

**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: ACTION RESEARCH AMONGST  
PERI-URBAN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN BURUNDI**

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**LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: ACTION RESEARCH AMONGST PERI-URBAN  
HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN BURUNDI**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi are victims of sustained ethnic negativity, bias, stereotypes and animosity that lead to mistrust and violent interactions. Despite the agreement to ending hostilities in Burundi which was signed in 2000 in Arusha, Tanzania and which brought with it hope and possibilities for peaceful coexistence, both the Hutu and Tutsi youths carry wounded memories of lived or witnessed experiences of inter-youth violence which have not been addressed. They have continued learning self-defensive and destructive tactics which, instead of bringing them closer to each other, has deepened hatred, stigma, forcing some to leave the country for exile, killings each other, in addition to socio-politico-economic stalemate. The youths are manipulated and used as puppets by politicians to keep their positions and socioeconomic privileges while the youths continue crumpleing in intense poverty. Only the youths who accept to collaborate with political tycoons are rewarded with employment opportunities and other monetary benefits which entice most of them into political bling militantism which jeopardise stability and peacefulness. Using participatory action research (PAR) design, this study explored the nature, the causes and the consequences of the inter-ethnic negativity amongst the youth with the aim of rebuilding trust and ensuring there is peaceful coexistence amongst them. In total, 20 Hutu and Tutsi were equally included in the sample; they were split according to gender and ethnic groups and participated in the study as co-researchers. Social constructivism, the social learning theory of aggression and Lederach's conflict transformation frameworks were used throughout the stages of the investigation. Qualitative data was collected by means of sequential exploratory approaches via qualitative in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and PAR search conference tool. This engagement taped into intergenerational dialogue that was utilised as intervention along with peace circles to establish to which extent these paradigms can leverage trust and ignite reconciliation and healing between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha neighbourhood. It adopted the social constructivism worldview, and the transformative epistemology deemed necessary to gain insights about the inter-ethnic stereotypes and animosity suffered by the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. The same epistemological worldviews were used towards unlearning the negative inter-ethnic constructs. The results were obtained through triangulation of sources and data and the results that yielded. The overall findings exemplified the wounds mutually inflicted on the Hutu and Tutsi youths as a result of structural violence, and social and environmental factors as well. The study reveals that ethnicity is a significant trigger of recurring violence between Hutu and Tutsi youths in

Burundi. Inter-ethnic tensions are also just one of many consequences and symptoms of political power monopolisation, abuse, poor democratic governance and lack of accountability. The outcomes of the research are the following: (1) by participating in peacebuilding circles, the Hutu and Tutsi were empowered through the transformative un/learning and became peacebuilders and collaboratively designed; (2) planned and implemented intergenerational dialogue intervention forged the path of reconciliation between the two groups, namely the Hutus and Tutsis; (3) their interactions led to mutual forgiveness; (4) overall, empathy was rebuilt, forgiveness was enacted, trust was restored, and understanding was forged which proved that Participatory Action Research (PAR) and its search conference tool and intergenerational dialogue are key to peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The thesis concludes that peaceful coexistence is possible when parties to the conflict agree to discuss and collaborate on finding joint solutions to their contentious problems, especially ethnicity and other forms of structural violence that confront them and destroys the social fabric. Education institutions in Burundi should take the lead in the promotion of practice-oriented research in peace education and bottom-up peace building best practices. Future researchers should explore tailored peacebuilding efforts for specific regions and incorporate the perspectives and roles of high-level governmental institutions, educational experts, and school managers.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Ezechiel Nyabenda, declare that the present research entitled '*Living Together Again: Action Research amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi*' submitted for the PhD: Public Administration-Peace Studies at the Durban University of Technology represents original work by the author. It has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university worldwide.

Durban, 3 April 2025

Ezechiel Nyabenda

## **DEDICATION**

To the enduring memory of all youths and other victims of inter-ethnic human savagery and injustice across generations.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMIB	African Mission in Burundi
APA	African Proverbs App
APRA	Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement
AR	Action Research
AU STF	African Union Special Task Force
BINUB	Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi
BNUB	Bureau des Nations Unies au Burundi
CAJAVAT	Cadre des Jeunes Adultes Eveillés pour la Valorisation des Talents
CBO	Community-based organisations
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie- Forces de Défense de la Démocratie
CNL	Conseil National pour la Libération
CNU	Burundi Charter of National Unity
CPP	Consulting Psychologists Press
CUJPIA	Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs
D.C.	District of Columbia
DDR	Demilitarisation, Demobilisation and Reinsertion
DFID	Department for International Development
ELSC &C	Emergency Livelihoods and Social Cohesion & Cluster
EMJ	Emergency medicine journal
FAB	Forces Armées Burundaises
FNL	Front National de Libération
FRODEBU	Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi
FROLINA	Front pour la Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)
GCA	Global Ceasefire Agreement
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
JEDEBU	Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi
JPH	Jeunesse Patriotique Hutu
JRR	Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore

NASC	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NCCR	Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research
NTRC	National Truth and Reconciliation Commission
NY	New York
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONUB	Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi
PA-Amasekanya	Puissance d'Autodéfense Amasekanya
PALIPEHUTU	Parti Pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RDIRBC	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
SANDF	South Africa Protection Service Detachment
SCUP	Southern Cross University Press
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge for Youths' Empowerment
SLTA	Social learning theory of aggression
SMO	Service Militaire Obligatoire
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TKI	The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
TLPS	Timor Lorosa'e Police Service
UCP	University of Central Punjab
UCP	University of Chicago Press
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOY	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
UNTAC	The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAET	UN Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPRONA	Union pour le Progrès National
US	United States
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

## **PART I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This part incorporates the research problem and context.

### **CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROBLEM AND CONTEXT**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Relationships among the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi are poor with inter-ethnic tensions and unspeakable human rights violations that endanger the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (Falch and Becker 2008). The peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth population in Gihosha are engaged in political militantism, either as supporters or torchbearers of ideologies of political parties contesting for power and control, which have poisoned their thinking and revived the past ghosts of divisions along political and ethnic lines. Though many peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha did not witness genocide and ethnic cleansing in the past years, except for majority of young adults, most of the youth under 25 are lingering under the grip of a group of political elites and bombarded with haunting narratives of intergenerational violent crimes through political manipulators' scheme of brainwashing, indoctrination and incitement.

Accordingly, partisan treatment has created an ethical vacuum in peri-urban young Hutu and Tutsi livelihoods' including landlessness and material deprivation which often culminate in violent contacts, political intolerance and the criminalisation of the other (Allen 1995:308). To some extent, being tagged either as a Tutsi or a Hutu has become a conflict-inducing factor, making peaceful coexistence and constructive contacts unlikely between the peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi groups despite the Burundi Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and National Commission on Land and Other Assets known as (CNTB) instruments for reconciliation (Allen 1995:308). In all spheres of socio-political life, the risks are apparent that the situation might deteriorate further in the future and claim innocent lives again. Thus, the conflict between peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha highlight a pressing need for restoring trust and reconciliation for paving a way for them to live together again.

#### **1.2 KEY FACTS ABOUT BURUNDI**

Burundi is also known as *Republika y'Uburundi / République du Burundi / Republic of Burundi*. The form of government is known as a republic with two legislative bodies, the Senate and the National Assembly. The head of Government is the Prime Minister and the head of

State is the President assisted by a Vice-President. The population in the last census of 2022 was estimated at 12 890 000. The urban population was estimated at 17% in 2023 while the rural population was estimated to be 83% in 2023. The total area is 27 834 square km. The official languages are Kirundi and French but other languages used include Kiswahili, Arabic, English and Kinyarwanda (Reyntjens 2000:7).

### **1.2.1 Geography**

Burundi is a landlocked country bounded by Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, Lake Tanganyika to the southwest, and the DRC to the west (Daley 2006:658). It is one among a few historical kingdoms in Africa whose borders were not determined by colonial rulers. Burundi is hilly, mountainous and a landlocked country dropping to a plateau in the east with plains recognised as part of the Central Zambezian Miombo woodlands ecoregion in the southern and eastern peripheries. The economic capital city Bujumbura lies at the north-eastern end of Lake Tanganyika. The political city Gitega lies in the central region of Burundi at about 100 km from Bujumbura economic city. The old section of the city comprises buildings from the German and Belgian colonial periods (Uvin 2011:2; Berckmoes 2017).

### **1.2.2 Some Key Historical Issues**

After the scramble for Africa in 1884, Burundi fell under German Rule which ended with the Germans defeat in World War I (Uvin 2011:2). The mandate to rule over Burundi was then given to Belgium in 1916, who favoured the Tutsi minority over the Hutu majority. Since then, socio-politico-economic power has for long rested with the Tutsi minority who historically have controlled the army and most of the economy. In such context, Burundi has experienced patterns of warfare, which have worsened since its early days of independence from Belgium in 1962 giving rise to many rebel movements notably: PALIPEHUTU FNL, FROLINA, CNDD-FDD and many vigilante youth groups (Berckmoes 2017; Uvin 2007:39, Samii2013:222; Daley 2007:334).



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Cartographic Section

Figure 1: Political map of Burundi<sup>1</sup>

Burundi, whose political map is represented in Figure 1, is known as one of the poorest and risk-prone countries in terms of security and safety. Bloodshed has disgraced the whole country.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.un.org/depts/cartographic/map/profile/Burundi.pdf> (accessed 23 March 2023)

### 1.3 PROBLEM BACKGROUND

From a peacebuilding perspective, a critical examination of the inter-ethnic relations amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha shows that that most peri-urban youths have traumatic memories. Despite the power-sharing mechanisms implemented through consociational politics in Burundi since 2005 (Falch and Becker 2008), the unsettled slaughter, ferocity, negativity, mistrust, inter-ethnic biases and lack of constructive contacts (Berckmoes 2015) threaten peaceful coexistence. This adds to the pressures due to disappointments of failed expectations which urban youth theoretically dreamed of only to find themselves consigned to living in misery and dearth. The aftermath of seven deadly military coups, countless political assassinations, targeted ethnic cleansing, property seizure, flights, human hunting, ethnic subjugation and oppression marked Hutu and Tutsi cohabitation since the 1900s through 1962 and was then extended to the present generation, where the problem of superiority or inferiority has emerged through the divide-and-rule politics resulting in a polarised and unsafe nation for all. As a result, overt nepotism, inter-ethnic antagonisms and unfair treatment continue to claim innocent lives with appalling consequences for socioeconomic stability.

The alleged favouritism by colonial masters of the Tutsi minority (10–14%) over Hutus (85–90 %) (Uvin 1999: 253) occasioned latent and manifest legacies of violent conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis which has degenerated into spoils politics exercised today with respect to political assets, ethnic ties, affinities and patronage making peri-urban young people the most discontented generation of all time. Politically, the exercise of ‘winner-takes-all’ politics and ‘it’s our time to chop’ ideologies have left many ‘other’ peri-urban youths vengeful. Economically, the lack of occupational identity amongst peri-urban youths has culminated in grievances and greed. Currently, the peri-urban commune of Gihosha has become the hub for vigilantes youth groups who have resorted to vigilantism and militantism as paramilitary forces strategically positioned as watch dogs despite all peacebuilding attempts (Berckmoes 2015).

While the Tutsi and Hutu youths expected that the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi would lead to a decent life, good jobs and economic opportunities, nearly 85% of them lack access to decent jobs and employment opportunities (UNICEF 2020). More than 65% of the Burundian population is composed of youths, but their expectations are not met as the labour market has been closed to them by the ruling elites except for the lucky few who access employment opportunities through political militantism, clientelism and sustained protests. In actuality, while employment opportunities for youths should foster peace, resilience

and reconciliation, the exercise of political power based on patronage has widened the gap amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths (Paris 2010:337) and have thus accelerated young peoples' efforts to align themselves with political party elites for temporary gains (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:4). Unfair treatment and the prevalence of grievances (Emerson and Kilson 1965:17) continue even where consociational politics has been implemented through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi (Daley 2006; Vandeginste 2016).

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem explored in this research was investigating the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha neighbourhood with the objective of curbing such rampant negativity and restore trust and peacefulness amongst them. Although the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi agreed to engage in politics based on power-sharing (Falch and Becker 2008), attempts to achieve complete healing, reconciliation and trust restoration have remained elusive. As peacebuilding efforts seem not to have led to sustainable peace and genuine social cohesion, we observe today that the youth groups in Burundi have been neglected with regard to extent of their contributions to peacebuilding. The above does not discredit peacebuilding efforts and initiatives that led to the cessation of hostilities between fighting factions, but it exemplifies that the efforts have not focused on the Hutu and Tutsi youth groups, who have remained victims and subject to intergenerational violence.

#### **1.5 OVERALL AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

##### **1.5.1 Overall Aim**

The present research is tailored on the Sustainable Development Goal 16, which reads, 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' (UN 2015) and aims at reducing ethnic prejudice by exploring alternatives, possibilities and options for young Tutsi and Hutu's constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience in Burundi.

##### **1.5.2 Research Objectives**

To achieve the aim, the study embarks on meeting the following specific objectives:

1. To explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths.

2. To explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundians youths.
3. To conduct action research and find viable approaches based either on local wisdom or conventional peacebuilding theories to forge the paths of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among those youths.
4. To design and build together with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Bujumbura outskirts of Gihosha practical knowledge and intervention for improved interactions and peaceful coexistence.
5. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and implement them.

## **1.6 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

### **1.6.1 Research Assumptions**

Within all forms of research, it is of paramount importance for any researcher to identify the assumptions and worldviews he brings to the research enterprise (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer 2012). Latief (2009) emphasises that a researcher who undertakes to determine the relationships between two variables must believe that such relationships exist and that they are prone to discovery. Assuming that everything in this world is governed by a certain system, Latief (2009) emphasises that it is the duty of the researcher to determine the system believed to exist. As such, based on my own experiences of inter-ethnic violence in Burundi and the knowledge the researcher have acquired on the violent history of Burundi, the following assumptions are posited to guide this research:

- ❖ The socioeconomic vulnerabilities and lack of employment identity infuse inter-ethnic tensions and prejudices amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha.
- ❖ High politicisation of key socio-political sectors hinders youths from thinking independently while they remain abused by the political elites to maintain control of both resources, people and power.
- ❖ Young Hutu and Tutsi youths alone cannot achieve sustainable peaceful coexistence without the collaboration and the involvement of adults and other grassroots level members and actors.

- ❖ Political leaders and elites continue to dividing the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi by planting the seeds of political intolerance and by cementing divisions on the basis of political belongings and beliefs.
- ❖ There are no strong and unbiased socio-politico-economic policies and initiatives for debunking the stereotypes and building trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi.
- ❖ Ethnic negativity and mistrust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are due to the unaddressed grievances from past violent inter-ethnic clashes and the lack of genuine judicial mechanisms to curb cyclical power abuse by politicians.

### **1.6.2 Research Hypotheses**

As Creswell (2008) posits, researchers place signposts to carry out their study. Among them include hypotheses which are predictions that involve testing some variables. As far as this research is concerned, the following hypotheses are articulated:

- ❖ The Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha can achieve peaceful coexistence and restore mutual trust if efforts to bring them together are made.
- ❖ The trigger causes and facilitating factors of inter-ethnic enmity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are embedded in the political manipulation of ethnicity.
- ❖ Implementing conflict transformation interventions that involve robust participation and the buy-in by all youth categories is best option for improving the relationships and restoring trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in general and in Gihosha in particular.
- ❖ Prioritising intergenerational dialogue is best option for empowering not only the Hutu and Tutsi youths, but also generations of adults to addressing the ethnic dividers embedded in their local communities.
- ❖ If the Hutu and Tutsi youths are empowered and brought together into collaborative peacebuilding circles, they would be instrument of change and active co-creators of the desired future.

### **1.7 THE STUDY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To achieve the above aim and objectives of this research, four theories were favoured namely social constructivism alongside Bandura's social learning theory of aggression Lederach's conflict transformation theory, peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue approaches. As such, this investigation conceptualises inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi

youths in Burundi as learned aggression by means of reinforcement of interactions and attitudes across generations. The study conceptualises that the Hutu and Tutsi youths are pitchers that have been filled with negativity imposed by structural factors, social interactions and values. In this angle, the study sees that the possible interventions for trust restoration, healing and peacefulness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi need to adopt the Lederach's conflict transformation theory which has the capacity for influencing behaviours, altering social norms and beliefs and improving inter-ethnic relations.

### **1.7.1 The Social Learning Theory of Aggression**

In the framework of Bandura, 'people are not born with preformed repertoires of aggressive behaviour; they must learn them' (Bandura 1978:14). In his reasoning, Bandura observes that all forms of aggression, whether military, revenge or any other form of aggressive behaviour stem from three sources. He points to learning by observation, re-enforced performance and structural determinants as the main origins of aggressive behaviours amongst the human species (Bandura 1978:14). He notes that modelling influences, incentive inducements, aversive treatment, instructional control and bizarre symbolic control are key instigators of aggressive behaviours in social learning. Above all, he points to regulators of aggression which include external reinforcement, tangible rewards, social and status rewards, expressions of injury, alleviation of aversive treatment, punishment, vicarious re-enforcement, self-re-enforcement, moral justification, victims' dehumanisation, diffusion of responsibility of blame to victims, and perversion of adverse effects. Thus, as Bandura holds, the whole notion of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is stems from observational learning coupled with practical re-enforcement.

Bandura reasons that learning starts with observation upon seeing aggressive behaviour. Favouring conditions, retention and memory of aggressive behaviour often lead to reproduction wherever motivation occurs. The family stands out as the main nucleus in modelling and reinforcing aggressive behaviour followed by the subculture in which individuals live. He has developed three theories on motivation of aggression namely: instinct theory whereby the natural aggressive instinct leads to aggressive behaviour; drive theory whereby frustration stands as aggressive drive leading to aggressive behaviour; and social learning theory where aversive experiences or incentive inducements add to emotional arousal or anticipated consequences, all of which culminate in adverse behaviour (Bandura 1978: 17). Akers and Jennings (2016) who are amongst key proponents of the social learning theory emphasise the

influence that peoples' interactions have on others in their peer groups and residence and which are prone to alter individual behaviours.

### **1.7.2 The Conflict Transformation Theory**

Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework perceives conflict transformation as a way of looking as well as seeing where we look at the context of the relationships involved. He highlights that the concept of conflict transformation involves envisioning and addressing the complexities that arise from social conflicts by focusing on possibilities that promote life-enhancing outcomes, aiming to create constructive changes that reduce violence and strengthen human relationships (Lederach 2014:16).

Thus, the concept of transformation bears much on conflict, time and change. While conflict is inevitable, Lederach (2012) opines that conflict transformation should be regarded as an extension of conflict resolution. Thus, the notion 'resolution' technically suggests the ultimate goal to put an end to undesired realities while the idea of 'transformation' indicates seeking new realities and possibilities for radical change to an undesirable situation. Ideally, the conflict transformation perspective is relationship-centred and aims to end something destructive through the promotion of constructive change processes with a strong emphasis on immediacy. Otherwise, the notion of 'transformation' seeks to incorporate the framework of relationships and local social context into peacebuilding efforts (Paffenholz 2014).

### **1.7.3 Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding, as Lederach (1997) envisions, is a non-linear transformative procedure inspired by ideals of peace, justice, truth and mercy and humanness. This change entails intrinsic personal transformation as well as short and long-term structural renovation, relational renewal and cultural revitalisation (Miall 2004).

Contrary top-down initiatives (Cooper, Turner and Pugh 2011:1998), effective peacebuilding in the African context requires incorporating local knowledge where participation and inclusivity is favoured, namely, a bottom-up approach (Dietrich 2002:50). This local participation helps to transcend political and economic aspects which are the most recurring dynamics of violence involving young people. Thus, local peacebuilding processes reveal deep-seated dynamic expressions of concealed mental trauma lived or experienced by perpetrators or victims, such as ideology, resentment and hostility (Lederach, 2005). Such a

noble task entails conceiving a more elaborate pattern of experiences, perceptions, affective behaviour and rationality as the best option for eradicating violence and bringing about peace (Stremlau 2016).

#### **1.7.4 Intergenerational Dialogue as Peacebuilding Approach**

The afore-mentioned paradigm of local peacebuilding certainly helps in bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality through dialogue, collaboration and integration (Peace Direct 2019:13). This points to the role of intergenerational dialogue. In curbing violence involving the youth, they were involved in collective local peaceful endeavours in various ways (Bush 1998). The culture of peace is defined by the Hague Appeal for Peace (2003-2005) as a holistic process involving participation in democratic and human rights education to ensure that peace and sustainable development finds its real meaning. When the youth are led into understanding trigger factors of violence and suspicion by revisiting violence and its causes (Galtung 1969:169), they become aware of their predicament. In such circumstances, they opt for participation into sustainable endeavours through local knowledge valuation and by using local transformative and psychosocial trauma-healing mechanisms (Garzon and Burkett 2002).

Therefore, this research focuses on curbing the inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths using the social un/learning theory of aggression to explore and scrutinise experiences of learned aggression and their implications for living together amongst the Hutu and Tutsis. In addition, the research delves into exploring possibilities for trust restoration and peaceful coexistence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths through the lens of Lederach's conflict transformation approach.

#### **1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH TO SCHOLARLY KNOWLEDGE**

This research seeks to contribute knowledge on peacebuilding scholarship and practice by exploring participatory conflict transformation initiatives. The study aims to contribute to academic discussions by showing that parties involved in conflicts, who are typically seen as passive subjects, should instead be empowered to become researchers themselves. This allows them to actively engage in finding solutions to challenging situations and take ownership of peacebuilding efforts. The study is tailored to contribute to policymaking by demonstrating that peacebuilding interventions should not be envisaged from top-down perspectives or from donors' lenses. It contributes to the general understanding that locally led collaborative peacebuilding endeavours underpinned by equal participation is a practical framework for

effectively dealing with protracted and intergenerational negativity. The study also builds on peacebuilding practical insights to demonstrate that desired futures and change can be reached when all stakeholders are involved and intentionally agree to engage in attitude and behavioural change.

### **1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on the peri-urban locality of Gihosha, located in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura Municipality, on the northern outskirts of Bujumbura city. Historically inhabited by middle-class Burundians, primarily public servants and small-scale businessmen, Gihosha provided convenient access to the former capital, now the economic hub of Burundi. The area's population, a multi-ethnic mix, consists largely of migrants from rural areas and other cities. Gihosha has been a longstanding site of violent conflict, serving as a battleground for decades between rebel movements and government forces, with youth vigilante groups still active today. Its strategic location near mountainous rural areas, where various rebel factions like the FNL, CNL, and CNDD-FDD established strongholds during ethnic violence, has contributed to its turbulent history. Gihosha is also home to the University of Burundi's Kamenge campus and Holy Spirit Lycée, where many Hutu youths went missing during successive crises.

The neighbourhood is considered a focal point of the ethnic violence in 1965, 1972, and 1993, which resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, predominantly Hutus. Since the 2015 protests against the contested third term of the late President Pierre Nkurunziza, Tutsi youths in Gihosha have been particularly targeted, and many have fled the area, leaving behind families fearful for their safety. Youths who are not affiliated with the CNDD-FDD party are often regarded as rebels or opposition supporters and are monitored by the *Imbonerakure*, the ruling party's youth league. Today, the area is marked by a tense atmosphere, with ongoing questions about the identity of those responsible for mass murder, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances, as well as lingering bitterness, reflected in polarised memories and experiences of violence (Reyntjens 2000).

### **1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The main challenges faced in this research are threefold. For one, an important limitation to this research was the fact that the study used small ratios which means that the researcher was not able to generalise the results.

Another challenge concerned logistics arrangement. The researcher initially intended not to give any monetary fee to participants but given that the researcher worked with youths who were financially destitute, he reimbursed their transportation fees, in addition to providing refreshments. When the search conference<sup>2</sup> and the intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention were conducted, the researcher provided food and refreshments because he recognised that the participants might be exhausted from travelling.

Furthermore, organising the peacebuilding circles presented their own challenges such as bringing together people from diverging and often antagonistic groups. It required empathy, neutrality and a sense of strong leadership and lobbying to succeed.

## **1.11 DEFINITIONS OF KEY OPERATIONAL TERMS**

Before delving into the problem, it is necessary to understand the meanings ascribed to the following key operational concepts: conflict, conflict transformation, peace, peacebuilding, aggression.

### **1.11.1 Conflict**

To gain insight into the meaning of ‘conflict’ requires understanding the complexity of relationships in terms of behaviours and actors at individual, group, community, stakeholders and national levels. Thus, the Igarape Institute (2018:6) refers to conflict as long-drawn-out disagreements that adversely affect people, their development and peacefulness and social cohesion. Lambert and Myers (1999) look at conflict as a struggle or competition between people who present opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. For Lambach (2007) ‘conflict’ connotes conditions marked by aggressiveness perpetrated by various role players. In their seminal analysis, Miall, Ramsbotham and Tom (2011:11) propound that ‘conflict’ is an unavoidable feature of collective change’ marked by distinct values, beliefs, interests that require intelligent choices and shifts in our habits for common ground to be reached.

As can be seen above, the word ‘conflict’ is fluid. In a sense, conflict is best understood in relation to principal events and motifs involved including the underlying processes driving it.

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<sup>2</sup> The search conference is an action research tool used for participatory planning and problem-solving, particularly in community development, organisational change, and strategic planning. It is designed to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders – such as members of an organisation or community – who collaborate in identifying shared goals, challenges, and actionable strategies to address a complex issue or future direction

Thus, in this research, the concept ‘conflict’ includes all forms and varieties of human aggression perpetrated against other human beings.

### **1.11.2 Aggression**

In their seminal work, Tucker, Turner, Barling and McEvoy (2009:2) posit that social learning theorists agree that individuals learn how to behave in many ways such as by observation, imitating the performance of prominent people around them. On this note, aggression is best understood as an interlocking and multivariate concept, which, amongst many other respects, is a salient type of behaviour leading to personal injury and physical destruction (Bandura 1978:12).

However, the causes of aggressive behaviour are contested and subjectively appraised based on intention and causality, leading to different conceptions and theories that account for violence. This plethora of views of aggression and the multi-layered variables accounting for the ensuing victimisation requires a thorough examination of root causes, including familial influences, social structures, and the impact of mass media.

Considered from the perpetrator and victim lenses, the fact is that physical violence, the intentional and direct infliction of damage on persons, including physical suffering, bodily harm and violent death (Igarape Institute 2021:6), are forms of aggression that state agencies often use. Moreover, other forms of aggressive behaviour involve reactionary antagonism usually triggered by provocation or threats, in addition to instrumental aggression that usually manifests itself as a means to an end (Hsieh and Chen 2017:2). As a result, where aggression abounds, the likelihood of negative responses is inevitable when reinforcement and development of cognitive expectancies are learned through observational learning (Erdley et al. 2010: 41).

For this study, this research explores all forms of aggression although ethnic violence in Burundi is the most salient form of discrimination (Greenland 1976:101). This allows for the consideration and recognition of all forms of aggression and violent behavioural characteristics of the Hutu and Tutsi throughout history. This sets the stage for scrutinising the extent of the Hutu and Tutsi atrocities and aggression that permeate the Burundian social fabric.

### **1.11.3 Conflict Transformation**

In the debate on conflict transformation, Lederach's approach and definition to a great extent encompass all one needs to envisage for peace to prevail. To prevent replication, the researcher uses the definition that conflict transformation is the process of responding to negative issues through possibilities that create a positive change in human relationships (Lederach 2014:16).

As such, with regards to the protracted inter-ethnic negativity prevailing amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youth, and given the fivefold objective of this research, this researcher focuses on finding options for sustainable, peaceful coexistence by changing the narratives amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. In this perspective, by determining the nature, causes and consequences of such inter-ethnic stereotypes and bias, this research contributes to lessening the negative tensions and rifts by increasing peacebuilding ownership and participation by all youth categories, adults and other grassroots partners for positive change to occur.

### **1.11.4 Peace**

Discussing the concept of peace requires considering many facets that need serious exploration. This is because people conceive peace differently depending on their cultures from which they come. Many scholars agree that peace refers to a state of mind and a situation in which a person feels secure and free from any psychological, physical, political and economic threats (Crawford and Church 2020:5; Gerwin 1991:76). While the debates continue that peace should not be thought of as mere absence of war and hostilities (Gerwin 1991:75), researchers agree that in some cases, especially in the realm of political strife, peace can be demarcated as the absence of war (Martin 2005:45) and agencies (Ekwealor and Mtshali 2016:26). Speaking of the Roman word '*pax*' in the same vein as the Greek word '*eirene*', Anderson (1985:101) associates it with 'a state of affairs' and thus thinks of peace as 'the absence of war'.

### **1.11.5 Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding is understood by many scholars as a web of interventions that attempt to overcome existing structural, interpersonal and cultural struggles that fuel conflict in order to underpin the processes of peacemaking and peacekeeping. It is the 'removal of causes of wars' by offering alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur (Galtung 1976: 297-298). Reychler (2001), Karbo (2008) and Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2011) posit that

peacebuilding is a process seeking conflict transformation and motivated by the achievement of sustainable peace and change.

Referring to the UN- Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's vision of peace building in post-conflict scenarios, Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell and Sitea (2007:35) define it as 'action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict'. Maina (2015:43) defines peacebuilding as 'a process that seeks to prevent, reduce, transform and help people recover from violence in all forms'. The UN-Brahimi Panel Report 2000 (cited in Zittel 2002) concluded that peacebuilding is an aggregate of multivariate programmes and mechanisms encompassing political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights interventions that seek to prevent the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of armed conflict, violence or social tensions.

Thus, beyond cultural dependency, the success of sustainable peace depends on a number of *sine qua non* conditions, based on the knowledge that 'people do not want to be pushed around, especially in their own country' (Zittel 2002:502). So, the first step should start where conflict gives place to negative peace which is sanctioned by violence or war (Galtung 1976: 2). Secondly, as a way to sustainable peace, Karbo (2008:116) highlights that positive peace should triumph and is construed in terms of structural and social stability where the drivers of violence are decreased. Reilly (1998:136) holds that both negative and positive peace should be cemented by democratic practices favouring their initiation, construction and sustainability. One should note the particular relationship between sustainable peace and systemic transformation of relationships as per Lederach (1999:31).

#### **1.11.6 Intergenerational Dialogue**

Envisaged in peacebuilding, intergenerational dialogue is defined as a dual or multiway method of communication founded on active listening and mutual learning practices between members of different generations which is meaningful for all parties (Tanghøj 2023). Fishbane (2005) considers intergenerational dialogue as a form of therapy by noting its many uses which can be extended to addressing many human challenges and issues including people facing distress in their relationships. Noting that unknown legacies, secrets and allegiances often result in inner struggles that affect families, individuals and entire generations, Fishbane (2005) highlights that embracing intergenerational therapy can heal protracted distress and dilemmas and break down the cycle of intergenerational resentment and tensions, thus culminating in peace.

Thus, while generations have different perspectives and approaches regarding society and history (Schmitt, Hinner and Kruse 2015), the concept of intergenerational dialogue is an important ingredient that bridges the gap between generations and people from different age groups by nurturing a shared communal model of narratives based on positively true, personal and helpful lived experiences and stories (Wallace, Pasick, Berman and Weber 2014). While the intergenerational dialogue approach to redressing societal issues and challenges is a special type of empowering knowledge that increases awareness and critical consciousness, it equally enables people to develop their own concepts of generational equity and provides tools for realising a desired future (Tanghøj 2023).

## **1.12 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.12.1 Research Approach**

This study was premised on participatory action research (PAR). It used the search conference AR tool cycle to deter mutual suspicion amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha community. Typically, PAR involves a series of small-scale investigations involving collaboration and participation of people experiencing the problem through three main phases namely the exploration of a problem, planning and implementing an intervention, and evaluating the short-term outcomes.

Bailey et al. (2001:134) rightly point out that action research aims at solving problems by thoroughly altering a certain aspect of practice resulting in enhanced practice, new knowledge and understanding. They highlight the pertinacity of the participants in solving problems in the situation under exploration. Thus, the aim of PAR is to turn participants into researchers who become involved in examining their personal practice culminating in new knowledge and new practices leading to new action and change. That new knowledge and new practice are vital to this study as they point to the concrete stages that will be undertaken by Hutu and Tutsi youths towards effecting constructive contacts as they are best placed to address the problem and find alternatives to improve their relationships and understanding.

Thus, the PAR approach in this research aligns with the need to devise new alternatives and develop new ways that would lead to peaceful contacts and end mutual suspicion between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha area. Likewise, the PAR nature of this study resulted in an intervention which was planned and implemented to ensure peaceful coexistence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi.

### **1.12.2 Research Design**

This research is qualitative and adopts the PAR methodology. Qualitative research aims to investigate a social phenomenon, in this case the inter-ethnic tensions in the natural setting of Gihosha neighbourhood. It uses a small samples of participants, i.e., 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths while the researcher is the measurement device (Dornyei 2011: 39). Creswell (2018) holds that qualitative approach to a study adheres to certain research principles including reasons for the choice of the research location, of participants and the planned activities to be carried out at the site, the researcher's role and reflexivity in the study. The qualitative nature of this study entailed an in-depth exploration of the participants' attitudes and opinions on possibilities of positive contacts amongst youths through constant and intensive experience with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths over a period of 12 months.

Meurer et al. (2007:1065) opine that in qualitative research, data is obtained from a small group of contributors and is not evaluated using numerical techniques. They add that data in qualitative research is obtained from descriptions of cases and settings using observations, interviewing, and document review, all of which contribute to a thorough exploration of the problem and a detailed understanding of participants' behaviours, motivations and attitudes. Thus, the qualitative design in this research ensured an in-depth scrutiny of the nature and magnitude of negative interactions and lack of contact in the natural setting of Gihosha neighbourhood by focusing on understanding the meanings which young Hutu and Tutsi hold. The validity of this qualitative study and the robustness and reliability of ensuing findings and conclusions thus emerged through triangulation of data sources and methods involved.

### **1.12.3 Population and Sampling**

According to McMillan and Schumaker (2002:85), the population represents elements conforming to a set of standards. The population involved in this research comprised young Hutu and Tutsi currently living in Gihosha neighbourhood. According to the Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi (ISTEEBU) (2021), Gihosha neighbourhood has a population of about 8 890 people. Youth are officially aged 18–34, but the researcher focused on younger youths aged 20–25 who are likely to be unmarried and without children.

Sampling involves selecting a small group of representatives of a relatively larger population without involving everyone (Adler and Clark 2011: 100). This study used purposive selection of participants amongst young people belonging to different political parties and those who see

themselves as non-affiliated to political groups who are currently living in Gihosha and who have been living in the area for at least 3 years. The purposive sampling method entails that the researcher purposely identifies participants using pre-established characteristics related to competencies and other criteria that assume that respondents will be able to deliver relevant data (Oliver 2010).

In terms of sample size, there is no scientific way of deciding on sample size in qualitative studies of this kind. Various research methods texts (e.g. Creswell and Creswell 2018) indicate that between 12 and 20 for interviews is a suitable number. The researcher chose to work with 20 youth aged between 20 and 25. The 20 participants were 10 Hutus and 10 Tutsis and these were further divided into equal groups of males and females. In summary, the sample consisted of five Hutu males, five Hutu females, five Tutsi males and five Tutsi females.

### **1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research is presented in five parts which encompass nine chapters. Part I is the general introduction, Part II is a review of related literature, Part III looks at the research methods, Part IV deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation while Part V concerns the conclusions.

The first chapter presents the research problem and context. It presents key facts about Burundi and scrutinises the issue of inter-ethnic violence and its impact on relations between the Hutu and Tutsi youths. It presents the aim, the specific objectives of the research and the theoretical aspects of the study. It also presents the rationale of the study, defines key concepts, provides an overview of the research design and approach, and the theoretical framework as a lens on inter-ethnic tensions involving the youths in Africa.

Part II comprises Chapter 2 which reviews literature pertaining to the background of the study. In the main, it scrutinises factors of protracted inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi and presents some examples of violent occurrences. It overviews some traditional and contemporary approaches to conflict transformation in Burundi.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical foundations that underpin this study. In the main, it presents Bandura's social learning theory of aggression and as a way of viewing the inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi in the first instance. Furthermore, this

chapter overviews global perspectives on conflict transformation in the context of violence prevention and peacebuilding. Lederach's conflict transformation theory is used as a basis for unlearning the social construction of inter-ethnic negativity and for rebuilding trust in Burundi. The chapter presents peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue as complementary approaches in addressing the aim and specific objectives of this research.

Chapter 4 presents successful cases and experiments based on the suggested theories. The chapter presents a holistic picture of transformation and focuses on the processes of transformation, not in terms of isolated conflict transformation efforts, but rather as a journey that encompasses several complementary approaches. Thus, the chapter looks at successful cases of conflict transformation and the relevant approaches that have led to peace and change in respective contexts. Key reviewed conflict transformation cases include Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Nepal, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Kenya and Northern Ireland.

Part III starts with Chapter and presents the research design and methodology. It discusses the PAR design, its origins and principles. The chapter overviews in detail the epistemology of social constructivism and discusses its importance throughout this research. It rationalises the use of the search conference AR and its implications for diagnosing the problem, planning and implementing interventions.

Part IV includes Chapter 6 which presents data collected from the field and highlights the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. The chapter presents findings from the pre-full-scale research phase, data from interviews, focus groups discussions, dialogue, search conference and intergenerational dialogue intervention. The data is visualised using the NVIVO software to help the reader grasp the interconnectedness between different concepts and categories that emerged.

Chapter 7 focuses on analysing and interpreting thematically the data presented in Chapter 6 and made sense of the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. The data analysis process adopted the interpretative paradigm. The chapter shows that it is not well in a Gihosha neighbourhood due to unremitting structural, physical and emotional violence that the youths and adults alike are faced with. It explored the possibilities for Hutu and Tutsi to live together again and ends with a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 8 highlights the validity of the data in relation to the theme under investigation, the aim of the research, the specific objectives and the hypotheses. The chapter discusses the

findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks applied to the research namely the social learning theory of aggression, the conflict transformation theory, peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue.

Lastly, Part V which comprises Chapter 9 concludes the study by synthesising the findings of this research in relation to trust restoration and healing amongst the Hutu and Tutsis youths, in particular and the Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi in general. The chapter discusses the implications for the peacebuilding practice and formulates recommendations for action. These relate to what the government and policymakers can do, the role of civil society and community-based organisations, international organisations and the role of the Hutu and Tutsi youths, the contribution from educational institutions. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research, notably investigating the propensities for full-scale ethnic violence across the Great Lakes region given that Burundian Hutus and Tutsis youths are involved in fighting factions and rebel groups whose headquarters are distributed across the region.

#### **1.14 SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced the study and comprised the research problem and context. The problem background underscored the protracted nature of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban neighbourhood of Gihosha. It pointed to the general atmosphere prevailing amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and unveiled triggers of the enmity which informed the research aim, the research specific objectives and the research design and research approach. Key concepts pertaining to the research were provided including the theoretical framework and the research limitations. This chapter presented an overview of pertinent literature on inter-ethnic violence across Africa and pointed to the universal nature of negative contacts amongst conflicting youth groups and provided briefly some possibilities and options used for mitigating them. Thus, the chapter offered a foundation for engaging the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the PAR using the search conference tool as a pathway towards trust restoration, healing and reconciliation by means of participatory interventions.

## **PART II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **CHAPTER 2: FACTORS OF PROTRACTED INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS AMONGST HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Since independence, Burundi has been plunged into cyclic ethnic rifts which until today have not ceased to claim innocent lives. Manifested by social divisions, the relationships between the majority Hutu population and Tutsi minority have remained tense leading to aggression and a struggle for power control. Meanwhile, scholars and practitioners concur that protracted conflicts usually emerge when goals are incompatible. The root causes that fuel such incompatibility are often hard to fathom. This chapter seeks to scrutinise key trigger factors and causes of the long-lasting waves of violence that have prevailed amongst the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi. The extent of military coups, assassinations, insurgencies and ethnic divides that have existed between the two ethnic groups certainly result from an array of complex roots with deeply ingrained ethnic-grievances (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:7).

Before delving into factors of protracted inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, it is worth noting that inter-ethnic tensions are a rampant issue throughout the world. A glimpse into the socio-politico-economic relations in multi-ethnic countries in Africa, suggest that ethnic youth groups often clash due to socioeconomic and political and ethnic differences.

#### **2.2 PRIMARY FACTORS EXPLAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN THE HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS**

Though there is no straightforward explanation for the aggression between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, scholars consider that colonialism, competition, fear, political-strategic motivations, deep partisan motivations, ethnicity, political behaviour and regional identity are key factors causing immense anxiety (Samii 2013:220). As noted by Ndula (2006:199) and Uvin (2009:26), the nation of Burundi agonised under the yoke of racism and ethnicity perpetuated by colonial patrons. Bandura (1977:13) notes that the more fortunate the citizenry, the more they tend to see aggression for public control as lawful while the less fortunate view such propensity as institutional aggression.

Literature has interrogated why aggression between the Hutu and Tutsi youths has developed amongst people who used to live together quietly, who often intermarry, share everything, go to the same schools, worship in the same church and live together (Greenland 1976). In response to the issue, most critics hold that the aggressive behaviour between the Hutu and Tutsi youths is embedded in socio-political, economic and cultural events and experiences that have been nurtured and degenerated into rifts along ethnic lines since the colonial era (Fein 1993; Turner 2008). In this sense, ethnic aggression in Burundi results from community rifts whose fault lines extend to political power and economic wealth (Uvin 1999:255). Rwantabagu (2010:346) considers that a crisis of morality and the collapse of traditional values in society have led to tense social relationships that have existed for more than six decades between the Hutus and Tutsis.

Indeed, the dynamics of aggression between the Hutu and Tutsi are best explained by Bandura's social learning theory of aggression in multivariate ways. In his reasoning, Bandura (1978:18) argues that the type of behaviour elicited is usually a copy of learned and modelled behaviour of adults observed in social contexts. For years, each generation of Hutu and Tutsi alike have been exposed to violence and aggressive behaviour which have shaped, nurtured and rapidly spread collective aggression (Bandura 1978:16). The political context has served as a fertile ground for social learning, intensifying deep-rooted and widespread prejudice through the moral exclusion of the Hutu, often leading to violence and physical death (Staub 1990:51).

The social impact of exclusion and violent clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi was so profound that the frustrated Hutu began to formulate collective aggressive intentions and plans for 'violent reprisals' (Kreuzer 2002:84). As Hutu experienced ongoing deprivation, they became more bitter and violent against the Tutsi's hegemony and they justified their actions as a moral obligation and struggle for survival (Bar-Tal and Warren 1993:9). Widespread discontent grew among the Hutu, while the Tutsi minority continued to brutally oppress them on the basis of their ethnicity, using this approach to maintain control of political power and, in turn, accumulate wealth and prestige (Uvin 1993: 266). In Bandura's terms, this is a multi-determinant factor, a significant source of emotional arousal likely to escalate into heightened human aggression (Bandura 1977:18).

Given the scale of ethnic aggression in Burundi, the structural role of ideological reinforcement on both Hutu and Tutsi cannot be ignored. In his analysis of how perpetrators of violent

aggression express their fear of revenge, Uvin (1993: 266) found that offenders often resort to various forms of aggression and fabricated defensive attacks to protect themselves and rationalise their violent actions as legitimate. Uvin's (1993:266) examination of the dynamics of ethnic aggression between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi underscores the continuity of cycles of ideological violence, taking Rwanda and Burundi as examples. He estimates that unfortunate events in either country are manipulated and used to justify their suspicions and subsequent violence. Aggressive crimes which included inhuman cruelty and brutality against innocent, disillusioned Hutu were committed to satisfy the perpetrators' ideological desires (Greenland 1976:110).

### **2.3 DRINKING FROM A POISONED CUP: ETHNICITY AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION AMONGST BURUNDI YOUTH GROUPS**

Trends in post-independence Burundi were characterised by unfortunate unrest. Military coups, regional rivalries and ethnic negativity (Daley 2006:659) depleted the country's socioeconomic and cultural fabric. Inherited from colonial masters, the Tutsi elites used ethnic and region-based favouritism to abuse power and resources (Persson and Sjostedt 2012). Successive regimes and military power holders failed to ensure the safety and security as divisions and sectarianism continued unabatedly.

Most of the generations that took part in the Burundi conflict fell victim to manipulation and indoctrination initiated by colonial masters then protracted by the fortunate Tutsi elites who took over the leadership and management of the country after independence. Political leaders incited widespread hatred which had devastating effects amongst the Hutu. This manipulation created sentiment for revenge and sparked more human violence (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:7; Uvin 2009). In such context, ethnic aggression prevailed for decades and failure to address human security has aggravated economic, social, political and cultural discrimination that adversely affected subsequent generations (Greenland 1976:123). Thus, both the Hutu Tutsi elites fuelled ongoing intergenerational campaign against one another (Daley 2006:671).

In order to understand the political game involved in Burundi youths' indoctrination, it is worth noting the strategies adopted by the mainstream politicians to achieve that aim. First, given that the cycle of violence between the Hutu and Tutsi has involved myriad atrocities, shocks, fears, grief, anger, bitterness, revenge and retaliation (Elworthy and Rifkind 2006:44), and efforts to end the cycle of violence had failed, the younger generations sought protection from those in

power, but not passively (Loomba 2014:20). Tutsi elites continued to perpetuate and legitimise violence against any dissenting voices (Gunay 2013:176). Consequently, young Hutu were consistently less fortunate than Tutsi youth, who enjoyed full protection and could act with impunity as they committed crimes and violence against their peers. The way successive governments perceived this violence, along with the leaders' indifferent attitudes and responses, shaped the younger generation's understanding of the government in power and its inherent potential (Kundnani 2012).

For one, while 'individuals with access to state power are able to accumulate private wealth by virtue of their public office' (Cranenburgh 2008:99), they often distribute multiple favours and monetary advantages to their supporters and groups in exchange for fidelities (Morris 2000:427). In such cases, the youths, who constitute a significant segment of the population, and 'who have a considerable impact and influence on their societies in times of both peace and conflict' (Natil 2021: x) fall prey to instrumentalism and indoctrination by 'criminal dictators' (Morris 2000:428). This is so, because the youth are easy to convince and available 'targets for recruitment, indoctrination and as perpetrators of violence' (Manyange 2015: 1).

## **2.4 KEY OCCURRENCES OF SOCIALLY LEARNED AGGRESSION AMONGST THE HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTH GROUPS IN THE HISTORY OF BURUNDI**

In the scenario of conflict in Burundi, studies have charted a pathway grasping the use of nationalism and ethnicity in which youth groups have espoused discourses based on their ethnic identities and therefore made themselves available at the forefront of violence (Schraml 2014:624). From contradicting patriotic claims stamping one ethnic group's supremacy over another between Hutu and the Tutsi (Young 2004:7), youth groups aligned themselves with political elites creating havoc throughout successive generations. As a result, it has become impossible even for leaders to quench and discipline the scattered youth groups nationwide that in some cases ended up harming their own community members. Notoriously recorded, are recurring historic patterns of youth violence that permeated top-down socio-political relations in Burundi which the youths observed, learned and emulated.

### **2.4.1 The Mulelists' Attacks**

The 1972s reported sporadic attacks in border regions of both western Burundi and East Congo allegedly perpetrated by middle-aged and youth Mulelist mercenaries (Manirakiza 2011:27). This group of Congolese young Maquisards, an uprising youth wing, extended its ideology in

Burundi beyond its borders (Welch 1975:116). The Mulelists' initial success in Eastern Congo and 'stiff resistance to government troops' (Lemke 2011:61) revived local support amongst Burundians who felt oppressed and thus opted for guerrilla fighting that started as localised insurrection against Micombero power (Russell 2015:437). Fox (1965, cited in Welch 1975:118) offers a better understanding of the local preconditions that justified the Mulelists' guerrilla struggle, including the moral bankruptcy of the new officials and the socioeconomic and political depravity.

Scholars believe that the Mulelists promised to the masses and youth *maquisards*, a new political regime that embraced the Marxist vision of good society in which every citizen would have access to work and 'a beautiful house' (Welch, 1975:118-119). The Mulelists' popular mobilisation over limited choices and 'life chances' (Berckmoes, 2015) which were informed by the social-political and economic differences in Congo, sharpened tensions in Burundi on the basis of ethnicity, regional differences and deprivation. This led to contrasting ideologies setting the Hutu against the Tutsis in the southern regions of Burundi.

Moderate Hutu elites in Burundi realised their predicament and started propaganda, counting on the support of the Mulelists who regularly crossed Lake Tanganyika and established their guerrilla bases in Burundi, from where they regularly infiltrated Eastern Congo (Lemke 2011:60). Some Hutu men were trained militarily and plans were finalised to overthrow Micombero's regime by attacks from various points. According to narratives collected by Iwacu (2007:5), Hutu claiming to be Mulelists attacked first between 15 and 29 April 1972. This was followed by an indiscriminate repression and brutal reprisals inflicted by Burundi army on Hutus in all spheres of life, which is believed to have claimed between 200 000 and 300 000 Hutu lives (Lemarchand 2002:559; Russell 2015:73). Though the Mulelists' ideologies did not gain momentum in Burundi, the few Hutu who adopted its guerrilla strategies were fighting to be heard and to be guaranteed their inalienable basic rights, including having a voice and representation (Frances and Francis 1988:91; Malkki 1996:379).

On the other hand, while the Hutu rebellion struck in the south, the Tutsi elites and military officials, began a meticulously planned and extremely violent attack designed to effect ethnic cleansing against the Hutu (Russell 2015:73) leading to one of the most sophisticated 'contemporary political tragedies' (Malkki 1996:379). While the Mulelists' uprising started with the killings of innocent Tutsi, leaving many physically and psychologically wounded while their properties were destroyed, the mass killing of Hutu was not justifiable. From an

anthropological point of view, the systematic Hutu massacres that spread all over the country, orchestrated by the political regime in such a short time, testifies to ‘the forces of physical, psychological and structural violence’ (Harrison 1995:60). Though richly documented, this manufactured and manipulated racial genocide has not been fully explained (Songolo 2005:111) while Tutsi continued to play victim to avoid taking responsibility for nearly 50 years, while further excluding Hutu from political participation and forcing others into exile (Frances and Francis 1988: 91).

#### **2.4.2 The Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore (Rwagasore Revolutionary Youths)**

For too long, political manoeuvres in Burundi have been summed in the phrase ‘evil comes from the top’ (Lemarchand 1994: 63). Youth in Burundi have always been victims of protracted hate speech, falling prey to political indoctrination and manipulation. The *UPRONA* youth militants known as the *Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore* are credited to have been responsible for the selective massacres and genocide that Burundi experienced in 1972 (Frances and Francis 1988:91). According to memories of the 1972 violence, the JRR participated in the cleansing of Hutu elites, business dealers, preachers, men, and women who displayed a degree of intellectual capability (Kaburahe 2013). As a radical political wing of the *UPRONA* party, their role included arresting, loading into trucks and killing targeted Hutu elites in the army, local institutions and in confiscating their material possessions (Ntibazonkiza 1993, cited in Manirakiza 2011:29). Lemarchand (1995:96) documented the genocide against the Hutu population in 1972 and found out that armed forces and the JRR militants carried out the deadly ethnic cleansing. He added that ‘revolutionary youth groups [were] active throughout the country trying to control the populace through intimidation’. As reported by Greenland (1976:117–118), the Tutsi members of the JRR were instrumental in beating up leading Hutu giving ‘the spiralling ethnic tension a further twist’.

In his long accounts, Lemarchand notes that in classrooms, youth Tutsi with the complicity of the armed forces assaulted Hutu classmates, and many were beaten to death as groups of soldiers and JRR would abruptly enter classrooms, local entities and churches with lists of Hutus to be killed (Lemarchand 1994:62). Tutsis who tried to urge restraint particularly in Bujumbura on the basis that the situation had gone too far targeted Hutus were arrested and summarily executed. Micombero’s regime had ‘lost control of the army’, which ‘along with the JRR had become the driving force behind the killings’ (Lemarchand 1995:99).

### 2.4.3 The Ntega and Marangara Hutu –Tutsi Ethnic Clashes

While the Burundi Third Republic under Buyoya managed to appoint a few Hutu among the quasi-mono-Tutsi leadership, threats of the return of the 1972 refugees led to youth Tutsi students engaging in a psychological intimidation meant to prevent the few Hutu students from passing their exams (Frances and Francis 1988:93). Incidents unfolded in 1988 in *Kirundo* and *Ngozi* provinces, specifically in *Ntega* and *Marangara* communes where ethnic-based violence claimed several Tutsi lives. In revenge, Buyoya and his oppressive army regime killed thousands of innocent Hutus, in complicity with JRR, a fact that highlights that such violence referred back to perpetuation of the Hutu genocide of such magnitude as that of 1972 (Ngoma 2014). The Hutu death toll and the physical executions that followed the attack by the mono-ethnic Tutsi armies in partnership with young Tutsi JRR point to the extent of ethnic manipulation, indoctrination and instrumentalism amongst the youth. The massacres of August through October 1988 were instigated by the Tutsi military regimes and the political structure in place that made the political sphere more impenetrable to the Hutus (Frances and Francis 1988:92)

### 2.4.4 The Sans-échet, Sans- Pitié and Sans- Défaite

The *sans-échet* (who do not fail), *sans- pitié* (merciless) and *sans-défaite* (those who conquer) were Tutsi youth extremist groups that became mobilisation instruments to defeat the Hutu political adversaries (Manirakiza 2011:38; Ndarishikanye 1999:233). Following the October 1993 military coup and subsequent overthrow of the democratically elected government, the *sans-échet* and *sans-défaite* developed in Bujumbura urban areas and later spread all over the country. With the extended longevity of the ethnic civil war that broke out in 1993, this urban youth Tutsi militia lasted until the end of 1999 and were instrumental in the killing of innocent Hutus, particularly in Bujumbura (CEPPI 1995). They conducted acts of terrorism and human rights violations against the Hutu with casualties and persecution beyond expectations. They hunted and burnt alive thousands of Hutus in different towns (ethnic cleansing), participated in vandalism and barricaded roads, burnt vehicles and tyres and set public and private properties on fire (*villes mortes /dead cities*).

According to eyewitnesses, the *sans-défaite* who had participated in Rwanda's RPF revolution turned out to be an uncontrollable armed militia when they returned to Burundi in the years, 1994–6 (CEPPI 1995). They instigated havoc in boarding schools throughout the country,

including the University of Burundi where they executed, killed, expelled Hutu students from campuses and forced many elites and business owners out of the country. The CEPPI (1995) referred to above, recounts that most of them were young boys, drug abusers and indiscriminate assassins and thieves who caused terror among both Tutsi and Hutu. They received unprecedented support from Tutsi officials, the police, the army who protected them and provided munitions and means of transportation without being held accountable (Callamard 2010:1213).

#### **2.4.5 The Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi and Jeunes 72**

The years that followed President Pierre Buyoya's coup in 1987, were marked by relative ethnic rapprochement (Frances and Francis 1988: 89). When political spaces appeared to be open to multiparty system in the 1990s, ethnic tensions mounted again amongst the Hutu and the Tutsi elites. Inspired by the workings of UPRONA's JRR youth wing, new-fangled political parties created their own youth wings'. Thus, the JEDEBU youth wing of the FRODEBU and the Jeunes 72 organised self-defence units. Their role in countering attacks perpetrated against the Hutu population, particularly the FRODEBU party and affiliate militants' during political campaigns and even after FRODEBU's victory in the 1993 elections was noted.

The JEDEBU youth militia are believed to have scattered throughout the country targeting Tutsi extremists and organising riots and mass violence following the military coup on 21 October 1993. They often collided with active youth Tutsi militia in the northern part of Bujumbura operating in the same way as JRR (Scherrer 2002:618). Subsequent to the overthrow and assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye and his cabinet staff, added to merciless killings and forced disappearances of many government officials (AP 1993), the JEDEBU and the Jeunes 72 committed human rights violations under self-defence claims against the unbridled *sans-échec* and *sans-défaite* youth Tutsi militias (HRW 2009).

#### **2.4.6 The Jeunes Vigilantes (Post-1993 Paramilitary Groups)**

The Jeunes Vigilantes was a paramilitary militia group composed of young Tutsi and Hutu who worked in collaboration with the Forces Armées Burundaises (FAB). This youth militia was supported by the Tutsi populace and collaborated with university students who had gone through military training initiated by President Buyoya's decree on mandatory *Service Militaire Obligatoire* for all university students. Scattered countrywide, they committed crimes to undercut the CNDD-FDD rebellion, which had gained momentum since 1994. Their role

was to identify and arrest suspected Hutu rebels, their supporters or any affiliates. Behind the scenes, the young men and women who went through SMO were responsible for killing innocent Hutu and burying them in mass graves as witnessed by survivors and perpetrators (Mbazumutima 2013). In most cases, the youth groups supplemented the FAB and the police by engaging with indiscriminate killings, particularly during night-rounds meant to guard homes. They received protection as they carried out organised criminal activities such as burning houses and looting and destroying property. Some of these young people joined the rebellion and survivors were integrated into the FDN after the signing of the Peace and Reconciliation agreement for Burundi in 2000.

#### **2.4.7 The PA-Amasekanya**

With worsening ethnic tensions, political parties organised their youth around militantism. Behind the rhetoric of youth violence in Burundi, lie the relationships that young Burundians have had with their neighbourhood, their community and their cultural and social institutions. Part of this is the role the *PA-Amasekanya* (Refworld 2002) played in fostering violence among young adolescents of the Tutsi ethnic background. The *PA-Amasekanya* youth militia contributed to Tutsi youth violence (International Crisis Group 2011:28). They organised attacks that fuelled the anti-Hutu campaign in manifold ways by harassing the democratically elected officials countrywide. The *PA-Amasekanya* nurtured, fostered and propagated antisocial and deviant behaviour among many youths throughout the country, particularly in Bujumbura in partnership with the then FAB and Gendarmerie.

As a result, many young Tutsi fell into the trap of extremism and turned away from the ethics within their own communities and became uncontrollable terrorists. Even within power-sharing mechanism, *PA-Amasekanya* believed that the DDR ‘of Tutsi from the army is part of a plan to commit genocide currently being prepared against them’ (International Crisis Group 2008:12). Most significant of the *PA-Amasekanya* brutalities was their participation in cross-country morning marches and alleged beatings of Hutu students on campus that were meant to intimidate the few Hutus that remained in the peripheral areas of Bujumbura.

#### **2.4.8 The Imbonerakure (CNDD-FDD Youth’s Wing)**

From a pessimistic point of view, Wren (1977) posits that one social system is as bad as another and that nothing we do will make much difference in our society because a just society cannot be achieved. While the histories of oppression have led many young Burundian to aligning

themselves with armed groups and political parties in the past, the claim to overcome oppression they were subjected to resulted in other persistent conflict, animosity and terror. While reports converge that the CNDD-FDD political party's youth league *imbonerakure* are instrumental in intimidating and forced conversion of 'the other', many others point to *imbonerakure* as responsible for psychological trauma through threat and harassment. Reports say that they were instrumental in tracking and arresting opposition leaders and their supporters or forcing 'the other' to perform some political or social duties. Viewed by many as an active militia protected by the patrons, they are often accused of participating in extra-judicial killings and human rights violations or verbal assaults and banishing members of the opposition.

#### **2.4.9 The JPH and *Ivyuma vy'indege* (FNL youth wing)**

The northern periphery of Bujumbura has seen the development of many civilian youth groups throughout the Burundi socio-political crisis. Among them, the JPH and *Ivyuma vy'indege* youth groups, linked to FNL-PALIPEHUTU patronage are the typical 'other' targeted by their counterpart *imbonerakure* whose main responsibilities included mobilisation, collection of money and despatching intelligence (Burgess 2005). Subjected to psychological trauma, threatened and often molested or harassed, they are presumably accused of irreverence for institutions and the CNDD-FDD leaders and thus rank amongst the victims of intolerance of the ruling party's youth wing *imbonerakure*. Considered as leftist in thinking and deeds, they are faced with regular intimidation and are subjected to regular checks by the ruling party's youth wing throughout the country. To avoid being perpetual victims, the *Ivyuma vy'Indege* FNL and JPH youth have developed self-defensive mechanisms and tactics such as 'an eye for an eye', making youth violence an everyday occurrence throughout the country.

In a nutshell, what comes from the above testifies to the extent and historical significance of ethnicity manipulation, indoctrination and intoxication amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youth ethnic groups in Burundi. From the Mulelists' attacks to groups like JRR, *sans-échet*, *sans-pitié*, *sans-défaite*, *JEDEBU*, *Jeunes 72* quadrant, *Jeunes Vigilantes*, *PA-Amasekanya*, *Imbonerakure*, JPH, and *Ivyuma vy'indege*, to name a few, the grim reality is that a chain of causality has connected acts of human violence across generations, fuelled by ethnic and political manipulation. As such, the alarming ethnic violence as witnessed in Burundi from independence onwards saw the youth as key instigators as they have been instrumental in relaying ideologies and are thereby manipulated by each ruling party to serve their selfish goals. Nothing was done to exorcise such demonic ideologies from the youth mindsets as youths

believed in the political lies of rewards including money, employment and other benefits. The tragic aspect of all this is that young Burundians today are tempted to adopt the same ideology and appear to be misled by the voracious pursuit of political ambitions.

Certainly, fuelled by a desire that denounces the socio-political and economic imbroglio in place (Dahrendorf 2006:14), the above testifies to the mechanisms of youth navigating roles in violence stemming from what scholars defined as a country marked by class exploited-exploiter dichotomy (Fox et al. 1965 cited in Welch 1975:118).

It flows from the above that the socio-politico-economic aspects of peoples' lives, divisions, mutual exploitation and exclusion have cemented misery for some and opulence for others, thus dividing Burundians into categories. This is seen in the effects of large-scale violent conflict that has occurred between the Hutu and Tutsis within which the Tutsis, in connivance with imperial Belgian masters, exploited the Hutus leaving their offsprings destitute and foreigners in their own land or forced to seek exile in refugee camps in other countries (Ndarishikanye 1998). A significant portion of the nature, causes, and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi stems from the lack of collaboration and the self-serving ambitions of the Tutsi minority, who have acted as accomplices to imperialists and their divide-and-rule agenda.

## **2.5 THE EFFECTS OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA ON THE YOUTHS**

Given the importance of social identities, it is crucial to acknowledge that ethnicity has been a destructive force dehumanising Burundian youth as a whole, regardless of ethnic background. The bitter history of violence, along with widespread misinformation, misrepresentation, and hatred, has led young Burundians to develop misguided perceptions of others. These perceptions have divided ethnic groups and fostered collective negative attitudes, shaping identities and mindsets along ethnic lines. Outlining the causes of such negative encounters, the Igarape Institute (2018:6) highlights the fact that if a group's beliefs and actions are denied by another group, the propensity for violence and insecurity is high.

As for reasons, behind the scenes were corrupted patrons, who orchestrated and led young people into violent contacts, acts and behaviour through ethnicisation and ideological manipulation. Fed with propaganda which was added to erroneous accounts of the history and narratives of Burundi, young people lacked trustworthy understanding of causes of cyclical violence among Burundians. This caused Burundi to struggle with socio-political instability,

and a severe inability to strengthen institutional legitimacy. According to survivors' narratives, the 1972 genocide and later mass killings created a vacuum that none will be able to fill.

## **2.6 WRESTLING FOR SURVIVAL: THE HUTU-TUTSI YOUTHS BINARY**

An examination of the long dark journey of overt violence, humiliation, aggression and structural despotism reveals that fear, grief, shock and anger (Elworthy and Rifkind 2006:45) have prompted negative attitudes on either side. A variety of attitudes and practices prone to triggering potential violence have developed (Berchmoes 2017:925). While the violent aggression and mass killings perpetrated by the Tutsi against the Hutu has ended, confiscated properties by the Tutsi have not been fully reverted to former owners. Most Hutu youths who are amongst the returnees and other younger generations of refugees scattered in the region and across the world have not returned yet and their rights have not yet been addressed. Thus, disproportionate reciprocity marred by contestation over land entitlements remain central to peaceful cohabitation and a strong terrain of contention (Hofmeyr 2004:130) between 'Hutu' youths returnees and former 'Tutsi' youth' settlers.

Considering Burundi's history of intense aggression and severe human rights violations, even the efforts of the TRC were insufficient to heal the country's deep wounds. The overwhelming influence of ethnicity has negatively impacted both Hutu and Tutsi communities, affecting their youth in mutually exclusive ways and leading to opposing survival strategies. Thus both the Hutu and the Tutsi younger generations share responsibility for the crimes that have been committed by one ethnic group against the other (Russell, 2015).

## **2.7 EXTENT OF INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS**

The extent of inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is reflected in the presence of hundreds of mass graves scattered everywhere in the country. While violence has been ethnic in its conception, the region of origin has been instrumentalised resulting in regional-based assassinations, divisions, corruption, nepotism, alliances and client-based political entrepreneurship (Karerwa 2018). As Vandeginste (2017:66) denounces, military power cemented regional ethnic skirmishes and connexions for retaining political power on the basis of ethnicity and this practice was perpetuated by the younger generations. As such, despite efforts to weaken the Tutsis (Crippa 2012:73), the effects of ethnicisation of the country have led to socio-political devastation targeting prominent Hutus in all sectors and walks of life (1972 Broken Hearts: A Documentary Film to Heal the Hearts of Burundians 2021). As

consequence, according to a report presented by the FRODEBU (1997), exclusion and discrimination against the Hutu, except those who joined the UPRONA government party have swept across all sectors of Burundian socio-political, economic and cultural life resulting in unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (Brachet and Wolpe 2005; Daudelin 2003:3). This view is consistent with the FRODEBU's report on the nature of region-based exclusion and political party-based favouritism which characterised over five decades of the unique party leadership. The Hutus who did not run away and who stayed in Burundi were exposed to all forms of humiliation, stereotypes and shameful treatments (The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation 2020).

Under such circumstances and drawing strength from the destruction of unity among Burundians, power holders (Hilgers 2011:584) fabricated patronage bonds based on socio-political aspirations and supremacy. The army and its Tutsi allies won victories against any Hutu resistance which was cruelly and irrevocably suppressed for over five decades. The UPRONA ruling party organised its youth-based group, JRR, as instruments who sometimes gathered in uncontrollable youth militias, supplementing the army and gendarmerie while "big men" (Daloz 2003) commanded them from a distance. As result, the JRR youths organised as gangs (Chabal Patrick 2009). Actually, it is through its JRR youth militia, that successive regimes engendered Hutu-cleansing and human hunt (Bienefeld 1986:9).

## **2.8 CURRENT STATE OF PEACE IN BURUNDI: EFFORTS TOWARDS VIOLENCE MITIGATION**

While ethnic diversity and social identity have become tools for selfish gains, the political structuring of citizens along ethnic lines became a key trigger factor in conflict (Hatungimana and Popic 2007:22). Primarily, structural factors (Galtung 1969) which have enforced polarisation, have prevailed in Burundi for more than six decades, occasioning group discrimination. Limited access to public assets and sustained cultural discrimination sparked the fight for survival (Delay 2006:672). It was not until the parties to the longstanding conflict agreed to engage in negotiation and talks that ethnicisation of political competition was reduced and opened a new era for power-sharing (Vandeginste 2009:63). Thus, premised on the second specific objective of this research which seek to explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundian youths, this research unearthed the following approaches.

## 2.8.1 Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Transformation in Burundi

Traditionally, Burundi has known traditional structures for peaceful conflict resolution which acted both to mediate at local and national levels in Burundi. These customary justice actors institutions were the hill council, the customary judges (or traditionally known as *Abashingantahe*) and the municipal court (Sinha and Djankov 2003: 8). Known as wise men, wise elders or the *Abashingantahe* / *Bashingantahe* (singular *umushingantahe* / *Mushingantahe*), they were respected men of integrity (Féron and Krause 2022; Jenicek and Grofova 2014).

### 2.8.1.1 The hill council

In traditional Burundi, the hill council was composed of up to six individuals, chosen from community members and one of them being the hill leader. Administratively, the hill encompassed a group of geographic circumscription and localities that made up a village or in contemporary terms, a quarter. The council was responsible for mediating disputes at the hill level and its responsibility extended to resolving family matters, land issues and petty crimes (Sinha and Djankov 2023). Members of the council of the hill are automatically incorporated into the college of the wise men, the *Bashingantahe*. Yet, with successive regimes, membership of the hill councils became conditioned by political belonging which diluted the validity of the institution and discredited it.

### 2.8.1.2 The customary judges or *Bashingantahe*

The name *Bashingantahe* evokes justice and equity and means someone whose words of wisdom and decisions are incarnated in justice both locally and nationally. Their role included ensuring justice, mediating civil and neighbourhood disputes and ensuring equity in their communities. This college of wise people mediated disputes between the Hutu and Tutsi in general whereby they established responsibilities and reparations to the victim. The mandate of the *Bashingantahe* was to mediate all types of disputes including land disputes, crimes, bloodshed and other social disputes (Jenicek and Grofova 2014). Ethics such as neutrality and impartiality and fairness revealed the true identity and role of *umushingantahe*.

The *Bashingantahe*<sup>3</sup> were greatly respected and were seen as the embodiment of ideals of peace and had access to different people. As Dexter and Ntahombaye (2005) posit, the *Bashingantahe* intervened in curbing bloodshed and reconciling families, groups and fighting factions. They were widely respected by people of the community where they had a positive influence. In most cases despite facing multiple safety risks, some *Bashingantahe* played their role where they protected neighbours in danger or set free individuals from the hands of slaughterers and cooperated to stop the incidents of lootings and killings. The *Bashingantahe* encouraged people to stay together and to avoid running away from their homes. They encouraged repatriation for those who had left their homes and succeeded in bringing together fearful or resentful people to associate, and hosted dialogue and reconciliation initiatives in partnership with local leaders (Dexter and Ntahombaye 2005).

However, as they were seen as ‘counter-authority’ (Berckmoes 2015:9), the college of wise men was progressively suppressed by the successive regimes which wanted to cover their crimes exposed by the *Abashingantahe*. They were progressively replaced by tribunals as a way for more professionalisation of the Burundi judiciary. The consequences were that the *Bashingantahe* became politicised and the traditional role of college of *Bashingantahe* was diluted by political infringements and manipulation. The *Bashingantahe* did not include the Batwa ethnic group and the Hutu were progressively stigmatised against and finally excluded by the Tutsi regimes that ensued.

This was the result of one-party and military rule for over 30 years since independence in 1962, where the second generation of *Bashingantahe* became highly politicised and lost their legitimacy (Reyntjens 2000: 31). As consequence, the *Bashingantahe* became instrumental in perpetrating injustices on the Hutus in general and other moderate Tutsis. The *Bashingantahe* lost their prestige and position when the CNDD-FDD took power. In the main, the *Bashingantahe* were accused of failing in their conciliatory mission as some of them were accused of not having kept their neutrality and of cooperating with Tutsi in wrongly accusing some innocent Hutus. The role of *Bashingantahe* was replaced by local administration through

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<sup>3</sup> Bashingantahe in the words of Dexter, T. J.D. and Ntahombaye P. 2005, is the plural of the word mushingantahe that is derived from the words gushinga (‘to plant or fix’) and intahe (‘ficus stick’) and means ‘the one who plants the stick into the ground’. It is so named because of the court stick, intahe, that the bashingantahe strike rhythmically and in turn on the ground to insist on the importance of the words they are using and the decisions they render while arbitrating conflicts; it has been transmitted from generation to generation. In a metonymical and symbolic sense, intahe means justice and equity. The word ubushingantahe means, on the other hand, the set of values underlying the bashingantahe institution.<sup>10</sup> Legends of origin agree and confirm that justice is the foundation of the bashingantahe institution.

communal tribunals, local mediators elected to that end, in addition to the judges. Still, the *Bashingantahe* are sceptical of the independence of the justice system in Burundi.

### 2.8.1.3 The courts and tribunals

Courts and tribunals represent the Burundi formal justice system and are present in all communes, at the ratio of one tribunal per commune across the entire country. They are well-organised and have been in place since independence in 1962. Their mandate includes rendering justice to people by dealing with all cases including land-related issues, marriage related issues, inheritance issues and minor crimes (Dexter and Ntahombaye 2005). Yet, because they have been unable to establish responsibility concerning inter-ethnic crimes or stop genocide, they are seen as incompetent and inefficient by the population. In addition to sluggishness and inefficiency due to lack of adequate human, financial and technical resources, many cases have never been adequately dealt with as a result of corruption, political crimes cover-ups and manipulation. In addition to being expensive, only extreme cases are referred to the courts and tribunals as last recourse and this hinders most people from accessing formal justice (Sinha and Djankov 2023).

## 2.8.2 Appraisal of Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Transformation in Burundi

In view of the afore-mentioned indigenous approaches to conflict transformation in Burundi, we note that despite their complementary missions, the *Bashingantahe* institution, the hill council and the courts and tribunals were not able to fully transform the inter-ethnic conflict that arose between the Hutu and Tutsi, in general and the Hutu and Tutsi youths in particular. Despite their local presence throughout the country, successive generations were disillusioned by the fact that violence persisted and inter-ethnic stereotypes reached every aspect of communal life, include the afore-mentioned indigenous structures.

Compared to contemporary approaches to peaceful conflict transformation which are top-down, one notes that most of them are initiated by the regimes in place or donors without necessarily taking into consideration the realities on ground or associating parties to conflict. Designed thus, most contemporary approaches for dealing with conflict have failed to yield expected results compared to traditional approaches which are more accessible and inexpensive. In addition, traditional approaches aimed to fit local realities while contemporary approaches to conflict transformation seek ‘universal applicability’ (Boege 2006). Yet, traditional approaches present the problem of not having a legally approved framework that

guides their conflict transformation efforts. Hence, in some cases, their judgements are based on common sense lending the traditional approaches more vulnerable to speculation and ‘instrumentalisation’.

Therefore, traditional approaches to conflict transformation are weakened and usurped and conquered by contemporary conflict transformation which are state-owned. As emphasised above, the traditional mechanisms for conflict transformation in Burundi, though they have developed independently from the state influence, have been engulfed by modern state and successive regimes (Boege 2006).

## **2.9 TOWARDS NORMALCY: A REVIEW OF PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS FOR ENDING ENMITY BETWEEN HUTU AND TUTSI IN BURUNDI**

The undisputed ethnically rent-seeking Tutsi elite predominantly in connivance with the mono-ethnic army acting as ‘both an actor and guarantor of the mechanisms of rent collection and distribution within the elite’ (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000: 376) has jeopardised social equity for nearly five decades. Due to one-party authoritarianism, marked by high rates of ‘murderous ethno-political strife’ (Vandeginste 2000:316), efforts towards normalcy faded as a result of the absence of justice and opportunities ‘open to all social groups’ (Daley 2006:674). In these circumstances, efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict were frequently thwarted by a “monolithic” military power base (Ndikumana 2005:20) that lacked any positive experience with a multiparty system. This markedly ethnic impasse gave rise to several attempts to end such animosity which abated when the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation was signed in 2000.

### **2.9.1 The 1987 President Buyoya Military Coup Versus Political Parity**

Nothing illustrates better the socio-political conditions that led to the desire for ending the imbroglio between the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi than the fact that with the military coup of the 1987, both ethnic groups were facing a socio-political and economic impasse. The antecedents of politico-economic and social exclusion of the Hutu (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000:385) and the resultant monopoly of state institution (Ndikumana 2005:11) added to unbridled violence perpetrated by a corrupted Tutsi leadership could no longer hold in the face of threats from refugee Hutu scattered in Tanzania and Rwanda refugee camps. The systematic exclusion of Hutu and Tutsi not from Bururi province extinguished support for the new regime,

despite its use of political tactics and weapons to control potential revolts. This whirlwind of systemic 'apartheid' (Uvin 2009:10; Prunier 1994:13) forcibly proved the urgency for redress.

