



CHALLENGES OF REINTEGRATING RETURNING REFUGEES:

A Case study of returnee access to land and to basic services in Burundi

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A thesis Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Transformation

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March, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been accomplished without support and comprehension of my family. I thank my lovely wife and sweet kids for their sacrifice in allowing me to dedicate precious time to research and writing of this thesis.

I owe acknowledgements to all my friends who advised or supported me during the writing process of this thesis. Special thanks to Yves, his family and the FHB staff in Bujumbura. I sincerely thank the staff at the Centre for Peace Studies and particularly my Supervisor Dr. Tone Bleie, for her insightful guidance. I am indebted to all my classmates in general and to “Dada” Martina, Kjersti, Michael, Neema and Suvi for enriching exchange during the study time in Tromsø.

To returnees and officials I met at different places in Burundi, thank you very much.

ABSTRACT

In post-war societies, the challenges associated with reintegration of returnees may contribute to the re-ignition of violence and armed conflict. But, despite recognition of this fact, the factors which make refugee return and reintegration sustainable are generally under-researched. This thesis deals with the reintegration of Burundian returnees in the aftermath of ethnic-based violence and civil war during the years 1993-2000. The study identifies the nature of the main challenges for returnee reintegration in Burundi, exploring how addressing or failing to address these challenges may affect the possibilities for conflict transformation and durable peace. It is based on qualitative research employing multiple methods and sources, including field work in Burundi. The study's theoretical framework is informed by various approaches, including theories on state building and concepts such as "failed state" and "sustainable livelihood". This model helps to explain not only the underlying and multi-faceted causes of the conflict, but also the dynamics of forced displacement in Burundi. The thesis findings indicate that refugees experience and livelihoods are key factors affecting their access to basic services and land for cultivation and establishing homesteads upon return. The thesis suggests that addressing land issues for landless returnees and improving the social infrastructure should be a priority in conflict transformation efforts aiming for a durable peace in Burundi. Without returnees' (and others') access to land and other key livelihood opportunities, the reintegration of returning refugees might fail to the extent that it may jeopardise the Burundian hard-won stability.

Key words: Burundi, violence, forced displacement, returnee experience, land, livelihoods.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AS	Amicable solution
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BINUB	Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi
CADZEM	Collectif des Associations de Développement de la Zone Mubavu (Ruyigi)
CD	Commission's Decision (CNTB)
CERD	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
CHT	Centres d'Hebergement Temporaire (temporary reception centre)
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de Défense de la Démocratie (the main Hutu rebellion during peace negotiations now in power in Burundi)
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (DRC)
CNN	Cable News Network
CNTB	Commission Nationale des Terres et autres Biens (Land Commission in Burundi)
COHRE	Centre for Housing and Rights and Eviction
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (of ex-combatant)
DFID	Department For International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire)
EAC	East-African Community
FHB	Food for the Hungry Burundi
FNL-PALPEHUTU	Front National de Libération du Peuple Hutu (Burundian National Front for Hutu Liberation)
FRODEBU	Front Démocratique Burundais (Burundian Democratic Front Party)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IBID	ibidem
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICG	International Crisis Group

IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	International Peace Academy
IRRI	International Refugee Rights Initiative
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission (UNHCR-WFP)
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NUPI	Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt (Norwegian Institute for International Politics Research)
ONUB	Office des Nations Unies au Burundi (United Nations Office in Burundi)
PARESI	Programme d'Appui au Rapatriement et Réintégration des Sinistrés
PHP	Production de l'Huile de Palme (palm oil factory in Burundi)
PRM	State Dept. Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (USA)
PRS	Protracted Refugee Situation
RSF	Reporteurs Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders)
SL	Sustainable Livelihood
TEP	Teaching Emergency Package (NRC)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom (Grande Bretagne)
UNDPKO	United Nations Department for Peace Keeping Operations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIK	United Nations Mission to Kosovo
UNPCB	United Nations Peace Building Commission
UPRONA	Union pour le Progrès National (National Party for Union and Progress)
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Programme
YEP	Youth Education Package (NRC)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Burundi, a small landlocked country in the Great Lakes region, is one of Africa's hotspots for protracted armed conflicts. Large-scale violence has prevailed in Burundi since it gained independence from Belgium in 1962. The conflict in Burundi has been one of the deadliest conflicts of Africa. It has claimed more than 500,000 lives (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000) and generated massive displacement both internally and beyond its national borders. When the armed conflict was terminated a decade ago, 13% of Burundians were either internally displaced, or refugees were forced into exile. Almost half a million refugees have returned home, some immediately after the civil war had ended, and others more recently. Reintegration of these returnees is fraught with difficulties. This thesis intends to identify the main challenges of returnee reintegration in Burundi. To grasp the context and complexity of this particular post-war challenge, it is necessary to briefly review the conflict that generated displacement in the first place.

1.1. Conflict and forced displacement ¹

Ethnic-motivated violence and civil war have occurred between two major ethnic groups in Burundi. The Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups were engaged in a violent struggle for power since only a few years after independence. The third ethnic group, the Twa, has not been directly involved in the power struggle, but has been badly affected by violence and forced displacement. The violent events perpetrated by the Tutsi-dominated Burundian army culminated in the latest civil war from 1993 to 2000. As power control determines who has access to resources among contending social and ethnic groups, it is argued that the Burundian conflict has both political and economic roots (Uvin 1999; Ndikumana 2000). The forced displacement in Burundi has thus mostly originated from violence and the civil war, fuelled by competition for control of state power among the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups.

The violent events that caused a four decades long protracted refugee situation in Burundi have had many episodes. The most tragic and infamous mass killings are those that happened in 1972, which claimed between 100,000 and 200,000 lives (Reyntjens 1995). Other major outbreaks of political violence took place in 1965 and 1988. All these massacres targeted the civilian Hutu population. They were carried out by Tutsi-dominated regimes that ruled Burundi since the abolition of monarchy in 1966. The last Ganwa King, Mwambutsa IV, was

¹ Many authors use the terms "forced migration" or "forced displacement" interchangeably. In this thesis forced displacement or "refugeeness" refers to both refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

overthrown by a military junta led by Col. Michel Micombero, a Tutsi from Bururi province in 1966. Already in 1965 and then in 1972, the army killed thousands of Hutu politicians, intellectuals and civilians. Many thousands who escaped these killings fled to neighbouring countries, mainly Rwanda and Tanzania. The Junta leader ruled from 1966 until he himself was ousted by a military coup d'état organised by Jean Baptiste Bagaza, also a Tutsi from Bururi, in 1977.

Relative political stability in Burundi lasted for ten years during the reign of Bagaza. Compared to the major violent events under the reign of his predecessor, there was a ten years period without widespread violence in Burundi from 1977 to 1987. This could be attributed to the army's brutal oppression. After the mass killings and purging of the majority of Hutu intellectuals and politicians out of state institutions including from the army, the regime ensured that none would dare challenge the established dictatorship. This relative stability came to an end in 1988. After Buyoya (another Tutsi army leader, cousin to Bagaza) took power, the army killed thousands of Hutu civilians in Kirundo province. This particular event occasioned a massive exodus of refugees to Rwanda and triggered regional and international attention to the crisis in Burundi. The international community started to pressurise the Tutsi minority-dominated government into ending oppression and violence against the Hutu. Another important violent event was the assassination of the first Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye in 1993. This event kicked-off a civil war which also caused massive internal displacement and refugee outflows to the neighbouring countries. The Burundian refugee problem increasingly became an unbearable burden.

According to analysts of regional politics, the 1993 crisis in Burundi also contributed to the escalation of war and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The new president of Burundi (Ndadaye's successor)², was killed in the same airplane with the Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana. Both presidents were returning from a regional summit held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The escalation of war and the Rwandan genocide created millions of refugees in the Great Lakes region.

Pressured by the regional and international community, the main parties in conflict, the Tutsi-dominated government and the Hutu rebel movements, agreed to negotiate. Peace

² Melchior Ndadaye was succeeded by the President of the Parliament Cyprien Ntaryamira, who also was killed in Rwanda on 6th April, 1994, an event that triggered the Genocide in Rwanda.

negotiations took place in Arusha in 1998 under the mediation of Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania. A cease-fire agreement, facilitated by Nelson Mandela (former President of South Africa) who took over after Nyerere's death in late 1999, was signed in 2000. The cease-fire became a pull-factor for refugees and IDPs to return to their home country and areas of origin, respectively. According to UNHCR (2001), 13% of the Burundian population were either refugees or IDPs at the eve of the cease-fire agreement in 2000. However, though many refugees and IDPs rushed to return in the immediate aftermath of the peace agreement, the process has been long and challenging for those involved. UNHCR started to facilitate voluntary repatriation since 2002 and is still providing assistance to many of them. Returnees have particular socio-economical challenges in addition to several years of suffering and marginalisation inherent to forced displacement. If these complex challenges are not properly addressed, they may undermine the early success so far achieved on the path to conflict transformation.

1.2 Study rationale, objectives and limitations

While the detailed theoretical framework of this thesis will be outlined in chapter four, this section gives a brief introduction of different research and approaches on returnee reintegration. In post-war society, reintegration of returnees may be difficult both due to a lack of basic infrastructure and means of living. In this way, post-war challenges may contribute to the re-ignition of violence and armed conflict. In order to mitigate the potential threat to stability returnee reintegration entails, we need to know the challenges of specific reintegration programmes. Experts in peace and security studies consider reintegration of returning refugees as a part of peace building, which aims at preventing war-torn countries from relapsing into violence (Petrin 2002; Harpviken 2008; Jarstad and Sisk 2008; Paris and Sisk 2009). Despite this recognition of the potential impact of reintegration on peace building, the factors that make return and reintegration sustainable are under-researched³.

Various theoretical approaches to refugee studies highlight the divergence of and difficulties in conceptualising refugee return and reintegration (Black and Gent 2004). Two major approaches are noteworthy: the narrow approach that focuses on individual returnee achievement, the “status-quo ante” situation upon return; and the broad approach that connects refugee reintegration to broader issues. The latter suggests comprehensive responses

³ The first study on this particular topic was done by the University of Sussex for the UK Home Office relating to return to Bosnia and Kosovo, whereas the second was conducted by the UN Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK) in 2004.

to post-war challenges including addressing issues of failed states, broken bonds between state and society, socio-economic problems, as well as human rights (Anthony 1991; Helman and Ratner 1992; Loescher and Milner 2003; Rotberg 2004; Hammerstad 2005). Moreover, this approach recognises the validity of refugee experience in the study of forced displacement. Refugee experience is defined as “human consequences -personal, social, economic, cultural and political- of forced migration”(Ager:2). The divergence and difficulties in the scholarly literature conceptualising refugee return and reintegration come from the fact that there is no “one-size fits all model” to post-war intervention (Black and Gent 2004). Therefore, there is a need for studies analysing reintegration through linkages to specific challenges in specific historical and contemporary conflict contexts.

Several theorists for example (Anthony 1991; Kibreab 2003; Harpviken 2008) have analysed broader issues linked to forced displacement. According to this literature, larger issues such as security, economic development, and human rights are at the origin of conflicts that generate millions of refugees. In post-conflict situations, the sustainable reintegration of refugees depends mostly on the solutions to these same broad issues. It is further argued that that the risk of renewed armed conflict is generally high and that unless typical post-war challenges are properly tackled, hard-earned stability is easily jeopardised in post-war context.

The “greed and grievances”(Berdal and Malone 2000; Berdal 2005)⁴ debate has given the impression that there might be distinct root causes of civil war that can be divided into economic and political factors. However, the context of conflict and forced displacement in Burundi illustrates that the causes of civil war are complex and that there is no clear separation between economic and political causes. Moreover, the causes underlying the conflict are interlinked. The main cause of the crisis in Burundi can rightly be attributed to the notion of a “failed state” (Rotberg 2004:1), here understood as a state-nation that is “consumed by internal violence and ceases delivering positive political goods to its inhabitants”.

The study also intends to investigate the connection between violent conflict, civil war, and the main empirical topic of this thesis - forced displacement. It departs from the assumption

⁴ Berdal (2005) has described Paul Collier and associates as the front liners in insisting on the “greed” thesis of contemporary civil wars. He says that Collier and co.’s thesis overemphasises and explains “greed” as “the quest for loot for rebel actors”, while underplaying “grievance”, defined as “claim on the part of insurgents to be fighting for justice” (2005:687).

that failing to address legitimate returnee expectations and basic needs is likely to reignite conflict and destabilise a very fragile situation. In addition, a durable solution for refugees and IDPs will depend on the overall development of an inclusive society, with popular democracy and citizen rights as well as enhanced state capability to deliver basic services and to manage land laws, land rights and disputes in ways that may hinder escalation of land-based conflict in the communities of return.

In view of what has been argued above, the research objectives are:

- to identify the nature of the main challenges for returnee⁵ reintegration in Burundi, and
- to explore how addressing or failing to address these challenges may affect the possibilities for conflict transformation and a durable peace.

In this thesis I will draw on qualitative research including data from my own field work in Burundi from mid-May to mid-July, 2009. Nonetheless, the interpretation of qualitative data is informed by many other sources, including secondary data based on research of others in and on Burundi. Moreover, my personal experience (as a refugee and humanitarian practitioner), including my personal ties with many Burundian individuals and personal interest in media coverage (internet, radio, magazines and newspapers) of the crisis in the African region of Great Lakes Region, has significantly influenced my analysis and comprehension. The main findings suggest that the sustainability of reintegration in Burundi depends on an appropriate solution to broader livelihood issues for returnees and their communities in two principal areas: a) access to basic services and b) land for both cultivation and establishing homesteads.

1.3 Relevance to Peace Studies

While the debate about the significance of refugee return to peace prospects is not unanimous, there is a widely shared opinion among scholars and policy-makers that refugee return constitutes an indication of the end of conflict and restoration of normalcy. Moreover, this opinion argues that there is a relationship between successful reintegration of refugees and former fighters and security (Petrin 2002; Black and Gent 2004; Harpviken 2008). However, those scholars who see returning refugees as a potential threat to stability argue that returnees should not solely be regarded as passive “civilians”, but that they may under some situations

⁵Throughout the thesis, the term “returnees” refers to former refugees.

be “returnee warriors”(Harpviken 2008). Nonetheless, both sides of the debate acknowledge the success of refugee return and reintegration as a way of ensuring long-lasting stability and legitimacy of post-war institutions. Therefore, the study on how to successfully reintegrate returning refugees as a solution to conflict and forced displacement is relevant and may benefit the peace building literature.

When forced displacement was first linked to security concerns, especially through the coining of the phrase “refugee warriors”, practitioners and scholars were troubled by this aspect of forced displacement. The concept of refugee warriors meant that refugees under certain conditions may play active roles in war. However, recent experiences in the field of peace building have acknowledged the linkages between returnee reintegration and demobilisation and reintegration of combatants. The case of the region of Great Lakes in general and Burundi in particular with its protracted conflict and refugee situation, illustrates clearly this linkage emphasised by the refugee warriors perspective (ibid.).

In the far-stretched and volatile Great Lakes Region, which Burundi is a part of, the ethno-political violence has generated millions of refugees and IDPs, which in turn has caused genocidal civil wars in recent years. While these regional conflicts have attracted much attention by foreign scholars, local-based research on violent conflict involving forced displacement is scarce (Ndikumana 2000; Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000). Burundian protracted violence does not only deserve more attention due to its huge magnitude (it has lasted for more or less four decades and claimed approx. 500,000 lives); it may also be important in that young scholars from this region contribute with insights that can be said to be local-situated knowledge (Genat 2009)⁶. It is my hope that this thesis will contribute to this endeavour.

Durable solutions to refugee problems require recognition of the potential impact of the key socio-economic issues in each and every post-war context. This recognition, both in analysis and in practice, is imperative for a broader and long-term approach of peace building. Theories of conflict transformation from eminent peace studies scholars emphasise deep analysis and responses addressing the underlying and root causes of violent conflicts (Galtung and Webel 2007). While Galtung makes a medical analogy between disease vs. health to

⁶Drawing upon literature on participatory action research, Genat used methods that privilege knowledge of reference groups “whom the research is for”.

violence vs. peace, Lederach uses the metaphor of house construction (and design) to peace building and reconciliation (Jenner and Lederach 2002). The medical model is comprised of analysis (diagnosis) of causes (pathogens), prognosis (natural history) and therapy (intervention). Applied to forced displacement and refugee flows, it can be argued that the phenomenon is the visible part of a large iceberg of structural problems of the state and the society. Though the empirical focus of this thesis is mainly limited to the phase of post-war reintegration of returning refugees, and does not in detail deal with the broader issues of peace building such as transitional justice, reconciliation and democratisation in Burundi, it is informed by the above mentioned theoretical framework including grand theory of conflict transformation studies. These theoretical frameworks assert that a holistic understanding of post-war challenges in relation to durable peace is a must.

1.4. Thesis outline

Chapter one of this thesis introduces the topic of the study, its rationale, objectives, assumptions and limitations as well as relevance to peace studies. The general historical and recent background of the conflict and the successive phases of displacement in Burundi are accounted for in chapter two. Chapter three outlines the methodology and field work context, including the methods and techniques used in data collection and analysis. This third chapter highlights some methodological and ethical considerations about this research work. Chapter four outlines the most relevant theoretical frameworks for this research topic, while chapter five presents and analyses the main empirical findings about reintegration of returnees in Burundi. The last chapter (six) discusses the findings and addresses some theoretical and empirical finding's implications on policy.

II. CONFLICT BACKGROUND

The latest civil war that started in 1993 and that was ended by the 2000 peace agreement is often erroneously referred to as the only conflict Burundi has had. However, as Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000:372) have observed, "since Burundi's independence in 1962, the country has experienced five civil conflicts, including the 1993 civil war which has become the longest and costliest in terms of economic loss". The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background of the conflict by describing the historical and political context and conditions under which the conflict and forced displacement in Burundi have unfolded. The starting section describes and analyses political dynamics of kingdom and colonial and rules in Burundi.

