, 15-4-2016)

Close and good cooperation with the local administration is most often executed by the partner organizations. If the local administration interrupts activities of a peace club – because the peace club is not affiliated with the same political party – it is up to the partner organization to explain to the ‘chief of the colline’ that the peace club activities contribute to peace and social cohesion, and that it reduces the chance that youth will engage in destructive actions in his colline (Source 3, 15-4-2016). This is often not a role undertaken by INGOs (Ware, 2012). “But what we are actually doing is that we abide with the recommendations and the rules of the government [...] to inform them of whatever activity will happen in the community” (Source 4, 18-4-2016). The government is cooperative as long they can see that NGOs are acting on the felt needs of the communities (Ibid.)

In addition to informing the local authorities, the local authorities are sometimes also invited to the activities of PUC. The local government might see these activities as a threat to their power and

can therefore be suspicious, even though they do not always share this openly. As a result the local authorities are always asking to share a plan with activities, since they are really keeping their eyes open (Source 4, 18-4-2016).

“Attention may need to be paid to reaching out to these leaders and others who may resist such processes in order to prevent community-based projects from being undermined. Should such authorities perceive benefits from community-led projects, for example access to training and capacity building initiatives, they may be more supportive and refrain from interfering in community decisions.” (Cliffe, Guffenheim & Kostner, as cited in Haider, 2009, p. 7)

Involving the local authorities, might take their ‘fear to lose power’ away, because they can observe a contribution of the activities to the development of their own colline. For instance, service providers are satisfied with the community scorecard (SCS) – one activity of the peace clubs – since it gives an opportunity to enhance both their effectiveness and legitimacy (Source 7, 22-4-2016). This is emphasized by Haider (2009, p. 14), who states that “government officials may also be given credit for successes from community-based approaches in order to enhance perceptions of government legitimacy and to gain support from government for such approaches”. Including local authorities in such a way that they can take some credit for the results can be fruitful (Ware, 2012). According to Haider (2009), government authorities may still support community-based peacebuilding initiatives, even when they are wary of the participatory and empowerment principles; this is due to the pressure on local authorities to produce tangible recovery benefits and peace dividends. Therefore, it has become more important and sometimes even necessary to involve the local administrations to convince them that the PUC activities contribute to peace and security in their collines.

According to one of the respondents, CARE has built up good relationships with the local administrations. The latter is generally positive as they can see directly the added value of the peace clubs, for instance that peace clubs can solve conflicts for which the court does not have the capacity (Source 6, 20-4-2016).

“It is important not to bypass completely the technical institutions of government that are responsible for service delivery. [...] they underline that there may be opportunities for strategic engagement with technical line ministries, particularly at the local level. [...] promoting state responsibility for protecting and assisting conflict affected civilians was difficult in a war in which government institutions were central protagonists in the violence.” (Harvey, 2013, p. s160)

However, something that is quite different from the pre-election period is that it has become difficult to pull these activities up to the national level. “Participatory government at the provincial level is

already more difficult, but at the national level they prefer to minimize any public participation” (Harvey, 2013). Changing legal structures for which support of the national ministries is needed are simply impossible. However, there is still humanitarian space at the local level in engaging with the local administration (Andrews, ZOA 4-5-2016; Source 12, 18-5-2016). The vertical linkage with the national government is recognized as an necessary element for sustainable change. Yet,

“minimum conditions for vertical integration efforts to gain traction clearly include the existence of political space and the willingness by the governments of fragile and conflict-affected states to engage. Authoritarian governments, by definition, are unlikely to offer much space or opportunity, and other methods and strategies for change may be needed.” (Mccandless, Abitbol and Donais, 2015, p. 7)

5.4 Advocacy

Since the elections many advocacy and lobby activities have been stopped, because it was politically too sensitive to proceed with these activities (Source 5, 19-4-2016). It became difficult and sometimes impossible to organize training sessions or to exchange information with communities concerning human rights in terms of security, democratic principles or even the legitimacy of the government (Source 2, 15-4-2016; Source 7, 22-4-2016). In order to make progress in the field of advocacy, CARE was working together with a local civil society partner named FORSC. FORSC was strong in advocacy and regarded by the government as being too political, therefore it was forced to stop its activities in the aftermath of the elections (Source 7, 22-4-2016; Source 9, 3-5-2016). Since then CARE has not been able to find another partner that could address activities of advocacy, also because this has become too dangerous (Source 9, 2-5-2016).

In order to adjust to the situation and to continue activities concerning human rights, an ‘early warning system’ has been developed through the peace clubs. With the new technology of WhatsApp and SMS, the peace observer can share photos and information with CARE of any human rights incident or suspicious situation. This new system serves the purpose to prevent conflicts and to identify conflict triggers (Ndayiragije, CARE 5-5-2016). However, “people are scared, now you are thinking once or twice before you start writing critically about the government” (Source 9, 3-5-2016).

“If agencies advocate too strongly or too publically they risk being prevented from operating at all and/or being asked to leave, but failure to challenge sufficiently access limitations, the politicization or diversion of aid, and violations of IHL and IHRL can lead to fears of failing to act in the face of unacceptable human rights violations and humanitarian suffering.” (Harvey, 2013, p. s161)

According to one of the respondents, it will ‘take a while’ before CARE or any peace committee can have influence at the national level. To build up this influence you need advocacy, which is now quite impossible; people have lost trust in the effectiveness of any attempt to advocate. The Burundians rather want to keep advocacy related activities in small circles. Within the small circles they are preoccupied with solving local conflicts and are making sure the conflict in Bujumbura will not spread to their *colline* or community. Hence, it is not only a major challenge to advocate at the national level, it is also extremely dangerous (Source 6, 20-4-2016). “So there is a paralyses in the sense of, there is no progress possible within government departments, because they would not allow to engage with them” (Andrew, ZOA 4-5-2016).

On the other hand, the suspension of advocacy activities in Burundi opens up new financial space. The reinvestment of this money went to a different advocacy campaign, focusing on actors with a possible leverage on the Burundian government. Such as the neighboring countries, the Eastern African Community and the African Union. This happens all behind closed doors, face-to-face, private advocacy and with the aim of indirectly influencing the Burundian government (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Also the country director can be deployed to advocate behind closed doors, this would however happen with informal talks (Source 6, 20-4-2016).

Despite the fact that Burundi had been on the right track during the last years, it has fallen back to a more authoritarian state. The power holders in Burundi are increasingly using the top-down approach, which is in contrast with the bottom-up community approach. Once people are used to a ‘dictatorship’ it is not easy to shift from top-down to a bottom-up approach. According to Haider (2009), countries with an authoritarian rule often create a legacy of passivity, powerlessness, dependency as well as the absence of a sense of belonging or notion of citizenship. These are considered to be necessary elements in a participatory society. Thereby, the power holders also need to accept the bottom-up approach as legitimate. Yet, it seems that in the current situation in Burundi, this link is missing and that the communities are not empowered enough to advocate beyond their own *colline* or community (Source 4, 18-4-2016). It is impossible for peace clubs to organize a network at the national level, therefore they miss the link with the policy holders and hence a link to the national government system (Ndayiragije, CARE 5-5-2016). Respondents widely agreed that sustainable change is not possible through change at the local level only, but will require major (structural) changes that address for instance, property rights and access to finances for women.

5.5 Sustainability

“In conflict-contexts, skills in dispute resolution, cross-cultural communication, consensus-building, inclusiveness and the ability to manage power dynamics are especially valuable. Community facilitators must be well trained in such skills. It is also highly valuable to train

community members in these skills and to engage continually with communities in learning how to develop social trust and cohesion through peaceful resolution of problems and disputes that arise during the duration of the project. Without attention to these aspects, community projects are unlikely to contribute to sustainable conflict transformation.” (Richards Bah & Vincent, as cited in Haider, 2009, p. 9)

In the previous sections of this chapter it has become clear that the development of ‘social trust and cohesion’ are quite challenging in the remote areas in the current crisis. This indicates that social trust and cohesion, as two important elements in achieving sustainable development, might threaten the sustainability of development programs in the future. According to Ware (2012, p. 205), sustainability “requires communities themselves be able to maintain their own development beyond the project lifecycle”. In addition, “empowerment can lead to feelings of ownership, necessary for the sustainability of project outcomes” (Haider, 2009, p. 9). However, concerns over the potential negative impacts of authoritarian rule and governance failures on sustainability have been expressed differently throughout the interviews. Some peace clubs have fled the country, others have emptied their savings account because of insecurity in the current crisis (Source 6, 20-4-2016).