Despite the fact that President Buyoya's tentative prowess for pushing out into new directions of leadership that accommodated Hutu grievances, it did not lead to a fully-fledged inclusion of Hutu. The deep-seated exclusionary tactics of the Bururi Tutsi elite clashed with the new vision for a unified country, as extremists within both the Tutsi elites and the Hutu outnumbered the moderate voices among the Hutu and Tutsi. As such, both the few moderate Tutsi and Hutu willing to give up their privileges failed to contain the Tutsi and Hutu extremists and as a result, ethnic violence broke out again in the northern provinces in 1988 (Lemarchand 1994:119; Prunier 1994:14; Uvin 2009).

### **2.9.2 The 1992 New Constitution and Referendum for National Unity**

By 1987, the first phase of reforms was initiated to avoid the potential horrors and dilemmas that might come from anti-Tutsi Hutu havoc (Lemarchand 2009:134). Despite using political methods and weapons for the suppression of opposition, President Buyoya sought to establish state legitimacy by opening the political space for Hutu participation, allowing opposition parties to emerge. After seizing power in a bloodless military overthrow against President Bagaza in 1997, Buyoya structured the political administration to ensure equal participation by Hutu and Tutsi, with a Hutu Prime Minister leading the government (Vandeginste 2009:66). This led to a political climate that facilitated the framing of a referendum for national unity in 1992.

The socio-political factors pointing to the ethnic violence in the northern provinces of Kirundo and Ngozi, respectively in Ntega and Marangara communes were juxtaposed with pressure from the international community on Buyoya's regime (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2005). This was in marked contrast with the socioeconomic political scenarios of three decades before in terms of attention given to the incidents by western donors. Despite resistance from some Tutsi extremists, Buyoya pressed on with his socio-political reforms, signaling the end of exclusionary politics and partisanship as a means to prevent Hutu participation. As such, by 1992, a new constitution that initiated a multiparty system of governance was adopted for the sake of accommodating a large proportion of political and ethnic groups and thus achieve ethnic inclusivity and regional diversity (Vandeginste 2009:67).

### **2.9.3 Formal Power-sharing Under the 1994 Convention de Gouvernement (Convention of the Government)**

Looking back at the provisions of the then 1992 new constitution, it is clear that the equal ethnic participation aspect revealed the high risks of the Hutu-Tutsi antagonism resurfacing. This is evident in the ethnic labels and identity politics promoted by both the one-party dominance of UPRONA and the newly formed quasi-Hutu party FRODEBU, which contributed to the outbreak of the violent 1993 ethnic violence (Prunier 1994:17) in a bloody coup led by Tutsi military forces.

With the assassination and overthrow of the first ever Hutu-led government, all efforts for ending the threat of a mono-ethnic and military hegemony were doomed to failure. According to Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2005: 46, 58) and Vandeginste (2005), the likely motives for the Tutsi-dominated military overthrow of Ndadaaye's government include fear of losing their long vested socioeconomic and military privileges among the old Tutsi elites and their community. Lamin (2011:1) holds that the neo-patrimonial hostilities that broke out after elections were a result of competition over state resources. Nevertheless, by means of civilian resistance and disobedience that followed the assassination and overthrow of Melchior Ndadaaye's democratic government, a forcible return to democratic leadership resurged leading to the failure of the coup (Uvin 2009:13).

The escalation of ethnic violence created an opportunity for seeking compromise between the long-standing FRODEBU government and the Tutsi extremists who had overthrown the democratically elected officials and the political institutions. On the one hand, the Tutsi regarded the FRODEBU regime as a threat while on the other, the Hutu believed the Tutsi stood as a permanent threat both politically and militarily. Thus, on the ground of national interests, priority was given to the search for political stability over democracy (Maundi et al. 2006:83) and a formal sharing of power venture known (Government Convention) was forcibly instituted. As result, due to political rivalry and polarised atmosphere between the Hutu dominated political parties under the FRODEBU shadow and the Tutsi opposition (Curtis 2007:176), the unity government envisaged under the Government Convention failed. Part of the failure was due to the deceit underlying the convention whereby the Hutu believed to have been tricked through strange pacts and dubious motives, seeing their 1993 victory blotted out (Reyntjens 2000:15).

Thus, were born the immediate trigger factors that unerringly led to a protracted and full-scale ethnic civil war (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2005). The Hutu armed resistance, led by Bururi native Leonard Nyangoma, was founded on the Tutsi army's blatant violations of democratic leadership and their unscrupulous, manipulative theft of the Hutu political power that had emerged from the 1993 democratic election. Despite the fact some moderate Hutu participated in the unity government, the armed Hutu faction emphasised ending the expansion of violence and the human hunting perpetrated by the Tutsi army (Lemarchand 2007; Lemarchand 2009; Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2005; Reyntjens 2009). By 1994, efforts to contain and suppress the FDD rebellion only intensified the civil war, exacerbating the failure of what was intended to be a ceremonial consociational political arrangement (Lemarchand 2009:77).

#### **2.9.4 Power-sharing, Consociational Politics and the 2000 Agreement**

For peace to blossom, conflict has to be envisioned as a possible constructive mechanism for socio-political adjustment (Coy 2009:1). From this perspective, the 2000 peace Agreement for Burundi was a landmark in the Burundian peacebuilding efforts. Lauded by many as the beginning of a new era in Burundian politics, the agreement highlighted that neither Tutsi nor Hutu could achieve victory after the extensive slaughter, massive property destruction, and obvious war-induced exhaustion among the population (Lemarchand 2007). Not only were world leaders impressed by the spirit of the agreement, but security, economic, and political partners in Burundi also felt a sense of relief from the country's security dilemma following the failure of the *Convention de Gouvernement* (Maundi et al. 2006:78, 80). The Burundi peace agreement joined a series of notable agreements that resolved political crises through power-sharing (Cheeseman 2011:336), but it is credited with achieving a more significant transformation (Lemarchand 2007:11).

Sanctioned by intensive talks and slow progress, the Arusha agreement conflict transformative attributes brought an end to the rigorous repression perpetrated by the Tutsi army and the sporadic attacks by the CNDD-FDD and fashioned afresh the Burundian politics (Lemarchand 2007). Central to the agreement were key provisions including power-sharing involving equal participation in socioeconomic, political and military management of the country by all ethnic groups, entitling them to equal rights while fostering greater elite social cohesion (Cheeseman 2011:358). Scholars have claimed that consociational power-sharing mechanisms as a 'realistic choice' model prone to foster stability in divided communities (Lijphart 1977:238). However,

this model has been subjected to critiques including Mehler (2009) and Binningsbo and Dupuy (2009) who questioned the suitability of consociation politics in containing open aggression.

There can be little question that the Peace Accord for Burundi paid off in terms of changes to structural, personal and interpersonal, intrapersonal and inter-communal and political world views (Wolpe 2011:70). As core values embedded in the agreement, parties to the conflict reaffirmed the intention to mitigate the root causes of violence (Peacemaker 2018:2). This historical step inaugurated a great opportunity in the process of ending civil confrontation and the military and political stalemate. Among the key outcomes, reconciliation and pacification were achieved by establishing institutional arrangements that recognised communal divisions, ensured representation of minority groups, and avoided military coups through democratic principles and institutional legitimacy (Vandeginste 2015: 2).

The process of ‘rebuilding relationships’ (Karbo 2008:117) between the Hutu and the Tutsi that was envisaged through power-sharing was multidimensional. As scholars have put it, the only way to effective reconciliation includes political, economic and security power-sharing where inclusion in the power structures contribute to reducing grievances and safety predicaments and reduce inequalities across communities. This humanisation of the enemy (Dudouet 2006:66) paved a way to structural reforms whereby ‘fairness’ (ICCG 2017: 4) would reign and thus avoid dividing factors and wellsprings of tension.

However, there are discrepancies that power-sharing mechanisms are forged on asymmetric dynamics that advantage the elite while the masses continue to feel a deep peace gap. In most intractable conflicts, existing literature shows that power-sharing and peacebuilding are contradictory in as much as state agencies tend to assume that peace is achieved even if locally-driven peace consolidation models are curtailed (Lee 2019:1). Evidence from some studies in Israel and Palestine suggest that discrepancies often exist between ‘real and imagined peace’ (Aggestam and Strombom 2012:1) due to the prevalence of peace built on perceived needs of the elites rather than legitimising ownership of the procedure (Nkurunziza 2015:1). As far as the 2000 agreement for Burundi is concerned, both facilitators failed to end hostilities between all armed groups (Uvin 2009:17). Thus there are important gaps related to whether power-sharing and consociational politics ever favour the promotion of local ownership involving local informal associations and activists.

### **2.9.5 The UN Peacekeeping Mission to Burundi**

The big stories of violent civil war and the long journey towards consociational politics through the 2000 agreement for Burundi have set conditions conducive to the need for mutual coexistence amongst the Hutu and the Tutsi elites. To ensure the stability of this new governance approach, the frequent relapses into violence necessitated a continuous peacekeeping presence. As a result, Burundi has hosted five consecutive peacekeeping missions, namely, SAPSD from 2001 through 2003, AMIB from 2003 and 2004, ONUB from 2004 through 2006 and the AUSTF from 2006 through 2009 and later BNUB (2007-2014) (Accord 2007). Under such circumstances, the Arusha spirit of ensuring peace in Burundi gained its impetus through an inclusive transitional government that was led respectively by President Buyoya and then by President Ndayizeye Domitien from 2001 through 2005.

By securing peace as a result of the 2000 peace accord, a smooth transition to democratic elections flowed from extensive socio-political and structural adjustments through the security sector reform and subsequent DDR. The situation with respect to DDR and SSR in Burundi is of special interest in that both mechanisms for providing security were completely new (Kurtenbach and Wulf 2012). Both DDR and the broader SSR meant a transitional society whereby all protocols of the agreements were useful for renewal and peaceful coexistence through keeping peace and assuring security to the Hutu elites who did not yet think political assassination was a thing of the past (Bellamy and Williams 2005).

It should be kept in mind that a big proportion of the rapid socio-political and structural changes as envisaged by the 2000 peace accord were implemented throughout the transition period that ended with the general elections in 2005. For a long while, it appeared that both the power-sharing mechanisms as of the 2000 accord and the 2003 GCA under President Ndayizeye Domitien and the CNDD-FDD led to a complete willingness to end armed hostilities between warring parties (Vandegiste 2009). The success of the 2005 elections was marked by the absence of the unpredictable outbursts typically seen in previous pluralistic elections in Burundi, such as those in 1965 and 1993. Despite the success of the 2005 elections, the volatile nature of Burundi's peace reemerged during the 2010 to 2015 elections, driven by fears among the opposition and their allies (Vandeginste 2011:318).

## **2.10 POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE: WHAT PEACE FOR BURUNDI?**

It is easy to win war than winning the peace (Nye 2004: XII). Whether consociation politics and power-sharing mechanisms in Burundi paid off with regard to peaceful coexistence remains a bone of contention not only amongst the academic and policy circles but also amid the political arena. The dire effects of episodes of skirmishes enmeshed with ethnic brutality and rebellions have negatively impacted peacebuilding policies and post-conflict reconstruction (Nkurunziza 2015:1). Bearing in mind the fact that the management of a typical conflict determines its outcomes (Aritzeta and Aystaran 2005:161), this begs whether Burundi has achieved peace (Nkurunziza 2015:1). Looking back at the socio-political and security paradigms that ensued after the 2000 peace accord in terms of relationship-building (Dudouet 2006:19; Lederach 2014:11) amongst the Tutsi and the Hutu ethnic group, the assumptions are that the conflict was not effectively and constructively addressed (Lovelace, Shapiro and Weingart 2001).

While the lenses of conflict transformation as posited by Lederach (2014:12) suggest that the process of transformation starts both as a way of watching and appreciating, its sustainability becomes a puzzle when transformation does not encompass the current condition, the principal arrays and context as well as a theoretical structure (Lederach 2014). In the context of Burundi, many advances have been made through implementation of the 2000 peace accord. These include absence of war, which materialises as ‘negative peace’ (Galtung 1969:2) and the relative equilibrium or stability of ‘positive peace’ (Galtung 1969) that prevailed. Although the provisions of the 2000 peace Accord set to deter adversarial politics have succeeded, establish the TRC in Burundi endangered the foundation for stability (Nkurunziza 2015:1). As a consequence, the scope of the consociational politics in Burundi has favoured cooperation between elites as well as ethnic inclusivity within all political parties (Lemarchand 2007:16), while the masses continued in unabated misery.

A further development that followed the implementation of 2000 peace Accord is the role of youth militants which continued to threaten stability. One of the reasons for this scenario is that the country’s economy was continuously shaped by political belonging where the elites formed networks with the youth and distributed favours to youth population which posed a risk for relapse into conflict (Brachet and Wolpe 2005: 23). Out of the fear of the strategic ‘winner-takes all’ politics implemented by the ruling party CNDD-FDD, the opposition actively sought to challenge the state of affairs which led to political violence in the 2010 elections.

Similarly, the ex-combatants, most of whom maintained ties with their respective old rebel groups, continued to play a major role either as intimidating agents under a paramilitary umbrella. Fear and mutual suspicion rose and the general mistrust and misconception of the judiciary and police apparatus lost their effective legitimacy (Cheeseman 2011:341). From one point of view, the ex-combatants regularly engaged in human rights violations while benefitting from the protection of their patrons at the top. The situation became ambiguous and volatile while internal strife within almost political parties continued often ending in split political parties. Under the above circumstances, power-sharing institutions have not achieved the consolidation of peace and democracy (Roeder and Rothchild 2005: 12).

## **2.11 SUMMARY**

What comes to light from the above discussion is the extent to which aggressive behaviour and ethnic violence in Burundi was an intergenerational socially learned catastrophe which permeates the current generation. As the reviewed literature shows, historical, socio-political and cultural structures shaped both the Tutsi and the Hutu's aggressive tendencies as they engaged in systemic mutual dehumanisation. Structurally, the government failed to act even if it was aware of the plan but rather facilitated its eruption (Lemarchand 2008:10). Although the traumatic events deeply divided the Hutu and Tutsi, with ethnicity and collective memories often distorting the facts (Lemarchand 2008:8), the underlying intent was genocidal extermination. The Hutu and Tutsi youths, considered crucial to their communities, have been betrayed by ruling elites who exploited and manipulated their energy, leading them into aggressive behaviours and treating them as pawns. As a result, these youths have faced a precarious existence marked by failure and enduring socio-political, cultural, and economic oppression.

Since ethnicity continued to be a means for both Hutu and Tutsi citizens to access and secure resources crucial for their survival, it perpetuated potential sources of conflict for youths, consistently ignited along ethnic lines (Lemarchand 1974:7). It has emerged that Tutsi had access to livelihood opportunities that enabled them to manipulate ethnicity and encouraged Hutu grievances, marginalisation and exclusion. Thus ethnicity remained the foundation for enmity between the Hutu and the Tutsi, leading to suspicion, destructive contacts, physical violence and property destruction that were learned and socially constructed in the community. What cannot be ignored is the truth that 'masses were put death by destructive forces' while

groups of criminals ascended and improved their criminality tactics that younger generations inherited and perpetrated (Bandura 1978:15, 20).

In a nutshell, the ravaging inter-ethnic aggression in Burundi since its encounter with the European world became rampant and its scope widened as years passed and reached the contemporary Burundi. Two trends vis-à-vis the violence that hit Burundi as a nation have emerged in the literature: the lived oppressive experiences by one ethnic group, specifically the Tutsis and the Hutus, has never been assumed nor fully addressed; and from rejection, trauma, betrayal, injustice and all sorts of ill-treatment, both the Hutu and Tutsi youths have been shaped by dehumanising experiences of annihilation and alienation trends. The next chapter discusses the theoretical foundations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This chapter discusses the theoretical foundations that guide the whole reasoning of this research

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the literature relevant to key theoretical frameworks included the social learning theory of aggression, conflict transformation, peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue approaches to conflict. The social learning/unlearning theory (or social constructivism) positions the research to pinpoint determinants of negative reciprocal interaction emanating from socially learned factors, personal and environmental livelihoods and related struggles as well as other negative experiences (Rhee and Park 1980:1). It proceeds with examining the causal factors that link social and psychological intuition to discriminatory and aggressive practices (Nangle et al. 2010: V) to account for the protracted animosity and violent suspicion that have shaped the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. In the second instance, the chapter discusses key approaches to conflict transformation theory from a global perspective and from the angle of violence prevention and peacebuilding. The chapter overviews the concept of peacebuilding and highlights the value of intergenerational dialogue approaches to mitigating inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutus and Tutsis in Gihosha, in particular and Burundi in general.

### **3.2 OUTLINE OF KEY THEORIES APPLIED TO THIS RESEARCH**

As introduced in the afore-mentioned paragraph, four theories emerged as pertinent to this study. First, the social learning theory of aggression as posited by Bandura was used to unveil that the issue of inter-ethnic animosity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi is a learned experience based on exposure to negative narratives, attitudes, behaviours and actions of Hutu and Tutsi youths. Second, Lederach's conflict transformation theory adds a dimension to finding options for the Hutu and Tutsi living together again despite the protracted violence experienced over decades. Third, the peacebuilding theory was used to disclose the possibilities for engaging the Hutu and Tutsi youths in constructing steps towards peaceful coexistence and healing. Building from the above, the intergenerational dialogue approach was premised on the afore-mentioned approach as sustainable path towards bridging the widening gap amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in addition to connecting different generations to address the issue of negative contacts along ethnic lines in Gihosha.

Practically, the research connects the conflict transformation that complements Bandura's social learning theory of aggression and thereby suggests ways forward for sustainable conflict transformation amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. Furthermore, by scrutinising peacebuilding and intergenerational approaches as viable paths towards curbing the protracted enmity and ethnic stereotypes among Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, we can identify strategies that lead to reconciliation, mutual understanding and sustainable peace for future generations. All four theories were considered by the researcher as viable foundations for mitigating ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, starting by unveiling the real causes, the nature of that ethnic enmity and bias and transforming them by means of social unlearning.

### **3.2.1 Social Learning Theory versus the Burundi Crisis Dynamics: View from Below**

While some scholars argue that individuals can only comprehend actions they personally exert on other things (Castell 1962:243), others suggest that these actions may be ineffective if the necessary skills are not within the person's repertoire (Nangle et al. 2010:42)

#### **3.2.1.1 Exploration of channels for social learning of patterns of aggression**

Disputes over the patterns of aggression often divide people. Bandura, for instance, observes that all forms of aggression, whether military, revenge or any other form of aggressive behaviour, stem from three sources of awareness. He opines that learning by observation, reinforced performance and structural determinants are the main origins of aggressive behaviours amongst the human species (Bandura 1978:14). In line with this learning trend, Smith and Berge (2009:440) agree that learners observe others' behaviour, integrating it into their psyche before engaging in new activities through assimilation and imitation. This learning takes place in the environment, noting that the concept of 'environment' for one individual can include another individual (Staddon 1984:503). In Bandura's explanation, beyond reciprocity, modelling influences, incentive inducements, aversive treatment, instructional control and bizarre symbolic control are key instigators of aggressive behaviours in social learning (Bandura 1978:14). He highlights several factors that regulate aggression, including external reinforcement, tangible rewards, social and status incentives, displays of injury, relief from negative treatment, punishment, vicarious reinforcement, self-reward, moral justification, dehumanisation of victims, shifting responsibility onto targets, and distorting the consequences of actions.

Philips and Orton (1983, cited in Staddon 1984:502) challenge this view as poorly defined, identifying several types of relationships in social learning theory of aggression: unidirectional, partially bidirectional, and reciprocal. Yet, as Bandura posits, favouring conditions, retention and memory of aggressive behaviour often lead to reproduction wherever motivation occurs (Philips and Orton 1983, cited in Staddon 1984). In assessing aggression dynamics, Bandura recognises that the family stands out as the main nucleus in modelling and reinforcing aggressive behaviour followed by the subculture in which individuals live. This is shared by Akers and Jennings (2016) who emphasise the influence that peoples' interactions have on others in their peer groups and communities, which are prone to alter individual behaviours. Bandura proposed three theories on the motivation behind aggression: instinct theory, where natural aggressive instincts lead to aggressive behaviour; drive theory, in which frustration acts as an aggressive drive resulting in aggressive behaviour; and social learning theory, where aversive experiences, incentive inducements, emotional arousal, or anticipated consequences combine to produce adverse behaviour (Bandura 1978: 17).

Within the framework of social learning theory, aggression is developed either for survival or growth, with aggressive behaviours resulting from extensive learning, exposure and assimilation (Bandura 1978:14; Nangle et al. 2010). The social and physical environments serve as fertile grounds for shaping impressions of social realities, whether positive or aggressive, transforming them into altered perceptions of self and others. This process weakens cognitive control over behaviour while intensifying the impulse to act (Bandura 1978:26).

### 3.2.1.2 Vehicles for learning aggressive behaviour

Several social learning theorists and existing literature on the social learning theory of aggression reveal troubling mechanisms that drive aggressive behaviour. For one, gaining knowledge of the real world is often hampered by misconceptions developed by means of erroneous observation and related behaviour modelling of salient others. This diverts attention from objective appreciation of other people and things and shapes the relationships that individuals have with others and determine how people behave. While aggressive behaviour is typically triggered by an aggressive drive, the functional value of misconceptions is often significant, leading to contagious negativity that is cognitively processed at both personal and communal levels (Bandura 1978:17).

Triggers and mechanisms of aggression are complex and difficult to decipher, as they arise from numerous determinants serving various purposes and are influenced by different perspectives, including individual, collective, personal, or structural viewpoints. In such contexts, the forms of aggression can proliferate depending on their nature, extent, and duration. This type of education prepares children to become active adult members of society, offering guidance on political and social life, conduct, and interpersonal relationships (John 1968:48). Many scholars agree with this when referring to multivariate factors behind youth violence and aggression. For example, Ferguson et al. (2009:904) examined various risk factors contributing to youth aggression, identifying family, peers, depression, and violence exposed in the media as major influences on aggressive behaviour among young people. They argue that key elements driving aggression include nurturing factors such as negativity experienced in the neighbourhood, poor relationships with members of the community, unacceptable personality traits, time spent with family, peer pressure, family dysfunction and violence (Ferguson et al. 2009: 906).

### 3.2.1.3 Why do the youth opt for aggression?

The concept of aggression has permeated human circles irrespective of geographical location or cultural background or time. Studies have revealed that the nature and relationship between the driving forces of aggressive behaviour are naturally intrinsic to human nature. The ways in which individuals opt for aggression is naturally determined by instigating triggers, i.e., situational events or circumstances and factors that are likely to increase the prospect for aggression (Hsieh and Chen 2017: 2). Often, instigating triggers are fuelled by impelling forces which are associated with personality traits or dispositional factors that would increase the chances of aggression in the face of instigating triggers. Similarly, the suppression of energy can outweigh an aggressive urge, determining whether aggressive impulses turn into actual aggressive behaviours (Hsieh and Chen 2017:2).

Scholars submit to the idea that aggression is a choice just like peaceful endeavours. After all, there is no way to avoid aggression while there are basic grievances where someone feels miserable and desperate looking to others to achieve his fulfilment and genuine peace of mind. In such circumstances, aggressive behaviour becomes a bridge to radicalisation. In this context, Kundnani (2012:9) illustrates the path to radicalisation by highlighting the diverse roles of various agencies. He emphasises that radicalisation arises from factors at the individual level,

the ideology, the group, and, most crucially, the complex root causes, circumstances and grievances.

In light of the above, it is possible to enumerate a list of factors affecting the origin, form and nature of radicalisation. These discriminatory behaviours are produced over extended time and are embedded in family ties and relations where parents often pass on to their offspring inherited life events from which younger generations create and build their identity. In practice, such trends in aggressive behaviour and radicalisation become a cultural, psychological and philosophical intergenerational virus. Sageman (2004, cited in Kundnani 2012:15) offers a model of the rhetorical strategies towards aggressive tendencies whereby friendship and kinship stand out as significant factors with social networks, political and cultural agencies implications fuelling radicalisation. Sageman (2012: 15) adds that in the process of radicalisation, aggression spreads the same way a virus does from a single individual already infected to his fellows, often culminating in violence.

### **3.2.2 Features of Typical Cases of Inter-Ethnic Tensions Involving the Youths in Africa**

Inter-ethnic violence involving youth groups is an international phenomenon but the causes vary for each type. In Africa for instance, existing literature reveals that much inter-ethnic violence involving youths in Africa seems to be fuelled by the continent's inability to develop economically. As result, young people devise ways to adjust to competing systems which often dictate their behaviour and involvement in conflict. In his analysis of rebel movements in Sierra Leone, militias groupings in Brazzaville, rival miners in DRC and Northern Angola, Chabal (2005:14) concludes that all these forms of violence are consequences of rapid change within political perspectives in which youths are politically and economically marginalised, if not entirely ignored by the leaders controlling the faltering polity. In Chabal's thinking, violence in most African countries is politically motivated with cases of both overt and covert motivations when violence extends beyond countries' borders. He points to cases such as the Sudanese Government which is believed to have prompted and supported rebel movements in Northern and Eastern Uganda, mostly composed of youth and child soldiers. He cautions that there are yet other motivations for violence other than economic or political, mainly anthropological, cultural, psychological which justify the phenomenon. Chabal (2005:14) concludes that violence is ravaging Africa unabatedly and that there cannot be peace unless the root sources of violence are accurately understood.

### 3.2.2.1 Inter-ethnic violence involving the youths: Case of Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk in South Sudan

Through the inter-ethnic violence involving the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk youths in South Sudan, we note that the youths are at the same time key players and victims who frequently engage in aggression to liberate their people. According to Strategic Comments (2017), most of the inter-ethnic violence between the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk factions is rooted in multivariate factors ranging from economic, political and perceived military domination leading to cruel treatment of civilians where youths are involved. Of the many reported massacres, the ethnic factor remains central and contests are described as the Dinka against the Nuer and vice versa. Ensor (2012) indicates that the underlying factors behind the inter-ethnic violence involving youth in South Sudan are so deep and wide in scope to the point that a single solution to ending violence would be doubtful. As a young nation, South Sudan leadership fell into the hands of ex-combatants who had spent most of their life in war and whose wounds and aspirations did not match. The South Sudanese had access to adequate training due to socio-economic and political segregation and bias (Cherian 2011:132). As a conglomeration of forces divided along ethnic lines, even political parties succumbed to ethnic contention.

In the above circumstances, South Sudanese youths experienced similar violence in a different way. Some faced challenges and motivations related to the history of their country where they joined militias to protect their cattle and their traditional autonomy such as the Darfur youths (Flint and De Waal 2005). Due to few choices left for young people in such highly volatile crisis, where violence seems to engulf a nation and where civilians have become targets and all socioeconomic and administrative sectors face violence, deprivation, and death, Ensor (2012:273) concludes that recourse to weapons appears to be good option for survival instead of doing nothing to improve their condition.

### 3.2.2.2 The multivariate nature and drives of inter-ethnic violence involving youths: Case of Kenya

Literature on the multivariate nature and drivers of inter-ethnic violence involving youths in Kenya portrays that there is no hierarchy of causes of instability and violence involving young people in Kenya but that the land issue and ethnic factors are keenly felt in some provinces. The type of land ownership instituted by colonial settlers and the subsequent Kenyan elites' socio-political monopoly in post-colonial Kenya have had implications for the country's social

stability and security. Kareithi (2015) notes that many factors account for the tribal conflict in Kenya with profound repercussions for the livelihoods and safety of pastoralists. He points to the politics of ethnicity and the re-invention and use of conflict as a strategic scheme to achieve political and economic goals where young warriors engage in aggressive attacks in the face of local limited ability to counter-attack.

Traditionally, young warriors in Kenya are ordinary productive young men who assume multiple socio-political and economic roles, duties and responsibilities in their society including the protection of communal land and kinsmen and increasing their herds. However, young warriors in modern Kenya are usually motivated by factors such as unmet expectations, marginalisation, isolation, resource competition, socio-cultural transformation, identity, poverty, the glorification of violence, ethnicisation of politics and inadequate conflict management. (Kareithi 2015). As can be seen, there is no straightforward explanation of the root causes and drives of violence involving young people in Kenya. Needless to say, the political, structural, historical, economic and ethnic factors play a key role in sustaining violence in Kenya as elsewhere in Africa.

### 3.2.2.3 Socioeconomic consequences of violence on youths in Africa

Conflict urges the youth to migrate to urban areas. Mabala (2011) posits that some of the immediate socioeconomic consequences of violence involving youth in Africa is the growing number of young people migrating towards urban areas. Given their big number and concentration in urban settings, they are mostly visible and thereby exposed to stereotypes, marginalisation, manipulation and other forms of aggression either as aggressors or victims. Facing unemployment and the high cost of living in cities, individuals are exposed to urban crimes that frequently spread to rural areas. This exposure often breeds greed, which can lead to conflicts between those who have resources and those who do not.

Often marginalised, young people become soft to instrumentalisation where they fall prey to political elites' manoeuvrings who exploit their vulnerability through clientelism and sophisticated networks. Alongside weak local political practices, poverty and the struggle to secure a livelihood push the youth into insurgency and guerrilla warfare. They end up fighting to protect the interests of ruling elites, becoming entangled in harmful cycles of internal conflict (Berman 1998).

#### 3.2.2.4 Intergenerational ethnic violence involving the youth in Africa: Who is to blame?

Against the backdrop of vagueness and partitions, ruling layers in most African countries have failed to rekindle humanity and pride in their respective citizens which would re-invigorate their post-independence socio-political, cultural, economic and development recovery (Berman 1998). Though ethnicity in Africa has emerged as a social concept grounded in colonial legacies and adjusted to new socio-economic and administrative manoeuvres in colonial and post-colonial Africa, ethnic violence is imputed to the personalistic, materialistic and opportunistic character of African political elites whose actions and behaviours occasion grievances and ultimately violence. As Buckley (2005:101) points out, there are more important triggers that sustain violence some of which are embedded in the misuse of citizenship rights such as determining who is considered an insider and who is seen as an outsider in a community. Therefore problematic relationships between community members as highlighted by Vandeginste (2015), Lederach (2005) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) permeate ethnicity, religion and race (Wilén 2019; Hatungimana, Theron and Popic, 2018) with repercussions for younger generations.

The above point emphasises the fact that violence in Africa is embedded in a complex network of facts that permeate all spheres of peoples' lives. In the Burundi and Rwanda cases for instance, ethnicity between Hutu and Tutsi was meticulously engineered and instrumentalised to demonise internal opponents across the ethnic divide (Vandeginst 2014:3).

With reference to negativity between the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, the same aggressive patterns and tendencies are accounted for by the underlying assumption that recourse to violence is the way to accessing power and wealth (Daley 2006:669). What sets aggression apart is that grievances from either the Hutu or Tutsi groups often lead to the creation of their respective realities. This aggression typically manifests through four main stimuli: a sense of moral outrage over perceived unfairness; enabling interpretations; personal experiences; and mobilising networks (Sageman 2004, cited in Kundnani 2012:15). Paradoxically, the causal links between aggression and deprivation do not convincingly explain the level of violence that often occurs. This is demonstrated by the presence of individuals who, despite experiencing various forms of deprivation, opt for peaceful solutions rather than resorting to violence and aggression (Wiktorowicz 2005, cited in Kundnani 2012:17).

In sum, as the main conclusions, opting for aggression is a result of social learning and exposure to social aggression and violent patterns. As the literature has highlighted, the centrality of individuals in learning patterns of behaviour by observing other people in their immediate environment and by embracing the behaviour of others in their reach often leads to future reproduction of the same realities. Recognising that all human behaviour is deeply rooted in our physical experience, it is evident that aggressive behaviour is learned from a variety of diverse sources. In the Hutu-Tutsi relationships, shared attitudes and norms have constituted the backbone for groups to adopt typical behaviour over a period of time through ongoing socialisation and social interactions (Tucker et al. 2009). Often, aggressive behaviour including radicalisation and extremism follows from ideological indoctrination with role models playing a central role in far broader context (Kundnani 2012, cited in Schils & Verhage 2017:2).

### **3.2.3 Issues in Social Learning of Aggression: The Role of Social Environment**

The main perspectives of existing literature acknowledge that aggressive behaviour is often fuelled by lack of positive options available in a given society which is aggravated by individual's need for social belonging, significance and importance, or a response to prejudice and grievances (Schils & Verhage 2017:4). In practice, aggression is influenced by the 'contact' factor whereby parents, peers, the social environment, politics, economy, human nature and conditions play a major role in the process (Hsieh & Chen 2017). This assumption underlines the role of social education in fulfilling desired political outcomes based on desired ideologies in most countries (John 1968:49).

However, differing views exist among scholars on the role of the social environment in fostering aggression. Beyond the environmental input, critics suggest that aggression can occur as a genetically built-in aspect of human nature that is impossible to prevent (Baron 1999:98). This is valid in the Biblical depiction of aggressive traits of human character displayed in the fate facing the first human family on earth. Cain insisted that Abel should go with him to the field and there Abel was murdered (Genesis 4: 8, NIV).

The aggression inflicted on Abel by his elder brother Cain is a clear indication that the tragedy of aggression is not a new concept in human history marked by uncontrollable groaning and lamentations (Vorster 2005). The first family facing Cain's act of aggression against his younger brother Abel inaugurated havoc in the universe where only a handful of people lived. This demonstrates that human nature is shaped by a history of violence and intergenerational

transfers. The Biblical account attributes the root of human chaos to Satan's enmity against humanity (Genesis 3:15). While some scholars might dismiss this view, the core issue remains that mankind inherently bears a propensity for aggression from birth.

However, there is limited acknowledgment among existing knowledge and scholars that concepts like 'Satan' or 'God' should be considered in scientific discussions. Despite this, while many people overlook the influence of Satan, Biblical accounts depict him as a persistent adversary, infiltrating every aspect of life—homes, cities, churches, national councils, and courts of justice (White 1973). The Biblical narrative clearly portrays Satan as tempting humanity to sin, with his corrupting influence extending into contemporary homes, societies, and various spheres of life. Consequently, humans may become captives to ignorance, decay, and indifference, struggling to understand what truly brings them peace. This justifies why Jesus wept over Jerusalem, forecasting the city and the world destiny as its inhabitants did not know where their peace came from because it was hidden from them (Luke 19: 42).

Two points emerge from the above supposition. First, there is a desire in the world today to understand why aggression is in vogue in almost all spheres of life. Second, from Adam's era to contemporary times, Satan has been exercising his snaring power and subtle temptations to oppress, destroy, deceive and perpetuate violence and aggression. However, the growing foundations of man's culture and education have tended to be suspicious of the existence of evil spirits whose father is denoted as Satan, the foe (White 1973:449). There are linkages between the aggression in the Bible referred to above and the theory of aggression.

The afore-mentioned Biblical account clarifies that the instigator of Cain's murder of Abel was not observational learning nor reinforced performance or structural determinants. It was the supernatural power of evil, imbedded in human nature, prompted by anger and wrongdoing. Cain received God's ultimate warning and he was given an option to choose between what was right and the consequences of his failure to choose what was right was made plain (Genesis 4:6).

As can be seen, man is manifestly and constantly prey to bad choices and this connection of the visible with the invisible world is inseparably interwoven with human behaviour and should be the starting point for understanding the functional value of aggression as Bandura puts it in the origin of aggression as below:

Table 1: Origins, instigators and regulators of aggressive behaviour in social learning theory

Origin of aggression	Instigators of aggression	Regulators of aggression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Observational learning</li> <li>❖ Reinforced performance</li> <li>❖ Structural determinants</li> </ul>	<p><b>MODELLING INFLUENCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Disinhibitory</li> <li>✓ Facilitative</li> <li>✓ Arousing</li> <li>✓ Stimulus enhancing</li> </ul> <p><b>AVERSIVE TREATMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Physical Assaults</li> <li>✓ Verbal threats and insults</li> <li>✓ Adverse reductions in reinforcement</li> <li>✓ Thwarting</li> </ul> <p><b>INCENTIVE INDUCEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTROL</b></p> <p><b>BIZARRE SYMBOLIC CONTROL</b></p>	<p><b>EXTERNAL REINFORCEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible Rewards</li> <li>• Social and Status Rewards</li> <li>• Expressions of injury</li> <li>• Alleviation of aversive treatment</li> </ul> <p><b>PUNISHMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inhibitory</li> <li>• Informative</li> </ul> <p><b>VICARIOUS REINFORCEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observed Reward</li> <li>• Observed Punishment</li> </ul> <p><b>SELF-REINFORCEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reward</li> <li>• Self-punishment</li> <li>• Neutralization of self-punishment</li> <li>• Moral Justification</li> <li>• Palliative Comparison</li> <li>• Euphemistic Labelling</li> <li>• Displacement of Responsibility</li> <li>• Diffusion of Responsibility</li> <li>• Dehumanization of victims</li> <li>• Attribution of Blame to victims</li> <li>• Misrepresentation of consequences</li> </ul>

Source: adapted from Bandura (1977:14)

As presented in Table 1, one can assume that beyond the fact that human aggressive behaviour is determined by social and cultural determinants, his position towards others is determined by the level of his vertical and horizontal relations. Hence, the assertion that men are naturally predisposed to develop tendencies which require reasons. Because our body is a perceptual centre from which we see, hear, touch, smell and taste our world (Johnson 1987:124), the significance of aggression is, therefore, intensified by aggressive encounters in which exposure to violence leads individuals to violent conduct, unless some sort of inhibitory force and punishments are exercised. This validates the claim that ‘men do not proceed like animals under the law of instinct’ (Castell 1962:485).

Staddon (1984: 504) raised a concern about Bandura's social learning theory. Taking an example of the response of an aggressive child to punishment, he argues that there are other factors leading to aggressive behaviour. He notes various factors such as the history of punishment, for instance, and concludes that there are inherent factors within a person prone to producing aggression. In a similar fashion, John (1968:62) typifies a child who commits an antisocial act and is perceived as transgressor by his peers, teachers, parents and other friends out of school, yet the child continues to display antisocial behaviour and does change.

Although the above two positions are not deeply explored, they point to another line of study that involves individual's resistance to social learning because of personal or deliberate choices. Yet, this does not rule out the centrality of social learning environment including instigators and regulators of aggression, but adds to understanding that there are other avenues and multiple sources (Kiesner and Kerr 2004) in which social learning takes place. John (1968:73) estimates that this is possible in the advent of negligence, minimising of principles or where there is political indifference or subjectivism.

I conclude, therefore, that what emerges from the relatedness between origins, instigators and regulators of aggression is rather an interplay of complex aggressive behaviour which are intrinsically reinforced by the subculture where individuals live (Bandura 1977:15). This again justifies the validity of Bandura's social learning theory of aggression as far as the violent context of Burundi is concerned. The fact equally cast this research within the aggressive predicament facing ethnic groups in Burundi in the form of 'mystical racialised history' (Daley 2006:670). As such, this research does not exclude alternative factors such as frustration, aggressive instincts, aversive experiences and incentive inducements which play a major role in emotional arousal leading to aggressive behaviour (Bandura 1977: 17).

### **3.2.4 Relevance of Social Learning Theory of Aggression to the Burundi Case**

For more than six decades, unbridled human aggression has been rampant in Burundi and has stretched to all spheres of socio-political, cultural and economic life. It has decimated families, disrupted the economy and infrastructure while the Hutu and Tutsi aggressive obstinacy does not seem to have an endpoint. The unpredictable nature and causes of aggressive behaviour, along with the strained relations between Hutu and Tutsi, have been so erratic that the extent of this intergenerational violence appears almost incomprehensible. Such intergenerational human aggression can only be understood through the lenses of Bandura's social learning

theory of aggression in terms of prolonged exposure to violence and insecurity as posited by Samii (2013:221).

In the context of recurring national crime, disorder, revenge, killings, assassinations and unbridled bloodshed that were indiscriminately orchestrated between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, it is difficult to pinpoint why such animosity took place. The relevance of Bandura's theory of social learning of aggression is crucial in pinpointing important features that led to the animosity sustained between the Hutu and Tutsi for more than six decades. For instance, through direct, indirect, and observational exposure to violent behaviour (Bandura 1977:13), both Hutu and Tutsi have engaged in violence while denying responsibility. The Hutu, for example, became acutely aware of their oppression and subjugation, which led them to form a distinct group and reinforce their Hutu identity (Lemarchand 1994:103). On the linkages between ideology enforcement and aggressive behaviour, Bandura (1977: 25) notes that people fail to see themselves as accountable because they transfer their responsibility and thus continue acting aggressively out of collective motivation.

From the above, it follows that ideology, as a symbolic aspect of culture, tends to rationalise and legitimise structural violence, presenting it as valid and lawful for social existence and survival. The significance of Bandura's social learning theory of aggression found its validity in socialisation and ensuing cultural violence in the sense epitomised by Galtung. Galtung (1969:305) presents cultural violence as a triangular syndrome forged in the minds of perpetrators through institutionalised violent structure, internalised violent culture and institutionalised, repetitive and ritualistic direct violence.

It is necessary to examine the prototype of institutionalised ideology between Hutu and Tutsi both in Burundi and Rwanda to figure out how structural violence begins and how it is sustained. By examining the structure of domination in Burundi and Rwanda, Uvin (1993:266) recognises the manipulation of ethnicity in both countries. He argues that in Rwanda rulers have reinforced the validity of their discriminatory ideology by emphasising the carnage inflicted on the Hutu by the Tutsi army in Burundi in 1965, 1972, 1988, 1989 and 1993 as a demonstration of Tutsi's ruthless cruelty. Uvin (1995:266) found that to put the rhetoric of ethnicity into perspective, whenever the opportunity arises, Tutsi in Burundi have pointed to Rwanda since the 1960s to prove that the Hutu are more than genocidal murderers.

Owing to the above, the undisputed culture of violence that has shaped the rapport between the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi reminds us of the likelihood of 'de-socialisation' and 're-socialisation' culminating in violence (Galtung 1969:306). Both Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi have orchestrated morally unacceptable inhumanities (Bandura 1977:25).

### **3.2.5 The Rhetoric of the Burundi Crisis since the Colonial Era**

Most narratives available on the Burundi crisis do not converge in locating the origins of the recurring crisis. For some, the protracted patron-client networks that were characteristic of relations amongst ethnic groups in Burundi, including the nature of precolonial state, the introduction of divide and rule politics by colonial masters accelerated the polarisation and ethnic speculations (Uvin 1993:255). Cammack (2007) and Chabal (2009) argue that the identities of Hutu and Tutsi were socially constructed. Uvin (1993:254) attributes the Hutu-Tutsi-Twa ethnicisation and socioeconomic stratification of Burundi as an act of colonial engineering orchestrated by both Germans and Belgians. For instance, Brussels' colonial policies based on castes triggered the Tutsi domination in key sectors which led to the Hutu upheavals (Yervasi 2008:17).

Under colonial rule, the social construction of Hutu and Tutsi identities has adversely affected their relations in Burundi, diverging significantly from the historical lineages that previously existed. The Tutsi managed to forge new connections within their lineages and strategically organised themselves into groups such as the '*Bahima*' and '*Banyaruguru*' to resist economic encroachment and eliminate socioeconomic and political rivals (Lipschutz 2000:1). Through a political and economic system that excluded the Hutu and Tutsi not from Burundi (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000:385), 'intra-elite dynamics' (Daley 2006:672) perpetuated violence. This historical societal hierarchy and the constructed relationships have been deeply politicized through the 'monopolization of state institutions' (Ndikumana 2005:11) in contemporary Burundi, affecting younger generations.

### **3.2.6 The Social Structure versus Hutu and Tutsi Relations in Precolonial Burundi: The Archetype of Social Learning Theory of Aggression**

Before the scramble for Africa and subsequent colonisation, Burundi had been a resilient, organised kingdom inhabited by four groups who were recognised based on their everyday livelihoods. These include the Twa who were recognised as potters, hunters and entertainment performers; the Ganwa who were mostly connected with the ruling upper classes (in our day

considered as a Tutsi subgroup); the Tutsi who were recognised as cow herders; and the Hutu who were mostly farmers and soil tillers. Social relationships between these groups favoured interdependence where intermarriages enriched and maintained social harmony and thus facilitated ‘vertical mobility of labour without any sentiment of superiority before the advent of colonialism’ (Okon and Ojakorotu 2018:31). All people that lived in Burundi had the same linguistic and verbal behaviour, shared same culture and practice the same religion (Daley 2006).

In terms of political leadership, traditional authority held the power and rule based on patrimonial ties and personal loyalty between top leaders, administrative staff and the citizenry as advanced by Kelsall (2011:76). This socially constructed type of leadership continued to be entertained by elites and other locally appointed leaders in post-independence Burundi. Such practices unintentionally reinforced patterns of discrimination and stereotypes along ethnic lines (Greenland 1976:107). The relations between the Hutu and Tutsi which used to be harmonious and friendly, were thus spoiled by dividing ideologies. This new force of social division emerged after colonial rulers established their divide-and-rule system, which involved exploitation, leading to exclusion and prejudice.

Le Vine (1980:666) describes these types of relationships as personalism, where individuals seek to align themselves with those in power for personal or family benefits. Erdmann and Engel (2007:98) refer to this as a substitute for personal rule. Consequently, within the hierarchical network of patron-client relationships, traditional leadership was stratified with princes at the top, Hutu primarily engaged in farming, and the Twa occupying the lowest standing. The precolonial social organisation of Burundi and the monarchy leadership system favoured Tutsi power while leaving the Hutu with very little influence (Weinstein 1972:27).

### **3.2.7 Violence as Social Construct in Colonial through Post-colonial Burundi: A Historical Account**

In the contemporary world, the notorious trigger cause of violence is embedded in lack of positive contact amongst ethnic groups (Brogan 1989, cited in Banton 2000:481). For more than six decades, Burundi has experienced the detrimental effects of colonial rule, both internally and externally, which have significantly disrupted interactions between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. Historically, neither the Hutu nor the Tutsi aimed to mobilise socio-political efforts along ethnic lines (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:1). Even today, there is no unified

understanding of the chronological origins of ethnicity and exclusion in Burundi. Mostly, crosscutting socio-political divides and mobilisation are attributed to colonial rule perpetrated first by the Germans from 1889 through 1916, then by the Belgians from 1916 through 1962. By usurping the authority of the incumbent *Mwami* or king and his cabinet, both Germans and Belgians sowed the seed of democratic deficit that destroyed the traditional and political institutions which upheld social equality in the society (Okon and Ojakorotu 2018: 30).

Mamdani (1996, cited in Morris 2000:431) highlights that it is the colonial state that is responsible for the bifurcated power system in African societies both in rural areas and in towns. Under this type of leadership, clientelism emerged as a powerful, accessible, and effective method of political mobilization, where recruitment was carried out through personal, face-to-face interactions or door-to-door efforts, particularly targeting the most disenfranchised or marginalized citizens (Morris 2000: 435).

Similarly, as highlighted by Uvin (2009:8), the colonial systems had a profound impact on the socio-economic, cultural, and political organization of the country, hindering collaboration between the Hutu and Tutsi groups in Burundi. Under these circumstances, the Germans and Belgians established Tutsi aristocratic dominance by promoting ethnic myths, which ignited ethnic rivalry and framed future political power struggles and resource-related discourse in the country as a zero-sum game (Okon and Ojakorotu 2018: 31).

The above narrative of the Burundi social construct of exclusion does not obscure the fact that other factors account for the protracted accounts of violence amongst the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa communities in Burundi. For one thing, the traditional ordinary Burundian citizen had long entertained clan-based and region-related loyalties as well as socioeconomic ties and dissimilarities between the privileged and those who struggled economically (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:5). For instance, the Tutsi close to *Micombero* and in control of the army, mainly belonging to *Hima* clans and from *Bururi* province, wished to remove the suspected challenge posed by a group of Tutsis from more aristocratic clans in central and northern Burundi (Greenland 1976:119). Even so, antagonism, hostility and rifts became more overt when the Belgium colonial administration system elevated the Tutsi over the Hutu and orchestrated social, economic, political and cultural negligence and marginalisation of the Twa, particularly in the colonial-run educational system (Alvarez 2001).

Aided by the privileged Tutsi minority, from 1933 to 1934, the Belgian colonial masters notably enforced socio-political rifts by expelling traditional Hutu leaders and by introducing the management of the country through their inaugurated leadership composed of better educated Tutsi and Ganwa (Horowitz 1985; Lemarchand 1970). Despite the personal rulership of Tutsi and Ganwa, which was based on loyalties rather than the leader's exceptional personal qualities (Le Vine 1980:657), four significant divides were solidified: ethnic, clan-based, regional, and class-based. These divisions were particularly evident between the rural peasant masses and the urban elites (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:5; Greenland 1976).

By consolidating small independent chiefdoms led by the *Bezi* and the *Batare* princes (Ganwa) that were meant to help the Belgian colonial administration to maintain better control of the regions, by 1929, the result was exclusion of the Hutu from any socio-political influence. The result was that the princely chiefs and leadership demanded forced allegiance, work and taxes on behalf of the colonialists, which cemented financial adversities for the local masses and resulted in rural protests in 1932 (Yervasi 2008:17). Consequently, monarchical leadership became the exclusive domain of the princes or Ganwa, while the Hutu and Tutsi were left vying for access to the monarchy's sovereignty.

Economically, the polarisation of power between Tutsi, Hutu and Ganwa, added to the virulent contest and eagerness for ascending to power was linked to incentives and rewards which saw an increase in the value of cows as a gauge for being tagged a Tutsi. 'What I have' superseded 'I am a human being' (Ramose 2010: 291). For instance, owning up to 10 cows for instance was a gauge for being arbitrarily identified as a Tutsi. Paradoxically, this imposed identity shifted over time, with a wealthy Hutu becoming recognized as Tutsi, while a poorer Tutsi was arbitrarily reclassified as Hutu (Quaynor 2011:38). This colonially fabricated ethnicisation of the identities of Burundians occasioned unfulfilled expectations on the Hutu and Twa side, while the Tutsi continued to enjoy privileged positions and economic benefits and transferred their ethnic identity into the judicial law and the economy. The concern was that such arbitrary assignment and manipulation of identity contradicted the traditional understanding of ethnic identity, which is customarily determined at birth and inherently passed down through generations (Che 2016:2; Greenland 1976).

Regretfully, facing exclusion from economic and political spheres of influence, the Hutu representing 85% and the Twa representing 1% of the whole population (Arieff 2015:2; Vandeginste 2009: 64) became deeply impoverished and the concepts of 'Hutu' and 'Twa'

became tokens of poverty, repulsion and powerlessness. While key public institutions including the education system, the military, the executive and the judiciary became the monopoly of Tutsi, tensions for power control led to further rivalries and marginalisation. Pronounced Hutu grievances, ethno-regional divisions, suspicion between different ethnic groups culminated in partisan politics (Allen 1995:303; Ndikumana 1998, cited in Che 2016:4).

### **3.2.8 Burundi Socially Learned Aggression: A Synoptic View of Trigger Dynamics and Consequences**

Although many variables contributed to igniting the Burundi conflict, the challenge to end cycles of such violence has been with the web of relationships between structural and social trigger factors that shaped the country since independence. Firstly, whereas the colonialists had ensured that all political power rested within the hands of elites from the Tutsi minority at independence, conflicts emerged for power and survival from that time (Brachet 2005; Okon and Ojakorotu 2018). The legacy of Belgian colonial oppression was handed over to ‘Tutsi-dominated politico-military institutions’ (Okon and Ojakorotu 2018:34) who forced allegiance by tormenting, killing and excluding the Hutu (Brachet 2005:10) while unabatedly exercising more extensive patronage powers (Allen 1995:304). By replacing the monarchical rulership, which had been the legitimate traditional system of administration until 1966, the subsequent eras of governance – characterised by military regimes from 1966 through 1993 and marked by rule through force and repression – undermined the legitimacy of power-sharing mechanisms.

Thus the centuries’ long journey of brotherly and peaceful coexistence amongst Burundi ethnic groups, who used to live intermixed in homogenous villages across the country (Greenland 1976) was eroded. The traditional enclosed tribal and village life drastically changed, a new era of ‘timocracy’ was born (Ramose 2010). In responding to this state of affairs, a big portion of the Hutu masses submitted to marginalisation, others escaped to neighbouring countries while other enlightened Hutu sought to challenge the status quo. Thus, the Hutu struggle was started, counting on the solidarity of the Hutu refugees scattered in camps in neighbouring Rwanda, Tanzania and former Zaire (Brachet 2005:10).

The positioning of the Hutu against injustice inflicted on them by the Tutsis’ emerging hegemony occasioned millions of deaths, increasing intermittent tensions that led to inestimable casualties as witnessed in 1965, 1972 and 1993 in the whole country (Daley 2006:

671; Greenland 1976; Lemarchand 1994; Okon and Ojakorotu 2018: 31), on the one hand. On the other, as the Hutu failed to gain power at national or local level, they tended to exploit communal divisions to avoid permanent exclusion (Allen 1995:304). It was not until 1980 that the Hutu refugees, who had been forced to flee Burundi and live in exile in Tanzania following the large-scale genocide of 1972, united to form PALIPEHUTU with the goal of seeking emancipation (Vandeginste 2009: 64).

Brachet and Wolpe (2005:11) identified the resurgence of ethnic violence between the Hutu and Tutsi in post-independence Burundi as a key factor in the ongoing conflict. They emphasized that this violence was fueled by the manipulation of ethnic divisions, personal and regional rivalries, resistance to oppressive mono-ethnic rule, and the elites' strategic use of mass mobilization, which perpetuated a cycle of unrest. The sad truth is that the consequent massacre of Hutus in Burundi was known to the wider international community but the Burundi regime did not receive 'any public censure' (Greenland 1976: 99).

#### 3.2.8.1 Physical Violence and local dynamics

“Crucial aspects of the 1972 events remain shrouded in mystery” (Greenland 1976:120). As already referred above, the mono-ethnic Tutsi army facilitated executions of thousands of Hutu innocents, including ethnic cleansing meant to eliminate the Hutu in the local and national administration, the army, the gendarmerie, the economy and the jurisdictional mechanisms (Hadzidedic 2017) which altogether annihilated the Hutus (Brachet and Wolpe 2005). The extent and political significance of the witnessed physical violence throughout the protracted cyclical events dominated by ethnic perceptions in the Burundi political life (Greenland 1976:160), aggression was for the most part orchestrated by Tutsi for political power control. At each turn, Tutsi-led military coups were followed by the overthrow of the government, including the dismantling of democratic institutions and the assassination of President Ndadaye and his cabinet, which ignited institutional chaos, socio-political unrest and countless inter-ethnic casualties (Vandeginste 2017: 67).

Micó (2020:3) asserted that factors that add to the long list of victims of physical violence stem from the disproportionate distribution of social production. Thus, despite the political, social, and historical factors that played a role in shaping the dynamics of violence, the degree of exclusion is recognised as a key factor that predisposed the country to such violence. It is believed that the national and local mechanisms of exclusion and take-all policies exercised by

the mono-ethnic leadership intensified the ethno-political confrontation in Burundi between dominant Tutsi and discriminated Hutu and Twa (Che 2016:2). Through mass mobilisation along ethnic lines, numerous political Hutu leaders and countless educated Hutu were assassinated from independence in 1962 through 2000. The persistent history of violence and the subsequent culture of impunity reinforced the structural and underlying forces of ethnic suspicion, further fuelled by numerous military coups and assassinations in 1961, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1976, 1987, 1993, 1996 (Brachet and Wolpe 2005).

A particularly sensitive issue is that under the Tutsi's socio-political and economic dominance, any Hutu efforts to demand equitable distribution of public services and opportunities were met with indiscriminate and brutal repression of the masses. This pattern of repression intensified in post-independence Burundi and persisted for over 50 years, culminating in bloodshed during the events of 1965, 1972, 1988, and 1990. Additionally, it is rather disappointing that out of fear, physical danger and for the sake of survival, the political manoeuvres perpetrated by the Tutsi-dominated army and national leadership led many Hutu into flight and most of them are still scattered in the neighbouring countries, particularly Tanzania and DRC.

During these successive periods of violence, the Tutsi elites, backed by colonial powers whose legacy and interests persisted in the form of neo-colonialism even after independence, orchestrated significant extermination of the Hutu population under the guise of the infamous "*Plan Simbananiye*." By endorsing the so-called Hutu threat, the colonisers legitimised Tutsi dominance through violence, thereby reinforcing exclusionary leadership and favouring Tutsi-led institutions based on ethnic distinctions (Gallaher 2020:303).

Clearly, the widespread and prolonged physical violence reinforces the notion that both the violence and any form of consolidation were rooted in certain deeply ingrained memories of conflict and aggression (Micó 2020:3). Until this point, the connection between the physical violence inflicted on the Hutu, leading to deaths and expropriations, was driven or supported by public institutions. Both Hutu and Tutsi reflected on these events through public memories and acts of memorialisation (Micó 2020:3).

#### 3.2.8.2 Psychological trauma

The extent of aggression and violence that have befallen Burundi as a nation have had a symbolic and traumatic impact of intergenerational implications. For one, the victimisation

caused by the Tutsi economic exploitation and subsequent exclusion of the Hutu from all spheres of influence and decision-making was communicated through communal forms of physical, psychological and emotional violence. Internal divisions between the younger generations of Tutsi and Hutu in Burundi have likely evolved and persisted over time, manifesting in two distinct scenarios. The continuing trauma was frequently exacerbated amongst perpetrators and potential victims and between organised groups of perpetrators and groups of people at risk (Micó 2020:5).

Given the above context, one can discern the underlying reasons for the rampant spread of international violence and the psychological trauma inflicted through ‘retaliatory assaults or orchestrated assassination campaigns’ (Mitchell 2021:12). Although quantifying the full extent of psychological trauma resulting from Burundi’s recurring ethnic violence is challenging, the dynamics clearly indicate a profound human catastrophe. The severe tortures endured by the Hutu masses and elites at the hands of the Tutsi army, with support from local and national youth militias, will remain obscured until the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and reconciliation mechanisms are put into place. One way to gauge the extent of psychological trauma inflicted on the Hutu and some moderate Tutsi is by examining the numerous mass graves scattered across the country and the survivors’ testimonies. This assessment is further complicated by the interplay between physical and psychological violence. Physical violence not only produces tangible harm and destruction but also leaves lasting effects on victims, highlighting the tools and methods, such as weapons, that facilitate such violence (Micó 2020:2).

One factor of great importance relating to collective psychological trauma is the magnitude of aggression which did not spare any Burundian family. At school, the political situation prompted school bullying amongst Hutu and Tutsi students where physical violence occasioned casualties. Indeed, various forms of psychological trauma nurtured by feelings for vengeance mounted among Burundians. Children, families, parents, mothers, fathers, and relatives faced traumatic experiences as they faced physical ill-treatment or recounted the ill-treatment of their loved ones. Certainly, wherever violent aggression takes place as suggested by Solovyova, Martynova, Zaletina and Kuptsova (2016: 49), all sorts of ill-treatment takes place indiscriminately. For example, victims may experience a range of violent acts including being struck, beaten, hit on the head, punched in the face, having objects hurled at them, choked, dragged by the hand, jolted, thrown to the ground, kicked, confined in or out of a room,

pinned behind a door, restrained by a dog, or assaulted by multiple attackers, all while their relatives look on without intervening.

### 3.2.8.3 Socioeconomic vulnerability

Wherever imbalances abound, economic deficiency occasions violence (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Stewart 1999, cited by Daudelin 2003:4). While ‘deep’ and ‘proximate’ partisanship has remained a significant factor in Burundi’s socioeconomic and political landscape, the Tutsi elites’ distribution of resources and opportunities based on regional origin, ethnic identity and party affiliation has entrenched greed and resentment (Samii 2013). The Tutsi elites drew personal benefit and accrued influence from their positions, enabling them to control national resources and powers, which they misused in the name of service and sacrifice for their ethnic group (Banton 2008). Despite these grim realities, both Hutu and Tutsi followed the paths set by the elites, whether those elites were self-serving individuals pursuing their own power and interests, acts that were condemned by Esteban and Ray (2008:2185). The central irony is that the exploited and victimised Hutu, along with some moderate Twa, openly supported the Tutsi-dominated social order that oppressed them (Micó 2020:2).

Under the above conditions, self-serving Tutsi elites perpetrated the famous ‘principle of effectivity’ in the same way colonial masters used to during the 70 years of economic deprivation (Alex 2015:242). It is important to recall that the principle allowed colonial masters to manage the country at will, where they imposed their own geopolitical agenda and leadership. This same principle later fostered envy among the Tutsi elites after independence. Through demagogic rhetoric, these elites kept the masses aligned with their regimes, often out of ignorance. However, as the masses’ vulnerability grew, this support eventually shifted from passive acceptance to active hostility and, ultimately, to conflict.

Despite the multidimensionality of the Burundian ethno-political and economic conflict, subjectivity and unequal access to social and public services and opportunities, including land tenure (Daudelin 2003) aggravated the situation. The historical, political and structural conditions in place shielded the state and its elite who monopolised power and controlled public assets. Being a society composed of more than 92% of farmers and agriculturalists, land tenure became a source of economic power over which tensions arose (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:9). This explains the repression imposed on the peasant masses and the denial of land access through oppression and suppression, which undermined their ability to ensure communal and

family survival (Michael 2017:2009). It is believed that ethnic biases in land tenure obstructed the Hutu, who were primarily farmers and relied on land for their liberation through alliances, activism, and mobilisation (Brachet and Wolpe 2005:9).

### **3.2.9 Envisioning the Ethno-political Conflict in Burundi as Learned Structural Violence**

The concept of ethnicity is central to raising awareness on socio-political and economic opportunities and can be a source of competition between interest groups (Daley 2006:669). Vorobej (2008:84) opines that institutional-based violence whose origin is not clearly identifiable is a threat to human safety. Vorobej's position was a criticism of Galtung's (1969:170) that on indirect actors. Clearly, the causes, evolution and impact of socioeconomic and political conflict in Burundi have obscured the structural dynamics, making them difficult to define. The structural nature of this violence has led to uncertainty, evasion of truth and confusion about the perpetrators' identities, which has in turn caused hesitation in pursuing justice, empathy, and accountability (Samii 2013: 221). In the Burundian crisis, each new generation engaged in military coups or rebellions to displace the rival tribe from power, often under the guise of shared responsibilities.

Tolerated by institutions and perpetuated by political elites, both the Hutu and the Tutsis' ability to think morally was curtailed by the social environment of submissiveness, passivity and near-silence which testify to cultural oppression in the frame posited by Wren (1977:6). State violence found its legitimacy through fantasy that merged truth and illusion, fictive tales and reality (Gunay 2013:182). The dynamics of the Burundian conflict have clearly involved multiple forms of structural violence. One sign of this structurally ingrained violence is the failure to bring perpetrators to justice. The ruling elite, who wielded ultimate authority over life and death (Micó 2020:5), ordered executions and carried out numerous extrajudicial killings of the Hutu, which remain unresolved. This ongoing cycle of atrocities and violence, justified as moral responsibility, has perpetuated and reinforced stereotypes and an aggressive perception of the other (Gunay 2013:174, 176).

For over five decades, both Hutus and Tutsis who have suffered segregations drew illusory assumptions about the inviolability of human life as they witnessed perpetrated political assassinations of both local and national leaders, which were followed by indiscriminate mass homicides, bitterness and ethnic cleansing (Alvarez 2001). It is more consistent to hold that it is such well-orchestrated crimes and the structurally nurtured ethnic skirmishes that spoiled the

country socio-political stability since independence (Vandeginste 2011). As the stationery office (2000:11) portrays, the cyclical social, economic and political squabbles that resulted from experiential learning of aggression mirror the extent of otherness. Through state discourses perpetuated by government military and police officials (Gunay 2013:176), both the Hutu and the Tutsi learned to apply aggression against one another as learned in their respective social environment through a process of social learning:

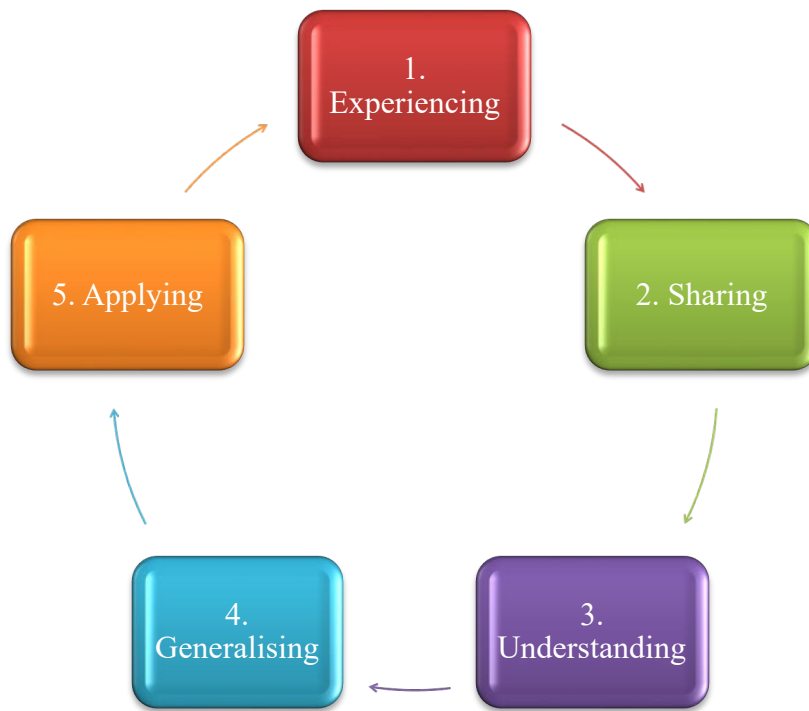


Figure 2: Learning of aggression circle. Source: (adapted from the Stationery office’s social education 2001:7)

As the Figure 2 above displays, the first step in social learning is manifestly through experiencing. Comes then the process of sharing which often takes place when individuals meet or are exposed to violent interactions and undesired behaviour. When individuals figure out the reality, be it positive or negative, they generalise that what they see as the norm and are therefore ready to apply what they have experienced and understood.

These components of social learning emphasise how individuals and communities go through either a social or political enhancement of aggressive attitudes. While the principle of education is to raise consciousness, it can serve a political purpose and be used ‘for the subjection of individuals and groups by the rulers’ (Aliakbari and Faraji 2011:79). Thus, the above learning approach and others in a similar vein, typifies the most popular way through which most

learning occurs, be it in social learning theory of aggression or others, as the Hutu and Tutsi violence exemplifies.

Manifestly, as the saying in Kirundi language stipulates, '*Ingwe ntiyari izi gufatira kw'izosi yarigishijwe*' (which in English verbatim translation means the "Cheetah did not know how to catch a prey by the neck, it was taught to do so"). Thus, as we have seen, the escalating structural ethnically motivated violence arose from ideologically motivated factors, which were sustained by successive regimes. One ethnic group after another, through experiencing, learning, understanding and generalising phases of the injustices in societal institutions reproduced and applied existing inequalities and became cultural producers of their own 'experiences and perceptions' (Aliakbari and Faraji 2011:80).

### **3.2.10 Justifying the Choice of Bandura's Social Learning Theory of Aggression as a Conceptual Framework**

Unveiling the nature, causes and trigger factors of the protracted ethnic aggression and political violence that marked the relationship of different ethnic groups in Burundi necessitates understanding Bandura's social learning theory of aggression framework. Drawing on what has already been mentioned from this perspective, the ongoing aggression that was extended over five decades was influenced by ethnic ties propelled in Burundi by colonialism, cemented by the rent-seeking elites who mobilised ethnicity for economic gains and political power control (Daley 2006:657). The question that arises relates to why the main perpetrators of this violence are young men and why both the young Hutu and the Tutsi consistently aligned themselves with their respective ethnic group not the other.

The core of these issues lies within the framework of social learning theory, where Bahutu, Batutsi, and Batwa children were shaped by enduring identities tied to their localities, kinship, and ethnicity, influenced by the political systems from the precolonial through colonial eras (Uvin 1999:254). As Castell notes, understanding the true value of humanity requires recognizing that individuals have the potential to develop their rational abilities in line with the tendencies of others (Castell 1962: 485). Given the differing attitudes of the Bahutu and Batutsi toward this longstanding exploitative system, the lingering question is how it persisted for so long and became entrenched as a social and legitimate norm. Scholars suggest that this is a result of the Tutsis' cynical behaviour toward the Hutu, which maintained their subjugation through a system of servitude

The Hutu endured the oppressive dominance and coercive control of Tutsi hegemony, where any Hutu resistance was met with brutal humiliation and intimidating retaliation. At the same time, successive Tutsi regimes failed to recognise the existence of ethnic differences for which the Hutu continued to face inequality and discrimination (Daley 2006: 669). Amidst this existential irony, the Hutu were subjected to a near-total monopoly of control held by the elites (John 1968:46), until they eventually began to forcefully challenge the status quo. The denial of ethnic violence in Burundi undoubtedly impoverished the Hutu, as punitive and coercive methods of control inflicted significant physical and social harm (Bandura 1977:13).

People actively respond to their lived experiences and environments (Nangle et al. 2010: 40). This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory of aggression, which suggests that when people compete for power, their interests inevitably conflict, with one party's violence perceived as altruism by the other (Bandura 1977:13). Since socially learned skills form the foundation of an individual's social behaviour (Nangle et al. 2010: 37), the aggressive actions displayed by the Tutsi significantly influenced the later aggressive behaviour of the Hutu. In this context, Akers (1998, as cited in Brauer and Tittle 2012:160) argued that responses to violence are shaped by the frequency and proximity of potential rewards or punishments associated with the act.

Based on the Burundian crisis context, Bandura's social learning theory of aggression as used in this study embraces the many avenues through which interaction between the Hutu and the Tutsi have been shaped by negative contacts, construction of biases and otherness reinforced by ethnicity and structural socially learned triggers (Brauer and Tittle 2012: 159). The strength of Bandura's theory lies in its explanation of the causes behind deviant behaviours and the consistent factors that encourage continued participation in such behaviours.

Initially, the terms Hutu or Muhutu (singular) Bahutu (plural), Tutsi or Mututsi (singular) Batutsi (plural) and Twa or Mutwa (singular) Batwa (plural) were names customarily recognised as belonging to different clans recognised in Burundi (Daley 2006: 658). However, these same names have been repurposed to highlight the perceived merits and privileges of each ethnic group, fuelling and dominating the narratives of warfare and aggression in Burundi. The widespread use or reference to the names Hutu (or Bahutu or Muhutu) and Tutsi (or Batutsi or Mututsi) highlights the complex socioeconomic and political dynamics, where the former was effectively positioned as socially subordinate to the latter. With such foundations of ethnic

identity, the ongoing violence was culturally or ethnically enforced and learned by each generation leading to more conducive conditions for social conflict.

On the one hand, with the historical development of awareness among generations that followed, the Batutsi considered themselves to be a superior group, while the Bahutu and Batwa were associated with being subservient to the former or simply recognised as the others. Such ongoing culturally deep-rooted ethnicity led to policies of differentiation and exclusion in institutions of governance and socioeconomic functioning of successive regimes. Thus, tribalism became a manifest socially learned narrative by both the Bahutu and Batutsi making the notion of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa a key destabilising trigger factor of violence and exclusion.

On the other hand, the resultant ethnic imbalances became manifest and expressed in the form of social psychosis where either ethnic group sees the other as an adversary. This learned form of aggression has undermined unity and societal transformation. Instead, the socially learned and transmitted stereotyping, and dehumanisation among ethnic groups negatively marked both the Hutu and Tutsi communities. The Burundian society thus evolved in a selfishly forged hierarchical web of patron–client connections where the Tutsi held the quasi-socioeconomic and political power control while the Hutu remained at the bottom. Such exclusionary policies led to political violence and protracted competition for power control and subsequent conflicts among different groups.

Therefore, the social learning theory of aggression theory finds its place in accounting for the learned ethnic subjugation and enforcement supplemented with competition, exclusionary tactics extended over generations of Hutu and Tutsi. As the elements of Bandura’s social learning theory of aggression exemplify, the Tutsi, the more advantaged citizenry (Bandura 1978:13), engaged in violent and coercive aggression against the Hutu and thus prompted ethnic war. Socially, the patron–client relationships on which elites organised the political systems and economic property control ignored the Hutus’ role as part of the political economy (Daley 2006:661).

Given that social learning can occur directly or indirectly (Nangle et al. 2010:38), it can be inferred that the Hutu conceptualised their collective identity by integrating a comprehensive set of rational, emotive and behavioural skills and aptitudes in response to their predicament. In this process, their focus on the long-term causes of intervention against communal

experiences of mistreatment, subjugation, and marginalisation paved the way for fundamental changes and self-improvement through violent political struggle (Mustapha 2002 cited in Delay 2006:661).

### **3.3 THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: EXTENT AND FOUNDATIONS**

Since the 1980s, when conflict transformation developed as a theory, various contributors have developed different paradigms which point to the fact that conflict is non-static and unpredictable and that any practice that seeks to change it needs to be envisaged along a continuum of constructive perspectives (Kriesberg 2011:51). Global perspectives and debates underpinning conflict transformation have fostered much-needed frameworks that provides support to peacebuilders. Whereas conflict is inevitable and is perceived as a normal manifestation of communal variance (Naraghi and Stanski 2004:1), dealing with it requires multiple approaches and mitigation skills which are complex, multi-directional and unpredictable (Dudouet 2006:20).

While conflict transformation is positively hailed in the practice and realm of peace, it is possible to enumerate its various definitions and applicability which have been engendered by conflict theorists. In conflict management, the existence of multivariate meanings and uses reflects associations that often overlap with other forms of conflict management approaches. Bearing in mind that all human experience permanently occurs in the rational world we create and to which we respond physically (Lederach 1995: 1, 133), the attainment of acceptable transformation of a conflict should go ‘beyond resolution’ (Tanabe 2013:7). Conflict transformation encompasses ‘prolific’ notions encompassing both the idea of conflict management and conflict resolution which emphasises the method of relational changes in the parties (Botes 2003:3). There are diverse perspectives through which conflict transformation is envisaged.

#### **3.3.1 Johan Galtung’s Conception of Conflict Transformation**

Galtung’s theory of conflict transformation is better represented by means of attitude (A), behaviour (B) and Contradiction (C) (Galtung and Fischer 2013). In Galtung’s philosophy, the potential of conflicts to lead to positives and negative stems from communal encounters manifested in attitudes and behaviour. He devised and defined several concepts and developed

the conflict triangle which contributed to the conflict transformational practices and approaches.

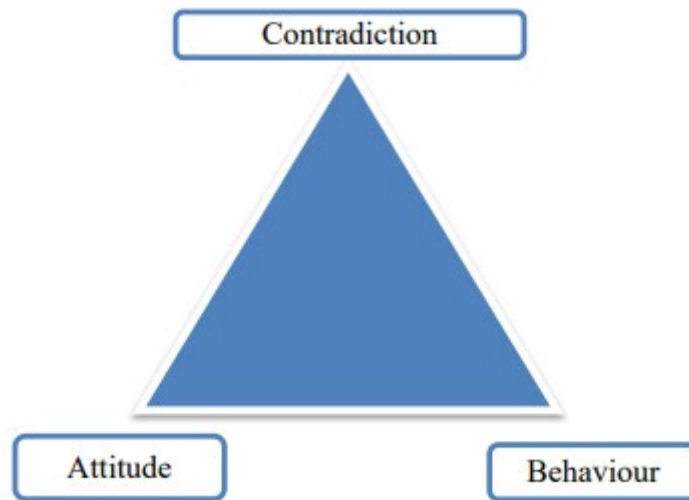


Figure 3: The conflict triangle. Source: (adapted from Galtung, 1969)

As Figure 3 shows, the conflict triangle as developed by Galtung suggests that contradictions include the real or supposed mismatch of goals amid disagreeing groups. Attitude refers to the disagreeing groups' good or bad understandings and confusions formulated about each other and themselves. He notes that stereotypes formulated by parties exacerbate the conflict and that attitudes are determined by emotive, cognitive and conative elements expressed in feelings of fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. He includes cooperation or coercion, hostility or conciliation signals in behaviour. Galtung posits that attitudes, behaviours and structures influence each other which makes conflict a dynamic process formed when parties' interests come into conflict, leading to oppression. Parties organise themselves around such incompatibilities in pursuit of their security and nurture hostility. This further develops negativity and complicates its redress as it draws in other parties, deepens and spreads, leading to additional clashes both within the main groups and among strangers.