2.1. Kingship and colonial rule (1800-1962)

Based on the European notion of statehood, fixed borders were drawn in Africa, often arbitrarily, leaving peoples of the same tribes and ethnicities on different sides of the border. The conference that was held in Berlin 1885 when such borders were drawn has been the reference time of colonialism on the African continent (Lemarchand 1977). These physical borders have, in one way or another, also fixed social and cultural identities that had been previously informal and fluid. During the colonial period, many traditional institutions and practices were undermined and some have disappeared altogether. The colonial administration has made ethnic identities significant as a means of recognition and access to the colonial state. Such forms of classification became important, not only for ascription by significant others but also by self-ascription. Social categories turned into social groups who competed for access to economic and political power to serve the new colonial state bureaucracy. Since the colonial borders did not necessarily coincide with ethnic geography, the seeds for dissident and strife were sown, which would, in combination with other factors, result to ethnic violence in the wake of hard-won political independence on the African continent.

Historians have suggested that the cattle-rearing Tutsi arrived in Burundi and Rwanda in successive waves of migration during the 15th and the 16th centuries looking for better grazing spaces. They met the agriculturalist Hutu who had migrated earlier into this rainy and fertile region, probably from central Africa. The third group, currently known as Twa, lived as potters and hunters and is considered to be the indigenous people of this region. The integration of these “different” groups was extensive: by the time the colonisers arrived, they spoke the same language, believed in the same god, shared the same culture and lived side by side (Uvin 1999).

Considering the history of the post-colonial states of Rwanda and Burundi, prominent scholars (Prunier 2009); (Lemarchand and Martin 1974; Lemarchand 1977); (Reyntjens 1993; Reyntjens 1995; Adekanye 1996; Adekanye 1998); (Uvin 1999) have highlighted the role of colonialism in the genesis of ethnic violence in Rwanda and Burundi. In Burundi, (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000) have described how Belgian colonial administration favoured the minority Tutsi ethnic group in the creation of “predatory bureaucracy”. In this respect, the

access to education and to public employment was reserved to the Tutsi discriminating the Hutu majority⁷, which contributed to increased ethnic divisions.

However, there is no consensus about whether or not the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi are ethnic conflicts. Many Historians have interpreted the origin of conflict in the two sister countries as an “ethno-class” (Lemarchand 1977; Uvin 1999) conflict due to exacerbation of violence through overlapping inequalities. Other authors have rejected the ethnic explanation for the outbreak of the large-scale violence in the Great Lakes region, insisting on political and economic causes (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000). Although ethnicity per se in Burundi is not the subject of this research, the role (at least instrumental) of ethnic identities in breeding violence in this region cannot be ignored. As Uvin (1999) has remarked, the main obstacle in reaching consensus among scholars on plausible ethnic origins of political violence in Rwanda and Burundi is their extreme contemporary political importance.

Lemarchand (1977) has described the traditional socio-political system in Burundi as close to the ideal “pyramidal” model similar to many other tribal African states. At the top of the hierarchy, were the King and a class of princes, then the Hutu in the middle and the Twa on the bottom. It is argued that the Burundian monarchy lacked absolute power on the eve of independence. Even though the Tutsi monarchy allowed for the Hutu’s participation in cultural and ritual public life, the Hutu did not occupy important office in pre-colonial Burundi. Both scholars state that unlike the rigid and absolutism monarchy of Rwanda, Burundian Tutsi monarchy tended to promote national unity among social forces (ibid).

Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser (1997) have argued that the political and social manipulation of folklore has the potential to exacerbate conflict along ethnic and sub-ethnic lines while it can also facilitate national and sub-national unity. In this respect, it can be argued that the use of events and their actualization in stories as an ongoing process and traditional folklore (ritual, songs, personal stories, poems and sayings) was a very common practice often coordinated by the royal court. Before colonisers, the Burundian monarchy played a symbolic role for both

⁷ In 1930, in the only colonial school of Astrida (Butare/Rwanda) where Rwandan and Burundian elite was trained, there was one Hutu for every five students. In public administration, there were 106 Tutsi (and royal Ganwa) out of 133 regional administrators in Burundi.

the Hutu and the Tutsi especially during the annual "*umuganuro*"⁸ ritual, giving the King a central (divine) role and respect (1997:3).

The promotion of equilibrium among the main power contenders that may also be characterised as certain weaknesses in Tutsi kingship in Burundi shaped the remarkable stability and ethnic co-existence in Burundi for centuries before the arrival of colonisers. Weakened by both the colonial power (through Catholic Church) and internal dissensions, the monarchy had no other option than to seek common grounds with potential contending forces (the two main ethnic groups) in order to survive during the colonial and post-independence eras. In this context, social mobility for Hutus and Tutsis outside the ruling class could be achieved much easier in Burundi compared to the social and ethnic mobility in Rwanda (Lemarchand 1977; Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser 1997). Therefore, the Crown's lack of total control over contending socio-political forces might have contributed to restraint and stability. In addition, internal dissensions and royal intrigues among the Ganwa dynasty were at the origin of the monarchy's structural weaknesses, and benefited the middle and lower social strata. Although unifying forces in a tribal society, the Ganwa monarchy was mainly preoccupied with the elite's interests, not the masses'. The royal status was passed on from generation to generation through patrilineal ascendancy and legitimacy was based on the King's role in rituals and folklore that associated him with divine powers. However, the myths of divinity were deeply undermined by the colonial administration through the Catholic Church that prohibited most traditional ritual celebrations.

Moreover, political, economic and social forces overlapped with ethnic identities in both Rwanda and Burundi (Adekanye 1996) has argued that the Tutsi-dominated political system used military means to sustain their power. The formation of an indigenous army in Burundi was based on criteria that discriminated the Hutu. The German/Belgian colonialists had arbitrarily established a descending order of categories from 'the Negroid', 'the Nilotic tribes', to the 'pure Negro' (1996: 41). This policy had meant that the Tutsi, with their 'tall, lanky, and loose-limbed' members were preferred above others as a better military material. The so-called 'Nilotic tribes' was according to this order, a perfect combination of their criteria for military dependability. They therefore had no hesitation in entrusting the Tutsi minority with the monopoly over these states' military function (ibid.). The army, as well as

⁸ A ritual ceremony where peasants exhibited and offered to the King selected products of their harvest activities.

the state became a source of enrichment, privileges and power during the colonial and postcolonial years. This practice widened the ethnic divides between Hutu and Tutsi not only by political and economical domination and inequalities, but also by increasing resentment and mutual mistrust between those who had and those who didn't. Anthony (1991) has also analysed the historical roots of internal war in Africa, and has argued that African state-building by colonialism has contributed to the creation of conditions that led to internal wars in the post-independence era. While political instability in Africa has not produced a refugee rises per se, "a resort to war as substitute for politics has expelled many Africans beyond borders of their respective countries. He has been categorised Burundi and Rwanda in "governing class" typology whereby colonial state building significantly shaped existing cleavages among political forces (1991:577).

Economically, the colonial administration imposed tax, cash crops, and compulsory labour to the detriment of the Hutu masses. Peasants have remained with lesser time to work on their own subsistence given less time spent in "public work" such as construction of infrastructure (road, schools, etc.). The Hutu peasants cultivated the land for their subsistence but were forced to sell their products to the urban elite in order to earn money, which has replaced the traditional, non-monetary means of exchange. Explaining how the state bureaucracy in Burundi has become a rent-seeking and predator administration, Ngaruko and Nkurunziza have argued that the private sector was inseparable from politics in Burundi (2000:384). The political and military elite (mainly Tutsi) has always monopolised the ownership of important businesses in the country. The exploitative and authoritarian practices were carried on by post-independence Tutsi-dominated military regimes.

2.2. Post-independence authoritarianism (1962-1990s)

Burundi gained its independence from Belgium on 1st July, 1962. Grave violent incidents happened amidst and shortly after independence. The greatest violent events that followed independence were the mass killings targeting Hutu in 1965 and the abolition of the Ganwa monarchy by the Tutsi-dominated army who contested the King's ethnic coexistence policy. The top army officers wanted a "radical solution" to the increasing Hutu emancipation (increasing numbers of educated Hutu mainly through the Catholic Church-owned schools, their promotion in the army as well as within the royal political party, UPRONA).

In fact, the abolition of the monarchy went hand in hand with the purge of the Hutu elite from the state and army apparatuses, and ethnic cleansing (Reyntjens 1994; Ndikumana 2000).

Lemarchand (1977) has attributed the 1965-1966 violence and the power take-over by the Tutsi-dominated army to the “disengagement” of the monarchy from politics in Burundi. The post-independence Monarchy did not have a firm control over the cabinet. He further argues that the vacuum left by the 1962 independence needed to be filled by the increased involvement in politics by the crown. The Crown’s policy of equilibrium among elites of both Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups was perceived by the Tutsi-dominated army as a threat to Tutsi-reserved privileges. Firstly, the conservative elements in the army felt betrayed by the Ganwa monarchy, which resulted in the assassination of the Crown-Prince Louis Rwagasore in 1961⁹. The assassination was followed by a deep political crisis, which included the assassination of Pierre Ngendandumwe, the Hutu Prime Minister appointed by UPRONA after the elections of May, 1965. This crisis culminated in the coup d’état by Michel Micombero, the Tutsi army Chief from Bururi who became the first President of the Republic of Burundi after overthrowing the last Ganwa King Mwambutsa IV in 1966. Micombero’s rule was ended by another coup that brought Jean Baptiste Bagaza, also a Tutsi from the same region, to power in 1976.

The year 1965 has marked the end of Hutu participation in political power in Burundi (Reyntjens 1994). The successive military regimes from Micombero (1966-1976), Bagaza (1976-1987), Buyoya I (1987-1993) to Buyoya II (1996-2002) were authoritarian. It is throughout these regimes that the mass killings of civilians were perpetrated by the army, including the tragically famous massacres of 1965, 1972, 1988 and those of 1993. It is estimated that between 200,000 and 300,000 people, almost exclusively Hutu, were killed during the massacres of 1972 alone (ibid.). In fact, these events have crystallised ethnic divisions in Burundi in such a way that subsequent crises can be said to be the consequences of the former.

2.3. The civil war (1993-2000)

The successive military regimes in Burundi have oppressed and discriminated against the Hutu majority in the four decades since. The relative stability during the period between the early 1970s and the 1988 bloody events in Burundi¹⁰ was mainly due to the elimination of the Hutu ethnic group’s elite (intellectuals, businessmen, etc.) and massive exodus subsequent of

⁹ He was also a charismatic leader of UPRONA, the Royal political party.

¹⁰ The so-called Ntega-Maranga mass killings in Kirundo province where the army killed many Hutu civilians in a reprisal after insurgents had allegedly killed Tutsi families in the area. Thousands of Hutu escaping these events fled to the neighbouring Rwanda.

the 1972 massacres. The Hutu political mobilisation reemerged within refugee settlements in neighbouring countries during the late 1980s¹¹. The relative stability in Burundian politics under Bagaza regime (1976-1987) came to an end with the outbreak of widespread violence in 1988, and when democratisation blew into Africa in the early 1990s.

Following the cold war, symbolically marked by the fall of Berlin Wall, Western economic institutions including the World Bank and the IMF pressurised African leaders into undertaking profound economical and political reforms. Particularly, the countries of the Great Lakes like other French speaking countries were shaken by the so-called “La Baule Speech” by Francois Mitterrand, the then President of France, urging African leaders to reform and liberalise their political systems by adopting multi-party democracy. The successor of Bagaza, Pierre Buyoya, then President of Burundi, allowed political liberalisation to take place. The 1992 constitution formally endorsed the multiparty political system paving the way for free and fair elections. In allowing these democratic reforms, Buyoya was compared to Gorbachev when he began to reform the “worst” aspects of the very system that produced him (Uvin 1999). The political change in Burundi was an opportunity for the oppressed Hutu citizens as well as the Hutu refugees abroad to eagerly return home and participate in the democratisation process. Many of Burundian refugees (especially intellectuals) from Rwanda returned to Burundi not only because there was political liberalisation, but because a Tutsi-dominated rebellion (RPF-Rwandese Patriotic Front) had attacked Rwanda from Uganda in 1990.

The first multi-party elections were held in Burundi in June 1993, and were won by Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu from exile. His party, FRODEBU won more than 63% of the seats in the new Parliament. The presidential party then pledged to deeply transform state institutions that reflected structural inequalities, including the army. Many historians link Mr. Ndadaye’s assassination with his declared determination to reform the security institutions including the army, legislation concerning access to education, employment, land, etc. In this way, the democratic victory of FRODEBU was felt by the mono-ethnic army and the ruling class as a threat to their interests. Therefore, the conservative army elements would not accept the verdict of the ballot box. Melchior Ndadaye, who had sworn-in on 10th July 1993 as the first

¹¹ It is during the 1980s that the oldest Hutu rebel movements (FROLINA and PALPEHUTU) were founded by refugees.

elected President, was assassinated by the Tutsi army together with his close collaborators on 21st October 1993.

The assassination of Ndadaye triggered further massacres and a civil war that led to a massive humanitarian and institutional crisis. Among the other consequences of the massacres that followed the president's assassination was that approximately half a million refugees fled the country and hence halted the return of some refugees who had been attracted by the (failed) democratisation process. The refugee problem became protracted, a heavy burden for neighbouring countries to bear. The regional African leaders pressured the Tutsi military leadership in power to negotiate a peace deal with the Hutu rebel factions that claimed, among other things the right for the refugees to return. The former President of Tanzania, the late Julius Nyerere, initiated peace talks that he facilitated from June 1998 to his death in October 1999. Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa, took over and led the negotiations, leading to a cease-fire agreement between the Government and the main Hutu factions in 2000. As a result, UNHCR started to assist refugees with voluntary repatriation to Burundi. Since 2002 and it is estimated that as many as 470,200 refugees have returned home (UNHCR 2009).

2.4. Post-civil war (ongoing):

As already noted, the political backlash and battles that followed independence in Burundi and the bloodshed violence in 1965 and 1972 claimed hundreds thousands lives, almost exclusively Hutu. Escaping from these events, more than 150,000 Hutu refugees fled to Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania. As also earlier described, the assassination of President Ndadaye in 1993 also created more or less than half a million refugees and enormous internal displacement. The peace agreement between the government (with its Tutsi-dominated army) and the Hutu rebel groups has marked the end of the devastating civil war. The agreement was reached in thanks to the strong commitment and pressure from international and regional leaders, especially from South Africa with Mandela at the helm. He was very much personally engaged in the peace process. As a result, many refugees were able to return to Burundi from abroad. Many IDPs have also started to return to their homes; they had been coerced to leave either by the hostilities or by the "*regroupement*" policy by Buyoya government (Ndikumana 2000). Most of the refugees who had fled following the 1993 civil war returned almost spontaneously from neighbouring countries (mainly from Tanzania). They returned without assistance to rehabilitate their homes despite massive destruction of key social infrastructures. Among the other human consequences of the violence and civil war, was the fact that

refugees and IDPs experienced abuse of their basic human rights, and were to some extent dehumanised (Malkki 1996). A returned refugee now in a temporary reception centre in southern Burundi, confirmed the bitter sentiment of being a refugee by complaining: “Being detached from your country is the worst form of alienation you can experience” (Interview, Makamba, 2009).

III. METHODOLOGY

According to Silverman (2005) , methodology is defined as “a general approach to studying research topics” which implies that the choice of method should reflect an overall research strategy. This chapter describes the overall research strategies, methods, sources and instruments. It also discusses some ethical and methodological challenges this thesis has encountered including the context under which the field work was undertaken.

3.1 General research approaches

Studying returnee reintegration in post-war Burundi poses a number of challenges. The first is as described in the introduction, the limitation of the thesis. Investigating the connection between violent conflict and civil war needed some decision about the choice of theoretical approach from an early stage in the research process. This was done while keeping a focus on forced displacement as the main empirical topic of the thesis. The second challenge was finding appropriate methods to deal with the empirical complexity of post-war reintegration. It was important to decide whether or not to use many methods, while making sure not to risk using an inadequate method. This question found an answer from Silverman (2005), who has asserted that “there is no right or wrong methods” and that many qualitative studies combine multiple methods. He further argued that all that counts is appropriate method in accordance with topic and chosen model of explanation (2005:112). Therefore, I have retained the strategy of using multiple methods and sources of information.

Researching on forced displacement and returnee reintegration in a post-war context is a complex task. Colson (2007) has argued that ethnographic methodology on forced migration and refugee studies must acknowledge the complexity of forced displacement and not solely limit the examination to a single aspect. She has recommended a “linkages” approach as an appropriate way of considering the diversity of themes and issues involved in forced migration. According to her, the linkage approach entails a “relational” dimension of individual refugee, bureaucratic exigencies and global flows of goods and persons. Through

her instructive article “Linkages methodology: no man is an island”, she has highlighted the complexity of involved issues and aspects of forced migration by asking:

“What common methodology could guide research on the genocidal aspects of forced migration, relationships between displaced persons and hosts, [...] humanitarian organizations and the coordination of aid to displaced persons, interethnic relations in exile, the impact of the Welfare State on refugees, predictors of administrative decisions to grant asylum, likely outcomes of the repatriation considerations associated with the restoration of property to those dispossessed, and the meaning of place in a world of movement?” (2007:321).

Though I am not explicitly applying the linkage approach methodologically, the choice of theoretical approaches was based on Colson’s approach, which I found relevant to understanding the complexity of forced displacement in Burundi. The conflict, as well as refugee problem must be understood through the country’s historical, socio-economical and political contexts.

Another challenge was design of research instruments. In order to operationalise a research question and strategy, I had to decide about the content of research tools for data collection. I relied on other studies with similar topics in order to compose interview guide questions and relevant issues on which data was need. The study by the University of Sussex on refugee return in Bosnia and Kosovo (Black and Gent 2004) was the main reference in this design of the research instruments. The researchers have found out that there are factors such as refugee experience before and after exile and the circumstances under which return takes place, which influence the sustainability of return. In addition they have identified key variables such as age, gender, accommodation, education, employment, etc. and their incidence within sustainability of return and reintegration (2004:16). Many of these factors are also relevant to influencing returnee reintegration in Burundi.

