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Engineering Peace and Development

A critical analysis of social capital, 'social engineering', and NGO-interventions. Case study Burundi

Preface

I started this thesis six years ago, and many people have provided me with support and encouragement along the way. At last, it is time to thank them all.

In Belgium, my two supervisors, Johan Braeckman and Koen Vlassenroot, definitely deserve a special mention. Johan, it was a real pleasure and privilege to be your assistant during the last six years. Above all, you have been my mentor, always available when needed. Koen, many thanks for your passionate efforts to push me ahead. I am thankful for your intellectual support, your encouragements, and for sharing your experience and knowledge with me.

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In Burundi, first of all, there are the people of the picture on the cover. They represent the numerous Burundian families which were so kind to suspend their daily routines, to come and answer all my questions. I owe grateful thanks to them, for their generosity, their hospitality and openness. Without these people this thesis would not have been possible. I hope they finally find enduring peace, so that they can enjoy again what is precious to them: a normal family life in harmony with their neighbours and other community members on their *collines*.

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List of Abbreviations

AFP	Agence France-Presse
BINUB	Bureau Intégré de Nations Unies au Burundi
CBD	Community-Based Development
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CDD	Community-Driven-Development
CDR	Community-Driven-Reconstruction
CDS	Centre de santé
Cenap	Centre d'Alerte et de Prévention des Conflits
CFW	Cash-For-Work
CIBA	Consortium Initiative Burara
CLC	Cumba Livelihood Consortium
CNDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CNS	Centre de Nutrition Supplémentaire
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBU	Franc Burundais
FDD	Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie
FFW	Food-For-Work
FNL	Front National de Libération
Frodebu	Front des Démocrats du Burundi
Frolina	Front pour la Liberation Nationale
G10	Group of 10 parties representing mainly the Tutsi interests during the Arusha peace talks
G7	Group of 7 parties representing mainly the Hutu interests during the Arusha peace talks
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index

HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INADES	Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social
IR	Intermediary Results
ISABU	Institut des sciences agronomiques du Burundi
JNR	Jeunesses Nationalistes Rwagasore
JRR	Jeunesse Révolutionnaires Rwagasore
LITA	Livelihoods Tangara
LSIC	Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture (Burundi)
NEPAD	The New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSI	The North South Institute
OAG	Observatoire de l'Action Gouvernementale
OAP	Organisation Appui à l'autopromotion
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCIBU	Office du Café du Burundi
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONUB	Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi
Palipehutu	Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu
Parena	Parti pour le Redressement National
Paribu	Parti pour le Renouveau Intégral du Burundi
PCR	Post-Conflict Reconstruction
PDC	Parti Démocrate Chrétien
PIPs	Policies, Institutions, and Processes
PRASAB	Agricultural Rehabilitation and Support Project
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RESO	Rassemblement, Echanges et Solutions entre Organisations Non Gouvernementales
RoB	Republic of Burundi
RPB	Rassemblement pour le Peuple du Burundi
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SCEDH	Renforcement de la Société Civile et Education aux Droits Humains
SNR	Service National de Renseignement
SOJEDEM	Solidarité de la Jeunesse Pour la Défense des Minorités
UNDP	United Nations Development Department

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UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
Uprona party	Parti de l'Union et du Progrès National
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WDR	World Development Report
WFP	World Food Programme

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Introduction

Social capital – What's in a name?

In recent years, few concepts have so powerfully appealed to the imagination of researchers and policy makers as that of social capital. It has been labelled a *deus ex machina* (Schuurman, 2003) for all kinds of societal problems, a 'missing link' (Grootaert, 1998) to development and democracy, even a 'catalyst for peace' (Cox, 2009). In other words, social capital has become something of a panacea for maladies affecting societies all over the world (Portes, 1998). Social capital's conquest of the world has been marked by the work of one man: Robert Putnam. In his famous study on Italy, *Making Democracy Work* (Putnam, 1993: 167), he defined social capital as the 'features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions', and was the first to release the appealing argument that social capital was indeed the 'missing link' to achieve economic prosperity, democratic governance and 'healthy' societies.

   However, social capital has also become one of the most contested concepts within the social sciences. Since Putnam's first use of the social capital concept, the debate has substantially evolved. His original concept and thesis have been criticized as historically inaccurate (Tarrow, 1996), normative (Edwards & Foley, 1998), tautological (Portes, 1998), mixing up sources and causes (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), confusing attributes of individuals and collectivities (communities/states) (Portes, 2000), blind to the 'down side' of social capital (Portes & Landolt, 1996), negating the role of the state (Evans 1996), obscuring the inequality of social capital (e.g. Cleaver, 2005; Edwards & Foley, 1997), paying lip service to neo-liberal Third Way policies and the Post-Washington consensus (Fine, 2001; Harris, 2001) and so on. Yet, the common sense idea holds firm – 'social relations do matter' – and the scientific need to integrate human social interaction into our understanding of economic and political development issues remains valid,

necessary and clear from evidence spanning social and natural sciences (Woolcock & Radin, 2008).

Notwithstanding its contested nature, social capital has become an influential concept within development and poverty reduction policy. In these policy circles it is Putnam's early normative notion of social capital which still monopolizes much of the debate. In particular the World Bank further developed Putnam's concept, and became one of its major institutional proponents. For some within the World Bank, the so called 'tacticians' (Edwards 2006), social capital was a blessing, a way to convince hardline economists to integrate more properly social analysis within the dominant economic thought of the World Bank (see Bebbington *et al.*, 2006). Promoted by the World Bank, social capital soon became mainstreamed within other development agencies such as DFID, which integrated the concept in their sustainable livelihoods approach (Francis 2002, Toit *et al.*, 2005). One part of the explanation for its popularity within policy circles has been that Putnam's social capital concept merged well with the communitarian and neo-liberal policies of that time: it gave academic back-up for Third Way policies and the Post-Washington consensus, underscoring the view of the free market and a minimal state (Fine, 2001; Harris, 2001). Another reason is the fact that Putnam's concept makes 'the social' measurable, which allows to integrate it into "conventional economists' models in terms that allow generalization, prediction, and policy relevance and that follow economics reasoning." (Mosse, 2008: 96). For policy makers, Putnam's equation of social capital with civic organizations not only provides an easy solution − reinforcing civil society − but also an easy way to measure the progress and success of their policies, predicated simply on 'how many new associations were built or strengthened'? As Edwards (2006: 102) observes well with regard to the World Bank: 'Donor agencies such as the World Bank have a natural tendency to focus on the short term and the easily measurable, and therefore concentrate on the physical infrastructure of civil society and the mechanics of social capital ('forms, not norms').'

The rise of social capital sparked a polarized debate between proponents and opponents, either entirely embracing or rejecting the term (see Wilshusen, 2009: 389-392). On the one hand, in line with Putnam, what can be called the 'developmentalist' camp uncritically promotes the term as the accumulation of collective cooperative capacity positively affecting democratic governance and economic development. The central hypothesis is that 'developing' new stocks of social capital will enhance such positive outcomes. To a great extent, this approach is followed by economists, who are indeed convinced by the fact that social capital is the ideal concept to integrate 'the social' into their econometric equations and models. Thus, the quest for a statistical concept of social capital, leading to aggregate data sets which can empirically verify the different correlations between high 'stocks' of social capital and a diversity of positive outcomes stands central in this strand of research.

On the other hand, opponents have radically rejected the concept as a 'manifestation of neoliberal hegemony' (Wilshusen, 2009: 390). Their radical position is based on a critical reflection on the genealogy of the concept within the World Bank, and points to a 'paradigmatic battle' between academic disciplines. For scholars like Harris (2001) and Fine (2001), the rise of social capital is only one illustration of how social theory is colonialized by neoclassical economics. Social capital supporters present the concept as a way to convince economists to take more seriously social analysis. Opponents, however, argue that exactly the opposite happens: social capital integrates 'the social' within the 'econometric imaginary' (Toit *et al.*, 2007: 3), and turns several 'social' disciplines (sociology, political science, anthropology, …) into another brach of micro-economics (Edwards, 2006: 96). In their view, social capital is not about science but about a religion, functioning as an ideal compliment to neoliberal economic thinking and policy. As Fine (2003: 147), one of social capital's most fierce antagonists, comments the methaphor of social capital as the 'social glue' which makes societies healthy:

> […] it is more akin to a religion. It is the missing link; it is ephemeral but its effects can be seen everywhere; it has its sects, disciples, followers and high priests; it has its downside and a struggle between good and evil; there is the prospect of a promised land; harmony and trust must prevail over conflict, it is based more on belief than it is upon reason, although those beliefs evolve around, and are presented and interpreted in, increasingly complex scriptures; and so on.

In sum, these radical opponents *a priori* reject the social capital concept, and refuse to take position within the social capital debate, primarily because of its 'neoliberal undercurrents'.[1]

Gradually, however, a third strand of research has tried to adopt a middle course in this polarized debate, by referring back to an often forgotten originator of the social capital concept – Bourdieu – and presents a political economy view of social capital (e.g. Bebbington, 2002, 2007; Bebbington, Dharmawan, *et al.* 2006; Cleaver, 2005; DeFillipis, 2001; Toit, Skuse & Cousins, 2007; Edwards & Foley, 1997; Molyneux, 2002; Portes, 1998; Silvey & Elmhirst, 2003; Svendsen & Svendson, 2003; van Staveren, 2003; Vasan,

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[1] Their critique should be taken seriously, but their analysis has two main shortcomings: (i) their critique is correct for Putnam's original notion and the research which following his line of thinking (unfortunately indeed the majority), but it fails to appreciate the academic work which has been done since that time, in particular what I call the third strand of research; (ii) their critique is mainly a critique of neoliberal policies, often limited to one particular institution (the World Bank), and the particular use, some refer to 'lazy' (Bebbington, 2004: 344) or 'banalized' (Molyneux, 2002: 169) use, of the social capital concept within these powerful institutions. Although their genealogical analysis has interesting things to say about the politics of theory production and the supremacy of economic thought within such institutions, it remains limited to a particular Putnamian conceptualization of social capital, and does not necessarily present a substantial analytical critique of the concept.

2007; Wilhusen, 2009). These scholars take seriously the critique of economic imperialism within the social sciences, and reestablish social capital as a sociological concept. They criticize mainstream social capital thinking because of its tendency to undue 'the social' of its contingent character, in order to integrate it into 'essentialising' models with universal applicability. Therefore, in line with Bourdieu, they argue in favour of a relational and contextual view of social capital, and integrate the nature of power relations within their analysis, while underscoring the crucial fact that social capital cannot be understood separately from the particular contexts and practices with which it is entangled.

This thesis positions itself within this social capital debate. Whereas certain authors such as Fine (2001) and Harris (2001) *a priori* refuse to engage with the debate, this dissertation chooses to engage with the debate by looking at the potential values and shortcomings of the concept. Concretely, the thesis engages in the debate between the mainstream (Putnamian) and political economy (Bourdieuian) views on social capital, while applying this debate to the field of post-conflict reconstruction theory and practice.

Post-conflict reconstruction – in search of 'liberal peace'

Post-conflict reconstruction has become the 'core business' of the international humanitarian and development community (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005). Often it is bracketed together with concepts such as rehabilitation, state-building, peace-building, reconciliation or conflict management and resolution. It reflects the merging of the security, development and relief agenda's of the international community, in order to safeguard peace in places as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Afghanistan, or the country which will be the case study of this dissertation, Burundi (Duffield, 2001). All of these countries have been labelled 'new wars' (Richards, 2005) or 'complex political emergencies' (Goodhand & Hulme, 1999), and are characterized by the following features: they occur within and across boundaries, are political in nature, have multiple and interconnected causes, are protracted in duration, are expressions of existing social, political and cultural divisions in societies, and involve identity-based 'predatory' social formations (de Zeeuw, 2001: 11).[2]

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2 Concepts like war, conflict and peace can be interpreted in multiple ways and are not always easily distinguishable from one another. Conflict, for example is a common form of social interaction, both in war and peace time. However, in this thesis conflict refers to 'violent conflict' or 'armed conflict', i.e. when a destructive cycle of physical violence begins because a society can no longer peacefully manage and resolve struggles or conflicts between different interests (Goodhand & Hulme, 1999: 14). Furthermore, it is questionable if a clear

These 'post-conflict' countries all pose serious challenges: they have been called 'failed' or 'collapsed' states, where peace is fragile and premature and the economy damaged. These countries are in serious risk of slipping back into conflict. To avoid this relapse, key issues include: consolidating peace, rebuilding efficient states and kickstarting the economy. According to the World Bank (Kreimer *et al*., 1998) – one of the leading agencies in this field – post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) should combine two overall objectives: the transition to sustainable peace and supporting long-running social and economic development. Unlike post-natural disaster reconstruction, the emphasis is not on physical reconstruction but on rebuilding the institutions of society, politics and the economy at large. In sum, they seek nothing less than to resurrect the 'holy trinity' of peace, democracy and development.

The international community has been criticized for its handling of conflict-affected countries (Cramer & Goodhand, 2002; Duffield, 1994, 1999, 2001, 2002; Goodhand, 2006, Krause & Jütersonke, 2005; Milliken & Krause, 2002; Ottoway, 2002; Paris, 1997; Rathmell, 2005; Richards, 2005; Vlassenroot & Raeymakers, 2004). These critiques can be summarized in reference to three problematic assumptions on which post-conflict reconstruction policy is based. First, PCR rests on the assumption of developmentalism, part of the myth of modernity, i.e. that social progress is universal and linear, with all societies 'naturally' evolving from backwardness and barbarism to rationality, civilization and democracy. The power of this assumption reveals itself in the teleological postulate of the 'liberal peace' (Duffield, 2001) – a combination of free markets and liberal democratic states – as the ultimate objective of post-conflict reconstruction. Both are utopian 'fantasies' (Cramer & Goodhand, 2002), showing a lack of historical and contemporary understanding of state formation, yet they continue to inform PCR policy design.

Second, as a result of the previous factor, war or conflict is equated with anomaly, social regression or as a 'failure of modernity' (Duffield, 2002). Conflict is quarantined as a 'disease' (Richards, 2005), an aberration of normalcy. The result is a naive dichotomy between 'bad' war and 'good' peace, as clearly distinguishable time frames with incompatible logics and a linear progression thesis, as if life resumes its 'normal' pre-war course once war has stopped. This ignores the fact that war and conflict are best interpreted as 'social transformations' instead of 'social regression'. Keen notes that conflict is 'not the irrational breaking down of societies and economies: rather, "it is the

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distinction between war and other forms of collective violence can be drawn (Goodhand, 2006: 10). Therefore war and conflict are here used interchangeably. Also peace is not easily distinguished from war or conflict, yet most scholars agree on its double interpretation given by Galtung (1969): 'negative peace' (absence of physical violence) and 'positive peace' (the absence of structural violence or social injustice). From war to peace is best understood as a continuum. As Goodhand (2006: 11) states, the main observation should be that 'Whichever term is used, ultimately every conflict is unique […] and this highlights the need for detailed analysis and exploration of context'.

re-ordering of society in particular ways"' (Keen, cited in Goodhand & Hulme, 1999: 19). Therefore, the notion of 'post-conflict' is problematic and misleading, as there is no clear dividing line between war and peace, conflict and post-conflict: 'Simplistic dichotomies between peace and conflict must be avoided as "the habitual association of violence with disorder, and peace with the return of order, is an over-simplification"' (Stepputat, cited in Goodhand & Hulme, 1999: 15). In this respect, post-conflict reconstruction is mostly confronted with a timeframe that can be characterized as 'no peace, no war' (Richards 2005). Thus, although the term 'post-conflict' can be used, it should be understood 'as distinctive spaces that follow their own logic, not just as an "in-between" phase.' (Lambach, 2007: 5).

The third and final problematic assumption on which PCR policy relies, is that the only way out is a 'an enormous experiment in social engineering – an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalization' (Paris, 1997: 56). The international community assumes that a sophisticated technical 'social engineering' approach can 'telescope' a process that took Western countries decades and centuries to establish (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005: 451). Duffield (2002) illustrates how this caused a radicalization of development: humanitarian aid and development have been subordinated to the security agenda of the international community. It is in this 'social engineering' approach to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction that social capital plays a critical role.

Social capital and 'social engineering' – engineering peace and development

The concept of social capital has only recently gained significance in studies of peace and conflict (Cox, 2009). In the early 1990s, the social capital debate focused on development, democracy and civil society; but it has lately been integrated into research on violence, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction research (e.g. Barron *et al.,* 2004; Bohora *et al.*, 2006; Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b; Cox, 2009; Goodhand, 2006; Goodhand *et al.*, 2000; Morfit, 2002; Pickering, 2006; Pinchotti & Verwimp, 2007; Richards *et al.*, 2004; Varshney, 2001; World Bank, 2006).

At the end of the 1990s, however, social capital rapidly became a central concept in the 'social engineering' model: it grounded the need to (re)build civil society institutions as a crucial component of PCR policies (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005). In this model, civil society-building (nurturing social capital, strengthening community associations, etc.) and state-building (peace agreements, democratic elections, etc.) are two sides of the same coin. The social capital argument was used by international development corporations to

justify 'social engineering' operations, alongside post-conflict physical reconstruction and rehabilitation work (Englebert, 2001: 16-17). The work of Colletta and Cullen (2000b) has provided a reference point for the World Bank and many other international agencies for integrating the social capital concept into their PCR policies. It is worth quoting them (2000b: 122-123) at length to fully grasp the 'enormous experiment in social engineering' (Paris, 1997: 56) that is behind the social capital concept:

> Peacebuilding is, at its core, civil-society building. Measures of civic engagement, along with human security and government efficacy, transparency, and stability, are fundamental social capital indicators for comprehensive reconstruction. Social networks and organizations are essential assets in the portfolio of resources drawn on by the war-affected to manage risk and take advantage of opportunities. Peacebuilding involves not only economic reconstruction, or the rebuilding of physical infrastructure and economic stabilization, but also the fundamental revitalization of positive social capital and the strengthening of social cohesion. The solutions to conflict prevention lie not only in demilitarization and in jump-starting the economy, although these are important. They lie also in good governance – the rule of law, justice, and human rights – and in strengthening social capital at every level. [...] Development needs to nurture and transform social capital in order to create and maintain the mechanisms and institutions necessary for strengthening social cohesion, managing diversity, preventing violent conflict, and sustaining peace and reconciliation.

By and large, the policy has focused on reinforcing civil society organizations, while creating social capital (e.g. Fischer & Ropers, 2001; Kreimer *et al.*, 1998: NEPAD, 2005; Obidegwu, 2004; OECD, 2001; Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006; UNDP, 2008; World Bank, 2006; World Vision, 1998). The role of these civil society actors fits in a broader and more generalized approach to post-conflict reconstruction: that is, community-based or community-driven reconstruction (e.g., Cliffe *et al.*, 2003; Fearon *et al.*, 2009; Strand *et al.*, 2003; USAID, 2007). This approach aims to combine economic and social reconstruction, i.e. to alleviate immediate community reconstruction needs – tangible 'quick wins' or 'peace dividends' – while empowering the community, restoring community cohesion, and strengthening local conflict resolution capacity. Social capital is inextricably bound up with this renewed interest in the 'community' and the strategies of community-driven development: 'The general reasoning is that, if levels of engagement in civil society are raised (shown by improved input indicators such as membership of associations), this will lead to improved coordination (evident in the outputs of trust and collective action) and ultimately to increased levels of accountability and democracy.' (Mosse, 2008: 98).

However, in post-conflict settings, these civil society organizations are meant to build social capital in two particular ways (Paffenholz, 2009). On the one hand, as indicated, in-group socialization should support the practice of democratic values and attitudes within

society. On the other hand, and this is specific for post-conflict settings, through joint development activities, they should facilitate cooperation between adversarial groups in society, resulting in inter-group social cohesion or the much praised 'bridging' social capital. In other words, these community-based or civil society organisations are seen as 'agents of peace', capable of promoting conflict resolution and peaceful cohabitation (Varshney, 2001).

In sum, the central argument is that, if social capital is rebuild in post-conflict settings, this will strengthen local capacity for conflict resolution. This is how social capital relates back to the broader 'social engineering' agenda, while defining the particular role of NGOs. As Duffield (2002) and Goodhand (2006) indicate, in particular NGOs are expected to build social capital and strengthen local civil society, which turns their aid into a strategic tool for conflict resolution and social reconstruction.

Rationale and aims

After having 'set the scene', the rationale and aims are presented. Concretely, this thesis aims to present (i) a critical analysis of the debate on the social capital concept and the claims which are made about its role in post-conflict settings, and (ii) a critical analysis of the 'social engineering' approach to post-conflict reconstruction which is influenced by the social capital debate. This will be done through a descriptive multiple case study approach, which allows to grasp the particular reality of three NGO-interventions and their attempts to 'social engineer' peace and development in the north of Burundi after more than ten years of civil war.

This choice is based on the presence of three main gaps in research and the debate on the current application of the social capital concept in post-conflict reconstruction policy and practice.

- First, there is an empirical gap. In line with certain of the above criticisms, it can be argued how the social capital term is largely applied as a 'leap of faith'. Systematic empirical evidence on conflict and social capital is still very limited (Goodhand, 2006). Although most contemporary research on post-conflict reconstruction or peace-building speaks of social capital, it mainly deals with the concept indirectly. Colletta and Cullen (2000a, 2000b) have thus far offered the most comprehensive effort to systematically integrate social capital theory into the study of conflict. In addition, research on particular policies has been one-sided, as most research has been commissioned by the World Bank (e.g. Colletta & Cullen 2000a, 2000b; Richards, 2005; World Bank, 2006). The edited volume of Cox (2009) has been one of the first

attempts to present a systematic study of the links between social capital, conflict and peace.

- Second, there is also a theoretical gap. Post-conflict reconstruction policy is mainly based on Putnam's (1993) early normative conception of social capital as 'networks of civic engagement' which are assumed to nurture cooperation, trust and solidarity. Putnam's (1995, 2000) concept of 'bridging' social capital has become central to the social capital argument in post-conflict settings: social networks that 'bridge' social divisions and bring opposing groups together after conflict, are praised for their capacity for conflict resolution, reconciliation and social cohesion at community level. As such, policy fails to take account of the progress made in the social capital debate towards a Bourdieuian or political economy perspective. This reflects the 'lazy use' (Bebbington, 2004) of the concept when traveling from research to policy; it also points to a lack of academic research bringing new insights to the policy level.

- Third, there is what I call a 'local level' gap. While there are extensive critiques on the 'social engineering' model to post-conflict reconstruction from a national and international perspective (Cramer & Goodhand, 2002; Duffield, 1994, 1999, 2001, 2002; Goodhand, 2006, Krause & Jütersonke, 2005; Milliken & Krause, 2002; Ottoway, 2002; Paris, 1997; Rathmell, 2005; Richards, 2005; Vlassenroot & Raeymakers, 2004), little research has critically analysed its effects at local level from the perspective of NGO-interventions. Goodhand (2006) wrote an extensive comparative study on the role of these NGOs in peace-building, but he noted that concrete ethnographic empirical research on the community level was still limited. Especially on this local level, a social capital perspective is in its place because mainly NGOs are expected to restore social capital and civil society institutions within the conflict-affected communities.

Therefore, while drawing on the insights of contemporary social capital literature, the aim of this thesis is to provide:

- A critical analysis of the current application of the social capital concept in post-conflict reconstruction policy and practice: which conception of social capital is central to contemporary post-conflict reconstruction policy and practice, and which claims are made about its role and function?

- A comparative perspective within the social capital debate, opposing mainstream (Putnamian) and political economy (Bourdieuian) views on social capital: does a political economy perspective offer an added value in comparison to mainstream thinking on social capital (and if so, can it help us to describe, understand and explain more thoroughly 'social engineering' activities)?

- A critical empirical analysis of local NGO 'social engineering' practice to post-conflict reconstruction: how effective is the 'social engineering' approach of NGOs at local level? Are they indeed capable of upgrading social capital and is their aid a strategic tool for conflict resolution and social reconstruction? Or as Duffield (2002: 1067)

notes: are they able of 'getting inside the head to govern the hand' by changing behavior and attitudes instead or next to building schools and feeding the hungry?

These questions will be addressed via a descriptive multiple case study of three concrete NGO-interventions in northern Burundi.

The case – Burundi

Burundi is a country that desperately needs the 'holy trinity' of peace, economic development and democracy. Over 10 years of civil war have destroyed an already weak economy, further deteriorated a governance deficit, and disrupted the social fabric of Burundian society. Its violent past has pitted groups against each other, and subdivided society along ethnic, but also regional, gender, clan, urban-rural and more recently political lines. Approximately 300,000 people lost their lives during civil war (Lemarchand, 2009), and violence has forced over half of the Burundian population to flee their homes at least once since the beginning of the civil war in 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29). The agricultural sector, once the engine of the Burundian economy (and capable of covering national food consumption before the civil war), collapsed and pushed back the majority of Burundian rural households to subsistence level. According to the *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (UNDP 2008), 87.6% of the population lives below $2 a day, and 54.6% below $1 a day.

Since the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* of 2000, Burundi can be considered one of those proving grounds where 'liberal peace' is engineered (Daley, 2008). Burundi has been urged to accept and apply the 'universal blueprint' for international peace-building. In a nutshell: after a cease-fire, a peace agreement is signed, after which a transitional government is put in place to demilitarize the country and introduce institutional reforms, ending in free and democratic elections, after which an era of post-conflict reconstruction starts to remove the structural causes of conflict (Daley, 2006a). Burundi is approaching democratic elections in 2010, which will hopefully consolidate the peace process. Most analysts agree that the Burundian transition has been a success story for the international community (Uvin, 2009; Lemarchand, 2006; ICG, 2007). At least it has been able to install a minimal 'negative peace' (Galtung, 1969). Relative stability and security returned to the country after the largest rebel movement, the *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (FDD) signed a cease-fire agreement in 2003. The result of the 2005 democratic elections was accepted by all parties without a return to violence. On 22 April 2009, the last rebel movement, the *Front National de Libération* (FNL), also transformed itself into a political party.

Yet the current situation in Burundi is best subscribed as a 'no war, no peace' setting (Richards, 2005). Potential for conflict is continuously reproduced, undermining – overtly or indirectly – the democratic transformation, conflict resolution and peace-building efforts (Dijkzeul, 2008: 2). Burundi is therefore a long way from a 'positive peace', in which not only direct but also 'structural violence' is eradicated (Galtung 1969). This structural violence – i.e. the social injustices caused by inequality, discrimination and exclusion – remains a giant seed-bed for potential conflict, and it will demand a time-consuming social transformation of the Burundian society to eradicate it. It is questionable if the 'liberal peace' model will achieve this by a rapid modernization of Burundian society through the construction of new and liberal institutions. (Daley, 2008: 34). Uvin (2005, 2009) points to a general critique on the 'liberal peace' model, i.e. that the introduction of such institutions at national level in Burundi has installed a liberal-democratic facade, which may obscure the 'real' transformation of Burundian society beneath this 'formal' transformation process.

For the most part, however, this dissertation will examine Burundi from a micro-perspective. It will present ethnographic findings on three livelihood interventions on three particular *collines* (hillsides – administrative unit) in the north of Burundi. The interventions were chosen for their representativeness in post-conflict reconstruction in general, and reconstruction activities in Burundi in particular. Livelihood interventions are identified as appropriate instruments to implement post-conflict reconstruction policy in protracted crises situations (Russo *et al.*, 2008); their focus on food security aligned well with the Burundian context of protracted food insecurity and the critical role of the agricultural sector in the livelihoods of Burundian households.

The interventions were made by three American-based international NGOs under the umbrella of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This Consortium implemented projects in four provinces in northern and central Burundi (Kirundo, Muyinga, Gitega, Karuzi) between 2005 and 2007, and $2.5 million dollars of resources were requested for the implementation of the total initiative (LSIC, 2004).

Concretely, the thesis will look at (i) the CIBA project on Burara *colline* (Busoni *commune*, Kirundo province), (ii) the LITA project on Tangara *colline* (Butihinda *commune*, Muyinga province), and (iii) the CLC project on Cumba *colline* (Muyinga *commune*, also in Muyinga province). For the sake of discretion the identity of the different NGOs is not disclosed.[3] I use the pseudonyms Consortium Initiative Burara (CIBA), Livelihoods Tangara (LITA), and Cumba Livelihood Consortium (CLC). This

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[3] Similarly, the real identity of interviewees or other persons linked to the projects or localities are not revealed. Also for these individuals pseudonyms are used throughout the text.

confidentiality is a personal decision and the reason is simple and straightforward: this thesis is not about three particular NGOs, but discusses the interaction between social capital, conflict, and post-conflict reconstruction. Naming the NGOs would only result in misinterpretations. Indeed, the thesis will reveal things that went wrong, yet this is not because NGOs are 'bad' *per se*, but simply because the reality in which they worked was extremely complex, and the ideas, paradigms and models on which they base their work are sometimes questionable. Pointing a finger at one particular actor is short-sighted and simplistic. Instead, the situation requires a detailed and nuanced analysis.

The fieldwork planning was approved at headquarters in Bujumbura by all three NGOs. I gained access to all documents and could count on the cooperation of all staff employed on the projects. My research was however drafted independently, and with the exception of preliminary joint visits to the field, the field research was performed autonomously. As a researcher I also remained financially independent. In the scope of this dissertation approximately 15 months were spent in Burundi, including 10 months of actual fieldwork on Burara, Tangara, and Cumba *collines*.

The thesis

First, it has to be mentioned that the seeds of this thesis were sowed in an article I co-wrote with Dr Kristof Titeca, which was published in *World Development* (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). In that article, I had the opportunity to develop and test some of the theoretical insights, which led me to formulate the theoretical framework of present work. I'm grateful for this collaboration, as it was an essential step in guiding my further research.

Part one of the thesis gathers both introductory chapters. The first introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis. It is argued in several steps that Putnam's normative reworking of the social capital concept should be challenged. While relying on a theoretical framework in which different combinations of social capital (bonding, bridging, linking) account for a diverse range of outcomes, a political economy perspective on social capital is presented as a radical alternative framework. In addition, it also briefly introduces the links between social capital theory and three topics of importance for the Burundian case study: conflict, livelihoods, and development projects. The second chapter presents some methodological notes on the case study research and the field work conducted for this thesis. I explain my choice of a multiple descriptive case study approach, discuss the selection of my case studies, list the most important research questions and themes, expound the various techniques used to gather the data, and briefly mention the different phases of my fieldwork.

Part two consists of chapters 3 and 4, and introduces the Burundian case study. The first chapter presents a national level analysis. It gives a brief outline of the Burundian conflict and the current post-conflict situation. In addition, it makes an attempt to apply my theoretical argument, and as such, a broader political economy perspective is introduced to frame the following chapters dealing with social capital as a micro-phenomenon. Chapter 4 makes the switch from the national to the local level, and introduces the three *collines* and the NGO-projects as my three concrete case studies.

Part three contains the body of the thesis: in four chapters the empirical reality of the three case study NGO-interventions is described, as a basis to critically discuss social capital and social engineering. The four chapters are presented as papers, so there may be some contextual and theoretical repetitions. The bibliographies are, however, included in the general bibliography at the end of the thesis.

Before focusing on the NGO-interventions, chapter five presents an analysis of the functioning of social capital on the three *collines*. The chapter focuses on the question of how rural households' social capital portfolios adapted to a situation of protracted crisis. It demonstrates how social capital turned into an unproductive asset for the poor, and how this reflected the impact of broader institutional aspects. Social capital portfolios are put forward to integrate a broader political economy perspective into the actor-oriented livelihoodframework.

Chapter 6 deals with the community-based methodology used by the NGOs to implement their projects: such participatory-focused methodologies are based on the idea of social capital, and are assumed to have a positive effect on it. The chapter questions such community-based reconstruction as a mechanism to rebuild social capital after conflicts, where direct livelihood support is provided. It criticizes the 'technical procedural design' on which it is based, and its underestimation of the contrast between 'development' and 'post-conflict' settings. A revaluation of ordinary 'physical engineering' is considered an alternative to the current popular 'social engineering' approaches to post-conflict reconstruction.

Chapter 7 focuses on 'bridging associations' as universal blueprints of social capital building to bring peace and development. An interesting comparison was possible, as all three NGOs held different opinions, in theory and in practice, on working with such associations. The use of 'bridging associations' demonstrates the effects of a 'liberal peace' model on a micro-perspective: its incapacity and unwillingness to enter into dialogue and syncretize with local, endogenous forms of social organization.

Lastly, chapter 8 deals with one particular project activity: the 'solidarity chain'. The 'solidarity chain' is a livestock credit rotation scheme, implemented by all three NGOs. It is a classic example of post-conflict reconstruction, in which economic (livestock restocking) and social (reinforcing community cohesion) reconstruction are combined. The chapter questions the general assumption that post-conflict reconstruction policy should focus on transforming exclusive (mono-ethnic) bonding into inclusive (multi-ethnic) bridging social capital. In contrast, the chapter presents micro-empirical insights that point to a) a more fundamental and general lack of bonding social capital and b) the presence of 'unresponsive' or 'exploitative' linking social capital acting as a conflict trigger.

PART ONE :
INTRODUCING THE DEBATE

Chapter 1

The political economy of social capital

1.1 Introduction

'It's not what you know, it's who you know.' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000: 225). This phrase summarizes the common sense notion of social capital, through a comparison with one of its twin concepts, human capital. Not only the knowledge, capacities and skills you have acquired throughout life, but also your connections with other people will, among further assets (e.g. financial, cultural), help you to further develop your life chances. It is a very simple and intuitively accepted idea: family members stand in when children are sick as a safety net, membership of a trade union will defend your basic social rights, and the right friend in the right place will inform you about new job opportunities. Yet, behind this common sense idea, a plethora of definitions and theoretical views have produced an abundant literature on this concept, *The Handbook of Social Capital* (Castiglione *et al.*, 2008) being one of the latest attempts to summarize this work.

The aim of this chapter is not to unravel these many conceptual discussions or to define social capital once and for all. Instead, the idea is to present some evolutions within the debate and introduce some bodies of literature, in order to identify some of the implications for my empirical case study analysis. This is done in four steps.

First, the different sources of inspiration of the social capital debate are mentioned. Second, the debate is outlined, while starting from Woolcock's and Narayan's identification of the four principal positions: the communitarian, network, institutional and synergy view on social capital. Third, in the next section, I will argue that these different positions indicate an evolution in the debate towards a political economy or Bourdieuian perspective on social capital, and I will outline the main elements of such a view. Fourth, I

will refer to three bodies of literature, dealing with the link between social capital and respectively conflict, rural livelihoods and development projects. This literature will only be briefly introduced, as these issues will recur and be explored more in depth throughout the subsequent chapters discussing my empirical case study research.

1.2   Sources of inspiration : three research programmes

Instead of concentrating on definitions, I follow Castiglione's (2008) suggestion to use research programmes as an entry point to clear our path through the social capital debate. Castiglione distinguishes three such research programmes, each with a particular intellectual history (Table 1). I will take this analysis a step further to clarify that the choice for each is not without consequences, in that it stipulates if research uses the concept normatively or analytically, and focuses on the 'up' or 'down' side of social capital. This will become clear in both the intellectual concerns grounding the research programmes and the ensuing policy implications.

Table 1 Three social capital research programmes (source: author, based on Castiglione, 2008)

Research programme	Source of inspiration	Broader Objective	Academic Discipline	Variable	Upside / Downside	Policy
Sociality *(researching main motivational drives of human action in social contexts)*	**James Coleman**	**A theory of human action** *(importing the 'principle of action' of rational choice in social science)*	**Economy**	**Independent** *(social capital explaining human action)*	**Upside**	**Neo-liberal policy** Social capital corrects for market imperfections (instead of the state).
Sociability *(researching human tendency to associate with others in group)*	**Robert Putnam**	**A democratic theory** *(equating social capital with civicness, leading to democratic institutions)*	**Political science**	**Independent** *(social capital explaining government performance)*	**Upside**	**Communitarian policy** Social capital makes a society 'healthy' (and substitutes for government action).
Social embeddedness *(researching mechanisms of social integration and reproduction)*	**Pierre Bourdieu**	**A theory of social reproduction** *(social capital reproducing social stratification and classes)*	**Sociology**	**Dependent, intervening** *(social capital, dependent on and intervening during social reproduction)*	**Downside**	**Social Welfare Policy** Social capital as emancipation, challenging existing social structure, (demanding redistributive state policies).

1.2.1 James Coleman : the rationalists

The first research programme is very much related to the work of James Coleman (1990), and centres around the question of *sociality*, i.e. researching the main motivational drives of human action in social contexts (Castiglione, 2008: 184). Coleman (1990: 302) defines social capital functionally:

> Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common. They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence.

Two broader issues shape the author's concern with social capital. The first is theoretical, as Coleman perceived social capital as a tool to construct a broader theory of human action. Coleman aimed at solving the problem of both over- and under-socialized theories of human behaviour, merging economics with sociology (Coleman, 1999). Yet his attempts are clearly grounded in rational choice and methodological individualism. Self-interest as the primary mover of human behaviour and the 'principle of action' – maximizing utility – have never been questioned in his work. Therefore Coleman's conception of social capital is primarily economic. As he clarifies his approach: 'My aim is […] to import the economists' principle of rational action for use in the analysis of social system proper, including but not limited to economic systems, and to do so without discarding social organization in the process. The concept of social capital is a tool to aid in this.' (Coleman cited in Castiglione, 2008: 184-85). Castiglione (2008) identifies two steps whereby Coleman succeeds in his aim. First, he argues that the impact of social structure on human behaviour (through the internalization of norms and obligations) originated in a rational calculation of the individual. Second, Coleman rejects the old idea of social relations as being irrelevant or constraining factors for rational individuals (Woolcock, 1998); instead, he presents these social structures as useful and 'good' resources for self-interested actions. As such, the social is rationalized, which yields him the critique of making sociology the handmaiden of economics (e.g. Fine, 2001; Harris, 2002).

Coleman's second concern follows ethical-practical lines. It originates in his work on education, and reflects his unease with the disappearance of primordial (family, kin, community) ties – performing the social control function of social capital (norm-observance) – as a main factor in the coming of various social ills (crime and insecurity, blurring of moral standards in public schools, etc.). Portes (2000: 3) finds a double solution for these ills in Coleman's work: his celebration of existing community ties and the creation of new 'purposively constructed' organizations to fulfil this social control

function. This second preoccupation reveals the normative undercurrent in Coleman's work, social capital being a 'good thing'. Although Putnam brings this value-laden, norm-centric character to the core of the concept, Castiglione (2008) notes that a Putnamian normative approach was already prevalent in the work of Coleman.

Coleman's work has led economists in particular to champion the concept of social capital. Indeed, the economic strand of social capital research follows Coleman's focus on human action; it is grounded in microeconomics (Fine, 1999; see e.g. Collier, 2002) and understands social capital as pooling trust and information, thus reducing transaction costs (Edwards, 2006), while clarifying economic performance. This strand of thinking has been highly influential in the World Bank since the 1990s. Edwards (2006: 94) explains the reasons of this group of *enthusiasts* (mainly economists): 'For them, social capital is the missing ingredient, that, by integrating "non-market rationality" into economic models, explains why some countries or communities grow faster than others.' Wolleb (2008: 375), introducing the section on economic development in *The Handbook of Social Capital* (Castiglione *et al*., 2008), explains why social capital matters for economics: 'Generally speaking, social capital intervenes in the economy when the market fails.' He defines two broad types of market failures. First, based on theory of transaction costs, social capital is there to smoothen out trade and increase economic efficiency through the reduction of risks and costs of economic transactions (social capital creates trust which makes doing business 'easier'). Second, and based on public goods theory, social capital is meant to facilitate collective action to produce public goods, which cannot, or at least not sufficiently, be produced by the market (e.g. safe neighbourhoods). In addition, social capital, if not producing public goods, is meant to make the delivery of public goods and services more efficient (e.g. parents associations in public schools). Concluding, the central thesis of this research programme is that '"more social capital" is associated with "better economic performance"' (Edwards, 2006: 94).

It is easy to understand how this research programme is linked with Third Way policies in the Western World and the Post-Washington Consensus for development countries (e.g. Fine 1999, 2001; Harris, 2001). In both cases, after successive failures of planned economies (states) and free market economies (markets), social capital is the academic counterpart of society itself, which is asked – as a third partner (society) – to smoothen out the excesses of neo-liberalism. Thus, in the hands of neo-liberal policy makers social capital underscores their view of the free market system and the minimal state. Market imperfections are caused by non-market society, and thus society itself is best placed to solve the problem. For them social capital is the glue that fills the gaps of market imperfections.

1.2.2   Robert Putnam : the communitarians

The second research programme has been the most influential and is linked mainly to the work of Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000); it focuses on the question of *sociability*, i.e. questioning people's tendency to unite and associate in groups (Castiglione, 2008: 188). Putnam (1993: 167) defines social capital normatively:

> Social capital here refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.

Again, the author's concerns are clearly theoretical and practical-ethical. Both concerns were already reflected in the title of his famous Italian study *Making Democracy Work* (Putnam, 1993). Putnam made a theoretical contribution to democratic theory by arguing that 'civicness' played an important role in explaining differences in institutional performance between north and south Italy, presenting his 'social capital as civicness' thesis as a reconfirmation of De Tocqueville's (1835/1840) argument on American democracy (Putnam, 1993). In line with Castiglione (2008) three successive steps can be distinguished throughout the Italian study. First, Putnam makes a causal link between the degree of civicness and institutional performance. He explains this link in two ways, combining a culturalist and structuralist interpretation of social capital (Castiglione, 2008). On the one hand, Putnam presents a historical account of the republican tradition to explain the high degree of civicness in Italian city states, postulating the path-dependent character of social capital, i.e. it slowly emerges from historical processes. On the other hand, toward the end of the book, Putnam couples civicness with the presence of dense networks of associations, echoing De Tocqueville's (1835/1840) point on the importance of a vibrant civil society for American democracy. This structural analysis enables Putnam some specification, as he argues that only voluntary, horizontal and bridging (i.e. inclusive and open) associations – in contrast with the vertical and bonding (i.e. exclusive and closed) networks in the south (ref. e.g. Banfield's (1958) 'amoral familism' in the Mezzogiorno) – produced the necessary 'networks of civic engagement' (Putnam, 1993: 171-186). Such associations are perceived as the learning schools for democracy; by joining them, people are socialized into a democratic value pattern. Therefore, a civic culture, derived from networks of civic engagement, brought efficient democratic institutions to the north of Italy.

Putnam's more ethical-practical concerns become much more explicit in his second major work, *Bowling Alone* (2000). It is here that Putnam aims to deliver scientific proof for Coleman's unease with the disappearance of community ties in American cities and neighbourhoods; Putnam argues that social capital and civic engagement did steadily decline at the end of the twentieth century. Both the conception of American civic life and

the solution for its decline are inspired by his Italian analysis, in particular the structuralist part of it. Now, Putnam explicitly uses the concept of 'bridging' social capital, to argue in favour of a revival of 'networks of civic engagement'.

In the wake of Putnam's work, a vast number of political scientists have extensively researched the core idea of this social capital research programme: the importance of associational life for healthy societies and democratic states. This strand of research has focused on macro-dynamics, in many cases comparing communities, cities, regions and even states with each other (e.g. Knack & Keefer, 1997), equating social capital mainly with membership in horizontal associations (e.g. Hooghe, 2003; Mayer, 2003), and researching it as an independent variable to explain democracy (Foley & Edwards, 1999).

Conservative and communitarian policies have been receptive for this explicit normative and value-laden strand of research. It gives their proponents academic back-up for their defence of a moral revival in western societies, in which extreme individualism should be counterbalanced with self-sacrifice and commitment to the community and the common good (Harris, 2001). Communitarians emphasize the benefits and self-sufficiency of local communities – small is beautiful – and perceive Putnam's networks of civic engagement as the building blocks for socially cohesive communities. As Woolcock and Narayan (2000: 229) state: 'The communitarian perspective equates social capital with such local organizations as clubs, associations, and civic groups. Communitarians […] hold that social capital is inherently good, that more is better, and that its presence always has a positive effect on a community's welfare.'

1.2.3   Pierre Bourdieu : the critics

The third and last research programme is grounded in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), and relates to the question of social embeddedness, i.e. researching the mechanisms of social reproduction (Castiglione, 2008: 191). Bourdieu (1986: 248-49) defines social capital as follow:

> Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network […] The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital [economic, cultural, symbolic] possessed by a given agent, or even by the whole set of agents to whom he is connected.

Bourdieu's concerns with the concept of social capital are, likewise, both theoretical and practical-ethical. First, Bourdieu's broader theoretical framework is a theory of social reproduction. His conceptual framework of economic, cultural, symbolic and social capital enables Bourdieu to argue first that economic capital reproduces itself, and that

this reproduction is interwoven with the reproduction of more cultural dimensions. Like Coleman, he recognizes the embeddedness of economic and social life (Rankin, 2002), yet his point of departure is different: he is not interested in how human behaviour *reacts* in social contexts (*sociality*), instead, he wants to describe the mechanisms of how social context *reproduces* human behaviour (*social embeddedness*). In the case of social capital, Bourdieu introduces two intertwined elements to establish his argument: 'content' and 'context'.

The first factor, content, is already clearly specified in Bourdieu's definition. Not all social networks produce similar social capital. Social capital varies depending on its size and structure (cf. e.g. rural versus urban household) and on the volume and nature of the capital (cf. e.g. dockworker versus manager versus academic) accessed through it.

Second, this internal differentiation is influenced by 'context', referring to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. As Bebbington (2007: 156) states: 'While each agent's *habitus* has a certain biographical, idiosyncratic dimension, it is also heavily structured by where it falls within wider relationships and structures of social difference: class, gender, ethnicity, and so on. These structures of difference are characterized by distinct distributions of capitals, social, cultural, symbolic and economic.' It is then a small step towards Bourdieu's more ethical-practical concerns with social capital. In the hands of Bourdieu, social capital as a tool is used for entirely different purposes than was the case for Coleman and Putnam. As Somers (2005: 245) correctly states: 'His Marxist roots spurred him to explain the reproduction of class power, and he found social capital useful for this purpose.'

Although most scholars identify Bourdieu as one of the three founding fathers of social capital, still this strand of research has been much less visible in comparison to Coleman's and certainly Putnam's influence. This can partly be explained by the attractiveness of Coleman's and Putnam's work, which chimed so well with the ideological undercurrents of neo-liberalism and communitarianism. Yet it also relates to the unattractiveness of Bourdieu's story, as he presents us social capital as part of the problem instead of the solution. Scholarship of this research programme, mainly conducted by sociologists and various applied social scientists, has been working on the micro-scale, arguing that social capital reproduces inequality, poverty and power structures (Bebbington, 2007; Cleaver, 2005; Edwards & Foley, 1997; Mayer & Rankin, 2002; Molyneux, 2002; Rankin, 2002; Vasan, 2007), i.e. that social capital is the dependent or intervening variable during social stratification (Edwards & Foley, 1999).

The unattractiveness of this research for policy has two causes. First, their policy conclusions run counter to ideological policies defending a minimal state, as this strand of research argues that social capital can never substitute for sound redistributive state policies, and defends the 'developmental state' (Fine, 1999, 2001; Harris, 2001). Second, it does not provide policy advisers with clear-cut solutions. Bourdieu's work emphasizes social capital as a constraining factor in the lives of many, hence social capital should be destroyed and created at the same time. In other words: social capital policies should

'challenge structures and institutions as much as build assets' (Bebbington, 2007: 159). However, building assets is much easier, at least in Putnam's framework: for policy makers his normative ideas illustrate not only the ease of the new solution – building more community organizations – but also the ease of measuring the progress and success of their policies – how many new organizations were built or reinforced? (Ponthieux, 2004). At least, this is what policy makes of academic research, reflecting the 'lazy' (Bebbington, 2004: 344) or 'banalized' (Molyneux, 2002: 169) use of concepts when travelling from research to policy. As Edwards (2006: 102) observes well: 'Donor agencies such as the World Bank have a natural tendency to focus on the short term and the easily measurable, and therefore concentrate on the physical infrastructure of civil society and the mechanics of social capital ("forms, not norms").' Critical research based on Bourdieu, however, warns about such quick-fix policies, which run the risk of creating new 'forms' that only reproduce the old wrong 'norms'; thus deepening a situation of inequality and poverty. In their view social capital policies should have a more 'politico-emancipatory' (Schuurman, 2003) function, challenging existing social structures, power relations and inequalities, through the 'counterwork' of oppositional social movements (Bebbington, 2007). Immediately, concepts such as 'counterwork', 'opposition', and 'struggle' differentiate these policies from those of third-wayers and communitarians, which are based on the more normative work of Putnam and Coleman and embrace concepts such as 'consensus' and 'partnership' (Edwards, 2006).

1.2.4 'Up' side versus 'down' side

The aim was not only to differentiate the various sources of inspiration, but also to clarify the ideological underpinnings of all three research programmes. Social capital researchers should be aware of these ideological undercurrents and look for a concept with analytical value. Ultimately, the basic touchstone of this should be that the concept incorporates both the 'up' (positive) and 'down' (negative) sides of social capital, confirming both its constraining and liberating power.

The choices made on this important issue sometimes depend on deep but not explicit convictions and beliefs, and can ultimately be reduced to 'Hobbesian' pessimistic (individuals are egoistic in nature and need third-party enforcement to enter into a social contract) versus 'Rousseauian' optimistic (individuals have a 'good will' in nature and enter into a social contract through self-enforcement) views of human nature (Paldam & Svendsen, 2000). Smith and Kulynych (2002) refer to two traditions of theorists claiming that integrative (Coleman & Putnam, ref. Rousseau) versus coercive (Bourdieu, ref. Hobbes) processes were the primary aspect of social relations. In line with this, they (*idem*) also refer to Stone's (1989) influential concepts, to differentiate between Coleman's concern with 'power to', to attain certain goals, and Bourdieu's concern with

'power over', which reproduces social differentiation. Also Putnam's (1993: 177-185) concerns with social capital are entrenched in these inexplicit views of human nature; for example, when he distinguishes his 'civic' social capital in the north of Italy with the Hobbesian amoral familism of the south. However, this struggle of Hobbes versus Rousseau presents us with a false, normative dichotomy about the origins of human behaviour, as empirical evidence from both social and natural sciences strongly reaffirms that 'the social' or 'the relational' is a fundamental determinant of human behaviour, for better *or* worse (Woolcock & Radin, 2008). In this respect, the capability to incorporate both the 'up' and 'down' sides of social capital is a minimal but central touchstone for the conceptual framework.

It is then sad to observe that, in the past, 'ideological clubbiness' has stagnated much of social capital research (Roca cited in Bebbington, 2004: 347). Vast amounts of paper have been wasted on social capital research, while ignoring its down sides. Many illustrations can be given of selective reading (Bebbington, 2004). Putnam (1993), for example, does not once mention Bourdieu when he discusses social capital in *Making Democracy Work*, still this book was once the starting point of all current debates. Another illustration is much of the work done within the World Bank. Also here, for example, Bourdieu was not mentioned once in the 424 pages (!) of *Social Capital. A Multifaceted Perspective* (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 1999). The denial of many (*Rationalists* and *Communitarians*) to take seriously the constraining factors of social capital have led to an international community wasting considerable amounts of time in policies based on a too optimistic and highly unrealistic view of social capital. Yet, on the other hand, the failure of Bordieuian analysis (*Critics*) to argue what an efficient developmental state should look like (inevitably coming back to the question of how society – and thus, social capital – should look like, in order to create such a developmental state), and their failure to affirm the 'up side' or the emergence and potential of 'disinterested, cooperative, or solidaristic [sic] action' (Bebbington, 2007: 160) also points in the direction of one-sidedness.

Still, the fact is that until now Putnam's communitarian notion of social capital has monopolized most of the academic debate, and even more the development policies and practices which have been inspired by this debate. In the following sections I present how different strands of research present alternative views on the communitarian concept of social capital. A first step is to shortly mention the main findings of network theory to add 'content' to the social capital concept. Second, mentioning the insights brought by the institutional view indicates that the social capital concept should be put back in 'context'. Lastly, the synergy view is discussed as a way to integrate the main conclusions of both the network and institutional perspectives.

1.3 The debate: the search for synergy

1.3.1 Networks and 'content': good versus bad social capital

The network view focuses on both the 'up' ('good') and 'down' ('bad') side of social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Network scholarship has done this through adding 'content', i.e. to investigate internal differentiation of various kinds of social networks leading to different types of social capital (Table 2).

Table 2 Three social capital types (source author)

	BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL	BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL	LINKING SOCIAL CAPITAL
WHAT	Horizontal relations with close others	Horizontal (symmetric) relations bridging across social divisions	Vertical (asymmetric) relations with formal institutions
FUNCTION	'To get by' Preserving resources Closure	'To get ahead' Obtaining resources Brokerage	Access to formal institutions Obtaining resources Brokerage
EXAMPLE	Friends, Family, Neighbours	Peasant groups, Women's associations, …	Community member – local administration, health worker, …
DOWNSIDE	Exclusiveness Excessive duties Restriction of freedom	Conflict between interest-groups Groups with anti-social outcomes	Unequal and oppressive relations

Network research measures internal differentiation along two factors: embedded resources and network location (Lin, 2001). Lin's (2008: 51) social capital definition is exemplary for this strand of research (NB the similarity with Bourdieu): 'Social capital is defined as resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks'. It was Granovetter's argument of 'the strength of weak ties' that grounded this kind of research. Granovetter (1973) showed that more open ended networks between people who do not know each other very well (that is, weak ties) are more effective for job-seekers than networks between people who are closely knit (that is, strong ties). This led to the formulation of two distinct and well documented network mechanisms (Burt, 2001). The first is 'closure': a dense network of strong ties between similar individuals facilitating access to redundant information/resources and social control. The second is the 'structural hole' mechanism: weak ties performing a brokerage function between non-similar individuals, facilitating access to non-redundant information/resources, and inclusion in new opportunities. The main sociological mechanisms explaining these network functions – closure and brokerage – are respectively the homophily and heterophily principles (Lin, 2008: 60-61). The homophily principle advances a strong link between the intensity of interactions and shared sentiment

(accounting for the social control function), and shared resources (accounting for access to redundant, and thus less strategic resources). The heterophily principle states the opposite: less intense interactions occur between more diverse individuals, giving access to heterophilous resources.

Both kinds of network refer to the clear distinction between bonding (strong ties) and bridging (weak ties) social capital (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Briggs (1998) differentiates between *social support* (bonding) and *social leverage* (bridging) networks. The *social support* dimension refers to social capital that helps one to 'get by'. Social capital as *social leverage,* on the other hand, helps one to 'get ahead'. Rather than being a coping strategy, it helps to create new opportunities for socio-economic mobility. As a consequence, 'I am more likely to have the leverage I need to get ahead if I have at least some ties to people who are quite *unlike* me.' (Briggs, 1998: 179). As such, Briggs distinction echoes Granovetter's (1973) argument of 'the strength of weak ties' and corresponds with Lin's (2001: 10; 2008: 52) distinction between 'expressive actions' (preserving or maintaining resources in a closed – bonding – network, in order to maintain cohesion, solidarity or well-being) and 'instrumental actions' (searching for and obtaining resources in an extended – bridging – network, in order to gain wealth, power or reputation).

Later on, linking social capital has been introduced as a subtype of bridging social capital, as it connects people across explicit vertical power differentials in society (Szreter & Woolcock 2004). In network terms, the difference is between 'symmetric' (bridging) and 'asymmetric' (linking) power relations. Compare a link between a company employee and his manager and the link between two employees of different firms: both are weak, bridge different networks, have a potential brokerage function, yet the first is asymmetric, the second symmetric. Whereas bonding and bridging social capital are horizontal metaphors, linking is about vertical ties. Examples of this vertical dimension are relations between doctor and patient, social worker and client, community member and local administration, and so on (Woolcock & Radin: 432). Although some question whether bridging and linking social capital can be distinguished reliably and empirically from each other (e.g. Putnam, 2004), most scholars highlight its importance in linking micro (bottom-up) and macro (top down) processes (see section 1.3.3.).

Two main arguments point to the advantages of the network view. First, the functional and micro (relational-structural) interpretation gives the notion its most clear-cut meaning as both 'social' and 'capital'. On the one hand, its 'social' character: in line with the definitions of Coleman and Bourdieu, what makes social capital unique is that it lies in relations between individuals and groups, not in individuals alone, nor in entire societies. Edwards and Foley (1998) clarify by making the difference with human capital. When people move out of a certain social context, they easily take their human capital (knowledge, skills) with them, yet their social capital is bound to that particular social context, in which certain social relations were built up and maintained. Thus, *particular*

social networks form the first and main constituting factor of social capital: without them there can be no social capital of any kind. Social capital defined as a macro concept (communities/societies), as is the case for communitarian conceptions, negates this embeddedness in these micro-processes, while aggregating context-dependent measures towards a trivial common denominator for entire societies (Edwards & Foley, 1998).

On the other hand, on the micro-level, social capital fits most with the meaning of 'capital'. Part of the literature has questioned whether social capital can really be defined as 'capital' (e.g. Arrow, 1999; Solow, 1999). In particular, capital demands a 'deliberate sacrifice in the present for future benefit' (Arrow, 1999: 4). However, most social interactions occur for their intrinsic value; their future benefits are unintentional side-effects. On the other hand, the use of 'capital', from a network view, is not merely metaphorical, as it presents some broad similarities with the 'capital concept', and presents us with a 'capital theory' (Lin, 2008). Social capital is 'capital' – broadly defined – in the sense that it is functional: it is perceived as a 'resource' or 'asset', on which individuals can rely to attain other resources or benefits (ref. definitions of Coleman and Bourdieu). As such, in some cases people will make intentional 'investment' in their social capital (in addition, social capital always demands an 'investment' of time and effort, producing some costs, even when this investment produces future benefits only as unintentional side-effects), everyone has a certain 'stock' of social capital on which they can rely (similar to human capital), and one may speak of the 'returns' it has produced. More importantly, social capital presents a 'capital theory', as it gives a conceptual framework to describe how capital is captured and reproduced for returns, or more specifically: 'social capital theory conceptualizes production as a process by which 'surplus value' is generated through the investment of social relations (Lin, 2008: 51). Thus, this network conception of social capital, emphasizing both its 'social' and 'capital' character, corresponds best to the emerging consensus, both in theory and empirical evidence, that social capital is best understood as a 'micro phenomenon' (Woolcock, 2005: 220).

The second argument in favour of the network view is that it has opened up the debate about 'perverse' (Rubio, 1997) social capital, or the 'down' or 'dark' side of it (Portes & Landolt, 1996; Portes, 1998). Network research on the functional differentiation of social networks led to the conclusion that social capital valuable in certain contexts and to certain ends is not valuable or has even negative effects on the achievement of other ends in other contexts. In this respect network scholarship has warned of the dangers of tautological and normative definitions of social capital. Portes and Landolt (2000: 532) start from the following definition:

> The definition of social capital as the *ability* [italic added] to secure resources by
> virtue of membership in social networks or larger social structures represents the
> most widely accepted definition of the term today.

Tautological definitions are then the result of mixing up the *ability* to secure resources with the *resources* themselves (Lin, 2001; Portes & Landolt, 1996, 2000; Portes, 1998). In that case Lin (2001: 11), presenting an example, indicates that social capital is only identified when it works: '[…] for actor X, kin ties are social capital because these ties channel X to a better job, and for actor Y, kin ties are not social capital because these ties do not channel Y to get a better job.' Defining social capital in that way is 'saying that the successful succeed' (Portes, 1998: 5). Yet, when social capital is defined as the *ability* to secure these resources, tautology is prevented, and can then be measured by the *ability* to access or mobilize the embedded resources (Lin, 2008).

In the case of Putnamian or communitarian definitions of social capital, as a result of their macro (communities/societies instead of individuals) and cultural (value/norms instead of networks) foci, tautological reasoning has led to highly normative social capital conceptions (Lin, 2001; Portes & Landolt, 1996, 2000; Portes, 1998). Social capital itself can no longer be distinguished from its outcomes, which risk limiting social capital only to those 'good' or 'civil' outcomes which one is looking for, giving social capital the character of an 'unmixed blessing' (Portes & Landolt, 1996). Portes illustrates this with Putnam's equation of social capital with 'civicness'. Portes cites Putnam (1993: p. 36 cited in Portes, 1998) to indicate the circularity of his argument:

> Some regions of Italy … have many active community organizations … These "civic communities" value solidarity, civic participation, and integrity. And here democracy works. At the other end are "uncivic" regions, like Calabria and Sicily, aptly characterized by the French term *incivisme*. The very concept of citizenship is stunted here.

Portes (1998: 20) concludes: 'In other words, if your town is "civic," it does civic things; if it is "uncivic", it does not.' The metaphor of 'the hammer' elucidates the additional problems with such communitarian conceptions (cf. Woolcock, 2005: 221; Fine, 2001: 103-04). If social capital is a hammer, it is the *ability* to use this hammer to construct or destroy a house, it is not the house itself (tautology), and certainly, not only when the outcome is limited to the construction of that house (normative).

The next step was then to look more closely to the 'down' side of social capital. Broadly, four negative effects can be distinguished: exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms (Portes & Landolt, 2000). Examples are respectively Adam Smith complaining about assemblies of merchants as 'conspiracies against the public', excessive claims for family support wrecking economic initiatives of individual entrepreneurs in Bali, family clans in Chinatown enforcing conformity among young people and ruling out internal change, youth gangs' keeping their members down rather than raising them up, preventing them from escaping the youth gang world (Portes & Landolt, 1996). To a great extent, the dark side of social capital has been attributed to the bonding type of social capital.

Consequently, Putnam (2000) for example, has adjusted his argument by limiting his 'social capital as civic engagement' argument to the bridging form of social capital (Chambers & Kopstein, 2001). Concerns about circularity remain, as this shift has been simplified as a contrast between 'bad' bonding and 'good' bridging social capital (Geys & Murdoch, 2008). However, bonding social capital fulfils for example an important social support function (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Instead, bridging capital with anti-social outcomes is of course not excludable. Burt's (2001) analysis of 'closure' (bonding) and 'structural holes' (bridging) does not make normative statements. For example, drug traffickers fulfil a brokerage function and bridge a structural hole between supply and demand, yet such bridging ties have anti-social outcomes. Putnam (2000) himself points to how people at the same time bond along some social divisions, while bridging across others. For example, a church or sect can unite people from different socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, yet preach exclusiveness and hatred. Thus, both bonding and bridging social capital depend on the social or anti-social outcomes for which they are used. On the macro level, this debate equates to 'bad civil society' (Chambers & Kopstein, 2001). Both the Nazi movement in Germany (Berman, 1997) and the Rwandan government during the 1994 genocide (Uvin, 1998) grew from and harnessed a vibrant civil society, bridging across social divisions (yet strengthening others), and yet, united these people round inhumane purposes. Similar warnings should also be made for linking social capital. Putnam (2004) distinguishes between 'unresponsive' and 'responsive' linking social capital, arguing that contacts between citizens and government officials (or authority relations in general) can also be exploitative and have anti-social outcomes, when they for example resemble personalized patron-client ties, resulting in clientelism, corruption, and nepotism. However, independent from its social or anti-social outcomes, 'unresponsive' linking social capital can still be instrumental. Wolf (1966: 16) for example described patron-client ties as 'lop-sided friendship': patron-client ties can be very asymmetric, with an unbalanced division of rights and duties resulting in dependency. However, they still enable the client to access additional resources or services, although on unequal terms. Ultimately, besides the positive and negative aspects of bonding social capital, bridging and linking social capital respectively have the potential to 'reach out' and 'scale up' (Woolcock, 2002: 26) the impact of bonding social capital; but again, this can be for the better *or* the worse.

One particular and important shortcoming or potential danger of this network view is that it focuses almost unilaterally on the structural elements of social capital, while neglecting its cognitive elements. Structural elements of social capital refer to the 'visible' forms or 'social wires' of social capital, i.e. to the relationships, networks, associations, actions and other 'social structure' which connect people; cognitive social capital, on the

other hand, refers to the norms, rules and values governing these social relationships (see e.g. Uphoff, 2000). When analysing social relations without taking into account the institutions governing them one potentially ends up with 'primitive' structuralism.[1] Social interaction not only depends upon the kind of relationships, but also on the 'rules of the game' guiding the functioning of these relationships. Therefore, one should not forget that the 'social wires' of social capital function within a broader institutional landscape. This observation has been elaborated more in depth by the institutional view.

1.3.2 Institutions and 'context': a 'stop over' from micro to macro

The importance of the institutional view is their attempt to link social capital as a 'micro-phenomenon' (Woolcock, 2005: 220) to broader institutional processes, and thus, to put social capital back in 'context'. Woolcock and Narayan (2000: 234) characterize the view as follows:

> This approach argues that the very capacity of social groups to act in their collective interest depends on the quality of the formal institutions under which they reside. […] the *institutional* view, argues that the vitality of community networks and civil society is largely the product of the political, legal, and institutional environment.

Thus, the focus is more on cognitive social capital. Unlike the communitarian and network view, institutional scholarship postulates social capital primarily as the dependent variable (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). As such, they are more concerned with how the cognitive aspects of social capital (norms, rules and values) are influenced by broader institutional processes, and less with the role social capital itself can play in (re)shaping this institutional context. Two variants can be distinguished.

The first variant, defined by Knack and Keefer (1997) and Knack (2002), was a false start. This scholarship has shown that items including 'rule of law', 'civic liberties', and 'bureaucratic equality' have an economic pay-off. In themselves, these findings are important and widely accepted. However, this variant *equates* social capital with these macro economic, political and legal institutions (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), differentiating between 'government' and 'civil society' social capital (Knack, 2002). Once more, this makes social capital the *independent* variable. In addition, the possibility for tautological and normative reasoning is reopened, as social capital and its outcomes are mixed up: societies with high stocks of social capital have high scores on rule of law, protection of civic liberties, bureaucratic equality and economic performance, those with

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[1] I borrow this phrasing from prof. dr. Tom De Herdt.

low stocks of social capital don't. It seems that social capital is only social capital when it works, a similarity between this institutional variant and communitarian conceptions (the connection between both is clear in Knack, 2003). Edwards and Foley (1998) attribute this tension to a 'psychologized' and 'culturalized' macro (entire societies) focus, disconnecting the concept entirely from its structural micro-component – individual actions within social networks (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). If one distinguishes three layers in the institutional environment – social structures, rules, and culture (Bastiaensen *et al.*, 2002) – it is easy to observe the tendency of both views narrowing down the concept normatively, focusing on 'good' governments and civil societies, as if exclusionary and conflict-ridden civil societies or authoritarian states are 'social-capital-free' (Table 3).

Table 3 'Government' and 'civil society' social capital (source: author)

	Social Structure	Rules	Culture
Government social capital *(Institutionalists)*	Efficient bureaucratic state apparatus	Rule of law Protection of civil liberties	Western liberal democracy
Civil society social capital *(Communitarians)*	Horizontal, voluntary, and bridging 'networks of civic engagement'	Cooperative behaviour Reciprocity	'Civicness'

The second institutional variant is more promising, as it takes social capital's context-contingency seriously, and indeed, investigates social capital as the micro *dependent* variable of macro processes. It introduces a political economy perspective and is grounded in the work of Bourdieu. This variant yields two broad and important conclusions.