Thus, envisioning the resolution of the conflict necessitates altering a range of dynamics through the de-escalation of negative conduct, a shift in attitudes, and the transformation of interactions or conflicting interests that lie at the heart of the issue. Galtung emphasises that the practices of conflict transformation lie along a continuum comprising voicing or displacement, conscientisation or de-conscientisation, complexification or simplification, polarisation or depolarisation, escalation or de-escalation (Galtung, 1969).

### **3.3.2 Active Non-violence versus Passive Non-Violence: Two Nuanced Approaches to the Conflict Transformation Practice**

Non-violence has to be nuanced from what is understood as being rather than doing (Rosenwald 2001:239). An intriguing concept that consistently appears in the literature and discussions on active and passive non-violence is the decision-making process of how a bystander responds to violence. Theorists of non-violence have contributed to the discourse on conflict transformation, suggesting that non-violence involves a unique inclination to refrain from engaging in violence, which in turn limits resistance and hinders positive social change. Quite often, active non-violence involves actively opposing violence and injustice through direct action.

Embracing the notion of active non-violence/ passive non-violence, one is confronted with whether a straightforward understanding of the concepts is possible. Active non-violent resistance is considered as part and parcel of conflict transformation with possibilities of achieving peace and justice. Thus, drawing on various scholarly sources, Loomba (2014:21, 23) proposes that from Gandhi's viewpoint, passive 'non-violence' represents an absolute moral stance rather than simply a strategic approach. It provides a moral force to regulate the means related to it. In Martin Luther King's advocacy, passive 'non-violence' involves heroism, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and suffering in the face of oppression, injustice and moral failure (Ott 2018: 64, 65, 74). In other words, passive non-violence is regarded as a passive and often disengaged approach. By abstaining from violent acts and allowing events to unfold without intervention, passive non-violence is considered as a form of moral or ethical abstinence from conflict, rather than an active effort to address or resolve the underlying issues.

Thus both active and passive non-violence are a positive way for handling conflict in such a way that peace prevails at the personal level despite hostilities. This involves transitioning from a materially-focused society to one centred on individuals, where human values are fundamental (Ott 2018: 71). Even though passive non-violence is a deeply compelling ideal, the pervasive and intricate nature of distrust and violence makes the appeal to active non-violence appear to be a mere utopian ideal. Because of the variations in violence in the form of structural, direct and cultural (Galtung 2000), a significant controversy arises between what is meant by active non-violence and passive non-violence.

Referring to King's non-violence philosophy, Rosenwald (2001) notes that passive non-violence should be understood as being not violent and potentially inactive. Accordingly, King posits that non-violence is to be understood as a responsive attitude enmeshed with timely and tangible actions meant to end to injustices and ferocity. Yet, despite the fact that passive non-violence is cherished, the end results are often not predetermined and thus vary significantly based on behavioural and political attitudes of the parties involved. Thus, it is pertinent to consider passive non-violence / active non-violence as a spectrum within the conflict transformation framework in that both aim at reducing violence and increasing justice (Lederach 1995: 15; Galtung 2000:30). On the one hand, the practice of conflict transformation seeks to responding to patterns of conflict in a more autonomous, adaptive, systematic and creative fashion (Lederach and Maiese 2009: 8). On the other, the power of non-violence / non-violence, in the same vein as the conflict transformation practice, emphasises the centrality love for the struggle for justice, social reforms and collective transformation (Martin 1958: 478, 480).

So, given those nuances between the concepts, there is something powerful in non-violence specifically being proactive as injustice or violence emerge. One point that emerges is that opting for non-violence assumes a form of passivity either out of cowardice or complacency (Rosenwald 2001:242). However, while passive non-violence entails the core values of not being violent, resistance and positive social change requires active non-violence expressed in actions taken to end violence. In other words, non-violence should be contrasted with Galtung's concept of the triangular syndrome of peace (2016), which posits that active engagement is essential for combating injustices and addressing various forms of violence.

Thus, for implementing resistance and social change, non-violence (both passive and active) entails a personal choice at the individual level for not harming under any circumstances amidst personal attempts to bring about change through social action (Barbolet, Goldwyn, Groenewald and Sherriff 2005). In a violence-prone environment, non-violence serves as an effective tool for eliminating antagonisms by remaining non-threatening to the offender and by thoughtfully converting and engaging them.

### **3.3.3 Intergenerational Dialogue as Conflict Transformation Approach**

The concept of intergenerational dialogue has emerged to minimise the risk of perpetuating injustice, or nurturing resentment, inequality and social disorder posed by the exclusion of

some categories of people from decision-making processes that aim to solve humanity's dilemmas (Tanghøj 2023). It is embraced by many scholars as a tool that forges intergenerational solidarity emanating from shared knowledge on all levels and that contributes to relational and socially sustainable futures (Oropilla and Ødegaard 2021). With respect to the above, proponents of intergenerational dialogue consider that intergenerational relations are key to our lives as they give to all stakeholders, from children to adults, equal opportunities for participation (Wyness 2013). While the tendency has always been to neglect the contribution of some categories of people or exclude them from decision-making processes on matters concerning them, particularly the youth, children and women (Tanghøj 2023; Wyness 2013), intergenerational dialogue addresses this gap by promoting a understanding and fostering a shared purpose.

In practice, intergenerational dialogue is used to enhance all peoples' participation and engagement to advancing a common agenda, finding solutions to problems, to dismantling misconceptions and breaking down stereotypes. Intergenerational dialogue as Dyson and Ba (2006) argue, is a transformative tool that honours the voices of elders, adults and youths. As intergenerational dialogue connects to the history, to the present-day and to the future and reinforces shared social cohesion and a sense of belonging, it adds to the potential for increased societal resilience (Tanghøj 2023). For example, it is used to reduce bias amongst the youth (Fletcher 2007), promotes children's participation in mediating their own world (Wyness 2013) and serves as a practical network for engagement between adults, elders and youth in Alaskan native communities (Wexler 2011). Thus, forged on interdependency, the patterns of intergenerational dialogue to address issues integrate differences in age, purposes and location (Tolbize 2008, cited in Tanghøj 2023:10).

Given the escalating interlocking crises across the world, intergenerational dialogue is a vital tool that bridges the widening social divides across generations and builds empathy and hope (Hayes, Walker, Parsons, Arya, Bowman, Germaine, Langford, Peacock and Thew 2023). As the authors put it, the only way towards mitigating distrust, divisions and clashes between societal groups and factions is to recognise intersectional interrelationships that transcend social divides and that favour continuous empathetic intergenerational collaboration and dialogue. In this regard, Brandt, Roose and Verschelden (2023) maintain that intergenerational dialogue has the potential for forging rapprochement and understanding amongst various groups by bridging distinct perspectives of different generations. Intergenerational dialogue

entails conducive physical settings that promote people’s meaningful engagement to address key issues to bring about a desired future (Kaplan, Haider, Cohen and Turner 2007).

It flows from the above that, whether envisioned in formal or informal settings, intergenerational dialogue as an approach to transforming differences and dealing with issues and challenges stands out as powerful tool. Its usefulness is embedded in the capacity to considering all parties’ motivations, while keeping intersectionality in mind (Tanghøj 2023). In addition to creating opportunities for all stakeholders to co-create sustainable solutions to problems, intergenerational dialogue offers a sense of ownership that leads to holistic transformation and sustainability.

### 3.4 GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Any strategies for dealing with conflict depends on the level to which it has escalated or de-escalated over time (Dudouet 2006:6). In addition, the way in which we deal with conflict depends on personal choice, habit and context that make its analysis even more interesting (Felix, Godwin and Samuel 2013:235). Certainly, in the face of conflict, fathoming its real causes and mapping their interconnectedness and evolution over time can assist in breaking its cycle and thus achieving transition from ‘unpeaceful to peaceful relationships’ (Amaral 2015; Dudouet 2006), making ‘social change’ (Ramsbotham 2005, cited in Dudouet 2006:22) a reality. The following diagram depicts the life cycle and stages of a conflict:

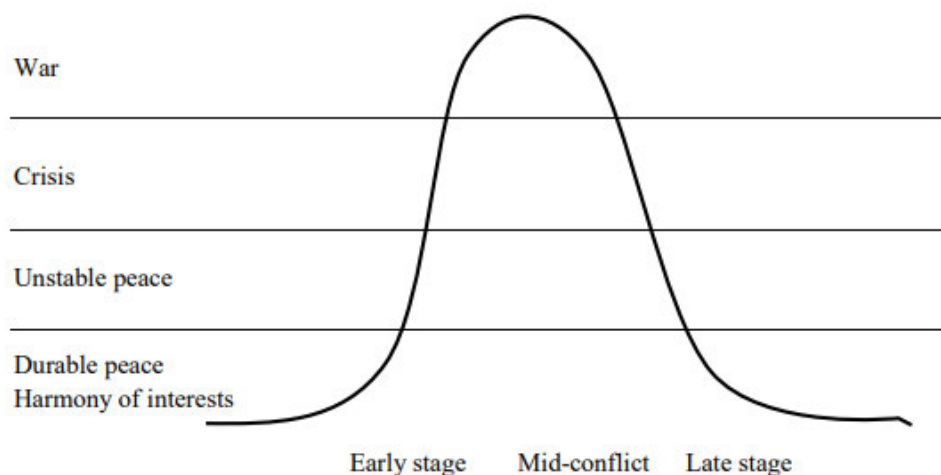


Figure 4: Life cycle and stages of a conflict. Source: (adapted from Raj 2017: 10)

The essential points to consider with regard to conflict is the determining interconnectedness of time and intensity in conflict stages. Figure 4 highlights that, irrespective of immediate

catalysts/triggers or proximate causes or systemic causes (Naraghi and Stanski 2004:5), the intensity of a given conflict escalates through various phases and stages that need a particular treatment and attention if successful transformation is to be the end result. While a conflict originates from latent conflict until it escalates into stalemate over time, it is important for peacebuilders to map its pathways and dynamics knowing that conflicts do not spread in a linear fashion. This awareness of conflict escalation and de-escalation serves as a model for successful intervention, which will pave the way for possible change, thus addressing the factors that generated the conflict (Lederach 2005, cited in Dudouet 2006:8).

Lederach envisions peacebuilding as a process which integrates different functions, roles and strategies utilised by different people at different stages of conflict progression. In conflict transformation practice, it is crucial to understand that just as a conflict escalates through various stages in an upward movement, the process of de-escalation similarly passes through those stages in a downward progression (Mitchell 2005 cited in Dudouet 2006:7).

The idea of conflict transformation entails engaging productively in shifting paradigms by adopting a transformative, interdependent and participative model to deter unresolved tragic events (Lederach 1995). Being aware of the multitudes of issues confronting conflict transformation, Lederach emphasises that the process must be based on the centrality of the person and their culture by not confusing people to issue or seeing the unknown as solution. Lederach proposes that process of peacebuilding encompasses diverse contributions, many purposes and approaches used by different people at different stages of the conflict development as the figure below highlights.

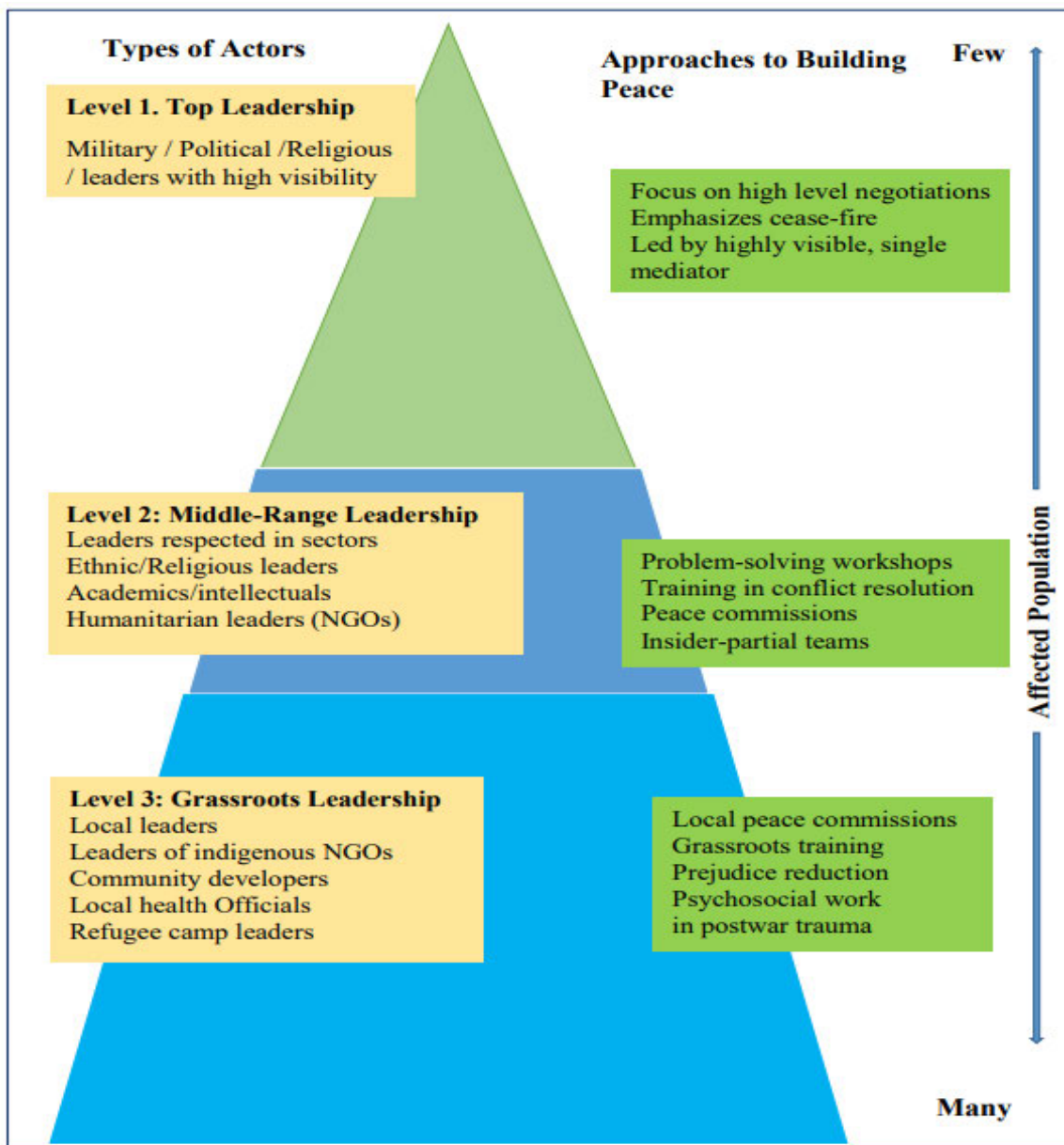


Figure 5: Actors and approaches to peacebuilding. Source: (Lederach. 1997:39)

Holding to the above views, Lederach 1995 (cited in Tanabe 2013:7) posits that in the search for sound transformation, a quest for change very much depends on a transformative outline that ‘encompasses tasks such as broader transformation, reconciliation and social transformation’. Hence, a key aspect of the conflict transformation approach is the desire to engage with and transform ‘relationships’, ‘interests’ and ‘discourses’ including the social substructures that sustain the persistence of war (Miall 2004, cited in Tanabe 2013: 7). Even so, conflict scholars do not agree on what leads to conflict escalation, although they assume that negative emotions, especially fear and anger, are central to generating and experiencing conflict (Graford 2013, cited in Bramsen and Poder 2018:3; Scheff 1999).

Therefore, for successful change, it is worth considering each stage of conflict development to ascertain that the intervention comes at the ‘ripe moment’ (Dudouet and Dressler 2016:11). Certainly, given that conflict do not follow ‘a unidirectional linear path’ (Dudouet 2006:7), the path towards transformation passes through a process which passes through episodes. Otherwise, failure to adequately consider the complexities and wave-like episodic development stages and related doses to the conflict (Lederach and Maiese 2009) will hamper the essence of the conflict transformation practice. Against such omission, Lederach (2005, cited in Dudouet 2006:8) argues that peacebuilding requires a special way of contemplating change that the whole process envisions.

Therefore, to avoid such over-reliance, it is essential to recognise that change occurs in a cyclical manner, following its own pace and progression. Lederach and Maiese (2009) stress the following dynamics at each stage:

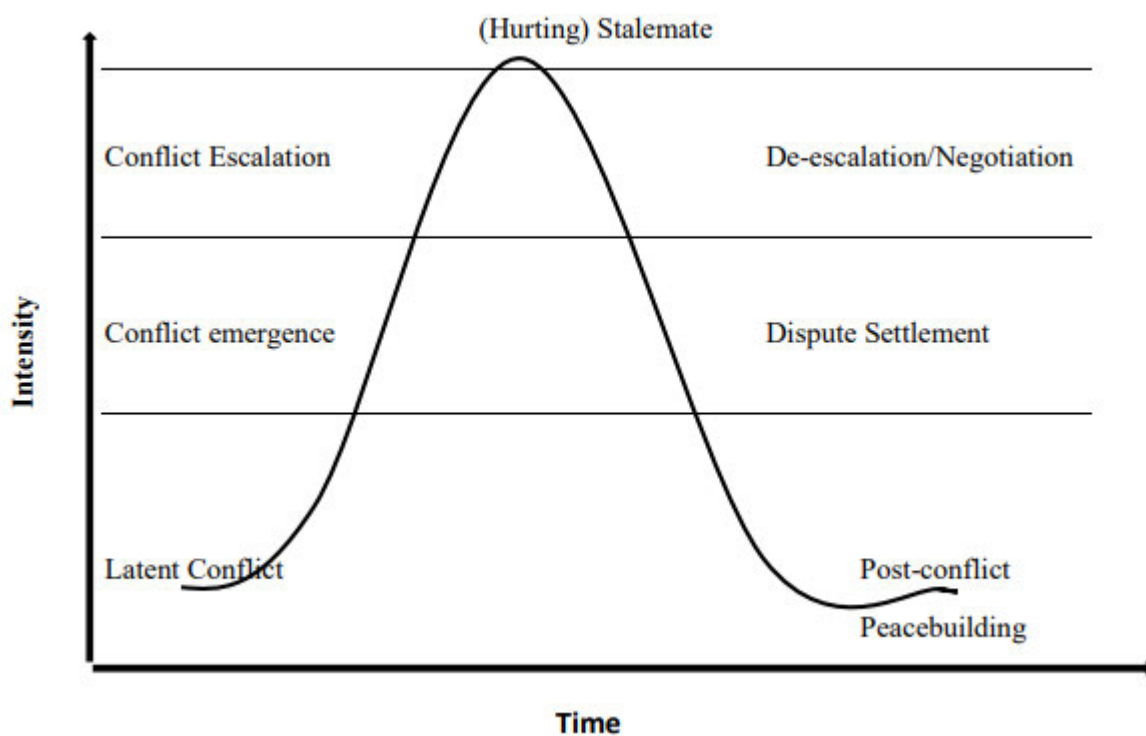


Figure 6: The conflict wave. Source: (Dudouet 2006:6)

As depicted in Figure 5, while much of the conflict transformation literature focuses on identifying the root causes of conflict before addressing ways to mitigate them, it is also crucial at times to acknowledge individuals’ sense of identity, their emotions, and their connection to their place of residence (Lederach 2003:55). This is because conflict erupts when human

relationships are disrupted and when fissure in social harmony has occurred in the natural discourse (Lederach and Maiese 2009). Similarly, achieving ‘constructive change’ happens when human relationships are considered in light of the current state, fundamental issues, the setting and living conditions (Lederach 2003:11).

### **3.5 JUSTIFYING THE CHOICE OF LEDERACH’S CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THEORY IN THE CASE OF BURUNDI**

The destructive effects of identity-based controversies that arose between the Hutu and Tutsi in both precolonial and post-colonial Burundi need to be addressed through a holistic transformative model. Ranked among the world’s most protracted and pervasive conflicts (Malkki 1995), the deep-rooted causes and recurring, unpredictable triggers have overshadowed efforts for peaceful coexistence and significantly impacted Hutu and Tutsi youths. Both the Hutu and Tutsi share an extensive past arising from a broader, deep-rooted socio-political and economic cycles of violence (Lederach and Maiese 2009:9) that have resulted in havoc and lethal ethnic clashes over six decades. From hard-line Tutsi who sustained campaigns against Hutus and maintained ethnic bias (Daley 2006: 671) to Hutu rebellions, conflict transformation architecture has remained elusive and inconsequential to date. The desired future is still missing despite ‘patterns of interaction’ being unilaterally addressed (Lederach and Maiese 2009:11). This is because, despite peace negotiations and state reforms, the power-sharing arrangements within such a liberal conflict resolution framework merely worsened the situation (Daley 2006:676).

Thus, Lederach’s conflict transformation theory is justified as a viable approach which aims at deconstructing longstanding enmity by means of ‘systemic transformation of relationships’ (Lederach 1999:31). This transformation is achieved through observed change to the status quo and a replacement of undesired situations through constructive efforts for change (Kriesberg 2009). Furthermore, the significance of Lederach’s conflict transformation theory lies in its ability to facilitate the necessary socio-political changes required to restore trust between the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi. This approach aims to achieve sustainable peace and a desired future by promoting transformation and personal changes, relational alterations, structural changes and cultural changes (Lederach 1997; Lederach and Maiese 2009: 10).

Given the ever-changing dynamics in Burundi’s collective ethnic conflict scenarios involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths, mindful design is required for peacebuilding and conflict

transformation to be effective. This sense of betrayal and pessimism that marked the Hutu and Tutsi psyche for ages requires a thorough approach to bring about reconciliation and a sustainable shared life again. With the multiplicity of approaches for dealing with conflict, scholars agree that, for any successful peaceful relationships, whether at international, intergroup or interpersonal levels, they should stem from intrapersonal peace (Redekop 2014:32; UCP 1995:854). This involves shared interactions whereby protagonists participate in constructing a common future and find new possibilities and behaviour directed at stopping the vicious and intractable circle of enmity (Gurbuz 2016:68).

Therefore, Lederach's conflict transformation theory is used to guide the researcher's thoughts in this study. His reasoning stands out from the rest as he proposes that we must aim to see the bigger picture and understand the underlying causes and forces by envisioning transformation as a process of change. He views conflict transformation as a long-term process of moving from violence to peace by implementing comprehensive changes across individual, organisational, communal, and cultural dimensions related to the conflict.

### **3.6 A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF LEDERACH'S CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THEORY**

Quite often, any patterns involving humans, whether socio-political or economic, are prominent in fostering conflict which necessitates a typical therapeutic approach for improvement and behaviour modification (Park and Rhee 1980:1). Even so, most people tend to avoid facing a conflict productively with the hope that it will cease to exist in the long run. Instead, failure to address a conflict leads to more conflicts and affects adversely our ways of thinking and attitudes (Froyd 2019:7). This requires a set of skills for conflict transformation proposed by experts in the area.

#### **3.6.1 Lederach's Typology of Actors and Approaches to Building Peace**

To address the various types of players and tactics involved in building peace, Lederach developed a peacebuilding pyramid. This model, which is one of the few that focuses on middle-range peacebuilding, has been recognised as a significant milestone in the field of conflict transformation. He distinguished three levels of leadership required to ensure the process of conflict transformation ownership by all players and stakeholders.

As the pyramid in Figure 5 shows, no one portion or group of people is left behind in the process of transforming the conflict that has affected an entire population, especially when it concerns internal armed conflict. In his view, grassroots leadership is crucial in effecting desired change and all stakeholders and interest groups in the population should be represented. In this frame, local leaders, leaders of Indigenous NGOs, community developers, local health officials and refugee camp leaders are key to transforming conflict as they represent the voices of affected people and are geared to responding to their needs. They can engage in activities such as grassroots training, activities meant to reduce prejudice, psychosocial work in post-war trauma, and participation in local peace committees.

Leadership in the middle representing key leaders, academic or intellectuals and charitable leaders or non-governmental organisations play their role as well. Different activities that they can undertake include training on how to address issues, capacity building on resolving conflict, participating in peacebuilding committees or other teams (i.e., mediation involving people who are already involved in the conflict). Leadership at top level, representing the fewest key professionals including the armed forces or governmental or spiritual authorities with high visibility may play their respective roles. For example, they may focus on high-level negotiations or advocacy efforts.

All the actors can approach peacebuilding using different methodologies available to them. However, as depicted in the pyramid, top leadership may struggle to initiate creative solutions to a conflict due to their status and position of power, which often limit them in addressing opponents and their specific communities. Therefore, the leadership in the middle may play the role of intermediaries as the actors at this level are not determined by political or military power and are flexible. They have the ability to effect peacebuilding if they are well managed and utilised.

### **3.6.2 The Foundation of Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory**

To be productive, conflict transformation is an continuing procedure aiming at attaining modification by shifting relationships from negative to positive (Ruppel 2020:7). It implies a profound revolution in the parties' attitudes and behaviours by redesigning interactions and the conditions that shaped the conflict.

### 3.6.2.1 Peacebuilding: approaching a conflict with three different lenses

As mentioned in earlier sections, Lederach suggests that the most effective approach to building sustainable peace involves viewing the situation through three distinct lenses. He observes that conflict represents a disruption in the normal flow of human interactions, and many tend to focus only on their immediate surroundings when searching for solutions, overlooking the broader context where the deeper causes of the conflict lie. Therefore, it is valuable to examine the issue from three different perspectives, as illustrated in Figure 7. The first lens should lead us to seeing the current state of affairs. Secondly, it is essential to see beyond the present problems and leads to uncovering deeper patterns of relationship, in other words, the context. The third lens concerns the conceptual framework connecting the direct situation to the deeper patterns, in other words, the structure of relationships.

Below is a sample map of basic ideas of Lederach conflict transformation theory.

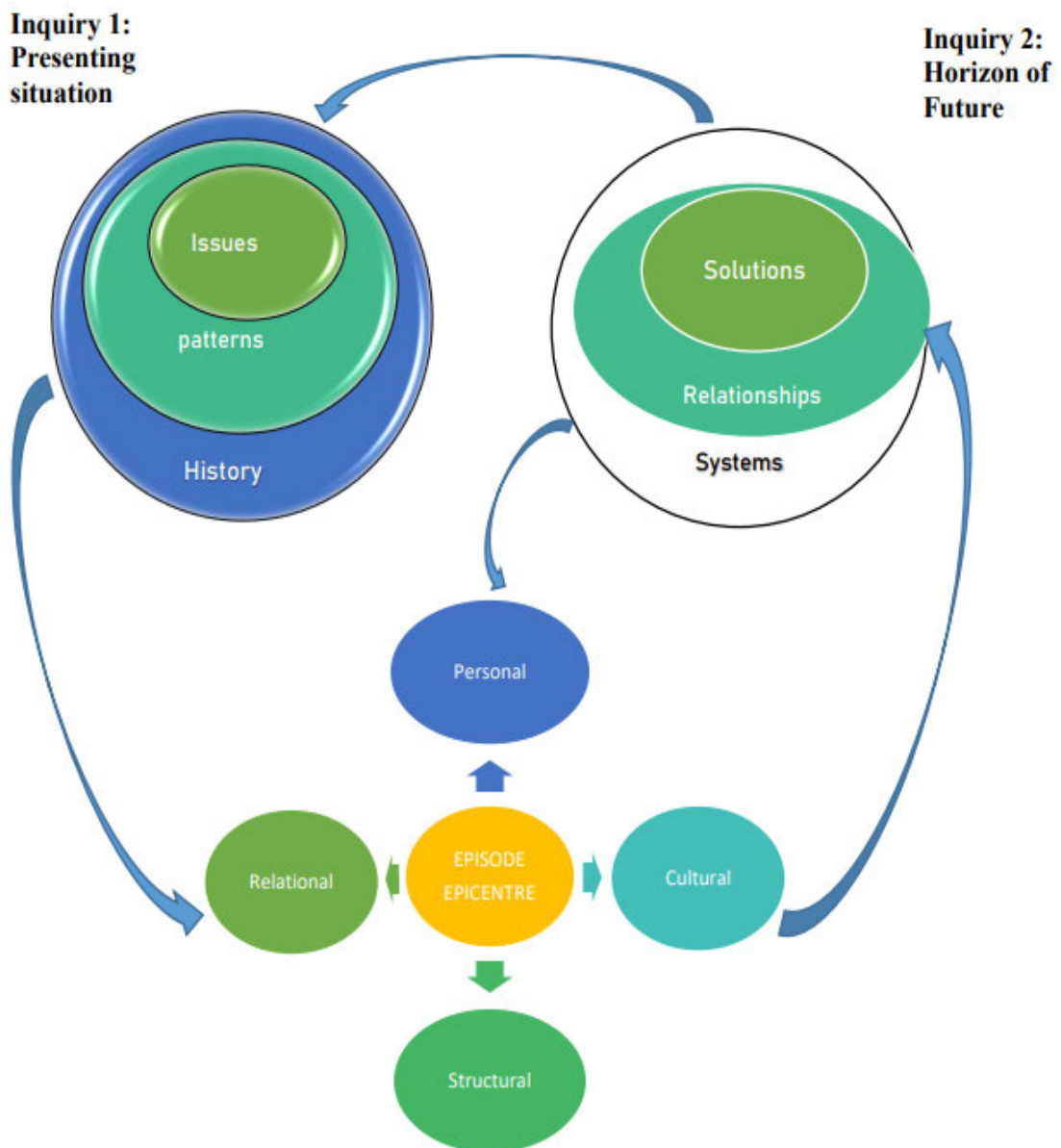


Figure 7: Development of change processes. Source: (Adapted from Lederach 2003:33)

What the above three lenses add up to is that conflict transformation is based on addressing the message, the situation and the organisation of relationships pertaining to an issue in a particular setting.

In Lederach's depiction, this diagram presents the degree of complexity and components necessary for creative conflict transformation. By examining the history and patterns surrounding the issue at hand, it becomes possible to identify deep-rooted causes, precipitating factors, and other contributing triggers. This inquiry should be balanced with efforts to replace destructive harm and foster the development of new, positive human relationships. The principles, according to the above conflict transformation design can be summarised as follows.

Since conflict is often caused by multiple triggers, the first point in elaborating viable solutions should focus on appreciating the historical patterns of the issue that connects the past to the present. This is achieved by means of questioning the immediate problems and finding ways for transforming their destructive aspects. The next line of study emphasises growth to the desired future and follows a process structure both linear and circular (Lederach and Maiese 2009: 7). Finally, the development of change processes requires a broad, creative and consistent approach that addresses both short- and long-term transformations across personal, relational, cultural and structural dimensions (Lederach 2003:14).

### 3.6.2.2 Peacebuilding is transforming personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of conflict

Lederach distinguishes four broad categories that are impacted by conflicts and that need long-term transformation. First, he points out that for peace to prevail, there must be changes in the personal aspects of a conflict. This entails minimising damages and maximising individual's development and welfare. Second, there should be relational changes whereby poor communication is minimised and understanding is maximised. The expectations and uncertainties connected to emotions in the relationships are dealt with and improved. Third, there should be structural changes by addressing the causes using non-violent mechanisms. Fourth, there must be cultural changes. This entails identifying and understanding socio-cultural factors by establishing avenues for countering and managing issues constructively.

### 3.6.2.3 Embracing peacebuilding as a process

The conceptual link between Bandura's social learning theory of aggression, Lederach conflict transformation theory, peacebuilding approaches and intergenerational dialogue is essential as it paves a way for explaining why the Hutu and the Tutsi youths opted for aggression and that for the sake of de-escalation and desired future to come true, addressing the social fissures requires robust intervention and deep personal, relational, structural and cultural changes (Lederach 1997; Lederach and Maiese 2009:10). In addition, since there are undesired socially learned behaviours in the relationships between the Hutu and the Tutsi youths, whose origins are deeply rooted in the communal consciousness among the citizenry, efforts and interventions towards building the desired future requires deep transformation and peacebuilding endeavours that encompass all generations and require inclusiveness, agreement and the participation of all parties, hence intergenerational dialogue approaches. As presented in Figure 8, this research

combined four theories to account for the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic negativity and bias amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha area.

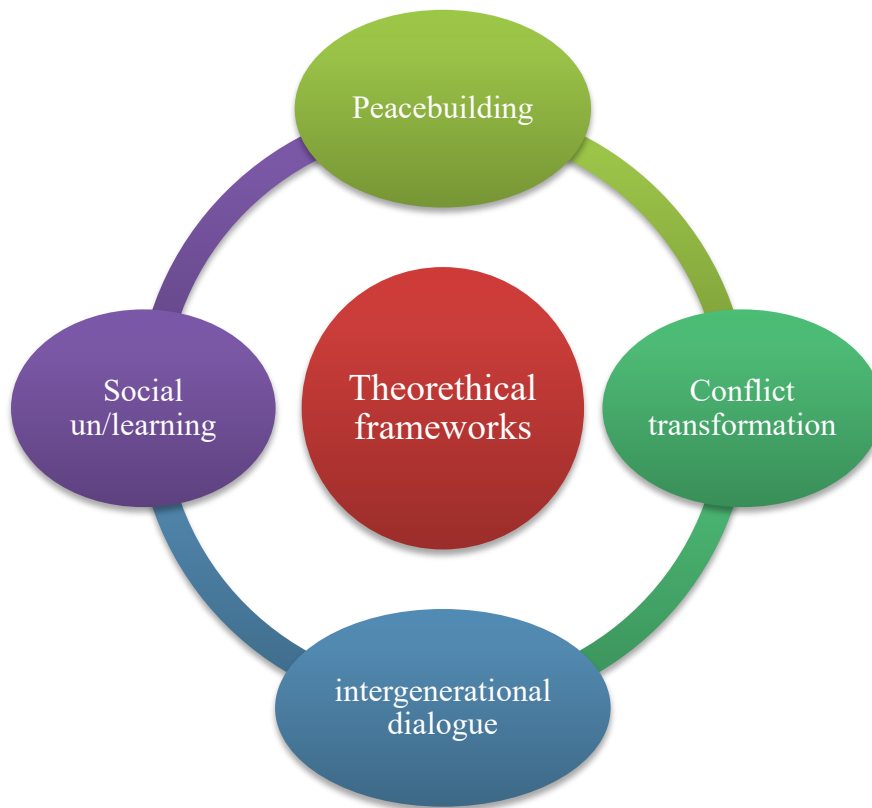


Figure 8: Summary of suggested theories in this research

The interconnectedness of the four theories resides in the fact that they all point to the research problem, namely the relapse into inter-ethnic tensions and the human violence involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. For one, the social learning theory of aggression points to the origins and factors that led to the venomous and ethnic aversion haunting the youth even though they did not witness the genocide. The conflict transformation theory is envisaged as a vital tool in mitigating the ethnic bias and stereotypes that have haunted the Hutu and Tutsi youths in order to rekindle and restore trust and mutual understanding in Gihosha. The conflict transformation theory is linked to the peacebuilding strategy used in this research to pinpoint the stages and measures to resolve the protracted animosity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi and aims to ensure peaceful coexistence among the youths in question. Ultimately, intergenerational dialogue as both a peacebuilding and conflict transformation approach was adopted to ensure that all categories of youth and other partners participate in curbing negative contacts amongst the Hutu and Tutsis in Gihosha.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter explored the application of the social learning theory of aggression and conflict transformation theory to the Burundian conflict. It examined how aggression and violence were socially learned and perpetuated within the Hutu-Tutsi dynamics, tracing these behaviours back to pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The chapter also highlighted the relevance of Bandura's social learning theory of aggression in explaining the cyclical nature of violence and justified its use as a conceptual framework for the research. Additionally, it discusses Galtung's and Lederach's contributions to conflict transformation theory, emphasising the importance of middle-range leadership and intergenerational dialogue in achieving sustainable peace in Burundi. The next chapter presents an overview of successful conflict resolution in various countries in Africa and the rest of the world.

## **CHAPTER 4: SUCCESSFUL CASES AND EXPERIMENTS OF SUGGESTED THEORIES**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses successful cases and experiments of the four theories used in this study, namely conflict transformation, peacebuilding, social unlearning and intergenerational dialogue. It draws together key threads that form the backbone of successful conflict transformation interventions and peacebuilding initiatives by screening cases that represent some similarities with the context of Burundi.

### **4.2 AN APPRAISAL OF CASES OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION, PEACEBUILDING, SOCIAL UNLEARNING AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE**

Towards the close of the twentieth century, top-down peacebuilding efforts shifted towards local people-based peacebuilding to include their knowledge and avoid the idea of unilateral peace initiatives (Coy 2009; Dietrich 2002; Féron and Krause 2022; Paris 2010). This change from top-down approaches to peacebuilding led to a focus on the emancipatory role of local actors and local communities in building peace that reflects their interests and perspectives (Lee 2020). Rooted in collaborative efforts among various local actors, agencies, and structures, the concept of local peacebuilding was well-suited to enabling effective responsiveness to managing conflict and bringing about healing. Characterised by plurality, sensitivity and interconnectedness (Lee 2020), this collaboration emphasised local involvement, acknowledging the pressures and influences of competing forces on various social actors and stakeholders. To be effective, the local approach necessitated uncovering lived experiences and contexts to shape decisions based on the diverse needs, fears, aspirations, hopes and knowledge of the impacted local communities. This step often involved intergenerational dialogue where inherited traumatic experiences and related societal challenges were dealt with collaboratively.

As a complex undertaking, the successful cases and theories applied in this research reveal a strong interconnectedness, where one theory often necessitates reliance on another. Therefore, envisioning effective peacebuilding requires people-centred approaches and context-specific efforts shaped by local realities, culture and needs. The transformation processes were not viewed as linear, but rather as a cycle of multiple interdependent steps that include various

approaches such as intergenerational dialogue, conflict transformation, social unlearning and peacebuilding. This is featured across peacebuilding efforts in the cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kenya, Nepal, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, and Northern Ireland.

#### **4.2.1 Liberia**

Liberia went through a lethal violence that occasioned the death of thousands of people and occasioned millions of refugees from 1989 through 2003. The main trigger causes of the civil war included unequal relationships between different ethnic and linguistic groups, corruption, state fragility and repressive governmental patterns (Cardona, Justino, Mitchell and Muller 2012: 21). As the war lasted for over a decade in Liberia, military efforts at securing security and legitimacy failed. Peacebuilding efforts in this country became a political process conditioned to ensuring security and an understanding of local, sub-regional, regional and global obstacles (Murithi and Scanlon 2006). Thus, interventions towards peacefulness started with the establishment of governance institutions based on ‘understanding the potential for the interest of local actors to change’ (Murithi and Scanlon 2006: 21).

Grassroots civil society organisations (CSOs) played a significant part in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Liberia. For one, scholars agree that the conflict in Liberia helped women to organise themselves against gender-based violence and foreshadowed women’s crucial role in advocacy for cease-fire and post-conflict healing (MacGinty 2010; Mitchell 2010; Ruppel 2020). In the main, the success of post-conflict reconstruction and healing was due to the inclusion and participation of women who, not only held Liberian leaders accountable at all levels, but also led mass awareness-raising campaigns. This is especially true of the Women’s Initiative in Liberia, which gathered women together irrespective of their background and advocated for peace. In addition, they assisted in collecting small arms while monitoring the peace process. From advocacy that brought about peace to ‘electing the Africa’s first female president’, Liberian women contributed in many ways to consolidating and maintaining peace after 14 years of conflict (Debusscher and Almagro 2016:293).

To various degrees, the success of peace in Liberia was sustained through preventive operations by taking into account the needs of all segments of the population. These operations combined activities meant to stop the relapse into conflict, to mitigate the triggers and to ensure national reconciliation, recovery and development (Connolly and Mincieli 2019). Starting from the signing on 18 August 2003 Peace Accord (Debusscher 2016), it was revealed that the UN

peacebuilding and peace sustaining frameworks in Liberia required creating partnerships and coherent coordination with local, national, regional and international actors. Effective coordination within the UN system played a crucial role in the success of peacebuilding efforts in Liberia. However, what truly set the process apart was the grounding of most interventions in Liberia's culture and practices, involving thousands of Christian and Muslim mothers, women, grandmothers, daughters, and aunts who were weary and exhausted from the war, and who ultimately contributed to bringing about peace (Lawson 2017).

#### **4.2.2 Sierra Leone**

In March 1991, the Revolutionary United Front invaded Sierra Leone from neighbouring Liberia stating its aim of ending allegedly corrupt and inefficient government (Denov 2006). Starting as a minor invasion, it spread by attracting dissatisfied portions of the population and involved the Kamajors, state-armed vigilantes in the form of national militia, made up of bands of young men defenders of their villages, who fought alongside both the regular and foreign forces. The decade-long brutal violence occasioned the death of thousands of citizens while displacing millions (Cardona et al. 2012: 27) and leaving thousands of others psychologically traumatised, economically destitute and disillusioned (Chabal 2005; Denov and Gervais 2007). Traumatizing atrocities and dehumanising experiences of the so called 'operation no living thing' (Millar 2013) made the war uncontrollable and deadly.

Efforts for containing crimes inflicted by warlords and for catalysing dialogues and healing in the country required a decisive departure from traditional top-down approaches. Millar (2013) notes multiple parallel interventions dictated by local experiences of the TRC and local experiences of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Peacebuilding, conflict transformation and healing efforts in the country took place in the midst of intense struggles over the memories of violence, truth-seeking and the pursuit of justice (Reategui 2009). At the forefront of conflict transformation, the Peacebuilding Fund in Sierra Leone encouraged working with local authorities and grievance redress committees by devising better community-driven initiatives on conflict prevention especially by integrating the youth.

As Bangura (2017:9) argues, the success peacebuilding initiative was due to people-centred changes and approaches that were implemented in the broader security sector reform. As anticipated, the transition from war and conflict to peace in the country was not straightforward. It shifted from a state-centric focus to a community-based, human security approach known as

Local Needs Policing (Bangura 2017). This was coupled with intensive consultations with community members and gave them a voice to identify problems at hand (O'Neill, 2004). Thus, through local partnerships, trust and collaboration were built, leading to participation and political buy-in across most sectors. Conspicuously, most social and political disputes were successfully resolved by engaging young people and women at local level while past violent crimes and atrocities committed during the civil war were addressed by the special Court for Sierra Leone. In addition, Sierra Leone's TRC was established to deal with anarchy, to address victims' desires, and to restore peace and social cohesion by shedding light on the extent, causes and nature of violence (Murithi and Scanlon 2006).

### **4.2.3 Rwanda**

Peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda relied predominantly intentional on governmental mechanisms. For one, most early efforts towards social cohesion, socio-political transformation, reconciliation, peacebuilding and healing stemmed from involving both local stakeholders and governmental agencies countrywide. In that aim, excluding ethnicity and physical difference, efforts towards peaceful coexistence have continued to be assured by positioning and aligning the self to the concepts of '*rwandaness*' or '*being Rwandan*' (Ataci 2021:1). Thus, the character of social relations that emerged in post-genocide Rwanda sought to reactivate a civic identity framed by integrationist policies that spearhead ethnic amnesia that dissuades political mobilisation and founding institutions on differences (Vandeginste 2014). To a significant extent, the dynamics of post-genocide Rwandan society required multi-level interventions including rehabilitation, reparation, trauma healing, provisional justice, truth and reconciliation, reconstruction and resilience. The main focus of such interventions sought to address negative experiences of the genocide that impacted the family, community, nation, global, and intergenerational levels (Shevell and Denov 2021).

Despite criticisms that the crisis in Rwanda has not recovered genuine peace due to pending destabilising issues (Alabi 2002; Hilker 2011; Samset 2011; Thomson 2018), efforts to rebuild the morale and the country have continued in the aftermath of the genocide. Typically, most of bottom-up efforts to consolidating peace were entrenched in the Rwandan traditional consciousness. For one, the pre-eminence of transitional justice such as the *Gacaca* transitional local jurisdictions led to reconciliation through truth-seeking and involved community members in generating evidence against individuals' responsible for committed crimes (Buckley 2005).

With their aims of enabling truth-telling, truth-seeking, promoting reconciliation, eradicating the culture of impunity, speeding up the trial of genocide perpetrators, encouraging offenders to confess and to express public apology, the *Gacacas* contributed to a great extent to mass justice (Thomson 2015). Coupled with the creation of the National Unity and reconciliation commission, the *umuganda* or community work, the *ingando* or solidarity camps and the establishment of *abunzi* or community mediators, the success of peacebuilding in post-genocide Rwanda was founded on the efforts to end stereotypes of exclusion and ensure inclusion (Kuzwe 1998). Through multifaceted partnerships between the polity and the social groups, the turnover was validated through socio-political and cultural resilience both at micro and macro-levels which became instrumental in curbing stigma across the population and enacted gradual healing and the restoration of relative trust.

#### **4.2.4 Kenya**

For decades, the socio-political landscape in Kenya has been characterised by multi-factoral tragic events of inter-ethnic violence. Whereas the seeds of violence in Kenya can be traced as far back as colonial times when colonial land-related segregation and harmful policies were implemented, the impact on people's welfare and livelihoods are still felt (Kareithi 2015). Mainly, as succeeding republican institutions in post-independent Kenya continued to use land as a tool for gaining power, support and as a proof of wealth and as a social factor (Mkangi and Githaiga 2012: 3), the strain of violence never let up. Sadly, the most documented chief trigger causes of that violence include interlinkages between weak government institutions, land grievances, poor ethnic relations, resource competition, intrastate conflicts and income inequalities (Kareithi 2015; Maina 2015). For instance, the political violence that erupted in most parts of Kenya in 1992 and 1997 was consequential to the prevalence of winner-takes-all politics that bestowed authority over all power, resources and control to the winning side. The violence lasted for years and occasioned forced displacement, death and property destruction while posing serious concerns over the future of Kenya.

Recurrently, the political situation that prevailed in the 2007–2008 and 2017–2018 post-election periods and the consistent political upheavals gave rise to an urgent need for robust efforts towards ending the political deadlock. This shift was driven by the resurgence of democratic practices that demanded new beginnings and socio-political recovery. Consequently, the establishment of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation processes offered practical avenues for addressing the various forms of injustice and violence, making it

a constructive choice. As a result, the push for socio-political transformation in Kenya, as outlined in these processes, inspired improvements in the challenges facing the Kenyan population. According to Mkangi and Githaiga (2012:7), the success of Kenyan efforts to contain violence was voiced by means of four pillars, namely, considering the urgency in ending violence; processes to deal with the human suffering; instruments needed; and the extent of endeavours and social issues that needed redress.

Beyond the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation processes, local CSOs advocated for participatory democratic practices and the empowerment of people and thus provided great impetus towards change, reforms and peaceful coexistence. Churches in Kenya contributed in bridging the gaps between communities divided by inter-ethnic violence remain crucial to peaceful coexistence and reconciliation (Githigaro 2012). In addition to these, university agencies and other state-led efforts provided frameworks of policies and practices aimed at building peace within local communities (Githaiga 2017; Johnson 2013). While violence in Kenya struck all sectors, efforts in peacebuilding came from all sectors, including independent actors. For instance, in the advent of local conflicts in some areas, local actors or local elders filled important roles in governance where the state actors and institutions had failed to provide security and key services (Miall 2004). By activating their natural endowment, legitimacy and power based on grassroots leadership and local conceptions of peace (Chopra 2009), local actors such as those in Kerio valley-Kenya, Northrift Region of Kenya, Ndetani, Dryland Mountain Kenya played key roles in building peace at local levels (Elfverson 2016; Mwaniki 2007; Owuor, Eriksen and Mauta 2005).

To ensure participation in peacebuilding processes, the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation processes proposed a new constitution that bestowed sovereign authority in the people of Kenya or the *wananchi* (Mkangi and Githaiga 2012:10). Thanks to the new constitution, the process of reconciliation and healing involved the participation of people from all layers of society. Women, for instance, pro-actively participated in changing patriarchal narratives and thus took the lead in building peace. Ringera (2014) highlighted that women share in conflict transformation in Kenya was crucial especially in contexts where most peacebuilding agencies had disengaged from the local contexts and were not exemplifying the principles of inclusivity, participation, emancipation, collaboration and empowerment. A case in point is the Wajir Peace and Development committees, through which Kenyan women delivered training and capacity building and supported efforts to prevent and resolve local

conflicts in affected communities (Miall 2004). Furthermore, while violence was perceived as normal way for solving differences, women succeeded at bridging the gap between groups of aggressive young men used by national political leaders to threaten, terrorise or counter opposition (Kareithi 2015).

Noteworthy, young people contributed in curbing violence and peacefulness in rural Kenya through traditional mediation structures. For instance, with the support of the UNV and UNDP, which assisted volunteers, young women and young men were empowered in building early-warning and response systems for peace which paved the way for relative stability (Smith, Sevilla, Mazzacurati, Richard, Doucey and TanghØj 2021). In the same vein, the “forum theatre” was another participatory method used in bringing about social change in Kenya. From this perspective, by means of indigenous dramatic performances epitomised by rituals, proverbs, songs and dance and traditions of rituals which resonated throughout the Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo communities’, peace, social cohesion and healing were achieved (Magak, Kilonzo and Miguda 2015).

#### **4.2.5 Nepal**

In the 1990s, Nepal was hit by increasing contestation against the royalty-based hierarchy and monarchy but the climax was reached in 1996, when intrastate violence opposing the Maoists and the government broke out (Joras 2008). In the interest of ending violence, a number of peace agreements were signed with limited international assistance, although the UN in Nepal intervened to monitor the implementation of peace agreements (Short 2022:260). Above all, though it presented challenges, the success of peacebuilding efforts in Nepal was due to a number of factors, namely open dialogue, multifaceted joint efforts of local people and local organisations and the UN in Nepal which led to the comprehensive peace agreement of 21 November 2006 (Raffoul 2019: 19).

Driven by the critical need for transformation in Nepal, ongoing mediation and the signing of numerous successive agreements have helped build relationships between conflicting parties and address longstanding obstacles. For one, with the support of district-level organisations, many local entities and civil society organisations worked together with national-level organisations to influence national peace processes and create change at the local level (Cardona et al. 2012). Most of the progress in peacebuilding process in Nepal resulted from the involvement of women. Typically, women’s organisations at the grassroots level such as

women's savings and credit cooperatives successfully mediated conflict by having their voices heard and by participating in peacebuilding activities (Ramnarain 2015). Briefly, Nepalese women were instrumental in pushing for peace by organising peace rallies, by involving themselves in the People's Movement and by acting as local intermediaries between the Maoists and the government. For instance, most active women's organisations specifically women's rights organisations, alliances and networks struggled hard and secured substantial representation in the national parliament that led to upholding their rights while they contributed to the drafting of the constitution (Cardona et al. 2012).

The successful end of war in Nepal shows how local support was instrumental in creating favourable frameworks for sustainable peace. As Short (2022) epitomises, without external mediators or facilitators, open dialogue between parties to the Nepalese war initiated and created a framework for a new constitution, a scheme for managing arms and armies and the formation of a neutral security force. This does not exclude the influence of transnational and international actors in the establishment of peace in Nepal since they were crucial in positively or negatively impacting the way peace was built (Giessmann 2016). Peace in Nepal encountered definite challenges especially the process of reintegrating former combatants into civil society which required social dialogue. Bhandari (2019) postulates that social dialogue was a powerful social tool in the promotion of social harmony, peace and reconciliation among community members and ex-rebels in Nepal.

As the causes of internal war in Nepal resided in complex dynamics, the success of peacebuilding efforts stemmed not only from effective management of arms and armies but also from the involvement of all categories of stakeholders namely, youth, women, civilians, ex-combatants and community forest user groups. Tamang (2017) notes that collective efforts of women, low-caste individuals, indigenous people, landless farmers, civil society groups and the marginalised influenced the Nepali socio-political landscape by contesting causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice and birthed inclusive peace. In addition, members of local entities and groups were also instrumental in the process of reintegration, reconstruction and by providing livelihood assistance (Chapagain and Sanio 2012). Subedi (2012) also states that peacebuilding in Nepal required a robust commitment of political actors to include short-term and long-term peacebuilding to ensure inclusive economic development for all Nepali.

#### 4.2.6 Cambodia

For over three decades, Cambodia suffered a full-scale civil war and violence due to territorial and ideological rivalries with Vietnam and the subsequent international involvement shaped by the Cold War dynamics and foreign occupation (Becker 1989; Sochua 1998). The dilemmas that Cambodia was confronted with were not only triggered by internal political power struggles but also by the external threat enmeshed with obscure diplomacy and confused foreign policy. This led to virulent fighting and resistance factions with lethal clashes that occasioned millions of deaths and sustained oppression and upheavals which lasted to the end of the Cold War (Hout 2006). The extent of bloodshed and destruction threatened the future of Cambodia as the Vietnamese troupes continued their attacks till a Peace Agreement was reached in Paris which paved the way for the establishment of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) (Etcheson 1992).

As for most protracted conflict, peacebuilding efforts to end hostilities and bring new life and healing in Cambodia were activated including international ad hoc measures and campaigns (Becker 1989). One of the most striking characteristics of the peacebuilding trajectory and the prospects of peace in Cambodia was the willingness of the Cambodian society never to allow its violent past to repeat itself again. In this way, from the Paris Accords of 1991 through the 1993 elections, Cambodia, civil society leaders and local elites in partnership with international advocates, introduced local peacebuilding agencies which led to inter-ethnic rapprochement, long-lasting reconciliation, transitional justice and conflict sensitivity (Martin and Kry 2023). In particular, in partnership with local communities, they developed peacebuilding strategies and programmes that incorporate a wide range of perspectives, needs and interests, and sustained peace and connections with the broader political frameworks by reconstructing broken social relationships with former perpetrators of violence, namely the Khmer Rouge (Lee 2020).

In each phase of peacebuilding efforts and healing in Cambodia, the involvement of multiple local agencies such as women agencies, youth agencies and other parties remain uncontested. For instance, despite their difficulty in breaking into politics due to the prevalence of gendered roles in Cambodia, women's social activism has prompted a nationwide literacy campaigns and contributed to national regeneration both economically and socially (Sochua 1998). As their mindsets changed, their activism through rallies and petitions was coupled with their willingness to participate into processes of decision-making processes across all sectors of the

country. As such, Cambodian women had their voices heard and succeeded in curbing open displays of violence and neglect in a non-confrontational fashion. As Hout (2006) notes, though external assistance played a key role, the success of peacebuilding efforts in Cambodia resulted from strong willingness of Cambodians to have peace which complemented their readiness to end poverty and establish democracy and respect for human rights.

#### **4.2.7 Timor-Leste**

In 1976, Timor-Leste declared its independence from the yoke of over 400 years Portuguese subjugation but the country was only internationally recognised as an independent state on 20 May 2002. Even though, the county had to suffer the adverse consequences of foreign control for over 24 years after its independence following foreign occupation exacted by Indonesia, Japan and Australia which occasioned the death of thousands of men and women. The years that followed Timor-Leste's independence were marred by socio-political crises and violence which threatened the country's stability due to the collapse of security brought about by the lack of proper governance and oversight (UN 2012). The state continued to feel the plague of frustrating legacies of communal disorder, divisions and disunity. In response to the Timorese socio-political impasse and rampant insecurity, efforts exemplified what successful peacebuilding and healing require. In 2006, The UN Security Council deployed the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

At first, the UN interventions failed to yield anticipated results of peace because of most of the initiatives tended to hierarchize interventions. Although the UN mandate included the creation of a new police force from scratch (Peter 2015) and the institution of numerous standard operating procedures, peace in Timor-Leste remained elusive. Given the complex landscape in Timor, the influence of networks and gang ties was strongly felt across the country. In response to the persistent insecurity and rising fear, comprehensive local initiatives were implemented, focusing on collaboration, the exchange of expertise and the capacity building of local stakeholders by reverting to cultural ways for conflict resolution based on indigenous arrangements (OECD 2007). Peacebuilding efforts necessitated securing the cooperation and trust of local non-governmental organisations and the broader Timorese population, who actively engaged in the process at various levels and contributed through diverse areas of expertise. This contributed to ending suspicion and the resulting flaws that had surfaced throughout the Timorese police reform process as well as other institutional development efforts. For instance, to end brutality and violence, the police reform provided a clear

disciplinary path for civilians' complaints in case of police misbehaviour which nurtured the credibility police (TLPS) (O'Neill 2004).

It is important to note that in Timor-Leste, democratic, rights-respecting policing was a completely new experience until 2003, and the lack of civilian oversight further undermined the police's effectiveness and credibility, particularly in the aftermath of the severe destruction caused by the Indonesian occupation (O'Neill 2004). On one hand, efforts to establish a new life in Timor-Leste were significantly hindered by the local population's lack of sufficient knowledge, competence, motivation, and work ethics, which was further compounded by deficiencies in education, capacity, and personal qualities (Autesserre 2017). Furthermore, the presence of various guerrilla factions, persistent personal and land disputes, coupled with high youth unemployment, political manipulation, and deep-rooted prejudices (Danby 2011), made peacebuilding efforts more complex. On the other, faced with a tumultuous past, the success of peace in Timor-Leste was achieved through training which was complemented by the creation of a human rights culture through social mobilisation, advocacy and the institution of Timor-Leste TRC. While the average rural population adhered to traditional kinship-based power structures (Cooper, Turner and Pugh 2011), the lack of a centralised state concept within the Timorese community became a significant factor in post-conflict recovery and healing.

To a greater extent, the form of governance suitable for the country's recovery combined local heterodoxies and realities such as large-scale resettlement of displaced people, and social engagement in long-term peace processes (Renoir and Boone 2020:32). The training programmes of local-level mediators, chiefly comprising women and youth increased local ownership in the resolution of public misunderstandings following the massive return of Timorese refugees (Giessmann 2016). Overall, the success of the peacebuilding intervention in Timor-Leste stemmed from comprehensive training, strong political will, and participatory engagement, all achieved through active collaboration with national authorities. This was a cornerstone of peacebuilding which paved way to democratic elections, the promotion of economic development efforts, justice and reconciliation in the country (Autesserre 2017).

#### **4.2.8 Northern Ireland**

The partition of Ireland by the British Government in 1922 occasioned long-term ideological and cultural divisions and suspicions between Protestants in Northern Ireland and Irish Catholics. Among notable long-term consequences was sectarian murders, riots and other

forms of violence which erupted in the Northern Ireland between unionists, who constituted the majority protestant and the nationalists who constituted the minority catholic (White 2018). The trigger factors of the conflict were evidenced between 1960 and 1970 by the advent of a Catholic protest movement against Protestants' exclusion and power monopoly. As both sides gained support from armed groups and major political parties within the region, parties to the conflict were involved in subduing the conflict until the Stormont peace talks were held, culminating in the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998 (Raffoul 2019). To be successful, the agreement was inclusive and involved many community-based organisations which propelled peacebuilding activities and initiatives. Skarto, Byrne, Ahmed, Hyde and Karari (2013) note that the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts resulted from the adoption of strategies that aimed to synchronise bottom-up development initiatives with top-level government policies which contributed to reducing violence and improved socioeconomic conditions.

Thoroughly alarmed by protracted socio-cultural and ideological divisions and long ingrained grievances, Northern Ireland communities held local level dialogues, in addition to the work of civil society, allowed the building of relations and reduced tensions (Raffoul 2019). Apart from involving players such as the political parties, the Northern Ireland Women Coalition played a crucial role in the negotiations of the peace process. Indeed women embody domestic capacity which they can exploit to achieve sustainable peace (Gizelis 2009). As the case of Northern Ireland conflict indicates, women's empowerment, creativity and involvement are key to peacemaking and conflict transformation processes.

Apart from the furtherance of political polarisation and mistrust, the commitment of local peacebuilders for reconciliation has remained a highly desirable goal consistent with the principle of equality between Protestants and Catholics driving the spirit of the Belfast Agreement. Driven by the need for reconciliation, local peacebuilding activists collaborated and organised cultural events and dialogues between victims and ex-combatants and by delivering support and promoting peace education and conflict awareness-raising campaigns. It is that spirit of inclusivity in the peacebuilding efforts that sustained enthusiasm in the Northern Ireland peace agreement and that made the process successful (Dudouet 2006). Overall, the success of peace in Northern Ireland was a result of robust collaborative interventions and consultations coordinated across all layers of the country including local

communities, the polity, international partners as well as civil society organisations in a flexible system (White 2018).

### **4.3 KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE AFORE-MENTIONED CASES OF SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

The case studies, in this section, revealed that the success of successful peacebuilding resides in the nature of approaches, attitudes and actions envisioned (2010:2). As such, building ‘mutual trust’ (Wilhelm 2019:28) by altering peoples’ perspectives and reversing their misconceptions, hostilities and cognitive distortions require unique manoeuvres including the following:

#### **4.3.1 Safeguarding Local Mobilisation and Ownership**

The case studies suggest that the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions is intrinsically connected to active engagement of the people they are meant to serve (Accord 2023). Indeed, when local peacebuilders are key in shaping the desired changes locally, the bulk of peacebuilding efforts is fully felt, as the cases of Liberia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Rwanda featured. The principal idea is that local actors know better what dynamics to be activated and what adaptive processes best suit their community for a new life to blossom for reconciliation and reconstruction (Lederach 2001, cited in Dudouet 2006:44). Indeed, as Dudouet (2006:52) posits, it is only through local engagement and domestic ownership by ‘local peace constituencies’ that we can achieve sustainable peace and make peacebuilding efforts more effective. As the cases of Kenya, Northern Ireland and Timor-Leste demonstrated, successful local peacebuilding requires an array of interventions that go beyond mere ceasefire agreements but rather permeates the socio-cultural, political and economic and psychosocial spheres (Garzon and Burkett 2002).

Noticeably, the case of Kenya has revealed that key to successful local peacebuilding is upholding the ideal for small-scale grassroots initiatives to be locally led, locally owned, locally managed and locally implemented (Peace Direct 2019:3). This entails local inclusivity which is different from most of the outwardly designated peacebuilding initiatives. The principle of local inclusion has featured strongly in several studies (Curtis 2013; Dudouet and Dressler 2016; Høglund and Lilja 2018; Lederach 1997; Lundqvist, Leonardsson and Öjendal 2017; Moore 2019). Referring to multi-ethnic scenarios and protracted conflict, these authors concur that successful peacebuilding processes must be grounded in interventions with a distinctly

local composition that incorporate ‘indigenous peacebuilding’, ‘local alternatives’, ‘local peacebuilding’, ‘local ownership’, ‘post-liberal peacebuilding’ and ‘meaningful participation’. Coy (2009) adds that local peacebuilding is successful if it circumnavigates through issues, peoples and circumstances in a holistic manner.

The benefits of local ownership and local mobilisation in peacebuilding and healing is that it avoids polarisation and achieves legitimacy (Peace Impact Framework 2023). This is due to the fact that local institutions and local structures are the vanguard in affecting conflict either positively or negatively. In Kenya for instance, local institutions at all levels, both formal and informal, contributed both in addressing and in exacerbating inequality, destitution and conflict related to landlessness (Owuor, Eriksen and Mauta 2005). The reality is that local actors, institutions, and structures play a crucial role in conflict resolution, as they have greater negotiating power and mechanisms rooted in their own communities than any external intervening bodies. Therefore, for local peacebuilding initiatives to succeed, they must be grounded not only in the processes and outcomes but also in the collaborative support of local actors and the involvement of international actors (Richmond 2019:15).

#### **4.3.2 Handling Local Knowledge Efficiently by means of Intergenerational Dialogue**

When local actors drive process, they contribute valuable knowledge while playing their role (Ruppel 2020). Indeed, as conflict takes stem from societies, efforts to deal with it come from the same societies (Reich 2006:5). Local peacebuilding depends on knowledge of local practices and how peace is manifested (Millar 2020, cited in Lee 2020:25). As the cases of Kenya, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone and Rwanda show, this knowledge is often held by civil society organisations, community members or local groups of individuals. Local knowledge is vital to and provides valuable insights into local emergencies, existing locally led activities, local partners, local interest groups and local government structures that can either promote or hinder peacebuilding efforts. The forum theatre in Kenya is a tangible example of how sharing local knowledge can successfully forge transformation and peace. Specially, using their cultural traditions, young people influencers in Kenya shifted local narratives and promoted the culture of inclusivity which demystified practices of exclusion. They mobilised other groups of marginalised people to buy into a communal process of renewal and reconstruction of minds and community (Reich 2012).

Contrary to interventions initiated by powerful donors (Cooper, Turner and Pugh 2011) which tend to neglect the local contexts (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015), a great deal of research applauds the nature of local wisdom and efforts required for the realisation of desired futures (De Coning, Saraiva and Muto 2023; Harst, Dirk-Jan and Brink 2023; O'Brien 1998; Rotmans, Teisman, Grin, Twist and Kemp 2007). Unlike top-down policies and practices, the success of local peacebuilding is embedded in harnessing all actors' creative imagination in multivariate innovative, inclusive, systematic and interdisciplinary ways (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Mitchell 2005; Natil 2021). Such cooperating approach allows a shared understanding of issues and dynamics and shapes ways for finding adequate solutions (Kelman 1996:111). Available local knowledge provides key and timely information about the reality on the ground in a more context-sensitive style (DeConing et al. 2023:152). The ties between local knowledge and lived experiences are strong and undeniable as both appeal to emotional sensibilities and cross-currents reactions, on the one hand.

Conversely, successful peacebuilding requires engaging in deep reflection both internally and externally, involving personal self-examination at the individual level and an analysis of the broader external processes occurring in the world (Gittins and Som 2023:38). It is accomplished by drawing from existing social truths, which offer patterns of behaviour and beliefs that carry binding implications, giving the world the appearance of functioning as it does. This requires informed factual explanations of social constructs, issues and dividers pertaining to the community in question. Thus, peacebuilding does not remove what people know about issues nor does it detach local people from their lived experiences. The cases of Rwanda, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Northern Ireland, Liberia and Sierra Leone emphasise the fact that achieving new life and healing after conflict entails unveiling the multi-causal explanations of the conflict (Maitre 2009:54) to determine the reasons, conditions and circumstances.

### **4.3.3 Valuing the Plight of Young People in Peacebuilding and Healing**

The role of youth in shaping and influencing the post-conflict period is almost inseparable from the processes of healing, renewal, and peaceful coexistence. To a large extent, local ownership in peacebuilding brings together various stakeholders and social movements existing in the community. The importance of inclusivity in peacebuilding is emphasised by Porter (2007, cited in Natil 2021), who underscores the significant contribution of key population groups, particularly the youth, in addressing local issues such as 'memory,' 'truth,' 'silence,' and

community social structures. This involves striving to propel and spearhead opportunities for meaningful representation and cooperation of less-privileged groups and those undervalued by building trust and mutual understanding on issues, concerns and facts as the cases of Kenya, Liberia, Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste confirmed.

A glance at typical successful local peacebuilding, Cambodia for instance, pinpoints that peacebuilding requires attaining a compromise of divergent motivations from different actors involved in the peacebuilding ecosystems (Peace Direct 2022:3). Ending decades of inter-ethnic civil wars that has led to intergenerational trauma and violence transmittable from one generation to the other in Cambodia was possible when both women and youth collaboratively developed necessary non-violent skills using local colours (Martin 2023). Cambodian local perspectives enabled participants to recognise individuals who either chose to disengage, collaborate with others or abandon the peacebuilding process. This example emphasises the importance of peacebuilding as a dynamic process that involves reimagining, reassessing, and nurturing the relationships that originally contributed to the conflict (Martin 2023: 5).

The case of Kenya demonstrates that fostering dialogue on local realities, experiences, needs, threats, and opportunities faced by all interest groups helps to uncover the root causes of victimisation, social divisions, and incompatible interests, leading to the development of effective adaptation and mitigation strategies (Owuor, Eriksen and Mauta 2005: 314). In Kenya, the Ndetani community members conducted research to settle prevailing conflicts, diverging perceptions and interests and by maintaining contact and engagement of all interest groups. Their peacebuilding interventions sought social cohesion, healing and adaptation led to expected results because they were crafted according to collective consciousness and shared measures taken by mobilised local actors, local institutions and formal and informal structures operating within the Ndetani vicinity.

#### **4.3.4 Mainstreaming Gender as Pillar for Peacebuilding and Healing**

The cases studies in this chapter substantiated that women are irreplaceable if peacebuilding, healing and conflict prevention are to succeed. As debated by scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding (Bibek 2018; International Alert 2023; Heyzer 2003; Osborn 22; Shevell and Denov 2021), effective peacebuilding and healing require weighing up the impact of dividers and connectors through the lens of gender positives and negatives and this requires the integration of women in the process. While power, class and gender are strong dividers

separating people and increase inequality in a society (Tuntivivat and Ly 2023:28), the cases suggest that women successfully brought critical views and standpoints to the table while shedding light on numerous overlooked issues in the peacebuilding endeavours (Vlachovd and Biason 2005:19).

As true leaders in every sense of the word (Derusha 2014), women hold vital information and intimate knowledge that can be used to reduce the lethality of crime and violence leading to healing in post-conflict scenarios. This view is reinforced by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 which stipulates that increased women participation in peacebuilding is an indication that not only adds to the legitimacy of peace processes but is also proof that different perspectives on the conflict are considered and addressed (Perrinet, Grossenbacher and Goetschel 2018: 23). As the cases of Liberia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nepal and Cambodia proved, there is great potential in including women in establishing the foundations and benefits of peace.

By means of their multidimensional roles exemplified through activism, organisational empowerment, education and advocacy-related skills (Arostegui 2013), women offer a clear focus on both the impact of violence and conflict on gender relations and the envisioned required changes. As demonstrated in Liberia, when women participate as equal peacebuilders, the likelihood for long-lasting peace that sustain women's economic empowerment, social reconstruction, family wellbeing and community recovery increases (International Labour Organisation 2019:12). In the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, scholars and practitioners in peacebuilding argue that peace is possible when a keen understanding of different experiences of men and women inform both gender mainstreaming and gender visibility (Walby, Towers, Balderston, Corradi, Francis, Heiskanen, Helweg-Larsen, Mergaert, Olive, Palmer, Stockl and Strid 2022).

#### **4.3.5 Devising a Peacebuilding Architecture that Matches Local Dynamics**

While most conventional peacebuilding processes point to the urgency of ending negative issues and bringing about positive change (Lederach and Maiese 2009), the main challenge remains creating a system that operates properly on the ground (Manaysay and Espesor 2021:101). The Timor-Leste case highlights that peacebuilding fails when top-down efforts are envisaged and supported externally under 'liberal ideals of democracy and economics' principles or liberal peacebuilding superstructure (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015:826). The

major reasons for failed peacebuilding initiatives reside in the failure to consider the ‘local context’, ‘the local capacity, the local ownership’, as well as the local agencies and local communities (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015: 825). Explicitly, if peace comes from the people it persists whereas peace that is imposed on people from above is short-lived (Peace Direct 2019:7). Thus, nurturing successful peacebuilding needs robust hybrid ‘liberal-local’ interventions (Manaysay and Espesor 2021:111).

Failure to consider local peacebuilding ownership, policies and autonomies (Leonardsson 2020:4) often leads to peace dilemmas as the cases of Timor-Leste, Liberia, Kenya and Sierra Leone have demonstrated. Thus, the success and efficiency of local peacebuilding remains a bone of contention for many observers particularly in contexts where local governments are fearful that their role is being usurped (Chopra 2009; Miklian and Bickel 2018:2). Practically, every political body is fearful that local level peacebuilding may pose dilemma as most of them challenge the state-led initiatives. In this light, Chopra (2009) examined the contradictions underlying peacebuilding and state-building in Kenya. His insights reveal that local peace initiatives can be at odds with autonomous decision-making and may jeopardise inclusivity and lead to abuse and potentially undermine state-building. Despite this, the scientific debate on peacebuilding emphasises the contribution of community-based players in driving the process to its successful destination (Ruppel 2020: 6).

Acknowledging the limitations of liberal peacebuilding interventions, particularly their detachment from indigenous realisms and the resulting disregard of traditional entities (Manaysay and Espesor 2021; Moore 2019:1), scholars emphasise the critical importance of local agencies in achieving genuine local ownership and impact. Indeed, the success of locally supported peacebuilding efforts depends on their effectiveness and the extent to which they encourage communal inclusion in addressing the political and socio-cultural conditions of specific, localised communities (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017:11). This highlights that integrated peacebuilding options succeed when envisaged in the framework of collaboration and inclusion of local initiatives and local community members in addition to anchoring global policies in local realities (Peace Direct 2019: 13). This entails engaging specific segments of community members such as youth, women, intercommunity councils, organisations and government bodies (Peace Direct 2019: 34).

Equally important are dialogue, democratic discourses and collaborations of actors (Natil 2021; Conciliation Resources 2012) which are powerful tool for reducing tensions and inducing

participants into collective local peaceful endeavours. Thus, mobilising people into a network to prevent violence by setting early-warning system (Bush 1998) is of paramount importance to local peacebuilding efforts. It is essential that local voices be included and their efforts acknowledged, as they are crucial for enhancing knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, as well as structures and norms that promote peaceful coexistence (Peace Direct 2019).

Considering the centrality of the concept of ‘local,’ Dudouet and Dressler (2016:6) and Herrberg (2012) argue that when an integrative approach to peacebuilding is combined with sustained efforts over time leading to cumulative impact, all initiatives in this area should be guided by cost-effectiveness. As such, the concept of ‘local’ signals is an all-encompassing term entrenching different actors, the dynamics, interactions, processes and structures (Ruppel 2020:4). As contexts change over time, practical orientation and relevance are locally felt where local peacebuilding efforts stem from within the community itself whereby insider actors play a major role. By helping people to exercise some sense of control over whatever unhinges them, successful local peacebuilding efforts usually tap into local knowledge and local tradition. They work with the grain to change the grain itself and ensure connections by restoring trust and perceiving the truth as singular and absolute means to reach peace. Thus, the centrepiece of peacebuilding efforts lies in transforming conflict, ensuring political participation and transparency by means of intercultural negotiations that encompass local specificities, differences and potentials (Reich 2006: 12).

#### **4.4 HIGHLIGHTS IN SUCCESSFUL PEACEBUILDING**

Generally, local peacebuilding efforts pave the way for residents to govern and impact the peacebuilding initiatives (Reich 2006:6). As local people understand the context and other local subtleties involved in hostilities (van der Merwe and Langa 2019:52), they also understand ‘innovation’ that allows a desired social world, i.e., the epicentre of sustainable relationships based on ‘local needs, local priorities and local resources’ (van der Merwe and Langa 2019:50). Consequently, this context-specific bottom-up peacebuilding initiative requires collaboration, ownership and participation to lead to changes and sustainable living. As Uzzi (1996, cited in Moore 2019:10) advises, the sustainability rest on three principles. First, there must be trust, i.e., the quality of personal relationships among stakeholders. Second, the prevalence of fine-grained information transfer, i.e., information awareness which is held by local actors. Third, there should be joint problem-solving arrangements which are devised in a context-sensitive framing.

Thus, to increase peacebuilding effectiveness, local peacebuilding is an emancipatory process which gives credit to ‘voices from below’, i.e., ‘peace from below’ (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015:825). In that respect, the peacebuilding process becomes transformative and involves many participants (UNOY 2020). The question of who controls the process and for what purposes becomes crucial as the cases covered in this study have indicated. As noted across the cases, effective local peacebuilding and healing occur in contexts where opportunities for participation by all community members is ascertained. At a glance, such peacebuilding efforts become a dynamic process encompassing myriads of avenues to tread while ensuring local ownership by all members in addressing local issues.