I have retained some of the variables such age, gender; accommodation, education, employment, etc. as factors that may influence returnee reintegration in Burundi. The variables, which are informed by the thesis theoretical framework, are further categorized into “broader” concepts: sustainable livelihood and refugee experience. While livelihood strategies concepts is here used in terms of access to basic services (food, water, health, education and employment) and access to land, refugee/returnee experience concept refers to the background of the conflict and life conditions before flight, during flight, exile and post-

return. The main themes, analytical concepts and research methods are presented in the table below. Fig.1 summarises the main conceptual sampling around which data was collected.

Fig.1 Study's main themes and concepts

Concepts	Issues	Methods
(1) Refugee experience	Age Sex Time and conditions of flight and return Actual conditions in exile and post-return Place of origin/destination Perception on war and violence Perception on forced displacement Feelings on inclusion in local community	(1) Semi-structured interviews (2) Focus group
(2) Livelihood Strategies	-Access to land (as homesteads and for agriculture) -Access to basic services (food, housing, water, health care, etc.) -Opportunity for education, employment -Socio-economic infrastructure (transport, communication, etc.)	(1) Interview with NGOs, Gov and UN officials (2) Secondary sources: academic, official and media publications (3) Semi-structured interview with returnees (4) Focus group

As the table above shows, the selection of themes and concepts was both influenced by theory and by data collection methods. The designed interview guide mostly contained the selected issues in column 2 (see appendix 3). While the table does not show actual interview questions, the aim was to design a research tool box that ensures no key information was left out during data collection and analysis.

3.2 Data collection techniques:

The present research involved various techniques and strategies to operationalise, assemble and interpret data on returnee reintegration in Burundi. Starting up my field work, I used the first week to contact key informants and explore survey areas. The second was spent conducting in-depth interviews with identified NGOs, UN representatives, and governmental officials. Moreover, each provincial round was preceded by a meeting with local governmental authority. I succeeded in meeting and interviewing the political, socio-economic advisors to governors in the three selected and visited provinces. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) have argued that gatekeepers are not only there to obstruct researchers from entering the scenes; while asserting their status as entry controllers, they might also provide

access. Interviewing local authorities before meeting returnees in remote areas helped me in two different ways. Meeting with administration was an implicit access negotiation as well as a collection of key data on the general profile of visited areas. I selected the province of Kirundo, Ruyigi and Makamba for access reasons: I expected it to be easier there due to the high numbers of returnees in these provinces (see statistics in appendix 2) and the organisation I was attached to had promised me facilities (local manager's guide, transport, etc) that could help me in reaching returnees in remote areas I had chosen to visit.

3.2.1 Interviews:

Silverman (2005) has rejected the idea of treating research methods as mere "techniques" (2005:110). He has argued that the broader societal context may explain why the interview method is preferred to other methods in qualitative research. I have preferred the semi-structured form of interview mainly due to its flexibility, but also due to uncertainty about security in the field and the fact that the investigated issues might be sensitive during the specific pre-election atmosphere.

After being briefed by my field contact and being given first hand information about reintegration of returning refugees, I was warned that situations and challenges differ from place to place and from category of returnees. This reality led me to adopt the interview guide forms for interviewing returnees that did not contain formulated questions, but topics and issues to which I needed answers. The semi-structured interviews were not strictly limited to a set of questions (with closed answer alternatives) written in the interview form. Questions were asked not in their order of the checklist/guide form, but according to interviewee's formulation and responses to the introductory questions. The designed interview guides only helped me to remember the key issues of investigation, leaving me with the freedom to reshape the format according to the atmosphere and the interview situation. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) have argued that such flexibility can help interviewers tailor their questions with the interview situation, so as to build good rapport and ensure trustworthy responses.

In this regard, the question guides constituted an informal "grouping of topics and questions that could be asked in different ways for different categories of participants". The same authors have argued that:

"...Interviewer can reshuffle topics and questions in order to find the best fit. Interview guides also allow the research to adjust to the verbal style of the participant. Questions can be rephrased, broken up into smaller unities, or altered in other ways in order to achieve the goals set out by the researcher" (2002:195).

It is noteworthy to mention that while the guide forms were written in English, I conducted interviews in Kirundi or French without interpreter. While the interviews in Kirundo and Ruyigi (north-east) mostly concerned the so-called 1993 returnee caseload and emphasised their experiences (pre-flight, exile and return conditions) and access to social services, the interviews and focus group conducted in Makamba (south) were focused on reception of the so-called 1972 returnees and their access to land.

I spent my second week of field work conducting in-depth interviews with leaders of different organisations and institutions (NGOs and UN agencies) in Bujumbura, the capital city of Burundi. I used the remaining time of my field work (five weeks in June and early July) to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus group with individual returnees in the above-mentioned selected provinces. The recruiting of interviewees was done through a “snow-ball” method. In the field, I was accompanied by the driver, the FHB’s local project manager/coordinator in the visited area¹². Interviews with returnees were often preceded by meetings with provincial administration with whom I (implicitly) negotiated access. They also provided me with basic information. Then I visited areas designated as having the highest number of returnees, expecting to easily meet some people to interview. After each interview session, the person interviewed sent me other returnees from his/her neighbourhood, and so on. Even though arrival in remote rural areas by car or motorcycle often attracted much attention, I managed to hold interviews private (between researcher and interviewee). Interviews were mostly held under shadow (against the summer sun) in settings where my team kept the curious children or neighbours a bit far from the interview spot. This apparent privacy setting provided both the interviewer and interviewee with an ideal setting that may have contributed to trustworthiness and hopefully increased data quality.

All in all, I conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with individual returnees during my field work. 11 interviews were conducted in Ruyigi, 6 in Kirundo and 4 in Makamba in addition to one focus group discussion and 11 open-ended interviews with programme co-ordinators of UN agencies, NGOs and Governor Advisors in visited provinces. The later (non-returnee) interviews were used to get an overview of reintegration activities on a country basis and

¹² During an all-staff meeting at the FHB Headquarters in Bujumbura, the Country Director introduced me to local managers

helped achieve understanding of the broader context of challenges returnee reintegration were faced with at that particular time.

3.2.2 Focus group discussion:

Focus group discussion is defined as an interview technique that allow a dyadic interaction and permits several people to be interviewed at once (Lindlof and T aylor 2002). After a long time of being considered as alternative or supplementary to other data collection techniques, the focus group has now gained a stand-alone status as a method. Its major advantages are: (1) exploiting “group effects whereby group members are stimulated by ideas and experiences expressed by each other; and (2) making people feel willing to express themselves on sensitive or long-repressed topics”.

One focus group was arranged in Makamba province to supplement data previously collected in Kirundo and Ruyigi provinces essentially through non-structured interviews with returnee individuals who shared their viewpoints on access to relief aid, social services and their perception on how this access (or lack of) affected their reintegration. This focus group was aimed at collecting data based on a group exchange on the importance of access to land and property for the 1972 returnees.

The content from group discussion supplemented the experiences from previously collected data dominated by claims about limited access to welfare and basic services. While the majority of returnees in North-East are the 1993 caseload returnees that almost immediately and spontaneously returned after the cease-fire agreement, most of returning refugees to the southern provinces including Makamba are comprised of the 1972 caseload whose return and reintegration face land-related challenges. The two categories of refugee caseloads (according to the time and event that caused their flight) thus determine the challenges they face upon return. Therefore, whereas the question of land access is not pressing in the North, it constitutes the key concern in South. Makamba was in this respect an appropriate area to investigate the scope of land occupation amid forced displacement. I chose the focus group method as an ideal way of collecting nuanced viewpoints from returnees who are susceptible to the same challenges upon return. In addition, the choice of focus group was motivated by the limited fieldwork time and resources (transport, assistant, etc.).

The meeting was held on an open air court in the middle of plastic sheets-roofed houses for the landless returnees in Gitara. While facilitating the discussion as “moderator”, I also took

notes of each participant's speeches and reactions. A local colleague helped me with organising the logistics for the meeting and took some pictures with a pocket digital camera. After my return to my night quarters in the evening, I wrote detailed field notes, reconstituting the stories, by way of my memory, brief notes and pictures. Most of the returnees I met there had arrived from refugee camps in Tanzania a year ago and were promised to be "temporarily" hosted in a refugee reception centre while waiting for CNTB's response on their deposited claims to land and other properties. Their views on the resolution of disputes related to land were invaluable. They helped to get a clear picture of different kinds of land claims, supplementing the general picture about the land situation available from secondary data. I will deal with this study's prime sources of secondary data below. In hindsight, given the relative importance I have gradually attached to land issues, it would have benefited my research if I had given more weight to it in my own primary data collection.

3.2.3 Secondary sources

I have used a range of secondary sources in this thesis, including reports on resolution of land related disputes in Burundi. The recent report from the land commission whose logo reads "Have a Home, Be Respected" (*CNTB 2010*)¹³ has been used to this end. The report documents contain statistics and description about resolution of land-related claims and I have taken this review into account. It represents one of the main findings in chapter five. In addition, key facts about land problems and their potential impact on the peace process is very well described by the ICG (2003) report also mentioned in chapter five.

By the summer 2009, the repatriation of the 1972 caseload refugees was at its peak. The problem of access to land was the main concern of the long-term refugees. The new waves of returnees raised this hot issue of rights to land when they were received by local authorities, agencies and residents. Due to time constraints, I collected limited material on land issues mainly through my already described field visit in Makamba province. With awareness that the collected data on this particular issue was limited in scope, I wanted to supplement it with data from other credible sources on the same topic of access to land. In my opinion, these two sources are credible, given the expertise and competence of the two respective bodies. And the data from these sources substantiates the argument that returnee reintegration challenges negatively impact on peace prospects.

¹³ My own translation from Kirundi

3.3 Field work context

3.3.1 About places and people

I undertook the field work from May to July 2009 to collect the data material for the thesis. Upon my first arrival in Burundi, I was fascinated by the beauty of the country and its people's resilience to coping with their past legacy of civil war and violence. The aerial view above Bujumbura, the capital city of Burundi, gives a beautiful image of a city located on flat landscapes and surrounded by hills and a large lake. On setting the foot out of the plain, you are greeted by a warm tropical temperature varying around 25°C in average. At a mile distance on the other side of Tanganyika Lake, you discover Uvira town in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the lake separating the two sister cities. They are situated on a low-lying plateau, which is a prolongation of the Rift Valley from far north-east Africa. This region is characterised by the presence of numerous large lakes such as Lake Victoria and long rivers such as Akagera, which is the main affluent to The Nile. Therefore, it is also known as the "the Great Lakes Region" of Africa thanks to the abundance of lakes and rivers. The green mountains surrounding Bujumbura city have become famous symbols of the just ended civil war in general and the city bombardment in particular: the Hutu rebel factions used the mountains as safe heavens from which to launch assaults from their hide-outs there. This guerrilla strategy seriously challenged the governmental troops from the outbreak of the civil war in 1993.

Small and clean, the airport is situated around a half an hour drive from the city centre. Custom services including immigration and luggage control services are pretty well organised. Unlike in many other regional border points, I did not experience any harassment by security services upon my entry and during my short stay in Burundi. My local contact had found transport and residence in the city. Bujumbura downtown is crowded and there are traffic jams during rush hours. Despite its favourable nature, the city has not been considerably developed during post-independence years. Most of administrative buildings were constructed before the country gained its independence from Belgium in 1962. The post-war government has pledged to build new infrastructure and has already renovated the city road network, which deteriorated due to the civil war. The main city's avenues such as the central market are crowded. Cars, bicycles and motorcycles are criss-crossed with pedestrians from dawn to dusk.

People are friendly, generous and open to foreigners. Kirundi, which is close to Kinyarwanda, is the national language shared of all. In addition, foreign languages such as Swahili, French and English are spoken in business, offices and media. Bujumbura city, as well as other small towns, is inhabited by those who did not flee during the civil war and by returnees from different lingual backgrounds. Although different accents of Kirundi (and other languages) are tacitly associated with one's background and country of exile, such diversity is tolerated. Apart from its cultural diversity and openness, the society reflects a bitter legacy of many years of forced migration. In order to spur economic growth, Burundi has since joined the East-African Community (EAC) along with Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, a regional organisation whose members have agreed on free movement of persons and goods. The common market protocol that was adopted in November 2009, entered into force on 1 July 2010. The benefits of Burundi in this regional cooperation are manifested mainly in the import/export sector where the country overcomes problems related to its landlockedness. According to the protocol, Burundian imported goods will pay less custom obligations and their shipment from Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Mombasa (Kenya) ports will be easier.

3.3.2 Security situation

The concern for any newcomer to a country emerging from civil war ought to be physical security. I was impressed by how fast security has improved in Burundi upon my arrival in mid-May 2009. Obviously, the civil war in Burundi was formally terminated by the dismantling of the military wing of FNL-PALIPEHUTU (The National Front for Hutu Liberation movement), the last rebel faction that has since May 2009 joined the peace process becoming part of the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration programme according to the peace agreement. The FNL's political wing was legalised as the 44th certified political party to operate in Burundi (BBC 2009).

The institutional and political reforms in the country have been achieved through the principle of sharing power, a constitutional amendment specifying proportionate ethnic and gender representation in the country's highest institutions (Reyntjens 2000). The transition period that followed the peace negotiations was terminated by general elections in 2005, largely won by CNDD-FDD led by the President Pierre Nkurunziza. Founded amidst the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye in 1993, this party emerged as a major Hutu rebel movement both militarily and as a political organisation. Already by summer 2009, the fever of the upcoming 2010 elections could be felt in public offices and on the streets. It was feared that the main

political forces taking part in the electoral campaigns may instigate violence in attempt to intimidate supporters of their rivals.

However, certain regional dynamics have an important influence on stability and therefore must be taken into account when analysing the political and security situation in Burundi during the time of my field work. Through active diplomacy, the international community managed to abort the Tutsi insurgency's assault on Goma (DRC) by the end of 2008. This rebellion recalled the two other previous civil wars, also known as a continental wars, that had ravaged DRC between 1996 and 2002 (Prunier 2009) . While different rebel groups continued to sporadically attack, kill civilians and rape women in the eastern DRC in 2009, the relative stability in the region (Rwanda, Tanzania) has revitalised the Burundian peace process. Most importantly, the involvement of South Africa in the peace process was a backbone of the painstakingly achieved stability.

3.4 Ethical and methodological considerations

3.4.1. Personal experience

During my early childhood, I learnt the word “refugee” in association with the Hutu Burundians with whom I went to school. Though refugees were socio-economically marginalised, they enjoyed at least sympathy from the ethnic Hutu majority in Rwanda. My early contact with refugees has influenced my interest into refugee issues and this interest grew tremendously when I experienced forced displacement myself. During the 1990s escalation of violence in Rwanda and Burundi, Hutu refugees from both countries feared the same armed forces that pursued them. They took the same itinerary and lived in the same refugee camps in Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Hutu refugees experienced the same hardship and violence, especially when the 1996 civil war broke out in east DRC, destroying refugee camps and dispersing refugees.

When I became a refugee myself first in Goma refugee camps, then in Tanzania, I internalised the refugee ways of coping with hardship in hostile environments. Thereafter I was luckily resettled to Norway, which gave me the opportunity to have voice for the voiceless refugees. I hope that my academic endeavour will contribute to connecting refugee issues to the broader agenda of conflict transformation, by researching the crisis in the Great Lakes region of Africa. As a native of the region, my goal is to make the often absent refugee voices be heard with hope that both scholars and policy makers could use these voices in analysis and policies to help the victims of violent conflicts. I am of a view that failures of foreign interventions in

many African conflicts (i.e. Angola, Somalia, DRC, Rwanda, etc.) were either due to misunderstanding of conflict's root causes and/or lack of knowledge about the societies into which the interventions took place.

Moreover, having experienced the 1994 Rwandan civil war and genocide and fled my country of origin, I share a lot with the people I wanted to "study" and I understand the "refugee world". My early sympathy and coexistence with Burundian refugees has blurred the distinction between national and ethnic identities to such an extent that I consider myself as a native when researching Burundian conflict and forced displacement. This is how I felt and expected to be perceived by my encounters; I cannot consider my informants as simply "distant subjects" during the research process. The choice of topic and case study was motivated by a passion for peace making in general and to finding a solution for refugee plights in particular. However, personal experience and passion as a "native" researcher entail both advantages and dilemmas (Hau'ofa 1982).

Firstly, it is not always a strong argument to claim legitimate access to refugees on the basis of alleged sentimental and altruistic motives. Some people still think that research should be "rational", i.e. pursuing objectivity, which is opposite to "emotionally" charged research that is often seen as "subjective". Instead I adopted the strategy to avoid suspicion by clarifying my identity to my informants. As a result, I established a good "rapport" with my informants on the ground thanks to openness and sincerity. Obviously, most of the Hutu returnees I interviewed were flattered that I was a refugee myself and that I had experienced the same suffering. On the potential question of credibility of a research done in spite of researcher's passion and emotions, native researchers studying their own societies have become common and popular in social sciences. In ethnography, for instance, "Anthropology at home" has meant that researchers make use of their experience, which has been heralded as enabling the discipline to see things from the native's point of view. In this respect, it has been argued that studying one's own society (or group) has "the great merit of humanising the discipline and taking Anthropology from the academy closet to the public arena"(1982:222)

Secondly, a very careful introduction to my audiences has been crucial since my topic involved investigating some sensitive issues, which invoked various forms of insecurity. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) have argued that a researcher's words and questions might be misinterpreted and create an atmosphere of threat and fear. To deal with this potential risk, it

is necessary to build “rapport” with informants. Rapport was defined as a quality of communication event that begins with the researcher’s clarity of purpose (2002:189). To do so, I had the advantage of being able to communicate directly with my encounters in the local language Kirundi and other spoken languages namely Swahili or French. Ultimately, establishing a good rapport with my returnee informants enabled me to accede to gain access to crucial data during my field work.

3.4.2. Gaining access

The negotiation of access to sites of study is often done in the early phase of the research process. While the official permission to enter the field was in my case tacitly obtained when the Burundian Embassy in Belgium accorded me the visa, the access in question concerns the outcome of negotiation with “those who control” the desired research sites. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), these might be persons, groups or organisations who have the authority to negotiate and approve research access. This is why they are referred to as “gatekeepers” (2002:101). Finding out who is the gatekeeper of the research site is the first step in access negotiation. In some systems and institutions it is not clear who is in charge of providing admissions and facilitating access to research sites.