One of the respondents mentioned that ‘in general’ the work that has been done has not been ‘destroyed’ by the current crisis, although it has become more difficult for results to be achieved (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Another respondent believes that indeed something has been built which might be useful for the future; however, it is not democracy and it is not inclusive governance, because this simply has been made impossible by the government (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Nevertheless, local structures of dialogue and conflict resolution in the peace clubs that have been supported by CARE do still exist and function, despite the current crisis. In particular the peace clubs outside of Bujumbura have resisted the violent conflict in Bujumbura; ‘they did not get dragged into the violence’ (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Source 6, 20-4-2016; Van Leeuwen, *RU* 25-4-2016; Source 9, 2-5-2016). It should not be forgotten that also some members of peace clubs, and in particular in Bujumbura, did get involved in the violent conflict (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Hence and in general all respondents agreed that the peace clubs softened the effects from the violent conflict in Bujumbura. There is one critical note to this, as the situation of the communities with peace clubs have not been compared to the situation of the communities without peace clubs; the latter communities may also not have felt the ‘effects’ of the violent conflict in Burundi (Source 1, 13-4-2016). At large, it is safe to state that the peace clubs generally function better in the rural areas than in the urban areas (Source 9, 2-5-2016).

One of the benefits was that the local structures of peace clubs already existed before CARE initiated its PUC program in Burundi. These local structures have been created by the communities themselves, based on experience from the civil war of 1993. Small groups of people started to build up local peace clubs to prevent any such event from ever happening again. This own initiative reflects the determination of the Burundian people and their own will to build a stable society. CARE has ‘solely’

strengthened these existing local structures (Source 6, 20-4-2016; Source 7, 22-4-2016). This indicates that the current crisis might again be ‘a wakeup call’ for the Burundians to realize the importance of peace clubs; it might trigger the emergence of new peace clubs or sustain the operations of existing peace clubs (Source 9, 3-5-2016).

Furthermore, now there is little you can do except to mitigate the negative effects of the current crisis; much more is ‘very’ difficult now (Source 1, 13-4-2016). The PUC program ends in July 2016 and it depends on the political situation whether it will be conducive or not, if the program will be sustainable. “If the political situation is not conducive the space for the community-based organizations [peace clubs] will be reduced” (Source 4, 18-4-2016). Even though CARE has quite some experience in working in conflict contexts and has a lot of local employees that have strong local contacts, the current crisis – if it gets worse – will most likely harm long-term sustainability (Source 5, 19-4-2016). Another respondent addressed an important issue: the situation has changed to the point in which the local administrations are all coming from the same political stream (CNDD-FDD), this questions the extent to which the communities are empowered, and whether people are ‘really’ taking their own decisions, hence it questions sustainability to the extent whether communities are really empowered (Source 12, 18-5-2016). This implies that there is “a risk of elite capture and government interference in decision-making processes in a way that undermines community empowerment” (Haider, 2009, p. 13).

Overall, what can be concluded is that the current crisis indeed affects the extent of sustainability. Some peace clubs have ceased to exist and fled the country while others have spent their savings in response to the insecurity. Work from peace clubs outside of Bujumbura has not been ‘destroyed’. However, they do also feel the consequences of the crisis, because the government has made democracy and inclusive governance impossible. Unlike democracy and inclusive governance, local structures continue to function and peace clubs are effective in conflict resolution and local dialogues. In general they have managed to soften the effects of the violent conflict in the rural areas and to a lesser extent in Bujumbura.

Despite the softening effects, sustainability might be affected ‘more’ in the long-term if the conflict does not come to an end or if the conflict is escalating. The extent to which people are empowered in terms of decision making is also questionable, due to the fact that most local administrations originate from the same political party. Therefore, the current crisis put sustainability under threat and it raises new questions such as: what is the difference with communities where there are no peace clubs in times of crisis, and does the local administration – being increasingly from the same political party CNDD-FDD – affect local decision making frameworks within the communities, and do (new) peace clubs function also without the presence of CARE employees? Finally, because the participatory model is relying on active citizenship, social cohesion and responsive government, “there is growing recognition that restoring a robust social contract between state and society, and

restoring social cohesion within society, are essential foundations for durable peace and sustainable development” (Spearing, 2016, p. 6).

5.6 Humanitarian space

Throughout the interviews the respondents have frequently given their perspective with regard to the restricted humanitarian space which constrains their development activities. How CARE and other INGOs are dealing with the issue of humanitarian space might shed light on mechanisms of conflict sensitivity and therefore how INGOs can be most effective in a situation of conflict. According to Herrero (2014, p. 1), humanitarian space refers “to both the physical environment and the room for maneuver of humanitarian workers to operate without fear of attack and interference by parties to the conflict”. In addition, “[h]umanitarian organizations are the custodians of humanitarian space, so therefore, they should endeavor to remain neutral in a conflict and consistently carry out their mandate in line with ethics in which humanitarian organizations are built on” (Bayode, Mbohwa & Akinlabi, 2015, p. 4). The latter argument is recognized by most of the respondents and it particularly accounts for the situation in Burundi.

During the elections in 2015, the projects with partners continued to operate in Burundi; however, CARE has chosen to become invisible in any community whatsoever. The risk of becoming affiliated with any (political) party in the conflict was too high. As a consequence certain activities were delayed (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Due to CARE’s neutral position, the government never saw CARE as a threat to their own power (Ndikumana, 12-4-2016). Unlike other organizations that comply less with the ‘neutrality’ principle – for instance organizations that support ‘the free media’ – are seen by the government as a problem, hence as the opposition (Source 2, 15-4-2016). If the government associates CARE with one of the opposition parties, the security of the staff comes at risk and the possibilities of implementing projects can become impossible (Source 6, 20-4-2016).

Another consequence of being associated with one political party is that the communities on one hill may lose trust in the organization and therefore drop the project (Source 6, 20-4-2016). With public meetings and dialogues CARE is neither reporting to the government about what community members have said, nor does it criticize the government towards the communities; “we keep in touch with our mandate, that is how we are having trust in the communities” (Source 4, 18-4-2016). The risk of working together with one of the opposition parties has declined significantly however, because there are none left and the remaining organizations have managed to keep their neutral reputation (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Even though keeping a neutral position allows you to proceed operations in Burundi, it still means that humanitarian space has declined; programs have become less politically sensitive and are therefore less extensive in their activities than before.

According to one respondent, working for another INGO than CARE, they had to stop with all ‘high profile’ activities that are somewhat politically sensitive. Activities such as large meetings in

Bujumbura and expressions in the media were not possible anymore; hence their space to operate became smaller. Keeping a low profile also means ‘not taking a public stance’, not on the national level, nor on the regional or international level (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Overall, which must be clear by now, is that it has become difficult to work with sensitive subjects, otherwise your work can be hampered.

‘Access’ as another aspect of humanitarian space has also become more challenging. Roadblocks are regularly found on the streets, which makes it necessary for CARE employees to pay bribes in order to get access to the area in which CARE is working. Sometimes it is necessary to negotiate about entry permits, which before the elections have not been a significant problem (Source 5, 19-4-2016; Source 9, 3-5-2015). “This is a daily reality for our employees in Burundi” (Source 5, 19-4-2016).