First, the 'use value' of social capital varies according to the context, or the particular social location, which is shaped by broader socio-economic and cultural factors (Edwards & Foley, 1997). It depends on the 'fields' (Bebbington, 2007) in which the social capital operates: e.g. a dockworker's network will not be useful in the academic or banking world, and vice versa; an academic's or manager's network will be useless in finding a better job in the docks. Or according to Edwards and Foley (1998: 130): 'The social capital of having wide-ranging network connections into a dying industry likewise would be of little value.' Their example (idem: 130) of human/cultural capital illustrates how the 'use value' of capitals can change over time: 'As corporate America awakens to the consumer-purchasing potential of Hispanics, the cultural competency represented by fluency in Spanish and understanding Latino communities is being accorded more value in the market'. Bebbington (2007) correctly states that in Bourdieu's view, the importance of this contextual differentiation is that it is accompanied with 'cultural markers'. These turn social capital into a cultural mechanism that reinforces boundaries between social groups, reproducing the supremacy of the world views of some of these groups, while dictating the 'right ways of socializing' (Bebbington, 2007). To continue our example: it

is most likely that being a member of a bowling team (dockworker – ref. Putnam's *Bowling Alone*), is less valued, appreciated and useful in current society than playing in a drama club (academic) or being secretary of the Rotary Club (manager).

Second, access to social capital is not equally distributed throughout societies (Edwards & Foley, 1997). Similar to other forms of capital – financial, cultural, human – access to social capital depends on one's social 'location' including race, class, sex, geographic or other social inequalities (Edwards & Foley, 1998). People with higher education (human capital), leading a diversified career, earning a high income (financial capital), of which the surplus at the end of the month can be spent on social and cultural activities (cultural capital) will have access to more and diverse social networks (social capital) compared to people without higher education, who work for many years in the same job, earning an income which is entirely spent on house rent, food and bills. It turn, access to more and diverse social networks (social capital) help to preserve existing capital and access to additional human, financial and cultural capital. Thus, social capital is inextricably bound up with other capitals (financial, human, cultural), and because of its fungible character, it helps to reproduce the capital portfolios of social groups, acting as a kind of catalyst for social differentiation (Edwards & Foley, 1998; Portes & Landolt, 2000).

This institutional variant has criticized other institutionalists and communitarians because they ignore this inequality when measuring social capital at national levels (Edwards & Foley, 1998: 130):

> To assume that we can simply aggregate social capital to produce some measure of the resources available to society or polity, moreover, is to make the same mistake that economists make in using gross national product (GNP) […] The same level of GNP per capita can mask vastly different distributions of income, wealth, and opportunity among subgroups within society.

Stated this way, what the institutional view of social capital should do on the national level is to come up, so to say, with a GINI-coefficient of social capital, and analyse the unequal distribution of social capital in societies. On the policy level, these conclusions led to a critical reaction on the contemporary zero-sum opposition between social capital (society) and government policy (state). People like Skocpol (1996) and Tendler (1997) have presented case studies to prove how the nurturing of social capital in civil society is heavily dependent on supporting state policies, in particular because it is the state which should act on the unequal distributions of social capital in society. It is this variant which has been integrated in the synergy view, emphasizing the complementarity of public and private sectors (Evans, 1996).

Although the institutionalists' argument that social capital is embedded in macro political and economic processes is a valuable contribution to the debate, it is also their weakness. In particular the first variant focuses almost exclusively on national level – macro – processes, providing aggregated data and cross-national studies. Such an

approach denies the fact that social capital originates in *particular* social relations, within *particular* contexts, and therefore will mainly be influenced by local level institutional factors. As such, this approach, which focuses on statistical data instead of case study research, overlooks the most fundamental level of explanantion – the local level – and remains blind for the enormous variation within societies (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). However, this is not necessarily the case from a Bourdieuian perspective (the second variant). On the contrary, the central idea that access to and the functioning of social capital depends on one's particular social 'location' and the 'field' in which one operates, highlights the importance of local level analysis, and underscores a relational and contextual view of social capital. Nonetheless, most research done from this institutional angle focuses on the impact of macroeconomic processes and policies.

1.3.3   The synergy view: bottom-up vs. top-down

The synergy view tries to integrate the main findings of both the network and institutional view. Woolcock and Narayan (2000: 236) define three broad conclusions emerging from the synergy view:

> Neither the state nor societies are inherently good or bad; governments, corporations, and civic groups are variable in the impact they can have on the attainment of collective goals.
> States, firms, and communities alone do not possess the resources needed to promote broad-based, sustainable development; complementarities and partnerships forged both within and across these different sectors are required.
> Of these different sectors, the state's role in facilitating positive developmental outcomes is the most important and problematic. This is so because the state is not only the ultimate provider of public goods […] but is also the actor best able to facilitate enduring alliances across boundaries of class, ethnicity, race, gender, politics, and religion.

A special issue of *World Development*, edited by Evans (1996), has been the central reference for the *synergy* scholarship. In the concluding chapter Evans (1996), reviews the evidence, and defines 'state-society synergy' as an equilibrium of *complementarity* and *embeddedness*. *Complementarity* refers to mutually supportive relations and actions between public and private actors, of which Fox (1996) presents us with a clear example, when he describes how by simply providing transportation, the Mexican government contributed to the scaling up of peasant social capital, as it enabled them to unite across geographical barriers. A more classic example is the protection of rights of association (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Whereas *complementarity* demands a clear division of labour, *embeddedness* refers to the need for sustaining concrete interactions across the public-private divide. Here, the classic example is that of local irrigation officials,

engaged by the state, living in the communities which are served by the irrigation programme (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Thus, the central idea of the synergy view is the synergetic relation between top-down (state-centred) and bottom-up (society-centred) models to promote sustainable development, a view already emphasized by Uphoff (1992):

> paradoxical though it may seem, 'top-down' efforts are usually needed to introduce, sustain, and institutionalize 'bottom-up' development. We are commonly constrained to think in 'either-or' terms – the more of one the less of the other – when both are needed in a positive-sum way to achieve our purposes.

Woolcock (1998) has made a remarkable attempt to take up this advice, while merging it with the social capital debate. On the one hand, he defines bottom-up approaches as the combination of *integration* (intra-community ties) and *linkage* (extra-community ties). On the other hand, top-down approaches are defined by the combination of Evans' *synergy* (state-society relations) and *organizational integrity* (corporate coherence and capacity). As Woolcock and Narayan (2000: 236) argue, Evans' *synergy* needs to be completed with *integrity*, as it only works 'where the actions of public officials are simultaneously bound by performance-oriented organizational environments that are competent, coherent, and credible.'

This analytical framework can be further refined in two ways. First, conceptual rigour can be increased by using the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital (e.g. Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Woolcock, 2002; Woolcock, 2005). Several attempts have been made in this direction, mainly working with the bonding and bridging concepts. Bonding (integration - intra-community ties) and bridging (linkage - extra-community ties) then account for the bottom-up strategies. Yet most of these frameworks, in their attempt to integrate bottom-up and top-down, fail to clearly distinguish social capital from the factors influencing it. For example, in Woolcock's (1998) framework: integration and linkage are clear types of bonding and bridging social capital, but are synergy and integrity then types of linking social capital? Woolcock and Narayan (2000) present another framework aimed at merging ideas of bridging social capital with governance: to what extent then is governance linking capital or social capital in general?

A possible answer lies in a clear demarcation of the concept of linking social capital, which has not until now been fully integrated in synergy frameworks, despite being the central means of linking bottom-up and top-down. Again, the influence of the wrong institutional variant obscures our understanding, with its tendency to equate linking social capital with its macro-economic, cultural, and normative outcomes. Wolleb's (2008: 373-74) definition, in *The Handbook of Social Capital,* is exemplary: 'So in the macroeconomic sphere, the relevant social capital is linking social capital, in the form of confidence in the correct and equitable functioning of institutions, and more generally the

honesty of individual economic actors'. Compare with Woolcock's (2002: 26) micro definition of the concept: 'The capacity to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the community is a key function of linking social capital.' If social capital is best understood as a micro phenomenon (Woolcock, 2005), one should be consistent, and perceive all its types as micro phenomena. Thus, coming back on the top-down/bottom-up framework: linking social capital is the capacity of individuals or particular social networks to access formal institutions (bottom-up), the organizational integrity and synergy of these formal institutions are not linking capital, but influence this capacity (top-down).

Second, the analytical framework can be made more comprehensive by a clear differentiation of the formal institutions influencing social capital in a top-down manner, as not only the state plays a role in this respect. Bebbington (1999: 2035) refers to the 'familiar trinity' of state, market and civil society; i.e. all three institutional spheres having their own logics (e.g. patronage versus market transaction versus collective action). From the framework follows that their integrity and willingness to synergy will determine the effectiveness of the top-down approaches. Viewed from a bottom-up perspective: linking social capital is the capacity – 'the feel for the game' (Bebbington, 2007: 156) – to deal with the different logics of these three institutional realms; voice, exit and loyalty categorizing the three broad ways of interaction (Bastiaensen et al., 2002).

This presents us with a framework integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches (Figure 1). The central idea of the framework, according to Woolcock (2002: 26), is that such a 'multi-dimensional approach allows us to argue that different combinations of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital are responsible for the range of outcomes that we observe in the literature, and to incorporate a dynamic component in which optimal combinations change over time.'

Figure 1 Social capital: synergy between top-down and bottom-up approaches (source: author)
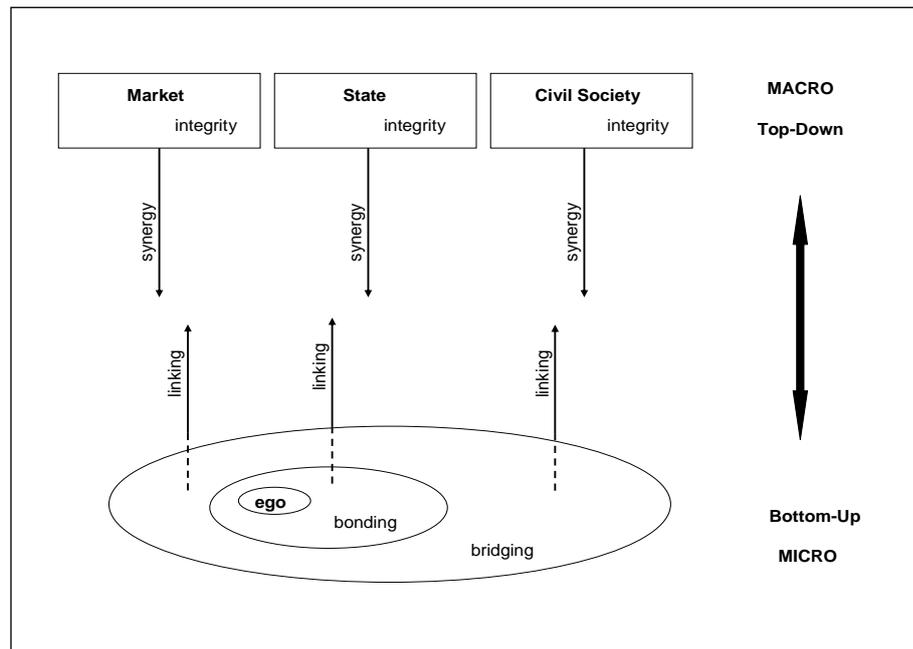
1.4 The political economy of social capital

The sequence of the above discussed views presents a certain evolution within the social capital debate (Bastiaensen *et al.*, 2002). After the network view added 'content' to social capital, the institutional view placed it back in its 'context'. As such, Putnam's reworking of the concept – a normative definition that stripped out both 'content' and 'context' (Harris, 2001) – has been annihilated. Thereafter, the synergy view aimed to make a synthesis of the debate. But each view has its weakness: the network view runs the risk of remaining 'simple' structuralism, both the institutional and the synergy view tend to focus on macro processes, and remain blind for the interaction between social capital and the micro-context and local level factors.

However, a leitmotiv throughout the debate has been the critique on the original normative social capital concept of Putnam, and the rediscovery of one of the main originators of the social capital concept, namely Bourdieu. Bebbington (2007) expresses an emerging consensus in the social capital debate by saying that 'even the most trenchant critics of social capital [he mentions Fine, 2001; and Harriss, 2001] seem to suggest that if the concept is to be of any analytical value at all, it has to be understood in the way that sociologist Pierre Bourdieu uses it – as part of a theory of practice, itself grounded in a broader theoritization of political economy.' A strand of research has followed this piece of advice, and has tried to outline/use such a political economy or Bourdieuian perspective

on social capital, although in a unsystematic way (e.g. Bebbington, 2002, 2007; Bebbington, Dharmawan, *et al*. 2006; Cleaver, 2005; DeFillipis, 2001; Toit, Skuse & Cousins, 2007; Edwards & Foley, 1997; Molyneux, 2002; Portes, 1998; Silvey & Elmhirst, 2003; Svendsen & Svendson, 2003; van Staveren, 2003; Vasan, 2007; Wilhusen, 2009). These scholars want to reestablish social capital as a sociological concept, and by doing so share the critique of people like Fine (2001) and Harris (2001) that mainstream social capital thinking has been used as a discourse to integrate 'the social' into micro-economics. Wilhusen (2009: 394) summarizes the difference between a Bourdieuian and Putnamian approach as follows:

> In summary, Bourdieu's heuristics permit a view of social interaction that is contextually grounded, explicitly relational, and attentive to dynamic power relationships over time. In contrast, mainstream conceptualizations of social capital derive from Putnam focus predominantly on the accumulation of network capacity and thus present a static and acontextual perspective on social process.

Some basic assumptions underlie most of the work done by scholars following this Bourdieuian perspective. They can be listed as following:

- **A relational view.** Social capital is *embedded in social networks*. What makes social capital unique is that it is manifested in relationships among individuals and groups, and not in individuals or entire societies. Thus, any attempt to analyse or describe social capital should start from the *particular social networks* in which it inheres. Furthermore, social capital is defined functionally as a means to access other resources, or in Bourdieu's terms, to access economic and cultural capital. As such, the definition given by Portes and Landolt (2000: 532) aligns well with this Bourdieuian perspective, i.e. social capital is best distinguished as:

  […] the ability to secure resources by virtue of membership in social networks or larger social structures.

  For scholars of the Bourdieuian perspective, this definition conceptualizes social capital more narrowly as a 'social relational and structural resource', excluding notions such as (generalized) trust, reciprocity, collective action, and other value-laden terms which have made the concept vague and normative in the hands of Putnam (Edwards and Foley, 1998: 135).
- **A contextual view.** Social capital is manifested in *culturally embedded networks*. This should overcome the structural bias. The ability to access resources through social relationships is shaped by broader institutional and cultural patterns of particular contexts. If and how people use their social capital is dependent upon their 'social location' (patterned along lines of race, class, sex, geography, …) (Edwards and Foley, 1998: 129). In Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) terms, this 'social

location' is defined by peoples 'habitus' (their predisposition proceeding from their social background), their endowments of capital (economic, cultural, social) they possess and mobilize, and the 'fields' (different social arenas within society, each defined by particular 'rules of the game') in which they operate. Thus, a second basic assumption is that social capital can never be analysed apart from the particular contexts and practices in which it inheres. A major consequence of this contextual view is that efforts to identify context-independent and universal aspects of social capital are useless – again a critique towards more Putnamian notions of social capital, which, for example, are measured in survey data as the General Social Survey (Edwards and Foley, 1998, 1997).

- **A political economy view.** Social capital is *unequally distributed* in society, and tends to *reproduce power relationships*. From its context-dependent character two other conclusions can be drawn. First, just as economic and cultural capital, social capital is unequally distributed within society: the ability to access resources throughout networks is dependent upon your particular 'social location' within society. Second, because of its context dependent character, social capital is inextricably bound up with the unequal distribution of resources and power within society, and as such, reproduces it. From such a perspective, social capital is both a product and a producer of broader cultural and policy economy (Bebbington, 2007: 155).

These basic assumptions are for example nicely summarized by Toit *et al.* (2007: 2) when they outline their paper on the political economy of social capital in Rural Eastern Cape:

> It [the paper] argues that if the concept is to be useful at all, it needs to be used in ways that are sensitive to the fact that social capital inheres in social relations; that these social relations cannot be understood separately from the meaning-giving practices and discourses with which they are entangled; that the analysis of social capital requires an agent-centred approach that is alive to the way in which it is used, transformed, created, made and remade; and that such an analysis further more needs to be alive to the nature of power relations both on the micro-level and the macro-level of political economy. The analysis of social capital therefore should be linked to a careful account of the practices, networks, systems and processes that empower some and enable them to climb out of poverty, but which also marginalise and trap others in poverty that is deep-seated and chronic.

This demands for a different approach to the study of social capital. These scholars want to revalue the 'social' in social capital (and not 'capital'). The crucial idea they want to underscore is the fact that social capital cannot be understood separately from the particular contexts and practices with which it is entangled. As such, their work is also a

methodogical critique on the more mainstream social capital research, which is 'marked by a modernist tendency to shoehorn the specificity of culture and society into abstract and essentialising frameworks which are then deemed broadly applicable to all cultures and contexts (Toit *et al.*, 2007: 3). Therefore, from a Bourdieuian perspective, the analysis of social capital should remain dependent upon other forms of social analysis (Mosse, 2008: 96), in order to present a more fine-grained and contextual analysis. Most of these scholars try to achieve this objective through ethnographic and case study research.

1.5 Social capital and conflict, livelihoods, and projects

After introducing the social capital debate, a further contextual angle is required. Below I present three bodies of literature, dealing with the link between social capital and respectively conflict, rural livelihoods and development projects. These tailor the social capital debate more concretely to the context of the present work: on the one hand, the Burundian context of post-conflict reconstruction (context), and on the other hand, development interventions (object). This literature will only be briefly introduced, as these issues will recur and be explored more in depth throughout the subsequent chapters.

1.5.1 Social capital, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction

Whereas in the beginning of the 1990s the social capital debate was mainly directed towards development, democracy and civil society, it has recently been integrated in research on violence and conflict (e.g. Bohara *et al.*, 2006; Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b; Goodhand *et al.*, 2000; Mehmet & Mehmet, 2004; World Bank, 1999). As a result, social capital has become a factor in post-conflict reconstruction research and policy (e.g. Barron *et al.*, 2004; Cullen & Forman, 1998; Harvey, 1998; Moser & Shrader, 1999; Obidegwu, 2004; Pickering, 2006; Richards *et al.*, 2004)

At the beginning of this debate, the basic assumption was that violent conflict destroys social capital. War and conflict zones were characterized as 'zones of social capital deficiency' (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000: 390). Since then, the idea has experienced some refinements, i.e. that violent conflict transforms social capital rather than destroying it, and that violent conflict can produce 'perverse' or 'bad' social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b; Goodhand *et al.*, 2000). Such refinements have stimulated Colletta and Cullen (2000a, 2000b) to elaborate a more nuanced analytical framework and hypotheses on the nexus between violent conflict and social capital, which has been broadly adopted in both research and policy, and joins in with the general analytical framework presented in the previous section.

Colletta and Cullen (2000a) link social capital with social cohesion and quote Berkman and Kawachi to define the latter:

> Social cohesion refers to two broader intertwined features of society: (1) the absence of latent conflict whether in the form of income/wealth inequality; racial/ethnic tensions; disparities in political participation; or other forms of polarization; and (2) the presence of strong social bonds-measured by levels of trust and norms of reciprocity; the abundance of associations that bridge social divisions (civic society) and the presence of institutions of conflict management, e.g. responsive democracy, an independent judiciary, and an independent media. (Berkman & Kwachi quoted in Colletta & Cullen, 2000a: 4)

Thus, translated in social capital terms social cohesion is dependent upon a combination of: (i) the presence of bonding capital (strong and trusting social bonds), (ii) the abundance of bridging capital (associations that bridge social divisions) and the existence of linking capital (access to institutions of conflict management, e.g. responsive democracy etc.) The relationship between social capital and social cohesion is then expressed in 'the nexus of vertical and horizontal social capital and the balance of bonding and bridging social capital' (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a : 4). This informs a typology of situations (Figure 2). Conflict-prone situations (low social cohesion, high conflict) are equated with the sub-optimal combination of strong but exclusive bonding social capital, a lack of bridging capital, and links with an oppressive, authoritarian state. Peaceful situations (high social cohesion, low conflict) are equated with the optimal combination of the absence of exclusive bonding capital, strong bridging capital, and links with a democratic state. Based on the earlier work of Woolcock (1998), this typology can be split into types of societies (bottom-up), based on the bonding/bridging distinction, and states (top-down), based on the *synergy* and *integrity* criteria (Figure 3).

Figure 2 Social cohesion and social capital (source: Colletta & Cullen, 2000b)
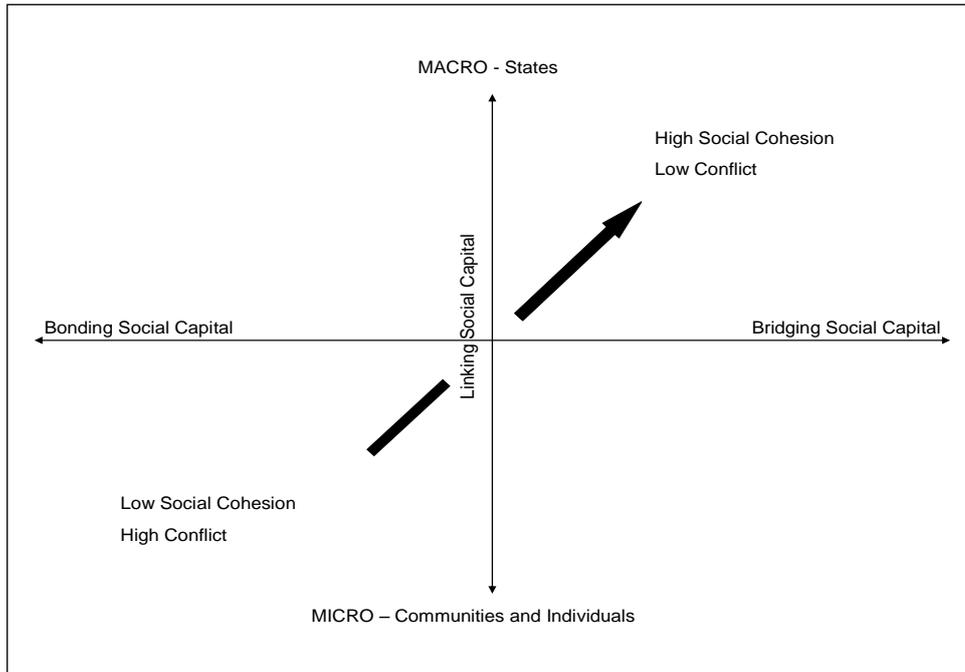
Figure 3 Social cohesion and social capital: typolohies of states & communities (source: Colletta & Cullen, 2000b)

	States				Communities		
		Organizational Integrity (state capacity and effectiveness)				**Bonding Social Capital (intra-community ties)**	
		Low	High			Low	High
Synergy (state-society interaction) — High		Predation, corruption (rogue states)	Cooperation, accountability, flexibility (developmental state)	**Bridging Social Capital (extra-community ties)** — High		Amoral individualism	Economic advancement
Synergy (state-society interaction) — Low		Anarchy (collapsed states)	Inefficiency, ineffectiveness (weak states)	**Bridging Social Capital (extra-community ties)** — Low		Anomie	Amoral familism

The main policy conclusion, now a mantra in post-conflict reconstruction policy documents, resulting from this literature, has been the need to substitute 'bad' bonding social capital for the more inclusive and 'good' bridging social capital. Morfit (2002) presents this idea as the core element of the social capital approach for post-conflict assistance. Whereas one approach is to design programmes which react quickly to the strong injustice felt by one side of the conflict (thus making explicit victims and perpetrators), the social capital approach diametrically emphasizes the need for 'inclusive' programmes, bringing together all actors in the conflict to transform 'shallow' (simple, rigid and exclusive, i.e. bonding) into 'deep' (complex, flexible, and inclusive, i.e. bridging) social capital.

Three broad but important observations can be presented about this policy conclusion. First, it reproduces the general, but oversimplified, tendency to equate bonding with 'bad' and bridging with 'good' social capital (Geys & Murdoch, 2008). Second, insufficient light has been shed on the role of linking social capital. The core idea is centred around the bonding/bridging distinction, leaving vertical (linking) issues of post-conflict reconstruction aside. And if linking capital is discussed, confusion is prevalent, as there is again no clear distinction between the macro influence of different types of states (political economy) and the micro ability to access and interact with these states (linking social capital). Third, following on from earlier observations, there is a tendency towards a one-sided bottom-up and society-centred analysis. An important question here is how types of social capital interfere, and how one proceeds from the sub-optimal combination of conflict-prone situations to the optimal combination of peaceful situations. From the synergy view we remember that causal arrows follow both directions: bottom-up and top-down. However, with its focus on the bonding/bridging distinction, this policy conclusion defines both conflict and its solutions more as a matter of society (uniting and bridging different groups within society), and less a matter of state-society relations. Reasoning goes from society to the state: transforming bonding into inclusive bridging social capital will ultimately lead towards better linking social capital and a state dedicated to peace.

All three observations reveal that both research and policy linking social capital and conflict still partly refer to the communitarian and Putnamian notion of social capital, focusing on both the 'good' bridging social capital and the primacy of bottom-up/society-centred approaches, in which face-to-face interactions on the community level are defined as the independent variable and the 'real' source of social capital, which in the end produces democratic governance (Szreter, 2002). As such, it partly fails to find the right equilibrium between bottom-up and top-down analysis. These are observations which the present work aims to tackle.

1.5.2 Social capital, poverty and rural livelihoods

From the beginning, social capital as a concept has been rapidly adopted by the international development community, especially the World Bank (Bebbington, Woolcock *et al.*, 2006). Social capital has even been called the 'missing link' (Grootaert, 1998) to poverty alleviation and development. Especially the *Voices of the Poor* studies, led by Narayan (1997) delivered empirical foundations for the link between social capital and poverty, which is twofold. On the one hand, it became clear that lack of social capital (lack of social relations and social belonging) is as much a part of the experience of poverty as is lack of income. Second, social capital was perceived as an important asset in the hands of the poor to empower themselves and cope with their poverty. Not surprisingly then, social capital became a new conceptual language which was integrated in the World Development Reports (WDR), especially the WDR 2000/2001 (Bebbington, Woolcock *et al.*, 2006).

The bonding/bridging/linking distinction has brought the analysis of this link between social capital and poverty a step forward, and produced the broad hypothesis that poverty is linked with a combination of high bonding, but low bridging and linking stocks of social capital. Woolcock (2002: 26-27) summarizes this hypothesis:

> These distinctions have particular significance for understanding the plight of the poor, who typically have a close-knit and intensive stock of bonding social capital that they leverage to "get by" ([…]), a modest endowment of the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital typically deployed by the non-poor to "get ahead" ([…]), and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions such as banks, insurance agencies, and the courts ([…]).

This subtle view reflects the need to mitigate enthusiasm about the link between social capital and poverty reduction, as social capital is unequally distributed, mostly at the expense of the poor, and thus can reproduce as much as it can eradicate poverty.

The livelihood framework has become a popular framework to link social capital to rural livelihoods and poverty reduction (Toit *et al.*, 2007: 3–4). From the definition (Ellis, 2000: 10) the link between livelihoods and social capital is already clear:

> A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual of the household.

In this framework, social capital is one of the assets at the disposal of households to perform livelihood strategies. As such, the livelihood framework is more inclined towards the network view of social capital, defining it as a property of individuals or small groups

(in this case, households), integrating both horizontal and vertical relationships (contrary to Putnam's focus on horizontal associations), and incorporating both benefits and costs of belonging to such relations and networks (Ellis, 2000).

In particular Bebbington's (Bebbington, 1997, 1999; Bebbington & Perreault, 1999; Bebbington, Dharmawan *et al.*, 2006) work has made more explicit the need for a political economy perspective when analysing this link between social capital, rural livelihoods and poverty. First, his work has emphasized the importance of social capital as an asset in the livelihoods framework, in that it facilitates or hinders access to other assets on which households build their livelihoods, and so can work as a catalyst for both the eradication and reproduction of poverty. Second, he placed the discussion in a broader perspective, while arguing that the functioning of market, state and civil society also defines the rules of access to resources, and so has considerable impact on the functioning of social capital as an asset in the livelihood strategies of rural households. Such a framework features in Bebbington, Dharmawan *et al.* (2006), which illustrates the combined efforts of political economy and social capital analysis to conceptualize village level livelihood and governance problems.

1.5.3   Social capital and development projects

The third and final link between social capital and external development interventions is the one which ultimately grounds the present work, and which will define the main unit of analysis, i.e. development projects. That this link should receive attention is clear when examining the implications listed by Woolcock and Narayan (2000: 53) of the social capital debate for development theory and policy:

> [...] development interventions should be viewed through a social capital lens, and assessments of their impact should include the potential effects of the intervention on the social capital of poor communities. As we have seen, the social networks of the poor are one of the primary resources they have for managing risk and vulnerability, and outside agents therefore need to find ways to complement these resources, rather than substitute for them.

Social capital soon became a pillar of development policy, in that external development interventions were asked to 'create social capital that increases the voice and economic opportunities of the poor' (World Bank, 2000: 129-130). In particular social capital has been linked to debates on social funds (e.g. Van Domelen, 2007) and community-driven-development (CDD) (Mansuri & Rao, 2004), later on added with community-driven-reconstruction (CDR) (Cliffe *et al.*, 2003; Strand *et al.*, 2003). However, although social capital became a new conceptual language in development policy, this did not result in strong efforts to use in practice a social capital lens. It will be hard to find a project,

programme or policy documents which do not state they increase, nurture or strengthen social capital, yet few of these documents will present it as a strategic objective. Relying on a normative communitarian analysis, and as a result of the 'lazy' (Bebbington, 2004: 344) or 'banalized' (Molyneux, 2002: 169) use of the concept, in most cases, social capital will be equated with associations, to box it into the logical framework of projects and programmes, its measurable indicator being the number of associations built. As Francis (2002: 7) describes for the World Bank:

> All Regions of the Bank are, of course, engaged in operations with a bearing on social capital […]. More specifically, community driven development and social funds, as well as programs in rural and agricultural development, human development and poverty alleviation, almost always draw upon and affect social capital at the community and local level. Most Regions have made some use of the concept of social capital in analytic or investment work. However, no Region has made social capital an orienting or strategic concept for its work.

If the aim of this thesis is to analyse the interaction between social capital and concrete development projects, this also demands a theoretical point of departure on how development projects should be conceived. In this respect, I rely on the literature defining development projects as 'arenas' in which 'strategic groups' enter into 'conflict' with each other (De Sardan, 2005). Here conflict has no pejorative meaning; it merely subscribes to the empirical observation that conflict is inherent to social life. Thus, conflict is a synonym for bargaining processes through social interaction between actors with different interests. An arena is then a 'space in which real conflicts between interacting social actors occur around common stakes [in this case, the development project].' (De Sardan, 2005: 190). The concept of 'strategic group', being an alternative for the rigid and mechanical notion of 'social class', then subscribes to the empirical observation that, within such an arena, groups are formed to defend common interests. Strategic groups have a variable nature, in that strategic alliances can be time-, context- and issue-specific, while not excluding that these can evolve into more durable alliances. As such, the development project can be characterized by the 'game' metaphor. As De Sardan (2005: 185) writes:

> A development project (or development infrastructures, in general) thus appears to be a game in which players involved all use different cards and play according to different rules. It could also be seen as a system of resources and opportunities which everyone tries to appropriate in his or her own way.

Developers (external agencies) and 'developees' (beneficiaries), and several strategic groups and individuals within these groups of developers (e.g. expatriate country director versus local social worker) and developees (e.g. men versus women), play the game with different cards, and all have different expectations about the development project, in terms

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of their own particular interests. Such observations emphasize the fact that an external development intervention always operates within an existing social context. External agencies have the tendency to assume that their project is always the recommencement of local history, negating both the synchronic (e.g. simultaneous projects of other agencies) and diachronic (e.g. past projects) contexts in which they operate. Instead, projects are tailored to the local social context, selective adoption (e.g. adopting farming techniques, yet rejecting the literacy programme) and sidetracking (e.g. a farmers co-operative using the proceeds to buy a minibus to organize transport instead of reinvesting in farming activities) being two main principles explaining such appropriation (De Sardan, 2005: 144-45). The bargaining and appropriation process between the different stakeholders can be analysed according to the mediation and brokerage literature, which presents certain outcomes in the scope of the development project (e.g. Bastiaensen *et al.*, 2002; Bierschenk *et al.*, 2002; De Sardan, 2005; D'Exelle, 2004).

Through this literature it is possible to tailor the general analytical framework of social capital debate to the particular context of development projects (Figure 4). In doing so, it portrays development projects as local 'arenas'.

Figure 4 Social capital, bottom-up and top-down approaches, and the development project
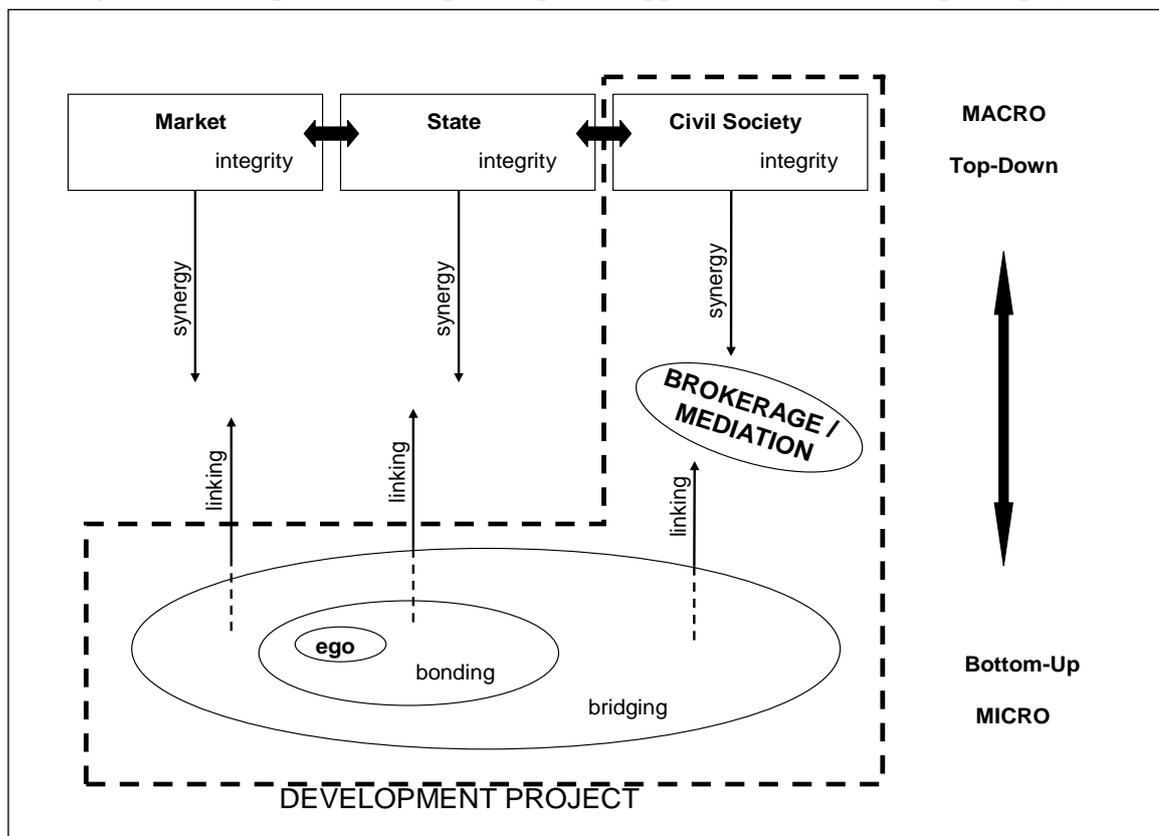
An external development project is therefore categorized as a top-down strategy from the civil society realm. Bastiaensen *et al.* (2002) argued that the success of development

projects depends on the equilibrium sought by the external agency between *synergy* (inclusive and participatory relations between the external agency and the community) and *integrity* (ability to avoid local power struggles). From a top-down perspective, the question then is how the external agency will nurture, create, change or destroy local stocks of bonding/bridging/linking social capital. From a bottom-up perspective, the question is how existing stocks of bonding/bridging/linking social capital will change, adapt, ease, or hinder the implementation of the project. Brokerage and mediation are then placed at the intersection of these two causal arrows. As such, this framework provides an analytical visualization of the scope and layout of the present work.

Chapter 2

Some methodological notes

2.1 Introduction

Here I explain my research methodology. After presenting arguments in favour of a multiple case study approach, I discuss the steps through which this approach materialized. First, the identification and selection of the case studies will be discussed, followed by a list of the main research themes. The next section examines the various data collection techniques used, in particular the use of focus group discussions. I end this methodological note with a chronology of the various periods of fieldwork carried out for this dissertation.

2.2 Research aim and approach : a descriptive multiple case study

As has been explained above, the aim of this thesis is (i) a critical analysis of the debate on the social capital concept and the claims which are made about its role in post-conflict settings, and (ii) a critical analysis of local NGO 'social engineering' practice to post-conflict reconstruction. This is done through an ethnographic descriptive multiple case study approach, which allows to grasp the particular reality of three NGO-interventions and their attempts to 'social engineer' peace and development in the north of Burundi after more than ten years of civil war. A case study can be defined as:

the detailed examination of a relatively few persons or items. The subjects of study must of course be appropriate to the matter in hand, but they will not usually be chosen by a formal sampling process. [...] The essential methodological feature of a case study is that it provides in-depth analysis, detailed analysis. (Caseley & Lury, 1987: 64-65).

The choice for a descriptive multiple case study was primarily motivated by the fact that context will play a major role in this research. Yin (1993: 3) exactly points to this argument when recommending case study research:

The case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context. It is deliberately including the context as a major part of the study.

For present research, this contextual argument is threefold. First and foremost, as described in chapter one, a Bourdieuian political economy perspective, underscores that social capital cannot be understood separately from the particular contexts and practices with which it is entangled. Therefore, a relational and contextual view with emphasis on power relationships is necessary. This demands for a fine-grained and detailed case study description, rather than large quantitative data sets that are unable to present a contextualized picture of social reality. As a consequence, this political economy perspective has mainly produced detailed case studies in which the context dependent character of social capital is taken seriously (e.g. Bebbington, Dharmawan, *et al.* 2006; Cleaver, 2005; Toit, Skuse & Cousins, 2007; Molyneux, 2002; Silvey & Elmhirst, 2003; Vasan, 2007; Wilhusen, 2009).

Second, since conflicts are no longer settled on a battlefield, but are fought in the streets of cities and villages, it is the community that presents the 'nexus of conflict action' (Goodhand & Hulme, 1999), and presumably, also the 'nexus of conflict resolution'. The case studies will illustrate this point: although the national Burundian conflict had serious consequences on and trickled down to the local level, both conflict and post-conflict settings are primarily defined by local level factors within the particular studied communities. Conflict analysis therefore also requires a detailed micro-perspective.

Third and lastly, this thesis tackles the lack of community level analysis of NGO-interventions in areas affected by conflict (Goodhand, 2006). Despite the natural tendency of projects to assume that 'history begins with the project', while underestimating the ecological, economic, institutional and political history that came before its arrival, 'project/milieu' interactions always take place within the particular context, and affects project outcomes (Olivier de sardan, 2005: 139). Thus, also these NGO-interventions – as the main unit of analysis – are context-dependent, and demand for a contextual approach. As such, the thesis hopes to offer a detailed contextual 'empirical story' of three NGO-

interventions and their attempts to 'social engineer' peace and development in the north of Burundi.

Consequently, the thesis presents a multiple case study, as it gives such an in-depth and detailed analysis of three particular NGO-interventions on three particular *collines* in northern Burundi: (i) the CIBA project on Burara *colline* (Busoni *commune*, Kirundo province), (ii) the LITA project on Tangara *colline* (Butihinda *commune*, Muyinga province), and (iii) the CLC project on Cumba *colline* (Muyinga *commune*, also in Muyinga province). As the case studies will illustrate, this gives the advantage that a comparative perspective is possible, both bringing forth similarities between cases and highlighting particularities of each case.

Descriptive case studies can be distinguished from exploratory case studies, which are mostly undertaken as preliminary research prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses. They can also be differentiated from explanatory case studies, which particularly seek to explain cause-effect relationships. The definition of a descriptive case study therefore reflects best my research set-up:

> A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon [social capital] within its context [three particular NGO post-conflict reconstruction interventions].' (Yin, 1993: 5).

My research approach can be labeled ethnographic, but then defined as:

> referring primarily to a particular method or sets of methods. In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 1).

Thus, I call my case study approach ethnographic, primarily because it is based on 'going to the field'. In general approximately 15 months have been spent in Burundi, including 10 months of actual fieldwork on Burara, Tangara, and Cumba *collines*. For each of the cases, daily visits to the field for at least two succesive months have been executed, in addition to field visits during preparatory research. However, I never lived on the three *collines*, which limited the opportunity for participant observation. Besides, taking into account the complex realities of interventions, these ten months proved quite a minimum to me. During fieldwork I was able to achieve a general picture of the different histories of the *collines* in the light of the above research questions (as is presented in chapter 4 and throughout the empirical chapters 5 to 8). However, during field research one also runs into many other particular and interesting stories or issues which demand time to unravel and grasp them fully. Therefore, I decided to focus strictly on the above research questions, and the events shaping these different events. Thus, the thesis is not a

'classical' anthropological study, based on actually living a substantially longer period of time in one particular location. Instead, by being present and researching these three *collines* allowed me a more focused understanding of the lived realities with regard to the three NGO-interventions.

2.3 The case studies : the CIBA, LITA and CLC livelihood interventions

Now to the selection of the case studies. Four American-based international NGOs introduced livelihood interventions under the umbrella of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The projects were implemented in four provinces in northern and central Burundi (Kirundo, Muyinga, Gitega, Karuzi) between 2005 and 2007, and $2.5 million dollars of resources were requested for the implementation of the total initiative (LSIC, 2004). This dissertation will present ethnographic findings on three of these livelihood interventions in the north of Burundi. Concretely, the three case studies are (i) the CIBA project on Burara *colline* (Busoni *commune*, Kirundo province) (ii) the LITA project on Tangara *colline* (Butihinda *commune*, Muyinga province), and (iii) the CLC project on Cumba *colline* (Muyinga *commune*, also in Muyinga province).1 This case selection was done in two successive stages.

In the first phase, the NGO-interventions were identified. The main criterion guiding my choice for livelihood interventions was their representativeness for post-conflict reconstruction in general, and reconstruction activities in Burundi in particular. Livelihood interventions are identified as appropriate instruments to implement post-conflict reconstruction policy in protracted crises situations, and their focus on food security aligned well with the Burundian context of protracted food insecurity and the critical role of the agricultural sector in the livelihoods of Burundian households. Livelihood interventions have become popular because they aim to bridge a particular gap in international response to protracted crisis situations, i.e. the need for developmental relief (Russo *et.al.*, 2008). As such, livelihood interventions link humanitarian short-term interventions with the start of long term measures for reconstruction. Specifically for the Burundian case, the focus on food security and agricultural production within such

1 As explained in the introduction, for the sake of discretion the identity of the different NGOs is not disclosed. I use pseudonyms, which stand for Consortium Initiative Burara (CIBA), Livelihoods Tangara (LITA), and Cumba Livelihood Consortium (CLC).

livelihood projects represents the primacy of food security as one of the most urgent and important 'peace dividends' for the Burundian population after 10 years of civil war (BINUB, 2008), and the need to rebuild the agricultural sector in a country in which 94% of the population is dependent on this sector for their livelihoods, and which accounted for 45.2% of the Burundian GDP in 2005 (RoB, 2006a).

Due to financial and time constraints, it was impossible to select four case studies, which would have enabled me to cover all four NGOs residing under the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium. Only three projects were selected as case studies, in two provinces in the north of Burundi. Partly, the choice to work in Kirundo and Muyinga provinces was based on practical concerns, since both provinces border on one another, which made it more practical to plan and implement the fieldwork. However, the main reason was methodological, and is related to the second stage of the selection of the case studies.

In this second stage, a maximum variation strategy was used to select the three concrete NGO-projects and the three *collines* on which the research would be conducted. The objective was to select cases rich in information, facilitating in-depth analysis of each particular case, but also to maximize variance between NGO-projects, facilitating interesting comparisons between the cases. Variance between NGO-projects was observed along two criteria: (i) the presence of activities differentiating the project vis-à-vis the other interventions, and (ii) variance in intervention approach (Table 4).

Table 4 Variance between NGO-projects (source: author)

	Intervention Approach	Core Activities
LITA	Associational approach	Storehouses
CIBA	Mixed associational/household approach	Wetland development
CLC	Household approach	Health issues / individual training
NGO 4	*Associational approach*	-

LITA used an associational approach to implement its activities, CLC followed a strict household approach, and CIBA used a mix of both. Furthermore, the construction of store houses was typical for the LITA project, whereas the CLC project was characterized by its clear focus on health issues and capacity building (focus on individual training, minimal distribution of material resources). Instead, the CIBA project mainly focused on development of the wetland. This is a very brief characterization of the three NGO-projects (chapter 4 will elaborate more extensively on them), but it explains why NGO 4 was left out: their project had no activities substantially differentiating it from the other projects, and their implementation strategy was similar to that of LITA.

As a consequence, the identification of the *collines* resulted in the selection of 'typical cases' (Patton, 2002: 236) for each NGO-intervention. For the CIBA project, Burara *colline* was selected, because it was close to the wetland which constituted the main focus of the project. In the case of the LITA project, Tangara *colline* was selected because of the

presence of a store house and a large number of associations supported by the project. For the CLC project, the selection of the *colline* was more ad hoc, since no activities were limited to particular *collines*, yet it was found that most of the CLC activities were indeed implemented on the selected *colline*.

According to Patton (2002: 235), this maximizing of variance between the cases will provide two kinds of findings: '(1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. Both are important findings in qualitative research.'

2.4 Research themes

Based on preliminary research on the three selected NGO-interventions in 2006, several research themes came up and further guided the field work experience. Structural components of social capital refer to the 'visible' forms or 'social wires' of social capital, i.e. to the relationships, networks, associations, actions and other social structures which connect people (in addition to cognitive social capital: the norms, rules and values inherent in these structures, and which explain their functioning, ref. Uphoff, 2000). Four such structural components of social capital came forward as important research themes: social support networks, associations, local governance, and project activities.

All four components will be explained in depth later in this thesis. Here, it is enough to indicate the reasons why they were selected as research themes to further guide the field work. First, during preliminary research, informal social support networks were observed as the most organic and historically embedded component of social capital. Traditionally, these networks facilitated mutual support and solidarity, yet the protracted crisis situation seemed to have negatively affected their functioning. Second, as elsewhere in the world, two of the three NGO-interventions used associations as 'universal blueprints' to organize rural communities and build social capital. Third, all three NGOs made great efforts to ensure their interventions were community-based and participatory. Therefore, they worked together with local administration and set up new local participatory intermediating structures. Both strategies refer to the third structural component of social capital: local governance structures. Lastly, during preliminary research, it became clear that NGO-interventions did not have a 'one-shot' impact on social capital, but that different project activities resulted in substantially different social capital effects. Therefore, project activities or components were selected as a fourth structural component of social capital (cf. particular actions affecting community cohesion such as weddings, communal works, or village festivities) and as a last research theme.

These research themes clearly overlapped: for example, some project activities worked via associations, while others did not; collaboration with local administration can explain the effectiveness of certain project activities and vice versa, and in turn associations can act as social support networks. Thus, questions on one of the research themes frequently generated important information for other themes during field work. It illustrates the difficulty of categorizing the relational aspects of development projects, and the context-dependent character of different forms of social capital that influence one another. Yet the overlap and the mutual interference between the different research themes supported the idea that the research was working towards an in-depth analysis of the three NGO-interventions and their social capital effects.

2.5   Data collection techniques

Once the research themes fed into the research and field work, appropriate instruments had to be identified to collect the data. Focus groups and interviews with key actors, and to a lesser extent non-participant observation, were selected for this task. However, before dealing with these data collection techniques, a few words must be said about my role as a researcher in the local research setting.

First or all, a researcher should be aware of his own subjective position and motivations when going to the field. Particularly important for my field work is the position of the researcher vis-à-vis the development project. Because such projects can be described as 'arenas' (Olivier de Sardan, 2005) in which different groups in the community try to appropriate the project, the question should be asked if and how the researcher takes sides in this process, and how it influences the research. Most likely, a researcher will feel empathy for the underdog, or those who have been disadvantaged, which reflects a tendency to choose sides with those who criticize and focus on what went wrong. This bias should be taken into account, but also, for example, the consideration that people can 'use' the research to affect the social positions of others should be kept in mind. When things are going wrong and conflicts arise, the truth is not so easy to distinguish from rumours, gossip and lies (for an extensive case study on the centrality of rumours in Burundi on a national level, see Turner, 2007). However, it also reflects the position of a researcher as an 'engaged observer' (Sanford & Angel-Ajani, 2006): one cannot ignore the ills and wrongs which have been identified, and sometimes a researcher will make an active intervention to change a particular situation. This also relates to the issue of researchers struggling with the fact of reciprocity: what can be done as a service in return, can we, for example, use our position to defend research participants interests? All these considerations also influenced my behaviour and attitudes during fieldwork: feeling uncomfortable about the negative effects of the NGO-interventions, reflecting if and how

to react upon corrupt practices, a troubled conscience because asking many questions and not doing so much in return, and so on. Reflecting in detail upon these issues should bring me to discuss concrete cases, but the general point I want to make is that such issues are mostly not integrated in research design, yet most researchers are inevitably confronted with them during field work.

Second, a researcher should also not forget that he is himself a research object for the local community, hence why self-representation is an important task during field work (Brown, 2009). People can have multiple perceptions of the researcher based on aspects of race, gender, age, status, and so on. Apart of being a *muzungu* (a white person), the aspect I believe was most critical in my relationship with the communities was my alleged relationship with the case study NGOs. De Herdt *et al.* (2004: 27) correctly state that 'the degree of connection the respondents believe there to be between the research and a development intervention' is one of the first elements which significantly influences the interview situation. Therefore, throughout the field work, considerable efforts were done to present the research team and myself as independent from the studied NGOs (visiting the *collines* with own transport probably being the most important factor). However, it should be kept in mind that this link between me as a researcher and the 'aid industry' necessarily influenced the interaction between the research team and the communities, sometimes overtly (people suggesting to finance their new association), sometimes more indirectly (the question to report people's worries to the NGO managers in the capital Bujumbura).

Which brings me to a third point: the sometimes difficult issue of building up acceptance and trust which should facilitate the researcher-participant interaction during fieldwork. As will be explained in the following sections, the choice for focus groups (instead of individual interviews) and the skills of the focus group moderator are important in this respect. However, the most critical factor to achieve this trusting relationship was my daily return to each *colline* for about two months. Although I stayed an outsider, the acceptance of my presence was eased by the choice for relative long periods of fieldwork in small geographical areas. Within a couple of days, the majority of people were aware of my presence and my objectives. As field work progressed, people learned more about the research through fellow community members which already participated in the focus groups. Sometimes, in the last focus groups people referred back to earlier focus groups held on their or neighbouring *sous-collines*, which indicates that the research also became a topic of discussion in daily community life. In sum, the crucial element in creating trust and willingness to cooperate with the research was the fact that people appreciated that not a small group of people, but a large part of the community was invited to focus groups or interviews, and could express their views and opinions. It reflects Wood's (2006: 382) point that acting as an 'engaged listener' was some sort of service in return for their willingness to share their views with you, but in my case it was

particularly the inclusiveness of my 'engaged listening' which proved to be of major importance (see also further).

2.5.1 Non participant observation

Social, cultural and political factors limit the opportunities to conduct full participant observation (Patton, 2002: 266). In my case, the population on the three *collines* continued to perceive myself and my assistants as outsiders. Every morning we arrived on motorbikes and every evening we went back to the provincial city, as there was no accommodation available on site. In addition, this region had a history of *bazungu* white people coming to their hills, mostly in big white jeeps, to distribute all sorts of things (also one of the reasons why I preferred motorbikes). As such, it would have been unrealistic to make my observations as a participant in project activities and daily life.

However, observation was used during research, in particular during preliminary fieldwork, to understand the projects and their activities, and to form a picture of the general research context. In some cases, I joined NGO staff when they were conducting activities such as meetings with beneficiaries, seed distributions, inspection of works, capacity building of associations, and so on (once preliminary research was finished, also joint field visits with NGO staff stopped). On many other occasions, I visited the *collines* individually with my interpreter. Observation was used to go and look at some project activities, but also to analyse a diverse range of contextual factors that influenced the NGO-interventions: e.g. the observation of beneficiary identification for other projects, food distributions by WFP, communal meetings or activities, etc.

2.5.2 Key actor interviews

In general, key-actor interviews were used on a complementary basis with the focus groups: actors which could not be tackled during focus group interviews, such as elites, were addressed during these interviews, and they allowed the cross-checking and substantiation of focus groups.

Key informants are knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and their insights can prove valuable to understand and explain certain general events, but they also provide additional information because of their particular situation. (Patton, 2002: 32). Thus, for example, interviewing a member of the local administration did not only yield new information on project activities or general community issues, but was also an opportunity to ask more questions about his or her particular function in local administration, and the potential responsibilities he or she had within the project.

The key informants can be subdivided into four groups (Table 5). A first group presents local administration such as *chefs de colline*, *chefs de sous-colline*, and the *nyumbakumi* (chief of ten households). A second group assembles the mediating structures: all the people involved in the implementation of project activities (presidents of associations, *encadreur de base*, captains, members of committees, and so on). A third group includes the staff of the various NGOs, and lastly, there was a remaining group of people who for one or another reason were important on their hill (e.g. petty traders, politicians, teachers, and so on).

Table 5 Key-Actors Interviews

	LITA	CIBA	CLC
Administration	11	4	10
Mediating Structures	13	13	9
Staff	3	4	4
Other	3	2	/
TOTAL	**30**	**23**	**24**

The selection of key actors was different for all three NGOs. In general, more interviews were done for LITA, because of the complex situation and the difficult cooperation with local administration. Administration was less important for CIBA as they worked with more NGO staff in the field and so fewer interviews were conducted with local administration. CLC, in turn, worked less with mediating structures than both other NGOs. In conclusion, the selection of key actors was tailored to the context of each NGO-intervention.

The interviews were done by local assistants. They used an interview guide to maximize the conversational and flexible character of the interview (Patton, 2002: 343). During my preliminary research it became clear that conducting my own interviews with an interpreter was not a good option. In one-to-one interviews, people are reticent towards a white researcher and his interpreter, and do not feel at ease, in particular when answering questions about sensitive topics such as corruption or the mismanagement of project benefits. (In focus groups this problem is less present because of the group dynamics and the group tasks, see further). My local assistants memorized the different interview guides and started a conversation with the informant, while taking some notes and writing down important quotes. At the end of the interview, the interview guide was checked to ensure no information was missing. Only afterwards the assistants made their report, in which they put together the quotes, notes and remarks.

How my local assistants were selected is explained in the section on the chronology of the various periods of fieldwork. However a short note should be made about their role in the research process. One should be aware that also local research assistants are themselves a research object for the local community:

Research participants use researchers' physical appearance, accent, mannerisms and multilingual abilities to identify them with certain ethnic, regional and even political groups [...] The collection of identities on a research team can also make them more or less likely to be perceived by participants as biased, foreign, or unfriendly, which would hamper their ability to work ... (Paluck, 2009: 45).

Although unintentionally, my research team was composed of two Hutu and two Tutsi. However, I'm unable to give a clear picture on how their ethnicity could have played a role. One issue that did came up, when discussing this item with my research assistants, was that ethnicity primarily played a role when interviewing notables and more prominent and powerful individuals in the communities (this was much less the case with ordinary community members). One example was the interview of a powerful Tutsi businessman with clear links to a political party: the assistants spontaneously proposed that it was better that an assistant of the same ethnicity could interview him. But even more important was that it should be the eldest among them, because the businessman would never accept to be interviewed by a young person. And indeed, in general, the local assistant with considerable more difficulties than the others to put people at ease was the youngest among them (a problem I also faced as a young researcher). In retrospect, the most important decision was probably that I decided to work with local people, and not with more experienced people from, for example, the capital Bujumbura. My decision had advantages and disadvantages. Surely, although all research assistants had previous experience with interviewing, it took them some time to acquire the research questions and techniques. However, what was observed as extremely important during field work, was to avoid that research participants were treated high-handedly (people can be very shy when confronted with people coming from the city). The only way to earn the trust of these people is to show a sincere and honest interest in their lives and problems. Because of their earlier experiences with interviewing or working as local social workers in NGO-projects, and living near to these rural areas, my local assistants were experienced in how to handle this issue. The 'distance' between them and the rural households could be bridged. However, this also had a drawback: although I was sure than none of them had worked on the particular hills for the NGOs under study, I could not exclude that my assistants were completely unknown on the *collines*. For example, my interpreter/research assistant lived a considerable time of his life close to one of the *collines* I researched. Another one was married with a women which grew up close to another *colline* under study. Furthermore, my research assistants all lived in the provincial city of Muyinga, and as such, had their own opinions on how the civil war had raged in the north of Burundi. As such, my local assistants became important advisors to explain local customs, attitudes and behaviour of people I could not fully grasp, or to inform me about some broader historical or political facts. This also facilitated that they felt responsible for the research and were attached to it. Yet, on the other hand, it was important to permanently realize that this information was based on their subjective interpretations (in this respect, the fact

that there were four 'subjective' interpretations helped of course). These issues indicate that one should not neglect the role local research assistants play in the progress of field work.

2.5.3   Focus groups

As focus groups constituted the main instrument to collect the data, these are explained in depth. Focus groups are a specific type of group discussions, in which group interaction is encouraged. They can involve different group compositions and various group tasks (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999: 5-6). A focus group can be defined as:

> […] a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is relaxed, comfortable, and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. (Krueger, 1988: 18)

The definition already presents the main arguments for using focus groups. First, the strength of the focus group technique is that it is ideal for understanding how people think or feel (Krueger *et al.*, 2001: 2). Focus groups are used to determine perceptions and feelings of consumers about products, services, or opportunities (Krueger, 1988: 29). In particular, they can be used to evaluate how well programmes or projects are working (Krueger & Casey, 2001: 5-6). Indeed, perceptions can differ substantially from the objective reality of programmes or projects, yet these subjective perceptions and feelings held by 'consumers' will to a great extent determine the impact of such programmes or projects. Thus, for the present research, focus groups were used to explore and analyse the perceptions and feelings of community members about the selected NGO-interventions, and in particular, in relation to their social capital effects. In addition, the aim was not to know 'how many' people hold a certain opinion – questionnaires are more appropriate to get such information – but 'how' and 'why' these opinions were constructed and expressed (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999: 5).

Second, the power of focus groups is their specificity (Patton, 2002: 344). Whereas in-depth ethnographic research is more suited for analysing broad cultural issues, focus groups are more appropriate for studying specific topics (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999: 5). Thus, a focus group must be seen as a carefully planned discussion to obtain data on a well defined area of interest, that is, for this research, the interaction between social capital and external interventions, and more concretely, the four specific components of structural social capital: social support networks, associations, local governance, and project activities. Therefore focus groups are to a great extent analyst-driven. Yet they

stay flexible enough because of the open-ended questions that are used in the discussion. As such, one can still go into unanticipated issues that come up during the discussions (Krueger, 1988: 45).

A third reason why focus groups were used, was the simple reason that they obtained better results. During preliminary research, individual interviews and more formal and structured interactions (questionnaires) were also conducted. Both the formal/structured and individual character of these interactions scared people off. Being the sole focus of the interaction, and sitting in front of a researcher filling in different forms, put too much pressure on most participants. In individual interactions also more apathy was experienced, in that people indicated they did not have much to say about the topic. Inviting them in group and providing participants with some enjoyable group tasks made them much more at ease and active in sharing views and opinions. As such, my experience supports the idea that in some circumstances focus groups can reveal more specific and meaningful answers than is the case with formal and/or individual techniques (Patton, 2002).

Lastly, focus groups can enhance the quality of the data as participants provide checks and balances, thus weeding out false or extreme views. In addition, it is relatively easy to assess if there is consensus or a great diversity of opinions on a specific topic (Patton, 2002: 386). In particular, in their article that analyses social capital in context, Dudwick *et al.* (2006: 4) point to the fact that asking open-ended questions about social capital to a group of people can yield more nuanced data than surveys. Discussions on the *chef de colline* on Tangara *colline* have been only one clear example of this argument. During these discussions, people were asked to rank the *chef de colline* according to criteria such as trust, effectiveness, and his intention to help community members. Two totally different yet not incompatible answers returned: they respected their chief when he took up his traditional role as mediator in the resolution of communal conflicts, yet they did not appreciate at all how he managed the LITA project and the aid distributions in general. A general survey question on the perception of local administration would have had difficulties in revealing such nuances.

There are however also limitations when using focus group discussions. Among other things, fewer questions can be asked in a group setting and there is less time for each individual; sensitive topics are difficult to discuss, minority views are difficult to incline, and discussions can be dominated by an opinionated member. (Patton, 2002: 286-387; Stewart *et al.*, 2007: 43). In other words, working through focus groups cannot always succeed in grasping the diverse realities and opinions of individuals or groups of individuals. Focus groups became popular with the emergence of participatory development and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) techniques, and share with them the tendency to treat 'the local' as a harmonious community, with a consensual view (Mohan & Stokke, 2000: 253). Instead, conflict analysts deliberately search for conflicts within communities, as they start from the

hypothesis that conflict is inherent to social life, since society is a pluriform entity, with interdependent but autonomous actors with different world views engaging with each other (De Hert *et al.*, 2004: 20).

Several steps were taken to anticipate these potential limitations of focus groups. First, fieldwork started from an analytical point of view that draws particular attention to conflict and power relationships, and is aware of the danger to 'romanticize' communities. As elaborated in chapter one, a Bourdieuian political economy perspective on social capital exactly criticizes mainstream social capital thinking for its romanticized communitarian views and the negation of power relations in their analysis (see section 1.4). In addition, when discussing the link between social capital and development projects, the latter have been identified as 'arenas' in which different 'strategic groups' enter into conflict (see section 1.5.3). Thus, the deliberate search for conflicts within communities, as applied by conflict analysts, formed a crucial part of field work.

Second, and as a consequence of the foregoing, this emphasis on conflict and power relations was translated into the questions asked and tools used to guide focus group discussions. As the term indicates, a focus group is a planned discussion focusing on some specific topics or issues. Therefore, the success of and the kind of information accessed through focus groups largely depends upon the questions asked, and the quality of the discussion in general. Therefore, when designing, preparing, and executing the focus groups discussions, particular attention was paid to reveal both 'cooperation' *and* 'conflict' within the communities.

Third, a combination of focus groups, key-actor interviews and non-participant observation was used to cross-check and substantiate the focus group findings. Furthermore, observing community live, consulting documents related to project activities, and interviewing key-actors yielded important information to nurture focus group discussions, and reveal certain complexities and conflicts within the communities.

Lastly, and most crucially, by organizing a high number of focus groups on each *colline*, a substantial part of the community members had the opportunity to attend a focus group and express themselves. As such, the research attempted to reach a maximum of diverse views within the different communities, in order to go beyond the homogeneity of community views.[2] A second advantage was that this enabled me to go beyond elite

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[2] One example, based on personal experience, illustrates the importance of this issue. In 2009, participatory consultations were organized, in order to fix the priorities of a large scale UNDP funding for income generating activities in three provinces of Burundi. I happened to be at the community headquarters of Isale, when such a focus group was held with some local authorities, technical community staff (agronomist, etc), and some members of the community development committee (CDC). The priorities that were listed as an outcome of this consultation was the need to support agro-forestry associations and associations of brickmakers, together with the need for a food-for-work programme and the rehabilitation of the rural road. Only to illustrate that focus groups can be used in very different ways, since the risk of hearing a 'fairy tale of a united and dynamic village'

views. Elite capture and control is both a crucial aspect and a potential problem of development projects, in particular for community-based development (Platteau, 2004). Local elites mostly mediate the interaction between external actors and the communities at large, while acting as 'development gatekeepers' or 'development brokers'. Therefore, the risks are also high that only elite views are gathered when researching development projects. Of course, these elites yield interesting and additional information, and their views were therefore gathered during key-actor interviews. But the combination with focus groups enabled me to also go beyond these elite views. Thus, a high number of focus groups was used to access a maximum of diverse views, and make research as inclusive as possible within the time-limits of the field work period.

2.5.3.1   Focus group participants

The selection of participants is not always an easy task. In hypothetical 'ideal' circumstances, participants are strangers to each other, have more or less a homogeneous background and are selected after a pool of participants was compiled (Krueger & Casey, 2001). The circumstances on the three *collines* made it impossible to meet these requirements. Several reasons guided my selection process.

First, the purpose of the research should drive the study, and as such, also the selection of the participants (Krueger, 1988: 92). It was therefore decided that the focus groups should represent a cross-section of the community population. Since the main unit of analysis was the NGO-project, the main goal of the research was to compare the three *collines*, and not to make comparisons between subgroups on each *colline*. Therefore, the homogeneity of the focus groups was broadly defined: the common characteristic that united the participants was that they lived on one of the three hills and as such were confronted with the activities of the NGO-project on their hill.

Secondly, it was difficult, almost impossible, to further subdivide the population in more homogeneous groups or categories (see e.g. also Uvin 2009, expressing similar problems with categorizing his Burundian interviewees). In most cases, a pool of participants is based on lists that assemble people that fit the selection criteria (Krueger & Casey, 2001: 10). However, there were no data or lists to further subdivide the population by age, gender, socio-economic situation or occupation. There was also no time to conduct a poverty assessment myself based for example on wealth rankings. There were also no unified lists of beneficiaries of the projects. In addition, as was observed during preliminary research, a further subdivision of the population only resulted in biases and

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(Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan, 1997; quoted in De Hert *et al.*, 2004: 20) is much higher when organizing *one* focus group for an entire *commune* with 17.106 households than when organizing 37 focus groups for one particular *colline* with a maximum of not more than 1000 households (as was the case in Tangara).

wrong interpretations because of the close link between the research and the development projects. As a consequence, every attempt to break down participants of focus groups into more homogeneous groups, resulted in the population reinterpreting the criteria as criteria to access some kind of material gain. Of course, you can hardly blame them, since the previous history of external interventions on their *collines*, each time subdividing the population into beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, is completely different from a researcher who is interested in more homogeneous groups, simply because of methodological reasons.

For all these reasons the most open selection process was used: everybody could join the focus group. The only selection criterion was being a member of the community. As such, a diversity of opinions would be addressed, consensus and broad conclusions would be based on this diversity of opinions, and no criteria could be wrongly interpreted and lead towards biases.

One particular disadvantage of this open selection approach was that I could not control the ethnic composition of the focus groups. However, it would have been clearly rude to openly ask for ethnic representation in focus groups. Also when asking some basic questions on socio-economic background at the beginning of each focus group, we did not ask participants' ethnicity. This does not mean that ethnicity was not discussed during focus groups. Burundians are remarkably open on the ethnic issue, they acknowledge the errors of the past and particularly express their willingness to work towards a peaceful cohabitation in the present and the future (this openness is however relative because it is expressed in general terms, on the level of personal stories people are much more reluctant to dig into the violent past). Thus, whenever ethnicity spontaneously came up during discussion, I took this opportunity to elaborate further on the issue. In addition, information on ethnic issues within the community was mostly gathered through individual key actor interviews, or in indirect ways (e.g. the presence of IDP camps reflects the presence of Tutsi, local struggles between political parties can have ethnic connotations, land conflicts with returning refugees from Tanzania reveals similar ethnic tensions, and so on). It was also not to objective to gather individual stories, but to reveal if and how ethnicity was an 'issue' with regard to the development projects. As will become clear throughout the different chapters, apart from Burara *colline*, ethnicity was less important than expected.

