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Elusive Tactics

Lidewyde H. Berckmoes, 2014

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Cover photograph by Lidewyde Berckmoes: Four youths on the way home after a visit to a youth centre in the Bujumbura neighbourhood Buterere, in May 2010.

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Elusive Tactics
Urban Youth Navigating the Aftermath of War in Burundi

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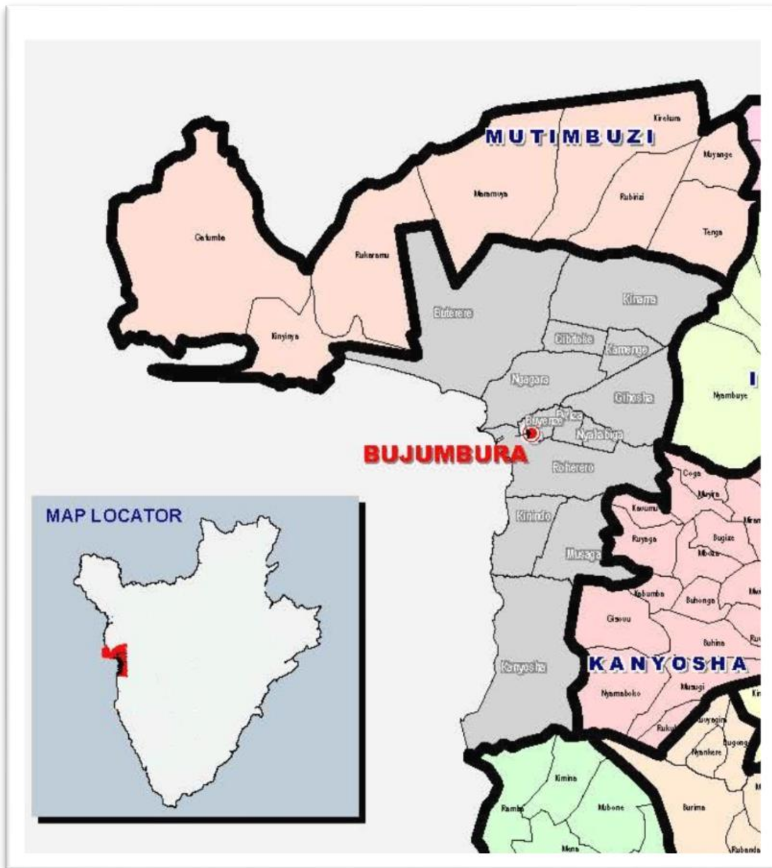
INTRODUCTION



The administrative boundaries of Bujumbura, Burundi (*communes*)
Based on the map 'Bujumbura rural and mairie provinces' by OCHA, 2004

WAR, YOUTH AND EVERYDAY PRACTICES

I. ‘LIKE A PARADISE’

[0:00 min.] Mathieu: I was born in 1985, in [the neighbourhood] *Cibitoke*. But I cannot tell you anything about my life from the age of my birth until, say, eight. At eight years old, that is when I started to see my life; to see what my life was. When I was eight, that is when, it was as though the war erupted in Burundi; in 1993. (…) I was in the second year [of primary school] when the war started; with the murder of our president. When he was assassinated, well, that is when I saw, when I started thinking about my life.

[41:30 min.] But today things are changing, the Burundian population [is starting] to see that it is not ‘the ethnic’ that kills. It is not the ethnic that kills (…)
Lide: So, when were things starting to change? You say that today things are changing?
Mathieu: To change? I can say, it was in, I can say in 2005 really (…) Well, yes, really, I saw [then] that Burundi was going to become like a paradise.

[1.07:15 min.] Mathieu: But today we can see that war [is] in the hearts of people, is it something, it is something that we apply as though it were simple (*c’est simple*). But it is not simple. Today we see people tell us “[killing] is not the first time and it will not be the last”. (…) It is as though I could say that it is something that they program in people, that is being programmed in the people of Burundi. You would think that they programmed us so that when we hear that someone has died we will say “ah, it is simple” (…) Each day people die. But we do not arrive…I do not even see the way [out]…it is terrible…Yes it is as though we have been programmed for killing; nothing good. (…)
Lide: Who did the programming?
Mathieu: Ha-ha. The politicians. You cannot tell me that it is the ‘little person’ on the mountain in [the province] *Bujumbura Rurale*...

[1.25:20 min.] Mathieu: It is [the politicians] who have the power [to make things happen].
Lide: You cannot do anything?
Mathieu: Me? When I can criticize, it is something (*ça va*). No it is not only criticizing that what they do; it is simply creating a bit of reconciliation among the Burundian population (…) It is a bit of telling [people] not to listen to the politics of Burundi. [The politics of Burundi] destroys, it does not construct; it destroys. (…) If we do not arrive at doing something today, Burundi, really, if we want to

> change something for the future, it will take a lot of effort, it will take a lot of time, it will cost us much… (…) [Now] it is chaos.
>
> Interview recording, Bujumbura, May 2011

In this ethnographic study I explore everyday practices of youths in Burundi and their effects on the social genesis of war and peace. I focus particularly on how, in the aftermath of war, male and female youths from the northern urban periphery in Bujumbura navigate processes of identification in their surroundings in view of undetermined war and peace prospects. This research focus stems from the observation that 'ordinary people' are usually neglected in studies that aim to understand war and peace (Van Leeuwen, 2008; Uvin, 2009), and the perception that war and peace are processes constituted through and moderated by social action (Richards, 2005). By exploring everyday practices through encounters with youths, this study offers a different perspective on the alternation of war and peace: It is complementary to insights about structural factors conducive to violence, such as institutional failure (e.g. Ndikumana, 1998; 2000), yet it is more responsive to local, lived realities. In addition, by foregrounding practices rather than structural dimensions this study not only highlights processes of social reproduction, but also explores social change (cf. Nordstrom, 1997; Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 2009, pp. 48–9).

The excerpt from my interview with Mathieu is illustrative of the research approach, the subject and the main questions of this thesis in several ways. Firstly, the excerpt shows the engaged ethnographic approach I adopted. Both my interlocutors' orientations and my curiosity about war and peace shaped the research process. Second, the main protagonists of this study are the youths who, like Mathieu, have grown up largely during the civil war. Because they were children during this specific historical period, they can be loosely described as a community of experience (cf. Burgess, 2005a). Nonetheless, the trajectories of my interlocutors during the war – trajectories that were shaped through structural positions, contingencies and individual characteristics – vary significantly. Because the youths grew up in conflict-ridden surroundings, but as a 'new generation' represent hope for change towards sustainable peace, they are expediently situated for an investigation of the tensions between continuities and changes in the war's aftermath. Moreover, as youths, they are perhaps more than any other generational category oriented towards the future.

Third, I approach youths as social actors who are actively engaged in efforts to improve their own lives and that of the people around them. As the interview excerpt exemplifies, the youths in my research were keenly analysing their lives and their surroundings and devising actions accordingly. Yet the unstable political context and the unpredictability of war/peace horizons – '*chaos*' as Mathieu summed up these aspects of indeterminacy – made analysing, planning and acting highly uncertain undertakings. In the aftermath of war, bleak images

of the potential for new outbreaks of violence competed with those of Burundi becoming *'like a paradise'* (see interview above). Violence and paradise should not be regarded as only far-away horizons. They also had to be taken into account for direct survival and immediate life chances. This raises several questions regarding purposive action. How do people envision goals in contexts that are marked by pervasive indeterminacy? How does indeterminacy influence the agentic processes of practices? When is uncertainty acknowledged and when is it denied in favour of assertions of truth (Whyte, 2009)? What do people try to control and what is believed to be beyond control?

Because the youths are developing themselves as well as simultaneously contributing to the development of their surroundings (Tudge et al., 2009, p. 200), I also look at what the youths' practices can tell us about social change. Yet, I explore the youths' practices as they unfold in the 'immediate present' (cf. Mbembe and Roitman, 1995). This means that I explore the effects of everyday practices that are *already rendered visible* (cf. Hammar et. al., 2010). What can we tell about the emerging effects of the youths' practices on the social genesis of war and peace in Burundi?

II. Structure of the Thesis

The study consists of six chapters. In Chapter 1, I introduce the fieldwork context and discuss the methodology and theory that underpin this study. I explore implications of doing research in insecure and uncertain fieldwork surroundings and clarify various aspects of indeterminacy in the Burundian context. I also introduce key ideas and concepts from literature to help explore purposive action in contexts marked by indeterminacy and to think about emerging effects of practices.

Chapter 2 serves as a historical background to my empirical findings. I explore writings about history in Burundi in order to contextualize the contemporary situation of 'no war, no peace' (e.g., Richards, 2005; Mac Ginty *et al.*, 2007; Montoya, 2011). I describe the regional and global embedment of violent crises in Burundi, trace the history of social categories employed in the multiple episodes of mass killings, and explore the emergence of a socio-political system that is based on exclusion and violence. From this history, key elements of political structure and state–society relations can be gathered, such as the history of regional and ethnic identity categories as bases for discrimination, and the significance of vertical ties between the ruling elite and ordinary people.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present my main empirical findings. I discuss how in everyday life youths deal with problems of uncertainty, insecurity and contingency in their surroundings. In Chapter 3, I explore the youths' practices of 'mapping'; that is, their systematic classification of others into categories based

on neighbourhood localities. I show that this type of classification builds on war-time experiences. In the war, ethnic/political identity categories were inscribed into the geographical map of Bujumbura's *Quartiers nord*. Although the practices have roots in the past, the current usage can best be understood as a way to re-create a moral order in order to get a grip on the surroundings in the present and as preparation against latent danger. The categories employed, I suggest, help identify 'guilty' and 'potentially dangerous' others as well as intimidate them into not acting upon their dangerousness.

Chapter 4 focuses on the way that youths navigate uncertainties about the salience of ethnic and other identity categories. I show that it is not the categories that are questioned and feared, but the employment of those categories and the potential consequences of such employment. This stems from the prevalent idea in Burundi that identification practices are omens of imminent violence. I argue that the perceived treacherousness of how others employ categories now and in the prospective future elicits tentative and elusive practices that add to the existing uncertainty, but not necessarily only in a negative, fateful way. Ambiguity can also be seen as a way to create space for, however uncertain, peace and reconciliation. In this context, the emotions of hope and fear appear vital for shaping unfolding practices.

In Chapter 5, I explore political participation and its connection to youths' 'search for life'. Political participation, as a way to build connections with those in power, is viewed by youths as one of the few routes towards the improvement of their own situation and that of the country. But this route is often cut off. When available, it is fraught with acute dangers and long-term risks, and is often at odds with ideals about how politics *should* work. I argue that the 'crisis dynamics', which include relatively peaceful periods alternating with critical moments, shape the youths' specific kinds of practices in both periods, sometimes emphasizing waiting and preparing, and other times requiring explicit side-taking and risk-taking.

The conclusion contributes to discussions about theorizing the agency of ordinary, war-affected people in reinventing peace. Popular peace-building approaches argue that youths are key actors in peace-building processes (Kemper, 2005). Yet, their relatively dependent position and their constraints in life give rise to hesitations about such views. See, for instance, Mathieu's assertion: '*You cannot tell me it is the little person on the mountains in Bujumbura Rurale (…) It is the politicians who have the power to make things happen*' (page 15). I approach this seeming contradiction from the proposition of De Certeau that everyday practices are a "fleeting and permanent reality (….) a dark sea from which successive institutions emerge" (1984, p. 41). I argue that the indeterminate nature of the war/peace context of Burundi, where the present situation and prospects of war and peace hinge on doubt, speculation and deep insecurity, promotes elusive tactics especially among those with

limited space for manoeuvre. Elusive tactics are geared towards versatility and intangibility. They help to create space, to prepare against adversity and to seize opportunities when they come along. The tactics also allow time to be bought in order to prepare more hopeful futures. Yet, the proliferation of elusive tactics adds to indeterminacy about others and their practices, and thus also contributes to the experience of enduring, treacherous surroundings. The question is how to break these crisis dynamics.

Chapter 1

Political map of Burundi (www.ezilon.com)
The red triangle on the right marks the refugee camp in Kibondo, Tanzania where I conducted research during my MA studies.

1. Beginnings and Horizons: Research in the Aftermath of War

I. Is There Still War, Could There be Again?

> As a graduate student, I conducted fieldwork in a Burundian refugee camp in Tanzania in 2005–06. In that period, I accompanied a repatriation convoy from the refugee camp to a reception centre in eastern Burundi, and a Dutch friend and I continued to Bujumbura, the capital city on the other side of the country. For a few months I had been doing research with youths who had grown up largely in the camp. Through my daily contact with them, their home country had become an enigma that had anchored itself in my thoughts. The opportunity to unravel a bit of the mystery with this visit had been too compelling to resist. I enthusiastically took in the scenic landscape of rolling hills and bluish views and people working in the almost vertical fields scattered along the hill sides. I didn't want to miss anything. But as we were speeding through the hills in order to keep up with the police escort that we were following for security reasons, I was starting to doubt whether I would enjoy the answers I would find: more dreamy views or dangerous turns and ambushes? Then, at our first stop, the head of the UNHCR[1] scolded my friend for our "risky holiday plans". The voice inside me that reminded me of the apprehension of some of the refugees gradually grew louder: is there still war, could there be again?
>
> Based on fieldwork diary, Kibondo, Tanzania, November 2005

In this chapter I explore the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of my study about the role of youths in the social genesis of war and peace in Burundi. The principal aim is to introduce the reader to the perspective from which I have come to understand Burundian society. This will help situate the findings and analyses presented in the following chapters. I start with an introduction to the fieldwork context. Through the lens of experienced and anticipated political violence, I portray the Burundian context as imbued with pervasive indeterminacy: the context creates a continuous experience of unintelligibility and unpredictability. In the second part of the chapter I analyse how enduring political insecurity and uncertainty necessitate reflections on methodological approaches. I focus particularly on the concerns and measures regarding safety, representativeness and the interpretation of findings. The chapter ends with a discussion of important theoretical points of departure for investigating everyday practices of war and peace in contexts marked by indeterminacy. The

[1] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the employer of the friend I was with.

questions I raise in that part, I take up in subsequent chapters. Throughout this chapter I integrate empirical findings in order to demonstrate my arguments and to give the reader a grasp of the fieldwork context.

On the Verge of Return

I started this chapter with an anecdote from my fieldwork during my graduate studies because my work with Burundian youths in that refugee camp was at the origin of this study. It aroused my curiosity about the relation between youths as social actors and the local dynamics that underpin or transform the recurrence of violence and the emergence of peace. On the fieldwork trip described, I got a first-hand glimpse of the fear of and enthusiasm for Burundi's future that had preoccupied the youths in the camp. My experiences with questions about their home country's uncertain future made me wonder how after repatriation the youths would influence the fostering of peace or a return to violence. Given the recurrent outbreaks of violence in Burundi, I saw a particular urgency in understanding whether and, if so, how this new generation contributed, or did not contribute, to a peaceful future.

In the refugee camp, the potential of youths as contributors to peace as well as the war/peace prospects for Burundi appeared to be undetermined. The youths had been hesitant about their pending return, but in contrast to many parents they had not been overwhelmingly afraid. In most of our conversations they showed a questioning attitude. They enumerated what attracted them to the idea of returning to Burundi and what kept them aloof. This could be summarized as being free from the restrictive camp rules and being tied by the insecurity of war: 'You cannot have freedom without peace, but here in the camp it is also difficult without freedom…' (Immaculée, December 2005). Consequently, speculations about the prospects of war/peace in Burundi were constantly in the background, and many refugees gathered information via the radio or letters from relatives in Burundi, or they crossed the border to check out 'what [was] going on]' (Immaculée, December 2005). Most of the youths, furthermore, were informed by the assessments of their parents, who seemed to be more certain that the worst would happen, again:

> Eric: Yeah the parents are saying the Hutus and the Tutsis are…some parents blame the war on the ethnic divisions, because they are saying that even though they [i.e. Tanzanian and Burundian government and the UNHCR] are saying that the war is over, there are so many years like this, that [parents] are saying it can't change.
> Lide: It can?
> Eric: It can't.

> Antoinette: Parents are telling their children they cannot forget what happened in their country. Maybe when [we] go back to the country [we] can see that ethnic divisions are no longer important, or still important?
>
> Group discussion, Kanembwa refugee camp, December 2005

The youths took seriously Burundi's historically proved conflict-proneness, but they did not take for granted the Tanzanian government's, the UNHCR's or their parents' assessments about the present and the future. In contrast to how they described their parents' attitudes, they were open to the likelihood of positive change: '...I left Burundi when I was very little, so I do not know how life is there [now]' (Eric, Kanembwa camp, December 2005).

The youths' wait-and-see attitude can be ascribed to a number of characteristics of protracted refugee life: it might have been caused by the spatial and temporal distance from the home country, as Eric seems to suggest; it may also be due to confusion and distrust related to the possibility and desirability of returning that was generated by the contradictory accounts of authorities and parents; or perhaps the hesitance was a sign of the 'refugee dependency syndrome', which – though not without critique – is often used to explain a lack of proactive action amongst refugees (Horst, 2006). The fact that I later encountered this standoffish but not disinterested attitude amongst youths in Burundi as well, nonetheless made me think there was a different reason. Perhaps it was just too soon to assess the war/peace balance? Perhaps the prospects for war/peace were simply not yet determined?

This indeterminacy became one of the most important points of departure for the present study. I set out to identify the local dynamics that foster cyclical violence, but without assuming 'history would repeat itself'. What the youth generation could and would do remained a question to be investigated empirically.

Cyclical Violence

Burundi has the reputation of suffering from 'cyclical violence' (e.g., Lumsden, 1997; Baghdadli *et al.*, 2008; Vandeginste, 2009). Since its independence in 1962, the country has undergone multiple abrupt changes of government and episodes of violence. Amongst the most notorious are the selective genocide of 1972 and the civil war of 1993–2005/6. The civil war was characterized by widespread violence and the formation of and contestation between new political groupings. During my fieldwork in the aftermath of the war, contestation between these groupings was on-going, although on a less dramatic level and with less fighting than during the war. Nevertheless, the awareness that political struggles could turn violent and widespread was hanging over my interlocutors like the sword of Damocles:

> About peace? That is difficult to explain, even for us who are natives in this country. It is very difficult because if we listen, if we try to listen to the radio (…), we hear that our country is not always in peace. Maybe, at whatever hour or minute or even second, it can turn ‘hot’; we can flee. (...) Peace is not certain (…) I think you can say that it is a ‘peace’ of two or three minutes. Maybe things can change.
>
> Ismaël, 18 years old, June 2007

Most significant for shaping the political ‘terrain’ (Vigh, 2006b) during my research in the aftermath of the civil war were developments in peace negotiations, rebel activity and elections. During my two-month research visit in 2007, two years after Burundi had officially been recognized as a post-war country, peace negotiations with the one remaining rebel movement were at a very fragile stage. When I returned for two months in 2009, the group had just become a political party and was preparing for the elections scheduled for the following year. My seven-month fieldwork period in 2010 was marked by a tense atmosphere of electoral campaigning in which more than 40 political parties competed. From February until May 2011, when I returned to carry out research for the fourth time, the repression of the opposition was increasing and rumours were circulating about the formation of new rebel groups. As I write this chapter, yet another attempt is being made to facilitate negotiations between the incumbent party and opposition members – including those in exile, some of whom are allegedly in ‘the bush’ (the *atelier* for talks was scheduled for 11 and 13 March, 2013).

My repeated field visits showed me that political struggles are hard to predict. They also made me realize how difficult it was to keep track and get an overview of what was happening at the moment. The difficulties of ‘seeing’ the current situation were a challenge for me and for my interlocutors (cf. Waage, 2006). ‘Seeing’ resonates with what in other studies of contexts characterized by deep-seated insecurity is sometimes referred to as ‘reading’ (cf. Bauman 1991, p. 1; Taussig, 2005; Scott in Vigh, 2009). In Burundi, where a large part of the population is illiterate, ‘seeing’ seems more apt. ‘Seeing’ refers to observation and interpretation even though the observed remains largely elusive; thus also in the sense of ‘reading between the lines’.[2] The difficulty of ‘seeing’ was at the origin of the wonderings in 2005, *‘Is there still war, could there be again?’* It was also reflected poignantly in one of my interlocutor’s conclusions after hearing about the contestations of the 2010 electoral outcomes: ‘*Et nous, nous restons*

[2] In the local language Kirundi, ‘seeing’ (*kubona*) can carry the meaning of having the ability to assess and interpret correctly what is happening. ‘Seeing far’ refers to the ability to predict and plan ahead. The verb ‘hearing’ (*kumva*) is sometimes used in a similar manner, as linguistic anthropologist Albert noted already in the 1960s: “[c]ontext distinguishes shades of meaning of (…) *kumva*, to hear, to understand, to conceive of” (1964, p. 44).

dans les hypothèses' ('And us, we remain [living] in hypotheses'; Claude, Bujumbura, July 2010). To 'see' signs of political unrest was deemed necessary to avoid or act upon the dangerousness that unrest potentially entailed (see Risør, 2010, p. 33, about the importance of 'reading' in situations of insecurity). Therefore, despite difficulties, it remained an important activity for me and my interlocutors.

Besides the volatility of the political terrain, deep social and political divisions contributed to the complexity of 'seeing'. In Burundi, everybody was generally assumed to have taken sides in on-going contestations. All sources of information were consequently suspected of political partiality. For instance, public news channels were viewed as spreading only pro-government news, and newspapers or radio stations that as part of civil society claimed to have a neutral stance, were labelled pro-opposition. This process of labelling was so widespread that it sometimes assumed the form of circular reasoning: if a source of information – that is, a media channel or public figure, neighbour, friend or family member – referred to a particular event or gave an opinion that could be interpreted as contributing positively to the image of one group over another, he or she was immediately categorized as siding with that group and against the other. In view of this, several contradicting versions of any politically tainted event usually circulated simultaneously. It is telling that after an armed robbery or grenade attack, multiple rumours about the orchestrators of the robbery/attack spread quickly through different channels, with some blaming the government, others opposition members. The blaming of a third party – 'ordinary criminals' – would also be interpreted as a suspicious explanation, as it would steer blame away from the 'true' perpetrators; namely the government or opposition.

Verification of the different versions was tricky. Strategies like diversifying or increasing the number of sources often only resulted in a larger number of possible interpretations. Painfully telling is the cynical comment of a colleague in the field following one of the first post-electoral grenade attacks on a bar in downtown Bujumbura in June 2010. My colleague, who had already given up hope of finding a conclusive answer to the question who had perpetrated the violence, cried out that, staggeringly, it appeared not even possible to get a clear finding on something as tangible as a body count.

The insecurity generated by struggles in the political domain raise important methodological concerns. For instance, safety precautions became a vital part of the fieldwork preparation and process; deep social and political divisions made questions about representativeness indispensable; and difficulties of distinguishing rumour from fact resulted in challenges for the verification, triangulation and interpretation of findings. In the succeeding sections I reflect upon these and related challenges.

II. Methodology: Balancing Act

The security risks caused by the unintelligibility and unpredictability of political struggles set important contours for the research project. The potential of violence made it necessary to balance safety concerns and the choice of research location, mode of transport and security arrangements. As such, I decided to conduct research in the capital city, Bujumbura. This choice was strongly motivated by the relative freedom of movement and security I enjoyed in the capital; both were imperative for the kind of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork I aspired to. Yet, the point of departure was the idea that youths potentially contributed to peace *and* to violence. I therefore selected as my fieldwork site a city area that was suspected of harbouring this negative potentiality (cf. Simone, 2007; Vigh, 2011): the *Quartiers nord* of Bujumbura (QN).

Perils and the Periphery

The QN comprise several neighbourhoods on the northern periphery of the capital. An estimated 250,000 people – about half of the total Bujumbura population – live there.[3] These neighbourhoods are especially notorious for having served as a primary battlefield during the civil war. Furthermore, they are known to be poor and *populaire* in the French sense of the word, and hotbeds of political unrest and criminal activity. I anticipated that research in these violence-affected neighbourhoods would provide good insights into the experiences of a generation that had come of age during the war. I also expected that the practices of the youths in these neighbourhoods would be especially revealing concerning potentially transformative processes in the context of the cyclical violence that Burundi was allegedly suffering from.

For this potential for transformation I am inspired by AbdouMaliq Simone's (2007) theoretical conceptualization of 'the periphery'. Simone describes 'the periphery' as a space that is simultaneously included and excluded from the centre – in this case, from the central neighbourhoods of Bujumbura. He argues that because of its simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, the periphery is imbued with a sense of insufficiency and incompletion. "This (alleged) lack also means that the periphery is never really brought fully under the auspices of the logic and development trajectories that characterize a centre, and therefore

[3] The preliminary results of the 2008 population census (2011) show that Bujumbura has 478,155 inhabitants of whom 246,813 live in the northern *communes* (Buterere, Cibitoke, Gihosha, Kamenge and Kinama). In total 8,038,618 people live in Burundi (2008 Population Recensement, résultats preliminair). Other sources give estimations of 230,000 to 700,000 inhabitants in Bujumbura (dating the estimates 2009–11).

embodies an instability that is always potentially destabilizing of that centre" (op. cit., p. 462). Additionally, besides the negative potentiality, the instability would theoretically render the periphery a potentially generative space: "a source of innovation and adaptation" (op. cit., pp. 462–3).

Simone's symbolic conceptualization of the periphery fits remarkably well with the image of the QN that I encountered amongst numerous city residents. To them, the QN, especially when referred to as "Kamenge", was both part of the capital and alien (hostile) terrain.[4] The following anecdote is illustrative:

> My landlord[5] once offered to drop me off for a celebration of the World Music Day at the youth centre in Kamenge. He confessed that since the civil war broke out in 1993 he had not been in this part of the city. As we got closer, he became more nervous. When we turned off the main road and passed the Kamenge market to get to the centre, he expressed concern that his old car might break down because of the many potholes on the sandy road. I reassured him: it was only a few hundred metres further to the centre. At the centre an enormous crowd of youths had gathered to attend the music concert. Upon seeing the thousands of youths, he asked disbelievingly if I was sure I wanted to get out. It was the only time he offered to give me a ride to the QN.
>
> Fieldwork notes, June 2010

Ideas about the QN as simultaneously part and not part of the capital were prevalent not only amongst 'outsiders' like my landlord. Images about dangerousness and segregation between the QN and other, more central Bujumbura neighbourhoods were widely shared by my interlocutors from the QN. These images built on real experiences, including for instance the lack of government investment in education and infrastructure, the higher crime rates on the northern periphery, as well as specific forms of neighbourhood solidarity. For example, at a funeral of a Kamenge inhabitant I was told by a friend of the deceased that it was common practice to share in the costs for transport to the graveyard (BIF 1000 a person, at the time the equivalent of about €0.70). My interlocutor assured me that in other neighbourhoods (he was referring to the

[4] 'Kamenge' usually refers to a particular neighbourhood (the administrative unit referred to as Kamenge *commune*). Other times the label is applied more loosely to refer to various neighbourhoods on the periphery in the northern part of Bujumbura. The exact boundaries of Kamenge as an administrative unit changed with the expansion of the city (see for more details about the development and expansion of Bujumbura, Ntwari and Nkurunziza, 1997).

[5] At the time, I rented a small house (an *annexe*) in a central-southern neighbourhood. In 2009 I lived for three weeks in the QN. Afterwards, I chose to live in various, more central neighbourhoods for reasons of security and relative freedom. On average I travelled five to six days a week to the QN; mostly during the daytime. I used taxis and public buses, depending on the availability of either as well as the risks in traffic I was willing to take that day (buses were especially notorious for being involved in road accidents). It took 10–40 minutes to commute.

central and southern city neighbourhoods) the financial burden of the rented buses would rest entirely on the shoulders of the deceased's close relatives.

In my view, the tensions between inclusion and exclusion and the concomitant potential for both positive and negative changes, made a focus on the QN periphery especially promising for explorations of youths' practices and their effects on violence and peace-building.

Kamenge Youth Centre

My entry point in the QN was the largest youth centre in Bujumbura: *Centre Jeunes Kamenge* (CJK). The centre was built in 1992, just before the outbreak of the civil war, on a plot of land belonging to the diocese of Bujumbura. From the start, the aim of the three Xaverian priests from Italy who started the centre was 'to help youths from different backgrounds to live together peacefully'. The location of the centre turned out to be very strategic for this purpose, especially given the strict ethnic segregation promoted in Bujumbura since the 1993 war: the centre is located at the crossroads of the Ngagara, Cibitoke and Kamenge neighbourhoods; during the war the first two were designated as 'Tutsi neighbourhoods' and the latter as a 'Hutu neighbourhood'. In the period of my research, one remaining priest ran the centre with the help of a few, mostly Italian volunteers, a French employee, and a number of Burundian staff members and youth volunteers. The CJK's membership was between 30,000 and 36,000.[6] Among them, 1000–2000 youths participated regularly in the centre's activities, which included sports, language courses, theatre activities, and computer literacy (CJK Communiqué de presse, 2011).

The existence of the youth centre facilitated my research in many ways: it provided a safe haven where I could meet, converse and hang out with youths; participate in youth activities; organize group discussions for my research; and give a course on qualitative research, in the process of which I worked with my students on a small study about youth unemployment in the QN. Furthermore, the fact that the youths at the centre had experience with meeting oversees volunteers and research students made our interaction easier, not in the least

[6] These numbers comprise all people who have registered as members since the youth centre opened its doors. Each youth who wanted to participate in activities of the centre had to register to obtain a membership card. The card carried a passport photo, name, date of birth, address, and membership number. To register, youths had to be between 16 and 30 years old and, ideally, live in the QN. Upon registration, youths had to produce an identity document like a birth certificate or school registration card. On 19 March 2011, the total number of people registered was 35,486: 457 from the Buterere *commune*, 8186 from Cibitoke, 2965 from Gihosha, 8957 from Kamenge, 4785 from Kinama, 4529 from Ngagara and 5607 from the rest of the city. Of them, 27,194 were youths (including 8292 girls) (CJK Communiqué de presse).

because many of these youths had had practice in speaking French.[7] This meant that I had to work with an interpreter only occasionally,[8] and it also greatly enhanced the building of trust and friendship.

Having the CJK as the base from which I conducted much of my research also raises questions about the representativeness of my findings. The question of representativeness is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, of course, it helps to situate the findings and analyses that I provide throughout this thesis. Second, it helps to prevent representations of youth as a monolithic category. Research on youth in Africa usually focuses on a particular, extreme group such as child-soldiers or refugee youths (e.g., Peters and Richards, 1998; Honwana, 2000; Honwana, 2005; Hart, 2005; Schepler, 2005). Yet even these categories are differentiated. In the Burundian refugee camp in Tanzania, for example, obvious differences in living circumstances and social status were found. These were connected to, amongst other things, education and family composition. Moreover, young people from different regions emphasized their different cultural practices (Berckmoes, 2006). Third, research in Burundi can be politically sensitive, especially when topics like violence or relations with political groupings are addressed. Research findings may have consequences for policy, intervention and public response. Political sensitivity and possible consequences feed into unease about generalizing 'population' statements. Therefore, in a context like Burundi the empirical basis of findings is continuously questioned. Discussions about representation illuminate the particularities as well as the characteristics my interlocutors shared with other youths in Burundi.

Who, then, were the youths at the youth centre? Outside the CJK I was warned that the youths at the centre were likely to be better off than their peers in the QN because they appeared better dressed and had time to hang out instead of work to find their next meal. They were probably more educated; many of the activities had an educative component. Additionally, far more male than female youths frequented the centre. 'Typical' QN female youths supposedly had 'no time' (i.e. were not allowed) to go to the youth centre because they had to study or help with household chores; besides, visiting the centre could tempt them into behaving indecently with boys and damage their reputation. At the centre, the priest agreed that the youths there were probably

[7] Nearly all interviews excerpts and fieldwork notes that are presented here, have been translated by me into English.

[8] When I worked with an interpreter I usually recorded the interviews. Afterwards, I had the interviews transcribed in translation (from Kirundi to French) to ensure that my reading of the interview would be accurate. With a few exceptions, I worked with only one interpreter/research assistant. This meant that she was well versed in my research interests. Moreover, because we knew each other well, I was aware of her social position and learned how she came across. This helped me interpret how her presence influenced the interactions and data, just as my presence did. A couple of times, when I needed translation but did not work with her, I leaned on youths to interpret conversations we had with their friends or relatives.

different in some ways from those 'in the *quartiers*', but not necessarily because of the aforementioned reasons. He suggested, in line with the centre's objective, that the youths at the CJK were more open to 'living together peacefully'. Youths at the centre, furthermore, sometimes jokingly added that they, more than their peers outside, were dreaming about going abroad; at the centre there were sometimes opportunities to participate in international activities and one could meet European friends, perhaps even girlfriends.

There was certainly truth in these characterizations of the youths at the CJK. Yet, in my experience the differences between youths at the centre and those in the *quartiers* risk being overestimated. For instance, many of the youths frequented the CJK on and off; for days on end they would not visit the centre because they needed to study or perform odd jobs to fulfil their basic needs, temporarily lost hope that they would find opportunities to travel to Europe through the CJK, or decided to work on improving their reputations by reducing their 'wandering around' (*circuler*) for a while. Had these youths then turned into a distinct category of 'youth in the *quartiers*'? Furthermore, despite appearances, youths at the centre could be as poor as youths outside the centre. Many young people shared with each other clothing or running shoes for sports activities that supposedly distinguished them as better off. Moreover, as Jenipher explains below, trying to keep up appearances as, for instance 'un-poor', could be an important protective measure:

> There is people who see me, who think I have a lot of money (…) Ha-ha! But I don't. [They think that I am] a liar. I do all I can to earn clothes (…) so that the world does not know, does not know, does not see that I have no money.
> Lide: You hide it?
> Jenipher: [nods her head] Because it is not good. Because everybody, if everybody knows, it is misery, it is not good. (…) If people see that you do not have money, he [a man or a boy] will, he will, he will look how he can, how he can 'take care' [of you] (*s'occuper*). Take care how? Sugar daddy (*père de la vie*). Because here, I do not know if they have it where you are from, HIV? …
>
> Jenipher, 19-year-old girl, June 2007

The youth centre can therefore be seen, firstly, as an institution that attracted youths at particular moments for specific ends, including leisure and education. Second, it was a public space where youths 'performed' certain characteristics, like in the example of Jenipher where she performed to be 'un-poor'. 'Performance' could also include opinions and attitudes, as revealed by a conversation I had with Nella (19). She was one of my closest interlocutors and had been strongly involved in the centre's activities for more than 10 years. Nella explained how different public and private settings required specific attitudes. In the following quote she uses the metaphor of clothes to talk about her attitude towards 'ethnicity' at the youth centre compared to the home setting:

> In Burundi it is custom for girls to wear skirts. But at the youth centre everybody wears trousers. If you wear trousers at home your parents will disapprove; they tell you to wear a skirt. That is why at home you wear a skirt; to respect your custom.
>
> Fieldwork notes, January 2010

(It is noteworthy that Nella did not categorize either the 'skirt' or the 'trousers' – or the home setting or the youth centre – as more 'truthful'.)

To acquire insight into the demands of different settings, it was necessary to gain access to youths in these settings. I therefore usually met my informants for the first time at the youth centre and later in other places and in other circumstances, for instance in people's homes, at a celebration, at a mourning gathering, on walks in the neighbourhoods or for drinks in a local *cabaret* (bar). Through this approach I established long-term relationships with 30–35 youths. These long-term relationships formed the core of my research. With these youths, I conducted recorded interviews, had informal conversations and spent a lot of time for the purpose of 'participant observation'. My work – and friendships – with these youths came in addition to countless conversations, interviews, and group discussions I held with more than 150 youths as well as other key informants on between one and five occasions.

The Protagonists

The protagonists of this research all came of age in the specific historical period of civil war, which lasted from 1993 until at least 2005. Some of my eldest interlocutors were 10 at the time the war broke out; the youngest were born in the first years of war. In line with societal ideas, these young people fulfilled at least some, but often not all of the following ideal–typical characteristics of 'youth':[9]

- In their mid to late teens or in their twenties;
- In secondary school, or if out of school considered to be of school-going age;

[9] The English word 'youth' cannot be translated into a local term unambiguously. Besides the French word *jeunes*, the local language Kirundi has several words that refer to young people. The connotations of these words vary. For instance, the word *abajeunes*, the Kirundi remodelling of *jeunes*, has strong political connotations; the word *umosore* is associated with energy (able-bodied person) and is generally used to describe young men on the verge of adulthood. It can also be used to comment on a person's strength and vitality irrespective of his age. The variant of *umusore* for young women is *inkumi*. *Urwaruka* refers to young people more generally; it includes children. *Umuyabaga* means adolescent girl and *umukangara* adolescent boy, but these latter two words are not commonly used.

- Unmarried;
- Still largely dependent on caretakers;
- Beginning to take more responsibility for their actions and for their own and their family's livelihoods;
- Energetic and physically strong.

The boundaries of these 'youth' characteristics were regularly contested and could differ per setting. At the CJK, for instance, a youth was defined as being between 16 and 30 years old, while the Ministry of Youth and Sports usually worked with the age parameters of 18 to 35. In the context of politics and elections, university students as well as young people well into their thirties were often categorized as 'youths' – especially if they were not married and were without steady employment, whereas the latter young people would be regarded as somewhat problematically still being 'youths' in the context of family life: they had failed to transition into 'proper' adulthood in their twenties (cf. Christiansen et al., 2006). Additionally, a lot of young people could not depend on caretakers due to their poor family circumstances. Above all, this revealed a schism between ideal and reality.

Discourses on 'youth' and concomitant 'youth' characteristics were important for the analysis of my research findings. Ideas that circulated in society about the role of 'youth' influenced my interlocutors' ideas of self and their opportunities, not in the least because of the structured relations between different generations (cf. Durham, 2000; 2004; Abbink and Van Kessel, 2005; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005; Utas, 2005b; Vigh, 2006b; Cole, 2010; Sommers, 2012; Huijsmans et. al., 2013).[10] As my research progressed, several of my long-term informants graduated, got married, had babies, found steady jobs and started to build their own houses. In most situations, these young people would then not be defined by the people around them or by themselves as 'youths'.[11]

Besides the geographical focus on the periphery – which meant that the youths in my research lived in generally poor and marginalized circumstances – and the aforementioned approach to youths as a generation that came of age in the period of war, my selection of informants was as indiscriminate as possible. That is, I did not want to privilege particular youth categories, such as ex-

[10] In Chapter 5, I explore the relation between youth as a social category and other categories, and particularly in relation to the political elite. In the other chapters, while aware of the youths' embedment in generational and other social relations, the focus is on youths and their peers.