Overall, CARE and other INGOs should take a more neutral position if they want to keep their operations running in Burundi. However, this means that the contents as well as the extent of their activities should not be politically sensitive. In most cases organizations need to adapt a low profile and take more distance from activities that might be too sensitive. Thereby, getting access to remote areas has become more difficult as well. Conflict sensitivity in Burundi begins with not becoming an enemy of the government. While agencies attempt to uphold their neutral mandate, they are also “attempting to support state capacity to meet development commitments in ways that involve working increasingly closely with the government” (Harvey, 2013, p. 159). This is considered to be a ‘dilemma’, therefore humanitarian principles should contain a framework for principled engagement with governments in situation of conflict (Ibid.). Yet, it is often the organization’s mandate that limits humanitarian space, because too often the mandates are interpreted as shorthand for ignoring governments (Ware, 2012; Harvey, 2013). In Burundi, INGOs often have to appeal to their mandate if they want to keep operating in the already more limited and available humanitarian space. However,

“larger and better resourced organizations have greater expertise, and can more easily demonstrate their humanitarian rather than political motives. While this may be an issue of resources and expertise, it might also be an indicator that status, where organisations which might be termed ‘higher-status organisations’ are granted better access, while smaller organisations with lower status do seem to struggle to negotiate official access.” (Ware, 2012, p. 250)

In addition to internal elements that can restrict humanitarian space, humanitarian space can also be restricted by the international community; an issue that will be discussed in Chapter VI.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the following research question was central: *What is done differently in applying the program to a more turbulent context, and what difficulties, challenges and obstacles come forth from the turbulent context at the community level?* Surprisingly, most respondents were not that ‘negative’ about the functioning of the PUC program in the current crisis. After asking whether or not the changing context caused significant adjustments to the program, the answers were often: ‘no, not really’. Maybe this is correct for locations in Burundi where the conflict is far from visible – looking only at the surface and the gross of activities. Or maybe this has something to do with ‘a lack’ of self-assessment, as it might come with unease to critically reflect on your own contribution regarding development assistance. Yet, after digging a little bit deeper and after changing the directness of the questions, the respondents touched upon different difficulties, challenges and obstacles in the PUC program, coming from the changing socio-political context that affect the underlying assumptions of the participatory model. The PUC program had to adjust and is to a certain extent applied differently to the more turbulent context.

One issue that has been mentioned by all respondents was ‘fear’. Fear is a significant factor in disrupting participation processes; fear leads to mistrust between the communities and the government administrations and therefore reduces space for dialogue. Until today, fear is imbedded mostly in Bujumbura, and the question remains whether it will spread with the ongoing conflict to other regions of Burundi. Fear restrains people from participating or expressing themselves openly, in that sense fear obstructs the effectiveness of the participation model. Fear might withhold people from participating and if they do participate, fear might withhold them from expressing their needs; it is likely that the communities taken by fear feel less empowered.

Moreover, as a consequence of the conflict the local authorities have been replaced by people from the ruling party (CNDD-FDD). They are often unfamiliar with the development programs and might see risk in the empowerment of the communities. It therefore has become more important to inform and involve the local authorities in order to convince them of the benefits of the PUC program in their colline. It is necessary to demonstrate that the development activities are fruitful instead of a threat. However, involving local authorities means also the involvement of the local police, where the police is sometimes the main reason for people fearing to participate or to express themselves. This implies a contradiction in the participation assumptions, in which it is expected that local authorities are involved to build trust, but at the same time involving the local authorities potentially undermines openness among the community members in meetings. Yet, being conflict-sensitive implies the involvement of local authorities, otherwise CARE risks its program from being undermined by the those same local authorities or losing access to the target regions. Interviewees generally place emphasis on this issue, but mentioned that the relationships with local authorities have taken more effort rather than becoming more difficult.

Furthermore, what has changed since the pre-election period is that lobby and advocacy activities have been forced to stop. Advocacy directed at the national government, if not about human rights than local legitimacy, is not recommended or is even too dangerous. Advocacy and lobby activities regarding these issues might bring the staff, beneficiaries and organization in danger; it may even result in total cessation of activities. A full participation or bottom-up approach may be somewhat limited by the authoritarian nature of the regime. The extent to which people are 'really' empowered is now more questionable, as they are restricted in terms of expressing themselves. A link with the national government is considered necessary for development programs to be sustainable and to create local legitimacy (in this case for the local peace clubs). The increasingly authoritarian nature of the government and its increasingly top-down approach is in stark contrast with the participation bottom-up approach. In Burundi track one has become impossible and track two is becoming more difficult, thus the authoritarian nature of the government is a risk to the effectiveness of the bottom-up approach and the goals it wants to achieve.

Empowerment generally gives a feeling of ownership and is necessary for a bottom-up program to be sustainable. Yet, the Burundian government has made inclusive governance difficult and democracy even impossible. These are important elements of the participation model, thus we can assume that communities are less empowered and sustainability has become questionable. Not in the way that all peace clubs stop to exist, but in the way that the expected outcomes of the bottom-up approach are not realized due to the changing context, such as the extent of decision making possibilities by communities. Some peace clubs have fled the country, although these peace clubs come from Bujumbura only. Mostly, peace clubs are believed to have softened the effects of the violent conflict in Bujumbura. And most respondents agree that peace clubs function better in rural areas than the urban regions of Bujumbura. Despite some peace clubs have left Bujumbura, most still exist and are functioning well. They play an important role in conflict resolution at the local level and improve service deliveries.

Nevertheless, the authoritarian regime in Burundi does threaten the sustainability of the PUC program if the current situation proceeds. Questions of empowerment are increasingly challenged, due to the dominance of local authorities of the ruling party CNDD-FDD. Thereby the space to talk openly has been reduced enormously. Overall, humanitarian space still exist at the local level, as long as organizations follow their mandates and try to stay as neutral as possible. In the case of Burundi, this also means the involvement of the local government and maintaining good relationships with the local government is significantly important, even though this might clash with the organizations' own mandate. Upholding the principle of neutrality and the good relationships with the local government are ways of being conflict-sensitive and preserving the humanitarian space that is left at the local level. Nevertheless, space is not only restricted by internal elements, restriction comes also from external actors; this will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter VI Being conflict-sensitive while dealing with key-stakeholder relationships

According to Ware (2012, p. 2014), “the complex socio-political context [...] impacts on INGO stakeholders relationships even more solidly than it does on INGO development work in Communities”. This chapter explores the effect of the changing socio-political context on stakeholder relationships, other than with the direct beneficiaries. In order to be conflict-sensitive, humanitarian NGOs not only have to deal with local (community) practices, but also with stakeholders at higher levels. This chapter aims to answer the following sub-question: *How does the changing context in Burundi changes the way CARE relates to other non-recipient stakeholders with whom it is important to have relationships, such as local partners, the government, and the donor?* First, this chapter will discuss why the relationship with contemporary partners only has become more important in the current crisis. Secondly, this chapter will delve into the changing attitude of the Burundian national government towards CARE and the international community, and thirdly an anecdotal view will be given about the international donors and their relationship with NGOs and CARE in particular. Lastly, in the conclusion an answer will be given to the research question of this chapter.

6.1 Partnering with local NGOs

It is believed that by strengthening civil society, paternalism and dependency can be overcome. Therefore, the development of local organizations is a primary objective for many humanitarian agencies (Ware, 2012). The main reason for strengthening the local partners is that whenever the project cycle is finished, local partners are empowered enough to organize their own development (Van Leeuwen, *RU* 25-4-2016; Source 9, 2-5-2016). The partnership between the local and international implementation agencies is sometimes at risk due to a constrained environment. The constrained environment creates a high level of risk for local NGOs, and when local NGOs are still in the ‘early formation stage’ their capacity is significantly limited (Ware, 2012). As mentioned in the previous sections, the high profile civil society – of which local NGOs are part – has been intimidated and harassed by the government. “High profile civil society activists reported receiving phone calls in the middle of the night and seeing strange people hanging around outside their homes in recent months. Others received serious threats to themselves and their families” (Daley & Popplewell, 2016, p. 5). Local NGOs are left alone, “as long as their agenda does not too explicitly clash with government policies; organizations working on economic and social development are especially encouraged” (Oudar & Lopez, 2015, p. 59). In the case of the PUC program, CARE has ‘lost’ some local NGO partners that were seen by the government as a threat, but on the other hand the current crisis has brought CARE closer to the still existing partners.

One of the local partners of CARE which is still operating in Burundi, is MIPAREC. One of the founders of MIPAREC told me that they have more than 20 years of experience in working on peace and reconciling divided communities in Burundi. This means they were founded during the last civil war in Burundi, and are therefore not new to the Burundian government (Ndikumana, *MIPAREC* 12-4-2016). According to Ndikumana, “the government knows that we are not the problem of the community, but part of the solution”. In addition, after the escalation of the crisis MIPAREC developed – together with CARE – mechanisms to avoid becoming a victim of the crisis. “If MIPAREC is affected then also CARE will be affected” (Ibid.). Hence, the current crisis brought CARE and their still operating local partners closer together. The same was emphasized by another respondent from another INGO: “Because of the unrest our relationship with our partners has become more closer” (Source 1, 13-4-2016).