In part, this is because addressing needs is the backbone of all sustainable peacebuilding (Leonardsson 2020:1). This pluralistic approach to local peace-making creates an environment in which participation and ownership are extremely useful as far as changing the longstanding issues in the community in question are concerned. Reich 2005 (cited in Ruppel 2020:5) is clearly aware that the efficiency of local peacebuilding not only resides in organisational alterations but also affects behaviour and perceptions through local partnerships. This bottom-up approach or peacebuilding from below enhances sustainability of both the peacebuilding process and its outcomes as community members contribute in the fight against evil going rampant in the society by replacing them with desired positivity in terms of ‘local safety and security priorities’ (Merwe and Langa 2019:49).

The distinctive benefits of local peacebuilding are its ability to influence intercommunity relations and to associate various community members into communion and cohabitation. Often, this change begins by empowering local citizens involved in the conflict inducing the likelihood for immediate impact and positive outcome on the ground (Lederach 1997). As exemplified in the case of Kenya, both the local agency and ownership stand as powerful mantras behind the success of peacebuilding initiatives as local community members see themselves involved in process not as ‘recipients’ but as ‘resources’ (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015:826). Local ownership evokes the idea that local communities optimise their conscientious chances to change their situation using their own strategic schemes and models of peacebuilding. The experiences of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Timor-Leste demonstrate that a holistic approach grants legitimacy to local actors, recognising them as both key players in the problem and contributors to the solution. This approach strengthens the connection between local actors and the issues at hand.

## **4.5 NEW LIFE: TRAUMA HEALING, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: WHICH WAY TO START?**

As epitomised across the case studies in this chapter, there are typical practices of peacebuilding, ownership, management and implementation styles that attain successful peace, healing and new life. Following Dudouet's (2006:44) thought, effective reconciliation and healing psychological wounds are ingredients that require as frequent and varied stages as the triggers of the conflict in question. The following steps are essential to reaching new beginnings:

### **4.5.1 Embracing Reconciliation as a Token to Effective Peacebuilding**

As peacebuilding aims to avoid, decrease, alter, and assist people in recovering from various forms of violence (Maina 2015), reconciliation remains a crucial, albeit intangible, milestone that must be given the attention it deserves for peacebuilding efforts to achieve meaningful change and stability. Specifically, Dudouet (2006: 44) argues that effective reconciliation, which is essential for healing psychological wounds, must encompass a range of stages as diverse as the root causes and triggers of the conflict. In the case of Sierra Leone and Rwanda, for instance, the TRC worked hard to heal the communal wounds after violence and atrocities committed on all sides. By and large, the reconciliation process, just as a conflict transformation framework, responds to conflict in cycle and process fashions to ascertain transformation at the individual, the interpersonal, the organisational and communal levels (Lederach and Maiese 2009).

Scholars and practitioners involved in reconciliation in protracted conflict scenarios have itemised key foundations of the reconciliatory process which include a shift in attention from blaming others to taking responsibility by means of learning and unlearning (Conciliations Resources 2021; Lederach and Maiese 2009; Mallinder 2009). By way of illustration, Clogg and Parlevliet (2021) point out that the reconciliation process is a sum total of the following activities:



Figure 9: Reconciliation process. Source: (Adapted from Clogg and Parlevliet 2021:3)

From this perspective, as portrayed in Figure 9, the first step to reconciliation is the willingness of all groups in the community and formal or informal state institutions to affirm lifelong issues which apply not only to the present, but also to the future and the past. The next step consists of mending shattered horizontal and vertical relationships by repairing past violence and damage to achieve communal unity and peacefulness. When all stakeholders are willing, mutual understanding is developed, leading to a shared vision for a common future and sustainability. Some authors view reconciliation as the final phase in the process of conflict de-escalation (Dudouet 2006:7; Conciliation Resources 2012) which focuses on exploring and dealing with the legacy of past violence (Clogg and Parlevliet 2021:3). One may assume from this that reconciliation embarks on the same pathway as conflict transformation. In most cases, reconciliation efforts have achieved their expected outcomes through the promotion of social service, compensation, public confession and many other actions of remorse (Mallinder 2009: 5).

While reconciliation involves rebuilding and transforming relations damaged by violent conflict and oppression (Conciliation Resources 2012:4), the level of inclusivity determines its success. It is crucial to involve the entire society in reconciliation processes, rather than focusing solely on resolving conflicts between armed forces and political actors (Hellmuller and Ahere 2014:6). Inclusivity gives local actors the opportunity to assess the situation and decide what measures are priorities for ensuring peace and social cohesion. While

acknowledging addressing the past precedes mutual understanding, it is likely for reconciliation to start before transitional justice.

For instance, the reconciliation process in South Africa started by granting amnesty to perpetrators for crimes committed in the past which led to the establishment of the TRC in 1995 for securing justice for all (Hellmuller and Ahere 2014:8; Mallinder 2009:7). This was a result of several factors namely full engagement and involvement of community players such as CSOs, the church and other independent actors who worked jointly to reshape the structural organisation of both the society and the state (Hellmuller and Ahere 2014:8). It was also a result of the willingness of former opponents to govern together and deal with the past by seeking justice and restoration strategies (Conciliation Resources 2012) in ‘an influence relation’ fashion (Galtung 1969:169).

Thus, as a ‘non-linear, retrospective, prospective and dynamic’ process (Conciliation Resources 2012:6), reconciliation requires interventions and adjustments on the same scale as conflict resolution and conflict transformation (Diamond 1994, cited in Botes 2003:5). To yield expected results, reconciliation requires navigating paradoxes and challenges that may arise along the journey. Taking the case of Rwanda, for instance, while many efforts for reconciliation have been made in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, the shortcomings were that provisional judicial mechanisms and peacebuilding became the prerogatives of the ‘victor’ in which the famous local jurisdiction of *Gacaca* operated (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017:57). The result was that the reconciliation process in Rwanda complicated the journey towards social cohesion which was a major concern for perpetrators. Undeniably, a wide range of activities for settling past differences, reframing the present and envisioning a common future are essential for genuine reconciliation (Conciliation Resources 2012; Lund, Rubin and Hara 1998, cited in Botes 2003).

#### **4.5.2 Truth Seeking and Truth Telling: The Role of Transitional Justice**

Almost inseparable from successful healing is the search for the truth that leads to reconciliation, peace and new life. Quite often, the process of healing requires knowing the truth about what happened and the identity of the perpetrators in order to establish accountabilities. In the case of Rwanda, the search for the truth was achieved through local and community-based mass justice known as the *Gacaca* (Thomson 2015). Notably, in the cases analysed in this chapter the process of reconciliation involved the transformation of horizontal

and vertical relations. Thus, harmony was re-established between individuals, communities or nation which inaugurated healing. As such, to be efficient, the process of healing transcends self and incorporates the spiritual, the relational, the social, the structural, and the ecological dimensions, in the view of Borer (2006:67). At any rate, instruments for healing include documenting abuses, doing justice to victims and punishing perpetrators. In Kenya and Rwanda, for instance, transitional justice was a critical component that approached perpetrators and victims in the aftermath of violence. Throughout the cases, a core strategy to effective healing was to induce perpetrators to admit their crimes and to apologise to victims (International Crisis Group 2017: 6).

### **4.5.3 New Life: The Ultimate Goal in Conflict Transformation**

Scholars and practitioners highlight that building a new life after protracted aggression exemplifies successful transformation where ideals of good, upright and just behaviour are rewarded and bad behaviour is punished (Borer 2006; Clifford 2005; Loyle 2023; Loyle and Davenport 2020; Millar 2013). Since peacebuilding envisions a common desired future by reframing the present and addressing historical events and issues, making a new beginning possible remains priority. First, there has to be effective reconciliation which is a central pillar of structural peacebuilding including restabilising normal administrative and collective relationships (Bloomfield 2006, cited in Dudouet 2006:45). Second, addressing the past requires reconciliation to occur at multiple levels, demanding a high degree of conflict sensitivity and a careful consideration of cultural issues. This process must be approached in a retroactive, prospective, dynamic, and non-linear manner tailored to specific contexts to ensure healing (Clogg and Parlevliet 2021; Conciliation Resources 2012). As the cases in this chapter highlighted, the journey towards a new life starts with genuine reconciliation which inaugurates a new beginning and mutual understanding of a desired future.

## **4.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter evaluated successful cases of conflict transformation, peacebuilding, social unlearning and intergenerational dialogue. In the main, attention was paid to typical activities, behaviour or attitudes that highlight the success of peacebuilding endeavours required to achieve true reconciliation, healing and new life. The outstanding cases demonstrated that, in order to succeed, local ownership is essential and should embody adequate grassroots and locally based actions, initiated and implemented by people in a bottom-up fashion, i.e., from

their own contexts which in some cases extend to the national level as a whole. This approach integrates responsiveness and effectiveness into the process by bridging the gaps between rhetoric and reality. It transforms both vertical and horizontal relationships, engendering acceptance and cooperation with local government agencies and actors. The intergenerational dialogue approach proved to be of paramount importance as the cases proved that dialogue across generations increased mutual understanding, challenged short-sighted decision-making and contributed to addressing communal issues.

Thus, essential to the rhetoric of successful peacebuilding as per this study is the engagement of all segments of the community, namely young people, women, local policymakers, local peace infrastructures, local institutions, local civil society organisations and community members. Involving local actors helps in tapping into their knowledge of issues pertaining to triggers and drivers of conflicts and challenges that they are facing in their respective communities. As highlighted in the analysis, the success of peacebuilding initiatives depends on aligning efforts with existing conditions to effect change and leveraging local knowledge, which reveals the interconnectedness of various factors. This approach is essential for achieving cumulative, sustainable peace, healing, and renewal. Overall, the cases of successful application of the conflict transformation, peacebuilding, social unlearning and intergenerational dialogue approaches testified that by gaining a clear understanding of their involvement, people from different groups, generations, age and identity have a great share in the success of peacebuilding endeavours.

The next section presents the research methods used in conducting this study.

## **PART THREE: RESEARCH METHODS**

### **CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, the researcher presents the core research methodological procedures and shows their relevance to this research in relation to other existing knowledge generation techniques. The chapter describes the theoretical and practical research methodology and different research methods underpinning the exploration. In general, this study involves the intervention of two different groups of respondents, namely Hutu and Tutsi youth, who actually live in the geographic area of Gihosha in order to unveil their respective experiences as socially constructed and integrated into their relations.

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Being qualitative action research (AR), this study aims to suggest ways to achieve peaceful coexistence and transform relations amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Burundi. Interestingly, the hallmark of any commendable scientific study lies in generating knowledge through ingenious and conclusive research methods, means and approaches. Accordingly, in the advent of an investigation that aims to transform conflict and build positive relations, knowledge generation is usually correlated with exploring multiple avenues that require systematic and well-thought out strategies. Generally, research involves a process of negotiation that often includes differing viewpoints through clear processes and methods. This approach helps in comprehending the complex nature of the topic, the context, evolving attitudes, and the related inferences.

Thus, this chapter discusses the research design, the research paradigm, the geographic site covered by the research, the specification of the target population, the sample size, the sampling techniques, modes of data collection and analysis. The chapter then provides an overview of major assertions on which validity and reliability are grounded and presents anticipated ethical issues connected to the investigation. Pointing to the study's topic and main objectives which seek to understand the nature, causes and consequences of ethnicity amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth, this chapter highlights the importance of insider knowledge generation as a way of understanding cultural elements of ethnicity in the community under study. From that perspective, it correlates with the reviewed literature, the methodologies, research instruments and the data presentation, data analysis and interpretation methods.

## 5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

As we reflect on research, it is readily apparent that there is a variety of research designs which appear in several approaches based on the theoretical frameworks adopted, methodologies used and their ultimate purposes. Usually, the structure of a research design is delineated depending on activities and stages involved. As submitted by Hatch and Lazaraton (1991:1), research design is best understood as ‘the organised, systematic search for answers to questions we ask’. It encompasses all procedures of study pertaining a social problem (Creswell 2014:31). Thus, in finding answers to key asked questions or objectives envisioned, it is the researcher’s responsibility to generate knowledge by conforming to a set of research principles, frameworks, methods and theories.

Therefore, prior to engaging with study, a good researcher commits himself to planning and structuring his research, a crucial stage that provides guidance through the investigation and data analysis processes. In establishing a good research structure, a researcher relies on his extensive background knowledge in the field he is investigating. Thus, the design stage serves as a roadmap that presages the research success and the trustworthiness of the findings (Tashakkori and Teddie 2003).

For all the above reasons, underlying assumptions on designing research inform two concepts that signal the need for planning and structuring. These are ‘*research*’ and ‘*design*’ which, within the framework of research, show the link between research objectives, research participants, research site, data collection instruments, data analysis methods and ensures that the stages involved in the research process lead to trustworthy, insightful, rich and sensitive findings (Nowell et al. 2017). Typically, the concept “research design” is used to denote a format that includes the strategy involved in any process of scholarly study, including identifying the connections that exist between the problem and the research process. Mouton’s analysis (2001:55) pictures research design as a blueprint of how an investigator envisages carrying out his research in different stages, i.e., from idea inception to the end results.

Although widely agreeing with the above mentioned, most research practitioners hold that it is not sufficient to design a research itinerary without taking into account possible biases that might arise in the course of research in as much as the truthfulness of findings is concerned. This infers that researchers should aim to design their research itineraries in such a way that minimises threats to internal validity of an study including bias related to selection,

intervention, follow up, measurement, information, and confounding and chance (Clancy 2002: 1). Such choice adds value to rigorous and systematic study and informs which design fits better a research (Creswell 2007).

As way of meeting the above criterion, Leedy and Ormrod (2010:1) opine that while there are different designs possible based on the phenomenon under study and the objectives at hand in an investigation, a researcher should ascertain that he is not deviating from the truth by seeking answers through systematic research. As such, they emphasise considering eight major components and characteristics that enhance understanding of a phenomenon investigated while ensuring the viability of proceedings. The above informs the nature of the design suited for this research for the sake of empowering young Hutu and Tutsi youth with adequate skills and knowledge for peaceful coexistence to prevail, namely AR.

### **5.2.1 Overview of Action Research Design**

As already said above, the design that tailors this research is AR. Notwithstanding being commonly labelled AR, there are varied definitions and nomenclatures relevant to the concept which usually vary on the basis of themes under scrutiny or the objectives sought (O'Brien 2001). Proponents of AR include McNiff (2002), Bless et al. (2014), Whitehead (2002), Reason and Bradbury (2012), Creswell et al. (2007) and O'Brien (2001), to mention a few. Nearly all these scholars share the perspectives that AR involves different categories of people, about whom the research is conducted and share in knowledge generation about their own lives. This is the case of Bless et al. (2014), McNiff (2002), Whitehead (2002) and Creswell et al. (2001) who manifestly underscore the strength of AR in terms of associations between a researcher and researched social groups.

There is a variety of perspectives from which the concept of AR is debated. McNiff and Whitehead (2002) suggest that AR focuses on behaviour observation to describe what people are doing in practice with the aim of transforming cultures and meanings that they hold dear. They further insist that AR is relational practice that tackles human interactions in such a holistic way that accommodates divergent thinking to arrive at reciprocated understanding. Similarly, Creswell et al. (2007:241) epitomise the relevance of AR in addressing a community issue and in altering practices so that change can occur. Thus, this AR best suits the problem of negative ethnicity that this study intends to positively change by involving peri-urban youth community of Gihosha in handling the situation and to decide ways of conflict resolution.

Within this framework and with the aim of responding to the research problem and meet its objectives and aim, the AR cycle as ‘holistic approach to problem-solving’ (O’Brien 2001:3) is used to address mutual suspicion and animosity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha neighbourhood. It is sensitive to the far-reaching dynamics and attitudes implicated including wounded and traumatic memories, inter-ethnic biases and sustained stereotypes.

## **5.2.2 Origins and Evolution of Action Research**

In the debate pertaining to the concept of AR, scholars and practitioners do not agree in their conclusions about its origins. In their investigations, however, one group of practitioners such as Reason and Bradbury (2012:3) signposted the origins of AR back in the 1940s and believe Kurt Lewin to be its founding father. They base their views on Kurt’s socio-technical experiments and their ‘application to the practices of social democracy and organisation change’. In the same vein, Nunan (2001:135) posit that it was the sociologist Kurt Lewin who coined the term AR and that ever since the term was deployed across many contrasting diverse situations ranging from insurance, prisons, social administration, ships, hospitals, community development projects, education, industry, coal-mining and business management. This view is supported by O’Brien (2001) who pinpointed that Lewin succeeded at characterising AR as a comparative research approach combining both social actions and social action as far back as 1946. Yet, other scholars contend that the origins of the concept of AR reach far back prior to the Aristotelian era through the modern Marxism whereby participatory study to solve practical problems abounded across cultures and community organisations (Reason and Bradbury, 2012).

Further, another group of practitioners provide ways through which AR was embraced by various practitioners as a genre to accommodate people’s needs, to solve problems or to improve or alter practices across various spheres of life or to enhance the understanding of situations. A prime example is that, after being introduced into education in 1968 and 1975, it reached its peak recognition when renowned educators Geoffrey William and Smith Lou adopted it to enhance teaching practices (Nunan 2001:135). They were joined later in 1975 by the notable British educator Lawrence Stenhouse, who acclaimed AR, not only as a mode for solving problems, but also as the best accessible method for improving practice and contributing to theory (Nunan 2001:135). As applied to education, AR presents two facets that make it attractive. On this note, Wallace 1991 (cited in Nunan 2001:135) highlights that AR proves to have specific and immediate outcomes directly related to practice in the teacher’s

own context, on the one hand, and that its findings are primarily specific contrary to those of conventional research, on the other hand.

For one, pointing to its benefits in education, Nunan's (2001) conclusions in his article 'AR: class-investigations' maintains that doing AR impacted his teaching career, knowledge, skills and development and he saw his attitude and awareness affected. By collaborating with participant students, he learned about their valuable contribution to the learning process and admitted that AR produced specific knowledge that functioned both at a local and context-specific levels. He highlighted that member participation contributed to changing the dynamics of class and facilitated communication while producing new knowledge and skills that responded to a particular problem and improved practice of education. He made it plain that the skills and knowledge springing from his AR study were relevant to the specific classroom context in which he was involved and explained that such skills and built knowledge would fit other disciplines or contexts as well.

In the same way, albeit in varied contexts, another team of practitioners have expanded the use of AR to create knowledge and to improve practices and social conditions. Ultimately, by engaging action and reflection, theory and practice, AR has been used as a valid and hands-on technique for attainment practical solutions to peoples' concerns through the creation of new knowledge while prospering individual persons and their communities. Eric Trist, known as a major contributor to AR is credited to have addressed large-scale and multi-organisation problems in post-war context by embracing social research (O'Brien 2001). Similarly, Noffke (1997, cited in McNiff and Whitehead 2002:40) voices how Collier adopted AR to cultivate responsible citizenship and democracy among Native Americans.

Thus, found across various contexts and disciplines, AR has been variedly used to effect productivity in a range of spheres including experiential learning and psychotherapy where teachers and consultants facilitated reflective study and improved teaching and learning practices. It is found in community development endeavours to solve practical developmental problems and to improve economic conditions and empower communities (Creswell, Hanson and Clark 2007:256). In organisations and businesses, AR is used to improve leadership practices; in healthcare and medicine to improve patients' health in social work to improve workers' conditions and in the human social to improve relationships (Reason and Bradbury 2012).

### 5.2.3 Principles of AR

As stressed by scholars, although AR is always participatory, participatory research is not necessarily action research (Bless et al. 2014:90). On this note, Winter (1989, cited in O'Brien 2001) unveils six distinctive principles of AR. First, AR is a reflective critique by virtue of the fact that truth emerges as a result of people's reflection on issues and processes in a social setting. Second, AR ensures it emerges as a dialectical critique where the reality about a social phenomenon is intrinsic to the context and validated through a consensual dialogue to understand existing relationship to create change. Third, AR is a collaborative resource in that participants' ideas and differing viewpoints contribute to the analysis of a phenomenon or the interpretation of its categories. Fourth, AR carries risk particularly when open consultations about an issue threaten long-held beliefs and practices thus obliging collaboration to dissipate fears or misjudgements so that learning takes place. Fifth, AR should originate from multiple often contradictory and ongoing voices and points of view that give room to diverse actions and interpretations among collaborators. Finally, in a continuous fashion, AR amalgamates theory, practice and transformation. Practically, theory in AR informs practice while practice refines theory all leading to change in cyclic way.

Even though, some practitioners have identified certain differences that exist between participatory action research (PAR) and AR. Bless et al. (2014) for instance, highlight that while participatory research encourages active participation of the people whom the research is intended to assist, action research brings both the social researcher and the community to work together as equal partners through the AR cycle. Such investigation assumes an ongoing learning process for everyone involved, not in a way that dictates to the community. This view is supported by Zuber-Skerritt (2001:3) who states that AR takes place in society and deals with sentient humans with diverse characteristics, ideas, behaviour and experiences. Therefore, the uniqueness of participatory research lies in the fact that it involves the collective investigation of a problem that leads to collective action. In this regard, Reich (2006:27) emphasises the need for fostering knowledge which are prone to altering and broadening joint actions of all participants.

More broadly, AR design investigates a researcher's own learning in a specific way by including other people who do the same on themselves throughout a study (McNiff and Whitehead 2002:15). On the one hand, AR as a learning process starts as exploratory and progresses in cyclical manner while focusing on discovering ways for improving a situation

(Reason and Bradbury 2008, cited in Tashakkori and Teddie, 2010:650). Thus, as the study is exploratory, this implies that the researcher embarks on learning about the topic and thus fills the gap in the existing knowledge by providing new insights from a different perspective (Leavy 2017:5). This makes AR endeavours to be situational, reflective, systematic, collaborative, value committed, future oriented, evaluative and rigorous (Titchen 2015, cited in Kaye & Harris 2017).

On the other hand, AR involves a series of small-scale investigations involving collaboration and participation of people who are experiencing or have experienced the problem. It follows a number of threads that include problem diagnosis, planning alternative courses of action, taking or implementing an action / an intervention, evaluating the short-term outcomes of an action and lessons learned (Tashakkori and Teddie 2010:644).

It flows from the above that in AR knowledge and social action go together and henceforth this research espouses the social constructivism worldview. This is true given that this study set to study human beings as social animals with the aim of establishing transformative knowledge which is based on an objective and unbiased observation of the world (Burr 2003:1). Coupling Lederach's conflict transformation theory and constructive paradigm, the researcher seeks to engage in discussions with participants to devise a therapeutic-like action and intervention taking into account the plight of marginalised and oppressed youth on both Hutu and Tutsi sides. This was implemented to match the need for redressing the assumed socially learned aggression between successive generations of Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi as discussed in previous chapters. The combination of social constructivism and conflict transformation theory contributes to re-assessing the researcher and youths' assumptions, rationality and truth about how the world appears to be while striving to understand it politically, historically and culturally.

#### 5.2.3.1 Overview of the social constructivism paradigm

Being a theory of knowledge (Paria 2015:13), social constructivism epistemology is essential to understanding the influence of social and cultural identities on people's behaviour and attitudes. It represents the influence of social exchanges on cognitive growth and determines the role of culture and history in the process of learning. Social constructivism typifies the how of learning and thinking, where the understanding of the world and the knowledge therein are developed by individuals. Its assumptions include the fact that understanding, significance and

meaning that individual develop are determined by other human beings (Paria 2015) in area of residence (Vygotsky 1978 cited in Paria 2015:3).

The pioneer of social constructivism was Vygotsky. As result of his social learning theory, most experts in the field agreed that the psychological phenomena emerge from social interaction (Liu and Chen 2010:64). Keaton and Bodie (2011:192) hold that social constructivism is visible through intra-and interpersonal communicative acts whereby the existence of an object is determined through sensory perception. Adams (2007:245) backs Vygotsky's idea that the learner's understanding of facts stems from interacting with others, explanation and appreciation making it a learning process. Vygotsky holds that understanding occurs socially before individuals understand and conceptualises what is going on in the society. For his part, Roth (2011) emphasises that peoples' understanding emerges from interacting with others before internalising it. Derry (1997) and McMahon (1999) both cited in Kim (2001:2) note that culture and context are essential in making sense of what occurs in a society and that the social constructivism is essential in accounting for the knowledge constructed as results of this understanding. Kim (2001, cited in Paria 2015:6) highlights that social constructivism is embedded in three specific assumptions namely reality, knowledge and learning.

As maintained by the social constructivism expertise, we can retain the following three main assumptions which highlight ways to making sense of the world around us.

- (i) Reality: The social constructivism claims that human activity leads to the construction of knowledge which does not exist in advance. In this frame, Kukla (2000, cited in Paria 2015:6) adds that members of a given society invent the properties that guide the world of group. Hence, social constructivism contends that reality cannot be discovered by individuals because it cannot be created beforehand.
- (ii) Knowledge: According to social constructivism, knowledge is a culturally and socially constructed human product. In this perspective, as individuals relate to their area of residence and to each other, they can create meaning.
- (iii) Learning: In this assumption, social constructivism is a learning process whereby individuals' learning takes place as people interact or cooperate (Paria 2015).

The social constructivist epistemology emphasises that learning is a continuous social process, progressing from the external social level to the internal individual level. As such individuals make meanings of the environment they live in, based on personal interpretation. Keaton and Bodie (2011) also make links to social constructivism and emphasise that communication affects the way objects are perceived and the range of meanings that can be derived. Socially constructed knowledge is not pre-existent, emerges from communicative circumstances (Anderson and Baym 2004, cited in Keaton and Bodie 2011:192).

#### 5.2.3.2 The importance of social constructivism epistemology in this research

Social constructivism is applicable to the research on negative ethnic interactions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. From start to the end, social constructivism is a guiding framework that permeates the methods, approaches and conceptual frameworks with regard to investigating the inter-ethnic tensions that have marked the Hutu and Youths interactions. It is included in the PAR and was materialised through the search conference whereby participants constructed knowledge which paved way for planning and implementing the intervention. Similarly the social constructivism epistemology permeates the interviews, the focus group discussions and intergenerational dialogue intervention. Therefore, based on the social learning theory of aggression, the researcher aimed at including social constructivism in the study by incorporating participants constructed knowledge of the issue of ethnicity as a socially constructed reality, on the one hand. On the other hand, as the research investigates a complex topic of the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths, social constructivism was a suitable paradigm as participants were empowered and participated to solving the problem.

In actuality, based on knowledge which is socially constructed, both the researcher and youth participants collaboratively devised an intervention whose action agenda intended to shift political and societal cultural stereotypical norms and change lives and worldviews of youth participants and the community. The study intended to incorporate Hutu and Tutsi youths' values, perceptions, interpretations and attitudes on ethnic violence and to collaboratively plan an intervention to end ethnic suspicion and resultant stereotypes and violence. In this respect, by voicing the youths' opinions, a series of dialogues were implemented whereby youths' consciousness was raised and positive change ascertained. This ongoing process of discussions and exchange culminated in youths' strategies for mitigating enmity and the joint actions to be implemented were measured against reconciliation success dynamics such as forgiveness,

reparation, youth rapprochement and the flow of ideas meant for bridging the gap between Hutu and Tutsi in the specific area of Gihosha.

Finally, by connecting the researcher and participants' feelings to the realities in Gihosha, mixed cultural signals that have perpetuated certain stereotypes were alleviated and refuted while relationships were improved. For the sake of understanding and appreciating attitudes and cultural values that lead to change and transformation, scholars caution that exploration alone does not suffice as it requires developing and testing promising solutions that come to light through information borne through the exploration phase (Kaye 2017). Thus, since this research seeks to build peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth, it is based on the following typical AR cycles:

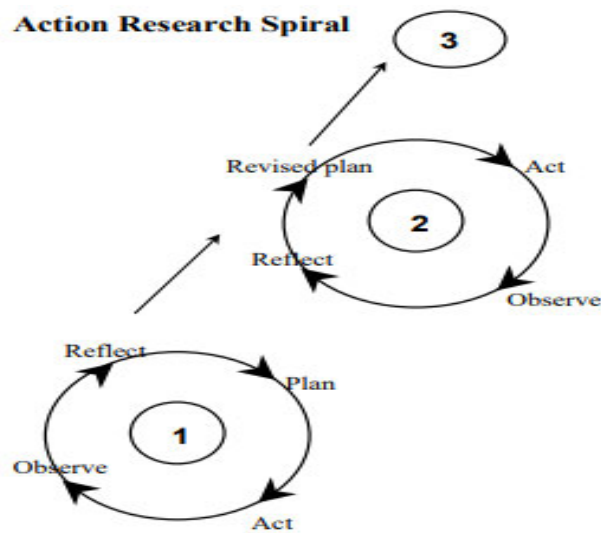


Figure 10: Typical AR cycles. Source (Zuber-Skerritt 2001)

As can be seen in Figure 10, a typical AR cycle implicates multiple steps that altogether facilitate immediate, desired change. From exploration or diagnosing a problem to practical interventions, AR evolves through a series of cycles namely defining a problem and conducting a preliminary data collection to obtain baseline data concerning the issue under investigation. This process begins with planning an alternative course of action, which guides the subsequent implementation. It is followed by observation and reporting on the outcomes, leading to a phase of reflection and, if needed, the development of a revised plan. While AR aims at altering conditions and systems, it considers the community's acceptance of the solutions and frees participants by embedding transformed consciousness and practices in the solutions. Such

alterations are possible thanks to its flexibility that holistically solve real problems through a series of cyclic involvement and collaboration of people (O'Brien 2001:6).

The above views of AR as a cyclical iterative practise of acting and reflecting on an action as Zuber-Skerritt (2001: 2) highlights, not only enables transformation, but also paves the way for participants' interactive and collaborative efforts for addressing a phenomenon. Accordingly, it is interesting to note that the distinctive features of an AR, as Tashakkori and Teddie (2010:644–645) rightly point out include a participatory process that bring together action, reflection, theory and practice in the pursuit of providing solutions to issues facing individuals and their communities. Bailey et al. (2001:134) rightly point out that AR aims at solving problems by thoroughly altering certain aspect of practice resulting in enhanced practice, new knowledge and understanding. All the above scholars elucidate the pertinacity of participants' involvement in solving problems in the situation under exploration.

Therefore, envisaged under the circumstances of participation and action 'within the real-life experience of real-life people' (McNiff & Whitehead 2002:16), this AR involved the participation of young Hutu and Tutsi who collaborated in making sense of their predicament. While AR upholds that people are practically geared to create their personal identities and allow others to do so, the researcher ascertained that Hutu and Tutsi youth are central to investigating the nature, extent and root causes and consequences marginalisation that have shaped both ethnic groups for decades. Afterwards, the researcher and participants collectively participated in planning and designing an intervention in order to find durable solutions that end the negative ethnic contacts between Hutu and Tutsi. In line with McNiff and Whitehead's (2002:17) views, this AR attempts to boost 'life-affirming' conducts that foster coexistence by suspending prejudices despite long cherished values at odds.

In fact, the responsibility of action researchers includes ensuring that their lives are exemplary and honest before tackling the task of improving other peoples' lives through the spirit of truth, social justice and compassion (McNiff & Whitehead 2002). Moreover, with the need to create space for ensuring participation of all community members that arrives at shared and successful conclusions, Bless et al. (2014:93) suggest a form of contract. As summarised in the next illustration, the first and often most urgent aspect of the contract lies in equal participation where both the investigator and participants share and exchange knowledge and skills. Such a contract achieves credibility in the eyes of both participants and researcher as it provides mutual agreement and envisages situations resulting from the findings. Notwithstanding shared

input and consensual findings, this contract-like involvement provides common options for approaching future problems and anticipates adequate solutions to address them as the following chart exhibits. Table 2 represents a simple research contract that binds together a community and a researcher studying a phenomenon in the community.

Table 2: Simple research contract

<b>Community</b>	<b>Social researcher</b>
<b>To provide:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active participation</li> <li>▪ First-hand practical knowledge of the problem on the ground</li> <li>▪ Material resources</li> <li>▪ skills</li> </ul>	<b>To provide:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ active participation</li> <li>▪ academic knowledge and theory</li> <li>▪ academic and research skills</li> <li>▪ access to material resources</li> <li>▪ skills training</li> </ul>
<b>To receive:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a solution to their particular problem</li> <li>▪ a solution to future similar problems</li> <li>▪ skills to solve future problems</li> <li>▪ skills training and access to resources</li> </ul>	<b>To receive:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a general solution to similar problems applicable to a range of similar communities</li> <li>▪ increased understanding of the problems faced by some communities</li> <li>▪ development of theory</li> <li>▪ publication</li> </ul>

Source: Bless et al. (2014:93)

As presented by Bless et al. (2014) and reproduced in Table 2, a closer look at the contract-like AR framework, reveals key interactions that emerge between a community and a social researcher. Through equal participation, a social researcher provides academic knowledge, research skills, theory and material resources while the community provides locally acquired skills, material resources and first-hand knowledge related to the problem on the ground. In practice, this predetermined relationship assumes that both the social researcher and community receive benefits in their respective and proper proportions. For one, a social researcher, not only develops a theory or publishes results, but also receives a general orientation towards solutions applicable to similar communities and gains an increased understanding of the problems faced by some communities, while the community finds a

solution to current and future problems and gains skills and resources that help in solving future problems.

#### **5.2.4 Justifying the Choice of Action Research**

While traditional research does not necessarily lead to personal or social change as a result of failure to motivate and include participants in knowledge creation or practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002), this research aims to fill this gap. It should be noted that the role of a social researcher and that of the community he is investigating are equal when it comes to AR. Thus, the choice of AR as design for this research is congruent to the need for devising new participatory alternatives and new knowledge that would lead to peaceful contacts and end mutual suspicion between Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha area. To achieve this, the researcher and participants engaged in a series of iterative reflections on the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths which culminated in the conceptualisation, systematic study and shared understanding of what really happened and determine its triggers. Likewise, the AR nature of this study resulted in the intergenerational dialogue intervention which was planned and implemented to foster peaceful coexistence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi.

Essentially, AR turns participants into researchers who are pivotal in examining their personal practices, experiences and values that culminates in creating new knowledge and new practices that lead to new action and desired change. In practice, participants are drawn to how things work in their world and bring their problem-solving skills to make their world a better place. This view is dearly held by AR practitioners such as Freire (1970) and Lewin (1946) who posit that while liberating, grass root knowledge and people's participation are vital to bringing about change in communities. Thus, this AR includes participants in addressing practical ethnic stereotypes in the community whereby Hutu and Tutsi youths are active working jointly towards effecting constructive contacts as they are best placed to devise possible solutions to the problem of ethnic violence and find alternatives to improve their relationships. As Reason and Bradbury (2012) emphasise, this AR seeks to transform individuals' experiences, ways of thinking and courses of action in such a way that it shifts strongly held worldviews.

As this study is an AR, the intervention emerged from the Search Conference resolutions where participants joined hands to create inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles. To reach out to the wider community of Gihosha, an intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention was

planned, implemented and evaluated. According to Stringer (1999), the purpose of AR is to use participants' full potential and lead them into understanding their situation and finding adequate solutions to it. This, then, is vital since the human-centric dimension of this research entails that the intervention emerged as a result of ground knowledge and collaboration between participants in the study, namely Hutu and Tutsi youths who have been adversely impacted by and witnessed ethnic violence. This AR initiative envisioned intergenerational collaborative efforts to ensure the participation of culturally aware and competent Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults. The goal was to create positive interactions across ethnic, class, and political boundaries within the Gihosha community.

### **5.2.5 Importance of Incorporating Action and Participation in this Peacebuilding Research**

This research aims to reduce ethnic prejudice by exploring alternatives and options for young Burundian Tutsi and Hutu's constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience. As with many other aspects, one of the overriding problems of most studies has been the tendency to disregard the centrality of people in the process of generating knowledge about themselves. This has often resulted in proposing foreign and biased solutions to poorly understood or vaguely perceived issues, which in many cases has compromised the objectivity of the research. This failure to include insiders in the process of research has prompted researchers to think that they are experts on communities' internal workings or needs, which hinders insider-outsider mutual sharing and relationships (Leavy 2017:241). On this note, Bless et al. (2014:89) point to concerns that have faced research from an African perspective. They give examples where anthropology and theology researchers have spent considerable time in Africa studying African people to serve 'their own interests and values as researchers, rather than the interests and concerns of the people they studied'.

As stipulated in the above investigation by Bless et al., key is to note that the foundation of trustworthy knowledge generation about people is embedded in people themselves. In other words, any knowledge created about people without including the people themselves, who actually experience issues the research is seeking to address, is simply 'obstructive', unidirectional and definitely biased. As such involvement and participation is the best way to give credit to people and empowers them as they participate in defining who they are, their values, their experiences, their own world based on their own opinions, their thoughts about an issue and their future (Bless et al. 2014: 90). Ultimately, action and participation are key to

uncovering insider perspectives, rather than relying on outsider views, and they highlight the various interactions within specific contexts (Mingers 2001:255). AR typically leads to the creation of relationships that allow participants' concerns to be addressed, translating them into actions that eliminate undesirable realities. This is achieved through collaboration and a shared commitment to creating and redefining meaning about the world around us (Bless et al. 2014: 89). Figure 11 summarises the key stages involved in the research and action cycles:

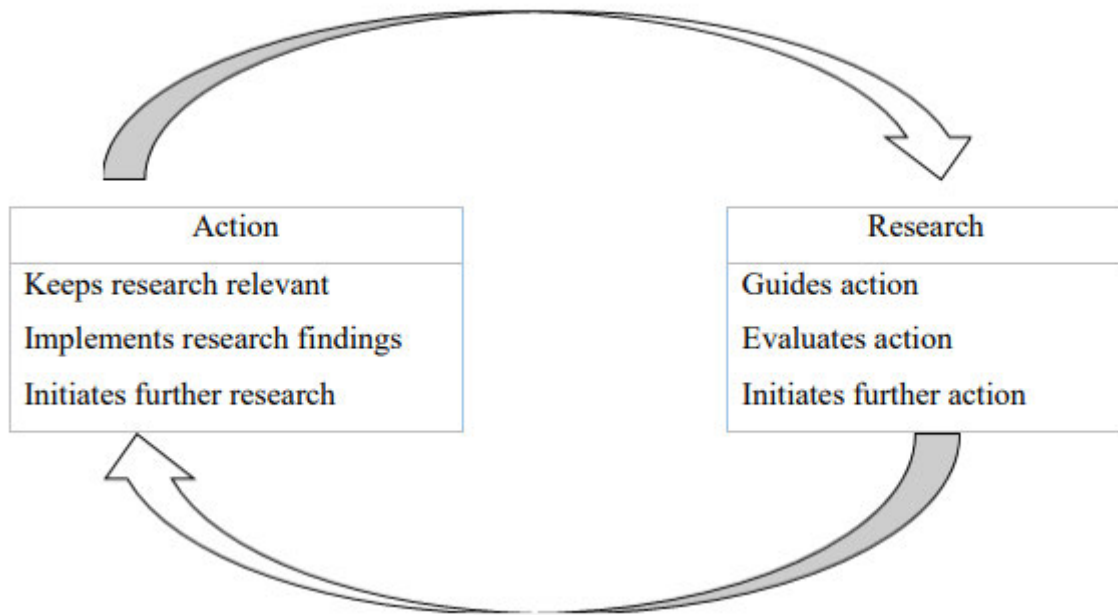


Figure 11: Key stages involved in research and action cycle. Source: Bless et al. (2014: 95)

As featured in the Figure 11, two key concepts, namely ‘action’ and ‘research’ form a spectrum that guides the search for solutions pertaining to a community issue. Two instances of collaboration come to the fore. On the one hand, it is the responsibility of researcher and partners to collectively engage in the search for solutions that validate the relevance of the research, facilitate implementation of findings and initiate further research. On the other hand, a researcher provides guidance, evaluates actions and initiates forthcoming actions depending on whether satisfactory results are achieved or not vis-à-vis the evaluation of community needs. This cyclical process of action, reflection, and further action (Zuber-Skerritt 2001:2) follows a fundamental pattern of look-think-act (Stringer 2007:9), often repeating in a spiral until desired outcomes and objectives are achieved (McKay and Marshall 2001:49).

### 5.3 RESEARCH METHODS

The centrality of research methods remains uncontested for any investigation as it paves the way for a corresponding research design. Wellington et al. (2012:97) state that methodology entails learning and considering the best practices and methods. In other words, methodology, described as ‘the process of research’ (Creswell 2014:54), lays the groundwork for constructing meaning through practical and feasible steps. It aims to address the research questions or objectives in a manner that reflects the researcher’s capability and commitment (O’Leary 2010: 99–100). Put simply, a research methodology framework is likened to research approach also known as ‘disciplined study’ (Laplan et al. 2012: 10). Alternatively, research methodology is the foundation on which the strategy, the planned courses of actions, the process and the design are built in order to lead to the desired results of the intended investigation (Crotty 1998). This holds true when research is designed to produce solutions to problems.

Table 3 displays the distribution of key assumptions underlying opposing views on problem-solving. It categorises these assumptions based on the type of the issue or phenomenon, the proposed methods for addressing it, the applicability of the solution and its credibility. As featured in the Table 3, for any AR to achieve satisfactory and trustworthy findings and to assume its problem-solving role, it should be premised on the nature and complexity of underlying issues from within the social context as well as on specific and active solutions. This entails that the researcher observes the issues at stake by playing a role either as a participant or observer, first as a ‘participant-outsider’, then as a ‘participant-insider’ (Creswell 2014: 242).

Table 3: Problem-solving views

	<i>Technical rationality</i>	<i>Reflective rationality</i>
<b>Problem solution</b>	There are <i>general</i> solution to practical problems	Complex practical problems demand <i>specific</i> solutions
<b>Method</b>	These solutions can be developed <i>outside</i> practical situations (in laboratories and research centres)	These solutions can be developed only <i>inside</i> the context in which the problem arises and in which the practitioner is a crucial and determining element
<b>Application</b>	The solutions can be translated into practitioners' actions by means of training, publications, etc.	The solutions cannot be successfully applied to other contexts but they can be made accessible to other practitioners as hypothesis to be tested
<b>Credibility</b>	<i>Hierarchy</i> in the institutional power structure: The closer a person is to policy making and theory development, the more credible and powerful s/he is. Separation of theory and practice	New types of communications: networking, symmetry of communication and collaboration. Integration of research and development, theory and practice.

Source: Zuber-Skerritt (2001:6)

A particular striking issue to note from Table 3 is that although solutions are reached, it does not give room for generalisation to other contexts, given that those solutions do not apply to such contexts as they are strictly local. Rather, they function as references for possible change in other social contexts which is possible after being adequately tested and proven. The realisation of full credibility is therefore contingent on collaborative integration of research findings which credits new types of communications and behavioural change and action at the end.

Qualitative research is a well-known approach to a study and requires rigour and adequate tools to generate trustworthy results (Nowell et al. 2017:1). It best suits the exploration of meanings assigned to individuals or communal issue (Creswell 2014:32). Arguments and debates have been nurtured to demarcate differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Davies (2014) emphasises that the contrast between qualitative and quantitative research lies in a number of dynamics such as the philosophy underpinning the study, the way in which data is collected, the analysis methods used and the process involved throughout the study to obtain results. The current research is mainly qualitative given that it aims to investigate a social phenomenon in the natural setting using a small samples of participants, where the researcher was the measurement device (Dornyei 2011: 39). From this perspective, Meurer et al. (2007:1065) highlight that in qualitative research, data originate from a small group of people and are not evaluated using arithmetical methods.

### **5.3.1 Core Characteristics of Qualitative Research Methods**

Recognised to be cornerstones for collecting and analysing data (Rehman 2016: 52), methods are dependent on the design and the theories pertaining to a study. Qualitative scholars have distinguished between general characteristics and specific approaches pertaining to qualitative research such as strategies, designs and procedures (Creswell 2018:182). Yet, contentious issues concerning the nature of qualitative research have been reported. Some qualitative specialists argue that qualitative research should not adhere to a predetermined design, as it is subject to emerging factors that could introduce biases if the investigator intervenes. Instead, it requires flexibility to accommodate these unforeseen developments (Glaser and Strauss 1967:37). This view was received with heated debates from scholars who contend that any qualitative researcher should have a conceptual backdrop that governs his study from start and therefore the claim of the emergent characteristics of a qualitative research does not hold.

Thus, amongst the core distinctive features of qualitative research is the fact that by means of observation, surveys, focus groups and interviews, a qualitative researcher focuses on observing what people do and say (Maimon, Peritz and Yancey 2009:25). In this light, the characteristics of the research setting is equally important as they prevent the researcher from manipulating the phenomenon he is investigating. In that respect, the researcher immerses himself into the location ‘where human behaviour and events occur’ (Creswell 1994:225) and spends extended periods of time capturing adequate details about the natural context of his enquiry. In other words a qualitative study requires that a researcher conducts an exploratory

study by learning from the participants with the purpose of building an understanding from what he acquires from the phenomenon and the population under study (Creswell 1994:61). Seen in this way, a researcher endeavours to make subjective meaning of a phenomenon from the research informants' viewpoints (Punch 2005) that ascertain the truth value of the data (Creswell 2014: 260) making the investigator the major interpreter.

Furthermore, another characteristic associated with its labour-intensive nature is that qualitative investigation employs a small sample of participants. Thus, qualitative research does not seek sample representativeness, but rather focuses on finding respondents prone to providing vital insights related to the issue at stake. In this light, the qualitative approach to a study adheres to certain research principles including reasons for the choice of the research site and the participants, the planned activities to carry out at the site and the researcher's role and reflexivity in the study (Creswell 2018). Noteworthy is that reflexivity entails interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics taking into account both the researcher's personal perceptions, i.e. words, thoughts and feelings, as well as participants' stories (Lapan et al. 2012:203). In this regard, for such reflexivity to succeed, the researcher comments on 'past experiences' and how the latter 'shape interpretations' not only from the investigator's perspectives but also by considering participants' views (Creswell and Creswell 2018:184).

As it stands, this research is qualitative and the choice is sanctioned by the quest for an overall understanding of the nature, trigger causes, dynamics and magnitude of negative interactions and lack of contact in the natural setting of Gihosha neighbourhood, by focusing on learning the meanings which young Hutu and Tutsi hold. This supported the research aim which was to explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths which were validated by the youths themselves. The research investigated past, present and routine events and experiences as well as related perceptions and meanings expressed by participants (Creswell 1994:257). In fact, the ultimate target of this qualitative study is to consolidate trustworthy in-group and out-group knowledge based on objectivity.

### **5.3.2 Debates on Characteristics of Qualitative Data**

More broadly, qualitative research generates knowledge through several instruments including interviews, FGDs, primary and secondary documentation which are then transformed into word-based format and processed. Meurer et al. (2007:1065) highlight that data in qualitative research is obtained from descriptions of cases and settings using observations, interviewing

and document review which all contribute to a thorough exploration of the issue and a detailed appraisal of participants' behaviour, motivation and attitude. For this reason, qualitative data captures complex and relevant details that are later analysed using textual reproduction or word transcription during the data analysis stage.

Thus, the qualitative nature of this research entails that the researcher carried out an in-depth exploration of Hutu and Tutsi youths' attitudes, opinions, what they do, what they are like, what they think, believe and their own accounts and narratives in terms of social cohesion and life together. By approaching the phenomenon from this angle, this qualitative approach helped to avoid the focusing on the usually predetermined top-down trigger factors of inter-ethnic animosity that Hutu and Tutsi youths have entertained in Burundi. It paved the way for possibilities of positive contacts amongst youths through constant and intensive interactions with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths over a period of 12 months. That means that the researcher was the major instrument in collecting and reconstructing qualitative data which were mainly participants' experiences, issues and realities lived in their social world (Creswell 1994:255). However, themes and issues were analysed from the participants' perspectives to assess the impact of ownership and appropriation of findings, with the expectation that this would lead to positive changes in attitudes, relationships and culture, ultimately engendering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

#### **5.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The nature of scholarly discourse associated with research has led to different versions of the concept of paradigm. Zuber-Skerritt (2001:22) provides at least three perspectives associated with the concept. First, he equates paradigm with ontology or the truths people make about the things or reality. Second, he envisions paradigm as epistemology, i.e. the assumptions researchers have about the nature of knowledge and knowing and thirdly he sees paradigm as methodology, i.e. the consequent approach and study strategy we adopt to solve problems. Thus, there is no point of departure between the concept 'paradigm' and theoretical framework. Similarly, often understood as 'worldviews', paradigms are understood as philosophical statements that guide a study and are intrinsically interrelated with the methods applied in research. Maimon et al. (2009:25) label the concept of paradigm as a framework serving as a foundation for a field of study.

Irrespective of various existing nomenclatures ranging from ‘paradigms’, ‘worldviews’, ‘epistemologies’, ‘ontologies’ and ‘roughly regarded research practises’ (Guba 1990, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba 2011, Mertens 2010, Neuman 2009, cited in Creswell and Creswell 2018:5), a worldview is a general logical orientation that guides the actions and outlook of a researcher. It is a basic belief system guiding the investigator in choosing which methods are suitable for a research (Guba and Lincoln 2011:105). Even though, scholars and practitioners have developed dissimilar approaches to inquiry for collecting and analysing data. As result, a continuum of three research paradigms has developed, specifically, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. Scholars note that such distinction pertaining to research approaches could otherwise be understood in terms of worldviews, designs and methods.

Therefore, in addition to being AR, this investigation espouses a qualitative transformative worldview format on the basis of its main intent of exploring possible options for Hutu and Tutsi youths’ engagement in positive contacts and collaboration. As propounded by Creswell (2014:37), transformative worldview is often interwoven with politics and political change and aims at reforming and confronting social oppression through the involvement of participants in the research process. As such, given the political marginalisation, oppression, domination and stereotypes amongst the Hutu and Tutsi, the transformative nature of this research seeks to reform and change the situation to substantiate harmonious life together again after decades of negative and suspicious contacts.

Given that the topic under investigation is a complex and sensitive social phenomenon, this AR is premised on constructivism. The key point for social constructivists lies in the understanding that individuals give meanings their areas of residence and professional settings though varied and personal interpretation whose sense emerges through collaboration. As Crotty 1998 (cited in Creswell 2018:8) assumes, constructivism also allows individuals to understand their world by developing their own subjective meanings and interpret it on the basis of their perspectives. He adds that such meaning is a product of the culture and history in which individuals grow and a qualitative researcher therefore interprets inductively different findings bearing in mind that they originate from interactions with a human community. This collaboration is key to this research as both the researcher and participants were equally involved to make sense of different facets of inter-ethnic tensions that has hampered harmony and solidarity in Gihosha area.

Altogether, the provision of these paradigms or research perspectives guided the researcher about the process, methods and outcomes of this research leading to trustworthy findings. As outlined above, the core objective of the investigation is to make sense of the triggers that nurtured animosity which has hampered peaceful coexistence and aims at building trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi. Despite this, the journey towards social problem-solving as put forth in the framework of the above research objectives is based on assumptions which have led to an array of disparate problem-solving views namely technical, rational or those based on professionalism, on the one hand, and the reflective view on the other (Altrichter et al. 1993, cited in Zuber-Skerritt 2001: 5). There are alternative ways of problem-solving, each one having advantages or disadvantages based on the focus.

## 5.5 THE STUDY SETTING

This study setting is considered to be a peri-urban area with potential for serving as a model of successful peacebuilding once the intended intervention yields its expected fruits. Most of the potential youth participants have witnessed ethnic discrimination in one way or another given that they have resided in an area where the mass graves are reported. Although various classes of people living in Gihosha study area possess information about this study, the research was limited to female and male Hutu and Tutsi youth living in Gihosha and who have continuously been living in the area for at least three years and who had the potential to provide insightful facts pertaining to this study. The long-run tensions that existed between the Hutu and Tutsi groups have hampered peaceful coexistence among young people and almost indelible influence of ethnic-borne clashes are still felt to date.

Figures 12 and 13 below capture the maps of the peri-urban area of Gihosha in Burundi.

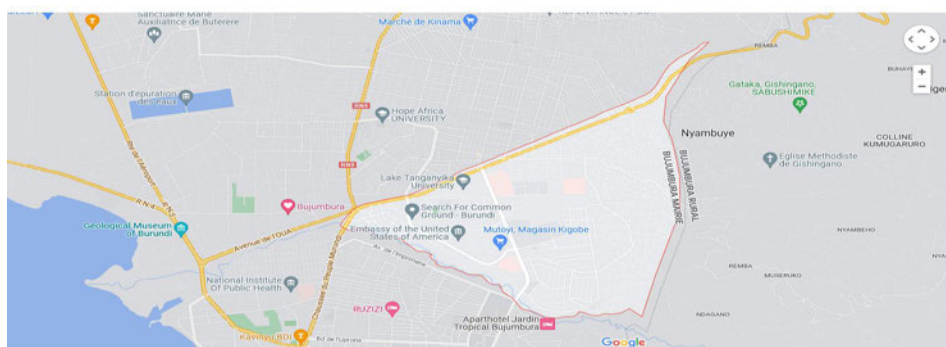


Figure 12: Location of Gihosha. Source: Nations online project (2022)

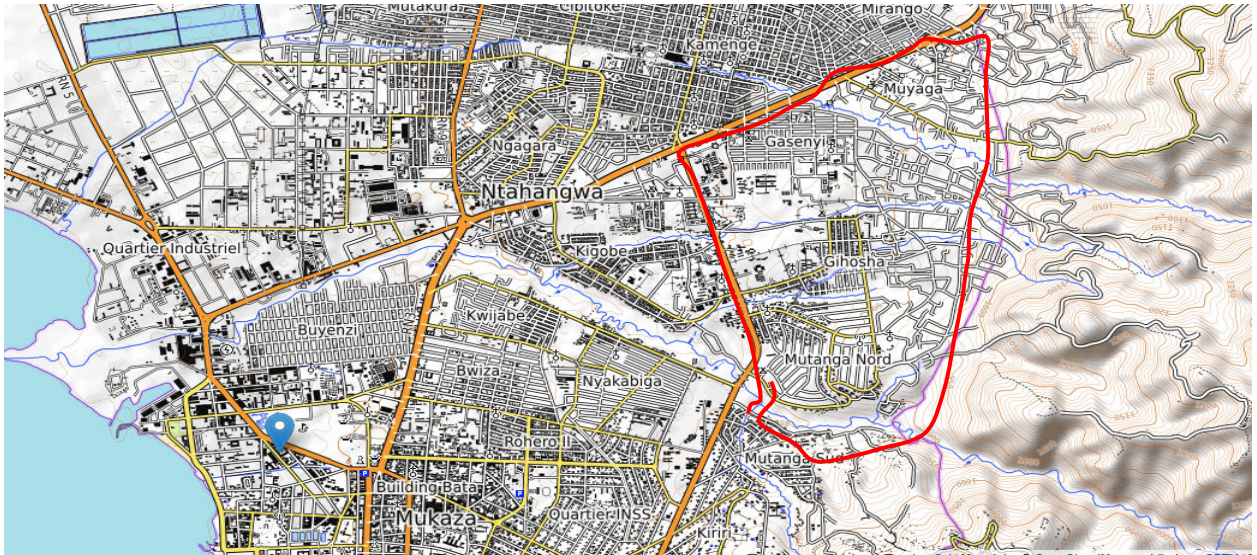


Figure 13: A view of Gihosha area. Source: Google maps, June 2022)

## 5.6 SAMPLING

### 5.6.1 Target Research Population

In the research debates, the concept ‘population’ also known as a ‘universe’ is a set of elements about which one aims to draw conclusions (Blair et al. 2014:88). In other words, the population is the category of individuals or things from which a researcher intends to draw a sample (Davies 2007:55). Two questions are essential when defining a population about which a researcher would like to draw inferences. Blair et al. (2014:106) indicate that establishing what the population units and boundaries are makes it easier to determine which convenient population would produce an adequate sample. Thus, McMillan and Schumaker (2002:85) refers to a research, a population refers to a collection of items or cases that meet specific criteria, which an investigator seeks to use as the basis for generalising the findings of their study. Usually, the choice and meaning of a research population is dictated by the research topic, aims and design of the study (Blair et al. 2014:106).

Hence, the population involved in this research is defined by three parameters, namely, geography, demographics and behaviours. From this perspective, due to the particular intention of this research which is to bridge the gap between Hutu and Tutsi youths interactions, the population involved in this research comprised of young Hutu and Tutsi currently living in the Gihosha neighbourhood. The approach focused on the phenomenon of ethnicity and related negative relationships linked to negative human experiences amongst the population of the Gihosha area. According to ISTEERU (2021) the demographic statistics of the Gihosha

neighbourhood is estimated to about 8 890 people and among them, 2 078 youths. Youth are officially aged 18–34, but the researcher decided to focus on younger youth aged 20–25 who were likely to be unmarried and without children. While the research aims to collaboratively construct and describe meanings, events and experiences of young Hutu and Tutsi, their active role and position were visible at all stages.

Thus, the research population boundaries dictated the research design which needed to be penetrating to the culture, key norms, customs of the community of Gihosha area to achieve success. The researcher intended to dedicate sufficient time to engage with young Hutu and Tutsi living in the Gihosha community to gain insights into the accessibility of the research population. As Leavy (2017:239–240) notes, the researcher’s cultural competence, such as insider knowledge of what is happening in a particular setting, including experiences of hostility at micro levels, remains crucial to research. It is this knowledge and understanding of such norms and values that inform research instruments, methods and intervention strategies, highlighting the suitability of the research in maximising the benefits to the community(Montoya and Kent 2014, cited in Leavy 2017:240).

### **5.6.2 Research Sample**

Understood as ‘a subset of a larger population’ (Blair et al. 2014: 88), there is no scientific way of deciding on sample size in qualitative studies of this kind. Various research methods texts (e.g. Creswell and Creswell 2018) indicate between 12 and 20 as typical numbers. They recommend that in the case of interviews, for example, sampling or data collection cease when saturation has been reached, i.e. ‘when no new information seems to emerge’ (Saldana 2013:222). Against this backdrop, Blair et al. (2014: 89) emphasise that the focus on sample size is misplaced if you do not get the right information from the right people. Inspired by the above insights, the researcher chose to work with 20 youth aged between 20 and 25. Half of the 20 participants were Hutu and half were Tutsi and these were further divided into equal groups of men and women. In summary, five Hutu men, five Hutu women, five Tutsi men and five Tutsi women. This sample is sufficient, as supported by scholars like Krueger (2007) and Morgan (1997) (both cited in Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009:4), who suggest that facilitating three to six distinct focus group discussions is enough to attain data or theoretical saturation, provided each group meets one or more times.

Nevertheless, in the course of the research, and as dictated by the intervention designed to fit the research objectives, the researcher and youth participants agreed to increase the sample by adding 20 more participants to accommodate different generations in the intergenerational dialogue intervention in addressing the social issue of negative ethnicity, mistrust and resentment. Thus, the researcher and youth participants gained a critical consciousness and understanding of the issues and challenges pertaining to negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. They agreed that it was vital to get at the roots to include members of the mainstream community to redress the deep-rooted causes of inter-ethnic tensions entrenched in the local consciousness and narratives. As the design of the research required, the investigator observed and noted attitudes pertaining to the general atmosphere prevailing in Gihosha vicinity.

It is important to clarify that before conducting the full-scale research, the lead researcher visited the Gihosha neighbourhood to observe and take notes on the prevailing atmosphere and the interactions among Hutu and Tutsi youths. He also aimed to shed light on the apparent relationships between Hutus and Tutsis in general, as well as to understand what life in Gihosha was like for someone identifying as either Tutsi or Hutu from the perspective of the wider community. Thus, in the course of this exercise, the research conducted five interviews with two women and three men amongst the locals. Thus the overall sample amounted to 45 people.

### **5.6.3 Sampling Techniques**

It is underscored that sampling involves selecting a small group of representatives of a relatively larger population without involving everyone (Adler and Clark 2011: 100). Formally, however, there is a difference between sampling methods applied in qualitative and those applied in quantitative research. For one, Polkinghorne 2005 (cited in Dornyei 2007:126) notes that in quantitative research, a sizeable sample is required to facilitate the demarcation of idiosyncratic individual differences. He adds that, because qualitative studies focus on describing, understanding and clarifying idiosyncratic human experience, its sampling methods aim to unveil participants likely to hold vital information pertaining the issue being investigated for the sake of maximising what we can learn. He adds that it is through ‘purposeful sampling’ that this goal is achieved (Dornyei 2009:127).

#### 5.6.3.1 Purposive sampling

Despite the abundance of sampling techniques, each research design proposes its own methods for approaching potential participants to the research. One of them, known as purposeful sampling, is commonly applied in qualitative research and is usually guided by specific competencies or characteristics of participants (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). Thus, this qualitative research used purposive selection of participants from the young Hutu and Tutsi belonging to different political parties and those who saw themselves as non-affiliated to political groups. The criteria were that the participants had to currently live in Gihosha and must have been living in the area for at least three years. The purposive sampling method entails that the researcher purposely identifies the participants using the above pre-established characteristics. Additionally, the researcher looked for the best cases based on the premise of competencies assuming that selected respondents would be able to deliver relevant data (Oliver 2010; Patton 2015, cited in Leavy 2017: 235). Essentially, purposive sampling equally applied to the research site which was Gihosha. As such, the researcher assumed that participants from Gihosha would have sufficient knowledge of ethnic violence as observed through history.

#### 5.6.3.2 Sample recruitment

The lack of an exhaustive sampling frame for participants' recruitment has occasioned heated debates amongst scholars. For some, like Krueger and Casey (2000, cited in Nyumba et al. 2017:22), although expensive, difficult and often contentious, recruitment of suitable participants should be determined by the impact of the discussion. This option for addressing such contention is again supported by Leavy (2017: 79–80) who submits that seeking out the best cases for a study leads to the best data. Leavy stipulates that 'information-rich cases' in relation to the topic are key to the purposeful sampling strategies.

Therefore, to recruit youth who were involved in this research, the researcher visited selected recruitment sites in Gihosha made up of three churches, namely God's Grace Church, Evangelical Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church to initiate face-to-face contacts with church leaders and inform them of my research intent and request their collaboration in arranging meetings with the youth. The researcher left invitations intended for youth willing to participate in the research to stay for initial contact after Sunday service at different dates on three consecutive Sundays. Each youth group at each recruitment site was briefed on the type of the investigation, the aim, objectives, ethical issues, the eligibility criteria for participation

and the voluntary nature of their participation. The researcher explained the characteristics of the population involved in the inquiry, their roles, the responsibilities and the expectations of each participant. The researcher collected the names and contact details of those willing to participate and then selected the required 20.

#### 5.6.3.3 Inclusion and exclusion standards

Connelly (2020: 125) stresses the necessity for qualitative researchers to determine explicitly their inclusion and exclusion standards. Thus, in this research, youths who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria related to demographics and geographical location such as age limit, gender, having no children, being unmarried, not having a family, not being a militia or a policeman, having been a resident of Gihosha for at least three years at the time of recruitment there were recruited. Overall, 10 Hutu and 10 Tutsi youths aged 20–25 equally split between genders were selected using purposive sampling method. Given the topic in this study, the objectives and questions, the pre-intervention baseline data on youth's attitudes vis-à-vis social cohesion set the foundation for the purposive sampling method used in this research.

### 5.7 DATA COLLECTION

This investigation set out to explore the nature, causes and consequences of negative contacts between Hutu and Tutsi youth in Burundi. It sought to collaborate with peri-urban young Hutu and Tutsi to devise options for peaceful and constructive living together after decades of deadly ethnic stereotypes and socioeconomic exclusion. There are various data collection methods and strategies applicable to qualitative investigation. Lapan et al. (2012: 70) highlight that the concept 'methods' refers to data collection techniques and are determined by the theoretical framework pertaining to a study. Thus, the main data for this research was collected through direct observation, interviews, FGDs and dialogue using two languages namely Kirundi and English. Data was collected from July 2022 through March 2024. Bi-monthly interviews of about 60 minutes each were conducted based on the questions provided in the appendices. Interviews and FGDs were conducted in Gihosha at the high-school teacher-training school in Kigobe Campus which was safe and provided for confidentiality.

For the sake of informed, cross-checked and comprehensive investigation, empirical data for this research was gathered using documentary sources. Empirical data was drawn from available materials including archives on precolonial, colonial and post-colonial Burundi while

secondary sources include grey literature, research articles, surveys, reports, working papers and newspaper articles.

### **5.7.1 Pre-Intervention Data**

During this phase, the researcher conducted interviews and FGDs to get ample understanding of the atmosphere amongst Hutu and Tutsi living in Gihosha in general, and amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in particular. Using semi-structure interview guides (see Appendix 13 for more clarity), this stage helped me grasp what meanings Hutu and Tutsi give to their routine experiences of ethnicity and helped me to get overall picture of relationships that exist in the locality. At the same, the researcher tested the research instruments. This pre-intervention baseline data on peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi attitudes were replicated at the end.

In addition to the above data collection tool, the researcher used the Search Conference<sup>4</sup> AR tool to take into eyewitness accounts from Hutu and Tutsi youth participants. Developed at the Tavistock in 1959 by Eric Trist and Fred Emery, the search conference is one of the most relevant tools used in conducting AR. Developed to suit a far wider range of scenarios and issues, its developers applied it to promote different social, political and development causes. O'Brien (2001) highlights most of the distinctive fields and circumstances in which the search conference has been prolific. He notes that decision-makers, practitioners, policymakers and businesses embraced it to fit their aim of change or to re-organise their affairs. For instance, the search conference was instrumental in shaping participatory democracy in the Americas, to promote health in Ontario or to alter business organisational structure such as Xerox and aircraft.

A detailed working process of the search conference is customarily juxtaposed on a set of procedures (O'Brien 2001:9)

While O'Brien's account makes it plain, this AR embraced the Search Conference tool to attain its objectives. The search conference led to the adoption of peacebuilding circles and was

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<sup>4</sup> In search conference, searching is carried out in groups which are composed of the relevant stakeholders. The group meets under social islands conditions for 2–3 days, sometimes as long as five. The opening sessions are concerned with elucidating the factors operating in the wider contextual environment – those producing the meta-problems and likely to affect the future. The content is contributed entirely by the members. The staff are facilitators only. Items are listed in the first instance without criticism in the plenary session and displayed on flip charts which surround the room. The material is discussed in greater depth in small groups and the composite picture checked out in plenary. The group next examines its own organisational setting or settings against this wider background and then proceeds to construct a picture of a desirable future. It is surprising how much agreement there often is. Only when all this has been done is consideration given to action step.

premised on the hypotheses posed in the research which guide the evaluation process. They are: (a) the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha can achieve peaceful coexistence and restore mutual trust if efforts to bring them together are made; (b) implementing conflict transformation interventions that involve robust participatory and the buy-in by all youth categories is the best option for improving the relationships and restoring trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in general and in Gihosha in particular; (c) prioritising intergenerational dialogue is the best option for empowering both the Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults to address the ethnic dividers embedded in their local communities; and (d) if the Hutu and Tutsi youths were empowered and brought together into collaborative peacebuilding circles, they would be instruments of change and active co-creators of the desired future.

During the pre-intervention phase, the researcher issued and distributed invitations and introduced the research topic, objectives and aim. Once youth participants agreed to participate in the research, the researcher formed small FGDs in which the issues at stake were previewed from the past and present in line with possible futures. In the later development of the AR, the researcher facilitated small group discussions on long-term visions to bring to light alternatives to ethnic violence among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth.

### **5.7.2 Observation**

At regular intervals, the researcher visited and spent extended time in Gihosha area, observing directly different cultural meanings to which young Tutsi and Hutu attach great importance, their beliefs, daily events and related behaviour. Details of my observations were noted, reflected on and later described. As Creswell and Creswell (2018:189) highlight, the researcher changed roles throughout my observation stage, and the researcher played the role of both participant and observer. On some occasions, the researcher engaged in non-participatory observation when collecting general information about demography and individuals' behaviour. This served the purpose of capturing variations of behaviour amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths.

### **5.7.3 In-Depth Interviews**

There are many types of interviews and all of them require ample planning and preparations. Used as versatile data collection strategies across many disciplines, interviews serve the purpose of obtaining descriptions that facilitate interpretation of meanings of a phenomenon

(Kvale 1996, cited in Dornyei 2007:134). The main factor making in-depth interviews successful lies in that both the interviewer and interviewees participate in co-creating meanings through the reconstruction of perceptions, events and experiences (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006: 316). This is because the core nature of an interview is that it is meant to be a private and friendly encounter that uses uncluttered clues that stirs interesting narratives and stories (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006:317). Therefore, it is common for interviewees to share rich descriptions of social issues and narratives that matter more for him while leaving room for the researcher to interpret and analyse them both conceptually and theoretically. For example, face-to-face interviews are a personal, open-ended questioning technique used in qualitative research that allows for the exploration of individual perceptions of issues (Meurer et al. 2007:1067).

Thus, interviews in this research allowed a systematic examination the ethnicity issues and a clear understanding of the Hutu and Tutsi's behaviour and attitudes. In the same vein, as recommended by Polkinghorne (1989, cited in Creswell et al. 2007:254), the number of participants can be from 5 to 25 individuals to safeguard the promises of experiences. These interviews lasted around 45 to 60 minutes and aimed to obtain answers from interviewees on the nature, causes and consequences of ethnicity among the Hutu and Tutsi youth, based on questions itemised through interview guides provided in Appendix 12.

#### **5.7.4 Focus Group Discussion**

With the rise of participatory research and for addressing the gap between scientific exploration and local inquiry, FGDs have emerged as 'cost-effective' and 'promising alternative' that offer a platform for diverse worldviews (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Morgan 1996, cited in Nyumba et al. 2017: 21). Wilkinson (2004:117) holds that focused group research involves informal discussions of a particular issue or topic between people in a relatively small group. A FGD is a qualitative approach to research which leads to in-depth appreciation of a collective issue while the researcher facilitates or moderates the process (Nyumba et al. 2018:20). Dornyei (2011:144) argues that a typical FGD is dependent on communal thinking, inspiration, challenging and reacting to emerging points and issues about a phenomenon.

In this regard, FGDs were vital to this research and their aim was to nurture collegial cooperation and participation between young Hutu and Tutsi participants. As pointed out earlier, FGDs are key to gaining in-depth insights related to a phenomenon from a purposefully

selected group of individuals (Nyumba et al. 2017:20). Ultimately, Hutu and Tutsi youth shared their opinions regarding issues that have divided them along ethnic lines based on their 'experiential knowledge' (Berkes 2004, cited in Nyumba et al. 2017:21). Each FGD lasted for approximately 90 minutes. FGD questions (Appendix 11) related to the nature, causes and extent of ethnic violence and cultural stereotypes were explored. Four FGDs of five participants each with the researcher as moderator were organised to understand youths' perceptions of violence and its implications for peaceful coexistence in the peri-urban locality of Gihosha.

### **5.7.5 Dialogue**

In order to explore and grasp deep human experiences of Hutu and Tutsi, a dialogue was organised with members of the Burundi Committee for Unity and Reconciliation which was instituted after the referendum that inaugurated the Charter for National Unity on February 1991. A key aspect of the CNU in Burundi is the pursuit of genuine unity, in contrast to the false cohesion imposed by authoritarian and military regimes that ruled during the years leading up to the introduction of multiparty politics at the end of the Cold War.

## **5.8 DATA RECORDING METHODS**

Conforming to the nature of data that this research involves as well as the data collection instruments used, namely observation, in-depth interviews, FGDs and dialogue, data recording involved some paper-based recordings along with digital tools. Accordingly, data collected during interviews, observations and FGDs was recorded using appropriate procedures in compliance with observational and interview protocols. These include audio recordings and transcriptions, handwritten notes, reconstruction of dialogues and transcription of interviews. (Creswell and Creswell 2018). The essence of transcription lies in accurately transcribing recordings, whether audio or video, into a comprehensive and exhaustive textual format (Lapan et al. 2012: 125). The researcher used electronic devices, namely, a computer and external drivers to back up and store my data for analysis. For security purposes, all files stored in a computer are password-protected and will be stored for five years and then damaged.

## **5.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

'Data analysis is an ongoing process during research' (Creswell 2014:261). Perceived as one of 'the most exciting research tasks' (Davies 2014:217), qualitative data analysis requires exceptional thinking adequacy, skills, imagination and discipline. Davies (2014:217) points to three factors that must be taken into account in qualitative data analysis. The first one is the

various overlapping cycles involved in the planning and processes of data collection in the 'rubbish in, rubbish out' fashion. The other two, as he points, include the time factor which underscores the third factor he calls speciality qualitative research factor. Often, all three factors overlap when it comes to the interpretation of findings and are crucial in determining the quality of any research. Thus, as Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1989, cited in Creswell 2014:258) contend, research is more efficient and productive when the data analysis phase is concurrently done during data collection stage.

Thus, the time factor implicated in qualitative data analysis requires clockwise or 'in the round' exploration of the emotional state of respondents, their interactions with their social environment and their visions of the present and past and considers other people's perceptions of the research subject matter. It is that thoughtful and time-consuming examination of evidence that translates into the speciality factor of any qualitative research. Trying to explain and classify peoples, things, events, properties and experiences is a demanding process and requires long-term repetition and non-linear hard work. As Lapan et al. (2012:126) comment, making meaning and sense of culturally and personally shaped views of people is an art that requires a researcher to be analytical and focused.

In order to exhibit the nature, causes and consequences embodied in inter-ethnic clashes between Hutu and Tutsi, data analysis for this research followed sequential steps through interpretative methods both deductively and inductively. In general, during data preparation, the researcher began by reading and re-reading though the data, then coding it and organise it according to themes which was followed by analysis. While various qualitative researchers envisage coding and thematic analysis differently, Rossman and Rallis (2003, cited in Saldana 2013:14) explain that a category or code is a 'word' that clearly designates a fragment of data while a theme refer to more 'subtle and 'tacit' practises. It is through a careful assessment and reading of data that an exploration of an issue such as participant's practises, sentiments, values and experiences lead into discovering themes including patterns, trends or concepts.

Since this research investigates a social phenomenon involving an intersection of Hutu and Tutsi youths' behaviour in the Gihosha area, most coding activities for this research concerned cultural practices, encounters, social roles, groups and cliques, subcultures and lifestyles as Lofland, Snow and Anderson (2006, cited in Saldana 2013:15) highlight. In addition, data from interviews and FGDs was analysed using NVIVO. The researcher was in a position to use the NVIVO program thanks to the training on the use of the software that DUT offers its students.

Thematic data analysis was highlighted whereby transcribed/recorded information and other types of data were coded into categories. With regard to the NVIVO data analysis software, the researcher tested its compatibility with his computer and found that he needed another device to download the software.

Also, as the essence of qualitative research tradition usually focuses on the distinctive meanings that participants make of their own experiences in context-sensitive scenarios, the data analysis phase strives to objectively gauge subtle meanings. Basically, this process of interpretation required the investigator interpret data as it emerged from historical, cultural and relational points of view (Lapan et al. 2012:125). In other words, the researcher engaged with meaning-making of the successive episodes of Hutu and Tutsi youth lives in Gihosha. Although the researcher carried out repeated observations of issues and youth behaviour and attitudes at the research site of Gihosha, his data analysis process required informants to check interpretation of data. This is because the flexibility in qualitative research bears risks as it 'is many things to many people' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:10). Dornyei (2011: 245) recommends that the starting phase in the process of analysing qualitative data is transcribing the data, then pre-coding and coding.