[11] My findings do not per se confirm the bleak images of youths 'being stuck' (Sommers, 2011) in a 'social moratorium' (Vigh 2006a, b) or in 'waithood' (Honwana, 2012a; b), which is often portrayed as the current predicament of youths, especially African youths. This is not to deny concerns about reaching 'proper' adulthood, which were in fact widespread amongst youths and people around them in Burundi (Berckmoes and White, 2013). A historical perspective on youth generations in the past (cf. Burtan and Charton-Bigot, 2010) and longitudinal research in Burundi could help to understand and situate these preliminary observations.

combatants, orphans, students or rural–urban migrants. At the youth centre I talked to everyone who had the courage to start a conversation with me; my group discussions were open to every interested youth; and the announcements of the activities I organized were put on a notice board that was visible to all CJK visitors.[12] In addition, I tried to redress obvious biases as much as possible by explicitly investing in relationships with female youths and by taking 'accusations' of an ethnic bias as seriously as possible. Amongst my main interlocutors were male and female youths; on average they were 18–25 years old,[13] although some were younger and some were older. They included Hutu, Tutsi and Congolese; university students, secondary school students and youths who were not at school, but most of them with some level of education; with different religious outlooks; living in different QN neighbourhoods; born in the city and a few rural–urban migrants who came to Bujumbura for their studies; some extremely poor and others without acute poverty difficulties; and with reputations of being good and of being trouble.

This diversity was intended to obviate the ostracizing of particular categories of youths. I was interested in the relations and interactions between different people, and I did not want to assume in advance the relevance of specific youth categories. In conflict-prone situations, this can be a risky methodological choice. Interaction with different categories of people can endanger trustworthiness for all (cf. Vigh, 2006b). Nonetheless, I feel that my efforts not to discriminate generally improved my access to youths. It sustained my reputation as being serious about my project and genuine in my interest in everybody's story. It is perhaps telling that my interlocutor Matata, upon hearing that I was meeting a friend with a bad reputation because of his involvement in criminal activities, encouragingly patted me on the shoulder and remarked that I really was open to meeting 'different people' (he later confided in me that he sometimes worked for that friend by selling drugs for him; April 2010). A second example concerns a Tutsi man who knew that I was spending a lot of time in a 'Hutu neighbourhood'. He volunteered his life history with the explicit purpose that, 'I should hear all sides so that I can write a book about the whole truth' (fieldwork notes, May 2011).

[12] They were in French and thus attracted especially youths with a level of education that allowed them to communicate in French, one of the official languages of Burundi. In Burundi, pupils start being taught in French in classes five and six of primary school. Secondary and tertiary education is entirely in French.

[13] Throughout this thesis I have written down the exact age or year of birth of my interlocutors if they had shared this information with me.

Despite the promising entries I had to the field and the long-term, close bonds I was able to build, gaining trust and dealing with distrust remained important challenges throughout my research (cf. Feldman et al., 2003, p. 56). The on-going struggle with distrust was noticeable to me in the first place through the 'conflicting narratives' I encountered. Goffman (1999) speaks of a conflicting narrative when a verbal act of a person is not in accord with the 'line' he has taken. Line, he argues, refers to a pattern of acts by which a person expresses his view of the situation and his evaluation of the participants, especially himself (1999, p. 306). Before meeting up with someone, I usually went over all the data from our previous meetings. This meant that I easily noticed how descriptions about family composition, opinions, or roles or activities during the past war were denied or altered on subsequent occasions. I categorized the aberrations – of which there were many – as conflicting narratives.

A situational analysis usually proved useful to give meaning to the conflicting narratives. They could stem from the places in which they occurred (like in the example given by Nella earlier in this chapter, when she uses the metaphor of trousers and skirts to talk about the need for different attitudes towards 'ethnicity' in different settings) or from developments in the personal life trajectories of my interlocutors. They could also be related to changes in the socio-political context. Given the political tensions and dangers associated with political turmoil, many of the conflicting narratives appeared tactically motivated to prevent precarious situations (cf. Utas, 2005a). For instance, in 2007 my interlocutor Arsène denied his participation in the rebel movement Palipehutu–FNL. In 2009, the movement had become a legitimate political party, and he was open about his involvement in the movement.

A situational analysis did not always take me further, however. I was aware that memories could change as an effect of time passing (Fujii, 2010) and that my interlocutors could change their minds. Still, the process of interpreting conflicting narratives sometimes felt similar to the confusing attempts of reading rumours and counter-rumours in the political domain. For example, after a three-hour interview about family and boyfriends with Ines, a young women I had been in contact with for over a year, I wrote in my notebook: "... good [interview], but something worries me: I do not have the feeling that I get to know her better every time [I speak to her]. Instead I feel as if I have to readjust my image of her: [not in depth, but] from left to right" (fieldwork notes, July 2010).

To obtain "'good' data", it is vital to gain the trust and confidence of interlocutors (Thompson, Ansoms, and Murison, 2013, p. 6). This is a challenge that all fieldworkers have to deal with (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Feldman et al., 2003; Chong, 2008). Yet it may have particular urgency and take

specific forms in conflict-prone contexts. Norman (2009) argues that in conflict-prone contexts the cognitive dimension of trust has been breached so often that emotional aspects have gained importance. Researchers may therefore have to work more on emotional dimensions of trust (pp. 72–3). My long-term relationships with interlocutors were helpful for this, but certainly no guarantee. The experiences of a missionary who had been working in Burundi for over 40 years are also revealing:

> Burundians seem very open, don't you think so? But in reality they are very much closed; very reserved. It is culture, mentality. (...) It takes a lot of effort [to get to know them]. Every day you have conflicts. People also lie a lot. 'Truth' is not in their dictionary. (...) Sometimes you can speak to people for two hours and only then they will let go of something. (...) Even with people I've known since their childhood, things remain hidden, difficult to penetrate.
>
> Fieldwork notes, June 2009

The missionary's experiences show that negotiating 'access' takes a lot of effort. His ideas about deceptive openness of Burundians are also provocative. In line with this, the linguistic anthropologist Ethel M. Albert, who conducted fieldwork on speech behaviour in Burundi between 1955 and 1957, points out the high cultural valuation of clever lies, evasions and elegant but often incomprehensibly subtle literary allusions in Burundi (1964). Methodologically speaking, this shows the importance of caution in the interpretation of findings.[14] Long-term ethnographic fieldwork, exploring different perspectives and continuously revisiting findings were therefore extremely important. Additionally, as things remain 'hidden', answers are best sought not only in positive forms but also in 'negative spaces', that is, in affirmations and in silences,[15] in confrontations and in avoidances (cf. Kublitz, 2011b).

These ideas also resonate to some extent with the calls of various anthropologists to acknowledge "the indeterminate, ambiguous, and manifold character of lived experience" (Jackson in Whyte, 1997, pp. 224–5). This may require other ways of writing and analysing: "It is time to attribute to the people we study the kinds of complexities that we acknowledge in ourselves, and to

[14] Elsewhere, I discuss methodological challenges related to dealing with deceit in fieldwork in Burundi. I suggest various approaches to understanding the meanings of lies in Burundi (Berckmoes, 2013).

[15] In this regard, Albert's (1964) analysis of speech behaviour shows that in Burundi silence can be a deliberate and significant communicative technique: "In family conclave or political caucus, silence on the part of the ranking person present effectively negates the proceedings. It is understood by all attending as total disapproval" (p. 41).

bring these into the forms of knowledge that we produce and circulate" (Biehl and Locke 2010, p. 317). In view of this, Whyte proposes a more naturalistic, lifelike, open-ended and inconclusive anthropology (Barth, Jackson, and Lambek, in Whyte, 1997). In this thesis, I follow her example.

Ethics and Conflict

The uncertain context also necessitates reflections on the ethical imperative of doing no harm (cf. Thompson, Ansoms and Murison, 2013, p. 4). Given the dangerousness brought about by the politically unstable context, a vital part of the research methodology both during and after fieldwork concerned taking measures to ensure my safety and that of my interlocutors. Lessons from other anthropologists were vital for this (e.g. Nordstrom and Robben, 1995; Wood 2006; Robben and Sluka, 2007). For instance, I took precautions regarding the questions I asked and the stones I left unturned (Horst, 2006), and I securely stored my data in encrypted computer files. Additionally, in the writing process, I carefully considered what data I would reveal and how (ibid); for example, I have given my interlocutors fictional names. Furthermore, to prevent misrepresentation, I stayed as close as possible to my fieldwork notes and interview recordings.[16] Moreover, I took into account discussions about 'writing violence' (Robben and Nordstrom, 1995, p. 11), particularly in terms of the unforeseen effects that may accrue from the writing (Spivak, in op. cit.), and about the ethical demands of witnessing inequality and violence (see e.g. Scheper-Hughes (1995), who argues that research about mishaps should induce the researcher to take an activist or militant stance, or Bourgois's (1996, p. 254) criticism of suspending moral judgment on an intellectual and emotional level). As such, I am exploring ways to continue working with Burundians on peace-building. Finally, in this thesis I hope to convey not just intellectual curiosity but also moral and emotional engagement. Still, I have to admit that my struggles with many ethical questions are on-going. For instance, is it enough to publish and relate my findings to certain audiences in the ways I do? Should I reach out to more youths more directly in order to alleviate some of their hardships, and what would this mean for those that, by implication, I exclude?

Second, I tried to learn from and adapt to the security measures my interlocutors themselves took to avoid compromising situations. Some of these adaptations occurred largely unconsciously; for instance, the way I moved

[16] When the data I present in this thesis stems from recorded interviews, I note underneath the presented material the fictional name of the interlocutor, the month and where relevant the place of the interview; when presented data concerns notes taken from my fieldwork diary, I write fieldwork notes followed by the date of note-taking. The latter are sometimes slightly rewritten for reasons of legibility or summary.

around as though I belonged there; I generally avoided making eye contact with passers-by; I avoided authorities, especially the police; I was vague about my travel plans and left unanswered the occasional question about the people I planned to meet or had already met. Other adaptations were more deliberate, and included for instance not taking out my notebook in conspicuous situations and avoiding certain places or people I knew could mark me as the enemy (cf. Boyden, 2005, p. 240) – like for instance a notorious bar owned by the head of the ill-reputed secret service.

Yet, despite the care I took to prevent endangering my interlocutors' and my own safety, I sometimes was unable to live up to expectations. This, I believe, was partly because I had to learn to judge what was safe and what was not; yet paradoxically such lessons remain to a large extent inherently elusive. As Taussig (2005) describes in his diary about a 'cleansing' in Colombia, violence is often so disconcerting because there appears to be no logic to it. Furthermore, doing fieldwork research in a conflict-prone setting entails that you become part of a setting in which conflict and danger are beyond most people's control. Consequently, both the researcher and his or her interlocutors may play a role in the dynamics that generate everyday dangerous situations. Let me give two examples. The first shows how my interlocutor, due to his own precarious position, put me, the researcher, in a compromising situation:

> In 2011, Arsène approached me for help. He explained that the secret service had issued threats to him because of his allegiance to the opposition group FNL. Worried about his safety, I decided to try and help him and I went to the Netherlands *Bureau d'Ambassade* to explore possibilities for protection. The Dutch diplomat that received me explained that she could be of little help to my interlocutor. He was not an exceptional human rights defender whom the Netherlands would be proud to protect, and he used to be affiliated with a rebel movement and thus could possibly be a war criminal. She added, however, that she would be able to protect me. Then it occurred to me that through my contact with my interlocutor, I too was possibly under threat – if only as 'collateral damage' in an attempt to silence him. From then on, when with Arsène, I scrutinized every passer-by with a hand in his pocket (*Was someone hiding a gun?*). I am pretty sure that had I told Arsène that I'd started to worry about my own safety, he would laugh about my paranoia.[17] But as Robben and Nordstrom warn us, anthropologists are not safe from violence (1995, p. 18).

[17] On a previous occasion, Arsène had laughed and joked about the fear I had displayed some years before. We had been on a walkabout in an area allegedly controlled by rebels. When I realized where we were, I was anxious to return to the city. He had tried to downplay my fear. The alleged nearness of rebels had not worried him. Two years later I learned that he was a member of that rebel movement (for more details about that trip, see Berckmoes, 2013).

The second example illustrates how difficult it can be for a researcher (me) to prevent potentially dangerous situations from arising:

> My research project meant that I became close to many people with diverse backgrounds, including people who had been on opposite sides during the war or who had become political adversaries in more recent times. I therefore decided against a farewell party. It would bring together all these people and I realized I could not foresee the effects of the unusual encounters. Yet, on the day before I left Burundi, many friends and interlocutors spontaneously visited me to say goodbye. This was of course heart-warming, as it confirmed the mutual appreciation that had grown over time. But it turned out to be potentially even more compromising than I had anticipated. Just after most of the friends had gone home, I received a worrying text message from one of them, asking if I was aware that two of my visitors worked for the secret service. I was aware. My text-sending friend had been under the impression that he was with likeminded people – all friends of mine – and thus had felt free to vent his critique on the incumbent party. When he found out from other guests, who tried to warn him, that he was in fact discussing politics with people from the *documentation*, he became worried about possible repercussions. I tried to calm him by explaining the relatively non-threatening position of my friend at the *documentation*, but he insisted that it might still be relevant in the unpredictable future. The damage had been done. As I started to take his fear seriously, he in turn tried to calm me by downplaying his initial fear. The friend that was still with me when I received the text message said – perhaps to sooth my feelings of guilt – 'This is always the case in Burundi; you never know with whom you are having drinks. You should always be careful.'
>
> Fieldwork notes, May 2011

These examples are not intended to discredit my research endeavour as being unethical, although I do believe that it is important to be alert to and critical of the implications of research in areas that are affected by conflict. Nor do I want to exaggerate the security concerns, which, I should emphasize, fortunately remained largely in the realm of the possible. Instead I wish to point out a risk that is inherent in work and research in conflict-prone settings: notwithstanding that the aim might be to contribute to peace-building, research in a volatile and opaque context like Burundi entails the risk of unknowingly or unavoidably contributing to conflict dynamics (cf. Uvin, 1998; UNICEF, 2012). Acting in and enacting upon a conflict-prone context is to become part of that context, and the effects are often not controllable or predictable.

III. Questioning Purposive Action

In the previous sections, I depicted the politically volatile research context and described how in Burundi periods of heightened political tensions and violence gave rise to a perpetual experience of insecurity in which boundaries between rumour and fact, truth and lie, and actual threat and paranoia were blurred, and in which intersubjective processes were difficult to control and predict. The intangibility of the present situation and the doubts about what to expect, created methodological and ethical challenges. They also raised questions about how people act purposively in the context of this apparent 'chaos'. In this third part of the chapter, I look at these questions from a theoretical point of view.

I first reflect on writings about 'chaos' – or in less normative wording, indeterminacy. I describe a proclaimed connection with communal violence and raise concerns about the war/peace prospects in Burundi. I then distinguish different dimensions of indeterminacy in order to explore orientations of purposive action with more precision. I subsequently portray concepts that have been developed to describe purposive action in contexts marked by indeterminacy. I focus on those that are especially relevant to my findings about everyday practices amongst youths in Burundi: subjunctivity (Good and Del Vecchio Good, 1994; Whyte, 1997), judicious opportunism (Johnson-Hanks, 2005) and social navigation (Vigh, 2006b). These concepts help to analyse situated practices. Yet, I argue, they do not automatically also deliver on one of the most pressing questions in Burundi: namely, how the everyday practices of youths contribute to the social genesis of war and peace.

Chaos and Violence

> An orderly world is one in which one knows how to go on (…) in which one knows how to calculate the probability of an event and how to increase or decrease that probability; a world in which links between certain situations and the effectivity of certain actions remain by and large constant, so that one can rely on past successes as guides for future ones.
>
> Bauman, 1991, pp. 1–2

Bauman argues that modern times brought an awareness of the difference between chaos and order, and this stimulated the systematic effort to classify and order society. In contrast to an orderly world, he suggests, in a chaotic world it is not possible to rely on the past as a guide for the future. Memory, learning and calculating are "useless, if not downright suicidal" (1991, p. 1). But because of people's memory and learning capacity, chaos causes confusion and discomfort. "At worst, it carries a sense of danger" (p. 56). Naturally, people try to avoid this. Bauman makes these points in the context of the emergence of

modernity and its effects on violence and genocide in 20th-century Europe. In Europe, he suggests, order was ultimately sought through acts of genocide; as an attempt to exterminate strangers and rid society of ambivalence.

Obviously, the insights gained from Bauman's study cannot simply be transposed to the context of Africa and Burundi. The genealogy of modernity and the trajectory of violence and genocide differ from what they are in Europe.[18] Nevertheless, writings about Africa show that modernity and processes of globalization have led to experiences of chaos and a sense of loss of control. Several researchers link this to "the scale and impact of various kinds of catastrophes on the [African] continent [that have] been disproportionately huge in recent times" (Haram and Bawa Yamba, 2009, p. 11; cf. Mbembe and Roitman, 1995, p. 324). Others argue that "there is no evidence that life prior to *la crise* was objectively more certain" (Johnson-Hanks, 2005, p. 366), but nonetheless acknowledge that it is experienced as a disturbing recent, post-colonial product (ibid.). In the context of Burundi, then, Bauman's points raise questions concerning the logics of action in the face of undetermined war/peace prospects. Especially in light of dangers, if people cannot rely on the past as a guide for the future, how do they devise action? Bauman's study also raises concern about how people address situations of apparent 'chaos', especially in terms of 'ordering' and whether or not this happens through violence.

Studies in Africa have explored indeterminacy in the context of a wide range of phenomena, including illness (e.g. Whyte 1997; Myhre, 2009; Mogensen; 2009), pregnancy interruptions (Van der Sijpt, 2011), gender violence (Ndosi, 2009), economic crisis (Jones, 2010; Hammar et al., 2010), generalized crisis (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995; Berner and Trulsson, 2000) and war (Utas, 2003; Vigh, 2006b; Finnström, 2008; Lubkemann, 2008). These studies all reflect upon how people deal with indeterminacy. Moreover, following Bauman, some of these studies explore the relation between violent action and the pursuit of order. Appadurai (1998), for instance, argues that communal violence may be seen as a response to indeterminacy. He compares communal violence in a number of settings, including Burundi of 1972. He describes brutal violence between social intimates as 'vivisectionist violence': a modern form of violence wherein the body is cut up or cut open in an attempt to literally expose the treacherousness of the intimate other. The violence offers to temporarily expose ambivalence and remove uncertainty. Appadurai suggests that bodily brutality occurs "in circumstances where the lived experience of large [identity] labels becomes unstable, indeterminate, and socially volatile" (p. 922). These "forms of uncertainty call for the worst kind of certainty: dead certainty" (p. 923).

[18] For a discussion on modernity in Africa, see Geschiere et al., 2008; for violence and genocide in Burundi, see Chapter 2.

The question Appadurai poses is: what is the threshold of uncertainty beyond which it will culminate in violence? (p. 907). In view of the undecided stance I encountered amongst, for instance, refugee youths, I question whether there can be a different response, one that is non-violent but geared towards change – order – or perhaps a “living with ambivalence” (Bauman, 1991, p. 231) or even embracing of indeterminacy (cf. De Theije and Bal, 2010, p. 81). I explore this empirically in subsequent chapters.

INDETERMINACY

In this section I reflect on dimensions of indeterminacy to help grasp the logics of associated action. Indeterminacy refers to “phenomena that are by their nature rather vague” (Whyte, 2009, p. 213). In order to be more precise, Whyte suggests differentiating uncertainty, insecurity and contingency. Firstly, uncertainty can be defined as a state of mind and minding. It is not necessarily negative; it is a property of natural existence (Dewey in Whyte, 1997, p. 19). It indicates a lack of absolute knowledge. Think for instance of Eric’s statement ‘*I left Burundi when I was very little, so I do not know how life is there now*’ (see page 25). Uncertainty implies the existence of alternatives, and can therefore be a basis for curiosity and exploration. It can also be something that people experience as disquieting (Bauman, 1991; Appadurai, 1998). Moreover, it can be denied, whether or not through violence, in favour of assertions of truth (Risør, 2010).

Concern about uncertainty appears to exist especially in situations of rapid transformations (cf. Hylland Eriksen, 2010). Rapid transformations bring about a destabilization of referents and a proliferation of criteria for judgment (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995). These processes confront people with dilemmas (Haram and Bawa Yamba, 2009, p. 22). For instance, Waage (2006) shows that due to rapid changes, young people in Ngaoudéré, Cameroon, cannot rely on given scripts to achieve their goal of a stable future. They constantly have to test out new roles and face dilemmas between new opportunities and traditional cultural values.

The emergence of dilemmas can also be due to insecurity. Insecurity refers to a negative, social state; it denotes “a lack of protection from danger” (Whyte, 2009, p. 214). To give an example, in the context of the coloured townships in Cape Town, Jensen (2008) describes the complex contradictions between requirements of survival and moral codes. People have limited opportunities to improve their lives. They straddle the fence or have to make trade-offs, often on the margins of what is considered legal or ‘proper’. In contrast to uncertainty, insecurity points to the lack of alternatives.

Contingency refers to an existential state. It highlights the interrelatedness of events that may affect people's lives unexpectedly (Whyte, 2009, pp. 214-6). Contingency directs attention to relationships of interdependency. This is captured beautifully in the African proverb 'When two bulls fight, it is the grass that suffers', which in Burundi I heard regularly as a commentary on how developments on the political stage end up hurting ordinary people. The relation between struggles between political leaders and locally experienced adversity made the activity of 'seeing' extremely important. Yet, as I mentioned, 'seeing' was often a hapless undertaking. Changes in the political terrain were highly contingent: *Maybe, at whatever hour or minute or even second, it can turn 'hot'; we can flee (...) Maybe things can change* (Ismaël, see page 26).

Of course, these different dimensions of indeterminacy are connected and can be mutually reinforcing. Ismaël's statement shows that contingency and insecurity are often closely related. They can feed into uncertainty. The reverse is also possible: in the examples provided by Appadurai (1998), uncertainty about identity labels fuelled the insecurities faced by people accused of being traitors. This connectedness also comes out in the way that people deal with indeterminacy. Nonetheless, as I show in the next section, different concepts developed to capture the logics of action in contexts marked by indeterminacy emphasize diverse characteristics, particularly in terms of valuation, scope of options, and regarding the trajectories and future scenarios that people can or cannot imagine. In line with this, the concepts I describe below – subjunctivity, judicious opportunism and social navigation – interact differently with the dimensions of uncertainty, contingency and insecurity.

Practices

In contexts marked by indeterminacy, people lay more emphasis on intentions, hopes and doubts (Good and Del Vecchio Good, 1994); they explore alternative ways, acknowledging that these ways might fail (Whyte, 1997); they improvise, adapt and use trickery (e.g. Utas, 2003; 2005b; Waage, 2006); they engage "in heterogeneous activities without a clear trajectory in mind" (Johnson-Hanks, 2005, p. 363); or they start planning, rather than courses of action, to be in the right place at right time (Jones, 2010). Several concepts have been coined to grasp the logics of such practices, or, otherwise said, the modes of operation or schemata of everyday action (De Certeau, 1984, p. xi). Here I describe three concepts that are especially useful for the analysis of the findings from Burundi.

Firstly, some practices are described as acts in the subjunctive mode: "to be in the subjunctive mode is … to be trafficking in human possibilities rather than in settled certainties" (Bruner, in Good and Del Vecchio Good, 1994, p. 838). For instance, in the narratives of illness, subjunctivizing tactics can be found in the

commitment to portraying healing as an open possibility: "those who told the stories were situated in the midst of the accounts. Endings were often hypothetical; outcomes which were feared were juxtaposed against those desperately hoped for" (Good and Del Vecchio Good 1994, p. 837). Characteristics of subjunctivity are observable in what I quoted Antoinette saying earlier in this chapter: '*Maybe when we go back to the country we can see that ethnic divisions are no longer important, or still important?*' (see page 25). They can also be recognized in Claude's statement 'w*e remain living in hypotheses'* (see page 27). A key aspect of subjunctivity is that it implies alternatives (Whyte, 1997). Whyte's findings about how the Nyole people in Uganda deal with misfortune reveal that they 'try out' a plan of action to see if it works. For this they make use of different 'idioms' for dealing with misfortune (p. 23). These idioms may be seen as "scripts" (Waage, 2006) or "maps of action" (Ricoeur, in Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p. 989). Yet, the Nyole acknowledge that action is no guarantee of success (Whyte, 1997).

As noted earlier, rapid transformations and a lack of stable referents can dissolve such maps. This can stimulate a reorientation of practices towards the short-term and to survival; "'zig-zag' deals cut 'in a particular time and place'" (Jones in Hammar et al., 2010, p. 271). In this regard, Johnson-Hanks (2005) discusses how women in Cameroon adapt to the requirements and opportunities of the moment. The women can no longer decide in advance what courses of action to follow. They do not know which means will result in the desired ends, and the social ends that they might hope to attain are being contested and revised. This means that action is not the outcome of prior intention, but is about seizing promising chances. Johnson-Hanks calls this mode of action 'judicious opportunism'. She refers to critical periods in which judicious opportunism takes place as 'vital conjuctures':

> The analytic concept of the vital conjuncture refers to a socially structured zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation in a life or lives. It is a temporary configuration of possible change, a duration of uncertainty and potential. Although most social life may be thought of as conjunctural, in the sense that action is conjoined to a particular, temporary manifestation of social structure, vital conjunctures are particularly critical durations when more than usual is in play, when the futures at stake are significant.
>
> Johnson-Hanks, 2005, p. 871

Judicious opportunism helps to reflect on action as responsive to contingencies. Yet, in critical periods (vital conjunctures), not everybody has the same opportunities or makes the same choices. Johnson-Hanks provides little insight into the patterns that help to explain why certain people pursue certain horizons, that is, the future scenarios that people imagine possible. From this

critique, Van der Sijpt (2011) explores how certain characteristics define 'promising chances' and the likelihood of people taking them from the outset. In her research on pregnancies and their interruptions in Cameroon, she emphasizes the importance of social positions (e.g. kinship and marriage), individual characteristics (e.g. the ambition of attaining rural or urban respectability) and physical characteristics (e.g. fertility or age). To incorporate these aspects in the conceptualization of purposive action, she refers to the action and choices of her interlocutors as reproductive navigation. This concept is inspired by 'social navigation' (Vigh, 2006b).

Social Navigation

If subjunctivity appeals most strongly to aspects of uncertainty and judicious opportunism appeals most strongly to contingency, social navigation is especially helpful for conceptualizing the ways in which agents act in contexts marked by insecurity. Namely, social navigation concerns the ways that agents deal with dangerous situations, move under the influence of multiple forces and seek to escape confining structures (Vigh, 2009). In view of the marginalized positions of the QN youths and the on-going threat of violence and war, this concept is especially relevant for studying everyday practices in Burundi.

Vigh (2006b) developed the concept of social navigation in research about soldiering in Guinea-Bissau. Volatile political change, economic hardship and decline marked the Bissau context. For young men this meant they had limited 'life chances', which designates the realm of possibility open to the individual through his position within society (Dahrendorf in Vigh, 2006, p. 14). By navigating patrimonial ties and economies of affection they hoped to tap into better opportunities through political mobilization in the Aguentas militia group. They aspired to realize social being and to escape the "social death" that otherwise awaited them (Vigh, 2006a, p. 33).

Social navigation has several important characteristics. Firstly, the concept aims to overcome the dichotomy between agency and structure. It looks at the interface (or interactivity) between agents and social formations (Vigh, 2009, p. 420). Second, the practices are usually situated in environments marked by extreme instability.[19] The concept concerns the "radical interactivity" of practices and environments: "motion within motion" (op. cit., p. 425). Third, social navigation is directed simultaneously at the present and at future horizons. It concerns the continuous assessment of the dangers and opportunities of the present as well as the plotting and attempting to actualize

[19] Vigh argues that the concept is also applicable in less volatile contexts (2006b, p. 13). Nonetheless, navigation and social navigation are particularly often used in relation to contexts of rapid social change.

routes into an uncertain and changeable future (ibid). Cognitive capabilities are privileged in social navigation. Indeed, as the following quote suggests, the concept is concerned with analysing situated rationalities:

> [A]ll actions, advantageous or not, are related to situated readings of terrains, horizons and possibilities. In other words, in order to make sense of my informants' motives and actions, I need to address what they see as their socially and politically manifest and imaginable terrain and their possibilities of movement within it: that is, to define the configuration of those social and political factors and processes which they see themselves as able or unable to navigate.
>
> Vigh, 2006b, p. 30

The quote also shows that informants' perspectives are of key concern in social navigation. This proximity to informants' perspectives is another, striking characteristic; it is sometimes even reflected in local parlance. For instance, in Bissau social navigation resonates with practices locally referred to as *dubriagem*: "a flexible and adaptive practice constantly attuned to the movement of the environment peoples' lives are set in" (Vigh, 2009, p. 423); in French-speaking Africa social navigation echoes the term *se debrouiller* (to make do): "[*Système D* or *se debrouiller* is] a very popular expression in Congo that refers to the art of adapting and surviving in any situation" (Jourdan, 2013, p. 17); and in the shantytowns of Brazil people refer to the trickery and cunning manipulations "they often use to get out of a tight space" in terms of *jeitos* and *malandragem* (Scheper-Hughes, 2008, p. 47). These examples resonate with Lévi-Strauss's concept of *bricolage* (in Honwana, 2012b), in which irregularity is implied: "[I]n our own time the 'bricoleur' is still someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman" (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 11). They all emphasize the extremely restricted opportunities to plot, plan and actualize.

Tactics and Effects

In the previous sections, I described subjunctivity, judicious opportunism and social navigation as concepts that refer to practices in contexts that are marked by indeterminacy. The concepts illuminate different aspects of practices that interact more or less with uncertainty, contingency and insecurity. The concepts nonetheless share the focus on situated action, the emphasis on cognitive reasoning, and the orientation towards the present and towards (near or more distant) future horizons rather than to the past (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Moreover, the concepts stress the disempowering characteristics of the environments in which they operate, but show that even under extremely trying

circumstances men and women struggle for some measure of control in their lives (cf. Finnström, 2008). Utas (2005a) gives a telling example of such a struggle. He argues that agency and victimhood are not exclusive. He tells the story of a young Liberian woman in a war zone who presents herself as a victim in order to rid herself of social blame and to create a platform for both social acceptance/reacceptance and socioeconomic opportunities. She employs 'victimcy' to improve her situation and outlook: she employs "tactic agency" (Honwana, in op.cit., p. 407).

Like in Utas's example, practices in indeterminate, disempowering contexts are often described as tactical in nature (cf. Honwana 2000; Vigh, 2006b). This description is inspired by the distinction between strategy and tactic given by De Certeau (1984), who was interested in bringing to light the modes of action characteristic of those who are the dominated element in society (pp. xi–xii). De Certeau defines strategies as the calculi that can count on demarcating and constituting place. A tactic refers to a calculus in the place of another:

> A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances (…) Because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be 'seized on the wing'. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into 'opportunities'.
>
> De Certeau, 1984, p. xix

This description reveals why tactical practices are generally considered part of the "trajectories travelled by the weak" (Utas, 2005a, p. 408). The emphasis is on ad hoc, short-term responses and temporary gains in contexts where the 'strictures' are defined by more powerful actors.

In view of my interest in the youths' role in the unfolding of war and peace in Burundi, this description of tactics raises questions regarding their effects, not in terms of the actor's chance of success, but in terms of the contribution of tactics to social reproduction and change. How exactly do tactics, as short-term responses with a temporary gain, contribute to longer term social developments? Moreover, how does the recognition of the social position of particular actors like marginalized urban youths as allowing primarily or only tactical practices,[20] sit with claims that youth are "makers and breakers of society" (Honwana and De Boeck, 2005)? In other words, how can we grasp theoretically and empirically the quite common assertion that "[youths] are both

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[20] I am wary of defining youths or other actors as social navigators; it risks attributing situated practices as inherent to particular actors. Actors can find themselves in various situations that ask or allow for various kinds of practices. Nonetheless, it can be argued that due to particular social positions, for some actors particular kinds of practices are more likely than other kinds.

social navigators of the present *and social generators* of individual and collective futures" (Christensen et al., 2006, p. 19, *my emphasis, LB*)?

I do not suggest that there is a contradiction between tactics and enduring effects per se. Indeed, De Certeau (1984) argues that everyday practices – tactics – are a "fleeting and permanent reality (...) the night-side of societies, a night longer than their day, a dark sea from which successive institutions emerge" (p. 41). Rather, I aim to point to a tension that has not received much theoretical or empirical reflection in social science studies on youth. Currently, when young people's contribution to the development of their surroundings is explicitly described, it is often emphasized that due to their structurally constrained capacity for agency, this contribution is either limited (e.g. "young women's contributions were even 'smaller' than those of their male peers"; Van der Molen and Bal, 2011, p. 104) or is operating "in subcultures outside hegemonic structures" (Honwana, 2012a, p. 23). Despite constraints, can the everyday practices of youths not also affect, inspire and generate "successive institutions", as De Certeau suggested? In this ethnographic study, I will try to identify the tactics' effects that may last "longer than their day" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 41).

Biehl and Locke suggest that:

> Through close attention to people moving through broken institutions and infrastructures in the making and with careful observation always complicating the a priori assumptions of universalizing theory, ethnographic work can make public the constellations through which life chances are foreclosed *and* highlight the ways desires can break open alternative pathways.
>
> Biehl and Locke, 2010, p. 318, *emphasis in original*

In the following chapters, I explore from this perspective the youths' efforts to exceed and escape forms of power and knowledge, and express desires that might be world altering (op. cit., p. 317). I build on the idea that "fields of action and significance are leaking out on all sides" (Deleuze, in Biehl and Locke, 2010, p. 317) – which is perhaps especially obvious in contexts like the Burundian that are marked by broken institutions and indeterminacy. I explore what emerges through and from this 'leaking'. To link this to a quote I gave in the introduction: Mathieu said '*It is the politicians who have the power to make things happen (…) Me? When I can criticize, it is something*' (see page 15). I will investigate this 'something' of youths' everyday practices in terms of their effects on the social genesis of war and peace.

To do justice to the unpredictability of the Burundian war and peace prospects, and in line with the prompting by Whyte (1997) and other researchers to pursue a lifelike, open-ended and inconclusive anthropology, I reflect on what can be observed in the "immediate present" (Mbembe and

Roitman, 1995, p. 323). I explore emergent effects in so far as these are already rendered visible (cf. Hammar et. al, 2010).

IV. Discussion: Indeterminacy and Reinventing Peace

This chapter described the background, aims and the orientations of this thesis on youths' everyday practices and their effects on the social genesis of war and peace in Burundi. I described how my research among Burundian refugee youths in Tanzania aroused my interest in the role of youths in promoting war and peace in Burundi. The openness of my interlocutors to the possibility that the country could either relapse into war or see the consolidation of peace encouraged me to take seriously the indeterminacy of these processes. Moreover, my own and my interlocutors' confrontations with the unintelligibility of the present and the unpredictability of the future impelled me to acknowledge "the messiness of the social world", in methodology, in analysis and in writing (Biehl and Locke, 2010, p. 321). Wary of futurology, it made me privilege the 'immediate present' as the site for research and reflection.

The indeterminacy I encountered also raised theoretical and empirical questions. The findings of other researchers working on purposive action in situations marked by indeterminacy, inspired questions about how youths in Burundi deal with uncertainty, contingency and insecurity in their everyday lives, and in doing so contribute to the social genesis of war and peace. From the perspective that uncertainty is a natural property of existence, I explore conditions that render it something that youths experience as disquieting. In the face of experienced adversity, I seek to understand what the youths try to control and what is believed to be beyond control. I am also concerned with the references on which one can base actions. As I argued in the first two parts of this chapter, Burundian youths not only face unpredictable futures but also have to engage with elusive present situations. Fourth, I try to grasp how indeterminacy affects the horizons Burundian youths pursue. And, I seek to understand the effects of such pursuits on war and peace. Can we see that in Burundi, in line with Appadurai's argument, indeterminacy is again leading to violence, or can it also be a basis for building peace?

I argued that the theoretical concepts used in contexts marked by indeterminacy often describe prevalent practices as tactical in nature. The concepts emphasize the limited space available for devising action, the ad hoc and short-term responses to unexpected events, the openness towards outcomes of action and the inability to hold onto successes. The contribution of tactical practices to social processes – like war and peace – has received limited theoretical attention. I argued that such attention is important if we are to understand the role of youths as social actors in war-making and peace-building.

Indeed, the supposed tactical nature of practices of generally marginalized, 'ordinary' actors like youths, raise questions about how youths' practices make and break society. In this thesis, I explore this question through the ethnographic fieldwork research I conducted amongst youths in the QN of Bujumbura between 2007 and 2011. I describe what my youth interlocutors said and did, and what their practices mean for the social reproduction and change that is already visible. In this way, I aim to contribute to debates on the agency of the war-affected in reinventing peace (Nordstrom, 1997; Richards, 2005).

In the following chapter, I present the historical background to my empirical research findings. I explore Burundian history in order to contextualize the contemporary situation of 'no war, no peace'.

Chapter 2

2. Troubled Past

I. Notes on History

> … After the arrival of the Belgians it was calm (…) Since Rwanda in 1959, and Burundi in ’61, ’65 and then ’72, ’93, in the years of independence, let’s say since the 60s; in those days there were cyclical wars, regular wars, crises. Wars, some worse than others but every five years there was something. There was a small crisis or a big crisis. Now since ’93, ’93 until now there is crisis you see. How many years is that? Almost 20 years. Since ’91, and then in ’91 there was something, in ’88 there was something, after ’72, between ’72 and ’88 there were 15, 16 years of peace because there had been a big confrontation, a big shock. After a big shock there is calmness.
>
> Government official, Bujumbura, May 2011

The above quote gives an idea of the numerous violent crises that gave Burundi the reputation of suffering from cyclical violence. Each year that the government official mentions was a year in which a major political event consisted of deadly violence: in 1961 the ‘hero of independence’ Prince Louis Rwagasore was assassinated; 1965 marks the year of an aborted *coup d’état* followed by ‘ethnic’ violence; 1972 was the year in which an estimated 200,000 Hutus were massacred;[21] in 1988 several thousand Tutsi civilians were murdered in the north of Burundi; in 1991 a Hutu rebellion attacked Bujumbura and adjacent provinces; and in 1993 the country-wide civil war broke out.