In the current crisis it has become clear that in terms of security, but also in terms of project outcomes, local partners and INGOs are very much dependent on each other. Even the local partners working on human rights, governance and free media, that ceased to function or that had to take a ‘very’ low profile, have continually been supported as much as possible (Source 1, 13-4-2016; Source 10, 9-5-2016). The trust that INGOs have in local partners derives mostly from the local partner’s experience. For instance, MIPAREC went through a history of violence; they know the underlying processes of conflict, unlike the people in the field from INGOs. Hence, there is confidence in the ability in how to deal with escalating situations by MIPAREC (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Yet, in the current crisis certain responsibilities, such as advocacy, have been taken over by CARE, due to the government’s changing attitude towards local NGOs. It is easier for INGOs to work in such a context than for local NGOs (Source 6, 20-4-2016; Andrews, *ZOA* 4-5-2016). Nevertheless, despite the growing numbers of local NGOs, there are just a few local NGOs with sufficient capacity on which INGOs can build, not to mention on which they can rely. A number of previous local NGOs that have gained trust stopped to exist. It has therefore become more important for CARE to secure and to sustain relationships with their still existing partners, which have built up their experience for years and are accepted by the Burundian government, but also in which CARE has spent money for years.

In addition, it was addressed in the previous chapter that because of the changing socio-political context in Burundi, it has become even more important to build good relationships with the local government. The cultivation of a good relationship with the local government, up until the provincial government, is done by the local implementation partners of CARE. This reflects another underlying reason for the importance of maintaining a strong relationship between INGOs and local partners, especially when the context is becoming more turbulent. Through local partners the government will be informed about projects. Informing and involving the most important local government officials is key is reducing the chances that the local government officials cause troubles. “If something goes wrong you need them; often they are the ones that cause problems, hence informing them will reduce the chance that they cause problems” (Source 3, 15-4-2016). However,

regarding the humanitarian principles such as impartiality and neutrality, involving the government as part of humanitarian action will always be surrounded by ethical dilemmas (Herrero, 2014). In the current crisis, it is exactly this relationship with the local authorities, whether it be chiefs, the elder, police officers and so forth, that might open up the space to meet the needs of those who need it.

“Accepting its negotiated nature will make concessions and trade-offs acceptable [...]. Partial achievements in humanitarian negotiations will still result in lack of protection and death of many. But at the same time, such achievements will help alleviate suffering and allow for progressively greater access to those in need.” (Herrero, 2014, p.8)

Thus far, particularly the local government (up until the provincial government) and its relationship with CARE regarding the changing socio-political context, has been discussed in this thesis. The following section will discuss the relationship with the national government, and how the national governments’ attitude has changed in the more turbulent context.

6.2 National Government – trying to control that on which it depends

Florea (2005) emphasizes that unstable and weak governments (if existent) in post-conflict states may feel threatened by NGOs; this contributes to a tense government-NGO relationship. As a result, the government becomes more hostile towards NGOs and therefore impede the desire for cooperation between the two (Ibid.). This development is explained in more detail by Herrero (2014, p. 8):

“A government party to an armed conflict has a dual role. As a belligerent party, it is subject to the obligations of IHL [International Humanitarian Law]. At the same time, the government is also the primary responsible for the lives and wellbeing of its population, irrespective of their location or political affiliation. Since the former role often leads to governments being unable or unwilling to fulfill the latter role, there is an international consensus around the important role of neutral and impartial agents external to the conflict in the provision of humanitarian assistance. This means, however, that humanitarian action involves an act of substitution of the host governments’ responsibility, which governments are frequently unwilling to accept or recognize.”

Due to the current crisis, the national government is much less inclined to engage in dialogue; it has become more difficult and mostly impossible to reach the national government (Source 2, 15-4-2016; Andrews, ZOA 4-5-2016). In general, the relationship between the international community and the national government has become quite cold (Source 10, 9-5-2016). Prior to the crisis, the government was more open and not as rigorous as it is now concerning humanitarian projects. The government is

now really on top of projects; they want to know exactly when and in which communities humanitarians are working, but also with whom humanitarian workers talk to and why (Source 6, 20-4-2016). They sometimes even send government officials to the field of the program, slow down the process of issuing visas, or put restrictions on visiting project sites; therefore the space for doing (politically) sensitive activities has become more difficult (Source 1, 13-4-2016). Moreover, they devote a large amount of time on crisis management instead of development. The governments' strategic framework of 'Growth and Fight against Poverty II' (Cadre Stratégique de Croissance et de Lutte contre la Pauvreté II) at the national level, and the 'Communal Plan for Community Development' (Plan Communal de Développement Communautaire) at the grass-root level are much less of a priority in the current crisis (Source 3, 15-4-2016).

In general the government is increasingly more critical towards external interventions and foreign governments; this is also the main reason that led to the bureaucratization of incoming external intervention. Humanitarians feel – more than before – that they are being watched, and therefore have to be more careful (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Otherwise, if you do not comply with the stricter rules, the government might freeze the program. It seems that there is a huge centralization of the government in Burundi (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016).

“It is a strange time, it becomes harder and harder for the government. The government is using different ways to strengthen themselves, which means also picking up on the international actors. But because we [CARE] still bring in money, the government will – besides using ugly words – not make it impossible for us to keep working in Burundi. Especially, because we do things, that the government in the current crisis cannot do themselves.” (Source 6, 20-4-2016)

The government's actions have serious implications on Burundi's economy, which as a result collapsed. The government lost money from the international donors, but it also lost money from their 'tax tank'. According to Andrews (*ZOA* 4-5-2016), the government is getting 'increasingly desperate', and is taking 'increasingly desperate' measures to shore up their finances. One of these measures is that it is no longer possible for NGOs, such as CARE, to receive foreign currency to their bank accounts (Source 4, 18-4-2016; Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Andrews, *ZOA* 4-5-2016). Until recently NGOs could transfer money through commercial banks. However, the national government decided that all foreign money should now be transferred through the Central Bank (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). In this way the government is able to control foreign currencies coming into Burundi (Andrews, *ZOA* 4-5-2016). This is seen as a threat towards external funds; “We ask ourselves what will happen to our funds at the Central Bank, if the government does not have money, maybe they will use ours? All foreign currencies, such as the dollar and euro, are now in the central bank” (Source 4, 18-4-2016). According to Gerhardt (*Cordaid* 24-4-2016), this is an example of a 'panicking'

government, attempting to control everything that is coming from outside of Burundi. Of course, what happened is that NGOs developed new mechanisms in order to prevent their money falling into the hands of the national government (Andrews, 4-5-2016). For instance, what CARE is doing, instead of transferring all the funds at once, the money is now transferred weekly in smaller amounts, and taken from the Commercial Bank as soon as possible (Source 4, 18-4-2016).

In response to the current crisis the international community decided that no funds should be given directly to the government. The fund will be reinvested through INGOs operating in Burundi, or that are willing to operate in Burundi (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). The donors have not drawn back from Burundi as such, but they found other channels to direct their funds into Burundi (Source 6, 20-4-2016). Nevertheless,

“One reason why donor money is increasingly channeled through NGOs rather than through governments in developing countries is that many of these countries are plagued by weak or bad governance. Corruption is often high, so donor agencies cannot be sure whether their money will end up in someone’s Swiss bank account. However, channeling funds through the above-described chain of Northern and Southern NGOs risks weakening these states even further. After all, what these NGOs do is to set up structures of service provision in fields such as health care and education that are parallel to government ministries. This competing structure weakens rather than strengthens such ministries. The parallel structures of NGOs are funded not by tax incomes but by Northern donors, which makes them highly aid dependent.” (Verkoren, 2008, p. 73)

6.3 International donors – different channel, same objective

“Despite the chorus of donors who talk of liberal peacebuilding, inclusive peacebuilding, local peacebuilding, and social justice, postelection governance in Burundi shows that international and regional actors are willing to tolerate an authoritarian government as long as the government contains certain kinds of insecurity. [...] For donors, a degree of low-intensity violence in Burundi and authoritarian practices seem acceptable and even normal, as long as this does not destabilize the region or threaten the international system.” (Curtis, 2014, p. 89)

Ever since the crisis, donors such as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFa), have chosen not to cooperate with the Burundian government. The MoFa wants to have as little as possible relationships with the Burundian government. Humanitarian programs that contain elements of ‘inclusive governance’ are still possible, as long as it emphasizes working with communities, not working with the political actors in Bujumbura (Source 6, 20-4-2016; Source 12, 18-5-2016). The space in terms of

what you can or cannot do with the national government has declined significantly. Discussions came together with a lot of friction between MoFa and their fund receivers, about how to support the Burundian government. Much of the commitments that have been made are not valid anymore (Source, 3-5-2016).