I also mixed up men and women, old and young. This was justifiable because the research topics were in general not gender or age sensitive (Krueger, 1988: 92). The opinions about the projects were very much similar between men and women, young and old. Specifically with respect to gender, it should be indicated that also women participated as lively and dynamically in these mixed focus group discussions. One particular example illustrates this point. When discussing the role of the *adminstratice* (of the *commune*) on Tangara *colline*, this always led to animated discussions between men

and women. Often, the *administratice* addressed men hanging around in rural centres, making them clear that they should be working on their fields together with their wives. Unsurprisingly, men disapproved such brutality, yet women openly defended her approach to mobilize these men. However, as in any group, some individuals were more shy and reserved than others, but these could be both men and women, younger and older people. Tools (matrices, drawings, rakings, etc.) and group tasks have been used to maximize the participation of all participants.

To a certain extent, this open selection process was also guided by an ethical consideration. The communities did not want to be divided and subdivided over and over again because of external actors requesting the identification of beneficiaries for material gains or the selection of participants for meetings or other affairs. Most held the generally accepted conviction that 'identification' equated 'corruption', leading to repeated privileges for a small group of people within the community. This open selection process, and the choice of working on the small scale of the *colline* level, aimed at staying long enough on each *colline* to go beyond the small circle of people that always appears and speaks to external actors whenever they are visiting the *collines*, i.e. to communicate with the communities at large. And indeed, because of the long presence on each *colline* (approximately two months) and the high number of focus groups on each *colline* (between 200 and 300 participants for each *colline*), a substantial part of the community had the opportunity to attend a focus group discussion. On all three *collines*, the same process was observed: more prominent residents who were used to acting as mediators between their communities and external actors all passed by in the first two or three focus groups, expressing more optimistic and positive views, (most project evaluations stop here because of time concerns), yet thereafter, the majority of focus groups allowed 'ordinary' and sometimes very poor and destituted community members to express themselves.

This research therefore controlled geographical coverage and eliminated power imbalances. The focus groups were geographically representative, since I worked through the *chefs de sous-colline* (and *nyumbakumi's* – chiefs of ten households) to organize them, so that community members of all *sous-collines* (both close and more remote from centres and rural roads) could join and participate. Second, power imbalances were avoided by excluding people which took up a role as mediator in the projects or who fulfilled an important function in the community (in particular, local administration). These individuals were not sidelined (as they can yield interesting information) but instead invited for key actor interviews. Sometimes, I was not able to avoid these power imbalances and more focus groups were conducted if necessary. This was for example the case on Tangara *colline*, because local administration was substantially involved in some cases of project corruption, and tried to boycott the focus groups or at least control them. But in most cases it worked out well. Several times participants clearly expressed their

satisfaction with the way of working: small groups, a more or less closed room or isolated place where everybody could speak freely, and the absence of local administration or other mediators. This was in contrast with general practices of NGOs, which preferred open community meetings in which everybody could join and speak up. However, people were reserved during such meetings, since local administration or others could remember who held more critical views. As one person in Tangara expressed:

> When LITA comes for a meeting, then it is with everybody and we are scared to present our problems. It is better in a small group, like here, we are more at ease. (focus group, 31/05/2007, Tangara)

Furthermore, focus group participants were asked some basic questions. Their sex, age and sub-hill; and to have some idea of their poverty level, questions were asked about access to land and livestock, and the quality of their housing (a generally accepted and quick method used in Burundi, see e.g. Uvin, 2009). In addition, participants were asked if they had benefited from the NGO-project. These findings are presented below (Table 6), and give a general view of the focus group participants.

Table 6 Focus Group Participants (source: author)

CIBA			CLC			LITA		
SEX	**#**	**%**	**SEX**	**#**	**%**	**SEX**	**#**	**%**
man	123	58	man	103	53	Man	158	51
woman	90	42	woman	90	47	Woman	147	49
AGE	**#**	**%**	**AGE**	**#**	**%**	**AGE**	**#**	**%**
<20	5	3	<20	6	3	<20	10	3
20-30	55	26	20-30	60	31	20-30	81	27
30-40	60	28	30-40	54	28	30-40	86	28
40-50	43	20	40-50	30	16	40-50	65	21
50-60	24	11	50-60	25	13	50-60	41	13
>60	26	12	>60	18	9	>60	22	8
BENEFICIAIRY CIBA	**#**	**%**	**BENEFICIAIRY CLC**	**#**	**%**	**BENEFICIAIRY LITA**	**#**	**%**
ben	112	53	ben	73	38	Ben	141	46
non-ben	101	47	non-ben	120	62	non-ben	164	54
SUB-HILLS	**#**	**%**	**SUB-HILLS**	**#**	**%**	**SUB-HILLS**	**#**	**%**
munyonza	71	33	cumba	72	37	Tangara	63	21
bucanka	31	15	rutamba	70	36	Masiga	52	17
kirerama	20	9	ryaruvuno	52	27	Kiguruka	54	18
rusarasi	85	40				Kivoga	70	23
mpinga	6	3				Rurembo	66	21
POVERTY SITUATION	**#**	**%**	**POVERTY SITUATION**	**#**	**%**	**POVERTY SITUATION**	**#**	**%**
livestock			**livestock**			**Livestock**		
no	150	78	no	147	69	No	208	68
small (goat, etc)	43	22	small (goat, etc)	45	21	small (goat, etc)	95	31
cows	0	0	cows	21	10	Cows	2	1
land			**land**			**Land**		
<50x50	103	53	<50x50	116	55	<50x50	161	53
50x50 - 100x100	73	38	50x50 - 100x100	75	35	50x50 - 100x100	119	39
>100x100	17	9	>100x100	22	10	>100x100	25	8
housing			**housing**			**Housing**		
thatched roof	146	76	thatched roof	99	47	thatched roof	181	59
roof with tiles	47	24	roof with tiles	109	51	roof with tiles	124	41
tiles and ciment walls	0	0	tiles and ciment walls	5	2	tiles and ciment walls	0	0
TOTAL	**#**	**%**	**TOTAL**	**#**	**%**	**TOTAL**	**#**	**%**
	213	**100**		**193**	**100**		**305**	**100**

2.5.3.2 Focus group questions

Focus groups need to take a questioning route (Krueger & Casey, 2001). Both the topics of discussion and the questions must be carefully predetermined and sequenced, based on the analysis of the situation. Different focus group discussions were conducted, in line with the four research themes identified during preliminary research. By using predetermined group tasks, the questioning route was drafted again and the focus groups were made enjoyable for the participants (some flip chart presenting group tasks – a matrix, drawing, ranking, etc. – can be found in annex 1).

For the research theme 'social support networks' mainly two different focus groups were conducted. First, the resource exchange matrix used by Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004) was tailored to the Burundian context. By using this matrix it was possible to differentiate between what kind of resources people gave/received through which kind of social support networks. In a second focus group the people were asked to list the existing conflicts within the community (between neighbours, friends, family and community members in general), and which potentially stressed or changed the functioning of these social support networks. Drawings were used to present these different types of conflicts and afterwards the participants were asked to make a ranking.

For the research theme 'associations' focus groups differed according to the NGO-projects, since all three collaborated differently with associations. For example, in the LITA case, most associations were producer groups and received similar support from LITA (seed credits). As such, focus groups were held on these associations in general. By contrast, in the CIBA case, associations had substantially different activities and received different support from CIBA: e.g. rice associations, tree nursery associations, anti-erosion associations. Here, road maps were used to analyse the specific evolution and problems of these particular associations. Lastly, since CLC did not work with associations, and a general absence of associations was observed, in this case, discussion groups focused more on the reasons for this absence.

For the research theme 'local governance', two types of focus groups were conducted. First, an institutional matrix was drawn up based on Dudwick *et al.* (2006: 24). Participants were asked to score and rank different local structures (administration, committees, etc.) on accessibility, trust, efficiency and democratic decision making. Second, a variant of the venn diagram (itself too complex to be used properly) was used to map out the entire intermediation scheme which linked the external NGOs to the communities. This intervention map presented a river which separated the NGO (vehicle) from the community population, and participants were asked to list and draw the different islands which the NGO vehicle should pass to bridge the river and arrive at the community. This way of working was very efficient. Several times, straightforward questions on the functioning of intermediation structures found no answer, or at least not a detailed one. However, during discussion, participants were occupied with drawing all

these islands in the river, and only at the end it was asked if any of these mediating structures did not function well (in their words: NGO benefits failed to reach the other bank of the river and 'disappeared into the river'). In many cases, a much more animated discussion followed.

For the research theme 'project activities', one additional focus group was conducted, in which participants were asked to rank the different project activities according to certain criteria on social cohesion in the community: How well were community members informed about the activities? Did the activity help to reduce some community conflicts or did new conflicts arise? Did the activity affect trust and cohesion among community members? And so on.

Lastly, one focus group yielded information on all four research themes, except the 'social support networks' theme. In this focus group, access to (i) project participation (and thus activities and benefits), (ii) local administration and other mediators, and (iii) associations was examined more in depth. Through this access matrix, it was analysed what relationships and assets were important to participate in project activities, access local administration and mediators, and become a member of a local association. During the focus group, participants were asked to gives scores to the different aspects that defined their access.

This brings us to seven different focus groups. Below (Table 7) I present the different types of focus groups and for which research theme they yielded information.

Table 7 Focus Groups (types) (source: author)

	Focus Group	Explanation	Research Theme
1	Resource Exchange Matrix	What resources are exchanged between which people?	Support Networks
2	Conflict Ranking	Ranking of important conflicts in the community.	Support Networks
3	Associations	Motivational, functional and sustainable aspects of the working of associations.	Associations
4	Institutional Matrix	Performance of institutions on accessibility, trust, efficiency and democratic decision making	Local Governance
5	Intervention Map	Schematic mapping of mediating structures used by NGO to intervene.	Local Governance
6	NGO Activity Matrix	What is the impact of different activities on social cohesion in the community?	NGO Activities
7	Access Matrix	What determines access to NGO aid, local administration and mediators, and associations?	Local Governance Associations NGO activities

To determine the number of focus groups, I used the theoretical concepts of redundancy and theoretical saturation (Krueger & Casey, 2001). Focus group discussions on a certain topic were conducted until no new information was presented (in most cases, three to four focus groups were sufficient for each topic). In Tangara, considerably more focus groups were hed because of problems with the local administration (their efforts to control the research). In most cases between 6 and 10 people took part in each focus group, which conforms to the rule of thumb (Patton, 2002: 385). In total 83 focus groups were conducted (37 for LITA, 24 for CIBA and 22 for CLC) with a total of 711 participants.

Table 8 Focus groups (#) (source: author)

Focus Group	LITA		CIBA		CLC	
	# groups	# part.	# groups	# part.	# groups	# part.
Resource Exchange Matrix	5	43	3	27	3	27
Conflict Ranking	4	31	3	28	3	25
Associations	9	75	6	51	4	29
Institutional Matrix	5	39	3	26	3	30
Intervention River	5	43	3	30	3	28
NGO Activity Matrix	5	44	3	26	3	26
Access Matrix	4	30	3	25	3	28
TOTAL	**37**	**305**	**24**	**213**	**22**	**193**

The focus groups were conducted in teams of two, one moderator and one reporter, as is advisable (Patton, 2002: 386). The most basic level of recording was used: the reporter took notes and for all discussions a flip chart presented the drawing, matrix or ranking exercise (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999:15). These field notes yielded two different forms of data: general notes on content and progress of the discussion and quotes by various participants (Krueger & Casey, 2001: 14).

When searching for patterns and general conclusions triangulation was used to increase the validity of the data. First, a group discussion allows people to change and modify their opinions during the discussion, which creates a process of 'indefinite triangulation'. This triangulation can yield more qualitative data when compared to a definitive statement of a single person at a certain moment (Morgan, 1993: 24). Participants triangulate amongst

themselves during the discussion, and in the process of analysis afterwards, the analyst can triangulate between the different opinions in search of internal consistency.

Second, triangulation between the different focus groups dealing with the same topic was possible. The standardization of the focus groups and their questioning routes facilitated this as it made the comparison between the focus groups more easy. Thus, general patterns and conclusions were derived from consistency within but also between the different focus groups. However, both divergence within and between focus groups could also provide interesting insights, comparable to outliers in a regression analysis (Dudwick *et al.*, 2006: 11).

Lastly, the focus group data were triangulated with the data from the key actor interviews, and to a lesser extent with the non-participant observation and documents related to the project and context. As mentioned, the interviews with the key actors used insights from the focus groups to obtain the opinions of the key actors but also to verify and complete some of the focus group data.

2.6 The field work : chronology

I end this methodological note with a chronology of the different periods of fieldwork conducted. I visited Burundi for the first time in September and October 2005. These six weeks were used to familiarize myself with the country and to look for interesting entry points for my research. During this period, I had the opportunity to participate in a mid-term evaluation of a CARE project: *"Renforcement de la Société Civile et Education aux Droits Humains" (SCEDH)*. This evaluation brought me to five different provinces and provided me with a general view on Burundi in a short period of time.

My second period of fieldwork was planned from February until May 2006. The main objective of this period was to select the NGO-interventions which would serve as case studies for my research, and to conduct preliminary research, to prepare the genuine study of the three case study interventions in 2007. As a starting point in my selection process, I used the organisation RESO (*Rassemblement, Echanges et Solutions entre Organisations Non Gouvernementales*). RESO was an umbrella organization that assembled about the 40 most important international NGOs intervening in Burundi. They provided me with a report that gave an overview of the sectoral and geographical spread of NGO-interventions at that time, and a list with contacts. Based on the broad conclusions of my previous fieldwork, I selected some of these NGOs, and had a first round of contacts in the headquarters in Bujumbura. As explained in the section on the case selection the projects of CIBA, LITA and CLC were chosen. However, it was not an easy task convincing NGOs to tolerate a researcher analysing their projects. Some NGOs, like

CIBA and LITA, were enthusiast from the beginning. CLC, by contrast, was very reserved. As a consequence, CIBA gave their official agreement in the beginning of March, LITA came later on, and it required almost the four whole months to get an official agreement from CLC which would permit me to analyse their livelihood project in 2007. As a researcher, I remained totally independent financially. The NGOs only asked their staff to answer my questions and to present all documents available. In general, I underestimated the efforts and time it would require to convince the NGOs to agree with my proposal for cooperation.

In addition to this administrative part of my second field trip, the preliminary research during this period contained two main components. First, I analysed in depth the case study projects, as fortunately enough, all three NGOs agreed to let me analyse the main project documents, to talk to staff in headquarters and to make visits to their provincial offices, to obtain a complete understanding of the different projects, even before official agreements were obtained for further collaboration. Second, field work was conducted in Busoni commune, to get a preliminary view on the functioning of social capital in the lives of rural Burundian households (the fieldwork was conducted in Busoni, the intervention area of CIBA, since they agreed to join the research project early on during my second stay in Burundi). From a livelihood perspective, both a household survey (with particular attention for social capital issues) and a wide range of focus groups were conducted, to obtain preliminary views on my research topic, social capital, or in particular, if and how social capital was used in daily livelihood strategies of rural Burundian households. In sum, together with the analysis of the three case study projects, this preliminary field work on the functioning of social capital, enabled me to prepare more efficiently for the real field work of 2007. This resulted in the identification of the four research themes, the further refining of research questions and methodology, and the selection and further drafting of the data collection techniques (interviews, focus groups, questioning routes and questionnaires, etc.).

Finally, during my third and most extensive period of field work of seven months – January until July 2007 – the genuine comparative analysis of the three case study projects was conducted. First, I composed my research team. Fortunately, I could fall back on my interpreter/research assistant whom I had contracted for my fieldwork period in 2006. After spending several months together for this preliminary fieldwork, he was familiar with the research and became trained in moderating focus groups, a trusting relationship was established between us, and above all, he held the right attitude to communicate with Burundian farmers: he could put them at ease, he respected them as equals, and his humour was key to animating the group discussions. In addition, I selected a group of three assistants. Where I was based, in Muyinga, I informed administration and international and national NGOs that I was looking for assistants. About 15 candidates presented themselves for the interview and examination. Their previous working

experiences were taken into account, and their knowledge of the French language and their reporting skills were tested. Through role playing, their interviewing skills and their contact with possible interviewees was tested. Five candidates were selected to conduct three days of field research. After this exercise of three days, the three most capable candidates were selected. All three had previous experience with interview techniques. They were further trained about the research and for the specific tasks they had to execute.

Thereafter, I selected one *colline* – Tangara – to test and further refine the different techniques for collecting the data. From preliminary research, it was already clear that focus groups were an efficient instrument to collect the opinions and feelings of the population about NGO-interventions, and that interviews with key actors were preferentially conducted by Burundian interviewers. However, further refinement of matrices, maps, rankings and other group tasks was completed during this test phase. This period was also used to further train my assistants in interviewing key actors and moderating focus groups.

Finally, the analysis of the three case study projects was finished *colline* by *colline*. First, the research team travelled to neighbouring Kirundi province, to work on Burara *colline* (CIBA), then we turned back to Muyinga province and worked on Cumba (CLC) and Tangara (LITA) *colline*. We spent approximately two months on each *colline*, during which time we arrived daily early in the morning on hired motorbikes. After our introduction on the *colline* (presenting ourselves before local administration, some preliminary focus groups or interviews on the history of the *colline* and the project intervention, the identification of the key actors to be interviewed, and the preparation of the focus groups) during the first days, a daily routine was set in: together with my interpreter/assistant I descended towards one of the *sous-collines*, to conduct one or more focus groups, while my three assistants tried to make appointments and interviewed key actors or also conducted focus groups. In the early evening we returned to Muyinga and Kirundo city, where the assistants compiled their reports, and I handled the focus group data and the interview reports of the day before. Every day, important observations were discussed in group, to further refine the work for the following days. After the last visit on each *colline*, major observations were again discussed, and the end of work was celebrated with beer and chicken. These six months of daily field work were intense for the entire group, with ups and downs. For the author, they represent a significant, unforgettable experience.

PART TWO :
SETTING THE SCENE

Chapter 3

Introducing the Burundian context

Burundi is a small landlocked country situated in the Great Lakes Region, bounded by Rwanda in the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, and Tanzania in the south and east. Its hilly and mountainous surface of 27,830 sq km had an estimated total population of 8.3 million in 2008, almost half of which is under 15 years of age.[1] According to the *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (UNDP, 2008), Burundi has a GDP per capita of 699 (PPP US$). The report adds that 87.6% of the population lives on less than $2 a day, and 54.6% on less than $1 a day. With an annual population growth rate of 3.2%, and a population density over 300 inhabitants/sq km (one of the highest of Africa), the country experiences serious pressure on the availability of fertile land, endangering the livelihoods of many. Life expectancy at birth is 48.5 years, the adult literacy rate comes to 59.3%, and HIV prevalence is estimated around 3.3% of the total population. As such, Burundi is ranked 167th of 177 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI = 0.413) of 2007/2008, presenting one of the poorest countries of the world. It is clear that Burundi's violent history has played a catalyst role in creating this current poverty profile.

This chapter will introduce the Burundian context in two phases. After introducing the history of the Burundian conflict, a broader political economy perspective is introduced,

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1 Estimates and calculations of demographic and socio-economic indicators differ according to sources. Here, I rely on World Bank, IMF, UNDP, WFP, and Burundian Government data. A comprehensive overview can be found on the World Fact Book site of the CIA: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html

to frame the following chapters dealing with social capital as a micro-phenomenon into a broader historical context of macro-processes. Therefore I follow the approach of Bebbington (Bebbington, 1999; Bebbington, Dharmawan *et al.*, 2006) and introduce a description of the three institutional realms of society, state, and the economy. I introduce these briefly as a framework, since particular expressions of processes of social stratification, state formation and the interplay with the economy will recur throughout subsequent chapters.

3.1 The Burundian conflict

One could argue that Burundian history starts round 1700, when *Mwami* (Kirundi for king) *Ntare I* creates the first kingdom in what is now called Burundi (Eggers, 2006). He and his successors remain in power until the colonial area, at the end of the 19th century. First the Germans, and then the Belgians, controlled Ruanda-Urundi through indirect rule, leaving the King and his court to rule the country under the auspices of colonial administration. However, the Belgians introduced some important administrative reforms from 1926 until 1933, after which Burundi would never look the same again (Uvin, 2009). The reason for this indelible impact was the 'hamitic hypothesis' on which these reforms were based. This hypothesis, based on 19th century European race theories, placed ethnicity in the forefront of Burundian history (Lemarchand, 2009).

During pre-colonial times ethnic identities[2] did exist, based on occupational specialization, differentiating between Hutu (agriculturalists), Tutsi (pastoralists) and Twa (hunters and gatherers), and a somewhat special class of Ganwa or princes (see further).[3] The Twa, an often forgotten small minority, yet the first inhabitants to settle in the area, were marginalized by both Hutu and Tutsi. The Tutsi had immigrated to Rwanda and Burundi during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while Hutu agriculturalists arrived

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[2] In line with Fearon and Latin (2000: 848) I define ethnic identity as a social category, i.e. a set of people 'given a label (or labels) and distinguished by two main features: (1) rules of membership that decide who is and is not a member of the category; and (2) content, that is, sets of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moralm commitments, and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category, or behaviors expected or obliged of members in certain situations (roles).' This reflects a social constructivist position, rejecting the notion of unchanging, essential ethnic identities of primordialists, Burundi being an illustration of how ethnic identities have been changed over time and by context.

[3] Since Belgian occupation figures of 84% (Hutu), 14% (Tutsi), and 1% (Twa) have been replicated. Although the accuracy of these numbers has never been proved and is questionable, all agree on the fact that the Hutu present the majority of the Burundian population, while the Tutsi and Twa respectively present a minority and ultra-minority.

some centuries earlier from central Africa (Uvin, 1999; Lemarchand, 1970).[4] The differentiation between Hutu and Tutsi was however not so straightforward (Lemarchand, 1995: 6-10). First, the occupational dichotomy is not absolute, as the Tutsi did not have the monopoly on cattle herding. Second, Hutu and Tutsi were not rigid as social categories, as inter-caste mobility was undeniable, upward mobility (from Hutu to Tutsi status) known in Kirundi as *Kihutura*. Third, Hutu and Tutsi referred to both cultural and social identities, in the latter case, based on the social status obtained through patron-client ties, which presents confusing situations:

> Thus a Tutsi cast in the role of client vis-à-vis a wealthier patron would be referred to as "Hutu," even though his cultural identity remained Tutsi. Similarly, a prince was a Hutu in relation to the king, and a high-ranking Tutsi was a Hutu in relation to a prince. (Lemarchand, 1995: 10)

Instead, the hamitic hypothesis 'naturalizes' ethnicity while ascribing a genetic interpretation to these social categories (Daley, 2008: 49). From this racial point of view, the Tutsi minority was identified as '"born rulers", superior in every respect to the [Bantu or Hutu] "dark agricultural"' masses.' (Lemarchand, 2009). Thus, Tutsi were called *'Européens à peau noire'* or *'Juifs de l'Afrique'* (Chrétien, 1997: 151), because of their alleged links with the Caucasian race as Hamites (Sanders, 1969). These racial ideas led the Belgian administration to dismiss all Hutu of political positions during the reforms between 1926 and 1933, and to reduce access to secondary schooling to only a small Tutsi elite. As a consequence, Belgian colonisation introduced the supremacy and domination of the Tutsi minority over the Hutu majority, sowing the seeds of ethnic conflict and the manipulation of ethnic identities throughout post-colonial history.

Burundi became independent on the first of July in 1962, installing a constitutional monarchy in the country. A year before, the legislative elections of September 1961 were won by the nationalist Uprona party (*Parti de l'Union et du Progrès National*). At that time, both the Uprona party and its leader Prince Louis Rwagasore had the potential to unite all Burundians – both Hutu and Tutsi – around a national identity based on the struggle for independence. However, the assassination of Rwagasore by agents of the PDC (*Parti Démocrate Chrétien*, close to the Belgian government), and the Hutu social revolution in neighbouring Rwanda (triggering ethnic tensions in Burundi), created an ethnic polarization within the Uprona party between the 'Monrovia' (Hutu) and 'Casablanca' (Tutsi) groups. In 1965, new elections brought a second victory for Uprona, yet more importantly, with a clear ascendancy of Hutu political leaders. However, *mwami*

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[4] The origins of the Tutsi are not formally established, and statements in this respect are to a great extent speculative, but it is assumed that they originate from the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia (Lemarchand, 1970).

Mwambutsa refused to appoint a Hutu prime minister. A failed gendarmerie Hutu coup was put down by loyal Tutsi military officers, resulting in the assassination of many of the Hutu political leaders, and a weakened royal Court. One year later, Major Michel Micombero, one of the main actors during the repression, took over government, after a peaceful military coup on 28 November 1966, and installed the First Republic of Burundi while declaring himself Burundi's first president. This marks the beginning of the military dictatorship of *'la maffia de Bururi'* (Chrétien, 1997: 160), the Tutsi-Hima clan of the Bururi province, with two palace revolutions dividing the period between 1966 and 1993 into three republics, under three presidents from the same Rutovo *commune* in Bururi: M. Micobero (1st Republic, 1966-76), J-B. Bagaza (2nd Republic, 1976-87) and P. Buyoya (3rd Republic, 1987-93).[5] During these three decades, Uprona was the single political party. Both the party, the government and the army became strongholds of the Tutsi minority, and gradually a system was put in place, resulting in the total exclusion of the Hutu population: exclusion from political participation, no access to education, no opportunities for jobs in the army or the government administration. Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000: 390) note:

> For instance, in 1985, there were four Hutu out of twenty members of the cabinet; seventeen Hutus out of sixty-five members of a non-elected parliament; two Hutu out of fifty-two members of the Central committee of the then state Party, UPRONA; two Hutu out of fifteen governors of province; one Hutu out of twenty-two ambassadors; ten Hutu out of ninety University professors; nearly 20% of Hutu among university students, no Hutu among the country's prosecutors; and no Hutu among education inspectors, etc.

By contrast, through job distribution, corruption and clientelism within the administration and numerous state enterprises, the Burundian state became a 'milking cow' for the elites controlling it (Uvin, 2009: 11).

The events of 1972 marked the beginning of this exclusionary system. After a Hutu rebellion, the Tutsi dominated army executed a 'selective genocide' (Lemarchand & Martin, 1974; Lemarchand, 2009), eliminating the educated Hutu class. Estimations vary between 80,000 (Uvin 2009) and 300,000 (Lemarchand 2009) Hutu killed during the army's pogrom, yet many more fled the violence. Hence, all educated adult Hutu males were either assassinated or driven into exile. The 1972 events also gave rise to Hutu radicalism, as only a year later the Palipehutu (*Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu*) was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania, of which the anti-Tutsi ideology has until

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[5] It reflects that factionalism between clans within the same ethnic group – e.g. between the Banyaruguru and the Hima, between the Rutovu and Matana factions – was often more important to the dynamics of Burundian politics than Hutu-Tutsi divides (see e.g. Lemarchand 1995).

recently influenced the Palipehutu-FNL rebellion of Agathon Rwasa (Lemarchand, 2009). However, out of a general fear for a repetition of such events, and because all opponents were marginalized, Burundi endured relative peace until the end of the 1980s. In 1988 ethnic violence erupted again, but on a more local scale in Ntega and Marangara *communes* in the north of Burundi. One of the main differences with 1972 was the different reaction of the international community, in particular the attitude of the U.S.A. (Lemarchand, 1995). Whereas the international community simply averted its eyes in 1972, it sharply condemned the 1988 violence, which at the same time marked the start of the international community's pressure for democratization of Burundian politics and society (Reyntjens, 1993).

This democratization process culminated in 1993 with the first democratic elections held in decades, albeit in a climate of ethnic polarisation between the two main political parties: the (Tutsi-)Uprona party and the (Hutu-)Frodebu (*Front des Démocrats du Burundi*) party. Melchior Nadadaye, the Frodebu candidate, surprisingly defeated the incumbent president Buyoya (Uprona), gathering 64.75% of the votes in the presidential elections on the first of June 1993 (Reyntjens 1993). A few weeks later Frodebu won the national assembly elections with an overwhelming majority of votes (71.40%). As such, Ndadaye became the first Hutu president of Burundi. With Frodebu's victory, the Hutu majority also won a political majority in the national assembly: as parliament was composed of 85% Hutu and 15% Tutsi (Uvin, 2009).

Barely 100 days in power, Ndadaye was assassinated on the night of 20-21 October 1993, during a *coup d'étât* by units of the national army, which marked the opening of a civil war that raged for more than a decade throughout Burundi. One of the main reasons was the rapid 'FRODEBU-ization' of the lower levels of the state, which led to the fear among the Tutsi elite that the army would follow, until then acting as the safeguard of the Tutsi minority (Uvin, 2009). Although the *coup d'étât* failed, it sparked violence across the nation. The day after the assassination of Ndadaye, the Hutu population took revenge on their Tutsi neighbours, partly expressing popular anger, partly mobilized and organized by local Frodebu cadres. In response, the Tutsi dominated army tried 'to restore order', short-hand for the deliberately murder of Hutu and Frodebu members. 50,000 people – approximately an even number of Hutu and Tutsi – were killed in the days following Ndadaye's assassination (Reyntjens, 2000).

During the next ten years the entire Burundian population suffered as 'proxy targets' (Human Rights Watch, 1998) in the civil war between the national army, Tutsi militias and several Hutu rebel movements, of which FDD (*Forces pour la Défense de la*

Démocratie, the military wing of CNDD – *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie*)[6] became the main armed opposition, in addition to Palipehutu and later on FNL (*Front National de Libération*) and Frolina (*Front pour la Liberation Nationale*). The capital Bujumbura was divided into Hutu and Tutsi *'quartiers';* straying into the wrong *'quartier'* meant certain death. In the countryside the Tutsi population fled to urban centres and military posts, creating IDP camps, to seek protection from the army. Instead, many Hutu fled to neighbouring countries, to escape prosecution for their killings, or the retaliations of the army. Later on, from 1996 onwards, Hutu who remained in the country were forcefully displaced into *'camps de regroupement'*, officially to protect them against the rebels, yet in reality prisoners of the army to cut them off from Hutu rebel groups (Human Rights Watch, 1998). Recent statistics indicate that some 52% of the population have fled their homes at least once since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29), and that around 300,000 people lost their livee during the civil war (Lemarchand 2009), not to mention the devastating impact on the economy and the looming humanitarian crisis, which to date is still not entirely under control (WFP, 2008).

On the political level, the power vacuum left by the assassination of Ndadaye led to a 'creeping coup' of the army and oppositions parties (Reyntjens, 2000). In 1996 this was translated into an effective *coup d'étât* by former president P. Buyoya. This led to an economic embargo imposed by the neighbouring countries, only increasing the suffering of the Burundian population. At the same time, the international community put pressure on Buyoya to talk with rebels and open peace negotiations. After almost ten years of fighting, with no clear winner, most factions realized that a military solution was impossible, and an overall *'war fatique'* was prevalent, as people were 'sick of an unwinnable war' (Uvin, 2009: 18).

On 20 August 2000, both sides, comprising the G10 (ten Tutsi parties) and G7 (seven Hutu parties), signed the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, after mediation by the former presidents of Tanzania (J. Nyerere) and South-Africa (Nelson Mandela), and under major pressure from the international community. This peace negotiation process has twice put Burundi in a somewhat illogical situation. Consider the 'universal blueprint' of peace negotiations in a nutshell: after a cease-fire, a peace agreement is signed, after which a transitional government is put in place to demilitarize the country and introduce institutional reforms, ending in free and democratic elections, after which an era of post-conflict reconstruction starts to remove the structural causes of conflict (Daley, 2006a).

The first illogical situation is one of 'peace without a cease-fire' in 2000, as the main rebel groups – the CNDD-FDD and the FNL – did not sign the Arusha Agreements. Only

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[6] The CNDD-FDD has been formed after President Melchior Ndadaye's assassination. The FDD has been one of the more visible rebel groups during civil war, operating from DRC and Tanzania.

in 2003 did relative stability return to the country after the largest rebel group (CNDD-FDD) signed a cease-fire with the transitional government. At that time, power-sharing had to be renegotiated to include CNDD-FDD both as a military and a political partner, which confused the further planning of the transitional phase, in particular the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process (ICG, 2004a, 2004b). Under international pressure, the transitional period was concluded with democratic elections held in 2005, with a victory for the CNDD-FDD on al levels, and their strongman P. Nkurunziza overwhelmingly elected as the new president of the republic.

This introduced a second illogical situation of 'democracy without peace' in 2005, as the last Hutu rebellion, the FNL of Agathon Rwasa, was still active throughout the country, and in particular in Bujumbura Rural, holding a strong grip on the capital. Only recently, on the 22 of April 2009, the FNL transformed itself into a political party after signing and implementing a cease-fire agreement, the last step in the pacification of Burundi, and this nine years after the first peace agreement was signed in Arusha. Thus, from 2000 onwards until today Burundi is best characterized as a 'no war, no peace' situation (Richards 2005). Burundian post-conflict society should be understood as a 'distinctive space' with its own logic (Lambach, 2007: 5), in which potential for conflict is continuously reproduced (Dijkzeul, 2008: 2).

Yet most analysts agree that the Burundian transition has been a success story for the international community (ICG, 2007; Lemarchand, 2006; Uvin, 2009). To a certain extent this is the case. The 2005 democratic elections took place in a calm and peaceful climate, the democratic result was accepted by all parties, relative security returned to the country (except for the FNL), and constitutional reforms together with consociational government reconciled Tutsi rights with Hutu demands, which in turn, on a very short period, pushed ethnic conflict to the background of both political and everyday life in Burundi (Lemarchand, 2009). Keeping this process on track has been the result of the shared efforts of Burundians, neighbouring states, and the international community. Given the lack of any geo-political or economic importance, international efforts are all the more surprising (Uvin, 2009).

However, the challenges ahead are enormous. Because all intervening partners focused much of their efforts to come to an agreement with the FNL until recently, not much time was left to address the structural causes of the conflict. Security Sector Reform still faces many challenges (Nindorera, 2007; HRW, 2008); DDR programmes booked successes (Uvin, 2007), yet a new wave of demobilisation of FNL-rebels has sought extra capacity and resources (AFP, 2009b); 'democratic culture' is still weak, exemplified by a 'governance deficit' (Lemarchand, 2009) and a disappointing record of human rights violations and intimidation of political opponents and civil society actors, e.g. the 'Muyinga case' (HRW 2006) and the alleged *coup d'état* of September 2006 (Cenap 2006); the Radjabu case – dividing CNDD-FDD into pro-Nkurunziza and pro-Radjabu factions – illustrates the internal democratic deficit within the CNDD-FDD, but is also

exemplary of how the *'pratiques de maquis'* in general are introduced within the newly founded democratic institutions (Lemarchand, 2009); there is the problem of the refugees, IDPs and their access to land (ICG, 2003b); and still 66.9% of the Burundian population lives below the poverty line (RoB, 2008).

As a thread running through most of these different factors, explaining the motives of the main parties, and this from the very beginning after the 2005 elections, is the prospect of the 2010 elections, the next opportunity to gain or lose power over the state in a country in which access to that state is the only way to attain one's goals. According to many observers, in particular the competition between the CNDD-FDD and the FNL, and more generally the CNDD-FDD's fear of losing the elections, are factors which could destabilize the situation. As such, it is important to follow up how several of the listed challenges will evolve within a time frame dedicated to political mobilization in the run up to the 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections. These elections will test the sustainability of the Burundian peace process.

3.2   A political economy perspective

3.2.1   Burundian society

From pre-colonial time onwards Burundian society has been strongly organized and structured in a vertical fashion (Laely, 1997). In particular, vertical patron-client relations were seen as one of the cornerstones of social life and mobility (Lemarchand, 1995). Central to this clientage system stood the traditional institution of *ubugabire*. Translated as 'cattle contract' or 'contract of pastoral servitude', it involved a transaction of pasture land or cattle in exchange for services (workforce), offerings in kind (e.g. harvest), and loyalty via a highly personalized relationship between a patron (*shebuja*) and a client (*mugererwa*) (Lemarchand, 1970, 1995). It is here that Hutu and Tutsi as 'social' identities recur, as *ubugabire* is based on their occupational specialization – Hutu agriculturalists versus Tutsi pastoralists – and 'the unequal distribution of cattle and wealth between the patrons (Tutsis) and the clients (Hutus)' (Daley, 2008: 45). Yet it is important to underscore that this clientage system represented more a 'basis for closer union' (Lemarchand, 1995: 9), working as a 'glue cementing different social strata of the society' (Daley 2008: 46), rather than reinforcing ethnic boundaries or social inequalities between Hutu and Tutsi (in contrast to Rwanda, cf. Lemarchand, 1970). In this respect,

patron-client relationships were perceived as a vehicle for enrichment (but also for social mobility).[7] Lemarchand (1995: 13) quotes some Kirundi proverbs to illustrate the positive affinity towards these dependency relations:

> 'Amasabo arakize (Dependency makes one wealthy); Udasavye ntakira (He who does not have a protector will never get rich); Amasaka aba ku masabo (Sorghum [serial crop] grows in the shade of subjection).'

These expressions illustrate well why Wolf (1966) described patron-client ties as 'lop-sided friendship', because of their instrumental nature. However, inequality and coercion was not absent in these kind of relationships, especially in the higher echelons of society where clientage was linked with political power, and clients were not in the position to refuse certain obligations. The stability of these relationships, based on fair exchanges and a balance of rights and obligations on both sides, was mainly influenced by contextual factors. For example, general resource scarcity often increased the potential exploitation of the clients by their patrons, and in a post-independence context of ethnic polarisation *ubugabire* also became 'ethnicized', as in the Hutu-ideology patron-client relationships were presented as a mechanism of past Tutsi-domination (Lemarchand, 1995).

In development literature, and in social capital literature in particular, these asymmetric dependency relations are mostly unilaterally equated with its negative, say oppressive, consequences, and presented as characteristic of 'backward' societies. Putnam (1993), for example, highlights the 'bad' vertical patron-client networks to explain Banfields (1958) 'amoral familism' present in the south of Italy. He defines patron-client ties as 'unresponsive' linking social capital, as the bridging of power differentials is only used by the powerful to control the powerless (Putnam, 2004)[8]. However, the traditional social mobility function of patron-client ties through the institution of *ubugabire* may equally refer to 'responsive' linking social capital, as it potentially redistributes resources, ideas and information in the advantage of the powerless (Putnam, 2004; Woolcock, 2002). To some extent, the Burundian context turns Putnam's thesis (1993) upside down, as exactly the clientage system – which, according to Putnam, can only result in 'exclusive' social capital – actually possessed the capacity to 'bridge' different social groups, and worked 'inclusively'. [9] At least in the Burundian context, this demands a more nuanced analysis.

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[7] The difference between 'enrichment' and 'social mobility' is that the latter implies change in status. This change in status or inter-caste mobility was called *Kihutura* in Kirundi, and was undeniable in pre-colonial times (Lemarchand 1995: 8). (I thank prof. Tom De Herdt for his remark on this difference).

[8] Patron-client ties are defined as linking social capital, because of the explicit power differential that they bridge. Whereas bonding and bridging social capital are mainly captured in a horizontal terms, linking social capital refers to the vertical and assymetric character of social relationships (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

[9] This indicates the risk of essentialising types of networks, and highlights the need to keep in mind that particular social networks are dynamic and can simultaneously take up different roles, with different effects. In

Whether 'responsive' or 'unresponsive', these vertical patron-client relations have long played a central role in Burundian society (e.g. Laely, 1997; Kamungi *et al.*, 2005).

This is not, however, to suggest that horizontal and symmetric relationships do not exist in Burundi (Laely, 1997). A much less discussed type of social network in Burundian society is that of *abatererezi*, or what Trouwborst (1973: 111) has called the network of 'beer friends'. Traditionally, Burundian rural households are part of a horizontal social network, based on the institution of *ukuterera*, which means the gift-giving of food and beer during ceremonies (Trouwborst, 1973: 111). In particular each married male has the social duty to offer beer during festivities, and in turn, will receive beer when he himself organizes a ceremony. People rely on these networks for the preparation of their land, the guarding of livestock, the construction of houses or helping the sick (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993: 9-10). The network is mainly based on *solidarité par parenté* (kinship solidarity) and *solidarité residentielle* (neighbourhood solidarity), as the core of the network is a relatively unchanging local group of relatives and neighbours (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993). When Burundians refer to mutual help and solidarity among the population, they mostly have this type of network in mind. Yet, as Uvin (2009) describes, the help and solidarity found in these kind of networks are currently under pressure because of the devastating consequences of civil war (social divisions, economic crisis), echoing the link between conflict and social capital, in that conflict zones can be described as 'zones of social capital deficiency' (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000).

However, the *abatererezi* network also illustrates the fact that beyond the extended family, and the bonding social capital linked to it, there is little horizontal or community organization in Burundian rural social life. As Uvin (2009: 69-70) nicely summarizes:

> All early scholars agree that the only centre of a Burundian's life was his family. Typically, one's neighbours are one's family, and while there is a sense of joint belonging to a *colline*, that is hard to separate from belonging to an extended family. […] There are no traditional village chiefs or masters of ceremony, no age groups or secret societies.

It reflects a society in which rural households do not live in villages, but in isolated homesteads (sometimes called *rugo*), close to their *itongo* (land), scattered all over the

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this case, a patron-client relationship could both 'link' (across socio-economic boundaries) and 'bridge' (across ethnic boundaries) at the same time; just like patron-client ties, but then from a mono-ethnic character, could result in more exclusive ethnic bonds, when they were instrumentalized during political struggles. Although Putnam (2000) himself admits that social relationships can bond and bridge at the same time, the search for a typology of networks, which to a great extent has its basis in Putnam's normative dichotomy between 'bad' bonding and 'good' bridging social capital, engenders the danger of essentialing the functioning and outcomes of social networks.

collines of Burundi. Thus, if any social capital able of cutting across social divisions was present in Burundian society it was embodied in the vertical, more personalized patron-client ties described above, and much less in horizontal, associational, and group-based social structures. In this respect, Burundian bridging social capital is far removed from the Putnamian (1993) horizontal 'networks of civic engagement', which are in many cases presented as 'universal blueprints' of such bridging capital, or social capital in general (Molenaers, 2003).

There is however one exception, which adds to the notion of community organization in the Burundian context, i.e. the institution of *ubushingantahe*, a legal and moral authority playing an important role as 'advisor' in local conflict regulation (Laely, 1997). A *mushingantahe* (singular) or 'wise man' is a person who embodies *ubushingantahe*: 'The set of virtues that include having a sense of justice, as well as honesty, righteous self-esteem, and an ethic of hard work – roughly summed up as "integrity"' (Nindorera, 2003: 30). One only becomes a *mushingantahe* after passing several stages of initiation by practising *bashingantahe*, and after approval by the community. As such, the authority is sustained from within the community, and thus from below. However, after the colonial period, its history has been one of manipulation and politicization from above, with an ambiguous role during the civil war; some trying to stop the violence, others participating in it, still others criticized for not having done enough to stop the violence (Dexter & Ntahombaye, 2005). Current arguments within international donor circles, about 'traditional' transitional justice and reconciliation, has led to large amounts of donor money being invested in the rehabilitation of the institution (Dexter & Ntahombaye, 2005). Unfortunately, this externally driven 'scaling-up' process has deprived the institution of the *bashingantahe* of its local embeddedness, while transforming it into a national and top-down led organization. Although many agree with this criticism of the institution, the idea and the values behind it are still highly valued by the Burundian population (Uvin, 2009).

It should now be clear that Burundian society has long been highly complex. A tangle of kinship and clan ties, ethnic affiliations, and patron-client ties define the position of an individual in the social order (Lemarchand, 1995: 13). To give a final example, Burundian society is divided in 220 clans (*umuryango*). Burundian identity in the past has much more been based on lineage affiliations (cf. *solidarité par parenté*), their locality (cf. *solidarité residentielle*) and other geographically-based collective identities than on 'ethnic' belonging (Daley, 2008: 45).

However, no-one can deny the strong ethnic polarization that has characterized Burundi for more than half a century. Whereas pre-colonial times present a structured and integrated Burundian society, in which distinct social groups are well connected and mutually dependent (except for the Twa), at the end of the twentieth century Burundi was a divided country, the capital Bujumbura split into Hutu and Tutsi *quartiers*, the

countryside into Tutsi-IDP camps and Hutu-regroupment camps, or Hutu and Tutsi 'enclaves' or 'colonies' (Laely, 1997: 695). In social capital terms, one could speak of a country of 'weak bridges, strong bonds', in which inter-ethnic bridging interactions have been replaced by more inward looking ethnic bonding ties, resulting in an 'us versus them' rhetoric (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 6).

However, without denying this ethnic component, this is too much of a simplification of a complex reality. Social differentiation and exclusion has been shaped by a tangle of social divisions (regional, inter-elite, rural-urban and intra-ethnic divisions being the most important ones) (Daley, 2006a, 2006b; Lemarchand, 1995; Reyntjens 1995, 2000). Regional differences, for example, explain why in the past a Hutu from Bururi, the native province of the three Tutsi-Hima presidents, was better off than a Tutsi of the north. Both Hutu and Tutsi peasants living in rural areas have been the victims of the small urban elite residing in Bujumbura. And also on the political level a complex web of alliances and divisions were prevalent. As Daley (2006b: 666) notes:

> In the post-colonial state, the Hutu/Tutsi binary has only limited explanatory value. One can identify five distinct cleavages around which conflict occurred: intra-aristocracy, between the old guard and the young modernised elite, between Hutu and Tutsi, intra-Tutsi, between the military and the political elite, and lately intra-Hutu.

An example of the latter is the difficult cease-fire negotiations between CNDD-FDD and FNL. Although both bear a 'Hutu' stamp, they are now political opponents ahead of the 2010 elections. This immediately indicates what has always been at the core of the Burundian conflict: elite struggles for control of the state and its resources.

However, much of the international conflict analysis is stuck in what Chrétien (Reyntjens, 2000) has called 'ethnic regression', i.e. the reduction of this complex of social divisions to a simple Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy. In this respect, 'lazy' (Bebbington 2002) social capital analysis becomes problematic, as its matches the far too naive 'bad' bonding/'good' bridging dichotomy with the much too simple Hutu/Tutsi binary, potentially missing a broad spectrum of nuances of the Burundian conflict, and possible answers for post-conflict reconstruction. Both dichotomies are society-centric – both conflict and its solution are mainly a case of ordinary people (Hutu/Tutsi), not states; so both run the risk of missing the elephant in the room, i.e. the Burundian state, on which I turn next.

3.2.2 The Burundian state

In pre-colonial times, Burundian political organization was hierarchically structured around the king, his court and the princely class of Ganwa at the top, with several levels

of Tutsi in the middle, the Hutu population below, and the Twa at the bottom of the social ladder. The uniqueness of this situation is best expressed when compared with the neighbouring Rwandan kingdom (Lemarchand, 1970; Uvin, 1999). First, Burundi was much less centralized because of rivalries within the princely class of the Ganwa. Below the king, power was fragmented among relatively autonomous political territories, each under the authority of a prince, all of them competing for royal succession. Second, the Hutu/Tutsi distinction was not as prevalently integrated into the political constellation as in Rwanda. On the one hand, the princely rivalries led to the necessity to seek support of both Hutu and Tutsi. On the other hand, intra-Tutsi rivalries between the 'low-caste' Tutsi-Hima and the 'upper-caste' Tutsi-Banyaruguru downplayed the potential importance of the Hutu/Tutsi distinction. The *mwami* relied for example on a high proportion of Hutu chiefs to oversee the royal domains (territory directly under the control of the king). According to Lemarchand (1970: 26) all these elements led to a 'pyramidal system' of political authority, with a more fluid character, which explains how:

> This greater variety of status groups, ranging from prince to commoner, is one major reason why in the past Burundi society was relatively free of racial tensions; just as the degrees of social distance within the Tutsi stratum were at times far more perceptible than between Tutsi and Hutu, the distance between them and the princely families was equally if not more conspicuous (Lemarchand, 1970: 24).

Although this political authority is more fluid and varied in character, it did not rule out a clear discourse of domination around the monarchical order, defining interaction between the governors and the governed. However, in his detailed analysis of peasant-state relations Laely (1997: 706) shows how this was done indirectly, through subtle, multi-layered and overlapping pyramids of mutually dependent people, based on vertical patron-client networks, linking the top (the rulers) and the bottom (the ruled) via a nexus of mediators.

As such, the strongly personalized patron-client ties linked to the institution of *ubugabire* were used as a model to create political ties and reproduce state domination. In this broader political sense *ubugabire* was known as *amasabo*, defined as unconditional loyalty and dependence (Laely, 1997: 704). From the perspective of the governor (or patron), thus established from above, the relationship was called *kuguba*. Laely (1997: 703-04) brings us as close as possible to the core understanding of 'authority' in Burundian society, when he indicates the two meanings of the verb *kuguba*: 'to give' and 'to command/to control'. To quote Lemarchand (1995: 13): 'In the popular consciousness of most Barundi, the exercise of power is virtually synonymous with gift giving'. This is present in the notion of God – *Rugaba* or 'He Who Gives' – but also in the notion of the King, who was the owner of the country and its material resources (Ndikumana, 2005). As such, the role of 'distributor' is central to the Burundian notion of authority, as this role unites the right to control or command with the ability of gift giving. This distributional

role becomes even clearer when considering *ubugabire* or *amasabo* from below. From the viewpoint of respectively the client and the governed, both relations contain the 'moral obligation' to ask for these gifts, as the relationship is called *gusaba*, a verb meaning both 'to request' and 'to submit' (Laely, 1997: 703). *Mu-ganwa*, the Kirundi term for prince, literally means 'the one who is approached'; people not performing their moral duty of 'approaching' were perceived as rebels and called *inyegezi* or 'the ones who do not show up to authorities', which also repeats the capacity of domination and control executed by the governor on the governed through these networks (Laely, 1997: 705).

It is then a small step to understand the patrimonial character – *l'état patron* (Botte, 1982) – of the Burundian state. The leaders used the resources of the country or their territory to safeguard and maximize their personal political and economic power, via the establishment of a clientele – mostly restricted by family, clan, ethnic or regional borders – to which part of their wealth was redistributed in return for political support and loyalty (Ndikumana, 2005). Ndikumana indicates this patrimonialism as the thread connecting pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial state formation. However, it has undergone a serious transformation during these periods.

During colonial times, indirect rule already restructured the existing state structure through the concentration of *chefferies* (chiefdoms) under the authority of princely factions (Bwezi and Batare) and Tutsi elements. In addition, colonial rule introduced a paternal 'law-and-order' state, based on military repression, while enforcing entirely new claims and demands, or *prestations* (Lemarchand, 1995: 42) on the population, e.g. standardized taxes, forced coffee cultivation, and the provision of forced labour (*kurarika*) (Laely, 1997: 708). This considerably changed Burundians perception of their *Leta* – their 'state' (Uvin, 2005: 1) – adding far more sentiments of coercion and repression, obeying and executing orders from the 'modern' colonial state, while putting aside the pre-colonial attitude of actively approaching superiors from below via personalised relationships. The Inamujadi revolt across the Ndora region in September 1934 is significant in this respect (Lemarchand, 1995: 44-47). Baranyanka, a Batare from the south was the newly appointed chief, and with him, he brought some of his Tutsi clientage to the region. In the eyes of the local population this led to a government of '"alien" elements […] who "implemented with iron hand colonial directives with regard to taxes, corvées and compulsory crops"' (Chrétien quoted in Lemarchand, 1995: 44). Additionally, it dismantled preexisting clientage ties, taking away an important social protection function of the local population to cope with the prevailing economic crisis (a combination of declining prices paid for commodities and rising taxes). The result was a Hutu and Twa led revolt against everything Tutsi, Batare or Muzungo (European). It illustrates the effects of coupling the more coercive character of 'modern' colonial administration with the policy of ethnic classification, favouring princely factions and the Tutsi minority, to the detriment of large parts of both the Hutu and Twa population.

Most of the post-colonial state has been a mixture of this 'modern' colonial state apparatus, yet grafted onto 'traditional' pre-colonial patrimonialism. Hence, its character is neo-patrimonialistic, as behind the facade of liberal-democratic institutions the state apparatus has always been guided by patronage politics (Uvin, 2009). However, as the decentralized princely regime under pre-colonial monarchy, via a colonial intermezzo, transformed into a centralistic state apparatus in the hands of a small Tutsi-Hima elite, patronage also became centralistic and extremely exclusionary. Through the 'privatisation' of the state (Ndikumana, 2005), both political power and economic wealth fell into the hands of this small ethno-regional elite from Bururi, while the UPRONA party embodied this 'monolithic apparatus of power' and became the central vehicle for patronage politics (Laely, 1997).

This was a post-colonial state that could not build legitimacy onto broad popular support, as the ruling elite represented such a narrow social base (Uvin, 1999). According to Uvin, the elite resorted to high levels of brutal violence and repression, a strategy of elite maintenance which culminated in the 1965, 1972, and 1988 events. The repression of 1972 ruled out elite contestation for more than two decades due to a deep-seated fear of a repetition of such events. Indeed, as Daley (2008: 234) concludes, militarism has served as the 'dominant ideology' for the Burundian state. Besides this violent repression, the construction of a controlling state apparatus, or 'police state', was another important vehicle to maintain in power. According to Ndikumana (2005) this was done through a mixture of 'centralization' and 'penetration' efforts. He indicates how administrative and party structures, from top to bottom, were under control of 'state agents' only accountable to central authority; and how the system of 'expatriates' – people of the south controlling local administration, schools, clinics, etc. throughout the country – prevented public accountability. In addition, the state incorporated civil society within the Uprona party structure, be it via its youth, women or workers wings. As such, the state penetrated all facets of life throughout the country, yet all power remained centralized in the capital Bujumbura.

This entire evolution of the Burundian state, in particular during the post-independence period, seriously questions the unilateral society-centric approach of most communitarian or Putnamian (1993/1995/2000) social capital analysis – that transforming 'bad' bonding into 'good' bridging will ultimately scale up to democratic linking social capital. By contrast, it rather subscribes the synergy view of Fox (1996), in that the state can also be the primary mover and creator of social capital – causal arrows also going from linking down to bridging/bonding social capital. The fact that pre-colonial proto-state/society relations (*amasabo*) were modelled after the social 'cattle contracts' (*ubugabire*) indicates the bottom-up process of social capital formation. However, the entire impact of both the colonial and post-colonial state on Burundian society – with its ethnic polarization as the

most visible effect – highlights the important role of top-down processes of social capital formation.

Let us, for example, return for a moment to the post-colonial state. First, the state has made considerable efforts to destroy social capital that was not under its control. The most famous case is the conflict with the Catholic Church (Longman, 2005). The Bagaza government feared the power of the Church at the grassroots level, especially as its non-discriminatory education created potential breeding grounds for a new Hutu generation that would contest the status quo.

Second, several top-down efforts from the Burundian state to promote social capital formation resulted in negative experiences for the population. The history of the cooperatives is significant on this point (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993). The first 'paternalistic' cooperatives were created under the auspices of Belgian rule in 1952, rather as a means to implement colonial policies than to defend the interest of its members. In 1976 the Bagaza regime reintroduced a national programme for cooperatives, as part of its revolutionary *projet de société* (Lemarchand, 1995: 107). However, the programme died a slow death mired in corruption and fraud. To date, some people still refer back to this programme to explain their mixed feelings about cooperatives. The attempt of the Bagaza regime to unite the rural masses in villages presents another example of how the state tried to introduce more community organization, however, even this *villagization* was not successful, as most peasants interpreted the action correctly as another instrument to regulate and control their lives (Lemarchand, 1995: 109). A more current illustration are the *travaux communautaires* (community works) which are executed every Saturday morning, and which also have a coercive character. Throughout Burundian history, efforts towards collective action and organization have been mostly state-led, with a coercive element, and negative consequences for the majority of the population.

Third, the incorporation of civil society into the party structures gave rise to illustrious examples of what has been called the 'dark side' of social capital. Consider the *Jeunesses Nationalistes Rwagasore* (JNR), later on renamed as the *Jeunesse Révolutionnaires Rwagasore* (JRR). This youth wing of the Uprona was one of the initiators of the *Kamenge* riots (riots in the *Kamenge quartier* of Bujumbura, intensifying ethnic tensions in 1962), and rapidly became an extreme anti-Hutu organization, actively participating in the 1972 killings (Lemarchand, 1995). Several similar youth militias, such as *Solidarité de la Jeunesse Pour la Défense des Minorités* (SOJEDEM), *Puissance d'autodéfense 'amasekanya'* (power of self-defence), *Sans Echec* (the infallible) and *Sans Défaite* (the undefeated), which recruited school pupils or dropouts, university students, and unemployed youth, were formed during the civil war in the 1990s. Even today, in the run up to the 2010 elections, the ruling CNDD-FDD party is accused of transforming its youth wing *Imbonerakure* (*ligue des jeunes du parti CNDD-FDD*) into a new militia (AFP, 2009a). So, if we look at Burundian history, the state has played a determining role in the creation of the 'exclusive' form of ethnic bonding social capital. Or as Lemarchand (1995:

63) notes, when quoting a Hutu person in his discussion of the *Kamenge* riots: ""The evil comes from the top"".

All three cases demonstrate the impact – for better or worse – of top-down state intervention on the constellation of Burundian society. They portray the state as a major initiator of social capital creation; they note the strong links between state and society (linking social capital) in the broader processes of social capital formation in society itself (bonding and bridging capital).

3.2.3 The Burundian economy

The neo-patrimonial state machinery clearly needed enough 'fuel' or resources to keep the system going. So, in turn, both the state model and state-society relations are closely linked to the Burundian economic constellation, and vice versa. Oketch and Polzer (2002) speak of a predatory model, in which control over scarce ecological and natural resources has fuelled the Burundian conflict via the predatory behaviour of urban elites, resulting in severe structural violence to most of the rural masses. They note that this predatory model is based on two pillars: coffee and international aid.

Burundi is a landlocked and resource-poor country. Compared to countries such as the DRC, Sierra Leone or Angola, Burundi lacks mineral deposits, with few opportunities for the state to profit from controlling the extraction of these natural resources (Oketch & Polzer, 2002). In addition, the country has a small private sector, is poorly industrialized (industry only accounting for 15% of the GDP), and the development of a secondary sector is seriously hindered by its landlocked character. Consequently, the main source of state income is the primary sector. More than 90% of the total population of Burundi lives in rural areas and is dependent on subsistence agriculture. Not surprisingly, the agricultural sector accounts for almost half of Burundian GDP (48.7% in 2004), and for more than 90% of foreign exchange earnings, coffee being the main export crop, and as such, the main income resource for both the Burundian state and the rural population (coffee employs between 600,000 to 750,000 households, roughly 40% of the population) (RoB, 2006a; Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007).

Coffee, the most important cash crop, was introduced under colonial rule. Already at that time the new cash crop economy led to 'coffee kings', local chiefs forcing their constituency to cultivate coffee and meet certain quotas, in order to receive personal privileges of the colonial state. Thus, from in the beginning coffee production had a coercive character, and farmers were whipped by the *chicotte* (switch) if they failed to maintain their coffee plantations (Daley, 2008: 56-57).

After independence, in 1976, the coffee sector was nationalized and put under the management of the OCIBU (*Office du Café du Burundi*), a reform making the processing

(industry) and trade (export) phases of the coffee sector completely under the control of the state. An International Alert (Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007) study indicates that coffee accounted for 50% of cash income among rural households, yet farmers received incorrect prices (e.g. when compared to neighbouring countries such as Uganda), as money was diverted to the industrial and management layers of the sector. In addition, because of land scarcity, disappointing remunerations, and a higher demand for food crops, coffee growing gradually competed with food crops, such as bananas. A law and state 'coffee propaganda' prohibited farmers from neglecting their coffee production (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 141). People's land was confiscated if they did not obey to these orders, with a sometimes clear negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the rural households; one Oxfam GB study in Gitega province found that profits and nutrition would increase if households could cultivate more nutritious food crops (Daley, 2008). Thus, redistribution of natural wealth – agricultural production – into the patronage networks of the elite was realized through the foreign currency earnings of the coffee export, which reveals a direct economic link between the elites and the rural masses: the Burundian population was forced to produce coffee, in order to permit the elites to set up rent-seeking activities in the processing and export stage, of which the profits were channelled into prestige consumption, the maintenance of a repressive state apparatus and satisfying political opponents, in order to protect the system (Oketch & Polzer, 2002).

The second pillar of Oketch's and Polzer's (2002) predatory model has been international aid. Ndikumana (1998: 43) indicates that in the republic era, from 1966 to 1993, Burundian military regimes collected more than one billion dollars of loans from the international community, the Bagaza (1976-87) regime being the most efficient with a total of $831 million. In the 1980s Burundi was the highest per capita recipient of low-interest loans from the World Bank (Daley, 2008: 101). In the beginning of the 1990s, before the civil war, half of government expenditures were paid by donor money (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 109). After a sharp decline (a reduction by two-thirds according to ICG: 2003a) during civil war, especially after Buyoya's coup in 1996 and the economic embargo which followed, the Arusha peace agreement unblocked aid flows again (Daley, 2008). In 2006 a stunning 82% of the national budget was externally funded, $341 million out of a total of $417 million (Uvin, 2009: 24). It leads Uvin (2009: 187) to conclude that:

> All of Burundi's modern institutions (the ones the international community recognizes and interacts with) would cease to exist in their current form if it were not for foreign money. More than half the state's budget comes from aid, and basically, so does the entire NGO sector's financial lifeline.

As international aid became integrated in the predatory state model, it has been criticized for consolidating a violent and discriminatory state in the past, since regionalism dictated why 'It always rains in the same place first.' (*Imvura iragwa ntikwira hose.)*

(Sommers, 2005: 4), with high regional differences of development investments as a consequence (a, 2003). Such clientelism manifested itself in direct lines between state departments in the capital and the country side, leading to 'project islands' (Laely, 1997: 710) and serious 'geographical favouritism', an issue still important for post-conflict reconstruction in Burundi (Sommers, 2005; Uvin, 2009: 35). In this respect, the educational sector has been a well documented example. Jackson's (2000) figures of one *commune* of Bururi province (Mugamba) delivering 15% of the total university student population, and the allocation of 60% of donor aid to the education sector in Bururi at the end of the 1980s, are clear illustrations of this phenomenon of geographical favouritism.

As the economic model is inextricably bound up with the state infrastructure, its overall impact on social capital has been very similar. In social capital literature, a predatory economic model like that of Burundi has been linked to the notion of 'rogue states' (Colletta & Cullen, 2000b; Woolcock, 1998) (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.1). The predatory function of the state is then identified as a combination of low *organizational integrity* (state capacity and effectiveness) and high *synergy* (strong state-society relations), which seems to apply for the Burundian case: strong *synergy* reflects the penetration of the state, draining all possible economic profits out of agricultural production and international aid on the one hand, and repressing any kind of rebellion through repression on the other hand; while low *organizational integrity* indicates the 'corrupt rationale' for which this economic predation was used, as the state only presented and defended the vested interests of a small powerful elite instead of being based on a strong and broad social basis.

From a society perspective, the impact of such an economic model has further increased the imbalance of strong bonding and weak bridging social capital, added with a highly inequitable distribution of linking social capital. Since most lucrative economic sectors were monopolized, economic opportunities were only granted to a minority of people with links to the powerful elite. So efforts to create bridging ties (associations, cooperatives, trade networks) among the peasants to access more efficiently agricultural markets were confronted with markets entirely monopolized by exclusive ties between the elite and their clientele. For the coffee sector in particular, although long-standing efforts by organizations including INADES to organize the coffee farmers are bearing their first fruits (Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007), the predatory model has long successfully repressed the creation of an organized peasantry to demand a better share of the profits of their coffee production or to simply claim their right not to cultivate coffee but food crops. Indirectly, the state made sure the peasantry did not have access to the financial and material means or infrastructure to unite themselves or to bridge themselves to a more diversified network of traders. Investments in the agricultural sector have never been a priority of the Burundian government (Ngaruko & Nkuruniza, 2000). Whereas the agricultural sector provided 64% of the GDP, it only received 20 to 30% of investments from 1972 to 1992. Instead, the industrial sector, only accounting for 16.7% of GDP

received 70 to 80% of investments in the same period. This matches t rural/urban split: while 90% of the population lived in rural areas, only 20% of state funding during the 1980s was accorded to the rural sector, instead Bujumbura received 50% of total public investment and 90% of social expenditure (Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007: 11). The agricultural sector was entirely under-funded, which led to a lack of storage facilities, bad conservation methods and limited supply channels, resulting in an imperfect market structure opposing two unequal players: a large number of producers and a small number of traders (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 128). Concluding, economic predation only increased ethnic bonding social capital, as it increased ethnic polarization:

> Coffee production, processing and marketing, including the crop's export, reflect and reinforce the country's ethnic divisions. The Tutsi play an almost exclusive part in the role of the 'minority middleman' and the state, effectively controlled by a cabal within this group, expropriates the earnings, leaving little trickling down the peasants' way. (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 133).

This link between the economy and civil war has regained importance within the 'greed versus grievance' debate, adding economic gains and opportunities to political grievances as potential causes explaining civil war (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, 2000). To a certain extent, this 'greed' argument is a welcome modification of the sometimes one-sided 'cultural' or 'ethnic' interpretations of the Burundian conflict (cf. 'ethnic regression' in most conflict analysis), because it points out the importance of economic factors, rather than only the 'ethnic' factor.

The 'greed' argument that potential gains out of controlling primary commodity exports plays a central role in conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000), is confirmed by the high dependency of the Burundian state on foreign exchange earnings, gained through the export of coffee. After independence, coffee, to a certain extent, has played the role diamonds, gold, oil, or coltan have played in countries such as Sierra Leone, DRC or Angola, in that it financed a repressive state apparatus. One United States report found that future coffee production was offered as payment for arms and weapons during the civil war (Oketch & Polzer, 2002). As the other pillar of the predatory state model – international aid – was largely put on hold after 1993, coffee export was the only regular flow of income for the Burundian government to finance their war efforts.

Yet the greed argument does not entirely follow from this dependency, because rebel movements never financed their activities via accessing and controlling these natural resources. The reason is that, in the case of agricultural production, as for coffee, wealth creation takes place at the processing and trading phases (Oketch & Polzer, 2002). This is in contrast to minerals, for example, where predatory behavior of states and rebel movements focus on the production and the extraction process, as these natural resources are more easily extractable, exploitable, and controllable because they are found in localized sites. This is much less the case for agricultural production. Burundian rebel

movements have mobilized the population to destroy coffee plantations, and otherwise, to smuggle coffee to neighboring countries, yet this was never done to gain control over these natural resources, but simply as an act of civil disobedience against the Burundian state (Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007).