In this chapter, I situate the killings in a broader historical context. The chapter provides the background to social group and state formation in Burundi. These historical, structural features help contextualize the contemporary processes of peace and war that I investigate in subsequent chapters. The focus is on three key themes that recur in contemporary discussions and conflict analyses on the potential for relapse into war. These themes are: the regional and global interests and networks that influence political processes and violence in Burundi; the historicity of identity categories and social divisions; and the organization of state–society relations. The chapter is organized around these themes in order to better illuminate changes and continuities. I thus successively look at relations between Burundi and beyond, between different groups within Burundi, and between authorities and ‘ordinary people’. Within the sections I follow a chronological order.

[21] Estimates of the number of deaths vary. The figure most often given is 150,000 (e.g. Turner and Mossin Brønden, 2011); however, the figure of 200,000 is also often mentioned (e.g. Laely, 1997).

Before I start, I should emphasize that the chapter is based primarily on a literature review about Burundi since the end of the 19th century. It does not make use of the opportunities for historical reconstruction provided by oral history, archaeological and archival research, or the methodology of historical linguistic 'upstreaming' (e.g., De Luna et al., 2012, p. 78). Such research is undeniably important for understanding the deeper patterns of continuity and change, but is beyond the scope of this ethnographic study. Unfortunately, however, this leads to some limitations. Firstly, the literature I rely on is often guilty of "historical foreshortening" (Reid, 2011, p. 135), that is, of privileging 20th-century history over Africa's deeper past to understand contemporary processes, like violence.[22] As Reid argues, "the growing conviction that the colonial experience had engendered identities and processes that were not connected – or only tenuously so – to anything that had gone before meant that the deep past was increasingly relegated to mere prologue" (op. cit., p. 147). I am aware of this risk. I do not propose to explain contemporary processes as products of events of the 20th century. Rather, I suggest that insight into historical processes in the 20th century help to understand some key features of the contemporary structuring context, primarily regarding the Burundian state and the prevailing images about violence in Burundi as cyclical and driven by politicians' personal interests in state power. Second, it is regrettable that much of Burundi's 'history from below' (op. cit.) still waits to be written. This explains my focus on the state rather than on 'ordinary people'. It also means that I can only provide tentative ideas for a social history that could help identify the relation between practices of ordinary people (specifically youths) in the past and today.

A further issue that should be noticed is that the available literature has been accused of bias. Already in the 1950s in Rwanda and Burundi, Vansina actively sought Hutu and Tutsi voices, "because research, like administration was Tutsi-aligned" (in Tonkin, 1995, p. 893). The question about whose history could be written due to problems with sources and access has shaped much historical research on Burundi (Sommers, 2001, p. 31). Indeed, as Wagner notes for the 1980s, the authoritarian regime and the hostile political climate in Burundi "imposes itself at every step of historical research whether the historian wants to admit it or not" (1996, p. 20). Moreover, present stakes in history, for instance to legitimize past violence or prevent prosecution, foreclose much consensus (Daley, 2008). This politicization of historical writings made me focus on processes and events about which some accord seems to exist. Where necessary and possible, I refer to alternative claims, sometimes in the text and sometimes in footnotes.

[22] Notable exceptions are Chrétien (2003) and Schoenbrun (1998).

II. LOCAL–GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

The importance of regional and global networks for the dynamics of social group and state formation in Burundi has not always been acknowledged. In accounts of pre-colonial times, Burundi's isolation is often stressed.[23] Similarly, literature on post-colonial wars has long described predominantly internal conflict drivers (e.g. Laely, 1997). A reading of the past through the lens of connections between actors in and outside Burundi, however, shows that regional and global geopolitical interests have been important in shaping political contestation, violence and identity formation in the country. Below I explore some of the important connections.

EARLY CALAMITIES

Historically, the Great Lakes zone supported several small states based on hierarchies of class. The Burundi kingdom was amongst the strongest in the area (Newbury, 2001). The kingdom can be traced back to the end of the 16th or 17th century (Chrétien, 2003). It slowly expanded its territory by incorporating other political units. Burundi's territorial limits in around 1850 largely coincide with its current borders (Botte, 1982).

Most historical accounts state that regional ties intensified only after the arrival of European powers (e.g. Van der Burgt, 1903; Chrétien, 2003). The first Europeans arrived in the Great Lakes region at the end of the 19th century. The conquest of Burundi was bloody. King Mwezi Gisabo put up strong resistance, but in 1903 failed due to the Germans' manipulation of internal divisions and their use of machinegun fire (Chrétien, 2003). The conquest of Burundi coincided with other tragedies. European invasion complemented and worsened ecological and demographic disasters like famine and disease. Botte (1985) describes the disasters around the turn of the century in an article with the telling subtitle "Chronology of a Slow Assassination".

In the early stages of conquest, the central and east African territory was divided between the three colonial powers of Britain, Germany and Belgium. Burundi and Rwanda became part of German East Africa. In Rwanda, the German protectorate was consolidated earlier than in Burundi, "where the situation was more confused for a long time" (Chrétien, 2003, p. 249). From the start, the German approach to Rwanda and Burundi was premised on their 'obsession' with riches from the Congo: "as if the Germans saw these countries only as depositories of ivory" (pp. 246–7). Later, British colonial practices inspired Germany to develop Arabica coffee plantations and to invest in the economy. World War I interrupted their 'development plans'. The war caused a great deal

[23] See Wagner for a critique on the "isolationist view" (1993, p. 149).

of suffering: troops, mainly Congolese, pillaged and occupied many parts of Burundi, and Burundian soldiers and porters were recruited and sometimes taken all the way to Mozambique. Furthermore, the economy collapsed and the country suffered from large food shortages. In 1924, Belgium officially accepted the mandate over 'Ruanda–Urundi'.[24] Belgium maintained the strategy of indirect rule and extended the coffee producing programme, which it enforced brutally. The various calamities and episodes of violence in this period of colonization is said to have had a serious, traumatic impact on the Burundian people (Chrétien, 2003).

Cold War Contagion

Burundi became independent on 1 July 1962. In the years of preparation for independence and in the first years after, Belgium's intervention in Burundi was strongly informed by Cold War nervousness. This fed into new political divisions amongst the local elites. A clear example can be found in the events surrounding the 'Simba rebellion' in Congo. The Simba rebels were followers of, amongst others, Mulele, who was associated with the Congolese Patrice Lumumba.[25] China played a key role in this rebellion. At the time, the Chinese Embassy in Bujumbura was the second biggest foothold of China in sub-Saharan Africa (Duignan and Gann, 1994). Through the embassy, the Chinese supported the rebellion in Congo with arms and money. The Burundian political factions drew on the Chinese support and the European opposition to it for their own power ambitions (Lemarchand, 1966).

The official Chinese presence was short-lived. The Burundi monarchy recognized communist China in 1963, but in January 1965, after the defeat of the rebels in Congolese Stanleyville, they expelled the Chinese (Duignan and Gann, 1994). Yet Burundi did not cut all relations with the Communist world. According to several of my informants, connections with the USSR and North Korea manifested themselves in, for example, scholarships for university students and in training in the mobilization of the masses. Nonetheless, in the years after independence, balancing Communist versus Western interests became less important in local power struggles (Lemarchand, 1966).

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[24] Belgium received the mandate from the League of Nations – the intergovernmental organization founded as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that officially end the First World War.

[25] Mulele briefly served as a minister in Patrice Lumumba's cabinet in the Congo. After Lumumba's murder in 1961, Mulele determined to continue the struggle. He received military training in, amongst other countries, China, and played a leading role in the 1964 Simba rebellion, in which European countries intervened. During this rebellion, many Belgian citizens living in the Congo were attacked.

Although the interest of Burundian elites in Cold War politics decreased after independence, Cold War logics continued to shape European and American intervention and non-intervention in politics and violence in the region. For example, it played a role in the lack of intervention in 1966 when the army successfully staged a coup, and in the massacres of 1972.

The 1972 *événements* – as the mass killings are euphemistically referred to – were especially bloody and traumatic. In retaliation for attacks in which Hutu rebels from the DRC killed an estimated 10,000 Tutsi, the government orchestrated the massacre of several hundred thousand Hutus (Malkki, 1995; Foster Lynch, 2012). The US Embassy soon recognized the 1972 killings as 'selective genocide', as especially educated Hutu were targeted. Yet, Bujumbura's position on the Congolese border seemingly outweighed reasons for intervention: the location was good for monitoring communist activity in the neighbouring country (Lemarchand, 1994; Daley, 2008).

An additional factor that hampered international efforts to stop the government's retaliatory violence was the alleged connection between the Hutu rebels and the Mulelist rebels in eastern Congo (D'Hollander, 2008). The details about the motivations of the USA and Belgium, the exact involvement of the Mulelists rebels, and the extent to which the attack and the government's retaliation had been planned beforehand, remain topics of disagreement (for a detailed discussion, see Lemarchand, 1994, pp. 76–105).

During the Second Republic (1976–87), the European and US stance of indolence changed slightly when President Bagaza started repressing the Catholic Church in Burundi (Lemarchand, 1994; Daley, 2008). The Church and the Burundian government were locked in a protracted struggle, as the government found the Church's criticism of Burundian human rights abuses subversive and neo-colonial in its efforts to influence national politics (Wagner, 1996). The *coup d'état* of 1987, which led to the third republic with Pierre Buyoya as the new head of state, is attributed partly to the Burundians' embarrassment about this Church boycott. Some historians suggest localized grievances instead (Reyntjens versus Ntibazonkiza, in Daley, 2008, p. 75).

In 1988, there were more massacres, in Ntega and Marangara in the north of Burundi. The massacres coincided with a large request for donor money. This time, notwithstanding the government's manipulation of media reporting, the international community put pressure on the government to start democratic reforms (Uvin, 1999).

The decades of discrimination and violence had already sown the seeds for better-organized rebellion, however. In the 1980s, the pro-Hutu rebel movement Palipehutu had been formed in Tanzanian refugee camps. In 1991, Hutu rebels attacked Bujumbura and adjacent provinces. Throughout the

subsequent civil war, the large refugee populations in Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania, and the diaspora in Europe and the USA played a significant role in the formation and support of political opposition and rebel movements (Turner, 2006; Turner and Mossin Brønden, 2011).

At the beginning of the 1990s, war also flared up in the DRC and Rwanda. In the region, conflict became increasingly interdependent (Uvin, 1999). The importance of taking global and regional dynamics and interests into account for understanding conflict in the Great Lakes countries became ever more pronounced (i.e. Van Leeuwen, 2008).

Thus, local–global connections had an impact on conflict dynamics in Burundi. Especially due to its nearness to the DRC, Burundi gained a significant place in international geopolitical strategies. The continuous tug-of-war between various outside fronts fed into local political struggles. The elites and emerging elites in Burundi played into the international interests for their own competition over power. The interference or non-interference of the international community, particularly in the violent events after independence, was vital for making access to state power maintainable. For the Burundians who were persecuted or excluded from power, neighbouring countries were important for refuge, served as spaces to organize and stage rebellion, and, especially in recent decades, influenced the political field.

Insight into how these global and regional connections influenced the formation of groups and categories outside the Burundian political arena, especially in the earlier periods, is rather restricted. In the following section, I explore some findings on the theme of social group formation and their relation to the national spectre of political power.

III. Internal Diversity

Most Burundi researchers do not describe their findings as specific to particular spatial or social groups, with the exception of sometimes making distinctions between Hutu, Tutsi, Twa and the royal Ganwa (or *Baganwa*). Burundi is a small country (27,830 sq. km – about two thirds the size of the Netherlands) and is almost entirely covered with rolling hills. Its roughly eight million people share many cultural and linguistic characteristics (Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007). Nevertheless, there are compelling arguments for a stronger acknowledgement of how, from an early stage, internal diversity shaped social groups and support or resistance vis-à-vis the central state.

REGIONS AND CLANS

At least three local ecological zones can be distinguished in Burundi: savannah plateaus with grasslands in the eastern half, mountainous regions in the west extending into the DRC, and lowland areas (*Imbo* plains) along the eastern Lake Tanganyika shore. The diverse ecological, economic and epidemiological characteristics of these zones encouraged different relationships in and beyond the Great Lakes region. Much more than in, for instance, Rwanda, they prompted a diversity of cultural configurations and some largely autonomous regions. In this regard, the east retained strong ties with the grasslands in today's Tanzania (northern Buha); the north (Bugesera) had its own social and political identities across the Rwandan border; the central highland areas were of most significant import in shaping the dynastic structures of the Burundi state; and along the lakeshore, the *Imbo* area fell largely outside state control (Newbury, 2001).

At the time the territorial limits of the monarchical state coincided with its current borders, around 1850, it attempted to integrate the various parts more strongly (Botte, 1982; Newbury, 2001). This endeavour was only really successful under colonialism. The colonial interests in the consolidation of power coincided with that of the ruling elite (Newbury, 2001; Lemarchand, 1994). The pursuit of consolidation was probably facilitated by the fact that the lineage system was unable to cope with all the calamities in those turbulent years. Subjects started to turn more to the influential princely leaders for support (Lemarchand, 1994). Despite this process of incorporation within the state, strongly localized notions of identity continued to exist (Newbury, 2001; Lemarchand, 1966).

Clan membership provided another basis for local differentiation. Burundian society was divided into some 220 clans (*umuryango*). They were recognizable by a common name of an ancestor. They operated through the paternal grandfather to form a fundamental social unity (*abavandimwe*). Relations via the maternal grandfather or paternal aunt (*incuti*) were important in maintaining group solidarity. Certain clans had particular responsibilities and performed specific tasks for the royal court (Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser, 1997; Chrétien, 2003). Clans were not defined by or confined to particular geographical areas. "Even so", in pre-colonial times, "certain regions were the prerogative of certain clearly defined clans" (Mworoha, 1977, p. 40, *my translation, LB*).

Just before independence, there were three prominent clans that were associated with particular geographical zones of influence. After independence, rivalry manifested itself most clearly in struggles between the *Batare* and the *Bezi* clan, and between the Tutsi–*Banyabururi* (southerners) and Tutsi–*Banyaruguru* (from rest of the country) (Daley, 2008). The labels 'southerners' versus 'the rest of the country' should be understood quite loosely. 'South' most often referred to Bururi province (hence, *Banya*bururi) and *Banyaruguru* often

referred to the people from the central province, Muramvya. Later, 'southerners' were associated with the Tutsi–*Hima*, who competed successfully with the *Banyaruguru* from the centre (Lemarchand, 1994; Uvin, 1999). The associations between and the overlapping of categories and political factions meant that the 'map' that could be used to classify friend and foe was complex and somewhat blurry. As Lemarchand (1994) argues with regard to the importance of factional conflicts during the first and second Republic:

> We need to remind ourselves of the multiplicity of meanings that enter into the definition of factional aggregates and of the considerable overlap in the criteria used to distinguish one faction from another. Indeed, depending on what label one chooses to affix to a given faction, the latter may carry radically different symbolic messages. What some may perceive as a regional entity, others will define as a monarchical clique and still others as a neotraditional status group.
>
> Lemarchand, 1994, p. 81

BUJUMBURA AND THE HINTERLANDS

A further important spatial divide concerns the gap between rural and urban Burundi, or more poignantly, between Bujumbura and *l'intérieur* (the hinterland). Bujumbura has been a site of permanent residence only since the beginning of the 20th century. Nonetheless, the site was exploited and inhabited by Africans before that, particularly for trading purposes (Van der Burgt, 1903; Dickerman, 1984; Chrétien, 2003). For the German colonials, Bujumbura was a staging point for further expansion. The Germans stimulated segregation between the capital and the rest of the country. Later, Belgium further encouraged this segregation (Dickerman, 1984).[26]

The distinct colonial approach to Bujumbura and the dissimilar characteristics of rural and urban Burundi prompted differences in identity formation, state support and conflict, also after independence. Let me give two telling examples from the literature. The first concerns the prevalence of animosity between people from various social categories. In this regard, Lemarchand (1994) notices that after the violence in 1965 and 1969, Hutu–Tutsi hostility was prominent in Bujumbura but virtually absent from rural Burundi – "at least outside Muramvya", the province associated with the abovementioned 'faction' of the *Banyaruguru* (p. 72).[27] Second, the gap between Bujumbura and the rest of the country played an important role in whether people felt they were being

[26] In Chapter 3, I briefly discuss some of the colonial policies specific to Bujumbura.

[27] This observation should be approached with caution. My interview material suggests, for instance, that at least in the *Bugesera* area, near the Rwandan border, the influx of refugees following the 1959 Rwandan 'revolution' contributed to a strong 'ethnic awareness' and corresponding hostility (interview with an elderly man born and raised near the Rwandan border, Bujumbura, April 2011).

represented by the national government. This showed in regional differences in support for central authorities. For example, in the referendum in February 1991,[28] central and peripheral regions in Burundi voted differently; the peripheral regions voted significantly more against the incumbent authorities (Thibon, in Reyntjens, 1993).

Historicity of Ethnicity

Despite a general awareness of the multiplicity of social categories and their role in political struggles, Burundi scholars have overwhelmingly focused on divisions based on 'ethnicity'. Indeed, the violence in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, 1991 and 1993 is framed mostly in terms of Hutu and Tutsi antagonism. A primary question in the debate about social divisions concerns the historicity of ethnicity.

By and large, historians agree on the existence of 'ethnic' categories in pre-colonial Burundi. Some scholars suggest that the categories are better referred to as cast or class categories (Uvin, 1999; Sommers, 2001; Turner, 2006).[29] Burundian scholar Ndihokubwayo argues that the Kirundi term that refers to differences between Hutu and Tutsi – *ubwoko* – was translated as 'ethnicity' but could have been better translated as 'category' or 'rank' (2009). In the pre-colonial period, the 'ethnic' categories often coincided with particular positions in the socio-political pyramid: the king and Ganwa (princes) at the top; various levels of Tutsi in the middle (i.e. Tutsi–*Banyaruguru* and Tutsi–*Hima*); then the Hutu; and the Twa at the bottom (Uvin, 1999; Newbury, 2001). The meaning of ethnic categories shifted with political–cultural changes (Chrétien 2003).

The process of consolidation of power by the monarchy entailed an increase in the salience of these 'umbrella categories' (Newbury, 2001; Laely, 1997; Chrétien, 2003). Yet, one's social position always depended also on other markers of identity, for instance clan membership (Rutake and Gahama, 1998; Chrétien, 2003; Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007).[30] Moreover, it is noteworthy that the ties with political leaders in internal wars, which were prevalent in the pre-colonial era, were not based on ethnicity (Botte, 1982). Rather the opposite: "[T]he competitive struggle among princes required them to maximize their support among both Hutu and Tutsi" (Lemarchand, 1994).[31]

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[28] On 9 February 1991, the referendum on the Charter of National Unity was held. The charter aimed to abolish ethnic discrimination. It gave a mandate for the government to write a new constitution.

[29] Throughout this study, following common practice amongst my interlocutors, I refer to the categories Twa, Hutu, Tutsi and Ganwa as 'ethnic'. In the post-colonial period, Ganwa were often, though not without objection, categorized as Tutsi (e.g. Sommers, 2001).

[30] Reid warns against overstating the 'invention' of ethnicity. He suggests that "the recent tendency to muddy the pre-colonial waters, and to ascribe to African lives a bewildering degree of complexity, almost seems to represent an over-compensation vis-à-vis earlier simplifications" (2011, p. 149).

[31] Although there existed inequality between Hutu and Tutsi in pre-colonial Burundi (Daley, 2008), the logic of ethnic discrimination was much stronger in Rwanda. Nonetheless, also in Rwanda wealth

Under colonialism, the Belgians started a process of ‘Tutsification’ or ‘Baganwafication’. By 1945, there were no longer any Hutu chiefs (Reyntjens, 1994; Prunier, in Daley 2008). Additionally, the process entailed privileged access to education for royal and certain Tutsi families (Ndikumana, 1998). The process was part of an attempt to introduce a ‘modern’ state system in which financial objectives as well as moral argumentation played a role. Western racial ideologies and Catholic missions supported the reforms. Tutsi were believed to have originated in northeast Africa. They featured in policy as “black Europeans” who were superior to the Hutu, who were “Negro as such” (Van der Burgt, 1903; Young, 2006, p. 309).

By the summer of 1961, three political cartels were competing for power. The first was the nationalist and royalist bloc centred on the Union pour le Progress National (UPRONA) party, led by Prince Louis Rwagasore. The prince was associated with the Bezi clan and married to a Hutu girl (Lemarchand, 1966). The second – the Common Front – was centred on the Parti Démocratic Chrétien (PDC). It was associated with the Batare clan. This party was favoured by Belgium. It was less radical and more pro-western. The third cartel – the much smaller Union of Popular Parties – was centred on the Parti du Peuple (PP), which was inspired by the ethnically polarized Rwandan model (Chrétien, 2003).

In the period of struggles for independence, ethnic identity acquired increasing importance also outside the political factions that competed for state power (Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007). Burundian professor Adrien Ntabona (b. 1939) traces the visibility of ethnicity for political mobilization of followers back to 1957 (personal communication, Bujumbura, 9 August 2010). The 1961 elections were won overwhelmingly by the anti-Western UPRONA party. The victory is often mentioned to prove that despite the apparent ethnicization of politics (Chabal, 2009), polarization was not all-encompassing: Hutu *and* Tutsi supported UPRONA.

A few months after the victory of UPRONA, Prince Louis Rwagasore was assassinated by a Greek mercenary allegedly working for Rwagasore’s rival Baranyanka from the *Batare* clan. The role of Belgium in the affair remains ambiguous.[32] Internal conflict then divided UPRONA. It had lost its charismatic leader, who had ensured legitimacy through the connection to the crown. In 1966, the monarchy was overturned. Ethnicity became an increasingly important ‘frame’ that shaped party membership and political debate, as well as divisions within society. Vansina argues in this regard:

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and poverty did not correlate as strictly to the Hutu–Tutsi divide as is sometimes assumed (Chrétien, 2003, pp. 188-89).

[32] See for instance the non-fiction novel by journalist Guy Poppe: “*De moord op Rwagasore: de Burundese Lumumba*” (2012), which can be translated as: ‘The murder of Rwagasore: the Burundian Lumumba’.

> The change in mentality among Barundi [Burundians] between 1959 and 1972 is a perfect if poignant example [of changing trends that go unnoticed]. The records mention Hutu and Tutsi but not how these criteria of identity which were at first rather minor ones compared to others, became the foremost criterion of ethnicity in everyone's mind.
>
> Vansina, 1996, p. 135

Above I explored the existence and emergence of various social groups and categories in Burundi's past, namely those based on regional and clan characteristics, a rural–urban divide and ethnicity. They all shared some logic of hierarchy. Moreover, at times, some of them overlapped or were conflated. Together, the categories made up a complex 'map' for classification. Ethnic categories, although existent in pre-colonial and colonial times, became much more prominent around the period of independence. This period is seen as an extremely turbulent one in which many shifts in the centre of gravity of the political spectrum occurred: from the colonial authorities to the nationalist elites, from one ethnic segment of the nationalist elites to another, and from the government to the crown to the army (Lemarchand, 1966). In the post-independence period, animosity between Hutu and Tutsi gained salience far beyond the political arena (e.g. Wagner, 1996; Sommers, 2001).

In the following section, I describe how especially the asymmetrical, vertical ties were important for shaping relations within and between different groups. I focus on the relations between rulers and subjects. The characteristics of these sets of relations are revealing for the mechanisms that helped "diffuse the spread of ethnic rivalries, thus expanding the scope of Hutu–Tutsi polarities" (Lemarchand, 1994, p. 66).

IV. State and Society

In contemporary debates about war and peace in Burundi, reference is often made to the historical configuration of relations between rulers and ruled. The importance of vertical ties is often used to explain the authority that leaders have over their followers. For instance, the cultivated value of unconditional loyalty to superiors is thought to be an important reason why people participated in violence during the 1993 civil war (Uvin, 1999).[33] Nonetheless, the literature also reveals a certain flexibility in the hierarchical structures and room for personal ingenuity in forging and using the vertical ties to one's own benefit.

[33] This 'authority-abiding' characteristic is attributed even more strongly to people in Rwanda (Uvin, 1999).

PRE-COLONIAL CONFIGURATIONS

In Burundi, the institution of kingship was the most effective source of cohesion at the national level (Lemarchand, 1966). Power relied on royal mystique and a finely elaborated ideology that had "'elliptic thinking' as its point of orientation, i.e. the concept of a cyclical course of history in the form of spiral movements" (Laely, 1997, p. 702). Various rituals, such as annual harvest festivities, played an important role in this monarchical religious type of support (Chrétien, 2003).

The relations among rulers and between rulers and subjects were governed by a strong hierarchical structure (Chrétien, 2003). Among the rulers, the king (*mwami)* occupied the most influential position. He had direct control in a number of areas, even though most areas fell under the delegated authority of the princes (Ganwa) – although in some areas the leaders were chiefs not of royal descent (*batware)* (Botte, 1982). The king shared a royal blood line with the Ganwa. He was "*primus inter pares*" (Trouwborst 1962, p. 9, *my emphasis, LB*).

The king both used and divided the royal chiefs (Chrétien, 2003). This was clear for instance in the internal wars, which were briefly referred to on page 62. Internal wars were quite frequent in the pre-colonial period. They took place between political chiefs who tried to expropriate each other's territory. The struggles between the chiefs formed an essential means for the reproduction of power: they brought about a certain constant instability on the level of individual leaders. Therewith, any threat to the state was redirected to a lower echelon (Botte, 1982; Lemarchand, 1966). On the level of the small province, the Ganwa and *batware* retained political, economic and military control (Botte, 1982; Chrétien, 2003). The relationships between chiefs and subjects were mediated through sub-chiefs (*vyariho*).[34] These could be found on the level of the locality, for example, a hill or group of banana gardens (Chrétien, 2003). In exchange for land, subjects paid 'tax' in the form of food, cattle, and labour. In times of war, the adult men were mobilized. They were expected to fight for their political leaders (Botte, 1982).

This means that "power depended ultimately on the protection of the territorial chiefs" (Trouwborst, 1962, p. 10). This contrasts with the governing system of Rwanda at the time. There, the administrative domains of army, cattle and land were under separate control. This provided people in Rwanda with some degree for manoeuvre, as they could play off different leaders against each other.[35] Still, a similar logic that allowed for manoeuvre appears to have existed in Burundi. Trouwborst (1962) distinguishes the political, the clientship, and the caste structure. The three structures resulted in a complex system: some

[34] Ntahombaye and Nduwayo refer to a similar structure, but translate *batware* as sub-chiefs and *ivyariho* as delegated leaders (2007, p. 244).

[35] Personal communication, C. M. Overdulve, 7 February 2011.

relations between rulers and subjects crossed territorial limits, some were not subjected to the authority of the local chief, and some were connected to local leaders in name only. In Rwanda, the three administrative domains also allowed for some mutual checking. In Burundi the role of 'counter-authority' was primarily for the 'hill judges' (*abashingantahe*) (Laely, 1997). Yet, since they were appointed in the king's name, they also helped to create support for him (Chrétien, 2003).[36] The *abashingantahe* were chosen locally on the basis of their moral authority, wisdom, experience in jurisprudence, skill in social relations and linguistic mastery (Laely, 1997; cf. Ntabona, 1990).

Besides structured positions, personal relationships and trust were important for the relations between rulers and subjects. People had to rely on highly personalized and particularized ways to approach authorities. Intermediaries played a significant role in this. There existed a detached discourse of domination, and rulers' visibility was marked by discretion (Laely, 1997). The relations took the form of bonds of dependence, in which power and gift were strongly interrelated: "to give is to command, and to give is also to exercise power" (Botte, 1982, pp. 282–3, *my translation, LB*). For example, in *amasabo* relationships the superior would provide protection and shelter to the petitioner in exchange for unconditional loyalty and dependence (Laely, 1997). Rulers put a lot of effort into upholding their reputation as benefactors, "yet at the same time the rulers were themselves the principal source of insecurity" (op. cit., p. 704).

Through the asymmetrical, vertical forms of personal dependence, there arose sizeable networks of patrons and clients (Daley, 2008). For the subjects, the vertical relationships provided a way to secure their position, given the "arbitrariness of the powerful" (Laely, 1997, p. 705). Additionally, they could be the means for upward social mobility (Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser, 1997), and they helped redistribute resources, ideas and information (Vervisch, 2010). Moreover, through individual resourcefulness (*ubgenge* in Kirundi), these vertical ties could be used to increase personal wealth and political influence (Albert, 1964; Lemarchand, in Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser, 1997). Furthermore, relationships across social divides were possible primarily via vertical ties (Vervisch, 2010).

A number of Burundi scholars also point to the importance of horizontal ties (e.g. Laely, 1997; Vervisch, 2010). These were expressed in, for instance, values like 'good neighbourliness' and affirmed in 'beer-drinking circles' (Van der Burgt, 1903; Ndihokubwayo, 2009). Yet, the vertical, personalized relationships were much more central. Albert (1964), who did her research in the late colonial period, suggests that traditional 'horizontal' relations were also supported by the

[36] For an extensive discussion on the past roles of the Bashingantahe, and how their positions changed over time, see for instance, Reyntjens and Vandeginste, 2001; Kohlhagen, 2009; Ntabona, 2010.

logic of hierarchy: "*[u]bukuru*, seniority or superiority, is the guiding principle of all behavior: cast order is known; the older are superior to the younger; men to women" (p. 37). This was observable in, for instance, the well-defined norms that governed the uses of speech, which were differentiated according to caste, sex and age (ibid).

Colonial Reformulation

German rule strongly influenced these sets of relations. For instance, Germany played a role in draining the religious underpinnings of the monarchy (Chrétien, 2003). It also set the scene for a rigidization of existing ethnic differences (Rutake and Gahama, 1998, p. 84). These processes were carried on by the Belgians.[37] I mentioned earlier that in the 1930s Belgium started a vast operation of reform of chiefdoms. They replaced noncompliant chiefs, transformed complex personal ties into purely territorial dependence, emphasized ethnic differences, and, through the introduction of hill-level aides, reduced the authority of the *abashingantahe* (Chrétien, 2003). The introduced school system was a further important vector for changing relations, not in the least because it privileged access for certain groups to the detriment of others (Dickerman, 1984; Chrétien, 2003; Ntabona, 2009).

Colonial domination and the concurrent changes met with some protest. There were popular revolts against the *bazungu* (whites, Europeans) and their allies. The protests were related to the expansion of rule and the increasing bureaucratization. They took place in areas where legitimacy was most questionable (Lemarchand, 1994). For instance, there were protests in 1922 in central Burundi following discontent with the tax system (Chrétien, 2003); in the context of the abolition in 1930 of the annual *umuganuro* festivities (Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser, 1997); and, with the support of traditional authorities, in 1934 in the north-western mountains against the installed sub-chiefs who came from another region (Chrétien, 2003). The violence during these moments of revolt represented a break with the internal wars that took place in pre-colonial times, as they were not geared towards building support among the masses (Lemarchand, 1994).

Most conflicts still took place between various Burundian elites, particularly between the Ganwa and the upcoming Tutsi elite. After 1940, elite struggles also occurred between the older generation of royalists and the younger, mission-educated, Westernized elite (Lemarchand, in Daley, 2008). The struggles were mostly fought through non-violent means. Belgium had prohibited internal wars;

[37] In contrast to Chrétien (2003, p. 288) and various other scholars working on Burundi, Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser suggest that the Belgians softened rather than hardened ethnic stereotypes (1997, pp. 31-2).

hence the otherwise difficult to understand denomination of the period as "*la paix des Belges*" (Botte, 1982; Lemarchand, 1994).

What stands out in the above description of early state–society relations are the fine-grained socio-political pyramid and the importance of vertical ties. The account also suggests that authorities had considerable influence on people's lives at the local level: from 'top to bottom' rather than 'bottom up'. For instance, in the pre-colonial era political struggles were redirected from the monarch to the high/intermediate level of princely rivals, who called on local, male subjects to fight in internal wars. As a whole, this system left the country divided. Yet, it ensured the reproduction of power at the level of the state, and because local leaders had to create support amongst the masses it stimulated unification between, for instance, Hutu and Tutsi at the level of the locality (Lemarchand, 1966). The frequency of war also created a certain constant instability (Botte, 1982) that generated a continuous sense of insecurity and the need for protective ties with powerful leaders. These ties were highly personalized, but not necessarily a guarantee of security (Laely, 1997). Nonetheless, subjects could try to improve their situation through individual resourcefulness (*ubgenge*).

Although this constellation of relationships changed considerably in the colonial and early post-colonial period, politics remained a matter for elites and cliques. The struggles for state power between elites descended along the vertical ties to ordinary people. This is not to deny that, as Laely (1997) suggests, political factions likely built on tensions that already existed within society. In the following section, I briefly outline the process of political polarization since Burundi's independence.

Post-independence Polarization

Since independence, state power has increasingly remained in the hands of those at the top of the political structure. The state aimed for a total restructuring of society through planning and mobilization. In 1966, the Tutsi–*Hima* from Bururi province managed to consolidate power after a *coup d'état*. The young, Colonel Micombero, became head of state. Until 1993, all three presidents, all of whom had come to power through coups, shared the same ethnic (Tutsi–*Hima*) and regional (Bururi, Rutovu) background. Throughout this period, discriminatory policies and practices sustained inequality between Hutu and Tutsi, 'southerners' and others.

Because of this narrow representative base, they were not able to use an ethnic–social discourse to legitimize their position in the eyes of the larger public (Uvin, 1999). Dogma held that "Hutu and Tutsi are a single people, whose natural linguistic cultural and political unity is harmed by an invidious and artificial

language of difference" (Young, 2006, p. 320). To legitimize their position, the elite used repression. This came to full expression in the outbursts of violence under Micombero's rule in 1969 and especially in 1972. Yet the ethnic issue was denied in political culture (Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007), and its taboo carried well beyond Bujumbura's political arena: "the most important category of identity existing in Burundi at the time of the research [between 1985–7], ethnic identity, was taboo. In Bujumbura, I was warned in no uncertain terms never to use the words 'Hutu' or 'Tutsi', and this avoidance carried through to Makamba [province in the southeast]" (1996. P. 26). By the 1980s, the government and ordinary people were sharply separated (ibid; Ndikumana 1998), and surveillance by the secret service and other government actors was omnipresent (Wagner, 1996). Under the surface and in exile, however, antagonism was kept alive (Malkki, 1995; Young, 2006). [38]

Public talk about ethnic identity resurfaced under the rule of the third president, Buyoya, who initiated reforms towards national, ethnic unity and democracy (Rutake and Gahama, 1998; Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007). The reforms were stimulated by the Ntega–Marangara violence against Tutsi in 1988, which revealed the unsustainability of state legitimacy based on repression. Some progress towards the inclusion of Hutu (and 'non-southern' Tutsi) was made between 1989 and the 1993 elections: more Hutu entered the apparatus of the state; more Hutu students obtained access to secondary education and university; and, in 1992, a constitution was adopted that proscribed political parties based on ethnicity. Significantly, the largely mono-ethnic (Tutsi) army was not subject to the reforms (Reyntjens, 1993).

Elections and War

Despite the steps towards inclusion, ethnicity became a major mobilizing tool in the run-up to the democratic elections of 1993 (Ntahombaye and Nduwayo, 2007). The campaigns stimulated ethnic polarization, sometimes unintentionally. An example that Reyntjens (1993) provides is that UPRONA accused the Front démocratic du Burundi (FRODEBU) of being an ethnic organization of Hutu, the 'legal arm' of the outlawed Palipehutu rebel group. Instead of delegitimizing mobilization based on ethnicity, the accusation strengthened the ethnic identity of respective parties. Given the relative demographic weights of the ethnic groups, this could only play into the hands of FRODEBU. The electoral results fitted remarkably neatly with the estimated 'ethnic' composition of society: 85 per cent Hutu, 14 per cent Tutsi and 1 per cent Twa (ibid.).

[38] They were usually discussed, if at all, within the confines of the family (Interviews, Bujumbura, April and May, 2011).

In June 1993, Melchior Ndadaye (Hutu, FRODEBU) became president. He initiated changes in the government and army. Three months after the elections, on 21 October, the disgruntled army (still predominantly Tutsi) attempted a coup. The president was murdered, and violence between Hutu and Tutsi spread throughout the country. Within weeks, 30,000–50,000 Tutsi were murdered. By the end of the war, an estimated 300,000 people – mostly Hutu – had been killed and 1.2 million displaced (Voors et al., 2010).[39] The 1972 events are often seen as having planted the seeds for the spread of violence.[40]

In the first years of war, the FRODEBU coalition remained in power. Violence continued unabated. Before the 1990s, outbursts of violence had struck specific areas in Burundi. During the civil war, however, people killed each other and the army and rebel groups clashed all over Burundi, although the exact expressions of the war differed per area.[41] In July 1996, the former President Buyoya staged a coup. He announced the goal of restoring order, but hopes of a resolution of the crisis under his rule were short-lived (Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser, 1997). The first major step in the peace negotiations resulted from international pressure. Under the facilitation of South Africa, on 28 August 2000, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed. This, however, did not signal an immediate halt to the fighting. The fighting died down only in 2003, after the Burundian army and the largest rebel group, Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces de Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD–FDD) signed a protocol on political, defence and security. Nonetheless, in the *Quartiers nord* of Bujumbura and in the areas surrounding the capital, where the Hutu rebel movements CNDD–FDD and Palipehutu–FNL had strong bases, violence between these groups continued for some time. Two years later, CNDD–FDD won the transitional elections. The Palipehutu–FNL had not participated in these elections. They continued fighting until 2009 when, in April, in preparation for the 2010 elections, the movement transformed itself into the political party *Front National de Liberation* (FNL).