During my stay in Burundi, I was affiliated to a humanitarian organisation¹⁴ and this affiliation was a door-opener to spheres of international and local organisations involved in the reintegration of returnees. My new status as an intern in the organisation facilitated my access to NGO officials that would have otherwise been difficult to achieve. This status also permitted me to accede to needed resources (transport, office, printer, copy machines, etc.) from both within the organisation and partners. Most importantly, I learnt a lot about the socio-political context of Burundi through the daily exchange and networking with colleagues during my short field work.

An example of how this status facilitated my access to research sites is when my driver, my colleague and I were allowed by local officials in Makamba to partake in a cross-border repatriation convoy, an operation which is normally limited to staff of UNHCR and its partner organisations. The Refugee Agency regularly arranged such convoys in collaboration with the governments of Burundi and Tanzanian. That day, 503 returnees had been transported to Musenyi Temporary Reception Centre, a mile from Manyovu border point. When refugees

¹⁴ FHB is local office of Food for the Hungry International, which is a non-governmental organisation involved in community-based development in Burundi since 2006.

arrived in the centre, they were registered and photographed in order to obtain national identification cards as well as a “return package” composed of food and Non-Food items (NFI). This trip allowed me to see the conditions of return and understand the different challenges different returnee caseloads are faced with.

Nonetheless, combining my status as a humanitarian worker and a researcher implies ethical dilemmas. Wearing a double hat might mislead and lead to biased collection of data about reintegration achievements and challenges. Usually, when expecting aid according to expressed problems, beneficiaries of relief aid overemphasise their vulnerabilities to humanitarians. To avoid this expectation during my returnee encounters, in the beginning of each session I insisted that in spite of my affiliation with the NGO, I was a just researcher expecting them to describe their situation by answering asked questions. I clearly explained that my research intended to raise refugee issues in the Great Lakes region on the research agenda, and that the outcomes would not impact their immediate needs. Therefore, with awareness that my affiliation to the organisation entailed both easy access (advantage) and data bias (inconvenience), I tried to negotiate access without compromising data quality.

3.4.3 Sensitive questions

While there is no formal definition of what a “sensitive question” is in social sciences - to my knowledge, sensitive topics are thought to be those which are surrounded by taboo and/or encroach on private lives. Lee (1993) has noticed that authorities in Anglo-Saxon societies have on several occasions been reluctant to grant the go-ahead for large-scale surveys on sexual behaviour or research involving teenagers. He suggested that sensitive topics raise difficult methodological and technical problems because of the moral threat they pose. Lee has argued that researching on sensitive topics implies challenges of access [to data], but also wider issues related to ethics, politics and legal aspects of such research (1993:2). In conflict-torn societies, research on sensitive topics poses more challenges and dilemmas because of its potential effects on traumatised participants. Moreover, many issues that usually are seen as “neutral” may become sensitive due to their specific meaning in relation to the very nature of ethnic conflicts.

Refugees, relief assistance and land issues are politically charged topics. When political contention among rival parties and ethnic groups started growing and new parties burgeoned in preparation for the 2010 elections in Burundi, raising any politicised issue in conversation was particularly sensitive. Even though Burundi scores relatively higher compared to its

neighbours as far as freedom of speech/press is concerned (103/175 on the RSF's press freedom index of 2009)¹⁵, the election fever that prevailed in Burundi when I conducted my research in Burundi seemed to bend that rule. Rumours linked the political party proliferation with foreign interference in Burundian internal affairs as sabotage towards the ruling party. There was mutual mistrust, suspicion and rumours among contending parties. Of course it is particularly difficult to deal with or verify rumours. In the past, rumours about political unrest have triggered deplorable violence in Burundi. In the generalised climate of mutual suspicion, researchers, journalists, human rights activists, etc. are fairly frequently accused of spying (Lee 1993).

In addition, given the sensitivity of the topics I intended to investigate, informants would hardly open up to express their deeper opinions, fearing for their own safety. In front of such potential auto-censor, I adopted research strategies that asked open questions rather than closed, long questions instead of short ones, etc. And most of all, I allowed my respondents to describe activities in words which are familiar to them.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this thesis, reintegration of returning refugees in Burundi is approached with a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework comprising concepts and paradigms, rather than a hard-theory. The framework is mainly based on the "state" concept and its variants. This "model" is an attempt to explain underlying causes of endemic political violence and the subsequent protracted refugee situation in Burundi. Reintegration of returning refugees is understood as a restoration of distorted bonds between state and society.

4.1 Theories of the state

The choice of "state" as a theoretical tool to analyse the civil war and reintegration of returnees in Burundi was inspired by two intersected ideas: the first idea is about the classic theories of statehood (Vincent 1987; Paris 2006; Dokken 2008), which define the essence and basic functions of the state; and the second idea is that which is largely shared among scholars about failed states, defined as "nation-states consumed by internal violence and ceasing to deliver positive political (Law, Wood et al.) goods to their inhabitants"(Rotberg 2004:1). The latter idea suggests that failed states are at the origin of civil wars and subsequent forced displacement (Helman and Ratner 1992; Petrin 2002; Hammerstad 2005(Loescher and Milner

¹⁵ RSF. (2009). "Press Freedom Index." Retrieved 26 May, 2009, from <http://en.rsf.org/pressfreedom-index-2009,1001.html>.

2003; Policy 2005). From this opinion, it can be assumed that addressing challenges of reintegrating returnees is a way of enabling a state to fulfil certain performance criterion for statehood and empowering the society to fulfil their duties and obligations, which in turn may prevent re-escalation of violence.

According to Vincent (1987), there is not one “theory of state”, but “theories of the State” because state is not one clear thing. He has defined a state as a complex of ideas and values, some of which have an institutional reality. Distinguishing the early idea of state from political organisation, Vincent has argued that the state is comparatively a recent phenomenon dating from the 16th century. The Greek *polis* (city-state) or medieval political organisations were not states per se, but antecedent to state. Etymologically, the word “state” derives from the Latin “stare” (to stand), and more specifically from “status” (a standing or condition), with reference to Kingdom, Pope or Emperor in the same way as one might refer to the status or state, which means static, fixed and stable (1987:17). The definition of the “state” has often been linked with the state’s characteristics or functions. It is argued that the most crucial features of the state are continuity, territory and population, many of whom are classed as citizens (ibid.).

The above definition of the state seemingly sets criteria or the standard that a state must attain in order to be recognised as such and qualify for state’s sovereignty. In international relations, it is the state’s capacity to fulfil international obligations that determines its sovereignty. While the sovereignty principle is mostly linked with the state’s external affairs, the state’s legitimacy is mostly in regard to its domestic affairs. Therefore, a sovereign state is not only recognised by other states, but must first and foremost have a functioning government, territory and population. Legitimacy implies that the state is able to provide the most crucial political goods to its inhabitants. Political goods are sets of criteria according to which modern nation-states are judged strong, weak or failed (Rotberg 2004). Rotberg has hierarchically classified these goods: security (maintenance of internal order and defence against external threat), political participation (freedoms and human rights) and socio-economic goods (health care, education and infrastructure for economic growth) (2004:3).

The idea of the state’s basic functions is also found in the classic realist theories of state. According to Paris (2006), the “Leviathan” (by Thomas Hobbes) has explained the role of “sovereign” confronted with “the state of nature”(2006:426). The state of nature being sort of

a security dilemma requires the sovereign (hereafter state) whose basic function would be to ensure collective security. According to this realist view, the state should exercise absolute power in order to establish the rule of law. The realists' pessimistic¹⁶ view of state and society raised a reaction from liberal theorists who rejected the idea of state of nature and instead defended individual liberties by suggesting an effective but limited state authority. The liberal political thought was spearheaded by John Locke who though recognising the necessity of central authority to enforce law, dismissed the idea of absolute power (ruler) that ignores the role of the ruled in the governance. According to the liberalists, "any individual citizen, oppressed by the rulers of the state, has the right to disobey their commands, break their laws, and even rebel and seek to replace the rulers and change the laws" (Walzer 1970: 3). The implication of such a "social contract" (between state and its citizens) is that parties' failure to fulfil their duties and obligations may lead to disastrous results. And accordingly, the state's failure to deliver the common good may engender violent conflict. The following section will discuss which states fail to deliver expected goods and how such failure leads to violence, civil war and forced displacement.

4.1.1 Failed states

The above-described functionalist theories of state views failed states as tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and bitterly contested by warring factions (Rotberg 2004). In this way, a state's failure is characterised by its incapacity to fulfil its prime function. Although the functionalist theory of state focuses on security as a prime function determining a state's fate, violence is not the only criterion for identifying failed states. Some of the other state's functions including provision of social and economical goods; are so vital that failure to fulfil them affects the state's legitimacy. In this regard, several analysts have underlined the importance of good governance including provision of basic services and socio-economic infrastructure. The political analysis of bad governance has led to different interpretations, with some authors preferring the term "failed state", while others adopt the concept of "shadow state". These terms are often interchangeably used to designate dictatorships where heads of states abuse their people by, for instance, using public good for private interests (Helman and Ratner 1992; Reno 2000; Policy 2005) and (Dokken 2008). According to Reno (2000), the concept of "shadow state" explains the relationship between corruption and politics which is the main cause of large-scale violence and civil war (2000:45). The states

¹⁶ According to Paris, R. (2006) Hobbes' "state of nature" implies that life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short because the continual fear...of violent death would make peaceful social life virtually impossible. Therefore, people would rationally conclude that their mutual interest lay in conferring sovereign authority upon individuals to guarantee their safety.

that violate human rights and oppress their citizenry lose their legitimacy. Those states risk being contested and fought over by their own people who aspire to ensure the political good by themselves (by rebellion or revolution). And since violence from one failed state may spill over to its neighbour through forced migration, illicit drugs and arms traffic, etc., the international community's recent intervention has essentially consisted in dealing with the "failed state" phenomenon (Helman and Ratner 1992).

Moreover, Rotberg (2004) has argued that a state's failure or collapse is not accidental. He has attributed responsibility of the state's descent into failure to undemocratic leadership (2004:25). In Rotberg's discussion of indicators of failure, he blamed colonial errors in the management of challenges and opportunities, which led to the state of affairs in most of the current weak, failed and collapsed states. Therefore, Rotberg emphasised heavily on democratic rule as an indicator of failed state. He has maintained that "democratic states fail to fail because they respond to popular discontent and accommodate dissident political challenges, while also maintaining normative and institutional inhibitions against massive human rights violation" (ibid. (2004:22). This view is shared among scholars who have analysed recent violent conflicts in Africa and found that states' failure was a result of historical "errors" of state building (Anthony 1991; Adekanye 1996; Chowdhury 2009). Acknowledging that there is a refugee crisis in Africa, Anthony (1991) has argued that internal wars that often lead to forced displacement and refugee flows are due to colonialism's creation of doomed-to-fail states on the continent. He has outlined three models of the colonial state, which are of high relevance in attempting to explain the drivers for post-independence internal wars and the refugee phenomena. The first is radical separation of different parts of colonised countries, and is illustrated by the French and British colony management in respective Chad and Sudan. Here, the south and the north were administered differently and these distinct systems came to collide in the wake of independence. The second model is based on paternalism that is illustrated by the colonial administration mode the Belgians adopted for Zaire (now DRC), while the third model is the creation of governing class which was the case in Burundi and Rwanda. The prevailing ethnic cleavages were further exacerbated by elevating (economically and politically) the Tutsi minority to the detriment of the majority Hutu masses (Adekanye 1996).

In a thorough study of state and security in Africa, Dokken (2008) described the specific nature and meaning of governance and security in contemporary Africa. She argued that state

and security in Africa differ from the classic understanding of Western “states”. The African war-threatened states oriented security threats to internal enemies, rather than to outsiders. The leaders in power personalise state institutions and attempt to discriminate and oppress their internal potential opponents. The country’s resources are used to sustain the incumbent power holder, rather to invest in socio-economic growth, which results in inefficient governance, also known as “belly politics”(DiJohn, Economics et al. 2008), which is the predatory pursuit of wealth and power as a mode of governance. Dokken has concluded that the most widespread characteristic of statehood in Sub-Saharan African is “neo-patrimonialism”, defined as a political and administrative system where power is used for personal gains and with no division between the private and public spheres (2008:35).

These views (Rotberg 2004; Dokken 2008) and (Reno 2000) converge on several points in their analysis of bad governance. They also explain how the state’s failure leads to dysfunctional institutions and hence contribute to the onset of violence and armed conflicts, since patrimonial rulers craft state institutions on the basis of their personal power and threaten their people as subjects with no rights. In addition to oppression, subjects are intentionally impoverished by the rulers as a means of fortifying their own power. Material benefits are distributed (pay-off) on condition of loyalty and obedience to the ruler. Therefore, the causes of failure of states governed by such regimes are interlinked (greed and grievances causes that I will discuss later under section 4.4). Normally, states shall fulfil at least what Reno refers to as “minimal state functions”, i.e. the monopoly over the control of forces in a territory is sufficient to protect everyone whether they like it or not (2000:47).

In Africa, the political elites are blamed for many cases of state failure. Authoritarian leaders have purposely created shadow economy and neo-patrimonial governance relying mainly on foreign aid. As a result, such state’s institutions were transformed into dysfunctional governance characterised by “shadow state” or “failed states” leading to civil war and violence(Reno 2000; Dokken 2008). According to Chawdhury (2009), there is a distinction between weak, failing, failed and collapsed states and the differences lie in the ability to deliver public goods: security, dispute resolution, and freedom to participate in government, and basic rights and services(2009:421). In Burundi, the conflict and forced displacement may be explained by the “failed state” phenomenon, not only because Burundi is classified as such by recent research (Rotberg 2004:23), but because its post-independence history demonstrates

most of the failed state diagnostics. Subsequently, responses to the post-war challenges should be concentrated in “bringing the state back in”.

4.2. Post-war state building:

Many of the civil wars that have ravaged Africa since the early 1990s are a result of failed states, according to Adekanye (1996) who described how the formation of a “uni-ethnic” army has contributed to dysfunctional state institutions that in turn culminated with political violence and civil wars in Burundi and Rwanda (1996:39). In post-war context, foreign interventions in war-torn countries pay particular attention to security concerns in rebuilding the failed states as is illustrated by the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, which has been the key task of UN-sponsored peace making operations (Helman and Ratner 1992). Moreover, violence and civil war emanating from state decay lead to economic stagnation, which in turn leads to conflict and poor governance (Chowdhury 2009). In attempts to save states from collapse, post-war interventions mostly help in rebuilding the state through strengthening political, economical and security institutions because of their interaction with the state’s failure and cycle of violence.

However, Paris (2000) has argued that peace operation studies have neglected broader macro-theoretical questions in international politics. According to (Francis 2008; Jarstad and Sisk 2008; Paris and Sisk 2009), post-conflict peace building, which is generally defined as “actions to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict”, entails various dilemmas and most of its components are meant to restore the failed states (Paris 2000:33). Literature on peace building and peace operations research has according to him, focused on practical, policy-oriented issues rather than building bridges between the study of peace operations and larger theoretical debates in the discipline (2000:27). He has maintained that what is missing is not academic attention, but rather a serious effort to engage the study with the central theoretical debates in international relations. Paris has thus suggested three possible research agendas that peace missions studies should explore including the notion of “international governance, or the capacity of the international system to perform government-like functions in the absence of centralised government authority. He has further suggested that

“scholars in peace operations should draw upon the cultural anthropology literature given its relevance to the study of civil and ethnic violence, conflict resolution, democratic theory, post-conflict justice, economic development, humanitarian

assistance, psychological effects of conflict and physical reconstruction of war-damaged infrastructure” (2000:34).

It is within Paris’ research agenda of broadening peace operation study that I bring the forced displacement topic in, suggesting that its security aspects should be acknowledged by scholars and practitioners involved in post-war intervention. The following section focuses on the main paradigms and approaches to forced displacement.

4.3 Refugee Experience

It is argued that while a range of theories and concepts may be employed in attempts to map the impact of forced migration, the use of the refugee experience concept emphasises the centrality of refugees themselves in the attempted analysis (Ager 1999:2). The post-war responses to refugee situations have often been blamed for not properly addressing the root causes of people’s flight and it is argued that by ignoring the political dynamics of the conflict, humanitarian response on emergencies have steered outcomes only to the margin (De Waal 2009). Moreover, humanitarian responses to forced displacement have important unintended consequences (Pantuliano 2009). Such unintended consequences include what prominent scholars in refugee studies have termed refugee experiences, defined as social, economical and psychological effects on people escaping from violence (Ager 1999:2). The concept of refugee experience has been at the fore front of the debate on humanitarian intervention in refugee studies. Participants in this debate have maintained that refugee relief aid is provided in the ways that perpetuate deprivation, dependence and stigma in the beneficiaries. And the most pointed-to refugee experience comes from the “refugee label” by international refugee law determining refugee status and their access to rights and entitlements. This law is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention that defines a refugee as:

“Any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside of his (her) country of nationality and is unable ...or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (Ager 1999:52).

This theoretical debate about legal definition has raised various reactions including what (Black 2001) has been termed “refugee theory”. The critiques of the legalistic framework have focused on the effects of the “refugee status” to the bearer, which is also known as “refugee label”(Zetter 1999; Pottier 2002; Colson 2007), asserting that this label entailed stereotypes and an institutionalized marginal status’ to refugee individuals. Colson (2007:321) has written that the refugee label carries negative and stigmatic connotations for the bearers, who are seen as victims and dependents. The debate has gone on to discuss that the

international legal instruments including Refugee Law defining “refugee” were adopted to justify the international community’s interventionism in conflict as result of failed states in contravention against the long-established principle of “state sovereignty”. More critiques of the (legal) refugee regimes came from prominent scholars (Zolberg, Suhrke et al. 1986; Harrell-Bond 1999; Zetter 1999) who denounced international perspectives on the refugee phenomena and pointed to the minimal scope of the refugee definition, which in turn limited international responses to refugee problems. The categorisation embedded in the “refugee label” is used by humanitarianism to control and contain refugee individuals in refugee camps as a means of containment in degrading life conditions. The common framework for refugee experience identifies discrete phases within forced migration. The typical phases are respectively pre-flight, flight, temporary settlement and resettlement or repatriation (Ager 1999:3). In post-war return, humanitarianism tends to treat refugees as victims, passively dependent on relief aid, which impinges on their long-term prospects of self-sufficiency (De Waal 2009:19).