“First there was enough space for the Burundian government to play an important role in the program, for them it is also a financial opportunity. As the crisis continues, the relationship between the donors and the Burundian government worsened. The Dutch government wanted less and less that we [CARE] actively supporting the government. Of course, the Burundian government did not like the distance between them and the incoming money in which they thought to play an important role. And of course they attempt to get control over the money. This situation created a power game.” (Source 9, 3-5-2016)

The well-developed policy plans ended up in ‘the trash bin’, because the non-functioning government is adhering to these policies. The crisis, or the non-functioning government, has triggered a situation in which international donors and humanitarian agencies operate in Burundi without taking into account the governments’ agenda (Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016). As a consequence of the diminished collaboration and the government involvement in NGO workshops, the Burundian government – which is highly dependent on foreign aid – loses basically all money and therefore its capacity to strengthen the economy (Tesfay, 2014; Andrews, *ZOA* 2-5-2016). For instance,

*“There is a land reform office as part of the Burundian ministry, which has been 100% financed by international donors, that money has now been withdrawn and is no longer available. This means that the office continues to function but is barely functional because it has no budget. That risks further destabilizing the government and the army.” (Andrews, *ZOA* 2-5-2016)*

According to Ndikumana (*MIPAREC* 12-4-2016), the diminishing of international donor support to the national government is also affecting the local communities. For instance, international donors give less support to the health sector in order to prevent funding from going to the government (Ibid.). This is emphasized by Gerhardt (*Cordaid* 24-4-2016), who explains that Cordaid started in Burundi as an emergency organization and has shifted towards structural interventions. Cordaid started to invest in capacity building of governmental hospitals and schools. However, due to the current crisis and the changing mandate of the MoFa, money is not going to these hospitals and schools anymore (Ibid.). Consequently, many NGOs have found themselves in an impossible situation, a situation which makes it difficult to spend money properly. Goodhand (2006), strikes that NGOs are highly dependent on official funding, which often makes them unable to lobby for changes in donor policies and practices.

During the civil war in 1993, the Burundian people have been given large amounts of material support such as food and non-food items. While the situation was improving, humanitarian intervention changed from emergency relief towards sustainable development, as mentioned in previous chapters. This was something to which the people had to get used to, and in the current crisis, again, people are expecting material support (Source 4, 18-4-2016). Partly, because donor funding has to go directly to the communities now, more organizations are operating in emergency response mode, such as distributing food. According to Gerhardt (*Cordaid* 24-4-2016) this is absolutely not necessary, as Burundi is able to be self-producing. People might lose incentives to be self-consuming, and instead hold out one's hand. For instance, people are aware that they can get food, drinks, and education in neighboring refugee camps or elsewhere; for them this is a temporary (short) solution, although it might cause problems on the long run (Ibid.).

“This is very dramatic, because the farmers leave behind a region where they can produce coffee, tea, pineapples or bananas, and everything the land has to offer. Yet, if the market was well organized, this could have brought them as much profit as in Rwanda. We are at a point in which it is unclear whether we should go for emergency relief or sustainable development.”
(Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016)

Sustainable development is slowly disappearing in Burundi, because the country is increasingly finding itself in an emergency situation (Source 10, 9-5-2016; Ndayiragije, *CARE* 5-5-2016). Moreover, the current crisis has led the international donors to develop a new mandate which implies the diminishment of any cooperation with and of direct investments through the national government of Burundi. Hence, restrictions on humanitarian space are coming from the international community. Therefore, many structural initiatives have come to a hold or have become non-active. Even most respondents agreed that they also would not want to deal directly with the national government, as they also believe that any project with the national government will not be sustainable. Thereby the government is also responsible for the security and the current political crisis (Source 6, 20-4-2016; Gerhardt, *Cordaid* 24-4-2016; Source 12, 18-5-2016). Overall, the new restrictions from the donors bring a certain dilemma to many NGOs and probably also to CARE. Investing money through different channels other than the government might give incentives to work on emergency relief; emergency relief in its turn might give incentives for the communities to open one's hands. Hence, this way of thinking has definitely an effect on sustainable development work that has been done. Thereby, INGOs in Burundi, and CARE in particular, have to maneuver within their humanitarian space which is increasingly restricted by the Burundian government as well as the international donors. Eventually, it is the communities, 'the normal Burundians', who feel the consequences of everything that is decided at the higher levels; the crisis is not only affecting the communities, but it also reaches the international donors.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the following research question has been answered: *How does the changing context in Burundi changes the way CARE relates to other non-recipient stakeholders with whom it is important to have relationships, such as local partners, the government, and the donor?* Not unexpected, the changing socio-political context does indeed change the way in which CARE relates to stakeholders such as the local partners, the national government and the donors. Despite the findings that all relationships are important to a certain extent in terms of access and humanitarian space, it seems that some relationships are sometimes beyond the ‘control’ or ‘influence’ of CARE, certainly in the case of a changing socio-political context. Moreover, CARE has to deal with two major stakeholders (the government and the international donors) in order to uphold its conflict sensitive approach. Thereby this chapter has shown that the current crisis has had a positive effect on the relationship between CARE and its local partners, hence it should not be forgotten that emphasizing strengths is sometimes just as important as emphasizing constraints.

Burundi is a small country in which trustworthy NGOs with sufficient capacity are ‘scarce’ so to speak. However, the partners that work together with CARE are experienced in working in Burundi. One of them, MIPAREC, was founded during the civil war from 1993 and knows therefore how to deal with situations of conflict. As is evidence from its survival it has built enough capacity to be sustainable. The current crisis in Burundi has brought CARE closer together with its partners. Together they developed mechanisms in order to survive the current crisis and in order to prevent the government from bringing negative measurements upon them. Care has taken over certain responsibilities, such as advocacy, that are better dealt with by INGOs in times of crisis. But as was evident from the previous chapter, the relationship with local authorities has become significant important for CARE to meet the needs of the beneficiaries. These relationships are maintained by the local partners; the local partners are the gatekeepers and key in mainstreaming a conflict-sensitive approach at the local level.

Furthermore, the relationship between CARE and the national government has run cold ever since the crisis. The Burundian government has become more suspicious towards external interventions, consequently it is restricting the humanitarian space. The government is increasingly trying to control everything that is coming into the country and has switched from development mode towards a crisis management mode. The bureaucratization of the process to gain access and to create humanitarian space is part of an increasing centralization of the government. Moreover, the government is trying to control the incoming money, which is of great concern to most INGOs. Generally, the government, even though out of reach for CARE in the current crisis, is increasingly restricting humanitarian space in order to control anything that is coming inside Burundi. Yet, the process of gaining access has become slower, but not impossible; the government – despite all its suspicions – is still highly dependent on aid.

Additionally, the relationship between CARE and the donor has changed in terms of new restrictions and a different mandate that has been imposed by the donor itself. The donor does not in any case want its funds going through the government, nor does it want CARE and other INGOs to cooperate with the government. In practice it concerns the line ministries, such as the political parties and the national government. As a consequence, humanitarian agencies and their donors follow solely their own agendas and are not taking into account the agenda of the Burundian government. The Burundian government, which is highly dependent on aid, loses its capacity to sustain for instance hospitals. Most hospitals have been externally funded by particular NGOs, which is not possible anymore. Indirectly this affects the welfare and economy of the communities, hence it harms community-development programs.