In other words, the greed argument as such does not strictly apply to the Burundian context. Still, the broader expression of the greed hypothesis does, in that political grievances have been complemented by economic greed, as both sides were motivated to prolong the civil conflict to safeguard economic gains via looting, and in particular, smuggling networks (Oketch & Polzer, 2002). This also echoes the argument that conflict gives rise to the 'dark side' of social capital, via the creation of new social networks (e.g. smuggling networks) with anti-social, i.e. conflict-inducing, effects (Goodhand & Hulme, 1997). Daley (2008: 99-101) describes the so called 'gold wars' of Bujumbura as one of the best known examples of such networks producing 'genocide economics' in Burundi. The withdrawal of AFFIMET's licence (which had enabled the company to control the smuggling and processing of gold from DRC) by Ndadaye's government in 1993 is said to have been one of the factors that prompted Ndadaye's murder. Daley (2008: 101) sharply notes the close links between conflict and informal economies when she states:

> The AFFIMET affair illustrates the formal and informal connections between international capital and local elites […] Genocidal economics involves the merger of formal and informal networks of accumulation – a process that has been speeded up through the introduction of market liberalism. Other aspects of the informal economy flourished under conditions of war; drugs, cannabis grown in Rwanda, along with heroin and mandrax worth millions annually, were transited through Burundi.

Another expression of the greed argument is known as the 'green war' thesis, which 'postulates a simplified and inevitable progression from environmental degradation (including land scarcity, land degradation and desertification, etc.) to poverty and conflict.' (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 89). In the case of Burundi, and neighbouring Rwanda, many international actors and analysts have emphasized the deadly combination of an agricultural-based economy with a high population density as one of the structural causes of Burundian conflict, land scarcity being one of the direct triggers of violence. Without denying population pressure and land scarcity as determining factors of Burundian poverty, Oketch and Polzer (2002: 89) suggest putting '"environment in its place"'. Scarcity of land was never the root cause or direct trigger of mass violence during civil war. This is illustrated by the fact that the vast majority of land conflicts have an inter-familial character, and are not war-related, nor do they have an ethnic connotation (Vervisch, 2008). However, there exists a link between land and civil war, but indirectly via the state. Access to land has always been unfairly distributed, as it was incorporated as another natural resource into patronage politics. Civil war aggravated this situation, as

'official' corruption and land grabbing enabled the state and high ranking officials to confiscate and use so-called state-owned land for private and commercial use (Oketch & Polzer, 2002). In this respect, the land question in Burundi reflects how 'Many political sources of ecological conflict are mistaken for ecological sources of political conflict, sometimes because of wilful obfuscation by those involved.' (Huggins, 2003: 4). This therefore calls for a more nuanced analysis. It is not only land scarcity (ecological cause) which potentially results in violent 'political conflict', but also inequitable access and state policies (political cause) potentially leading to an 'ecological conflict' of land scarcity.

In sum, the links between the economy and Burundian civil war and poverty are complex and diverse. If we, for example, look at the different development traps Collier (2007) uses to identify those poor countries which are populated with 'the bottom billion' of the world population, they unfortunately all apply to Burundi: Burundi has been ravaged by civil war (the conflict trap), although there is no real resource-abundance in Burundi to date, it is highly dependent on the export of natural resources (the natural resource trap), it has been landlocked and surrounded by unstable neighbours (the landlocked with bad neighbours trap), and it has a serious governance problem (the bad governance in a small country trap). However, the thread through these different explanations remains the Burundian state.

Thus, central stands this predatory state, which is incorporated in what Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000: 384-385) have called the 'predation-rebellion-repression' model: 'predation by power holders who share its rents has led to rebellions by those excluded, triggering, in turn, repression by the army, whose primary role has appeared to be the defence of the system of predation'. To a large extent, exclusion has been ethnically defined, referring to the 'horizontal inequality' concept of Stewart (2009) between the two ethnic groups (Uvin, 2007); yet when taking into account that only a small number of the Tutsi ethnic group could profit from their links with the elite, the bottom line of the Burundian predatory model has been 'structural violence' (Galtung, 1969) for the majority of the population, i.e. social injustice caused by great inequality, discrimination and exclusion. The Burundian peace process, at least temporarily, succeeded in breaking this cycle of predation, rebellion and repression. For peace to become durable, it will need a thoughtful rethinking of the Burundian state, and another kind of economy, which presents alternatives to the Burundian elites for capturing the state as the only way to preserve and enhance economic wealth.

Chapter 4

Introducing three hillsides and their projects

Below I introduce the three *collines* on which the case studies were implemented. Each of the *collines* presents a 'typical case' (Patton, 2002: 236) of the different projects carried out by the three development agencies: the CIBA project on Burara *colline*, the LITA project on Tangara *colline*, and the CLC project on Cumba *colline*. For each *colline* I briefly present the basic socio-economic figures, discuss their conflict histories, and introduce the NGO-projects.[1]

Socio-economic data according to *collines* or *zones* (the administrative unit just above the *colline*) are not available in Burundi, so I present data at *commune* level. For the conflict histories, I rely mainly on interviews with key-actors and focus groups conducted in 2006 and 2007, but also on focus group discussions held in 2009, which aimed to compare the conflict history on each *colline* for the period 1993–2005 and 2005–2009 (before and after the 2005 elections). As shown below, the general trends shared by these conflict histories included (i) the significance of drought and food crises next to the war as the main factors of conflict (an observation also made by Uvin, 2009), (ii) the shifting of ethnic divisions to economic divisions once relative stability and security returned after the 2005 elections (echoing the general trend that total impoverishment after conflict marks a shift of focus from political to material concerns and a focus on urgent material needs, see World Bank, 2002), and rising tensions ahead of the 2009 elections. For the presentation of the three case studies, I rely on focus group discussions with the population, rather than logical frameworks and other NGO documents, to present how the

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[1] For the selection process of the three case study projects, I refer back to the methodological chapter.

NGO-projects looked 'in reality' (the programme goals, objectives and results as described in the proposal document can be found in annex 2, 3, 4).

4.1 Burara *colline* – the CIBA project

4.1.1 The *colline*

Burara *colline* is one of the 21 *collines*, subdivided into five *zones*, of Busoni *commune* (see annex 5 for maps). As the largest *commune* in Kirundo province, Busoni borders the neighbouring country of Rwanda to the north, covers a total surface of 420.89 sq km, varies between an altitude of 1500 and 1700m, and to a great extent belongs to the natural region of Bugesera, which has witnessed serious droughts from 1997 (El Nino) onwards (RoB, 2006c, 2006f). Below I present the basic demographic and socio-economic indicators (Table 9).

Table 9 Demographic and socio-economic indicators, Busoni *commune*

Busoni *Commune* (Burara)*	
Total population	126 626
Population density *(2005)*	289 / sq km
Predicted Population growth / year *(2003-2010)*	3.7%
Population under the age of 25 *(2006)*	69%
Main agricultural cultures	Sweet potatoes (23.4%) Manioc (23.3%) Beans (17%) Bananas (16%)
% population in need of food aid* *(Season 2006B, entire province of Kirundo)*	>51%
Health Infrastructure	8 CDS (Centre de santé) 3 CNS (Centre de Nutrition Supplémentaire)
No. of reported cases of most prevalent diseases / month**	Malaria (54809) Malnutrition (7692) Respiratory diseases (3843) Diarrhetic diseases (2268) Dysentery (698)
Water access *(standard : 30 hh / water point)*	212 hh / water point
Primary school enrolment	111.7%****
Secondary school enrolment	974 students (4% of the 10-20 year age-group)
Vulnerable Groups	
Child Heads of Household (No.)	39
Child Soldiers (No.)	22
Total No of Orphans (No.)	2156

*Based on *Monographie de la Commune Busoni* (RoB , 2006c)
**Based on a joint evaluation of MINAGRI (Ministry of Agriculture), FAO, WFP; UNICEF, and OCHA (RoB , 2006b)
***To a great extent dependent on the presence of health infrastructure
****Children from outside the *commune* also came to schools in Busoni

Burara *colline* is located near the administrative centre of the *commune*. This centre is near a bridge linking both sides of the hills surrounding the Muhembezi wetland, itself ending in lake Rweru. A large IDP camp straddles both sides of the wetland. The sites are named Rutabo and Rusarasi and the latter belongs to Burara *colline*. As the administrative centre of the *commune*, several public services are available, such as communal offices, a primary school and a secondary school nearby, a *Tribunal de Résidence* (lowest court) a *Centre de Santé* (health centre), and a market. It is relatively well-connected via rural roads with the provincial capital Kirundo, and other communal and rural centres. Burara *colline* has five *sous-collines*: Rusarasi (site), Kirerama, Munyonza, Bucanka, and Mpinga.

4.1.2   The conflict

Compared to the other *collines*, Burara's conflict history has been the most severe for two reasons. On the one hand, Busoni *commune*, and Burara *colline* in particular, has clear ethnic segregation. On the Hutu side, the proximity to Rwanda has led to major infiltration and mobilization across state borders, and an easy escape route for Hutu after crimes committed in 1993. On the Tutsi site, Busoni has a relative high presence of Tutsi. Burara *colline* borders the centre of Busoni *commune*, the site of the communal administration. As all over the country, including Busoni, the Tutsi fled to urban and rural centres, soon after the assassination of Ndadaye in 1993, to seek protection from the military. Today, the result is still visible, as on both sides of the centre two relatively large IDP-sites are still in place: the Rusarasi and Rutabo sites. Their presence is even more visible, as large herds of cattle set the scene when arriving in the mornings in the centre of Busoni. The *commune* accounts for 25% of the total livestock of Kirundo province (RoB, 2006f). In reality, both sites have become permanent residences for many of the IDPs, based on both security and socio-economic concerns (close to markets and public services such as health centres and schools). As a result, Busoni is geographically split up into a 'visible' large group of Tutsi around the centre, and a majority of Hutu living in the surrounding hills.

A second reason has been the strong links between the Tutsi of Busoni *commune* and national level politics. Historical links with political elites in Bujumbura were summed up when the *chef de colline* explained the feud between the two strong men of Busoni, each from a different Tutsi clan:

> Minani was *administrateur* during the Bagaza years as an upronist [member of Uprona party], afterwards he became a businessman. Rutayisire was two times minister under Bagaza, and he also held important offices under Boyaya I and II. At that time, they were friends. But with the multi-party system, Minani became Parena, the party of Bagaza, and Rutayisire became angry, because he was afraid that he would lose his votes in the Rusarasi site. Uprona and Parena are two Tutsi

parties and compete for the same votes. Rutayisire lives in Bujumbura and was less present in Rusarasi. Minani is rich and he can rally the whole site because Rutayisire is not there. (interview *Chef de Colline*, Burara, 27/04/07).

Busoni is therefore shaped by a large and politically sensitive group of Tutsi. The rallying of Rutayisire (Uprona party) caused frequent tensions between the ethnic groups after the elections of 2005. This was not the case for Minani, as he defected to CNDD-FDD and one of his sons became the *gouverneur* of Kirundo province.

As in many Burundian communities, ethnic violence broke out in Busoni shortly after the assassination of Ndadaye in 1993. The Frodebu *administrateur* mobilized the Hutu to take retaliations: road blocks were set up, and bridges destroyed to hinder the intervention of the Tutsi national army. Houses were burned, and cattle, bicycles, and motorbikes were stolen. The Tutsi attempted to regroup around the communal centre. When the army arrived, several Hutu were shot, among them the Frodebu *administrateur*, and the majority fled to Rwanda. In 1994, a large group of Hutu came back from Rwanda and organized themselves in the surrounding hills (near *colline* Nyakizu), to retake control of Busoni. The Tutsi, on the other hand, wanted to revenge the killings of 1993. With the back-up of the army, the Hutu group was pushed back, and most fled back to Rwanda. A little later, after the outbreak of the Rwanda genocide and the push of the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front), these Hutu returned to Burundi, many fleeing again, this time to Tanzania. In the following years (1995-1997) tensions flared when Hutu were hunted down for their active participation in the killings, resulting in large groups of Hutu fleeing to Tanzania.

1998 was clearly marked as the beginning of the droughts, introducing a new era of food crisis and general insecurity. The year 2000 was marked by droughts with devastating effects. During the food crisis, theft increased substantially, bringing more violence to the *commune*. People destroyed their houses by selling their roofing tiles, and other assets were sold (cattle, bicycles, motorbikes, etc). Large groups migrated to other *communes* or to neighbouring Rwanda or Tanzania. In addition, people were forced to sell land at low prices, creating tensions with the rich, who were criticized for profiteering. From 2002 onwards, cohabitation between both ethnic groups became more peaceful.

On the political level, after the events of 1993 the Frodebu *administrateur* was replaced by several Upronists until the elections of 2005. This was also the case for the *chef de colline* of Burara. At s*ous-colline* level geographical ethnic segregation remained visible; the chef of Rusarasi *sous-colline* (IDP site) was an Upronist, while the four other *sous-collines* (further removed from the centre and the IDP site) were Frodebu. In the 2005 elections, the *administrateur* was from CNDD-FDD, while the seats in the *conseil communal* were distributed as following: CNDD-FDD (19), Frodebu (4), and Uprona (2). The *chef de colline* was elected as an Upronist. The *conseils collinaire* were divided

between CNDD-FDD (2) and Uprona (3). On the *sous-colline* level, both *sous-collines* near the Rusarasi IDP site were Uprona, the *sous-collines* further away in the hills became CNDD-FDD.

During the 2005 elections, changing parties to win or maintain political power has been a nationwide strategy for local politicians and other strong men. It was no secret that CNDD-FDD would win the elections. Minani, the Tutsi businessman who defected from Parena to CNDD-FDD via his son, is a clear example in this respect. Another illustration was the *chef de colline* of Burara, a member of the Rutayisire clan and Upronist, also switching to CNDD-FDD. As a result, the Tutsi of Rusarasi site branded him a traitor. The chef de *sous-colline* of Rusarasi stated: '[There is] little trust, because almost everybody in the site is family of Rutayisire, and it is as if he defects and takes with him the secrets of the clan to the CNDD-FDD.' (interview *chef de sous-colline* Rusari, Burara, 02/05/07).

Shortly after the elections (2005 and 2006), tensions rose again because of *le terrorisme* of CNDD-FDD, claiming a landslide victory in the elections, and replacing people from other political parties holding positions. Several Upronists were imprisoned on the basis of alleged involvement in land conflicts between IDPs and repatriates. Although defined as a problem of political parties, because of the politicized character of the *commune* and the rallying of Rutayisire, tensions were clearly ethnic in nature (especially when compared to both other *collines*).

In 2007, famine once again pushed these tensions into the background. In 2008, the forced reintegration en masse of Hutu refugees from camps in Tanzania intensified another kind of conflict, those related to land. The fact that most of these land conflicts have no ethnic character (as most conflicts are between neighbours and people from the same family), yet seriously increase insecurity in the *commune*, was illustrated by one demobilized person who threw a grenade into the house of his brother, killing 2 people and injuring four. From 2009 onwards, tensions within the community increased again, as political mobilization began in the run up to the 2010 elections. In particular, the CNDD-FDD, fearing a defeat, is rallying aggressively, via groups called *Imbonerakure*, which practise sports in public, while singing the CNDD-FDD songs, while also waving truncheons to scare the population. In January 2009, the home of a Frodebu member was attacked with a grenade, although it is difficult to rule out apolitical motivations (see also HRW, 2009).

4.1.3 The CIBA project

For several years CIBA has been responsible for relief distributions (in particular food and seeds) on behalf of the WFP (World Food Programme) and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) in Kirundi province. During fieldwork, CIBA still organized

seed fairs by order of FAO and WFP. However, the shift towards development assistance was already made with the implementation of the 'Kirundo Integrated Development Programme', which started in 2003. The livelihood project, which is the subject of the present work, was the continuation of this project. The project focused on developing the *Muhembuzi* wetland and the surrounding hillsides that constitute its basin (see annex 2 for the goals, objectives and intermediary results (IR) of this project, as defined in the project proposal).

A first component of the project, the cash-for-work programme, aimed at injecting cash into the local rural economy through employment intensive infrastructure works (irrigation and drainage system in the wetland, road works, supply of clean water through water pipes and distribution points). The development of the wetland was particular in this case. Instead of earning an income the proposal was that workmen were compensated with a plot in the newly developed wetland. To this end local authorities (wetlands are property of the state) authorized the distribution of a so far unoccupied section of the wetland near the administrative centre of the *commune*.

A second project component was the introduction of the 'solidarity chain', a livestock credit rotation scheme in order to restock livestock, enhance community ties, increase agricultural production through access to manure, and increase milk and meat production. Passing on the newborn (in this case mainly imported species of goats) creates a chain of beneficiaries, which aims to reinforce ties between neighbours through sharing responsibility for the livestock. Closely linked to this was the introduction of a veterinary pharmacy in Busoni *commune*, where the population and veterinarians, trained by CIBA, could procure the necessary veterinary drugs.

A third cluster of activities focused on the sustainable use of natural resources, in particular soil protection through the integration of contour berms and agro-forestry.

The final major component of the project was the development of the wetland and its basin through the introduction of rice culture, the multiplication of manioc resistant cassava, and the introduction of several other improved crops.

Capacity building was identified as a transferral activity, as it concerned repeated training courses (*les formations*) on a diversity of subjects (rice culture, soil protection, livestock, HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution, etc.). In all focus groups similar components always came first, which highlights their importance for the population: distribution of plots in the wetland, livestock, introduction of rice, road works, and access to water. (Instead, the veterinary pharmacy, training, soil protection, agro-forestry, and introduction of other improved crops were not always mentioned or only at the end of the conversation).

In sum, the Burara project was geographically the most concentrated of the three projects: only one *commune*, with a focus on two zones. It had an environmental focus:

developing the Muhembezi wetland. This resulted in an integrated project, with a complex of activities and high visibility. The project had clear technical objectives, focusing on irrigation systems in the wetland, water tap infrastructure, road works, improvement of local livestock by cross-breeding, certification of improved rice seed varieties, and so on. In terms of intervention strategy, the project used a mixed strategy, identifying both households and associations as end-beneficiaries. In addition, CIBA followed a top-down approach, matching the community-driven character of their project with the achievement of technical end-results.

4.2   Tangara *colline* – the LITA project

4.2.1   The *colline*

Tangara *colline* is one of the 30 *collines*, split up in 4 zones, of Butihinda *commune* (see annex 5 for maps). Butihinda, in the north of Muyinga province, borders Tanzania in the east and is close to the important Kobero border crossing. As in Busoni *commune*, most of Butihinda's 293.60 sq km belongs to the natural region of Bugesera, varying between an altitude of 1500 and 1700m, and with similar periods of droughts as a consequence (RoB, 2006d, 2006g). Below I list some socio-economic indicators (Table 10).

Table 10 Demographic and socio-economic indicators, Butihinda *commune*	
Butihinda *Commune* (Tangara)*	
Total population	97 629
Population density *(2005)*	372 / sq km
Predicted population growth / year *(2003-2010)*	3.7%
Population under the age of 25 *(2006)*	64.6 %
Main agricultural cultures	Bananas (76%) Sweet Potatoes (13.9%) Beans (2.6%)
% population in need of food aid** *(Season 2006B, entire province of Muyinga)*	>51%
Health Infrastructure	3 CDS (Centre de Santé)
No of reported cases of most prevalent diseases / month***	Malaria (1184) Respiratory diseases (332) Diarrhetic diseases (195) Malnutrition (192) Dysentery (25)
Water access *(standard : 30 hh / water point)*	309.5
Primary school enrolment	56%
Secondary school enrolment	526 students (2.6% of the 10-20 year age-group)
Vulnerable Groups	
Child Heads of Household (No.)	37
Child Soldiers (No.)	21
Total No of Orphans (No.)	836

*Based on *Monographie de la Commune Butihinda* (RoB, 2006d)

**Based on a joint evaluation of MINAGRI (Ministry of Agriculture), FAO, WFP; UNICEF, and OCHA (RoB, 2006b)

***To a great extent dependent on the presence of health infrastructure

Tangara *colline* is located on the rural road connecting the administrative centre of the *commune* and the Kobero border crossing, from which the paved road leads to Muyinga, the provincial capital. Tangara has a small rural centre near the road, with a school and a small market. A large market is found at Kobero, and the nearest health centre is at the communal centre. Tangara has five *sous-collines*: Tangara (centre), Kiguruka, Kivoga, Masiga, and Rurembo. As several *sous-collines* are relatively far from Tangara centre and the rural road, there was a clear distinction and disconnection between the 'rich' centre and the 'poorer' *sous-collines*. The argument of geographical favouritism – 'It always rains in the same place first.' – (Sommers, 2005) was illustrated on an extreme local level of the *sous-collines*, in many cases central to people's explanations of social life and local politics.

4.2.2 The conflict

The local situation on Tangara *colline* followed a similar course to the nationwide events of 1993, but was less intense than for example on Burara *colline*: the Hutu population took revenge on the Tutsi population, before the national army arrived and took retaliation against the Hutu population. Although killings took place in Tangara, the situation on neighbouring *collines* was more severe, and many fled the violence, both Hutu (to Tanzania) and Tutsi (IDP camps in Rugari and Muyinga). The population suffered displacement, the material damage of houses, and the looting of cattle, land and other assets. In 1996 some groups of IDPs returned to the *colline*, which led to arrests, imprisonments, and occasional torture and executions of Hutu suspected of being actively involved in killings or the looting of assets. Some innocent people were arrested or assassinated, based on clearly false accusations of victims, etc. Many Hutu fled back to Tanzania to escape trial or retaliation. From 1997 onwards the situation stabilized and both IDPs and repatriates returned to the *colline*. In 1999 and 2000 Tangara, and the entire region, suffered from serious droughts and famine. People who had just returned from refugee or IDPs camps, fled again, but now from hunger. During this period tensions and insecurity flared again: richer people profiting from households who were forced to sell land, coffee plantations, or roofing tiles, and many households falling victim to armed robbers. In turn, the population enforced the law themselves through the creation of civil patrol groups. In 2002 both on the political and food security level, the situation calmed down, and security returned to the *colline*.

Butihinda *commune* and Tangara *colline* have been strongholds of Frodebu since 1993. Both the *administrateur*, the *chef de colline* and all five chefs de *sous-collines* have come from Frodebu. With the 2005 elections, Butihinda and Tangara turned into a CNDD-FDD

stronghold. The seats in the *conseil communal* were distributed as follows: CNDD-FDD (16), Frodebu (6), Paribu (*Parti pour le Renouveau Intégral du Burundi*) (2), RPB (*Rassemblement pour le Peuple du Burundi*) (1). Most positions were taken by CNDD-FDD. Both the *administrateur* and the *chef de zone* of Tangara were from CNDD-FDD signature. On *colline* level the *chef de colline*, all five *conseils collinaire* and all five *chefs de sous-colline* were from CNDD-FDD. Again, changing parties explains a great deal of this situation, as the *chef de colline* defected from Frodebu to CNDD-FDD. He had been *chef de colline* (1994-96) and *chef de secteur* (1996-99) for Frodebu before the 2005 elections. Even a *chef de colline* of Uprona was asked to become the leader of CNDD-FDD in Tangara, however, he declined the offer. A similar explanation applies for most of the *chefs de sous-colline*: also on this level, most of the individuals remained, since only the party name changed from Frodebu to CNDD-FDD.

Thus, in Tangara ethnic tensions were not as prevalent as in Burara, and the 2005 elections presented a more 'classical' political party struggle between CNDD-FDD and Frodebu to win the majority Hutu electorate. People therefore held administrative positions for Frodebu, yet rallied for CNDD-FDD and promised more external aid (which they controlled at the time) so long as they were returned to office in the elections. In addition, the CNDD-FDD in Butihinda had a militant character, which was personified by the *administratrice* of the *commune*. Her personal militantism was expressed in the populations' fear of her, stories of summary imprisonment, and especially – as a woman – her criticizing lazy men only drinking beers in bars, which of course won the approval of many women. Under her leadership 'the party' was omnipresent, something which was to a lesser extent felt in the two other studied *communes*.

The situation of the *administratrice* of Butihinda offers a present day illustration of the continuation of the historical centralised and top-down way of how the Burundian state apparatus works, as she fell victim to the national political conflict between Hussein Radjabu (President of the CNDD-FDD party) and Pierre Nkurunziza (President of the Republic, CNDD-FDD signature). On 7 February 2007 Radjabu was dismissed as president of the party at an extraordinary congress in Ngozi, after a political struggle between the two big men, which had split CNDD-FDD into two parts (Swiss Peace, 2007). As a consequence, from the national to the very local level, many political supporters of Radjabu were dismissed of official functions. Radjabu is a Hutu from Muyinga, not surprisingly then, the Radjabu camp was very strong in the entire province. After his dismissal, and later his imprisonment, the Governor of Muyinga province was replaced, and also the *administratrice* of Butihinda *commune*, a strong supporter of Rajabu as they both belong to the Muslim minority, was replaced by the *conseil communal*. It indicates how the functioning of the *conseil communal*, if necessary, is completely orchestrated from above, from the capital Bujumbura. Before, many members of the *conseil communal* were loyal to their *administratrice*, and also a large part of the population (especially the women) praised her efforts to bring development to the

commune. As such, her story is a perfect illustration of how democratic elections could not alter the 'traditional approach of top-down governance' (Uvin, 2005: 2, see OAG, 2007 for a discussion on decentralization in Burundi).

After the elections, the population was afraid that tensions would rise again with the return of both repatriates and IDPs. The situation remained relatively calm for a time, but this changed in 2006 when conflicts between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of aid (also from the NGO which has been researched) intensified. This soured relations between the population and local administration, as the latter was implicated in the embezzlement of external aid. People who remained – and clearly suffered – on Tangara *colline* during the crisis therefore cannot accept that only repatriates receive aid. Despite the clear ethnic component (Tutsi IDPs demanding an even package of aid as Hutu repatriates) the problem was broader, as many of those who remained were also Hutu. (It was also a political move, as CNDD-FDD used aid to win over recent repatriates – representing an entirely new constituency – for the elections of 2010). The monopoly on political power of a militant CNDD-FDD party enhanced the control over external aid, leading to the exclusion of many, and a corrupt local administration. In 2007, the Radjabu case even created conflicts on the *colline* level, and although not violent, through mobilization from above, conflicts were rapidly eliminated. In 2008, as was the case in 2000, failed harvests and food insecurity increased insecurity, as robberies and conflicts about the selling of assets saw a steep rise. Some households living isolated in the hills left their homes and tried to find shelter near the rural road, in search of better protection. As in Busoni, also here political mobilization in the run up for the 2010 elections started already in 2009, although not as intense.

4.2.3   The LITA project

Although all three case studies featured a number of similar activities, some were particular to each project. For CIBA in Burara this was the development of the wetland. In the case of LITA in Tangara, the project was set up around the construction of *le hangar*, a storage facility for agricultural production (see annex 3 for the goals, objectives and intermediary results of this project, as defined in the project proposal).

A brief sketch of the project thus starts with the *hangar*. In several centres of Butihinda *commune* LITA constructed storage facilities for agricultural production of the surrounding *collines*. This was also the case in Tangara *colline*, and in the eyes of the population, the hangar was the 'concrete' realisation of the project: wood and brick buildings were constructed to store harvests (potatoes, beans, sorgho, etc.) beside the market in Tangara, together with a centre which served as a meeting place for associations

or other groups in the community. Closely related to these storage facilities was the seed credit system with local agricultural producer-groups, being the main end-beneficiaries of the LITA activities. LITA asked the local population to form associations; in turn they received a seed credit of beans, peanuts, etc. Afterwards, the producer groups reimbursed the credit to the committee of the hangar, which used it to supply other groups.

A second main component of the project was the introduction of the 'solidarity chain', similar to the livestock credit scheme in Busoni. In addition, a veterinary pharmacy was also built within the hangar to provide the population with accessible drugs, and a vet was chosen and trained to assist the participants of the credit scheme.

Also similar to the other NGO-projects, both anti-erosion measures (contour berms) and reforestation activities (agro-forestry) were carried out to improve the management of soil and water resources.

As a transferral component, training was given on various topics. However, rather specific for LITA in Tangara was its focus on both organizational capacities and conflict resolution skills. During the project, a goal related to conflict resolution was included upon request of the donor. Not many activities could be implemented because of the late inclusion, but LITA in Tangara made most progress on this issue.

In sum, the Tangara project of LITA revolved around the locations of the *hangars*, including one in Tangara centre. The project had clear social objectives. LITA in Tangara was the consortium partner most focused on participatory group-oriented processes: associations were identified as the main end-beneficiaries, storehouses were opportunities to create local structures of cooperation and collaboration, and great efforts were made to support these participatory processes. In terms of intervention strategy, this was translated into an associational focus, and a more bottom-up *laisser-faire* approach to introduce community participation. Rigorous supervision by NGO staff was less necessary, as the goal of the project was the participatory process rather than achieving technical end-results.

4.3 Cumba *colline* – the CLC project

4.3.1 The colline

Cumba is one of the 51 *collines*, divided into four zones, of Muyinga *commune* (see annex 5 for maps). This is the central *commune* of Muyinga province, including the provincial capital, and bordering Tanzania in the east. Spread across 379.94 sq km the *commune* belongs to two similar natural regions, Bugesera (as both Burara and Tangara *collines*)

and Bweru, varying between an altitude of 1400 and 1800m, with similar climatological conditions as both other studied *collines* (RoB, 2006e, 2006g). Below are key socio-economic indicators (Table 11).

Table 11 Demographic and socio-economic indicators, Muyinga commune

Muyinga *Commune* (Cumba)*	
Total population	125 725
Population density *(2005)*	331 / sq km
Predicted Population growth / year *(2003-2010)*	3.6%
Population under the age of 25 *(2006)*	65.3%
Main agricultural cultures	Bananas (59.4%) Sweet potatoes (20.4%) Manioc (8.7%), Rice (6.4%)
% population in need of food aid *(Season 2006B, entire province of Muyinga)*	>51%
Health Infrastructure	7 CDS (Centre de Santé) - 1 Hospital (in provincial capital)
No of reported cases of most prevalent diseases / month***	Malaria (2899) Respiratory diseases (1334) Malnutrition (351) Diarrhetic diseases (229) Dysentery (34)
Water access *(standard : 30 hh / water point)*	89.3****
Primary school enrolment	84.2
Secondary school enrolment	2042 students (8% of the 10-20 year age-group)
Vulnerable Groups **Child Heads of Household (No.)** **Child Soldiers (No.)** **Total No of Orphans (No.)**	 0 97 1279

*Based on *Monographie de la Commune Muyinga* (RoB, 2006e)

**Based on a joint evaluation of MINAGRI (Ministry of Agriculture), FAO, WFP; UNICEF, and OCHA (RoB, 2006b)

*** To a great extent dependent on the presence of health infrastructure

****Gives a distorted view, because of major differences between rural areas and Muyinga city.

Cumba *colline* is located on the rural road connecting Muyinga with Karuzi province, yet close to Muyinga city (approx. 10 km). Cumba possesses two rural centres, one with a small market on the road, and the other being the administrative centre of the Cumba zone, with a health centre (Centre de Santé). Cumba zone has both primary and secondary school facilities. Cumba *colline* is divided into three *sous-collines*: Cumba (near the zone centre), Rutamba (near the market), and Ryaruvuno (more isolated from the rural road).

4.3.2 The conflict

Compared to the other *collines*, a similar course of events took place on Cumba *colline* after the assassination of Ndadaye (1993). The Hutu population, led by local politicians, killed Tutsi. In turn, the Tutsi dominated army arrived and carried out retaliatory attacks. The effects were still visible at the time of research: the ruins of buildings around the market were still present after a heavy grenade attack in 1993. The zone office was still not reconstructed, and had almost no roof on top of the little building. The expected results were Tutsi regrouped into IDP camps (also near Muyinga city), and Hutu fleeing to

neighbouring Tanzania, with robbery, destruction of houses and looting of assets such as cattle and land by both sides.

During 1996 and 1997, as on the other *collines*, fresh trials against Hutu involved in killings and looting sparked a second displacement of the Hutu population, joining those who fled to Tanzania in 1993. It was also during this period that the *Sans Echecs* were present. This Tutsi youth militia, active throughout the entire country, received back up from the national army, and under the pretext of judging participants of the 1993 events, carried out retaliatory actions. On 21 February 1997, for example, they attacked around ten households on Rutamba *sous-colline* with grenades, destroying the houses, looting several cows, injuring eight and killing three inhabitants with machetes. From 1999 onwards, the situation calmed down, and relationships between the Hutu still present on the *colline* and Tutsi households from the nearby IDP camp improved. This improvement was marked in 2000 by joint nightly patrols to increase security. In 2001 and 2002 droughts led to generalized food insecurity among the population and a rise in armed robberies, and conflicts with those profiteering from the situation to buy or confiscate assets because of unpaid debts.

On the political level, Muyinga *commune* had a mixed Frodebu/Uprona outlook after the 1993 events. The function of *administrateur* changed from Frodebu to Uprona in 2001, the *chef de zone* was Upronist until the elections of 2005, while the *chef de colline* was a Frodebu member and the *chefs de* sous-*colline* were both Frodebu (2) and Uprona (1). With the elections of 2005 seats in the *conseil communal* were distributed as follows: CNDD-FDD (17), Frodebu (6), Uprona (1), and Paribu (1). The *administrateur* was from CNDD-FDD, however as a Radjabu supporter he was replaced by another CNDD-FDD member. Both the *chef de zone* and *chef de colline* belonged to the CNDD-FDD, and the *conseils collinaires* and the *chefs de sous-colline* were divided between Frodebu, Uprona, and CNDD-FDD, with a majority held by CNDD-FDD.

Interesting on the political level was the fact that the population of Cumba *colline*, although CNDD-FDD controlled most administrative positions, was not at all militant. Instead some people dissociated themselves from the party and mistrusted party members. One often quoted reason was the gap between the rural population and their *administrateur*, the latter living in the urban provincial centre, rarely visiting his *commune*, and as such, staying 'invisible' for its constituency.

The main reason, however, was the general mistrust and fear of the ruling CNDD-FDD party, after the killings of 31 civilians by the army and *Service National de Renseignement* (SNR). From July 2006 at least 31 'disappearances' have been reported by families in the *communes* of Buhinyuza, Muyinga (including Cumba *colline*) and Giteranyi in Muyinga province. In the months thereafter several bodies were found in rivers in Muyinga *commune* (HRW, 2006: 18):

ONUB human rights monitors dispatched to the scene found at least four bodies in the river near Nyoko, Muyinga *commune*, on August 25 and three more soon after. Human Rights Watch researchers saw bodies in the river near Mageni, Muyinga *commune*, on September 1.

Later on, more bodies and body parts were found in other local rivers near and in the Ruvubu National Park. Although first denied by army and civil authorities, many witnesses approved the fact that these people had been arrested and detained at Mukoni military camp in Muyinga city, accused of alleged collaboration with FNL rebels, and later on eliminated by the military and SNR agents. At the time of field research, these accusations of collaboration with FNL rebels were still prevalent, with rebellious teachings taking place (OCHA Burundi, April 2007: 3), and illustrated with the alleged passing by of a battalion of FNL rebels near Cumba centre, some of them visiting their families, the army rapidly intervening to track them down (which they failed to do), and the *administrateur* visiting Cumba *colline* the next day to reaffirm the government's control over the situation.

In addition to these events, Cumba *colline* has suffered from similar conflicts and tensions as the two other studied *collines*. Soon after the elections of 2005, tensions increased with CNDD-FDD intimidating members of other political parties to join CNDD-FDD. On several occasions external aid of NGOs caused conflicts, in particular between the local population and the newly returned repatriates from Tanzania, which had been privileged by local administration as these repatriates were a potential new constituency for the 2010 elections. Again, these conflicts were not ethnic, as both local population and repatriates were to a great extent Hutu. Closely linked to the return of refugees has been the increase of land conflicts between family members and neighbours. Food insecurity in turn increased levels of armed robbery and conflicts about assets (land, cattle) sold at low prices. Again, from 2009 onwards, political mobilization in the run up to the 2010 elections started, with CNDD-FDD rallying aggressively with the help of their youth groups and demobilized former soldiers.

4.3.3 The CLC project

All three NGOs (CIBA, LITA, CLC) used the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium project to switch from a more humanitarian to a more long term development logic, by rolling out sustainable household livelihood strategies. However, CLC on Cumba *colline* most clearly translated this shift into a reduction of the distribution of material resources, and focusing almost solely on training and raising awareness among the local population. (See annex 4 for the goals, objectives, and results of the project as described in the project proposal.)

Broadly, the project on Cumba *colline* was divided into two main components, the first being the agricultural component. Central to the project was the *encadreur de base*, a local trainer paid by CLC but who lived within the local community. He closely followed the participant households in the project to create 'lead farmers' which could serve as an example for their fellow community members. The *encadreur de base* trained these farmers in modern agricultural techniques: the construction and use of a compost bin, the integration of contour berms on their fields as a combination of anti-erosion measures and the production of pasture for the cattle, and so on. The 'solidarity chain' was key: farmers who succeeded in all the measures above and who introduced modern small-scale agriculture in their community, received a goat as an integrated part of small-scale agriculture.

Health issues were the second component of CLC's project. Different from the two other projects, CLC spent considerably more time and effort on health issues, such as nutrition, household hygiene and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, and sexual violence. For these activities the NGO passed via health agents of the provincial health department of Muyinga. The NGO provided additional training and encouragement bonuses. In turn, agents gave numerous training sessions on diverse health topics throughout the project target area.

In sum, the Cumba project differs on some important points from the two other studied projects within the livelihood consortium. First, the CLC project was much less geographically centralized: the project worked on all *collines* of the *commune*, yet always with a smaller selection of the population. Whereas CIBA (Burara) to a great extent identified its target population according to technical criteria (e.g. farmers with plots in the wetland, technical possibility for water infrastructure) and LITA (Tangara) focused on social criteria (belonging to a group or association), CLC (Cumba) chose according to individual criteria of vulnerability, only working with the most vulnerable (e.g. the elder, the disabled, widows, orphans, people affected by HIV, etc.), yet on all *collines*. This choice presented a much more dispersed and less visible project. Second, in terms of objectives this was translated into a focus on individual change – in contrast with a more technical (Burara) and social (Tangara) focus – which went hand in hand with a household intervention strategy. This focused on changing individual behaviour and attitudes, while enhancing personal knowledge, capacities and skills.

PART THREE :
ENGINEERING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 5

Livelihoods, power and food insecurity: adaptation of social capital portfolios in protracted crises[1]

Abstract. *– The failure of food security and livelihood interventions to adapt to the conflict settings in which they operate remains a key gap in humanitarian response to protracted crises. To tackle this policy gap, the article proposes a social capital analysis. This adds a political economy angle on food security and conflict to the actor-based livelihood framework. A case study of three hillsides in northern Burundi offers an ethnographic basis for this hypothesis. While relying on a theoretical framework in which different combinations of social capital (bonding, bridging, linking) account for a diverse range of outcomes, the findings present empirical insights on how social capital portfolios adapt to a protracted crisis situation. It is argued that these social capital adaptations have the effect of changing policies, institutions, and processes (PIPs) on livelihoods, and clarify the impact of the distribution of power and powerlessness on food security issues. They represent a solid way of integrating political economy concerns into the livelihood framework.*

5.1 Introduction

The failure of food security and livelihood interventions to properly understand the broader conflict environment in which they operate has been identified as a key gap in humanitarian responses to protracted crises (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009; Lautze & Raven-Roberts, 2006; Pingali *et al.*, 2005; Russo *et al.*, 2008). This implies that most interventions are unable to tackle the impact of the broader political economy of conflict on food security issues. There is therefore a consensus on the need to integrate a political economy perspective into the livelihood framework. Such a perspective highlights how the conflict environment affects the distribution of power and powerlessness in society, and how this in turn affects people's food security. Several attempts have been made to reconcile livelihood analysis and political economy (e.g. the case studies in Collinson, 2003, or Le Billion, 2000). Yet concepts of political economy, such as the 'structures of inequality' (Seddon & Adhikari, 2003) or 'power' and 'powerlessness' remain vague, difficult to apply in practice, and far removed from the actor perspective of the livelihood framework.

This article examines the hypothesis that the analysis of social capital portfolios offers an opportunity to integrate a broader political economy perspective on food security and conflict into the actor-oriented livelihood framework. It is argued that social capital is a crucial mechanism through which livelihood assets are distributed, accessed and claimed. It comprises the concrete 'social wires' through which the complex interaction between livelihood actors and broader policies, institutions, and processes (PIPs)[2] crystallizes. Our findings present how the adaptation of social capital portfolios reflect the changing impact of the conflict environment on the livelihood options of the rural households. As such these changing social capital portfolios clarify the effect of the broader political economy of conflict on people's daily livelihood choices. They present a concrete entry point to integrate political economy concerns into the livelihood framework.

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[2] Policies might include the policies of governments (e.g. land tenure) , rebel groups (e.g. taxation) and international agencies (e.g. international humanitarian law); institutions refer to both formal (e.g. public services such as health services, markets or banks) and informal (e.g. traditional authorities) customs, rules, and norms which constitute the 'rules of the game' in societies; processes deal for example with the dynamics of political and economic marginalization, but also with climate change or environmental degradation (Jaspars and Maxwell 2009: 6).

5.2 Research method and context

This ethnographic analysis is based on 10 months of extensive fieldwork on three *collines* (hillside, administrative unit) − Burara, Tangara, and Cumba − in the north of Burundi during 2006 and 2007. The article is part of broader PhD research on the interaction between external (NGO) interventions, social capital, and post-conflict settings in Burundi. The case study *collines* were therefore selected using NGOs as the independent variable (to select three 'typical cases', Patton, 2002: 236), while keeping the context constant. In the scope of this article, this variable is of less importance than the context for three reasons: (i) the focus is on the interaction between social capital and the context of protracted crises, and all three *collines* were selected because of a similar crisis profile (in particular with regard to food security)[3]; (ii) the effect of external interventions does not present a bias, since external interventions in many protracted crises become a structural component of the crisis context (this was confirmed in Burundi: it would be difficult to find *collines* that were not targeted by external agencies); and (iii) this article does not claim to be representative for Burundi, but seeks ethnographic evidence to substantiate or disprove a theoretical hypothesis.

The aim of the field research was to examine if there was an ethnographic base that supported the hypothesis that the analysis of social capital portfolios can help integrate a political economy perspective on food security and conflict into the livelihood framework. To achieve this goal we had to demonstrate that changes in social capital portfolios indeed reflected the effect of the broader changes in the political economy of conflict on food security and livelihood options of households. The central objective of the ethnographic case study research was therefore to examine and describe if and how the broader conflict environment changed the social capital portfolios of the households, and how this affected their livelihood strategies.

Focus group discussions were selected to collect our data. Critical was the use of the resource exchange matrix, adopted from Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004), tailored to the Burundian context. It enabled us to examine what kind of mutual help people gave/received through which kind of social networks and relationships. Because this matrix emphasizes interpersonal interactions, we conducted additional focus groups to probe into more associational forms of mutual help. We also relied on focus groups to assess more generally the impact of the crisis situation on the social fabric of the communities. For all three kinds of focus groups the theoretical concepts of redundancy

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[3] All three *collines* were situated in the northern region of Burundi, which has been characterized by the combination of the long term effects of civil war and recurrent natural hazards (in particular drought).

and theoretical saturation were used to determine the number of focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2001). As a result, for each kind of focus group an average of three to four were conducted on each hillside. Between 6 to 10 people on average participated in the focus groups, which conforms to the rule of thumb (Patton, 2002: 385). The dynamic of focus groups automatically creates a process of 'indefinite triangulation' (Morgan, 1993: 24), in which statements and opinions are modified by the group. In sum, the different focus groups gave us a general view on the impact of the protracted crisis on the mutual help networks.[4] In addition, interviews with key local actors were used to verify and clarify the focus group findings, and to access information which could not be accessed through focus group discussions (e.g. elite views, or information about particular individuals, price information, etc).

During these focus group discussions it was difficult to discuss the effect of the protracted crisis situation on the available mutual help within a well-defined period. Most focus groups were conducted during the first half of 2007, so we invited people to discuss the different types and activities of mutual help on their *collines* during the year before. But mostly the discussion quickly evolved towards a broader time perspective, and participants referred to the impact of *la crise* in general on mutual help. In most cases, this was a reference to the civil war which started in 1993, yet in other cases they made reference to *la famine* from 2000 onwards, when several successive seasons were unsuccesful because of continuing drought in the north of Burundi. Furthermore, the interpretation of the crisis situation was adapted towards the local contexts on each of the three *collines*: different patterns of insecurity and violence, refugee flows, political evolutions, climatological circumstances, and so on resulted in different reference points within the history of each *colline* (see Chapter 4). For example, the return of large groups of refugees or IDPs, which fled the civil war in the nineties, or simply people who had fled because of food insecurity in more recent years, fuelled social tensions on all three *collines* (increasing land conflicts, cases of theft, familial conflicts, …), but the exact moment this happened of course differed on each *colline*. This difficulty to limit the crisis situation to a clear-cut time period, and the adaptation to diverse local settings illustrates the protracted and multi-causal nature of the Burundian crisis (see further).

Nevertheless, a constant during all group discussions was the focus on food insecurity as the most important effect of the crisis, which was translated into longer and more severe periods of *soudure*. These are the periods between two harvests that a farmer and his family needs to bridge without own food reserves. In Burundi these periods of soudure

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[4] However, a limitation of working through focus groups was the inability to differentiate more clearly between different sub-groups within the community (e.g. how was mutual help between the elite or between the most severely destituted people affected by the crisis?). Although sporadic comments indicated some ideas on these topics, this was not systematically researched.

start from March/April (season B), and from September/November (season A). In addition, farmers saw a direct and seasonal returning link between climatological circumstances (in particular the delay of rains), a failed harvest, and the extension of the period of *soudure*. Therefore, discussions about 'la crise' focused more on natural hazards than on indicators related to the civil war.[5] Thus, when de population discussed the impact of the crisis on the effectiveness of mutual help on their *collines*, they particularly refered to the food insecurity situation, and more concretely, to the recurring periods of *soudure*.

5.3 Protracted crises, food security, livelihoods and social capital

Flores *et al.* (2005: 525) define a protracted crisis as a 'situation in which large sections of the population face acute threats to life and livelihoods over an extended period (years or even decades), with the state and other governance institutions failing to provide adequate levels of protection or support'. The term was introduced to highlight the protracted nature of situations, which were previously referred to as 'complex (political) emergencies'; in recent years, it has also been linked to concepts of 'fragile' or 'failed states' (Russo *et al.*, 2008). Providing these concepts with clear-cut definitions remains problematic, but they provide a useful, shorthand expression for a range of humanitarian crises, characterized by their (i) political, (ii) multi-causal (in contrast with mono-causal natural disasters), (iii) violent and (iv) protracted nature (Duffield, 2001; Goodhand & Hulme, 1999; Schafer, 2002).

Food insecurity is one of the main characteristics of such protracted crises (Russo *et al.*, 2008). Three paradigms have set the debate on food insecurity (Devreux, 2000). Demographers (neo-Malthusian or demographic theory) explain food insecurity as a direct effect of food shortages caused by climatic change or demographic pressure; economists (entitlement theory, see Sen, 1981) focus on the demand side and define food insecurity as people's inability to access food because of their poverty situation ('entitlement failure'); political scientists and human rights activists (e.g. De Waal, 1997) view food insecurity as

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[5] Uvin (2009: 82) confirms climate change as an important indicator explaining deterioration in people's life for other regions in Burundi. Indicators that were related more directly to civil war and which were often mentioned: the depletion of livestock (because of looting and distress sales), migration (and the loss of properties as a consequence), deforestation (resulting in increasing soil erosion), and asset depletion in general.

a 'failure of political accountability', caused by the victims' political (instead of economic) powerlessness.[6] The rise of this third 'political' paradigm is linked to the emergence of protracted crises in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa since the 1980s, although war and repressive policies have always played a significant role during famines (Devreux, 2000). In those situations, food insecurity could no longer be explained by referring to poverty statistics or a bad climate, as all these crises were to a certain extent political famines, caused by conflict, insecurity, and government policies.

Currently, livelihood interventions have become popular instruments to deal with food insecurity in such protracted crises situations (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009; Russo *et al.*, 2008). Most of these livelihood frameworks and interventions are based on Sen's conception of food insecurity as an entitlement collapse: livelihood assets and strategies, and access to both, are the necessary building blocks which affect the entitlements of individuals or households to attain food security (Ellis, 2000; Maxwell *et al.*, 2008). Such an actor perspective was welcomed because it valued the resilience of people as 'active agents' capable of coping with crisis situations. On the other hand, livelihood interventions have been criticized because they fail to integrate issues of power (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005), and in the case of protracted crises, the effects of the broader conflict environment (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). In other words, to date, livelihood frameworks still need to incorporate the concerns of the 'political paradigm' on food security. Some analysts therefore broaden their theoretical models to link livelihood opportunities to the broader political economy, thus counterbalancing the actor perspective and emphasizing the structural embeddedness of livelihoods (Collinson, 2003; Lautze & Raven-Roberts, 2006; Seddon & Adhikari, 2003; Vlassenroot, Ntububa & Raeymaekers, 2006; Vlassenroot, 2008). In most of these frameworks the central element is how policies, institutions and processes – PIPs – of the wider political economy mediate people's access to resources, needed to secure their livelihood strategies and attain food security. The failure to understand this mediation process has been identified as a key gap in humanitarian responses (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009).

Our assumption is that social capital plays a crucial role in this mediation process. Social capital is a basic 'building block' for the adoption and adaptation of livelihood strategies. First, social capital is an important asset in itself: it refers to the claims a person

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[6] The difference between paradigm two and three is not always very clear. Devereux starts from a disciplinary difference: entitlement theory mainly has an economic background, and as such focuses more on the relationship between people and markets, is grounded in positivist economics, and defines famine as a 'economic disaster' caused by the 'economic' powerlessness of individual persons. Instead, according to Devereux, those who view famine primarily as a political phenomenon, focus on 'political'(lobbying power) instead of 'economic' (purchasing power) powerlessness, and as such extent the culpability of famine beyond its victims, towards political structures and institutions. However, Sen, for example, has tried to integrate these political dimensions of famine in his earlier more economist analysis. (See Devreux 2000: 18–23).

or household can draw by virtue of belonging to a social network, which may comprise ascriptive or elective personal or family networks, horizontal associative networks, or vertical authority relationships with patrons, chiefs, politicians, etc. (Ellis, 2000). Second, and critically, social capital facilitates or constrains access to other assets or resources, since the depletion, diversification, extension or maintenance of a household's asset portfolio are necessarily mediated by social relationships (Bebbington, 1999). Broader policies (e.g. land tenure), institutions (e.g. markets, informal credit saving groups), and processes (e.g. social marginalization, environmental degradation), mediate this access to livelihood assets and their use in livelihood strategies (Ellis, 2000). A household's social capital stock demonstrates how it is linked to these broader mediating processes or PIPs. In sum, social capital finds itself at the centre of the livelihood framework, as it comprises the social 'wires' connecting livelihood actors and broader political economy processes. Bebbington (1999: 2023) notes:

> Indeed access to other actors is conceptually prior to access to material resources in the determination of livelihood strategies, for such relationships become almost *sine qua non* mechanisms through which resources are distributed and claimed, and through which the broader social, political and market logics governing the control, use and transformation of resources are either reproduced or changed.

Therefore in protracted crisis situations where social, political and market logics are unpredictable and volatile, social capital is key to helping or hindering people's abilities to react to such crises.

5.4   The poor and their social capital portfolios

Based on network theory, the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital has brought the analysis of social capital a step further, by presenting the argument that different combinations of these dimensions are responsible for a wide range of outcomes (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Bonding social capital refers to dense and strong social networks with family, friends and close others (intra-community ties); bridging social capital refers to weaker, dispersed social ties with people not belonging to the inner circle (extra-community ties).[7] Linking social capital is therefore a sub-type of bridging

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[7] The equation of bonding with intra-community and bridging with extra-community ties in Woolcock (1998) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) is confusing. Part of the confusion is due to the dual interpretation of 'community', both as a geographical and identity boundary. When Woolcock (1998) describes the intra-community social networks of first-generation immigrant communities, or when he refers to the ethnic

capital, as it refers to vertical relations which cut across explicit power differentials (e.g. vertical authority relationships with patrons, chiefs, politicians) (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). These networks can also be functionally differentiated. Bonding social capital performs a 'social support' function, used to 'get by'; while bridging/linking social capital performs a 'social leverage' function used to 'get ahead' (Briggs, 1998). Bonding networks with people 'like me', will give me access to redundant resources, since similar people have similar resources (homophily); instead, bridging/linking networks with people 'unlike me', will give me access to non-redundant and more strategic resources not available in my own bonding social network (heterophily) (Lin, 2008).

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entrepreneurship literature, community refers to an identity boundary, in this case an ethnic one. When Woolcock and Narayan (2000) discuss the intra-community ties between women of a village saving group, they refer to the village as a geographical-administrative boundary. The example further illustrates that 'community' is also used to refer to particular homogeneous interest groups (the saving group). In many cases, geographical and identity boundaries can overlap: e.g. most of one's ethnic group live nearby. However, this is not necessarily the case. For example, ties with a family member which migrated to the city have both an intra-community (sharing identity) as an extra-community (linking people in different regions) character. In addition, within the same village not so dense extra-community ties can exist: between neighbours of different ethnic identities, between the poor and the rich. Both geographical-adminstrative and identity boundaries are not so easy to define, and are shifting, overlapping and dynamic. Therefore, instead of linking bonding and bridging ties unilaterally to intra –or extra community ties, it is better they are viewed as (i) contextual and dynamic concepts, in order to recognize the multiple, overlapping and shifting realities in which people connect to each other, and (ii) with reference to the possible and shifting functions they can perform (integration/closure or linkage/brokerage). (See chapter 1).

Figure 5 – the poor's social capital portfolios (standard hypothesis)

Authority relationships
(patrons, chiefs, politicians, social worker, etc.)

Intercommunity   Intracommunity   **ego**   *(Family, close others)*   *(more distant ties e.g. farmer association)*

Strong bonding
Modest bridging
No linking
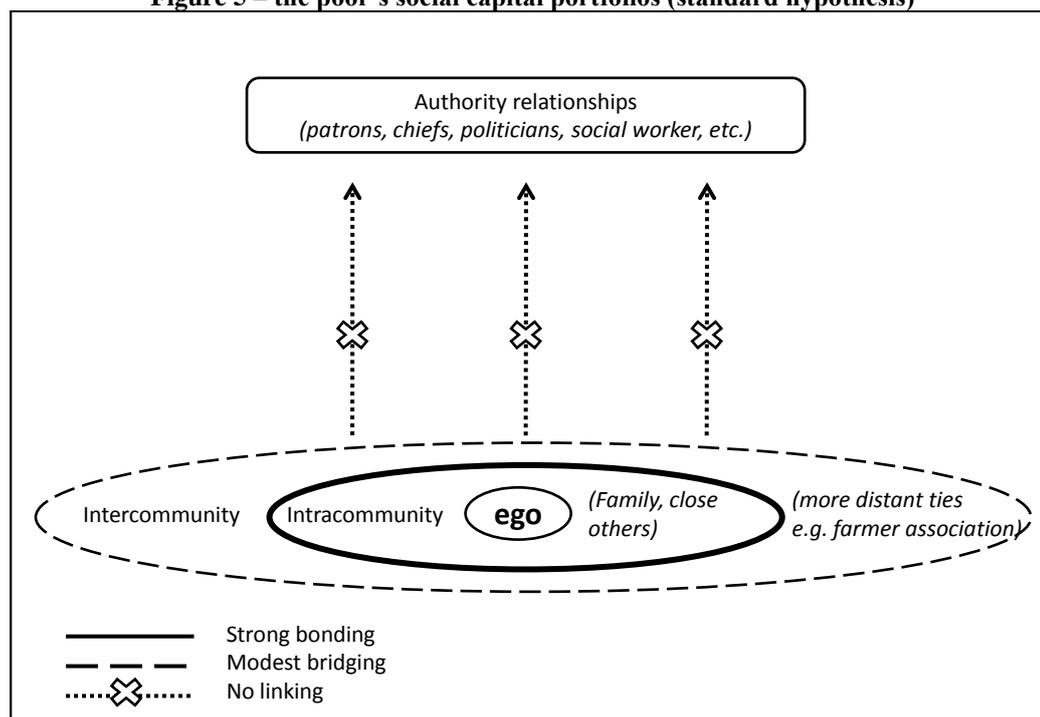
This multi-dimensional analysis has produced a 'standard hypothesis' on the composition of the social capital portfolios of the poor, to better understand social capital as an (un)productive asset in the lives of the poor (Figure 5). This hypothesis is based on three interrelated assumptions. The first assumption is that poor people rely extensively on their bonding network, yet these support networks mainly have protection and risk-management functions (e.g. World Bank, 2000: 128). In the livelihood framework of DFID, for example, these support networks are identified as the 'resource of last resort': they provide a buffer against shocks, function as an informal safety net, and compensate for a lack of other assets (DFID, 1999). The second assumption is that their vulnerability hinders the poor from accessing more cross-cutting bridging ties, which are necessary to 'get ahead'. Barr (1998) makes this clear when he refers to the 'solidarity networks' and 'innovation networks' of respectively poor and non-poor entrepreneurs in Ghana. Thus, whereas non-poor have more extensive and leveraged networks and play 'offense', the poor's networks mostly play 'defense' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The third assumption is that the poor are deprived of linking social capital with those in authority (chiefs, administration officials, social workers, politicians). This highlights the vertical dimension of poverty: their poverty situation creates information and power barriers that hinder access to these individuals and institutions. Woolcock (2002: 26-27) presents a good summary of the 'standard hypothesis' which results from these three assumptions on the composition of the poor's social capital portfolios:

These distinctions have particular significance for understanding the plight of the poor, who typically have a close-knit and intensive stock of bonding social capital that they leverage to "get by" […], a modest endowment of the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital typically deployed by the non-poor to "get ahead" […], and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions such as banks, insurance agencies, and the courts […].

We start from this theoretical framework to describe the social capital portfolios of rural Burundian households. The main aim of the case study field research was then to examine if and how the context of a protracted crisis influenced the composition of these social capital portfolios. But let us first introduce the Burundian context.

5.5 Burundi and its protracted crisis

Burundi is slowly emerging from a civil war that lasted more than 10 years.[8] After three decades (1960s–90s) of authoritarian and military rule by the ethnic Tutsi minority, the first democratically elected Hutu president was murdered soon after his appointment in 1993. In the civil war that followed, ethnic strife wrecked Burundian society, approximately 300,000 people lost their lives (Lemarchand, 2009), and recent statistics indicate that 52 per cent of the total population has fled their homes at least once since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29). Currently, after a transition period leading to the 2005 elections, Burundi finds itself in a 'no war, no peace' situation, although relative peace has returned to the country.[9] The effects of this protracted crisis persist and will take many years to overcome.

Conflict has multiple devastating effects on people's daily livelihoods: in a protracted conflict environment livelihood strategies become limited, asset bases are depleted, and an institutional breakdown results in dysfunctional social services, markets and state institutions (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). Burundi was no exception. For over 10 years, civil war nullified the security of people and goods as a minimum condition for allowing Burundians to work. Insecurity led to restricted mobility, preventing the population from working their fields, migrating in search for labour, or trading their agricultural products and other goods. For many, their livelihood strategies became limited to subsistence.

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[8] On the history of conflict in Burundi, see e.g. Daley (2006b), Lemarchand (2009), Reyntjens (2000), and Uvin (2009).

[9] Only on the 22 of April 2009, the last rebel movement, the *Front National de Libération* (FNL), transformed itself into a political party after signing and implementing a cease-fire agreement. In addition, in the run up to the elections of 2010 political tensions are increasing again.

There has been widespread plundering, destruction and theft of assets by government and rebel forces (Human Rights Watch, 1998). In particular, the looting of livestock disrupted the mixed farming system: a national survey in 1997 showed losses of 32 and 46 per cent, respectively, for large and small stock (Koyo, 2004). In addition, the asset base has been further depleted by distress sales. Another crucial effect of the civil war has been forced migration, resulting in massive illegal appropriation, occupation, and sale of land. Even today, many refugees and IDPs are returning to their hills, finding their land sold or occupied by family members or community members (e.g. ICG, 2003b; Kamungi et al., 2005). On the institutional level, 'government institutions have been instruments of violent oppression, unequal distribution of investments, and unfair regulators of markets' (Baghdadli et al., 2008: 3). Conflict resulted in long-term under-investment of human (education), natural (sustainable development), and physical (infrastructure) capital, state action was characterized by predation and corruption, and the private sector focused on shallow commercial and business networks to the extent of investing in production capacity. In addition to this multiplicity of conflict factors, the effects of civil war were combined with recurring natural hazards such as droughts, floods, and crop diseases (in particular, the mosaic virus has seriously depleted production of cassava) (Levine & Chastre, 2004; WFP, 2004, 2008).

To date, this has resulted in a generalized and protracted situation of food insecurity. Between 1991 and 2002 the number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 37 million, an increase largely due to five warn-torn countries, including Burundi (FAO, 2006). From the early 1990s and 2000, during civil war, the number of undernourished people in Burundi increased from 2.7 to 4.5 million. In the period 2003-2005, 63% of the total population was undernourished (FAO, 2008). In 2005, for example, the WFP distributed food aid to 1.8 million Burundians, or 25 per cent of the population (Baghdadli et al., 2008: 3). There are many confusing statistics about 'food insecurity', but the voices of Burundi are clear: for them the inability to feed their families has been the single most important symptom of their poverty due to the crisis (RoB, 2006a).

Next to conflict and natural hazard factors, other elements have caused food insecurity (e.g. Levine & Chastre, 2004; WFP, 2008). The most important has been access to land. Due to high population pressure, the inheritance system, and deregulated land markets, Burundian hills are literally transformed into a patchwork of continuously diminishing familial land holdings. A recent survey indicates that 42.1% of households own a plot of 0.25 ha or less, which is well below subsistence level (WFP, 2008). Consequently, a majority of households depend on the market for food. These markets, however, constitute a serious constraint to food insecurity. On the one hand, access to these markets is restricted to few traders, and many farmers need to use middlemen, receiving low farmer-gate prices for their agricultural production. On the other hand, households that depend on the market for food are vulnerable to volatile price-fixing and sometimes exorbitant increases in food prices. In contrast, when food shortages arise, the number of households

relying on the sale of labour increases substantially, resulting in a decrease in wages, even accepting food rations as compensation. As a consequence, many poor households rely on distress sales of assets and indebting themselves to cope with short term food shortages. Below we discuss how the social capital portfolios of the rural households on the three case study *collines* adapted to this protracted crisis situation.

5.6 Social capital portfolios in a protracted crisis: 'weak' bonds, 'absent' bridges, and 'unresponsive' linkages

5.6.1 'Beer friends' : weak bonding social capital

Traditionally, Burundian rural households are part of a horizontal social network, based on the institution of *ukuterera*, which means the gift-giving of food and beer during ceremonies, hence the people comprising these networks are known as *abatererezi* or 'beer friends' (Trouwborst, 1973: 111). The network is mainly based on *solidarité par parenté* (kinship solidarity) and *solidarité residentielle* (neighbourhood solidarity), as the core of the network is a relatively unchanging local group of relatives and neighbours (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993: 9; Trouwborst, 1973: 114). These networks possess a high degree of density and a high frequency of transactions (Trouwborst, 1973). People rely on these networks for the preparation of their land, the guarding of livestock, the construction of houses or helping the sick (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993: 9-10). These networks are generally used as a safety net. As such, they can be equated with bonding social capital, while performing a 'social support' function. However, on the three studied collines, these bonding social networks degenerated into an unproductive asset in the hands of rural households.

In line with the historical description of the *abaterezi*, people referred to mutual help between neighbours, close familymembers and friends (Trouwborst, 1973). Although the categories of neighbour, family, and friend did overlap within these networks – one's neighbour was likely also one's family member or friend, and vice versa – the locality proved to be the fundamental reference point for these networks. Because households live scattered in their isolated homestead or *rugo*, and not in villages (Uvin, 2009: 69–70), spatial proximity is a crucial aspect of social life on the Burundian *collines*. Therefore, neighbours are crucial because of their proximity: they are the first to intervene when a household has a problem. A frequent example which returned during discussions was theft. When a household is robbed, close neighbours are the first to intervene: to catch the thief, to alert local authorities or the police, and to act as a witness. Another recurring

example was illness: neighbours are expected to go and inform family or friends, and have the moral duty to help with transporting the sick person to the health centre or hospital. Because of this proximity neighbours are 'condemned' to each other, since there is no other option than to fall back on each other in many daily situations. Maintaining good relationships with close neighbours is therefore crucial, but as will become clear, not always easy under certain circumstances (see further).

As assumed by network theory, these networks facilitated access to redundant resources, as similar people possess similar resources. During focus groups, people described how they relied on these networks for food and non-food transactions, and what can be called physical help transactions (offering physical labour). In the case of the latter, people referred to helping each other with the collection of firewood or water, support with construction works (e.g. repairing the roof or walls after heavy rains, the construction of a new house, etc.), and helping the sick (transporting the sick person to the nearest health centre or the hospital).[10] For non-food items people gave the examples of soap or lending out a sleeping mat, kitchenware or farming equipment, in addition to small amounts of cash and credit. For food items people gave the examples of 'a plate of beans', sweet potatoes, colcase or manioc, salt or cooking oil. Given the protracted food insecure situation, the search for food (or cash to access food items) through these social networks stood central in most of the discussions. During a focus group in Tangara a man putted it this way: 'During famine[11] everybody has little bags in his pocket. If you meet somebody who can give you a plate of beans, then you already have a bag to keep it. Famine is the time of the little bags' (focus group, 01/06/07, Tangara).

The above described transactions were not exceptional, and happened frequently. Of course, the frequency differed for each transaction and according to specific circumstances, but lending some farming equipment, receiving a food ration or a small amount of cash, or helping to collect firewood were all part of normal social life. People expressed that many of these transactions were part of daily routine, and as such, were considered as self-evident social and moral duties: children contributed to better relationships with neighbours through collecting firewood or water, women exchanged kitchenware, men helped each other with construction works, the neighbourhood

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[10] In comparison with the historical account of the *abaterezi* networks, one particular transaction – helping with the preparation of the land – was not so often mentioned. This was because in many cases, it was more in particular limited to the members of the own household and the family. However, another important reason, as will be explained further, is that the supply of labour in the fields was increasingly offered through the local labour market (see section on *abakozi*).

[11] The people used the word *la famine* (famine) to phrase their situation because food insecurity was indeed their first and most important concern. By no means this indicates that an effective famine was raging in these communities.

supported the most destitute among them with food rations and small gifts of cash (mostly not more than 100 Fbu, 1$ at that time was approximately 1000 Fbu). Credit transactions (of cash, but also of seeds), on the other hand, were mainly a matter for men, and were more in particular bound to the rules and norms related to the relationship of *pfampfe*. *Pfampfe* is the word that many people use to identify a close or 'real' friend. In most cases it has two related meanings: it is someone with whom you can share your secrets, and it is someone on which you can rely for material or financial help; both functions refer to Wolf's (1966: 10) distinction between expressive or emotional (sharing secrets) and instrumental (help) friendship. A credit is a perfect example of a transaction which takes place between such 'close' friends: it concerns financial help and it is considered as a secret between friends (if not, it would be publicly known that a man is not able to maintain his family, which would affect his status in the community). The transaction which was generally identified as the most clear moral obligation within the community was helping to transport the sick. Whereas helping each other with a plate of beans, soap or firewood was perceived as socially desirable but not obligatory, refusing to help a family with a sick person was strongly disapproved within the community, and sanctioned. As a focus group participant in Burara (16/04/07) comments:

> If we do not help the sick person, we can be punished by the *nyumbakumi* [chief of
> ten households living near to each other]. It is an obligation. If you refuse you can
> be excluded from society.[12]

   The diversity and quantity of resources accessible through these social networks was however restricted. The protracted crisis produced rather 'covariate' instead of 'idiosyncratic' risks[13]: the combination of structural factors (population pressure, land tenure, soil degradation, …), the long-term effects of civil war (migration, asset depletion, …), and recurrent natural hazards (in this region: drought and the mosaic virus) affected entire communities and not individual households. Because of this mix of factors the population in the north of Burundi has known yearly recurring periods of increased food insecurity since the nineties. This was an irregular evolution, with peaks (e.g. the year 2000, caused by drought which followed repeated poor rains from 1997 to 2000) and more moderate years, and with geographic discrepancies within the northern region (Levine and Chastre, 2004: 4). Since then, the periods of *soudure*, when households need

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[12] However, this obligation did not apply to everyone in the same way: richer people could not be easily forced to take action by local authorities like the *nyumbakumi*, but they often sent a groom or one of their workers to help with the transport.