Since the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) started to prefer repatriation as the best solution, critical academic analysis proliferated in regard to so-called durable solutions to the refugee phenomenon. Firstly, repatriation has been often promoted or facilitated without the cessation of causes that triggered the flight in first place (Stein and Cuny 1994) and second, that returnees face difficulties in taking in charge of their own livelihoods due to the side-effects relief assistance in post-return. It has to be born in mind that in its creation (1950) UNHCR statutes did not allow the refugee agency to be involved in political activity while intervening on behalf of refugees. According to this principle, the refugee agency should be a non-political organisation only aimed at the provision of legal protection and assistance to refugees (Crisp 2001). Analysts have criticised this minimalist approach, arguing that it no longer reflects the contemporary nature of the refugee phenomena. According to (Malkki 1996), the “non-interference” principle has lead humanitarianism to “dehistorisation” and “silencing” refugees, ignoring the problems at the origin of forced migration. Analysis and understanding about the ways through which the refugee phenomenon is linked to national, regional and international dynamics is necessary in order to inform policies of prevention of forced displacement. The following section will show the relationship between armed conflict and forced displacement through the refugee warrior phenomenon.

4.3.1 Refugee Warriors

Refugee warriors are defined as “highly conscious refugee communities with a political leadership structure and armed sections engaged in warfare for a political objective, be it to recapture the homeland, change the regime, or secure a separate state” (Zolberg, Suhrke et al. 1986; Harpviken). According to this concept, forced displacement is linked to armed conflict in two ways: on the one hand forced displacement is often caused by large scale violence, and on the other hand the way in which refugee problems are managed may contribute to renewal of armed violence. Scholars in security studies link forced displacement with its potential risk of aggravating insecurity in region already affected by violent conflict. This has dominated the debate about the role of “refugee warriors” (Zolberg, Suhrke et al. 1986), (Adekanye 1996); (2006; Harpviken 2008). The latter author has deplored the fact that in spite of the emergence of the “refugee warriors” concept at the end of the 1980s, refugee and security studies have neglected to theorise and analyse the importance of security dilemmas with forced displacement.

This scholarship has argued that refugees, who are often taken to be victims of large-scale violence and conflicts may also be actors in the onset or renewal of civil wars. While the concept of refugee warriors has revealed the shortcomings of humanitarianism in responding to the militarisation of refugee relief aid and refugee camps, it may help in analysing the potential risk of re-ignition of hostilities if underlying causes of conflicts were not tackled through reintegration of refugees upon return. Moreover, (Knight and Özerdem 2004) have argued that there is relationship between socio-economic reintegration of former combatants and the sustainability of the peace process regarding DDR, which implies that failure to achieve reintegration of former fighters can lead to considerable insecurity including rent-seeking behaviour through the barrel of a gun (2004:501).

Given the security aspects of forced displacement in post-return, failure to understand and address the problems of refugees may undermine peace building endeavours. Harpviken (2008) has suggested that when “refugee warriors” become “returnee warriors”, they represent a security threat in post-war setting, and that in such circumstances refugee return is not synonym with viable peace (2008:1). Indeed, it is misleading to ignore the active role of refugees not only in the conflict, but also in taking initiatives and strategies for their own reintegration upon return. To give an example, Afghan returnees could be considered as actively involved in the conflict and that in such context, return was not synonymous with

viable peace (2008:8). In the same way, it is assumed that Burundian refugees have been mobilised using factional ideologies while in exile. Malkki (1995) who has analysed how identity formation was crafted among Hutu refugees in her famous *Purity and Exile* monograph based on her fieldwork within refugee camps, has compared refugees living in camps with those living dispersed in towns of Tanzania (1995:250). Though not all returnees are formally recognised as ex-combatants to be included in DDR programmes, Malkki's account of the construction of national consciousness or ideology in exile fits in the broader definition of militarisation and refugee warriors. This fact has been confirmed by other studies including those specifically aimed at conceptualising and empirically documenting mechanisms by which refugee camps become militarily and politically mobilised (Muggah, Small Arms Survey et al. 2006:138). It would cost little for former warlords to recruit and rearm returned refugees especially the youth if peace process was broken.

The refugee warrior debate blurs the distinction between returnee reintegration and DDR. Based on insights from this debate, the returnee reintegration should draw upon the approaches of reintegration of former combatants which intends to make socio-economic livelihoods of former combatants more attractive as an incentive to abandon fighting and reintegrate into local community (Torjesen 2006).

4.4 Political economy of returnee reintegration

The literature on civil wars in Africa has used a political economy approach to analyse economic and non-economic causes of civil wars. The major arguments of this theoretical approach are articulated through the “greed and grievance” debate as I early mentioned earlier on. However, although some authors diverge on the weights of such and such variables in the comparative study of causes of civil wars, all seem to agree about many of the economic factors in violence. As for Burundi, Ngaruko and Nkurunziza (2000) have maintained that “post-colonial Burundi perfectly fit the description of Collier's economical factors of civil war”(2000:377). Though I will not engage in a deep discussion about the “greed-grievance” debate, a detailed review being found elsewhere (Berdal and Malone 2000; DE SOYSA 2002; Berdal 2005); (IPA 2003; Sherman, Ballentine et al. 2003), I only intend to suggest that the debate is relevant to the analysis of the underlying causes of the conflict that caused forced displacement in Burundi. Moreover, I want to reiterate that the economical and political factors in the conflict are those already explained in the “failed state” framework.

However, two aspects of this debate do deserve a particular attention: the causes of civil war in terms of greed or predatory competition about scarce resources (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Berdal and Malone 2000; Sherman, Ballentine et al. 2003), and the political and economic challenges to post-war recovery (Torjesen and Ammitzbøll 2007; Muggah 2009) and (Torjesen 2006). (Collier, Hoeffler et al. 2009) have advanced the hypothesis that sets primacy of feasibility over motivation in maintaining that:

“Where rebellion is feasible it will occur: motivation is indeterminate, being supplied by whatever agenda happens to be adopted by the first social entrepreneur to occupy the viable niche [...]. An implication of this hypothesis is that if the incidence of civil war is to be reduced, which seems appropriate given its appalling consequences, it will need to be made more difficult (2009:24).

My interpretation of Collier’s thesis is that it tends to suggest that governments with low income per capita cannot afford “buying off” their potential internal opponents through democratic values and distribution of social goods, as suggested by the liberal peace theorists (Paris 2010), and are thus ineffective in pre-empting potential sources of rebel recruitment (through education, employment, etc.).

Moreover, as earlier mentioned, the political economy of returnee reintegration may draw from insights from DDR. Departing from the Tajik case study (Torjesen 2006) has explained how DDR is in a dilemma of often being associated with economical incentives “awarding” warlords in order to persuade them to disarm. The author has also highlighted the shortfalls of DDR in dealing with transformations inherent to war with regard to state, economy and market functions (2006:13). The Tajik case study has shown that the main dilemma has been about the ways in which abundant financial incentives to ex-combatants affected the market economy, instead of positively impacting on peace efforts, in turn weakening the state and hence jeopardised peace building efforts (ibid.). The Tajik case study highlights the general post-war concern about how relief aid aftermath of civil war may unintentionally harm rather than doing good (Sarah Kenyon 2003). The political economic approach is compatible with the Burundian axiom that says “*Those who share insufficient meal, quarrel*” or another one that goes “*A hungry man is an angry man!*”, implying that injustices from competition about insufficient resources may lead to violence. The next section will try to explain the “livelihood strategies” concept, and how returnee reintegration can be analysed through access to resources such as land, basic services and other assets and its implications to both the failed state and violence.

4.4.1 Sustainable livelihood

The challenges inherent to refugee return in post-war context require appropriate measure if efforts to mitigate recurrence of violence are to yield fruits. Black and Gent (2004) have expressed this concern when he wrote:

Not only is it difficult for refugees and other migrants as individuals to simply go 'home', but return to countries of origin can contribute to a spiral of decline, whether through re-igniting conflict, through perpetuating inequality or abuses of rights or through economic hardship, which could stimulate greater levels of forced displacement in the future (2004:16)

Post-war resources need to be concentrated on making reintegration of returning refugees sustainable. According to De Waal (2009), humanitarian responses are mainly informed by the livelihood concept. But they need to assess local realities (challenges and prospects) and help beneficiaries dealing with the specific challenges as well (2009:21-22). The concept livelihood (Knight and Ozerdem) is analytically defined as "comprising the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living" and has been identified as a framework or approach to poverty reduction, rather than just components of social policy (Carney 1998; Moser 2007). A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources (Moser 2007:10). Before turning to the application of this conceptual framework, it is noteworthy to mention that literature on SL sees people's livelihoods options and their vulnerability as depending on many factors, including structures (political, environmental and market, etc.) and processes such as incentives, laws, etc.

The broader approach to returnee reintegration requires analytical rethinking about to what extent external factors affect livelihoods strategies and the use of assets. For instance, De Waal (2009) has argued that as long as humanitarians are concerned with livelihoods, they must dispose a better researched-based understanding of the major recovery challenges such as access to land as means of enhanced capability when coping with stress and shock from violence and civil war (2009:22). Traditionally, reintegration of returnees has relied on the provision of relief aid with the assumption that beneficiaries will be able to sustain their livelihood in the long run. UNHCR for instance constantly provides returnees with what is called a "return package" consisting of provision of food rations for a limited time (often 3 months), and the "non-food items (NFI)" such as seeds and domestic tools in the hope that returnees will soon take up their own ways of living. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has defined "livelihood" as capabilities, assets (material and social

resources) and activities required for a means of living (Moser 2007:10). In situations of large-scale violence and civil war, these assets and capabilities are the most affected in addition to the costs of human lives. In line with this analysis, violence and displacement entails transformations, which oblige analysis and assessments of post-war conditions not to take the pre-war or “status quo ante” situation for granted. Therefore, there is a need to consider socio-political transformation inherent in the nature of violent conflict because these events distort the state- society relationship in general and people’s livelihoods in particular.

The major factor that influence post-war livelihood in rural areas is people’ access to land for cultivation and for establishing homesteads. De Waal (2009) has argued that a humanitarian response has an impact on land tenure and settlement patterns both during and in the recovery phase. Land issues must be addressed because they underlie every conflict (2009:13). Land issues consideration is in this regard an essential way of preserving and rehabilitating people’s livelihoods strategies. The author gives three reasons why humanitarian responses should address land issues in recovery process: firstly, humanitarian responses would be handicapped by the failure to understand why the crises happened, secondly recovery intervention impacts on land issues (tenure rights, settlement and use) and thirdly because humanitarian responses are driven by impulses to emancipate the poor, the peripheral people and that land is the key for sustainable livelihoods (2009:10). While practitioners and scholars agree that land tenure lies at the centre of humanitarian crises (2009:195), restitution and compensation mechanisms in case of loss or occupation of land access has attracted relatively less attention by studies dealing with post-war issues (Paglione 2008; Leckie 2009). A number of scholars who have defend the Housing, Land and Property Rights (HLP) issues; have explained why these issues should be incorporated into humanitarian responses to post-war recovery.

House, Land and Property issues have not until recently been included into the United Nations Peacekeeping mission(Leckie 2009). From the early establishment in the mid 1990s of institutions mandated to resolve conflicting property claims to the recent adoption in 2005 of the so-called ‘Pinheiro Principles’¹⁷, several initiatives have contributed to enforcing property restitution rights both at operational and at normative level. HLP are now universally recognised as rights through international human rights and humanitarian law. The main

¹⁷ The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has conferred to the Brazilian Expert (Paul Sergio Pinheiro) the task of developing a guidelines draft on housing and property restitution in the context of return rights of refugees and IDPs. The Sub-commission of Human Rights in CERD endorsed Pinheiro’s final text on 11th August, 2005.

sources of this right are: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Pinheiro principles were developed in order to bridge the gap that has been identified in humanitarian responses to forced displacement. These principle guidelines are very useful because they reaffirm compliancy of HLP issues within existing human rights that situate these issues in the specific post-war repatriation of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to Pinheiro principle 2.1 "all refugees and IDPs have the right to have restored to them any housing, land and/or property of which they were arbitrary or unlawfully deprived, or to be compensated for any housing, land and /or property that is factually impossible to restore as determined by an independent, impartial tribunal"(COHRE 2011), while principle 2.2 instructs states to "prioritize" restitution right as a remedy for displacement and a key element of restorative justice. In addition, principle 5 provides "*the right to be protected from displacement*" (ibid). All these principles underscore the legal wrong and responsibilities of stakeholders in forced displacement in the first place, which justify the rights for victims to be rehabilitated.

4.5 Social citizenship approach

The problems raised by forced displacement and responses needed to repair the damages are numerous. Among the problems already described in the previous chapters, the distortion of state and communities is the most challenging. Not only there is no straightforward or "one-size-fits-all" solution to restoring failed states, but there is also different analysis and understanding of post-war recovery approaches. The latter (analysis and understanding of approaches) is relevant here for the sake of the meaning of refugeeness, return and reintegration. I want to stress that while there is a common knowledge about the legacies of violence and armed conflict, there is not a uniform understanding of how to efficiently repair it or what the reparation ought to achieve. It is from this angle I want to introduce an approach that could be ultimate solution to state failure and distortion of state-society bonds.

The approach of "citizenship" may be an adequate tool in the analysis and understanding of corrective measures needed to restore past injustice because it encompasses the interest in upholding both state and society. The legal aspect of citizenship concept is the most known, other aspects attached to it are not widely known. Scott (1994) has quoted T. H. Marshall definition of citizenship as:

"a status bestowed of those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is

endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed”(Scott 1994:13)

My intent here is to link the notion of “citizenship” (with focus on its social component) to the ending of “refugeeness”¹⁸ through enhancing their livelihoods. Achieving this link would have contributed to the broader analysis of approaches involved in reintegration of returning refugees. Therefore, using citizenship theory to analyse conflict transformation could be crucial to broadening understanding of returnee reintegration in a post-conflict context.

Burundi is not the only country where people have been subjugated to oppression, dehumanisation, and other prejudices. It is assumed that reintegration of returnees is affected by their (self) image and the public representation through categorisation and “labelling”. The spoiled identification entails stigmatisation of the bearer (Goffman 1963) that can impinge on integration of the individual. Many other societies have had to deal with legacies of history of oppression, exploitation and inequalities. In an attempt to understand social policies that promote political participation of the uprooted, countries such as South Africa, Great Britain and the Nordic countries (Marshall 1977; Lallo 1999; Kuisma 2007)) have applied the citizenship approach. Welfare states have, through material entitlements kicked-off processes of empowerment for the deprived peoples. In Great Britain, the working class’s identity was attached with negative stereotypes inherent in the social stratification until their conditions were improved by welfare policies of the post-World War II governments. The most influential social theory to analyse the effects of welfare state on the working class is from T. H. Marshall (1977) who maintained that “*every man is a gentleman*” (1977:74). According to (Scott 1994), “citizenship” as sociological concept refers to the rights and lifestyles embodied in the cultural understandings and normative obligations that define full membership in a society (1994:12). It is argued that Marshall did not defend the primacy of wealth as a decisive condition to citizenship. He viewed working class’s access to material wealth as a way of improving their self-image, which was equally important. While T. H. Marshall has distinguished three components of citizenship: civic, political and social (Scott 1994:62), his focus was on the social component of citizenship which, he argued, was the fundament for the other two.

¹⁸ Signs of refugeeness here refers to all physical, symbolical (low standard shelter, extreme poverty, dependence) and psychological (stigma) effects of refugee experience.

While I am suggesting analysis of underdevelopment and marginalisation in Burundi should be done through the concept of citizenship, I am aware that inequalities and dependence might take time to eradicate. What is needed is an understanding of the far-reaching significance of access to modes of production such as “land”, “home” and other basic goods. In this respect, Lallo (1999) has argued that equal citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa would not be achieved unless the goals of housing policies move beyond abolition of apartheid and address the broader issues of property and land (Lallo 1999). According to her, legal and social allowances measures were not enough. Policies had to take into account the deeper meanings invested in “place” and “home” in order to remediate the challenges of homelessness and uprootedness (1999:35). She used the equal citizenship approach to better analyse the major types of place that are the legacy of apartheid: the African location or township, the displaced urban settlements or dormitory towns of the African reserves, and the rural homestead (ibid.).

V. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF MAIN FINDINGS

This chapter presents and analyses my empirical findings, mainly based on my fieldwork-based research in Burundi in mid-2009. It presents a brief general picture of the post-war context with focus on returnee livelihoods and their access to basic services. My own data are also presented under these thematic focuses. My interview and focus group data also document to some degree the perceptions of my encountered informants about the challenges of reintegrating in different parts of Burundi. As I have acknowledged in chapter three, my rather late inclusion of land as an important element of livelihoods led to limited collection of primary data on ownership and access to land in the early phase of the field work. I make use of secondary data (from reports by specialised institutions) in order to describe and analyse land issues, and mechanisms of resolution of land-related disputes in particular. However, even though primary and secondary data have been the major sources of this thesis, some findings are informed by other sources of information including non-formal sources, i.e. personal communication with different knowledgeable persons about Burundi.

My main tools of data collection (see appendix 3) have respectively been open-ended interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. All in all, I conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with returnees during my field work, one focus group discussion and 11 open-ended interviews with programme co-ordinators of UN agencies, NGOs and Governor Advisors in visited provinces. The selection of returnee informants followed a

snow-ball strategy with the main criterion that one should have left Burundi and lived in exile as a “refugee”¹⁹. In this way, my study was limited to the only returnees (former refugees), with the intention of finding out how they cope with post-return challenges after years of disconnection with their homeland. In addition to semi-structured interviews, I conducted one focus-group discussion in Makamba province towards the end of my fieldwork in order to collect primary data on land issues that was lacking from the early data collected in the east and north. For the focus group, I was assisted by a colleague from FHB, after the leader of the CHT (reception centre) had given authorisation and helped in inviting participants to focus group. The survey areas were chosen based on a high prevalence of reintegration activities. According to UNHCR’s statistics (see appendix 2), the three provinces (Ruyigi, Kirundo and Makamba) that I visited were the main destination for returning refugees, representing 46% of the country’s total returnees (220,741 out of 477,046).