Braun and Clarke (2014:79) state that thematic analysis is useful for classifying, examining and reporting data patterns. They add that a theme represents vital features of the data in relative to the research question and signifies certain meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke 2014:79). The researcher organised data into labelled categories and then generated themes which were analysed and shaped into descriptions by means of explicating interconnections between themes and issues that enabled the researcher to circumnavigate throughout the data till an intelligible interpretation arises (Smith and Firth 2011). Scholars point out that both content analysis and thematic analysis are vital to examining life narratives and stories which are then treated descriptively (Sparker 2005, cited in Vaismoradi et al. 2013:400).

Thus, throughout the data analysis process, the thematic analysis adopted the grounded theory approach, i.e., the researcher followed well-reasoned logic in relating to empirical material to make sure rigorous techniques for processing data grounded in the views of participants were used (Glasser and Strauss 1967, cited in Alvesson 2010:11; Creswell 2012:21). One reason for thematic analysis is that it involves searching common threads and provides rich, complex and detailed data (Vaismoradi et al. 2013:400). Data was then interpreted by means of summaries of key findings, comparing them to the literature, critical analysis and discussion and personal

interpretation (Vaismoradi et al. 2013:400). Given that this investigation is an AR, data from observation, mainly notes and interviews, was examined using simple coding and coding techniques (Tashakkori and Teddie 2010:647).

## **5.10 DATA REPORTING METHODS**

A very important and frequently used method for reporting findings in qualitative research is the use of narrative text (Creswell 2014:260). Typically, this research is seeking to qualitatively investigate a social phenomenon related to protracted ethnic violence in the natural setting of Gihosha. Thus, to communicate the findings of the study, the researcher reconstructed, described and interpreted various feelings, experiences, issues, stories and events which were evidenced and complemented by his own observations, ‘field notes, interviews and artefacts’. Although scholars have divulged a number of shortcomings of transcribing audio-recorded interviews in textual data, such as omissions, mistaking words or phrases, difficulties related to capturing spoken words (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006:318), the researcher ensured accuracy of data by listening to recorded materials several times while reading the transcribed texts at the same time. This cultural ‘thick description’(Lapan et al. 2012: 201) enabled him to share insights related to the nature, root causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian and establish different meanings attached to them from the perspective of participants.

## **5.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

For any research, the conception of truth makes up ‘the nuts and bolts’ of validity and reliability which is often shows up through ‘knowledge-as-conversation’ rather than ‘knowledge-as observation’ (Chioncel et al. 2003:499). Thus, whatever type of research, the validity or quality of social knowledge refers to how genuinely and well-informed it is, based on the scientific methods and procedures involved in the methodology. Ultimately, validity intimates credibility that authenticates the text as lifelike, believable, possible, coherent and true: hence, its ‘validity’ (Lapan et al. 2012:207). In this respect, it is noteworthy that validation entails checking for the correctness and credibility of results from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants as well as the audience’s account’ (Creswell and Miller 2000, cited in Creswell 2018:199). This validity emerges when findings are well suited with dependable bottom-up sources as well as providing answers to research questions or objectives (Schirch 2013).

To ascertain the validity of this qualitative study and the robustness and reliability of ensuing findings and conclusions, the researcher used triangulation of both data sources and the methods involved in the study (Meurer et al. 2007:106). Not only was triangulation used to cross-check findings of the investigation but it was also used to relate the findings to other already published results which provided different perspectives and gave room for reflecting on complexities in the line of thought as propounded by Hendrick (2009:40). Moreover, to enhance validity, the investigation involved multiple respondents to cover all aspects of interest related to the topic through an engagement with Hutu and Tutsi youth over a long time. The aim was to gain and share new knowledge to better grasp the nature and underlying causes of negative contacts amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha area. Furthermore, to authenticate the reliability and accuracy of the research, transcripts and codes were cross-checked to ensure consistency of procedures and findings. In this vein, data was reliable and valid as it originated from trustworthy sources and answered questions raised throughout the research (Schirch 2013).

Essentially, the credibility of a study is embedded in its validity and reliability which often emerge from trustworthiness (Saldanã 2013:152). To ensure and build credibility or ‘acceptance’ apart from the afore-mentioned validity and reliability protocols, the researcher espoused the reflection and reflexivity processes to account for any inconsistencies between his own beliefs and the espoused values through non-judgemental lenses to avoid bias and actively effect expected changes (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2010). The researcher remained reflective to avoid any potentially problematic connections with participants and the research site that could have unduly influenced data interpretation. As a result, the researcher’s beliefs, interests and values did not affect the research, and self-awareness was prioritised (Danielewicz 2001).

## **5.12 ETHICAL STANDARDS OBSERVED**

It is the obligation for any investigator to uphold the rights, desires, ideals and requirements of the participants (Creswell 1994:257). Interestingly, most of the body of knowledge in the debate about ethics agrees that ethical guidelines in any academic social study denote the application of principles and standards for preventing harm or doing wrong to others, by promoting good, respectful and fair treatment (Morrow and Richards 1996:91-92). This study applies appropriate ethical methods to make sure it abides within codes of good practice principles and avoid any form of abuse. In deciding whether a study is ethical or not,

practitioners posit key principles of ethical research such as big-heartedness, independence, fairness, faithfulness and admiration for participants' rights and self-esteem (Bless et al. 2008; Morrow and Richards 1996).

As this investigation is premised on AR design and involved collecting data from young Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, the researcher anticipated and considered ethical issues that might surface. Essentially, ethical issues were considered in the research design principles, data collection methods and reporting of the research findings. Here it is useful to mention that ethical issues pertaining to this AR allude to what is right, fair and sustainable (Bless et al. 2014: 28). Winter 1996 (cited in O'Brien 2001:11) assumes that AR ensures that all participants have been consulted and that the ethics guiding the inquiry are considered by everyone. This AR abides by this requirement. In the same way, this AR allowed all participants to contribute to the investigation as co-researchers, remained open to suggestions from others and ensured that information was accessible to all as a collective product. As a way of empowering youth participants in producing knowledge and taking adequate action, this AR considered participation and collaboration of all participants to ensure accuracy and maximum benefit of findings.

The research proposal was submitted for an ethical review by the DUT IREC for final approval (Appendix 1). For the sake of research integrity (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 88), the researcher identified potential participants and requested permission to conduct research (Appendix 2) and the researcher received local approvals whereby the Mayor of Bujumbura Municipality permitted the study to be conducted in the proposed research site (Appendixes 3 and 4). In addition, the researcher requested endorsement from the Ministry of higher education and scientific Research in Burundi to conduct a doctoral research which was approved (Appendix 5). As the study required the participation of young Hutu and Tutsi, the researcher requested schools in Gihosha to allow some of their students to partake in the research (Appendixes 6 and 7). Furthermore, the researcher arranged a dialogue with the president of the TCR in Burundi to gain more insights on the topic under study (Appendix 8). Moreover, the researcher conducted a needs assessment and the researcher planned to hold informal discussions with participants to consider their needs as well. The researcher explained the research objectives and what kind of activities it involved so that the participants are clear about them (Appendix 9). The remaining phase was dedicated to receiving written consent from research participants (Appendix 10) as a token to proceed with the research. This

informed consent and voluntary participation gave participants an opportunity to cancel their participation at any time if they felt it necessary to do so.

In the same vein, since this AR was uniquely situated in social encounters between Hutu and Tutsi youth, all participants were well-versed of all the data gathering tools and all actions to be carried out and the research verbatim transcriptions and interpretations and findings would be availed for participants to ascertain accuracy at the end of the research. Put simply, all participants had access to information emanating from this collaborative research venture. The researcher revealed the voluntary nature of the study and he found a gatekeeper to assist prior to conducting the study. During interviews, FGDs and dialogues, the researcher avoided leading questions and clarified that data would be used solely for scientific inquiry and would be destroyed after five years. The researcher explained that in the interim, all data which the researcher collected was to be securely stored.

With regard to consent, before any collection takes place, each participant was given an informed consent form to complete (see appendices). Conceptually, consent as envisaged in this research was an ongoing process with options for participants to decline continuation on freewill (Morrow 2013:24). The researcher accepts full responsibility for maintaining confidentiality and anonymity while maximising opportunities to involve all participants. Unless participants wish to have their names disclosed in which case they are published as agreed, the researcher took into consideration the privacy dimension. Informants were kept abreast of the voluntary nature of their participation and that there were no restrictions from withdrawing from participating to the study anytime they felt uncomfortable with anything. They were advised that no remuneration was offered.

### **5.13 SECURING PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT**

The researcher asked the potential participants whether they would be happy to spend a full day in a workshop on the theme of 'Curbing inter-ethnic tensions and restoring trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha'. Most of the people contacted were happy that the project was going to take place in the Gihosha area and that it would be a good opportunity to contribute to their community. However, although they ensured their participation to the intergenerational dialogue workshop on the weekend of 24 February, the researcher told them that their acceptance would be validated when they signed the consent form which the researcher provided before the workshop began (Appendix 10). The researcher provided the

plan for the workshop and the chargé of social affairs helped in distributing them since they had a meeting on Thursday 22 February 2024 at the zone headquarters. The researcher informed the potential participants to the intergenerational dialogue workshop via the chargé of social affairs in Gihosha that they would not expect any monetary reward as Perdiem and that we would only provide refreshments. Yet, to my great surprise, on Saturday 24 February, all community members who volunteered to participate in the intergenerational dialogue workshop were present at the venue and none of them was late. Before the opening of the workshop, they all signed a consent form. Figure 14 shows the participants in the venue.



Figure 14: Community members signing on the consent form as they participate to the intergenerational dialogue workshop, Gihosha, 22 February 2024 by the researcher

## **5.14 LOGISTICS**

Given that the researcher did not want my research participants to spend their money on the research, the researcher volunteered to pay for the lunch, tea and transport for the participants. The researcher used a part of his stipend from DUT to pay for the required logistics. In this respect, the researcher contracted a catering service in Gihosha and they provided tea, one bottle of water in the morning, lunch and one bottle of water in the afternoon. Ultimately, the investigator made sure that there was no research-related harm or adverse reactions although he was not delving into personal experience of violence, so that councillors' support was not needed. The researcher abided by the research ethics and guidelines of DUT to uphold the legitimacy of this research findings and methods.

## **5.15 RESEARCH TIMELINE**

This venture started in January 2021 with the development of the PG2. The researcher projected to conclude it in September 2024 as Table 4 summarises.

Table 4: Research Timeline

<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>January - June 2021 -</b>	Development of the PG2 form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Basic Literature reading for PG2 draft</li> <li>❖ Drafting and Submission of PG2</li> <li>❖ Final PG2 submission</li> </ul>
<b>July 2021 -June 2022</b>	<b>Part Two: Review of related literature:</b> Chapter 2: Background to the study Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundations Chapter 4: New life, Healing and Reconciliation: A sequential analysis of successful conflict Transformation Efforts
<b>July 2022 – August 2022</b>	<b>Part Three. Research Methods</b> Chapter 5: Research Design and Methodology
<b>August 2022- October 2023 November 2023 – Jan. 2024</b>	<b>Part Four: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation</b> Chapter 6: Data Presentation Chapter 7: Analysis and Interpretation
<b>February 2024- May 2024</b>	<b>Part Five: Conclusions</b> Chapter 8: Summary, Conclusions and and contributions  <b>Part O: General Introduction</b> Chapter One: Research problem and context
<b>July 2024- September 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Thesis Proof-reading</li> <li>❖ Have Thesis vetted by supervisors</li> <li>❖ Submission of final year report and send off</li> </ul>

## 5.16 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design and methodology of this study were thoroughly outlined. The chapter began with an introduction that set the stage for the overall structure of the research approach. It then delves into the research design, with a particular focus on AR. The chapter explained the origins and evolution of AR, the principles guiding this approach, and the

rationale for its selection, especially in the context of peacebuilding research, emphasising the importance of action and participation.

The chapter continued by discussing the research methods, highlighting the core characteristics of qualitative research methods and addressing debates surrounding qualitative data. The research paradigm was then examined, followed by a description of the study setting and a detailed account of the sampling process. This included the target research population, the research sample, and the sampling techniques employed.

The data collection process was outlined in detail, covering pre-intervention data, observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and dialogue. Following this, the chapter explained the methods used for data recording, as well as the data analysis and interpretation techniques applied to ensure robust findings.

Attention was given to data reporting methods, and the chapter discussed how validity and reliability were maintained throughout the study. Ethical considerations were a key focus, with sections dedicated to the ethical standards observed and the process of securing participants' consent.

Finally, the chapter concluded with logistical details, including the research timeline, ensuring transparency on how the research was structured and executed.

The next chapter focusses on presenting relevant data of this research. It highlights key findings from the pre-full-scale research, then proceeds with data from interviews and focus group discussion, and concludes by data from search conference and intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention.

## **PART FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This section comprises three chapters namely Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. While the earlier chapter presented research methods which detailed the data collection methodologies used in this research, Chapter 6 aims to presenting key findings that emerged from the data. Chapter 7 focuses on data analysis and interpretation, while Chapter 8 discusses key findings

### **CHAPTER 6: DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

AR focuses mainly on solving real problems in real-time circumstances through collaborative efforts by all participants (O'Brien 1998). As such, the first step towards that objective is the identification of the problem to solve. To meet that requirement, the first stage in this research was dedicated to reviewing existing theoretical literature pertaining to the main problem underpinning this study in line with the research primary aim of reducing ethnic prejudice by exploring alternatives and options for young Burundian Tutsi and Hutu's constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience. In the second phase comprising research fieldwork, empirical data was gathered using in-depth interviews, FGDs, search conference reports and dialogues.

The pre-intervention phase ascertained the necessity for an in-depth study regarding the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths in Gihosha. Data pertaining to this study were imported into the NVIVO software and pertinent responses to the research questions and objectives were coded. Initial themes and subthemes were generated, reviewed and combined according to similarities. The following key findings that arose from the collected data are presented based on the research questions and objectives that guided the study.

#### **6.2 PARTICIPANTS**

Before delving into the data presentation, it should be noted that the researcher initially planned to work with 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha peri-urban area. Given the nature of the study which necessitated ample cognizance of the general atmosphere prevailing in Gihosha neighbourhood, the researcher moved across Gihosha whereby he conducted five interviews with local inhabitants. Thus, in the initial planning of fieldwork phases of this study, pre-

intervention interviews were conducted with Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. Towards the end of the research, as the researcher and the 20 youth co-researchers were planning the intergenerational dialogue intervention, which, according to its essence requires participation of all social groups, we agreed to include 20 additional representatives of local social groups as it was suggested that the problem of ethnicity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths emanates from within the community. In this exercise, 20 representatives of various social groups were involved in the intergenerational dialogue. This justifies the increase in number of the participants to the study, from the initial 20 participants to the number of 45 participants as Figure 15 presents:

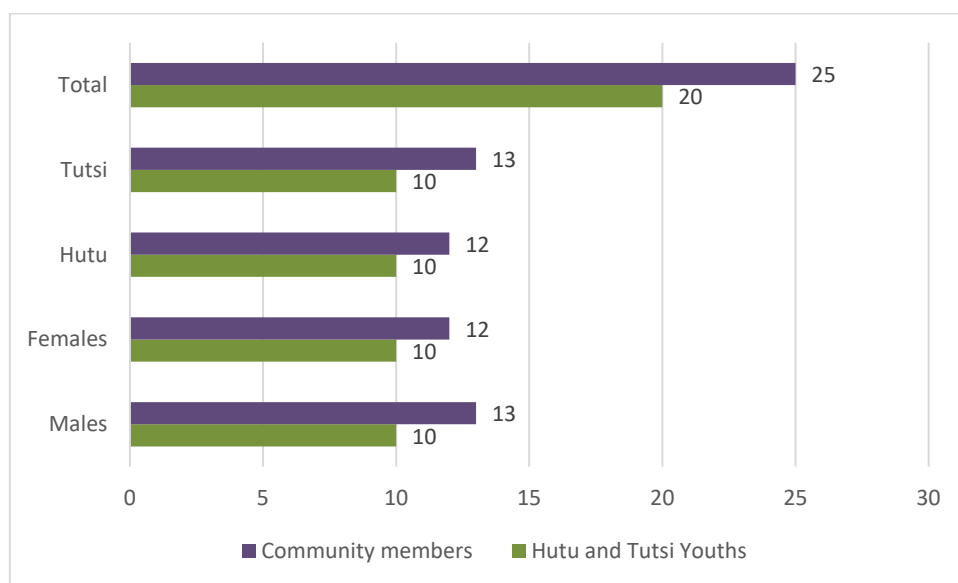


Figure 15: Sample involved in this research

To ascertain conceptual appreciation of the nature, the drives of violence involving youths in peri-urban area of Gihosha and the opportunities and options for improved interactions amongst the youth, data that emerged from interviews, search conference reports, FGDs and intergenerational dialogue were subjected to triangulation. After this, the data was collated and coded according to pertinent and recurrent themes, core categories of issues as well as subthemes to which they belong using the NVIVO software package. Findings are presented below.

### 6.3 PHASE 1: PRE-FULL-SCALE RESEARCH BASELINE FINDINGS

In this phase, to identify the problem and in proportion to the overall objective and the objectives of the study, a pre-intervention baseline was established on the general atmosphere

with emphasis on deciphering prevailing attitudes in Gihosha area. The field visit was scheduled on 10 January 2023 when the researcher visited Gihosha area. During this phase, the researcher met the local residents, chatted with them and held discussions with different people. In essence, the visit was intended to unveil peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths' attitudes prior to delving into the research per se. To facilitate the research tasks, the researcher used a banner which introduced the work that the researcher was conducting. Figure 16 below displays the banner that was hung in Gihosha and in premises where the research was conducted.

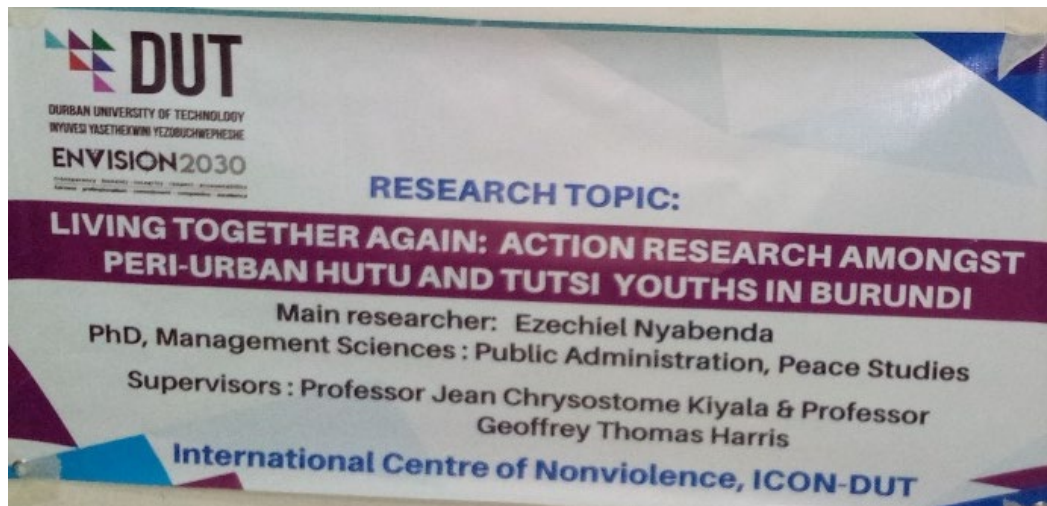


Figure 56: Research banner used during fieldwork

### 6.3.1 Participants in the Pre-Full-Scale Research Baseline Interviews

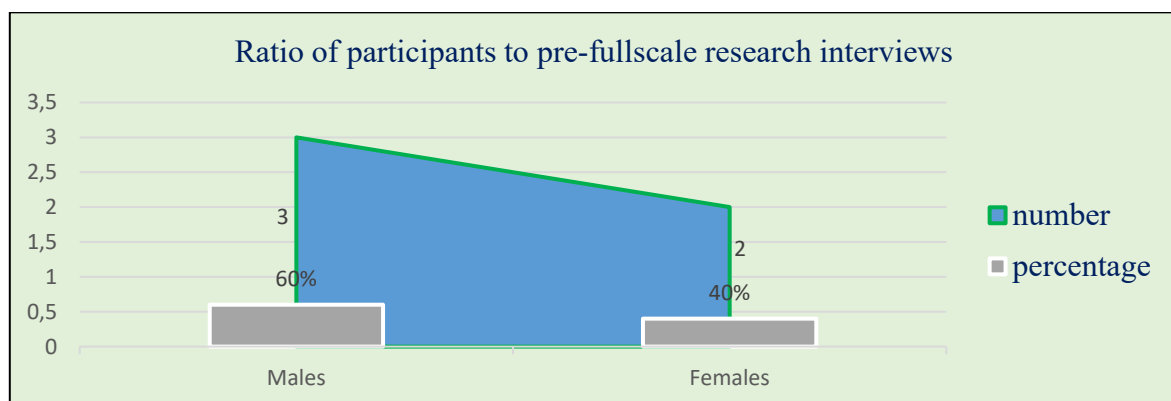


Figure 17: Participants in the pre-full-scale research baseline interviews

Figure 17 shows participants in the pre-full-scale baseline research interviews. They were randomly selected using purposive sampling when the researcher took time to move through different residential quarters of Gihosha. Purposive sampling was adopted on the basis that informants were geared to provide data that could provide clear understanding of the nature,

causes and consequences of inter-ethnic violence among the youth in Gihosha. Figure 18 indicates the area covered which included quarters of *Winterekwa*, such as *Muyaga*, *Mutanga Nord*, *Kigobe* and *Gikungu*. The researcher observed the general atmosphere and attitudes of the general population and took notes and ultimately approached potential and eligible participants.

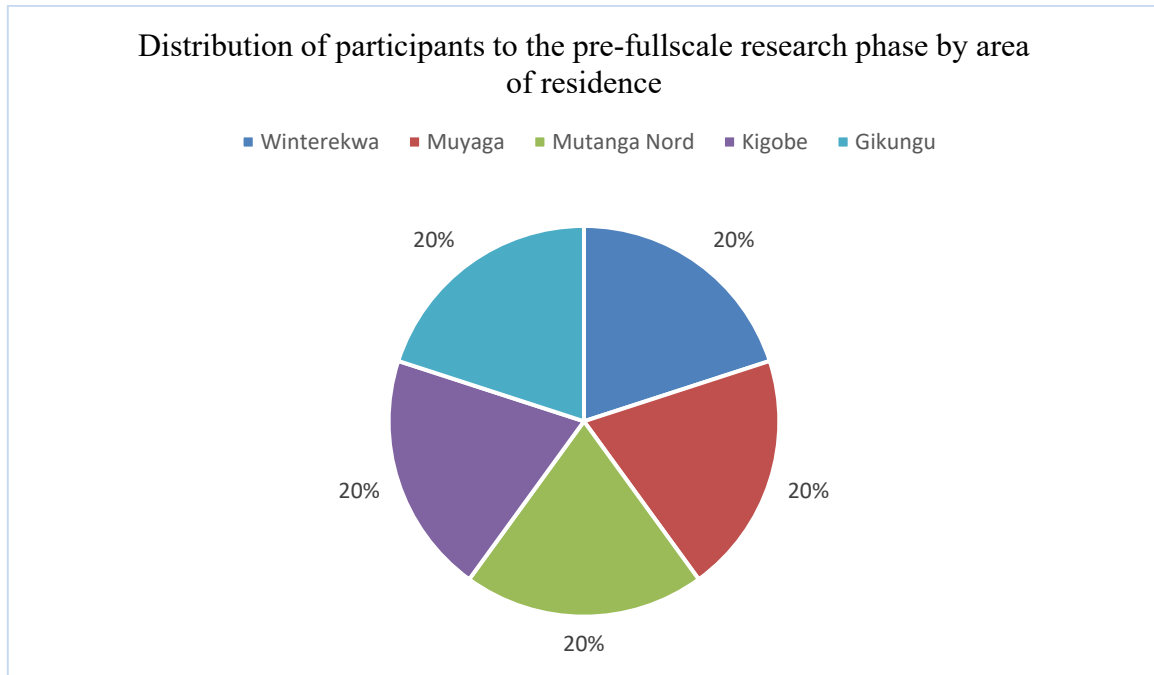


Figure 18: Distribution of participants to the pre-full-scale research baseline interviews by residence

Interviews conducted in this phase paved the way for conducting the study. The question prompts used during this phase aimed to generate data on the general atmosphere between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha neighbourhood. This baseline information proved to be of paramount importance as it pointed to nature of inter-ethnic relationships prevailing amongst the Hutus and Tutsis in general in Gihosha area. To that end, Figure 19 captures the prominent themes that emerged from the findings.



Figure 19: Core categories generated from the dataset for the pre-full-scale research baseline

### 6.3.2 General Atmosphere in Gihosha Neighbourhood

Question 1 sought to determine the attitudes and the general atmosphere between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha. Responses to this question revealed that there was no outward or open conflict reported in the area during the time the researcher was conducting the study but they reiterated the existence of ethnic hatred and that Hutus and Tutsis avoided one another. In the community, there were no violent interactions but there were incidents of inter-ethnic provocation and an absence of empathy and love. It was reported that parents' shared narratives and stories about ethnicity infusing negative sentiments amongst the youth and that inter-ethnic marriages were rare as Figure 20 captures:

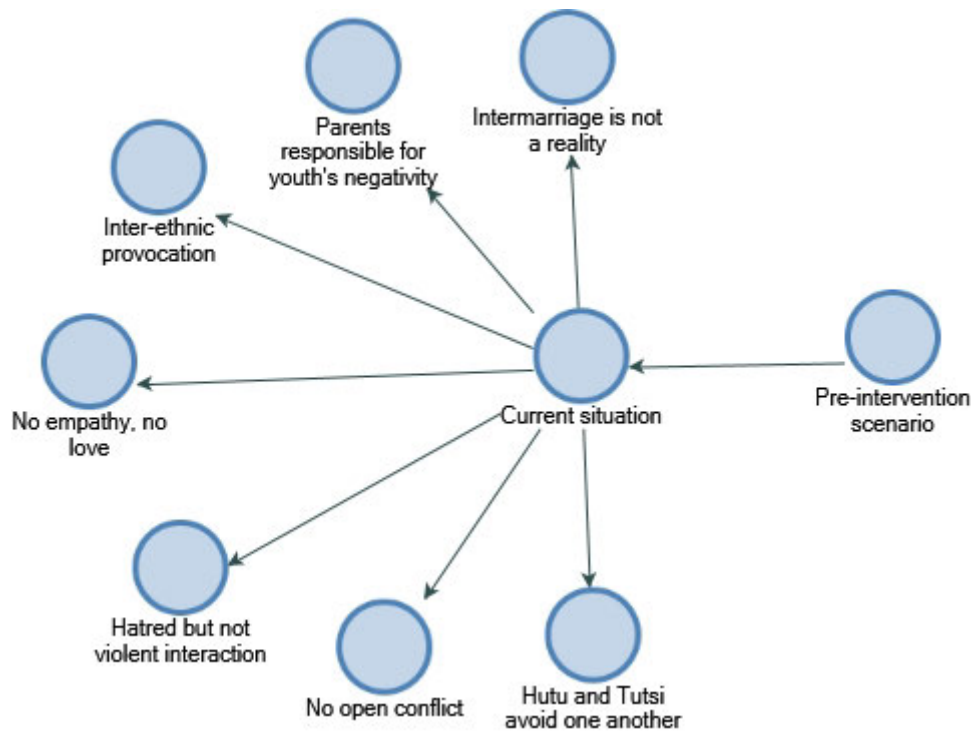


Figure 20: Current scenario in Gihosha area

#### 6.3.2.1 Fear and thoughts about ethnic violence in Gihosha

Question 2 was: ‘what do you fear most when you see violence involving Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha neighbourhood’, and Question 4 was ‘what do you think about ethnic suspicion inflicted on others in Gihosha neighbourhood’. These questions were asked to gain a deeper understanding of youth’s fear and thoughts about ethnic violence between the Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha. Responses to these questions revealed the prevalent thoughts and fears namely fear of losing their dear ones, fear of being killed or forced disappearances, fear of being arbitrarily arrested, fear of sustained political violence, injustice and inequality, poor and laissez-faire governance.

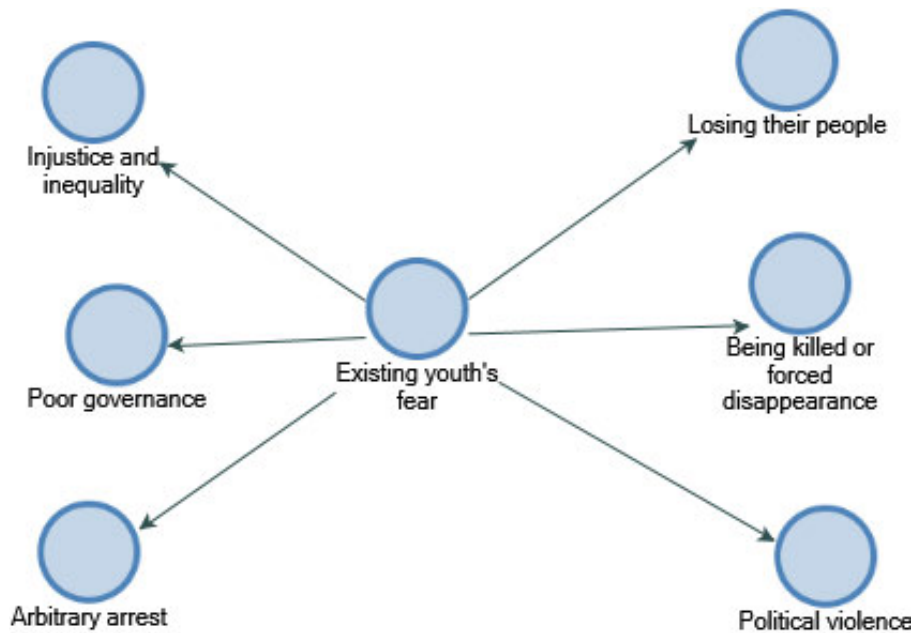


Figure 21: Nature of expressed fears in Gihosha area

As Figure 21 illustrates, the results are that youths in Gihosha fear injustice and inequality that prevails together with poor governance, political violence and arbitrary arrests. They were most fearful that they could be killed or forced to disappear or lose their loved ones.

#### 6.3.2.2 Youths' feelings about ethnic violence

Question 6 on the pre-intervention interview guide, which reads 'how do you feel when ethnic violence takes place in Gihosha?' sought to determine youths' feelings about ethnic suspicion inflicted on others in Gihosha neighbourhood. Overall, when violence flares up in Gihosha vicinity, most youth navigate through collective trauma, disappointment, sadness and sorrow for the victims from all ethnic groups – the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa – as responses to Question 8, 'who do you think are mostly victims of violent ethnic contacts between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?' showed.

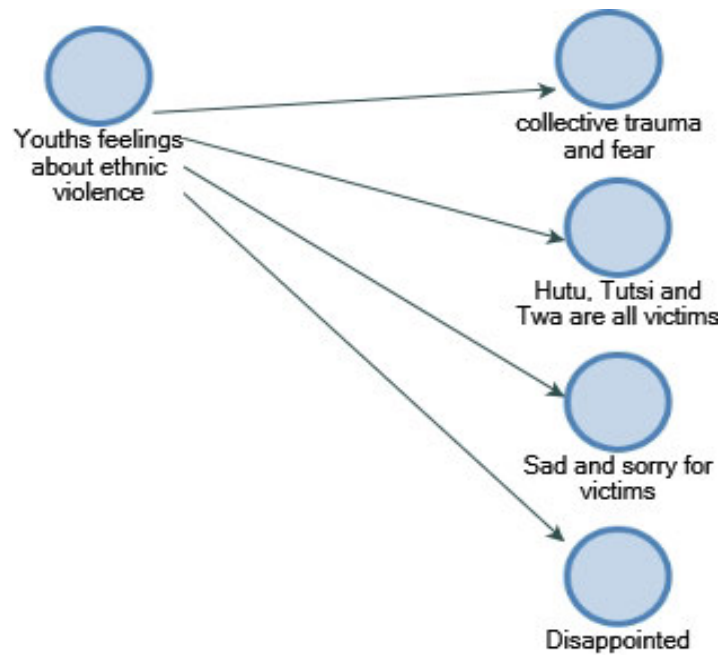


Figure 22: Youth’s feelings on ethnic violence

Notably, the Figure 22 above exhibits the feelings that youths have about ethnic violence in the peri-urban area of Gihosha. Regretfully, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa alike are experiencing collective trauma and chronic fear. This makes them sad and sorry for the victims and leads to acute disappointment.

### 6.3.2.3 Violence instigators in Gihosha neighbourhood

The answer to Question 3 which reads, ‘who do you think is likely to be violence instigator between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?’ showed that elected officials used the youth as a shield to reach their target.

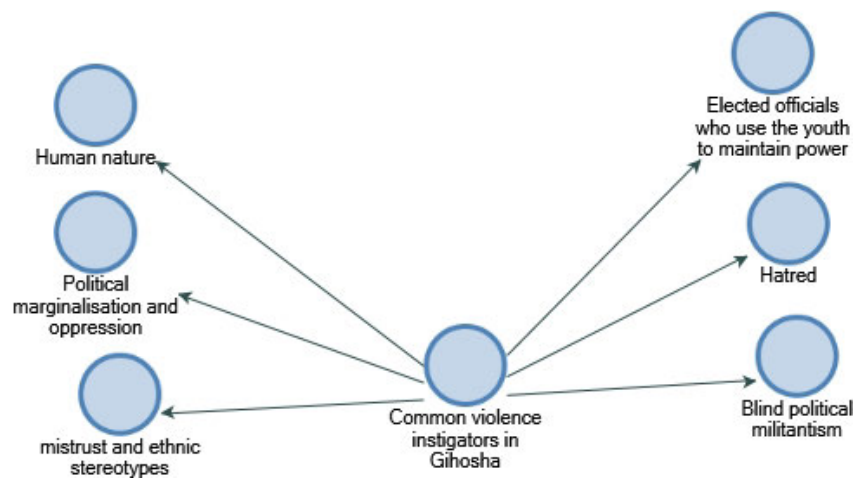


Figure 23: Instigators of violence in Gihosha area

Figure 23 reveals some of the factors in instigating violence, notably political marginalisation, mistrust and ethnic stereotypes, blind political militantism, hatred and the use of the youths to maintain political power.

#### 6.3.2.4 Ways for handling ethnic violence amongst peri-urban youths in Gihosha

Question 5 reading ‘what do young people in Gihosha usually do when violence between Hutu and Tutsi erupts?’ and Question 7, which reads ‘what do youth do to protect themselves from ethnic violence in Gihosha?’ were asked to bring to light common attitudes and typical behaviour of young people in the event of ethnic violence in Gihosha neighbourhood. Different responses were noted.

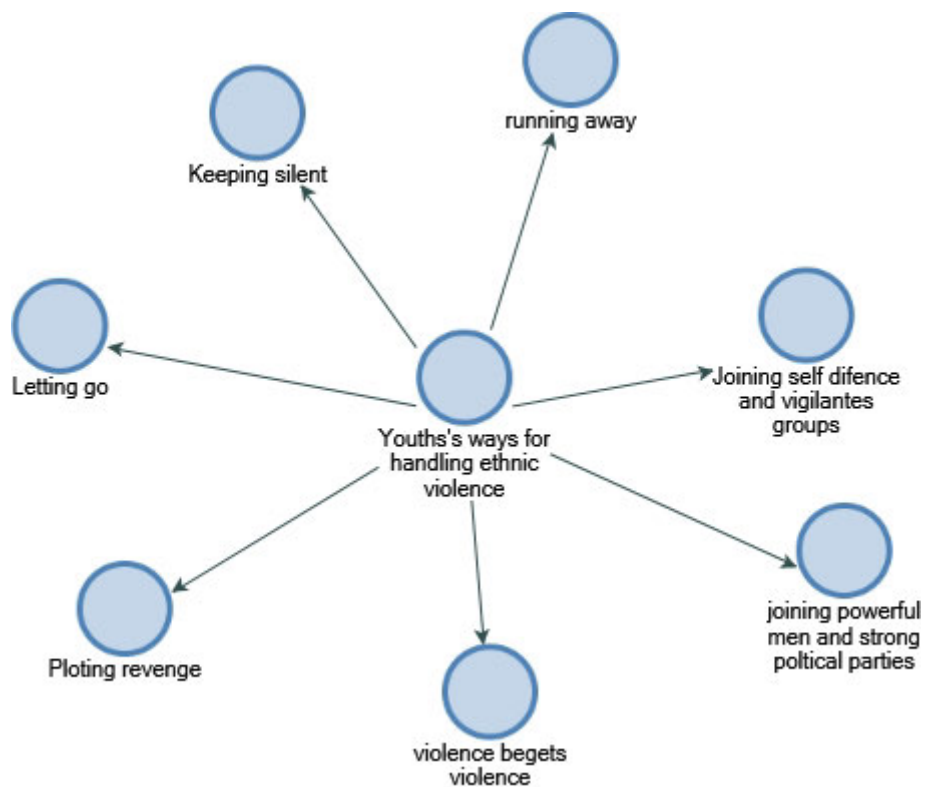


Figure 24: Youth’s ways for dealing with ethnic violence

When ethnic violence erupted, the youths did not remain inactive. Figure 24 portrays different scenarios and ways that the youths use to handle differences. Some people let go, others kept silent, plotted revenge, fought back as violence begets violence, ran away, joined powerful men and strong political parties, and some joined self-defence and vigilante groups.

### 6.3.2.5 Effects of ethnic suspicion

The researcher noted some responses and findings directly related to the effects of ethnic violence in Gihosha. Data suggests that negative feelings, intolerance, psychological wounds, self-defensiveness, arrests, killings, forced migration and non-participation to political life were some effects of ethnic suspicion in Gihosha.

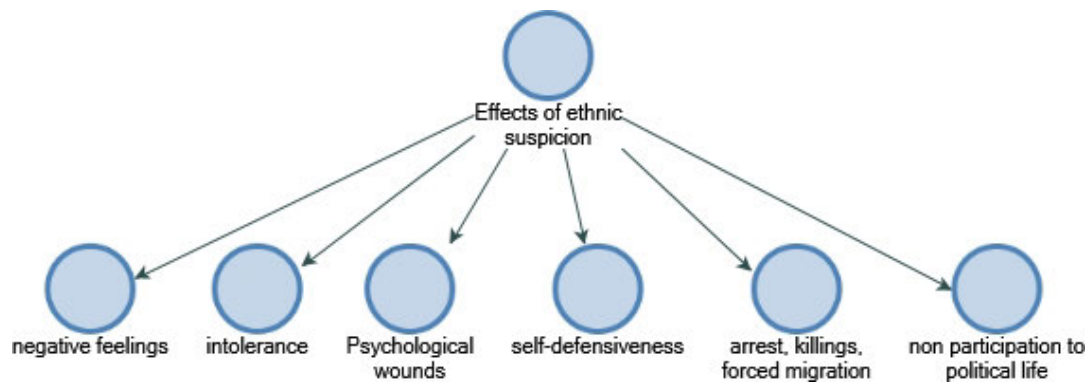


Figure 25: Effects of ethnic suspicion in Gihosha

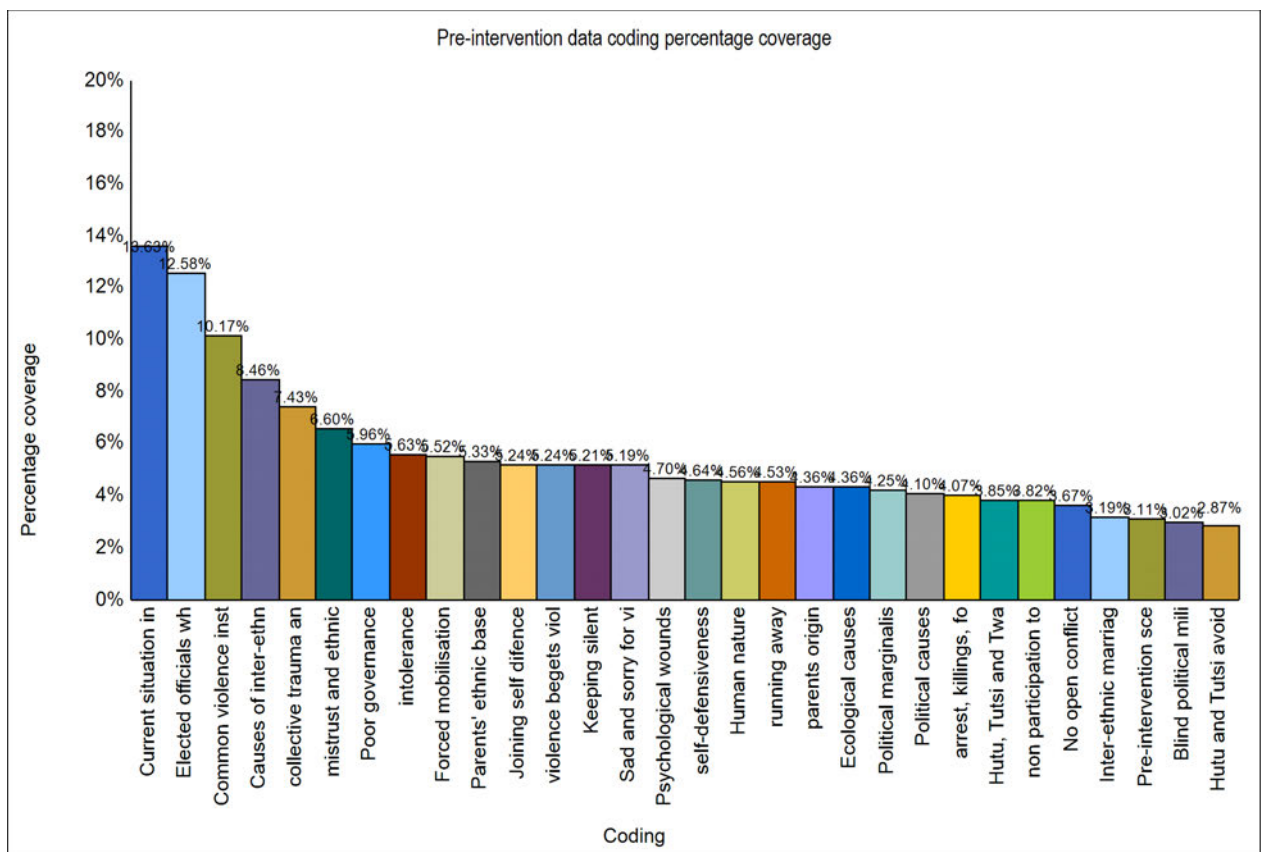


Figure 26: A visual of the percentage coverage of coded pre-full-scale baseline data as generated by the NVIVO software

Figure 26 displays the degree of coded data that amounted to the finding discussed in this section. Overall, the researcher highest percentage of coded data from the pre-full-scale interviews was around 14% while the lowest amounted to about 3%.

## 6.4 PHASE II: DATA FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### 6.4.1 Key demographics of participants to the interviews and the FGDs

Figure 27 captures the main demographic features of participants in the FGDs and in-depth interviews. It includes whether the participants were employed, unemployed, victims, students, members of political parties or whether they had witnessed instances of violence.

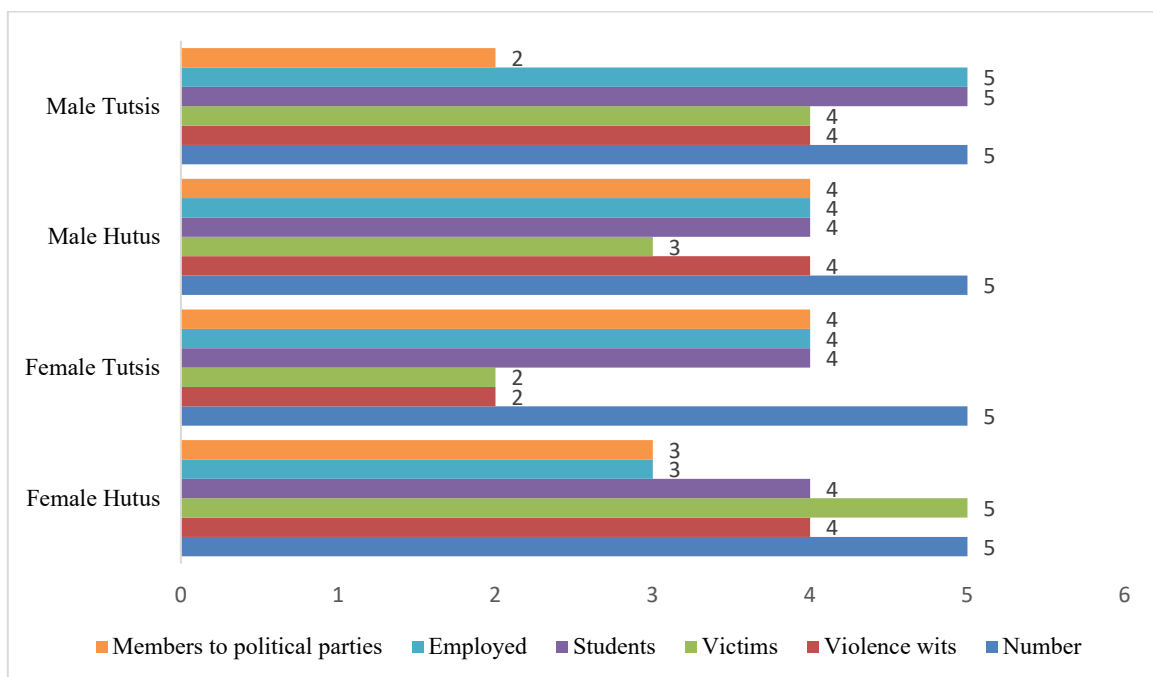


Figure 27: Key demographic features of Participants

As Figure 27 and Figure 28 exhibit, the distribution of key demographic features revealed that amongst the 20 Hutu and Tutsi youth participants, 16 had witnessed ethnic violence being inflicted on others while 14 were, at some point, direct victims of inter-ethnic violence. Of the participants, 17 were students, and only 5 youths were employed while 15 were not employed, while 13 youth participants were members of political parties. All the participants resided in Gihosha municipality and had been living in the area for at least 2–3 years.

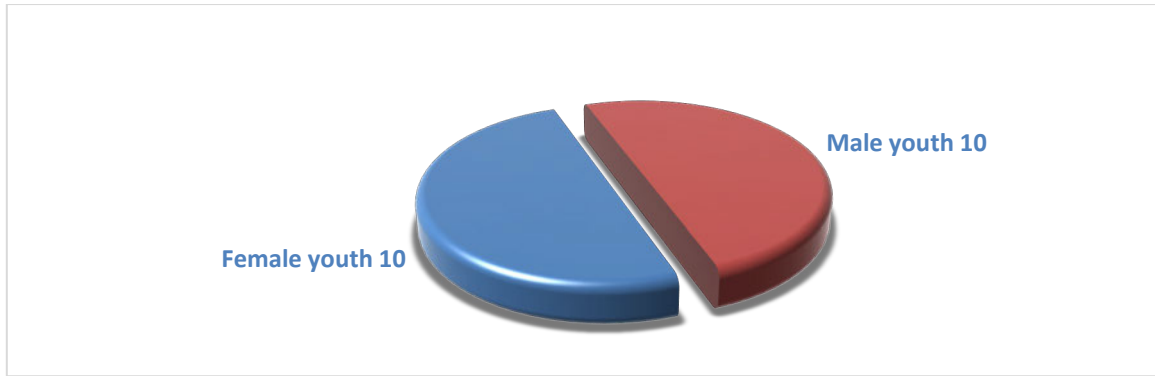


Figure 28: Research participants to interviews split according to gender



Figure 29: 14 Initial contacts with research participants, photo taken in Kigobe by the researcher on 07 February 2023

This research venture purposed to work with 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths. It was rewarding to approach them, build positive relationships with them, communicated unreservedly with them and let them choose whether they wanted to join or not. Figure 29 presents one scenario towards that aim where the researcher and potential participants posed for a group photo on 7 February 2024 in Kigobe.

#### 6.4.2 Age Categories of Participants in the Interviews and the FGDs

Regarding the age categories of participants, Figure 30 shows the age range of respondents which varied between 20 and 25. Two female Hutu respondents were between 20 and 22, whereas three Hutu females were aged between 23 and 25; 4 female Tutsis were aged between 20 and 22 while one Tutsi female was 24; 3 Hutu males were aged between 20 and 22 while 2 were aged 23 and 25 respectively. Two Tutsi males were 20 and 3 Tutsi males were aged between 23 and 25. Overall, 9 respondents were aged between 23 and 25 while 11 were aged between 20 and 22.

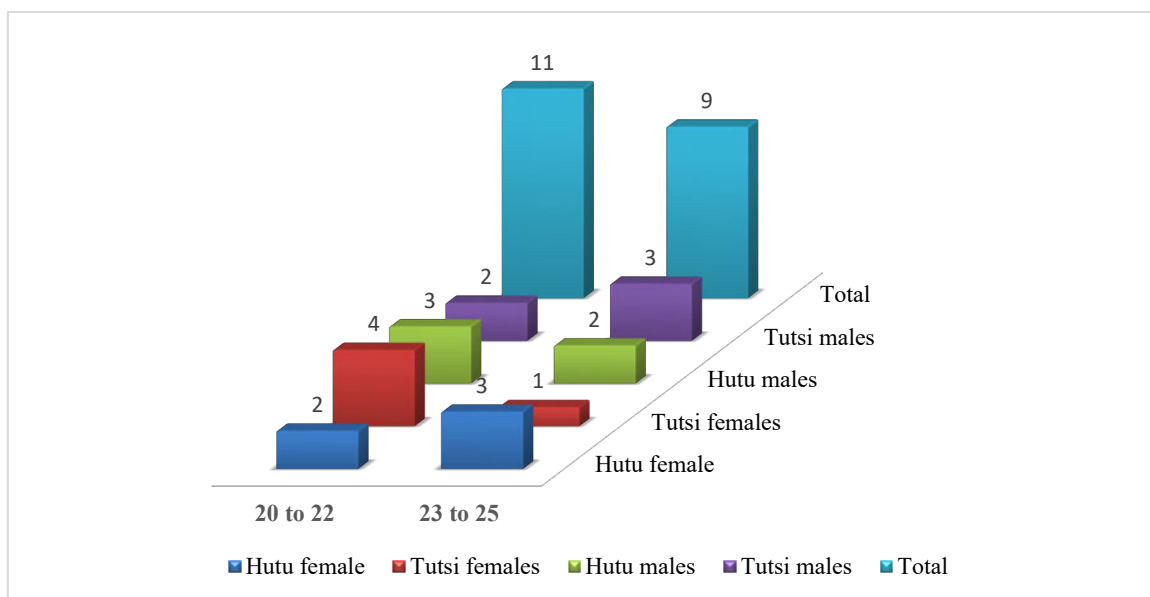


Figure 30: Age category of respondents

### 6.5 THE NATURE, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS AMONGST PERI-URBAN BURUNDIAN YOUTHS

The specific objective number one that guided this study was meant to explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths. Findings were dissected into three subcategories namely the nature, the causes and

consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths respectively, to better grasp the interconnection between the forms or types of inter-ethnic violence and their causes and consequences in Gihosha. Below is Figure 31 which captures some youth participants to interviews with the main researcher.



Figure 31: Some research participants attending scheduled interviews, by the main researcher, Bujumbura, Kigobe, 17 November 2023

### 6.5.1 The Nature of Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths

As core aspect of the specific objective of the research on which the second and third specific objectives are grounded, exploring the nature of violence amongst peri-urban youth was a fluctuating process. A considerable number of questions were asked both during the interviews and FGDs. Some of them were the following: Question 1 on the interview guide: “what are



Findings from coded data revealed three main groups of types of violence, each of which having subcategories namely emotional violence, physical violence and structural violence.

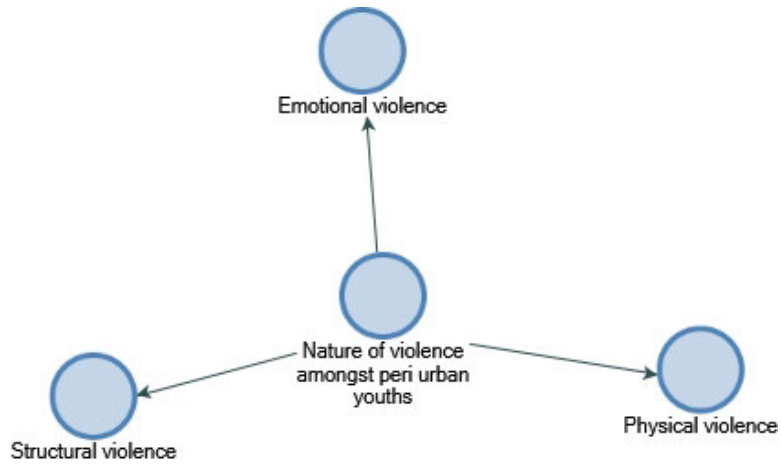


Figure 33: Three main groups of types of tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

As Figure 33 displays, there are three main types of prevailing violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths. Each of the main group of nature of violence presented other significant subthemes pertaining to the nature of violence as per Figure 34, Figure 35 and Figure 36.

#### 6.5.1.1 Structural violence

As per the findings in this study, the nature of violence in Gihosha that falls into the structural violence specification includes injustice in schools, injustice inflicted on the opposition, political bias in schools, long-held stereotypes and political intolerance.

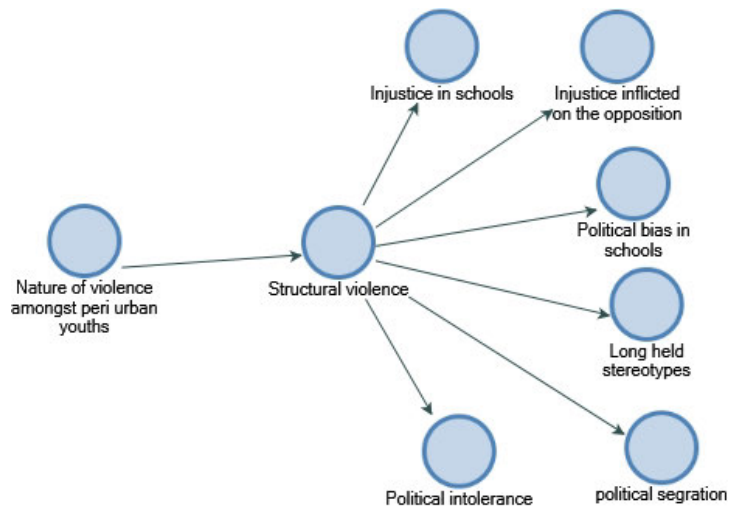


Figure 34: Structural violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

### 6.5.1.2 Physical violence

The findings on the nature of violence pertaining to physical violence show that ill-treatment and beatings, physical harm and torture were commonplace amongst the youth in Gihosha.

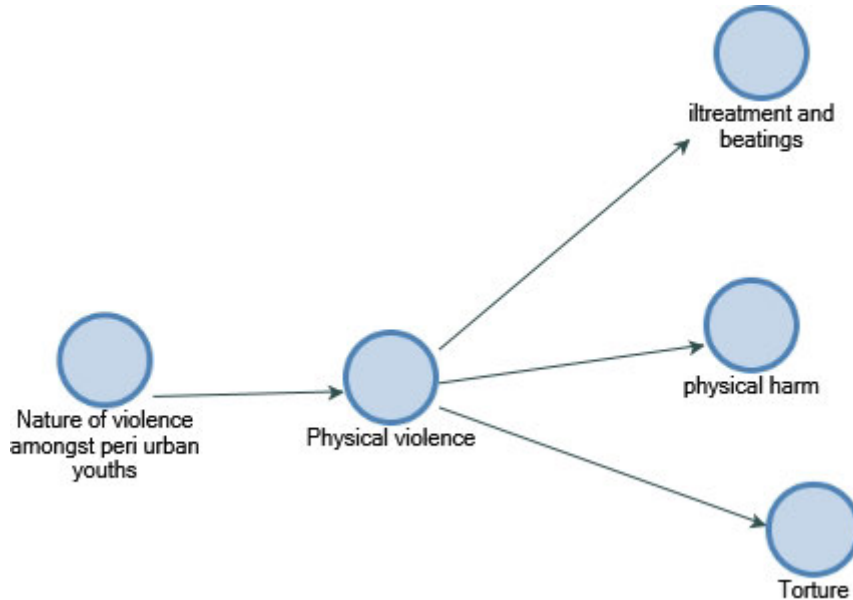


Figure 35: Physical violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

### 6.5.1.3 Emotional violence

Emotional violence was a common aspect of the violence involving the youth. Notably, ethnic stigma, exclusion and parents' ethnic-based narratives were evident and adversely affected social cohesion in Gihosha neighbourhood.

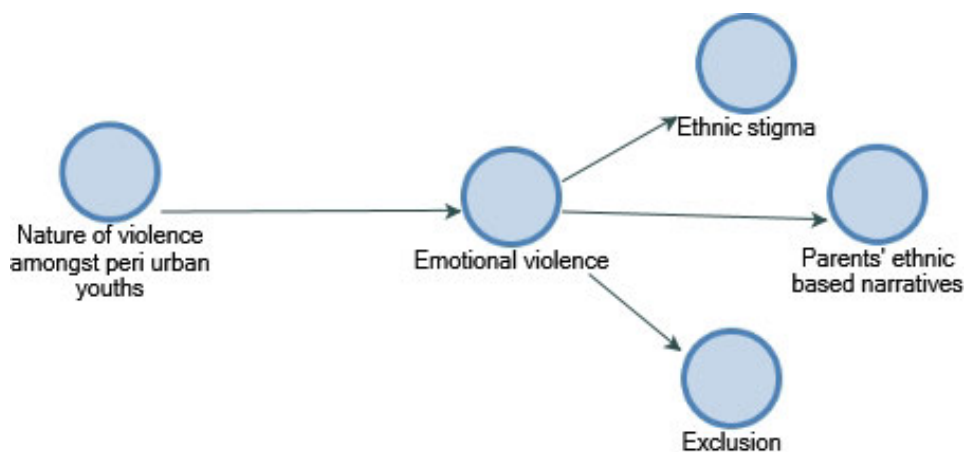


Figure 36: Visual of emotional violence

One respondent testified that:

*A young Tutsi girl moved into a community where majority of residents were the Hutus. She found herself alone as she looked different from other members of the community. The Hutus avoided her and she was moving alone without friends and she felt really lonely. Other youths (Hutu) used to question one another why they should associate with her, that type. This pushed the young Tutsi girl to seeking other peers far away who would like to associate and converse with her.<sup>5</sup>*

### **6.5.2 Causes of Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths**

Two questions namely Question 5 on the interview guide which reads, ‘Have you ever been involved in negativity towards others? A) what were the causes of that behaviour?’ ‘b) Can you describe what happened? c) How did you feel about the other person?’ ‘d) How did the victim respond?’ and Question 6 on the face-to-face guide that reads, ‘What factors you think induce Hutu and Tutsi youths into suspicious coexistence?’ sought to determine the main causal factors of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. Similar findings derived from responses to Question 5 on the FGD which reads, ‘How often do Hutu and Tutsi youths engage in negative contacts?’

Coded by items, the following chart represents key aspects of the causes.

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Jean Baptiste Ndayizeye, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

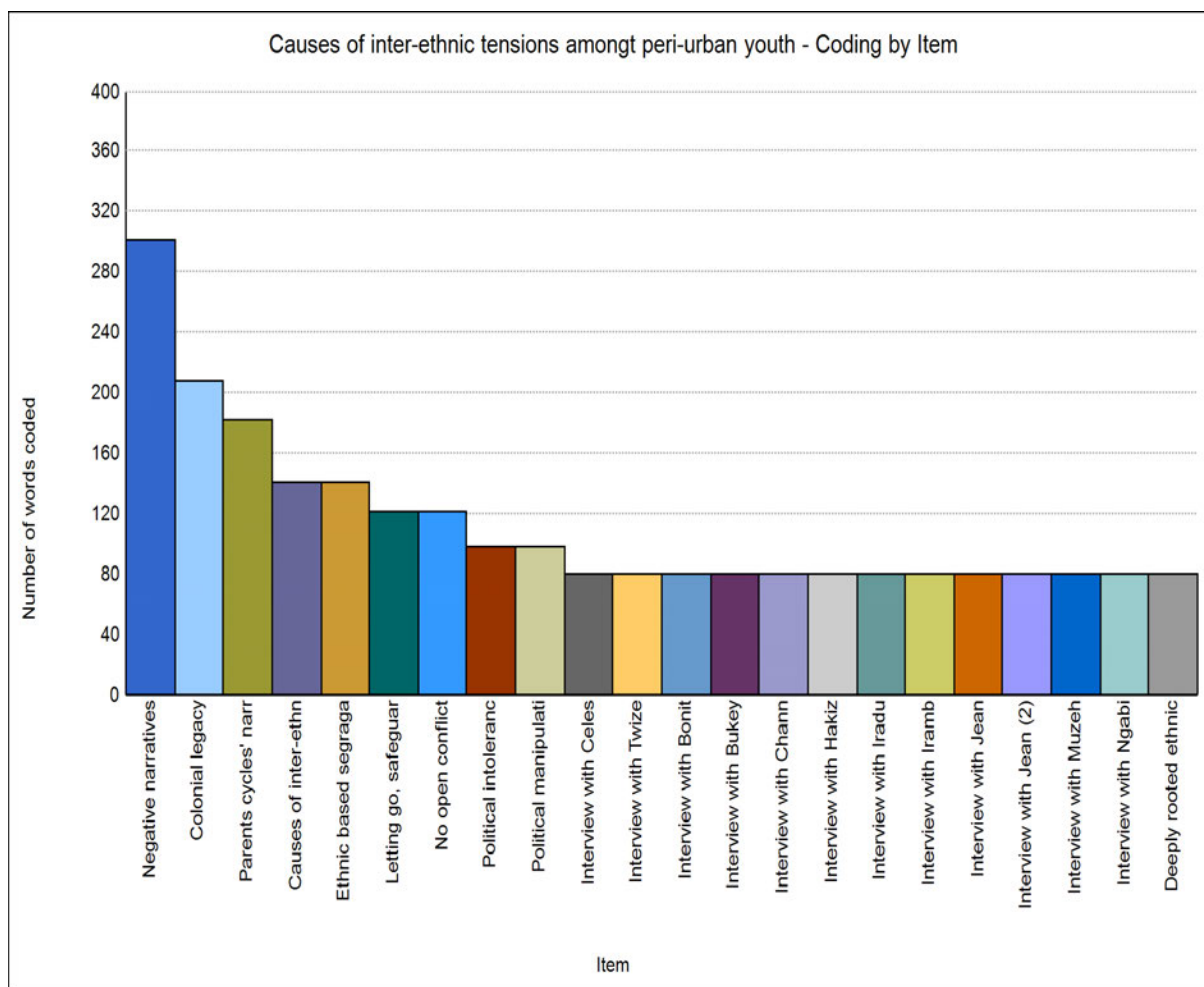


Figure 37: A visualisation of causes of inter-ethnic violence amongst youths as generated by the NVIVO software

As displayed in Figure 37, findings revealed a web of causal factors of inter-ethnic tensions which fall, on the main, in four (4) categories. Among them are social causes, ecological causes, economic causes and political causes. These categories of causes have underlying effects that undermine peaceful relations between Hutu and Tutsi youth and exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha. The four categories of causes are visually represented in the following figures and their subcategories are also visualised in the following sections.

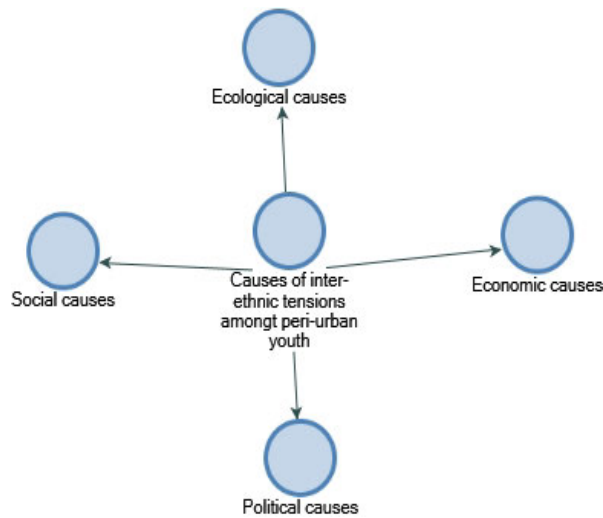


Figure 38: A visual of the four main categories of causes of inter-ethnic violence amongst youths

Figure 38 portrays four main causes of inter-ethnic animosity and stigma involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths. In the main, economic causes (Figure 39), social causes (Figure 40), political causes (Figure 41) and ecological causes (Figure 42) are the triggers leading to the prevalence of tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha.

#### 6.5.2.1 Economic causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth.

Notably, findings revealed a web of economic causes that impinge on unity and peacefulness amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth. They include a high rate of employment amongst the youth; competition over scarce resources; biased accessibility to employment opportunities and sponsorships; economic vulnerabilities; economic inequality; selfishness and unequal economic growth; lack of equity; lack of economic opportunities; systematic corruption; and abuse of public resources, economic discrimination.

One key interviewee confessed that she applied for a job and that she was refused employment because she refused sexual favours to her recruiter. The respondent was summoned after her job interview and was told that the job was hers and that the boss liked her. He invited her for a drink and to her surprise, the boss insisted that she agreed to sleep with him and he said he had booked a room in a hotel. The lady left without saying goodbye and that was the end of her job<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with a youth Tutsi girl (Mika-name changed), Gihosha, 6 February 2024

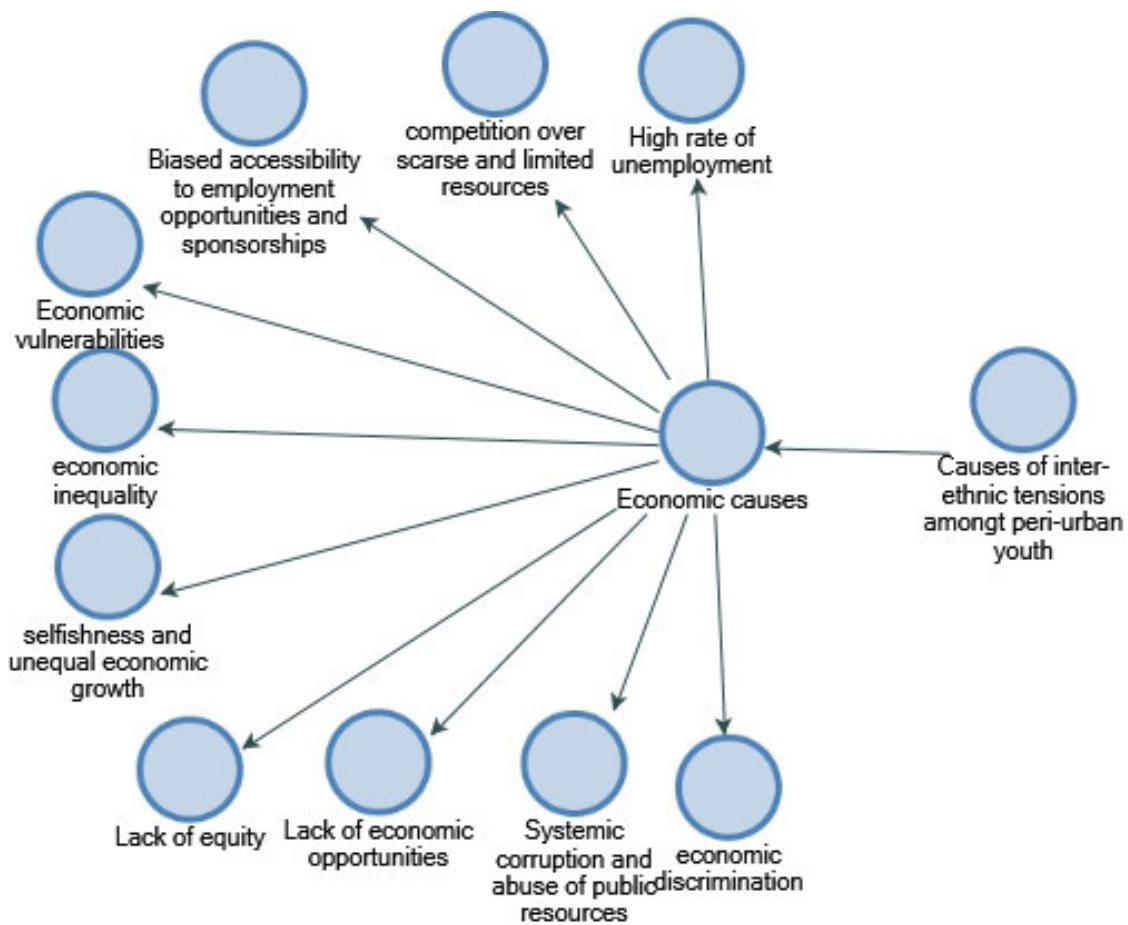


Figure 39: A visual of economic causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth

### 6.5.2.2 Social causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

The data generated on the social causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth was prolific and varied. Some tensions impact social life in Gihosha such as a political causes having a social bearing on the youth’s social life and communal relations. In a nutshell, most social causes identified are the following: disrespect and envy; memories of lived experiences of ethnic violence; violent communication; faith-based intolerance; inequality and social divisions between the Hutu and the Tutsi; ethnicity; intergenerational ethnic rivalries; hate speeches; parents’ cycles narratives; negative narratives; peer pressure; victimisation; social group; religion; deeply rooted ethnicity; superiority complex and inferiority complex; region of origin; and political slogans and songs.

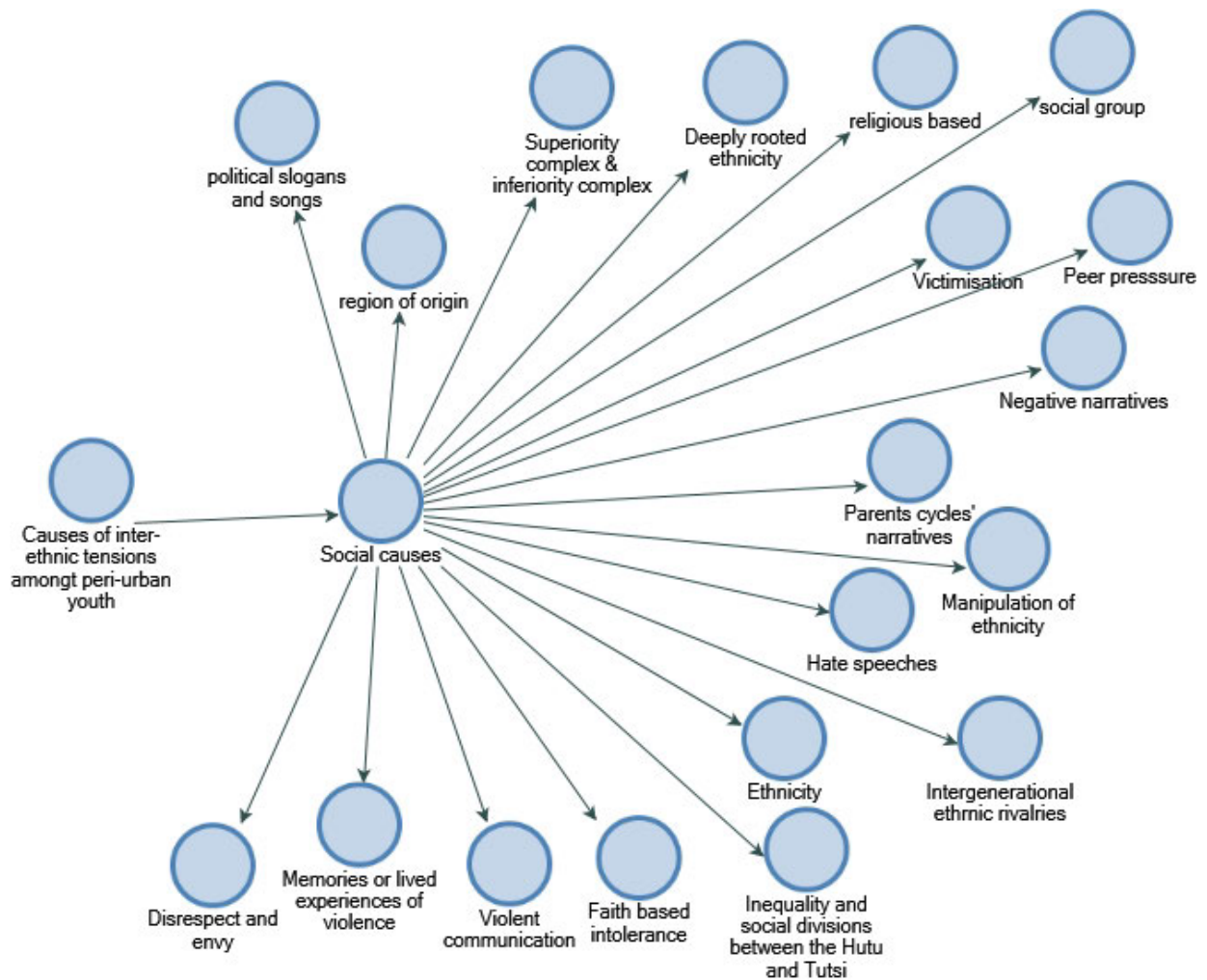


Figure 40: A Visual of social causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth

### 6.5.2.3 Political causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth

Another fertile category of causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha area was politics. As demonstrated in the findings, key political causes include the following: political segregation and stereotypes; stifling of civil liberties and human rights; squeezing of political spaces; political parties; political manipulation; perceived injustice; quasi-total power monopoly by one-party; top-down political elites' influence; labelling; and name calling. To the list are added lack of accountability; persecution due to political belonging; corrupted government officials; neo-divide and rule politics; breach of the rule of the law; limited voice in political decision-making; disrupted democratic governance; cemented culture of fear; colonial legacy; unaddressed past structural violence; forced mobilisation and rallies; commodification of politics as a source of wealth; historical

grievances; long and deep-rooted ethnicisation of political power; political intolerance and suppression of opposition; political assassinations; poor governance and nepotism; propaganda of warlordism; abuse of power; and subversion of the rule of law. Below is a visual representation of the political causes:

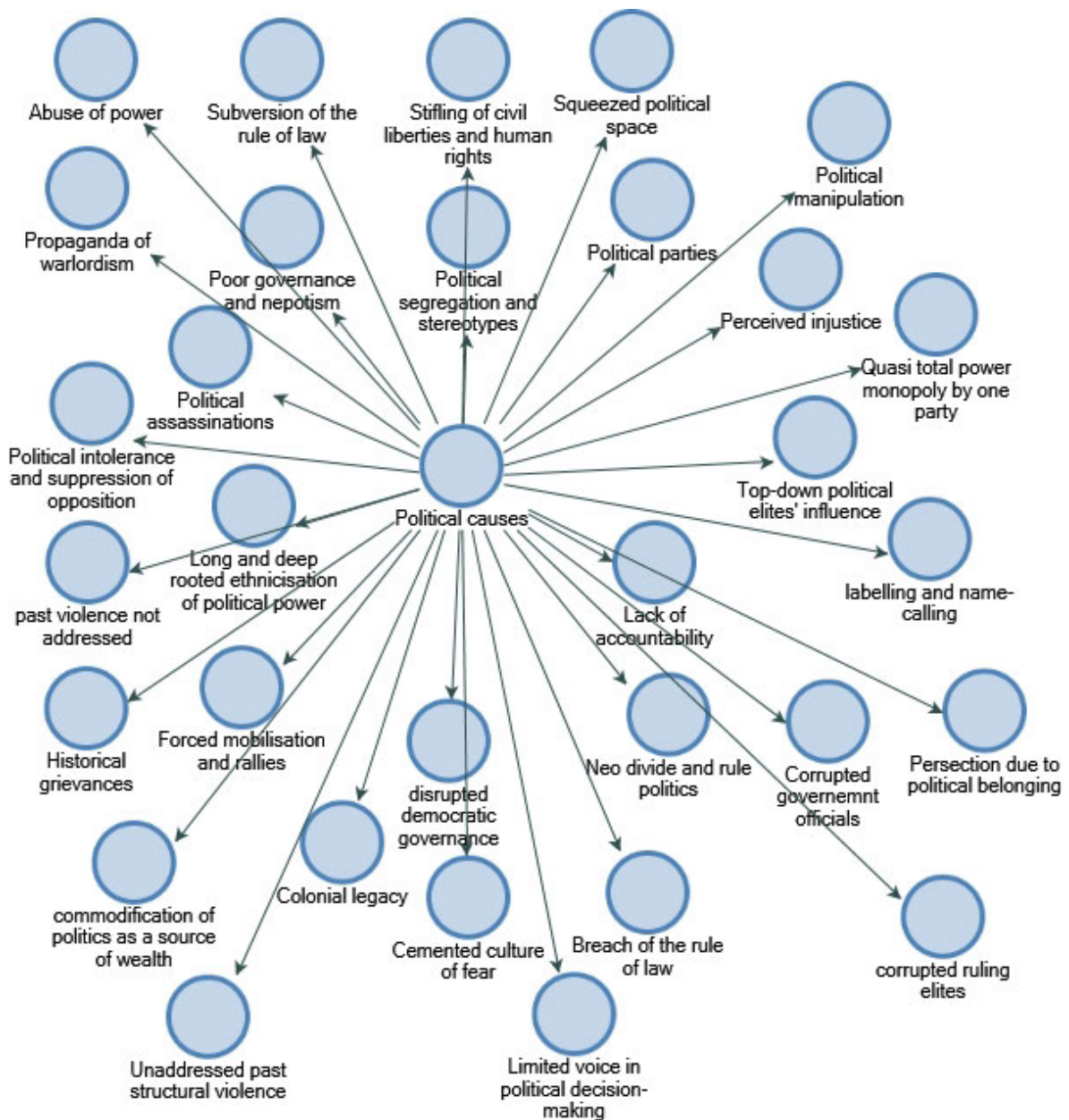


Figure 41: A visual of political causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth.