[39] These figures are rough estimates.
[40] This was not necessarily the inevitable consequence everywhere. Foster Lynch (2012) for example argued that at least in the first stages of the civil war, memories of the 1972 'retaliatory violence' against Hutu tempered fighting in the southern region Makamba. Remembering the violence, people tried to prevent army retaliation from reoccurring.
[41] In 1965 violence occurred primarily in the province of Muramvya, Bukeye *commune* and in the city of Bujumbura. In 1972 violence took place in many areas, but particularly the provinces of Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural, Makamba, Karusi and Bururi suffered. In 1988, massacres took place in Kirundo, Ntega *commune*, and Ngozi, Marangara *commune*. The 1993 civil war affected the entire country, albeit in different ways. Over the course of the war, relatively more people in the areas near the Tanzanian border fled the country; the provinces of Gitega, Kayanza, Makamba, Bubanza and Bujumbura Mairie counted an elevated number of internally displaced people; and in various provinces in the north of Burundi research indicators (e.g. the number of orphans and widows) suggest especially high death rates (Africa Label Group, 2009).

In sum, after independence key institutions of the state, like the military, judiciary and education system, were co-opted by a small ethnic, regional entity. The narrow base for representation added to the strong separation between state and society. The state used repression and extreme violence to legitimize itself. This discriminatory and authoritarian governance system stoked extreme fear (Wagner, 1996; Uvin, 1999; Sommers, 2001). These features played a crucial role in the outbreak of the civil war (Ndikumana, 1998).

V. Discussion: Cycles of Violence, Cycles of Myth?

In this chapter I discussed political struggles and violence within a broader, historical context of group and state formation in Burundi. The chapter shows that 20th-century Burundi was characterized by numerous calamities, severe political instability and multiple episodes of extreme violence. I focused on three key themes that stand out in historical writings. The aim was to lay a foundation for exploring and understanding contemporary practices related to identity and violence in Burundi. Restricted by the information available, the chapter provides above all an image of the political arena and structural dimensions of state–society relations. Unfortunately, especially in terms of a 'history from below', information available is highly limited. Burundi's population appears in historical writings primarily as victims of calamities brought about by their leaders or outside forces, or as docilely following their leaders into war.

The historical background of the political arena is nonetheless important for increasing insight into the structuring context in which contemporary, everyday practices of youths unfold. For instance, the literature shows the multiplicity of uncorrelated yet overlapping identity categories, including regional categories; the emergence of ethnic differentiation as a major political tool that gained increasing salience in society; and the significance of vertical ties between political leaders and ordinary people, which were undergirded by logic of hierarchy and fostered through personalized relationships.[42]

Additionally, the findings discussed are suggestive of the social reproduction that renders the deep past important for understanding the more recent practices of ordinary people. Chrétien (2003), for instance, refers to this idea when he stresses the traumatic impact of the colonial conquest; Lemarchand (1966) and Laely (1997) touch upon it when they point to the old clientalistic bonds that were transposed to the 'modern' bureaucratic system; Albert (1964) does so when she discusses *ubgenge* as a valued and important source for individual tactics; and Uvin (1999) suggests the importance of historical legacy

[42] These three key elements of political structure are reflected in the following three empirical chapters about contemporary youths' practices of 'mapping' (Chapter 3), the salience of ethnicity and other identity categories (Chapter 4), and youths' political participation (Chapter 5).

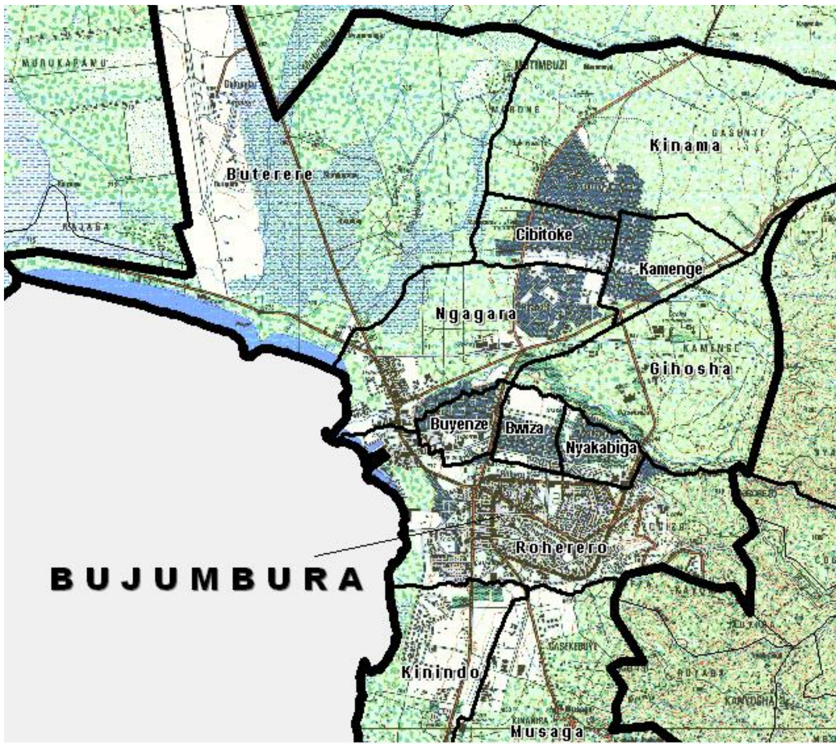
when he discusses the 'authority-abiding' characteristic as a contributing factor, alongside long-term nurtured fear (cf. Sommers, 2001), for large-scale participation in violence.

Issues of cultural persistence – whether it is found in the material landscape, the social grid, or in the embodied and sensorial self – are indeed important for understanding current practices. Yet, such interpretations should be presented with the necessary caution. We should be wary of presenting the present as an inevitable outcome of the past. As Nordstrom (1997) warns us, people's creativity can go a long way, for instance, in inventing peace or even 'un-making' a troubled past. Moreover, I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter the alleged partiality and politicized nature of literature on Burundian history. This underlines that the basis for tracing the present through the past cannot be trusted blindly. Many details about past events are still unclear, and the multiplicity of groups, categories and violent periods provide room for numerous, sometimes contradictory interpretations that feed into contemporary practices of accusation, inclusion and exclusion, and violence. Indeed, there is still urgent "need to unravel modern cycles of propaganda and myth" (Reid, following David Newbury and Jan Vansina, 2011, p. 146). "Mythico-histories" (Malkki, 1995) have too often been used to incite violence in the Great Lakes region.

There is also the risk, I argue, that the lack of consensus on Burundi's past itself will become a myth that is kept alive as a tool in struggles over truth, power and impunity. Accusations of partiality and myth seem to become 'just another discourse', as also emerges from the case material provided in the following chapters. If the past remains unverifiable, legal answerability is unlikely.

In the following chapters, I explore how, against this background of awareness of a troubled past and uncertainty about correct interpretations, youths in the *Quartiers nord* of Bujumbura plan, plot and actualize practices in their everyday lives. Chapter 3 explores these questions regarding everyday practices of 'mapping' on the northern periphery of Bujumbura, that is, the classification of others according to neighbourhood of residence.

CHAPTER 3



Source: Topographic map of Bujumbura, OCHA Burundi 2005 (selection, LB)

3. MAPPING IN THE *QUARTIERS NORD*

I. 'MYTHICAL MAP'

In this chapter I situate the protagonists of this thesis in their neighbourhood surroundings, namely the northern periphery of Bujumbura, which is often referred to as *les Quartiers nord* (QN). My focus is on youths' practices of systematically classifying peers based on their neighbourhood of residence. Connections between neighbourhood locality, wartime experiences of violence, and socioeconomic differences render place of residence particularly significant for the youths.

I show that 'mapping' is used to position oneself vis-à-vis others and 'know' the past and present circumstances of one's surroundings. In the process, the practices contribute to the emergence of a shared 'map' in which characteristics of otherness are being standardized and imbued with moral value; arguably, a mythical map in the making.

My use of the term 'mythical map' is inspired by the idea of a moral ordering that Malkki described in her study amongst Burundians in exile in Tanzania. Malkki called the narratives about the past that she encountered in the refugee camp "mythico-history":

> [The Hutu history] represented not only a description of the past, nor even merely an evaluation of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms. In this sense, it cannot be accurately described as either history or myth. It was what can be called a mythico-history.
>
> Malkki, 1995, p. 54

In Malkki's study, moral order was expressed through a 'shared' version of the past.[43] In the QN, I show that the narratives for moral ordering find expression through references to space, particularly neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, in the QN the emerging 'map' builds heavily on past violence and identity categories prevailing during the war.

The classifying or 'mapping' practices can thus be seen as efforts of youths to grasp their uncertain surroundings. I contend that this may serve in identifying peers as allies or adversaries – which may or may not become significant in the

[43] For a critique on Malkki's position that the mythico-history represents a 'shared' map; Turner, 1998, and Sommers, 2001. Both suggest that would she have taken into account power relations, she would have found out that the mythico-history represented a political narrative promoted by the political leadership in the camps rather than necessarily a narrative shared by the refugee 'community'.

unpredictable future. The neighbourhood-based categories, however, should be seen as in a state of 'becoming': they are not established in the same way as, for instance, ethnic or political categories are – although these are also always in flux. In other words, this chapter is concerned with mapping as an emerging mode of identification.

For my arguments, I take the vantage point of the youths. Illustrative is the edited diary transcript provided in the following section of the guided tour Innocent took me on in his neighbourhood. The description of the tour portrays the neighbourhood surroundings from Innocent's perspective. It provides insight into the meanings that are attached to different spaces.

The guided tour is the entry point from which I explore youths' mapping practices. In subsequent sections, I look at processes that allowed neighbourhood categories to accumulate layers of meaning. I describe the historical roots of connections between urban planning, segregation and violence; look at the youths' accounts of the war; and portray socioeconomic characterizations of neighbourhoods. In the fourth part of the chapter, I explore how youths employ the neighbourhood-based categories and I describe the stakes involved. In the discussion, I reflect on questions about mapping in relation to purposive action and indeterminacy.

Innocent's Guided Tour

Innocent had reproached me that, despite my repeated rebuttal, my research did in fact have a bias towards the Hutu youth. It was not my fault, he decided: more Hutu frequented the *Centre Jeunes Kamenge*. Having learned the limited possibilities for defence in light of such 'accusations,' I challenged Innocent to help me combat the partiality and suggested that he, a young Tutsi, could help me by showing me around his neighbourhood, Ngagara.

Monday, March 2011
13.30. The youth centre is still closed. The new flag at the entrance, which translates as '*We Have to Live Together like Brothers and Sisters Despite our Differences,*' is getting wet with rain. Innocent arrives half an hour early. He shows no intention of starting our walk yet. He says "Hi" and then goes to greet several of the youths who are sheltering from the rain beneath the lean-to.

An hour later, we set off. The rain is still dripping. We have to go through Kamenge because the rain will have made the riverbed that separates the youth centre from Ngagara too slippery to cross. At the Kamenge market, women squatting on small stools on the muddy ground call out to me in Swahili: "*Mzungu*! Buy my tomatoes!"

"*Mzungu*, help me!" Now and then I greet one of them, but most of the time I don't turn to look.

Innocent is surprised that I am not bothered by them: "Anna always got mad when they called her that."

I tell him that if I got mad at everyone who called me 'white person', I would not have any rest.

"You're right," Innocent responds, "You hear it every ten metres. But it is not good. *Muzungu* is understood to be someone who plundered the country. They should not call you that. They don't know you; they only see you."

"I heard it also has a positive connotation."

"No it does not."

The main road is crowded, as usual. Cars and buses trying to avoid potholes, cyclists with piled up goods or passengers, and pedestrians of all ages compete for space on the road. Across the road a church is being built; a large solid building that stands in contrast to the small mud-brick houses that characterize the Kamenge neighbourhood.

Innocent explains: "There was already a church, but they started out with a small house. When a congregation grows, the building grows."

He adds that these days many people change their religion. He too had once tried it. He became a Muslim, but only for a short time, because his family pressurized him into re-converting to Catholicism, the dominant religion in Ngagara.

"In Ngagara there are a few Muslims, but you don't notice them easily. They don't dress differently, like in the other neighbourhoods. It is because of culture. They were raised like this and will not all of a sudden start wearing headscarves or something."

We arrive at the street that separates Kamenge from Ngagara. On the right-hand corner, on the Kamenge side, there is a bar. The strong local brew – *kanyaga* – is sold there. Many people are gathered in front of the bar. There seems to be a fight going on. I hesitate, keen to avoid a mob. But Innocent continues, seemingly unconcerned. There is something he wants to show me. We pass the crowd and to my relief, the people are more interested in one of the persons walking away, than in us. Innocent points towards a blue police truck that is parked around the corner.

"Before the war, a Hutu policeman lived there with his family. When the war broke out, they were murdered. Their bodies were thrown in the river." He points towards the river that we had not tried to cross. "They just lay there, rotting away. Nobody did anything."

Innocent had a Hutu friend who lived on the corner where the bar is now. He and his family had to move, too. It was not safe for them to live so close to the neighbourhood of the other ethnic group.

We turn and venture further into Ngagara. At the next street, Innocent nods at a white gate. It is where he was living when the war broke out. They moved to Rohero for a while, which is a neighbourhood near the city centre. Later they returned to

Ngagara. He did not live with his mother at the time. He lived with his paternal aunt, before the family conflict, before his father died in the war. He points: “From there, ‘bombs’ were fired at Kamenge.”

As an explanation he adds that a lot of military personnel lived in Ngagara, especially in this *quartier*. Some of the houses date from the colonial period, Innocent tells me with some pride. In later years, especially soldiers originating from the southern province, Bururi, profited from the housing scheme. Innocent lives in such a house. His father was a soldier from Bururi. I ask if his father profited from the housing scheme. Innocent says no; he had bought the house later.

We pass a school. On a previous occasion he had drawn my attention to the soccer field adjacent to it. It is well known for being a place where people come to buy drugs. Last time we caught his younger brother hanging out there. He had waved to his brother to let him know that we had seen him: to instil shame or convey some kind of warning. During the war there had also been a school, but a smaller one. The infamous Tutsi youth gang, *Sans échec,* which was involved in ethnic violence, gathered there to do drugs before going to Kamenge: “To hunt, so to say.”

Innocent tells me that some of the people during the war involved in the ‘*equipe’,* as he calls the youth gang, are now dealing drugs. But from what he tells me, I cannot get a clear picture of who was involved in what, or when.

He then takes me to a kiosk in another part of the neighbourhood, in *quartier 6*. A few weeks earlier, gunshots had been fired at the kiosk. A number of people were injured and had to be taken to the hospital. Nobody was killed, but according to Innocent, killing appeared to have been the objective. I ask him some questions to find out whether the shooting was crime related or politically motivated. Innocent looks at me as though my question is irrelevant – or perhaps irresolvable?

There is a small bar, a *cabaret,* next to the kiosk. The bar, fenced off with bamboo, covers eight square metres, if not less. Two boys hurry away when they see Innocent and me talking. I am bothered by Innocent’s body language: he leans close, constantly looks around as if on the lookout, but points at things shamelessly. I worry that it will appear as though he is ‘snitching’. Perhaps he is. “At night, a lot of people gather at the bar...,” he whispers. I nod, expecting him to continue. He remains silent.

Down the road there are some grey, three- or four-storey housing blocks. They come across as poor and depressing – perhaps because they remind me of the typical images of poor neighbourhoods in Europe. Yet I know that these blocks are more solid than the mud-brick dwellings that make up most of the houses in the northern neighbourhoods.

We enter a cobblestoned side street and stop in front of an iron gate, that fences off his place. One day, Innocent had heard people screaming. It had come from the corner. He points and mimics the screams in a high-pitched voice, twice. He translates the Kirundi phrases to me: “Help, they will kill me! Help, they will kill me!”

He was young, he tells me, but not so young as not to remember: “As children, we saw too many things. Four people were sitting on the ground; so beaten up that they were dazed, tires wrapped around them so that they could not go anywhere. Someone went that way, through that street, to get petrol. The people were set on fire.”
I ask: “Does that affect you today, to have witnessed such things?”
“No. What bothers me are ...,” and Innocent starts to talk about current day political affairs.

Back on the main street, he indicates one of the houses. Somebody from *Sans échec* had lived there. His parents did not want him to continue participating in the gang activities and sent him to Europe. One day he sent a letter, apologizing for what he had done.
I ask: “Did a lot of people go to Europe?”
“Nowadays they are starting to come back. They are forced back; from various European countries…The guys partaking in that *equipe* were many; very many.”

We cross a big gravel road. Innocent recalls that people did not like to cross that road during the war, because of the clear view from the end of the road. Sometimes the Ngagara residents would hold a doll or piece of clothing on a stick across the street, to see whether it would be fired at. If not, they knew it was safe to cross.

Then another main road, recently asphalted. He reminds me that it is the road where his former *ligala* (hangout) had been, under the big tree. When he had pointed out the place to me last year, he had been ambivalent about it: on the one hand proud of the fact that the *ligala* had been well known, notorious rather, all over the city; on the other hand, he repudiated the way its members had pestered some of the *boys* – the household servants working for families in Ngagara. The *boys* were usually children from rural areas, allegedly also usually Hutu. Now, the tree is gone.

Innocent brings up the subject of *Sans échec* again, mentions a nickname of one of the former leaders of the gang, and the name of a bar that was somehow involved. I soon understand how he came back to the subject: the former leader is at the end of the street, talking with another man. Innocent whispers that he got completely mad after the war, like many of the gang members. He gives me the short bio of the former leader: after he got mad, he continued the violence, raped a nine-year-old, was almost killed by her family, saved by God, transferred to the justice system, and released shortly after. He comments: “That is how it goes here, Lide, we have told you that. If you have money, you can do whatever you want. Someone with family that has money, or a good position, they can do whatever they want.”

When we pass the two men, the former leader greets Innocent: “*Salut petit* [Hello little one].”A bit further along, I ask how they know each other. “He also belonged to the *ligala* under the tree.”

We leave *quartier 5* behind us. Across the asphalted through road there is a bar, decorated with the flag and colours of the ruling political party. His aunt owned a plot there. She held pigs and other animals. After the war, the land was appropriated by the government. She decided to leave it like that. Innocent points to a field adjacent to the bar. During the war there had been a refugee camp. It was for *Banyamulenge* refugees, sometimes referred to as the Congolese Tutsi. They were 'chased away'. Some of the refugees moved to a camp upcountry, others to Gatumba, near Bujumbura on the Burundi–Congo border. "Have you heard of that place?" he asks me. "In 2004, Gatumba was attacked by the Palipehutu–FNL rebel group, who worked together with the Congolese troops."[44]

We move towards the industrial part of the neighbourhood, in the direction of the empty COTEBU (Complexe Textile du Burundi) factory, which went bankrupt a few years ago. He hesitates: "It is too far to go there."

On our way back he points out a narrow sandy side road. "My uncle lived there."
"Maternal?" I ask.
"When I say family I always talk about my maternal family, I have no contact with the other side."

We cross the asphalted through road again. On the left-hand side there is a military camp. As a child Innocent used to come there often. His aunt lived there because her husband was a soldier. His school was nearby the camp, but far from his own home. I find this peculiar and ask him: "Why did you not go to a school in your own *quartier*?" Innocent: "Because of the wash-out with my art teacher. It was in the period when children were told that Hutus were short, had a broad nose, etcetera. The teacher was a Hutu lady. She gave us the assignment to draw a picture of her."

Innocent had been in the 2nd or 3rd grade; it was in 1998 or 1999. He had been proud of his drawing. Underneath it, he wrote '*umuhutu kazi*' (Hutu lady). When the teacher saw it, she was outraged and yelled: "look what he has drawn!" After a visit to the principal's office, he was sent home to get his parents. Not understanding, he ran home to fetch his mother. He then switched schools.

In front of the school, he nods at the police watch house: "These days nearly all schools have a police guard post."
Since the elections last year the security situation has deteriorated. Innocent complains about the police: they steel, are corrupt, do nothing all day, and there is no justice. He looks teasingly at me when he grumbles about the Dutch development aid. He does not understand the Dutch: "Why do they support the police – so that they become better at steeling from the people?"

[44] For a detailed description of the attack on the refugees in Gatumba, see the Human Rights report 'Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre, War Crimes and Political Agendas, *Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, September 2004*.

At ten past six we are at *Gare du Nord*, the crossroad that separates Ngagara from Kamenge, and the *Quartiers nord* from the rest of the city. From there I take the bus to the city. Just in time before it gets dark.

***

Innocent's guided tour shows the Ngagara neighbourhood surroundings from his point of view, while his selection and comments reveal interest and networks far beyond the neighbourhood locality (cf. Maira and Soep, 2005). The tour raises many questions, for instance about the significance of social categories. Several of Innocent's remarks suggest that he is acutely aware of the potential devastating authority of categories. His disapproval of people calling me *mzungu* (or *muzungu;* Swahili versus Kirundi) is a case in point, and perhaps the pressure from his family to re-convert to Catholicism can also be seen in this way. Did his family try to make sure that their loved one would continue to share with them the denominator 'Catholic'? Moreover, during his childhood, Innocent learned and experienced from close hand how categories of Hutu and Tutsi could have sweeping consequences: neighbours killed and were killed, childhood friends had to flee, and he had to switch schools.

The tour also raises questions about how categories are related to the past and to physical spaces and social surroundings: many spaces in his neighbourhood tie into memories of wartime violence and exclusion, even if the physical markers are gone.[45] His street corner, where people were burnt alive, and the big tree of his *ligala* are only two examples. Additionally, more recent violence, sometimes perpetrated by the same actors as in the past, generated similar space–violence–identity associations, and blurred boundaries between violence and injustice in the past and in the present. Take for instance Innocent's remarks about the *équipe* in which drug dealing in the war period, the recent past and the present, effortlessly flowed into each other.

In the following parts of the chapter I reflect on these issues by exploring the connections between neighbourhood locality, wartime experiences and violence. I start with a description of historical processes that allowed for layers of meaning to become imbued in neighbourhood-based categories. In the subsequent two parts, I look at accounts of the war and at social and economic characteristics, both of which show that the present situation is strongly connected to and flowing from the war.

[45] Although I am aware of the many scholarly debates of how to understand 'memory', I use 'memory' and 'memories' simply to refer to any account about past experiences by my interlocutors.

II. URBAN PLANNING AND VIOLENCE

The QN encompass several neighbourhoods, or *communes* or *zones* as the neighbourhoods are referred to in administrative language: namely, Buterere, Kinama, Ngagara, Cibitoke, Kamenge, Gihosha (see the map on page 74), and since the recent expansion of the city,[46] also Carama. Each *commune* is subdivided into smaller neighbourhood segments – in Ngagara called *quartier 1* to *quartier 9*, and in other neighbourhoods like Kamenge and Kinama they carry names including Kavumu, Mirango 1, Mirango 2, and names of provinces like Gitega and Ruyigi.

Within Bujumbura, the manifestations of the civil war varied greatly in terms of scale and forms of violence. The northern neighbourhoods are especially renowned for having served as a primary battlefield. Innocent's tour made several references to the violent encounters between the Tutsi-dominated army and Hutu-dominated rebel groups and between inhabitants of so-called Tutsi neighbourhoods and Hutu neighbourhoods, like when he referred to the launching of mortars and the 'hunting' carried out by youth gangs.

The manifestations of wartime violence were strongly connected to the residential patterns of diverse population categories in the city. In the following sections, I describe the origins of residential patterns. The patterns can be seen as both the materialization of societal divisions and important conditions for the operations of the discriminate wartime violence.

ORIGINS OF RESIDENCE PATTERNS

The residence patterns in Bujumbura originated at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, Bujumbura started to be used as a site for permanent residence. Particularly the Belgian administration actively formulated a policy that spatially segregated population groupings. Underlying the policy was a combination of economic and labour objectives and a moral philosophy about appropriate life styles for Africans.[47]

The policy, besides encouraging a separation between Bujumbura and the hinterlands (see Chapter 2), fragmented the urban population and organized them spatially according to specific characteristics. The administration did not create or maintain absolute divisions, however. Around the 1920s, four 'population categories' were distinguished in Bujumbura: European, Asian, permanent African city residents (usually Muslim) and temporary African city

[46] The urban population in Burundi is 11 per cent (2010). The overwhelming majority lives in Bujumbura. At 4.9 per cent, the annual rate of urban growth rate is considerably high (estimated, 2010-15) http://www.indexmundi.com/burundi/demographics_profile.html, accessed 14 July 2013.

[47] For a critical analysis of colonial urban planning as a tool for power and social control, see Njoh, 2009.

residents. Each group lived in a specific area. Subsequent urban planning sought spatial separation especially between Muslims on the one hand and Christians and traditionalists on the other hand. With changing ideas on the economic value of urban areas in colonies, and therefore the desirability of permanent residence, policy started to foster a Christian and wage-earning middle class in Bujumbura. In addition to the earlier divisions, government officials and programmes started to emphasize economic differences and ethnic distinctions. Before, especially Africans from other countries had worked closely with the colonial administration (primarily Congolese); now specific groups amongst the *Rundi* (Burundian) population profited (Dickerman, 1984).

The policy move was accompanied by housing plans. The *Office des Cités Africaines* (OCAF), which was established in 1950, had a special task in giving shape to the new ideals in the northern part of the city. The first OCAF project was the construction of houses in Ngagara, in 1952. The houses built in Ngagara mirrored European models and followed the philosophy behind the earlier housing scheme of the inner city elite neighbourhoods – like *quartier Belge* – except there were more restrictions on the residents. For instance, in Ngagara one could only rent houses and not own them, and people were not allowed to build annexes to the buildings. This was to prevent people from renting out rooms. In the opening story, Innocent referred to this housing scheme; he lived in one of the houses.

A second housing project concerned Kamenge (also amongst the city neighbourhoods in the north) where, "...OCAF contented itself with a cheaper plan, with laying out avenues and plots alone" (Dickerman, 1984, p. 238). Kamenge was the only attempt under colonial rule to provide a housing area within the city limits that accommodated the poorest segment of Bujumbura's population; primarily *Rundi* newcomers without steady employment.[48]

In the years following independence, the city attracted more and more migrants from the rural hinterlands. Although there was no strict policy on where they could reside, neighbourhoods usually attracted 'similar' citizens and maintained specific characteristics. For instance, relatively many residents in the newer neighbourhoods Musaga (in the south) and Nyakabiga (bordering the QN) came from Bururi province; Congolese workers often lived in Kamenge, Ngagara (QN) and in Bwiza (near the city centre); and for the residents in Cibitoke, Kinama (QN) and the more central Buyenzi, agriculture remained an important economic activity (at the time, all three neighbourhoods were on the edge of the city). In the postcolonial years, more and more Burundians moved to live in the city, although a large part of the population remained foreign; primarily from

[48] With the expansion of Bujumbura, both in terms of population and space, the boundaries of the administrative unit Kamenge changed.

Rwanda and the DRC (Zaïre at the time).[49] (For more details see Ndayikuriye, 1997; this study does not make a distinction between Hutu and Tutsi residential patterns.)

VIOLENT SEPARATION

At the beginning of the 1990s, the residential patterns reflected to some extent the earlier policies and immigration patterns.[50] Still, no neighbourhood pertained exclusively to one 'population category'. In the QN, Ngagara inhabited the middleclass segments of the population (largely, but not exclusively Christian and Tutsi) and the neighbourhoods Cibitoke, Kamenge and Kinama the poorest (in the latter two, allegedly, the majority were Hutu). Interlocutors in the QN, when asked about the residential patterns before the war, generally portrayed the following picture: 'Before the war most [neighbourhoods] were almost mono-ethnic, but groups of other ethnicities also lived there; also foreigners, from Congo for example' (fieldwork notes, Catholic priest, July 2007).

The outbreak of the war set into motion a much stricter spatial segregation, one in which ethnicity became the defining characteristic (see also Lemarchand, 1998, pp. 8–9). In January 1994, Hutu in the *communes* Musaga and Nyakabiga were systematically targeted; they were either killed or had to flee to Bwiza, Buyenzi, Kamenge or Kinama. Later, Bwiza and Buyenzi – which were ethnically more mixed and inhabited by many Congolese and Swahili – also underwent some attempts of 'ethnic cleansing'. Tutsi had to flee from the northern neighbourhoods Kamenge and Kinama, where Hutu made up the majority. Besides 'spontaneous violence', (informal) policies geared at 'ethnic cleansing' stimulated the segregation.[51] It is often argued that segregation occurred with the strategic objective to facilitate 'genocidal violence' (e.g. Krueger and Krueger, 2007).

The strict segregation of Hutu and Tutsi in Bujumbura and especially on the northern periphery thus allowed the QN to become a central battlefield for the violence between the army and Tutsi civilians versus rebel groups and Hutu civilians. The passage below, copied from a wartime pamphlet entitled '*Halte au*

[49] In 1969, for instance, Rwandese represented 16 per cent and Congolese 9 per cent of the Bujumbura population (Ndayikuriye, 1997, p. 515).

[50] For an overview of research on urban planning in post-colonial Africa, see Mabogunje, 1990; for an interesting study that looks at colonial planning and post-colonial transformation in another city, Nairobi, see Lee-Smith and Lamba, 2000; or, about the mechanism that feed into sustained urban segregation (in Nairobi), Olima, 2001.

[51] The relation between spontaneity and calculation in collective ethnic violence poses a difficult problem to researchers. Appadurai (1998) in his article about bodily violence between social intimates as a form of vivisection, suggests that there may be an inner affinity between spontaneity and calculation as both appear to draw upon modern scientific techniques aimed at resolving uncertainty (p. 912).

Genocide', signed '*cri d'angoisse par des survivants de ces deux zones [Kinama and Kamenge]*',[52] from August 1995, provides a good image of the magnitude of the discriminatory violence in Kamenge and Kinama; the neighbourhoods that especially in the early years of war were most severely affected by fighting:

> Kamenge and Kinama have always been two extraordinary zones in the municipality of Bujumbura.
>
> In fact, they were the only zones where the majority of the population were ethnic Hutu. They have always been left to [fend for] themselves by all the regimes of independent Burundi. This can explain the 'constipation' they showed during the elections of 93. From then on, the partisans at the top of the status-quo, embodied by the UPRONA party, looked at the two zones with an evil eye. As such, Kamenge and Kinama were surrounded by the *putschiste* army in the night of 20/21 October 1993. They shot at innocent people.
>
> The tactics of ethnic cleansing in the rest of the municipality, which consisted of selectively attacking Hutu, was deemed almost impossible in the zones Kamenge and Kinama. It was the Tutsi who evacuated the two zones, in response to the appeal made to them by the Tutsi plan of ethnic purification of December 1993. The Burundian army participated in the evacuation and had made available military trucks to move Tutsi who did not have their own means [of transport].
>
> As such, the army came to have free range to systematically kill without having to worry about victimizing even a single Tutsi.
>
> Multiple successive hunting (*chasse*) operations that targeted Hutu were carried out by the forces of order in Kamenge and Kinama, under the pretext of disarmament.
>
> Youths have organized themselves in armed gangs to defend the last two Hutu neighbourhoods threatened with complete devastation. (…)
>
> Over the course of the military operations, these zones suffered enormous material and human losses. The balance, not exhaustive, is more than telling:
>
> March 94: more than 200 people killed in Gasenyi (Kamenge) and a many houses pillaged and ravaged;
> April 94: more than 1500 people killed and multiple houses burned and ravaged;
> May 94: more than 150 people killed and multiple houses burned and destroyed;
> September 94: more than 100 people killed, including a dozen on a truck at the station at the entrance of Kamenge; multiple houses kicked down and plundered;
> September 94 – June 95: 258 persons killed, 189 houses burned, 450 houses ravaged and plundered; 45 vehicles burned;

[52] Translated: Stop the genocide: cry of anguish by the survivors of these two zones [Kinama and Kamenge]. The pamphlet was written by inhabitants of Kinama and Kamenge. Later in the war, local leadership, often in alignment with political/rebel groupings, started to get better organized.

> July 95 – August 95: 263 persons killed, all houses that were still standing were completed destroyed...[53]

The scale of the violence and devastation as well as the actors represented in the QN – who symbolized two warring sides to the extreme – contributed to the image of the QN as iconic for war in the country at large. Telling is the reputation of Kamenge as *l'état-major* (army headquarters) of the rebellion,[54] which was strengthened by the fact that this neighbourhood had been the stage for Hutu uprisings before the civil war.[55] Ngagara on the other side gained the reputation of being host *par excellence* to Tutsi extremists: many army soldiers lived there and military attacks were launched from there. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, it was a place where several notorious youth gangs were formed (see also Reyntjens, 1993). In the next part, I explore how youths' accounts about the war drew on and reiterated these 'two sides' that largely coincided with neighbourhood boundaries.

III. Talking about the Civil War

The civil war was usually summed up by the trope of ethnic segregation between neighbourhoods. In longer versions, youths' first confrontation with violence and ethnic awareness and the experience of flight were among the key ingredients of their wartime accounts. In this section, I look at these three topics and what youths said about them, in order to describe some emerging patterns that, I suggest, feed into and are fed by neighbourhood based-categories.

The Trope of Segregation

The most common way youths described the civil war was by referring to the segregation of Hutu and Tutsi in different neighbourhoods. The segregation appeared as a trope; it was used to convey the intensity and severity of the war without giving a lengthy treatise of all the adversity that took place. The use of this trope may be understood from the idea that places can be seen as

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[53] *My translation, LB*. The events enumerated in this pamphlet are largely corroborated by my interlocutors as well as by the chronology of reported incidents of violence in the country, which was put together by the non-political journal *Dialogue.* The journal *Dialogue* was founded in 1967 by Father Massion. The journal publishes articles from various Rwandan and foreign 'sides' and is concerned especially with providing information and reflection on political developments in Rwanda and/or Burundi. The journal is published in Brussels (see Palmans, 2003).

[54] See the vignette about the lift to Kamenge by my landlord, Chapter 1, page 29.

[55] See for instance Lemarchand (1994), who writes about the 1962 'Kamenge Riots', in which youth wing militants of the UPRONA party launched armed raids against local Hutu trade unionists and members of the PP (pro-Hutu) political party (p. 62-3). In 1991, Kamenge again figured amongst the locations where rebels and military clashed.

mnemonic devices with the "potential to evoke and therefore transmit the incommunicable [extreme violence]" (Filippucci, 2010, p. 155). Another reason that might account for its widespread use is that the segregation affected everybody in the QN. Moreover, because of this, the trope provided a rather non-threatening way to speak about the war. It acknowledged that both sides were affected by war, and thus suggested 'common ground' – at least, at first sight.

In elaborations on the segregation, significant differences in wartime experiences between those on opposite sides of the neighbourhood boundaries became apparent. As such, young Tutsi from Ngagara or Cibitoke often mentioned their inability to visit childhood friends who had moved away; to visit family if that required passing through 'hostile areas'; the poverty and hunger they endured due to the fractured economic situation or restricted food provisions (which needed to pass through the hostile province Bujumbura Rurale); the tensions within their families due to all these constraints; and the difficulties in avoiding witnessing or participating in the violence perpetrated by extremist groups that found support in their neighbourhoods. Many young Hutu interlocutors from Kamenge and Kinama said that they had had to abandon their school in Ngagara or Cibitoke; had hidden from army attacks in the hills of the province Bujumbura Rurale; had crossed borders when they fled; at some point had lived in one the temporary displacement camps in the neighbourhood Gihosha; or had accompanied rebel movements all over the country – while confronted with personal and material loss and extreme poverty. To get an idea of the scope of hardships, furthermore, these youths affirmed time and again that at the height of fighting no civilians could live in Kamenge.[56] The youths of mixed origin told me how they had moved closer to the town centre, often to Buyenzi or Bwiza where many people of different nationalities lived and where it was relatively 'calm'; how they had seen their families broken up and had had to live with just one of their parents; had fled the country; had moved around the city only in 'mixed groups' so that ethnic classification based on appearances became more difficult;[57] and had sought allegiance to groups that stressed alternative identity categories, such as the scouting club.

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[56] The document '*Chronologie Burundi, chronologie des evenements marquants de fevrier 1995 a juillet 1996*' published by the journal *Dialogue* confirms: "21.9.95: Bujumbura, Kamenge: start of a visiting tour by the President and the Prime Minister in the former Hutu neighbourhoods; according to the *chef de zone*, not more than 42 families are in Kamenge; the houses have been destroyed," *my translation, LB*).

[57] The youths that told me about this strategy explained that in a mixed group it was more difficult to define the ethnic background of the group members. People could try define ethnic background by looking at particular physical traits ascribed to Hutu and Tutsi; e.g. Tutsi were believed to be tall and have fine facial features whereas Hutu were believed to be short and have a broad nose, for instance (see also Malkki, 1995; Sommers, 2001).

These differences show that ethnic segregation generated specific wartime experiences for youths pertaining to particular ethnic/spatial categories. Nonetheless, more detailed life-history accounts of the war usually revealed a much more diverse picture of the experiences of youths from different backgrounds. Clearly, experiences with violence, poverty, and flight did not necessarily follow the usually portrayed patterns. Selection and emphasis, it seems, privileged the sharing of particular wartime experiences.[58] In the following section, I explore this process of selection through several examples of accounts about the war. I give examples from three topics common in many of the wartime accounts, namely the onset of violence and ethnic awareness, the experience of flight, and the effects on family and personal circumstances. The emerging patterns in these accounts, I argue, speak to contemporary power relations.

First Signs of War

My interlocutors generally dated the start of the war on 21 October 1993, when the Hutu president was murdered in an attempted *coup d'etat* by the majority-Tutsi army. Most of my interlocutors, however, stressed that the first signs of war had been seen two years earlier than that. They pointed to the rebel insurgency in the QN in 1991. The scale of the violence then was limited compared to the war two years later.[59] Nonetheless, the youths saw the events as critical and illuminating for what was to follow. For instance, in the first excerpt given below, Eddy (a Tutsi youth from Ngagara, born in 1982) explains the events as revealing ethnic segregation for the first time. In the second excerpt, Idda (Hutu, from Kamenge, born in 1989) describes the 1991 events as laying the groundwork for Hutu resistance in 1993, both in terms of preparation and in terms of an emerging collective political consciousness:

> I remember it was a Sunday. Usually we went to pray very early in the morning and after the mass we went to Lake Tanganyika to swim (…) But [that day] there [was] someone, a neighbour more or less, he was my age (…) he told us [imitating the conversation:] "Today you should not go swim at the lake, you should not go far, you should not leave the *commune* Ngagara."
> "Why not leave the *commune*?"
> He said: "It seems that there are rebels in the country."