[13] 'Covariate risks' are aggregate, economy wide-risks which affect entire communties or regions. Examples are drought, civil war, floods, etc. 'Idiosyncratic risks' are indivdual risks which only affect the own household. Examples are illness or theft. (Dercon 2000: 142-143).

to cope with food shortages between two successive harvests, have become longer, more severe, and a structural risk for livelihood strategies. As the majority of households is affected by these covariate risks, the resources accessible throughout their social networks dry up.

For food transactions, in many cases only sweet potatoes were still accessible through these social networks. Together with manioc, sweet potatoes is considered one of the *cultures de soudure* (Bundervoet, 2007: 17) on which Burundian households rely in the period between two harvests (since manioc was affected by the mosaic virus, for many sweet potatoes was the only option left). There was still a sufficient supply, and sweet potatoes had a low economic value (low price on local markets) which means that speculation for this crop was absent. To the contrary, beans, for example, were only sporadically exchanged and in very small amounts because they were in short supply and had a high market value (and therefore provoked speculation). Although this was an observation made on all three *collines*, the difference between sweet potatoes and beans was most clear on *Cumba colline*, where people labeled beans as *intabonwa* or 'invisible':

> The sweet potatoes, we gave for free, but for the other seeds we could not give. Seeds of beans, for example, were 'invisible'. (focus group, 23/05/07, Cumba)

> For seeds of beans, it did not happen once in 2006. With the famine nobody has given that for free. But we have given and we have received sweet potatoes. Even if there was not much of it, the people have helped each other. Even a poor can give sweet potatoes to us, and we can give to our patron or to richer people. (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba)

Also the amounts of cash accessed through these networks decreased. First of all, cash credits became rare, and were replaced by seed credits if possible, because 'we had not so much seeds, but even less money.' (focus group, 16/04/07, Burara). And if a cash credit was given, the amount of money was substantially reduced. During focus groups, most examples of credits given within these networks went from 2000 Fbu to 5000 Fbu, sometimes up to 10.000 Fbu. Yet, people indicated that this became impossible for many in the last years, and that it was difficult to even acces a credit of 500 or 1000 Fbu within your own family. It reflects the subsistence economy which is prevalent and the low rate of monetization of the rural areas, a major drawback for any strategy to rebuild the rural economy of Burundi (WFP 2008, Baghdadli *et al.*, 2008; RoB, 2006a). As respectively a man and woman illustrated the inability to help one's own family members during a focus group in Cumba (23/05/07):

> Really, we cannot give money for free when there is famine, even to your brother you cannot give.

> One day my daughter came, but I could not give, I had no money. Even 50 Fbu we
> could not give for free.

In fact, only the resources accessed through physical help transactions (collecting firewood, helping with construction works, fetching water, offering labour …) stayed redundant within these bonding networks. In many cases, people only had their physical force left to help others with, and only resources which were still redundant could be exchanged. As one person illustrated during a focus group (14/05/07, Cumba):

> 'Even in 2006, during drought, we helped a lot, because we can find firewood and
> water in the nature. There is always water and firewood, we don't have to go to the
> market to buy it.' (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba).

In particular, people tried to help specific vulnerable groups such as the elder, the disabled, widows and orphans, i.e. households with a shortage of labour. But although people tried to help each other and the more vulnerable within these bonding networks, during the periods of *soudure*, these physical help transactions also became instrumentalized to relationships with richer people within the community. People offered their force to execute some household work, in order to please richer neighbours, hoping for some compensation:

> The poor have to fetch water from the dwell or searching for wood many times, like
> this they hope to get a plate of food when they need it. They have to do it a lot, like
> this they have good relations with the neighbours. This is very important for the
> vulnerable. (focus group, 13/04/07, Burara).

> People can give water or search for firewood for somebody who is rich, to show that
> you want to help him when there is a problem. One day he can be of benefit for you,
> so we have to do it. (focus group, 23/05/07, Cumba).

> You search [water] for him, that's to show your goodwill, one day this can be of
> benefit for you, when the situation asks for help from a rich person. (focus group,
> 01/06/07, Tangara).

In sum, apart from resources accessed through these physical help transactions, more strategic resources to cope with food shortages during periods of *soudure* (in particular cash and food) dried up within these bonding networks. As such, these bonding ties could no longer perform their social support function to 'get by' (Briggs, 1998) or to 'play defense' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) : households could not rely on their bonding ties to cope with their food insecurity situation.

Within these bonding networks also a 'contraction' of reciprocity (Swift, 1993) was observed during the periods of *soudure*. This was mainly the case for loans and credits.

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The fact that the vast majority of households faced drought and bad harvests (i.e. 'covariate' risks) led to the problem 'that scarce resources can leave expectations for reciprocity unmet' (Domínguez & Watkins, 2003: 114). In the case of credits or loans, people stopped reciprocating and broke rules of return by postponing or cancelling their part of the transaction. Men indicated that, if possible, they prefer to give a small amount of cash for free (as a gift) to a friend, because they are aware of the problems reimbursement can give. Yet, during periods of *soudure* such 'free' solidarity (or general reciprocity) became rather exceptional, and in most cases reimbursement, although without interest, was agreed (balanced reciprocity). When the borrower could no longer reimburse, the 'secret' between both friends (cf. *pfampfe*) was made public, and local authorities became involved, or the case was brought to court. From then on there is an open conflict, and the lender starts to ask interest and will try to maximize his profits (negative reciprocity). It illustrates how 'general reciprocity' ('gift') was narrowed down to 'balanced reciprocity' ('quasi-credit'), with stricter rules of return, ultimately replaced by 'negative reciprocity' ('credit with interest') by which one partner tried to maximise utility at the other's expense (Swift, 1993: 10-12).[14] Ultimately, this seriously deteriorated existing relationships of mutual help. As one man (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba) expressed the situation:

> During famine a lot of people have asked a credit to a friend. […] We used it to search for food or seeds. But it has created conflicts. Before he was a friend, but if he cannot pay back, that friendship is finished. Also if I cannot pay back, I lose my friends, it is dangerous for the relations with friends.

Another man expressed more clearly the secret character of the credit transation, and the failure to maintain this secrecy, during a focus group in Burara (16/04/07):

> You have cultivated your land, but with the bad climate, you didn't harvest anything. This can make an end to friendship. This was a lot the case in 2006, without a harvest there were a lot of conflicts between friends. The loan is always a secret between friends, but if you cannot reimburse, it is not a secret anymore, because he will make a complaint and the whole hill is aware of the conflict.

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[14] Swift (1993 : 10-11) defines the three categories of reciprocity as following : '*generalised reciprocity* : apparently altruistic transactions without any expectation of a return – typically gifts, hospitality, generosity; *balanced reciprocity*: direct exchanges in which there is an expectation of a return, without much delay, of something of equivalent value – typically direct barter; *negative reciprocity*: exchanges in which there is an attempt to get something for nothing or for very little; participants confront each other as opposed interests each trying to maximize utility at the others' expense.'

A last important observation was the fact that these bonding networks between 'beer friends' were severely stressed by an overload of conflicts between family, friends and neighbours. Theft of crops, livestock or other valuable assets such as bicycles was widespread and cases peaked before the beginning of the new season, when food shortages were generalized. In Burara this even led to some serious violence:

> In the beginning of the famine, there was a lot of theft and a lot were killed or even burned, but the administration has sensitized and now we have to report them [to the police]. They were with so many that they were even brought to the prison of Kirundo [capital of the province]. (focus group, 26/04/07, Burara).

A crucial aspect was that people were not robbed by strangers or organized gangs (although some existed, e.g. in Burara because of the nearby border crossing to Tanzania), but by their neighbours and close others. Food insecurity was the main cause of increasing theft, and most cases concerned theft of crops (in the fields) or harvests (at home). Even brothers stole from each other, which created an atmosphere of mistrust among community members. As people commented the situation during focus groups:

> In most cases you are not robbed by someone who comes from far away, a neighbour or a friend is someone from near by. (focus group, 16/04/07, Burara).

> Neighbours rob neighbours, the men, the women, even the children. They were hungry, but from that time on the friendship is over, even in the family one can rob each other. (focus group, 31/05/07, Tangara)

> You have good relationships with your neighbours because they live near to you and you help each other, but with cases of theft the mutual help is over, the trust is gone. (focus group, 22/05/07, Cumba)

> Helping each other becomes difficult, even your brother can steel from you, or one of your neighbours. If there are many cases of theft, how can you help people who are maybe thieves? (focus group, 30/04/07, Burara).

Land conflicts posed the next serious threat to harmonious community life on the three *collines*. Many families were divided because of sometimes violent land conflicts, related to inheritance or illegal sale of family land. Nationwide, land pressure (related to a high population density in a country where more than 90% of the population is dependent upon agriculture) causes a serious backdrop in familial relationships. Currently, the average land holding of a Burundian household is around 0,5 hectare, which in many cases is insufficient to feed one's family (Kamunigi et al., 2005). These small landholdings are again divided among the sons of the family when their father dies, and this generation after generation. As such, as in the past, the inheritance system will further intensify the crumbling of familial land holdings in Burundi. As alternative livelihoods outside of

agriculture are hardly an option in Burundi, the competition for land is high, also and especially within Burundian families. In addition, the large flows of refugees and IDPs, caused by the civil war and its humanitarian aftermath, only increases this 'land time-bomb' (ICG, 2003b), since numerous returnees (both IDPs and refugees) have been confronted by properties occupied by family members or neighbours, putting further stress on key bonding networks.

In sum, the instrumentality of the described bonding networks was minimal on the three *collines*. Strategic resources to cope with food insecurity were not accessible through these networks, and the social networks were sometimes stressed because of an overload of conflicts. With regard to the causes why solidarity and mutual help within these networks stagnated or decreased, two main lines of reasoning could be differentiated. On the one hand, people sometimes referred in general to *la crise* (the civil war) which destroyed basic levels of trust, tore many families apart, installed a culture of impunity (resulting in high levels of criminality), and further impoverished the different communities. In general, decreasing levels of mutual help was one of the concrete effects of how social life had been complicated by civil war.[15] When discussing solidarity and mutual help with local authorities, for example, the phrase *c'est chacun pour soi* (it's everyone for himself) kept returning. On the other hand, however, in the majority of cases, people referred to *la famine*, and more concretely, to the bad climate, drought and the recurring periods of *soudure*, to explain the fall back of solidarity and mutual help within their social networks. As described above, the regression of mutual help was explicitly linked to these periods of *soudure*, during which bonding networks became even more stressed because of conflicts and the inability to perform their social support function. For many then, economic impoverishment, and not the social divisions caused by civil war, was the primary reason why people could no longer help each other as before.[16] Or as one individual summarized:

> People don't really like to help each other. It is because of the famine. We have no power to look at the others. Because of the bad climate, we don't have rain anymore, and we suffered from the famine, and also solidarity has suffered. That's it, together with the crisis which destroyed a lot of trust. (focus group, 21/05/07, Cumba).

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[15] Uvin eplicitly compares mutual help before and after civil war and comes to the same conclusion (see Uvin, 2009: 112-116).

[16] A conclusion confirmed by Uvin in other parts of Burundi, see Uvin 2009: 112-116.

5.6.2   Associations : 'absent' bridging social capital

The second assumption of the 'standard hypothesis' on social capital portfolios – i.e. that poor people have difficulties to create bridging ties to access the leverage they need to make progress – was confirmed (Woolcock, 2002). The most natural way to create such bridging social capital in rural areas is to unify and cooperate on the basis of professional activities, in other words, to structure the peasantry. Through associations and producer-groups people are organized horizontally – as in their bonding networks – yet are connected to a much broader and diversified group of people, which present more opportunities for social leverage.

No high stocks of this associative form of social capital were observed on the three *collines*. However, this was primarily explained by a cultural/historical instead of an economic explanation. It reflected the absence of an associational tradition in Burundi. As already mentioned, social organization beyond the family has been minimal in Burundi, as Burundians live scattered on hills and not in villages. So there is no tradition of village associations, age groups or secret societies, and mutual support has been limited to the family (Uvin, 2009: 69-70). Closely related is the tradition of a more individualistic/capitalistic ethos, where individual initiative is encouraged and personal merit admired and developed (Uvin, 2009: 116-122). These factors, together with the hegemonic character of the state order, prevented the nurturing of autonomous peasant unions or associations (Laely, 1997). Efforts to organize the peasantry were top-down, state-led and not welcome, as their aim was to control rather than support the rural masses.

A recent study of Sebudandi and Nduwayo (2002) estimates that membership of associations or *groupements* in Burundi encompasses 3% to 5% of the total population. Although no data were available on community or *colline* level, focus groups and interviews confirmed these low levels of membership. Associations reached a very small proportion of the population and most were ineffective. To give just one example, in Muyinga province only 186 out of a total of 805 associations (23%) were perceived as operational and carried out activities (RoB, 2006g). People were also suspicious about associational 'projects' because of bad experiences in the past. During fieldwork, people still referred to a nationwide state-led programme from the 1980s that sought to create cooperatives. This failed because of widespread mismanagement and corruption (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993). In sum, associations were not considered as an useful livelihood strategy to cope with food insecurity or vulnerability in general, which stands in sharp contrast with the popularity of associations with international aid agencies to

implement their programmes and projects in Burundi (see e.g. Sebudandi & Nduwayo, 2002).[17]

5.6.3 Patrons and clients : 'unresponsive' linking social capital

Next to the 'weak' bonding and 'absent' bridging social capital, important stocks of linking social capital were observed. Critically, this linking social capital – i.e. vertical authority relationships with patrons, chiefs, politicians, etc. (Ellis, 2000) – played a much more decisive role in the livelihood strategies of the rural households than their bonding and bridging counterparts. This is not surprising, Burundian society has always been far more vertically than horizontally structured, as a tangle of kinship and clan ties, ethnic affiliations, and clientage ties defined the positioning of an individual in the social order (Lemarchand, 1995: 9-14). Historically, the institution of *bugabire* formalized the most common transactions between patron and clients: land and cows were exchanged for services (workforce), offerings in kind (e.g. harvest), and loyalty (Lermarchand, 1995). Because of their asymmetry, such patron-client ties possessed a double-edged character: they facilitated social mobility and protection, but also eased oppression and exploitation of the clients (serfdom). To date, patron-client networks still execute an important social function in Burundian society (e.g. Kamungi *et al.*, 2005; Laely, 1997).

The findings demonstrate how Burundian households were forced to rely more intensively on their vertical linking social capital to cope with the protracted crisis situation, and in particular, with food insecurity. However, this increased reliance ultimately strengthened the 'unresponsive' character of their linking social capital. Whereas 'responsive' linking social capital refers to a stable authority relationship, in which rights and duties on both sides are balanced, 'unresponsive' linking social capital refers to oppressive authority relationships, in which dependency results in subordination (cf. Putnam, 2004; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). The functioning of this 'unresponsive' linking social capital was manifest in three important coping strategies.

First, 'unresponsive' linking social capital controlled access to markets for sale of agricultural production. For most cash crops, such as coffee and beans, a trapped system of intermediaries was present (cf. Oketch & Polzer, 2002 for a deeper analysis on coffee). Merchants from Kirundo or Muyinga city had an extended network of middlemen throughout the countryside, which in turn worked with local helpers. These helpers went from door to door to purchase individual harvests, or their homes served as local depots. Clearly, the farm-gate price was lower than the market price. For local farmers it was

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[17] This will be handled more in depth in chapter 8.

nearly impossible to bypass these local intermediaries as they had no direct personal ties with the merchants. Moreover, transportation costs to nearby markets could mount. As a consequence, on market days you could find the same middlemen along the roads to buy up products before they arrived at the markets, again at a lower price. In both cases, the fact that poor people had neither the financial (paying transportation) nor the social resources (direct ties with merchants) to access more interesting markets or more extensive trade networks was confirmed (Prakash, 2002). Instead, food insecurity only increased their dependency on middlemen, as many households had to mitigate immediate needs, which gave them even less bargaining power while negotiating the price. During a focus group in Cumba, a man put it this way:

> We sell sorgho and other harvests to people who work for the patron. The patrons give the money to these people. They [local helpers of the patron] look for the harvests and because they also have to make profit, the give a very low price. Later on we have to go the patron and buy against a high price. We need to sell our harvest immediately after harvesting because we need the money. If our harvest [food stock] is finished, then we go to the patron and we buy our own harvest back for 600 or 700 Fbu, the harvest that we sold for 150 or 200 Fbu. (focus group, 23/05/07, Cumba)

Second, 'unresponsive' linking social capital underpinned one of the main coping or adaptive strategies during food crises in Burundi, *abakozi* (Kirundi for workers) or daily labour: a farmer offers his workforce to a richer farmer (patron), who will pay him in cash or food, mostly on a daily basis. Unless necessary, Burundian farmers will not turn to this livelihood strategy. They prefer to work on their own land and be self-supporting. However, during food crises, when their own agricultural production does not cover food consumption, many are forced to search beyond cultivating the own land. In addition, a substantial part of the population (14.7%) is structurally dependent on daily labour/manual labour (WFP, 2008). These people are highly vulnerable to food insecurity, since they have limited access to land, have few assets, and depend on markets to access food. Thus, when food crises set in, an abundant supply of day labourers causes a sharp decline in prices. People reported cases whereby the price fell down from 500 Fbu to 100 Fbu per day (1 US\$ = 1000 Fbu). Simultaneously, prices of all staple crops increase, and the ratio between wages and food prices fall out of balance. Increased food insecurity placed the day labourers in a subordinate position, yet further increased their dependency on day labour to cope with food shortages, and thus minimized their negotiation room. Because of this imbalance between labourer and patron, some referred back to the traditional institution of *bugabire*: the unfortunate one is not in need of land (*bugabire*), but in urgent need to feed his family (*abakozi*), which can lead to temporary exploitation whenever food shortages arise. As one man (focus group, 05/06/07, Tangara) expressed his feelings:

> When there is no famine, then he [the patron] cannot pay whatever he wants, because you have your own harvest and if he doesn't pay, you give up. But if there is famine, then you have no choice, your family is starving and you have to accept.

A third and final materialization of 'unresponsive' linking social capital was in the functioning of *umugwazo*, a form of usury common in several parts of Burundi. It is called *umugwazo* in Kirundo and Muyinga provinces, *ubukonanyoni* in Ngozi, *gukungisha* in the Imbo plain and *imvyazu* in Kayanza province (Hakisimana, 2004). The usurer is well informed about seasonal trends of different crops and the moments that rural households have to tide over periods of food shortages. At that time, they increase their profits by asking exorbitant interests. The time to repay is very short as the reimbursement is in kind. In practice, a person asks an amount of money from a local petty trader. The latter inspects the fields to be sure that the person will have a future harvest to repay, and they agree the proportion of the harvest that will serve as reimbursement. An earlier study has calculated that this mechanism results in a drop in prices equivalent to borrowing money at interest rates of up to 8,400% (Levine & Chastre, 2004).

The practice of *umugwazo* made most visible the protracted character of the crisis. *Umugwazo* was not only used to access cash to buy food or other immediate needs, but was also relied upon to access seeds for the next season, the hospitalization of a family member, or other unexpected costs. And because of seasonal recurring food shortages and failed harvests people indebted themselves for several years. One man, for example, offered in 2006 his 50 coffee trees to a rich patron, which he could exploit until 2009. Another woman offered some of her banana trees in 1996 to one of her creditors. By 2007, the creditor still exploited her banana trees, as she could not afford to pay back her debts. Yet, in many cases, it got worse when people were unable to reimburse *umugwazo*. People were put in jail and livestock or land were confiscated and sold. Food crises substantially increased the forced reliance of households on these 'unresponsive' linkages, which in turn, strengthened a downward spiral of usury and indebtedness. This ultimately led to asset depletion, particularly through the sale of land. People were even ashamed to admit that they had sought *umugwazo* from a patron. Whenever discussing the topic during focus group discussions, people started to laugh, as they were surprised that an outsider knew this 'big secret'. As one person (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba) answered the question after a long discussion:

> Honestly, everyone has done umugwazo, we had no choice, but the people don't like to tell that, it is a shame and often it gives problems, but it's common here.

However, the 'unresponsive' character of these linkages should also be nuanced to a certain extent. First of all, from the viewpoint of the patron there are some serious risks involved when taking up the role of middleman, creditor, or employer. Take the example of Rachid, a local petty trader acting as a middleman to collect beans (but also coffee) in the area of Tangara. He purchases and stores beans immediately after harvest time from

individual farmers until he has a considerable amount to resell. Indeed, when interviewing him at home, people dropped by several times to sell a small amount of beans. But he also hired local helpers to collect the harvest in the surrounding *collines*. When riding through the area, these people could be spotted with their balance hanging on a tree. A friend of him, who is police officer in the capital, then links him up to merchants in Bujumbura which can buy up his stock. However, before this chain can be set into action, Rachid needs cash to buy up the harvests of individual farmers. Therefore, he receives a credit of the merchant who will buy up his stock later on. For 2006, for example, he asked a credit for 300.000 Fbu (300 USD). At his turn, he gives credits to his local helpers in proportion to the quantity of harvest they foresee to collect this season (four helpers received credits from 20.000 Fbu (20 USD) up to 65.000 Fbu (65 USD) in 2006). Both between the merchant and Rachid, and thereafter between him and his local helpers the quantity of kilo's is agreed that should be delivered to disburse the credit. Thus, the price is agreed top-down, and each link in the chain needs to make profit, which of course increases the difference between farm-gate and market prices. The major risk for Rachid is when his local helpers use their credit for other means, and are afterwards unable to pay back or to provide the amount of sacks of beans which was fixed. Then he in turn is unable to pay back his credit to the merchant. Sometimes the credit is recovered, when his local helpers are forced to sell a plot of land to pay back, or when Rachid (together with the local authorities) confiscates and sells the livestock of one of his local helpers.[18] But in other cases, the loss could not be recovered. In 2006, for example, some of his helpers could not pay back Rachid and fled to Tanzania and Rwanda. In sum, although these linkages have serious negative effects for the people who are dependent upon the patron – i.e. the local helpers (forced sales of assets) and individual famers at the bottom of the chain (lower prices for their production) – there are also risks involved for the patron.

Secondly, many of these vertical linkages remain instrumental, also for the person who finds himself in the dependent position. Without *umugwazo* transactions or the opportunity to work as an *abakozi* for a richer person, many would be worse off. During focus group discussions, people consistently expressed this idea. Although many were quite explicit about the unequal and exploitative character of *umugwazo* and *abakozi* in the long term, they also perceived both transactions as a kind of solidarity or help. Take for example the following quotes on *umugwazo*:

> People also gave their fields. They had no seeds, so people gave their land. For 5000 Fbu he (*le commerçant*) should take a field where he can harvest 300 kilo. You see that the profits are very high. He can get 300 Fbu for a kilo, which means 90.000

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[18] Rachid explained that, in this way, he sold several goats of LITA, which resulted in the malfunctioning of the solidarity chain (see chapter 8).

Fbu. But we can't protest. We were on the point of not eating anymore. He has helped us to survive. We have to be grateful. (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba).

Mostly, it was this [umugwazo] which kept us alive, otherwise we would no longer be alive. We needed to go to the boss a lot to ask for this. (focus group, 19/06/07, Tangara).

Also the opportunity to work as *abakozi* was sometimes perceived as solidarity. This was most clear in Tangara, because it was linked to a geographical distinction within the *colline*. For community members of Tangara, there was a clear difference between the rural centre of the *colline*, where the majority of the richer people lived, and the surrounding more isolated hills with a poorer population (the rural centre was located on an important road which connected the rural area to a border crossing with Tanzania, and further on, to Muyinga city). As a consequence, most nearby opportunities for *abakozi* could be found in this rural centre (on the two other *collines* we visited, Cumba and Burara, but also in Tangara people also migrated to find work as *abakozi*, mostly to neighbouring *collines*, but also to Rwanda or Tanzania). Therefore, when we for example asked to the *chefs de sous-colline* or the *nyumbakumi's* (chefs of ten households) if there existed mutual help on their *sous-collines*, most answered negatively but indicated that some solidarity existed in the centre of Tangara, because some richer people could contract people as *abakozi* and give them some money or food:

Yes, there were just a few places where there was mutual help, I give Tangara centre as example, because there you have many rich people, you could go and cultivate for the rich, you earned something to eat. (interview *nyumbakumi sous-collines* Tangara, 18/06/07, Tangara).

No, it was everyone for himself, expecially on my *colline*. But at Tangara centre, where you have many rich people, you could go and cultivate and receive food or money. (interview *nyumbakumi sous-collines* Masiga, 18/06/07, Tangara).

In Tangara centre, there are many rich, you could go there to work to find something to eat. (interview *chef de sous-colline* Masiga, 18/06/07, Tangara).

In sum, although transactions as *umugwazo* and *abakozi* were based on sometimes very unequal relationships, most of these vertical linkages with richer people (*les patrons*) remained instrumental: in the short term, these linking ties were indispensable to cope with food shortages during the periods of soudure (which labeled them as relationships of mutual help), yet in the long term they had some serious negative effects (because of a downward spiral of usury, indebtedness and asset depletion).

5.7 Implications for food security and livelihood interventions

This article presents empirical insights on how social capital portfolios adopt to a situation of protracted crisis. The findings question the validity of the 'standard hypothesis' on social capital in such situations. (Table 12). The first assumption of this 'standard hypothesis' – i.e. poor people rely heavily on their bonding social capital as a safety net – was not supported. The protracted crisis situation substantially weakened bonding social capital, and turned it into an unproductive asset: bonding networks could no longer offer social support or play 'defense' (Woolcock, 2002). The second assumption – i.e. that poor people have difficulties to create bridging ties – was partly confirmed: there was indeed a lack of more bridging associations, yet this was primarily explained by a cultural (the absence of an associational tradition in Burundian society) instead of an economic (vulnerability) explanation.

Table 12 social capital portfolio: standard hypothesis vs. adaptation protracted crisis

	Bonding social capital	Bridging social capital	Linking social capital
Social capital portfolio of the poor (standard hypothesis)	**Strong bonding**	**Modest stock of bridging**	**No linking**
	Access to social support, to 'get by'	Modest access to social leverage, to 'get ahead'	No access
Social capital portfolio in protracted crisis situation	**Weak bonding**	**No bridging**	**Strong 'unresponsive' linking**
	Unable to deliver social support	No access	Access to social support, to 'get by', on unequal terms

Finally, and most critically, the third assumption – i.e. that there is no linking social capital at work in the lives of the poor – was seriously questioned by an increased dependency upon 'unresponsive' linking social capital to cope with food insecurity. Access to markets (middlemen), labour opportunities (*abakozi*) and credit (*umugwazo*) – all among the single most important strategies to access food – illustrated how the food crisis increased dependency on vertical authority relationships with patrons. Therefore, the main conclusion is that the problem of rural households was not their lack of linking capital, or social capital in general, but their increased dependency on 'unresponsive' linking capital. It confirms Wood's (2003) 'faustian bargain' as a crucial aspect of poverty, i.e. that survival in the present creates loyalties and duties to certain institutions and organizations, resulting in short-term security, but against longer term costs.

Whenever insecurity and uncertainty rise, also this 'faustian bargain' rises or is strengthened, as was observed during the recurring periods of *soudure*.

This increased dependency upon 'unresponsive' linking social capital makes tangible the concept of 'powerlessness' as a crucial element of vulnerability during protracted crisis situations. As such, our social capital analysis reconfirms a central argument of the 'political paradigm' on food insecurity, that is: food insecurity is ultimately about the power and powerlessness of individuals and groups of individuals which determine their access to food and other assets (Collinson, 2003: 10). The findings illustrate how social capital plays a crucial mediating role in accessing this food and other resources. Furthermore, our analysis reinforces the idea that food insecurity brings forward 'winners' and 'losers' (Duffield, 1993). 'Unresponsive' linking social capital concretizes the social relationships through which the powerlessness of many was reinforced, and how others could profit from that: increased vulnerability led to accumulated debts, exorbitant interest rates, distress sales, and asset-stripping (livestock, land); the total absence of bargaining power on the labour market (accepting food rations in exchange for day labour); and extremely low farm-gate prices, and limited access to markets (few middlemen and traders controlling the marketing of agricultural production). In three particular ways, these findings support the necessity to integrate a broader political economy perspective into food security and livelihood interventions in protracted crisis situations.

First, the findings indicate the necessity to take into account that crisis situations have the potential to transform productive livelihood assets into liabilities (Lautze & Raven-Roberts, 2006). Lautze *et al*. (2002), for example, have illustrated how credit became a liability in Afghanistan, since a prolonged period of draught seriously accumulated debt, which resulted in increased distress sales of assets. Our findings present how social capital degenerated into a liability: unmet obligations of mutual help further stressed already conflict-ridden bonding networks (with sometimes violent conflicts), and 'unresponsive' linking capital hampered access to diverse other assets. In particular the fact that social capital mediates access to other critical assets, indicates the comprehensive and far-reaching consequences when it transforms into a liability: it can block or hinder several livelihood strategies at the same time. The example of social capital illustrates well how vulnerability in a protracted crisis situation is not limited to an external shock (e.g. drought, flood), but is central to all elements of the livelihood framework. (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). Vulnerability becomes structurally integrated in the asset portfolio, where assets can turn into liabilities. Unfortunately many food security and livelihood interventions simply 'borrow' from responses to natural disasters or more stable environments, and do not take into account these more structural causes of vulnerability (Lautze & Raven Roberts, 2006; Levine & Chastre, 2004).

Second, the centrality of 'unresponsive' linking social capital reaffirms the necessity to consider food security from a broader economic perspective instead of focusing on food production. In Burundi, as in many other countries, most food security interventions are

based on a narrow subsistence economy paradigm, which equates food security with household agricultural production covering household food needs. As a consequence, interventions focus on agricultural subsistence production, and distribute seeds, tools, and seed protection rations. However, Levine and Chastre (2004), for example, indicate that dozens of households assessments in the Great Lakes Region have shown that the majority of the poor rely on the market for their food. Yet, in our case, the functioning of 'unresponsive' linking capital illustrates how access to these markets was severely restricted. The shifting of social networks revealed and made more tangible how the interlocking of the land, labour and credit markets reduced farmers options to access resources (Farrington *et al.*, 2004: 5): as a response to higher levels of risk during the periods of *soudure* people were forced to rely more heavily on a patron, which then became the only source to access credit, inputs, and market opportunities while strengthening a downward spiral of usury and indebtedness: labour was claimed to repay debts, and if not possible, debts were repaid by the usury practice of *umugwazo* or selling assets (e.g. livestock). In turn, indebtedness was an important mechanism influencing the local land markets: when debts could not be repaid by *abakozi*, *umugwazo*, or the selling of livestock or other assets (bicycle, roofing tiles, …), land was confiscated and/or sold. Furthermore, stressed bonding networks (and a reduction of mutual help) were to a great extent the effect of the functioning of this land market, i.e. land becoming an extremely scarce resource, and family ties being the only option left to access land for the majority of people. This led to a further crumbling of the cultivatable land (inefficient production, overexploitation, and soil erosion) and a multiplicity of familial land conflicts. These examples illustrate the need to integrate a good deal of broader structural policies, institutions and processes (PIPs) in the analysis of food insecurity: the functioning of labour and commodity markets, the crucial aspect of access to land, the local supply of credit, and so on. Although these factors are identified as crucial in understanding food security in Burundi and elsewhere, most interventions fail to take them into account (Levine & Chastre, 2004).

Third, the importance of linking social capital, and power relations in general, reconfirms the necessity of food security and livelihood agencies to focus properly on their own role in the entire process, in order not to reproduce or aggravate existing power inequalities and imbalances. In conflict and protracted crisis situations vulnerability is intensely related to marginalisation and a lack of power, which makes that targeting of assistance, in particular the provision of high-value assets, is more difficult (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). As in many other crises, Burundi is a country where external aid interventions represent one of the only flows of resources that arrives at the communities, which makes it more than likely that competition for aid will be intense and the risk of reinforcing social disruption high (cf. Uvin, 2009: 67-68). If asset distribution is necessary, it should be based on sound targeting criteria, and not on some vague notion of 'the vulnerable', meaning that NGOs can more or less choose arbitrarily their

beneficiaries (Levine & Chastre, 2004). Working through local formal and informal institutions (local organisations, groups, CBOs) is not an easy solution to this targeting problem, since our social capital analysis clearly warns not to start from a naive notion of local community organization. These local institutions are likewise embedded in the broader political economy of conflict, and therefore their conflict-ridden character should be assumed instead of negated. The responsibility which aid agencies should take up is perhaps most clear when stated this way: if 'unresponsive' linking social capital is indeed a crucial factor of vulnerability during protracted crisis, international aid agencies have the unique opportunity to break this cycle of powerlessness and marginalisation, by setting up an example of 'responsive' linking social capital, i.e. an authority relationship between them and the population which empowers the latter. As a baseline, it is indeed of utmost importance that aid agencies make efforts to foresee and act upon the potential risks and negative effects that their interventions can bring along (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009).

5.8 Conclusion

The failure of food security and livelihood interventions to properly understand the broader conflict environment in which they operate has been identified as a major gap in humanitarian response (Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). It implies that most interventions are unable to tackle the impact of the broader political economy of conflict on food security issues, i.e. how the conflict environment affects the distribution of power and powerlessness between and within groups in society which controls the access to the necessary resources to attain food security (Collinson, 2003). To date, the way in which these broader policies, institutions and processes (PIPs) of conflict influence the daily livelihood options and strategies of households stays poorly understood.

We believe that the analysis of social capital portfolios, as elaborated in this article, can contribute to attain a deeper understanding of this interaction. The importance of social capital is that it facilitates or constrains access to other assets and resources: through social relationships resources are distributed and claimed, and the policies, institutions and processes (PIPs) governing the access and use of these resources exercise their influence. In other words, social capital comprises the 'social wires' through which these PIPs are structuring people's livelihood choices. This means that social capital analysis also makes more tangible the concepts of 'power' and 'powerlessness', and the effect of their distribution on livelihood strategies: changes in exercise of power or increasing levels of powerlessness can be observed as changes in the social capital portfolio. In our case study, for example, the increased dependency upon 'unresponsive' linking social capital clearly indicated an increase in powerlessness, with a constraining effect on livelihood strategies

and their effectiveness. Although further research will be needed to refine and test our argument, this article delivers ethnographic evidence that changes in social capital portfolios reflect the effect of the broader conflict environment on the daily livelihood choices of people, which makes these social capital portfolios a concrete entry point to analyse and make more tangible the impact of the political economy of protracted crisis situations in the livelihood framework.

Chapter 6

Social capital and post-conflict reconstruction : the limits of community-based reconstruction[1]

Abstract. – This article questions community-based reconstruction as a mechanism to rebuild social capital after conflicts, where direct livelihood support is provided. This is analysed through an ethnographic examination of three NGO-interventions in post-conflict Burundi. It argues that a straightforward and generalized application of community-based development (CBD) methodology fails in post-conflict settings: it copies the focus on 'technical procedural design' and underestimates the contrast between 'development' and 'post-conflict' settings. On the theoretical level, the findings suggest the need for a political economy perspective on social capital. On the policy level, the article suggests a revaluation of ordinary 'physical engineering' actions vis-à-vis the current popular 'social engineering' approach to post-conflict reconstruction.

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[1] In a restricted version submitted to *Development and Change* as Vervisch, T., Braeckman, J, & Vlassenroot, K. 'Social capital and post-conflict reconstruction in Burundi: the limits of community-based reconstruction'.

6.1 Introduction

Social capital theory has recently been used as a framework to hone post-conflict reconstruction policies. 'The norms and networks that enable people to act collectively' is a widely accepted definition of social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000: 226). The World Bank and other international development organizations have used the social capital argument to justify 'social engineering' operations, alongside the usual physical reconstruction and renewal efforts in post-conflict settings (Englebert, 2001). It is argued that conflict damages and transforms a nation's social capital; recovery therefore demands reconstruction, not only of a nation's infrastructure but also of its social fabric (Colletta & Cullen, 2000b). Community-driven reconstruction programs, promoted by the World Bank, are designed to rebuild physical infrastructure and social capital. As such, they are popular tools to implement recommendations of this social capital approach during post-conflict reconstruction (Cliffe *et al.*, 2003). These programs therefore rely on a community-based development (CBD)[2] methodology: integrating local participatory structures into short-term reconstruction programs, thus enabling community cooperation and social cohesion. CBD methodology is increasingly mainstreamed and adopted in several sectors of post-conflict reconstruction, including livelihood interventions (e.g., Goovaerts *et al*., 2005; USAID, 2007).

This article challenges the appropriateness of CBD methodology for creating social capital and cohesion when providing direct livelihood support in post-conflict settings. From an ethnographic standpoint, it examines three NGO-interventions that use CBD methodology in post-conflict Burundi. First, it demonstrates the main shortcoming of CBD methodology: a copied focus on 'technical procedural design', resulting in what may be termed 'supply-driven demand-driven' reconstruction (cf. the 'supply-driven demand-driven' development concept of Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Second, it shows that a generalized application of CBD methodology to a post-conflict reconstruction environment underestimates the contrast between 'development' and 'post-conflict' settings. The case studies illustrate that CBD methodology, initially designed for development programs providing public resources/services for entire communities, is not easily tailored to post-conflict reconstruction programs, which also provide direct livelihood support to households and individuals.

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[2] I prefer to use community-based development (CBD) rather than community-driven development (CDD). The latter concept is bound up with the CDD programs of the World Bank, in which block grants are allocated to community councils to fund sub-projects. Here, CBD is used to refer to the broader participatory methodology behind these and other programs.

The first part of the article outlines the main arguments on conflict, social capital, and CBD methodology. A theoretical framework is drawn up, contrasting political economy (Bourdieu) and communitarian (Putnam) views on social capital and CBD. The next section briefly introduces the Burundian context, indicating how a social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction is put into practice. The three NGO livelihood interventions are then introduced as case studies, presenting their participatory intermediation schemes (established to give the projects a community-based character). General case study findings and conclusions are offered in the final sections. On the policy level, the article questions the appropriateness of CBD for providing direct livelihood support in conflict-ridden communities; more broadly, it suggests a revaluation of 'ordinary' 'physical engineering' actions vis-à-vis the current popular 'social engineering' approach to post-conflict reconstruction.

6.2   Social capital, post-conflict reconstruction and CBD

6.2.1   Social capital and conflict

Numerous civil wars and intra-state conflicts in the wake of the Cold War prompted the international development community to focus again on conflict. Since then, an evolution is observed from national level conflict analysis, working with large cross-country data sets and delivering technocratic approaches, to local level analysis, introducing social structures, inter-group and state society relations – i.e., social capital – as new determining factors in conflict analysis (Barron *et al.*, 2007: 4–7). Gaining insights into these local 'micro-politics' (King, 2004) of conflict illuminates the two-way process of how 'states in transition shape local environments and how local peoples can constrain, interpret and realize these changes, in turn shaping the transition itself and the nature of the new and reformed state institutions and social structures which result.' (Barron *et al.*, 2007: 7).

Social capital scholarship makes a threefold connection between conflict and social capital. First, the basic assumption is that violent conflict destroys social capital. War and conflict zones are defined as 'zones of social capital deficiency' because trust and social cohesion are eroded in such circumstances (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000: 390). Second, conflict transforms social capital. Conflict is identified with weak bridging and linking, and strong bonding social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b). Whereas bridging capital refers to inclusive inter-group solidarity, uniting people from different backgrounds; bonding capital refers to exclusive intra-group solidarity based on ethnicity, religion, cast, class, etc. Conflict is also more likely when 'unresponsive' or 'exploitative' (Putnam, 2004: 669) vertical state-society relations are present (linking capital). Third, in times of

conflict, societies integrate the 'dark side' of social capital (Portes & Landolt, 1996). New networks arise, with a view to harnessing and prolonging conflict, leading to social capital with anti-social effects (Goodhand & Hulme, 1997).

6.2.2 Social Capital, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and CBD

A social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction rapidly became popular in policy circles. Goodhand (2006) classifies it among the 'social' models of conflict analysis. Morfit (2002: 8, 11) differentiates between a 'root cause' and a 'social capital' approach. Programs were previously designed to react quickly to the root grievances of specific groups. The social capital approach emphasizes the opposite, by promoting 'inclusive' programs. It brings together conflict actors with a view to transforming 'shallow' (simple, rigid and exclusive, i.e. bonding) into 'deep' (complex, flexible, and inclusive, i.e. bridging) social capital. From a social capital approach, post-conflict reconstruction needs to transform 'exclusive' bonding into 'inclusive' bridging social capital. In other words, reconstruction policies will only be effective if they convert exclusive intra-group solidarity (which opposed different identity groups: ethnicity, religion class, region, etc. during conflict) into inclusive inter-group solidarity, which can then rebuild bridges between conflicting parties after conflict (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b).

CBD is considered an effective mechanism to achieve this transformation because of its participatory and thus inclusive methodology. CBD 'relies on communities to use their social capital to organize themselves and participate in development processes' (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 6). When applied in post-conflict settings, CBD mechanisms should enable community participation and cooperation, and thus inclusive collective action and problem-solving for concrete issues in community reconstruction. For example, community-based organizations (CBOs), one of the most popular instruments of CBD methodology, are portrayed as 'agents of peace' (Varshney, 2001: 363) when they unite groups, which had opposed one another during conflict, in addressing common practical concerns, while creating bridging social capital between them. In sum, CBD in conflict-affected areas aims to alleviate immediate community reconstruction needs (tangible 'quick wins' or 'peace dividends') while empowering the community and restoring community cohesion and trust (e.g., Cliffe *et al*., 2003; Fearon *et al*., 2009; Strand *et al*., 2003; USAID, 2007).

6.2.3 CBD – failure or success : main argument

The broader social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction and the particular CBD mechanisms both rely on a 'Putnamian' or communitarian notion of social capital (cf.

Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The communitarian view argues 'that social capital is inherently good, that more is better, and that its presence always has a positive effect on a community's welfare' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000: 229). This view equates social capital with voluntary, horizontal, and civic associations at community level, following the ideal image of Putnam's (1993) 'networks of civic engagement'. The effect has been a strong reliance on these western ideas of community organization when promoting a social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction. The popularity of community-based organizations (CBOs) as 'peace agents' is significant in this respect (Strand *et al.*, 2003; Varshney, 2001)

On the operational level of CBD methodology, this communitarian view is translated into a focus on 'technical procedural design', in order to copy these western ideals of community organization. For an extensive overview of factors explaining failure or success of CBD programs I refer to a critical review by Mansuri and Rao (2004). Here it suffices to indicate that elite capture has been identified as the core problem of CBD methodology: the participatory approach often leads to projects that are dominated by elites, thus failing to empower the poor (Platteau, 2004). Most research treating this elite capture problem of CBD programs focus on procedural design factors, as most studies try to respond to Mansuri and Rao (2004: 30, emphasis added) in seeking 'what types of *checks and balances* are most effective in reducing [elite] capture and the systematic exclusion of the poor and of discriminated-against minorities'. This is what I call 'technical procedural design': leadership elections, accountability arrangements, leadership-disciplining mechanisms, representative composition of committees and boards, and conflict management facilities. These are all considered effective antidotes to elite capture, and thus predictors for successful CBD interventions (e.g., Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Platteau & Gaspart, 2003; Platteau, 2004, Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Classen *et al.*, 2008; Fritzen, 2007). Relying on Chhotray (2004: 329) this focus on 'technical procedural design' is based on a mixture of both liberal and communitarian assumptions about community organization. The liberal idea that public deliberation mechanisms, based on formal/legalistic procedures, are able to overcome differences between rational individuals is linked to the communitarian idea that a shared deliberation process results in a 'perfect consensus' within the community.

From a broader political economy perspective on social capital, the seeming 'neutrality' and assumed 'strength' of such formal procedures in CBD methodology to change the communities in which they are introduced comes as a surprise. In contrast to the communitarian view, a political economy view underscores the context-dependent character of social capital (e.g., Cleaver, 2005; Edwards & Foley, 1997; Fine, 2001; Molyneux, 2002; Bebbington, 2007). While referring to the original work of Bourdieu (1986), these scholars identify social capital and its 'use value' (Edwards & Foley, 1997: 677) as inextricably bound up with other forms of cultural (e.g. educational qualifications) and economic capital (e.g. resources directly convertible into money). Social capital is

tightly interwoven with 'cultural markers' (Bebbington, 2007: 156) in the broader fabric of socio-economic power relations. It is also a catalyst for social differentiation: people and groups of people use their social networks (social capital) to reproduce their social positions within society, thus reinforcing existing boundaries between groups. So, from this contextualized approach, the optimistic communitarian idea of social capital should be mitigated by the fact that social capital can structure both 'patterns of inclusion and exclusion' (Bebbington, 2002: 801).

This article aims to apply a more context-specific reading of social capital and CBD methodology. The findings reconfirm a central argument of the political economy perspective, i.e. that the functioning of social capital can never be divorced from its economic counterpart. For Bourdieu (1986) the outcomes of social capital are reducible to economic capital because ultimately people's investment and participation in social networks (social capital) delivers them access to economic resources (economic capital). The article presents empirical observations of the mutual influence between social and economic capital within the framework of NGO-interventions. It demonstrates how a typology of economic resources (economic capital) distributed by NGOs has clearly determined the 'exclusive' or 'inclusive' working of social capital. This link between economic and social capital explains why CBD is an unsuitable mechanism for strengthening social capital when providing direct livelihood support in conflict-affected communities.

6.3   Burundi : a social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction

Burundi is slowly emerging from a civil war that lasted over 10 years.[3] After three decades (1960s–90s) of authoritarian and military rule by the ethnic Tutsi minority, the first democratically elected Hutu president was murdered soon after his appointment in 1993. In the civil war that followed, some 300,000 people lost their lives (Lemarchand, 2009). Recent figures indicate that 52 per cent of the population have fled their homes at least once since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29). Currently, after a transition period leading to the 2005 elections, Burundi finds itself in a phase of post-conflict reconstruction.

Burundi presents us with a concrete case study of how social capital discourse has influenced post-conflict reconstruction policies. The ethnic character of the Burundian

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[3] For the history of conflict in Burundi, see e.g. Daley (2006b), Lemarchand (2009), Reyntjens (2000), and Uvin (2009).

conflict was rapidly translated into social capital terms. At the end of the twentieth century Burundi was a divided country, the capital Bujumbura was split into Hutu and Tutsi *quartiers*, the countryside into Tutsi-IDP camps and Hutu-*regroupment* camps, or Hutu and Tutsi 'enclaves' or 'colonies' (Laely, 1997: 695). In social capital terms, Burundi was identified as a country of 'weak bridges, strong bonds', which led to an exclusive 'us versus them' rhetoric through the destruction of multi-ethnic bridging social capital (Brachet & Wolpe 2005: 6).[4] So one of the core questions for Burundi was how to convert exclusive ethnic bonding social capital into multi-ethnic bridging social capital. This closely follows the core policy implication of a social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction. A recent survey of 133 peace building programs in Burundi further confirms the dominance of the 'social capital' approach vis-à-vis the 'root cause' approach described by Morfit (2002). The survey (Sebundandi *et al.*, 2008) reveals that most programs worked on dialogue and conflict management and resolution, while focusing on emotional and attitudinal change and healing of individuals and groups in society. The authors of this report conclude that these efforts, of which 'the promotion of shared spaces of expression and communication seems to be the point of convergence', played a key reconciliatory role between ethnic groups. However, they also highlight the need to go beyond ethnic tensions and look for 'root causes' as 'the last few years has brought most observers, regardless of background, to converge around the idea that the conflict is over control of the country's limited resources, and the social and economic marginalization that has been occasioned by it' (Sebundandi *et al.*, 2008: 40–41).

On the community level the social capital approach to post-conflict reconstruction was implemented via 'bricks-and-mortar projects', used as a 'vehicle to address social issues by strengthening inter-group trust and the capacity of communities to collaborate effectively and manage conflict without resort to violence.' (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 4). There was a strong belief that when development agencies work on 'modes of reconciliation and cooperation between groups at the local level […], then this creates peace constituencies which can impact on the national level negotiations as well' (Oketch & Polzer, 2002: 117). Therefore, many international actors and NGOs coupled economic with social reconstruction, and used CBD methodology to implement their reconstruction projects and programs (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005; Cliffe *et al.*, 2003; ICG, 2003a; Strand *et al.*, 2003; USAID, 2007; Uvin, 2007). Below three NGO livelihood interventions are presented as case studies.

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[4] Although the ethnic component cannot be denied, these analyses are prone to ethnic regression, by which a complex of social divisions (regional, rural-urban, etc.) are reinterpreted in terms of the ethnic divide. (Reyntjens, 2000: 19).

6.4   The case studies

CBD methodology has been mainstreamed and adopted in diverse sectors of post-conflict reconstruction, one of them being livelihood support (e.g., Goovaerts *et al*., 2005; USAID, 2007). It is assumed that livelihood support in conflict-affected communities will be ineffective if it does not link together economic and social reconstruction (Goovaerts *et al*., 2005). Livelihood interventions ideally provide quick, tangible benefits – 'quick wins' or 'peace dividends' – while also providing opportunities to increase community participation, cooperation, and cohesion (USAID, 2007).   This article presents ethnographic findings on three such livelihood interventions. Three American-based international NGOs introduced livelihood projects under the umbrella of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC), which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (LSIC, 2004). The projects were implemented in the north of Burundi between 2005 and 2007, and all three implementing NGOs put great emphasis on the use of CBD methodology to implement their livelihood activities.

Data and analysis are based on 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork on three *collines* (hillsides, administrative units) in 2006 and 2007. Each of the *collines* presented an illustrative 'typical case' (Patton, 2002: 236) of the different interventions of the three development agencies: CIBA (Burara colline), LITA (Tangara colline) and CLC (Cumba colline).[5] The fieldwork was conducted in cooperation with a team of local research assistants by conducting focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.[6]

The community-based methodology of the interventions is briefly presented below by considering the participatory intermediation schemes that they established. The schematic representations of the intermediation schemes are based on intervention maps, composed during focus groups. These intervention maps were used as a variant of the venn diagram (itself too complex to be used properly). It presents a river which separated the NGO (vehicle) from the community population, and participants were asked to list and draw the different islands which the NGO vehicle should pass to bridge the river and arrive at the community. This way of working was very efficient. Several times, straightforward questions on the functioning of intermediation structures found no answer, or at least not a

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[5] For the sake of discretion the identity of the different NGOs is not disclosed. I use pseudonyms, which stand for Consortium Initiative Burara (CIBA), Livelihoods Tangara (LITA), and Cumba Livelihood Consortium (CLC). Pseudonyms are also used for individuals.

[6] To determine the number of focus groups, I used the theoretical concepts of redundancy and theoretical saturation (Krueger & Casey, 2001). Generally between 6 to 10 people took part in the focus groups, which conforms to the rule of thumb (Patton, 2002: 385). In total, 81 focus groups were conducted with a total of 693 participants. A further 77 interviews with key actors (NGO staff, local administration, etc.) were also conducted.

detailed one. However, during discussion, participants were occupied with drawing all these islands in the river, and only at the end it was asked if any of these mediating structures did not function well (in their words: NGO benefits failed to reach the other bank of the river and 'disappeared into the river'). In many cases, a much more animated discussion followed. These discussions have then been complemented with (i) focus groups conducting an institutional analysis of these different mediating structures (based on Dudwick *et al.*, 2006), and (ii) focus groups discussing the functioning of these mediating structures with regard to specific project activities (see annex 1 for visual illustrations of the intervention map and the institutional matrix used during focus groups).

6.4.1 The CIBA project on Burara *colline*: a complex of 'brokerage chains'

The CIBA project focused on the rehabilitation of the *Muhembuzi* wetland and the surrounding hillsides constituting its basin. A first component of the project, the cash-for-work program, was designed to inject cash into the local rural economy through labour-intensive infrastructure works (an irrigation system in the wetland, road maintenance, water infrastructure). A second project component was the 'solidarity chain', a livestock credit rotation scheme to restore livestock and boost social cohesion via the creation of a chain of beneficiaries (i.e. neighbours). This was closely linked to the introduction of a veterinary pharmacy and the training of local veterinarians. A third cluster of activities focused on the sustainable use of natural resources (soil protection and agro-forestry). There was also major development of the wetland and its basin with the introduction of rice growing and several other improved crops. Finally, LITA improved access to potable water through infrastructure works.

Figure 6 Intermediation scheme, CIBA project, Burara *colline*
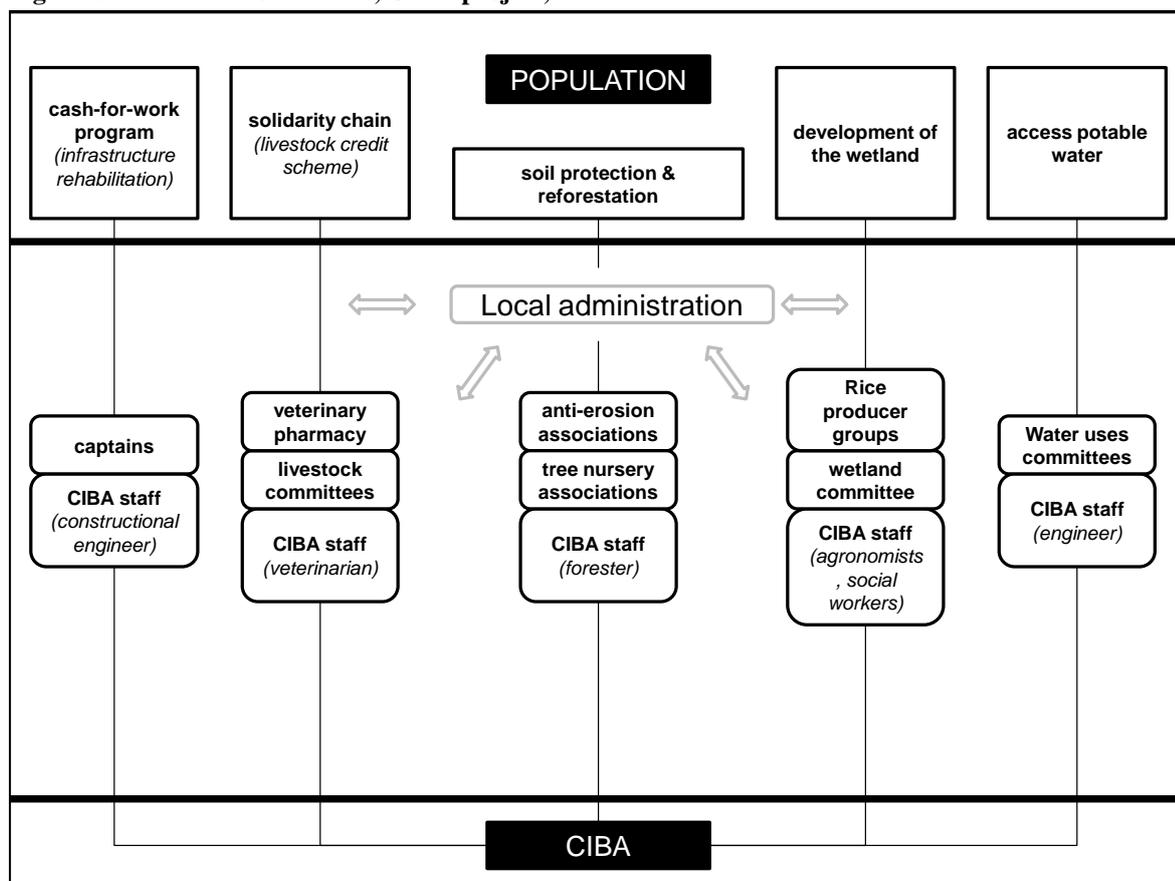
The intermediation scheme of the project can be typified as a collection of 'brokerage chains' (Bierschenk *et al.*, 2002: 25). Each chain vertically connects a small group of brokers with one particular local NGO staff member (Figure 6). This results in a decentralized participatory structure, as each project component has its particular chain. Remarkable was the fact that local CIBA staff were integrated in the scheme, since NGO workers are not generally considered to be mediators (it is assumed that they represent the external NGO) (D'Exelle, 2004: 13), and are also not trained for that purpose (de Sardan, 2005: 169). The other structures can be classified into three sub-categories: individuals (captains or foremen, veterinarians), group-based structures (committees and associations), and local administration. CIBA opted for individuals in cases where technical capacities constituted an important selection criteria (e.g. captains following infrastructure works); notably, these individuals were approved by the population during public meetings. Committees and associations were mostly introduced to handle collective action problems (e.g. maintenance of irrigation system or water infrastructure). Meanwhile, the local administration played a facilitating (e.g. mobilisation) or more operational role (e.g. taking up positions in the wetland committee).

6.4.2 The LITA project on Tangara *colline* : *le club d'hangar*

The three NGO-interventions carried out many similar activities, but some were particular to each project. For CIBA, development of the wetland; for LITA, the construction of *le hangar*, a storage facility to improve the conservation of agricultural products, which also functioned as the corner stone of the seed credit system with local agricultural producer-groups. Furthermore, the 'solidarity chain' – the livestock credit scheme – was introduced to restock cattle, with access to veterinary drugs and care provided by a pharmacy and one trained veterinarian, 'Mister Tanzania' (cf. several in the CIBA project). Both anti-erosion measures (contour berms) and reforestation activities (agro-forestry) were implemented.

Figure 7 Intermediation scheme, LITA project, Tangara *colline* (source: author)
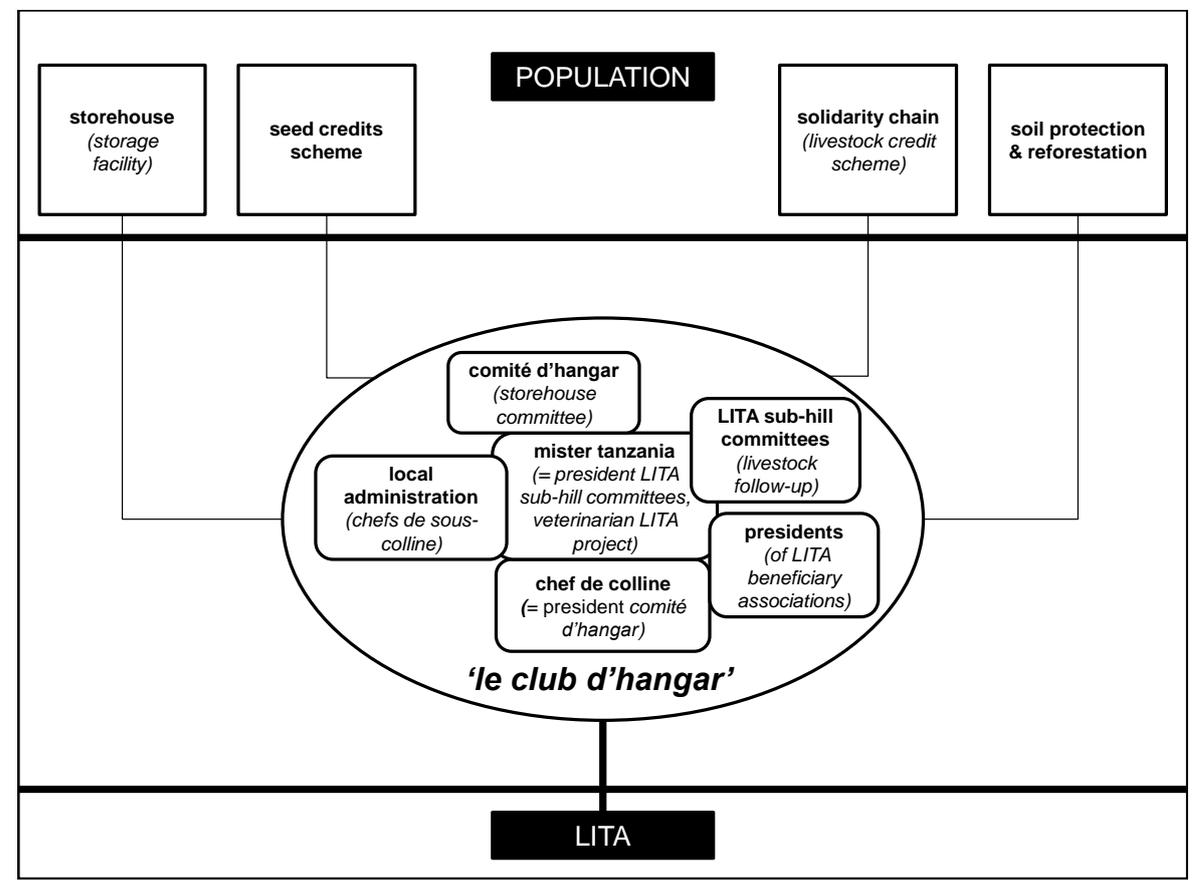
The LITA intermediation scheme paints a totally different picture from that of CIBA. LITA presents a 'brokers' club' instead of a complex of independent 'brokerage chains' (Figure 7) (Bierschenk *et al*., 2002: 25). This led to strongly centralized intermediation and in turn more elite capture. The intermediation scheme was controlled by the *club d'hangar*, made up of the local administration and members of the local elite (local big men such as petty traders, shopkeepers, etc.), headed by the *chef de colline* and 'Mister

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Tanzania' (as president of the LITA sub-hill committees). Thus, behind the institutional façade of various intermediaries (*comité d'hangar*, LITA sub-hill committees, associations, pharmacy, etc.), there was a powerful group who populated and controlled most of these structures, centralizing intermediation in the hands of a few. Repeatedly, the population explicitly expressed both the 'secret society' character of the *club d'hangar* and clear links to the local administration.

6.4.3   The CLC project on Cumba *colline*: a single 'brokerage chain'

The situation on Cumba hill presented a rather more dispersed project by CLC. There were two differences. First, whereas CIBA focused on the wetland, and LITA targeted the *collines* near their storehouses, CLC identified the vulnerable (orphans, the elderly, widows, people living with HIV/AIDS, etc.) as their primary target group, but on all *collines* of the commune. In line with this targeting, CLC used a household approach, minimizing working with associations or other group-based structures. Second, CLC most radically switched from a relief logic towards a developmental logic, minimizing the distribution of material support and focusing on capacity training. For example, seed distributions were kept to a minimum, while modern agricultural training was made central (compost bin, contour berms, sowing techniques). Thus, no infrastructure works (cf. CIBA) or a substantial seed credit scheme (cf. LITA) were implemented. The livestock credit scheme (the 'solidarity chain') was therefore identified as the project's main activity. There was also a focus on training and awareness raising for health issues (unlike CIBA and LITA, CLC had a clear focus on health issues).

Figure 8 Intermediation scheme, CLC project, Cumba *colline* (source: author)
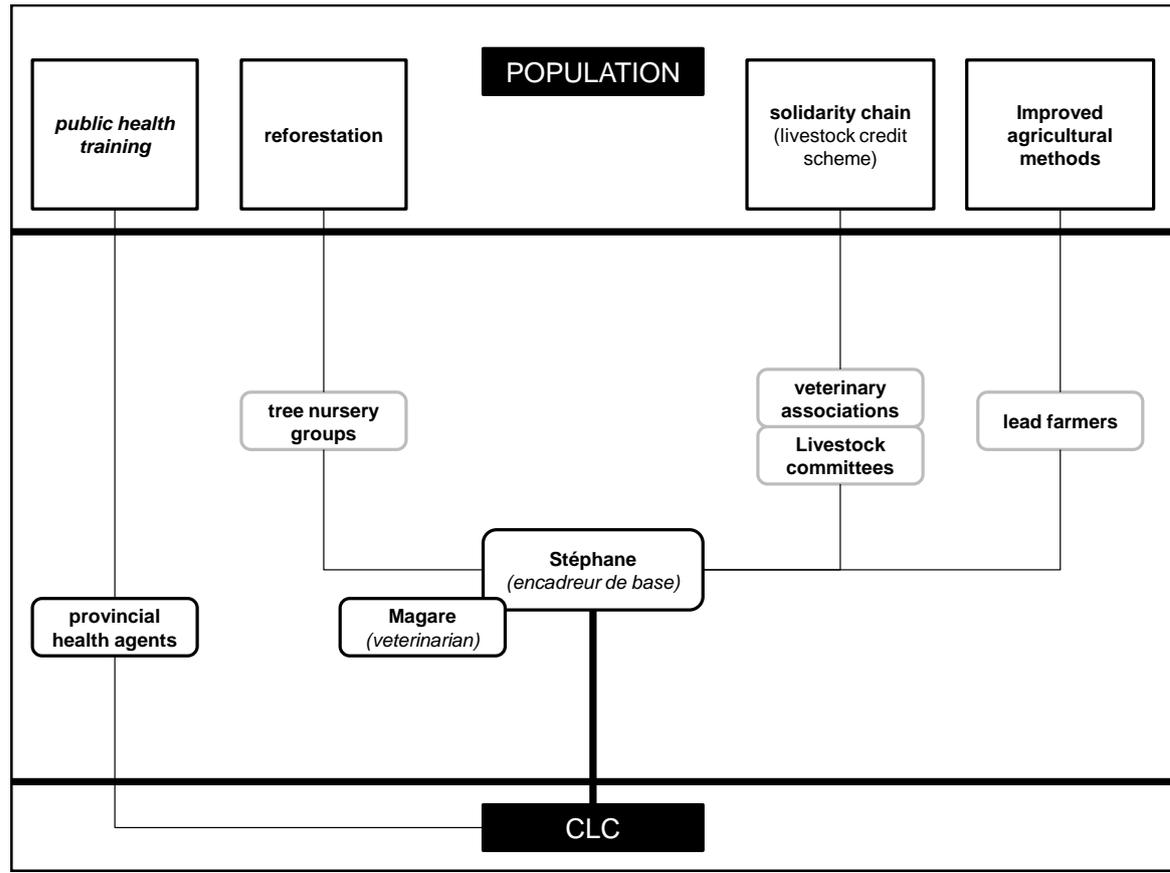
This intervention approach was reflected in a less extensive intermediation scheme (Figure 8), presenting only one main vertical 'brokerage chain' (cf. several in the CIBA case), personified by Stéphane, the *encadreur de base* (comparable to a community worker) of CLC, and to a lesser extent by Magare, the local veterinarian of the project. They both represented CLC at local level. Stéphane was responsible for the implementation and follow up of all activities of CLC on three *collines*: Cumba, and neighbouring Burenza and Butihinda. As an employee of CLC, he was paid a salary (12.000 Fbu, or 12 USD), received a bike and a budget for reparations of the bike (1.000 Fbu, 1 USD). Although they always worked in a team, Stéphane was the central mediator, while Magare was his assistant. In addition, livestock committees, temporary tree nursery groups, a system of lead farmers (with demonstration plots), and one veterinary pharmacy association were introduced, but these social structures presented minimal activity and were more or less 'invisible'. Thus, because of their status as 'paid employees' of CLC, the *encadreur de base* and the vet controlled all intermediation between CLC and the local population (their central position is also illustrated in the absence of local administration in the intermediation scheme). As such, the CLC intermediation scheme combines some characteristics of both the CIBA and LITA project: the centralization of intermediation (cf. LITA), and the centrality of local NGO staff in the brokerage chain (cf. CIBA). There

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was however one component carried out independently from the *encadreur de base*: the health training courses, executed by agents from the provincial health department.