#### 6.5.2.4 Ecological causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

Another category of causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth was the ecological causes. Findings suggested that residence, place of birth, parents' origin and

displacements were no causes of insecurity in Gihosha area. Figure 42 displays the four aspects noted during data screening:

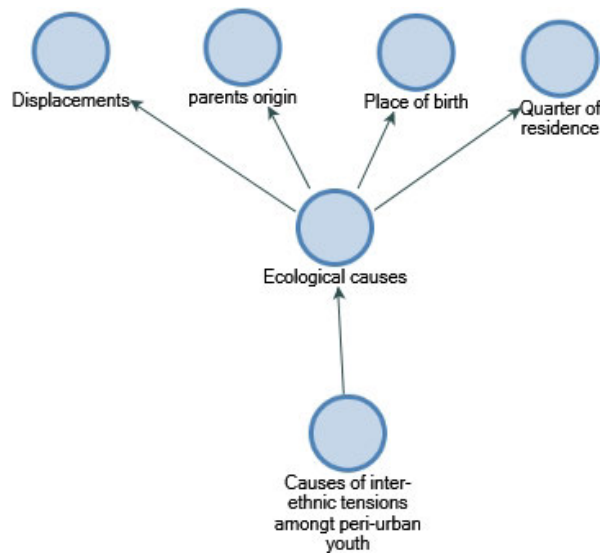


Figure 42: Visual of ecological causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths as generated by the NVIVO software

### 6.5.3 Consequences of Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths

Building on the final aspect of Research Objective 1, this theme aimed to identify the key consequences of the various types and causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, focusing on their impact on relationships between the Hutu and Tutsi at individual, community and local levels. To meet this objective, two questions namely, Question 6 on the FGD guide, which reads, ‘What are the consequences of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths?’ and Question 4 on the interview guide, reading ‘Have you ever assisted to violent treatment being inflicted on others? c) What effects has this have on you?’ were used. Figure 43 represents the main findings:

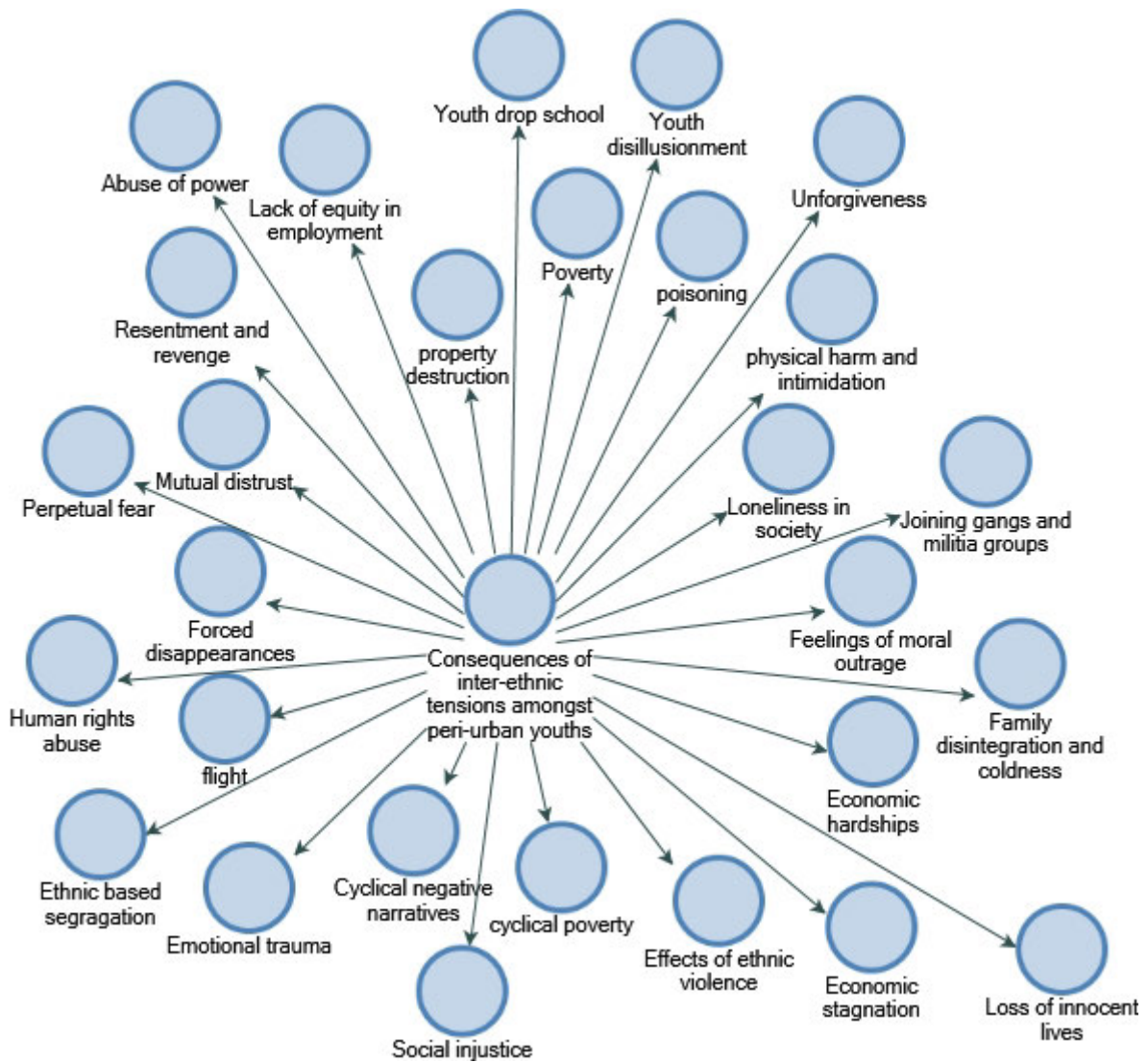


Figure 43: Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

Leveraging consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths resulted in five categories of consequences of inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha namely social consequences, emotional consequences, physical consequences, political consequences and economic consequences.

- **Social consequences:** This category includes cyclical negative narratives, youth dropout from school, mutual mistrust, social injustice, unforgiveness and social injustice, loneliness in society, family disintegration and coldness.
- **Economic consequences:** Economic consequences that were highlighted were poverty, lack of equity in employment, cyclical poverty, property destruction, economic stagnation.

- **Emotional consequences:** Findings included emotional trauma, resentment and revenge, feelings of moral outrage, youth disillusionment and perpetual fear.
- **Physical consequences:** These were loss of innocent lives, physical harm and intimidation, forced disappearances.
- **Political consequences:** Lastly, findings showed that ethnic-based segregation, flight, joining gangs and militia groups, abuse of power and human rights abuse are pertinent aspects relating to political violence in Gihosha. Below is a broad visual of consequences exposed in this study.

As Figure 41 shows, consequences of inter-ethnic violence affect all layers of young peoples' lives. Politically, the youth face human rights abuse, fight, abuse of power, ethnic-based segregation and some are forced to joining gangs and militia groups. Economic consequences amount to economic stagnation, property destruction, cyclical poverty, and lack of employment opportunities. As if that was not enough, the youth navigate through emotional trauma, resentment and revenge, feelings of moral outrage, disillusionment and perpetual fear. They are lonely in society, and face family disintegration and coldness, amid social injustice, mutual distrust, negativity and school dropout. Worst of all, innocent lives are often taken, the youth are brutally subjected to physical harm and intimidation or forced to disappear.

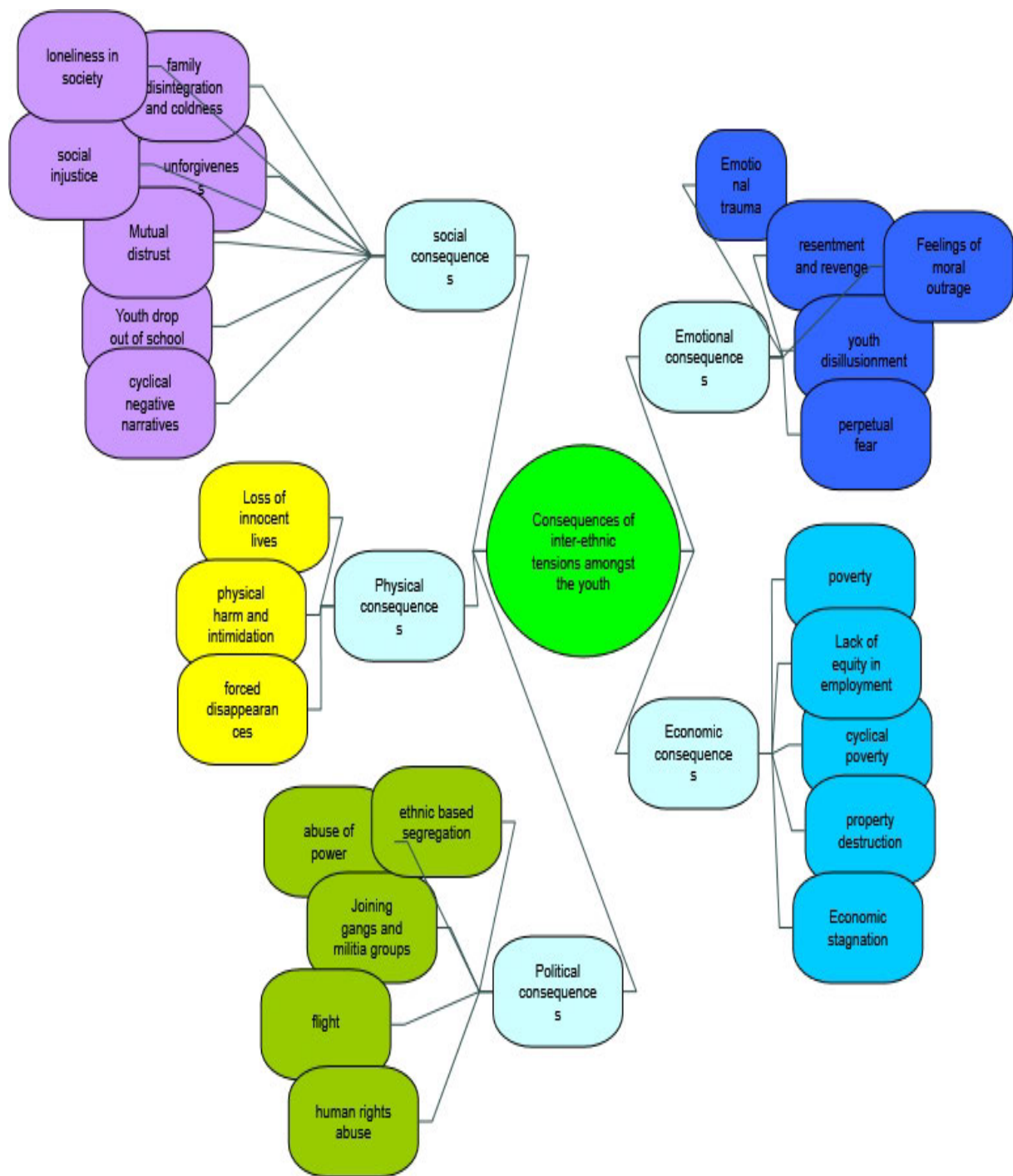


Figure 44: Typology of consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

#### 6.5.4 Opportunities and Options for Living Together Again: Building Trust amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Burundi

This theme relates to Research Objective 3: What are the opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi

youths in Gihosha? Forging mutual understanding amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths requires a keen understanding of grassroots opportunities and options to which participants buy in. As such, ensuring holistic healing and reconciliation among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths can be achieved.

### 6.5.3.1 Opportunities for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha

An aspect of the Research Objective 3 aimed to determine what the opportunities for ensuring positive contacts amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth are. To explore this, two questions were used namely, Question 9 on the interview guide which reads, ‘What do you think can be done for Hutu and Tutsi youths to live together again peacefully in Gihosha?’ And Question 8 on the FG guide reading, ‘What can be done to build sustainable peaceful coexistence amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths?’ Responses to these questions suggested pathways to reigniting positive contacts among the youth in Gihosha. Figure 43 highlights key available opportunities for positive contacts in Gihosha.

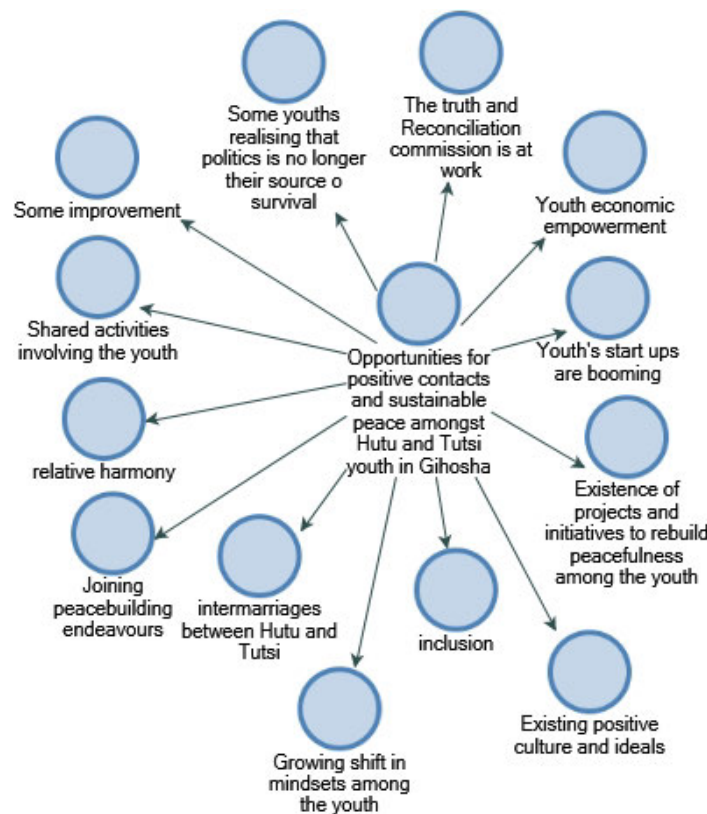


Figure 45: Opportunities for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha

Findings include upholding positive culture and ideals; inclusion; projects and initiatives to rebuild peacefulness among the youth; youth's start-ups which are booming; economic empowerment; empowering the youth in realising that politics is no longer their source of survival; improvement and shared activities involving the youth; and harmony and the youth's eagerness to joining peacebuilding endeavours. From this perspective, findings suggested that there is a growing shift in mind-sets among the youth and inter-ethnic marriage.

#### 6.5.3.2 Options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha

One aspect of Research Objective 3 was to look into options for positive contacts, sustainable peace and reconciliation among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha. To reach that objective, two questions were asked: Question 9 on the FG guide which reads, 'How can improved interactions among Hutu and Tutsi living in Gihosha be achieved?' and Question 9 on the interview guide which reads, 'Do you see anything missing in ascertaining constructive contacts amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths?' Findings that emerged from responses to both questions confirmed that the existence of options through which peace can be built amongst the youth. As exhibited in Figure 46, options for fostering positivity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha include: infusing cooperation and collaboration amongst the youth, letting go and safeguarding peace, socioeconomic empowerment, maintaining positive attitude, youth mentorship on positive values, power-sharing, preserving justice, safeguarding the rule of law, rewriting the past, enforcing peace education in schools, curbing negativity, mitigating youth's exploitation by the elites, forging critical thinking and living, multiplying intergenerational dialogue, embracing citizenship education, forging ethnicity amnesia, encouraging youth up-skilling and ensuring youth entrepreneurship.

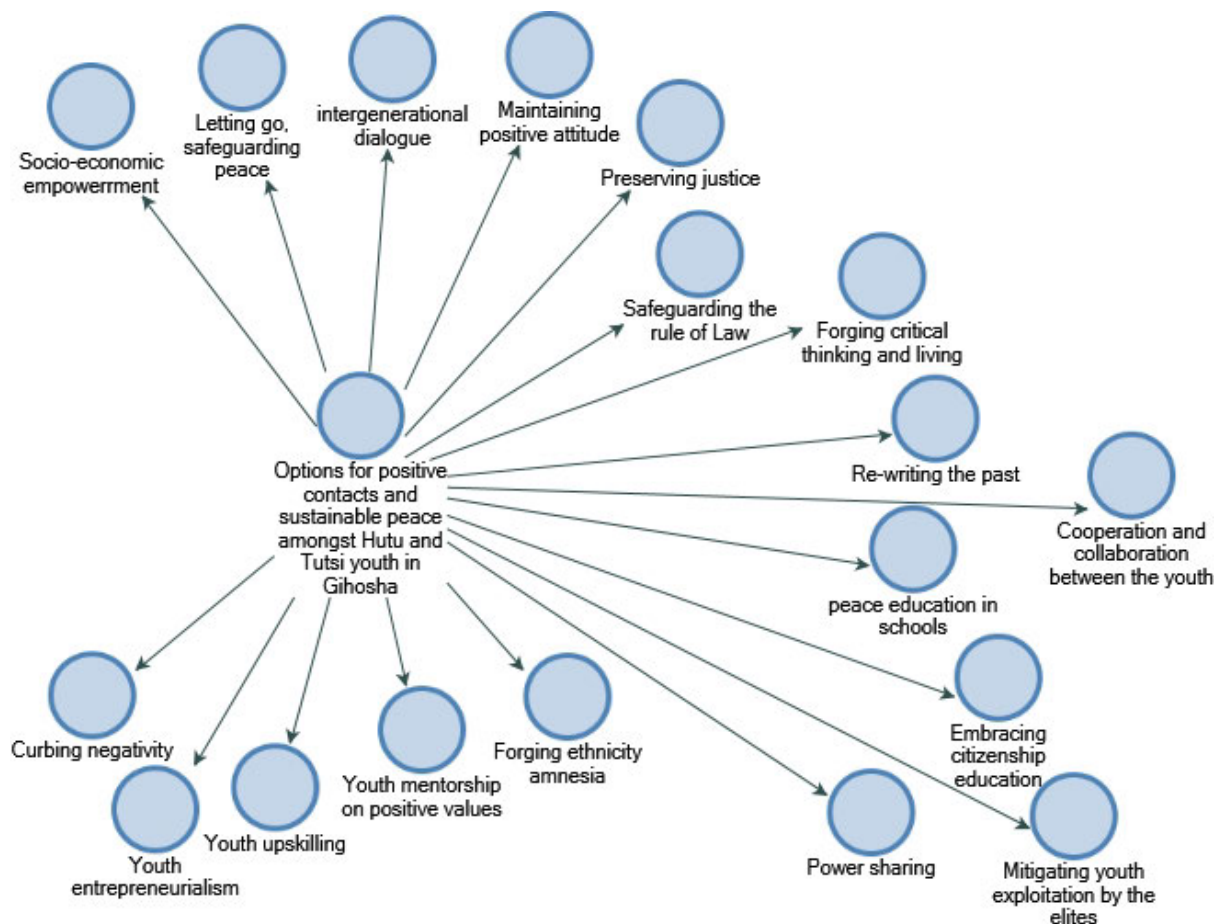


Figure 46: Options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha

### 6.5.5 Existing Peacebuilding Efforts towards Improved Interactions amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths

In line with the Research Objective 2, which seeks to explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundians youths, Question 7 (interview): ‘Do you know any past conflict transformation activities amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths?’ aimed at pinpointing efforts towards improved relations amongst peri-urban youths. Findings suggested a list of actors whose efforts are prominent. As emerged from findings, there are efforts that are deployed by youth groups, women groups, some political leaders, some families sticking to peace education, school led and other public institutions efforts, local initiatives by individuals, local administration or government officials, international organisations, individuals in the communities, civil society organisations, churches, charities and activists.

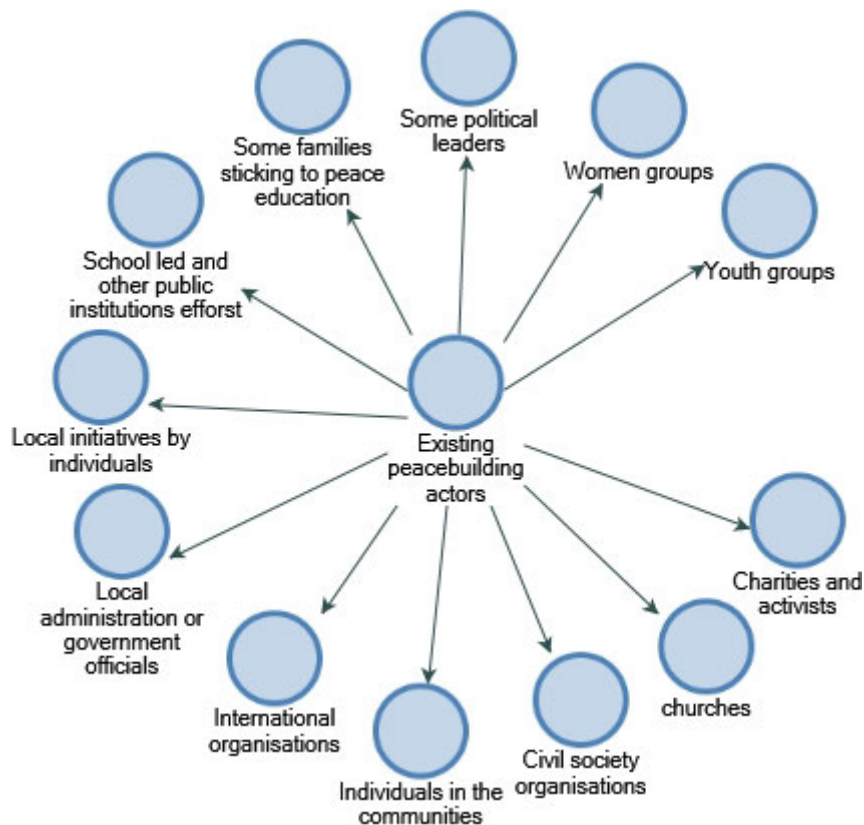


Figure 47: Existing peacebuilding efforts towards improved interactions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

Thus, as Figure 47 shows, despite the protracted nature of inter-ethnic bias, stigma, stereotypes and negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, efforts to restore trust are being made by many actors and agencies.

### 6.5.6 Limitations to Peaceful Coexistence amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths

Despite the presence of all the afore-mentioned peacebuilding actors, findings suggested the prevalence of protracted drawbacks to effective positive interactions in Gihosha. They include culturally induced stereotypes coupled with economic hardships; enforced blind submission and obedience; and prevailing intergenerational hatred.

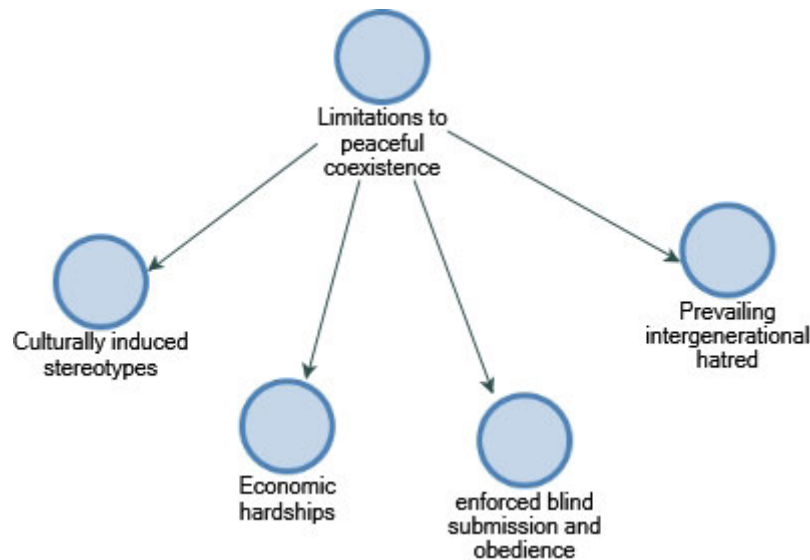


Figure 48: Limitations to peaceful coexistence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths

### 6.6 PHASE III: DATA FROM SEARCH CONFERENCE

As per Research Objective 2, search conference as tool in this AR involved working with Hutu and Tutsi youth to design and build practical knowledge together and identify specific actions and practical interventions aimed at improving interactions and ensuring peaceful coexistence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. Thus, by capitalising on youths’ knowledge, we engendered new ideas and strategies, reconciled different views and gave youths an opportunity for learning from one another, while planning a joint intervention for a better future. The five-day long search conference contributed to unearthing the real causes of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the youths in Gihosha. Participants confirmed that the session was helpful and helped them recover from negativity.

As the participants to the search conference were empowered, gained knowledge and analysed their predicaments, they adopted a slogan as follows: ‘It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?’<sup>7</sup> They proposed to disseminate their peacebuilding efforts to the mainstream community of Gihosha by fighting inter-ethnic stereotypes and bias across generations. From that perspective and for the sake of sustaining their peacebuilding involvement, they opted for the creation of a ‘network of whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles’ in Gihosha and envisaged extending it across Burundi.

<sup>7</sup> Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

Their desire to provide a solution to the Hutu and Tutsi enmity led them to initiate a ‘network of whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles’.<sup>8</sup> Figure 49 portrays the Hutu and Tutsi ready to undertake peacebuilding ventures after the five-day search conference which empowered and enlightened them on the area of conflict transformation and inter-ethnic violence mitigation.



Figure 49: Young Hutu and Tutsi empowered and awakened after the search conference discussions, Photo taken by the main researcher in Bujumbura, Gihosha on 14 February 2024

Key insights are summarised below.

### 6.6.1 Trigger Factors behind Inter-Ethnic Violence amongst the Youth in Gihosha<sup>9</sup>

- ❖ Prevailing intergenerational narratives sustain ethnic violence in Gihosha area;
- ❖ Most youth live with effects from adverse adulthood lived experiences and mutual ethnic rejection;
- ❖ Politicization of the socioeconomic sector where there is a lack of access to basic livelihood needs has a direct bearing on political militancy;
- ❖ Widespread crippling poverty and gross inequality exists between youths connected to political elites and the poor majority youths not connected to political elites;

<sup>8</sup> Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

<sup>9</sup> Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

- ❖ Absence of protective measures against economic insecurity and unfair labour standards leads to abject inequality;
- ❖ Political leaders use political power to deploy coercive measures to threaten and control community members and other interest groups, especially the youths who do not work under the regime's control;
- ❖ Youths who feel crushed by the politicians misbehave and engage in violence and risky behaviours including extremism;
- ❖ Political stereotypes and bias are sustained by politicians, especially amongst the CNDD-FDD and the CNL members.

### **6.6.2 Behind the Scenes: The Real Identity of Key Parties involved in the Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Gihosha<sup>10</sup>**

While the study focused on the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, there are other players involved in the game. As the search conference unearthed, some parties act behind the scene and propel the youths into acting and behaving negatively towards each other by engaging in inter-ethnic marginalisation and bias. An examination of the actors led to the identification of the following actors:

- ❖ Adults: Adults are the main indirect party in the inter-ethnic tensions through their negative behaviours, attitudes, narratives, words, speeches and actions. They pass these behaviours on to the younger generations. They are an open channel through which negativity is upheld and passed onto the youths, irrespective of their ethnic group;
- ❖ Youth members to political parties' leagues: they are puppets to both the regime and the political parties to which they belong and fall prey to the elite instrumentalisation and top-down propaganda;
- ❖ Politicians, the country's elite and elected officials: Most of them have spent almost the entirety of their lives fighting in rebel groups and guerrilla armies. They have better access to economic assets, the police and the army and utilise them to buy the youths' loyalty;
- ❖ The police, the army and paramilitary forces: Having emerged from former rebels groups and fighting factions, they are connected to national centre of power which is managed by politicians and elected officials and are used to support egoistic ambitions. They collaborate with former combatants who supersede the regular armed forces and engage other youths in negativity and violent acts.

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<sup>10</sup>Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

The above are some parties which have been identified as indirectly connected to the youths' inter-ethnic negativity in Gihosha. So, in view of the above parties involved in the inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths, this means that efforts to restoring trust should be extended to these categories as well.

### **6.6.3 Opportunities and Options for Restoring Unity, Healing and Trust amongst Hutu and Tutsi Youths, towards Creating a New Community in Gihosha Area**

Participants in the search conference agreed that restoring trust and healing the wounds amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth can be achieved. The following were strategies noted as best suitable for restoring trust and peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths.

#### 6.6.3.1 Strategies for curbing ethnic negativity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha<sup>11</sup>

- ❖ Changing narratives of bitterness into positive ones by discrediting deceptive tactics and discourses which divide people;
- ❖ Engaging in collaborative disruption of the practice of hate speech to ensure holistic healing of both victims and perpetrators;
- ❖ Nurturing non-violent alternatives by breaking stereotypes held across ethnic groups;
- ❖ Engaging political and elected leaders in creative strategies that foster a sense of belonging and self-worth;
- ❖ Shunning divisive tendencies and promote inclusive national identity;
- ❖ Building youths' civic responsibility and positive self-conception.

#### 6.6.3.2 Options for curbing ethnic negativity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha

- ❖ Removing all structural barriers hindering openness and trust;
- ❖ Promoting healing, forgiveness and discourage finger-pointing at others;
- ❖ Promoting mutual respect and organising youth spaces and joint endeavours that bring youths together through intergenerational dialogues;
- ❖ The enactment of laws that prevent ethnic manipulation and punish offenders;
- ❖ The use of public channels by government agencies and political leaders to propel messages of hope, dignity, respect and preservation of human rights;

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<sup>11</sup>Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

- ❖ Addressing collective traumatic experiences and offer individual youths their chances of feeling valued again;
- ❖ The avoidance of covering up crimes and provision of mechanisms for justice by the Government of Burundi and its partners.

#### 6.6.3.3 Alternatives for Socioeconomic Recovery<sup>12</sup>

In order to ensure resilience amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth, the following were noted as possible alternatives:

- ❖ Engaging youths in positive and collaborative creative thinking and entrepreneurial literacy to ensure the youths achieve employment identity and self-development;
- ❖ Fighting nepotism, promote accountability, transparency and equity;
- ❖ Advocating for the co-create of mechanisms that pledge national insurance and living wages for all citizens of Burundi;
- ❖ Multiplying social services that address unemployment and ensure equal access to productive resources and employment opportunities;
- ❖ Building the capacity of the youths to engage with collaborative self-transformation and self-help activities in the community;
- ❖ Supporting efforts that seeks to empower Hutu and Tutsi youths to rise out of poverty by increasing social entrepreneurship options and meaningful activities for youths;
- ❖ Giving equal consideration to both Hutu and Tutsi youths when there are opportunities for employment through fair and equitable standards and recruitment.

Below is a visual of key findings from the search conference.

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<sup>12</sup> Search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

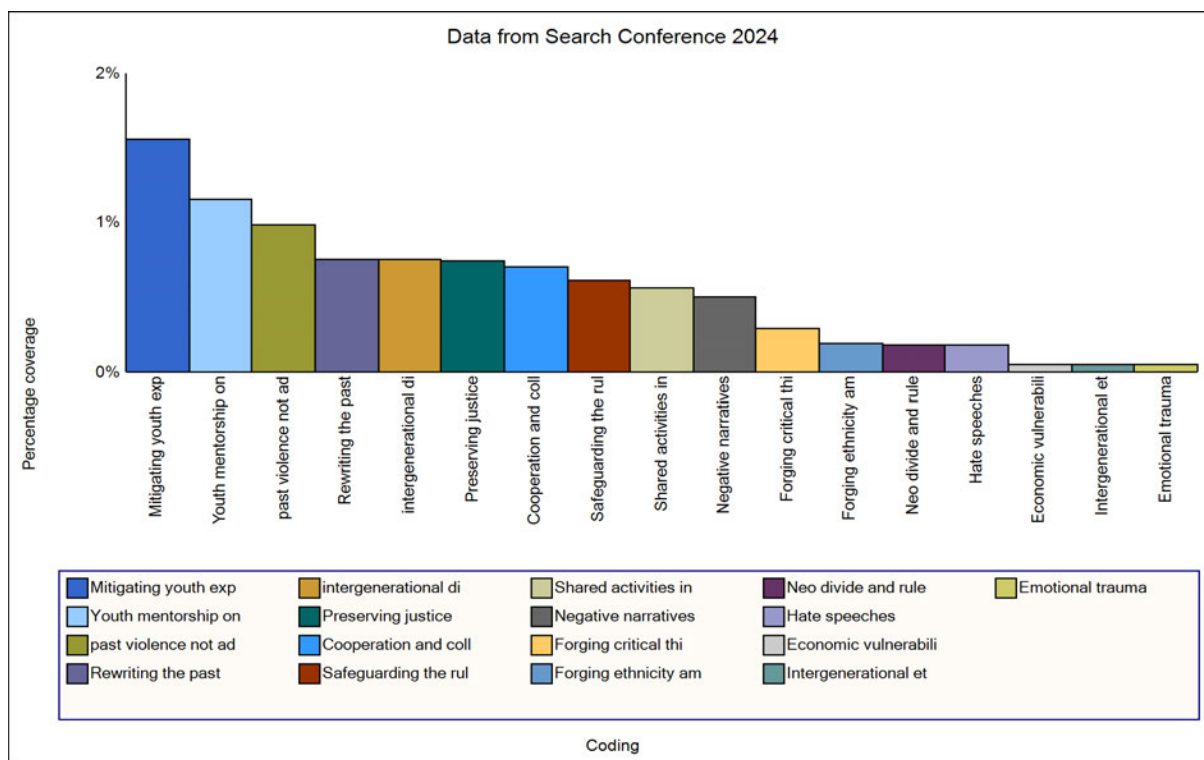


Figure 50: A visualisation of the search conference key findings as generated by the NVIVO software

### 6.6.4 Search Conference Outcome Evaluation

Participants in the search conference of ‘whistle-blowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles in Gihosha’ identified the prevalence of sustained problematic ethnic relations between the Hutu and Tutsi youths and located the roots causes within respective family. Figure 50 shows that the issue of ethnicity is present both at micro- and macro-levels with ramifications reaching into the socio-political, economic and cultural domains of the Burundian community. Most of the participants in the peacemaking circles were not direct perpetrators of violence, but they were witnesses of violence either inflicted on their loved ones and carried grudges and trauma all along their lives due to lack of adequate mechanisms for genuine reconciliation and endeavours for trauma healing.

Participants offered honest critique that negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha was rooted in the politics based on ethnicity and exerted on people by selfish elites whose moral decisions were hampered by assumptions and distrust. It was noted that all the youths in Gihosha were playing the game of hypocrisy to avoid suffering that the reprisal

machine in place could inflict on them as no-one knew what the person next to them was thinking or planning.

The urgency of curbing intensifying divergences between the youth affiliated to the ruling party and other youths was noted. In this regard, participants realised that the so-called enemies of the nation which is the language used by some political leaders should be considered as a crime, in as much as no ground for such gross accusation is provided. The problem with such divisive discourses is that they persistently rekindle negative sentiments and perpetrate historical hatred and revenge.

### **6.6.5 Lessons Learned**

- ❖ The youth population in Gihosha are experts in communicating matters and are connected to one another using communication tools, particularly social media. They are knowledgeable in terms of ethnic narratives that are delivered through different channels and media.
- ❖ The youth have been adversely affected by long-term legacies of inter-ethnic violence and biases in Gihosha and the affliction of young people amidst poverty and trauma was palpable.
- ❖ The different positions represented in the search conference sessions revealed that living together amongst peri-urban youths in Gihosha is possible and that peace emerges when there is full recognition of the youths' skills and collaborative openness.
- ❖ The dialogue in the search conference revealed that no matter how ethnic negativity may appear, there are still options for healing, especially where the good is rewarded and the 'bad' punished irrespective of the identity of the perpetrators or victims. Also, the trauma the youths living in Gihosha experienced was evidenced in relation to long-held narratives which should be debunked and replaced by positive and critical thinking.
- ❖ Peacebuilding circles were vital to connecting Hutu and Tutsi youths through structured dialogue which reinforced relationships and networks, building towards harmonious living.

## **6.7 PHASE IV: DATA FROM INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE WORKSHOP INTERVENTION**

### **6.7.1 Planning the Intervention**

Achieving the main research aim which was reducing ethnic prejudice by exploring alternatives and options for young Burundian Tutsi and Hutus' constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience required organising an intervention. Thus, after conducting the search conference, both the participants and the main researcher agreed to conduct an intervention to kindle healing and trust amongst the youths in Gihosha. Based on the identification of protracted issues facing the youths in Gihosha, and in line with the need for improved interactions, the researcher organised an intergenerational dialogue. The intergenerational dialogue intervention aimed at curbing ethnic negativity, stereotypes, biased and violent intergenerational narratives and interactions in the mainstream community of Gihosha. As we planned the intergenerational dialogue, we adopted Lederach's pyramid of peacebuilding which guided our thinking and served to showcase the level of local ownership of conflict transformation involved.

Before the intervention, both Hutu and Tutsi research participants opined that they already knew the implications and what it was like to be a Tutsi and a Hutu youth in Gihosha. They assured the researcher that the discussions in FGD and the dialogues in the search conference sessions had emancipated them and paved way towards healing from their past intergenerational wounds. They noted that the only way towards mitigating inter-ethnic bias, tensions and stigma was through intergenerational dialogue that could uproot sustained negative narratives in the mainstream society of Gihosha.

From this perspective and for the sake of moving forward together and building for the future, the intervention was tailored to end intergenerational inheritance of conflict in a holistic fashion. Therefore, we reached out to the community and organised intergenerational dialogue sessions with the aim of bridging the generational gap and ensuring forward-looking future which transcends the past and the present, age and area of residence. We adopted Lederach's pyramid of peacebuilding in planning our intervention which showcases the extent of ownership of the transformation intervention.

Planning the intervention required deep consultations between the co-researchers and an appraisal of the issues facing the youth community in peri-urban area of Gihosha. Thus, young

Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha realised that mitigating protracted and intergenerational negativity without the involvement of adults was not possible. We agreed to organise an intergenerational dialogue session so that our joint effort would be a means of changing attitudes and behaviours, mutual trust building and improving interactions amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha.

### 6.7.2 Adoption of Intervention Work Plan

Researchers agreed on implementing an intergenerational dialogue workshop on the project titled: “Curbing inter-ethnic tensions and restoring trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha”. The researcher and youth participants adopted a workable plan that was thought to be effective to reach the objective. Thus, Table 5 represents key steps embedded in the intervention plan:

Table 5: Intergenerational dialogue intervention workshop plan

Intergenerational dialogue Plan: Project: Curbing inter-ethnic tensions and restoring trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi Youth in Gihosha			
Day	Time	Activity	Facilitator / Responsible
Saturday 24 February 2024	8:30 to 9:00	Arrival to Gihosha Community Hall	All participants
	9:00- 9: 15	Welcome and Introduction	Local leader & the main Researcher
	9:15 to 10:00	Participatory exchange and discussions: What does living together between the Hutu and Tutsi youths entails in Gihosha community?	-Main researcher -2 youth -Two elders -2 elected officials
	10:00 to 10:30	Intergenerational Reflection and testimonies: Preventing inter-ethnic violence amongst the youth: issues and challenges	Volunteers: 3 Tutsis and 3 Hutus (females and males) including (an adult woman, an adult man, a young Hutu & a young Tutsi)
	10:30 to 11:00	Tea break	All participants
	11:00 to 11:20	Mapping peacebuilding interventions and their achievements	All participants
	11: 20 to 11: 40	Presentation	All participants
	11:40 to 13:00	What is required for breaking the cycle of inter-ethnic tensions in amongst the youth in Gihosha community?	All participants &
	13:00 to 14:30	Lunchtime & Networking	All participants
	14:30 to 15:00	Reflection: Lessons learned & Action Planning	All participants
	15:00 to 15:30	Concluding remarks & way forward	Main researcher & Local leader

### **6.7.3 Recruitment of Participants to the Intergenerational Dialogue**

As noted by scholars, intergenerational dialogue as peacebuilding approach is an appropriate tool for redressing societal challenges and issues while considering different experiences and perspectives of different generations. Thus, while the main researcher had initially planned to use a sample of 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths living in the peri-urban area of Gihosha, the requirements for implementing intergenerational dialogue obliged the researcher to include community members to ensure the aim of study was fulfilled. Thus the rationale for increasing participants was dictated by the need to mitigate the causes of negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha vicinity as the youths who participated in the search conference have noted that parents and adults are responsible for sustaining negative ethnicity amongst the youths. As a reminder, the rationale of the research was to restore trust and peacefulness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi and this necessitated involving adults and other participants in the study to reach a holistic recovery and sustainable peaceful coexistence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths.

Thus, prior to conducting intergenerational dialogue, we planned meetings with officials in Gihosha area to contact our potential participants. As the Mayor of Bujumbura Municipality had sent a copy of my gatekeeper letter to different authorities in Gihosha, introducing my research topic, the researcher went to Gihosha Zone headquarters to meet the Chief of the zone level. After talking to him, he blessed the project and entrusted his chargé of social affairs to assist us throughout the process. The chargé of social affairs in Gihosha Zone became the port of call for the potential participants and assisted me and provided necessary phone contacts of representatives of different groups in the community. The researcher provided airtime and we called different representatives among whom the researcher was able to recruit: three members of civil society organisations, representatives of the youth, five members of women's community development forums, three representatives of prominent political parties, five members of the mediation forum in Gihosha, and four elected officials. In total, 20 community members were recruited, adding to 20 youth initially recruited researchers. The overall number of participants in the intergenerational dialogue was 40.

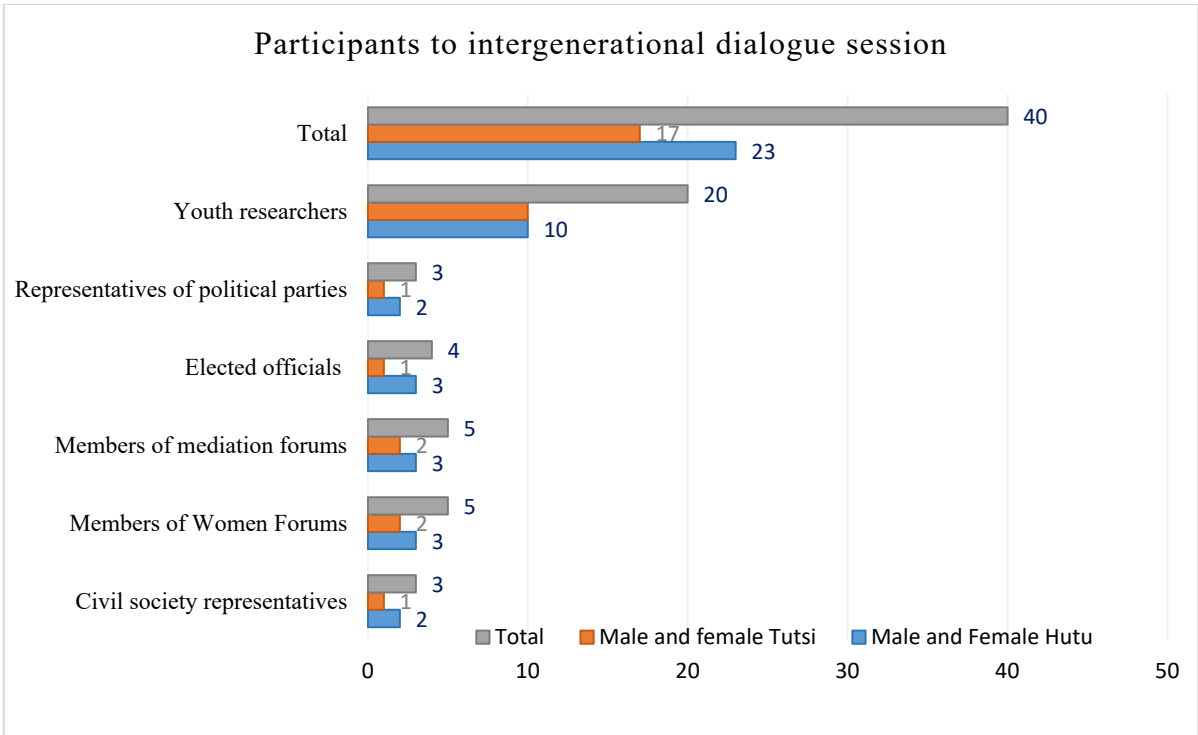


Figure 51: Ratio of participants to the Intergenerational dialogue workshop

As already mentioned in the previous sections, this research was initially envisaged to involve 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths living in the peri-urban area of Gihosha. Yet, dictated by the nature of the intergenerational dialogue intervention that emerged from the search conference, 20 more participants representing all layers of people living in Gihosha were included. Thus, Figure 51 captures the total ratio of participants in the intergenerational dialogue which took place in Gihosha on Saturday 24 February 2024.

## 6.8 OUTCOME OF ACTIVITY 1: PARTICIPATORY EXCHANGE AND DISCUSSIONS: WHAT DOES LIVING TOGETHER BETWEEN THE HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS ENTAIL IN GIHOSHA COMMUNITY

Scheduled to take place on Saturday 24 February 2024, this session opened with a welcome note by the chargé of social affairs in Gihosha Zone and a preliminary note from the main researcher. The researcher informed participants that the workshop was an opportunity to resuscitate the ideals of living together again and that it was an occasion to explore possible paths towards unity in diversity. The researcher outlined that the tasks throughout the intergenerational dialogue workshop were not only to validate behaviours prone to improving interactions amongst the youth, but also an opportunity for elders to infuse into the youth ideals of peace, social cohesion and trust-building across generations. We co-created a code of

conduct which we all accepted which amounted to mutual respect, active listening and respect for other's opinions.

The choice of intergenerational dialogue as a strategy for curbing inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths was dictated by its assumed effective in different contexts. For illustration, in 2022, the UNWOMEN in the Americas and the Caribbean acknowledged the relevance of an intergenerational perspective in peacebuilding and social cohesion (UNWOMEN, 2022). It is stressed that intergenerational dialogue is fundamental to holistic transformation for both younger and older generations and is crucial to addressing the needs of diverse groups of people while taking into consideration participants' feelings, perspectives and future aspirations (TanghØj 2023:6)

This activity sought to explore participants' general description of the relationships that Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha entertain. The ultimate goal was to establish positive contacts between the youth and adults of the inevitable vulnerabilities the youths are faced with in Gihosha area due to inter-ethnic tensions. This activity provided participants from different walks of life, age and status to appreciate and reflect on accounts from real-life experiences and identify causal factors of negativity across generations. As the researcher facilitated this activity, he invited participants to note three pertinent issues that every speaker mentioned. We discussed the noted issues and we assigned a note-taker to compile them on a flipchart. Meanwhile, the researcher was collecting data, taking notes of different groups' dynamics and noting observations and recording key insights consistent with the aim and objectives of the study that pertain the restoration of trust and healing amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha. There are varying concerns as the following accounts from different respondents show.

Living in Gihosha area presents many challenges with regards to human security. One Hutu youth highlighted that there is fear as the following exclamation highlights

*“Fear, fear and fear. Living in Gihosha is conditioned by participation to political parties, or rallies organised by the ruling party. If members to CNDD-FDD do not see you in their rallies, you are marginalised and suspected to either belong to CNL or other opposition factions”.*

He added that:

*“Although young people in Gihosha community are at peace with one another, this peace is temporary due to intricacies that hinder effective and genuine communication between youth belonging to different political parties”.*

He further noted that community members, especially youth in Gihosha were fearful and moved silently to avoid being noticed or caught by the youths from the ruling party.

A female Tutsi highlighted the following:

*“Some youth in Gihosha are insincere about other youth belonging to the CNDD-FDD. They call us terrorists but we are not terrorists. The youth are striving to heal from violence inflicted on their parents as most of them grew up here and have seen what the previous politicians have done. So members to the CNDD-FDD youth league are on the watch to prevent relapse into chaos.”* (Account of a female Tutsi youth, intergenerational dialogue workshop, 24 February 2024)

She further explained that:

*“There is this feeling that other youth are not open to communication with members of the CNDD-FDD and that is why mutual distrust remain, unfortunately.”*

In her opinion:

*“It is a matter of recognising authority. Some youths go astray and do not acknowledge leadership. They only criticise us and state that members to the ruling party are receive special treatment.”*

A male elder provided a threefold explanation.

*“The positive side about Hutu and Tutsi youth living together in Gihosha lies in that their presence in Gihosha inspires hope for the future and they are our pride today.”*

In addition, he saw that:

*“Despite differences, the youth are fighting for their future: some are busy with their studies, others are running their own business and life in Gihosha is moving smoothly and the youths are quiet”.*

In his judgement:

*“Something missing between the Hutu and Tutsi interactions lies in that they continue to nurture enmity amongst themselves and continue the old stories of ethnicity as we experienced them in the past.” (Male elder, intergenerational dialogue, Gihosha 24 February 2024).*

A female elder cautioned that:

*“Today’s youth are inattentive when it comes to the past. Most of them continue the old ways of divisions and as the researcher see it, their mind sets are darkened by the cloud of ethnicity and intolerance.”*

Her fears were that:

*“The youth are going to provoke the irreparable in the future as they continue fetching from infested consciousness.”*

She pointed out her disappointment in the following lines:

*“Despite our guidance, the youth are recalcitrant and disobedient. They lack humility and claim to know where they are going. They do not take our advice and we can’t stop them from doing what they like, or they beat us.”*

A male elected official expressed his disappointment:

*“The songs of never-again resonate everywhere and we acknowledge the youth’s contribution towards people’s security.”*

He noted that:

*“The Hutu and Tutsi demonise one another for no reason at all. Some act out ignorance and they need to be awakened and empowered” and that “there are some youth who claim that they want to live in peace with one another, yet they cooperate with rebel groups and this jeopardise our community.”*

The account of a female elected official was:

*“There is suspicion amongst certain categories of the youth. Some Tutsi have a contradictory view of what their expectations are and the actual legitimate power in place”.*

Speaking as an elected official, she warned:

*“I assume that, unless the youth agree to change and embrace unity in diversity, our community of Gihosha will remain divided and poor.”*

Her views of the violence were that:

*“The past incidents, especially the 2015 ethnic-based violence has sparked enmity between the Hutu and Tutsi youths which can’t be easily repaired.”*

As these verbatim extracts showed, living in Gihosha neighbourhood was not as safe as some people might think. The circumstances that ensure every citizen’s feelings of safety are not met as some of the findings indicated that, unless someone belonged to the ruling regime, he would never feel safe to express himself or engage in debates contradicting those of the regime. On the one hand, people fear for their lives and preferred keeping silent as they believed the youth belonging to the ruling party were always awake seeking whom to accuse. On the other hand, the youth affiliated to the CNDD-FDD believed that other youths were spoilers of peace and that they constituted a permanent threat in as much as they did not comply with the ruling regime. They thought that other youths were plotting something negative about the regime and thus acted violently out of suspicion.

After this participatory exchange and reflection, the researcher invited six participants to share their testimonies and reflections on issues and challenges on preventing inter-ethnic violence amongst the youth.

## **6.9 OUTCOMES OF ACTIVITY 2: INTERGENERATIONAL REFLECTIONS AND TESTIMONIES: WAYS OF PREVENTING INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE AMONGST THE YOUTH IN GIHOSHA**

Building from insights from Activity 1 above, the researcher invited three Hutus and three Tutsis who shared their reflections and testimonies. Speakers included a member of the women’s forums (Tutsi), a young female member of the CNDD-FDD (Hutu), an elder woman (Tutsi), an elder man (Tutsi), an elected official (Hutu) and a member of mediation forum (Hutu). As the above activity was carried out, other contributors were given a question and answer opportunity and presenters attended to them. The main points were written on a flipchart and important issues highlighted.

A member of the Women's Forums (Tutsi) Account was that Gihosha hosted a multivariate community of people who migrated from rural areas especially during the 1993 ethnic violence. This influx of strangers provoked suspicion and resentment among neighbours and bitterness was exacerbated by the incidents that followed targeted assassinations and forced disappearances. Instead of healing from the past trauma, the youth were instrumentalised and subjected one another to mutual intimidation. The youth in Gihosha sought to stay apart based on politics. The only way to prevent enmity among Hutu and Tutsi youth was to compromise on the necessity for living together, sharing opportunities and forging communication, mutual respect and reciprocal love.

An elder Tutsi woman stated:

*“Now long time ago, before the ethnic division calamity between the Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha, we lived peacefully and people from all background helped each other. Everything was serene and friendship was the motto. We did not look at the nose or origin, but we valued humanity and we respected everybody. Then came politicians who divided us, and today we are witnessing the unbearable among our youths. Although we, parents try to inculcate in the youth value of humanity and that it is possible that they can live together in peace, they keep making excuses and fall down over and over again. We have to synergise with all stakeholders to engage our youth in tackling divisions and set path for opportunities for living at peace with each other.”*

A young female member of the CNDD-FDD (Hutu) stated:

*“I lived in Gihosha for 16 years and the researcher have seen so many horrible incidents of violence involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths. A team of Tutsi killed my grandfather who owned a food store on Nyankanda Avenue. They stole all his money and run away. Later my elder brother who is a Hutu decided to avenge my grandfather. They killed an innocent Tutsi as he was on the road to Saint Esprit. I will never forget that and so far I have kept grudges and I understood that it is impossible for Tutsi to be forgiven. May be God who is so merciful can mend the ills the Tutsi committed against the Hutu and the youth are victims of the past.”*

An elder Tutsi man told the following story:

*“My story is long and sad. I grew up in Bururi province and moved to Gihosha when the researcher was 13. I worked as a watchman for 4 years during wartimes. I saw Hutu and Tutsis killing each other and I saw the horrendous killings in this city. I saw innocent people arrested and killed by patrolling soldiers in Gihosha and I saw young Tutsi acclaiming the killings. I saw young Hutu organising themselves in gangs, using traditional weapons. I understood that the youth and Tutsi in Gihosha are all combatants and that the cycle of violence is deeply ingrained in Gihosha. What the Hutu and Tutsi youth are doing today, is a result of long-held stereotypes and the confusion and suspicion that run rampant throughout Gihosha community is due to unhealed past experiences of violence.”*

An account from an elected official (Hutu) was:

*“Thank you for those who spoke before. My story is a bit similar to some of the narratives we just heard. During the 1993 ethnic violence, I was a student at the University of Burundi. One afternoon, as I was coming to see my nephew who was a student at College du Saint Esprit, which is now Lycée du Saint Esprit, I met a team of gangs made up of Tutsi students from the University of Burundi. They were arresting and beating people whom they met on the November 28, boulevard. Some were injured, other people (the Hutus) were running away. As I noticed some of my classmates had joined the Tutsi gangs, I ran towards Gishingano and never went back to the university campus. In Gishingano I met other youth Hutus who were fleeing the killings in Bujumbura and Gihosha.*

*Two days later, we organised ourselves and we came back to see what was going on. On our way we heard people crying on the main road to the campus. We retreated each taking his own direction. We met again at Gishingano where we planned to revenge. Our plan was to kidnap Tutsis, kill them and take their money and other food stuff. Later we joined the CNDD-FDD fighting factions and later defected and joined FNL fighters. I was traumatised by the extent of inter-ethnic violence I witnessed and this was renewed in 2015.*

*To me, preventing inter-ethnic violence between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is only possible for younger generations of those who did not participate into the various fighting and who are clean. Otherwise, I personally feel unworthy to tell others*

*that ethnicity is not a problem in Gihosha. I was a victim and I have participated in violence and I tell my children about the ill-treatment I have experienced. That is it.”*

The testimony by a member of mediation forum (Hutu) was expressed as follows: (Before giving his testimony, the researcher noticed that his eyes were full of tears).

*“Comrades, as we have already heard from speakers, all of us here have been victims of inter-ethnic violence at a certain degree. I cannot tell you all that when I grew up, I was denied everything including education, future and opportunities. Yet, my parents taught me the power of courage and prayer. Not mentioning the bitter experiences we all have encountered as community of Gihosha and a country, we should remember that every human generation is faced by particular challenges and opportunities.*

*My mother had three sons to different fathers and I am the eldest. Both my brothers were murdered by Tutsi during the wars in 2004 as they were fighting in the FNL. Now 20 years later, I am working as a community mediator because I would like to Gihosha community and the whole country at peace. Reflecting back over my childhood and adolescence, I can remember how I was chased from school without reason. I witnessed emotional violence among people in Gihosha, I met Tutsi youth who were agonising and threatened, I encountered Hutu who were violent and intolerant. In situations like these, I decided to secure a stable and safe environment so that the youth can blossom and contribute to the improvement of our community.*

*Gihosha community is no worse than other parts of Burundi and the world. Many young people have suffered far worse than the youth in Gihosha. We have no doubt an opportunity today to re-establish ourselves and plan ways for curbing inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths for the sake of future generations, or otherwise we will be held accountable and judged by history.”*

The following ways for preventing instances of inter-ethnic violence amongst the Tutsi and Hutu youths in Gihosha emerged:

- ❖ Establishing partnerships for development between the Hutu and the Tutsi youths so that they can work together to address their own needs and develop self-esteem.
- ❖ Engaging the Hutu and Tutsi youths in socio-political education on the role, duties and responsibilities of citizens towards one another, their community and their country.

- ❖ Doing away with acts of impunity, ending sources of grievances and bridging the widening gap between youth from different political parties.
- ❖ Pursuing reconciliation, forgiveness and forgetting past ills, through truth telling, empathy, respect and mutual support amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths.
- ❖ Investing in awakening the Tutsi and Hutu youth on self-reliance, the rule of law and accountability.
- ❖ Fostering unity, collaboration and putting on other people's shoes in dealing with them.
- ❖ Merging enhanced civic and leadership training with the creation of economic opportunities to connect and bringing the Hutu and Tutsi youth together.
- ❖ Regaining a united voice against ethnic prejudice and ensure equity and justice for all.

### **6.10 ACTIVITY 3: MAPPING AVAILABLE COMMUNITY TOOLS, APPROACHES AND EXPERIENCES OF PEACEBUILDING**

This activity sought to map out exciting peacebuilding interventions and their impact in Gihosha. Participants were asked to write down at least two existing peacebuilding actors and their role in curbing inter-ethnic tensions amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth. This activity was carried out in line with the Research Objective 2, which sought to explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundians youths. The activity was also meant to highlight the whether peacebuilding efforts and interventions were implemented consistently amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha peri-urban area to account for what was missing and why.

#### **6.8.1 Recorded Peacebuilding Efforts or Actors**

Exploring peacebuilding interventions, efforts and initiatives available in Gihosha area showed the existence of several peacebuilding efforts, actors and impacts that range from individuals, civil society organisations, churches and denominations, government-led efforts and community mobilisers.

Table 6: Prominent peacebuilding efforts and impact that were highlighted

Interventions / Actors / efforts	What they do / Impact / Challenges
Civil society organisations	Most of them organise campaigns and training sessions. Yet, because the youth are not associated in decision-making, impact is not fully felt.
Youth peacebuilding clubs and cooperatives: Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Giramahoro</i> club;</li> <li>✓ <i>Ejo hacu</i>;</li> <li>✓ <i>Turibamwe</i>;</li> <li>✓ <i>Garukiramahoro</i>;</li> <li>✓ etc.</li> </ul>	They are trying their best in preventing inter-ethnic violence amongst the youth in Gihosha but politicians interfere in the work. The impact is not big as some leaders see the efforts as a source of money.
Churches and denominations:  e:g: Commission diocesain pour la reconciliation;	They provide advice and encourage the youths to love one another and live in harmony. Some churches and denominations are divided and are not the role models for the youth.
Government led efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Police;</li> <li>✓ Army;</li> <li>✓ Law enforcement agents;</li> </ul>	Their peacebuilding efforts is part of their daily activities. Yet, some youth see them as instruments of intimidation and repression as witnessed in 2015;
Community mobilisers:  Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Women's leaders;</li> <li>✓ Youth's leaders;</li> <li>✓ Human rights advocates;</li> <li>✓ Green peace activists</li> </ul>	They are best suited to gearing intergenerational understanding across Gihosha. They are not well seen by the regime in place, unless they are supporting the ruling political party;

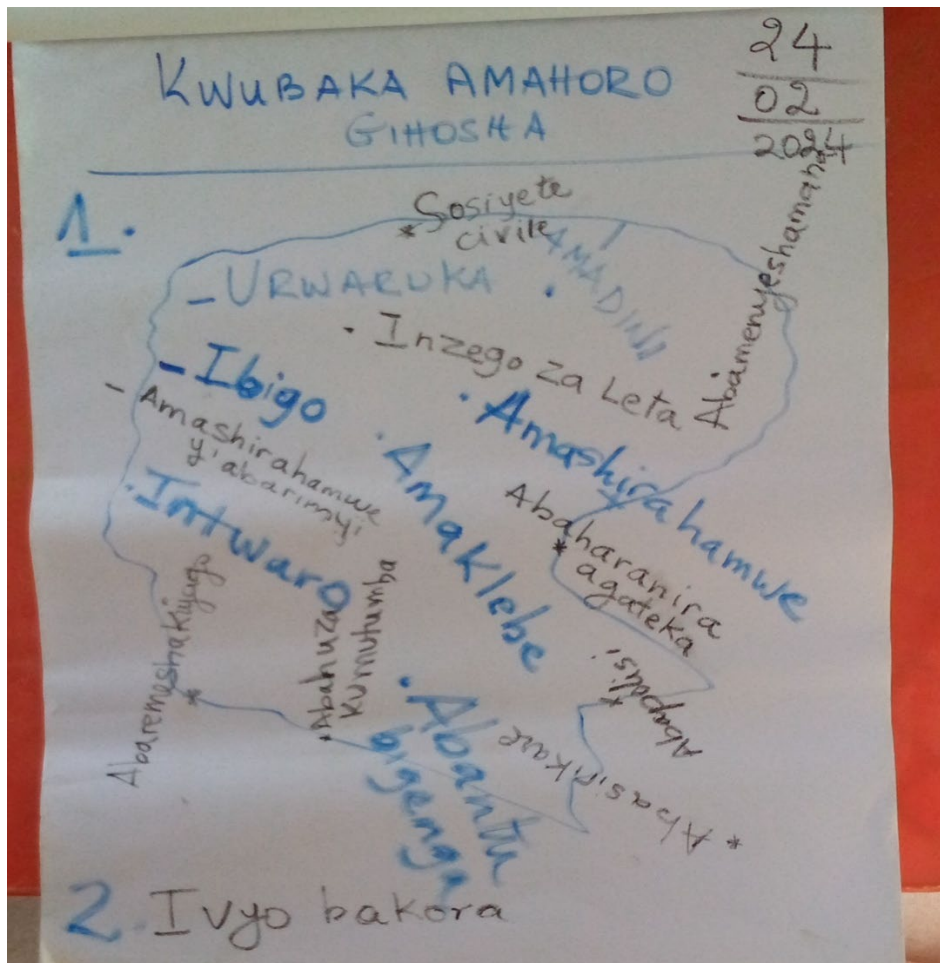


Figure 52: Mapping existing peacebuilding efforts in Gihosha, 24 February 2024

### 6.8.2 Recorded Shortcomings

While peacebuilding interventions and efforts are increasing in Gihosha, participants in the intergenerational dialogue session noted that most efforts were not properly designed to respond to the inter-ethnic challenges. Efforts were deeply divided and sceptical and were dominated by political ideologies of the regime in place. Participants noted that interventions did not address the issue of youth collaboratively and thus the peacebuilding mandate was failing. The dialogue did not provide clear paths towards healing and trust-building among the youths and seemed to be politically managed.

### 6.9 ACTIVITY 4: WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF INTER-ETHNIC TENSIONS AMONGST THE YOUTH IN GIHOSHA COMMUNITY?

This open activity was included on the agenda to give an opportunity for the participants in the intergenerational dialogue workshop to share perspectives and knowledge for them to heal

from their past wounds. As we were planning this intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, youth researchers agree that, based on the experiences of the impact that the search conference had had on their lives, the intergenerational dialogue workshop would equally require deep exchange and a communal analysis of issues that have hindered peaceful coexistence so that the healing process emerge.

Mr Tunda, an evangelist who was amongst the participants read in his Bible in the book of Jeremiah Chapter 6 verse 14 and cautioned that unless the inner being was transformed, all outer efforts for reconciliation would be limited. The verse reads: “They have healed the wound of my people as though it were not serious and they say, peace, peace when there is no peace”. To the participants’ surprise, we understood that we have to strategize the way we address youths’ inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha.

### **6.9.1 Meditation and Reflection**

Participants were given time to collectively reflect and exchange on what it would take to restore trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths. One participant mentioned that ethnicity in Gihosha in particular, and in Burundi, in general was an intergenerational curse which required to be seriously rooted out. She underscored the importance of reversing the way of living and tackling the issues from a spiritual foundation. This drew the attention of the majority of participants who highlighted that it was important to change participants’ inner lives before thinking about breaking the cycle of inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha community.

### **6.9.2 Poll**

After a rich debate on key options, participants voted that the only way to end inter-ethnic suspicion and tensions amongst the youth in Gihosha was through intergenerational commitment to love and living in harmony. They stressed that this commitment had to be preceded by repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and self-denial, expressed in forms of contrition by all participants to the intergenerational dialogue. To achieve this reconciliation milestone, we selected volunteers to represent various groups of perpetrators and another group of volunteers who represented the victims. The remaining participants were witnesses. The process was as follows:

On the side of victims, the following representatives volunteered to represent various groups of victims of inter-ethnic violence in Gihosha: a representative of young Hutu victims, a

representative young Tutsi victim, a representative of adult victims, a representative of women victims, a representative of men victims, and a representative of elected officials' victims, and a representative of all those who perished in the ethnic violence in Gihosha.

On the side of perpetrators, we had: a representative of young Hutus, a representative young Tutsis, a representative of adult perpetrators, a representative of women perpetrators, a representative of men perpetrators, and a representative of elected officials' perpetrators and a representative of other categories of unidentified perpetrators who committed crimes but were not present to the intergenerational dialogue workshop. This symbolic prophetic simulation was an occasion for all participants to acknowledge past ills committed on the soil of Burundi and in Gihosha area in particular. After recognising that both Hutu and Tutsi youths and Hutu and Tutsi adults were all culprits, they all knelt and repented for all the crimes perpetrated by the youth, adults and other perpetrators.

### **6.9.3 Interfaith Prayer**

The prayer of repentance was pronounced by the evangelist, Mr Tunda, as all participants held each other's hands and prayed together for community healing, intergenerational forgiveness, personal healing and reconciliation.

## **6.10 EVALUATION: REFLECTION, LESSONS LEARNED AND INTERVENTION OUTCOME**

This activity started in the afternoon after lunch time and networking. Participants were late coming back as they continued discussing and networking. The researcher called them twice and they said that they had a very good day and that they were pleased to connect with one another. When they had all sat down, the researcher requested 10 volunteers to come to the stage and share what they had learned during the intergenerational dialogue workshop.

### 6.10.1 Participants' Perceptions of the Intergenerational Dialogue Intervention

Table 7: Some immediate outcomes as emerged from participants' responses

<b>Participant 1:</b>	I learned that I am no exception with regard to lived experiences of inter-ethnic violence and that healing begins within ourselves and that no one else will play the role. There is no messiah who can heal us, unless we undertake to heal ourselves.
<b>Participant 2:</b>	1) I learnt two things: First, trying to hide our emotional wounds is impossible because the mind is like a machine that has recorded all traumatic experiences. Second, it is important to focus our anger and frustrations not on people, but on issues.
<b>Participant 3:</b>	Thanks to the intergenerational dialogue workshop, I have connected to the Hutus against whom I kept resentment and I could not understand they have endured all forms of violence as well;
<b>Participant 4:</b>	I never imagined that research as you introduced it in the morning was capable for bringing together people from diverse groups and have them contribute to such incredible healing as witnessed today in this hall;
<b>Participant 5:</b>	It is possible for people to heal from past violence. It only takes willingness, open-mindedness, creativity, networking, collective action and opportunity;

<b>Participant 6:</b>	If our ways of feeling and thinking are filled with resentment, it does not matter how much gain we have in this world, it is all building on the sand.
<b>Participant 7:</b>	Even though humans may fervently search for peace, unless they let go, they cannot find real inner peace;
<b>Participant 8:</b>	I learned that, if not dressed properly, ethnicity is a factor that perpetuate intergenerational enmity that bears much on socio-economic and identity crises from one generation to the next;
<b>Participant 9:</b>	The intergenerational dialogue offered me good opportunity for realising that recognising other persons' dilemmas helps deconstructing the problem of evil in communities;
<b>Participant 10:</b>	I was surprised to learn that almost all of us in this hall had negative feelings that were rotting us deeply inside. I appreciate that at least we are free from today and that we will be able to build for the future generation;

Table 8 presents key findings that emerged from an evaluation conducted on Saturday 24 February 2024 where participants were asked to give their views on the intergenerational dialogue intergenerational session. Some immediate outcomes that emerged from participants' responses revealed that intergenerational dialogue was a powerful tool that brought people together despite their differences, whether ethnic, social status or age differences. The responses showed that if participants' life experiences were shared with others, a deeper understanding, connection and empathy would emerge.

### 6.10.2 Researcher's Evaluation

- ❖ Dealing with diversity and divergence required a multifaceted strategy that favours participation and empathy.
- ❖ Neither the Hutu youth, nor the Tutsi youth nor the adults both Tutsi and Hutu in Gihosha area had been spared from traumatic experiences resulting from inter-ethnic tensions.

- ❖ Suspicion among the Hutu and Tutsi youth was a deadly disease that require robust interventions and actions.
- ❖ Inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha weakened all efforts for community development and affected all community members and benefitted nobody.
- ❖ The intergenerational dialogue unearthed important instances of hypocrisy that lingered amongst the youths and adults alike in Gihosha community.
- ❖ Despite efforts at restoring trust amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha, in reality there was no genuine holistic approach to addressing ethnicity.
- ❖ Spiritual renewal, forgiveness, repentance and contrition were key to reconciliation and healing.
- ❖ It was possible to build genuine relations and mend broken hearts when people let go and created an environment for open discussions and trust.
- ❖ The provision of guidance and the development of a framework that enables people would be a token of peace, healing and reconciliation amongst divided people and hurting generations.

## 6.11 FURTHER ACTION PLANNING

Participants in the intergenerational dialogue intervention workshop suggested that all those who participated to the dialogue should form a network. Following this request, Mrs Bella Irankunda, one of my co-researchers during the search conference told participants that they had already launched a ‘network of whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles’ and that they would be glad to invite other participants to join the circles. She added that they participated as co-researchers alongside the main researcher because they were empowered and that they appreciated the role of participatory research in community mobilisation and solving societal issues, including inter-ethnic tensions.



Figure 53: A partial view of some participants in group work, Photo taken by the researcher in Gihosha on 24 February 2024

Participants agreed to join the network of *whistle-blowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles* and charged me to follow up as they chose to contribute to breaking the cycle of inter-ethnic enmity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi through collaboration and by investing their time in finding sustainable solutions. The chargé of social affairs at the zone level assured participants that the administration at Gihosha Zone level would assist in the implementation of programmes for advocacy and other intergeneration dialogues for the sake of reaching out to the overall community of Gihosha. He assured them that the *whistle-blowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles* would receive full backing and support from the administration in Gihosha and that it was an opportunity for preventing inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha.

## 6.12 POST-INTERVENTION EVALUATION

On 23 and 30 March 2024, just a month after the intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, the researcher conducted a follow-up interview with six participants who shared their stories of lived experiences of inter-ethnic violence in Gihosha. There were stories of healing and forgives among interviewees who participated in the intergenerational dialogue workshop. One Tutsi speaker testified:

*Since the researcher participated to the intergenerational dialogue on 24 February, the researcher feel light and it is well in my heart. Ever since, I realised that there is no difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi, we are all humans and we share all the sufferings of this earthly life. I love everybody. (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).*

Another Tutsi youth asserted:

*I used to fear the Hutus because I assumed they were assassins and terrorists. But as the researcher listened to their experiences of lived violence, I am ashamed that I did not sympathise with them. Since I attended the dialogue workshop, I feel guilty for the misconceptions that I had held for so long. Now, I love the Hutus as love my fellow Tutsis (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).*

A woman whose grandfather was murdered confirmed:

*After many years of tears, anger, frustration and bitterness, the intergenerational dialogue workshop challenged me, especially the prayer that Mr Tunda prayed that*

*day. I keep reminiscing on the words we pronounced and I feel I am indebted towards the Tutsis, as fellow humans. (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).*

A member of the mediation forum contacted said:

*I can't thank you enough for the intergenerational dialogue. It was an occasion to highlight the need for us to be peacemakers. It was an opportunity for me to acknowledge the added value of human connections as a source of healing (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).*

The chargé of social affairs in Gihosha Zone:

*You have saved our lives and you have built our community. It was the first time I saw the youth and adults discussing such a 'taboo' topic. It was incredible to see the enthusiasm among the youth that you're working with. Thank you for conducting such initiative in Gihosha. We will continue working together using similar strategies (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).*

A youth Hutu commented:

*People can lose important things due to the lack of communication. The intergenerational dialogue workshop opened up my mind. Before I participated to this workshop, I used to be upset and I was reluctant to speaking to other people, especially the Tutsis. I knew them as tricksters but, I realised that we need each other's support. (Post-intervention evaluation, 24 March 2024).*

Another Tutsi speaker testified:

*Since I participated to the intergenerational dialogue on 24 February, I feel light and it is well in my heart. Ever since, I realised that there is no difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi, we are all humans and we share all the sufferings of this earthly life. I love everybody. (Post-intervention evaluation, 30 March 2024).<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, Gihosha, 24 February 2024

Overall, the afore-mentioned testimonies that emerged from the evaluation exercise validate the role of intergenerational dialogue in the rapprochement of people with diverging interests and breaking enmity.