[58] Discussions about this have been raised especially in the academic field on memory and violence. In the social sciences, it is largely agreed upon that memory is guided by contemporary circumstances, including power relations (e.g. Halbwachs, 1992; Lambek, in Argenti and Schramm, 2010, p. 3).

[59] Amnesty reports (August 1996) that at the end of 1991 security forces killed about 1000 Hutu civilians in Bujumbura and the northern province Bubanza.

> "Rebels in the country? Here? What is that [about]?" (…)
> [In the afternoon] we went out to watch, because they told us that someone had thrown a grenade but that it had not exploded, and they said that the soldiers were trying to kill him; he [who had thrown the grenade]. So we went out to see [what was happening]. It was around four p.m. There was shooting, more or less far from where we were. So at that moment we went for shelter in one of the houses that was there next to *Gare du Nord*, and I remember, we fled to someone's place, and he yelled at three of us, he said: "You, you and you, out!"
> Out, while there was shooting?!
> [Imitating the conversation:] "You, you tell us to leave?"
> "No, I don't want people to see you here."
> Well, being young and innocent children, the others also, we were five, the two they were letting stay, they said: "No, if they go, we all go."
> The man said: "No, [okay] no problem, stay."
> But later [his initial refusal started to make sense]. It was in [19]93, after the crisis, then people started to speak about the ethnicities Hutu, Tutsi, the problems between Hutu and Tutsi.
>
> Eddy, Bujumbura, April 2011

> They were called the Palipehutu–FNL. The Palipehutu–FNL, they came, they trained a lot of people here in Kamenge. They trained boys, soldiers. But it weren't rebels like that. No, they were called 'The People'. After they had given training, they made war in 1991. They [the government army] came with heavy artillery, machines; a lot of things. Well, after that, in 1991, the war stopped and we continued in peace like this, like that. Until they killed the president. When they had killed the president (…) the people from Kamenge, they were already trained for rebellion. Yes, that is how the war was started. Because they said: "No! Since you have started to kill the Hutu people, to kill them, well now, we also are going to revolt. We are going to start the war!" …That is why the war started in Kamenge.
>
> Idda, Kamenge, June 2007

Both youths named the Hutu uprising in 1991 and the subsequent army retaliation as their first experience with warlike violence. Yet, there are some noteworthy differences between their accounts. Eddy's account comes across as more personal, and Idda's as a more ideologically oriented. Perhaps it is because the narrators differ significantly in age, and Idda's account relies more on what has been taught to her later.

Indeed, the two accounts raise questions about direct experiences versus memories of violence transmitted by other generations.[60] As I mentioned in

[60] For interesting examples of research into intergenerational transmission of memory and violence, see for instance Kublitz, 2011a; Kidron, 2010; and Melchior, *forthcoming*.

Chapter 1, although all my interlocutors all grew up during the war, some of them were about ten when the war broke out, some were toddlers and others were born in the first years of war. Their maturity obviously influenced how they experienced the wartime events they spoke to me about as eyewitness experts. The questions about what in their stories they 'remember' and what has been 'taught' to them later, and how this influenced the memories they recounted, are especially important when trying to determine what unfolded in the past. Memory's exact relation to 'history', as what objectively unfolded, continues to be debated (cf. Argenti and Schramm, 2010; Reid, 2011; cf. Chapter 2). Yet, to understand how 'memories' feed into present and emerging social categories, it is more interesting to look at power relations and present stakes in accounts of the past.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that through the differences of personal and ideological orientation, the accounts appeal to different moral valuations about suffering and responsibility. For instance, Eddy's story does not pinpoint a clear victim and perpetrator. His personal standpoint allows him to distance himself from the violence. He assigns responsibility to his parents' generation: he shows surprise about the existence of rebels in the country, he speaks of the violence as incidental – *someone had thrown a grenade* – and describes how children like him, at least until the crisis in 1993, stuck together. Idda, in contrast, portrays the image of a people finally revolting against discrimination and violence perpetrated by powerful state institutions. In her story there is no surprise; there is endurance and preparation. Her story speaks not of a generational divide, but of an ethnic/political categorical one: 'we' (*us*) were civilians in Kamenge for whom protection and justice was sought; 'they' were the rebel soldiers, amongst whom boys from Kamenge figured, and '*They'* were the 'real' others: the state and the army co-opted by the minority Tutsi. (Now, the head of state was a Hutu and the incumbent party was a former rebel group with a strong presence in the QN.)

Flight Experiences

A second recurring theme in the youths' accounts of the war concerns the experience of flight. For instance, in the story with which I opened this chapter, Innocent made reference to having to move temporarily to the inner-city Rohero neighbourhood. Below, Révocate, also a Tutsi youth, describes his wartime experiences in terms of flight to Gitega, a province in central Burundi. In the second excerpt, Quinn, also Tutsi, explains how displacement gave way to an extremely difficult life:

> We lived here [in Kamenge], and there was war. We had rented a house. When the war started we fled, leaving everything behind. We fled on foot with the others. Upon arrival in Bugarama [in the province Muramvya, midway Bujumbura

Mairie and Gitega], we climbed into a truck. We did not know where we were going, and the truck left us somewhere; it was in Gitega. (...) Upon arrival in Gitega, we found family members. They gave us a ticket to return. We prepared [our food] in clay pots,[61] and it is [only] in 2006 that we returned to Buterere [neighbourhood in the QN].

Révocate, 16 years, June 2007

Quinn: We moved (*se déplacer*) [in 1999] and we returned, when the war finished we returned [in 2002].
Research assistant: Where did you move to?
Quinn: We moved in the direction of Congo.
(...)
Research assistant: Can you describe how life was in Congo?
Quinn: The life in Congo was an abnormal life, we could pass a whole week without eating; we lived really badly. When we found food, we ate, but often we lived badly. (…) It was an abnormal life. Life in war is complicated.
Research assistant: Abnormal how?
Quinn: Because we lived badly, you see, somewhere where you are not born and when you arrive, you see that you have a bad life, and we arrived in mourning because when we arrived they had killed my brother and we arrived in mourning. That is why we did not have a good life.
Research assistant: They killed him when you were in Congo?
Quinn: Yes (*Ee*), they killed him when we left, they killed him here but they killed him when we were crossing the border. That is where they killed him. (…)
We came back because, there, the life we lived was bad and we accepted to come here. Here, there was also war but we did not flee far, we arrived in Ngagara. We farmed there but we did not go far [when we fled]. (…) We moved house to Kiyange I [a camp for internally displaced people] and we came back to live in Buterere. (…) Better to live a difficult life in the *commune* where you were born [than live a difficult life elsewhere].

Quinn, 17 years, June 2007

The QN youths from Hutu backgrounds also often conveyed their wartime experiences in terms of flight and displacement. Willy's story, part of which is presented below, is an example:

Yes I remember [the start of the war]. I was already eleven, eleven I think…eleven? We lived in Kamenge (…) we had to flee to the mountains there [pointing to the mountains of Bujumbura Rurale] when the war became worse, and we returned after some days. We spent two weeks, three weeks [here], then the soldiers came again to attack the neighbourhood, and we fled again, like this, like that. We passed about a year and a half like that. (…) So my parents, between

[61] By referring to having to use clay pots, Révocate appeals to the extreme level of poverty they endured.

them, there was some disagreement. When the war became worse, I remember days when they launched mortars….my mother decided to flee and my father refused. He said: “I cannot flee, I fled in the war of 1972, I have seen life in a foreign country, it is so difficult, I cannot flee again.” My mother said: “Me too I am tired, you know, going to the mountains, returning, massacring and what not, I cannot stay here.” So my mother decided to quit the country and we went to Bukavu, to Bukavu? No, to Uvira….

[Willy continued his story by telling about his flight with his mother and siblings to Uvira, the small Congolese city across the Tanganyika Lake. His mother found a job as a nutritionist in a refugee camp near Bukavu, to the north. He went with her in order to continue education. His younger siblings stayed in Uvira. When his father went to look for them, he found the siblings and returned with them to Bujumbura.]

I remember my mother was so shocked because she remembered how life was here, the war, what, but she did not have the means (…) to get them again and [she said]: “They even do not want to [be here]; [so] it is up to God”.

[In November 1996 the war in the DRC broke out. The refugee camp was threatened with attack and they had to flee again.]

We continued on foot, I believe six days. Six days on foot, we continued up to a village called Kazimia, near Fizi …it is just on the road [near] Lake Tanganyika …It was almost all the people of Bukavu, who just quit Bukavu, they passed Uvira, it was a long chain.

[They had to cross the lake to go to Tanzania.]

In the first days it was too expensive. They asked 50 dollars per head to go to Tanzania so we did not have enough money. We waited for three days, but the troops of Kabila advanced every day, and the price to cross went down every day. When the price had become five dollars per head we paid and crossed the lake.

[In Tanzania the UNHCR came to transport the refugees to Kigoma. A new camp was opened.]

It was a big forest and they put us there.

[In the following years, they tried to go to Mozambique to find better life chances. On the way, they ran out of money and became stranded in a Burundian settlement for the 1972 refugee caseload. In 1999 they returned to Kigoma region. Willy returned to Burundi in 2005.]

> It was in 2005 in the month of January, it was 2 January and I had passed the State exam [which I took in the refugee camp] with success, with distinction (*grand fruit*); 84.9 [per cent]. So they sent me to the University of Burundi.
>
> Willy, born 1983, Bujumbura, March 2011

Significant in the above accounts is especially the length in which the wartime memories were recounted. Willy's story was very elaborate, especially when compared to the other two and despite the fact that I had to summarize part of it here to keep it from running on too long. Révocate and Quinn were quite brief. Révocate summed up 13 years of war with the phrase: *we prepared our food in clay pots…* For Quinn months and years of hardship and violence were initially summed up with the phrase: *We moved and we returned, when the war finished we returned*. She elaborated only after my research assistant probed for more information.

The difference can be a result of a number of issues. Willy had perhaps more experience in recounting his story, as this was an exercise refugees in Tanzanian camps were regularly confronted with.[62] And of course, he was a bit older. Nonetheless, I suggest the difference can better be understood through a reflection on memory and silence.

Firstly, researchers of violence often emphasize that experiences of violence bring forth silence and confusion in establishing the 'truth' (Argenti and Schramm, 2010, p. 9). Some even argue that memory, as representations, are impossible because of the incomprehensibility of violence: "[memories of violence] are not possible where there lies an absence of meaning, and it is not possible to give meaning to experiences of extreme violence" (p. 12). Narrative histories, from this perspective, do violence to histories of violence (Lyotard in op. cit., p 13). Second, researchers have pointed out that silences may occur as an alternative to the voicing of polemic and divisive interpretations of the past. This can be especially important if 'victims' are forced to live alongside 'perpetrators' (Argenti and Schramm, 2010, p. 16). Think for instance of the trope of ethnic segregation, which obliterated the need for detailed accounts and granted Hutu and Tutsi from all QN with some kind of equal status-quo. Third, especially in contexts affected by war, silence can be enforced upon those on 'the losing side'. All three aspects likely played a role in the selections youths made in their wartime accounts.

In view of these three issues, perhaps for Quinn and Révocate the wartime experiences were too traumatic to recall and recount. Second, it is noteworthy that in contrast to Willy, Quinn and Révocate shared their memories in the presence of a third person, namely my research assistant, who happened to

[62] My MA-research project in a refugee camp in Kibondo showed that on a number of moments refugees were asked to recount their stories of flight – by for instance, the Ministry of Home Affairs, UNHCR, or researchers like myself (Berckmoes, 2006).

have a different ethnic background. Could it be that their narratives of flight were brief because their stories about suffering did not find enough public recognition to be recounted at length? Were their narratives cut short because of a contested understanding about who were to blame the most for the suffering of all?

Personal Stories

A third theme in the accounts of wartime experiences concerns the impact the civil war had on family and personal relations. During my research, I learned that the family situation was amongst the most sensitive topics to discuss, and was usually only possible in private conversation. In these conversations, many youths shared with me that the war had affected their family situation in ways that, from their perspective, had changed their life courses forever. Yet, these stories did not reveal clear patterns in terms of space/identity. Here I give a few examples of the youths' stories:

> Almost each time I asked Saidi how he was doing, he lamented that his father had lost his job in the war. This had set into motion a domino effect of events that led to a broken family and everyday hardship for him. Saidi's father, a Swahili with Zambian roots, whose grandfather had arrived in Burundi to serve for the colonial administration, "had only been able to obtain a job through the kindness of a *muzungu* without prejudice against 'foreigners'." Yet with the war, he lost this job. The war had motivated the company owner to close his business in Bujumbura. Saidi's mother then left her husband and remarried a man who could take care of her. The mother and her new husband moved to another province. His younger sister moved in with his maternal aunt, who lived in a neighbourhood closer to the city. Saidi remained with his father. After the war, his father had not been able to obtain stable employment. Therefore, Saidi often had to find ways to contribute to the household income. He regularly ate only one meal a day to save money to pay for his own school fees, so that perhaps, when he had a diploma, he would find a job and build a future for himself. His projections about what the future might hold for him were usually quite bleak.
>
> Conversations, home visits and interviews with Saidi and his father, Swahilis (Hutus), Kinama, 2009–11

> A second example concerns Rose. She was born in 1992. The loss of both her parents during the war made care a highly precarious good. Rose was the youngest in the family. When I met her, in July 2010, she was living with the second eldest sister in the Kinama neighbourhood. Before that, she had lived with her eldest sister but that sister 'mistreated' her: she did not let Rose go to school. The second sister took her in. Still, Rose often fought with this sister too, especially if she was doing her homework rather than helping with household

> chores. In return for staying there, she was expected to help raise the four children, also because her sister and the husband were both working. When the husband was shot dead in 2010 – allegedly related to some quarrel with the secret service for which he worked (Rose was afraid to make inquiries about the details) – she found it even more difficult to balance her study ambitions and her family obligations. She was sad that she is an orphan. She missed her parents, and without them, care and support – and education – was never a given.
>
> Conversations, home visits and one interview, Tutsi, Kinama and Kamenge, 2010–11

> Idda lost her father in the violence. It was only in 2010 that her mother had the means to perform the last mourning rituals, which are usually performed a year after the funeral. The occasion gave her the very first opportunity to meet her paternal family from Gitega. Given the patrilineal family norm, she argued, this was a 'wrong' beyond comprehension.
>
> Conversations, visits, interviews with Idda, Hutu, Kamenge, 2007–13

> Severin's father was a politician before the war. He fled with his family to Zambia when the civil war broke out. After his return to Burundi, in 2008, he could not reintegrate into the French-speaking university system. In 2010, new political struggles led to his father being threatened again. Feeling threatened by extension, Severin returned to Zambia, where he was robbed and beaten up. As an illegal refugee, he felt that he could not protect himself. He continued his journey to South Africa, where he was illegal as well. The last time I spoke to him (January 2013), he told me that he was sleeping in a bus station in Cape Town. When we spoke about a mutual friends' wedding plans, he told me had no girlfriend: "How could I? Maybe if my life was stable, I could start thinking of that."
>
> Conversations, interview, and phone calls with Severin, Hutu, born 1985, 2009–13

These examples illustrate that, especially in the long run, the myriad ways in which the war has affected the lives of youths from different ethnic backgrounds or from different neighbourhoods did not follow any neat patterns. This finding was supported by a small survey research I conducted in three of the northern neighbourhoods (Ngagara, Cibitoke and Kamenge). On the question about how respondents felt they had been affected by the war, the results show no obvious differences between youths from different neighbourhoods (see figure below). Indeed, most surprising perhaps is that almost a fifth of the youths (N=20) reported that they had *not* been affected by the war. In openly shared accounts of the war, there was very little room for that 'memory'.

Were you affected by the war?	Strongly in a negative way	Mildly in a negative way	Not affected	Total
Kamenge	12	14	7	33
Cibitoke	16	13	8	37
Ngagara	14	18	5	37
Total	*42*	*45*	*20*	*107*

Thus, at first glance the various wartime accounts of the QN youths speak to common experience: youths from all QN neighbourhoods experienced ethnic segregation; became aware of ethnic differences with the first confrontation with organized violence in 1991; and many of them had experiences with flight and with negative effects on the family situation. At second sight, the accounts reveal the importance of belonging to either the Hutu or the Tutsi side of the conflict, which followed specific neighbourhood boundaries. The youths' accounts of the civil war were illustrative of a coalescence of wartime experiences and ethnic/political identity categories as inscribed onto the map of the QN. Moreover, through processes of selection and emphasis – through which an unequal status quo comes into view – the accounts fed into a standardization of the differences between people from different neighbourhoods.

In the following part, I explore various social and economic characteristics that provide another layer of meaning for neighbourhood-based categories.

This poem, by Erneste, a youth from Kinama, provides a further illustration of a feeling of belonging based on the shared experience of poverty and marginality: '*Despite this ghetto: it is beautiful my neighbourhood....*'

My Neighbourhood

In our days youth walk around doing nothing, all the time
When tired, they assemble in the streets to form their *ligala* [hangout posse]
For hours they tell the stories of the neighbourhood,
Because there are too many stories to tell
If they have some cash, they take traditional drinks! Not good for your health

For sure you need little time to pass through my neighbourhood
But you need years to recount the problems we live
Despite this ghetto: it is beautiful my neighbourhood....
Ah! Yes, I love being there. I love living there.

Bujumbura, 2007,[63] my *translation*

[63] Erneste shared this poem with me in July 2007 when I asked him to keep a diary for me. The poem may have been composed before. Erneste had the ambition to start a career as a writer or journalist

IV. Social and Economic Characteristics

Besides differences due to urban policy and planning, and based on experiences and memories of wartime violence, social and economic characteristics fed into the meanings ascribed to neighbourhood-based categories. Specific characterizations emerged especially when different neighbourhoods were compared. Depending on the situation, the opposition sketched could be between *communes* (like Kamenge and Ngagara); between different *quartiers* (for instance, within Ngagara, *quartier 1,* or within Kamenge, *Kavumu* and *Mirango II*); any QN versus a southern neighbourhood; or the QN, referred to as *la cité,* versus the city centre, *la ville*. Each locality was subject to particular reputations regarding the character and identity of the community members living there. These characterizations were usually agreed upon by all parties.

The prevailing social and economic characterizations usually revolved around three issues, namely the positive effects of the war; 'modernity' and 'civilization' as expressed through education and access to facilities; and political allegiance. Firstly, wartime experiences were not always considered negative. Indeed, the youths often attributed positive characteristics to their neighbourhoods as a result of marginality and suffering. The following characterization of youth from QN neighbourhoods vis-à-vis those registered as the better (richer, safer) city neighbourhoods is illuminating. The quote exemplifies how wartime suffering and marginality could be given a positive twist:

> Amongst us, the youth of the capital city, we also toss, I would say, stereotypes. We could say that the youth from Rohero, Kiriri, they are spoiled. (…) They were not close to the war like us, and they, in trying to imitate those that were, I would say 'close the war', I would say, those that were…We'd often say that they want to imitate the youth from Ngagara because according to what we say, we know what life is. We know. We lived through good and bad moments, we know the risks: [this is] to say [that] we can take care of ourselves (*s'arranger*) or, well, we can adapt ourselves in life. Meanwhile, we say that those from the city are more or less spoiled.
>
> Eddy, Bujumbura, April 2011

A second example concerns an excerpt of an interview I held with Idda in 2007. It shows, albeit in a somewhat macabre way, Idda's positive connection and sense of belonging to her neighbourhood. It reveals that for her the reputation of Kamenge as *l'état major* was as a source of pride and solidarity, rather than stigma:

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and participated in various contests, including those organized by the *Centre Jeunes Kamenge* and the *Centre Culturel Français*.

> Here in Kamenge, a lot of soldiers were killed. They came, mercenaries came; mercenaries from Uganda, from Tanzania, from Rwanda…They did not succeed in Kamenge. They were all killed! If they came from Uganda, nobody returned. Nobody. All: they were all massacred! When the Somali came, they were also killed. The [army] soldiers, that is something else…They died like fish. They were killed like flies here in Kamenge. (…)
>
> When, because the boss in Congo watched on the television, when he saw that Kamenge was becoming the fighter for the whole country… They even said that in your country – well I do not know at your place, but maybe you have seen – they said that if you would look at the internet, when you are looking at the news there, you would see 'Kamenge' a lot. A lot! Even the Italians that came here [at the youth centre] during the holiday [as volunteers], came to see Kamenge…they said: "No, I did not know it was a zone, we thought it was a country, a big country Kamenge." Yes! A lot of people think it is a country, not a zone…They say: "No, this is marvellous, a zone fighting a whole country! And killing a lot of people!"
>
> Idda, July 2007

I stayed in touch with Idda over the course of my research. As time passed, her heroic views on killings during the war changed. She distanced herself more and more from celebrating violence that had occurred during the war. Yet her pride of belonging to Kamenge was relentless. Particularly the solidarity amongst the people of Kamenge was a trump card she liked to play. For instance, she would often compare the security situation for her with that of a friend Généviève (a Tutsi in her early twenties), who lived in an adjacent neighbourhood. Time and again Idda asserted that it was safer for her to walk home in the evenings than for Généviève because, in contrast to where Généviève lived, the people of Kamenge would come to the rescue when a community member was under attack, even if this meant recourse to mob justice. When she argued this standpoint in front of Généviève, the latter readily agreed.

Besides the knowledge and solidary that stem from wartime experiences, factors like economic prowess, access to facilities (e.g. electricity), employment opportunities and level of education were often mentioned to characterize neighbourhoods. These factors were seen aspects of 'modernity' and 'civilization'. To give an example, Buterere, Kinama, and Kamenge – in that order from worse to better – were viewed as poor and less 'civilized'. They were thought, in that same order, not have many school-going youths. Ngagara on the other hand, was reputed as a better neighbourhood that brought forth many students, also compared to more prosperous inner-city neighbourhoods:

> Besides, since the crisis we like to say [meaning, we often say] that the *commune* of Ngagara, is a *commune* of intellectuals (…) The majority of parents in Rohero, the majority [of them] are traders who have not studied a lot but who have

> money, and their children generally do not study much, they do not study a lot [meaning: they do not go to higher levels of education].
>
> Eddy, Bujumbura, April 2011

A third issue concerns political alignment and therewith, government support. A lack of support was made tangible especially through the lack of investment and access to such facilities as water taps and electricity, and were believed to be at least in part a result of the civil war or political struggles born in war. As such, a municipality survey conducted in all Bujumbura neighbourhoods revealed that inhabitants of Cibitoke explained insecurity in their neighbourhood at night by pointing out the lack of street lights. This was a result, they stated, of the destruction that took place during the civil war. In the same survey, Kamenge inhabitants attributed their 'lack of development' to the fact that in 2005 the majority of the people in their neighbourhood had not voted for the political party that won the elections then.[64]

V. 'Know' Your Neighbour

So far, I have discussed the patterns in the youths' accounts of the war and described the social and economic characteristics they attributed to their neighbourhoods and the people living there. I showed how urban policy and discriminate violence gave shape to differences between neighbourhood communities in experiences with violence and exclusion. In addition, I argued that the narrated memories of wartime experiences are standardizing some of these differences. Furthermore, social and economic characteristics support the violence–space–identity categories. In the following two sections, I explore how youths applied the categories in order to 'know' others. Subsequently, I delve into the reasons that help understand the stakes in 'knowing your neighbour'.

Where Do You Live?

The above examples of characterizations of QN neighbourhoods and their inhabitants, especially with regard to the social and economic characteristics, were considered more or less 'general truths'. Illustrative is that Génévième readily agreed with Idda's categorization of the neighbourhoods as places of solidarity versus non-solidarity or safe versus unsafe. Classification based on location of residence therewith gave way to a shared 'map' that youths used to position themselves and classify others. These processes were more obvious at the Kamenge Youth Centre (*Centre Jeunes Kamenge, CJK)* than anywhere else.

[64] Elaboration du Plan Communal de Développement Communautaire, Province Bujumbura Mairie, Ministère de l'Intérieur, République du Burundi, 2010.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the CJK is situated at the crossroads of different neighbourhoods. It had the explicit objective of bringing together youth '*Despite [Their] Differences*' (see the slogan of the flag at the entrance of the centre, which is mentioned above in Innocent's guided tour). The location of the youth centre on the junction of Ngagara, Cibitoke and Kamenge served the centre's ambition to function as middle ground for people from different backgrounds. Although I soon recognized many of the youths at the centre as regulars, the sheer size of the membership ensured that on a regular basis young people that did not know each other beforehand, were meeting.

During first encounters, the primacy of locality for defining the other was very clear. The group discussion interview excerpt below is an apt illustration. In the meeting, Nella, one of the participants in the discussion and a regular youth centre visitor, took over the introductory round from me:

> Vénant: As I arrived late, I have not yet introduced myself.
> Nella: So present yourself…
> Vénant: Me, my name is Vénant.
> Nella: Where do you live?
> Vénant: Cibitoke.
> Laurent: Laurent.
> Nella: You live where?
> Laurent: Kamenge.
> Innocent: Me, I am Innocent I live in Ngagara.
> Nella: Who?
> Innocent: Innocent.
> Nella: Innocent. Oh.
> Noémie: My name is Noémie. I live in Mutakura.
> Nella: Nella, Kamenge.
> Erneste: Erneste Kinama.
> Ines: He?
> Erneste: Erneste.
> Nella: from Kinama.
> Fiacre: Fiacre, Kamenge.
> Ines: Ines, Kamenge.
> Lide: Lide, Amsterdam.
> Erneste: Wow!
>
> Group discussion, July 2009

Nella's tone might come across as quite belligerent. But it is not a result of hostility. Her questioning conveys the current idea about the identification requirements when one meets in a youth centre activity. Rather than age, occupation, educational status or where one was born, for example, it was one's location of residence that was asked for. Yet, only because of all the inferences

believed possible from one's location of residence, could these other (rude, prying) questions be avoided.

Another revealing example is the encounter of Matata with another youth centre visitor. This encounter took place just outside the youth centre and was only atypical in that the inferences generally drawn from mapping others were actually vocalized:

> At the end of an afternoon at the centre, Matata offered to walk me to the bus stop next to the Kamenge market. Another young man accompanied us, while shooting questions at me. We had not met before. I was not sure whether he and Matata knew each other, so I asked. Both said no. Matata then gave a hand to the young man and started asking questions. His tone was a bit forceful: "What is your name? Where do you live? Oh, if you live there, it means you that either you or your father is a soldier."
>
> The young man, much less confident than he was when asking me questions, answered softly: "My father is." He then turned to me and said apologetically: "I am just a student."
>
> Fieldwork notes, February 2010

Both the group discussion introductory round and the encounter between Matata and the other young man reveal that classifying based on location of residence was not innocent: it was about 'knowing' the other. I put 'knowing' between quotation marks, because it did not always seem that the aim was to obtain knowledge that was as accurate as possible.

Inaccuracies

Matata was not far off with his conclusions based on the young man's location of residence: his father was indeed a soldier. But of course, very often reality was messier than the stereotypical characteristics ascribed to inhabitants from particular neighbourhoods. Indeed, for specific groups of young people connections between neighbourhood locality, wartime trajectory and socioeconomic position were far from obvious. This was the case, for instance, for youths whose parents were of diverse ethnic or national backgrounds; for youths who had only recently migrated to Bujumbura for studies or employment; and for youths whose personal and family circumstances had been turned upside down in the war. Second, 'exceptions' in the classificatory 'map' stemmed from the fact that the neighbourhoods were not strictly designated for particular population categories. People often took into account house rents, prices of plots or facilities like electricity – rather than ethnic/political/wartime differences – when deciding where to live.

Matata also had first-hand experience of this discrepancy between individual circumstances and stereotyped categories: his mother was a Tutsi, his father a

Hutu. During the war he lived part of the time with his father and part of the time with his mother; currently, he lived with his mother and her new husband, although living with his father or on his own would be have been more in line with custom. Additionally, his mother was Christian, his father Muslim. Given the patrilineal tradition in Burundi, this means that Matata was born a Muslim. Against his family's wishes, he had converted to Christianity, partly because his close friend, an ex-rebel (Hutu), was a faithful Christian. Furthermore, Matata's celebrity status as a rap artist – which he expressed in 'subversive', 'cool' behaviour like drinking, taking some drugs and partying – messed up remaining prospects for a clear position on any 'classificatory map'.

Yet even if ascribed characteristics based on locality were known to be inaccurate, contestation of the 'general truths' was usually difficult. For instance, on one of my visits with Félix to Gabriel in Kamenge, Eloi, Gabriel's scout friend from Ngagara, stopped by. Eloi contested the characteristics he was ascribed following the QN 'map', but Félix and Gabriel disregarded his protest:

> Gabriel suggested that Eloi could answer some questions that would help me advance my research. Eloi seemed not to be very enthusiastic about the idea. Then, when I asked where he lived, he became defensive. After some time – Gabriel and Félix kept urging him – he said: "Ngagara." Upon this, Félix, who liked to provoke people, said: "You people, you have not fled." Eloi: "Yes we have." Gabriel: "No that is not the same, you were 'displaced'. For us, it was 'flight' (*nous, c'est la fuite*)."
>
> Fieldwork notes, Kamenge, February 2010

In addition, in situations where there was an 'obvious' disconnection between location of residence and, for instance, ethnic background, this would lead to new suppositions that reconfirmed similar stereotypical categorizations. For instance, Rose was a tall girl who, based on her appearance, was typically categorized Tutsi. When she told me in the presence of a young male acquaintance of hers that she had just moved out of Kinama, she was immediately confronted with assumptions about why: she must have had a difficult time as a Tutsi living in that Hutu neighbourhood. When she said she that she had moved to Kamenge, her acquaintance responded that at least the 'extremism' was less in Kamenge (Alain, Congolese, Bujumbura, June 2010). Kamenge was geographically closer to the city centre and known to be more supportive of the incumbent party than Kinama, which has the reputation of being part of the opposition and an FNL breeding ground (formerly Palipehutu–FNL, known as an extremist pro-Hutu rebel movement).

The fact that apparent disconnects with reality did not lead to a reconsideration of the 'map' suggests that what was at stake was not the 'truth' per se. Instead, what seems to have been central was a "*moral order* of the world" (cf. Malkki, 1995, p. 56, *emphasis in original*).

MORALITY AT STAKE

The emotional responses of, for instance, Gabriel and Eloi, shown in the previous section, suggest that the categories based on neighbourhood residence were far from neutral. Indeed, the categories were imbued with moral valuations about who was to blame for what during the war, and, in the aftermath of war, who was deserving or underserving of help, protection, or recognition from the state, international actors and, of course, each other. In other words, with the categories, a particular hierarchical, moral ordering was imposed: perpetrator versus victim, true versus false, privileged versus neglected, deserving sufferer versus undeserving sufferer – to some extent, this was visible also in the accounts of the war. For example, earlier in the chapter, Eddy gave a positive twist to the suffering he and his peers in Ngagara went through during the war. Concurrently he commented on the lack of 'authenticity' of youths from better-off neighbourhoods: *'… they, in trying to imitate those who were, I would say, close to the war…'* Another example concerns the interaction between Eloi, Gabriel and Félix about experiences with flight. Félix and Gabriel conveyed the message that they had been 'the real victims' in the war. They created a boundary between themselves and Eloi, therewith absolving friendship or scouting membership as the only (significant and binding) factor that counted in their relationship. A third example can be found in Erneste's poem about Kinama, on page 96. Although Erneste more implicitly refers to a 'wrongdoer', his poem reveals a critique of the situation the youths in his neighbourhood are made to live in: '*In our days, youth walk around doing nothing, all the time'*.

Therewith, the emerging QN 'map' shows interesting similarities with Malkki's (1995) mythico-history amongst Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania. In both contexts the boundaries between self and other were "explored, reiterated, and emphasized" (p. 54). Moreover, the identified categories were imbued "with abstract, moral qualities" (p. 54) and concerned with ordering rather than with "truth or falsity" (p. 55).

Yet, there are also noteworthy differences. Malkki argued that the mythico-history had "seized center stage in everyday thought and social action" (1995, p. 53). The processes I described in this chapter were central mainly in direct encounters with others. Indeed, the youths engaged in mapping in confrontation and dialogue with the 'other', rather than against an absent other (op. cit.). Second, the mythico-history constituted a "shared grand narrative" (p. 57). In the QN, I would rather describe the mapping practices as contributive to a mythical map in becoming: standardization – especially in terms of the moral values attached to categories – seemed underway but had not yet crystallized. Inferences drawn from the neighbourhood-based categories were generally well known by all parties involved, but their moral implications were contested.

The moral valuations – not the inaccuracies – were also an important reason for youths to try avoiding assumptions about who they were and how they fared. Youths sometimes hoped to get away with not mentioning where they lived, like Eloi initially tried to do. At other times, they were vague in terms of the location of their residence or gave misinformation. For instance, one could be creative in responding to questions about where one 'lived'. I noticed on multiple occasions how interlocutors whom I had known for some time would do this when they were confronted with apparently 'too curious' questions. For instance, Martin sometimes replied to the question about his place of residence by mentioning the location of his boarding school, knowing fully well that this would not lead to the right inferences. At other times – and this would lead to more 'accurate' inferences – he referred to the place his paternal grandmother lived. She had raised him for most of his childhood. He did not live with her, but still often visited her. Without challenging the categories or their ascribed meanings, he tried to avoid moral judgment, but also potentially threatening situations. Being 'mapped' implied being 'identified' and the consequences were not always predictable.

The possibility to adopt such tactical navigation varied per situation. They depended at least partly on where the question about place of residence was asked. For example, tactics like being vague or deceptive were usually more difficult to use at the youth centre than, for instance, in a bar or in a cybercafé in the city centre: at the youth centre many people knew each other; upon membership registration, location of residence was one of the few things noted down on the youth centre membership card; and, as shown by the group discussion excerpt earlier in this chapter, stating one's place of residence could be demanded in quite forceful ways.

Indeed, one factor that may contribute to the surge in the importance of neighbourhood-based categories, in addition to those mentioned throughout this chapter, may be that location of residence can more easily be 'verified' than other 'characteristics' for identification.[65] In this regard, it is significant that local

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[65] It is noteworthy moreover, that classification based on neighbourhood residence was sometimes described as a form of '*regionalisme'* (regionalism), which is a politically-laden concept manifest in a variety of Burundian settings. 'Regionalism' was most often used to designate privileged/discriminatory treatment in terms of access to public office, public goods and employment opportunities on the basis of province or region of origin (see Chapter 2). The term 'regionalism' was also used to describe the stereotyping of sociocultural differences based on location of origin. For example, regions were used to mark differences in character traits and behaviour: "The people from the region called Imbo, well they [say that] people [from the Mugamba region] are hypocrites. They don't say anything, and when they do tell you something, they will try to beat around the bush (*essayer de passer dans different coins*) (…) I belief those are [examples of] prejudice at the level of 'regionalism'" (Group discussion, March 2010). Furthermore, in the refugee camps in Tanzania, 'regionalism' referred to the classification of people as, for instance, 'perpetrators of war atrocities' (Ruyigi province) or as 'witches' (Kumoso region). These various manifestations of 'regionalism' differ. Nonetheless, the historical and diversified currency of locality-based categories may well have

election outcomes were often mentioned to substantiate claims about differences between neighbourhoods. For example, the voting outcomes of Kinama versus Kamenge after the community level elections in May 2010 were occasionally used to prove that Kinama was more 'extremist' than Kamenge, as the inhabitants of Kinama had voted significantly more for the opposition than the inhabitants of Kamenge.[66]

IV. Discussion: Mapping and Indeterminacy

In this chapter, I described youths' practices of classifying peers based on neighbourhood residence. I explored various connections between locality, wartime experiences and socioeconomic differences, and argued that these connections make place of residence particularly significant in identifying peers. Moreover, I suggested that the youths' classification practices contribute to the emergence of a map in which meanings attached to neighbourhoods and their residents are becoming standardized.

The mapping practices can be interpreted as a way to produce order in one's surroundings – which is perhaps especially important given the pervasive indeterminacy that characterizes the aftermath of war in Burundi. The search for order may be driven by the natural need of people to make the world more graspable and to resolve "unacceptable levels of uncertainty" (Appadurai, 1998, p. 905). The fact that inaccuracies related to neighbourhood-based categories or the inferences drawn from the categories were usually waved aside, suggests that making the world more orderly was at least one of the factors that motivated mapping practices. Uncertainty was denied in favour of assertions of truth (cf. White, 2009). At the same time, one's location of residence was fairly easily verifiable and perhaps therefore rendered mapping especially attractive for the purpose of ordering. Verifiability manifested itself for example in the fact that location of residence was noted on various identity cards and was observable for people living in the vicinity. Moreover, in political contestations, 'locations' were amongst the few characteristics that were officially registered and counted, and in the past had important bearings in socio-political positions – mostly under the heading 'regionalism'.

The quality of verifiability also made questions about people's place of residence appear to be objective. The question regarding place of residence could be asked quite openly because it could be defended as 'neutral' and 'innocent'. I say 'defended', as few Burundians would understand enquiries

enhanced the idea that 'origin' and 'place of residence' were, self-evidently, relevant for systematic classification of the people around.

[66] Electoral outcomes show that at the community level elections, in Kamenge, 41.7 per cent had voted for the CNDD-FDD and 37.5 per cent for FNL; in Kinama, 28.6 per cent of the population had voted for CNDD-FDD and 49.4 per cent for FNL (Travaglianti, 2013).

about one’s place of residence as neutral or innocent, especially when made by fellow Burundians.

Unease about these questions can be understood in two ways. Firstly, the mapping practices contributed not just to order, but were geared at “remaking” a moral order (Malkki, 1995, p. 55). This means that positions of power are important to take into account. The discussion between Eloi, Félix and Gabriel, for example, illustrates that negotiations over categories and their moral significations did not take place in a power vacuum. Second, the mapping practices, including the unease about being mapped, can be viewed in light of an anticipation of violence as an ever-present possibility. Here, there are two elements at play. One, through mapping practices potential allies and adversaries can be identified. In this respect, the strong references to wartime ‘sides’ in the neighbourhood based categories are significant. Two, given the ‘open’ (or confrontational) way in which mapping practices take place, there may be something to the idea that mapping is a communicative devise intended to manipulate or even intimidate those being mapped. Indeed, mapping can serve as a warning to the other (‘Be warned, I know who you are’; ‘I know that you might be or become an adversary’). As a communicative devise, mapping is value-laden and elusive enough to be useful for identifying and influencing others and to be defended as harmless.