6.5   General findings

6.5.1   Elite capture, 'technical procedural design' and logics of intervention

A first general finding was that the case studies confirmed the general focus on 'technical procedural design' in CBD methodology. Without going in too much detail, all three NGOs paid much attention to standard procedures on how committees, associations, and other intermediaries were identified and composed, and to the formal procedures guiding their participatory, accountable and transparent functioning. All three NGOs used democratic elections as the standard uniform procedure to identify capable community leaders (e.g., Fritzen, 2007). In addition, concerns about equal representation of both sexes and all ethnicities – endorsing the importance of inclusiveness and creating bridging social capital – further guided the make-up of the intermediary bodies. For individual intermediation, joint decision-making mechanisms with more 'representative' bodies were set up; where local administration was involved, their collaboration was subject to similar procedures. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, this array of procedures and mechanisms failed to prevent many of the participatory intermediating structures falling victim to elite capture and practices of corruption and clientelism.

How these practices developed was very dependent upon the different local settings and the particular persons involved.

In the CIBA project, for example, the captains, being responsible for the selection of casual workers for the cash-for-work component, restricted access to casual work on the basis of bribes, and more importantly, on the basis of sex. In particular, they used their position to 'collect' girlfriends in exchange for casual work (polygamy is illegal in Burundi, but in some areas it is widely practiced – among Muslims, but not exclusively – and in many cases causes problems, eg. the inheritance of land by suns of different wives). In a focus group the issue was further discussed, and especially women were afraid that the problem would expand to other girls and their own daughters. As various women commented the situation during the focus group (19/04/07, Burara):

> For the captains the girls are important. Even when you have the money to find the job, he has to give the job to a young girl. She can get the job without even paying.

Even if she is on the list, she does not have to work all days, but then she has to date with the captain. When she refuses she is excluded from the work. But if she doesn't refuses, it can lead as far as polygamy. The captains have a lot of girls. Four captains have already divorced their wife and even Wamare [a CIBA staff member] has a wife from here now. She is from Magaramango and she is also captain now. He has his other wife in Kirundo.

You have captains who rent a house together with the girl. Others have abandoned their wife.

Before this happened at the Rusarasi centre, but know it happens everywhere. It has become a routine.

The problem will even worsen. A lot of girls who are still at home see the girls of the captains, they have money and they even do not have to work for that. A lot of girls want to follow these girls of the captains.

Also in the CIBA project, the functioning of the wetland committee illustrated the impact of the upcoming 2005 elections. This committee was elected by the population to oversee the rehabilitation works in the wetland and the (re)distribution of plots within it. Notwithstanding the fact that some 'ordinary' community members were elected, the committee assembled the most influent people from the local elite: Minani (the most important businessman in Busoni)[7], his sun Nkurunda (judge in neighbouring commune of Mukenke), Rutayikire (judge in Busoni), Pascal (communal accountant), and Prospère[8] (community member and most influential captain within the CIBA project, responsible for the construction works in the wetland). They were completed with elected members of the local administration (*administrateur, …*). In particular Minani, Ritayikire and Prospère have used the CIBA project to unfairly appropriate large parts of the wetland (instead of redistributing plots as compensation for those who participated in the rehabilitation works: digging the irrigation and drainage canals). However, in view of the 2005 elections,

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[7] See chapter 4 for a more detailed description of his role in Busoni community.

[8] His influential role within the CIBA project was based on a personal connection with one of the high staff members of the CIBA office in Kirundo which supervised the project. His wife was from Bururi, like the CIBA supervisor, and her father had a direct clan link with him.

provincial and communal authorities (the wetland is property of the latter[9]) were however reluctant to solve the problem: both the governor and in particular the *administrateur* were aware of their upcoming defeat (as it was clear that CNDD-FDD would win the elections), and realised they would have to coexist with powerful people as Minani and Rutayikire afterwards. In addition, these elections installed the sun of Minani as the new governor of the province for the CNDD-FDD, which of course blocked the whole situation: 'And now we can't do anything, because the son of Minani is the governor. Can he give the order to redistribute the land of his father?' (focus group, 16/04/2007, Burara). As the vice-president of the wetland committee – calling himself a *figurant* in the whole process – explained:

> We [the population] thought that they [Minani, Rutayikire and others] would represent us properly, because they were intellectual men. But we have seen the contrary. It was a way to follow up things closely, to receive more plots in the wetland. […] In the beginning, we understood the importance of setting up the committee, but little by little we understood we had no power. […] I can say that CIBA has done a good job with irrigating and rehabilitating the wetland, but I tell you they have failed to cross the slyness of some people. (interview vice-president wetland committee, 30/04/07, Burara).

Elite capture was possibly most clear in the LITA project: behind the institutional façade of various intermediary structures, there was the small *club d'hangar* which controlled the entire project. During focus groups and in individual interviews, more than once, the population explicitly expressed both the 'secret society' character of the *club d'hangar* and the clear links with the local administration and the ruling party:

> But look, Mister Tanzania and the *chef de colline* cooperate closely, in the mean time one of them [Mister Tanzania] is president of the *comité de* LITA, veterinarian [within LITA project] and president of an association [beneficiary of the LITA seed

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[9] The question of property rights in the wetland illustrates how institutions, in this case land tenure and land politics, influence access to and the distribution of local level resources, and as such, determine the opportunities for participatory governance within community projects. According to the outdated Land Code of 1986, wetlands are property of the state, and all land transactions should be registrated. However, in reality, large parts of these wetlands are occupied and cultivated by individual community members (sometimes with agreement of community administration), but in the majority of cases without an official registration. Such a situation of institutional vagueness, in which property rights are not secured, only contributes to *ad hoc* local land politics, in which local power struggles and relationships define access to land (see e.g. Kamungi *et al.*, 2005 for an elaboration on legal and policy frameworks of land access in Burundi).

credit scheme], and the other [*chef de colline*] is president of the *comité d'hangar* en president of two associations [also beneficiary of the LITA seed credit scheme] and more than a little of the delegates [members of local administration, four out of five to be exactly] are part of the different committees. (focus group, 20/06/07, Tangara).

It is the club, they work together, they are friends, they share a lot of secrets. (focus group, 31/05/07, Tangara).

It is a club of friends, and the chief, that's the *chef de colline*. He is the patron. (focus group, 31/05/07, Tangara).

It is similar to the committees of the hangar or care, it are the same people who control the associations, it is a small group which is organized, and if you aren't one of them, you can't know a thing. (focus group,19/06/07, Tangara).

Those who participate in the trainings, you can't know, that's for the people of the club. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

They are the same [people], especially, you can find someone who is part of the administration, at the same time [part of] the comité de care and the comité d'hangar and president of an association. (interview *nyumbakumi sous-colline* Tangara, 18/06/07, Tangara).

The comité d'hangar is to a large extent the same as the administration. (interview *nyumbakumi (2) sous-colline* Tangara, 18/06/07, Tangara).

Furthermore, the LITA case was also an illustration of the mergence between 'development' and 'political' brokerage (Bierschenk et al. 2002). During the 2005 elections people used their function as a 'development broker' within the LITA project to secure political leadership positions after the elections. People were quite open and explicit on this issue and the link with party politics:

During elections they [members of committees] also promised that LITA would arrive with a lot of things, even roofing tiles, if we elected them. (focus group, 01/06/07, Tangara).

In the comité [d'hangar] there is not one who is not from the party [CNDD-FDD]. […] The secrets of the comité [d'hangar] are the same as those of the party. (focus group, 01/06/07, Tangara).

Some people who held functions with regard to the activities of LITA have promised the population that, when they would be elected, they will give goats and seed to the population. […] Some people have been elected because they held

functions in the activities of LITA. (interview *chef de sous-colline* 19/06/07, Tangara).

Some have used their social and economic position like all politicians do, especially the *chef de colline* who said: I'm the chief of the storehouse, we work together in the association, if I will be elected as *chef de colline*, I will do everything to improve the collaboration [with LITA]. (interview member of *comité d'hangar*, 19/06/07, Tangara).

If they aren't Muslims [the *chef de colline* was Muslim], then they are intimate friends of the *chef de colline*. We [members of committees] are all from CNDD-FDD with the exception of Grégoire [former Uprona *chef de colline* and a local big man] and two other Tutsi women who act as nonentities. (interview member LITA committee, 18/06/07, Tangara).

The CLC case paints a totally different picture: elite capture and corruption became personified in the strong position of Stéphane, the *encadreur de base* (and to a lesser extent his assistant Magare). His strong brokerage position was due to the fact he was perceived by the local population as the local representative of CLC (see 6.4.3). However, a second important factor was his personal relationship with one of the CLC supervisors of the project: they had been colleagues in the past, when the supervisor was still a communal agronomist and Stéphane his assistant, and they had a close friendship relationship as members of the same Pentecost church. In sum, they functioned as a tandem within the project. Stéphane used his brokerage function within the CLC project to divert resources: in particular many of the distributed livestock was diverted to a neighbouring *colline*, unsurprisingly where the *encadreur de base* himself lived (during fieldwork you could actually observe the results of this deviation, as it was difficult to spot goats distributed by CLC).[10] Numerous individual stories were told during focus groups. One of these was the story about the showpiece of the *colline*, a 'huge' male goat (imported race) for a crossbreeding program. Nobody had ever seen such a male goat on this hill, and even a radio-broadcast had been dedicated to crossbreeding program on their *colline*. But also this male goat was sold by Stéphane to people from Bujumbura. As the farmer who received to goat explained:

The male goat was mine. It was the example for the entire *colline*, they even talked about it on the radio. Désiré [the CLC supervisor] came every day to visit the goat, but after Stéphane sold the goat he never came back and he never asked why the goat was gone. (focus group, 11/05/07, Cumba).

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[10] This was however not the only problem with the livestock programme of CLC and the other NGOs, see chapter 8.

As a consequence, CLC cancelled a second distribution of goats, and towards the end of our field research, Stéphane had been transferred to another zone of intervention.

Summarizing, all three case studies illustrate that the 'participatory' procedures, mechanisms and structures could not prevent that elite capture and brokerage took place, with sometimes clear negative effects. It illustrates that such participatory efforts become quickly embedded in particular local contextual settings.

But the case studies also point to a more external aspect: the failure of procedural design to prevent elite capture, corruption and clientelism recalls the general critique on the 'technocratic' nature of participatory or CBD methodology. According to Chhotray (2004: 328–29) this is reflected in a strategy which divides participation into 'accountable segments which can be itemized and recorded on paper along with the project's physical and financial targets.' And indeed, in all three case studies, participation was translated into excel sheets listing among other things the legal identity, ethnic composition, participation of women, constellation of committees, and frequency of meetings of the structures put in place. This itemization of participation has been criticized because it negates local politics (Chhotray, 2004), underestimates the 'endogenous community imperfections' (Platteau & Abraham, 2002), or overestimates the homogeneity of communities (Williams, 2004). These issues have been confirmed throughout the case studies. As described above, local politics influenced the functioning of wetland committee (CIBA) and the *comité d'hangar* (LITA), and corruption and clientelism around the cash for work program (CIBA) and the livestock program (CLC) point to 'community imperfections' and the heterogeneity, power relations, and inequalities on which they are based.

In addition, such a technocratic approach has been criticized because it uses participation as a means to an end (Parfitt, 2004). This is illustrated by the wider intervention logic of the NGOs and how they shaped the establishment of participation and intermediation. Although all three NGOs carried out very similar activities, they produced very different intermediation schemes to give the projects their community-based character. This is immediately clear when comparing the schematic representations of the intermediation schemes (cf. Figure 6, 7, 8).

For example, the top-down yet decentralized nature of CIBA's intermediation scheme, resulting in a complex of 'brokerage chains', can be traced back to CIBA's focus on technical end-results. This was for example reflected in staff policy, as technical staff (agronomists, veterinarians, engineers) outnumbered social workers. This 'technical' focus gave rise to a more top-down approach to match the community-based character of the project with the achievement of particular technical end-results. It created a number of relative independent 'brokerage chains', for each specific technical end-result connecting one particular technical staff member to a participatory community structure: the cash-for-work component (road and water infrastructure rehabilitation) connecting a constructional

engineer with the captains, anti-erosion efforts connecting a forester with specific anti-erosion and tree nursery associations, the livestock credit scheme connecting a veterinarian with specific livestock committees, and so on.

By contrast, LITA's more 'social' focus on participatory processes, resulted in a more bottom-up *laisser-faire* approach. This led to the centralized intermediation of the *club d'hangar*. LITA's focus on participatory group-oriented processes was for example illustrated by their choice to work almost exclusively with local associations (and not with individuals or households) and the centrality of the storehouses as opportunities for community participation and cooperation. As a consequence, the composition of staff was the opposite of CIBA: social workers outnumbered technical staff, and LITA's more bottom-up *laisser-faire* approach led to less visibility of local NGO staff. For CIBA, I met NGO staff on a daily basis in the field, while I only met LITA staff twice when conducting fieldwork on their project. Because of less top-down control from NGO staff, LITA deliberately left more space for existing social structures to take up intermediary roles. This led to the strong presence of the local administration, and ultimately to the centralized intermediation of the *club d'hangar*. Although diverse participatory structures were introduced by the project, the local elite assembled in this 'club' dominated most of these intermediation structures.

CLC's 'individual change' philosophy, by contrast, explained their choice of working with *encadreurs de base*. CLC did not believe in the associational model of LITA for example, and used a more personal approach, focusing on changing individual behaviour and attitudes, and enhancing personal knowledge, capacities and skills. As such, CLC opted for a close and constant follow-up of individual households by its *encadreurs de base*, people living among or close to the target population, functioning as the contact person between the population and provincial CLC staff for all components of the project. CLC even made a long term commitment, intending to employ these *encadreurs de base* in several successive projects. This strategy was expressed in a smaller staff in provincial head quarters, closely working together and supervising the *encadreurs de base* in the field, and gave rise to the functioning of one main brokerage chain around the central position of the *encadreur de base*: all participation of the local population in the project was linked, supervised and controlled by the *encadreur*.

In sum, the findings illustrate that, to a great extent, participation has been used as a means to efficiently deliver project outputs, on the one hand a process influenced by wider interventionist ideologies and philosophies of implementing agencies; and on the other hand the apolitical and technocratic 'logical framework' (reducing participation to procedural design) in which time-bound development projects have to be implemented (e.g., Brett, 2003; Chhotray, 2004; Parfitt, 2004). Therefore, the implementation of community participation ultimately led to 'supply-driven demand-driven' reconstruction (cf. Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 1). Community participation within the projects was structured, albeit unintentionally, on the external intervention logics of the different NGOs – CIBA's

'technical', LITA's 'social' and CLC's 'individual change' ideologies. And because of the 'logical framework' straitjacket, NGOs were forced to itemize participation into excel sheets counting among other things the number of democratically elected committees, their multi-ethnic composition, and meetings, in order to present calculable results in their project reports towards the donor.

To a great extent, the popularity of the communitarian view on social capital in CBD methodology, is exactly because it aligns well with such technocratic project planning. For policy makers, Putnam's (1993) communitarian view provides an easy solution – building community organizations means building social capital. It is an easy way to measure 'technically' the progress and success of such policies, simply predicated on 'how many new organizations were built or strengthened?' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

6.5.2   Resources and social cohesion: an underexposed but crucial factor

The timing and conditions for channelling resources to local communities are crucial to the analysis of elite capture in CBD programs. Several studies argue that offering too much too soon attracts wealthier individuals, and substantially increases the risk of elite capture (e.g., Classen *et al*., 2008; Platteau, 2004; Platteau & Gaspart, 2003; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). This resource factor proved to be a strong predictor for failure or success of the case studies to improve social cohesion and rebuild local stocks of social capital. However, most significant was not the timing or conditions, but the 'type' of resources. Therefore, a typology of resources is presented below, in order to further analyse the case study findings.

This typology is based on two axes: public/private goods, and strategic/non-strategic livelihood assets. Private and public goods have different characteristics. Bastiaensen *et al*. (2002) differentiate according to subtractability and excludability: private (or market), common pool, club (or toll), and public goods. Private goods are rival and excludable, e.g. the consumption of food diminishes its availability to others (abstractibility) and it is easy to deny others' access to your food (excludability). Public goods are non-rival and non-excludable, e.g. individual use of a rural road does not diminish its availability to the use of others and it is difficult to deny access. In between we find common pool (rival but non-excludable, e.g. irrigation water) and club goods (non-rival but excludable, e.g. mill facilities). The second strategic/non-strategic axis distinguishes between assets that deliver a strategic individual advantage to cope with short-term needs, stress and shock situations (strategic assets), and assets that provide opportunities for long-term livelihood strategies (non-strategic). Both, however, are key to sustainable livelihoods (e.g., Davies, 1993; Scoones, 1998).

This enables a classification of project components along these two axes (see Figure 9). By way of illustration, two very different project components can be compared. On the one hand, a developed plot in the wetland is privately used, it is excludable (tenure rights), causes extreme rivalry (because of general land scarcity), and presents a strategic asset (an additional highly valued rice season). On the other hand, road works in the countryside are a clear public good (non-rival and non-excludable), and a non-strategic asset (e.g. more trade in the long term). In between, the goods of clubs (e.g. storehouse facilities) and common pool resources (irrigation water in the wetland) may differ along the strategic/non-strategic axis.

Figure 9: Project components according to resource typology (for convenience, not all project components are indicated), based on Bastiaensen et al. 2002.
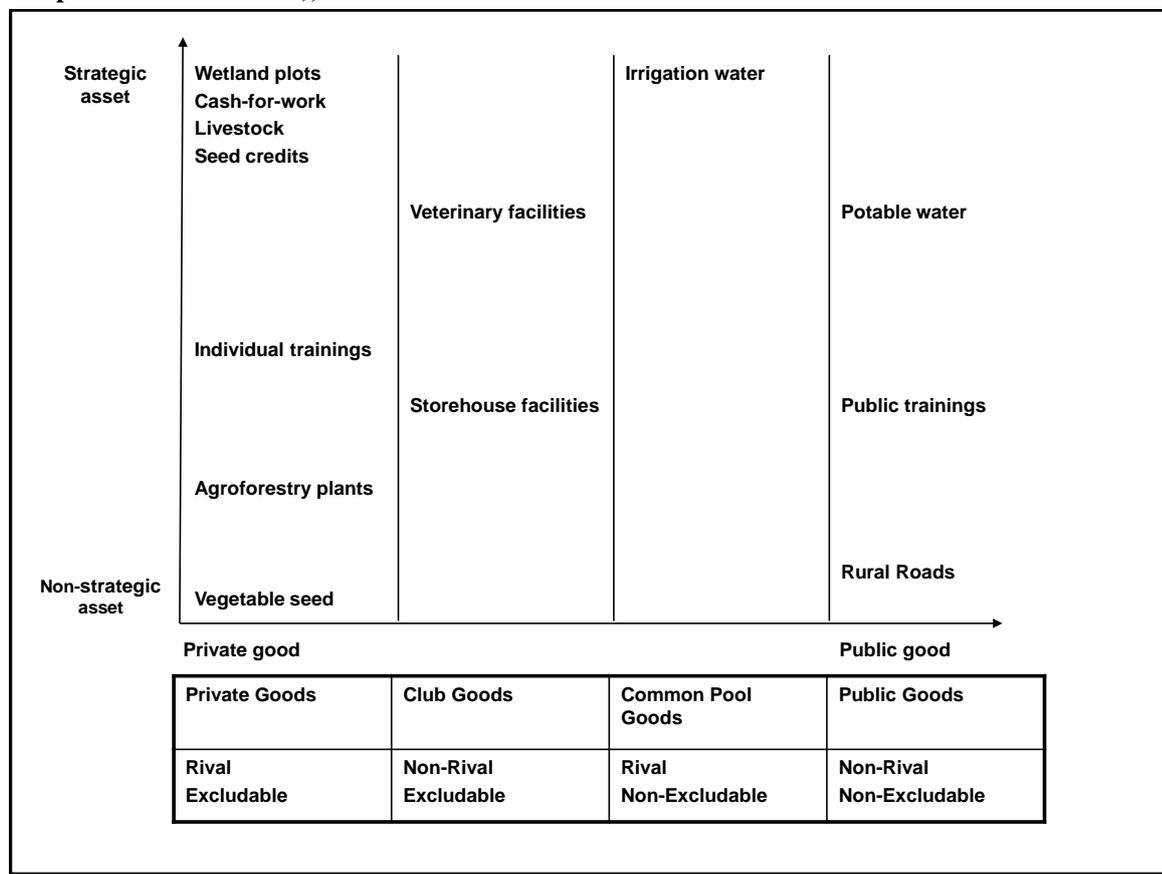
Based on this typology, three categories of project components, and their associated participatory intermediation structures, could be distinguished according to their impact on social cohesion (see Figure 10). A first category, delivering private/strategic goods, had a negative impact. These components were characterized by serious information barriers between the mediators and the local population (labelling them as 'secret' activities), while sparking new conflicts because of unfair distribution or access (frustrating bonds and bridges), which also decreased levels of trust in local

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administration (deteriorating linkages). One of the most clear-cut examples was the (re)distribution of plots by the wetland committee in Burara. Without discussion, these wetland plots were the most strategic private resource which could be accessed through the three projects. Accessing additional land which, on top of that, could be irrigated during the dry season, was of extremely strategic value for any household in this country where fertile land becomes more and more scarce. However, as 'people are dangerous when it comes to their land' (focus group, 12/04/07, Burara), and because of elite capture, the (re)distribution by the wetland committee led to serious tensions within the community, with a potential outbreak of violence (the governor had to come to calm down the situation):

> There was a lot of talking. We would receive plots in the wetland. But now, we are tired of this problem. […] for the wetland, it's finished, there is to much money implicated. (focus group, 26/04/07, Burara).

> On the hill we trusted Rutayikire, the judge, but he took a lot of bands in the wetland. Before, he was the friend of everybody, but that's finished now. He took 60 plots in the wetland, how could our confidence increase? […] He had good contacts with the administration and the committee of CIBA. […] He used the works of CIBA to take away our plots. (focus group, 18/04/07, Burara).

> The people who have a lot of wetland should distribute, but until now nothing has changed. These are dangerous things. The people with a lot of wetland have refused and threatened. They even said they would chop the head. (focus group, 12/04/07, Burara).

> There is no confidence anymore between the rich and the poor. The rich received the plots while the poor need the plots. They even took our plots. […] They [the administration] did nothing when they took the wetland. They were there, they have seen it, but they kept silent about it. (focus group, 18/04/07, Burara).

A second category, delivering public/non-strategic resources, presents the opposite picture. These components were characterized by effective information flows and reduction of existing conflicts as a positive outcome, while offering opportunities to strengthen social cohesion. For example, road works in Burara were appreciated because it reduced conflicts caused by traffic accidents within the community. However, more importantly, it cut transport costs, which made it easier to travel longer distances and visit friends and family. Thus, infrastructure works facilitated mobility, which in turn helped people to take up their social lives again. Another example was the repairing and replacing of water taps by the CIBA project: it reduced the number of conflicts when fetching water (because the number of functioning taps increased) and the water taps became again pleasant meeting points where you get to know each other. In Tangara, the

functioning of the storehouse had an important side-effect on social cohesion. It did not only create new storage facilities, it also reduced the cases of theft on the *colline*, since less people stocked their harvest at home. On Cumba *colline*, in particular the different health trainings which were held in public had positive side-effects. As was the case for the water taps in Burara, these trainings were appreciated as moments to meet community members and share some of their concerns. In addition, these trainings tackled daily problems within the community: sexual violence, but also HIV/AIDS and the prevention of diseases linked to hygiene and sanitation.[11] As some quotes illustrate for several of these activities:

> It was the administration who has asked to rehabilitate the road. Now we see taxis going to Kirundo or even Bujumbura. They have done well, they have sensitized. ('road works', focus group, 18/04/07, Burara).

> In the past, we slid as a snake. Now, there are less conflicts, because less accidents happened. ('road works', focus group, 02/05/07, Burara).

> Conflicts have been reduced. Before, other [water] taps did not function. But the taps of CRS function, even if you are lining up, you are sure that there will be water. ('water taps', focus group, 18/04/07, Burara).

> This creates a lot of confidence. Now, people come from far away to fetch water. Before, you didn't know them, but now we talk and we trust them. ('water taps', 18/04/07, Burara).

> Before there were not so many water taps, you were waiting with many people and you had to push away others. Sometimes people fought. And for this old woman for example [pointing to a fellow group participant] it was very hard to receive water. ('water taps', 18/04/07, Burara).

> It has increased trust among the population. There are less cases of theft and you are more at ease at night and with your neighbours. ('storehouse', focus group, 01/06/07, Tangara).

> The storage in the storehouse has decreased cases of theft in the homes of people, because thieves even came from Tangara [centre] because they don't like to work.

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[11] Correct information on certain diseases reduced conflicts between neighbours, as before certain diseases were linked to sorcery by a neighbour. The trainings also focused on cooperation between neighbours to ameliorate household hygiene.

Because they think we now bring our harvest to the storehouse, they stop coming to steel. ('storehouse', focus group, 26/06/07, Tangara).

The trainings gave us confidence, because they talked about the abuse of women and now we are again at ease, because now the population knows the problem and the abuses have declined ('trainings', 15/05/07, Cumba).

During the trainings the administration was very dynamic, because we should participate with much motivation. We [population and administration] were together in the training and we have discussed a lot together. ('trainings', focus group, 15/05/07, Cumba).

It has reduced conflicts. Every time they sensitized the population to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS, they did sensitization about hygiene in the house. Before there were a lot of cases of rape of girls, but now there are less cases. Also malaria and cholera declined because of sensitization. Before people said that cholera was sorcery, we thought you had been poisoned by a neighbour, but now we understand that it is a disease and how we have to defeat it. ('trainings', focus group, 21/05/07, Cumba).

The main aspects explaining the positive side effects of most of these activities on social cohesion was their inclusiveness (equal access), the restoration of social life (informal meeting places and mobility), and the fact that they tackled very concrete social conflicts within the community. These aspects confirm some of Uvin's (2009: 43-56) observations made when he asked what 'peace' means to Burundians. For example, mobility – the ability to visit one's family and friends – was also a surprising but important way of defining peace for many respondents in his study. Second, when people defined peace negatively (i.e. as the absence of violence), not politically motivated violence but criminality and theft were important references. The priority that people gave to tackle sexual violence (in particular in Cumba) and the fact that theft was the single most important factor that threatened people's safety (of crops, harvests, bicycles, livestock, …; see also chapter 5, section 5.6.1) confirms this observation for the three *collines*. Furthermore, what Uvin (2009: 48) calls 'social peace' was also expressed during focus groups: a community is in peace when there are strong social ties, and neighbours cohabitate and live in harmony. Especially, the quest for informal social contact and concrete places to meet fellow community members illustrated this social aspect of peace. In sum, Uvin concludes that few people refer to major political issues at stake (democracy, human rights, ethnicity, …) when talking about peace. Instead, they refer to their concrete problems related to security, development, and social cohesion. In line with this argument, the observations made on the three studied *collines*, add to this that people appreciate in particular those activities that, although mostly as a side-effect, tackle these concrete social conflicts: quarrels when fetching water (water taps), traffic accidents and

transport costs (road works), theft of harvests at home (storehouse), sexual violence and disease (health trainings).

In between, a third category of project components, delivering private but non-strategic resources, had a more neutral impact on social cohesion. An illustration which applies for all three projects was the distribution of agro-forestry plants: although privately distributed, they did not yield a substantial strategic advantage in the short term. Therefore, they had no substantial effect on social relations and social cohesion:

> It is impossible to have conflicts because everybody could receive a plant. The problem was that a lot of plants died because of the drought, but that is not the fault of CIBA. […] Everybody can go and plant, and everybody can benefit some trees. (focus group, 18/04/07, Burara).

> Everybody was informed, and everybody could cooperate, and there were enough trees. So, if you didn't join, it was your own choice. (focus group, 15/05/2007, Cumba).

> Even those who didn't work in the tree nursery received plants, and everybody was happy. […] No change [in social relations], because these activities didn't give personal profit. (focus group, 20/06/07, Tangara).

Figure 10 Impact project components on community cohesion according to resource typology (source: author)
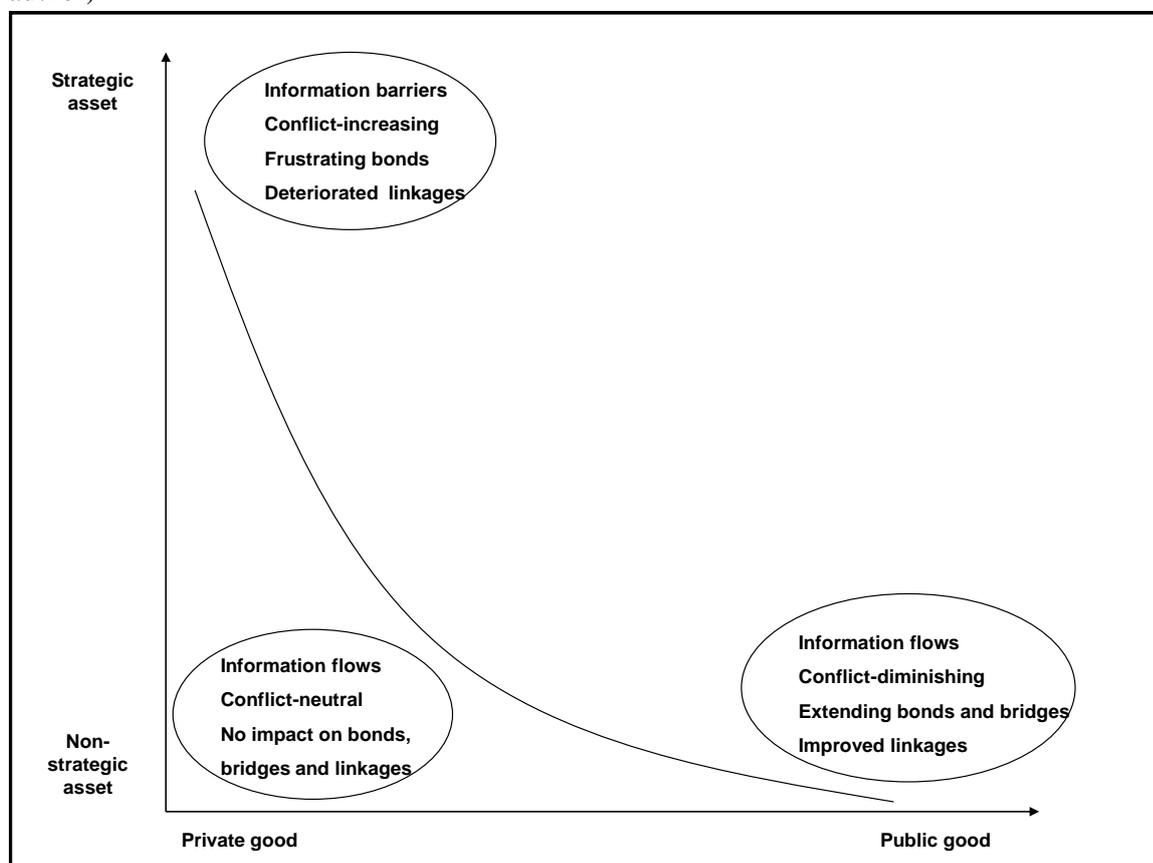
The resource typology accounts for different effects on social cohesion because private goods pose substantial different management problems vis-à-vis public, common and to a lesser extent club goods. (Bastiaensen *et al.*, 2002; D'Exelle, 2004). Public goods, in particular common pool resources, deal with collective action and free rider problems. Private goods pose management problems in terms of bargaining processes, i.e. where there is lack of agreement on the distribution of the benefits (D'Exelle, 2004: 7–8). The strategic/non-strategic axis was also significant, as illustrated by the following quotes:

> The activities with which something can be earned, are done in secret. [...] It [vegetable seeds] hasn't changed anything about the confidence among the population. It concerns little money. Everybody who wants can buy it on the market (focus group, 21/05/07, CLC project, Cumba).

> The water tap is for everybody, you cannot exclude people, you cannot make the choice who will draw water from the dwell. In the wetland, not everybody is present. There you can give something to receive the water you need to irrigate your plot of land. But for drawing water you cannot ask money, because it is for everybody (focus group, 17/04/07, CIBA project, Burara).

Both quotes present interesting comparisons. The distribution of vegetable seeds (CLC) did not create distributional problems when compared to the seed credit scheme of LITA. This is because the latter distributed strategic seeds (e.g. beans), while the former delivered non-strategic seeds (e.g. carrots or tomatoes). Similar reasoning explains the distinct effect of the distribution of potable and irrigation water in the second quote: potable water is a public and less strategic resource compared to irrigation water, which is a common pool resource, and a strategic asset in the livelihood strategies of the farmers in the wetland.

A last but crucial remark is that this distinction between public/non-strategic and private/strategic goods parallels the respective distinction between public resource/service provision in 'original' CDB programs, and the additional provision of private livelihood support in 'CDB-adapted' post-conflict reconstruction programs. 'Original' CBD programs have been designed to improve the delivery of public goods and services (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Social funds, widespread World Bank programs based on CBD methodology, are exemplary in this respect (e.g., de Silva & Sum, 2007). Such funds support programs with a focus on infrastructure works (e.g., roads, water supply systems, schools) or social service provision (e.g., nutrition campaigns, literacy programs). Instead, many post-conflict reconstruction projects need to 'provide direct livelihood support, often in the form of financial resources, to individuals or individual groups rather than providing resources or services that benefit the community as a whole' (Goovaerts *et al.*, 2005). The case studies are exemplary: they present a mix of public goods/services (roads, water infrastructure, storehouse facilities, public training, etc.) and private livelihood

support (developed plots in the wetland, seed credits, livestock, etc.). However, the case studies clearly indicate that a straightforward application of CBD methodology when providing direct livelihood support was ineffective: participatory methodology failed to nurture improved beneficiary targeting or service provision, and was unsuccessful in strengthening community cohesion. By contrast, the introduction of participatory structures linked to the distribution of such resources substantially increased the risk of elite capture and corruption. Thus, it is illustrated that CBD methodology, initially designed for development programs providing public resources/services for entire communities, is not easily tailored to post-conflict reconstruction programs providing direct livelihood support to households and individuals.

6.6 Conclusions

The examination of the three case studies shows the limits of community-based reconstruction. First, the narrow focus on 'technical procedural design' of CBD methodology was copied. This itemized participation into manageable 'technocratic' and 'apolitical' procedures and mechanisms, despite post-conflict situations being even more politicized than 'normal' CBD situations due to fragmented, contested or opposing national and local leadership and a fiercer competition for post-war reconstruction resources. Second, a straightforward application of CBD methodology underestimated the contrast between 'development' and 'post-conflict' settings. In particular, it negated the fact that many post-conflict situations require direct livelihood support to households or individuals, as well as public resources and services for entire communities.

From a theoretical point of view, the findings provide empirical insights in the limitations of a social capital concept, as applied so far. It reveals the narrow and normative 'Putnamian' or communitarian notion of social capital on which CBD methodology still relies (cf. Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Mosse, 2008). From such a conceptualization followed a strong belief in 'technical procedural design' to create social capital and community cohesion.[12] This focus was confirmed during the case studies, as a

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[12] The link between Putnam's conception of social capital and the focus on 'technical procedural design' in CBD practice is however not so straightforward. The reasons are twofold. First, the CBD discussion illustrates the 'lazy use' (Bebbington, 2004: 344) of the social capital concept in policy circles. In Putnam's (1993) original conceptualization, path dependency plays an important role, i.e. the construction of social capital is the outcome of historical processes. This exactly questions the ability to 'engineer' or 'construct' social capital through 'technical procedural design' in the short term (see section 7.3., chapter 7). Secondly, however, there seems to be a contradiction in the work of Putnam himself. Although he questions the constructability of social capital in his Italian study (1993), his *Bowling Alone* (2000) is a plea to rebuild stocks of social capital, as a solution to all

range of procedures was set up to guide community participation. Yet their failure to prevent elite capture is further evidence that procedural design is based on inaccurate assumptions: formalized and legalistic procedures were not able to overcome community discord (liberal assumption), and the feasibility of a perfect community consensus was not reached (communitarian assumption) (cf. Chhotray, 2004). The communitarian notion of social capital is therefore an erroneous theoretical point of departure to inform CBD methodology on how to rebuild social capital in conflict-affected communities. By contrast, a broader political economy perspective on social capital proved useful to present a more realistic analysis of CBD mechanisms. The findings endorsed two broad conclusions from a critical and contextualized perspective (e.g., Bebbington, 2002, 2007; Cleaver, 2005). First, social capital has potentially negative effects: social capital is wrapped up in broader socio-economic power relations, so it may act as a catalyst for social differentiation. From this point of view, elite capture within community-based projects is a logical result of social capital 'at work', not an aberration of it, as social capital has the potential to reproduce the power relations in which it is already wrapped up (e.g., Cleaver, 2005). Elite capture may therefore be seen as a potential 'dark side' (Portes & Landolt, 1996) of social capital.[13] Second, social capital is context-dependent, bound up in a broader capital portfolio, interacting with and shaped by cultural and economic forms of capital (Bebbington, 2007). The case studies showed how the 'use value' (Edwards & Foley, 1997) of community participation, and so of social capital, was mainly shaped by

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sorts of societal ills in the US (see chapter 1, section 1.2.2 on Putnam's theoretical and practical-ethical concerns). Nevertheless, Putnam has inspired the communitarian notion of social capital on which most CBD-methodology relies, i.e. a rather normative and harmonic ideal of the community and its potential for collective action (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). By way of comparison: if one starts from a Bourdieuian notion of social capital, the analysis should also focus on internal power relations, inequalities and mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion within these communities, which in turn, questions the enthusiasm for the empowering effects of collective action.

[13] If elite capture is defined as the 'dark side' of social capital, this does not necessarily mean that elite capture cannot be instrumental (for both parties), and always has negative effects. For example, although some benefits of the development project can be captured by the elite, the situation is still a pareto-improvement for the community when compared to the situation without a development project. Moreover, the 'capture' is sometimes accepted by the population as a bonus for the elite member which was able to attract these external development funds and projects in the first place (Platteau, 2004). It is therefore important to differentiate between potentially more benevolent forms of elite domination and elite capture (Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 23), or between elite control and elite capture, the former being the willingness of the local elite to contribute their time and know-how to facilitate the execution of development projects (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007: 244). However, in the particular case of the three *collines*, elite capture was very negatively perceived (although objectively, there was a pareto-improvement, but the elite was not held responsible for this improvement). Examples of elite control with positive effects, although less explicit, were also present: e.g. when local administration supervised the works of water tap construction, and motivated the local population to collect the necessary resources (sand, bricks, etc), local administration was appreciated for their leading role.

the economic capital of community participation (see typology of resources). Concretely, the provision of private/strategic resources created a higher risk of community participation being wrapped up in power relations; as such, social capital facilitated elite capture. By contrast, the distribution of less strategic/public resources led to a more equal and inclusive resource access, potentially downplaying existing power relations. Once more, this reflects the double-edged character of social capital, i.e. social networks structuring both inclusion and exclusion. On a general level, these findings stress the importance of a broader contextualized political economy perspective on social capital, as it was the interaction between economic and social capital that ultimately explained the 'exclusive' or 'inclusive' effects of social capital within the communities. The findings present a concrete demonstration of Bebbington's (2007: 155) argument that Bourdieu and a political economy perspective on social capital can and should 'travel to policy'.

This leads to practical policy conclusions. First, the ease with which CBD methodology is colonizing different sectors of post-conflict reconstruction should be questioned. As noticed, 'development' and 'post-conflict' settings may differ substantially because they require de facto various kinds of support. Typical for 'post-conflict' settings is the need to provide a mixture of both direct livelihood support to individuals and public resources/services for entire communities (Goovaerts *et al*., 2005). Hence, the assumption that community-based reconstruction programs should bridge the humanitarian and development phase after conflict, and provide both (Cliffe *et al*., 2003). However, the case studies clearly question the effectiveness of providing both private livelihood support and public resources/services with the help of CBD methodology in one and the same project. It leads to a 'tendency to "bodge" instruments for aims and contexts they were not meant for' (i.e. participatory CBD methodology for short-term livelihood support) (Leader & Colenso, 2005: 51). In addition, it negates the potential comparative advantage of external agencies, each in their own proper 'professional field'. As such, the obvious plea for more integration and better harmonization of these different phases is not contested; yet it should be questioned if this should be done 'within' programs and agencies instead of 'between' them. In the case studies, CBD mechanisms had a potentially positive effect on community cohesion when applied to public/non-strategic resources; yet the effect of community participation turned negative when applied to private/strategic resources. This confirms the idea that community participation should not be overrated while livelihoods are under serious stress (Steinberg, 2007). It also reflects a broader political economy argument on social capital: although civil-society led development and social capital policies are important, they cannot replace sound redistributive policies from a neutral third party or 'developmental state' (Bebbington, 2007). In many post-conflict reconstruction settings, external agencies *de facto* take over the role of the state, and so will always have redistributive responsibilities. It requires them to stay focused or refocus their attention on their organizational capacity, flexibility, and integrity to come up with

alternative solutions in circumstances in which participation is not the magic panacea for successful aid delivery.

Second, the findings present empirical insights into the limitations of the broader 'social engineering' approach to post-conflict reconstruction (cf. Goodhand, 2006, chapter five). Based on Western models of community participation (sc. the communitarian view of social capital), external interventions try to 'micro-engineer' social cohesion and social capital through the introduction of 'technical procedural design'. However, in the case studies most of these efforts failed to nurture better community cohesion. By contrast, the case studies highlighted the value of 'ordinary' infrastructure works and public service provision as project activities which positively influenced the social fabric of community life. Road works in the CIBA project showed the importance of mobility, of how visiting friends and family is a clear 'peace dividend' in Burundi (cf. Uvin, 2009: 49–50). The repairing or replacing of water taps (CIBA project) and public training (CLC project) created a need for new meeting places, reflecting Burundians' preference for informal daily interactions rather than formal community associations or committees, designed in the image of Putnam's (1993) 'networks of civic engagement'. In addition, public training on sexual violence (CLC project) did touch one particular consequence of the conflict, as rape and sexual harassment constantly fed feelings of insecurity and pitted households against each other because of insinuations and forced marriages. The construction of better and safer storage facilities by the LITA project, on the other hand, reduced theft of harvests at home and so clearly reduced conflicts and distrust among neighbours. These examples indicate that 'physical engineering' and 'ordinary' public service provision is sometimes more efficient than 'social engineering' when trying to strengthen community social cohesion. Instead of trying to 'micro-engineer' social cohesion from the top-down, resulting in 'supply-driven demand-driven' reconstruction (cf. Mansuri & Rao, 2004: 1), it creates the necessary 'material' or 'physical' preconditions, from which a truly bottom-up and organic process of locally embedded social engineering can slowly emerge over time. As such, this article presents ethnographic evidence that confirms the advice that external agencies should focus on understanding how they may create an enabling environment to create social capital, rather than trying to engineer it themselves (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000). It suggests a further investigation of 'ordinary' infrastructure works and public service provision in post-conflict settings, with minimal attempts to socially organize or 'engineer' communities, and their potential impact on social capital.

Chapter 7

Bridging community associations: the difficult merging of social capital endowments and new 'institutional settings'[1]

Abstract. – Associations have been labelled the main 'building blocks' for creating social capital. It has been argued that community associations need to transform bonding into bridging ties to 'reach out' while also creating linking ties to 'scale up' (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008; Woolcock, 2002). External development actions follow a reverse logic by promoting these associations: they assume that linking ties with the external intervener will reinforce prior social capital endowments. This article highlights the inherent difficulties of such a 'social engineering' approach in the context of post-conflict reconstruction, describing three development interventions in the north of Burundi. The findings define the process of 'institutional syncretism' (Galvan, 2007) – merging local with global institutional settings – as the key to successful social capital building. They question 'bridging' associations as 'universal blueprints' for restoring social cohesion after conflicts.

7.1 Introduction

Associations have been labelled the main 'building blocks' for creating social capital. The reconciliatory nature of bridging associations – uniting groups in society that opposed each other during conflict – is welcomed in post-conflict situations (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b). Social capital literature argues that community associations need to transform bonding into bridging ties to 'reach out' while also creating linking ties to 'scale up' the impact of the associations (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008; Woolcock, 2002). However, creating social capital from the outside is not self-evident. When external development agencies promote the creation of associations they follow a reverse logic, assuming that linking ties with the external intervener will create or reinforce locally produced social capital endowments.

The article examines this 'social engineering' approach, presenting a case study of three interventions by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in post-conflict Burundi. Burundi is slowly emerging from a civil war that lasted over 10 years.[2] After three decades (1960s–90s) of authoritarian and military rule by the ethnic Tutsi minority, the first democratically elected Hutu president was murdered soon after his appointment in 1993. In the civil war that followed, approximately 300,000 people lost their lives (Lemarchand, 2009). Now, following a transition period that led to the 2005 elections, Burundi finds itself in a post-conflict reconstruction phase, featuring many of the external interventions noted above. The impact on social capital by these interventions will be analysed in terms of their success in creating bridging community associations.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. First, I enumerate the various arguments why community associations are seen as 'building blocks' for social capital, and why in particular, bridging community associations play a role in post-conflict reconstruction. Second, I present a brief discussion of the 'constructability' of social capital. Third, after outlining the state of Burundi and its historical social capital endowments, I discuss the three development interventions. All three interventions highlight 'institutional syncretism' (Galvan, 2007) as key to successful social capital building. The cases note the difficulty in finding the right blend to create a new 'institutional setting', which is 'soft' enough to adapt to prior social capital endowments, but 'strong' enough to change or reinforce these endowments to bring positive results. I will then explore the overall impact and long-term effects of external interventions on

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[2] On the history of conflict in Burundi, see e.g. Daley (2006b, 2008), Lemarchand (1970, 1995, 2009), Reyntjens (1993, 2000), and Uvin (1999, 2009).

social capital endowments, ultimately providing both theoretical and practical conclusions. To produce positive effects, one priority is a thorough knowledge of prior social capital endowments, combined with a deep awareness of external resources or incentives (linking social capital). Also key is the availability of a minimal basis of bonding and bridging ties.

7.2 Social capital, community associations and post-conflict reconstruction

The strong link between social capital and civil society is one of the main consequences of Robert Putnam's work. He equates social capital with horizontal associations, in what he calls 'networks of civic engagement' (Putnam, 1993: 171). These associations have been labeled the main 'building blocks' of social capital, which Putnam (1995: 664–65) defines as 'the features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives'. The equation between social capital and community associations has tempted some policy makers to oversimplify the debate. Many define a vibrant civil society as the 'missing link' (Grootaert, 1998) to economic development and democracy. Community associations rapidly became promising new 'actors' in the 'development industry'.[3] In this respect, a landmark report was the *Voices of the Poor* study by Deepa Narayan (1997). This is just one example of the general tendency to use 'membership in groups with particular characteristics' (Narayan, 1997: vii) as one of the main proxy measures to build social capital. For policy makers, these studies provide an easy solution – building community associations means

[3] See for example the World Bank website on the Social Capital Initiative : http://go.worldbank.org/XSV70MA600 (Consulted on 2 October 2009). Of course, the 'participatory turn' in development practice predates the social capital discussion: well before the beginning of the nineties, non-governmental organizations already worked trough associations to implement projects and programmes in a participatory way. Nonetheless, the social capital concept added another argument to the debate, and succeeded to convince actors such as the World Bank, DFID, and USAID to integrate more social analysis into their econometric policies, and to apply this 'participatory turn' (see e.g. Bebbington *et al*., 2006; Mosse, 2008). However, the main argument here is more specific on the link between associations and social capital: that (i) social capital should not necessarily be equated with associations, but (ii) that exactly this equation has made the social concept so popular. First, only a Putnamian concept of social capital as 'networks of civic engagement' results in a focus on associational capital (compare e.g. with a Bourdieuian conceptualisation, chapter 1). Second, however, Putnams equation of social capital with civic organizations presents an easy and measurable concept for policy makers which focuses on the mechanics ('forms, not norms') of social capital, i.e. 'how many new organizations have we built and strengthened?' (Edwards, 2006: 102).

building social capital – and an easy way to measure the progress and success of their policies (predicated simply on 'how many new associations were built or strengthened'?).

Briefly, membership in community associations has four expected positive effects. First, several studies provide evidence that associational membership has a positive effect on the welfare and well-being of households (e.g. Narayan, 1997). Second, community associations are seen as fostering democracy, since membership in community associations facilitates participation, accountability, and democratic governance (Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Putnam, 1993). Third, community associations partially explain 'why some villages are peaceful and others not' (Krishna, 2002: 115). They are identified as local vehicles to bridge ethnic or other social boundaries. Finally, using community associations improves project and program effectiveness, as they are seen as preferred partners in participatory approaches (World Bank, 2000: 130). In particular, the potential *bridging* character is valued as positive in post-conflict situations.

Conflict is linked to high stocks of bonding and low stocks of bridging social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b). Whereas bonding capital refers to exclusive solidarity based on ethnicity, religion, cast, class, etc.; bridging capital refers to inclusive solidarity, uniting people from different backgrounds (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Community associations are labeled as instruments 'par excellence' to transform this 'exclusive' bonding solidarity within groups into more 'inclusive' bridging solidarity between these groups. In this respect, economic and social reconstruction efforts will only be effective if they involve and bridge between different social groups (Colletta *et al.*, 1996; Fischer, 2004). A particular case of group integration is after ethnic conflict. Institutions fostering repeated inter-ethnic interaction together with addressing practical concerns, support the reconciliation between ethnic groups (Pickering, 2006: 79). An association in which Hutu and Tutsi widows work together after the Rwandan genocide, is a concrete example of this (Colletta & Cullen, 2000b: 113). This explains why multi-ethnic community associations are seen as 'agents of peace' (Varshney, 2001: 363).

In sum, community associations have been introduced as the main 'building blocks' of social capital. They are not only useful in periods of peace, but also in periods of post-conflict reconstruction, as bridging associations have the potential to reconcile and reunite the conflicting parties. Two questions remain: How easy is it to construct social capital? How can external development interventions play a role in this process? The latter may seem a rhetorical question; but although the 'constructability' of social capital in policy circles seems no longer to be an issue, there is less consensus among social capital scholars. This debate is briefly discussed in the next section.

7.3 The 'constructability' of social capital revisited

Putnam's (1993) path dependency model argues that the construction of social capital is the outcome of historical processes. In his Italian study, for example, Putnam illustrates this with a historical account of the republican tradition to explain the high degree of 'civicness' in the Italian city states. The presence of such social capital endowments is then perceived as vitally important for the further development of social capital in societies.[4] This 'endowment view' (Evans, 1996: 1124) gives an idea of social capital stocks emerging over long periods of time, leaving little room for change. Others point to the fact that social capital patterns are neither stable nor given, and that contemporary institutional arrangements can facilitate or erode the production and maintenance of social capital stocks (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003: 6). In this view, prior endowments of social capital are not the key constraining factor, as 'soft technologies' on an organizational level and 'institutional entrepreneurship' can build new stocks of social capital or change existing stocks (Evans, 1996: 1124). For Evans, the critical question under this 'constructability view' is how existing endowments of social capital can be 'scaled up' to increase the efficiency of solidarity ties and societal action. Supporters of this view consider both the state and civil society as two main actors capable of supporting this 'scaling-up' process (Fox, 1996). Both views are not completely opposed, as the discussion is more subtle and handles the relative importance of prior 'endowments' on the one hand and the facilitating 'institutional settings' on the other hand.

This helps us to sharpen our analysis of external development interventions. It puts the process of 'institutional syncretism' (Galvan, 2007) at the heart of the debate. Institutions can be defined in terms of layered social structures (organization, networks, etc.), the norms (or 'rules of the game') that govern these structures, and underlying cultural markers (social identities) (Bastiaensen *et al*., 2002: 10, 2005: 980). Galvan (2007: 62–63) defines institutional syncretism as 'the creative recombination of institutional elements (organizational structures, rules, habits and values) derived from more than one socio-cultural origin (e.g. from local "tradition" and globalised "modern" models)'. Whereas

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[4] As already noticed in chapter 6, there seems to be a contradiction in the work of Putnam on this issue. Although he questions the constructability of social capital in his Italian study (1993), his *Bowling Alone* (2000) is a plea to restore stocks of social capital, as a solution to all sorts of societal ills in the US. One of the chapters, *Towards an Agenda for Social Capitalists*, explicitly refers to this objective and presents a concrete programme to achieve it. Furthermore, *Better together: Restoring the American Community*, by Putnam and Feldstein (2003), is even entirely focused on how to implement Putnams ideas and analyses into reality. Part of the problem is possibly the oversimplified use of Putnams ideas by others, yet the contradiction between his theoretical endowment view and his strong practical commitment to influence policy is clearly visible in his works, (see also chapter 1, section 1.2.2 on Putnam's theoretical and practical-ethical concerns).

Galvan explores the capacity of the local population (the 'recipients' of institutional engineering) to recombine these institutional settings from different origins, I will focus more on this capacity from the 'supply side'. As such, the main question is if and how well development agencies can play the role of 'institutional entrepreneur', and introduce new globalised and 'modern' 'institutional settings', which are able to syncretise with prior local 'traditional' social capital endowments.

As noted in the sections above, community associations are considered an excellent and widely used example of a new 'institutional setting' for constructing social capital. From an 'endowment perspective' the assumption is that community associations follow a linear progression: transforming bonding into bridging ties to 'reach out' while also creating linking ties to 'scale up' the impact of social capital endowments (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). These steps are clarified in for example the roles Brown (1991) allocates to organizations in sustainable development: the ability to maintain local effort, the ability to create bridging ties to other organizations and the ability to influence politics through vertical ties. However, when external development interventions promote the creation of such associations they follow a reverse logic, assuming that linking ties with the external intervener will reinforce prior social capital endowments. Through the introduction of linking social capital – the capacity of the local population to leverage global, 'modern' or exogenous 'ideas, information, and resources' (Woolcock, 2002: 26) from an external agent – the aim is to reinforce existing local, 'traditional' or endogenous bonding, bridging and linking social capital endowments. This reveals a clear 'constructability view', identifying the external agency as a social engineer using institutional 'soft technologies' (Evans, 1996: 1124). These 'soft technologies' refer to both the exact content of the induced linking social capital (e.g. financial resources, knowledge transfer, etc.) and the new 'institutional setting' in which these are made accessible (e.g. community associations). When stated this way, linking social capital is central to the 'constructability view'. As identified by Evans (1996), it produces the synergy between local dynamic processes of social capital and the policies of external interveners, including the state and (inter)national civil society. Below, after introducing the Burundian context, I will analyse three case studies of potentially synergetic relationships between social capital endowments and external development agencies.

7.4 Social capital endowments in Burundian society

Burundi does not have a strong associational tradition. First, Burundian society was much more vertically than horizontally stratified, with patron-client ties to a great extent determining the outlook of Burundian social life. (Laely, 1997; Lemarchand, 1970, 1995). A second historical element is the fact that social organization beyond the family has been

minimal in Burundi: Burundians lived scattered on the hills in their isolated homestead or *rugo*, and not in villages (Uvin, 2009: 69–70). Third, most 'formal' associational life that did exist was enforced from above, and left a negative impression: e.g. 'paternalistic' cooperatives under Belgian colonial rule (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993), and the Bagaza regime (2nd Republic, 1976–87) controlling the peasantry through cooperatives and *villagization* (attempt to centralize the rural masses into villages) (Lemarchand, 1995). In addition, the Burundian state has made considerable efforts to destroy social capital not under its control, the most famous case being the muzzling of the Catholic Church during the 1980s (Longman, 2005). Burundi has also been confronted with the 'dark side' (Portes & Landolt, 1996) of ethnically exclusive bonding social capital: several youth groups (*Jeunesse Nationaliste Rwagasore*, *Sans Echec*, *Sans Défaite*) illustrate how civil society groups have adopted a genocidal logic and taken part in ethnic violence (Daley, 2008). In sum, the Burundian people have little experience in voluntary, bridging associational life at grassroots level. Instead, they have generally negative feelings toward the forced (cooperatives, *villagization*), suppressed (conflict with the church) or dark (ethnic youth militias) character of associational or other collective action experiments.

Ethnic violence, and the civil war from 1993 onwards, influenced social capital endowments in two ways. On the one hand, ethnic strife clearly destroyed existing stocks of social capital. The people of Burundi were taken hostage by both sides of the military conflict as 'proxy targets' (Human Rights Watch, 1998). Massive displacement tore apart families and community life: recent statistics indicate that 52 per cent of the total population have at least once fled their homes since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29). The crisis led to a general decline of mutual help and solidarity, and a further segmentation of economic groups (rich/poor) (Uvin, 2009). On the other hand, civil war also transformed social capital. During the civil war, most of Burundi was divided into Hutu and Tutsi 'enclaves' or 'colonies' (Laely, 1997: 695). The capital Bujumbura was divided into Hutu and Tutsi *quartiers*; walking through the wrong district meant certain death. In the countryside, the Tutsi population fled to secure Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, while the Hutu population was forcefully displaced into *camps de regroupement* (Human Rights Watch, 1998). In social capital terms, one could speak of a country of 'weak bridges, strong bonds', in which inter-ethnic bridging interactions were replaced by more inward looking ethnic bonding ties, resulting in an 'us versus them' rhetoric (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 6).

Paradoxically, since 1993, and even more after the Arusha peace agreements of 2000, grassroots associations have mushroomed across Burundian hillsides. The explanation is twofold (Sebudandi & Nduwayo, 2002). On the one hand, civil war pushed the Burundian population even more towards self-help and mutual help, since the capacity of the state to deliver basic public services deteriorated dramatically. On the other hand, the proliferation of associations was externally driven, coinciding with the arrival of various international and multilateral aid agencies, donors, and NGOs. As a general strategy, the international community used bricks-and-mortar projects as a 'vehicle to address social issues, by

strengthening inter-group trust and the capacity of communities to collaborate effectively and manage conflict without resort to violence.' (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 4). As prescribed by social capital literature, bridging multi-ethnic community associations were at the centre of this approach (for an elaborated illustration see Rupiya & Schuller tot Peursum, 2009). The emergence of a vibrant civil society at grassroots level, promoting reconciliation and community development, was therefore seen as a positive evolution as part of a conflict-sensitive development strategy for Burundi (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 7). Also for the three cases, which will be introduced in below, strengthening and the creation of associations was used as a major strategy to increase the capacity for conflict resolution on the studied *collines*.

7.5   The cases : introducing new 'institutional settings'

Three American-based international NGOs introduced livelihood projects under the umbrella of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (LSIC, 2004).[5] The projects were implemented in the north of Burundi between 2005 and 2007. Data and analysis are based on ten months of fieldwork on three *collines* (hillsides, administrative units) in 2006 and 2007.[6] Each of the *collines* presented an illustrative 'typical case' (Patton, 2002: 236) of the different interventions of the three development agencies: Burara (CIBA), Tangara (LITA) and Cumba (CLC).[7] The fieldwork was conducted in cooperation with a team of local research assistants by conducting focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.[8]

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[5] The LSCI was a collaboration of four NGOs. It was present in four northern and central provinces: Gitega, Karuzi, Muyinga, and Kirundo. For practical (time and financial) and methodological (similar context, different intervention strategies) reasons the research focused on three NGO-projects in the northern province of Kirundo and Muyinga.

[6] Clearly, my case study approach does not allow for generalizations for the entire scope of the projects, or for the whole of Burundi or other external interventions.

[7] For the sake of discretion the identity of the different NGOs is not disclosed. I use pseudonyms, which stand for Consortium Inititative Burara (CIBA), Livelihoods Tangara (LITA), and Cumba Livelood Consortium (CLC).

[8] To determine the number of focus groups, I used the theoretical concepts of redundancy and theoretical saturation (Krueger and Casey, 2001). Generally between six to ten people participated in the focus groups, which conforms to the rule of thumb (Patton, 2002: 385). In total, 81 focus groups were conducted with a total of 693 participants. In addition, seventy seven interviews were conducted with key actors (NGO staff, local administration, etc.).

The strengthening of community associations was linked to both the third and fourth specific objective within the logical framework of the Consortium project proposal (see annex 2, 3, and 4; and LSIC, 2004). On the one hand, associations were used to create new economic opportunities via the promotion of agro enterprise development and income generating activities (objective three). On the other hand, associations were used to reduce community conflicts (objective four). For all consortium partners, strengthening associational life, with special attention for the ethnic and gender dimensions, was a strategy to increase local capacity for conflict resolution. In fact, the increase in the number of associations and the number of households participating in associational life have been the only two indicators measuring this specific objective of community conflict reduction (Morinière *et al.*, 2007: 25–26).[9] As such, the Consortium proposal fits well the policy agenda, which urges to combine economic and social reconstruction during post-conflict reconstruction (for general references, see section on social engineering in the introduction, for Burundi see chapter 6, section 6.3). Furthermore, it subscribes the hypothesis that associations are able to function as institutions that combine addressing concrete practical concerns (e.g. income generating activities) with reconciliation of adversial parties (e.g. reduction of community conflicts) through repeated social interaction (see e.g. Pickering, 2006: 79).

It was possible to make a fruitful comparison because all three agencies had different philosophies on the use and utility of community associations. As will become clear, whereas LITA in Tangara was a strong advocate of working with associations, CLC in Cumba was much more critical of the associational approach, and used a more strict household approach. CIBA in Burara stood somewhere in between the two. Since all three collaborated differently with associations, focus groups discussions were adapted towards the different projects. For example, in the LITA case, most associations were producer groups and received similar support from LITA (seed credits). As such, focus groups were held on these associations in general. By contrast, in the CIBA case, associations had substantially different activities and received different support from CIBA: e.g. rice associations, tree nursery associations, anti-erosion associations. Here, road maps were used to analyse the specific evolution and problems of these particular associations. Lastly, since CLC did not work with associations, and a general absence of associations

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[9] This is a clear example of how 'counting associations' is used as a proxy indicator (or a short-cut) to measure all kinds of complex social processes (in this case, local capacity for conflict resolution). It reflects both the demand from donors to present measurable results (numbers and percentages) – as if the number of associations will tell us anything about the capacity for conflict resolution on the three *collines* – and the popularity of Putnams equation of social capital with associations, exactly because it makes social capital a measurable concept in the hands of policy makers.

was observed, in this case, discussion groups focused more on the reasons for this absence.[10]

7.5.1 CIBA on Burara *Colline* : associations as technical subcontractors

From the three development agencies studied, CIBA had the most explicit focus on technical end results. This technical focus substantially guided the constitution of the community associations. In general, associations were used to solve collective action problems linked to specific technical project objectives. For the entire commune, fifty nine associations were set up and supported, of which nine were located on Burara *colline*.

A first illustration of this approach are the anti-erosion associations. Because of deforestation and extensive land use, each season heavy rains cause floods, landslides and further degradation of the soil. Anti-erosion measures (contour lines and hedges) had previously been executed through food-for-work (FFW) and cash-for-work (CFW) programmes, also under the supervision of CIBA and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Burara. After the FFW programme stopped, CIBA preferred to make past efforts sustainable, raising public awareness to create one anti-erosion association for each *colline*, since soil protection was best organized by geographical entities. Although the associations were set up, the population did not accept these changes. Until that time, food aid compensation was the main incentive for the people involved. To their minds, associations represented a continuation of the FFW programme, as they expected to receive the same incentive (food aid) for the same work (contour lines), but delivered through a new channel or 'gateway' (via the association instead of individually). For them, the new associations presented a kind of technical subcontractors, which should be paid according to the delivered services within the scope of the livelihood project, and not as a community association as such. The following quote, in which a man makes the comparison with working on his fields, illustrates how the humanitarian logic of compensation within the food-for-work programme and the need to see a direct personal benefit still determined people's motivation:

> We cannot work without compensation [for the anti-erosion association], because there is no individual benefit. The time I am working on my fields and I have a harvest, then I have a compensation. And if I have to dig contour lines, I want to dig

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[10] Within the Consortium project CLC did work with some associations, but this was in particular the case in the province of Karuzi. However, their overall strategy was to work closely with households.

in my own fields. If they don't give, we have not the force to work. (focus group, 24/04/07, Burara).

People also referred to a project of the World Bank, the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Support Project (PRASAB), as an example of the proper promotion of associations. This nationwide project was based on a grant system. Local associations could submit a grant proposal to a provincial committee to implement agricultural or livestock activities. For example, one association of 45 members, which was explicitly created in function of the PRASAB project, received a grant of 6.600.000 Fbu (6.600 USD) for pig farming and vegetable production as income generating activities. As one of its members, which also had been a member of the anti-erosion association, explained the difference:

> The [anti-erosion] association can only start up again activities, when there are compensations. Today, a lot of people join the associations of PRASAB because they have compensations. There we receive seeds or goats, these associations help us, there is an interest for us in it. (focus group, 12/04/07, Burara).

The situation was even more complex, since there was little or no coordination among the intervening actors. During the fieldwork, other NGOs like Help Channel and Agro-Action Allemande (AAA), did compensate for the anti-erosion works on neighbouring hillsides. But CIBA also made things difficult for itself. While staff tried to motivate the population to implement anti-erosion activities unpaid within an associational logic, other staff paid the wages of the casual workers repairing the roads. Thus, when it became clear that food compensation would not follow, most of the anti-erosion associations stopped with their activities and ceased to exist.

A second type of associations facilitated the implementation of the rice program in the *Muhembuzi* wetland. First, water user committees were established to maintain the irrigation system. Second, these committees were transformed into rice farmer groups: to ease the technical support and to structure the rice program. Third, all sixty nine rice farmer groups were grouped into a single rice cooperative, to ease commercialisation of the rice production, and improve market access. These stages clearly illustrate the assumed linear progression of community associations as mentioned in the theoretical section: bonding social capital (the ability to maintain local efforts in the management of the irrigation system) is complemented by bridging capital (the ability to create bridges and unite all rice farmers in the wetland) to create linking social capital (the ability to influence the rice market through the rice cooperative). However, also in this case, associations functioned as new 'aid gateways'. On the one hand, people accepted the new social infrastructure of water user committees, rice farmer groups and the cooperative because CIBA promised to buy up the rice production during project years. On the other hand, community associations served as temporary intermediaries to transfer knowledge, skills, and technology. As a member of a rice farmer group argued:

The associations were born for the aid of CIBA. Now we have the knowledge of modern agriculture. If the aid will stop, we will use this knowledge for our own fields, but the associations will stop existing' (focus group, 20/04/07, Burara).

And indeed, when I interviewed one of the technicians of ISABU (*Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Burundi* – a state agency), responsible for the follow up of the rice programme, again in May 2008 (approximately a half year after the end of the CIBA project), the majority of the rice farmer groups had ceased to exist (personal communication, ISABU technician, May 2008).