### **6.13 SUMMARY**

One main goal was pursued in this chapter. It presented qualitative research results connected to the negativity and the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha neighbourhood. Given that the research is an AR, the chapter began by presenting findings generated from the pre-intervention phase which informed the next phases of study. The findings from interviews, FGDs and search conference are visualised using figures, graphs, tables according to cases that emerged from the initial analysis using NVIVO software. The findings from the intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention were presented in the discourse, tables and bulleted format. The chapter also presented pertinent insights on the learning, healing and reconciliation process that emerged. Notably peoples' feelings, fears, experiences and frustrations were managed through honesty and respectable mutual exploration and collaboration. The ensuing chapter focuses on data analysis and interpretation of the overall findings.

## **CHAPTER 7: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Two goals are pursued in this chapter. The first one concerns the exploration of the data presented in the earlier chapter, the second concerns the interpretation of the data. The qualitative means of data analysis used are descriptive and combine both deductive and inductive methods. To make sense of the findings, a thematic analysis is applied to the relevant codes created using NVIVO software. The interpretive paradigm is used as regards the themes derived from the research objectives namely: the nature, causes, consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths, the opportunities and options for sustainable peace, possibilities for positive contacts and reconciliation amongst the youths and practical knowledge and intervention for improved interactions, trust restoration and peaceful coexistence.

Interpretive models which combine content, thematic and discourse analysis are used in analysing and interpreting qualitative data namely, interviews, FGDs, search conference, peacebuilding circles and the reviewed literature. The interpretive methods burrowed into the data to capture meanings from latent themes and the complex patterns on inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. This chapter draws together the findings, the aims of the study, the objectives, the theoretical framework and the methodology used in this research.

### **7.2 DEMOGRAPHICS IN PEACEBUILDING ENDEAVOURS**

Facts about relations amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are linked to their age group, their gender, their ecological area residence, their occupational identity and their ethnicity dynamics. The socio-demographic backgrounds of the Tutsi and Hutu respondents namely age, gender, ethnicity and area of residence were of paramount importance as they provided relevant information pertinent to Research Objective 1 on the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. Thus, although the research focuses on a population sample within the active age range of individuals living in the Gihosha community, it is important to note that the youth are particularly vulnerable to various challenges in their respective communities. Demographic information about them is crucial for addressing and mitigating negative influences.

Thus, taking into consideration the Hutu and Tutsi youths' varied demographics is important as they equally apply to Research Objectives 2 and 3. They are the backbone to the preliminary evaluation of opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha.

Noteworthy is that participants to the study are both direct and indirect victims of inter-ethnic tensions as Figure 18 and Figure 27 display. Some youth participants were employed, others were unemployed, others were students, others were party members and most of them were witnesses of violence.

### **7.2.1 Age and Generation Factors in Peacebuilding**

As the findings showed, there are several reasons to consider age range in peacebuilding and reconciliation. While age range is usually measured in years, it carries underlying indications on the nature of perpetrators and victims and the required changes. The age range of the Hutu and Tutsi youth participants in this study was between 20 and 25. Data revealed that violence amongst the peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Burundi has an intergenerational dimension in many respects. For one, both the Hutu and Tutsi youth feel that adults have betrayed and excluded them from decision-making power structures including access to socioeconomic opportunities. Thus their relationships with adults are marked with tense speculations which engender manipulation, on the one hand, and disempowerment, on the other. While the majority of the youths are unemployed amidst scarce employment opportunities and acute poverty, the data disclosed that socioeconomic inadequacy sustains security problems and grievances making the youth more likely to be caught up in acts of violence as they continuously compete over scarce opportunities and options for survival. One interviewee noted that *“young people are easy prey to intoxication”*.<sup>14</sup>

Age range is equally vital to peacebuilding efforts among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths. Being aware of the interconnectedness between distrust, ingrained ethnic stereotypes and tensions, results that emerged from the search conference highlighted the need to include adults in the healing, reconciliation and trust building process amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha. This is justified by the fact that as aggression is influenced by the contact factor (Hsieh & Chen 2017) – it was through human contact that peace, trust, reconciliation and

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Bella Iradukunda, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

healing were restored<sup>15</sup>. Whereas the majority of youths were still students, most of them were victims of frustration, unfairness, power abuse and many other forms of ill-treatment. Age was perceived as a dividing factor whereby both the Hutu and Tutsi youths feel bitter as they are faced with barricades from adults, particularly those in power.

Further analysis reveal that most young Hutu and Tutsi are angered that their parents refuse them to socialise with other youths, from different ethnic groups especially the youth of different sex. Figure 28 illustrates that the age difference between youths and adults contributes to a superiority complex among parents and an inferiority complex among Hutu and Tutsi youth. Hence, parents or adults think that youths' choices are not properly thought about and this leads to intergenerational identity clashes<sup>16,17</sup>. In terms of boy-girl relations, some youths are willing to enter into relations with girlfriends or boyfriends from another ethnic group but some adults mock them. This showed that the impact of adults impinges on young peoples' choices as shown through the findings<sup>18</sup>.

The Examination of the results points to the fact that the production of meanings, behaviours and ideas amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is influenced by adults, specifically their parents as well as structural arrangements. This supports Bandura's social learning theory which posits that the family is the nucleus for modelling and reinforcing aggressive behaviour, which is learned by observation and reinforced by action (Bandura 1978). In this regard, several respondents noted that influence of parents' misconceptions and destructive narratives contributed to negativity across generations and cemented the division among the youths. Thus, it is through intergenerational strategies that peace, healing and trust restoration is possible. There are many avenues for that to happen such as exploiting the youths' vigour and energy and engaging them in productive endeavours, and sustainable initiatives<sup>19</sup>.

### **7.2.2 The Area of Residence Factor in Trust Building**

As literature postulates, people living in communities are influenced by religion, politics, individuals, social norms, peers, policies, institutions, parents and families (Akers and Jennings 2016). Hutu and Tutsi youths are similarly influenced by the ideologies prevalent in the environments they live in or frequent. The above point is supported by Sageman (2004, cited

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<sup>15</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, Gihosha, 24 February, 2024

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Simeon Niyonkuru, Kigobe, 27 December 2023

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Bella Iradukunda, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

<sup>18</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Gihosha, 24 January 2022

<sup>19</sup> Search conference report, Gihosha,

in Kundnani 2012:15) who reasons that aggressive tendencies are nurtured by friendship and kinship ties with social networks, political and cultural agencies that fuel radicalisation. Gihosha hosts a multivariate population of people who migrated from rural areas especially during the 1993 ethnic violence. This influx “of strangers” provoked suspicion and resentment among neighbours and bitterness was exacerbated by the targeted assassinations and forced disappearances that followed<sup>20</sup>.

As emerged from FGD, the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha call each other names based on supposed ethnic group living in a certain quarter or area. As Staddon (1984) clarifies, the concept of ‘environment’ for one individual can be another individual. Therefore, as learning occurs within the environment, attitudes are similarly shaped by the area in which one resides.

One respondent reported that although he was a resident of *Gihosha* they call him *Mugamba* (Tutsi from the *Mugamba* region) <sup>21</sup>. Such nicknames which refer to youths’ identity were also reported amongst the Hutu where they were labelled by their ethnic identity attributed to them on the basis of their physical appearance. The finding revealed that living in Gihosha had an effect on the youth’s stability, collaboration and ties and subsequently peaceful coexistence.

However, in this study, data exemplified that the area of residence was, at the same time, a proxy for safety and healing. It was through the Gihosha community intergenerational dialogue outreach that both the Hutu and Tutsi youth and adults achieved forgiveness, healing, reconciliation. The coming together of both the youths and adults resulted in collaboration which inaugurated a new era amongst participants as was manifested in the search conference and intergenerational dialogue intervention. The positive aspect of place of residence is that it compelled both the youth and adults to find practical solutions to ethnic suspicion and bias in Gihosha.

In the sense of Bandura (1978), inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth was learned through observation and exposure to reinforced performance and determined by socio-political structures operating in the Gihosha vicinity. As such, results confirmed that narratives that parents shared with their children, both the Hutu and Tutsi at home and during

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<sup>20</sup> Member of the women’s forums (Tutsi) during the intergenerational dialogue workshop, 24 February 2024

<sup>21</sup> Participant, to the FGD, Kigobe, 24 January 2022

family conversation and the area are factors that ignite conflict, on the one hand.<sup>22</sup> On this note, Figure 31, points to emotional violence inflicted on the youth by their parents.

The responsibility of parents in instilling negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths was noted and confirmed by Sageman' (2012:15) statement that, in the process of radicalisation, aggression spreads the same way a virus does from a single individual already infected to his fellows, often culminating in violence. The place of residence like the social environment was found to be a proxy for aggressiveness (Hsieh & Chen 2017). One participant avowed that her parents moved to Muyaga in Gihosha and a Hutu neighbour told another that they should be careful as strangers or aliens (Tutsi family) had moved to the area<sup>23</sup>. The findings confirmed Castell's (1962:485) opinion that "men do not proceed like animals under the law of instinct". As Figure 40 typifies, the place of residence, place of birth, parents' origin and displacements were causes of insecurity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha area. The tensions between Hutu and Tutsi youths also stem from a shared collective consciousness, shaped by social values and cultural factors. Suspicion, ethnic hatred, scepticism, and stigma were openly directed at innocent youths by those from different ethnic groups.

### **7.2.3 The Ethnicity Dynamic in Trust Building and Reconciliation**

Ethnicity has a special overtone and is a complex demographic aspect noted throughout the findings. It permeates the research. Being 'genealogical and interactional' (Banegas and Chrétien 2011:6), ethnicity ranks among the main themes that emerged across data and is represented as a crosscutting manipulated catalyst of conflict. The analysis found that young Hutus and Tutsis alike, are victims of collective bias which is outside their control. The long history of colonisation inaugurated enmity between historical brothers and sisters. As emerged from FGD, some parents refused their children to intermarry and that caused problems. A Tutsi young lady got engaged to a Hutu young man and the girl's mother refused to bless the union. On one occasion, the brothers of that Tutsi girl engaged in a fight with family members of the Hutu young man and they refused to take the dowry.

Despite the above, the researcher found that ethnicity is portrayed at the same time as a reason why the Hutu and Tutsi should work towards reconciliation. Figure 18 revealed very significant information that ethnic perceptions are pertinent in peacebuilding as it has significant effects

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<sup>22</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Gihosha, 22 January 2023

<sup>23</sup> FGD, Gihosha, 22 January 2023

on social cohesion amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. Although literature suggests that ethnicity among Burundians was not used as a means of discrimination by successive regimes (Samii 2013), the findings indicate that the social consequences of exclusion and violent conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi throughout Burundi's history have led to insecurity, deaths, forced disappearances, property destruction, and displacement. Based on those realities, breaking the cycle of animosity based on ethnicity requires joint efforts of both the Hutu and Tutsis.

In the aim of curbing inter-ethnic violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths, findings showed that if not properly handled, ethnicity becomes a cancerous virus across generations. Although some respondents suggested ethnic amnesia as a proper path towards reconciliation amongst the youth in Burundi<sup>24</sup>, results confirmed that effective and efficient intergenerational collaboration, empathy and love is key to reconciliation and the restoration of trust. It was mentioned that one option for preventing enmity among Hutu and Tutsi youth is to compromise on the necessity for living together, sharing opportunities and forging communication, mutual respect and reciprocal love<sup>25</sup>.

#### **7.2.4 The Gender Dimension in Peacebuilding**

Although gender is not a direct cause of inter-ethnic violence among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth, the findings show that being a male or female Hutu or Tutsi youth in Gihosha significantly influences the nature, causes, and consequences of inter-ethnic vulnerabilities. The extent of various types, causes, and impacts of hostility between Hutu and Tutsi youths is notably shaped by gender. Gender-based violence was highlighted in the findings, with some male and female youths having their rights denied.

The results confirmed that the gender factor is crucial in effective peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. For some youths, engaging in romantic relationships with another youth from a different ethnic group was perceived as a social crime by their family and ethnic group. The youth was tagged as renegade and faced bias from members of his or her own ethnic group. This is continued to cement the long-held stereotypes as figures 32, 34 and 38 exemplified. Yet, some youth transcended the social norms that restricted them from romantic relations with youth from other ethnic groups, a social

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<sup>24</sup> FGD, Kigobe, 24 January 2022

<sup>25</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop, Member of the women's forums (Tutsi) account, February 24, 2024

phenomenon which was rare, but prone to improving social relations amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths.

Thus the results showed that to be successful, peacebuilding efforts require weighing up the impact of dividers and connectors by means of gender positives and negatives as discussed in Chapter 5. This is in line with the assertion made by Arostegui (2013) who highlights that gender relations are vital to envisioning required societal changes. Thus, data disclosed that gender was considered and ensured equal participation of both females and males. This added value to the impact of the research in terms of holistic recovery as the search conference results and intergenerational dialogue intervention outcomes highlighted.

### **7.2.5 Occupational Identity as Proxy for Conflict and Peace**

Gihosha neighbourhood is a hub for youth job seekers, especially part-time jobs for fulltime students or fulltime jobs for other categories of the youths. Securing employment was regarded as success due to the pressure and gymnastics involved<sup>26</sup>. Thus, employment status and occupational identity was constructed from Research Objective 1, which is the exploration of the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths. The data collected showed that the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha lack access to decent jobs and employment opportunities as in many other parts of the country (UNICEF, 2020). This situation raised security concerns and fuelled mutual suspicion, hatred, and dangerous behaviours such as theft, killings, and kidnappings. With limited access to the labour market, many youths turned to political activism, where favours were distributed by political elites (Brachet and Wolpe 2005) through a network founded on political allegiance and sustained inflammatory discourse (Persson and Sjostedt, 2012).

Notably, the results revealed that economic discrimination<sup>27</sup>, biased accessibility to employment opportunities and sponsorships enmeshed with systematic corruption and abuse of public resources lead to economic vulnerabilities and subsequently, to economic inequality<sup>28</sup> which engendered selfishness that ignited grievances and enmity (Brachet and Wolpe, 2005). In actuality, instead of fostering peace, resilience and reconciliation, the few employment opportunities available to youth became a stumbling block (Paris 2010) as the exercise of political power based on patronage widened the gap amongst the youth enticing them to align

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<sup>26</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Kigobe, 24 January 2022

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Bigirimana Jean Marie, Kigobe, 16 November 2023

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Jean Baptiste Ndayizeye, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

themselves with political party elites for temporary gains (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:4). The youths who benefited from the unlawful favours acted as watchdogs on behalf of their bosses who protected them even if they committed atrocities or killed people.<sup>29</sup> In the main, some youths were subjected to physical harm, torture, ill-treatment and beatings. Such unfairness increased grievances (Emerson and Kilson 1965) and continues to cause negativity and tensions amongst the youths as visualised in Figure 38 in the previous chapter.

Yet, despite the above, the results showed that employment status is an indisputable foundation for sustainable peace, as it paves way towards positive contacts, reconciliation and trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha<sup>30</sup>. Some efforts were being made to up-skill young people<sup>31</sup> mostly through economic empowerment<sup>32</sup>. Similarly, as emerged from the whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles, employment status through entrepreneurship and personal initiatives led to peaceful coexistence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and prevented a relapse into inter-ethnic violence. This has been the case for many countries such as Kenya (Mkangi and Githaiga 2012:7).

### **7.3 IT IS NOT WELL IN GIHOSHA NEIGHBOURHOOD: INSIGHTS FROM THE PRE-INTERVENTION RESULTS**

Research Objective 1 which was to explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic violence amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths, led to findings of interrelated factors, triggers as well as consequences of violence which require robust intervention.

The pre-intervention phase used questions that addressed issues related to the following themes: the prevailing atmosphere in Gihosha; the fear, hopes and perceptions of Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha in the face of violence; types of instigators of violence; and ways of dealing with inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. As the researcher delved into this quest, he was able to see the association between nature, causes and effects of inter-ethnic tensions as the general atmosphere prevailing in the mainstream community of Gihosha area was described by key informants as Table 17, 18 and 19 display. Outwardly, relations amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha were marked by relative peace as no violent and open clash between the two groups were mentioned. Yet, there were micro-

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Muzehe Ayub, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Ngabirano Zacharie, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Nijimbere Frederick, Kigobe, 17 November 2023

<sup>32</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Gihosha, 19 January 2022

dynamics of tensions such as the following: Hutus and Tutsis both young and adults avoided each other, and they were often victims of hatred which is aggravated by parents' negative tales related to ethnicity. Mostly, respondents mentioned the prevalence of incidents of inter-ethnic provocations. The analysis of these patterns reflected that social relations between the Hutu and Tutsi youths are not ideal. As noted by Erdley et al. (2010: 41), when aggression is prevalent, the likelihood of future aggressive responses increases, as cognitive expectations are reinforced and learned through observation. These conflict micro-dynamics stem from leaders who deliberately perpetuate ethnic discord for their own benefit.

Some common effects of the strained ethnic relations between peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi included psychological trauma, defensiveness, negative emotions, disengagement from political life, intolerance, arrests, killings, and forced migration. These emotional states impact both Hutu and Tutsi youths, leaving them with a constant sense of threat. This exposure to "distressful emotions" (Hsieh and Chen 2017) affects their relationships and interactions. The researcher also found that many youths not only feel betrayed but are also emotionally scarred.

The analysis pointed to the fact that, beyond the tense interpersonal relations, the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are faced with structural challenges which nurture emotional stress. In a country where accountability and the rule of law is jeopardised, the expressed views by respondents confirmed that most youths felt insecure and this led to negativity. Some of the causes of their insecurity were injustice and inequality to which the youths were subjected and which were prone to foster violence. This was evident as the expressed misconceptions about ethnicity led to manipulation which perpetuated hatred and destructive attitudes where each group tended to manipulate or control the other. Thus, both the Hutu and Tutsi youths were haunted by perpetual fear of losing their people or being killed themselves or being forced to disappear due to arbitrary arrests and political violence.

Additionally, the analysis identified key violence instigators of tensions amongst the target population by respondents revealed a complex web of instigators including human nature, political marginalisation and oppression, hatred, mistrust and ethnic stereotypes, blind political militantism and elected officials who used the youth for their own gain. This echoes Hsieh and Chen's (2017:2) confirmation that instigating triggers of violence are fuelled by impelling forces which are associated with personality traits or dispositional factors that would upsurge chances of aggression in the face of instigating triggers. As the youths were exposed to grievances and violence, they became radicalised and this led to violence (Kundnani 2012).

The inter-ethnic tensions amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha are complex and subtle. The paradox of these tensions lies in the fact that, while the coldness of the relations between Hutu and Tutsi may not be immediately visible, it is evident through the contradictory and antagonistic behaviours exhibited in their interactions. In this regard, Lambert and Myers' (1999) definition of conflict as a struggle or competition between people who present opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals is accurate. The analysis of the youths' ways of handling ethnic violence showed that diverging trends were common and encompassed the following: plotting revenge; letting go; keeping silent; running away; joining self-defence and vigilante groups; joining powerful men and strong political parties or, for some youths, reacting to violence with violence.

It is important to highlight that each youth group dealt with the inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha differently. As emerged from the data analysis, the regime in place determined the kind of behaviours that were displayed as it was noted that political marginalisation and oppression caused blind militantism. For instance, since the eruption of violent demonstrations in Bujumbura in 2015, which were sparked by President Nkurunziza Pierre's bid for a third controversial term, the Tutsi youths were targeted and most of them ran away or were still living in hiding. Some were frustrated as the indiscriminate repression which followed the failed military coup had not stopped and arbitrary arrests and forced disappearances continued. The weight of structural violence led most Tutsi youths living in Gihosha feeling insecure, and for survival's sake, most of them had opted for changing their political allegiance to please the CNDD-FDD regime.

The researcher observed that there was a paradox that resulted from the political game being played in Gihosha area. While the phenomenon discussed in this research concerns inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths, results showed that political intolerance transcended the ethnic factor to include the '*ahengamiye he*' (to which political party does he/she belong) slogan. The researcher sadly noted that youths, either Tutsi or Hutu, who were not numbered amongst the CNDD-FDD youths' league or any other entities associated with the ruling party, were subjected to intense surveillance by youths affiliated to the ruling party. Worst of all, they were discriminated against and, on occasion, they were refused some services, such as sugar distribution, access to aid and official documents.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Key informant interview, Gihosha, 10 January 2022

From the initial evidence of existing inter-ethnic tensions and violence, the researcher established that the main trigger of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths was ingrained in the Hutu and Tutsi youths' mind-sets coupled with complex and subtle social, political, economic, relational and structural factors. The latter were developed and cemented into the general population's consciousness to the point that it was not easy to determine which trigger factor was the main problem. This emphasised the need for a robust and holistic participatory peacebuilding intervention for the peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths to be able to live together again in harmony. It was with this general picture pertaining to pending issues facing the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha that the researcher endeavoured to provide an in-depth analysis of the real nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions as they permeated and haunted the lives of Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha neighbourhood. This analysis followed the aim and specific objectives and sought to determine options and opportunities for the Hutu and Tutsi to live together again.

#### **7.4 INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE NATURE, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES: EVIDENCE FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, INTERVIEWS, SEARCH CONFERENCE AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE WORKSHOP INTERVENTION**

The issue of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha is not restricted to a linear or straightforward scheme regarding their typologies, instigators, parties or consequences. This is because the root causes of that animosity transcend the present and reach back to history throughout successive generations. Yet the current generation of Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are faced with consequences of intergenerational ethnic manipulation sustained throughout history. Aiden (2015) notes the crimes committed by one ethnic group against the other are committed by both the Hutu and the Tutsi. This highlights the challenge to demarcate the extent of individual responsibility.

Tensions involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban neighbourhood of Gihosha, are contingent on the socio-ecological realities of the area. As highlighted previously, Gihosha is the hub for a burgeoning youth population and hosts the former centres of operations of fighting rebel groups namely the CNDD-FDD, FNL-PALIPEHUTU and others. Currently, the emergence of Gihosha to the status of urban zone of the Bujumbura Municipality has contributed to the youths' upsurge in quest for employment opportunities, in addition to the affordability of living conditions and the proximity to the centre of Bujumbura. Subsequent to

the peace Accord in 2000, Gihosha has remained a terrain of opposing ideologies and the nearest zone of transit for losing side and fugitives as the 2015 failed military coup has exposed. As a matter of fact, being such a melting pot area, which borders Bujumbura Municipality, Gihosha extends to rural areas with thousands of steep hills and valleys where it is easy for perpetrators to hide and withdraw. Gihosha has always been a strategic entry or exit point for military attacks and at the same time it is a safer route through which the losing side often retreat to re-organise tactically or simply to retaliate or hide out. Those facts justify the reason why Gihosha is a good case that portrays the causes and the consequences of violence between the Hutu and Tutsi youths.

#### **7.4.1 Analysis of Identity of Parties involved in the Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Gihosha**

The researcher turns now to the question of identity of key actors who, despite acting behind the scene, influence inter-ethnic relations amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha vicinity. Erdley et al. (2010) are correct when they underscore that aggression emerges from a web of intertwined causal factors, far-reaching in perspective and wider in scope. This applies fully to the negativity that the Hutu and Tutsi youths entertain amongst themselves as the findings suggest multivariate parties involved. Thus the several parties presented as catalytic to inter-ethnic bias and negativity include adults, youth members of political parties' leagues, politicians, the country's elites and elected officials and the police and the army.

The existence of those actors operational behind scene have a big share in shaping attitudes, behaviours and feeling amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. For instance, the researcher noted that adults (in other words, elder family members) are key to moulding the youths' attitudes as they are responsible for the meaning attached to their respective identities. Philips and Orton (1983, cited in Staddon 1984) argue that the family is the primary influence in shaping and reinforcing aggressive behaviour, followed by the surrounding subculture. As a result, young people adopt and build on the social order passed down from their ethnic background, which is shaped by adults and family members.

There are additional interlinked parties involved in inter-ethnic tensions amongst the youths in Gihosha: youth members of political parties' leagues, politicians, the country's elites and elected officials and the police, the army and paramilitary. In the debate on ethnicity between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, Brachet and Wolpe (2005) argue that, despite consociational

politics, ‘the winner-takes all’ politics is shaped by political belonging where the elites develop networks with the youth and distribute favours to them which poses a risk for relapse into conflict. Non-affiliated youths are socially, economically, and politically discriminated against by elites and officials, who use the police, army, and paramilitary forces to suppress peaceful dissent. In this way, the youths become tools for both the regime and their political parties, manipulated by elites and exposed to top-down propaganda, which ultimately leads to more violence.

#### **7.4.2 Typologies of Inter-Ethnic Violence involving the Hutu and Tutsi Youths**

To meet the research objectives of this study, all research instruments<sup>34</sup> that guided the discussions, activities and intervention were designed and administered to explore the following themes: perceived forms of violence involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths; their nature, their consequences and effects; opportunities and options for curbing them; and key actors and factors behind the inter-ethnic tensions. The exploration of the types and the determining factors of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha revealed that they are intertwined with their consequences in a cyclical fashion. Indeed, results from the above themes pointed to three main categories of violence, namely, emotional violence, physical violence and structural violence. This typology of violence is consistent with Galtung’s (1969) model. Based on lived experiences and witnessed forms of inter-ethnic tensions, the respondents in this research categorised inter-ethnic tensions into three main kinds of whose upshots click cross throughout the findings.

##### **7.4.2.1 Unremitting structural violence**

Galtung (1969) posits that structural violence is exploitative in nature and refers to systemic violence that permeates all human needs. As such, while negative contacts between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are entertained by the respective youth categories, some youths are debased through structural injustices. The data as displayed in Figure 32 denotes the following types of injustices: injustice in schools; injustice inflicted on the opposition; political bias in schools; long-held stereotypes; and political intolerance<sup>35</sup>. Some categories of youths, especially youths not affiliated to CNDD-FDD regime were subjected to segregation and

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<sup>34</sup> See research instruments: Interview guide, FGD guide, Search conference report, and Intergenerational dialogue intervention program.

<sup>35</sup> See Figure 7:16.

forced to drop out of school<sup>36</sup>. The noted case was reported through one FGD in Gihosha whereby a young Tutsi had to swap schools after she was refused admission on the basis of her parents' political affiliation which was different from that of the headmaster<sup>37</sup>. Similar cases were reported in the interviews<sup>38</sup>.

As seen from throughout the data, political violence is reported as one form of violence that affects the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. Data showed that politically motivated violence is often steered by the ruling elites who use their positions to influence the Hutu or Tutsi youths to intimidate other youths. These forms of structural violence are often seen in political segregation whereby some youths are not allowed to hold meeting unless permitted by the youth members of the ruling cliques. A case in point is where youth members to the opposition party, CNL were subjected to intimidation and not allowed to hold meetings in Gihosha, even when they asked for permission. Worst of all, leaders in the area do little to make all youths feel they are valued or they belong to Gihosha.

The reason why structural violence persists in Gihosha is that leaders are elected based on political militantism, not on morality. This posed the challenge related to accountability and the rule of law as elected officials see themselves as demi-gods and beyond the common reach. The leadership has become more and more repressive and intolerant to the point that some Tutsi youths fear to participate in community works. Also, criminality in Gihosha is not dealt with properly as some youths belonging to the ruling regime are protected even if they are caught or arrested after committing crimes. The administration feigns their imprisonment where after few days, they are released and continue to threaten other youths, especially those they consider potential opponents. Thus, some youths, especially the Tutsi have turned violent out of frustration and some have run away and joined criminal groups based in Eastern Congo and Rwanda from where they orchestrate disruptive attacks on Burundi. As Loomba (2014:20) postulates, structural violence does not leave younger generations indifferent but pushes them into seeking protection from those in power though not in a passive or submissive manner.

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<sup>36</sup> FGD, Kigobe, 14 February 2022

<sup>37</sup> FGD, Gihosha, 16 November 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Iradukunda Celestin, Kigobe, 16 November 2023

#### 7.4.2.2 Physical and emotional violence

This type of violence was noted as a current threat to social cohesion amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. As findings showed ongoing incidents of inter-ethnic violence including torture, physical harm, ill-treatment and beatings. Physical violence is often associated with youth members of the CNDD-FDD youths league and youth members of other political groups. Youth members of the ruling party physically inflict physical harm to other youths simply because they mention something unpleasant for the regime. The youths are not allowed to criticise poor governance. Likewise, youths who feel threatened retaliate and the cycle of tensions resumes. As the views that emerged from the FGDs and interviews highlight, physical violence is the ultimate cause of negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha<sup>39</sup>.

Generally, physical violence, which is understood as the intentional and direct infliction of damage on persons, including physical suffering, bodily harm and violent death (Igarape Institute 2021:6) opens the door to more incidents of violence. For one, family members of the victims become emotionally aroused with intent for revenge or retaliation. Findings suggest that the Hutu and Tutsi issue in Burundi is still a problem as there has never been proper redress. Thus, if a Tutsi youth is harmed physically, all the Tutsis feel harmed and this rekindles ethnic resentment and tensions. While physical violence materialises through ‘physical harm’ (Brauer and Tittle 2012), the ethnicity factor determines the aftermath. The researcher noted that if a Hutu youth inflicts physical harm onto another Hutu youth, the incident is not considered as when a Tutsi youth physically abuse a Hutu youth or vice versa.

As per the findings, physical inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is embedded in acts of intimidation, killings, arrests, forced disappearances, exile and torture whose perpetrators include local self-determining actors supplemented by state-owned actors, including the judiciary. Considered from the perpetrator and victim lenses, both structural and physical violence culminate in another type of violence which affects the wellbeing of the youth victims: emotional violence.

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<sup>39</sup> Focus Group Discussions, Kigobe, 16 November 2023.

### 7.4.3 Causes of Inter-Ethnic Tensions amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Burundi

Four main groups of triggers of such violence were identified: some are socially driven, other are economically motivated, others are politically stirred and still others are ecologically controlled. Amongst the social recipes of inter-ethnic violence include intense segmental (ethnic, religious) rifts and rivalries between the Hutu and Tutsi in general. This is supported by the wider literature on causes of violence in Burundi such as Nodular (2006), Samii (2013) and Uvin (2009) who note that multifarious trigger factors of tensions including competition, fear, political-strategic motivations, deep partisan motivations, ethnicity, political behaviour, regional identity in Burundi, have resulted in mutual distrust. These findings confirm the hypothesis (2) that the trigger causes and facilitating factors of inter-ethnic enmity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are embedded in the political manipulation of ethnicity.

Thus, compared to other trigger factors of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths, political factors are far ahead in instigating negativity amongst the youths. This was indicated in the data from interviews, FGDs, search conference and the intergenerational dialogue intervention workshop. Using the divide-and-rule policy, some high-ranking political elites entertain divisions amongst the youths and promise to reward those performing better by making sure there are no other politicians challenging their local constituencies. This affects safety and human security as the clients engage in political intolerance as blind militantism occasion beatings, torture, forced disappearances and silencing the opposition.

In the same vein, the researcher noted that there are ‘big men’ who appeal to their respective communities and constituencies and thus mobilise their followers by capitalising on their political and intellectual positions as Daloz (2003) observed. Their intentional actions involve appointing undeserving individuals to key positions, offering them financial rewards, and advancing their status in return for loyalty, while neglecting others, leaving them in poverty and disempowered. As per the following honest statement that emerged from the search conference, negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is rooted in politics based on ethnicity and exerted on people by selfish elites whose moral decisions are hampered by misperceptions and distrust<sup>40</sup>. One respondent expressed his concerns and mentioned that “*young people feel that they will not be considered for opportunities unless someone on top*

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<sup>40</sup> Search Conference, Gihosha 14 February 2024

*help them so. They are forced to rely on top leaders who they believe one day will help them through and they work for them irrespective of the conditions”<sup>41</sup>*. The perpetrators are generally youths affiliated to the ruling party, CNDD-FDD who often entertain tense relations with other youths, specifically youths belonging to CNL, the major opposition party.

The analysis revealed that political factors structurally compel youth to contribute to inter-ethnic tensions in various ways. Youths are particularly affected by politically driven elements of structural violence, manifesting as injustices within schools, discrimination against opposition members, political bias in educational settings, entrenched stereotypes, and the political intolerance they experience. The researcher found that the use of coercive tactics to pressure school youth into joining CNDD-FDD rallies, chanting slogans, or attending ruling party gatherings out of fear fosters animosity among them. This forced compliance, rooted in a culture of fear imposed by the CNDD-FDD on the broader population, leads to deep resentment among both Hutu and Tutsi youths.

#### **7.4.4 Consequences of Tensions amongst Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Gihosha**

As the construction of inter-ethnic violence cut across the social (figure 38), political (figure 39), economic (figure 37), physical and ecological aspects of the youths’ lives, the analysis validated that the consequences also swap across all spheres of the youths’ lives (Figure 41). As such, the wretched lifestyle imposed on the youths by power structures, political parties, political elites and other interest groups disseminate fear and anxiety amongst the youths and adds to their dreadful social circumstances<sup>42</sup>. Impunity, abuse of power, and the subversion of the rule of law, combined with unchecked top-down influence, allow elites to obstruct recovery and undermine justice for their own selfish gains. This erodes accountability, leading to collective trauma (Figure 42), which affects all youth groups.

Further analysis of the effects of ethnicity on social cohesion amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths revealed that, overall, ethnicity is a manipulated tool that has nothing to do with the real identity of Burundians. Although accepted and implemented through power-sharing mechanisms in the current administration in Burundi as result of the Peace Accord for Burundi (Vandegiste, 2009), there is no such thing as ethnic groups known as ‘Hutu’ or ‘Tutsi’, at least culturally. One respondent pointed out that *“there are no ethnic groups in Burundi... we are*

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Jean Baptiste Ndayizeye, Gihosha, 17 November 2023

<sup>42</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, Gihosha, 24 February 2024

*similar and physically resemble*”<sup>43</sup>. In other words, the manipulation of ethnicity acts like a persistent virus, holding back both Hutu and Tutsi youths in various ways. This is exemplified by the ongoing cycle of deceit, hypocrisy, and cunning behaviour passed down through generations in Gihosha.

The findings confirmed the views expressed by many scholars that ethnicity is a colonial legacy which was manipulated to divide Burundians through the divide-and-rule speculative politics and upheld by successive regimes (Chabal, 2009; Yervasi, 2008; Ngaruko and Nkurunziza, 2000). In other words, the youths have been unwittingly driven to oscillate between selfish ambitions, which have been manipulated by unscrupulous individuals. One respondent noted the *‘bad behaviours of dividing young people has repercussions in the ensuing generations... that led to the destruction of the country, families and potentially ethnic cleaning or killings’*<sup>44</sup>. Other effects of ethnic violence include sustained negative feelings, intolerance, psychological wounds, self-defensiveness, arrests, killings, forced migration and non-participation to political life.

#### 7.4.4.1 Economic consequences

Our analysis pointed to the economic consequences of the protracted inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. There are damaging effects which not only hamper the socio-political life of the youth population but also distort economic efforts for recovery after decades of property destruction, looting and human instability that wiped away the family economies. With the rising numbers of unused youths and the rampant nepotism which add to the misery and lack of life basics, the researcher noted that greed and grievances among the youths are on the rise. The latter see themselves as a generation with no future and act irresponsibly in many aspects. Jean Bosco (a young Hutu) sadly noted that “one pertinent issue facing young people in Gihosha is related to poverty in the families and lack of people who can push them up in their everyday endeavours. Young graduates who do not have acquaintances in important positions in the country cannot achieve their life goals due to rampant clientelism and nepotism across all sectors. To be recruited has become an issue”<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Muzehe Ayub, Kigobe, 17 November 2023

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Muzehe Ayub, Kigobe, 17 November 2023

<sup>45</sup> Jean Bosco, a young Hutu, Focus Group Discussion, Gihosha, 16 November 2023.

Due to the absence of accountability and fairness, most young people in Gihosha neighbourhood are running away to neighbouring countries to try new economic ventures there. This is connected to the feeling of unsafety, punctuated by corruption, killings and organised criminal offences which takes innocent lives. As emerged from FGD, there is no economic progress and the intelligentsia run away from the country and most educated people do not return. For instance, lack of equity that runs rampant across sectors affects economic growth and progress and fear is cemented among the youth.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, the lack of equity in employment leads to cyclical poverty and economic stagnation which give rise to other forms of violence.

#### 7.4.4.2 Social consequences

The analysis noted that social consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the youths in Gihosha include the prevalence of cyclical negative narratives. The point is the youths tend to live according to negative spoken words about ethnicity and related rumours instead of living according to their own common sense. The impact of inter-ethnic tensions also is seen as most youths drop out of school as some are even discriminated against at school. A young Hutu had to leave school due to mutual distrust as per his account running as:

*“I was ill-treated because the perpetrators thought that the researcher belonged to CNL, politically known as the leading opposition party. They stole my chicken and threatened me and the researcher almost was denied access to volunteerism.”<sup>47</sup>*

Stigma, coupled with social injustice occasions loneliness amongst the youth in their own society. Socially, the meaning of a community as a family becomes questionable due to the lack of empathy resulting in coldness.

#### 7.4.4.3 Navigating through emotional, physical, and political trauma: the crucible of trauma

The results in this study showed that the youths are suffering from trauma due to the inter-ethnic tensions. They have lost space in which to flourish and their personality is neglected. The analysis showed that they find themselves in a confined place where they cannot think creatively and differently. As noted, some youths prefer to keep silent in the face of injustice, as they devise self-defensive measures which do not improve their conditions. Our analysis led

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<sup>46</sup> FGD, Gihosha, 24 January 2022

<sup>47</sup> Interview with, Bigirimana Jean Marie, Kigobe, 16 November 2023

to the discovery that the youths move with emotional trauma, perpetual fear and feelings of moral outrage. Feeling disillusioned, the Hutu and Tutsi youths' emotional condition is endangered by feelings of resentment and revenge. This is related to their experience of physical violence of which some of them have not yet recovered. They witnessed physical harm, and some have lost their family members and other innocent lives. As some of them feel apprehensive, they opt for either exile or flight, joining gangs or militia groups.

## **7.5 REFLECTIONS ON THE LIKELIHOOD FOR HARMONIOUS LIVING BETWEEN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN GIHOSHA<sup>48</sup>**

Despite the prolonged experience of overt violence, humiliation, aggression, and structural despotism, which has exposed Hutu and Tutsi youths to daily doses of fear, grief, shock, and anger (Elworthy and Rifkind 2006), the culture of Gihosha, which values social cohesion, makes coexisting an unavoidable necessity. To achieve harmonious living, the environment in which the youth grow must provide supportive conditions that enable them to thrive and act without fear. According to Rhee (1980), patterns involving humans, whether socio-political or economic, significantly contribute to conflict. Therefore, restoring relationships and modifying behaviour require a typical therapeutic approach. In this line of thought, the researcher analysed participants' views on living together again. The analysis highlighted the question of social cohesion, trust restoration and peacefulness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha present socio-political, cultural and economic subtleties. The researcher noted that they were similar to concerns expressed throughout the search conference, FGDs and interviews. Based on the analysis, the above concerns point to the fact that dealing with tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is a demanding enterprise, which, if managed inappropriately, can lead to more incidents of tensions. All peacebuilding interventions need to incorporate bottom-up approaches that draw on the knowledge of local communities to prevent a one-sided approach to peace (Coy 2009; Dietrich 2002; Féron and Krause 2022; Paris 2010).

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<sup>48</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, 24 February 2024

## **7.6 GETTING RID OF INTER-ETHNIC NEGATIVITY THROUGH RECOVERY AND MUTUAL TRUST RESTORATION: RELATING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS**

Before delving into the analysis of findings related to this theme, it is vital to recall that this inquiry is tailored on four complementary theoretical frameworks namely the social learning theory and Lederach's conflict transformation, intergeneration dialogue and peacebuilding conceptual frameworks. The social learning theory has hitherto accounted for the protracted animosity and violent suspicion that have shaped the Hutu and Tutsi and traced their origins. Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework suggests ways forward for sustainable conflict transformation of between the Hutu and Tutsi of Burundi. In other words, each theoretical framework supports the other as far as the inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are concerned. The peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue approaches offer avenues for redressing the negativity to ensure peacefulness amongst the youths in Burundi.

### **7.6.1 Curbing Animosity versus Bridging the Divide amongst the Hutu and Tutsi Youths**

This theme relates to Research Question 3, which sought to identify the opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. As the analysis proved, the prevalence of physical, structural and emotional violence amongst the youth necessitates healing and redress through truth seeking. The literature consulted in this study has confirmed that truth seeking has achieved healing in many protracted conflict scenarios such as Rwanda (Buckley 2005; Thomson 2015) and Sierra Leone (Bangura, 2017; Reategui, 2009). Concerning Burundi, findings suggested that the truth-seeking process in is still going on and majority of Burundians prefer 'forgetting the past rather than seeking the truth' (Samii 2013:230). Thus, the researcher noted from results that envisioning healing and trust restoration from a transformative viewpoint without seeking the truth is one amongst notable shortcomings in peacebuilding amongst the new generation of Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in general, and in Gihosha, in particular.

However, participants to the study perceived available opportunities and options that are prone to altering the afore-mentioned negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. As figure 43 and figure 44 demonstrate, respondents believe that genuine healing and reconciliation is possible

through a socio-cultural, economic and political revolution. Results showed that the community has the responsibility to uphold positive cultural consciousness and ideals of harmony and inclusion to ensure peaceful coexistence.

Economically, our analysis showed that ensuring the youths' economic freedom can contribute to resisting temptation and political manipulation. As youth-led start-ups are booming, it is an opportunity to engage with them in more sustainable productive endeavours since it was noted that most youths have understood that politics is no longer a solid source of survival and resilience. These findings are consistent with Peace Direct (2019). Socially, community members have to realise that there is a growing shift in mind-sets among the youth, whereby some opt for inter-ethnic marriage, evidence that a new era is unfolding in Gihosha area.

### **7.6.2 Towards Positive Contacts Restoration: Exciting Peacebuilding Efforts**

As for any social misfortune, the issue of inter-ethnic tensions in Gihosha has attracted many interventions and actors. However, the issue of peace in Burundi is politically controversial as some see the negative peace as a milestone, while others consider that there is a noiseless war going on in Burundi in general.<sup>49</sup> In line with Research Objective 2 which seeks to explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundians youths, the study found that most preventive efforts have been implemented sparingly and their results were not sustainable at all. For instance, most youth clubs, women's forums, civil society organisation and church led initiatives are working under the influence of the ruling party since the violence that erupted in 2015. The researcher found that, unless efforts are endorsed by the ruling party regime, they cannot be implemented properly due to political interference and scepticism.

Even though, the peacebuilding efforts deployed in Gihosha area are not sufficient and do not look at the pending issues affecting the Hutu and Tutsi youths holistically. Some are one-sided and operate in vacuum given that there has never been reconciliation, truth-seeking and truth-telling. For instance, some peacebuilding practitioners, namely civil society associations are politically censored and therefore cannot be objectively engaged in addressing ethnic challenges.<sup>50</sup> Below are some prominent peacebuilding initiatives in Gihosha:

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with a Key informant,

<sup>50</sup> Views expressed during intergenerational dialogue intervention workshop, Gihosha 14 February 2024

### 7.6.2.1 Civil society organisations

The CSOs has been crucial in peacebuilding in many countries such as Nepal (Cardona et al, 2012), Liberia (Ruppel, 2020; Debusscher and Almagro 2016), Cambodia (Martin and Kry 2023), Kenya (Johnson 2013; Githaiga 2017) and Northern Ireland (Acheson and Milofsky cited in Raffoul, 2019). In all the above contexts, the role of civil society included negotiating peace, advocating for peace, knowledge sharing about peace and mobilisation for peace. Indeed, the contribution of local entities and civil society organisations is undeniable in peacebuilding. They have succeeded at influencing national peace processes and creating changes at local level (Cardona et al. 2012).

In Gihosha neighbourhood, several CBOs are contributing to mending the divisions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. The researcher noted, for instance, that CAJAVAT which is operational in the area has multiplied interventions. It is connecting the youths from all ethnic groups and provides services, especially entrepreneurialism and other small activities that bring youths together.

*“The initiative is fostering social cohesion amongst the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa youths and everyone feels valued, supported and respected.”<sup>51</sup>*

However, other peacebuilding efforts amongst the Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha by some CSOs are perceived by most Tutsi youths as biased. This is because since the violent demonstration in 2015, there has been serious censorship by the Administration and some CSOs were banned. Following the banishment, most Tutsi youths ran away as they were hunted by other youth vigilantes belonging to the ruling party. This created a victim mentality in the ranks of Tutsi youths who think that the current CSOs are working to please the regime, instead of advocating for justice for all.

### 7.6.2.2 Churches and denominations

One role of churches is to promote harmony, peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding in the society by ensuring human dignity, human rights and justice. The researcher noted that different denominations and churches are conducting peacebuilding initiatives that seek to restore mutual understanding in Gihosha. As emerged from FGD, participants acknowledged that some churches were contributing to peaceful coexistence by helping young people to cope

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<sup>51</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Gihosha, 16 November 2023.

with their predicaments. For instance, while in politics, young people are faced with overt divisions, churches strive to bring the youth under the same umbrella of brotherhood in Christ. Churches invite the youth not on the basis of political affiliation but on the call for brotherhood and sharing the word of God<sup>52</sup>.

Ultimately, the church stands as a unifying institution and is generally accepted by all parties. However, some denominations are extremist with regard to keeping youth members from dealing with other youths from different faiths with the excuse of preserving members from being yoked together with unbelievers. It was noted that some churches, especially the Pentecostal church, does not bless unions where one is not a member to Pentecostal church. This is a rule that does not please many youths and is seen as source of divisions.

#### 7.6.2.3 Youth peacebuilding clubs and cooperatives

As found, there are initiatives such as youth cooperatives and clubs that are working to bridge the gap and divides amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha neighbourhood. Youth cooperatives namely, *Giramahoro* (have peace), *Ejohacu* (our tomorrow), *Turibamthe researcher* (the researcher are one), *Garukiramahoro* (work for peace) were some noted efforts that are trying to bring both the Hutu and Tutsi youths together around productive purposes. For instance, *Ejohacu* club has undertaken to connect both the Hutu and Tutsi through SKYE endeavours. The researcher talked with the chairperson of the club who said that they came together just to help one another following the experiences of the youths in trying to secure employment in Gihosha area. He informed me that the *Ejohacu* initiative was born after attending a three-day seminar that World Vision organised for the youths. Unfortunately, their efforts were not supported and some politicians interfered with their work to promote their own ambitions.

#### 7.6.2.4 Peacebuilding efforts from governmental institutions

Although vital to the country's stability, government-owned peacebuilding efforts and mechanisms are more coercive than participatory. The analysis showed that national bodies including the armed forces and other law enforcement agents are legislated to put a halt to violence or to prevent or document the outbreak of it. As such, they are no longer trusted and have lost their legitimacy (Cheeseman 2011:341). Those institutions are highly politicised and

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<sup>52</sup> A participant to FGD, Gihosha, 16 November 2023

ethnicised to the point that both the Hutu and Tutsi youths see them as instruments of intimidation, repression and silencing as witnessed in 2015<sup>53</sup>. They are only accountable to the polity from which they take order and are managed.

Hence, government-led peacebuilding efforts are more structural and do not ensure inclusivity as they are influenced by political agendas and political interests of the regime in place and its elites. As such, successful peacebuilding government-led efforts respond to political arrangements between top leaders, as the youths continue to feel crushed by top-down measures. Often, the regime's efforts complicate peacebuilding interventions that are not sanctioned by them. This point is favoured by Lemarchand (1994:63), who cautions that for too long, due to political manoeuvres in Burundi, 'evil [has come] from the top'. This reiterates that government initiatives work better when they are people-centred rather than politically manipulated by state agents.

#### 7.6.2.5 Community mobilisers

The researcher found that, besides the afore-mentioned peacebuilding actors in Gihosha, some community mobilisers, namely women leaders, youth leaders, independent human rights advocates and some green peace activists and individuals are contributing to social cohesion amongst the youths in Gihosha. Their positive impact is seen through their capacity to bring the Hutu and Tutsi youth together by drawing them into community volunteerism. Some youth are given opportunities and empowered to speak out as they follow the paths of elders in the Gihosha Zone and are associated with solving community challenges related to social cohesion. For instance, women leaders cooperate with Hutu and Tutsi boys and girls through intercultural and artistic outings, especially on weekends whereby they gather at the Lycee Municipal Gihosha playground and exchange, play, chat and exercise.<sup>54</sup> Green peace activists for their part, mobilise the Hutu and Tutsi youths through environmental protection practices or in the collection of litter discarded everywhere in Gihosha. Likewise, independent human rights activists engage the youths from different ages, ethnic and gender groups in workshops and seminars on the preservation of human life and rights.

Although the above initiatives are not sponsored by government or any other international organisations, it appeared that their work is making a difference because the youths are in

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<sup>53</sup> Intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, Gihosha, 24 February 2024

<sup>54</sup> Woman leader participant to intergenerational dialogue, Gihosha 24 February 2024

control and feel that they belong. This aligns with Galtung (2016) who concludes that active participation is an effective vehicle for countering injustices and addressing forms of violence. However, the study has elucidated that participation in the above initiatives by community mobilisers is conditioned by genuine motives, clear goals and a conducive environment.

### **7.6.3 Possibilities for Trust Restoration among the Hutu and Tutsi Youth in Gihosha**

In order to effectively eradicate inter-ethnic tensions among the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, viable interventions were devised to redress the multivariate desires of young people, such as connecting and bringing them together; awakening them; fostering unity, collaboration and empathy; enhancing their civic and leadership engagement; connecting them to addressing their own needs and developing self-esteem; engaging them in acknowledging their roles, duties and responsibilities towards one another, towards their community and towards their country<sup>55</sup>. This aligns with Coy (2009:1) who advances that sustainable peace is only achieved where conflict is perceived as a prospective path towards socio-political and cultural transformation. It equally resonates with Lederach's conflict transformation theory whose central claim is that conflict transformation envisages improving and restoring the relationships of disputants in a sustainable fashion (Lederach 2014). This affirms the hypothesis that if the Hutu and Tutsi youths are empowered and brought together into collaborative peacebuilding circles, they would be instruments of change and active co-creators of the desired future.

The researcher noted in the findings that the above efforts can be achieved because there is a growing shift in the mindsets amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths with regards to the necessity of living together, truth seeking, reconciliation and trust restoration. For example, some youths have gained a clear understanding of how politicians, elites, religious groups, and other entities manipulate ethnicity for their own purposes.<sup>56</sup> It was noted during the search conference that one of the strategies for curbing ethnic negativity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha was changing narratives of bitterness into positive ones by discrediting deceptive tactics and discourses which divide people<sup>57</sup>;

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<sup>55</sup> Views from participants during intergenerational dialogue intervention, Gihosha, 24 February 2024

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Iradukunda Celestin, Kigobe, 16 November 2023

<sup>57</sup> Search Conference, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

#### 7.6.4 Search Conference Reports' Results Analysis

The researcher adopted search conference as an AR tool due to its high potential for empowering participants to creating desired futures without direct involvement of the main researcher. This sought to respond to Research Objective 2 which concerns designing and building together with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Bujumbura outskirts of Gihosha practical knowledge and intervention for improved interactions and peaceful coexistence. It also supports to the first hypothesis which holds that the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha can achieve peaceful coexistence and restore mutual trust if efforts to bring them together are made. In seeking ways to restore trust between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, especially in Gihosha, the approach aligns with O'Brien's (2001) perspective that AR is demarcated by its emphasis on participation, collaboration, and learning that is both empowering and contextually relevant. As such, search conferences for solutions to the inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha were piloted by the youth as co-researchers guided by the main investigator.

The search conference sessions also sought to equip participants to carry on the tasks when the main researcher and co-researchers had left as they needed a clear understanding of the methods the process requires. The search conference was organised with the intent of engaging participants in understanding and learning about the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions prevailing in Gihosha area and developing collaborative strategies for restoring trust. The engagement of the Hutu and Tutsi youths, some of them having been victims of inter-ethnic violence and others having witnessed it, pinpointed pertinent themes that unveiled key insights into the research problem and solutions.

##### 7.6.4.1 'It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?'<sup>58</sup>

Participants in the search conference were empowered and learned from each other in a more convivial, participatory, collaborative and democratic manner. With explicit knowledge on peacebuilding acquired during the search conference, which enlightened them and raised them to the position of peacebuilders, they agree on a statement which was summed as "It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?" This was an occasion for deep thinking on possible strategies and consensus generation of the possibilities and actionable tasks which led to the creation of a network of peacebuilding cycles. At this stage, it was clear

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<sup>58</sup> Search conference, Gihosha, 05 February 2024

that the inter-ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi youths are a stark symptom and consequence of political power monopolies and inadequate democratic governance.

#### 7.6.4.2 Whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles<sup>59</sup>

After analysing the issues at stake which related to negativity and animosity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha environs, participants to the search conference agreed to come closer to each other for learning, strategizing, collaborating and action planning. As such, chose “whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles” to be their banner as they meet or reach out to the wider community in Gihosha vicinity. This confirmed Hypothesis 5 that if the Hutu and Tutsi youths were empowered and brought together into collaborative peacebuilding circles, they would be instruments of change and active co-creators of the desired future. As such, the coming together of the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha led to the thirst for designing and implementing a peacebuilding intervention intended to reach out to the wider community of Gihosha.

#### 7.6.4.3 Exploration of key insights and themes

The following matters and themes were noted as per the final adopted search conference report.<sup>60</sup> The Hutu and Tutsi youths realised that they were trapped in ongoing intergenerational narratives shaped by the negative experiences of adults. They were faced with widespread crippling poverty and economic insecurity where political elites distribute favours to some of them to gain their support. Political leaders entertain divisions, stereotypes across political parties and have politicised all socioeconomic sectors which they open to whoever on the condition that they are members of their political parties. The above findings affirm the hypothesis that the trigger causes and facilitating factors of inter-ethnic enmity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha are embedded in the political manipulation of ethnicity. Thus, the both Hutu and Tutsi youths felt crushed and some misbehaved and posed a threat to social cohesion and trust.

Participants in the search conference noted that the best way to curb ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha was not avoiding it but rather facing it. This is supported by Froyd (2019) who reasons that avoiding conflict leads the conflict to actually escalate

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<sup>59</sup> Search Conference, Gihosha, 6 February 2024

<sup>60</sup> Search conference final report adopted, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

making our thoughts and feelings become more negative. Thus, the youths noted some strategies which include discrediting deceptive tactics and discourses dividing them, combatting hate speech, breaking stereotypes, promoting inclusive national identity and building youths' civic responsibility and positive self-conception. This should be accompanied by a strong personal engagement, commitment and collaboration of the Hutu and Tutsi youths so that the desired future and holistic healing be achieved for both the perpetrators and victims.

Also, as per the Search Conference reports, the options for fostering trust and peaceful coexistence include changing attitudes and behaviours, namely, discouraging finger-pointing at others and organising youth spaces where they could engage in intergenerational dialogues to address and transform collective traumatic experiences encountered by both adults and youths. As the idea of conflict transformation entails engaging productively in shifting paradigms in a transformative, interdependent and participative model (Lederach 1995), participants in the search conference highlighted that the suitable alternatives should be more participatory, collaborative and engaging both on the part of adults, Tutsi and Hutu youths and on the governmental structures. Thus the search conference report proposed alternatives which include: fostering creative thinking and entrepreneurship; fighting nepotism; promoting accountability, transparency and equity; addressing unemployment and ensuring equal access to productive resources and employment opportunities.

As negative contacts between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha originated from multiple triggers, therefore, their transformation, as the search conference report required multiple strategies. This substantiates the applicability of Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework that holds that the positive change require a comprehensive, creative and consistent response that focuses on both short and long-term change in personal, relational, cultural and structure fabric and scopes (Lederach 2003:14). Therefore, the idea for implementing an intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention, proposed by participants to the search conference under the whistle-blowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles is an appropriate model to deter social-related factors, causes and effects of inter-ethnic negativity in Gihosha.

### **7.6.5 Intergenerational Dialogue as Pathway towards Healing, Reconciliation and Trust-Building**

This intervention emerged from the search conference where the Hutu and Tutsi youth participants, after conscientisation and awakening through whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles,<sup>61</sup> planned an intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention in Gihosha community. As maintained in literature on the peacebuilding practice, intergenerational dialogue is vital to fostering healing, reconciliation and restoring trust.<sup>62</sup> The motivation for the intergeneration dialogue workshop was to activate social warmth and connection amongst participants as a prerequisite towards reducing ethnic prejudice and ensuring constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience. As advocated by Raffoul (2019) and Short (2022), the process of successful renewal always begins with open dialogue. This is also coherent with Galtung (2016) who observes that active participation is key to addressing forms of violence. These data confirmed Hypothesis 4 which posits that prioritising intergenerational dialogue is the best option for empowering, not only the Hutu and Tutsi youths, but also generations of adults to address the ethnic divisions embedded in their local communities.

This exercise led participants to the intergenerational dialogue intervention to reflect on important issues for the sake of restoring trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. These included eliminating acting with impunity; ending sources of grievances and bridging the widening gap between youths from different political parties; pursuing reconciliation, forgiveness and forgetting past ills through truth telling and truth seeking, empathy, respect and mutual support and regaining a united voice against ethnic prejudice; and ensuring equity and justice for all. While victimhood emerged from different sources which participants had not contributed to physically, participants unanimously agreed to talk the matter over. Through participatory exchange and discussions on what living together between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha community entails, participants agreed to be sincere about every aspect of the problem. As outspoken as they were, they acknowledged both their personal and their respective groups' flaws, actions, attitudes and behaviours related to tensions emanating from ethnicity.

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<sup>61</sup> See search conference report, Gihosha, 14 February 2024

<sup>62</sup> See, Tanghøj, E. 2023.

After a rich exchange of ideas and participatory discussions that empowered all participants, they undertook to embark on the healing and reconciliation journey by asking for pardon in a prophetic fashion. This stage underscored that the participants had understood that the inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youth was error which deserved repair. Thus, after the reading out of the passage in Jeremiah 6:14 in the Bible, “They have healed the wound of my people as though it were not serious and they say, peace, peace when there is no peace”, participants identified themselves as culprits with regard to ethnicity and its manifestations in Gihosha. Both the Tutsi who always thought they were victims of Hutu perpetrators and the Hutus who believed the Tutsi were their enemy were relieved as they realised that humanity was what makes them special, not ethnicity. Both apologised to the victims from the group and realised that all the incidents noted amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths were a result of long-held and learned stereotypes which were manipulated by politicians. This supports Rwantabagu (2010) who posits that the extent of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi was due to the crisis of morality and the collapse of traditional values in Burundi.

To bring participants to the knowledge of the impact of inter-ethnic tensions, the researcher invited them to listening to six testimonies from three Hutu and three Tutsi speakers who included a member of the women’s forums (Tutsi), a young female member of the CNDD-FDD (Hutu), an elder woman (Tutsi), an elder man (Tutsi), an elected official (Hutu) and a member of mediation forum (Hutu). As they testified and delivered their reflections on ways for preventing inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, participants became interested in sharing their stories as well. The researcher observed that a sense of empathy was rekindled and that the healing process was visibly working. The researcher noted brokenness and contrition as some participants nodded their heads, signalling solidarity and shame. Every person present in the conference hall, irrespective of their age, ethnic group, level of victimhood, on the one hand and the degree of innocence on the other, were seemingly shocked after hearing the atrocities each speaker who delivered their testimony had endured. They empathised with all speakers and acknowledged their pain as they spoke.

The next exercise concerned what is required for breaking the cycle of inter-ethnic tensions amongst the youth in the Gihosha community. Following the testimonies which showed that both the Hutu and Tutsi youths, and adults alike were victims of inter-ethnic violence, the researcher could see that every participant was awakened as they shared perspectives and knowledge that could contribute to healing from their past wounds.

The participants were surprised to discover that they needed to develop strategies similar to the researcher's approach to addressing inter-ethnic tensions among the youth in Gihosha. During mediation and reflection, a poll was conducted that supported the idea of addressing ethnicity from a spiritual perspective. Participants agreed that transforming individuals' inner lives was crucial before attempting to break the cycle of inter-ethnic tensions in the Gihosha community. Consequently, they concluded that the only way to resolve inter-ethnic suspicion and tensions among the youth in Gihosha was through a long-term commitment to love and harmonious living. They stressed that this commitment had to be preceded by repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and self-denial, expressed in forms of contrition by all participants to the intergenerational dialogue. In achieving this reconciliation milestone, the researcher selected volunteers to represent various groups of perpetrators and another group of volunteers who represented the victims. This followed the sense that violent aggression and various forms of mistreatment occur indiscriminately (Solovyova et al. 2016:49). In the end, all participants humbled themselves and acknowledged the wrongs done by both the Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults alike and prayed an interfaith prayer, confessing the wrongs committed.

#### **7.6.6 Evaluation of the Overall Outcomes of the Intergenerational Dialogue Intervention**

The intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention which included the interfaith prayer transformed both the youths and adults and empowered them. Their engagement in critical analysis of the realities facing the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha which allowed participatory reflection and open dialogue disclosed a long repressed traumatic consciousness. It is through openness and outspokenness that participants experienced healing, forgiveness and reconciled with one another and committed to forgive and forget.

### **7.7 CONCLUSIONS**

The conclusions that the researcher drew from the above are that the afore-mentioned testimonies and stories demonstrates that the journey towards healing, reconciliation and trust restoration was achieved, not only amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths, but also amongst adult participants. The above outcomes confirmed the hypotheses that the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha can achieve peaceful coexistence and restore mutual trust if efforts to bring them together are made. The outcome confirmed Hypothesis 3 that implementing conflict transformation interventions that involve robust participation and the

buy-in by all youth categories is best option for improving the relationships and restoring trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in general and in Gihosha in particular.

The critical consciousness knowledge and attitude transformation attained are consistent with the idea that the best option for successful peacebuilding is through collaboration and inclusion of local initiatives and local community members (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017; Peace Direct, 2019). Similarly, they confirm Lederach and Maiese's (2009) views that, to bring about holistic change requires individual conversion, interpersonal, organizational and social changes. Such peacebuilding intervention needs to be designed in line with local dynamics. In the same vein, they confirm the idea that peacebuilding has to be 'local' and envisaged in a bottom-up approach to lead to desired results (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Ruppel, 2020).

## **7.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter examined the influence of demographic factors on peacebuilding efforts, emphasising the role of age and generational dynamics in shaping strategies for reconciliation. It explored how the ecological zone of residence impacted trust-building, with varying environments fostering different levels of community cohesion. Ethnicity was identified as a significant factor in trust-building and reconciliation, often complicating efforts to achieve unity. Gender dimensions were also crucial, affecting how individuals contributed to and experienced peace processes. Additionally, occupational identity was considered a proxy for understanding conflict and peace, as job roles and social status influenced perspectives on peacebuilding.

The chapter presented insights from the pre-intervention phase in Gihosha, revealing significant challenges that impeded progress toward peace and reconciliation in the neighbourhood. Through focus group discussions, interviews and workshops, the research investigated the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi youths. It included an analysis of the identities involved, typologies of violence and the underlying factors driving these tensions.

Reflections on the potential for harmonious living between Hutu and Tutsi youths were discussed, considering the findings and insights from the research. Strategies for overcoming inter-ethnic negativity were explored, including approaches for curbing animosity and bridging divides, restoring positive contacts and evaluating the effectiveness of intergenerational dialogue in fostering healing and reconciliation. The overall outcomes of these interventions

were assessed to gauge their success in addressing inter-ethnic tensions and promoting mutual trust.

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## **CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

This study aimed to reducing ethnic prejudice, negativity, inter-ethnic stereotypes and stigma by exploring alternatives, possibilities and options for young Tutsi and Hutu's constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience in Burundi. While the previous chapters analysed and interpreted data, the present chapter debates the discoveries in relations to the literature explored, the theoretical framework, the hypotheses, aim and research objectives envisaged in this study.

### **8.1 OUTLINE OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The subsequent summary outlines key research conclusions on issues pertaining to the inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. This outline reflects outcomes related to the research objectives and overall aim.

#### **8.1.1 Research Objective 1**

The first objective pursued in this research focused on exploring the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths. The themes that emerged from the findings highlighted that inter-ethnic tensions involving the Hutu and Tutsi youth in Burundi presented a web of causal trigger factors and consequences. Thus, findings revealed three main intertwined categories of violence. First, there is the prevalence of organisational violence which manifests through voluntary inflicted injustices, political intolerance, and long-held stereotypes, injustice inflicted on the opposition, political segregation and political bias. This is represented in Figures 31 and 32. Second, the research findings pointed to physical violence in the form of physical harm, torture, ill-treatment and beatings as represented in the Figure 33. The third category of violence involving the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is emotional violence such as exclusion, ethnic stigma and ethnic-based narratives as evidence in Figure 34 in this research.

With regard to the main causes of inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, the researcher found four prolific and overlapping strings of causes ranging from social causes, ecological causes, economic causes and political causes. Notable economic causes are economic discriminations, systemic corruption and abuse of public resources, lack of equity, economic inequality, biased accessibility to employment opportunities, economic vulnerabilities and many others as exemplified in Figure 37. Additionally, the lack of protective

measures against economic insecurity has led to widespread crippling poverty and stark inequality between politically connected youth and those without affiliations, posing a threat to social cohesion. To these, as highlighted in Figure 38, are added social causes which include deep-rooted ethnicity and its manipulation, victimisation, negative narratives, inequality and political slogans and songs, to mention but a few. Political causes include lack of accountability, breach of the rule of law, corruption, persecution, labelling and name-calling, unaddressed past violence, political assassinations, squeezed political space and many others as displayed in Figure 39. On a larger scale, findings were that the inter-ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is inherent to different demographics of the Hutu and Tutsi specifically age and generation. Also, the ecological zone of residence is crucial to trust-building in Gihosha.

### **8.1.2 Research Objective 2**

The second research objective aimed at exploring existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundian youths. The findings brought to light that it is not well in Gihosha peri-urban area due to protracted inter-ethnic provocations and aggression entertained by certain leaders and political elites despite the existence of many peacebuilding interventions and actors. Peacebuilding actors include individuals, civil society organisations, churches, charities and activists, youth groups, women's groups, schools, some administrative entities, international organisations. Looking into the strategies and approaches used, the researcher found that, except for community mobilisers whose efforts are best suited to ignite intergenerational understanding amongst the youths, other approaches and strategies were not having any real impact. The researcher found that the reason for that is that political leaders often interfere with efforts as they tend to impinge on the organisation and implementation of the efforts and strategies to suit the political agenda and policies.

Yet, the researcher noted that there were no clear common peacebuilding agenda approaches and strategies used by key actors in Gihosha. Rather, every actor was working on their own, without coordination and that hampered the overall aim of such peacebuilding efforts. Other limitations are due to prevailing intergenerational hatred, economic hardships, enforced blind submission and obedience and culturally induced stereotypes as highlighted in Figure 46.

It is important to note that, alongside the previously mentioned approaches, the researcher found that traditional methods used by customary judges known as the *Bashingantahe* and the

hill councils, complement the role of municipal courts. These traditional approaches play a crucial role in resolving civil and neighbourhood disputes and promoting social cohesion among various groups. However, the researcher found that the role of the customary judges, hill councils and *Bashingantahe* had been reduced due to political infringement by political agents.

### **8.1.3 Research Objective 3**

The third specific objective provides the *raison d'être* of the research. Thus, the core focus of this research was to conduct action research (AR) to identify effective approaches, whether rooted in local wisdom or conventional peacebuilding theories, to foster reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among the youth. Four conventional theories were found to be relevant for promoting healing, reconciliation, and trust among Hutu and Tutsi youths:

- Social constructivism highlights the importance of unlearning ethnic negativity that the youth have absorbed in their communities and social environments.
- Conflict transformation theory offers a way to reduce negative attitudes and foster peaceful coexistence among youths in the Gihosha area.
- Peacebuilding, as a process, requires the active involvement of all stakeholders.
- Action research (AR) was conducted using problem-solving strategies, with the search conference tool engaging youths in collaborative efforts to shape the future they envision.

### **8.1.4 Research Objective 4**

Research Objective 4 aimed to identify mechanisms for designing peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts between peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in the Gihosha outskirts of Bujumbura. The goal was to develop practical knowledge and interventions to enhance interactions and promote peaceful coexistence. The research outcome was that the youths were empowered by means of the search conference which opened their eyes to the necessity for collaboration to end the bias and ethnic stereotypes amongst them. Thanks to the search conference, the youths designed, planned and implemented an intergenerational dialogue to accommodate the needs of all generations and various categories of people living in Gihosha. Ultimately, as the issue of ethnicity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi transcends the individual youths by reaching their areas of residence, an intergenerational dialogue was implemented and led to healing, forgiveness and trust restoration, not only amongst the youths but also

amongst other community members in Gihosha. Most importantly, the ethnicity dynamic is crucial to both trust-building and reconciliation amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi.

### **8.1.5 Research Objective 5**

Research Objective 5 was about undertaking a preliminary evaluation of opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and implementing them. The findings were that multiple opportunities and options for curbing negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha existed. Overall, the findings highlighted key opportunities, including changing bitter narratives, rejecting deceptive tactics and discourses, collaboratively countering hate speech, fostering non-violence, rejecting divisive behaviours, and promoting an inclusive national identity by strengthening the youth's civic responsibility and self-perception. In addition, the best option to forging positive contacts amongst the youth were found to be embedded in removing structural barriers hindering openness and trust, discouraging finger-pointing, promoting mutual respect, and organising youth spaces around collective endeavours that connect the youths and adults through intergenerational dialogue. The finding highlighted that gender and occupational identity are equally important in re-establishing peacefulness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha as they bear much on whether inclusive peace prevails or not.

## **8.2 EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE THEORIES USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

Initially premised on three theoretical frameworks, namely social constructivism, with focus on the social un/learning theory of aggression, Lederach's conflict transformation, peacebuilding, the exploration of the issue of inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi gave rise to the intergenerational dialogue approach.

### **8.2.1 The Social Un/Learning Theory or Social Constructivism**

As already pointed out, the research problem is the protracted ethnic negativity that hampers social cohesion and serenity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. The finding in the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 was that the development of ethnic aggressiveness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths was learned by both the Hutus and Tutsis. The findings were that exposure to ethnic injustice and the legacy of colonialism cemented the inter-ethnic aggression amongst

the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi as they all competed for power and economic control. Some findings are that today's anxiety amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is a result of historical ethnic rifts (Turner 2008; Fein 1993). The findings in this research pointed that, although ethnicity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths is a dividing factor, it is a manufactured and manipulated factor that serve to protect the egoistic ambitions of either ethnic groups (Songolo 2005).

*“Ingwe ntiyari izi gufatira kw’izosi yarigishijwe”* or “Cheetah did not know how to catch a prey by the neck, it was taught to do so”. This saying in the Kirundi language resonates with the social learning theory of aggression in Burundi. On the one hand, the Hutu and Tutsi youths were subjected to insidious forms of manipulation whereby they were subjected to violence, learned to be violent or went unpunished. Key findings of this research were that the occurrences of ferocity that have shaped the Burundian youths are dictated by the vindictive consciousness developed and sustained by Burundians throughout history the point that each generation of Hutu and Tutsi Burundians has harvested bitter fruits of negative ethnicity. At each turn, the findings were that political parties organised the youths around blind political militantism, with the latter acting as puppets and key instigators of ethnic violence to serve the political regimes, to the detriment of the welfare of the majority. Therefore ethnicity and its multiple ramifications were tactical measures that unscrupulous political elites and other groups of people used to keep some youths out of the socio-political spheres of influence of the country. Based on Bandura's social learning theory of aggression, which suggests that aggression is learned within localised social environments and spreads from individuals to the community, the findings indicated that victimhood and broken relationships between Hutu and Tutsi youths can also be unlearned.

The findings are that as the Hutu and Tutsi gained knowledge of the real world around them which was infested by ethnic negativity, bias, distrust and stereotypes, they adopted attitudes and behaviours based on the false misconceptions through the process of learning aggression (Hsieh and Chen 2017). The inter-ethnic aggression amongst the Hutu and Tutsi was a choice based on grievances that impelled the youths into aggressiveness. The findings suggest that the social environment, marked by a lack of opportunities for youths to fulfil their needs for belonging, significance, and importance, along with increased contact with politicians, peers, and ideologies (John, 1968), intensified the process of learning aggression. Certainly the Hutu and Tutsi youths have faced lack of positive options for ending the inter-ethnic enmity.

According to Bandura (1977), by witnessing and experiencing inter-ethnic violence, youths were often encouraged to engage in physical assaults, verbal threats and insults. These actions went unpunished and were, in some cases, even rewarded.

Just as the process of learning aggression is portrayed in Figure 2, the Hutu and Tutsi youths, who were once empty pitchers, were filled with ethnic hatred by imitating elders in their communities. Direct and indirect experiences shaped the behaviour of the Hutu and Tutsi. The findings also show that they were able to unlearn aggression when they gained a clearer understanding of their world and their community, as Paria (2015) suggests.

Given the category of this AR which is an extended venture that values participation, empowerment and collaboration, the social unlearning theory was effective in empowering both the researcher and the participants. For one, the youths gained deeper understanding of the local realities as they spent five days discussing, learning and sharing experiences which was concluded by the adoption of peacebuilding resolutions (see search conference report, Appendix 14). As participants in the search conference testified, the change in attitudes amongst the Hutu and Tutsi was visible as they adopted that slogan that it should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi and that there was urgent need for changing their situation and involving other groups of people within the Gihosha neighbourhood.

Thus, the participants' knowledge was crucial to planning an intervention that succeeded at shifting the mind-sets of the Hutu and Tutsi youth, while contributing to trust restoration, healing, forgiveness and personal engagement to living together again in peace as highlighted by different testimonies. In connection with the efficiency of the social learning theory of aggression, the findings are that the participants to the intergenerational dialogue went through the process of unlearning which paved the way for mutual understanding and collaboration of people from different ages and generations. Thus, the findings confirmed the viability and effectiveness of the social unlearning epistemology in curbing bitterness and engaging in constructive contacts, peacefulness and trust restoration, and the goal of the investigation was attained.

### **8.2.2 Conflict Transformation**

The aim of this research was to transform inter-ethnic relations by exploring alternatives, options and possibilities for forging constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience

among the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. The requirement for transforming conflict necessitates that parties to the conflict sit together. Thus, the researcher and youth participants worked towards forging positive contact that reproached all parties. As such, the conflict transformation venture was embedded in multiple initiatives such as meeting together and the establishment of rapport. This study found that connecting the Hutu and Tutsi was a milestone in the success of transforming the differences between the youths. This was so when findings showed that multiple conflict transformation interventions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths were enacted but negative encounters and ethnic stereotypes remained intact. The findings indicated that using the conflict transformation approach to address animosity between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha was not straightforward but rather a complex, iterative process. The initial interactions that brought the youths together marked a significant step in reconciling former adversaries by transforming tense and biased relationships (Lederach 2014).

By capitalising on the essence of conflict transformation, the process of unlearning the social construction of inter-ethnic animosity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha was achieved. The findings showed that the youths were negatively impacted by prolonged exposure to violence. They realised that without working toward a shared future, both Hutu and Tutsi communities faced the risk of disappearing. This unlearning process resulted from conscientisation, during which the Hutu and Tutsi agreed to embrace non-violence and collaborate on designing, planning, and implementing peacebuilding interventions. Thus, the Hutu and Tutsi became aware that they all shared the same fate, needs and predicaments as highlighted in the intergenerational dialogue intervention. There was collective self-discovery as participants debated the nature, causes and consequences of the inter-ethnic tensions that hindered them from connecting to one another under that pretext of ethnic differences.