In the following chapter I follow the second line of thought, about the ever-present possibility of violence. In the chapter, I explore how youths deal with ethnic and various other social categories in everyday interactions. Unlike the neighbourhood-based categories, these categories are no longer defendable as harmless and their use is openly contested.

CHAPTER 4

4. 'This Chapter is Not About Ethnicity'

I. The '-*Ism*'

A few years ago, I mentioned the words Hutu and Tutsi in a conversation with a colleague who had done fieldwork in Rwanda. She immediately glanced over her shoulder to see if anybody was within hearing distance. Half amused and half shocked about her own reaction, she explained that it was a reflex resulting from the tensions and taboos surrounding ethnicity in Rwanda: in Rwanda, ethnicity was unmentionable. In Burundi, the official taboo on speaking of Hutu and Tutsi was abolished after Bagaza's rule (1976–87). When I heard Burundians mention the words during my fieldwork, it was without apparent restraint. Yet like in Rwanda, in Burundi ethnic identification is charged with memories of violence and exclusion. Now and again, questions and remarks regarding the salience (and silencing of) ethnicity surfaced with intensity.

In this chapter, my focus is on the moments that these questions and remarks surfaced. I investigate when and how youths in Bujumbura invoked ethnicity, and the ramifications of this for continuing and altering roles of ethnicity in social relations. My interest in these issues rather than, for instance, the way youths conceptualized ethnicity, emerges from my data. My interlocutors hardly ever questioned the existence of ethnicity and they paid little attention to the veracity of differences in character traits or bodily aspects ascribed to Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Their attention was directed in the first place at actual and potential effects of people thinking and acting on the basis of ethnic differentiation. An anecdote about one of the radio programs I attended in a local studio in 2007 illustrates this.

The radio programme was part of a youth project called *Génération Grands Lacs* that was broadcasted from various stations in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to stimulate discussion and local and regional integration. On this occasion it gave space to callers to share their ideas about ethnicity. Two Rwandans called and, much in line with the official discourse in Rwanda, said that ethnicity had been 'invented' and 'does not exist' (cf. McLean Hilker, 2009). Dismissing these statements, the reaction of the young Burundian studio guest was that "scientifically speaking ethnicity exists", but that was not the problem: "It is the '–ism' behind it that makes it problematic" (fieldwork notes, Radio Isanganiro, July 2007). In other words, the concern with ethnicity for the studio guest, like for many of my youth interlocutors, was in the potential effects of employing ethnic categories for exclusion and violence, that is, in ethnicity's "negative potentiality" (Vigh, 2011).

To set the scene, I start this chapter by outlining some of the contradictory impressions regarding expressions and silences about ethnicity in Burundi. I then describe a number of fieldwork encounters with a group of friends. These descriptions show two things. Firstly, they provide insight into 'emerging trends' regarding ethnicity: that is, into prevalent ways in which ethnicity's contemporary importance is understood and navigated. By navigation, I refer especially to Vigh's (2006b, 2009) conceptualisation of social navigation as involving the continuous assessment of the dangers and opportunities of the present as well as the plotting and attempting to actualize routes into an uncertain and changeable future.

Second, the descriptions reveal particular doubts and contradictions in the youth's practices. These, I argue, seem to be prompted by grievances or such emotions as fear and hope. At play, for instance, are what Fassin, following Améry, called "*ressentiment*" – "a reaction to historical facts, which signifies the impossibility to forget and the senselessness to forgive" (2013, p. 260) – as well as what Biehl and Locke (2010), building on Deleuze's ideas about the importance of desire over power, referred to as: "…the angst, uncertainty, and passion for the possible that life holds through and beyond technical assessments" (p. 319). In addition to teasing out these "force[s] of intertwined grief and aspiration" (ibid), I am interested in the *effects* of the observable ensuing moments of doubt and contradiction. Indeed, in the third part of the chapter, I will argue that these moments of doubt and contradiction produce or reproduce a nervousness that influences and exists alongside the emerging trends that I describe in the second part. In the discussion, I reflect on the findings in terms of discussions about the logics of the everyday practices and war and peace.

Conflicting Narratives

Ntahombaye and Nduwayo (2007) argue that especially since the start of the peace negotiations in 2000, "solving the ethnicity issue" has occupied the minds of almost everyone interested in and engaged with the peace process in Burundi (p. 253).[67] During my fieldwork, the question concerning the continued importance of ethnic identity for life and death popped up especially in conversations with researchers and development workers. For my youth interlocutors in the *Quartiers nord* of Bujumbura (QN), concerns about ethnicity seemed far from their day-to-day worries. The topic hardly ever came up spontaneously in conversations, and when it did, ethnicity was usually relegated to history with phrases like 'ethnicity is disappearing' or 'ethnicity is of the past'.

[67] See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the role of ethnicity in conflict in Burundi's past.

Occasionally, however, I could hear my interlocutors expressing contrasting ideas or referring to ethnicity in order to explain both everyday and extraordinary contemporary events. Confusingly, very often the contrasting statements were voiced by the same interlocutors who otherwise assured me that ethnicity was no longer an issue. This can be illustrated by two conflicting narratives in conversations with Sylvère, a taxi driver I have come to know well through my fieldwork. I use 'conflicting narrative' to refer to a situation when a verbal act of a person is not in accord with the 'line' he has taken (Goffman, 1999) (see also the Chapter 1). 'Line' refers to a pattern of acts by which people express their view of the situation and their evaluation of the participants (op. cit., p. 306). This distinction helps to understand emerging trends in the context of paradoxical fieldwork findings.

Sylvère is a talkative man in his early thirties. He especially enjoys telling stories in which violence and morality are common motifs. He has shared with me his analyses about common interests and fears, gossiped about politicians, revealed how he deceives authorities when he feels that bribing has become excessive, and regularly came up with conspiracy-ridden tales that involved neighbours, clients or the police in order to justify his being late, again. Although the boundary between facts and story elements introduced for entertainment purposes is sometimes very thin, he is generally insistent on and consistent in his denial of the relevance of ethnicity in present-day Burundi. His references to ethnicity usually consist only of passing remarks. More often, the topic does not come up at all. But on one of our trips he mentioned atrocities committed by Hutu and Tutsi during the war, and I challenged him to explain more.

> I asked Sylvère whether people can really forget or forgive what happened, like he suggested. He assured me that it had been forgotten. "You mean the trickery or killing? Killing? That has been forgotten." He continued to argue that the problem now was between different political parties, and that if someone called him a Tutsi, he was not affected by it. "But before, well…"
>
> "Before you would run?" I filled in his silence.
>
> "Yes. Or I would fight."
>
> He then emphasized that all that was in the past. He added that not everybody had participated in the killings. He gave the example of his mother who had hid many Hutu in her house. Therefore, he reasoned, if he would now go somewhere where he would be among Hutu, he would go the way he would go home: at ease.
>
> Still probing, I asked: "But if you look at friendships, close friendships?"
>
> Sylvère said that his close friend was a Hutu. That friend was a real friend, he added, because there was nothing that connected them a priori. Sylvère said: "It is not a friendship based on shared origin [location] or ethnicity (...) It is a real friendship, based on nothing."

> As to my question whether ethnic opposition could return in the future, Sylvère referred to Rwanda. "No. In Rwanda, it is still there. Hate, I would call it. But here, no. Why? Because we have discovered the truth (...) We know now that it is the politicians who are the problem, who lie."
>
> Fieldwork notes, March 2011

As the conversation illustrates, the 'line' Sylvère took was that ethnicity could be openly discussed without inciting negative emotions like fear or hate, and that ethnic identification no longer functioned as an exclusionary factor in social or political relations, nor would it function like that in the future. Four weeks later in his taxi, the topic of ethnicity came up again. This time he broke with the 'line':

> In the evening I called a taxi to take me to town. As Sylvère picked me up, he seemed to head towards the *Quartiers nord*. I jokingly said that it was too late for me to go to my interlocutors for research. He faked a surprised look. "Ah," he exclaimed: "so you are just like me, scared to be there. Scared for the people of Kamenge!"
>
> He continued, saying that he was always scared to go to that part of town. "Because at the moment of change, 'they' can suddenly change. Just like when the war broke out. They forget about all the lending hands (*services*) given over the years and the friendships built."
>
> "Only people from Kamenge," I carefully elicited: "or Hutu in general?"
>
> "In general," he answered without hesitation.
>
> He then started enumerating the traits typically ascribed to Hutu or Tutsi, referring the tendencies for secrecy or bluntness to explain the political intrigues and killings that are continuously discussed in the news.
>
> Fieldwork notes, April 2011

The conflicting narrative about the significance of ethnic differences to understand the present situation and to anticipate the future – as expressed by Sylvère in the second situation – is difficult to reconcile with his 'line', as illustrated by the first excerpt. Within the time span of four weeks between both conversations, no significant changes had taken place in the broader social and political context or within our interpersonal relationship. I noted in my fieldwork diary: 'Standpoints on ethnicity differ not per person or environment, but per moment' (April 2011). The question is, then, when do conflicting narratives emerge? Second, how can we make sense both of the lines and of the conflicting narratives, without reducing one to the other?

For my analysis I refer to my encounters with a particular group of youths that I have come to know well through my research: Gabriel, Félix, Anatol and Elodie form the core of this group. My long-term relationship with them helped me to gain a good insight into their precarious pasts and present circumstances, in their aspirations, the expectations from the people around them, as well as into the changes regarding these issues, which took place over the course of

three years. Because of this, my research with them was particularly suitable for exploring meanings of the highly situational practices regarding ethnicity.

II. Fieldwork encounters

In this section, I share descriptions about various encounters I had with the abovementioned group of youths. The encounters serve to explore and illustrate the ways in which ethnicity in everyday relations was navigated. I approach the encounters as events on their own terms and as intertwined. The selection of excerpts is based on the criterion whether ethnicity came up as an explicit topic in the encounter. In total, I met these youths, individually and in various group formations, over 30 times, yet ethnicity became an explicit topic only six times.

The encounters are presented chronologically, starting with the first encounter in which ethnicity was articulated. The excerpts might come across as haphazard, and what is at stake in the encounters is not immediately clear. This, I feel, confirms the apparent randomness of moments in which ethnicity came up as an articulated concern. Nonetheless, when read carefully, the excerpts reveal three relatively persistent ways in which youths navigate ethnicity: namely, in expressing that ethnicity is disappearing or has already disappeared as a relevant category for meaning in Burundi; by disapproving all relationships based on ethnic similarities and dissimilarities; and by expressly avoiding the topic of ethnicity. These three ways, I propose, are the lines regarding ethnicity taken by many people in Burundi. They can be seen as emerging trends. Indeed, they are widely observable in both the private and public domain.

Focussing on the specific encounters or articulations within the encounters, however, exposes instances of contestation and of questioning the veracity and significance of the more persistent lines. These moments of conflicting narratives are crucial, I argue, to understand the simmering nervousness and the on-going preoccupation with the potential salience of ethnicity for relationships.

Kamenge, July 2009

Gabriel and Félix lead me into a small courtyard in Bujumbura’s northern *commune* Kamenge. In the yard stands an attractive girl with a toddler on her hips. She greets us with a wide smile. Gabriel walks up to her and greets her with a kiss on her mouth. She looks a bit embarrassed. Félix laughs. The girl’s name is Elodie. She is 19 and lives with her maternal aunt and cousins in the main house.

We enter the single-room annex in the back of the courtyard. Félix lives there with Anatol, to whom I am also introduced. A double bed and some personal items like clothing fill the entire room. I am offered a place on the double bed, next to Anatol and Elodie’s cousin Vital; the child’s father. Gabriel makes a remark about him wearing only shorts in front of a guest. He shrugs and moves over to offer me some space. Félix, Gabriel, Elodie and the toddler sit on a mat on the floor.

Gabriel encourages me to take out my recorder and start interviewing. Anatol takes up the role of 'expert' when it comes to the political situation, although Félix and Gabriel intervene significantly. Vital and Elodie are silent mostly, yet they listen attentively.

After some time I ask Anatol: "Are people still afraid, the one and the other [Hutu and Tutsi]? Or is it over?"
Félix: "It has ended but…"
Gabriel [unbelievingly]: "It has ended for you?"
Félix [laughing]: "No, but it has ended because…"
Anatol: "The crimes have ended. Nowadays the ethnic crimes have ended. What remains…"
Gabriel [sceptical tone]: "But during the elections [programmed for the next year, 2010]?"
Anatol: "Today, it is the…"
Félix: "During the elections, it will be the parties."
Anatol: "It is the parties. Ethnicity, it has ended here in Burundi. Now it is the parties."
Elodie has been quiet so far, but in a mix of Kirundi and Swahili she now fiercely casts doubts on the spoken viewpoints.
Félix: "No! We say for the crimes. We say that *that* has finished. What remains now is the eliminating of who is not, who is not…"
Anatol takes over and steers the discussion into another direction.

Fieldwork notes and interview recording

Kamenge, July 2009
This time there are only three of us: I'm sitting on the bed with Anatol and Elodie. Gabriel had asked his girlfriend if I could interview her. As we start to talk about the topic of employment, in which the link with politics is being made, Anatol intervenes to take up the role of expert again.
Anatol: "So in the era of the first republic, and second and third (…) now it is the eighth [republic].[68] So during the first, second and third republic, they gave work [to Tutsi] in that era, because it were the Tutsi who were in power. Buyoya was Tutsi, Bagaza was Tutsi, even Micombero: Tutsi."
Elodie: "Hutu."
Anatol: "He was Tutsi."
Elodie: "Hutu."
Anatol: "He was Tutsi."
Elodie: "Hutu."
Anatol: "He was Tutsi. He exterminated the Hutu. He was Tutsi."
Elodie: "He exterminated them, but he was Hutu."

[68] At the time of independence, Burundi was a monarchy. In 1966 a *coup d'état* brought Colonel Micombero into power; 'the first republic of Burundi' was born. The third republic ended with the democratic elections of 1993, a few months before the outbreak of the civil war (see also Chapter 2).

Anatol: “Oh, let it go.”
Elodie: “Hah.”

It is getting dark in the small room. Anatol turns on the light bulb. The foam rubber mattress is too thin to still feel comfortable, but my interview with Elodie is still on. She is telling me about her childhood before she came to live in Kamenge. When the war broke out, she was living in the adjacent neighbourhood Cibitoke. She then lived with her older sisters and her mother, who passed away in 2004. Her father was already out of the picture.
“He died during the crisis,” Elodie said.
She stayed in Cibitoke throughout most of the war.
Lide: “How was it, living [in Cibitoke] during the crisis?”
Elodie: “Yaaaaaaa [exclamation]…A lot [of things; gesturing by slapping a flat hand on a fist]. There were Hutus and Tutsis who killed each other. Because Cibitoke was a Tutsi neighbourhood. Kamenge, it was said that it was a Hutu neighbourhood. Kinama: Hutu neighbourhood. Mutakura: Tutsi neighbourhood. You cannot quit Cibitoke to go to Kamenge: they will kill you. A man, a boy or a girl who lives here [in Kamenge] cannot go to Cibitoke because they will kill him. And you can say… Because I had a friend here, I could not come and visit him. Or alternatively [he could not] come to our place to pay [us] a visit. There was conflict, between Hutus and Tutsis. We saw gunfire, people who were killed with machetes, stones. That was how it was (…) I continued [studying], because we were in school. When we heard gunfire, we went home. We studied little by little, because we saw that if we had a Hutu teacher, she could not come [teach] us, because she could not leave [Kamenge] to [give courses in Cibitoke].”

Anatol then shares his experiences. He fled; was forced to go ‘in the bush’ (*dans la brousse*).[69]
Elodie: “In the bush?”
Anatol: [to Elodie] “Me? [No] I was not *in the bush*. [To Elodie and me] I was attached [to the rebel movement] just because I was in the bush. But I was not *in the bush*, because I did not quit the mountains [of the province Bujumbura Rurale] to go to Kibira [the forest area known as one of the main locations from where the rebellion was staged]. I stayed there. [Anatol points into the direction of Bujumbura Rurale.] I simply collaborated with the rebel movement. [Long pause.] Because that girl there [pointing to Elodie] she was Tutsi: she was busy chasing me from the capital...”
Elodie: [laughs] “It was not me!”
Anatol: [laughs]
Elodie [to me]: “I did not know what they were going to do until they did it. Because I was little. I heard people say Hutu and Tutsi. But I had Hutu friends. Even today, I have many more Hutu friends compared to Tutsi.”

Fieldwork notes and interview recording

[69] The phrase ‘going into the bush’ is often used to refer to the activity of soldiering in a rebel group.

Kamenge, February 2010
Elodie moved in with Gabriel a few months ago when she got pregnant. They live in a two-room annex that he built a couple of years ago on the plot of his parents, deep in the Kamenge neighbourhood. As he was not yet available for meeting, he had asked Félix to pick me up from the youth centre, our usual *place de rencontre*. Félix visits them often. His parents live around the corner.

Félix teases Elodie with her new position as Gabriel's 'wife' – they are not officially married. "Do you miss Gabriel? Are you thinking of your husband? Mama Gabriel!"
First smiling at his jokes, and then trying to ignore them, Elodie's patience is starting to get exhausted. Elodie: "You wait and see, one day you will have a wife. Well, she will have a hard time with me. I will tease her just as much as you tease me!"

After a while, Félix's jokes are turning a bit more painful. He makes a remark about Elodie's ethnic background being different than those of the people in Kamenge (including Gabriel), suggesting that she might not feel at ease. Félix goes on enumerating some of the atrocities Tutsi committed against Hutu during the war. Elodie moves in and out of the room during Félix's exposition.

Now in the room, Elodie protests: "Yes, but there are also Tutsi women who were murdered by their Hutu husbands. Can you imagine?! Killing your own wife!'
Félix: "Well, that did not happen without a reason. The women would, for example, go to their family in Cibitoke, and tell the people there: 'you should go like this, like that, take this path, then that'; because they knew this neighbourhood well."
Elodie is not listening anymore. She repeats: "It is not true, you are lying, it is not true, you are lying."
Félix is laughing: "Hey, but it is not bad! We are talking about it, it is discussable now!"

Gabriel arrives. After some time, Eloi, a friend from the scouting club, stops by to visit Gabriel. He lectures me (and, indirectly, Gabriel and Elodie) about the fact that one should not live together with their *fiancé* unless they are officially married. In reaction to Félix, who has opened a bottle of beer, he also says that he does not drink anymore because of his religious conversion.
Gabriel explains, half-laughing: "He cannot stand those kinds of things."
Eloi, ignoring Gabriel's remark, asks me: "Have you ever heard of *the saved*?"
Lide: "You are Protestant?"
Eloi: "You should not say that! Don't say 'I am Catholic,' 'I am Protestant.' The most important thing is to believe, read the bible, accept Jesus Christ… Otherwise you'll get the same sort of things like with ethnicity."

Fieldwork notes

Kamenge, May 2010
I am with Anatol. We talk about his temporary job at the electoral commission, politics in general, and the truth and reconciliation commission that has still not been put in place. I ask him what he thinks about this commission.

Anatol: “I told you I prefer to forget, but every time I remember the past…I mean, it is the past that makes the person. If, well, if you do not know the past, [how] can you conceive of the future? Well, you will conceive of the future how? Well, the past gives us an image so as to prepare for the future. I try to forget all that concerns ethnic identities, what, [and] I cannot say that I base myself much now on that which concerns well, the political parties. I do not base myself too much on that, but…What I condemn is their shameful behaviour; [the behaviour] that is [among] political parties…”

Interview recording

Kamenge, May, 2010

In Gabriel’s yard, the debate between Félix and Chuck is turning ferocious. While Félix does not state it explicitly, his disapproval of Gabriel’s and Chuck’s shift in political allegiance to the incumbent CNDD–FDD party is obvious. Through his calm but challenging pose, he elicits justification from the two for going over. Chuck is openly agitated. He raises his voice and now and then stands up to give weight to his arguments. He defends his going over from the MSD party headed by Alexi Sinduhije.

Chuck [shouting]: “Alexi is a racist, a Tutsi who does not like Hutu!”

Félix replies [calmly]: “It is only a strategy of CNDD–FDD to lure votes away from MSD.”

Chuck: “I know it is true!”

Chuck substantiates his statement by saying that he was a member of the MSD party and spent jail time with Alexi when arrested for propaganda.

“Therefore, I know him very well.”

Elodie had walked away to finish her shower. Now returned, she acclaims her husband’s earlier contention that Félix is not politically neutral like he says, but FNL. At the least, she calls out; abstaining from voting is not patriotic.

Fieldwork notes

Vugizo, March 2011

I invited Elodie to my place. She does not have much time though, as she is just returning from school in town and will soon have to go breastfeed her daughter. In the living room, her eyes fall on *Iwacu,* the local newspaper. She loves to read. This week the paper features an item about Prince Louis Rwagasore, the hero of independence who was assassinated in 1961. Pointing at the picture of the young prince, she tells me laughingly that the girls in her school think she looks like Rwagasore. “Same eyes, they say.”

I ask her if she has royal blood. I am still curious about her ethnic background. She had lived in various neighbourhoods besides Cibitoke during the war, her cousins fought in the pro-Hutu rebel movement Palipehutu–FNL, and she sometimes accepted being Tutsi but other times denied this. Her denial was at least once reluctantly acknowledged by Anatol.

Elodie: “My mother was *Ganwa*, she was of the royal lineage.” She tries to remember the names of the different kings of Burundi. She continues: “They all had multiple wives. If the king saw someone he liked, he took her. Even if she was already married. Because he was the king. He chose his successor from amongst all his children.”

Redirecting the conversation again, I try: "What about your father?"
Elodie: "He is not."
I leave a pause, hoping she will continue. She is reading.

Fieldwork notes

III. Navigating Ethnicity: Trends

In this section I explore three prevailing ways in which ethnicity is navigated in the encounter excerpts, namely by stating that ethnicity is disappearing; by disapproving of acting on the basis of ethnicity; and by avoiding the topic. I read the encounters together in order to come to grips with these three ways of navigation, and look at particularities expressed in the encounters to explore the nuances the youths make. They sometimes narrow down the meaning of these lines, while at other times the meaning is stretched.

Disappearance

The excerpts of the fieldwork encounters illustrate that youths generally sustained the idea that in contemporary Burundi the importance of ethnic differences as a frame for understanding and devising action was fading or had disappeared. In the words of Anatol: *ethnicity, it has ended in Burundi*. At the same time, the conversations reveal specifications that youths made in terms of this position. The first specification was that my interlocutors generally circumscribed the diminished presence or complete absence of ethnicity to the domain of political struggles and selective violence. Its significance in other domains was usually either not part of the conversations on disappearing ethnicity, or the assessment was different. The interaction between Gabriel and Félix about whether Félix had really relegated ethnicity to the past, and Félix and Anatol's subsequent specifications that they talk about *ethnic crimes,* illustrate this point.

Second, and related, opinions on the importance of ethnicity were expressed in relative terms. The statements contrasted the reduced import of ethnicity with another time period, or with the exaggerated import of divisions in political party adherence for inclusion or exclusion and for violence. This came out when, for instance, Félix and Anatol respectively, said that *during the elections it will be the parties* and, *today it is the parties*.

The excerpts also show that assertions that ethnicity is disappearing were liable to be met with disbelief. Doubt was occasionally cast on the integrity of those making the claims and could take the form of an accusation, like in Gabriel's mocking question directed at Félix when he claimed that ethnicity had ended: *it has ended for you?* At other moments the assessment itself was

contested, like in Elodie's forceful intervention in that same conversation. Also telling in this regard is that many other youth interlocutors generally expressed their observations about ethnicity with much caution. They described the diminishing relevance of ethnic identification as a basis for understanding and devising action as an emerging process, implying that their analysis was provisional: the situation and direction could change.

Thus, despite the often expressed opinion that ethnicity was absent in people's views and relations, there existed a certain hesitation when it came to assessing both the present and the future. The present situation could be deceptive and things could change quickly. Assessment was further complicated by the disagreements and ambiguity about past events. Indeed, Elodie and Anatol's discussion about whether Burundi's first president was Hutu or Tutsi, reveals more about particular persistent rumours and conflicting versions regarding president Micombero's background than about the historical awareness of Elodie or Anatol.[70] In other words, some degree of uncertainty continues to surround common understandings of ethnicity's relevance as a basis for action, especially violent action, in the present, for the future and regarding what happened in the past.

DISAPPROVAL

The second prevailing way in which ethnicity was explicitly discussed in Burundi amongst my interlocutors was through statements of disapproval of forging relations or committing violence on the basis of ethnic similarities or differences. Disapproval was sometimes very explicit. One example is Elodie's condemnation of Tutsi women who were murdered by their Hutu husbands during the war. Another example is found in Chuck's explanation of his shift in political adherence; he was shouting that *Alexi is a racist, a Tutsi who does not like Hutu*.

At other moments the experience of being, or potentially being judged for acting on the basis of ethnic identification was more implicitly revealed through the justifications youths felt prompted to give to one another. For instance, after Anatol said that during the war he was *in the bush,* he swiftly justified himself when questioned about it by Elodie. Not only did he downplay his soldiering in the bush, he also turned the situation around*: because that girl there she was Tutsi: she was busy chasing me from the capital*. Elodie was thus put in a similar position as Anatol was seconds before, and moved to defend: *it was not me; I was little; I had Hutu friends*.

The widely shared view that relations on the basis of ethnicity should be disapproved of, however, fuelled ambivalence regarding the acts as well as the

[70] Colonel Micombero had physical features that were closer to the "Hutu stereotype" (Sommers, 2001, p. 33).

accusations of such relationship building. Especially in the realm of political contestation, disapproval of forging relationships on the basis of ethnicity prompted the suspicion that accusations of 'ethnicism' were, potentially, merely a malign political stratagem used to make rivals look bad. This is illustrated in the discussion about political adherence between Chuck and Félix. In it, the act of discrimination, the accusation and the questioning of the accusation were highly suspect. Chuck, in order to account for his own shift, accused the MSD party leader of ethnic hatred. Félix's dismissal of this assertion as being a political strategy cast doubt on Chuck's claim. Simultaneously, Félix's position was perceived as suspicious because his claim to be politically neutral was doubted. It was thus left undecided whether the party leader was racist, whether Chuck had been deceived or was deceiving to justify his behaviour, or whether Félix was the one 'playing the field'.

The back and forth accusations, contestations and suspicions were not confined to individual encounters between youths. The mentioned discussion between the youths mirrored remarkably similar discussions broadcast on the radio or in newspaper articles. A public condemnation of an FNL dissident shortly before the elections in May 2010 is a clear illustration of this. An FNL party dissident had allegedly called upon all Hutu people to vote for Hutu candidates in order to prevent the Tutsi returning to power. Various radio transmissions featured representatives of various political parties condemning this call of the FNL dissident. Subsequent releases and people's comments spread readings similar to that of Félix: it was merely a scheme of the incumbent party to make the FNL look bad and to divide the FNL's supporters (this event is also noted by Vandeginste, 2011, p. 329).

Avoidance

A third way in which ethnicity featured in my research in Burundi was, paradoxically, through the avoidance of the topic. Throughout my fieldwork research I regularly observed how young people would do their best to avoid the chance of being confronted with ethnic identification or with the allegation that they were identifying others on the basis of ethnicity. In the excerpts, this comes out particularly in the conversations between on the one hand Félix and Anatol and on the other hand Elodie – the only non-Hutu in this group. Elodie occasionally tried to laugh away a confrontation with her ethnic background, or literally moved out of the room or the courtyard when ethnicity was the topic of discussion. On one of these occasions, Félix reassured her, saying that talking about ethnicity and ethnic violence committed in the past was a good thing. The tense, almost hostile atmosphere throughout the interaction, however, seemed to contradict this position.

Avoidance also appeared in my encounters with youths as a preventative measure for confrontations or for uncomfortable situations – a practice that, towards the end of my fieldwork period, I subconsciously started to share with my interlocutors. For instance, in a series of semi-structured interviews about friendship, my two research assistants, the youths Franck and Olivier, were hesitant when it came to the question about ethnicity and friendship present in the interview guide. Sometimes they skipped this question and other times they went over it so quickly that respondents hardly had time to reply or elaborate on the topic. When I discussed the first few recordings with Franck and Olivier, I had to push myself to tell them to not forget that question. I noted in my fieldwork report: "I realized I felt hesitant to urge my assistants to go deeper into these sensitive issues [about ethnicity] that come up during the interviews and that they seemed to explicitly avoid or ignore (…) My prompting them to ask these questions was met with some renewed caution – as though I had a double agenda" (fieldwork notes, March 2011).

Another example can be found in Aloise's designs for his university research assignments. Aloise (mid-twenties), from the Cibitoke neighbourhood, explained that to avoid critical questions about his background or about the reliability of his data, he chose a 'neutral' research topic and a familiar research setting.

> Aloise and I sit on the wall outside the youth centre and talk about my research. With subtle queries, he calls into question the validity of any findings I may have, and suggests that I must have difficulties getting people to open up to me: why did you choose this difficult topic? Why did you want to do research so far from home? He goes on and tells me that for his university assignments he always chooses to do research with people from his own neighbourhood. He is acquainted with them and their situation, and therefore can easily assess whether people are telling the truth. He also chooses research topics that are politically neutral, so that it does not matter whether he or his interlocutors are Hutu or Tutsi or to which political party they belong.
>
> Fieldwork notes, July 2010

Aloise's tactical avoidance of sensitive issues was not restricted to issues regarding ethnic identification. Political adherence featured in the same equation. Indeed, identifications based on ethnicity were hardly the only ones people tried to avoid. For instance, Eloi's argumentation that people should not say *I am Catholic*, *I am Protestant* suggests that inclusion and exclusion on the basis of personal characteristics was generally to be avoided. Sometimes this led to ludicrous situations. Let me give two examples of how community-based organizations (*associations*) in Burundi could struggle with describing their target groups because of the sensitivity of 'identification'.

An association typically consisted of a number of people who organized themselves on the basis of particular characteristics for specific objectives in

order to give their group an identity, define membership eligibility and give direction to their activities. They could be a group of orphans from the Kinama neighbourhood or ex-combatants of the former rebel movement Palipehutu–FNL, and have objectives like saving money to invest in small businesses, paying school fees together, or covering funeral or other emergency costs. One of these associations aimed to create and enhance solidarity and development in their neighbourhood Cibitoke. Yet in drawing up their regulations, they struggled with defining their *raison d'être*. I was explained by one of the founding members that they felt compelled to expand the articles describing their objective to allow for the objective of helping development elsewhere and their membership eligibility to also include people who were not "native" and who lived elsewhere, for fear of accusations of *regionalism*:[71]

> *Articles of association*
> We, ~~*native members*~~, residents *or non-residents of the urban commune CIBITOKE* (…) decide together to create an Association. (…)
> Article 1: The founding members have created an Association named [...] that has as its purpose helping each other and the development of our neighbourhood. (…)
> Article 3: The Association [...] has as its objective to: develop and improve the living conditions of the members of the Association; contribute to the development of our neighbourhood specifically *and to our country in general*; help each other in case one of the members of the Association has a serious problem.
>
> Draft articles of association, 2010, *my emphases, LB*

Similarly, associations whose purpose was to create and revive solidarity among clan members sometimes felt they had to disguise their basis for support and solidarity.[72] The secretary of one of these associations explained to me that: "In a country where there exist so many divisions, you have to find new ways of bringing people together" (fieldwork notes, April 2011). The association decided to choose a name that concealed their premise, however. They were afraid of being accused of creating new social divisions that could potentially play a role in violence: "But I don't believe it will create new divisions or contribute to violence; we are not preparing anything bad" (secretary of the association, fieldwork notes, April 2011). The navigation practices, thus, were constituted

[71] In previous chapters I mentioned that the term *regionalism* in the political domain usually denotes the practice of discrimination on the basis of locality (e.g. see pages 59-62 and 105-06). The relevant types of localities were usually regions or provinces in the country. In the QN, the term was also sometimes used to refer to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion based on neighbourhood residence; discrimination linked to mapping practices.

[72] Clans traditionally played an important role in the organization of society in Burundi (see Chapter 2, page 60). For more on clans in Burundi, see Mworoha, 1977.

through highly intersubjective processes in which anticipation of the potential reactions of people one around was key.

IV. The Real and the Apparent

In the previous part of this chapter I discussed three lines regarding the ways in which youths invoked or avoided ethnicity. Roughly, the lines showed that generally speaking ethnicity in Burundi was deemed less pertinent than in the past, especially in the political arena. Moreover, the description showed that the youths actively sought for ways not to forge relationships based on background characteristics. This sometimes implied tentatively portraying optimistic assessments.

Yet, because of the intimate relation between background characteristics and violence in the past, youths were confronted with various challenges. Firstly, it was difficult to find alternative bases for relationships because any 'selection' was suspicious. Indeed, identification practices in general were deemed too dangerously close to discrimination and violence. Second, the negative potential of ethnicity still loomed threateningly. The actualization of this potential depended largely on how others could and would employ ethnicity now or in the future, rather than on their own ideas or practices. The salience of ethnicity depended on the people around oneself.

In this part, therefore, I explore the dialectic processes between youths and argue that the uncertainties and insecurities fuel variations on the three lines. Moreover, I explore the effects of these variations, or moments of conflicting narratives, on the preoccupation with identity categories in social relations.

Monitoring Guidelines

The encounters presented earlier in this chapter showed that my youth interlocutors were actively monitoring the relevance of ethnicity in society. The youths reflected on their own positions (Anatol*: I try to forget all that concerns ethnic identities, what, [and] I cannot say that I base myself much now on that which concerns, well, the political parties*); estimated their friends' ideas (for instance Félix, concerning Elodie's fear of living in a neighbourhood largely inhabited by Hutu); and monitored the acts of politicians and others (Chuck*: Alexi is a racist*). Moreover, they regularly tried to redefine some of the existing boundaries, for instance by downplaying the importance of ethnicity or by disapproving of what they heard and saw (Eloi*: You should not say that!*). Yet in the processes of monitoring and redefining the salience of ethnicity, the youths often encountered and displayed doubts, disagreements and contrasting views. In this section I show that these moments of conflicting narratives fed into

youth's practices of monitoring the salience of ethnicity. Silently registering rather than confronting people was the usual way in which my interlocutors engaged with contradictory impressions of whatever kind (Gabriel's remark aimed at Félix – *It has ended for you?* – was quite exceptional). Therefore, as a heuristic measure I here broaden up the repertoire of fieldwork examples to include exchanges that were not explicitly about ethnicity.

The frequency of inconsistent narratives about a wide variety of issues contributed to people's views on the necessity of intensively monitoring one's surroundings. If one was to understand what was happening in society or whom one was interacting with, it was not sufficient to keep eyes and ears open; one had to search for the more hidden levels of understanding. This could be achieved, for instance, through careful observation and reading between the lines. The following two fieldwork diary excerpts are illuminating for these 'guidelines for monitoring'. The first excerpt concerns a conversation I had with an adult man who tried to give me advice on how to conduct my research with youths; the second is from a conversation with Jonathan, a childhood friend of Gabriel, about finding out what one *really thinks* or how one *really is*:

> Parent: "If you talk to the youths, do you observe them as well?"
> Lide: "Yes, that is part of it."
> Parent: "I am asking because, well you have words, but there is something more, something in between. For instance, you can look, but not really see. You can hear, and when they ask you if you heard, you say 'yes yes, I heard, yes yes,' but maybe you have not really *heard*. Do you understand what I am saying? You can speak, say that someone spoke, but has he really *spoken*?"
> Lide: "You talk about [non-verbal] communication?"
> Parent: "Only after you have seen, listened, only then communication starts. You get it, Lidi?"
>
> Fieldwork notes, July 2009

> Jonathan wants to know all about my experiences in Burundi. After enumerating a number of things I enjoy, I remark, as a difficulty, that I have the feeling that Burundians can be a bit closed. Jonathan agrees: "Yes, [a Burundian] says one thing, but to know what is in his heart, what he really thinks, is difficult. But when you are able to observe someone for some time, you can see how he really is."
>
> Fieldwork notes, July 2010

Both excerpts speak to the narrative – that is, the stories Burundians tell themselves (and others) about themselves – of how difficult it is to grasp meaning in Burundians' communication. Indeed, a former refugee, who, upon his return, was questioned about his involvement in training youths in the camps for the rebellion, told me that one of the ways to convince others of his innocence was, paradoxically, by affirming his role in the trainings: "'Ah,' was

their reaction, 'then we believe it is not true. If you had been involved, you would not have said it'" (fieldwork notes, returnee, July 2007). The example shows the idea of a discrepancy between the obvious and the more difficult to discern – or the existence of the real versus the apparent (cf. McLean Hilker, 2009, about everyday ethnicities in Rwanda) or open versus hidden truths (cf. Turner, 2005, about elusive ethnicity amongst Burundians).

For my interlocutors, the 'script' about the existence of the real versus the apparent posed challenges to monitoring and communication that were not necessarily acceptable or benign. The juxtapositions increased suspicions of harmful, deliberate deceit. In this regard, Aloise's questions about the validity of my research findings reflected concerns not only about the ability of an outsider like me to discern meanings communicated in more subtle ways, but also about whether I would be able to tell truth from lies: *[as he] is acquainted with [the people from his neighbourhood] and their situation, [he] can easily assess whether people are telling the truth*. Indeed, suspicions of lies in Burundi abound (Berckmoes, 2013). Telling perhaps is that one of the first new phrases I learned during the summer *camps de travails*[73] of the CJK was '*acha bongo*': stop lying (fieldwork notes, July 2009).[74]

Suspicion (or accusations) of deceit regularly caused tensions in social relationships. Gabriel and Elodie's dismissal of Félix's expressed political neutrality is a case in point. Félix, who claimed a neutral position, was suspected of trying to deceive the others. 'Neutrality' was understood as ambiguity (see also the following chapter). By saying that Félix was in fact FNL, and then calling him unpatriotic, Gabriel and Elodie seemed to be trying to draw him into the open. Although the exchanges did not result in hostile conflict between Gabriel, Elodie and Félix, all three seem to have taken note of the atmosphere at that moment. In light of the exchange, even though this was not directly linked to this one particular event, it did not surprise me that Gabriel time and again insisted that Félix was a friend, but not a close friend.