A third and final example is that of tree nursery associations. Together with the integration of the contour lines, reforestation of the hillsides was key to preventing further erosion and degradation of the soil. Tree nursery associations were created to produce the plants necessary to achieve these goals. It is important to mention these tree nursery associations because the external development agency had a formal contract with the local associations. All tree associations signed a contract with CIBA. It stipulated the required production of plants for each year and the agreed purchasing price (15 Fbu / plant). Such a formal procedure has the positive potential of creating a more balanced relationship between two equal actors, with both rights and duties stipulated in the contract; but it also has the negative potential of linking the *raison d'être* of the local community association too closely to the project. Also in this case, the associations' goals did not exceed the project boundaries: activities considerably decreased or stopped once the 'contract' was implemented and both parties had been satisfied. As one member comments:

CIBA had as an objective to protect the hills of Busoni, and especially Burara; they achieved this goal, because all activities are realised and the associations which have executed these activities all have received a compensation. (focus group, 03/05/07, Burara).

The perception of associations as 'technical subcontractors' within the timeframe of the CIBA project was perhaps most clear in the case of these tree nursery associations, because the reimbursement for services provided was effectively formalized in a signed contract.

In all three cases, CIBA used associations in specific situations where collective action problems arose, and where the social capital literature confirms their usefulness: natural resource management – the maintenance of the irrigation system in the wetland, and anti-erosion and reforestation measures on the hillsides (e.g. Krishna & Uphoff, 1999; Pretty & Ward, 2001); and the commercialisation and marketing of agricultural production – the rice program in the wetland (e.g. Bebbington & Carroll, 2000; Sorensen, 2000). However, these associations never merged with existing social capital endowments. Most associations stayed exogenous or 'alien' institutional settings, only having a reason for existence within the scope of the CIBA project.

To a great extent, this lack of institutional syncretism (cf. Galvan, 2007) can be explained by the fact that the associations, as new institutional settings, were designed according to external technological end results, rather than to local social capital endowments. In all three cases, their constitution and composition was based on technical criteria. For example, in the wetland, farmers were asked to form groups of 30 people with plots beside each other: these criteria of proximity and group size were not based on prior social organization in the wetland, but on maintaining the newly introduced irrigation system. The same holds true for the anti-erosion association: the fact that its scope coincides with the boundaries of Burara hillside is not a social but a geographical demarcation, based on the technical feasibility of the anti-erosion measures. In the case of the three nursery associations, it was the technical capacity of individual farmers that was a critical factor in bringing people together. None of these criteria, however, guarantee the existence of a 'social basis' to maintain this technical collaboration among community members. Because of their close connection to technical end results, the newly created community associations were initially perceived as new 'aid gateways'; i.e. channels for the development agency to achieve technical project goals or for the local population to access support from the external agency.

However, concerning the particular situation of post-conflict reconstruction, the associations did succeed in creating bridging ties between the different ethnic groups. The NGO kept lists indicating the multi-ethnic and gendered character of both the associations and their committees. In all associations both Hutu and Tutsi were represented. Some associations even had Twa members, an often forgotten and extremely deprived ethnic minority in the past. But the creation of bridging associations presented a potentially 'false sense' of inclusiveness. The Busoni community has a segregated ethnic outlook: most Tutsi live in the centre, whereas most Hutu live in the surrounding hillsides. Because of this clear geographical segregation, and the presence of a large group of Tutsi in the centre, ethnicity still played a key role (in comparison to the other studied hills). As a consequence, most associations were Tutsi (centre) or Hutu (hills) dominated. Members openly indicated that they searched some extra Tutsi or Hutu to make their association multi-ethnic because CIBA asked for it. They called them Hutu or Tutsi *figurants* (or 'bit players'). Although this did not result in exclusion or ethnic tensions within associations, it does indicate that their multi-ethnic character was to some extent artificial, in order to meet CIBA criteria, and was not representative for the actual situation.

7.5.2 LITA on Tangara *Colline*: associations of the elite

LITA, compared to both other development agencies, used the most associational approach. LITA favours participatory processes, rather than (technical) end results. Favouring the associational approach, they made associations the main beneficiaries of

this new livelihood project. Participation in the project was therefore conditional on associational membership. This conditionality resulted in a new boost of associations on Tangara *colline*:

> Thereafter LITA has come to sensitize the population that they will ownly help associations, by distributing seed and even goats. On that moment, that was the motivation to become a member. Since that moment associations have multiplied. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

For the entire province of Muyinga, the project supported 176 community associations, of which 26 were present on Tangara *colline*.

By contrast to CIBA, LITA used a relatively open-ended approach for the creation and development of community associations. Their use was not linked to specific technical end results, and no geographical and/or technical criteria defined membership. LITA only required the associations to be agricultural, multi-ethnic and formalized (registration, statutes, etc.). Apart from these requirements, all community members could create or join an association and every association could define their own goals and activities. To motivate the population, LITA offered seed credits to the associations and constructed hangars as storage facilities for their harvests. For each hangar, a committee was made responsible for monitoring both the seed credits and the storage facilities.

Unlike CIBA's approach, this helped associations to integrate into community social life. The situation in Tangara shows how an exogenous approach can merge with local dynamic processes of social capital. At the same time, however, the LITA case demonstrates that this does not necessarily lead to better results. The reason was that associations, as new institutional settings, did not develop into 'building blocks' of bridging social capital. Instead, they reproduced locally 'unresponsive' linking capital (Putnam, 2004: 669), manifest in personalistic patron-client ties. This began with the problem of elite capture.

Elite capture of community associations had some previous history on Tangara *colline*. People explicitly referred to the breaking up of the 'mother of all associations' *Twiyungwe* to explain where and when this problem began with associations. The *Twiyungwe* association started in an IDP site near Rugari in Muyinga province, to which Tutsi from Tangara fled after the 1993 violence. When the security situation improved, these Tutsi returned to a resettlement camp in Tangara, and brought with them their association. At that time, it was the only association in Tangara colline, and it was supported by WFP. The association was subsequently audited and found to be mismanaged, before the president disappeared with the association's funds. Instead of staying unified in one association, several members of the committee of *Twiyungwe*, which belonged to the local elite, took advantage of the situation and split to form their own association, motivated by a possible collaboration with WFP. The 'associational logic' to access aid was therefore already understood by the local elite. With the arrival of LITA's livelihood project, access

to project benefits was made conditional on membership in associations. As such, the local elite applied the same 'associational logic', many of them becoming the president of their own newly created association to access external aid, this time not from WFP but from LITA. As a focus group participant summarized the logic behind the splitting and multiplication of associations:

> When there was the first association [*Twiyungwe*], people saw the aid that WFP gave. The people were motivated. But the president consumed all aid, and the committee members [*les comitards*] created their own associations to profit. After that, LITA came to sensitize that they will only work with associations. Because of this aid [of LITA] people were even more motivated, and the problems with the presidents got even worse. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

In the case of the LITA project, most of the associations were captured by *le club d'hangar* or 'the committee of the storehouse': a small group of local petty traders and members of the local administration under the leadership of the *chef de colline*. This committee centralised the control and supervision of project activities, in particular all LITA seed credits that were channelled through the storehouse. The powerful intermediary role of the club was based on the fact that committee members played two different roles: they not only distributed the seed credits among the associations but also received seed credits as presidents of their own associations. Therefore, the local elite occupied most leadership positions in both the associations and the storehouse committee. How this associational logic of the elite to access project benefits was enmeshed in local politics and power struggles was nicely illustrated with what happened to the association of the *chef de sous-colline* of Kivoga after he was not reelected in the 2005 elections? As one of the members explained:

> I became member of the association in 2003, after the sensitization of LITA. I've contributed 1000 Fbu as contribution [member fee], but until now we haven't seen anything of our money. Next week we will complain to the committee. We don't trust the president anymore. If the committee doesn't listen to us, we think to go to the *commune*. It was the president himself who created the association. In 2003 he was still *chef de sous-colline* [Frodebu], but he lost the elections. After that the association hasn't received a lot of aid from LITA because the new *chef de sous-colline* [CNDD-FDD] has also created an association and now it's this association that gets a lot. (focus group, 19/03/07, Tangara).

This problem of elite capture resulted into two main consequences. First of all, most associations had internal problems of mismanagement. The internal democratic character of the associations was minimal: presidents rarely accepted criticism, there were no information meetings, members were not informed about the financial situation, and presidents made financial transactions without any control. There were many reports of corruption and embezzlement of project funds, in addition to the embezzlement of the

collective harvest and the financial capital of the associations (normally deposited with COOPEC, a rural bank), and the complaint by ordinary members that their association became simply a vehicle for the president and his friends to access cheaper daily labour to prepare their fields. During a focus group with members of associations, one of them nicely listed the most widespread internal problems:

> The first problem is the exploitation of the members by the committee [of the association], and we can't oppose the president. The second problem is the aid, of which a large part goes to the committee. The third problem is the lack of benefits in the association. It's impossible that we always go and work for an association without something to take home. The fourth problem is the fact that the presidents embezzle the harvests or the goods of the association. You can't continue working for the committee without taking something home. (focus group, 31/05/07, Tangara).

The question then is: why ordinary members still accepted these associations? Some associations ceased to exist, but most carried on. The reasoning of the members reflected the 'pareto improvement' argument of Platteau (2004) in his work on elite capture in West-Africa. They preferred the unfair practices within their associations while still receiving some aid, rather than quitting the associations and losing all hope: as membership of the association still yielded a pareto improvement (ibid.: 227). Both parties were also dependent upon each other: the elite needed farmers to populate their associations, farmers needed a member of the elite with links to *le club d'hangar*. This interdependency between elite members and the population, in order to acces project benefits, underpinned the creation of many associations, and according to its members, it will also mark the end of many associations when project benefits will dry up:

> Even if they are busy with stealing, we wait for the day which brings help of LITA. If LITA leaves, we drop it. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

> Even now some members of the association have no confidence [in the committee and the president], but they persist because they still hope for aid; so if there is no more aid, if there is at least no promise for aid, if there is no sensitization, everything will stop. (focus group, 21/06/07, Tangara).

> The associations are only here because the *comité d'hangar* [responsible for the seed credits for the associations] and the presidents had a large profit. The ordinary members were happy when they got a small benefit. When LITA leaves, the profit for the presidents is finished, so the associations are finished. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

> If LITA stops with assisting, the profit for the presidents is gone and also for the ordinary members it is gone. They no longer need us to enrich themselves and we

can't hope anymore that we will receive something. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

A second consequence of the elite capturing the community associations, was its impact on the broader community. The associations not only created internal problems, but also pitted different groups against each other within the community. Associations worked exclusively rather than inclusively. First, their unparalleled splitting and multiplication created jealousy and tensions between the associations. Membership was kept to a minimum in order to maximise profits. A teacher of the local primary school said:

> Mostly, the creation of associations is done secretly, not everyone can join. If you're not a friend of the creator [of the association], you can't know an association has been created, and if you ask thereafter to join, he will ask a high contribution. Then they are sure that other people will not come to their association and that the benefits are for a small group of people. (interview teacher, 16/03/2007, Tangara)

As a consequence, new associations popped up at regular intervals, increasing competition between them to access external aid. In this respect, the situation in Tangara reflects an inverse evolution – the opposite – of the assumed linear progression of community associations. Instead of opening up to new members or seeking synergy with other associations (transforming bonding into bridging social capital), the multiplication of associations further fragmented the social arena in Tangara commune (creating more of the same bonding social capital). Second, what was referred to as the 'secret' of *le club d'hangar* caused a lot of anger. One man created his own association, became president, but invented a list of members. With good contacts with *le club d'hangar* and some bribes, this 'fake' association was put on the list to receive a seed credit from LITA:

> A lot of associations are created by the rich, who say that they have an association with for example 25 members or more, but they are alone and they get all aid from LITA (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

> There are also associations who don't exist. There is the president and he puts the names of his wife and children and other names that don't exist. (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

> A lot of presidents are in the *comité d'hangar* or have friends there. It are the presidents without members. That way they receive many sacks [of seeds] and there are no sacks left for the real associations. This is mainly the case for beans and groundnut, there is much profit (focus group, 04/06/07, Tangara).

An example of such a 'fake' association was Kazoya Neza, of which Rachid was the president (see also chapter 5, section 5.6.3. on his function as middleman). As a local

petty trader he belonged to the local elite, but he also had good contacts with the *chef de colline* as they were both Muslim, and because Rachid rallied for the CNDD-FDD party. Therefore, he belonged to the *club d'hangar* (although he was not a formal member of the *comité d'hangar*) and accessed project benefits through his proper association. Another example was Terimbezi, illustrating the individual/familial character of many associations: it was created by a man and a family member (who was also *conseil collinaire* of the *chef de colline*), with the names of still other family members (wife, daughter, …) as members of the association. Also one of the daughters of the *chef de colline* was president of her personal association, of which a list of members was hard to find (although the association had official papers, as asked by LITA).

This *commerce* in associations created tensions between the so-called 'real' and 'false' associations. Although they never blamed their own associations, most interviewed presidents of associations (in particular those without connections with the *chef de colline*) spontaneously mentioned this conflict between 'real' and 'false' associations, others gave particular examples (although it was not always easy to check all these examples). Also the staff of LITA was aware of these problems, but for them it was of course impossible to check for each association if the list of members matched with physical persons on the *colline*. At the very least it became clear that the use of associations to access project benefits created tensions and insinuations between these constantly multiplying associations, false or not.

Lastly, a vast majority of poor people who simply could not afford to pay the membership fees or were not 'invited' by the elite to join an association felt excluded from the LITA project, as they received no benefits at all. In the perception of these people, the associational strategy of LITA deprived them of fair and equal development opportunities. For them it was clear that if LITA wanted to include everybody, this could not be achieved via associations.

In sum, community associations did succeed in syncretising with local endowments of social capital. Unfortunately, they reproduced 'unresponsive' linking social capital (Putnam, 2004: 669; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). On the one hand, the internal organization of many associations mirrored existing endowments of vertical relations between patrons (president/committee) and clients (ordinary members), resulting in mismanagement and a lack of accountability and participatory decision-making processes. On the other hand, associations reproduced existing power structures within the community, and intensified feelings of exclusion, because of elite capture.

This in turn questions the ethnic focus when promoting *bridging* community associations. As the Burundian conflict is analysed as an ethnic conflict, most post-conflict activities focus on reconciling both ethnic groups. However, after consulting members of these associations in Tangara, they immediately mentioned the fact that ethnic groups and women were both represented; they were even more proud that Twa

were also members of their association (cf. CIBA in Burara). They knew how external actors analysed 'their' conflict, and so presented this discourse automatically. Still, ethnic tensions never caused problems in the associations, and in this way they succeeded in creating bridging capital.

However, the associations did create exclusion. Access to project funds through community associations was a privilege of the local elite, while the vast majority of the community was excluded from membership. This exclusionary governance of associations, resulted in a concrete example of structural violence, as discriminatory access deprived people from new opportunities to enhance their situation. This triggered tensions within the community, but not along ethnic lines.[11] The LITA case therefore illustrates how a tailored focus on multi-ethnic associations may create a 'false sense' of inclusiveness on the ground (the multi-ethnic and bridging character of the associations). It may also neglect or reproduce a more general, deep-seated problem of social exclusion (the exclusionary and 'unresponsive' linking character of the associations). This is because it produced economic (or class), rather than ethnic, exclusion.

7.5.3   CLC on Cumba *Colline* – a hillside without associations

CLC used a strict household approach for the livelihood project. Three reasons explain why. First, CLC's intervention strategy and philosophy focuses on processes of individual change, rather than social processes (LITA) or technical opportunities (CIBA). So, whereas CIBA chose specific groups as end beneficiaries according to geographical and/or technical criteria, and LITA used associational membership as an explicit precondition, CLC identified their beneficiaries along criteria of vulnerability (orphans, widows, people living with HIV/AIDS, etc.). Lastly, CLC had previously negative experiences with associations, before this livelihood project started, and questioned the appropriateness of this strategy to reach the population. This argument is expressed in the following quote from the project officer (interview, 29/05/2007, Muyinga):

> The philosophy of the genesis of these associations is to receive aid. If an NGO arrives to distribute aid, the people quickly get organized to receive this aid. But if the NGO and the donors have cut off funds, the people have divided the aid up among each other. Burundians have an individual psychology, not an associational one. They want to work individually. These are opportunistic associations and not associative [associations].

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[11] An illustrative example on this point was the fact that both the current (CNDD-FDD party and Hutu) and former (Uprona party and Tutsi) *chef de collines* were members of *le club d'hangar* and controlled much of the project benefits together.

The CLC intervention gave us the opportunity to observe what happened when no external agency was raising awareness and motivating the population to create new associations. As might be expected, I found almost no associations in Cumba. In Burara (CIBA) and even more in Tangara (LITA) the main incentive to create new associations was the project aid accessed through these associations. The CLC intervention confirms this general observation by turning the argument upside down: precisely because the external intervention did not channel project aid through associations, associations were almost non-existent on Cumba *colline*. According to the local population, the *raison d'être* of associations is to receive aid. As one man explained: 'There are not many associations because even the associations that exist did not succeed once to get help from a NGO. That's why people abandon their associations and no new associations are created' (focus group, 25/05/2007, CLC project, Cumba). People also explicitly referred to the importance of patrons who could act as gatekeepers: there was a lack of people willing to introduce the associations to external agencies in order to receive aid. As there was no incentive for the elite to interfere with the creation of associations, the local elite was much less involved in associational life and no elite capture was mentioned by the population. By contrast, the population of Cumba blamed the local administration for a lack of initiative because they did not approach NGOs to gain support for associations.

As such, the CLC intervention illustrates that reasons, incentives and motivations to create associations on Cumba *colline* became structurally adapted to the presence of external assistance. In fact, CLC was criticized because they did not work through associations, like all other international organizations. This reasoning was based on various experiences. Firstly, CLC had worked with associations in the past, and the population urgently asked the organization to start again with supporting associations. However, this 'opportunistic' intention to access project aid through associations was exactly the reason why CLC stopped their support. Secondly, the population compared their situation with other hillsides: 'Here we don't get [aid]. We hear that associations on other hillsides are supported and get aid. Why don't the NGOs come to here to support the associations? If they come, a lot of associations will originate' (focus group, 25/05/2007, CLC project, Cumba). Lastly, as in Burara, people compared the CLC project with the nationwide PRASAB project of the World Bank that was in its initial phase in Cumba. For the population, this was a 'promising' project, as associations would be linked to a concrete incentive (in particular livestock), so creating the association was clearly worthwhile. For the population of Cumba it was ultimately clear that no associations would grow without external interest; this was confirmed by the small number of 'only' three associations on Cumba *colline*.

The Cumba case illustrates the long-term effects of the general policy of external actors in Burundi to support the creation of associations. The externally driven character of the proliferation of associations was already mentioned (Sebudandi & Nduwayo, 2002). As a

consequence, the perception of associations as 'gateways' to aid was widespread on Burundian hillsides, and points to the general vulnerability of externally driven associations, reducing the incentive to create associations to the availability of external funds. In the long-term this can reduce local dynamics of social organization. (Crowley *et al.*, 2005: 15). It reflects a situation in which sustained exposure to exogenous new 'institutional settings' (external agencies working through associations) durably changes endogenous local dynamics of social capital building. In contrast with the LITA project, where associations became too embedded in local patron-client networks, the situation on Cumba *colline* illustrates the long-term effects of the other extreme of institutional syncretism, i.e. the wholesale adoption of local social organization towards external incentives.

7.6 Conclusions

All three case studies highlight different problems of the constructability of social capital. First, CIBA illustrates how an exogenous process of social capital building can remain exogenous. A 'strong' social engineering approach led to 'alien' associations: externally introduced 'institutional settings' which never merged with locally produced social capital endowments. This enables us to redefine the 'participation orthodoxy' in social capital terms: that it is no longer 'sufficient to permit "them" to participate in "our" projects' as our projects are not going to change their social capital endowments (McGee quoted in Crowley *et al.*, 2005: 16). With its focus on technical end results, CIBA gave the local population few opportunities to adapt their social life to the newly introduced institutional settings. The associations never disassociated from the project, functioning as technical subcontractors.

Second, LITA illustrates how an exogenous process of social capital building *can* merge with endogenous social capital endowments; but this does not automatically mean positive effects: their 'soft' social engineering approach (bottom-up and open-ended) led to 'uncivic' associations, as they adapted towards locally produced 'unresponsive' forms of linking capital. Because of LITA's soft approach, room was left for the local population to merge the new institutional setting of the associations with local norms and rules of social organization. Because of elite capture, the associations became too embedded in existing vertical patron-client ties, a process that was not appreciated by the local population. In contrast to the CIBA case, this conclusion highlights the limitations of participatory approaches, as they often underestimate the 'endogenous community imperfections' (Platteau & Abraham, 2002), and overestimate the homogeneity of communities (Williams, 2004). This also highlights the 'downside' (Portes & Landolt, 1996) of social capital. Most policy has been influenced by a romanticized idea of social

capital, only stressing its positive side. This obscures how development agencies are often confronted with the negative effects of social capital, in this case the constraining and 'unresponsive' vertical patron-client ties, restricting the positive work of the newly introduced associations.

Finally, CLC demonstrates how endogenous social capital endowments have the potential of being adapted in the long-term towards exogenous processes of social capital building. This shows that a policy of external support to creating organizations for the poor affected the broader environment and diminished the local dynamic for the poor to organize themselves (Crowley *et al*., 2005: 17).

Although problematic, the three cases support the constructability view, warning not to underestimate long-term effects of external interventions on existing social capital. In particular, if one accepts that development projects are always about 'social engineering', the LITA and CIBA cases indicate that the real challenge lies in developing new 'institutional settings' that are 'soft' enough to adapt to prior social capital endowments, but 'strong' enough to change or reinforce these endowments to bring positive results. This puts institutional syncretism at the centre of the debate on social capital building. As Galvan (2007: 70) explains: 'institutional syncretism, […], is neither the wholesale adoption of externally derived, "modern" rules and norms, nor the unreflexive reproduction of existing local or "traditional" regularised habits and practices'. In sum, the task is to avoid both the absence (cf. the CIBA case) and 'excess' (cf. the LITA case) of institutional syncretism (Galvan, 2007: 70). Departing from Galvan, this article focused more on the supply side: the new 'institutional settings' offered by the development agencies. This leads to practical conclusions for the design of new institutional settings.

First, my findings support the argument that external interventions confuse the development of associations, by abruptly inducing a high stock of linking social capital, injecting new resources, ideas and information to the association (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). This highlights the importance of the 'right' tangible incentives and the functioning of 'incentivised voluntarism' (Gillinson, 2004: 6). All three cases have at least one issue in common: community associations were primarily perceived as 'gateways' to aid. Because of external incentives people no longer joined the associations voluntarily. Their voluntarism was incentivised, as the project aid redirected members' motivations. This explains: a) the subcontracting nature of the associations in the case of CIBA; b) why the elite captured the associations in the LITA project; and c) the absence of community associations in the case of CLC. The CIBA case further illustrates the need for a streamlined approach of incentives, both in time (transition from a food-for-work to a developmental logic) and between different actors (some give, others don't). The cases generally indicate that the incentive should be designed as an initiator but not as the most important motivator of participants' behaviour; the external incentive has to be substituted

by an internal incentive (which is preferably more attractive). It seems that development agencies need to tailor their incentives, adapting them to the local situation. At present, they are driven more by the need to disburse funds and distribute resources, rather than focusing on the local dynamics of associational life, i.e. they need to act 'coherent' to donor logics more than to the needs on the ground (cf. de Sardan, 2005: 141).

Second, the case studies seem to confirm earlier findings which question the reverse logic inherent in the 'social engineering' approach of external interventions, that is, the 'external' constructability of social capital, or the assumption that linkages with the external intervener are capable of building 'bonds and bridges' within communities. (Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). In the CIBA and LITA cases, the impact of the external interventions turned negative because the associations lacked sufficient bonding and bridging social capital endowments to handle the externally induced linking social capital. In the CIBA case, membership was primarily based on external technical criteria, which did not guarantee that there was an effective 'social basis' from which this technical collaboration between farmers could be build. Similarly, in the LITA case, associations were not externalizations of existing social organization, but predominantly opportunity coalitions (between the elite and farmers) to access resources. As explained above, on the supply side, the content and phasing of the external incentive (linking capital) will be an important factor, but the CIBA and LITA cases also question the demand side (social capital endowments): is the presence of locally accepted, appropriated and supported social organization not a prerequisite for an external intervention to be successful? At least it makes more explicit the difference between 'strengthening' and 'building' social structure, or more concretely, between 'self-organisations of the poor' and 'externally created or supported organizations of the poor' (Crowley *et al.*, 2005). It moderates the expectations *vis-à-vis* external interventions: are they able to 'create', or should we be more modest, and assume that they can only 'upgrade' existing social structure? To a great extent, this distinction is a false one, since there is no such society that is free of social structure, and therefore every intervention will upgrade (or downgrade) what was already there. But it does highlight that the choice of what particular local social structures should be upgraded is a crucial one. This engenders a contextual view, since it assumes that there is only a potential match when (i) the proper social capital endowments are 'triggered' by (ii) an external incentive which is tailored and adapted to the particular functioning of these endowments and the context in which they inhere.

Which brings me to a third conclusion. If social capital cannot be built from zero, correct knowledge of prior social capital endowments is priority number one to design new 'institutional settings'. One needs to know which endowments should be 'triggered'. The brief historical summary in section four explained the lack of a strong associational tradition in this society. It highlighted how: a) patron-client ties play an important role; b)

social organization is weak beyond the family; and c) the civil war shattered social cohesion and organization. In addition to the the mechanism of 'incentivized voluntarism', and the more contextual and organizational factors influencing the use of associations for each NGO-project, such a broader historical view further enabled us to better understand why associations did not evolve as expected. This is not to say that associations, as new 'institutional settings', cannot become a promising element in the further development of Burundian society, as this would follow a radical 'endowment' view, in which societies are rigid and can only change over longer periods of time. Based on my own experiences when working in Bujumbura Rural with the *Organisation d'Appui à l'Autopromotion* (OAP), I believe associations are not a dead-end in Burundi (see Beuret & Fino, 2009). From 1992 onwards OAP has supported the population in Bujumbura Rural, and associations have since then been used to achieve this objective of *autopromotion*. Because of the sustained efforts of OAP, but also because of the proximity of Bujumbura and its economic opportunities (offering a market for products), a more 'entreprenuerial' attitude has been (re-)installed in these areas, which today gives rise to sustainable local associations. Another example are the long-standing efforts of INADES to organize the coffee farmers (Kimonyo & Ntiranyibagira, 2007). Both examples illustrate that associations have potential in Burundi, but that success depends upon many different contextual factors and variables, of which regional integration (close to Bujumbura), and particular crop production (coffee) are only two. In sum, it demands correct knowledge of existing social organization, and in particular, the multiplicity of contextual factors influencing it.

Finally, can we conclude that community associations were the right 'idea' at the right time for post-conflict Burundi? The general idea of multi-ethnic bridging associations sheds some light on the matter. After conflict, ethnic bonding social capital should be transformed into multi-ethnic bridging social capital, hence the importance of multi-ethnic associations. But this led to the creation of a 'false sense' of inclusiveness. In the case of CIBA, the multi-ethnic character of the newly created associations was unrelated to the actual ethnically segregated and sometimes tense situation in the community. In the LITA case, this 'false sense' of inclusiveness even worked as a smokescreen, as these multi-ethnic associations reproduced the more fundamental problem of 'unresponsive' linking social capital, resulting in economic instead of ethnic exclusion.

This echoes the more general critique on community associations as 'universal blueprints' to create social capital (e.g. Molenaers, 2003). In the particular case of post-conflict reconstruction, bridging community associations are indeed a global and 'modern' idea, which has to be framed within the broader 'liberal peace' model. The goal of this model, also applied in Burundi, is the rapid modernization of societies through the construction of new and liberal institutions. (Daley, 2008: 34). Uvin (2005) argues that the

introduction of such institutions on a national level in Burundi has installed a liberal-democratic facade, without substance or content, as the existing system and power structures undermine the imported system from the inside out. The LITA case describes exactly the same process on a micro scale, with a disconnection between the structural and cognitive components of social capital (Molenaers, 2003: 114). Although a multitude of bridging community associations were present (structural component, as a liberal-democratic 'facade'), these were disconnected from their horizontality and embedded trust (cognitive component), and adjusted towards the existing 'system' of vertical power relations. As such, the idea of bridging associations in the Burundian context presents us with a micro-manifestation of one of the main shortcomings of this 'liberal peace' model; that is, its incapacity and unwillingness to enter into dialogue and syncretise with local institutional settings, while underestimating the strength of the latter, for better or worse.

Chapter 8

The solidarity chain: post-conflict reconstruction and social capital building on three Burundian hillsides[1]

Rebuilding social capital stocks after conflict has become an essential component of post-conflict reconstruction activities. At the community level this policy is translated into projects that combine economic recovery with reinforcing social cohesion through small-scale participatory 'bottom-up' projects. This article presents an ethnographic examination of the 'solidarity chain' as an example of this approach. It concerns a livestock credit rotating scheme, which combined livestock restocking with the promotion of social cohesion on Burundian hillsides after more than 10 years of civil war. Our main findings are twofold. First, it is argued that the distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital proves a useful, analytical framework to assess the impact of such activities on social community cohesion. In particular, the findings show how a combination of 'weak' bonding and 'unresponsive' linking social capital accounts for the solidarity chain's failure to nurture more inclusive bridging social capital. Second, the

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*general assumption that post-conflict reconstruction policy should focus on
the transformation of exclusive bonding into inclusive bridging social capital
is nuanced and refined: the findings present micro-empirical insights
reaffirming the need to focus also on both the 'deficiency' and 'dark side' of
social capital in post-conflict situations.*

8.1 Introduction

Broadly speaking, 'social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively'. (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000: 226). In the early 1990s, the social capital debate focused on development, democracy and civil society; but it has recently been integrated into research on violence, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction research and policy (e.g. Barron *et al.*, 2004; Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b; Goodhand *et al.*, 2000; Goodhand, 2006; Morfit, 2002; Pickering, 2006; Richards *et al.*, 2004; Varshney, 2001). It is assumed that conflict damages and transforms a nation's social capital, and as such, recovery from conflict demands the reconstruction, not only of a nation's infrastructure, but also of its social fabric (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a). This social capital argument has been used by the World Bank and other international development corporations to justify 'social engineering' operations, alongside physical reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts after conflict (Englebert, 2001: 16-17). Thus, external interventions are requested to build social capital, as it serves a double objective in post-conflict situations: economic recovery through poverty reduction and peace-building through strengthening social cohesion. Central in this social capital approach are projects on the community level that rebuild trust and social cohesion through small-scale participatory 'bottom-up' projects (Moser & Shrader, 1999:11).

In this article we examine the solidarity chain as an illustration of such activities. It is a livestock rotating credit scheme, designed to link livestock restocking (economic recovery) with the restoration of trust and social cohesion (social recovery) in Burundian rural communities after 10 years of civil and ethnic strife. The findings are based on ethnographic case studies of three *collines* (hillsides – administrative unit) in northern Burundi, where the solidarity chain was implemented as one of the main activities in the scope of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC).

The article questions the ease with which post-conflict reconstruction activities are requested to build new stocks of social capital in post-conflict situations. It is argued that the literature referring to the bonding, bridging and linking dimensions of social capital is useful as an analytical framework to analyse and assess the effectiveness of such activities. Only a close analysis, placing social capital 'in context' and accepting its 'multi-dimensional' nature, can deliver a realistic appraisal of social capital building.

Second, the findings question the general assumption that post-conflict reconstruction policy should focus on transforming exclusive bonding social capital into inclusive bridging social capital. In the Burundi case this assumption signifies a transformation of ethnic bonding into multi-ethnic bridging social networks. Yet the case studies present micro-empirical insights that suggest i) a fundamental or general lack of bonding social capital and ii) the presence of 'unresponsive' or 'exploitative' linking social capital (Putnam, 2004; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008) acting as a conflict trigger.

The section following the introduction introduces our theoretical framework, applying the bonding/bridging/linking social capital distinction to conflict settings. In the second section we briefly introduce the research context and methodology. The third section introduces the solidarity chain as our case study. In the next two sections a detailed analysis of the solidarity chain and the problems encountered will be presented. It will be argued that a combination of 'weak' bonding ties and 'unresponsive' linking ties accounts for the disappointing social impact of the solidarity chain. Finally, we draw both theoretical and policy conclusions.

8.2 Social capital and post-conflict reconstruction – bonds, bridges and linkages

8.2.1 Analytical framework: bonding, bridging and linking social capital

The distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital has pushed the analysis of social capital by questioning how these social networks 'differ from one another in ways that are relevant to their consequences' (Putnam, 2004: 668-69). Gittel & Vidal (1998) define bonding social capital as relations between people who see themselves as being similar. Instead, bridging social capital refers to relations between people who are not alike in terms of age, gender, class, ethnic group, religion or geographical area. Kinship, ethnic and close friendship relations and relationships with neighbours are typical examples of bonding social capital. Bridging social capital cuts across these social gaps. Szreter & Woolcock (2004) define linking social capital as a subtype of bridging social capital, as it connects people across explicit vertical power differentials in society. As such, the key function of linking social capital is the capacity to leverage resources, information and ideas from formal institutions such as bankers, law enforcement officers, social workers, health care providers, NGO officials, politicians and public administration in general (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock, 2002).

All three forms of social capital have their downsides (Portes & Landolt, 1996). Strong bonding ties can be a burden in the form of obligations and commitments upon community members. These hinder social mobility and can produce exclusionary forms of social capital in terms of gender, ethnic group, religion, caste and so on (Colleta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b). Although bridging ties have the potential to be more inclusive, they may still have antisocial outcomes, as illustrated by drug cartels (Rubio, 1997). Linking social capital also features 'responsive' and 'unresponsive' dimensions (Putnam, 2004). Whereas the 'responsive' form can for example lead towards trusting ties between communities and their representatives, the 'unresponsive' form leads towards nepotism, corruption and oppression (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008).

This theoretical framework produces some broad arguments. First, it argues that different *combinations* of social capital dimensions explain the diverse range of outcomes. Second, these combinations are dynamic as they vary by context and over time. Third, these combinations can produce both positive and negative outcomes. As such, the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital points to the *multi-dimensional* and *contextual* character of social capital (De Silva *et al.*, 2007; Szreter, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

8.2.2   Bonds, bridges, linkages and conflict: main arguments

Social capital scholarship identifies a threefold connection between conflict and social capital. First, the basic assumption is that violent conflict destroys social capital. War and conflict zones are defined as 'zones of social capital deficiency', as trust and social cohesion are eroded in such circumstances (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000: 390). Second, conflict transforms social capital. Conflict is identified with weak bridging and linking, and strong bonding social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000a, 2000b). In particular, it is assumed that conflict transforms inter-group or inclusive bridging social capital into intra-group or exclusive bonding social capital. Third, in times of conflict, societies are confronted with the 'dark side' of social capital (Portes & Landolt, 1996), as new networks and engagements are formed. These are actively used to participate in and prolong conflict, leading to social capital with anti-social effects (Goodhand & Hulme, 1997). Warlords or other conflict entrepreneurs, for example, nurture new social networks to build up a constituency or clientèle. Yet the effects of these social networks will be anti-social, and will most likely foster factionalism.

Throughout the debate, the focus has been on the second 'transformative' assumption. As Colletta & Cullen (2000a: 4) argue:

> To better understand the emergence of violent conflict, the relationship between
> social capital and the cohesiveness of a society – expressed in the construct of social

cohesion, or the nexus of vertical and horizontal social capital and the balance of bonding and bridging social capital – needs to be examined.

It enables them to present a typology of situations. Conflict-prone situations (low social cohesion, high conflict) are equated with the sub-optimal combination of strong but exclusive bonding social capital, a lack of inclusive bridging capital, and 'unresponsive' vertical or linking social capital (oppressive power relations, e.g. authoritarian or corrupt state administration). Peaceful situations (high social cohesion, low conflict) are equated with the optimal combination of the absence of exclusive bonding capital, strong inclusive bridging capital, and 'responsive' vertical or linking social capital (e.g. democratic state administration).

On the policy level, this focus on the 'transformative' assumption has been translated into a central policy prescription: post-conflict reconstruction efforts should ease the replacement of bonding social capital into its more inclusive bridging counterpart (Goodhand, 2006; Morfit, 2002; Pickering, 2006; Varshney 2001). Morfit (2002) presents this prescription as the core element of a social capital approach for post-conflict assistance. The 'root cause' approach involves the design of programmes that react quickly to strong injustice felt by one side of the conflict (i.e. tackling 'root causes' of conflict). By contrast, the social capital approach emphasises the need for 'inclusive' programmes. These bring together all actors involved in the conflict to convert 'shallow' (simple, rigid and exclusive, i.e. bonding) into 'deep' (complex, flexible, and inclusive, i.e. bridging) social capital. In the words of Colletta & Cullen (2000a: 27):

> social capital can serve as a key source of reconciliation and reconstruction in divided societies through the formation of broad and diverse networks. The development of civic institutions that cut across traditional bonding social capital to form new links which cross ethnic, religious, age, income, and gender lines can provide the basis for the mediation, conflict management, and conflict resolution mechanisms that all societies require to sustain peace and development.

8.3 Burundi : research context and methodology

8.3.1 The Burundian context

Burundi is slowly emerging from a civil war that lasted over 10 years.[2] After three decades (1960s–90s) of authoritarian and military rule by the ethnic Tutsi minority, the first democratically elected Hutu president was murdered soon after his appointment in 1993. In the civil war that followed, some 300,000 people lost their lives (Lemarchand, 2009). Recent statistics indicate that 52 per cent of the population have fled their homes at least once since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29). The conflict was clearly ethnic in nature: for a long period the Hutu majority of the population was deprived economic opportunities, political representation, and access to education, and jobs in the administration and the army. At the end of the 20th century – during the civil war – Burundi was divided into Hutu and Tutsi 'enclaves' or 'colonies' (Laely, 1997: 695). Analysis is prone to 'ethnic regression', where social divisions – including regional, rural-urban, inter-elite, inter-ethnic, and intra-ethnic divisions – are reinterpreted according to the ethnic divide. (Reyntjens, 2000: 19). Analysis should also look beyond ethnicity, as the main root cause of the conflict is the pattern of 'exclusionary governance' (Uvin, 2007), i.e. 'the conflict is over control of the country's limited resources, and the social and economic marginalization that has been occasioned by it' (Sebundandi *et al.*, 2008: 40–41).

Burundi presents us with a concrete case study of a 'social capital' approach to post-conflict reconstruction (cf. Morfit, 2002). In most analyses, 'ethnic regression' aligns well with a social capital 'reading' of the Burundian conflict. A World Bank report is exemplary in this respect (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005). It adopts the main policy prescription of the social capital approach. The core of its conflict-sensitive development assistance to Burundi therefore aims at transforming inclusive bonding into exclusive bridging social capital (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005). It argues that, historically, Burundi was a country rich in multi-ethnic bridging social capital, uniting different identity groups around the King, Court, a common language (Kirundi) and cultural tradition. The report continues with a description of how 40 years of violence transformed Burundi into a country of 'weak bridges, strong bonds', replacing multi-ethnic bridging capital with ethnic bonding capital, which ultimately led to an exclusive 'us versus them' rhetoric between both ethnic groups (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 6). That such an analysis informs the policies of many

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[2] On the history of conflict in Burundi, see e.g. Daley (2006b), Lemarchand (2009), Reyntjens (2000), and Uvin (2009).

international actors in Burundi is confirmed by a recent evaluation of 133 peace building programmes in Burundi (Sebundandi *et al.*, 2008). The survey reveals that most of the programmes worked on dialogue and conflict management and resolution, while focusing on emotional and attitudinal change and healing of individuals and groups in society. The authors of this report conclude that these efforts, of which 'the promotion of shared spaces of expression and communication seems to be the point of convergence', played a key reconciliatory role in bridging divides between ethnic groups, yet did not tackle structural or 'root causes' of the Burundian conflict (cf. 'root cause' versus 'social capital' approach, Morfit, 2002). At community level, the social capital approach has been translated into a focus on 'bricks-and-mortar projects', used as a 'vehicle to address social issues by strengthening inter-group trust and the capacity of communities to collaborate effectively and manage conflict without resort to violence.' (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 4). This article examines the solidarity chain – a livestock credit scheme – as an illustration of such activities.

8.3.2   Research methodology

The article is based on primary data collected during seven months of fieldwork, from January 2007 until July of that year, and presents ethnographic case studies of three *collines[3]* – Burara, Tangara and Cumba *colline* – in the northern provinces of Muyinga and Kirundo, where the solidarity chain was implemented as one of the main activities in the scope of the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium (LSIC), a collaboration between several international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).[4]

Focus groups and key-actor interviews were conducted to collect our data. For the entire research project, 81 focus groups were held with 693 participants. Key actors were interviewed, including NGO staff, local administration and other local actors involved in the projects. Again, for the research project as a whole, interviews were conducted with 77 key actors. The findings in this article are especially, but not exclusively, based on the findings of two types of focus group discussions. The first was based on adoption of the resource exchange matrix of Kuehnast & Dudwick (2004) to map the breadth and strength

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[3] Hillsides, administrative unit in Burundi. The selection of the three *collines* fits in a broader PhD research programme on the interaction between NGO-interventions and social capital in post-conflict settings. The identification of the *collines* used the NGOs as independent variable to select three 'typical cases' (Patton, 2002: 236) for each of the NGO-interventions. However, in the scope of this article, this variable does not play a role, as it focuses on one particular activity – the solidarity chain – which was implemented by all three NGOs. Of course, our ethnographic research does not allow for generalizations for the whole of Burundi, Africa, post-conflict situations or development countries.

[4] For the sake of discretion, the names of the NGOs are not disclosed.

of existing social networks (social capital), which can be relied on for mutual support. The second type of focus group analysed the specific functioning of the solidarity chain. Linking these findings enables us to present a contextualized analysis of the functioning of the solidarity chain and its impact on existing stocks of social capital. To determine the number of focus groups, we used the theoretical concepts of redundancy and theoretical saturation (Krueger & Casey, 2001). In general, between 6 and 10 people took part in the focus groups, which conforms to the rule of thumb (Patton, 2002: 385).

8.4 Case study: the solidarity chain

8.4.1 A livestock rotating credit scheme

In 1989 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) funded a project in the province of Gitega, Burundi, involving a livestock credit scheme (FAO, 2005). Due to disappointing receipts from milk production and the outbreak of the 1993, crisis beneficiaries could not reimburse in cash the livestock received through the credit scheme. The solidarity chain was developed because the population could not reimburse in cash. In 1996 a new project was carried out, switching from reimbursement in cash to reimbursement in kind.

The solidarity chain consists of 'gradually giving livestock to all the farmers on a single hillside, starting with one batch of animals being given to a certain number of farmers. The newborn thereafter are then given to other farmers, until the needs of all the farmers on the hillside have been met.' (Koyo, 2004). Passing on newborn animals creates a chain of beneficiaries. The objectives are twofold.

It first aims to improve access to livestock as an important productive asset for the rural population. The livestock sector suffered enormous damage during the protracted crisis after 1993. A survey in 1997 showed losses of 32 and 46 per cent respectively for large and small stock (Koyo, 2004). Still, livestock are essential for the livelihoods of the rural poor: it produces food and cash, it is key to improving soil fertility and agricultural production, and it is used as savings to cope with shocks and stress situations.

Second, it is designed to improve solidarity in targeted communities: participants in the chain receive livestock from their fellow community members and solidarity is enhanced through shared responsibility for the livestock. As such, the solidarity chain is an excellent example of post-conflict reconstruction activities, in which both economic recovery and social reconciliation are intertwined. Multi-ethnic bridging networks are rebuilt between neighbours via the restocking of livestock, transforming the solidarity chain into a 'peacemaker' (Beleli, 2001) in Burundian communities. As a consequence, the solidarity

chain became popular among donors and development actors in Burundi. Not only FAO (2005), but also the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2004, 2007), the United Nations Development Department (UNDP, 2006) and the World Bank (RoB & World Bank, 2004) integrated the livestock credit scheme into their projects and programmes; it is also noted as an important strategy for livestock restocking in the Burundian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (RoB, 2006a).

It was therefore not surprising that the Livelihood Security Initiative Consortium followed this trend. All consortium partners used the solidarity chain to distribute their livestock. The chain was mainly used to distribute goats. Loan contracts were prepared and community committees were democratically elected to follow up the chain. Technical criteria were designed to select the beneficiaries, who needed to provide appropriate shelters and forage, practice permanent stabling and accept the principles of the solidarity chain. The chain was also monitored for its inclusive – multi-ethnic – and gendered constitution. The main objective was to restock livestock, but the social objective of strengthening community ties was clearly considered. As some staff members explained the functioning of the chain:

> If we say solidarity, it is mutual assistance. For the chain, this means that the goat belongs to the whole *colline*, there is a collective responsibility, the solidarity is to follow up the maintenance of the goat. It's up to them to do that and to distribute.' (interview staff member CIBA, 04/05/07, Kirundo).

> It's to restock [cattle] easily [on] the *colline*, and also, with the chain, people dig together the contour lines and the neighbours become friends, because they are responsible for the goat. (interview staff member CLC, 29/05/07, Muyinga).

> You have to show solidarity in the activities. We have to search for charity between the people. [...] First of all, we wanted that the goat was shared. Even if our *encadreur* commits mistakes there are others who are responsible for the good condition of the goat. It also facilitates mutual assistance. The person who will receive the second [offspring] follows the situation of the goat. Both need to help each other to raise the goat. (interview staff member CLC, 08/06/07, Muyinga)

8.4.2 A solidarity chain or … a chain of conflict?

The success of the solidarity chain was not always guaranteed. It even sparked two kinds of conflicts within the communities. A first group of conflicts resulted in a 'governance deficit': the solidarity chain produced conflicts between community members and local structures responsible for selecting beneficiaries and monitoring the chain. Although these local structures differed slightly, each NGO had some kind of a 'livestock committee'. These livestock committees restricted information flows between NGOs and the

population, even though committees were elected by the population and despite the various NGOs making considerable efforts to inform the population. Everyone knew about the solidarity chain, as everyone could 'see' the goats; far fewer people however knew how to obtain a goat. In Cumba, for example, the first distribution of goats was made publicly. Thereafter it became very obscure how the goats were passed on within the chain, and in Tangara people told they knew about the chain the day that livestock was distributed. As a consequence, bribery and corruption was rife in these committees. Prices to 'buy' a goat went from 2000 up to 5000 Fbu (1 USD = 1000 Fbu). In most cases there was an official list with the genuine beneficiaries, but just before the distribution, names were replaced. Thus, technical criteria – shelter and appropriate forage, permanent stabling and accepting the principles of the solidarity chain – were replaced by bribes and clientelism, resulting in a 'governance deficit'.

A second group of conflicts created a 'solidarity deficit': conflicts arose within the chain, between the beneficiaries, as the newborn were not passed on as scheduled. The mismanagement by the livestock committees was one of the reasons why loan contracts were not followed up. A second important factor was that several beneficiaries consumed or resold goats to relieve immediate needs. In turn, beneficiaries sought bribes from their neighbours to pass on the newborn. An NGO staff member was critical about the local population, adding: 'The principal cause is that there are people with greediness, who want to keep the goat for themselves. […] they don't want to share.' (interview staff, 08/06/07, Muyinga). In many cases the solidarity chain fell apart; instead of building solidarity between neighbours it caused a 'solidarity deficit'. In sum, because of both this 'solidarity' and 'governance deficit', the 'solidarity chain' became a 'chain of conflict'.

The malfunctioning of the chain was most problematic in Cumba, where a combination of distress sales by the population and the reselling of the distributed livestock by Stéphane, the *encadreur de base* of CLC and the unchallenged broker within the project (see chapter 6, section 6.4.3 for his role as *encadreur de base*), completely destroyed the 'solidarity chain'.

> Do you know how much energy we have used to install the contour lines and the compost bin? Now we have grass [pasture] for our goat, but we don't have a goat, now we have a compost bin, but we don't have a goat to throw [its] manure in it. Everything was linked to the goat, everything we have done, all activities (focus group, 11/05/07, Cumba).

> There were conflicts between people in the solidarity chain, so among neighbours who should have received a goat. If Stéphane took your goat, you came into conflict with your neighbour. (focus group, 11/05/07, Cumba).

> Everything started when the named Stéphane started to confiscate the goats of the beneficiaries and went to sell them. The population also sold the goats because the *encadreur* would take all. I also sold one male goat, but the *encadreur* condemned

me in front of the *chef de zone* and I paid [back with] another male goat that I had bought, and the *ecadreur* took them all [the male goat he bought to reimburse, and two other goats he had received through the chain]. (interview *chef de sous-colline Rutamba*, 25/05/07, Cumba).

Instead of giving a little [offspring] to the second in the chain Stéphane came and took the goat and its offspring with him. Your neighbour thought there was a secret between you and Stépahe and this created a conflict in the chain. In fact, because of that the solidarity chain doesn't exist anymore (focus group, 21/05/07, Cumba).

Because people were hungry they sold their goat. For us, from the [livestock] committee, this wasn't simple, because the people said that the goat was stolen. People also sold because they saw that when they didn't Stéphane came to take their goat. That gave a lot of problems between the people, but after that the solidarity chain was completely destroyed and still more have sold. There are almost no goats from CLC here anymore. (interview member livestock committee, 11/05/07, Cumba).

The activities with the goats didn't work. Partly this was the fault of Stéphane, but also without Stéphane there was famine and the people sold, and that created a lot of conflicts. But we sold because of Stéphane. It was a race for us. We saw that the other goats were sold by Stéphane, so we have tried to sell [our goat] ourselves, before he came to take our goats. (focus group, 14/05/07, Cumba).

Now, there are almost no goats anymore. Stéphane took them almost all back. Or he sold them on another hill, of he killed them and sold the meat. Now, there are almost no goats left, and we have no mature anymore. (focus group, 10/05/07, Cumba).

CLC staff members were aware of the problems (although at least one of them was implicated or was aware of Stéphane's actions, see chapter 6, section 6.5.1). CLC stopped the distribution of goats on several *collines* because of the problems noted above. Cumba was one of these *collines*, which explained why the negative feelings were most explicit in Cumba (in comparison to Burara and Tangara). In addition, towards the end of the fieldwork Stéphane was also transferred to another zone of intervention of CLC. Similar problems occurred for the other NGO projects, and also there NGO workers tried to tackle these problems. CIBA, for example, replaced the committee on Burara *colline* several times. It was created in 2002, and replaced in both 2004 and 2005. In Tangara LITA distributed conflict notebooks in which they asked to list all different kinds of conflicts that occurred on the *collines*. Also here, conflicts related to the solidarity chain clearly occurred in these conflict notebooks. Although NGO staff made efforts to find solutions, through awareness raising, replacing committees and so forth, both kind of conflicts related to the solidarity chain could not be eradicated. This points to more profound

reasons of the failure of the solidarity chain in creating new stocks of social capital. Below the analytical framework is used to present a more profound analysis. It will be argued that a combination of existing 'weak' bonding and 'unresponsive' linking social capital accounts for the solidarity chain's failure, endorsing the view that social capital cannot be built in a vacuum.

8.5 Putting social capital dimensions in context

8.5.1 The 'solidarity deficit' : underestimating weak bonding social capital

The 'solidarity deficit' of the solidarity chain is explained by an underestimation of the weakness of existing bonding social capital. Historically, bonding social capital in Burundi is based on the traditional institution of *ukuterera*, in which food and beer are exchanged as gifts during ceremonies, which explains why this group of people is called *abatererezi* or 'beer friends' (Trouwborst, 1973). It concerns mutual relations between 'equals': like articles are exchanged (traditionally, beer for beer) and the network has a core, unchanging group of relatives and neighbours linked to each other via *solidarité par parenté* (kinship solidarity) or *solidarity residentielle* (neighbourhood solidarity) (Badionona-Tshondo, 1993: 9; Trouwborst, 1973: 114). Concretely, these bonding ties are relied upon for mutual help: preparation of land, small credits, food and other gifts, helping the sick, and so on.

At the time of fieldwork, the analysis of the resource exchange matrix – assessing the breadth and strength of these social support networks (cf. Kuehnast & Dudwick, 2004) – revealed substantially 'weakened' and 'stressed' networks of bonding social capital, and thus, weakened capacity for mutual solidarity. A first explaining factor was the devastating impact of the civil war, which depleted general levels of trust and severely weakened the social fabric of Burundian communities. The Burundian population suffered as 'proxy targets' (Human Rights Watch, 1998) in the civil war, and Hutu and Tutsi neighbours became direct enemies in recurring ethnic uprisings. Some 52% of the total population fled their homes at least once since 1993 (Uvin, 2009: 29), and around 300,000 lost their lives during the civil war (Lemarchand, 2009). There was also a looming humanitarian crisis, which was still not under control at the time of fieldwork (WFP, 2008). War also created a culture of impunity, resulting in a high prevalence of banditry, sexual violence and insecurity, and continuing human rights abuses by the Burundian police and the national army (e.g. Human Rights Watch, 2006).

A second explaining factor is more typical for post-conflict settings. The observed downward levels of solidarity reflect a general trend: total impoverishment and urgent material preoccupations during post-war settings led to new economic divisions (pushing into the background the political – ethnic – divisions) because of an increasing competition for scarce post-war reconstruction resources, ultimately contributing to a 'general climate of jealousy, competition, and selfishness' (World Bank, 2002: 5). Uvin (2009) confirms this decline of mutual help within Burundian society, and also underscores the primacy of economic above ethnic or other factors explaining the decline. Our data adds further evidence to this analysis: bonding social capital was weakened, not because of ethnic or political tensions, but because of material preoccupations. The main preoccupation for the majority of the population was how to bridge the recurring periods of *soudure*: during these periods the increasing competition for scarce resources to cope with food schortages had a negative impact on the ability for mutual help on the three *collines*, and stressed existing social networks by an overload of conflicts. The two most prevalent were theft and land conflicts. For example, theft of crops, livestock or other valuable assets such as bicycles was widespread. In most cases, not strangers but neighbours and even brothers stole from one another, which created an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust among community members. As a consequence, 'Helping each other becomes difficult, even your brother can rob you, or one of your neighbours. If there are many cases of theft, how can you help people who are maybe thieves?' (focus group, 30/04/07, Burara *colline*). Besides this daily confrontation with theft, the 'land time-bomb' further deteriorated bonding social capital (ICG, 2003b). Burundi is characterized by a general lack of fertile land, and the inheritance system creates a further fragmentation of agricultural land. Therefore numerous families were divided because of sometimes violent land conflicts; many returnees (IDPs or refugees) were also confronted with the occupation of their properties (by family members or neighbours).

This weakness of bonding social capital resulted in a 'contraction' of both trust and reciprocity (Swift, 1993). In a hypothetical ideal situation, the radius of trusting relations would span the entire society: trust would be generalized, and people would even trust 'strangers'. By contrast, particularized trust limits trusting relationships to an inner circle of family, friends and close others. However, on the studied hillsides, trust was further contracted, as even two basic principles of Burundian community life – *solidarité par parenté* (kinship solidarity) or *solidarité residentielle* (neighbourhood solidarity) – were undermined (e.g. theft, land conflicts, etc.), which led to a situation of generalized distrust (cf. Uvin, 2009: 167). As such, there was a clear lack of mutual exchange or reciprocity (Sahlin, 1968; Swift, 1993). The economic impact of civil war, and the post-conflict competition for scarce resources, led to a general regression from 'general' to 'balanced' and in many cases finally to 'negative' reciprocity within the bonding social networks. This regression of reciprocity materialized in the transition from 'free' gifts to loans without and ultimately with interest. General reciprocity produces transactions without

any obligation of a return. It embodies altruistic transactions, typically made concrete with 'gifts', hospitality and generosity. Instead, balanced reciprocity refers to direct exchanges, whereby there is a strong obligation to repay with something of equivalent value and without much delay. In the case of negative reciprocity, an unbalanced exchange is the result of opposing interests by which partners try to maximise utility at the other's expense. Concretely, within the bonding support networks free gifts of cash, food or other material resources (generalized reciprocity) became an exception and were replaced by loans with strict rules of return (particularized reciprocity). When repayment was delayed, the lender started to ask interest and relations deteriorated (negative reciprocity).

The point at issue is that the solidarity chain was at odds with the reality of mutual help and solidarity. First, beneficiaries of the chain did not necessarily have trusting ties before the launch of the solidarity chain. The chain was designed to create bridging social capital to unite and reconcile different groups of people (ethnic groups, returnees, demobilized soldiers or rebels, men/women). Thus, at least partially, the chain demanded generalized trust (trusting 'strangers'), and this in a situation in which even personalized forms of trust were under pressure. Second, when the first beneficiary in the chain had to fulfil his commitment of passing on the newborn to the second beneficiary in the chain, this required a general form of reciprocity, as this transaction is a 'free' gift. The gift-giver can only hope that his generosity will reinforce his social status in the community, but there is no promise of tangible return in the short term. Thus, the solidarity chain sought general reciprocity, although most mutual help transactions within the bonding support networks were based on personalized or even negative reciprocity. In this context, it is unsurprising that most beneficiaries failed to adhere to this standard of general reciprocity and sold the goat or ultimately adjusted the transaction while contracting the reciprocity down to a balanced or even negative level and sought a return (i.e. 'bribe') for the newborn.

In sum, the 'solidarity deficit' shows how the solidarity chain failed to create bridging social capital, because it underestimated the weakness of existing bonding social capital, as a first 'building block' to creating these more inclusive bridging social networks. In particular, our analysis indicates that not exclusive but a profound and general 'lack' or 'weakness' of bonding social capital presented the main obstacle. Bonding social support networks were primarily composed of interpersonal relationships based on familiarity and geographic proximity, not on exclusive group-based (ethnic) identities. In addition, if conflicts stressed these support networks, it was mainly because of material preoccupations, not because of ethnic tensions. Lastly, conflicts in particular related to the solidarity chain were never expressed in terms of ethnic divisions, but revealed a more general lack of trust.

8.5.2 The 'governance deficit' : reproducing 'unresponsive' linking social capital

The 'governance deficit' of the solidarity chain is explained by the fact that the chain reproduced existing 'unresponsive' linking social capital. Concretely, the functioning of the livestock committees, responsible for the monitoring of the solidarity chain, became adjusted towards the functioning of locally embedded patron-client ties.[5] Rather than being local examples of participatory and democratic development (the initial objective of the NGOs) in order to introduce 'responsive' or 'democratic' linking social capital, the livestock committees were incorporated and adjusted towards existing modes of 'unresponsive' linking social capital. Historically, the patron-client system refers back to the traditional institution of *bugabire*, which formalized the most common transactions between patron and client: land, cows and protection were exchanged for services (workforce), offerings in kind (e.g. harvest), and loyalty (Lemarchand, 1995). As such, in the mindsets of the Burundian people, it is perceived as the prototype of all patron-client transactions. This system of patronage still carries an important social function in Burundian society (e.g. Kamungi *et al.*, 2005), from the top level of national politics to the very local level of the functioning of the solidarity chain .

Throughout post-independent Burundian history, patronage has received a clear negative connotation, as this system underpinned the 'exclusionary governance' (Uvin, 2007) of the country's economic resources, and as such, led to widespread social and economic exclusion and marginalization. In social capital terms, this system of patronage installed 'unresponsive' or 'oppressive' linking social capital, making access to social and economic opportunities highly unequal for the Burundian population. It enabled the political (Tutsi) elite to capture and control almost all available resources in the country, and since international aid was a substantial part of the national budget, the elite has 'gorged itself for decades on aid money' (Uvin 2005: 1). In particular, regionalism dictated why 'It always rains in the same place first.' (*Imvura iragwa ntikwira hose.)* (Sommers, 2005: 4). Between the 1960s and 1990s, patronage transformed the Burundian state into the private business of a small Tutsi-Hima elite of one particular region in Bururi (Lemarchand, 1995; Ndikumana, 2000, 2005; Uvin, 2007). Such clientelism manifested itself in direct lines between state departments in the capital and the

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[5] It is important to repeat that 'unresponsive' linking social capital does not necessarily imply that linking ties loose their instrumental value (see chapter 1, section 1.3.1). For the solidarity chain: the functioning of the livestock committees on the basis of clientelism still guarantees access to livestock for at least some of the community members. Yet it also gives rise to exclusion which was identified as unfair by many others in the community.

countryside, leading to 'project islands' (Laely, 1997: 710) and serious 'geographical favouritism' (Sommers, 2005).

The 'governance deficit' of the solidarity chain presents us with a micro-empirical illustration of this system of 'exclusionary governance' through patronage on the community level. Patronage materialized in the problem of elite capture on the community level. In the literature on community development, elite capture is linked to the terminology of 'gatekeepers' or 'development brokers' (Bierschenk *et al.*, 2000, 2002; Chauveau & De Sardan, 2000; Platteau, 2004; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008). As a participatory approach has to be adapted in little time, intervening agencies ask the population to organize themselves in groups, committees or associations. A common problem with these institutions is that they do not genuinely empower the rural poor, but rather the already privileged elite, which act as gatekeepers to access project benefits (Platteau, 2004: 227-28). The solidarity chain was no exception on that point. The livestock committees were populated by more wealthy community members, which used this gatekeeper position to control incoming flows of project benefits and so strengthen and maintain their patronage network. This is not surprising, as international aid is one of the only resource flows at the community level in Burundi (Uvin, 2009: 67). As such, it presents one of the main patronage resources. As a consequence, access to livestock through the solidarity chain became severely restricted, fuelling conflicts because of these missed 'development opportunities' for many. As such, the solidarity chain reflects how similar mechanisms on the national level play at the local community level: patronage led to the 'exclusionary governance' of the solidarity chain, resulting in patterns of marginalization and exclusion, nourishing community tensions because of illegitimate inequality.

The solidarity chain also presented a micro-illustration of how easily ethnic tensions can be intensified when political entrepreneurs capitalized on the 'exclusionary goverance' of the solidarity chain.[6] This was illustrated in the case of Burara *colline*. For several reasons the ethnic tensions were much higher in Burara than in the two other hillsides (see chapter four, section 4.1). First, Burara has a considerable group of resettled Tutsis near its centre. Consequently, because of the presence of this large group of Tutsi, the local political struggle between CNDD-FDD (Hutu) party, which won the 2005 elections, and the Uprona (Tutsi) party intensified. In addition, this Tutsi group has direct links with national politics and the Tutsi elite in the capital. Several important figures within the Uprona (Tutsi) party originate from Burara *colline*. Third, a conflict between two strongmen from different Tutsi clans complicated the situation. One local Tutsi strongman, Minani, defected from the Parena (Tutsi party) to the CNDD-FDD after the

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[6] 'Political entrepreneurship occurs when a individual acts on a political profit opportunity', in order to consolidate or gain political power (Holcombe, 2002: 143).

elections, in order to safeguard his strong position in the community. As such, the other Tutsi strongman, Rutayisire, member of the Uprona party leadership and living in the capital Bujumbura, lost considerable influence in the *commune* of Busoni and partially lost his hold on the Tutsi community. Therefore, he mobilized his clan-supporters, most of them living in one of the IDP sites (Rusarasi site), against the present local authorities. His rallying caused frequent tensions particular in Busoni *commune*, but also in other places of the province of Kirundo (see e.g. LDGL, 2007). As a consequence of this strong politicization of community life, the problems with the solidarity chain, and aid in general, were easily recycled by local political entrepreneurs rallying for Rutayisire and translated into problems between the two ethnic groups. Tutsis, in particular of the Rusarasi site, felt excluded from aid in general and complained that only Hutus received goats through the solidarity chain because

> The displaced [Tutsi] like to discuss things. We will not give money to receive livestock. But out there [outside the site] you have simple farmers [Hutu] who never discuss and who very easily give the money, because they think things are going that way. (focus group, 20/04/07, Burara *colline*).

Thus, the mechanism which triggered ethnic tensions, followed two successive steps. First, the 'exclusionary governance' of the solidarity chain – *not* yet in ethnic terms – triggered tensions because of unfair access to new development opportunities (livestock). Second, the 'political entrepreneurship' translated and generalized these tensions into tensions between two ethnic groups.

It reflects how unfairly distributed economic opportunities result in deprivation or discrimination based grievances, which are picked up by political entrepreneurs to mobilize certain groups, in turn both strengthening in-group solidarity and increasing tensions between different groups (Zartman, 2004: 144). In social capital terms, it illustrates the crucial role that vertical linkages with these political entrepreneurs play in strengthening mono-ethnic bonding social capital. This was confirmed by the fact that ethnic tensions were only triggered on Burara *colline*. Although the solidarity chain was mismanaged on all three *collines*, and even more on Tangara and especially Cumba *colline* (see above, section 8.4.2), only in Burara was it translated into ethnic terms because of the politicization of community life.[7] It was therefore the particular interaction

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[7] How 'exclusionary governance' and its interpretation by the population were always wrapped up in very particular local contexts becomes clear when for example comparing with the Tangara *colline*: as local politics in Tangara were not centered around ethnicity, but presented a more 'classical' political party struggle (between Frodebu and CNDD-FDD, both Hutu parties), 'exclusionary governance' of the solidarity chain and the other benefits of the LITA project was done along party lines. The main difference with Burara, however, was that this exclusion along party lines was indeed the case (in Burara exclusion was not necessarily based on ethnic

of 'exclusionary governance' and 'political entrepreneurship' that triggered 'exclusive' ethnic bonding social capital and pitted ethnic groups against each other.[8]

8.6 Conclusions

On the theoretical level, the analytical framework reveals in depth the impact of the solidarity chain as a post-conflict reconstruction activity. By applying the bonding/bridging/linking framework, we were able to define more explicitly the problems encountered, as it was the combination of 'weak' bonding and 'unresponsive' linking social capital that clarified the functioning of the solidarity chain. This indeed reflects the idea that activities never have a 'one shot' impact on social capital as a whole, but interact with different 'combinations' of social capital dimensions producing a broad range of outcomes. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of putting these social capital dimensions in context. It was a contextualized analysis of existing bonding social capital networks and broader patterns of locally embedded linking social capital, that enabled us to explain why the exact combination of 'weak' bonding and 'unresponsive' linking social capital prevailed. It underscores the idea that only a close analysis, which places social capital 'in context' and accepts its 'multi-dimensional' nature, can lay the foundation of a realistic appraisal of social capital building (De Silva *et al.*, 2007; Szreter, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Our analytical framework proved to be a useful impulse for such a close analysis.

This brings us to some policy conclusions. Broadly defined, our findings question the exclusive focus on the transformation of exclusive bonding into inclusive bridging social capital as the main policy prescription from a 'social capital' approach (Morfit, 2002) to post-conflict reconstruction. In other words, the functioning of the solidarity chain presents micro-empirical observations that question the exclusive focus on the 'transformative' assumption about social capital and conflict settings, yet reconfirms both the 'deficiency' and 'dark side' assumptions. As such, our conclusion is threefold.

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identity), and that there was no strong opposition (or political entrepreneurship) to contest and capitalize this 'exclusionary governance': the CNDD-FDD party was omnipresent.

[8] It is important to note that 'exclusionary governance' did not transform into 'political entrepreneurship'. It concerns two different groups of individuals: the more wealthy persons who use the solidarity chain to unfairly access and distribute livestock, and therefore prefer a rather peaceful environment, should not be confused with the small group of the local political elite which rallied for Rutayisire. To the contrary, some members of the livestock committee belonged to the lower echelons of the local administration, to a great extent CNDD-FDD and thus Hutu, but many had no political function.