The difficulties of analysing and measuring the factors influencing return and reintegration sustainability are also reflected upon in this chapter. The earlier mentioned studies on Kosovo (Black and Gent 2004) have found out that refugee experience at different phases of displacement (before, during and after exile) contributed to influencing sustainable return and reintegration. The concept of returnee experience comprises factors including individual’s background, perceptions and understanding of the conditions that affect them and their communities. In this respect, I have included similar factors (age, gender, perceptions on accommodation, education, employment opportunities, etc.) comprised in refugee experience concept. I have also used sustainable livelihoods (Knight and Ozerdem) concept that comprises internal and external factors such infrastructure, resources and services affecting sustainable reintegration. The data analysis and results from these variables and factors are presented through frequency tables.

5.1 Sustainable livelihoods:

In many refugee settings, the most important assets in refugee livelihoods are access to networks and mobility (Jacobsen 2006). Jacobsen has compared and analysed the experiences of urban refugees and asylum seekers from eight cities, (Johannesburg, Nairobi, Cairo and Kampala, Tokyo, London, Toronto and Vancouver,). She examined refugee’s own actions, and the social, economic and policy context in which they forge livelihoods. Jacobson’s study was interested in certain questions such as how do urban refugees negotiate xenophobia and

¹⁹ Not necessary having obtained the legal status provided by the 1951 Geneva Convention (chapter four).

harassment by local authorities? What impact do they have on their host communities? She has documented evidences of the economic and social contributions refugees make to their host cities, such as rejuvenating communities, expanding markets, importing new skills, creating transnational linkages, etc. (2006:273). Moreover, she found out that refugees were in many cases self-sufficient, despite the host country's policies against refugee movement outside of camps. It is also argued that refugee's contravention of restrictions and operation in illegal activities is a way of sustaining their livelihoods (Stepputat 2004:18). Illicit trade is exemplified by informal markets often created by refugees such as in Kenya by Somali refugees, which reflects the entrepreneurship of immigrants, many of whom would not describe themselves as refugees. It was thus suggested that through transnational or cross-border economic strategies even poor refugees managed to support themselves and their extended families (Jacobsen 2006:283)

Upon return, returnees shift (whenever possible) their strategies of coping from the use of informal networks and mobility to rely more on the rights and entitlements inherent to their newly recouped legal status as citizens. In Burundi, the reacquisition of citizen status implies that the returning population submit themselves to the control of the national authority. The means of reconnecting with old networks in the country of asylum are de facto limited. Moreover, returnees are expected to obey laws, social norms and local practices. Often, if not always, their familiarity with these norms and practices depends on the ability of upholding social and cultural values and customs while in exile, and the length of their stay in exile. In this case, ability to adapt values and customs from those found abroad to more local ones influences the livelihoods strategies of the Hutu returnees after decades of absence in their home country. In particular, transforming "illicit" strategies (trans-border trade, etc.) into the "legal" ones implies that returnees are obliged to rely on national bureaucracy. The only lawful option in regulated market is entering in open competition (with incumbent populations-who stayed or returned first) over available resources. Such conditions limit returnee's livelihood strategies. In this respect, it is important to look at the availability (or scarcity) of resource if we are to grasp the overall context in which the reintegration of returning refugees takes place in Burundi.

The most challenging obstacle to economic opportunities is the country's landlockedness and its demography. Sharing borders with Rwanda in the north, Tanzania in the south and east as well as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in west, Burundi is a land-locked central-east

African country that covers 27,830 sq km. With its 8.2 million inhabitants, Burundi has the 2nd highest demographical density on the continent (approximately 322.96 inhabitants per sq. km). The country is ranked 167th among 177 countries in UNDP's 2007/2008 Human Development Index with a lowest income per capita (\$105). According to the same index, more than 60% of Burundians are living under the poverty line and life expectancy in Burundi is estimated at 41.7 years, among the world's lowest. Although there are small quantities of non-renewable natural resources such as cobalt and copper, the main exports include coffee and sugar. As the focus on this thesis is, basic livelihoods including land for subsistence agriculture and for establishing homesteads, these facts are very relevant.

The challenges in reintegrating returning refugees vary from caseload to caseload. The so-called 1972 and 1993 refugee caseloads are distinguished by the historical events that occasioned peoples' flight. Refugees who fled following the 1993 assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye (see chapter two) and the subsequent massacres that happened at this particular time and during the following civil war started to return almost immediately when the cease-fire and peace agreement was signed in 2000. Reluctant and sceptic about the peace process, most of the 1972 caseload waited for almost a decade (hesitant to return home amidst the fragile and uncertain post-war context) before definitely returning. Many of these refugees have spent decades in exile or were simply born there. They face more challenges than the 1993 refugees who have lived in neighbouring countries for short periods of time and were able to return in the immediate aftermath of the civil war. This variation is illustrated by existence of the "sans addresses" category among the 1972 returnees who face particular land-related problems, unable to locate their actual places of origin in Burundi. They lack land for subsistence agriculture and for establishing homesteads.

In spite of variations according to time of flight and return, many other factors such as one's age, gender, education, etc. were found having effects on reintegration prospects for both returnee caseloads. The most common challenges are those shown in the following table that presents the key factors that influence returnee sustainable reintegration and livelihoods. The frequency rates table refers to a positive response on the particular question (see appendix 3) about the main livelihood challenges upon return. Results were put into percentage to show how many returnees among the 21 interviews across three provinces view access to identified basic services (and infrastructure) as important factors for their sustainable reintegration.

Fig.2 Frequency table (1) of factors influencing returnee reintegration in Burundi

Variable	Factors	Frequency	%
Sustainable Livelihood	• Access to basic services (food/ water, health, education, housing employment)	20/21	95.2
	• Access to land	14/14*	100
	• Social infrastructure	17/21	80.9
	• Recuperation or acquisition of properties and assets upon return	17/21	80.9

* From focus group discussion comprising 14 participants.

In addition to the fragile state's institutions inherited from the civil war, the data above shows that returnee reintegration in Burundi is taking place under extremely unfavourable socio-economic conditions. Apart from the country's profile in general, the provinces of origin for returnees have particularities that determine the challenges the returning population may face. Due to economical and political exclusion that has led to disparities in access to basic infrastructure between the regions of Burundi, southern provinces (Makamba, Rutana, Cankuzo and Burunri) were more privileged than the central and northern ones simply because the top leaders mostly originated from south (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000:382). Given these inequalities between regions, the overwhelming numbers of returnees become an additional burden for the less equipped regions and a return under limited absorbing capacity may contribute in creating grievance conflict between the already settled and newcomer population.

5.1.1 Access to basic services

Most of positive responses on access to basic services variable were collected through interviews in different areas Kirundo and Ruyigi provinces. The majority (95.2%) of interviewed returnees complained about lack of or difficulties in obtaining to specific goods or services (food, health and education, housing and employment). On the question as to how they get access to these "basic services" and infrastructure, the responses were almost unanimously negative. The following is a snapshot of responses, situation description, and analysis per factor:

- **Access to food and drinking water**

The registered shortage of drinking water in Kirundo is a paradox because there are abundant lakes and rivers in the province. Kirundo has 7 lakes out of 8 lakes in Burundi. What lacks is the infrastructure to filter and pump water from streams to populated rural villages. Shortage of drinking water increases the vulnerabilities of a population in general and returning refugees in particular. Especially, children, women and elderly whose role, according to local

customs determining labour sharing patterns, is to fetch water and collect fire woods. According to the same customs, men in rural areas are expected to cultivate land or do other works outside the household. In time of drought (very often in Kirundo), men migrate to other regions or abroad in order seek waged-seasonal labour, while women and children walk long distances, spending up to two hours to reach the nearest drinking water.

Shortage of food was also registered. All returnees especially those in Kirundo have complained that the “return food package” (usually made of food ration for three months) obtained upon return, was not enough. Many returnees have alleged that they did not benefit from this food package because their return was not facilitated by UNCHR²⁰ (hurried to repatriate when hostilities stopped in their region). The return package is expected to help returnees during the transition from aid dependence to self-reliance. However, even those who acknowledged having received the package were not self-reliant in food years after their return. Moreover, I learnt that some of the returnees sell or exchange part (or all) received assistance because they need more varied items than the aid obtained from relief organisations. Among other consequences of starvation is that children from starving families have been dropping out of schools. I was told that there had been a project of irrigation in Bugabira (Kirundo) to fight drought, but this project was later abandoned by one NGO that had to close its programmes in the region. Each of the five relief organisations operating in Kirundo intervene in one or another way to help in food security sector, including running supplementary nutrition programmes for undernourished children and other vulnerable categories of population. The widespread food distribution is done by the World Food Programmes (WFP) and is mostly channelled through school feeding programmes as a way of mitigating the school drop rate that has dramatically increased in the north and eastern provinces. In brief, all respondents recognised food and water shortage (for domestic use and for irrigation) as significant problem and that it contributes to endemic famine, malnutrition-related diseases and deaths in their respective areas.

- **Access to health care**

Good health was seen by returnees (here understood as not being often ill or the ability to find adequate treatment when you fall ill) as an important factor for active engagement in a new community. Access to health care services, combined with knowledge and skills increases

²⁰ To qualify for returnee destined assistance (transport, food, medical, shelter and non-food items), you have to be registered by UNHCR and obtain a “voluntary repatriation form”, which is an identification card for registered returnees.

people's capabilities and thus enhances their livelihood strategies in coping with stress and traumatic events. The first victims of epidemics and famine are vulnerable categories such as elderly and children. While infant (0-5) mortality is prevalent in other visited provinces, Kirundo has the highest rate. It is mainly caused by malnutrition and diseases emanating from lack of decent nutrition, clean water and adequate treatment. The recent famine and epidemic diseases have claimed thousands of deaths. According to (IRIN 2010), the famine that ravaged the northern parts of the country claimed 630 lives in 2010.

- **Access to education**

Basic education provides basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and other competences that increase the individual's prospects of access to employment. In this way, access to education is the key for a sustainable self-reliance and livelihoods. The first post-war government sworn-in in 2005, implemented a policy of free and compulsory primary education in Burundi. While it includes all citizens, returnee children and other poor families have benefited most from it, due to their vulnerabilities. However, parents' vulnerability still affects their children's education because of their incapability to pay for uniforms and other school materials. In addition, children from poor families (mainly returnees) are needed as labourers in order to increase their family's revenue. The challenges to make this universal primary education policy work according to expectations are numerous and interconnected. There are also particular constraints affecting the quality of provided education. The policy has enormously increased the numbers of children attending schools. Classrooms are overcrowded and the teachers-student ratios are reduced, which affects the quality and working/teaching conditions.

In many rural areas, the illiteracy rate is higher among returnees, with a 59.3% average for the Burundian population over 15 years old. As a response to these problems, humanitarian organisations supporting Burundi's education sector, have been concentrating on returnee children who do not attend or have not completed elementary education. Most of these children are above 8 years old and have surpassed the years limit for attending formal primary school education. NRC's Youth Education Pack (YEP) project in Burundi targets two groups of beneficiaries: the main one is composed of 447 illiterate or semi-illiterate youth aged 14 to 18, with a focus on the most recent returnees and the most vulnerable. The second one is made up of teachers and instructors. Moreover, primary schools are assisted in providing adapted curricula to teach this youth category, including an introduction to French and

Kirundi languages since many of them have returned from Tanzania where English is used as a medium of instruction (interview with an NGO coordinator, 2009).

- **Access to housing**

The interviewed returnees view grass-roofed huts as the symbol of poverty and vulnerability. Residents living in grass-roofed huts are those who lack the most basic needs and assets for adequate livelihoods. As Fig.3 illustrates, most of these huts belong to vulnerable returnees (widows, women or child-heads of families and elderly). The civil war has destroyed 120,000 houses alone in Kirundo province, which contributed to the deterioration of the housing situation. At the end of the civil war 60% of all houses were grass-roofed in rural areas. In Bugabira municipality for instance, 10,000 houses (approximately 90%) were destroyed according to figures by provincial authorities. Even though UNHCR's shelter programmes have pledged to build 71,000 new houses for vulnerable families (2003-2008), the results for the housing situation in Bugabira are far from satisfying. I have witnessed a huge challenge in this area with several mud and grass-made huts belonging to vulnerable returnees who were in principle, entitled to housing assistance, but did not benefit from it. These grass-roofed or "UNHCR" plastic sheets-covered huts are widespread in areas with new returnees. The interviews I have conducted, particularly in Kirundo, show that people are aware of the social and cultural impacts of housing. Establishing a "home" allows new residents to continually build relationships and networks necessary to enhance one's livelihood options. Living in a decent house creates supportive living environments that foster a sense of belonging, shared community, and meaningful membership in society (Lallo 1999). Living in makeshift huts is a sign of the very refugeeness that distinguishes returnees from others and perpetuates their vulnerabilities.



Fig.3 A grass-roofed hut for a returnee woman in Bugabira (photo: JP, 2009)

- **Access to employment:**

It is not easy to evaluate the actual unemployment rate in Burundi simply because only a tiny number of people are employed in paid-jobs, even fewer in the formal sector. According to JAM (Joint Assessment Mission-UNHCR-WPF) report, seasonal casual labour (land-based) wage-earning opportunities account for 28.6% of earnings (JAM 2007:16). Employment policies for the service sector are almost inexistent, despites pledges by the government and the donor community to boost macro-economic growth that would help in creation of jobs in the private sector. Most people are employed by the state, state-owned enterprises and by NGOs. Public employment represents 80% of job opportunities (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000). As long as qualifications for decently paid-job depends on one's level of education, those who had opportunity to receive low and high education are the ones able to compete for employment both in the state and NGOs. Due to past policies of discrimination and violence, the majority of the returnee population was not able to study. None of my informants had attended secondary education, which limits the employment opportunities open for them now.

The majority among the interviewed returnees are either the subsistence farmers, casual labourers or completely dependent on relief aid.

5.1.2 Access to land

My data illustrating inaccessibility to land by returning refugees were mostly collected in Makamba province, populated by approximately 600,000 inhabitants. The totality of participants in the focus group discussion (14/14) responded negatively to question 3.a (see appendix 3) “do you own land for cultivation?” Unlike in the northern provinces, the on-going refugee return mostly concerns the 1972 caseload that as I have stressed, hesitantly started returning long after the peace agreements were signed in 2000. The organised repatriation of this refugee caseload started in 2008. It was expected that around 200,000 refugees would return to this province as both the governments of Burundi and Tanzania campaigned-appealing to refugees to “go home”. The current returnees mainly come from Katumba, Mishamo and Ulyankulu settlements in Tanzania where they have lived for more or less three decades. The Hutu refugees who lived in these settlements many of which were established in the western regions of Tanzania in the 1970s were described as self-reliant (Malkki 1995:38-46). She has for instance observed the case of Mishamo, where refugees were “successful, small-scale peasant farmers who were self-supporting and capable of marketing the surplus (1995:41).

At the same time as campaigning for a massive return of refugees, UNHCR and the Tanzanian government were conducting a large-scale registration for those refugees who qualified to acquisition of Tanzanian citizenship. Not surprisingly, ongoing access to livelihoods was central in people’s decision-making process. For those opting to repatriate, access to land in Burundi was cited as fundamental: many of those who are returning believe that they will be able to reclaim family land upon their return (IRRI 2008). By the same token, socio-economic factors were important to those naturalising: access to land, livelihoods and education, were seen as major reasons for staying in Tanzania (2008:4). Those who did not qualify for citizenship or those who wished to voluntarily return to their home country have been facilitated with transport for themselves and their belongings. According to UNHCR, there were 41,000 refugees remaining in the sole refugee camp of Mtabila in Tanzania in 2009. Higher numbers of old caseload refugees were expected to be repatriated during 2009 as per refugee camp closure. In 2010, the Tanzanian Government has granted 63,000 Burundian refugees Tanzanian citizenship (IRIN 2010).

Makamba province has received the largest number of returnees (101,292) according to the latest statistics (UNHCR 2009). Out of 95,000 returnees in 2008, approximately one third (30,000) was from the 1972 caseload. When I asked the Advisor to the Governor the main challenge in reintegrating returnees, he, unhesitantly replied: “their access to land and to decent habitat”. The 1972 refugee caseload meet special difficulties in mainly identifying and acceding to the land they (or their parents) owned before flight. Their access to land is complicated by the fact that the majority of them are less than 40 years old. They were either born or grew up in exile. The “uprootedness” of their situation in Makamba is illustrated by plastic sheets huts on the road sides to the provincial head quarters. A UNHCR official has acknowledged these reintegration challenges in Makamba when he recommended me to visit the returning 1972 caseload now categorised as the “sans adresses” and the “landless. He said that the situation of the fresh returnees in Nyanza-Lac municipality would give me a specific picture of the challenges the long-term refugees face upon return.

According to CNTB recent data, there are 2,600 landless returnees in Makamba.

After my visits to different parts of this province, I realised that the metaphoric description of land situation in Burundi by a (ICG 2003) report as a “time bomb” was convenient. The focus group discussion in Gitara CHT (Makamba) collected perceptions of attempts at a resolution of land-claims issues. All participants expressed worries about the overwhelming numbers of unsolved land-claims. They fear these disputes may amount to tensions among the “occupants” and the “legitimate owners”. These opinions constitute evidence of how land issues may impinge on the overall reintegration and peace process.

The focus group discussion randomly gathered 14 participants (8 men and 6 women) and was conducted in Gitara Temporally Reception Centre. During this discussion, people exchanged their views and experiences. Strong emotions were expressed while talking about their experiences. One example was a 65 years old woman who broke into tears, asked to describe how and when she left the country, how is to be a refugee compared to returning home. She told a saddening story about how she and her husband had left their home amid the 1972 slaughters with their small children now grown-ups. The husband died in Tanzania, but she and her only son (who was sitting beside her during the meeting) had returned to the family’s left property which is now occupied by a non-related family. She concluded her speech by a sad tone: “...-No, being a refugee [returnee] is suffering” (focus group discussion, 2009).