Another example is the sustainability of community members that are engaged in income generating activities such as those of CARE, which has become questionable in the poor economy (both as a result from the a failing government as well as the sanctions form the international community). Moreover, CARE and other INGOs find themselves in a new dilemma. The restricted space coming from the donor changes the thoughts whether the focus should be on emergency relief or not and whether this will be at cost of previous development outcomes. Thus far, it is recognized that emergency relief might give incentives for communities to hold one's hand.

Chapter VII Concluding picture

This explorative research, mostly based on anecdotal evidence, aimed to contribute to development practices that are increasingly confronted by complex and turbulent contexts and the discussions surrounding humanitarian practices. It also contributes to a better ‘in-depth’ understanding of the sometimes obvious but underexposed dynamics between humanitarian practices and conflict contexts, in particular in the case when conflicts were not foreseen. This chapter provides an answer to the main research question that has been explored throughout this thesis: *To what extent does the changing socio-political context in Burundi – a context from ‘relative peace’ to a ‘state of civil war’ – affect the community-based peacebuilding program of CARE, and what mechanisms behind the dynamics of peace and conflict can be identified?*

Burundi is a country well known for its long history of violent conflicts. Burundi’s colonial era has transformed the political culture and destroyed the national consensus. Since the Belgians had implemented policies which favoured the Tutsi population over the Hutu population, Hutus were increasingly marginalized; and after Burundi became independent from the Belgian rulers in 1964, there was a 40-year Tutsi-based military rule. The same decades are characterized by various episodes of ethnic violence, in which ethnic cleansing was not uncommon and mostly directed to the Hutus. Not until 2005, the peace negotiations (Arusha Peace Accords) led by Nelson Mandela, started to work out. In the same year, CNDD-FDD under Pierre Nkurunziza, managed to win the elections. From that moment on, the situation started to change positively in Burundi, despite some sporadic violent incidents. Pierre Nkurunziza started his second term in office in 2010. The years since then are often framed as a time of ‘relative peace’, and it is in this time that CARE has initiated its community-based peacebuilding program, in 2012 to be precisely. Despite the relative peace, the people of Burundi have not yet forgotten the horrors of the conflict, and in particular the most recent civil war of 1993. Yet, now again Burundi has gone into the wrong direction and CARE has found its program in the middle of an adverse transition; in which CARE must find ways to sustain and to uphold a conflict-sensitive and participative program.

After President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would compete for an, unconstitutional, third term in office in 2015, the socio-political context started to change. The opposition organized protests, mostly in the streets of Bujumbura, to which the government responded violently. Burundi has turned itself more into an authoritarian state and with help from the youth wing, the *Imbonerakure*, the government has effectively silenced the opposition. Any space in terms of talking about politics has been restricted to a level of ‘zero tolerance’. Civil society is basically non-existent and the media is controlled by the government. Most of the violent incidents take place in Bujumbura, rather than other parts of Burundi where it is still relatively peaceful. The conflict now seems to be solely a political problem, unlike previous conflicts, in which ethnicity played a significant role. Both Hutus and Tutsis are victims of the system. And even though they do not have problems with each other, the

government plays increasingly the ethnic card. Thereby, the government is successful in controlling the opposition, as there is hardly any left. Fear has once again managed to control the minds of the Burundians; fear about what the future will bring and whether the conflict will turn into an ethnic one. The socio-political context has therefore changed significantly compared to the year 2012. In light of this study, this changing context has given better insights in the effects on peacebuilding practices and the mechanisms behind the dynamics of peace and conflict.

One issue coming from the changing socio-political context, that should not be taken lightly, is fear; fear is a significant factor in disrupting participation processes. Ironically, it is also the participation process that attempts to combat fear in societies. Yet, fear has led to mistrust between the communities and the government administration. It has reduced the space for dialogue among them or in the presence of each other. Fear breaks the social cohesion that has been achieved – particularly in Bujumbura; social cohesion is an important element of the Peace Under Construction program and the participation model. The peace clubs, as part of the PUC program, are focusing mostly on track one and two, which means that for instance key police actors are invited to peace club gatherings. But it is also the police which the people fear, hence effective participation and empowerment has become questionable; people are afraid to raise their voice. Not to mention, a large group of people are not participating anymore.

Another issue that can be considered as an obstacle, is the replacement of the local authorities by people from the ruling party (CNDD-FDD). It is well known that a relationship with local authorities is essential in effective bottom-up peacebuilding approaches. Yet, this time the relationships had to be build up from zero and became even more important. Unlike the previous authorities, the new officials are much more concerned and suspicious about humanitarian practices and might show obstructive behaviour. Efforts must be done to build up trustworthy relationships. More time must be spend in involving the new authorities in the program to uphold humanitarian space and to show the authorities the benefits of the program. Hence, instead of keeping distance from the local ruling party authorities, it has become significantly important to involve them in the programs; in other words, building up social contracts with those key local actors is necessary for maintaining humanitarian space at the local level. Thereby, it is certainly true in the case of Burundi that upholding the principle of neutrality is essential in order to be allowed by the Burundian government. Unlike 2012, when NGOs could be more critical and were more occupied with politically sensitive activities; those who remained politically sensitive after the elections have been forced stop its activities.

In addition, focusing on track one and two actors in peacebuilding practices is considered to be necessary for sustainable change. However, in the PUC program the changing socio-political context has made this hardly possible. Advocacy and lobbying to the level of the political parties and beyond (national government) are not possible anymore, neither for the communities nor for CARE. But it is precisely this line, track two, and also track one, that are crucial for transforming peace clubs into

formal institutions at the local level. Even though they might be considered legit at the local level. The social contract with actors in track two, for instance, are necessary to safeguard the achievements which are already observable at the local level. While these actors may be responsible for manipulating and causing regression of peace achievements in the first place. The authoritarian regime has made inclusive governance and processes of democratization impossible, and therefore undermines the participation and bottom-up approaches initiated by CARE. Sustainability is at risk with the current crisis and the oppressive authoritarian regime.

The crisis brought CARE closer together with its local partners. This relationship has become more important in the current crisis, as it is the local partners that need to maintain the relationships with local authorities and to maintain a conflict-sensitive approach. The local partners as the gatekeepers are an intermediate between CARE and the direct beneficiaries; through the local partners CARE can sustain its bottom-up approach, even in times of crisis. It is exactly the local partners that have experience and the 'know-how' elements in times of conflict in Burundi. Hence, the local partners have always been, and are now even more, key in maintaining local relationships and in mainstreaming a conflict-sensitive approach.

The Burundian (national) government is increasingly restricting humanitarian space in order to control everything coming to Burundi. Gaining access takes more time and program activities are delayed more often, yet the government has not made it impossible. Despite its suspicions towards external interventions, it is still highly dependent on aid. In addition, it has changed its focus towards crisis management instead of its development plans; this has significant implications for the economy. The latter, in its turn, has impact on the economic opportunities of the Burundian people, and indirectly on the activities of the PUC program. The PUC program contains activities that aim to economically empower women and youth. Both these activities and what has been achieved with these activities have become questionable in the current crisis.

Due to the changing socio-political context, the relationship with CARE and the donor has changed in terms of new restrictions and a different mandate imposed by the donor itself. The donor does not want, in any case, that funds go through the Burundian government, nor do they want CARE to cooperate with the national government. Instead of taking the agenda of the Burundian government into account, INGOs now focus more on their own and the donor's agenda. This has indirect implications on the service delivery by the Burundian government, hence on the communities. This does not imply that the donor's decision is inherently bad; on the contrary, it solely highlights that INGOs and in particular CARE find themselves in a dilemma and difficult situations. Their space is more restricted and it has become more difficult to spend funds. Thereby, the change towards emergency relief might give incentives to the communities to hold one's hand, and to give up what they already have achieved from the PUC program. Even though track two (and one) are necessary elements in sustaining community-based peacebuilding programs, it is made impossible by the donor and to a lesser extent by the government.