The more consistent expressions heard and observed (the lines) were not necessarily believed to be truer than the rarer conflicting narratives. Rather the opposite: inconsistencies were often interpreted as hidden truths disclosed. Sometimes hidden truths could 'reveal' themselves through slippages of the tongue. Yet, especially extraordinary events were believed to have the potential to disclose latent truths. An example can be found in Jonathan's description of how Burundi's history of ethnic opposition was revealed by parents to their children only upon the outbreak of war:

[73] Each year, the CJK organized summer camps during which youths from different backgrounds worked together in groups of approximately 20. They made bricks for community members in vulnerable situations, such as widows or former refugees.

[74] In standard Swahili, the phrase would be '*uacha uongo*'. In Burundian Swahili the 'u' is often replaced with a 'b'.

> Jonathan continues to say that the closed attitude or the guarding of feelings in the heart was similar in the war. I ask him to explain.
> He says: "Because before the war we knew nothing. At school they tell you nothing about the history, Hutu and Tutsi. It was only when the war broke out that our parents told us. When you came home, your father would say, okay, you are a bit big now, big enough to know the truth."
>
> Fieldwork notes, July 2010

In a similar vein, to give an example from the political domain, I was told time and again that pre-election voting polls would be of no use in predicting election outcomes in Burundi: only on the polling day would people show their true colours. In this regard, my interlocutors said that the first of the five elections that were scheduled in 2010, even though it was an election at only the low, *communal* level, would be the most important. These elections would reveal the hidden political identities and therefore show what could be expected from the presidential elections.

Producing Hidden Realities

The youths were also sometimes actively engaged in 'producing hidden realities', although some 'misrepresentations' were more deliberate than others (cf. Fujii, 2010, who writes about different shades of truth and lies in Rwanda). By 'deliberate misrepresentations', I mean representations that are not genuine to my interlocutor's own sense of truth and reality, such as in the example of the clan-based association. The initiators of the association concealed their premise in order to avoid negative appraisals from others. Like in the clan-based association, I suggest, insecurity and the negative potentiality attached to not hiding were important motivations for youths to deliberately produce misrepresentations.

Deliberate misrepresentations were especially obvious in the domain of politics. As a rule, the misrepresentations in this domain revealed an opportunistic use of deception. In addition, however, a profound concern with security and insecurity was often at play. A clear example is found in my encounter with Nella in the summer of 2009:

> Lide: "Is there propaganda already?"
> Nella: "A little. But only small meetings. (…) They promise a lot of things. CNDD–FDD says 'we will give you a phone, 100.000 BIF (about 75 euros)'. They [youth] say: 'Okay, come and give.' But a lot of youths here now decided to be solidary.

> We eat what they give us and then we vote for whoever we want. In my heart I say FNL, but if you give, I will eat it all."
>
> Fieldwork notes, Kamenge, June 2009

Nella looked to receive gifts by deceiving politicians into thinking that she would vote for them. Yet, this deception was not merely economically informed. Because adhering and not adhering to a political party were both commonly interpreted as deliberate choices (see the following chapter), not accepting a gift could be seen as an antagonistic gesture. Deceiving was deemed necessary in order to protect oneself against potential hostility.

The blurred boundary between opportunism and protection against potential hostility also becomes clear in Laurent's contra-confession. Laurent, a young rap artist, had let himself be hired by the party CNDD–Nyangoma to sing praise for them in public as part of their 2010 electoral campaign. He told me, however, that he would wear a mask during performances. This would allow him to hide his identity while simultaneously coming across as 'cool'. He told his acquaintances that he let himself be hired because it was an easy way to make money. A year after the elections, however, he confessed to me: "I told people I only did it for the money, but actually in my heart I think Nyangoma is really good." He had been afraid to express this openly as he believed that people around him disagreed with his political preference.

The examples confirm the mentioned suspected and heavily monitored existence of hidden truths related to identity categories that were potentially significant for exclusion and violence. Moreover, especially the example of Laurent gives some sense of the uncertainty surrounding the defining of what 'hidden and exposed truths' were actually 'truthful'. His (literal) masking masked not his *political preference*, but masked the *masking of his political preference* – or so he said. Because of this elusiveness of 'secrets', conflicting narratives as hidden truths disclosed would be assessed only tentatively as possibly truthful and kept in mind alongside the lines of emerging trends.

V. Potentiality: Between Fear and Hope

The examples I gave in the previous part point out that the suspicion of secrets has important ramifications for the valuation and actualization of lines and conflicting narratives. In this regard, a look at the role of temporality and emotions is illuminating. With temporality I mean the different temporal orientations that youths who are navigating ethnicity draw upon in their encounters and interactions (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Vigh, 2011). For instance, when youths scrutinized their surroundings to assess the contemporary relevance of ethnicity, they drew on their imaginaries of the past – mostly the past civil war they had lived through. In these instances, the past importance of ethnic identification in defining where one can live or travel to, for example, was

juxtaposed with contemporary experiences in which ethnicity did not appear to play a defining role for similar demarcations. The contemporary situation was thus evaluated through the image of the past. Outcomes of assessment were not always informed by a comparison of the past with the present. Often, the past was projected onto the potential future to inform readings of the present and expectations of that future. The past, in the words of Anatol, served as *an image so as to prepare for the future*.

Because of uncertainties about correct readings of the past and the unpredictability of the political environment, however, it was difficult to devise action correspondingly. One could not count on the past as a reliable guide for the future (Bauman, 1991; see Chapter 1). Therefore, I argue that emotions were important for estimations and practices directed at influencing the present and future. For example, reconsider, with this in mind, the second excerpt of the taxi ride to town in which Sylvère shared his thoughts on the relevance of ethnicity: *you are just like me scared of the people of Kamenge (…) because at the moment of change, they can suddenly change. Just like when the war broke out*. Sylvère’s assessment was premised on fear based on the past and projected onto the future, notwithstanding appearances today. At other moments, hope influenced assessments and investments in more positive potentialities.

The significance of fear and hope becomes especially clear if we take a closer look at one of the encounters previously described; namely between Félix and Elodie. In the interaction, bleak and more hopeful potential futures competed:

> In the interaction, Félix hinted at the fact that Elodie might be afraid; living in an area largely inhabited by people from an ethnic background different than hers. He brought in memories of the past conflict in which they had been on opposite sites, and suggested that should the past inform the future, Elodie had cause for fear. Elodie tried to disentangle herself from the ascribed position of ‘other’ and potential victim of violence she was pushed into by Félix. She laughed and moved in and out of the room, possibly as a first attempt to avoid the topic and defuse tension. Félix continued however, and emphasized the atrocities committed by Tutsi against Hutu; thus ‘recreating’ the wartime ethnic/spatial opposition between Elodie and him/her new area of living; not only casting her as ‘other’ but also as perpetrator. Still refusing to acknowledge Félix’s positioning of her and the insinuation that in the future she may be a victim of ethnic violence, Elodie tried to create a common ground – both sides had suffered losses. Furthermore, suggesting the unlikelihood of the events to reoccur, she simultaneously appealed to the insanity of the past conflict – *Can you imagine?! Killing your own wife!* Félix, however, insisted on the legitimacy of the recourse to violence; implying that the violence was not insane and therefore it was not improbable that it would reoccur. Invalidating Félix’s arguments was now one of the few remaining options for Elodie to hold onto a more promising future imaginary: *it is not true, he is lying, it is not true, he is lying*. Only then did Félix give in into

creating a shared platform, although still dismissing her arguments and not giving in on his positioning of Elodie with regard to the past: *it is not bad; it's discussable now.*

This example reveals that emotions and a dual relation to the past violence and to future, more peaceful horizons inform the navigation practices of youths. Elodie, in this regard, was determined to hold on to a more hopeful future: an optimist notion of "the possible that life holds through and beyond technical assessments" (Biehl and Locke, 2010, p. 319). Her current position as a non-Hutu married to a Hutu and living in what is still often considered a Hutu neighbourhood would put her in a very vulnerable position if she were to appraise her position as one that followed from the past. Correspondingly, Elodie does not identify herself as being on the side of the perpetrator, which Félix referred to as the Tutsi. Indeed, as the excerpts from the interaction between the group of friends at the beginning of this chapter showed time and again, Elodie contested her friends' classifications and held onto her understandings of Burundian history and her own background as more ambiguous, blurred and uncertain. Her practices may be interpreted as "human efforts to exceed and escape forms of knowledge and power and to express desires that may be world altering" (op. cit., p. 317).

Félix, in contrast, was not willing to let go of his rancour towards those he feels have caused him injury – namely Tutsi – which he projects onto Elodie. I believe that his severe suffering during the war (his family had to flee, they lived in extreme poverty, his eldest brother was murdered) and his continued marginalized conditions made Félix hold onto the emotion and 'moral experience' described by Fassin (following Jean Améry) as '*ressentiment': "*a reaction to historical facts, which signifies the impossibility to forget and the senselessness to forgive" (Fassin, 2013, p. 260). He did not call for revenge. Rather, in line with Améry, Félix argues for "permitting *ressentiment* to remain alive in the one camp and, aroused by it, self-mistrust in the other" (in op. cit., p. 251). Indeed, Félix thought it positive that *it is discussable now*.

Ressentiment, nonetheless, was at odds with the collective desire of the disappearing, disapproving of or avoiding ethnic identification, and gave rise to contradictory impressions and tensions. Indeed, youths generally expressed a keen desire for overcoming ethnic divisions, but the past continued to give rise to everyday emotional, moral and rational dilemmas concerning how to deal with past, on-going and potential loss, injustice and suffering. Anatol had articulated the resulting doubts and hesitations as follows: *I told you I prefer to forget, but every time I remember the past…I mean, it is the past that makes the person. If, well, if you do not know the past, [how] can you conceive of the future?*

Whether deliberate or engendered by a surge of fear or hope, the conflicting narratives were not without effects. They reconfirmed the existence of hidden

realities and the need to carefully monitor. They also reaffirmed the requirement to occasionally deliberately misrepresent one's views or intentions in order to protect oneself against potential hidden hostilities.[75] Thus, precisely because the youths needed to navigate ethnicity in a context of apparent contradictions – with inconsistencies both in silences and in articulated narratives about the salience of ethnicity – they ended up reproducing conflicting narratives of ethnicity themselves: "a self-referring chain" (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995, p. 325).

VI. Discussion: Peace Uncertainty

In this chapter, I explored the ways that youths in the QN of Bujumbura navigate ethnicity in everyday relations. From excerpts of encounters with a group of friends, I teased out meanings of 'lines' and of 'conflicting narratives' in their navigation. In order to understand emerging trends I proposed to acknowledge rather than reconciling the contradictions revealed by the lines and conflicting narratives about ethnicity. I argued that both are constitutive for the youths' practices and the effects regarding uncertainty about ethnicity in Burundi.

I also showed that the navigating practices do not follow an easily predictable pattern. Indeed, conflicting narratives can largely be understood as resulting from emotions connected to the past war, to on-going suffering, and to hopes and fears projected onto the future. The potentiality of identity categories, then, can be seen as a key entry-point from which to understand the youths' everyday navigation of ethnicity. What was questioned and feared were not the categories as such, but their potential for being employed by others: the treacherousness of ethnic identification depended on other persons potentially using an ethnic frame for exclusion and violence.

Processes of identification based on other background characteristics, such as religion, clan membership and political allegiance, were being associated with ethnicity's negative potential, which had been substantiated in the past. Processes of identification and classification in general were taken as omens of imminent violence; or at least, people were aware that they could be interpreted as such. Therefore, even 'benevolently' intended identification was considered to be too dangerously close to malignant processes, and thus required active 'hiding'.

Protective measures like hiding, concealing and deceiving – to which I referred as 'deliberate misrepresentations' – can be seen as tactics in which the

[75] Elsewhere (2013) I have argued that in Burundi it is useful to consider lies and lying as a possible outcome of recurrent experiences of feeling the need to protect oneself against dangerous others. Certain forms of lying may be seen as part of people's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990), formed through Burundi's long history of enduring conflict (in line with this, see Sommers, 2001, about the importance of fear for practices of 'hiding' amongst Burundian refugees).

intention to remain elusive prevails. Similarly, because it was not easily detected whether or not others used an ethnic frame, remaining difficult to define was believed to work protectively against noticed and hidden processes of identification. Preventively, one had to remain vigilant and versatile. Nevertheless, perhaps unintended, these widely prevalent tactics confirmed the treacherousness of identity categories and their employment. How could one be certain that the other was not employing an ethnic frame?

This self-referring chain should not be interpreted as an inevitable and necessarily gloomy course of events, however. Indeed, my argument in this chapter was twofold. Firstly, yes, the youths were preoccupied with the significance of inconsistencies for hidden realities about ethnicity, and therefore ended up participating in producing and reproducing conflicting narratives. And, as I just mentioned, by implication they endorsed the existence of latent 'truths' and thus reconfirmed the experienced overt and covert salience of ethnicity in Burundi. Nonetheless – as the second part of my argument – in their daily encounters, the youths were strongly investing in more hopeful futures. They tried to ensure that ethnicity would no longer be a potential ground for exclusion and violence. The lines revealed, for instance, that youths disapproved of forging relations on the basis of ethnicity and, possibly intended as a self-fulfilling prophesy, regularly denied the present salience of ethnicity. In addition, and this was most clearly revealed in the Elodie's practices, youths dwelled on and exploited the ambiguity and uncertainty regarding existing knowledge and power in order to imagine a different, more peaceful future. They engaged in subjunctivizing tactics to express this peaceful desire and forge it as a possible scenario. If one can say that in the past certainty was sought by means of 'dead certainty' (Appadurai, 1998), safer futures may perhaps be ensured – or at least, be given a chance – by acknowledging and dwelling on uncertainty.

In the chapter 5, I explore youths' practices in view of preparing for their futures as adults, spouses and parents. I show that the political conjuncture characterized by periods of relative stability alternating with periods of heightened tensions, shape the possibilities of the urban youths to prepare, create and seize life chances.

Chapter 5

5. The Cycle of Politics and Life Chances

I. Crisis Dynamics in Searching for Life

Most of my interlocutors in the *Quartiers nord* (QN), especially the male youths, kept a careful eye on political developments in order to monitor and anticipate dangers. On an everyday basis they shared news about politics with peers at the youth centre, in the *ligalas* (the place where youths hang out in the street) and at home. In these conversations, they showed themselves to be well aware and critical: they were knowledgeable about economic interests; sceptical about the intentions of politicians; and had strong opinions about the latter's supposed hypocrisy, corruption, and incapacity. Moreover, in the run-up to the elections scheduled for May–September 2010, I heard youths regularly repeat to each other the warnings about political participation that were being disseminated by the radio stations of government and civil society and by internationally financed awareness raising campaigns. In the warnings, youths were urged and urged each other not to allow themselves to be 'manipulated'. The warnings more or less equated political participation with being used for intimidation or politically inspired violence by politicians full of false promises. With a few exceptions, the youths all expressed a general disinterest in becoming involved in politics.

Just before the elections, however, it appeared that a large number of youths did become politically involved. In April 2010, I was comparing with two youths political participation amongst young people in Burundi and in the Netherlands, where elections were held in the same period. I told them that I had heard on the radio that in the Netherlands approximately one per cent of youths were members of a political party. In the Netherlands, politicians had to work hard to get young people involved. Both of them smiled upon hearing this and said that in Bujumbura the percentage must reach at least 99. Of course, participation in both contexts was likely differently defined and my interlocutors probably exaggerated their estimate for the sake of argument. Yet, it is impressive that also when in that period I asked other youths to estimate political participation amongst peers, all mentioned between 60 and 90 per cent.

Indeed, at large outdoor gatherings youths were overwhelmingly represented, and in the streets throughout the city, young people participated in political party parades. Even many of the youths who had expressed negative feelings about politics and who had been warning others to be careful not to fall for the manipulations of politicians, were keenly participating in the large outdoor gatherings. Boniface, for instance, who a year earlier had explicitly dismissed political participation, excused himself when we met at the youth

centre in order to go to a public meeting organized by the ruling party. He said he had to go and show his support for the CNDD–FDD. Another youth, the 18-year-old Rose, who was otherwise politically indifferent, told me that she had been asked to attend to the small gatherings (*reunions*) of political parties in the neighbourhood. She seemed proud about the invitation and had accepted it.

The youths I am referring to here live in the *Quartiers nord* (QN), were relatively well educated[76] and, as mentioned, were aware of the downsides and risks associated with politics and political participation. The question thus arises, firstly, if not naively following political leaders' agendas, as was commonly assumed to be the reason for the apparent massive youth participation, what induced these youths to become politically active? Second, how can we understand the apparent change of heart regarding political participation that many youths demonstrated during the electoral period?[77] Were people only then showing what had been 'in their hearts' all along? Or should we rather understand the apparent shift as 'judicious opportunism': the opportunistic seizing of promising chances (Johnson-Hanks, 2005)?

In this chapter I explore these questions and argue that the answers are best understood in light of the limited opportunities youths have to improve and build their lives and livelihoods (cf. Vigh, 2006a; 2006b; Honwana, 2012b). The historically fostered interdependence between political leaders and youths render political mobilization and participation as one of the few and rather obvious pathways for 'finding life' (*trouver la vie*), but requires a careful social navigation and balancing of different objectives and risks.

This pathway, however, is often closed off as well. I thus propose to see the practices of 'searching for life' (*chercher la vie*) in light of conjunctural 'crisis dynamics'. Youths anticipate that periods of relative stability will alternate with periods of heightened tension and turmoil. The former period allows for and requires different kinds of tactics, which come of use in the latter. Periods of

[76] In Burundi, the level of education amongst the population is relatively low. Since the abolition of primary school fees in 2005, net primary school enrolment rate increased from 59 to 95 per cent in 2011/12. Completion rates and grade repetition are high: 35 per cent. 9 per cent of the pupils drop out. Net enrolment rate in secondary school is 22.6 and 18.4 per cent for male and female adolescents respectively (age 10-19). Secondary school completion rate is 13.5 and 7.8 for male and female students respectively (UNICEF, 2013). This means that when youths finished a few classes in secondary school they are already considered relatively highly educated. Because of the limited formal-sector job opportunities and the saturated job market, and the growing number of students enrolled in schools, however, this is starting to change. Common perception now holds that only obtaining a degree counts as valuable (cf. Sommers and Uvin, 2011; Berckmoes and White, 2013).

[77] I use 'change of heart' rather than 'change of mind' because Burundians often speak of the 'heart' (*umutima/ coeur*) to refer to moral and emotional matters. Interesting in this regard are the findings of Ingelaere (2007) on the signification of 'heart' (*umutima*) in neighbouring Rwanda. He argues that the heart "is the centre of reception of outward impulses and the locus of interior movement, the seed of the interior. Emotions, thoughts and will are interconnected and unified in the heart. The heart is inaccessible to others, but nevertheless the place where the truth lies" (p. 16).

turmoil are not only characterized by danger but also present a 'vital conjuncture' in which new opportunities arise and can be seized (cf. Johnson-Hanks, 2005) – but not without negative consequences for the individual youths and for subsequent crisis dynamics.

I start with a description of the interdependent relation between political leaders and youths. I look especially at the historical factors that have contributed to the image of youths as a naïve but dangerous and powerful political constituency. I then explore youths' efforts to find life, and the various opportunities and constraints they encounter in periods of relative stability and in periods of instability.

II. Politics, Violence and Youth

> Young people in Burundi find themselves in a very tough situation. They have very few options. They are therefore vulnerable to offers from politicians who mobilize them for their own objectives.
>
> International expert, April 2007

> The main problem is that a lot of youths are not educated. They, being without education, are easily mobilized [for political objectives/ violence]. We have to try succeed in promoting 'individualization' so that the youths do not respond en masse anymore.
>
> Representative Ministry of Youth and Sports, July 2007

> Youths should make themselves free of the people who have an agenda of crime.
>
> Political science student at Great Lakes forum discussion, July 2007

These three quotations based on fieldwork notes, are emblematic for prevailing images of youths and their relation to politics in Burundi. In Burundi, youths are regarded as capable of disruptive, violent political behaviour, especially if they do not have an occupation and their level of education is low. Their potential as a group is feared. Additionally, youths are assumed to have a problematic, dependent position. They supposedly naively and willingly carry out the orders of malevolent political leaders. These representations are persuasive; they reflect socio-political configurations and experiences of violent youth groups in the past. Below, I describe the interdependent relationship between youths and leaders, and the role of youth groups in past violent events.

The above quotations suggest a strict separation between the categories of 'leaders' and that of 'youths'. The former are associated with power and accountability, the latter with constraints and dependence. There are important historical roots for the separation between the two categories and for concomitant associations. One of these concerns the longstanding structural relation between rulers and subjects to which I referred in the second, historical, chapter.

In that chapter, I described Burundian pre-colonial society as having a strong hierarchical organization. Subjects depended heavily on their territorial leaders for protection and support. Rulers were also an important source of instability and insecurity. Vertical, personalized ties, often mediated through 'brokers', served as a security measure. Moreover, these ties could help petitioners in their pursuit of social mobility. In the colonial period and after independence, the basic tenets of this system were preserved. The religious underpinnings and balancing factors, however, were severely undermined. State and society were increasingly separated and relations were maintained through cycles of violence and repression (Ndikumana, 1998).

In my research, the continued cogency of the top–down relation between authorities and ordinary people was repeatedly asserted. My interlocutors emphasized particularly the dependent position of citizens. In the opening quote of this thesis, for instance, Mathieu expressed this by saying that, '*It is the politicians who have the power to make things happen'* (see page 15). Another example is found in the interview I held with Mama Eric, a mother of eight. After a lengthy discussion on the different episodes of war (she was born in 1942) I asked her to share her ideas about the future. In her view, the decisive power lies in the hands of God and the leaders of the country:

> Lide: When you look at the future of your children and your grandchildren, what gives you hope?
> Mama Eric: It depends on God and the notables, especially the leaders. Otherwise I do not know; I don't see. It is up to God and the notables.
> Lide: What do you see as obstacles for your children and grandchildren?
> Mama Eric: It is not a good example that the leaders give (…) [We depend on] our leaders and God. You know well that in this country it is the men, the country is shaped by men. If they are willing to govern well, steer us in the right direction and give a good example, the people will work. But if they create discontentment, if they do not give a good example, war will stay in the hearts of people.
>
> Interview, Ngagara, April 2011

Mama Eric's answers reveal the common understandings of the top–down way in which Burundian society – down to *hearts of people* – is thought to be fashioned. Also, her assertion that *the country is shaped by men* shows the predominance of the patriarchal norm in society, particularly in the domain of governance.

Mama Eric suggests that both good and bad can come from the top. Yet, the prevailing image of political leaders and their doings is rather negative. This can perhaps best be understood in light of the belief that politics corrupts those involved (Turner, 2007). The phrase "evil comes from the top" has since long been used to summarize the general workings of Burundian politics (Martin Ndayahoze quoted in Lemarchand, 1994, p. 63). Political leaders, goes the idea, instigate ordinary citizens to feel hatred and commit violence (Uvin, 2009).

The typecast of gullible followers or willing receivers of hateful messages was regularly ascribed to categories like 'uneducated people'; 'people in the hinterland' (*l'intérieur*); 'Hutu' (Malkki, 1995); or to 'ordinary people' in general (Uvin, 2009). Nonetheless, 'youths' formed a category deemed especially vulnerable to manipulation by political leaders. In relation to this, mobilization efforts targeted especially youths. Firstly, a large part of the Burundian population – therefore, political constituency – was young.[78] For political leaders, gaining the vote of the youths was therefore important. Second, youths were viewed as dependent on their elders, but unlike children for instance, physically strong enough to act with force. In addition, youths were seen as still having to decide on their political loyalty, and, for that matter, relatively easy to convince: "Here [in Burundi] they [politicians] work with the youth because the old [people] will not change their minds. They already have a party. But the youth, they just want 'to eat'" (Nella, 19 years, June 2009). Yet most importantly perhaps, is the fact that a large youth following was equated with the availability of recourse to violence, and fear and intimidation were important electoral strategies (HRW, 2010; Travaglianti, 2013). Indeed, youths in both Bujumbura and the countryside told me they take into account the likelihood of new war when deciding on who to vote for. In a group discussion in Ruyigi, for instance, two youths said, respectively:

> Sometimes we think [another war is possible]. There are people who think that if we vote wrongly, the war may start again.

[78] Estimates for 2012 show that 45.8 per cent of the population is between 0–14 years, 19.7 per cent between 15–24 years, 28.3 per cent between 25–54 years, 3.7 per cent between 55–64 years, and 2.5 per cent 65 years and over. The median population age in 2012 estimated at 17 years (http://www.indexmundi.com/burundi/ demographics_profile.html, accessed 10 August 2013). The population of young people aged between 10–19 years is currently 1.947.000, i.e. 23 per cent of the population (UNICEF, 2013).

> It is possible that someone is in power who had a rebel group before, and if we do not vote for him, we risk that he will become angry and will restart the war.
>
> Gacokwe, Ruyigi, March 2010

The equation of a large youth following with the threat of violence and thus political force builds on the experience with violent youth militias in the previous decades. In the 1960s, 1970s, 1990s and 2000s, youth groups played a significant role in the repression and violence that were used as mechanisms for governance by ruling elites and war leaders. In the next two sections, I explore these groups' political activism, paying particular attention to the role of the groups in the violence.

Politically Active Youth

Youths in Burundi have been important actors in political struggles since the period of independence. In the 1960s, the phenomenon of politically active youth (*jeunesse*)[79] took shape in the first place through the youth wing of the UPRONA party. Over time, this wing carried the names *Jeunesse National Rwagasore* (JNR), *Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore* (JRR) and *Union de la Jeunesse Révolutionnaire du Burundi* (UJRB).[80] The first time the JNR established itself clearly as a radical political organization was in the Kamenge riots of 1962. The riots broke out after countless mutual provocations by *syndicalistes* and JNR militants on the urban outskirts. Several houses were set on fire and four prominent Hutu lost their lives. These riots helped establish the reputation of the JNR as anti-Western, anti-Hutu, and violence-prone. Subsequently, in 1965, after an aborted coup by Hutu leaders, the JNR militants, in collaboration with politicians, emerged as a kind of surrogate government and took part in the elimination of coup suspects (Lemarchand, 1994).

Several years later, the youth wing (then JRR) again showed its radical and violent side. In 1972, the JRR was called upon to identify and round up Hutu citizens to be killed. As Lemarchand (1994) phrases it, the youth organization, with their involvement in the selective genocide, completed its metamorphosis "from a loosely organised group of angry young men, seething with feelings of ethnic hatred, to a praetorian guard in the service of a Tutsi ethnocracy

[79] Instead of referring to the young people as 'youth,' Lemarchand (1994) uses the French word *jeunesse* to designate this special category of politically active youth. Nowadays, a similarity can be found in the use of the Kirundi-French word *abajeunes* – although *abajeunes* is not exclusively used in the context of politically active youth.

[80] In the 1960s the youth wing was called Jeunesse Nationaliste Rwagasore (JNR). It was then renamed Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore (JRR) after Rwagasore's death. Under the rule of president Bagaza, to negate the appeal to the Prince who was a member of an adversary (royal) clan, the official name became *Union de la Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Burundaise* (UJRB).

ultimately responsible for many of the killings of 1972" (p. 62). The following account of these events by a high-ranking government official (Tutsi) shows how the youth organization is remembered as central in the killings:

> In [19]72 they killed all the soldiers that were Hutu, they killed every Hutu soldier or policeman. It was primarily the JRR. The JRR played an important role in the massacres of Hutu (...) So the army, to arrest and kill people, used these youth a lot. It was like a militia of the party who, well, to arrest people, they sent the JRR. (...) The army used the youth to arrest the people and load them into trucks. It was not everywhere the [political] leadership [who gave these orders]; it was more the army and the administration, like community administrators or officers. It was them who used the youth. You see, it was a militia of the party.
>
> Interview with government official, May 2011

In addition to the central role of the JRR in the violence, the interview excerpt confirms the idea that the JRR youths carried out orders given by authorities; these political, administrative and army leaders were held primarily responsible for the killings – at least in public opinion; there have not been any trials. Nonetheless, youths were attributed a certain decision-making power as well; to the extent that they, as individual young people, did or did not agree to participate in the violence:

> Government official: The [youth] have a responsibility as well of course (...) in [19]72, I was sixteen [and] I had a feeling of hatred and fear for the Hutus (…) But, really, I did not participate.
> Lide: In that period, the majority of the JRR were Tutsi?
> Government official: The leadership was Tutsi, but there were a lot of Hutu. Especially in the countryside it was Hutu who were under the command of Tutsi to go and kill their own brothers. It was possible because they were not people with a much elaborated 'philosophy'. They had orders, were afraid of power, and received orders from the local administrator who would say that the others were traitors. We called them '*abamenja*'.[81]
>
> Interview with government official, May 2011

The specific type of relation that existed between the JRR youth and authorities was fostered in various ways. Firstly, the quoted official mentioned the readiness amongst young people to follow orders: out of fear of the authorities and their unquestioning faith in the decisions made (i.e. no *elaborated philosophy*). Second, he mentioned the prevalence of hatred and fear for the 'other' that existed in society. Additional important factors, I propose, might be the way the UPRONA party institutionally appealed to young people right from their

[81] *Abamenja* can be translated as 'people that betray'. It is derived from the verb *kumenja*: to betray, deceive, or commit an unforgivable act.

childhood, and the closeness of the JRR to the institution of the school and to the local administration.

By default, all Burundian citizens were members of the country's only political party, UPRONA. This meant that it was impossible to be politically 'neutral': if you were not with the ruling party, you were against it. Second, from primary school onwards, children were 'socialized' into UPRONA followers, first through the club '*diri diri*' (from *dirigent,* or in English, person in charge) and afterwards, membership of the youth wing was an obvious choice for anyone who wanted to be involved in the development and governance of the community and society. The following recollections of a former JRR member (Hutu, b. 1973) about his experiences as a member from 1986 until 1992, illustrate the attractiveness of political participation for ambitious and socially engaged school going children and youth:

> Former JRR: In that period, being first secretary of the JRR meant something like being the adjunct of the school director. The movement formed an integral part of the single party, and the school director was usually the first secretary [of the party] at the community level (...)
> Lide: You say you became a member when you were in the 5th grade of primary school. What made you decide to [become a member]? I mean to ask, how were youth attracted, or not, to participate? Were they mobilized, or [did they enter the organization] on their own initiative, what made...?
> Former JRR: Hmm, I am not sure how to say it. Anyway, there was no force involved. Involvement was not by force, only, there were advantages: to be with others, participate in the *défilés;* that was amusing for children. Because it were the '*militants*' of the JRR who would, on the first of July [Independence day], the first of May [Labour day], and other days, it was only the members of the JRR who were parading (...)
> That was in primary school. But in secondary school, I was a member because being a member of the JRR also gave you the power to have your opinions heard, because you were in all the organs of decision-making, you had decision-making power in the community, *voila* (...). In fact, at that time, being in the JRR meant that you were involved in the life, the life of a society. That is to say, in the life of the school, and you were involved in the management of the village. [For instance] at a particular moment they [authorities] gave orders to the population. (...). It was the *Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore* who mobilized the population to participate in the community work. It was the youth who, I was going to say, carried out the orders that came, that came either from the [provincial] governor or [local] administrator; with certain bravura of course, because the orders transferred were always interpreted according to the will of some and others.
>
> Former JRR member, Hutu, May 2011

The Burundian state's involvement in the civil education of young people recalls what has been described about the influence of communism elsewhere in Africa. Particularly interesting in this regard is Burgess' study (2005b) on the Zanzibari youth association the 'Young Pioneers'; the workings of this association show interesting resemblances to UPRONA's appeal to children and youths via the *diri diri* and the party youth wing. The Young Pioneers emerged in the 1960s and built on the expertise gained by Zanzibari students in Eastern Europe. After the revolution in 1964, these Zanzibari sought to create a new kind of citizen via the Young Pioneers. The organization used various activities to educate the young, including parades and labour assignments. The emphasis in these activities was on the ritual aspect; they served as visual proof of good citizenship and conformity to the ruling agenda of the state. Limited compliance and popular participation in the youth association was "an essential avenue toward the acquisition of official patronage" (Burgess, 2005a, pp. xvii–xviii).

Burundi's early flirtation, and later more cautious ties with communism are likely to have inspired some of the activities and workings mentioned by the former JRR member. The legacy of these practices, into which many (especially older) youths have been socialized, came out for instance in a conversation I held via *Facebook* about the 50th anniversary of Burundi's independence. When I asked Déo (b. 1978) about China's involvement in the preparations of what promised to be a massive, colourful *défilé* (parade) for the annual celebration – which signalled the strengthened ties between Burundi and China – he replied: "Yes school children are being trained for the event, looks like in the '70s, the thing was happening on all the national events..." (June 2012). These apparent connections, nonetheless, require further, historical research.

Wartime Youth Militias

In 1992, the quoted JRR member abruptly lost his enthusiasm for the youth organization. At the time, he was 'identified' as an ethnic Hutu and this was reason for the people around him to question his JRR leadership. As he became aware of his own (different) ethnic background, the discrimination present in the JRR and of the role of the organization in the 1972 killings, he stopped all political activities. He explained that the deeply polarized society made it impossible for him, being of mixed origin, to remain politically active.

His political 'retirement' coincided with the rise of open ethnic tensions and the abandonment under pressure of single party rule (see Chapter 2). In this period, new political parties also organized youth wings similar to the example of the JRR. For instance, FRODEBU, the political party that was to win the 1993 elections, created JEDEBU (*Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi*). After the murder of President Ndadaye, this youth militia was involved in systematically hunting

down Tutsi (Scherrer, 2002). The militia was active in the countryside as well as in the QN; members of JEDEBU participated in ethnic cleansing in the Kamenge and Kinama neighbourhoods (ibid). Various extremist anti-Hutu militia groups were also formed, for instance *Sans échec* (the infallible), *Sans défaite* (the undefeated), *Puissance d'autodéfense 'amasekanya'* (power of self-defence) and SOJEDEM (*Solidarité de la Jeunesse pour la Défense des Minoritées*; youth solidarity for the protection of minorities).

In the QN neighbourhoods, *Sans échec* was particularly notorious and is still often mentioned in conversations (note that in his guided tour (Chapter 3), Innocent mentioned the group). *Sans échec* was not formally linked to a political party but collaborated extensively with the army in the persecution of Hutu and in the urban campaigns called *ville morte* (dead city) (Daley, 2008). Many politicians, parents and neighbours initially encouraged the youth militia groups. In Ngagara, the youths were applauded for their courage in protecting the community against Hutu threats. They were rewarded with presents and drinks. Later, however, the youths started to cause problems in their neighbourhood. Support faded and the group gained the reputation of being out of control. Political leaders that used to collaborate with them, I was told, turned against them.

Another youth association that had an important presence in the QN was the civilian youth league JPH (*Jeunesse Patriotique Hutu*). The organization was linked to the Palipehutu–FNL rebel group and was well organized. The youth league had an important task in mobilizing followers, collecting money, and relaying intelligence. A former member of the JPH explained to me that the Palipehutu–FNL worked with at least four different groups: dispatched 'soldiers' responsible for pointing the way (literally) to new recruits; the informants, who for example sought information about robbers pretending to be FNL; 'guides', who led the way for soldiers unfamiliar with the area in which a military operation was to take place; and an 'administrative commission' that collected and registered the (monetary) contributions of the population. The JPH consisted largely of young people (both male and female) in their late teens and twenties, including many high school and university students (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Amongst my interlocutors, a number of youths had in one way or another been involved in the activities of the JPH (for instance, Anatol, to whom I referred in the previous chapter).

Non-violent Youth

The above list of youth collectives participating in ethnic/political violence is not exhaustive. It should be noted, however, that not all youth associations were politically active and involved in ethnic violence like the examples just

mentioned. For instance, during the war, many youth scouting club groups were engaged in charity work for the poor and sick. These associations, while not necessarily untouched by discrimination and violence, offered to youths some of the few available group affiliations aimed at bridging rather than underlining ethnic divisions. Another example of a non-violent youth association can be found in the neighbourhood Ngagara. Several youths, as a protest against the extremist and violent role of *Sans échec*, started to organize themselves – later this initiative developed into the group named *Icuru*. Their aim was to promote peace, and to respond to the needs of their neighbourhood. See in this regard the following account of two of its constituting members:

> We said to ourselves, we have to organize ourselves so that we can show that not all the Hutus are bad and not all the Tutsis are bad (…) But young people, students in the last years of [the secondary shool], how can they stand up to the political leaders [les homes politiques]? We had to undertake action. But not the action of attacking each other. First, we needed to dissociate ourselves from the other groups. To say we do not agree with those groups of *Sans échec*, *Sans défaite*. We do not agree with the violence. (…) [At first we did not have a name.] That came much later. People said: 'You, what is your identity? What do you do? You are policing here?' So we had to become 'legal'.
>
> Interview recording, April 2011

Significant, moreover, is that research conducted by Uvin shows that "less than 3 per cent of Burundian young men joined an armed movement during the war" (2009, p. 179).[82] Yet, the common perception, at least in the QN, is that this is a very gross underestimation. Indeed, the reputation of youths is built predominantly on the negative examples of the youth collectives involved in violence.[83] The persuasiveness of these negative images, I suggest, stemmed partly from the visibility of the militia groups as youth, as often explicitly referred to in the groups' names.[84]

Nonetheless, guidance and education were generally perceived as effective measures for countering youths' negative (i.e. violent) conduct. Especially formal education was appreciated as eradicating the 'manipulation' of youths into using

[82] Moreover, available statistics show, for instance, that there are only 1,2 and 0,8 demobilised ex-combatants per 100 inhabitants in Kamenge and Kinama respectively (based on total population of 50,070 in Kamenge and 49,776 in Kinama, 2008 Census) (Travaglianti, 2013).

[83] Both male and female youths have participated in the youth collectives, although the latter to a much lesser extent. The negative representation of youth as a disruptive political force primarily concerned male youths.