Among the 14 participants, 6 were female aged between 23 and 58, while the remaining 8 were men aged between 17 and 43. However, this proportion does not represent numbers of men or women in the centre. The leader of Gitara settlement told me that the numbers change so often that he did not have the exact numbers and breakdowns per gender. The changes are due to new comers (mainly from Tanzanian refugee camps) and departures (families whose land claims are solved leave the temporary reception centre). The selection of participant for the focus group was done randomly. Nevertheless, I came to realise that most of them knew each other because they had lived in the centre for periods varying from 8 months to one year. So, their overall negative opinion on CNTB's mechanisms (see next section) of disputes resolution is understandable.

All participants in the focus group discussion judged as unfair the CNTB's preferred method of sharing occupied land between the occupier and the claimant (returning) family. According to them, the returning refugee family is the legitimate owner. They claimed that the occupier might possess other properties and investments in his/her previous area, while the returnee does not possess anything except the land they owned before flight. In addition, they described the land commission's procedures of resolution of land-related disputes as too complicated, and exhausting. When asked about how they wish their problems could be better addressed, a 36 years old man replied that:

“if I were Peter [The President of Burundi], I would order these organisations to provide enough assistance to all instead of ‘the vulnerable’...then I would provide land and livestock to landless returnees in order that they can produce food themselves. Finally, I would comfort the returning Hutu refugees with enough resources so that they get rid of refugee signs [homelessness, poor shelters, etc]...”
(focus group discussion, 2009).

5.1.3 The failure of peace village project

The “peace village” policy was ideally conceived to accommodate the vulnerable and landless categories among the Hutu returnees, side by side with the Tutsi IDPs. According to the plan, villages would be equipped with better infrastructures and services (housing, water, schools and health care services). In this way, not only would living in peace villages be far better than life in refugee camps, but it also would attract others to live in these villages. It was also expected that only a small proportion (20%) of vulnerable families from those who did not flee (stayees) would be allowed to voluntarily join the peace villages. In addition, several actors including the United Nations agencies, NGOs and churches pledged to help the government of Burundi improve conditions in these villages. Nonetheless, both residents of

peace villages and many observers acknowledge that these settlements remain poorly equipped with basic infrastructure and are unattractive to those who are from the non-returnee population (PRM 2008).

In Makamba, two peace villages in Mabanda and Kibago also known as “integrated rural villages”²¹ were constructed in 2008. Each is intended to host 200 households. These peace villages as well as temporarily reception centres (CHT) were the new “homes” for the landless returnees, and the “*sans adresse*”. These returnees were born in exile or have been separated from parents during displacement and thus have no clue about their places of origin back in Burundi. So far, 16 peace villages were constructed countrywide to primarily accommodate such categories. There are also 13 CHTs that were built to receive those (mainly among the old caseload returnees) whose land-claims are being settled (UNHCR 2009).

While visiting the Nyakazi (Kibago) “integrated peace village”, I conducted individual interviews to document the views of the “landless” returnees on their situation. Exhausted and impatient, residents in this particular peace village live in socio-economic limbo. The only infrastructure is the nearby primary school. A resident of this village said to me: “repatriation was the cousin of the flight”, ironically meaning that he was deceived by his new life conditions upon return. Apparently, he did not see the difference between his life now and the one he was living while in Tanzania. Understandably, inhabitants of these villages do not feel “at home”. After more or less one year of arrival, residents of the visited peace villages and CHTs view these new forms of habitat as “ghettos”. Therefore, the peace village project became a “utopia” (illusory) due to improper implementation (PRM 2008).

The few among those living in Nyakazi who had been allocated farming fields complained mainly about two things: firstly, is that the fields given to them were very far from the village and they were non-fertile in many cases. And secondly the peace villages are characterised by low quality housing (in plastic sheets), lack of water, and are situated far from any other important infrastructure. As a consequence, some residents feel isolated and to some extent, discriminated against. I was told that many of the widows who constitute the majority of “landless” and hence living in peace villages are suspected “dangerous bearers of

²¹ From French “villages ruraux integres” also known as “village de paix”

HIV/AIDS”²². While discrimination of this sort is prohibited by the constitution and other laws in Burundi, such connotations imply that these female-head of families are discriminated against and stigmatised. In general female-head of households have problems recovering land previously owned by the family or obtaining land, simply because they are women (JAM 2007). All these conditions confer peace villages’ residents a low social status and increase their vulnerability.

5.1.4 Land-related disputes resolution

As I have already highlighted, access to land is the major asset in the reintegration process. In Burundi, more than 90% of the population live in rural areas and live out of subsistence farming. Land for cultivation is a very scarce resource in Burundi, but is perceived as the backbone of household livelihoods. According to the 1986 land law currently in force in Burundi (ICG 2003), land is owned by the state. However, those who occupy and use the land acquire de facto right of use. The common method of land acquisition is through inheritance (through patrilinear ascendancy) or by financial transaction. It also argued that during the reign of authoritarian regimes, fertile land properties were distributed only to those close to power (Huggins 2009). The state has exploited the private fields without expropriation to former owners. An example is the very fertile lands of Rumonge, where the state arbitrarily distributed the abandoned properties to powerful corporate owners in order to establish palm oil plantations (PHP factory). Those who do not own land for subsistence agriculture/livestock (mostly returnees) usually become casual labourers in others’ farms.

Drawing “lessons from the Great Lakes region”, Huggins (2009) has described the role land competition play in conflict. He further underlined the significance of land access to the peace process in the aftermath of political crisis in Burundi. Referring to land-related disputes registered cases, he maintained that there was a fear that such disputes may jeopardise the precarious stability. Land situation in Burundi has as I already noted, been worsened by the recent arrival of many of the 1972 returnee caseload. The newly land commission (CNTB)²³ has recently issued a report containing an important information about land issues in Burundi: (1) the description of the land problem in general, (2) the statistics about the scope of land-related claim resolutions and (3) methods and procedures of resolution (CNTB 2010).

²² In Burundi, it is widely believed that people dying (young) of natural death are killed by HIV/AIDS. So being a widow may be interpreted as being the bearer of HIV virus. Refugees with chronic illness or HIV/AIDS on treatment in refugee camps were also returning; mixed with others (JAM 2007:19).

²³ The CNTB was created in 2006

According to the commission, the encountered difficulties in dealing with land claims by the returning refugees are identified as follows:

- the legal framework (out-dated land law and absence of law on other properties),
- Insufficiency (exiguity) of land,
- Overwhelming numbers of complaints amounting to exhaustiveness and frustration of claimants,
- Massive repatriation and increased numbers of landless returnees,
- Non-existence of compensation and restitution fund (CNTB 2010)

As for the commission's methodology in solving land-related disputes, the basic guiding principle is to find a balance between rights, equity, peaceful neighbourhood and peace building (ibid.). In this regard, CNTB has often promoted voluntary land sharing between returnee claimants and the occupants of land as the best way of solving land-related claims. The preferred method of land sharing between parties is an amicable solution (AS) both parties "voluntary" agree upon. Alternatively, disputes are solved through a decision by the commission (CD). Some other forms of arbitration are envisaged, including restitution of lost or occupied property and "boundaries revising" in case of disputes about property limits, but very few cases go that far. Cases involving compensation are very limited. Given the political charge of land issues in a post-war setting, land-related conflict resolution demands careful and fair procedures.

The formal process starts when the complaint's case is registered. The case is then examined by the commission's office at the provincial level. If no AS is found through a plenum session at provincial level, a CD is examined through internal deliberation. When an AS is reached between parties, it is immediately implemented, whereas it takes two months before implementation of CD. There is a possibility for an appeal to CNTB's at the national level when one party (or both) is (are) not satisfied with the CD, the case may then undergo supplementary investigation by an ad-hoc committee. This investigation is concluded by analysis of the findings and a final decision is taken through CNTB plenum. The parties are notified before implementation.

Fig.4 Statistics on resolution of land-related disputes in visited provinces (CNTB 2010)

province	total disputes	adjudicated	unsolved cases	percentage (pending)
Makamba:	3624	2805	819	22.59(%)
Kirundo:	451	200	251	55.65(%)
Ruyigi:	238	94	144	60.5(%)

So far, with a total number of 15,114 cases registered in Burundi, 7897 (51,28%) were solved, and 7217 (48,72%) are pending. As of method of solution, there were 92.68% AS, 5,80% CD and 1,52% transferred to other instances (i.e. tribunals). The numbers in Fig. 4 clearly shows that land problem prevails more in southern provinces including Makamba than in northern (Kirundo) and eastern (Ruyigi) provinces. Given this regional difference, the Land commission, which is responsible for adjudicating land disputes claims in the first instance, has invested more resources and efforts in southern provinces, which justifies the low percentage of pending issues in south. However, though apparently low in percentage (22.59%), the number of persons involved is quite significant given the high numbers of returnees in these southern provinces. It is within this logic that there are more “landless” returnees in southern provinces including Makamba. Therefore, these figures also indicate to a certain extent (although implicitly) how unaddressed challenges in post-return may jeopardise peace prospects.

5.2 Returnee experiences factors

Responses about returnee access to basic services and their inclusion were as already noted, mostly collected in Kirundo and Ruyigi, provinces. The collected views of returnees about how the conflict and forced displacement affects their lives vary mainly according to individual’s background, conditions of flight, exile and return, etc. This variation is also related to the time of return and place of origin, when determining challenges and opportunities upon return. Reintegration of returning refugees is influenced by many factors. Data from my field work research (see appendix 3) show how some factors, understood as elements of returnee experiences have a huge influence on reintegration. Fig.5 below shows these factors and their frequency according to the total number of interviewed returnees.

Fig.5 Frequency table (2) of factors influencing returnee reintegration in Burundi

Variable	Factors	Frequency	%
Refugee experience	• Occupation and status before flight	17/21	80.9%
	• Property, income and assets before flight	15/21	71.4%
	• Direct reason and conditions of flight, status in country of exile	20/21	95.2%
	• Pre- return expectation, time of arrival, place of origin	20/21	95.2%

The socio-economical situation of returnees in Ruyigi province is relatively better than in Kirundo. However, findings from both provinces highlight how access to key livelihoods opportunities and infrastructure such as health, housing, education and employment interact with other factors in determining challenges and opportunities during the reintegration process. In this regard, individual’s (or family’s) previous status based on occupation, education or ownership of properties before and after flight determines his/her chances of inclusion and reintegration in the post-return phase of forced displacement.

The interaction of factors indicates that reintegration is a multi-dimensional process in which individuals on one hand and the community (and state) on the other play a role. In other words, it is not only the individual’s background or willingness to reintegrate that determines prospects for successful reintegration. Local context in the receiving locality plays a decisive role in returnee reintegration. For instance, the accessibility of resources and infrastructure may determine the livelihoods options. However, the context may also be the efficiency of local administration, active civil society or supportive external actors. In this sense, Ruyigi, may serve as an example of a periphery province, with its many remote rural areas isolated by lack of infrastructure. However, due to local dynamism, the province has achieved better community integration.

The province is situated on the Burundian eastern border with Tanzania, few miles away from the refugee camps in Tanzania. As large as 2,338.8sq km, and representing 6.5% of the country’s surface, the province’s population is estimated at 345,032. According to UNHCR’s records, Ruyigi is the third highest destination province (after Makamba and Muyinga) in terms of repatriation statistics with 84,693 returnees (UNHCR 2009). The population in Ruyigi is particularly young with 235,660 (68 %) under 25 years old. After interviews with different stakeholders, I have found out that in spite of the challenges in reintegrating returned

refugees, Ruyigi province was on the right path to successful reintegration, essentially due to the active roles played by NGOs, local civil society, especially the Catholic Church in improving social infrastructure, creating employment, etc.

When asked about the far reaching impact of the returnee reintegration in Burundi and in Ruyigi in particular, the FHB's Country Director whose organisation runs community development projects in Bweru and Kinyinya municipalities described to me:

Our programmes include: reintegration of refugees, Child Development programme, Food Security and Health. We consider reintegration of returnees as an important activity in our response to post-war challenges in Burundi [...] Lack of intervention or response to this particular issue would have disastrous effects on returnees and the local communities. The same is about distribution of basic relief aid[...] because if people's need especially the youth's needs are not satisfied, poverty and despair may amount to their involvement in violence and acts of insecurity (Interview, Bujumbura, 2009).

During my week-long visit in Ruyigi province, I visited the FHB's community development projects respectively in Bweru and a primary school construction site in Kinyinya. The former project consists of assistance to local communities in agro-pastoral activities, and the beneficiaries are a mixed group comprised of both returnees and the people who remained in the village during the ten-year-long civil war. They are all members of CADZEM (Collectif des Associations de Développement de la Zone Mubavu), a peasants' co-operative that, in collaboration with FHB multiplies cassava (manioc) seeds for a wider redistribution. CADZEM has around 200 members (men and women) who, twice a week, collectively work in the fields and share the outcome products. The project is multi-purpose, mainly consisting of farming and livestock that produces animal manure to enrich the soils. These animals also provide proteins to children with meat and milk.

A 51 year old man who returned from Tanzania in 2000 told me that he has been a member of CADZEM since it started in 2007. He has 5 children and owns 4 goats and small piece of land. He still remembers the violent incidents in the village that forced him to flee to Tanzania amidst the 1993 widespread violence:

“There were violence around here, including house burning but luckily, there were not many deaths in Mubavu. The [Tutsi] soldiers came from Mutukura [...] and rumours said they were killing the civilians [Hutu], and then we run, leaving all of our assets behind”.

On how they were treated in exile by host Tanzanians, he said:

“We were all called “wakimbizi”[refugees]. And as “mkimbizi”, you lose the freedom of movement. Neither was there freedom of choosing nor to elect our leaders, etc.” (interview, Ruyigi, 2009).

Accompanied by the Ruyigi’s local project manager, I also visited Kinyinya primary school construction project. The school project includes classroom, headmaster office and other small annexes. It was almost completed already by June, 2009, and the school was ready to be inaugurated later in the autumn. During my visit to this school project, I conducted a couple of interviews which helped me to discover unanticipated (unplanned) aspect of reintegration, i.e. the social reintegration of ex-combatants. Nearly all the young men I met working on the school construction site happened to have belonged to different warring factions during the now-ended civil war. Now demobilised through DDR, they see themselves as simply returnees²⁴. A 21-year-old young man, with only a primary education, described to me his experience in joining the fighting rebel group and his post-war life:

I followed the faction that controlled this area [Kinyinya] after heavy fighting in 1999. I was 12 years old [child] soldier. We followed the rebels who sent us to Baraka [DRC] to be trained. I fought in Moba when I was 15 [DRC] and stayed there ever since. When we came back in Burundi, we entered by Makamba to join Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in 2002. I was first selected to join the police training in Bubanza and thereafter I was demobilised in the second phase to give place to FNL elements. I received thirty thousand (30,000 FBu) [approx.60 \$US] and nine months salary to initiate income generating project. I have got four goats and a little farm for agricultural activity (interview, Ruyigi, 2009).

The former fighters (now demobilised) that I met in Kinyinya perceive themselves as just returnees. Their experiences converge to motives of enrolment and share many of the post-war civil war challenges. Their ages (now) vary between 20 and 35 and they have acquired (by doing) skills that open up more options for their livelihoods after they have been demobilised. They received a “DDR package”²⁵ (cash) as an incentive to leave the rebellion and reintegrate into the local community. With that package, they had tried to start small business (beer selling, butchery, etc.) in order to fulfil their roles as breadwinners for their families. However, they now claim that the package was not enough. There were allegedly delays and irregularities in the disbursement of the DDR packages. Their businesses are declining and owners are worried about redundancy and unemployment in the near future. This is why they all approached FHB’s school project to seek small jobs as construction helpers in order to improve their earnings.

²⁴ In this particular case, 6 young men showed up when I asked if there were former refugees among those working on the school project site or in the neighbourhood to be voluntarily interviewed.

²⁵ The DDR package is different from the modest “return package” given to ordinary returnees.

From Ruyigi, I visited Kirundo, where most of the responses from interviewees converged on starvation and poverty as the main challenges for post-war reintegration. I noticed that displacement from this area has been a way of escaping both violence and endemic famines. Kirundo people, especially those from Bugabira municipality near the Rwandan border, use to often cross the border to Rwanda or to Tanzania in order to seek manual labour when the drought hits their region. The following extract from an interview held in Bugabira explains how motivations for forced displacement are complex. A 49 year-old man has said:

“I fled to Rwanda in 1993 and continued to Tanzania in 1994. I returned from Lumasi refugee camp in 2002 where we were badly treated. UNHCR has assisted me with transport and provided me with the return package [non-food items]. For health service, I go to Ruhehe or Kiyonza which is far, and they charge payment for access to the services. I can neither read nor write, and only my younger daughter [among my 8 children] goes 3rd grade [to school]. I have no land to cultivate, when I get money from labour in neighbours’ farms, I rent a small plot for seasonal exploitation. Yet, I have not obtained roof materials for construction” (interview, Kirundo, 2009).

Another man, 48 years old also interviewed in Bugabira municipality described how, why and when he fled and returned:

“[...] I used to travel abroad a lot. While in Tanzania during the 1980s, I found out that there were lots of fertile lands to cultivate, and then I decided to buy a plot of land and settle there. There was a Burundian refugee camp in the nearby, but I did not want to be registered as a refugee [...]. When the war broke out in Rwanda and Burundi [respectively in 1993 and 1994], Tanzanians became hostile to all foreigners living in their village. I was obliged to join other refugees in the Lukole refugee camp. I left Lukole in 2001 when I heard that my father was dead, I came to bury him. At that particular time, the cease-fire was signed; I then remained [in Burundi]” (Interview, Kirundo, 2009).

It appears from these accounts that refugee experiences play a non-negligible role in post-return reintegration prospects. The stories collected in Bugabira, Kirundo and Bweru municipalities of Kirundo province support the argument that livelihoods strategies are not only influenced by the high-level structures and processes, but also by individual returnees themselves in taking initiatives to seek better options for coping with life-threatening events. Moreover, accounts show the problem of “label” in misleading both analysis and action that is meant to assist affected categories in a post-war context. Mostly, these labels (“returnees”, “ex-combatants”, etc.) significantly affect the bearer’s access to services and assets which are crucial for achieving sustainable livelihoods upon return.