First, the primacy of exclusive bonding social capital is questioned. No considerable stocks of exclusive bonding social capital which needed to be transformed into more inclusive bridging social networks were observed. Distrust and social conflicts were primarily centred around material preoccupations (instead of political or ethnic divisions), were not group-based but nurtured in interpersonal relationships, and in many cases opposed families, neighbours, and close others. This should not be read as an underestimation of ethnic tensions within Burundian communities, yet it does echo the general tendency that total impoverishment after conflict marks a shift of focus from political (ethnic) divisions to material concerns and a focus on urgent material needs (World Bank, 2002).

Second, the assumption that conflict zones are in the first place 'zones of social capital deficiency' (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000) is reaffirmed. Instead of exclusive bonding social capital a more profound and general 'lack' or 'weakness' of this bonding social capital was observed, resulting in a generalized (and not group-based) level of distrust. In our case studies, this was illustrated by the fact that even *solidarité par parenté* (kinship solidarity) and *solidarité residentielle* (neighbourhood solidarity), two basic principles of Burundian community life, were eroded. The need to create bridges between the two main ethnic groups is indeed a necessary step in Burundi, but the findings indicate that this analysis should not be made at the expense of the more profound need to reinforce basic levels of trust throughout society. It is plausible that once a Burundian can again trust his neighbour and family, reconciliation with others in society will also be improved.

Third, also the assumption that conflict zones are not necessarily 'organization free', and nurture the 'dark side' of social capital has been reaffirmed. The situation on Burara *colline* illustrates a) how 'exclusionary governance' of the solidarity chain, resulting in illegitimate inequality of development opportunities, triggered ethnic tensions within the community, and b) how networks of 'conflict entrepreneurship' acted as a catalyst in this process. In both cases, not exclusive bonding but 'unresponsive' linking social capital was at work. This reflects the important idea that the 'dark side' of social capital conflict settings is not limited to exclusive bonding social capital, but that a variety of social networks can nurture and create anti-social effects, with potentially serious effects on post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

In sum, these three conclusions argue in favour of a more diversified and contextualized approach to the analysis of social capital and post-conflict reconstruction, in which all three theoretical assumptions on social capital in conflict settings should at least be further researched and empirically tested, as such empirical evidence is lacking or at least minimal (Goodhand, 2006: 40). This approach reopens debates and enables the further refinement of theoretical arguments, thus informing post-conflict reconstruction policies.

Conclusions

The main conclusions of chapters 5 to 8 – dealing with the case study research in northern Burundi – offer answers to the main research questions that guided this research project. As stated in the introduction, this thesis has three goals. First, to analyse critically the present conception of social capital in post-conflict reconstruction literature and its effects in practice. Second, to present a comparative perspective between the mainstream (Putnamian) and political economy (Bourdieuian) views within the social capital debate. Third, to offer an empirical analysis of NGO 'social engineering' practice to post-conflict reconstruction.

The dissertation offers an ethnographic micro-perspective on this 'social engineering' approach: it focuses on three NGO-interventions in northern Burundi. Much has been written about 'social engineering' from a national or international macro perspective, in reference to diverse issues such as liberal internationalism (Paris, 1997); complex political emergencies (e.g. Goodhand & Hulme, 1999); post-conflict peace-building (e.g. Krause & Jütersonke, 2005); global governance, the new wars, and 'liberal peace' (Duffield, 2001); state reconstruction (e.g. Milliken & Krause, 2002); institution building (Ottoway, 2002); 'no peace, no war' societies (Richards, 2005); post-conflict reconstruction (e.g. Rathmell, 2005); and so on. But within this 'social engineering' approach NGOs have become key actors at local level, as their aid has been reinvented as a strategic tool for conflict resolution and social reconstruction (Duffield, 2002). Goodhand (2006) wrote a comparative study on the role of these NGOs in peace-building, yet he noted that concrete ethnographic empirical research at community level was one of the main gaps in peace-building research. This dissertation aims to help fill this research gap.

Although this dissertation offers interesting insights into above theoretical issues, there are, however, limitations to ethnographic case study research. The dissertation cannot claim to represent all NGO work in Burundi, let alone in other conflict-affected countries. This is not the purpose of this kind of research. The case studies that comprise the body of this dissertation should not be viewed as samples of something else, but as an in-depth description and analysis of three cases, in order to grasp the particular reality of three

NGO-interventions and their attempts to 'social engineer' peace and development in the north of Burundi after more than ten years of civil war. This methodological note should be kept in mind when reading the conclusions.

A Radical Critique

It has been made clear that Putnam's original conception of social capital is still largely dominant in both academic and policy literature on post-conflict reconstruction. In brief, this conception is based on three broad assumptions. First, the baseline for policy is that social capital is an 'inherently good thing' that should be restored post-conflict by all. This explains the prevailing demand to build and create 'new' social capital, to the extent that whenever civil society institutions *can* be reinforced, they *should* be reinforced. Second, it supports a communitarian or society-centered approach, celebrating the community and its civil society organizations. Third, the 'bad' bonding/'good' bridging dichotomy occupies centre stage in the reconstruction argument: this is the much praised bridging social capital that brings conflict resolution, reconciliation, and social cohesion to the community.

This thesis adds further empirical ethnographic evidence that rejects this conception of social capital, and as such, presents a radical critique on contemporary thinking on the role of social capital in post-conflict reconstruction. Chapter 5 (social capital and food security) strongly refutes the argument that social capital is an 'inherently good thing' in the hands of the poor. It demonstrates how social capital may become an unproductive asset and even a liability: people's social networks no longer provided social support, and their dependency on 'unresponsive' linking ties to access credit, labour opportunities, and markets reflected the restrictive character of their social networks. Thus, social capital expressed people's increasing powerlessness and destitution rather than offering a way out of poverty. Both chapters 6 (community-based reconstruction) and 7 (bridging associations) contest the communitarian notion of social capital. Chapter 6 demonstrates how community-based reconstruction did not always prove to be an appropriate mechanism to restore social capital after conflict. The introduction of community-based local structures did not automatically result in more community participation; on the contrary, more than once it nurtured elite capture and 'exclusionary governance' of the NGO projects. Similarly, chapter 7 questions community associations as the communitarian blueprint to restore social capital: comparable problems of elite capture were present, and associations had difficulties going beyond their status of new 'aid gateways', i.e., channels for the development agency to achieve technical project goals or for the local population to access support from the external agency. Lastly, chapters 7

(bridging associations) and 8 (solidarity chain) question the exclusive focus on the creation of bridging social capital. The aim of both the community associations and the solidarity chain was to create 'bridges' between adversarial ethnic groups, and reconcile them around concrete development activities. Their results were mixed. Although ethnic groups did cooperate within the associations and the solidarity chain, it resulted in a 'false sense' of inclusiveness. In Burara, for example, it did not reflect the real ethnic tensions in the community at large. In general, the focus on 'ethnic inclusion' distracted attention from the fact that both activities simultaneously produced 'economic exclusion'; while promoting multi-ethnic bridging social capital, they failed to provide equal access to economic assets (because of clientelism, elite capture, exclusionary governance). This negatively impacted community cohesion.

The dominance of this social capital concept in policy circles should be questioned. The findings herein make some critical contributions to broader debates on social capital and poverty reduction, local governance, and in particular, reconciliation and conflict-resolution policies. With regard to poverty reduction policies, the discussion on food insecurity and social capital in chapter 5 was clear: social capital should also be conceived as a potential liability that reproduces poverty and inequality. This contrasts sharply with the commonly held idea that social networks 'often mean the difference between day-to-day survival and despair' (World Bank, cited in Cleaver, 2005: 898). The 'survival myth' (González de la Rocha, 2007) is indeed a myth: the poor's capacity to survive in situations of complete destitution will not pull them out of poverty, and social capital is no4 the resource *par excellence* that will provide them a way out. Social capital may well facilitate mutual help and act as an informal safety net, but building poverty reduction policies on social capital is like putting a cherry on crumbs instead of a cake: social support networks can play a role, but they can never replace job opportunities or other options to earn an adequate income (González de la Rocha, 2007).

Concerning local governance policies, chapters 6 (community-based reconstruction) and 7 (bridging associations) clearly demonstrate that the communitarian notion of social capital is an erroneous theoretical point of departure to increase participation and empowerment in communities. It starts from a romanticized idea of the community, while underestimating the "endogenous community imperfections" (Platteau & Abraham, 2002), and overestimating the homogeneity of communities (Williams, 2004). Local governance policies that are grounded in this naive concept do more harm than good: they fail to 'see' and deal with existing power relations and inequality. They merely reproduce them, albeit unintentionally. This is all the more problematic for post-conflict reconstruction policies. In post-conflict settings, attempts to introduce local governance without considering local power struggles may reproduce the 'structural violence' (Galtung, 1969) – i.e. the social

injustice caused by inequality, discrimination and exclusion – that caused the conflict in the first place. It could even trigger new tensions or conflicts.

On reconciliation and conflict-resolution policies, chapters 7 (bridging associations) and 8 (solidarity chain) question the exclusive focus on the 'bad' bonding/'good' bridging dichotomy. It was demonstrated that this approach distracted attention from (i) a profound need to reinforce basic levels of trust throughout society instead of narrowing down the problem to distrust between the two ethnic groups, and (ii) the prevalence of proper conflict entrepreneurship instigating new community tensions. The first point shows how post-conflict zones in the first place remain 'zones of social capital deficiency'; the second point notes that they are also zones with 'perverse' or 'anti-social' social capital (Goodhand *et al.*, 2000). In general, the overarching urge to build 'bridges' between the adversarial groups fails to understand post-conflict settings as distinctive spaces with their own logic (Lambach, 2007). Post-war total impoverishment often marks a shift of focus from political divisions that played a central role during conflict to material concerns and more economic divisions after conflict (World Bank, 2002). Many are looking for their 'peace dividend', and the increasing competition for scarce post-war reconstruction resources creates new inequality, and offers new potential for conflict. Thus, those reconciliation and conflict resolution policies that focus solely on bridging the political divisions that sparked the conflict have been overtaken by events, and fail to respond to the changing and evolving characteristics of the conflict.

This focus on the 'bad' bonding/'good' bridging dichotomy still carries another risk for reconciliation and conflict-resolution policies: the dominance of cultural *vis-à-vis* economic explanations of conflict. It reflects a broader tendency to argue that only a 'culture of peace'[1], as a coherent whole, can counteract a 'culture of war', entailing the need to 'social engineer' a entire society to favour peace (de Rivera, 2004). The bonding/bridging dichotomy is one of many elements to produce this 'cultural reading' of war and peace. Equating war with the prevalence of 'bad' ethnic bonding social capital is close to 'new barbarism' that interprets war as 'ancient hatreds' between ethnic groups (Richards, 2005: 8). Instead, 'good' multi-ethnic bridging social capital easily fits into the 'culture of peace' model, in which the promotion of understanding, solidarity and tolerance is central (de Rivera, 2004: 531; Paris, 1997: 82). Burundi was also identified as a country of 'weak bridges, strong bonds' (Brachet & Wolpe, 2005: 6), and most peace-building programmes focused on emotional and attitudinal change and the healing of individuals and groups in society. Although these efforts to install a 'cultural of peace' have been indispensable to reconcile both ethnic groups, they did not tackle the

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1 This 'culture of peace' model to peace-building has been initiated by the UN, and more in particular by UNESCO, see e.g. UN, 1999 and UNESCO, 2002.

fundamental issue of the Burundian conflict: the struggle for access to economic assets (Sebundandi *et al.*, 2008). As such, the risk of Putnam's social capital concept to inform one-sided 'cultural readings' of social problems is likewise applicable to post-conflict reconstruction policies (Foley & Edwards, 1997).

This anger in academic circles, about the 'lazy use' (Bebbington, 2004: 344) of the social capital concept by policy circles, is also justified with regard to post-conflict reconstruction policies. The literature review confirms the persistence of Putnams' outdated concept in much of the debate, and the ethnographic case study research provides micro-empirical evidence on how it informs inappropriate policies and interventions.

A Political Economy of Social Capital?

The aim of this thesis was also to engage in the debate between more mainstream (Putnamian) and political economy (Bourdieuian) views within the social capital debate. In particular, it highlighted three basic assumptions of the political economy view (see section 1.4). First, a political economy perspective starts from a *relational view*. Social capital is embedded in social networks, which means that any description or analysis of social capital should start from the particular social networks in which it inheres. Second, it adopts a *contextual view*, in that social capital is manifested in culturally embedded networks, which entails that social capital is a context dependent concept and should therefore be analysed in relation to the particular contexts in which it is entangled. Third, and most obviously, it applies a *political economy analysis*: social capital is unequally distributed within society, and therefore tends to reproduce existing power relationships.

The added value, in comparison to the Putnamian conceptualization, is mainly the result of the contextual and political economy assumptions. Throughout the empirical chapters the need for contextual analysis and special attention for power relationships was confirmed. The functioning of social structures, and the way in which the NGO-projects were succesful or not in moulding them, was predominantly determined by contextual – local level – factors, in particular, local level power struggles around the access and the distribution of resources.

Chapter 5 (social capital and food security) reveals both how access to resources through social networks was influenced by broader institutional processes, and confirmed the centrality of power relationships in the functioning of these networks. As such, it clarified the impact of the distribution of power and powerlessness on food insecurity issues. The analysis of shifting social networks revealed and made more tangible how the interlocking of the land, labour and credit markets reduced farmers options to access

resources (Farrington *et al.*, 2004: 5): as a response to higher levels of risk during the periods of *soudure* people were forced to rely more heavily on a patron, which then became the only source to access credit, inputs, and market opportunities while strengthening a downward spiral of usury and indebtedness: labour was claimed to repay debts, and if not possible, debts were repaid by the usury practice of *umugwazo* or the selling of land (or other assets).

Chapter 6 (on community-based reconstruction) illustrates one of the central aspects of a Bourdieuian perspective, i.e. that social capital is context-contingent, because it is inextricably bound up with the other forms of capital (economic, cultural). It shows how the 'exclusive' or 'inclusive' effect of community participation within the three NGO-projects was largely explained by the interaction between social and economic capital. The provision of private/strategic resources by NGOs created a higher risk of community participation being 'exclusive'; by contrast, the distribution of less strategic/public resources led to more 'inclusive' community participation and social capital.

Chapter 7 (on bridging associations) shows that strategies to strengthen social capital are condemned to fail if not adapted towards the particular local context. In many post-conflict countries, bridging (in this case multi-ethnic) associations are used as a *passe-partout* strategy to heal communities after conflict, but they failed on the three studied *collines*. Both the focus on associations and multi-ethnicity revealed an unfamiliarity with at least the context of Northern Burundi.[2] Burundi lacks a strong associational tradition, as it is characterized by a past of vertical stratification via patron-client ties, minimal social organization beyond the family, and enforced associational experiments by the state. Associations were therefore inappropriate instruments to organize community cooperation (which does not necessarily implicates this cannot be the case in the future, or is the case for entire Burundi, see e.g. Beuret & Fino, 2009 for Bujumbura Rural). In addition, without ignoring the ethnical factor, people were primarily concerned with the material consequences of the conflict, and climate change (*la famine*) was no less than the political conflict (*la crise*) a crucial factor affecting the daily lives of the population. As a consequence, local conflicts were not necessarily between ethnic groups, but mainly around the access to and the distribution of scarce resources (as was the aid channeled through the different projects).

Lastly, chapter 8 (solidarity chain) indicates how different 'combinations' of social capital dimensions accounted for a diverse range of outcomes. In this particular case, a combination of 'weak' bonding and 'unresponsive' linking social capital explained why

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[2] There are certainly regions and particular places where ethnic tensions were and still are much intenser than was the case on our three *collines*. (In addition, even between the three *collines*, the importance of the ethnic factor differed, and was shaped by local contexts). Also, climate change had a more marked impact in the northern region of Burundi.)

the solidarity chain failed to restore social cohesion among community members. Only a contextualized analysis of existing social support networks (bonding capital) and existing governance patterns (linking capital) yielded this analysis. This corroborates the notion that activities never have a 'one shot' impact on social capital as a whole, and that only a close analysis, which places social capital 'in context' and accepts its 'multi-dimensional' nature, can lay the foundation for a realistic appraisal of social capital building.

However, even if a political economy perspective is adopted, some shortcomings of the social capital concept still persist. Most of these shortcomings are linked to the *relational view* (social capital analysis should start from social networks) of this perspective, and relate to the project to find a typology of social networks and their consequences, i.e. the distinction between bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Three major problems can be identified.

First, the analytical value of these sub concepts. Two issues should be questioned: can they be empirically distinguished, and do they not mask a high degree of diversity? The functional differentiation between bonding and bridging networks is perhaps the most clearly and generally accepted distinction we can make: it refers to the mechanisms of *closure* and *brokerage*, and distinguishes between relationships facilitating access to redundant and non-redundant information and resources. But distinguishing these networks on the basis of characteristics of the networks or the people which are connected by them, is already much more difficult. The equation of bonding with intra-community and bridging with extra-community ties is examplary. First, because 'community' refers to both geographical and identity boundaries: ties with a family member which migrated to the city have both an intra-community (sharing identity) as an extra-community (linking people in different regions) character. Second, because of its different functions: it can be assumed that this family member is better of in the city, and therefore can send back resources which are not available in the village. As such, this tie is both bonding (sharing identity) but also bridging (accessing non-redundant resources). Furthermore, also network characteristics are difficult. For example, bonding ties are defined as dense links, with a high frequency of interactions, but a Burundian farmer can have dense connections with his patron as he works on his fields (bonding), although they belong to different socio-economic classes (bridging), and this relationship gives access to non-redundant resources, for example credit (brokerage function). A second issue is the question if these concepts do not hide a wide variety of relationships. Bonding ties refer to the inner circle of family, neighbours, friends and close others. But relationships within this inner circle can still vary. As we have seen, neighbours occupy a specific position in social life on Burundian *collines*, as households live scattered on the hills, and therefore neighbours are the first to help. Family ties have of course particular characteristics defining the functioning of these networks. An evident example in the Burundian context, with a structural problem of land pressure, is the fact that familial ties are for many the

only way to access land. Also the category of friends can hide some particularities, as became clear with the relationship of *pfampfe* or 'close' friends. Another example is the concept of linking social capital, which refers to a diverse range of authority relations with for example local politicians, NGO staff, patrons, bank employees, and so on. The way authority will be executed will differ according to the particular relationship. Furthermore, even one individual can perform several authority functions. A nice example of the latter was offered during focus groups in Tangara and Cumba, when discussing the work of the *chef de colline*. In both cases the population gave a dual answer: they highly appreciated their *chef* in his traditional role as conflict mediator, but they were very skeptical when it concerned his role as local administration, responsible for the identification of beneficiaries and the distribution of aid. His role as mediator explicitly refers back to the traditional role of the *bashingantahe*, local wise men, publicly invested by the communities in which they live on the basis of their wisdom, impartiality and sense of truth and justice; and which manage, mitigate and resolve social conflicts and reconcile community members (Ntahombaye *et al.*, 1999). Instead, the identification and distribution of aid is specifically linked to project interventions. In Bourdieu's terms, the illustration exemplifies the fact that the functioning of one particular social relationship can differ, according to the different 'fields' (each with its own 'rules of the game') in which it operates (in this case: traditional conflict mediation versus NGO-projects). In sum, these critical remarks illustrate the multiple, overlapping and shifting realities in which people connect to each other, and how people perform different roles and functions at the same time.

Secondly, and as a consequence of the foregoing, when a typology of social networks is the point of departure for social analysis, it engenders the risk of falling back into simple structuralism. Focusing on the structure of networks can distract attention from the more cognitive aspects of social capital, i.e. the rules, norms and values which govern these networks. These cognitive aspects proved much more difficult to grasp. Labeling the practices of *abakozi* (daily labour) and *umugwazo* (usury practice) as 'unresponsive' linking social capital between patron and clients provides a clear illustration of this difficulty. From a structural perspective, both relationships fit the label 'linking' social capital, as they linked patron and client across a vertical power differential, installing a asymmetry in the relation. Yet, the label 'unresponsive' is much less succesful in articulating the functioning of these relationships. The reason is that it is much more difficult to distinguish clearly the rules, norms an values governing these relationships. In both cases, contradictory elements emerged. On the one hand, explicit reference was made to the traditional institution of *bugabire* (implicating serfdom), which expressed negative feelings about dependency. On the other hand, in particular *abakozi* was perceived as a relation of solidarity and mutual help, which resulted in feelings of gratitude towards the patron. Still, according to contextual factors, the negotiation positions changed (e.g. there was more space to negiotate labour wages outside the periods of *soudure*), and informal

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rules and norms were sometimes complemented by formal procedures, rules, and norms (e.g. when a conflict related to *umugwazo* was brought to court). It indicates how a complex mix of institutions influence these relationships, and how the latter can change according to context and over time. In this respect, the label 'unresponsive' poorly articulates this complex reality.

A third and last risk which relates to the relational view focusing on types of networks, is the tendency to essentialism and making generalising conclusions. The objective to formulate a typology of networks, reflects the aim to identify concepts which are applicable in diverse contexts and cultures. Putnams reworking of bonding and bridging into 'bad' and 'good' social capital, and his equation of the latter with associations is probably the clearest example. Both bonding and bridging ties can have positive (resp. e.g. access to social support and new markets) and negative (resp. e.g. ethnic exclusion and drug trafficking) effects, and the univocal link between bridging ties and associations is false: every association will to a certain extent include and exclude people, and as such, always combines bonding and bridging characteristics, and associations with a strong hierarchy are likely more structured along linking social capital. However, based on structural characteristics, one tends to essentialize by linking particular networks to particular outcomes, which leads to general conclusions as 'mono-ethnic bonding social capital should be replaced by multi-ethnic bridging social capital', which in practice is then translated in supporting the creation of multi-ethnic 'bridging associations'. The tendency to equate all patron-client ties with 'bad' linking social capital is another example. In development literature, and in social capital literature in particular, patron-client networks are presented as characteristic for 'backward' societies, and more than once reference is made to Banfields (1958) 'amoral familism'. However, both in Burundian history and in current social life on the three studied *collines* patron-client ties have played and still play a crucial role, not at least because, in many cases, these patron-client ties remain instrumental for both parties. Although on unequal terms, approaching a patron to access credit, inputs or labour opportunities provides a degree of protection during periods of *soudure* (chapter 5, food security). Also when some of the activities of the three NGO-projects (chapter 6, community-based reconstruction; chapter 7, bridging associations; chapter 8, solidarity chain) are captured by the elite, and participatory structures are tailored towards existing patronage and clientelism, they still present a pareto-improvement (Platteau, 2004) for some of the population: additional resources have been accessed through these patron-client ties (although many have been excluded). Both examples illustrate that univocally linking certain types of networks to certain types of outcomes, results in essentialising conclusions, which devalue the dynamic and shifting functioning of these social networks.

If one overlooks these shortcomings, an area of tension is revealed within the political economy perspective. The relational and contextual views drive research in opposite directions. Whereas the focus on a social capital typology reveals a tendency towards

essentialising concepts, the contextual view emphasizes the contingent character of social analysis, which in fact excludes context-independent concepts. Foley and Edwards (1999), both proponents of a Bourdieuian perspective, have warned for this structural bias, exactly because it nullifies the other, for them more crucial basic assumption, i.e. that social capital cannot be analysed apart from the particular contexts and practices in which it is entangled. In fact, it is this structural bias evident in Putnamian thinking that a political economy view has been criticizing (Wilhusen, 2009: 393). In particular the structuralist part of Putnam's analysis (social capital equates civic associations, later on limited to 'good' bridging associations) has inspired policy, focusing on the structural 'forms' (counting associations) and not the 'norms' of civil society and social capital (Edwards 2006: 102).

In sum, the cautions about this structural bias have been confirmed during empirical research. Although a typology of networks can guide research (as research is *de facto* guided by analytical concepts), there is the risk of using inflexible concepts, unable to account for the rich diversity of social relationships and the 'everyday enactment' (Wilshusen, 2009: 393) of social capital in empirical reality. On the other hand, however, the case study research also confirmed that the contextual view and the emphasis on power relationships did have an added value in comparison with mainstream Putnamian thinking, not at least because it is in particular criticizing the latter.

Social capital has been a contested concept in the past, and by all odds, it will remain a contested concept in the future. Edwards (2006) distinction between 'enthusiasts', 'tacticians', and 'skeptics' will probably remain valid, although with some adaptations.

The 'enthusiasts' will still be in the majority. The Putnamian conception of social capital has radically infiltrated the social sciences, in particular political science and economics, and has been integrated widely within policy circles. As is the case today, these enthusiasts will continue to produce mostly statistical studies which try to prove the causal link between high stocks of social capital and positive outcomes, in diverse research and policy areas ranging from health care, criminality, democratization, poverty reduction, and so on. For the majority of these scholars, social capital has become an accepted concept, which is used uncritically.

A second group of people, the 'tacticians', for whom the concept was a means to break the economic hegemony in institutions such as the World Bank, in order to integrate social analysis into policy circles, take the view that this objective is to a certain extent achieved. For them, social capital lacks the rigor to further deepen social analysis around specific policy issues, but it stays capable of expanding social analysis to research and policy areas where it is still lacking. As such, in their view, social capital becomes nothing more than a conceptual language to introduce and promote social analysis (see Bebbington *et al.*, 2006: 280, although Bebbington himself is not a good example as he

still uses social capital as an analytical concept, see e.g. Bebbington, Dharmawan, *et al.*, 2006, Bebbington, 2007).

The skeptics will remain skeptical, and they have good reasons. On the one hand, because of the ideological – neoliberal – cloud that the concept has. On the other hand, because of problems of social capital as a analytical concept. The popularity of the concept has stretched its meaning out of all proportion. The 'banalized' use of the concept, when applied to policy, has created a fuzzy concept, allowing it to be claimed by different agendas (Molyneux, 2002: 169). The concept has become a 'genotype' with an unqualified number of 'phenotype applications' (Adam & Rončević, 2003: 158). Their ideological critique has interesting things to say about the genealogy of the concept within the World Bank and the politics of theory production in such institutions (arguing exactly the opposite of the 'tacticians', i.e. social capital showing how social theory is colonialized by neoclassical economics), while their analytical critique denounces the vague and elastic use of the concept. Yet, others nuance these critiques, because it is predominantly a critique on the type of policy based on the concept (and not on the concept itself), and this within one particular institution, namely the World Bank. Furthermore, their critique on the fluidity of the concept is more convincing, but is also applicable to other concepts in the social sciences, which have developed their own discursive 'social life' within the development lexicon (Toit *et al.*, 2007: 3; Bebbington, 2002).

A possible further contribution of the political economy scholarship could be twofold, both narrowing and broadening the existing debate. One possible way forward is by narrowing down what we mean by social capital, in which the operationalization of Bourdieu's conceptualization could be at the centre. Starting from a clear-cut definition of social capital as 'the ability to secure resources by virtue of membership in social networks' (Portes & Landolt, 2000: 532), it should examine if social capital can be restored as an analytically meaningfull concept, by tracing back its most clear sociological origins in the work of Bourdieu (in contrast with Putnam as a political scientist, and Coleman leaning against economic rational choice theory). Therefore, it should renounce both social capital as a multi-disciplinary concept, and the coupled desire to create a unified conceptual field (Mosse, 2008: 83). While revaluing it as a sociological concept, Bourdieu's main question becomes central, i.e. how differential access to resources through the possession of more or less durable social networks reproduces social distinction, and influences the opportunities available to individuals to pursue their goals. Many, and among them also fierce propononets such as Harris (2001) and Fine (2001), are convinced that, if the concept should have any analytical value, it should be understood as Bourdieu used it, yet until today this exercise has not been done in a consistent way (Bebbington, 2007; DeFilippis, 2001; Portes, 1998; Wilhusen, 2009).

A second possible way forward is broadening the debate, in order to examine if and how critical social science can travel to policy. Political economy scholars are not

satisfied by the way social science is represented and used in current policies, not in social capital terms, but also not in terms of related concepts such as empowerment, participation, civil society, and so on. So, although their work started as a critique on the mainstream social capital concept, their alternative is not only linked to the social capital concept alone, but to a way of doing social science, and how this can inspire policy. For proponents of this political economy view of social capital it is clear that further criticizing mainstream social capital thinking is necessary, while reducing high expectations about its role and limiting its explanatory potential by demonstrating that social capital should be treated 'as part of a broader (multicausal) model containing numerous (sociocultural) variables of factors.' (Adam & Rončević, 2003: 178). In other words, how can the social capital debate be used to advance the more general debate on genuine social analysis, refocusing 'attention on how non-monetary relationships can be important sources of power, influence and the accumulation of economic capital' (Vasan, 2007: 1218), or showing how non-economic resources are 'crucial to our maneuvering the diverse social settings of which the economists' "market-place" is only a minor subset.' (Foley & Edwards, 1999: 164). Third, and subsequently, can we then convince policy makers that fine-grained and contextual social analysis will be necessary to unravel these issues, indicating that social analysis cannot be tailored towards economists' models, the latter being more 'compatible' with policy thinking because of their 'generalizing and predictive power' (Mosse, 2008: 103). It is not clear if the concept of social capital is necessary at all to develop these issues further (something which will depend heavily on the first way forward), and probably many will refuse because of its prehistory. However, with or without social capital, the current mainstream social capital concept will remain an obstacle which should be removed to push towards a more radical and genuine influence of the social sciences.

Engineering Peace and Development – towards 'Piecemeal' Social Engineering

What can be learned about the social engineering approach to post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building? Proponents of social engineering argue that war-shattered societies can only be helped by an all-embracing approach that profoundly transforms state, society and the economy, ultimately embedding a 'culture of peace'. The social capital argument has centre stage in this social engineering model, as it stands for rebuilding those civil society institutions that need to promote this 'culture of peace' from the bottom-up. It is clearly an appealing view because it responds to the widely accepted opinion that peace and development is not only about building bridges, schools, and roads, but above all relates to democratic citizenship, good governance, human rights, functioning markets and

so on. On the other hand, it has been criticized for seeking to transplant Western models of social, economic and political modernization – i.e. the liberal peace – to other parts of the world (e.g. Paris, 1997; Duffield, 2001). How should we interpret this social engineering approach, and can we learn something from the social capital perspective applied in this dissertation?

Krause and Jütersonke (2005) introduced Popper's (1998 [1945], 1974) concepts of 'Utopian' and 'piecemeal' social engineering, to distinguish between an improper and more realistic approach to achieve social change. First, we should start from the assumption that every single type or form of external help to a society or community in need is always about 'social engineering': it will interfere and substantially change the society or community in which it intervenes, and it has the intentional will to do that. All attempts to do so are grounded in the denial of historicism and the belief in the manipulability of societies (Popper, 1974). Second, social engineering, as understood here, should not be interpreted as solely 'technical' or 'apolitical'. There is a false contrast between technical and political solutions: every technical solution needs a political will to be executed, and every political objective needs a technical solution to be implemented. Proponents of the social engineering approach should be persuaded that technical solutions alone will not solve any problems, and those who criticize the social engineering approach for being 'apolitical' should recognize that they too need to find technical solutions to implement political aims. Third, a distinction can be made between 'Utopian' and 'piecemeal' social engineering. It is worth quoting Popper at length to explain both concepts. Popper (1998 [1945]: 157) describes the 'Utopian' approach as follows:

> Any rational action must have a certain aim. [...] To choose the end is therefore the first thing we have to do if we wish to act rationally [...] These principles, if applied to the realm of political activity, demand that we must determine our ultimate political aim, or Ideal State, before taking any practical action. [...] only when we are in possession of something like a blueprint of the society at which we aim, only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for its realization, and to draw up a plan for practical action.

A politician who adopts the method of 'piecemeal' social engineering (Popper, 1998 [1945]: 158):

> [...] may or may not have a blueprint of society before his mind, he may or may not hope that mankind will one day realize an ideal state, and achieve happiness and perfection on earth. But he will be aware that perfection, if at all attainable, is far distant, and that every generation of men, and therefore also the living, have a claim [...] not to be made unhappy, where it can be avoided [... and] to be given all possible help, if they suffer. The piecemeal engineer will, accordingly, adopt the

method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evils of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good'

Krause and Jütersonke (2005) have applied this distinction to peace-building policies in general. They criticized contemporary peace-building for acting according to the 'Utopian' approach, as it starts from the teleological postulate of 'liberal peace', and as such, aims at transplanting Western models of free markets and liberal democratic states into conflict-ridden countries, also assuming that these processes can be achieved in a short period of time (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005; see also Duffield 2001; Paris, 1997). By contrast, they argued in favour of a 'piecemeal' approach, which started from the people-centred concept of human security.

From a social capital perspective, the thesis seems to provide micro-empirical evidence that supports the meaningfulness of this analytical distinction. Throughout the ethnographic case studies, the distinction between 'Utopian' and 'piecemeal' engineering to a great extent ran parallel with what failed and what worked to enhance social cohesion on Burundian *collines* (see Table 13).

Table 13 'Utopian' versus 'piecemeal' engineering (source: author)	
'Utopian' Social Engineering	**'Piecemeal' Social Engineering**
Based on blueprint ideas Focused on ultimate goals	Not based on blueprints ideas Focused on concrete problems
• Community-Based Reconstruction *(wetland committees, livestock committees, comité d'hangar, encadreur de base, etc.)* • Bridging Associations • Solidarity Chain	• Road Works *(mobility)* • Water Tap Repair *(informal meeting places)* • Public Training *(informal meeting places)* • Training on Sexual violence *(reduction of conflict)* • Storage facilities *(reduction of conflict)*

Most activities that failed to restore social cohesion were based on utopian Western ideals and were introduced as 'universal blueprints' for community organization. Community-based or participatory reconstruction was implemented in the usual way. Committees, associations and other local structures were introduced and based on rigid ideas of participation, ownership, empowerment, democracy: democratic elections should be held, boards of committees installed, articles of association should be submitted, and so on. In particular bridging associations presented an illustration of how (i) an associational approach to community organization was coupled with (ii) the 'bridging' idea to reconcile

ethnic groups, although (i) there was no associational tradition in Burundi, and (ii) ethnic tensions were not the sole problem in local Burundian communities. The solidarity chain reflects perhaps the most clear-cut example of how external intervention tried to 'micro-engineer' social cohesion on the basis of a Western legalistic formula, i.e. through the making of a 'solidarity contract' between beneficiaries of different ethnic groups in the solidarity chain. These activities were not necessarily carried out as solutions to concrete local problems, but as means to achieve desirable ends. This does not fundamentally question values of democratic practice, participation, and empowerment, but it does indicate that these utopian objectives did not substantially help people to solve their daily problems, and therefore were not taken seriously the local population (cf. Krause & Jütersonke, 2005: 458).

By contrast, other activities not necessarily designed to strengthen social cohesion did succeed in strengthening community cohesion. These activities did not try to achieve a predetermined ideal of community organization, yet produced social cohesion as a spill-over effect. Road works, for example, cut transport costs on rural roads and showed the importance of mobility, of how visiting friends and family is a crucial element of Burundian social life. The repairing or replacing of water taps and public training created new meeting places, reflecting Burundians' preference for informal daily interactions rather than formal community associations or committees, designed in the image of Putnam's (1993) 'networks of civic engagement'. Public training on sexual violence confronted a daily problem, as rape and sexual harassment constantly fed feelings of insecurity and pitted households against each other because of insinuations and forced marriages. Similarly, construction of better and safer storage facilities tackled the problem of theft of harvests, which pitted neighbours against each other. All these activities were characterized by two major elements that marks them as 'piecemeal' engineering activities: (i) they were not derived from an 'ideal blueprint' of community organization, and (ii) they tackled concrete problems of the people (theft, sexual violence, mobility, access to water, absence of informal meeting places, etc.). These activities are clearly far removed from the achievement of ultimate goals, including democracy and empowerment, yet they helped people to solve daily problems. They were therefore taken seriously and appreciated, and above all, represented first steps in the long process of restoring community cohesion.

Alongside these empirical observations, two final reasons underscore why this 'piecemeal' approach should be preferred (Popper,1998 [1945], 1974). First, it is the only feasible option. Social science cannot provide a holistic understanding of such a complex process of social change as a whole, simply because society is not an uncomplicated 'experimental setting', in which only a small number of variables play out. Where it seeks global solutions, social engineering in post-conflict reconstruction is inevitably autocratic, unable to foresee its intentional and unintentional effects, and is based on prophecy rather

than on scientific prediction. Second, the piecemeal approach is the most democratic option, leaving most space to the people to change the course of their lives themselves. It should help them to overcome their suffering and problems, yet it should refrain from defining their life goals. Instead of trying to 'micro-engineer' society from top-down, it should sow the necessary preconditions, from which a truly bottom-up and organic process of locally embedded social engineering can slowly emerge over time.

In sum, this thesis describes the efforts of three international NGOs to 'engineer' peace and development in the north of Burundi. One should keep in mind this micro-perspective, while realizing that NGOs are only one particular cog in the machine of post-conflict reconstruction. Therefore, their potential damaging or positive effects in conflict-affected countries should not be overrated and put into perspective (Goodhand, 2006). As shown, however, they can make deep inroads on social life in communities, but it is not easy to get a clear view of their effects. The three NGO-interventions never had a one-shot impact, and both positive and negative effects went hand in hand. This complex interaction seems to favour a careful 'piecemeal' engineering approach, in which a process of 'trial and error' is primarily concerned with minimizing the negative effects of intervention. In the words of Richards (2005: 19): 'Might not wars sometimes be ended soonest by knowing how and when *not* to intervene?'

Annexes

Annex 1:   Examples of group tasks during focus group discussions
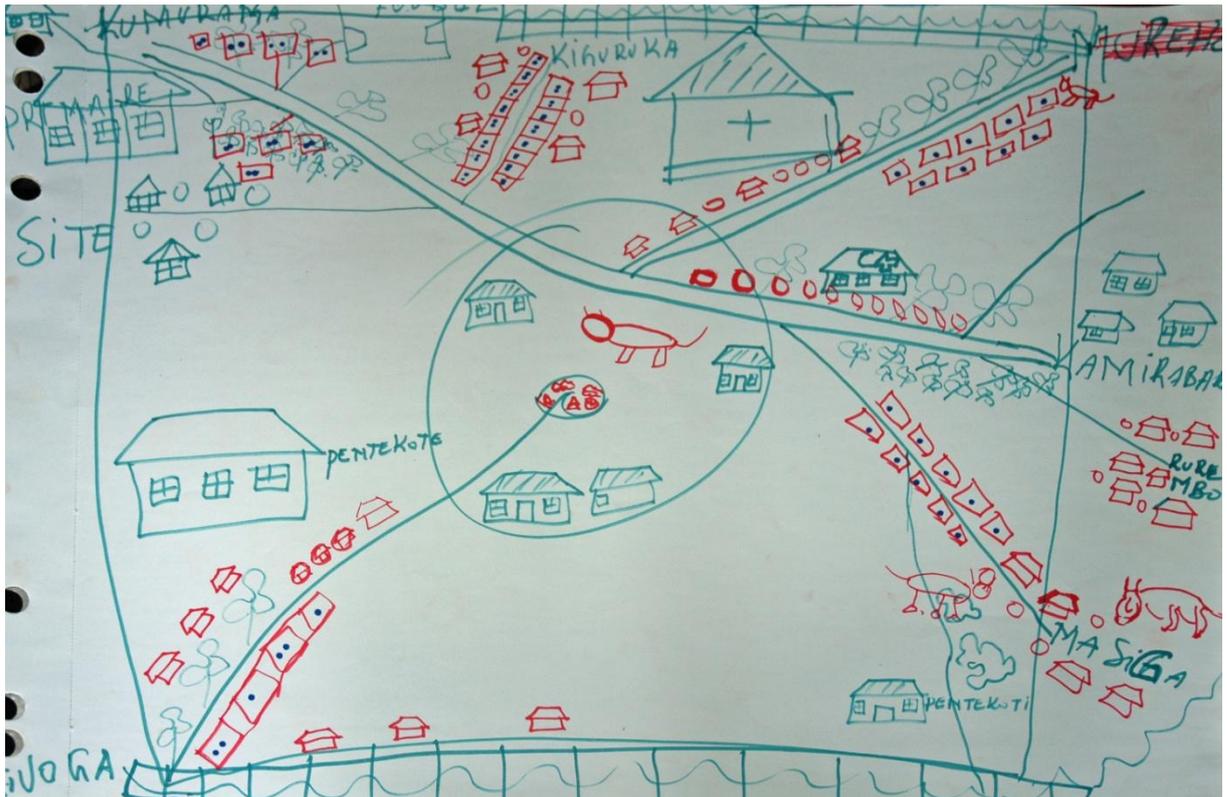
Community Map (Tangara) – was often used when arriving on a *colline*, to receive a basic view of the colline. It can present a pictorial overview of geographical, economic, and social issues: access to basic services (health centres, schools), the presence of different religious groups, access to markets, differences between sous-collines, location of better farmland, the presence of IDP sites, ...
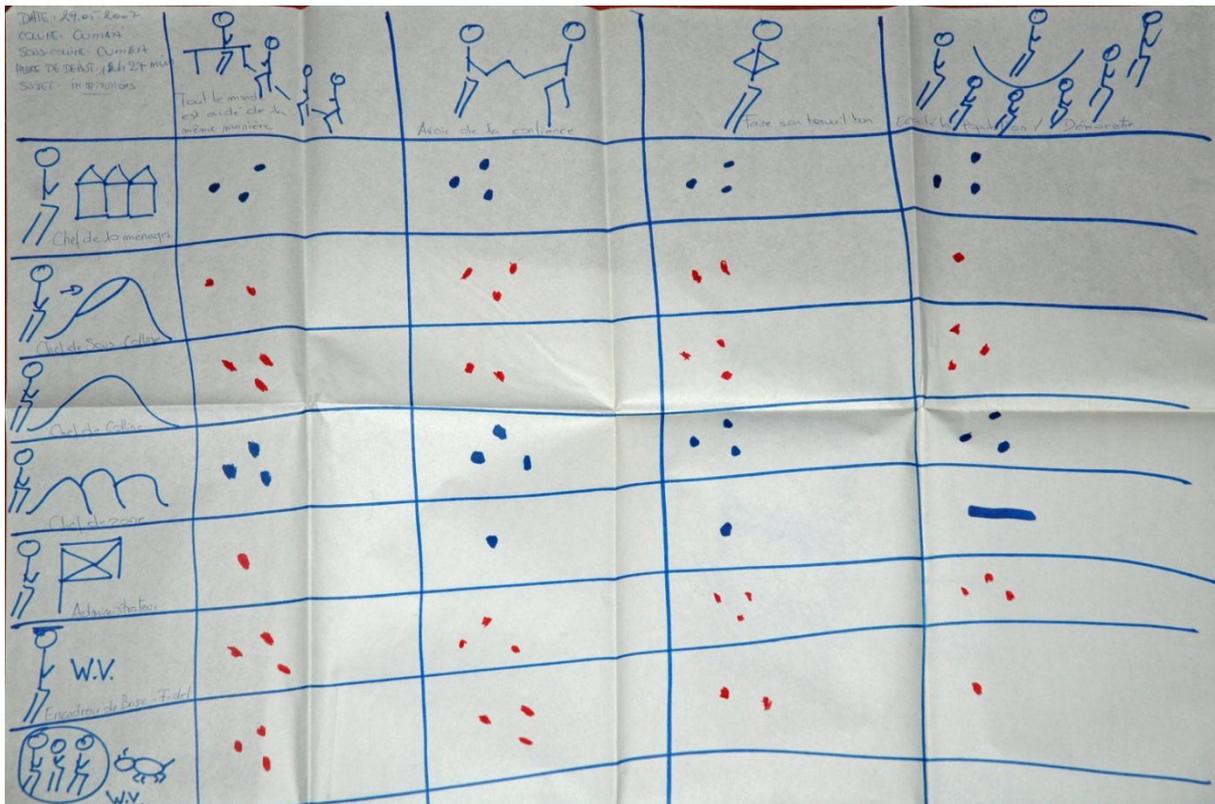
Institutional Matrix (Cumba) – was used to discuss the performance of institutions on accessibility, trust, efficiency and democratic decision making (based on Dudwick *et al*., 2006). In the left column different local institutions are enlisted. From top to bottom: the *nyumbakumi*, *chef de sous-colline*, *chef de colline*, *chef de zone*, *administrateur*, *encadreur de base* (CLC), livestock committee (CLC), ...
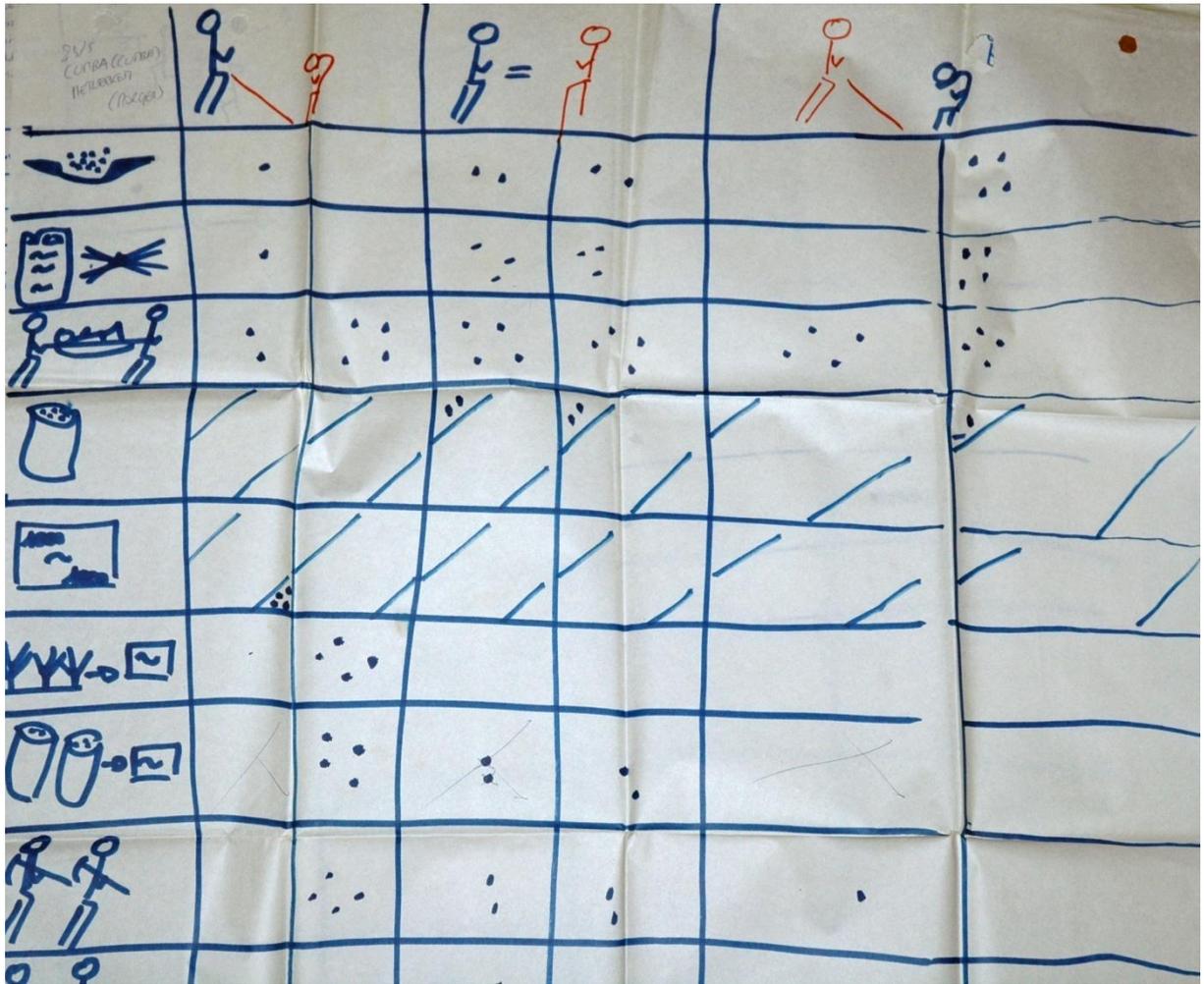
Resource exchange matrix (Cumba) – was used to differentiate between what kind of resources people gave/received through which kind of social networks. It was adapted from Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004) and tailored to the Burundian context. The left column represents the different resources which are exchanged between people. For example (from top to bottom): food rations, exchanging firewood or water, helping to transport a sick neighbour, access to seeds, access to cash, umugwazo, market transactions, abakozi, ...

Intervention Map (Burara) - was used as a variant of the venn diagram (itself too complex to be used properly). It presents a river which separated the NGO (vehicle) from the community population, and participants were asked to list and draw the different islands which the NGO vehicle should pass to bridge the river and arrive at the community. This way of working was very efficient. Several times, straightforward questions on the functioning of intermediation structures found no answer, or at least not a detailed one. However, during discussion, participants were occupied with drawing all these islands in the river, and only at the end it was asked if any of these mediating structures did not function well (in their words: NGO benefits failed to reach the other bank of the river and 'disappeared into the river'). In many cases, a much more animated discussion followed.

Annex 2: The CIBA project – Goal, Objectives, Expected Intermediary Results, and Activities

NOTE: All three NGOs have their own focus, which means that they do not cover all intermediary results. Also, this annex presents a summary of the entire project. Thus, not all listed activities have been implemented on the particular *collines* under study.

Program goal: Improve the Livelihood Security and reduce the vulnerability of households in targeted communes in Burundi.

Objective 1: Improve agricultural production in targeted communities

IR 1.1: Improved management of soil and water resources

- Rehabilitate inland valley wetlands for improved irrigation with community participation
- Train capacity of local committees in soil and water management and conflict resolution
- Oversee community watershed protection efforts (contour lines, agro-forestry, …)

IR 1.2: Improved access to diverse agricultural inputs

- Improve local access to goats
- Create community veterinary pharmacies and provide training to community veterinarians
- Train local tree nursery associations for continuation of agro-forestry
- Conduct on-farm trials of new varieties of seeds with farmers and farmers' groups
- Test, identify and multiply manioc varieties resistant or tolerant to Mosaic virus

IR 1.3: Increased adoption of good farming practices

- Provide farmers with land management, good farming practices, and other training
- Conduct training on technology transfer methodologies for Diocesan partners

Objective 2: Improve health and nutritional status of households in targeted communities

IR 2.1: Improved household hygiene and sanitation

- No activities (indirect through IR2.2)

IR 2.2: Increased access to water in selected communities

- Construct water sources and water points
- Train capacity of local water users committees in water management and conflict resolution

IR 2.3: Increased community support for people affected by HIV/AIDS

- Provide HIV/AIDS prevention information
- Improve access to high protein, biofortified food items for persons living with HIV/AIDS
- Improve access for persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families to crops that demand low labor input relative to other crops

IR 2.4: Improved knowledge, attitudes and practices of utilizing diverse foods

- Introduce concept of biofortified crops to farmers and households and provide seeds and technical support for on-farm testing

Objective 3: Promote agro-enterprise development and income generating activities in targeted communities

IR 3.1: Increased opportunities for farm and non-farm economic activities in targeted communes

- Create/train/build capacity of Agro-Enterprise Interest Groups
- Train Diocesan partners in Agro-Enterprise approach and methodology

- Assist formed Interest Groups to identify commodities with market opportunities, conduct market chain analysis for identified commodities, and the creation and implementation of agro-enterprise plans

IR 3.2: Improved management and organizational skills of targeted associations and farmers' groups

- No activities

IR 3.3: Increased market access

- Road rehabilitation.
- Reference to activities IR 3.1

Objective 4: Reduction of community level conflicts (with special attention to conflicts over natural resources).

IR 4.1. Mixed CBOs have increased their organizational capacity and increased their capacity for conflict resolution
IR 4.2. Local structures, local administration, and the community are engaged in conflict management.
IR 4.3. The capacities of these local structures are reinforced.

- For IR 4.1, 4.2. and 4.3 the main activities were trainings (natural resource management, conflict resolution, management of associations, …) given to the diverse local structures.

IR 4.4. The research on land issues is promoted and its results are valorised by the political decision makers.

- IR 4.4. was rather independent of the different concrete projects and communities, and was realized by a research unit based in Bujumbura.

Annex 3: The LITA project – Goal, Objectives, Expected Intermediary Results, and Activities

NOTE: All three NGOs have their own focus, which means that they do not cover all intermediary results. Also, this annex presents a summary of the entire project. Thus, not all listed activities have been implemented on the particular *collines* under study.

Program Goal: Improve the Livelihood Security and reduce the vulnerability of targeted communes in Burundi.

Objective 1. Improve agricultural production in targeted communities

IR1.1 Improved management of soil and water resources

- Identify sites to be fitted
- Carrying out technical analysis
- Establish a work plan with the participants
- Train members of monitoring and management committees
- Promote agro-forestry practices necessary for water and soil conserve
- Set up contour lines and biologic hedges for soil erosion control at hillside
- Set up drainage and irrigation infrastructures in marshlands
- Set up infrastructures to stabilize gullies
- Develop plans for community management of fitted infrastructure

IR 1.2 Improve access to diverse agricultural inputs

- Identification of participants and their needs
- Facilitate a relationship between suppliers of farmers inputs (seeds, chemicals, pesticides) and the associations involved in seed multiplication
- Support building of community and household storehouses for seeds storing
- Identify goats beneficiaries based criteria with partners
- Development of goat beneficiaries rotary plans with partners
- Preparing contracts for livestock loans (partners and communities)
- Acquire goats and supply them by partners
- Identification of sites for veterinary pharmacies

- Supporting building and equipment of the pharmacies
- Train associations and individuals involved in storage and supplying of agricultural inputs
- Set up a monitoring committee comprising farmers

IR 1.3 Increased adoption of good farming practices

- Identify farm appropriate techniques with partners and farmers
- Develop community capacity building plan based on gaps
- Select community workers and beneficiary committees to train
- Organize trainings for community workers in agric techniques
- Establish farmers training program with community workers
- Implement training of farmer program
- Organize cross visits with other communities (by partners)
- Establish pilot activities for technique demonstration (by partners)
- Providing communities with brochures on farming techniques
- Elaborate a community based monitoring and evaluation plan

Objective 2. Improve health and nutritional status of households in targeted communities

IR 2.1: Improved household hygiene and sanitation

- No Activities

IR 2.2: Increased access to water in selected communities

- No Activities

IR 2.3: Increased community support for people affected by HIV/AIDS

- Select new local associations dealing in HIV/AIDS within the region
- Establish a memorandum of understanding with existing associations
- Define with local associations the capacities needed to be reinforced
- Train local associations in partnerships with other local NGOs
- Train the local leaders, community workers and community in HIV issues
- Support local associations involved in assistance of HIV/AIDS infected persons

IR 2.4: Improved knowledge, attitudes and practices of utilizing diverse foods

- No Activities

Objective 3. Promote agro enterprise development and generating activities in targeted communities

IR 3.1 Increased opportunities for farm and non-farm economic activities in targeted communities

- Organise farmers associations in networking
- Facilitate the exchange of participants in the network
- Provide equipment for food commodity processing
- Survey on handicraft and other non-farm generating activities
- Identify income generating activities to be developed
- Facilitate linkage between associations & micro-finance institutions
- Sign memorandum of understanding with micro-finance institutions
- Monitor, review and evaluate the result

IR3.2 Improved management and organizational skills of targeted associations and farmers

- Train association members in developing of small economic activities
- Train associations members in marketing techniques
- Train associations members in micro-finance management
- Train associations in accounting techniques

IR 3.3: Increased market access

- No Activities

Objective 4: Reduction of community level conflicts (with special attention to conflicts over natural resources).

IR 4.1. Mixed CBOs have increased their organizational capacity and increased their capacity for conflict resolution
IR 4.2. Local structures, local administration, and the community are engaged in conflict management.
IR 4.3. The capacities of these local structures are reinforced.

- For IR 4.1, 4.2. and 4.3 the main activities were trainings (natural resource management, conflict resolution, management of associations, …) given to the diverse local structures.

IR 4.4. The research on land issues is promoted and its results are valorised by the political decision makers.

- IR 4.4. was rather independent of the different concrete projects and communities, and was realized by a research unit based in Bujumbura.

Annex 4: The CLC project – Goal, Objectives, Expected Intermediary Results, and Activities

NOTE: All three NGOs have their own focus, which means that they do not cover all intermediary results. Also, this annex presents a summary of the entire project. Thus, not all listed activities have been implemented on the particular *collines* under study.

Program Goal: Improved livelihood security and reduce the vulnerability of targeted communes in Burundi

Objective 1: Improve agricultural production in targeted communities

IR 1.1: Improved management of soil and water resources

- Training of staff
- Training of lead farmers
- Training of participant households
- Establishment/maintenance of demonstrations plots (model farms)
- Exchange visits
- Production of agroforestry trees in community tree nurseries
- Support to community reforestation initiatives

IR 1.2: Improved access to diverse agricultural inputs

- Collaboration with ISABU for improved varieties/new cultures
- Support to the establishment of commune level veterinary pharmacies
- Introduction of improved male goats and breeding programme
- Introduction of cow rotation credit system
- Support to the development of supplier links
- Purchase/propagation of strategic planting material

IR 1.3: Increased adoption of good farming practices

- Training of staff
- Training of lead farmers

- Training of participant households
- Establishment/maintenance of demonstrations plots (model farms)
- Exchange visits

Objective 2: Improve health and nutritional status of households in targeted communities

IR 2.1: Improved household hygiene and sanitation

- Training of trainers in hygiene and sanitation
- Training of participant households on hygiene and sanitation

IR 2.2: Increased access to water in selected communities

- No Activities

IR 2.3: Increased community support for people affected by HIV/AIDS

- Training of trainers in HIV/AIDS issues
- Training of participant households on HIV/AIDS issues
- Support to HIV/AIDS clubs

IR 2.4: Improved knowledge, attitudes and practices of utilizing diverse foods

- Training of trainers in health, nutrition and culinary practices
- Training of participant households on health, nutrition, culinary practices
- Establishment/maintenance of household vegetable gardens

Objective 3: Promote agroenterprise development and income generating activities in targeted communities

IR 3.1: Increased opportunties for farm and non-farm economic activities in targeted communes

- Identification of groups/associations involved
- Identification of appropriate income generating activities
- Provision of training and necessary inputs to launch activities
- Support to groups in accessing credit

IR 3.2: Improved management and organizational skills of targeted associations and farmers' groups

- Identification of motivated groups/associations
- Provision of training and technical support to groups/associations

IR 3.3: Increased market access (no activities)

Objective 4: Reduction of community level conflicts (with special attention to conflicts over natural resources).

IR 4.1. Mixed CBOs have increased their organizational capacity and increased their capacity for conflict resolution
IR 4.2. Local structures, local administration, and the community are engaged in conflict management.
IR 4.3. The capacities of these local structures are reinforced.

- For IR 4.1, 4.2. and 4.3 the main activities were trainings (natural resource management, conflict resolution, management of associations, …) given to the diverse local structures.

IR 4.4. The research on land issues is promoted and its results are valorised by the political decision makers.

- IR 4.4. was rather independent of the different concrete projects and communities, and was realized by a research unit based in Bujumbura.

Annex 5:   Maps

OCHA
Office for the
Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

BURUNDI PROVINCES AND COMMUNES

RWANDA

CIBITOKE
Mugina
Mabayi
Rugombo
Bukinanyana
Murwi
Buganda

KIRUNDO
Bugabira
Kirundo
Busoni
Giteranyi
Ntega
Bwambarangwe
Vumbi
Gitobe

MUYINGA
Marangara
Butihinda
Gashoho
Muyinga
Gasorwe
Buhinyuza

NGOZI
Nyamurenza
Mwumba
Kiremba
Gashikanwa
Tangara
Ngozi
Ruhororo

KAYANZA
Kabarore
Busiga
Kayanza
Muruta
Gahombo
Matara
Muhanga
Matongo
Butaganzwa
Rango
Bukeye

BUBANZA
Bubanza
Musigati
Gihanga
Mpanda
Rugazi

CANKUZO
Kigamba
Mishiha
Cankuzo
Gisagara
Cendajuru

KARUZI
Gitaramuka
Bugenyuzi
Buhiga
Mwakiro
Mutaho
Gihogazi
Mutumba
Nyabikere
Shombo

MURAMVYA
Mbuye
Bugendana
Muramvya
Rutegama
Kiganda
Giheta

BUJUMBURA MAIRIE

D.R. CONGO

BUJUMBURA RURAL
Mutimbuzi
Mubimbi
Isale
Kanyosha
Nyabiraba
Mutongomanga
Mutambu
Kabezi
Mukike
Muhuta
Bugarama

MWARO
Ndava
Rusaka
Nyabihanga
Kayokwe
Nyanrusange
Gisozi
Bisoro

GITEGA
Gitega
Makebuko
Gishubi
Itaba
Ryansoro
Bukirasazi
Buraza

RUYIGI
Bweru
Butezi
Ruyigi
Gisuru
Butaganzwa
Nyabitsinda
Kinyinya

RUTANA
Giharo
Musongati
Mpinga-Kayove
Rutana
Gitanga
Bukemba

BURURI
Mugamba
Matana
Buyengero
Burambi
Songa
Rutovu
Burambi
Bururi
Rumonge
Vyanda

Lake Tanganyika

MAKAMBA
Makamba
Kayogoro
Nyanza-Lac
Kibago
Vugizo
Mabanda

TANZANIA

Data Source

Administrative Boundaries: IGEBU, 2003

Map by: OCHA Burundi, 11 June 2004

OCHA-BDI-009-230604-E-A4

0   25   50
kilometres
SCALE 1:700,000

LEGEND
Province
Commune

N
W   E
S

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MAP LOCATOR

GITERANYI

Ngomo
Masaka Kijumbura
Cagakori
Nzove Ruzo Murama
Kayove
Vumasi Rusenyi Tura Kinanira
Bugoma Kabira Buhangara Gakoni
Mihigo Kinyami
Kagugu Rangiro Rumandari
Bisiga
Nonwe Giteranyi Gasenyi
Rugese
Karugunda
Ndava Mika Shoza
Rubenga Kabogo
Mangoma
Mugano
Mukoni

BUTIHINDA

Buhorana
Rabiro
Kinyuku Kobero
Kavumu
Cagizo Wingoma Ryabihira
Maruri Tangara
Mirwa Kinazi Kavumu
Gatwenzi Murama
Buvumbi Murehe Mwurire
Gitega Kamaramagambo
Musama Bunywana
Gikingo Murama Kinonora Rwamfu Gasasa
Bukambira Sunyarukiga Buvumbi Mugongo Mahonda Rugari
Njagatovu Bonero Gahehe Rugarama Gatongati Ruyivyi Musenyi
Gisabazuba Masaka Butihinda Maramwya Nibanda Ntamba
Nkonwa Kobero Busasa Nyamihondi Bucamihanga Munagano
GASHOHO Gisanze-Murengi Kivoga Sanzwe
Kagari Gisanze-Rugerero Karama Nyungu Rwimbogo Gahororo Gatovu
Bwisha Gishuha Munyinya **MUYINGA**
Gashoho Kinyami Bwasare Higiro Cibare Buhurana
Muruta Gisebeyi Jani Kinyota
Muyange Gishambutsa Kaguhu Kigogano Kiryama Centre Urban Karemera Nyamurumba
Cihonda **GASORWE** Kanira Kibogoye
Citwa Rukinzo Ngogomo Gasuru Bugomo Kwibuye Kibongera
Butirabura Masasu Mukoni Kayenzi Nkoyoyo Mageni
Gikwiye Kiryama
Kagunwe Kinama Mugungu Karambo Martyazo Ruganirwa Rusengo
Bihogo Kizi Bwica Musenga Gitaramuka
Rusimbuko Buringa Kivubo Nyamirambo Rarongwe Ntobwe Gasave
Kimanga Nyarusange
Mizuga Cumba Burenza Butihinda Bugungu
Rihinda Butihinda Kiyange
Nanganire Gihongo Nyankurazo Muramba
Kara Nyagishiru Bunywana
BUHINYUZA
Jarama Rugongo Kibimba Nyarunazi
Ruvumu Rugazi
Buhinyuza Karehe
Bukwazi Gitaba
Bonero Nabago
Nyabucugu
Mukungu Gaseny Nyaruhengeri
Rugabano
Kbande
Navuangoma Bugonza Kibongera Ciyanda
Kadende Kiyanza
Gahemba Kibwinai Karehe Musenga
MWAKIRO Kibwinai Kigajo Gahekenya
Rusheri Muyange
Rukanya Butobwe
Kagombe Gihoza Mwakiro Rurtyazo
Kabingo

Parc National de la Ruvubu

Scale: 1:400,000

8   0   8   16
Kilometers

This map can be downloaded from www.ochaburundi.org

Data Source
Administrative Boundaries: IGEBU, 2003

Map by: OCHA Burundi,   14 July 2004

OCHA-BDI-039-140704-E-A4

The boundaries and names shown and the
designations used on this map do not imply
official endorsement or acceptance by the
United Nations

L E G E N D
Commune
Colline

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KIRUNDO PROVINCE

OCHA — Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

MAP LOCATOR

BUGABIRA

BUSONI

Lac Rweru

KIRUNDO

Lac Cohoha Sud

NTEGA

BWAMBARANGWE

GITOBE

VUMBI
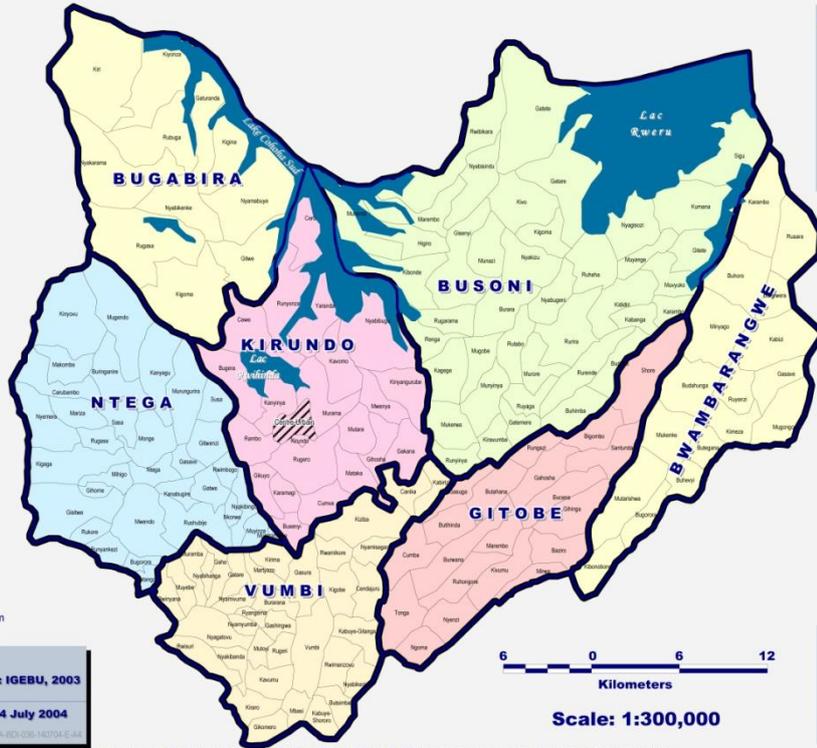
This map can be downloaded from
www.ochaburundi.org

Data Source
Administrative Boundaries: IGEBU, 2003

Map by: OCHA Burundi, 14 July 2004

Kilometers

Scale: 1:300,000

LEGEND
Commune
Colline

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