Overall, in the current crisis the authoritarian ‘top-down’ and ‘centralized’ government in Burundi reflect an outcome that is in stark contrast with the bottom-up development assumptions. The PUC activities did not stop to function; instead, peace clubs have managed to achieve local legitimacy and softened the effects and the spreading of the violent conflict in Bujumbura. Peace clubs also have taken over responsibilities from local authorities, the latter of which otherwise did not have the capacity to provide communities of any such services. Yet, the underlying components of the participation model are ‘partly’ undermined in the current crisis. The current crisis puts pressure on sustainability of the PUC activities. Communities or peace clubs for that matter are less empowered and encounter higher risks and participation has become less obvious. It is the ‘up’ of the bottom-up approach that has become difficult or even impossible. Restrictions in humanitarian space come both from the Burundian government as well as from the donors. The ‘up’ also referred to as track one and two are necessary elements for sustainable development. CARE’s close relationships with local authorities and its neutral mandate gives them the opportunity to continue its activities and to fill the needs of communities wherever there is little space for it in the current crisis.

Recommendations & Further research

This research has shown that the changing socio-political context comes along with different obstacles, challenges and difficulties for CARE and NGOs in general that are operating in Burundi. Although most of these consequences cannot be influenced by NGOs, that does not mean NGOs need to be helpless in turbulent contexts. NGOs do not just have to accept that their programs have been ‘affected’ or that some of the work has been ‘undone’. As has been mentioned in Chapter IV, mainstreaming a conflict sensitive approach means trying to get the best positive outcome as possible in the contemporary situation. This also means improving any future prospect and maintain as much as possible of the work that has been done; in other words trying to sustain the results as much is possible in the changing socio-political context.

Apart from the results of this research, I would like to make some personal recommendations that need to be taken into account with future programs in Burundi. In my opinion this might lead to a better mainstreaming of a conflict sensitive approach, whereby the results of the community-based peacebuilding approach are best kept. Even though the problem seems not to be that there are not enough lessons learned, but rather that NGOs are not acting upon them. The recommendations that will follow are not a solution to how to deal with changing contexts, yet it might trigger an attempt to move forwards and act upon the lessons learned.

The PUC program has shown the importance of relationships with local authorities in a turbulent context. Due to the changing socio-political context these relationships have become even more important in terms of access and humanitarian space. Yet, the changing context also made it impossible to reach the national government, while this link is essential for community-based programs to be sustainable in the long-run. I therefore recommend to support the Community Peace Structures, such as the peace clubs, to reach the top political leaders and state institutions to safeguard the achievements already observable at the local level. Reaching the national government is currently not a simple task and probably even impossible for the Community Structures as well as for CARE. Nevertheless, in most aspects the work of the peace clubs is proceeding at the local level despite the changing context. Creating local legitimacy for the Community Structures at the local authorities and community members is therefore an important task. If the Community Structures are well prepared and their local (informal) legitimacy has increased, I believe it must be less of a challenge to reach the national government as soon as the situation permits.

Second, what struck me was the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness and sustainability of peace clubs or the activities of the PUC program in general for that matter. ‘What is the relevance of the peace clubs in the current crisis’, was often a question that flashed through my mind. After the context changed, informants often mentioned the ‘dampening’ effect by the peace clubs on the conflict outside of Bujumbura. However, the peace clubs have never been compared with communities outside of Bujumbura without any sort of Community Structure or peace clubs. I would therefore want to

recommend to build a new monitoring and evaluation mechanism which compares target communities with other communities; only then CARE and other NGOs can really learn and gain knowledge about the real effectiveness of peace clubs in times of conflict.

Striking was that certain activities were not scrutinized in the current crisis. In Burundi the private sector is not very well developed and the national economy performs less than before. This leads to a challenge for youth and women to engage in income generating activities. For instance, the PUC program solely measured the people that participated the income generating activities instead of measuring the real impact on their lives because of their participation. In a crisis like this we should question ourselves whether economic activities make sense in a repressive economy, or do we need to focus on structural changes? Not to say that this is an easy task, yet it is something that should be taken into account when developing economic activities in times of relative peace. Thereby, activities that focus on participation and social cohesion should be questioned in times of crisis as well. Strikingly, meetings have been organized in which different actors participated such as the police, despite the fear from the communities for the police. One could question to what extent the communities feel empowered to express their needs in meetings in which for instance the police is also participating, hence to what extent are communities really empowered in a way NGOs want to achieve.

Of course community-based peacebuilding approaches such as PUC hope to achieve change. It takes time to achieve change and change comes along with ups and downs. Normally programs such as PUC take no longer than five years; this is also referred to the donor-cycle. Often this cycle is considered too short for long-term sustainable change and based on themes deriving from their own development agenda. CARE, and NGOs in general – alone or together –, should develop a strategy to advocate towards the donor so they will open their eyes. Advocacy for an extension of the donor-cycle if needed and a need-based funding instead of theme-based funding. The high dependency of NGOs on the Dutch government (in the case of PUC the donor) gives the donor a strong position to follow its own interests.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize a potential future research topic. In Burundi, in which case the context has changed significantly, donors as well as NGOs attempt to change their approach from structural development towards emergency relief. In this research an example was given about the communities fleeing to refugee camps hoping to receive education, food and medicines, despite their ability to be self-sustainable. The work that has been done by any community-based approach could be harmed by the response from the same communities towards emergency relief programs elsewhere. Yet, little is known about how both approaches might influence each other either positive or negative in times of conflict. Overall, and once again, it takes time to achieve change; the effect of the changing context is totally unexpected or new, sometimes it is even obvious. NGOs need to move forward as programs keep running and NGOs need to learn from their lessons learnt and start acting upon what they and the academic world already know. It is important to note once more: each and every context is different.

Reflections on the research

In this section I will reflect upon the research and highlight both its strengths and its limitations. Starting with its strengths. Despite the focus of this thesis on CARE and its practices in Burundi, several other NGOs have been interviewed. Focusing on only one NGO gives an in-depth understanding of its practices, however. Results are more reliable if they are compared with practices from other NGOs. The respondents therefore come from various NGOs working in the same branch of peacebuilding. During my internship – for my daily work – I was already in close contact with most of the respondents of this research; this gave me the opportunity to build trust and to receive quick responses on any research-related questions. CARE also has an enormous network among other NGOs, this has made it easier for me to receive responses from other NGOs and to get in contact with the right respondent. Moreover, this thesis adds a new case study – that of Burundi – to the academic literature. At the start of this research it was striking to see the limited number of ‘recent’ case studies about Burundi regarding peacebuilding. Most of the existing literature either focused on the other countries of the Great Lakes Region such as Congo and Rwanda. This thesis might therefore also be seen as a wake-up for the international research community.

Unfortunately, there are always limitations to a study. The first and maybe largest limitation is that I could not go into the field, due to the security situation in Burundi. Although this limitation has partially been solved, because I could meet and talk to employees from CARE’s partner organizations in Burundi during an 8-day international conference in The Hague. Another limitation is that I did not do any interviews with local people from the Burundian communities, local authorities and donor representatives. The latter three categories could have given an interesting perspective on the findings of this research. In particular the donor representatives might have softened the critical note towards their practices as a consequence of the changing context in Burundi. Notably, this thesis solely includes NGO perspectives.

Furthermore, I noticed that respondents sometimes felt restrained by the language barrier and therefore could not give a clear and extensive answer to my questions; or the questions were interpreted wrongly and therefore a different answer was given. After this experience I gave the following respondents the interview questions far in advance, so they could prepare and improve the quality of their answers. The respondents were also cautious in answering the questions in the beginning of each interview; because of the security situation in Burundi, any political sensitive answer might bring the respondent in danger.

In addition, the analysis of this research is for the most part based on anecdotal evidence, which means that the evidence is not verified by myself. This limitation is covered mostly with triangulation of different sources, such as the use of academic literature, news articles and observation. Nevertheless, once again, a field visit could have add more value to the findings of this research.

Even though Burundi is a small country, it knows different realities. Whenever people speak of a conflict in Burundi, this does not mean that the conflict is spread all over the country and in each and every province. On the contrary, the current crisis seem to be limited to Bujumbura with some exceptions. The future of Burundi is difficult to predict and people simply do not know what will happen in the long-run. The conflict might as well spread throughout the rest of the country or it might turn into an ethnic conflict. That Burundi knows different realities made it difficult to generalize the findings for the whole program of Peace Under Construction of CARE. What might be true in one target region of the program might not be true in another one.