VI. FINDINGS DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter gives a brief outline of the research outcomes including challenges and linkages between theoretical approaches and the main empirical findings. It also draws from these linkages to propose their implications on policy.

6.1 Research outcomes

As I earlier mentioned, this thesis has mainly drawn upon primary data collected during a two month-field work. The findings chapter has explained how my late recognition of the importance of access to land as a major factor in reintegrating returnees in Burundi has been tackled. This underestimation of the importance of land in conflict was due to my early focus and reliance on statistics on refugee return in Burundi. I based my choice of the three provinces I visited on returnee statistics, expecting that reintegration challenges would be similar everywhere, depending on the numbers of returnees per province. As the main finding indicates (chapter five), it has demonstrated that returnee challenges upon return are mostly determined by local conditions in returnee destination (places of origin) and length of time in exile (different caseloads).

The early choice of a methodology strategy also resulted in the necessary limitation of my thesis. The decision to limit my empirical data to “returnees” only implied that some other categories in almost similar conditions were left out. In making this choice, I avoided not only the demand of large-scale empirical research, but also the conceptual complexities. While limitation concerns may raise question of whether these findings can inform other larger studies or research in the same field, I am of the view that this thesis is useful at least in analysis of complexity and challenges embedded in forced displacement. As I have mentioned, the sampling of interviews was not based on probability. My informants were recruited through snowball strategy, also known as a chain referral sampling. This method is usually used in qualitative sociological research and consists of “starting recruitment by rolling through a personal contact or through an informant and allowing the resulting chain take its own course” (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981:142). The question of whether data collected under such methods are representative and/or can be generalised is relevant. As an answer to this concern, it is worth to highlight different types of generalisation. Sim (1998) has argued that there two types of generalisation: empirical and theoretical generalisation (1998:350). In this respect, my findings can be generalised in the sense of theoretical generalisation, which emphasises on a generalisation of the theoretical framework of concepts

and propositions. This process of generalisation is based on conceptual and logical comparability, not on the strict probabilistic or representativeness of the sample (ibid.)

These research challenges or concerns highlight the typical difficulty in conceptualising refugee return and reintegration (Black and Gent 2004). They also show particular methodological constraints in regard to data validity, given the complexity of a post-war context. Nonetheless, the findings on the studied category and at the time the field work was carried out are valid and compliant to social sciences qualitative data generating. Most importantly, the research has allowed me to address the preliminary research questions and objectives: (1) to identify the nature of the main challenges for returnee reintegration in Burundi, and (2) to explore how failing to address these challenges affect the possibilities for conflict transformation and a durable peace.

The return of refugees to their homeland is a noble achievement in the aftermath of violence and civil war. But a return to country of origin is not enough for breaking the cycle of conflict and forced displacement. Data collected on return and reintegration in different parts of Burundi show that refugee return entails competition over scarce resources under uneven conditions. It is also shown that post-war implementation of social policies increases and perpetuates inequalities, dependency and abuses of fundamental rights. These combined conditions contribute to a re-ignition of violence leading to further displacement. This analysis is drawn from a theoretical model that emphasises on the crucial role of failed state (dysfunctional governance) in violence through failing to deliver basic services.

By introducing the functional theory of the state, this thesis has demonstrated that the case of the Burundian state combines many of the characteristics of a “failed state” through the country’s historical state formation. The post-independence rulers have practiced nepotism, rent-seeking bureaucracy, neo-patrimonial and authoritarianism that have contributed to state failure and hence civil war (Ndikumana 2000; Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000; Dokken 2008). The regional dimension of inequalities where some regions were marginalised in terms of social infrastructure support the theoretical assumptions of failed state leading to violence and the civil war.

The thesis has also linked the sustainable livelihood (Knight and O’zardem) framework to the context and challenges of returnee reintegration in Burundi. The analysis of collected data has

paid more attention to returnees themselves and how they manage to cope with basic livelihoods challenges. In humanitarian practice, it is more and more acknowledged that refugees develop entrepreneur skills allowing them make ends meet because relief aid does not often suffice. Refugees find ways of subsistence with or without the relief aid (Malkki 1995; Harrell-Bond 1999). The Burundian returning refugees have in this regard demonstrated their hardworking ability and entrepreneurship while in exile and upon return despite restrictive structures and processes limiting their livelihood strategies.

Having now returned to their home country and facing categorisation as “*landless*” and “*sans adresses*”, uprooted returnees are not only limited in their livelihood strategies, but their vulnerabilities and dependence are also worsened. Policies aimed at addressing this particular challenge (peace villages) have failed due to improper implementation. The resolution of disputes emanating from land is contested and it does not address financial compensation or restitution to prevent tension between parties. Although I was not able to collect large-scale data allowing for comparison of livelihoods strategies between returnees and non-returnee population, my findings show that where the people have access to land and houses to establish homesteads, there is less dependence on humanitarian relief aid. A noteworthy example is where the label of “returnee” was underplayed in identification of beneficiaries of reintegration programmes: in Ruyigi province²⁶, returnees felt more included in the community. They are not stigmatised by their social identity unlike those living apart (i.e. peace villages) and hence their access to network and assets increases.

6.2 Policy implications:

This thesis data suggest that the sustainability of reintegration in Burundi depends on adequate solution to broader individual returnee and community livelihood issues. Two principal areas need a particular attention: a) access to basic services and b) land for both cultivation and establishing homesteads.

Violence and civil war leading to state and society collapse need to be properly addressed in order to pre-empt the vicious cycles of violence and refugees. A post-war context response comprises not only of raising the failed state but also of mitigating potential (re-) ignition of violence and armed conflicts through addressing individual’s basic needs and human rights issues. As in the case of Burundi, policies and their implementation cannot afford to be

²⁶ In FHB’s community development project, returnee and non-returnees are equal members of CAZDEM.

superficial. Partial or ineffective policies risk further perpetuating conditions that led to the conflict in the first place. The marginalised and uprooted population should be reintegrated in a sustainable way. Their reintegration should attract more attention and resources from all actors involved in peace building. Action is needed to address the identified challenges from both above and below.

6.2.1 Re-building the state and the society

Classical liberal thought views the state as a subsystem of society, meaning that the concept of state and that of society were often used in overlapping senses. The meaning of society has evolved to the current use of society as synonym for community. Society is thus thought to be a fellowship, a communal bond of shared values (Vincent 1987:22). According to this view, state and society are intimately bound to each other in many ways. The relationship between state and society is crucial here because post-war peace building has often dealt with dilemmas that include the choice of vital priorities to both state and society's survival. For instance, the question about whether war-torn countries should be hurried to democratisation was discussed in an inspirational article "Maximum or Minimum" (Torjesen and Ammitzbøll 2007). The minimum policy option refers to UN peace operations that give priority to security and postpone wider institution building such as democratic elections, whereas the maximum policy option "encourages UN to seize the momentum and take comprehensive steps to facilitate democratisation,[...] good governance, democratic practices and rule of law in government institutions and central and local level; and, importantly, invigorating the formal and informal elements of civil society"(2007:12). A debate like this illustrates the dilemmas involved in approaches.

On a practical level, the disparity in access to infrastructure and basic services and marginalisation of periphery regions may be addressed by a comprehensive reconstruction of infrastructures throughout the country. The high numbers of land-related claims can be addressed by transferring a few of the returnee population from the overpopulated regions to less populated ones or alternatively, equipping the less equipped regions with infrastructure so that people themselves are attracted by livelihood opportunities, as is the case with the increasing rural exodus (especially youth leaving rural areas to towns).

6.2.2 The far-reaching social policy

The notion of citizenship as briefly discussed (chapter four) constitutes disenfranchisement, the restoration of the distortion of state-society bonds. The concept thus might be a guide in the creation of good governance, a cornerstone for recovery of a failed state. In this respect, the three components of the citizenship concept (civic, political and social) are interconnected (Scott 1994:61). They are important both as analytical tools and as policy guidelines in addressing right-related issues such property (Paris and Sisk), and inclusion of uprooted categories into community. In this regard, returnee access to services such as housing, education and employment may constitute key factors for their sense of belonging and participation in governance, which cannot be materialised under extreme poverty, dependency and stigmatisation.

If the citizenship approach has been effective in analysing socio-economic imbalances in some other societies such as South Africa (Lallo 1999), why should it not be explored as a guiding tool for both analysts and policy makers in addressing the challenges inherent to violence and displacement in the Great Lakes region in general, and in Burundi in particular? The ultimate achievement of reintegration should lead to the empowerment of the beneficiaries and restoration of the bonds between the state and its citizens, which implies that the stigma-attached (refugees/returnees) identities must definitely be removed. Positive social policies informed by the citizenship approach may lead to an achievement of total “derefugeesation”²⁷ of the uprooted returnees in Burundi.

²⁷ Understood here as deletion of physical, symbolic and psychological signs of refugeeness.

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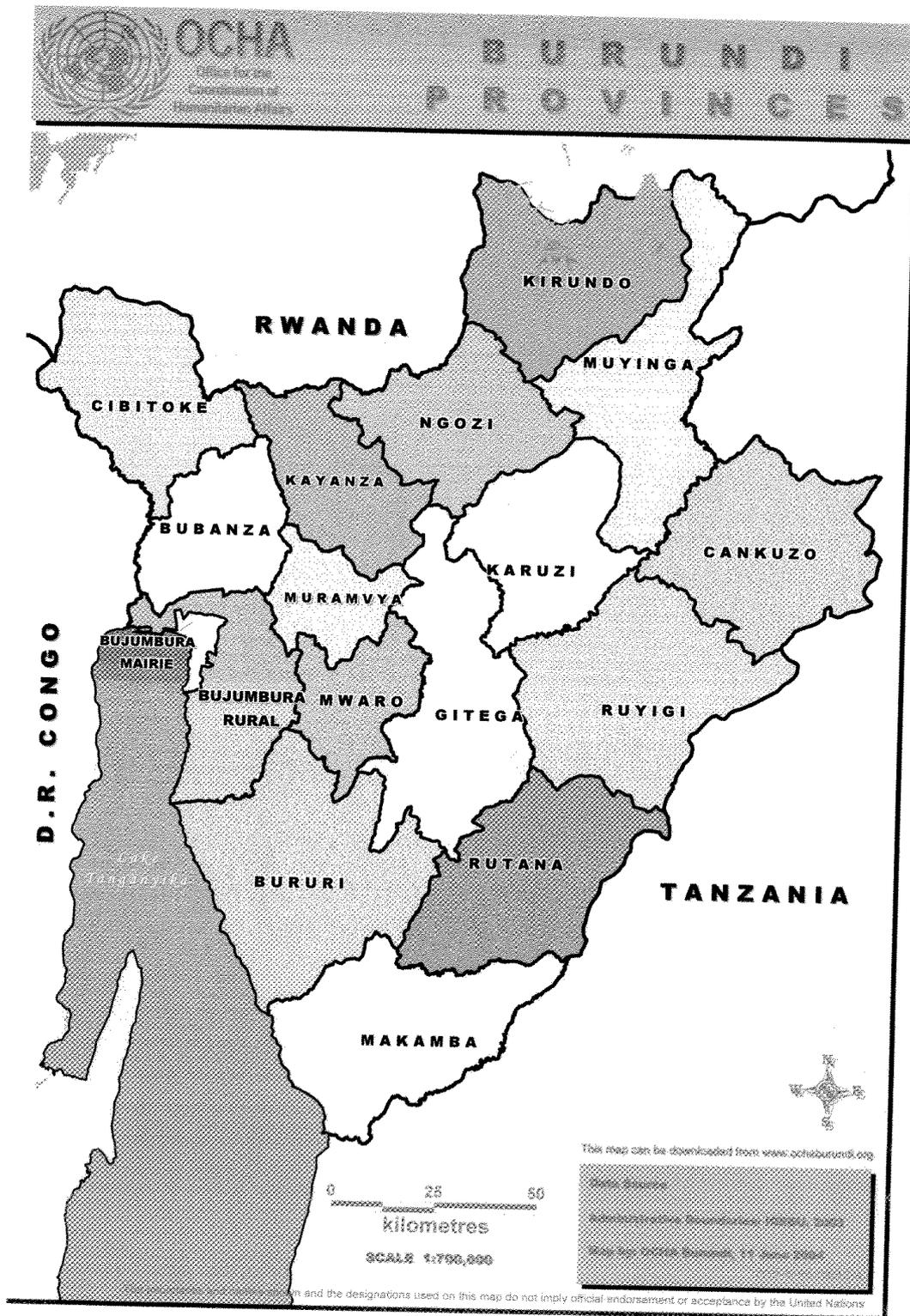
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APPENDIX 1

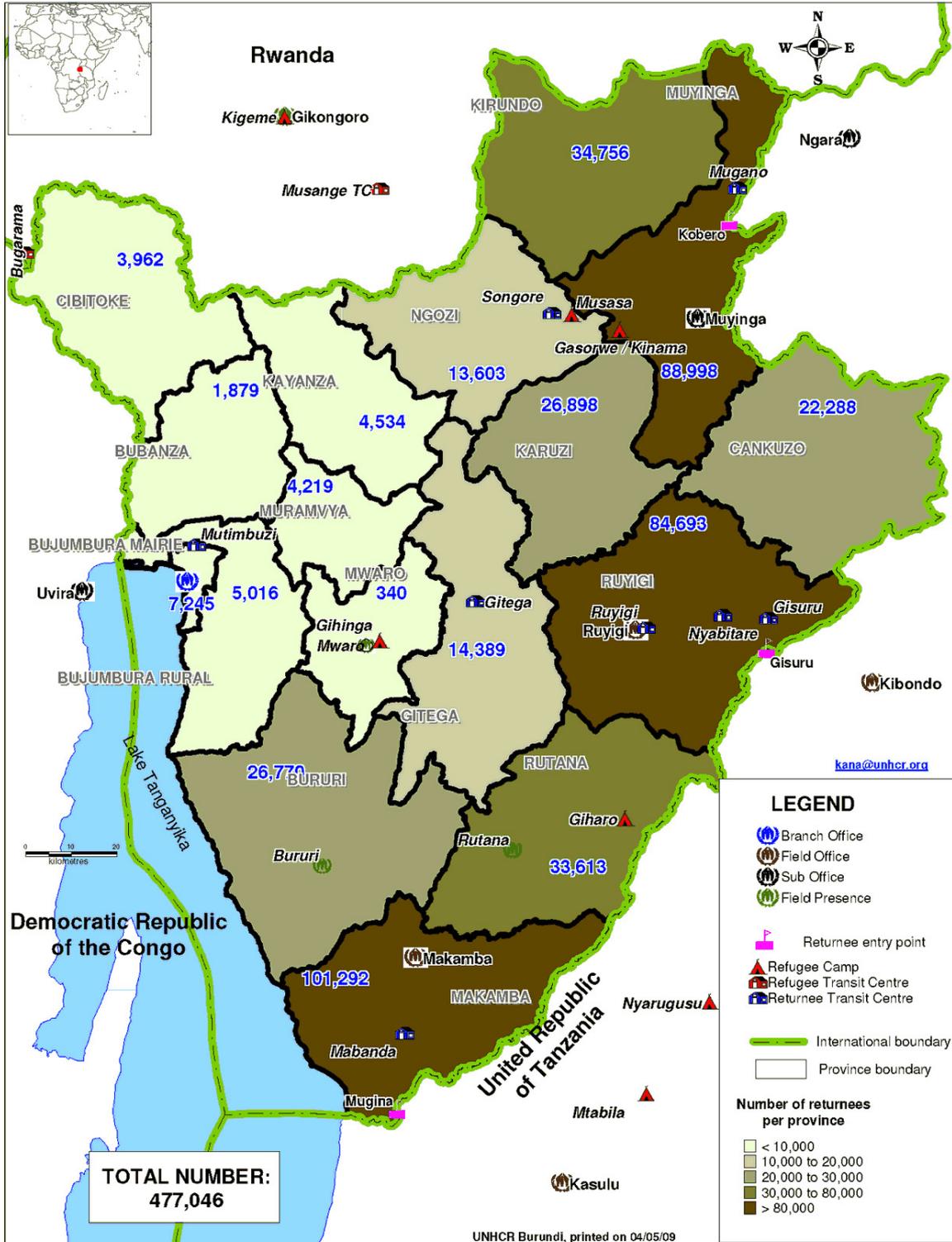
Map of Burundi



Appendix 2 Returnee statistics per province



UNHCR BURUNDI
 NUMBER OF RETURNEES PER PROVINCE
 01 March 2002 - 30 April 2009



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Repatriement_2002-30Apr09_WOR

Appendix 3 Data collection tools

- **Interview guide form**

1. Age Sex:
2. Refugee experience:
 - a. Why, when and how did you leave Burundi?
 - b. What was your occupation and economical situation before flight?
 - c. How have you been treated as a refugee?
 - d. What did you expect upon return?
 - e. How have you been received by authorities and neighbours?
3. The main livelihood challenge upon return:
 - a. Do you own land for cultivation? What does it mean for you?
 - b. Have you recuperated (or been compensated for) your property (land, other)?
 - How do you accede to basic services (infrastructure)?
 - Health care: Which and how do you accede to health services?
 - Education: Where and how do (your) children accede to school?
 - Housing: Have authorities or NGOs assisted in renovating/building houses?
 - Employment: Are there job opportunities in this area, which?
4. How does access to basic services and to land impact on peace building?
 - a. Do you feel that decision-makers are aware of your problems?
 - b. What are your views on the way returnees are treated by authorities?
 - c. Are you satisfied with how disputes over land and other properties are solved?
5. How can reintegration challenges be better addressed?

- **Question for Focus group Discussion**

1. From your experience of life in refugee camps, how is it to be a “refugee”?
2. What has influenced your decision to return from exile to Burundi?
3. How do you perceive reception and what is the biggest challenge for you upon return?
4. How do you perceive land-related dispute resolution and their impact on sustainable peace in Burundi?

5. What can be done to better address land issues and forced displacement?

Appendix 4 List of contacted UN agencies, provincial institutions and NGOs

1. FHI
2. NRC
3. World Vision
4. UNDP
5. BINUB
6. UNHCR
7. PARESI
8. Ligue ITEKA
9. Ruyigi Governor Advisor
10. Kirundo Governor Advisor
11. Makamba Governor Advisor