Essentially, the effectiveness of the conflict transformation theory was manifested throughout the findings. First, the Hutu and Tutsi agreed that inter-ethnic negativity is a political manipulation that serves the interests of political elites, keeping them dependent and vulnerable. Additionally, the analysis revealed that the restoration of trust between the Hutu and Tutsi – initially achieved through the search conference and later through intergenerational dialogue – demonstrated the success of the conflict transformation efforts. Ultimately, the conflict transformation theory emphasised the need for breaking down ethnic division, discrimination, resentment and stereotypes and fostering positive communication amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. While literature on peacebuilding indicates that the practise requires a

set of skills, the findings in this research were that the Hutu and Tutsi did not start as experts in conflict transformation but that they gained conflict transformation insights in the course of the AR as they were given opportunities to grow and participate. These findings confirm Lederach's views on actors and approaches to conflict transformation as an ongoing process beyond conflict resolution (Botes 2003).

### **8.2.3 Peacebuilding**

Findings were that the peacebuilding approach was intrinsically related to the conflict transformation theoretical framework (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 2011). As this study was AR and used the search conference tool, when the Hutu and Tutsi youths who were targeted by this research sat down together, they were empowered to overcome mutual resentment and embrace collaboration towards building peace. While peacebuilding efforts were present in the peri-urban area of Gihosha, the findings showed that the youths only became empowered and felt valued when they were fully involved as participants and stakeholders in the healing process. This involvement led them to take ownership of peacebuilding. Consequently, they volunteered to engage with the broader community to address recurring ethnic animosity and mutual suspicion by initiating and joining whistleblowers group focused on combating inter-ethnic violence. Findings testified that this milestone was a token that ensured the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts amongst the Hutu and Tutsi whereby the five-day search conference conversation brought diverging views together and enhanced the willingness for creating a new community in Gihosha.

The findings related to the theory of peacebuilding were consistent throughout all stages of the research. The search conference action research tool effectively enabled the Hutu and Tutsi youth participants to engage in dialogue and make sense of issues related to negative ethnic encounters. This was achieved through collaborative discussions on potential actions, aligning with Stringer (2007). Thus, empathy was developed amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths which paved way for rekindling humanity amidst the participants while reducing prejudice and bias.

Guided by the AR tool known as the search conference, the researcher and the youth participants realised that dealing with inter-ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha necessitated the participation, contribution and involvement of all groups of people. This requirement gave led to the taking on of the intergenerational dialogue approach to mitigate the causes and redress consequences of the enmity that prevailed not only amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths, but also permeated mainstream society in the peri-urban area of the

Gihosha neighbourhood. Thus, the rationale for including the intergenerational dialogue was to bridge the generational gap that was noted, given that the study was intended initially for 20 Hutu and Tutsi youths. It is worth recalling that the adoption of the intergenerational dialogue approach occasioned an increase in the sample to include representatives of all layers of the society. Thus, 20 participants were added to the 20 youths making a total of 40 participants in the intergenerational dialogue. Thus, as participants were brought together and discussed the issues and challenges that gave rise to ethnic hostility, resentment and behaviours, they all identified their personal responsibilities and the responsibility of their respective group. This gave rise to reciprocal acknowledgement of the harms inflicted on one another offering an opportunity for rebuilding rapport and restoring the Hutu and Tutsi youths' interpersonal relations.

Thanks to the peacebuilding approach that was applied to ending the Hutu and Tutsi enmity, a new morality was enacted seeking to change the current scenario marked by cyclic ethnic violence. The resulting network where participants joined hands under the 'whistle-blowers against inter-ethnic violence' peacebuilding circles at the end of the search conference was an indication of its success. The change in character, the coming closer to each other, the creation of positive interactions and the mutual acceptance to collaborate, cooperate and participate in peacebuilding ventures showed that both the Hutu and Tutsi youths were prepared to tackle inter-ethnic stereotypes and build a culture of peace. These qualities that the youths displayed in the end, namely bravery to end enmity and restore trust, willingness to apologise for the wrongs committed, and ability to design, plan and implement the peacebuilding cycles and intergenerational dialogue was a sign that testified that the Hutu and Tutsi youths were empowered, healed and reconciled with one another.

#### **8.2.4 Intergenerational Dialogue Approach**

Another important approach which succeeded in bridging the gap between generations and ending enmity between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha was the implementation of the intergenerational dialogue. The intergenerational approach to addressing inter-ethnic negativity among Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha aimed to promote inclusivity across generations in efforts to restore trust, heal, and reconcile. The introduction of intergenerational dialogue in the research stemmed from the need to involve people from all backgrounds to tackle the root causes of ethnic animosity and stereotypes among youths while simultaneously

healing the broader community. The genuine dialogue and rapprochement observed in the intergenerational workshop, where age-related distrust was reduced through mutual understanding of inter-ethnic violence, demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach.

The remorse and reactions displayed by participants in the intergenerational dialogue enmeshed with the willingness to co-create a desired future in which the Hutus and Tutsis feel valued matched the nature, intention and objectives of this study. The Hutus and Tutsis alike agreed that differences amongst them, instead of leading to dehumanising divisions, were rather a source of pride and testified to the sanctity of life. It showed that both the Hutu and Tutsi youths had the same needs, aspirations and problems which were manifested and experienced in different ways. As the Hutu and Tutsis engaged in meaningful exchange, their common vision of the ideal community of Gihosha prompted them to analyse how the past differences of age, gender and area of residence had shaped their interactions and influenced them negatively. This journey of growth from enemies to colleagues was a testament that by means of collaboration, they were able to heal from past bitterness and were ready to live in peace together again.

The findings revealed that collaborating on trust restoration, reconciliation, and healing was a profoundly positive experience for all participants. Their testimonies from the post-intervention period highlighted this successful journey. While literature highlights that intergenerational dialogue is often hampered by lack of connection, the researcher found that intergenerational dialogue amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths unlocked long-lasting solutions to the issue of inter-ethnic violence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. This was manifested when all participants agreed to co-design and devise a future action plan, marked by the determination and engagement of all participants to unite, work together, co-create and safeguard peaceful coexistence, not only amongst the youths, but also amongst members of the Gihosha community in general. This clearly pointed to the fact that participation and involvement were key to effective peacebuilding, conflict transformation and social unlearning.

Overall, the findings in this research were that all the suggested theories were relevant and their effectiveness was ascertained by their complementarity in the achievement of healing, trust restoration and reconciliation amongst the youths. The findings strongly support the social unlearning theory, showing that the youths were able to overcome their inter-ethnic animosity by coming together and learning from each other. This unlearning process was facilitated

through conflict transformation and collaboration in AR, which allowed the youths to design and implement interventions that aligned with their vision of a shared future. By improving relations, the youth constructed new visions and insights on peacebuilding and improving their relations. The culmination was that they all identified and became aware of the issues at stake and took steps to resolve their differences by including other groups of community members in Gihosha. Thus, the intergenerational dialogue complemented peacebuilding, conflict transformation and social unlearning processes to restore inter-ethnic trust, reconciliation, healing and peacefulness amongst the youths.

### **8.3 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Hypothesis 1 was that the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha could achieve peaceful coexistence and restore mutual trust if efforts to bring them together were made. Findings were that indeed collaboration amongst the youth bore positive results and impacted their lives and the lives of other members of the community invited to participate in the intergenerational dialogue. When the researcher started this AR, the researcher and the Hutu and Tutsi youth participants in this study did not have a clear picture of what the impact would be. However, the findings brought to light evidence that from the start to the end of the study, the youths were committed to the process and through collaboration, they designed interventions and co-created paths towards a shared common future. Their initiative for setting and joining efforts under the banner of ‘whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence’ peacebuilding circles is a vivid demonstration of the validity of the hypothesis.

The second hypothesis was that the trigger causes and facilitating factors of inter-ethnic enmity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha were embedded in the political manipulation of ethnicity. Although the main focus was not on locating the causes, this hypothesis was tested against the facilitating factors of inter-ethnic animosity prevailing in Gihosha area. As such, findings were that the youths were acting as puppets to accommodate the needs of unscrupulous political tycoons and selfish, unaccountable and abusive elites. The findings showed that despite efforts to building peace amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths, the issue of inter-ethnic animosity remained at the national level and that efforts to reach out to political leaders with a message on the urgency of peacebuilding, was crucial. This demonstrated the importance of the researcher focusing on addressing divisions and identifying unifying factors at the national

level. Engaging political elites and leaders to commit to national healing and peace is crucial to prevent the fragmentation and collapse of Burundi.

The third hypothesis stated that implementing conflict transformation interventions that involve robust participatory and the buy-in by all youth categories was best option for improving the relationships and restoring trust amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, in general and in Gihosha in particular. While findings portrayed that it is not well amongst the youths, the practical efforts towards collaboration, mutual empowerment, co-creation and involvement of all participants culminated in mutual empathy, healing, reconciliation, trust restoration and peaceful coexistence.

Fourth, it was hypothesised that prioritising intergenerational dialogue was the best option for empowering both the Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults in addressing the ethnic divisions embedded in their local communities. The findings confirmed the success and validity of the mobilization process, which effectively engaged both Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults in peacebuilding efforts aimed at reducing ethnic negativity and resentment among the youth. As such, dialogue across generations of Hutu and Tutsi on the 24 February 2024 was vital to bringing the youths and adults together irrespective of age, political affiliation, social status and ethnic group. Findings were that a forward-looking vision was enacted and the buy-in of all participants was achieved. It was the intergenerational dialogue that culminated in remorse, asking for pardon which opened the door for healing, reconciliation, trust restoration and engagement in working for a common future.

Hypothesis 5 stated that if the Hutu and Tutsi youths were empowered and brought together into collaborative peacebuilding circles, they would be instruments of change and active co-creators of the desired future. Addressing the issue of the Hutu and Tutsi was not a straightforward enterprise. The establishment of rapport and relations amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths was ignited first and then dialogue was used to loosen tensions and engage the youth in a social unlearning journey. In accordance with AR principles, the findings highlighted that efforts were put on the process of restoring trust through empowerment that derived from their experiences of violence. This was evidenced and validated by the overall outcome of the AR which proved to be a success.

## **8.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC UNDERSTANDING**

The journey through which the peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths achieved mutual understanding and cooperation in Burundi, after years of sustained stereotypes, bias and enmity paved the way for understanding how creating and making meaning of issues is crucial to peacebuilding. This research demonstrated that, as in the case of Burundi, tackling humanity's most pressing challenges did not require predefined top-down formulas to be effective. Instead, solutions should be approached from a bottom-up perspective. In the case of the Hutu and Tutsi, the investigation of the problem started with assessing the prevailing situations so as to empower the youths through the process of unlearning. Thus, promoting inclusive participation and imparting knowledge to participants by means of consistent self-discovery, mutual learning and collaboration facilitates the task of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

This journey of empowerment, not only turned the Hutu and Tutsi into researchers, but also contributed to self-rediscovery. As the youths became empowered, they fully participated in finding adequate solutions to end undesirable realities around them for the sake of living together again. The AR search conference tool as applied to the Hutu and Tutsi issue amongst the youths in Gihosha led to the youths' creativity as they initiated a 'network of whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles'. It instilled a desire amongst the youths to design, plan and implement an intergenerational dialogue with the aim of ensuring equal participation of all stakeholders in peacebuilding endeavours to effect sustainable change and desired futures.

The discussions of the findings showed that the research aim, the research objectives were all reached and that the hypotheses were confirmed. Most importantly, the discussions confirmed the effectiveness of all four theoretical frameworks applied to this research.

## **8.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed key findings on reducing ethnic prejudice and trust restoration amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha. The chapter discussed the results in relation to the purpose of the research, the objectives, the hypotheses and the theoretical foundations applied to this study. The discussions showed that all the objectives in this investigation as well as the overall aim were reached. Equally important, this chapter confirmed all the hypothesis formulated in this research with regard to the nature, causes and consequences of the inter-ethnic violence and enmity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. The chapter

pointed that the social unlearning of the socially constructed ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths was possible through knowledge gaining and empowerment that the AR search conference tool occasioned in the quest for conflict transformation. As such, peacebuilding was possible as the Hutu and Tutsi youths purposed to engage in an intergenerational dialogue intervention that brought together representatives of various groups of people living in the peri-urban area of Gihosha. Ultimately, the intergenerational dialogue, along with the social unlearning, peacebuilding and conflict transformation proved to be powerful complementary tools that culminated in healing, trust restoration, reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and positivity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths and adults alike.

## **8.6 SUMMARY OF PART FOUR**

Part IV consisted of three chapters namely data presentation, data analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings respectively. The analysis adopted a qualitative analytical methodology in scrutinising the experiences, hopes, feelings, fears and perceptions of participants. Apart from having focused on the Hutu and Tutsi youths, the results showed that there were other parties involved in the negative contact amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi, namely, adults, youth members of political parties' leagues; politicians, the country's elite and elected officials; and the police, the army and paramilitary forces. These parties were indirect actors in the inter-ethnic conflict and engaged in reinforcing marginalisation, oppression, stereotypes and bias which infringed on power legitimacy, accountability and human safety.

Some of the noted consequences of the above include cyclical inter-ethnic tensions, forced disappearances and perpetual fear which culminated in permanent tense relations. Results show that the effects were that most of the youths experienced trauma, while some opted to keep silent or chose exile due to physical, structural and emotional violence inflicted on them. This was embedded in politically manipulated interactions and attitudes by unscrupulous elites who used their position to gain their support. The researcher observed that the Hutu and Tutsi youths were often driven by their precarious socioeconomic conditions to commit violence, while those responsible for the violence lived in relative luxury.

This scenario of complex inter-ethnic tensions and perpetual fear amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha incited me to conduct a search conference to find answers to the recalcitrant enmity and negativity. The search conference was participatory and empowered the youth through participatory learning and proved to be a good start for connecting the Hutu and Tutsi

youths through collaboration to find adequate solutions. Both the Hutu and Tutsi youths were empowered, were reconciled and were healed from their past ethnic grievances and were able to see each other as brother or sister. This was seen when they adopted the slogan “It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?” During the search conference, participants concluded that the root of the inter-ethnic animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi was deeply rooted in their ecological environment. They proposed an intergenerational dialogue workshop to engage with the broader Gihosha community.

As enthusiasm and eagerness for curbing ethnic negativity was activated amongst the youths, the researcher planned and implemented the intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention which led to reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and trust restoration. As validated by the researcher’s own observations, participants’ testimonies and evaluations, the overall objectives of this research were reached. Thanks to participatory, collaborative and collegial discussions and knowledge exchange on what living together between the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha community entails, participants in the intergenerational dialogue workshop agreed to be sincere about every aspect pertaining to ethnicity. Participants unearthed the reasons why inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths were perpetuated and achieved trust restoration. The results that emerged demonstrated that by building confidence of participants to engage in critical and collaborative analysis of realities haunting their community and agreeing to cooperate, discuss and empathise with each other, healing and forgiveness and the restoration of trust were achieved.

In a nutshell, both the search conference and the intergenerational dialogue workshop intervention contributed to the attainment of the desired change. As the search conference led participants to a desire to end ethnic animosity, it is good to confirm that they were fully empowered and have turned into agent of peacebuilding. Likewise, the intergenerational dialogue achieved healing, reconciliation and trust restoration as participants confirmed and displayed it by holding each other’s hands, praying an interfaith prayer of repentance, asking for pardon for the crimes committed by their fellows and their ethnic groups and by empathising with the victims. The sign of success was their commitment to be peacebuilders under the “whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles”.

## **PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

In this part, the researcher presents the concluding remarks to this inquiry titled 'Living together again: AR amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi'. The part incorporates recommendations and makes suggestions for further inquiries.

### **CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

#### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter first summarises the overall results stemming from the evidence and analysis presented in the earlier sections. Then, it provides the conclusions to this study. Finally, the chapter delivers the overall implications of the findings to the practice of peacebuilding, formulates recommendations and winds up with a contribution to scholarly knowledge.

#### **9.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

##### **9.2.1 Research Aim and Objectives**

The overall target of this PAR is to reduce ethnic prejudice by exploring alternatives and options for young Burundian Tutsi and Hutu's constructive contacts, peaceful coexistence and resilience using PAR. Five specific objectives were pursued: (1) To explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths; (2) To explore existing approaches and strategies used to address inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Burundians youths. (3) To conduct AR and discover viable approaches based either on local wisdom or conventional peacebuilding theories to forge the paths of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among those youths (4) To design and build together with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Bujumbura outskirts of Gihosha practical knowledge and intervention for improved interactions and peaceful coexistence; (5) To undertake a preliminary evaluation of opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and implement them.

The literature reviewed on ethnicity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups unveiled the origin, development and culmination of the ethnicity factor amongst Burundians in general. It highlighted that most scholars had focused on enmity between adult Hutus and Tutsis but not necessarily the violence that tore apart the Hutu and Tutsi youths. Consequently, the literature

showed that most peacebuilding efforts in Burundi were designed from adults' perspectives for adults' sake and that little contribution was expected from the youths. However, the paradox was that many adults were deeply affected by ethnic biases, with their lives shaped by long-standing experiences of unresolved ethnic negativity which they passed on to their children. Thus, the researcher notes with satisfaction that this AR is the first in kind to be implemented in peacebuilding amongst the youths in Burundi.

### **9.2.2 Applicability of the Theoretical Frameworks and Theoretical Foundations**

To meet the study overall aim and research objectives, this exploration used qualitative approaches in all its stages. The research was premised on four theories namely social constructivism alongside Bandura's social learning theory of aggression, Lederach's conflict transformation theory and peacebuilding and intergenerational dialogue approaches. Thus, this investigation conceptualised inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi as learned aggression by means of interactions and reinforcement of attitudes across generations. The social learning theory of aggression (Rhee and Park 1980) and Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework (Lederach 2014) complemented one another in terms of learning and unlearning inter-ethnic bias and stereotypes.

On the one hand, the social learning theory as applied to this research views aggression (in this case inter-ethnic tensions and violence) as a learned experience which was modelled by both the Hutu and Tutsi youths. This is established in reviewed literature that people behave by learning what other people do and consequently internalise their behaviours (Tucker, Turner, Barling and McEvoy 2009:2). On the other hand, Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework perceives conflict transformation as a way of looking as well as seeing where the researcher looks at the context of the relationships involved. In other words, transforming conflict entails reacting to the complexity of negative social interactions by considering them as an opportunity for moulding constructive contact, fairness, understanding and social cohesion while establishing socio-economic and political stability (Lederach 2014:16).

Practically, every aspect of the social learning theory of aggression and Lederach's conflict transformation conceptual framework were found to be valid as they were found to be applicable to this study whose essence is trust restoration, healing and reconciliation amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha.

### **9.2.3 On the Nature, Causes and Consequences of Inter-Ethnic Tense Relationships Amongst the Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Gihosha**

This refers to Research Objective 1, which pursued to investigate the form, origins and effects of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths. The study provided insights that it is not well in Gihosha neighbourhood and pointed to structural, physical and emotional types of violence which were intertwined with a web of trigger factors that impinged on peaceful coexistence amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. The research noted that the ethnic animosity, stereotypes, bias and negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths are the consequences of manipulation by the elites and political tycoons who use ethnicity as a scapegoat to maintain their political power, prestige and positions and have access to public resources and funds which they distribute and misuse by excluding some people on the basis of their ethnicity and subjecting them to oppression. Furthermore, the ruling clique applies nepotism amidst economic hardships for the majority of youth. It was found that this imbroglio accrues resentment and leads to fear, collective trauma and violent interactions amongst the youths.

It was noted that the extensive exploitation of the youth by the elites and elected officials stood out as the channel through which negativity, bias and stereotypes stem. Moreover, the brutality which is often used to silence the opposition is entrenched in power abuse and the misuse of influence and authority that make leaders and other public institutions unaccountable for human rights violations. For example, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, property destruction, cases of intimidation, physical harm and other forms of crime are not documented to establish accountability and ensure justice.

The study revealed that ethnicity is a significant trigger for recurring violence between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. However, inter-ethnic tensions are also just one of many consequences and symptoms of political power monopolisation, abuse, poor democratic governance and lack of accountability. The study observed that all sectors in the country are dominated by clientelism and nepotism, controlled by the centralised system of the ruling CNDD-FDD party. This system engenders division among youths based on political loyalty and militantism, using these differences to advance the party's ideology and political agenda, rather than promoting equity.

With all the structural factors mentioned above, the study further identified the causes of inter-ethnic negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in socially and economically constructed

realities. The study revealed that narratives within family circles, along with adult influence and perceptions, contributed to growing negativity among Hutu and Tutsi youths. Although some of these youths were initially uninvolved, they were found to harbour ethnic bitterness and bias, shaped by past experiences and intergenerational stories of atrocities committed by both ethnic groups. The study confirmed that the attitudes and behaviours of the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha area were influenced by individuals whose unresolved past wounds had festered instead of healing.

## **9.2.4 Curbing Inter-ethnic Negativity Amongst Peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi Youths in Gihosha**

### **9.2.4.1 The role of the search conference tool in trust restoration**

This reflection relates to Research Objective 2, which aimed to explore methods for collaboratively designing and developing practical knowledge and interventions with peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in the Gihosha outskirts of Bujumbura to enhance interactions and promote peaceful coexistence. It also applies to Research Objective 3, which undertakes a preliminary evaluation of opportunities and options for sustainable peace, positive contacts and reconciliation amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha and how to implement them. Despite the widespread inter-ethnic negativity and its various causes, forms, consequences and harms that contributed to ethnic polarisation between Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha neighbourhood, there were also efforts and opportunities to mitigate these issues. As this AR demonstrated, the search conference which led to the creation of ‘network of whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles’ inaugurated healing and reconciliation. For one, through knowledge sharing, collaboration and strategic analysis, there was a shift in the mind-sets of youth participants as their statement, which reads, ‘It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?’ has demonstrated.

The promise of these peacebuilding cycles was noticeable as the youths were empowered, gained knowledge about possibilities and grasped options for living together again despite their differences. This effectiveness of the new acquired knowledge and positive impact of the search conference were confirmed in the evaluation of the outcomes and the engagement of participants to reach out to the wider Gihosha community with a peacebuilding intervention.

#### 9.2.4.2 Impact of intergenerational dialogue on trust restoration, recovery and reconciliation

Alongside the search conference, the Hutu and Tutsi youths collaboratively worked on designing, planning, and implementing an intergenerational dialogue intervention. Through this process, they became aware that they had been manipulated as pawns and recognised that enmity was deeply rooted in the broader Gihosha community. As a result, they decided to expand their peacebuilding efforts to include the wider Gihosha community. To a large extent the study showed that intergenerational dialogue is a suitable approach to peacebuilding, leading to healing, reconciliation and restoration of trust.

Both adults and young Hutu and Tutsi peacebuilders analysed the negative experiences of ethnicity and their own lived experiences. After collegial participatory reflections and scrutiny of the ethnic-related challenges and threats, they explored options, possibilities for healing, trust-building and reconciliation on behalf of both victims and perpetrators in a prophetic fashion. This was achieved through an interfaith prayer whereby representatives of all groups and categories identified as victims or perpetrators acknowledged the wrongs committed by them and prayerfully and out of contrition asked for pardon, forgiveness and held each other's hand as a sign of reconciliation. Adults and youths agreed to form partnerships to keep the peacebuilding cycles going. Thus, both the adults and young Hutu and Tutsi experienced healing from ethnic bias and stereotypes as their testimonies and evaluation showed.

As found, the evidence for this study suggested that peace is possible when parties to the conflict agree to discuss and collaborate on finding joint solutions. As the peacebuilding cycles and the intergenerational dialogues workshop intervention exhibited, the themes that emerged through telling and listening to stories showed that ethnicity was both a consequence and expression of manipulation. This prompted the Hutu and Tutsis to find appropriate solutions to the problem through collaborative and participatory efforts which fostered mutual understanding and peacefulness. Collaboration between the Hutu and Tutsi youths contributed to identifying the problem, to building empathy, to transforming anger, to removing bottlenecks and to redressing negative ethnicity properly. Similarly, the outcome of the intergenerational dialogue intervention facilitated healing, trust-building, reconciliation and common ground for future peacebuilding endeavours.

### **9.3 LIMITATIONS**

This investigation faced a number of inherent limitations. One of them was the reliance on the selection of participants from only one geographical area to account for the nature, causes and extent of violence among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth. Another important limitation to this research lay in the fact that the study employed small samples which means that the researcher cannot generalise the findings of this study to the larger population. Other limitations included limited logistics, particularly financial resources coupled with the labour-intensive nature of this endeavour and research time constraints which prohibited an exhaustive study and the participation of youths from other areas.

The research design, which included the use of FGDs, presented a limitation due to the potential for group communication effects. This could be particularly problematic when outspoken or dominant youth overshadow or silence those with opposing views, potentially leading to more extreme perspectives (Vanderstoep and Johnston 2009: 234). To overcome the noted limitations, the researcher adhered to the action research (AR) design and social constructivism, ensuring equal representation, participation and collaboration among the different youth groups. This approach aimed to achieve reliable and conclusive results. The researcher prioritised cooperation and finding common ground, deliberately avoiding any competitive or biased practices.

### **9.4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

In relations to the overall purpose of this study which was to reduce ethnic prejudice amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi, this study demonstrated that the origins of enmity and stereotypes between younger generations of Hutu and Tutsis in Burundi reach as far back as the precolonial era. Even if massive peacebuilding efforts and interventions were deployed, too much evasiveness was manifested as there has never been genuine truth-telling, truth-seeking or reconciliation from the youths' perspectives. The findings of this study revealed that Burundi's youth, particularly in the Gihosha neighbourhood, had been misled for decades by adults and unknowingly drawn into ethnic negativity and bias. Unscrupulous political elites manipulated them as pawns to serve their selfish and malicious ambitions. The study concludes that inter-ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi youths are largely a consequence and symptom of political monopolisation and poor democratic governance. Thus, the study sadly

exemplified that the political elites, who misrepresent themselves as messiahs for Burundi, are dangerously leading the young generations into disastrous futures.

The involvement of the Hutu and Tutsi youths into the AR reinforced that the youth are instrumental in effecting desired changes, finding solutions to problems and building a desired future through learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration. This proved that knowledge generated by parties to a conflict in a bottom-up fashion, in this case from the Hutu and Tutsi youths cycles to the mainstream community, is key to building trust, healing and reconciliation. In the same vein, the intergenerational dialogue approach epitomised the value of partnerships, collaboration, participation and empathy in conflict transformation.

## **9.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS TO THE PRACTICE OF PEACEBUILDING**

Redressing the inter-ethnic peacefulness amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi is a serious issue. While the political elites claim that peace is real across all parts of Burundi, many Tutsi youths are still living as refugees in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, DRC Congo and other nations. This study has unearthed the general feelings, attitudes, fears and hopes that are rampant among the Hutu and Tutsi youths in the peri-urban area of Gihosha, whereby most of them live under perpetual fear and trauma, having the options for either choosing exile, keeping silent or joining negative forces. The regime seems to have taken little notice of this as shown by the negative peace that prevails at a surface level. Important to note is the precariousness of this peace amidst the prevalence of fighting factions whose patrons are military and police officers who chose exile following the 2015 failed military coup against the late President Pierre Nkurunziza. Also the ban of media and human rights activists' organisations in 2015 pressed the survivors to continue their operations outside the country from where they continuously denounce violence and the instability of Burundi.

Therefore, this investigation accounted for the fact that in the advent of protracted conflict, there are deep-seated and extensive recurring cycles of trigger causes of antagonism which necessitate constant peacebuilding efforts and interventions. The study found that parties involved in a conflict, which are conventionally seen as ordinary subjects, should be integrated into research strategies as participants and thereby should contribute to finding solutions to typical problems. One tool for meeting the above goal is through collaboration and involvement which, as demonstrated throughout this study, are key approaches to effectively altering attitudes and effecting behavioural change while contributing to building mutual trust.

With regards to the peacebuilding practice, findings in this inquiry restated that AR has been proved to be effective in curbing negativity. Most outstandingly, findings reiterated that employing the search conference AR tool (O'Brien 2001) is an effective basis for designing bottom-up peacebuilding initiatives that empower participants to design and implement interventions that suit their needs and are appropriate for their situation and their desired futures. In addition, the intergenerational dialogue approach had extraordinary effects in bringing people together through collaboration and partnerships for change towards desired futures. In implementing peacebuilding efforts, adopting a neutral approach to engage all parties in finding common ground can eliminate harmful influences on peace across generations and develop a sense of ownership over both the process and its outcomes.

## **9.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are formulated in view of the urgent need for speedy and efficient bottom-up peacebuilding interventions in protracted conflict scenarios involving several parties, such as the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi. They also stemmed from the weaknesses observed in the existing peacebuilding interventions in the peri-urban area of Gihosha whereby no demarcation was noted between peacebuilders and politically manipulated militantism.

### **9.6.1 To the power-holders and decision-makers of Burundi**

- ❖ Preserve the rule of law and ascertain that laws are abided with by all citizens without exceptions;
- ❖ Ensure peace education is introduced in school curricula, from elementary schools to tertiary educational institutions in order to recalibrate the moral compass of the youth population regarding life sacredness and the value of civilisation;
- ❖ Give careful consideration to the political elites' behaviours and ascertain that accountability is guaranteed across all sectors;
- ❖ Support efforts that seek to empower Hutu and Tutsi youths to rise out of poverty by increasing social entrepreneurship options and meaningful economic activities for youths;
- ❖ Empower and train political leaders and elected officials on the culture of accountability, their roles and responsibilities towards history and future generations;
- ❖ Start a serious process for truth seeking, truth telling and reconciliation through transitional justice mechanisms, restitution and forgiveness rather than forgetting the ills without redressing the wrongs committed throughout history;

- ❖ Because of the existence of sectors that are lagging behind in socioeconomic performances, due to poor governance and corruption, the government should designate leaders from specific services sectors on the basis of intellectual and technical capacity rather than on the basis of political militantism and party membership;
- ❖ Given that peacebuilding circles empower participants through collaboration, participation and ownership, the government of Burundi should ratify

### **9.6.2 To the Rights Holders / Community-based Groups**

- ❖ To take action to advance and claim their rights and to ensure that the government and political systems translate the preferences of citizens into policies and act to protect and deepen democratic rights and ensure civil society organisations participate in ensuring order and acceptance;
- ❖ Ensure social justice is accessible to every citizen and advocate for vulnerable groups of people by acting as independently as possible;
- ❖ Plan and implement collaborative and coordinated educational and empowerment efforts in peacebuilding practice.

### **9.6.3 To External Support/ International Organisations in Peacebuilding**

- ❖ Align peacebuilding interventions and efforts to the desires of disadvantaged communal groups, specifically the youth groups as they are key to the upholding of peacefulness beyond generations and age;
- ❖ Do not disregard the voices and roles of local partners in any peacebuilding endeavours as their participation is crucial to determining the impact of interventions and securing ownership throughout the peacebuilding process;
- ❖ Develop an international network of organisations working in peacebuilding and set up an international advisory committee to facilitate cooperation, collaboration and knowledge sharing and exchange of experience with locally led initiatives and expertise.

### **9.6.4 To the Hutu and Tutsi Youths**

- ❖ Shun any incitement to inter-ethnic violence and take serious responsibility for their future lives and destiny;

- ❖ Collaborate, cooperate, communicate and mutually reach out to each other with kindness, humility, love and humanity to ensure empathy and social cohesion in their immediate ecological area of residence;
- ❖ Avoid political manipulation by elites and work together on self-transformation and self-help programmes and initiatives and take full responsibility for their actions;
- ❖ Engage in peaceful pursuits, avoid provocative and hate speeches as they wound the youth and incite them to take revenge or retaliate.

#### **9.6.5 To the Educational Institutions**

- ❖ Take the lead in the promotion of practice-oriented research in peace education and bottom-up peace building best practices to ensure accurate and easy-to-use tools in peace pedagogy and practice amongst various age groups of people;
- ❖ Collaborate with the CSOs, the churches, community-based organisations and local initiatives involved in peacebuilding to ensure that holistic healing and reconciliation is activated across all layers of the society, specifically the youths;
- ❖ Design and provide training curricula to foster common understanding of the Hutu and Tutsi issue and empower the overall citizenry on peaceful cohabitation and unity in diversity.

### **9.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following recommendations are made for future research:

- This study focused primarily on peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in the Gihosha neighbourhood of Burundi. Future research should extend to other regions, both urban and rural, to ensure broader applicability of the findings across diverse settings with protracted inter-ethnic tensions.
- Given that this study employed a relatively small sample, future research should involve larger participant ratios to enhance the generalizability of findings and provide more comprehensive insights into inter-ethnic tensions in Burundi.
- As each context of protracted inter-ethnic tensions presents unique challenges, future studies should explore tailored peacebuilding efforts for specific regions. Research should also compare contexts like Burundi and Rwanda, analysing why peacebuilding mechanisms, such as the Arusha Accords, have succeeded in one but not the other, particularly given Rwanda's "ethnic amnesia" approach.

- Future research should incorporate the perspectives and roles of high-level governmental institutions, educational experts, and school managers. This would facilitate the exploration of strategies for promoting peace across all layers of the Burundian community.
- The search conference tool, which empowers participants to learn from each other and collaboratively design interventions, proved effective. Future research should promote this method in peacebuilding initiatives to enhance collective decision-making and problem-solving.
- Further investigations should focus on understanding the risk of full-scale ethnic violence across the African Great Lakes Region. Research should examine why some Hutu and Tutsi youths have chosen exile and joined armed factions like RED TABARA in eastern Congo.
- Future studies should examine how ethnic social identity shapes the mind-sets of police and army personnel. This would help tailor peacebuilding interventions to these crucial public service categories, ensuring their active participation in long-term peace efforts

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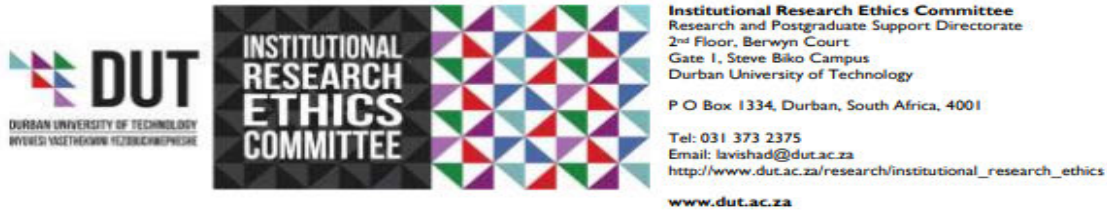
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



27 May 2022

Mr E Nyabenda  
P.O. Box 5970  
Kinindo-Bujumbura

Dear Mr Nyabenda

**LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: ACTION RESEARCH AMONGST PERI-URBAN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTH IN BURUNDI**  
**Ethical Clearance number IREC 291/21**

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC

## APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER



**His Excellency, the Minister of Home Affairs, Public Security and Community Development**

**Bujumbura-Burundi**

**Dear Sir,**

**Ref: Request to carry out a Doctoral Research in Bujumbura Municipal area of Gihosha**

My name is Ezechiel Nyabenda. The researcher am currently doing my PhD studies in Peacebuilding at Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban, South Africa. As part of my doctoral studies, the researcher would like to undertake a Participatory Action Research in Bujumbura Municipal peripheral area of Gihosha. My research is titled '**Living Together Again: AR Amongst Peri-Urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi**'.

I am conducting this participatory action research project to investigate alternatives and options for Hutu and Tutsi youths peaceful coexistence in Burundi. The study mainly focuses on curbing historically sustained stereotypes, inter-ethnic biases, ethnic prejudices and lack of constructive contact between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha area. The research is motivated by the concerns about threats that have regularly undermined genuine social cohesion among Hutu and Tutsi youth groupings in Gihosha and the recent failed 2015 military coup d'Etat and youth violence that followed on.

The key purpose of this study is to investigate the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions that have marked peri-urban youths in Gihosha. Throughout the initial stages of collaboration with participants, the study will document the dynamics and underlying trigger factors for violent contacts between peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi. The study will monitor and assess the effectiveness and limitations of previous peaceful endeavours in Burundi using

contextualised frameworks that cater for youths' predicaments and prospects. Thus, via collaborative activities, both the researcher and participants will contribute into planning, designing, implementing and evaluating a joint intervention for fostering improved interactions and peaceful contacts between Hutu and Tutsi youths that will be implemented in an agreed neighbourhood of Gihosha.

The research will involve focus group discussions, in-depth face-to-face interviews and dialogues which will be guided by the DUT research ethics. Participants will contribute to the study by participating in research activities over 12 months. Anonymity and confidentiality will be upheld at all-time throughout this study and the information and data collected throughout this research stage will be strictly used for academic purposes only. A copy of the findings will be made available to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Security and Community Development and the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Burundi.

I would be grateful if granted the permission to carry out this valuable research that will certainly bring about positive change in the The Gihosha community.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Please contact the researcher Ezekiel Nyabenda on +25779948812, my supervisors: : Dr Jean Chrysostome KIMBUKU KIYALA, on +27 313733102; Cell: +27 684410813 or [kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com](mailto:kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com) or [JeanK@dut.ac.za](mailto:JeanK@dut.ac.za) or Professor G. T. Harris on +2731 373 5609 or the Institutional research Ethics administrator on +2731 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to Dr. Linda Linganiso, Director, research and Postgraduate Support. Contact number is +2731 373 2577.

Yours Sincerely

-

Ezechiel Nyabenda (Researcher)

7 March 2022

**APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPER LETTER (ORIGINAL- FRENCH)**

REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI



MINISTRE DE L'INTERIEUR, DU  
DEVELOPPEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE  
ET DE LA SECURITE PUBLIQUE  
MUNICIPALITE DE BUJUMBURA  
CABINET DU MAIRE

Bujumbura le 11.5.2022



La Mairie est à votre service

Réf. N° 531.018/616/CAB/2022

A Monsieur NYABENDA Ezéchiel  
à

**BUJUMBURA**

**Objet : Réponse à votre lettre**

Monsieur,

Faisant suite à votre lettre du 07 Mars 2022 par laquelle vous demandez l'autorisation pour mener une recherche doctorale dans la localité de la zone Gihosha, commune Ntahangwa à propos du projet « **living together again : action research amongst peri-urban hutu and tutsi youths in Burundi** », nous avons l'honneur de vous informer que nous marquons notre accord.

Nous demandons à l'Administrateur Communal de Ntahangwa qui nous lie en copie de vous prêter mains fortes chaque fois que de besoin.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de notre considération distinguée

LE MAIRE DE LA

Jimmy H  
Général

RA

**TCI**

Administrateur Communal de Ntahangwa

## APPENDIX 4: GATEKEEPER LETTER (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

Bujumbura 11 May 2022



**MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS,  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SECURITY  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

REF. No: 513.018/616/CAB/2022

**Mr. Nyabenda Ezechiel  
In Bujumbura**

**Objective: Reply to your Letter**

Mr. ,

Subsequent your letter of 07 March 2022 in which you requested authorization to conduct your Doctoral Research in the location of Gihosha Zone in Ntakangwa Commune on the project titled '**LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: ACTION RESEARCH AMONGST PERI-URBAN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN BURUNDI**', we are pleased to inform you that the permission was granted to you.

We hereby request the Administrator of Ntakangwa Commune, who is copied, to fully assist you whenever required.

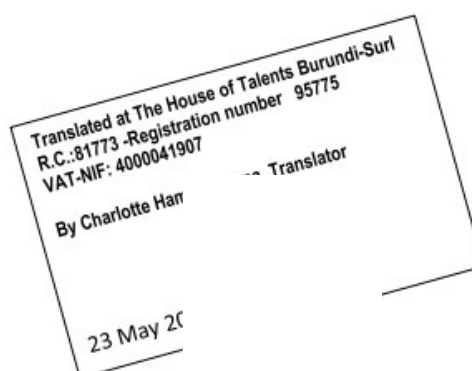
Sincerely, yours

*(Signed and Stamped)*  
**THE MAYOR OF BUJUMBURA**

**Jimmy HATUNGIMANA  
Police Brigadier General**

CC.

-Administrator of Ntakangwa Commune



**APPENDIX 5: AUTHORISATION BY THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TO CONDUCT A DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN  
BURUNDI**

REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI

Bujumbura, le 20 / 5 / 2022



Ministère de l'Education Nationale  
et de la Recherche Scientifique  
Cabinet du Ministre

N° Réf: 610 / CAB / 3662 / 2022

A Monsieur NYABENDA Ezechiel  
Tél : 79948812

à

Bujumbura

**Objet : Votre demande d'autorisation pour mener  
une recherche-action doctorale**

**Monsieur,**

J'accuse réception de votre du 07 mars 2022 dont l'objet est la demande d'autorisation pour mener une recherche-action doctorale.

Par la présente, j'ai l'honneur de vous informer que je marque mon accord.

Veillez agréer, **Monsieur**, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

**LE MINISTRE DE L'EDUCATION NATIONALE  
ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE.**



Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique  
B.P. 1990 Bujumbura, Burundi. Boulevard de l'UPRONA. Tél: (+257) 22 22 94 50  
E-mail: [info@mesrs.gov.bi](mailto:info@mesrs.gov.bi) / Site web: [www.mesrs.gov.bi](http://www.mesrs.gov.bi)

**APPENDIX 6: AUTHORISATION LETTER FROM HIGHER TEACHERS  
TRAINING SCHOOL INTENDING TO ASSOCIATE SOME HUTU AND TUTSI  
YOUTH PARTICIPANTS TO THE RESEARCH**



REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI  
Ecole Normale Supérieure  
Direction Générale

Bujumbura |

123

Réf : 610/ENS/DG/812/2023

A Monsieur NYABENDA Ezéchiel  
à  
**Bujumbura**

**Objet :** votre demande d'une permission d'associer  
les étudiants de l'ENS dans une Recherche.

Monsieur,

Nous accusons réception de votre correspondance du 10 novembre 2023 par laquelle vous demandez une permission d'associer les étudiants de l'ENS dans votre Recherche intitulée : « *Living Together Again : Action Research Amongst Peri-Urban Hutu And Tutsi Youths in Burundi* ».

Par la présente, nous avons l'honneur de vous informer que nous marquons notre accord.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de notre considération distinguée.

**Le Directeur Général de l'Ecole  
Normale Supérieure**

**Prof. Dr. Ir. NUSURA Hassan**

**C.P.I. à :**

-Monsieur le Directeur des Services Académiques;  
à  
**Bujumbura**



## APPENDIX 7: AUTHORISATION BY LYCEE DU SAINT ESPRIT TO INVOLVE SOME YOUTH IN THE RESEARCH



République du Burundi  
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale  
et de la Recherche Scientifique  
D.P.E Bujumbura – Mairie  
D.C.E Ntahangwa  
Lycée du Saint-Esprit



### Autorisation de mener une recherche

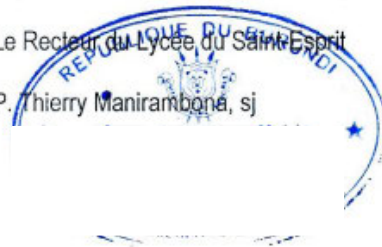
La direction du Lycée du Saint-Esprit autorise Ezéchiel NYABENDA à mener ses travaux de recherche au sein de l'établissement. Il peut rencontrer les élèves du Lycée du Saint-Esprit, organiser des interviews, bref collecter les données dont il a besoin pour son travail.

La direction de l'école veillera à ce que cette recherche se déroule dans de bonnes conditions et pour les élèves et pour le chercheur.

Bujumbura, le 1<sup>er</sup> février 2023

Le Recteur du Lycée du Saint-Esprit

P. Thierry Manirambona, sj



## APPENDIX 8: LETTER FOR ARRANGING A DIALOGUE



**The President of the TRC**

**Bujumbura-Burundi**

**Dear Sir,**

**Greetings.**

My name is Ezechiel Nyabenda. I am a PhD student in peacebuilding at Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban, South Africa. I am conducting this participatory action research project to investigate alternatives and options for Hutu and Tutsi youths peaceful coexistence in Burundi. The study mainly focuses on curbing sustained stereotypes, inter-ethnic biases, ethnic prejudices and lack of constructive contact between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha, the northern peripheral area of Bujumbura Municipality.

The key purpose of this study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban Burundian youths in Gihosha. Throughout the initial stages of collaboration with participants, the study will document the dynamics and underlying trigger factors for violent contacts between peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi in the peripheral area of Gihosha. The study will monitor and assess the effectiveness and limitations of previous peaceful endeavours in Burundi using contextualised frameworks that cater for youths' predicaments and prospects. Thus, via collaborative activities, both the researcher and participants will contribute into planning, designing, implementing and evaluating a joint intervention for forstering improved interactions and peaceful contacts between Hutu and Tutsi youths that will be implemented in an agreed neighbourhood in Gihosha.

The study will be guided by the code of ethics of DUT with regards to voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.

I would like to request your permission to access some documentation held within the TRC work related to violence and peacebuilding efforts in Burundi.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Please contact the researcher Ezekiel Nyabenda on +25779948812, my supervisors: : Dr Jean Chrysostome KIMBUKU KIYALA, on +27 313733102; Cell: +27 684410813 or [kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com](mailto:kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com) or [JeanK@dut.ac.za](mailto:JeanK@dut.ac.za) or Professor G. T. Harris on +2731 373 5609 or the Institutional research Ethics administrator on +2731 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to Dr. Linda Linganiso, Director, research and Postgraduate Support. Contact number is +2731 373 2577.

**Yours Sincerely,**

Ezechiel Nyabenda (Researcher)

10 Mars 2022

## APPENDIX 9: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER



Dear Participant,

Let me begin by thanking you for your interest to participate to this research venture. My name is Ezechiel Nyabenda and I am a PhD student at Durban University of Technology (DUT) in South Africa. I am conducting research aimed to build better relationships between Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha. I would like to invite you to participate in the research.

The researcher know that Burundi has a history of violence between Hutu and Tutsi people and this continues to cause fear and tension among the population. It doesn't have to be that way! The researcher believe the researcher can learn to respect each other and deal with our disagreements in a non-violent way.

### **Title of the Research Study:**

LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: AR AMONGST PERI-URBAN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN BURUNDI

**Principal researcher:** Ezechiel Nyabenda; BA English Language and Literature; Master of Art in African Peace and Conflict Studies

**Supervisor:** Dr Jean Chrysostome KIMBUKU KIYALA, PhD

**Co-Supervisor:** Professor Geoffrey Harris Thomas; BCom, DipEd, MEc PhD.

### **Outline of the procedures:**

Research means the researcher finding out things so as to build new knowledge. I will form a group of 20 young people – five Hutu males, five Hutu females, five Tutsi males and five Tutsi females. The researcher will ask you to do the following:

1. Be part of a focus group discussion with myself and four other participants for about 90 minutes
2. Have a face-to-face interview with me for about 60 minutes

**Risks or Discomforts to participants:**

This is a very low risk study and there are no discomforts expected.

**Withdrawal from the Study:**

Your participation is entirely voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason.

**Benefits, remuneration and costs:**

This study is entirely funded by DUT therefore you are not expected to pay anything or meet any cost, nor will you benefit in monetary term from this study. You will receive refreshments at the discussion groups.

**Confidentiality:**

Nothing that you say will be traced back to you. I will use pseudonyms (false names) in any written or verbal report of my research.

**Results:**

I will be meeting with you many times and will constantly be telling you what I am finding out. I will also give you a written report at the end of my research.

**Research-related injury:**

I can't think of any injury which might happen but if anything does happen, I will certainly look after you. If you need medical care, for example, I will take you to my doctor (or yours if you prefer) – at my expense.

**Storage of hard copy data, electronic data, including tape recordings:**

All the data I collect will be kept in a filing cabinet to which only I have the key. Electronic data will be protected by a password which only I will know. All the data will be destroyed after five years.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Please contact I Ezekiel Nyabenda on +25779948812, my supervisors: Dr Jean Chrysostome KIMBUKU KIYALA, on +27 313733102; Cell: +27 684410813 or [kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com](mailto:kljeanchrysostome@gmail.com) or [JeanK@dut.ac.za](mailto:JeanK@dut.ac.za) or Professor G. T. Harris on +2731 373 5609 or the Institutional research Ethics administrator on +2731 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to Dr. Linda Linganiso, Director, research and Postgraduate Support. Contact number is +2731 373 2577.

Thanking you for your cooperation

Ezechiel Nyabenda (Researcher)

10 anuary 2023

## APPENDIX 10: LETTER OF CONSENT



### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by I, Ezechiele Nyabenda, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by I.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature/Right
--------------------------	------	------	-----------------

### Thumbprint

I, Ezechiele Nyabenda, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
-------------------------	------	-----------

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)**

**Date**

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)**

**Date**

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 11: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. How would you define violence among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths?
2. In what ways have you perceived violence between Hutu and Tutsi youths?
3. Can you tell me a bit about your perception of violence involving Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha?
4. Which violent interactions are peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths often involved in in Gihosha?
5. How often do Hutu and Tutsi youths engage in negative contacts?
6. What are the consequences of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths?
7. What has been done to build constructive contacts between Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha?
8. What can be done to build sustainable peaceful coexistence amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths?
9. How can improved interactions among Hutu and Tutsi living in Gihosha be achieved?

## APPENDIX 12: FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW GUIDE



1. What are your perceptions of violent interactions amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?
2. What are your personal experiences with ethnic-based bias?
  - a) What has exactly happened to you?
  - b) How did you feel about the incident?
  - c) How did you see the perpetrator?
3. How did you figure out your treatment was based on your ethnic identity?
4. Have you ever assisted to violent treatment being inflicted on others?
  - a) Can you recall what happened at that time?
  - b) How often have you seen such cases of ill-treatment?
  - c) What effects has this have on you?
  - d) What happened to the victim?
5. Have you ever been involved in negativity towards others?
  - a) What were the causes of that behaviour?
  - b) Can you describe what happened?
  - c) How did you feel about the other person?
  - d) How did the victim respond?
6. What factors you think induce Hutu and Tutsi youths into suspicious coexistence?
7. Do you know any past conflict transformation activities amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths?
8. Do you see anything missing in ascertaining constructive contacts amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths?
9. What do you think can be done for Hutu and Tutsi youths to live together again peacefully in Gihosha?

## APPENDIX 13: PRE-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW GUIDE



1. What is the general atmosphere between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?
2. What do you fear most when you see violence involving Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha neighbourhood?
3. Who do you think is likely to be violence instigator between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?
4. What do you think about ethnic suspicion inflicted on others in Gihosha neighbourhood?
5. What do people in Gihosha usually do when violence between Hutu and Tutsi erupts?
6. How do you feel when ethnic violence takes place in Gihosha?
7. What do youth do to protect themselves from ethnic violence in Gihosha?
8. Who do you think are mostly victims of violent ethnic contacts between Hutu and Tutsi in Gihosha?

## APPENDIX 14: SEARCH CONFERENCE REPORT: COMMON THEMES AND TRENDS

*‘It should not be so amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths. So, what?’<sup>63</sup>*

### A. Curbing ethnic negativity in Gihosha

Participants to peacebuilding circles agree that there are sustained triggers of ethnic negativity amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths that need halting. They pointed to unrelenting intergenerational narratives sustaining ethnic violence coupled with adverse adulthood lived experiences and mutual ethnic rejection;

Agreed strategies and options for addressing them:

- Changing narratives of bitterness into positive ones by discrediting deceptive tactics and discourses which divide people;
- Collaborative disruption of practice of hate speech to ensure holistic healing of both victims and perpetrators;
- Nurturing non-violent alternatives by breaking stereotypes held across ethnic groups;
- Engage political and elected leaders into creative strategies that foster a sense of belonging and self-worth;
- Shun divisive tendencies and promote inclusive national identity;

### B. Alternatives for socioeconomic recovery

The lavish lifestyles of the spoilt politicians mock the daily struggle of the impoverished youths and nurture sentiments of hopelessness and fear for tomorrow. Participants to the peacebuilding circles recognised that the recurrent trigger of violence and negativity amongst Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is rooted into the politicisation of socioeconomic sector whereby access to basic livelihood imperatives has direct bearing on political militancy. They also noted the prevalence of widespread crippling poverty and gross inequality between youths connected to political elites and the poor majority youths not connected to political elites. Thus, there are no protective measures against economic insecurity nor fair labour standards leading to abject inequality.

Proposed strategies:

---

<sup>63</sup> Search conference, Bujumbura, Kigobe Nord, 14 February 2024

- Engage youths into positive and collaborative creative thinking and entrepreneurial literacy to ensure the youths achieve employment identity and self-development;
- Fight nepotism, promote accountability, transparency and equity;
- Advocate for the co-create of mechanisms that pledge national insurance and living wages for all citizens of Burundi;
- Multiply social services that address unemployment and ensure equal access to productive resources and employment opportunities;
- The Government of Burundi should build the capacity of the youths to engage with collaborative self-transformation and self-help activities in the community;
- Support efforts that seeks to empower Hutu and Tutsi youths to rise out of poverty by increasing social entrepreneurship options and meaningful activities for youths;
- Both Hutu and Tutsi youths should receive equal consideration when there are opportunities for employment through fair and equitable standards and recruitment;

### **C. Mitigating political stereotypes and bias to achieve unity in diversity**

Often, political leaders use political power to deploy coercive measures to threaten and control community members of other interest groups, especially the youths who do not work under the regime's aise, on the one hand. On the other, youths who feel crushed by the politicians misbehave and do engage in violence and risky behaviours including extremism.

- Political leaders should be empowered on best practices that avoid political manipulation and hate speeches;
- Working with all stakeholders in the community for healing the harm to Hutu and Tutsi relationships harmed by ethnicity and bias;
- Initiate a coalition that connects Hutu and Tutsi youths for mutual support and care;
- Engaging the youths in developing social responsibility and meaningful moral values and empathy by dismantling barriers to youths' ability to relate in healthy ways;
- Reducing ethnic-based stigma and social isolation by circumventing barriers that hinder equal socioeconomic and political participation;
- Building social bonds amongst the youths to fight against all forms of injustice and inequality;
- Encourage youths' systematic disengagement from violence and stereotypical political considerations;
- Public authorities and leaders at all levels should contribute to empowering the youth and train them to be respectable world citizens;

#### **D. Healing and restoring trust amongst peri-urban Burundian Youths**

Participants agreed that the following options are key to restoring trust and ensure healing among peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth:

- Build youths' civic responsibility and positive self-conception.
- Remove all structural barriers hindering openness and trust.
- Promote healing, forgiveness and discourage fingers pointing to others.
- Promote mutual respect and organise youth spaces and joint endeavours that bring youths together through intergenerational dialogues.
- The government should enact laws that prevent ethnic manipulation and punish offenders.
- Government agencies and political leaders should be tasked to use public channels to propel messages of hope, dignity, respect and preservation of human rights.
- Address collective traumatic experiences and offer individual youths their chances of feeling valued again.
- The Government of Burundi and its partners should avoid covering crimes and provide mechanisms for justice;

#### **E. Moving forward together, Building for the future:**

- Both Hutu and Tutsi youths agreed to build a 'network of whistle-blowers' led by youths in Gihosha to foster and sustain mechanisms for peaceful coexistence and harmony amongst the youths. They adopted for conducting an intergeneration dialogue project whereby to facilitate reflection on living together in Gihosha on the theme '*curbing inter-ethnic tensions and restoring trust amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha*'.
- Combat ethnic categorisation of Burundian youths and ridicule all forms of ;
- The Government of Burundi should ensure equal access to economic and employment opportunities irrespective of political belonging;
- Public authorities and leaders should ensure that no single youth is left behind and promote the culture of accountability in their activity;
- Politicians should be held accountable to people they serve and make sure that all governmental machines are used equitably for harm reduction, every day and everywhere;

- Engaging younger generations into cooperative contacts to ensure genuine social cohesion and trust building;
- The Government of Burundi in partnership with Burundi Civil Society should ensure that justice and the rule of law reigns in Burundi and that a retributive systems is in place to adequately address the wrongs while rewarding the just.

## **F. Evaluation**

Participants to the search conference of *whistleblowers against inter-ethnic violence peacebuilding circles* in Gihosha deciphered the prevalence of sustained problematic ethnic relations between the Hutu and Tutsi youths and located the roots causes within respective family. The issue of ethnicity is present both at micro and macro-levels with ramifications reaching into the socio-political, economic and cultural domains of the Burundian community. Most of the participants to the peacemaking circles were not direct perpetrators of violence, but they were witnesses of violence either inflicted on their loved ones and carried grudges and trauma all along their lives due to lack of adequate mechanisms for genuine reconciliation and endeavours for trauma healing.

Participants offered honest critique that negativity amongst the Hutu and Tutsi youths in Gihosha is rooted into the politics based on ethnicity and exerted on people by selfish elites whose moral decisions are hampered by assumptions and distrust. It was noted that all the youths in Gihosha are playing the game of hypocrisy to avoid suffering that the reprisal machine in place could inflict on them as none knows what the person next to you is thinking or planning.

The urgency of curbing intensifying divergences between the youth affiliated to the ruling party and other youths was noted. In this regard, participants realised that the so called enemies of the nation which is the language used by some political leaders should be considered as a crime, in as much as no ground for such gross accusation is provided. The problem with such divisive discourses is that they persistently rekindle negative sentiments and perpetrate historical hatred and revenge.

## **G. Lesson learned**

- The youth population in Gihosha are experts in communicating matters and are connected to one another using communication tools, particularly social media. They are knowledgeable in terms of ethnic narratives that are delivered through different channels and media.

- The youth have been adversely affected by long-term legacies of inter-ethnic violence and biases in Gihosha and you do not need a tour guide to show the affliction of young people amidst poverty and trauma.
- The different positions represented in the search conference sessions revealed that living together amongst peri-urban youths in Gihosha is possible and that peaceful coexistence emerges when there is full recognition of the youths' skills and collaborative openness.
- The dialogue in the search conference revealed that no matter how ethnic negativity may appear, there are still options for healing, especially where the good is rewarded and the 'bad' punished irrespective of the identity of the perpetrators or victims. Also, the trauma the youths living in Gihosha experienced is evidenced in relation to long-held narratives which should be debunked and replaced by positive and critical thinking.
- Peacebuilding circles were vital to connecting Hutu and Tutsi youths through structured dialogue which reinforced relationships and networks towards harmonious living.

**H. The search conference activities were co-facilitated by the following researchers:**

1. Ezechiel Nyabenda, Main researcher
2. Bella Irankunda, co-researcher
3. Moise Harimungu, co-researcher
4. Zacharie Ngabirano, co-researcher
5. Martin Hakizimana, co-researcher

The final report adoption was carried out in Bujumbura, Gihosha on 14 February 2024. Initially written in Kirundi, it was translated into English by the main researcher.

## APPENDIX 15: NVIVO PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

21/04/2024 21:53

### Project Summary

#### Living Together Again: AR amongst peri-urban Hutu and Tutsi youths in Burundi

21/04/2024 21:53

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
			Username		Username

C:\Users\hp\Documents

**Created By:** Ezechiel Nyabenda

**Created On:** 23

**Last Modified By:**

#### Nodes

Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth	hp	30/03/2024	hp	17/04/2024	hp
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes	hp	21/04/2024	hp	21/04/2024	hp
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\Biased accessibility to employment opportunities and sponsorships	hp	08/04/2024	hp	21/04/2024	hp
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\competition over scarce and limited resources	hp	10/04/2024	hp	21/04/2024	hp
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\economic discrimination	hp	08/04/2024	hp	20/04/2024	hp
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\economic inequality	hp	21/04/2024	hp	21/04/2024	hp

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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\high rate of unemployment	Nodehp	21/04/2024hp 18:52	21/04/2024 19:34
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\Lack of equity	Nodehp	10/04/2024hp 10:05	20/04/2024 09:03
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Economic causes\selfishness and unequal economic growth	Nodehp	06/04/2024hp 20:54	21/04/2024 18:41

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	By Username		By Username
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\Environmental causes\parents origin	Nodehp	21/04/2024hp 18:37	21/04/2024 18:37

Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\Environmental causes\\Place of birth or residence	Nodehp 21/04/2024hp 18:37	21/04/2024 18:37
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\political causes	Nodehp 21/04/2024hp 18:20	21/04/2024 18:20
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\political causes\\Breach of the rule of law	Nodehp 10/04/2024hp 10:33	20/04/2024 09:03
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\political causes\\Colonial legacy	Nodehp 06/04/2024hp 11:53	20/04/2024 09:03
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\political causes\\disrupted democratic governance	Nodehp 21/04/2024hp 19:30	21/04/2024 19:30

Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Forced mobilisation and rallies	Nodehp	21/04/2024 19:26	21/04/2024 19:26
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Historical grievances	Nodehp	21/04/2024 19:35	21/04/2024 19:35
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\labelling and name-calling	Nodehp	21/04/2024 19:04	21/04/2024 19:04
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Lack of accountability	Nodehp	21/04/2024 18:55	21/04/2024 18:55

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Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Neo-divide and rule politics	Node	hp	06/04/2024 11:54	hp	21/04/2024 19:34
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\past violence not addressed	Node	hp	10/04/2024 13:54	hp	20/04/2024 09:03

Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Perceived injustice	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:36	hp	21/04/2024 19:36
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\political manipulation	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:14	hp	20/04/2024 09:03
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\political parties	Node hp	23/03/2024 20:11	hp	21/04/2024 18:47
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\political segregation and stereotypes	Node hp	30/03/2024 19:39	hp	21/04/2024 18:46
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Poor governance and nepotism	Node hp	21/04/2024 18:56	hp	21/04/2024 18:56
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Propaganda of warlordism	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:01	hp	21/04/2024 19:01
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:23	hp	21/04/2024 18:59

causes\Quasi-total power monopoly by one party					
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Stifling of civil liberties and human rights					
Node hp	hp	21/04/2024	21/04/2024	19:30	19:30
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Subversion of the rule of law					
Node hp	hp	23/03/2024	21/04/2024	20:09	18:57
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\political causes\Top-down political elites' influence					
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Node hp	hp	21/04/2024	21/04/2024	18:21	18:21
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\social causes\Deeply rooted ethnicity					
Node hp	hp	10/04/2024	20/04/2024	10:02	09:03
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\social causes\Disrespect and envy					
Node hp	hp	30/03/2024	11/04/2024	19:51	08:48

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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Hate speeches	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:49	hp	11/04/2024 08:53
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Inequality and social divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:13	hp	21/04/2024 19:51
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Intergenerational ethnic rivalries	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:09	hp	20/04/2024 09:03
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Negative narratives	Node hp	23/03/2024 20:10	hp	20/04/2024 09:03
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Negative narratives\\Stories of violence relegated to younger generations	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:09	hp	11/04/2024 08:48

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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\Peer presssure	Node hp	06/04/2024 14:14	hp	11/04/2024 08:52
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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\region of origin	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:53	hp	08/04/2024 12:53
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\religious based	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:53	hp	08/04/2024 12:53

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Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social causes\\social status	Node hp		08/04/2024 12:54	hp	08/04/2024 12:54
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\\social	Node hp		06/04/2024 11:55	hp	20/04/2024 09:03

causes\Superiority complex & inferiority complex			
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\social causes\Victimisation	Node hp	03/04/2024 13:21 hp	20/04/2024 09:03
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\social causes\Violent communication	Node hp	30/03/2024 19:51 hp	20/04/2024 09:03
Nodes\\Causes of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth\social causes\Youth bulge	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:29 hp	21/04/2024 19:29
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:04 hp	11/04/2024 08:52
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Abuse of power	Node hp	10/04/2024 10:09 hp	17/04/2024 18:47
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Cyclical negative narratives	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:07 hp	17/04/2024 18:41
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Economic hardships	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:05 hp	17/04/2024 18:47
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Economic hardships\cyclical poverty	Node hp	08/04/2024 14:06 hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Economic hardships\Lack of equity in employment	Node hp	06/04/2024 13:05 hp	11/04/2024 08:52
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban	Node hp	06/04/2024 13:35 hp	11/04/2024 08:52

youths\Economic hardships\social injustice					
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Economic stagnation					
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Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Effects of ethnic violence					
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Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Effects of ethnic violence\Effects at community level					
	Node hp		06/04/2024 14:30	hp	06/04/2024 14:30
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Effects of ethnic violence\Effects at individual level					
	Node hp		06/04/2024 13:46	hp	06/04/2024 13:46
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Effects of ethnic violence\Effects at individual level\emotional and psychological trauma					
	Node hp		08/04/2024 13:52	hp	11/04/2024 08:55

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Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Effects of ethnic violence\Effects at individual level\Refraining from visiting some areas					
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Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Effects of ethnic violence\\Effects at individual level\\Self pity	Node hp	06/04/2024 11:58	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Effects of ethnic violence\\Effects at individual level\\Withdrawal from political activities	Node hp	06/04/2024 14:16	hp	11/04/2024 08:52
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Emotional trauma	Node hp	10/04/2024 10:15	hp	17/04/2024 18:21
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Ethnic-based segregation	Node hp	23/03/2024 20:05	hp	17/04/2024 18:40
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Family disintegration and coldness	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:04	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Feelings of moral outrage	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:37	hp	21/04/2024 19:37
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\flight	Node hp	08/04/2024 14:00	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Forced disappearances	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:06	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Human rights abuse	Node hp	08/04/2024 14:16	hp	11/04/2024 08:58

Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Joining gangs and militia groups	Node hp	08/04/2024 14:05	hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Loneliness in society	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:06	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Loss of innocent lives	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:06	hp	11/04/2024 08:58
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Mutual distrust	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:49	hp	17/04/2024 18:41
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Mutual distrust\\New Node	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:10	hp	10/04/2024 14:10
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Perpetual fear	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:19	hp	17/04/2024 18:41
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\physical harm and intimidation	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:52	hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\poisoning	Node hp	17/04/2024 18:39	hp	17/04/2024 18:39

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Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\\Poverty	Node hp		17/04/2024 18:27	hp	17/04/2024 18:27

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Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\property destruction\Nature of inter-ethnic tensions among peri-urban youth	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:00	hp	30/03/2024 20:00
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Resentment and revenge	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:04	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Unforgiveness	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:09	hp	11/04/2024 08:48
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Youth disillusionment	Node hp	08/04/2024 14:08	hp	11/04/2024 08:58
Nodes\\Consequences of inter-ethnic tensions amongst peri-urban youths\Youth drop school	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:21	hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:56	hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\Charities and activists	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:48	hp	21/04/2024 21:47
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\churches	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:56	hp	17/04/2024 18:42
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\Civil society organisations	Node hp	10/04/2024 09:52	hp	17/04/2024 18:32
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\individuals in the communities	Node hp	21/04/2024 21:48	hp	21/04/2024 21:48
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\International organisations	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:58	hp	11/04/2024 08:59

Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Local administration or government officials	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:57	hp	21/04/2024 21:45
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Local initiatives by individuals	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:44	hp	17/04/2024 18:48
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\School led and other public institutions efforts	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:34	hp	21/04/2024 21:46
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Some families sticking to peace education	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:17	hp	17/04/2024 18:42
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Some political leaders	Node hp	17/04/2024 18:23	hp	21/04/2024 21:47
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Women groups	Node hp	10/04/2024 09:51	hp	17/04/2024 18:22
Nodes\\Existing peacebuilding actors\\Youth groups	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:59	hp	17/04/2024 18:48
Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:20	hp	11/04/2024 08:52
Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence\\Culturally induced stereotypes	Node hp	06/04/2024 11:56	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence\\Economic hardships	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:21	hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence\\enforced blind submission and obedience	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:37	hp	11/04/2024 08:57

Reports\\Project Summary Report  
21/04/2024 21:53

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Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
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Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence\\Hegemonic power of traditional monarchies	Node hp	06/04/2024 20:39 hp	06/04/2024 20:39
Nodes\\Limitations to peaceful coexistence\\Prevailing intergenerational hatred	Node hp	06/04/2024 14:22 hp	11/04/2024 08:53
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:18 hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Emotional violence	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:39 hp	21/04/2024 19:39
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Emotional violence\\Ethnic stigma	Node hp	10/04/2024 09:50 hp	17/04/2024 18:18
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Emotional violence\\Exclusion	Node hp	10/04/2024 09:50 hp	10/04/2024 09:50
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Emotional violence\\Parents' ethnic-based narratives	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:41 hp	17/04/2024 17:41
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Physical violence	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:39 hp	21/04/2024 19:39
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Physical violence\\ill-treatment and beatings	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:20 hp	21/04/2024 19:41
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Physical violence\\physical harm	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:51 hp	11/04/2024 08:55
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Physical violence\\Torture	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:41 hp	21/04/2024 19:41
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence	Node hp	21/04/2024 19:39 hp	21/04/2024 19:39

Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\Injustice in schools	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:19	hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\Injustice inflicted on the opposition	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:40	hp	21/04/2024 21:50
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\Long-held stereotypes	Node hp	10/04/2024 09:50	hp	17/04/2024 18:17
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\political intolerance	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:40	hp	17/04/2024 17:40
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\political segregation	Node hp	10/04/2024 13:49	hp	11/04/2024 08:56
Nodes\\Nature of violence amongst peri-urban youths\\Structural violence\\Political bias in schools	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:19	hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha	Node hp	30/03/2024 20:22	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Existence of projects and initiatives to rebuild peacefulness among the youth	Node hp	03/04/2024 13:24	hp	11/04/2024 08:48

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
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Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Existing positive culture and ideals	Node hp	04/04/2024 17:59	hp	11/04/2024 08:48
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Growing shift in mind-sets among the youth	Node hp	03/04/2024 13:20	hp	11/04/2024 08:48
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\inclusion	Node hp	10/04/2024 10:35	hp	11/04/2024 08:49
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\intermarriages between Hutu and Tutsi	Node hp	06/04/2024 11:57	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Joining peacebuilding endeavours	Node hp	04/04/2024 17:57	hp	11/04/2024 08:48
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\relative harmony	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:15	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Shared activities involving the youth	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:16	hp	17/04/2024 18:50

Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Some improvement	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:16	hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Some youths realising that politics is no longer their source of survival	Node hp	04/04/2024 17:56	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\The TRC is at work	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:03	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Youth economic empowerment	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:27	hp	11/04/2024 08:54
Nodes\\Opportunities for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Youth's start-ups are booming	Node hp	04/04/2024 17:54	hp	11/04/2024 08:57
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:27	hp	17/04/2024 17:29
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:42	hp	17/04/2024 17:42
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\arrest, killings, forced migration	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:47	hp	17/04/2024 17:47

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\intolerance	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:43	hp	17/04/2024 17:49
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\negative feelings	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:43	hp	17/04/2024 17:43
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\non-participation to political life	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:48	hp	17/04/2024 17:48
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\Psychological wounds	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:43	hp	17/04/2024 17:47
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Effects of ethnic suspicion\\self-defensiveness	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:44	hp	17/04/2024 17:44
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Existing youth's fear	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:37	hp	17/04/2024 18:27
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Existing youth's fear\\Injustice and inequality	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:38	hp	17/04/2024 18:26
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Existing youth's fear\\Losing their people	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:38	hp	17/04/2024 17:39
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Existing youth's fear\\Poor governance	Node	hp	17/04/2024 18:15	hp	17/04/2024 18:16
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation	Node	hp	17/04/2024 18:06	hp	17/04/2024 18:06

Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\Hatred but not violent interaction	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:28	hp	17/04/2024 17:28
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\Hutu and Tutsi avoid one another	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:29	hp	17/04/2024 18:26
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\Inter-ethnic provocation	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:31	hp	17/04/2024 17:32
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\Intermarriage is not a reality	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:36	hp	17/04/2024 17:36
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\No empathy, no love	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:29	hp	17/04/2024 17:29
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\No open conflict	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:28	hp	17/04/2024 18:26
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Initial situation\\Parents responsible for youth's negativity	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:34	hp	17/04/2024 17:34
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths feelings about ethnic violence	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:45	hp	17/04/2024 17:45
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths feelings about ethnic violence\\collective trauma and fear	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:46	hp	17/04/2024 17:49
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths feelings about ethnic violence\\Disappointed	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:45	hp	17/04/2024 17:45
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths feelings about ethnic violence\\Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are all victims	Node hp	17/04/2024 17:54	hp	17/04/2024 17:54

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths feelings about ethnic violence\\Sad and sorry for victims	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:45	hp	17/04/2024 17:49
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:50	hp	17/04/2024 17:50
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence\\joining powerful men and strong political parties	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:53	hp	17/04/2024 17:53
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence\\Keeping silent	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:51	hp	17/04/2024 17:51
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence\\Letting go	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:50	hp	17/04/2024 17:50
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence\\seeking revenge	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:52	hp	17/04/2024 17:52
Nodes\\Pre-intervention scenario\\Youths' ways for handling ethnic violence\\violence begets violence	Node	hp	17/04/2024 17:52	hp	17/04/2024 17:52
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha	Node	hp	06/04/2024 20:46	hp	11/04/2024 08:56
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Cooperation and collaboration between the youth	Node	hp	08/04/2024 13:20	hp	21/04/2024 21:44

Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Curbing negativity	Node hp	10/04/2024 10:35	hp 08:57	11/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Embracing citizenship education	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:03	hp 21:43	21/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Forging critical think and living	Node hp	10/04/2024 10:37	hp 18:24	17/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Forging ethnicity amnesia	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:46	hp 18:49	17/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\intergenerational dialogue	Node hp	10/04/2024 14:18	hp 18:49	17/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Mitigating youth exploitation by the elites	Node hp	06/04/2024 14:08	hp 21:42	21/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\peace education in schools	Node hp	08/04/2024 13:03	hp 18:50	17/04/2024
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Power-sharing	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:27	hp 08:59	11/04/2024

21/04/2024 21:53

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Rewriting the past	Node	hp	08/04/2024 13:02	hp	11/04/2024 08:53
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Safeguarding the rule of Law	Node	hp	10/04/2024 13:56	hp	21/04/2024 21:45
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Socioeconomic empowerment	Node	hp	06/04/2024 13:47	hp	17/04/2024 18:49
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Socioeconomic empowerment\Youth entrepreneurship	Node	hp	06/04/2024 13:48	hp	11/04/2024 08:52
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Socioeconomic empowerment\Youth entrepreneurship\New Node	Node	hp	06/04/2024 14:13	hp	06/04/2024 14:13
Nodes\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\Socioeconomic empowerment\Youth up skilling	Node	hp	06/04/2024 20:48	hp	06/04/2024 20:48

Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Ways for handling ethnic bias	Node hp	06/04/2024 17:43	hp	11/04/2024 08:53
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Ways for handling ethnic bias\\Letting go, safeguarding peace	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:10	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Ways for handling ethnic bias\\Maintaining positive attitude	Node hp	06/04/2024 12:05	hp	11/04/2024 08:59
Nodes\\Options for positive contacts and sustainable peace amongst Hutu and Tutsi youth in Gihosha\\Youth mentorship on positive values	Node hp	08/04/2024 12:48	hp	17/04/2024 18:50

## APPENDIX 16: TURNITIN REPORT

Thesis Ezechiel Nyabenda

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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**15%**

SIMILARITY INDEX

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INTERNET SOURCES

**9%**

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Approved 03/04/2025

## APPENDIX 17: CONFIRMATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING



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19 October 2024

#### Declaration of editing

**LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN: ACTION RESEARCH AMONGST PERI-URBAN HUTU AND TUTSI YOUTHS IN  
BURUNDI  
EZECHIEL NYABENDA**

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I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 500 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor,

- I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism.
- I am not responsible for editing AI generated text.
- I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,

**Dr J Baumgardt**  
**UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management**  
**University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing**  
**University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching**



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