In this thesis the focus was on peacebuilding and the case of Burundi has shown that the applicability of theoretical perspectives on peacebuilding depends a lot on the context of conflict. It is not just a matter of 'applying' or not, it is matter of different gradation to what extent theoretical perspectives can be applied to the context. It is therefore of great important for NGOs to be aware of the challenges, obstacles and difficulties that come along with changing contexts from 'relative peace' towards 'a state of conflict'. The broad picture has become clear, it is now time to delve into smaller (cross) case studies to improve the quality and relevance of community-based peacebuilding programs.

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List of interviews

participants who gave consent to be (partly) identified

Andrews, Geoff. (2016). Former Country Director of an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 10am Wednesday 4 May 2016, The Hague.

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Van Leeuwen, Mathijs. (2016). Assistant Professor, *Radboud University Nijmegen*. Face-to-Face interview, 3pm Monday 25 April 2016, Nijmegen (translated from Dutch).

List of interview participants who require to stay anonymous

Source 1. (2016). Regional Program Coordinator for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 17pm Wednesday 13 April 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 2. (2016). Senior Program Manager for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 09am Friday 15 April 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 3. (2016). Project Manager for a LINGO. Personal interview (recorder), 11am Friday 15 April 2016, The Hague.

Source 4. (2016). Team Leader for Peace & Governance for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 15pm Monday 18 April 2016, The Hague.

Source 5. (2016). Safety and Security Officer for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 10am Tuesday 19 April 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 6. (2016). Program Director for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 2pm Monday 11 April 2016 and 10am Wednesday 20 April 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 7. (2016). Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Written interview, received on 5pm Friday 22 April 2016, The Hague.

Source 8. (2016). Security Focal Person of Bujumbura for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 10am Tuesday 26 April 2016, The Hague.

Source 9. (2016). Former Program Director for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Face-to-Face interview, 11am Tuesday 3 May 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 10. (2016). Former Program Director for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 11am Monday 9 May 2016, The Hague (translated from Dutch).

Source 11. (2016). Regional Emergency Coordinator East, Central and Southern Africa for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Personal interview (recorded), 10am Tuesday 10 May 2016, Grave.

Source 12. (2016). Program Manager for an INGO working into Burundi through partnerships. Face-to-Face interview, 3pm Wednesday 18 May 2016, The Hague.

Appendix I

Interview questions guide

Please note that this questionnaire was the foundation for all the interviews, but over time questions have been slightly changed to match the specific respondent and to improve the quality of the question.

A. Preliminary Introduction

Description of the Research

Background on the Researcher

Privacy/Confidentiality Policy

B. Personal Details

Could you first tell me something about yourself? How are you involved in Burundi?

C. Socio-political Context

Describe your view on the current political context, and what has changed since...?

How would you describe Burundi politically today?

What are your thoughts on the following:

Military/regime

People's attitudes towards the military/regime

Opposition/local dissidents

Prospects of change (positive/negative)

Ethnic division within the country

Local conflicts vs regional conflicts, is there an urban rural difference

People's perception of their freedoms & restrictions?

Impact on daily lives of people?

Economic situation

D. Project related

Can you describe the program that has been initiated in Burundi in which you are involved?

Why and when has the program been initiated?

What were the principle aims? Or assumptions?

How well did you achieve these aims in the short and long term? Why do you think community development is important in terms of peace building?

How does the organization manage the project in Burundi?

What has changed within the program over the last few years due to the changing context (in order to 'do no harm')? How do you ensure to 'do no harm principle' when you are building capacity?

Was there any sense in which you felt the project was undermined, or good work was undone by something or someone during the project?

What were the principle issues, difficulties, problems encountered during the project?

Why do you choose to work in certain areas and exclude other? Are all project sides affected by the changing context, which one, and why?

Which procedure did you follow to adapt the program?

What difficulties do you expect when the project ends in terms of sustainability? Do you think sustainable change can be achieved by a community approach alone or must there be policy changes?

E. Partnership

With which partners do you work together? How did you determine or identify their capacity to fulfil the obligations of the project in the time of the changing contexts?

Why do you work through partners?

Can you describe the obstacles they encountered the last years? And did it change the relationship you have with them or what makes the relationship difficult with them?

Did the changing context changed the way they are empowered? Do you think they have enough autonomy or is most of it still carried by the organization?

F. Community

If widely-held principles things like community participation (in identifying projects, decision making and implementation), empowerment, sustainability, equity and overcoming gender bias then:

To what extent did this project implement these principles?

How appropriate did you find these principles in working in Burundi?

In your experience what have been the obstacles to effective community development work?; how have these issues best dealt with?

How do people perceive participatory development work?

How do you build trust in the communities?

How do you build relationships with local community leaders, what are the obstacles since the events?

G. Organization

How do you experience the cooperation with members of your own organization?

Describe briefly the history of issues faced by your organization in deciding how to engage in Burundi during the changing context?

Can you tell me more about the advocacy strategy? Does the organization take over the role of advocacy? Why is that so? Are they effective or counter-productive?

Does your organization exclude people based on their political affiliation?

H. Key-stakeholders

Describe briefly the history of issues face by the donors in deciding the course of the project during the changing context?

Have you ever felt the project was constraint by any decision made by the donor?

Did the donor prevent funds from going to government officials?

What challenges did the changing context bring in the relationship or agreements with the government or local authorities regarding the project? How well did the relationship work?

How do you perceive government officials? And how does the government monitor you in order to accept your presence?

In general did the project strengthen or strain relationships between the organization, partnership and government?

Who are the most important key government actors / authorities with whom you have to cooperate?

In your communication with local authorities, do you prevent the use of words such as empowerment, because they might be related to democratization and therefore to equal power?

I. Referrals

Can you provide me with a contact that is doing community development work in Burundi? (such as INGOs, NGOs, governments, donors etc.)

J. Confidentiality

Do I have approval to publish your name, or do you require to stay anonymous?

Do I have approval to publish your institution / organization details?

Appendix II

Table 2: Important events in history of time in Burundi

Year	Events
1890-1916	First German colonial administration.
1916-1962	Second Belgian colonial administration.
1961	Assassination Louis Rwagasore (Uprona-Hutu) who won pre-independence elections and whom was a unifying factor.
1965	Rwagasore's successor Pierre Ngendandumwe (Hutu) got assassinated. After this incident, a Hutu won again the elections. This time the king ignored the outcome and chose a Tutsi as Prime Minister instead.
1965	In a coup d'état, committed by the Hutus in revenge for last elections, the king had to flee the country. The Tutsi-based army responded to the coup by killing approximately 5000 Hutus (Ndikumana, 2005, p. 14).
1966-1976	End monarchy. Michel Micombero (Tutsi) becomes the first military President.
1976-1987	Second military President Jean-Naptiste Bagaza (Tutsi).
1987- 1993/1996- 2000	Third military President Pierre Buyoya (Tutsi).
1972	Failed coup attempt by the Hutus. Massive response by the military, killing approximately 200,000 (mostly Hutus) (Ndikumana, 2005, p. 14).
1988	Hutu rebel insurgency with again military revenge. Approximately 15,000 (Hutus and Tutsis) got killed. Due to global changes, the first seeds of democracy have been planted.
1991	Small Hutu rebel insurgency. 1-3,000 (Hutu) got killed by the military (Ndikumana, 2005, p. 14).
1993	Melchior Ndadaye (Hutu) wins elections, however he got killed in a failed coup attempt. This triggered the upcoming civil war. More than 300,000 (majority Hutus) got killed (Ndikumana, 2005, p. 14).
Mid-1990's	Uprising of Hutu military wings such as FDD and FNL.
1996	Start peace talks.
1999	Success peace talks is Nelson Mandela.
2000	Signing Arusha Peace Accords by G10 and G7.
2003	President Buyoya steps down, this paves the way for CNDD-FDD to join the peace talks.
2005	CNDD-FDD with Pierre Nkurunziza wins the elections.
2006-2008	FNL joins the peace talks with CNDD-FDD, a ceasefire is formally signed in 2008.
2010	CNDD-FDD win elections. Elections have been manipulated. Since 2005 there is sporadic violence in Burundi, however the situation has much/and is improving.

Source: own work