[84] About the representations of youths in Africa as potential threat and danger, see for instance, Durham, 2000; Abbink and Van Kessel, 2005; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005; Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 2009.

violence.[85] The following extract from the notes I took after a conversation with a youth in a bar in Bujumbura illustrates the assumed exclusiveness of education and violence. Indeed, the logic and convincingness of the education-excludes-violence adagio appeared infallible to my interlocutor:

> I was in conversation with a young man in the outdoor garden of the well-known bar Nkolomboka. He was an acquaintance of a mutual friend who, when passing us, jokingly said: "Watch out for him, he is dangerous." My conversation partner immediately tried to redress the accusation. "No I am not dangerous! Here in Africa, when you say 'dangerous' that means 'killing'. I do not have blood on my hands and never will. I am not dangerous. I studied. People who studied, don't kill. Uneducated people do."
>
> Fieldwork notes, June 2009

The fact that educated youths in, for instance, the JRR and SOJEDEM held leadership positions (Daley, 2008, p. 86) and were represented in youth leagues like the JPH, did not seem to influence the promise of peacefulness popularly ascribed to education. Nonetheless, my research showed that the way that education was operative in the plots and plans of youths did not necessarily reflect its supposed effect of deterring manipulation and violence. Indeed, as I show in the next part of this chapter, education was often seen merely as a first step in a trajectory towards promising life chances, a trajectory that could but did not have to entail avoiding political participation and violence.

III. Chercher la Vie

> *Bujumbura, June 2007*
> I'm in the same zone called Kamenge at 20:00 o'clock. I'm still with two boys who are chatting [about] the problems of the government of Burundi, and so how will be their future?
>
> Philippe's diary[86]

The quote from Philippe's diary reveals that youths held critical discussions with peers about the governments' doings and how this could affect their lives. The short quote also illustrates why: youths perceived a direct relation between the operations of the government and their own precarious futures. I have described the historical configuration of relationships between rulers and ruled, and

[85] This perception, by the way, is shared by many international and national development organizations.

[86] During my fieldwork in 2007, I asked several youths to keep a diary for one week. The youths noted their activities from morning till evening and shared other comments about their life.

youths' past political involvement as important roots for this perceived relation. Another weighty component, which helps to understand the continued relevance of political development for youths, concerns the difficulties youths encounter in '*chercher la vie*' (searching for life) and the logics that are believed to apply to successful searches.

In this part of the chapter, I explore how political participation figures in the endeavour of searching for life, and describe some of the difficulties and dilemmas youths are confronted with when they purposefully engage in or withdraw from political participation.

Limited Employment Opportunities

The youths used the concept *chercher la vie* most often in the context of employment, especially formal employment. The importance of formal employment should be viewed in first place in the context of pervasive poverty and unemployment in Burundi. The majority of the population lives below the national poverty line.[87] Additionally, on the Human Development Index for instance, which provides a composite measure of the dimensions of health, education and income, Burundi ranks 178 out 187, which is well below the sub-Saharan region average.[88] Furthermore – although available statistics are rather problematic[89] – unemployment appears a problem that is especially acute in urban areas, and that disproportionally affects youths.[90] The prevalence of youth unemployment, particularly in *quartiers populaires* like the QN, can be gathered easily from qualitative studies; for instance those conducted in 2010 in

[87] According to the World Bank, 66.9 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line in 2006 (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC/countries/BI?display=graph, accessed 23 July 2013). Other statistics speak of more than 81 per cent of the population as living below the poverty line (PRSP, 2006).

[88] United Nations Development Programme, http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BDI.html (accessed 23 July 2013).

[89] In Burundi, available statistics are imprecise. The majority of people work in the – difficult to monitor – informal sector (according to statistics, 68 per cent against 34.6 per cent in the formal sector; IMF, 2011.) and many people, especially in the rural areas, indicate that they work in agriculture even though many cannot support themselves and their family through their agricultural activities.

[90] Employment statistics of Burundi indicate that in the mid-2000s, 81.2 per cent of the population reported being employed (IMF, 2011). The statistics indicate that unemployment is primarily an urban phenomenon: in 2008, 10.3 per cent of the population in urban areas indicated being unemployed compared to 1.6 per cent in the country in total (Bureau Central du Recensement, 2011). In Bujumbura, the unemployment figures are higher, namely between 13.3 per cent (CENAP, May 2010) and 17 per cent – although analysis of household surveys yields different results (ISTEEBU, in IMF, 2011). Young people figure disproportionally in the unemployment statistics: compared to an average of 90 per cent of employed people aged 25-54, only 68 per cent of the young people were employed (IMF, 2011, p. 47).

preparation of the communal development plans (*Plans communaux de développement communautaire*). These popular consultation studies show that in almost all of the QN the high number of youths 'in the streets' is one of the main concerns of the neighbourhood inhabitants.[91]

Besides the economic dimension of income that jobs represent, *chercher la vie* refers to social and existential dimensions of achieving the ideal image of an adult, spouse, parent, and person. This is the case especially for male youths, as traditionally men were (and usually still are) expected to be self-sufficient and provide for their families. In the city, long-term formal implyment is one of the few ways that render these expectations achievable. For young women, too, steady employment is increasingly valued as a sign of reputable (urban) womanhood, especially among the middle class and elite, and those aspiring to move up the social ladder. It shows that a woman works hard and that she can contribute to the wellbeing of the family. In this regard, for example, a single, 29-year-old nurse told me that her job made her a popular prospective marriage partner. The employment demand for nurses at the time was fairly high. Her difficulty, she said, was in finding a man who actually loved her and not the fact that she had a job (May 2010). In other words, steady employment and prosperous economic prospects were vital for achieving what others have dubbed 'respectable adulthood' (e.g. Christiansen et al., 2006).

In Burundi, the difficulties that youths face in finding employment are attributed primarily to the extremely restricted job market. (This is similar to situations elsewhere in Africa, e.g. Diouf, 1996; Utas, 2005b; Sommers, 2012; Orock, 2012.) Second, both international and local observers often state that Burundian youths have an 'unfitting attitude'. For example, the research report *Défis d'acces au marché du travail: quelles alternatives pour les jeunes burundais?*[92] points out that the popular imagination attributes much of the responsibility for not finding a job to young people's supposed laziness, unrealistic expectations of the job market, lack of creativity and innovation, and tendency to live beyond their means (CENAP, May 2010).

A small research project I conducted with youths on youth unemployment at the Kamenge youth centre, revealed that youths in the QN generally agreed with all these points. Nonetheless, the youths added some important nuances for the explanation of the youths' 'unfitting attitude'. For instance, Divine, one of the youth researchers in the project, explained that it was true that, like many other Bujumbura youths, she would not accept just any job offered to her – but not simply because of laziness or unrealistic expectations. She said that she would

[91] The *Plans communaux de développement communautaire* (PDCP) are linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), which are meant to guide the development plans of the country. The plans and papers are largely financed by international organizations like the International Monetary Fund.

[92] Translation: Challenges for access to the labour market: what alternatives for Burundian youth?

rather be unemployed than shame her parents by having their daughter work as, for example, a *taxi-vélo* (bicycle-taxi driver); they had denied themselves so much in order to put her through university (group discussion, June 2010). In other words, the 'unfitting attitude' may have more to do with social values and face-saving, and with an unwillingness to give up dreams, than with laziness or naivety.

The most strongly articulated concern that emerged from this small research project, however, was a third issue: namely the favouritism at play in hiring people for vacant positions. In the abovementioned research document, this issue was also noted and diplomatically worded as 'the lack of transparency' in how the few available positions were distributed (CENAP, May 2010). The youths in my research usually referred to this issue as one of the many forms of rampant corruption in Burundi.[93] In the past, access to jobs was influenced by ethnic and regional discrimination in the schooling and administrative system. Especially Tutsi from the 'South' were deemed at an advantage (see Chapter 2). Given the changed power constellation in government and administration, these ethnic/regional profiles were no longer believed to be guiding for career opportunities; at least, not simply in a positive sense. Nonetheless, the principles of discrimination in access to employment opportunities were seen to persist. To my interlocutors, they appeared more than ever linked to personalized connections with political stalwarts, particularly those in the ruling party. A major difficulty for youths in searching for life, therefore, was the inaccessibility of these *cadres*.[94]

Patience Tactics

The problem of not having access to people in powerful positions in order to establish personal connections was valid for most of the urban Burundian youths seeking employment. Yet, it may have been especially challenging for youths in marginalized neighbourhoods like the QN. These youths usually did not have well-positioned family members they could approach for help. Because of the separation between rich and poor, they also did not have people in their neighbourhoods with whom to establish patronage relationships:

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[93] Burundi ranks 165 out of 176 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. This index ranks countries/territories based on how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be. It is a composite index, drawing on corruption-related data from expert and business surveys carried out by a variety of independent institutions (http://www.transparency.org/ country#BDI, accessed 23 July 2013).

[94] Several researchers have referred to similar dynamics and systems elsewhere in Africa (e.g. Diouf, 1996; Vigh, 2006a; Jones, 2010; Orock, 2012). Vigh (2006a) for instance, describes how youths in Guinea Bissau sought the backing of a wealthy patron in order to access the amount of resources needed to maintain a household, thus entering a patrimonial network.

I already told you that there are rich and poor areas. In the poor areas, if you are in the rich area, and you are poor; you cannot say anything to … to her. And if you are poor, in a poor area, the poor they help each other. They can help each other [but they have the same problems].

Jenipher, June 2007

In correspondence, most of my interlocutors estimated their chances of forging the needed connections as extremely slim. They thus steered their efforts of 'searching for life' in another direction, at least preliminarily. The following discussion with Gabriel and Félix and two of Gabriel's friends illustrates this:

Lide: Why do you need family to find a job?
Gabriel: Because if you find a job, if you have someone who is in the government, he can help you. If you are not in the political party that is in power, you will not find a job. That's it.
Lide: Why does it have to be family?
Gabriel: It means a connection, someone who knows you.
Aimé: Yes.
Lide: Hmm. (…) Was it always like that, that you need to know someone to find…?
Gabriel: Yes, it is always like that in Burundi.
Lide: Even before?
Gabriel: Before? Everybody brings…
Félix: It is the same, the same…
Gabriel: Everybody brings his family. If I am a general, I make my sister secretary, my (…) technical assistant, my brother in the Cabinet…
Félix: And my aunt…
Gabriel: Then my aunt, then my uncle…
Lide: Why is it like that?
Gabriel: That's it, it is the way it is.
Aimé: It is a problem that exists.
Gabriel: But after 5 years, when he [the general] leaves power, and there is another that comes to the fore…
Félix: He will change also! [meaning that he will become like the others who were in the powerful position before].
Gabriel and Aimé: He will change!
Gabriel: He will bring his…ehm, ehm.
Aimé: So, competency means nothing!
Félix: And he will chase out those that were there [because of their connections to the former person in the powerful position].
Lide: So, why is it still important to study?
Gabriel: It is important because if you stay at home, and the day will come that God tells you: 'you too, it is your turn now'…
Lide: Hmm.

Félix: For example, you can have your friend, and he has someone who is, someone [up] there, higher, and, well, when [that someone] asks in the family, for instance, 'Is there not someone who has studied…?' If he is your friend, he may say to you, 'my uncle', or whomever, 'he just asked if someone has studied this, has studied this'. Then you can have the chance, and you participate…
Lide: So, you have to have a diploma and then you need 'family'?
Gabriel and Félix: Hmm, hmm.
Gabriel: It is better to stay at home with a diploma (…)
Aimé: It is better to study to have at least…, when, when one has a chance to find a job…Yes.
Lide: Are there not any ways to improve one's chances? To increase the likelihood of …?
Gabriel: The chances? If you have a chance, God, God will… It's your turn so, you stay at home and one day, you will also be somewhere.
Aimé: For example, you can hear about a vacancy. You go there with the others. But he who has advertised the vacancy, he has already his 'elements' that he wants to put there [to fill the vacancy]. They are already there.
Gabriel: Even if you have to take a test [that does not mean you will get an equal chance]…
Félix: You will do the test, and if, if they engaged all [the connected people they wanted to help get a job], if they see that the number [of new employees] is not yet complete, then you will have the chance to participate like that.
Lide: But you don't have any ways to, I don't know, to know people in those powerful places, people who can help you?
Gabriel: Ways? Creating friendships?
Lide: Hmm, hmm.
Gabriel: *C'est grave*. Can you create a friendship with a minister?
Félix: How?!
Lide: I don't know…
Gabriel, Aimé and Xavier: No…
Lide: So, in Burundi you have to be patient and wait a lot, wait for a chance?
Gabriel: Yes, yes.
Félix: Yes.

Kamenge, July 2009

The excerpt illuminates the youths' views on the intimate relation between formal employment and personalized connections. As most of the youths did not have family members in important positions (i.e. in government or industry), they felt it necessary to establish connections with political stalwarts. The obstacles foreseen, however, instead stimulated a waiting attitude.

The youths waited, but not passively (cf. Honwana, 2012b). They prepared themselves for opportunities. A clear example of how active the 'waiting' could be can be found in the activities of one of my research assistants. Olivier's tactics in searching for life illustrate *par excellence* how many youths invested in a range

of alternative career pathways at the same time. He simultaneously sought a university degree in Communication Science to become a radio journalist; volunteered at the Burundian soccer league in hope of a vocation as an international arbiter; played in several theatre groups, aiming for a professional acting career; and wanted more than anything to become a singer/songwriter – for this he practiced at home whenever he found the time. His weeks were filled with activities that could open up avenues to all these possible careers, however small the chance of success. At the same time, he performed odd jobs – like helping me with my data collection – in order to meet his daily needs. By spreading his chances as much as possible, Olivier hoped that if an opportunity came along, he would be ready to present himself as the perfect candidate.

My interlocutors in the QN thus focused their efforts on diversifying their knowledge and increasing their level of education.[95] They employed what I call 'patience tactics', which entail a combination of preparing and being patient. In this, their efforts were directed primarily at themselves. They worked subjunctively (cf. Good and Del Vechhio Good, 1994; Whyte, 1997; see also page 44) on themselves, in the hope that the acquired knowledge and diplomas would increase the likelihood of being able to successfully seize a chance whenever it came along. In this regard, education was a first step in a youth's precarious trajectory of finding life and livelihood; it could increase the likelihood of success in case of an opportunity. As Aimé said: *It is better to study to have at least…, when, when one has a chance to find a job…Yes*.

At the same time, the youths heartened themselves through patience: 'time will tell', '*si Dieu le veut'* (if God wishes), and *'il faut rester calme'* (you should remain calm) are just a few of the one-liners in support of patience that youths regularly mentioned to peers as way of advice. Patience was esteemed both for its calming effect and for being a tactic of calculated endurance. For instance, several youths congratulated me through the Kirundi saying *Witonze amira igimoze!*, which they translated as "in one word, 'patience'": after all those years of study to obtain a PhD, they reassured me, I would surely be rewarded with a well-paid job (2 July 2009).

At particular times, however, the practices of subjunctive self-improvement appeared to be supplanted by other tactics, namely by tactical political participation which was directed towards the outside rather than the self. In the next part of the chapter, I explore the choices and action regarding political participating in the 2010 electoral period, and place these within a broader context of recurrent episodes of political mobilization in the QN. I focus on the pressure and dilemmas the youths faced in navigating this critical period, and I

[95] Jeffrey (2009) writes about something similar in India, where middle class youths extend their studies because of difficulties in accessing the labour market: "Unable to obtain salaried employment, one of these students asked me: 'What can we do but study and wait?'" (p. 182).

describe how different youths came to different choices and faced different consequences.

IV. Critical Moments of Political Participation

> ...Today there is not really peace. And now all the parties are 'on stage'. Although some parties are more prominent than others. (...) The population is afraid. Why? Maybe because [the one that will lose the elections] will cause trouble in the country? If I try to analyse our neighbourhood, or beyond, some say that they won't vote because they are afraid to be killed afterwards. And I hope you have heard about those who refused to be registered to vote, during the period of registration? (...) If we try to analyse a bit…Look at Kenya! The case of Kenya.[96] I hope you have heard about what happened in Kenya? People are afraid that what happened there can also happen here in Burundi in the elections of 2010.
>
> Edouard, group discussion, March 2010

The 2010 electoral period was marked by a surge in political tensions and fear. People became even more vigilant than usual (cf. Vigh, 2011). They followed the news on the radio and, especially after the first round of elections, when tensions peaked and violent incidents were numerous, many youths sought and shared information via acquaintances formerly involved in rebel movements; now, the opposition. Some of my interlocutors explained that they went to specific places in their neighbourhoods for information. Hafsa, a youth in his mid-twenties, regularly hung out with old friends in one *quartier* (sub-neighbourhood) to hear the latest news about the strategies of the former rebel movement FNL (June 2010). In this 'pro-FNL' *quartier* he could get the most reliable information, he explained. Other youths told their friends about incidents and rumours they had heard through former rebels among their acquaintances. For example, I heard youngsters speak of people that came to collect weapons that their friends had hidden after demobilization. They were told: 'If you love your country, you give what you can give' (June 2010). This information was shared to warn friends about potential violence at hand. Nonetheless, the warning was meant primarily for mental preparation; people had limited ways to actually protect themselves against the danger. As one of my interlocutors explained in terms of emergency preparedness: "We have fled before so we know what it is like" (Alain, April 2010).

[96] Edouard refers here to the spread of political violence that erupted in Kenya after the elections in 2007, apparently with the aim of enforcing a negotiated power sharing between the two competing presidential candidates.

Yet, in addition to seeing the period as dangerous, many youths saw the electoral period as an opportunity to improve their social position and relations (cf. Vigh, 2006b). The electoral period provided a 'vital conjuncture' in which otherwise closed off pathways were made available (Johnson-Hanks, 2005). A vital conjuncture, Johnson-Hanks defined, is "a socially structured zone of possibility that emerges around specific periods of potential transformation in a life or lives (…) a duration of uncertainty and potential (…) when more than usual is in play, when the futures at stake are significant" (op. cit., p. 871). In this electoral period, youths hoped they could establish the connections and relationships that could lead to promising life chances after the elections.

Recurring Mobilization

In the 2010 electoral period, the otherwise marginalized youths from the QN were actively solicited as partisans. The 2010 elections therewith provided a distinct opportunity for youths to be noticed by political *cadres,* but this was not a unique event. The youth mobilization had several forerunners; it had been a common phenomenon in the QN especially in the form of mobilization for the rebel movements, particularly for the CNDD–FDD and the Palipehutu–FNL. For youths, these antecedents informed the logics of the constrained opportunities and risks they anticipated during the elections of 2010 and its aftermath.

Several of my interlocutors had spoken to me about their own past experiences with being mobilized for rebel groups. For instance, Arsène became a member of the Palipehutu–FNL in the first years of the civil war. He was only 12. His father had been murdered and a neighbourhood friend proposed that he should start to protect himself and other Hutu from the same fate. One day, while on his way to school, he decided to follow his neighbourhood friend.

Hafsa, explained that in 1998 he was drawn in as a member of the JPH by a friend from school. They hung out together, and he gradually became more immersed in the movement. In 2003, as the CNDD–FDD were gaining strength in Bujumbura, Hafsa was forced by CNDD–FDD members to shift his allegiance. He then worked as a soldier for the latter group for several years.

A third example was given by Nella. She mentioned several moments of solicitation: the Palipehutu–FNL movement approached her after the CNDD–FDD had signed a ceasefire in 2003; in 2008 when the movement wanted to strengthen their position in the peace negotiations; and in 2009, in preparation of the elections that were to take place a year later. Nella's story is illustrative of the recurrent periods of mobilization in the QN:

> Nella: Recruitment went as follows. The JPH stopped by [at the house]. Now they are called JP. He [the spokesperson] was sitting there [gesturing to a few metres

in front of her]. He was a bit older. He spoke the truth, so I had to become a member. He disclosed who had really started the war: the Tutsi. In the meeting everybody was quiet. But I raised my hand to ask a question.

'Why did you refuse to start peace negotiations with CNDD–FDD?'

He said because they started the war with the Tutsi, they needed to negotiate with the Tutsi. FNL and CNDD–FDD already knew each other from the forest; they had worked together. But they [CNDD–FDD] had been dishonest. They took money from the government to stop the war. They did not stick to the agreements and strategy that FNL and CNDD–FDD had agreed to. They betrayed FNL for money. That is why I feel in my heart that if I were to vote, I would have to vote FNL (...)

Lide: What about last year, with FNL?

Nella: Me too, I wanted to go to the forest to join the fight. I did not want to be simply JPH. I wanted to really get involved. But when I started to talk about it here [pointing at the youth centre], [the youth worker] advised me not to go.

Lide: What made you follow the advice?

Nella: She said: 'If FNL wins, CNDD–FDD will not accept. They will not want to let go of their power. A new war might break out, and if you are in the forest then, you will die. If you love your life, you stay here.'

In the evening my friends passed by. They were ready to go. I said I was not ready yet. A week later they returned. They told me: 'We are there and there, you have to join us.'

My uncle, a commander over there, also passed by to persuade me: 'If you come I will make sure you will get a position [a job].' I wanted to go, but had to think about it.

The day of my graduation, my friends also came. They told me how it was.

'It is hard, very hard', they said. 'For a month you don't eat, shower…really hard. A month long you fight hard.'

Then I decided: no, I don't want that. If you touch my skin like this, already it turns blue. Fighting hard a month long?!

By midnight they said: 'Okay, we return to the forest. We don't know when we will see you again, upon demobilization probably. Bye now.'

A lot of them came back without anything. They did not get a position. Some got a position, but even though they have diplomas, they are just [low ranked] soldiers. Most of the youths recruited were boys. The girls amongst my friends got lucky. They did get a position. The boys are at home. They cannot work, cannot return to school.[97]

[97] In line with this argument, various interlocutors explained that they joined the Palipehutu–FNL in 2008 because they hoped that, with their level of education, they would obtain good positions in the army or the police after demobilization and reintegration programmes. They drew on the examples of reintegration efforts from a few years before. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in Burundi took place in different phases. The first caseload, which concerned members of the CNDD-FDD, profited from a relatively generous reintegration package, especially

Lide: Why can they not return to school?
Nella: Because school started 5 or 6 months ago. They will have to wait. And they cannot work because of their reputation. Because they are connected to FNL. They have nothing to do and are very angry. If they hear the word 'FNL', they [gesture: slicing her throat]. FNL tells them to vote for them, so that they can see what they can mean for them once they win [the elections]. But they say: 'No I won't.' They are angry: 'We cannot vote for you.'
Lide: What about you?
Nella: When the propaganda starts, I will be out of here. It will be a dangerous time.
Lide: Is there propaganda already?
Nella: A little; but only small meetings. For instance, across the street [she points to an abandoned house ruin where small groups of youths regularly gather]. Three political parties passed by already. They promise a lot of things.
CNDD–FDD says: 'We will give you a phone, 100.000 Burundian francs (about 75 euro's)'.
They [youth] say: 'Okay, come and give.'

Interview, based on fieldwork notes, Kamenge, June 2009

The above passage gives insight into the periodic mobilization practices of political groupings. Furthermore, it shows the way in which mobilization took place: direct requests from family and friends and in small informative reunions in the *quartiers*. The small reunions of political parties took place well before the electoral campaigns for the 2010 elections officially started. I saw several of these on my visits to youths during my fieldwork in the summer of 2009, almost a year before the elections. Nonetheless, most of the youths expressed interest in attending these reunions, or the larger public meetings, only in the immediate run-up to the elections, just before May 2010.

The excerpt also shows that there were various incentives for youths to participate. These seemed to change over time.[98] It is noteworthy in this regard that in Nella's account during the war, the Palipehutu–FNL representative offered 'ideological' motivations. The representative sketched the opposition between Hutu and Tutsi, and described the CNDD–FDD as dishonest and sell-outs. In 2008, Nella's uncle tried to bring her on board with the promise of a 'position' after demobilization. In 2009, various political parties promised goods like mobile phones and money. The different incentives were not exclusive, however.

Closer to the elections, the motivations youths mentioned for attending the political party gatherings were also about material gain, career opportunities,

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when compared to the former Palipehutu–FNL rebels at later stages of the DDR process (Douma and Gasana, 2009).

[98] This idea found support in the preliminary results of a Burundian researcher looking at the reintegration of ex-combatants in Burundi (Patrick Hajayandi, personal communication, June 2013).

family pressure and 'ideology'. With regards to the latter, these motivations seemed to be more about trust and moral principles than about the translation of ideological standpoints into particular party programmes. Indeed, youths regularly mentioned that all parties had the same programme. Therefore, they based their choice upon the worth of the party leader: "They all say more or less the same, but you cannot *believe* all the politicians" (conversation with two youngsters, Mai 2010). Political leaders were judged, amongst others, on their trustworthiness and their constancy. Several youths mentioned that they participated in meetings because they wanted to contribute to rebuilding their country, and politics was one of the few ways through which one could exert influence on Burundian society. These youths appealed to the idea that politics, in its pure form at least, was potentially constructive (cf. Turner, 2007). There were also youths who were asked by family members to join them to the reunions or big meetings, and one would not easily refuse family. Yet most youths explained their interest in participating in the reunions or large meetings in terms of it being an opportunity to attach themselves to a particular political party or leader, which could lead to opportunities for ameliorating one's life and livelihoods after the elections.

This is not to say that the politically active youths were naïve about the likelihood of these opportunities materializing. Indeed, the youths were deeply sceptical about all politicians' promises. Nonetheless, they had hope that their loyalty would be rewarded with goods, scholarships or employment. There was still a chance that political leaders would keep their promises. The following exchange I had with Gabriel and Anatol in 2009, illustrates this characteristic mixture of hope and scepticism:

> I met up with Gabriel and Anatol at Anatol's place. Gabriel was a bit crabby. Anatol and Félix, who was also at home, laughed at him and ascribed his mood to a hangover from the previous night. The friends had gone to the residency of the upcoming political leader Alexi Sinduhije from MSD. They had welcomed him back from a trip to Europe, where he had been 'to win over the diaspora'. They had been celebrating until late in the night. I was surprised about the close connection between them and this high ranked politician and asked them how they came to be invited.
> Gabriel replied: "*C'est chez nous* – it is home."
> He appeared to be referring to their status of close supporters, but also possibly to the politician's shared neighbourhood origin.
> "Not everybody can be there, but for us, it is 'home'."
> Then, after a short pause, he added: "For now, that is. Once he has been elected, we don't know what he will do. But for now, we were just welcome."
>
> Fieldwork notes, June 2009

For the majority of the youths I spoke to, political participation emerged as a logical step only when the few alternative routes to finding life were blocked. This point of view was described clearly by Boniface, the youth I referred to in the beginning of this chapter as attending a meeting of the party in power. Boniface lived in Cibitoke neighbourhood and was in his early twenties and about to finish his secondary education. He was an excellent dancer and *tambourinaire* (drummer), but not an especially bright student. In 2009, Boniface told me he wanted to study medicine or law, which are known to be the most difficult university studies to get admitted to. He explained his choice as a way to avoid political participation:

> But, as the saying in Burundi goes, '*Nous propose, Dieu dispose'* [we make a plan, but it is up to God whether we can]. If I don't succeed [in getting into medicine], I would like to study law. (…) If you want work in Burundi, you have to join a political party. All jobs go via political parties. And now with the elections next year…but if at least you study law or medicine; that is heavy. You do not have to join a party because there are too few people who have a diploma in law or medicine. So I have to do one of those studies. Otherwise, I have to join the game.
>
> Fieldwork notes, Cibitoke, June 2009

A year later, however, he 'joined the game': he went to participate in the CNDD–FDD meetings.

Pressure to Choose

The most common way for youths to show loyalty to a political leader was by participating in public meetings, as Boniface did, and by encouraging peers and others to join. But exposing yourself as sympathizing with a particular party entailed a considerable risk. It was likely to have repercussions for the social relations with friends or class mates who supported a different political party, and could potentially make you a target for 'political violence' during the elections or in the unpredictable future.

The experiences youths had with exclusion, violence and persecution in the past, made them well aware of these risks. Hafsa, for instance, had been threatened with death if he did not change allegiance from the Palipehutu–FNL to CNDD–FDD in 2003. Nella's brother, after criticizing an opposing rebel group, had been humiliated in public by being stripped naked. He had also been threatened with death. Upon this, he had fled the country. Gabriel had been tortured and spent six months in jail for not voting for the 2005 electoral victor. Nearly all my youth interlocutors had stories about similar predicaments that they or people around them had experienced in the recent past.

Still, not actively sympathizing with a political party did not make someone necessarily 'neutral'. Much like when there had been single party rule, not being with a party, was often interpreted as being against that party. Claiming neutrality, moreover, was considered at best foolish and at worst highly suspicious. For instance, in the discussion with Félix, Gabriel, Elodie and their neighbourhood friend Chuck that I referred to in the previous chapter, Félix insisted that he was politically neutral (see page 116). To substantiate this claim, he explained that he had chosen not to register to vote. Chuck then ridiculed Félix by saying that he probably had not received the goods he had been promised in the past, and that was why he would not vote; Félix was accused by Elodie of not being patriotic ("*You are not Burundian*"); and both Gabriel and Chuck discarded Félix's claims further by saying: "Even though you did not register, we all know you are still FNL" (fieldwork notes, Kamenge, May 2010). In the past, Félix had been involved in the JPH.

The inescapability of political side-taking came to the fore also during the presidential elections, in June 2010. The incumbent party CNDD–FDD had won the large majority of votes on the previous polling day: the elections at the communal (municipal) level, in May 2010. After the polling day in May, opposition parties claimed that the elections had been rigged. They announced their withdrawal from the electoral process, and called upon their followers to boycott the other polls. Correspondingly, on the day of the presidential elections, voting was understood as voting for the incumbent party. In this regard, Idda for example, confided in me that on her way back from the polling station, she felt it necessary to hide her blue-inked thumb. She did not want anybody to see that she had voted for CNDD–FDD.

As a rule, one could only choose one political allegiance. Indeed, because of pervasive social control in the neighbourhoods[99] and because political parties demanded public manifestation of membership, political adherence was rather exclusive. Adhering to various parties or switching from one party to another was generally condemned and could be met with allegations of 'betrayal'; and this was a grave accusation. It is telling, furthermore, that people mockingly referred to the changing of political allegiance as 'political nomadism' ("*kugisha*" in Kirundi; a verb that refers to changing pastures in dry seasons). When I asked why this would be a bad thing, I was told: "they just follow their interests, are without ideology!" (University Lecturer, April, 2011). Nevertheless, as the mere existence of this saying also implies, quite a few people switched political adherence despite the negative association (the elections in 2005 showed many similarities in this regard; Vervisch, 2010).

[99] See for instance the notes on identifying and monitoring one's surroundings in the previous chapters.

To show you sympathized with a particular party or not thus asked for a deliberate 'choice'. Some youths chose their allegiance long before the electoral period of 2010, but only the official electoral period really brought everyone on the edge. It was considered the moment of truth, as people had to show their true colours – often literally by wearing clothing items distributed by political parties or displaying the political party flag. Colours, signs and symbols were highly significant. One of the most extreme stories I heard in this regard, concerned a wedding that took place just before the presidential elections. The family of the groom and of the bride adhered to different political parties, and the colours of the wedding decoration, including the groom's suit, were used to exhibit this political allegiance. Allegedly, one of the presents given was a live rooster in a green and white box; the flag of FRODEBU *Nyakuri* (meaning: *the real* FRODEBU) was green and white with a rooster in the middle. My research assistant, a school friend of the bride, insisted that this story was true.

At this point in time, youths could no longer maintain an undecided position, like Félix had tried to do. Particularly male youths (politics was still largely a male domain) were regularly confronted with questions regarding their political adherence. Moreover, it was too late to shift political allegiance; at least, to the eye of the public, which was, in the end, what mattered most. Indeed, in the run-up to the elections, it was especially the display of political adherence that was requested. My conversation with Martin, a high school student in his early twenties, provides an example of how in this period people were pressured about revealing their political adherence:

> Lide: Do you notice a difference between now, the electoral period, and let's say two weeks ago?
> Martin: Yes, a big difference. For example, I was visiting a friend. We were just talking, cracking jokes. But then his older brother asked: 'You are a member of which party?'
> I was surprised. I did not think you could ask it that directly! I did not answer, because if you say a party that is different than his, you have a problem. My friend's brother asked again, but luckily my friend came in between and said about me: 'He is a member of CNDD–FDD.' His brother responded proudly.
> Lide: That seems intimidating?
> Martin: Yes, very frightening. If he asks, where do you live, in which street, which number? I always try to be home before night falls. (...)
> Lide: Does that happen often, that people ask about the political membership of other people?
> Martin: Yes, all the time. Even, for instance, if you are in a *ligala* [the place where friends, usually from the same neighbourhood, hang out]. They ask you to which political party you belong. You can say that you are [on the same side] as them, but if later they see you with another party, then immediately you are the enemy. There are people that say: 'Yes I will go for a beer with that party, just for

> the beer.' And then they go sit with another party. People will say: 'Hey, you lied to us, you pretend to be with us but now you are sitting with the other party.' Immediately you become their enemy. So it is safer not to be member of any party.
> Lide: Do you feel pressure to choose a side?
> Martin: Yes, for instance in the *ligala*, or with that brother of my friend. People want you to be with them on the same side.
>
> Fieldwork notes, May 2010

The electoral period thus constituted a 'critical moment' in which acting and not acting could both be interpreted as a political act.

VITAL CONSEQUENCES

So far, I have described the severely limited opportunities for youths to build their lives and livelihoods. I argued that particular periods of political mobilization presented themselves as the life chances youths had been waiting and preparing for. In these periods, youths were actively sought as partisans, which they hoped would be rewarded with career opportunities after the elections.

Although political participation was an obvious 'choice' for any youth waiting and wanting to forge patronage relations with society's political elites, specific categories and groups of youths were more likely to become involved in politics. The first factors that feed into this likelihood, are related to the characteristics of a neighbourhood. Marginalized neighbourhoods like the QN were branded as 'politically active' areas, inhabited by large numbers of youths, and were known for the limited alternatives youths there had for searching for life. These youths were therefore more actively sought as partisans than youths elsewhere. These youths were also highly familiar with this way of forging connections, as there had been clear antecedents in the very recent past. Moreover, the youths in these neighbourhoods faced more pressure from the people around them to choose a side and become politically engaged. In this regard, gender was also important: politics was still largely a male domain, so it was easier for female youths to assume political naivety. Nonetheless, if girls wanted to seize the opportunities of this period to improve their lives and livelihoods, they too had to show political allegiance.

Still, youths always negotiated on the extent to which they became involved and exposed themselves as partisans. Below, I give a few examples of the 'choices' youths made in this regard. The examples show that besides area of living and gender, a complex interplay of personal circumstances, experienced pressure and individual youths' trade-offs between fears of danger and aspirations of respectable adulthood shaped their navigation outcomes.

Martin experienced pressure from his friend's brother to support the incumbent party. In addition, he felt intimated at his boarding school. The school was headed by a well-known party associate and students in the school were mobilized to 'convert' their peers. He had preferred to stay away from politics, but realized his limited leeway for staying neutral. Moreover, it could be an opportunity for career chances after school. He had no family he could count on; he only maintained good relations with his grandmother, but she was old and very poor. Being an active member of the ruling party would perhaps facilitate finding a job after the elections, he reasoned, and he reluctantly came out as a member, and later even as a youth leader in the school environment.

More than a year later, after he had obtained his A3 diploma, he wrote to me that he had found a job. He was grateful to God for the opportunity, but it did not pay very well. He had not been able to live up to his hopes and expectations of becoming a respectable grandson:

"I am doing well Lide, only I am left with a wound in my heart because of the loss of my grandmother, it is very sad, Lide my grandmother has helped me since my childhood, I stayed with her also after the loss of my mother, but see, she is dead without me having ever been able to buy her something of even 20,000 Burundian francs!!!!!????!!!!!!"[100]

Martin, fieldwork notes and email, 2010–12

Idda voted for the CNDD–FDD. Her motivations were ideological, she said. She primarily applauded the CNDD–FDD policy to provide free primary education and infant care in the hospitals. She had seen the importance especially of the latter in these last few months when she had been helping out a couple of friends and family who were hospitalized. She was a bit critical of the party leaders, but ascribed the negative points to the general workings of politics:
'Of course, they eat [referring to the corruption that party members were being accused of]. But they don't exaggerate: they still leave enough for the rest.'
Yet, she did not want to become an official member because she feared repercussions by opposition members who also lived in her neighbourhood. She sought to establish her support more subtly by coming out as CNDD–FDD only to people close to her. Her attempts to secure a job in an industry well-known as a CNDD–FDD stronghold, however, failed soon after the elections; according to her also because of her limited willingness to become politically active.

Idda, fieldwork notes, 2010-2011

Anatol was disillusioned by Alexi Sinduhije's promises and proclamations already before the elections took place. He had hoped to obtain a scholarship for study in the USA. He withdrew from political engagement and instead sought recognition

[100] 20,000 Burundian francs is the equivalent of approximately 15 euros.

as a ‘neutral’ electoral observer. He abandoned his conviction that to search life you needed to get involved in politics, a conviction he had defended to me for more than 18 months. But without a view on alternative pathways, he made ever more desperate attempts to migrate to other countries for work, and appealed to his mother and also to me for help with his plans. Furthermore, he returned to the church, and he registered for university studies, furthering his subjunctive self-improvement efforts.

Anatol, fieldwork notes, 2010–12

There were also ‘success’ stories:

A month after the presidential elections, Gabriel enthusiastically phoned me with news. “Finally, *j’ai trouvé la vie”* (I have found life).

I heard Elodie laughing in the background. The happy news moved me. He and Elodie had just had a baby. With the income, Gabriel could start meet the needs and expectations of his family, which was all the more necessary because his mother had recently passed away. She had been the pillar of the family in both moral and financial terms. His father had been unemployed since the war broke out. For several years now, Gabriel, the eldest son of the family, had been looking for a job.

I was also surprised: his ‘strategy’ had worked?! Gabriel became an active member of the incumbent CNDD–FDD party during the campaigning period. On multiple occasions he explained that it was pure ‘strategy’. A prominent CNDD–FDD partisan from his neighbourhood had promised him work at a transport hub in exchange for political support. Gabriel desperately wanted a job. The years before, he had been openly critical about this party and in 2009 he had even been a member of an opposition party; MSD. In addition, he had held CNDD–FDD responsible for the lack of development of the country and especially his neighbourhood, which still lacked roads and electricity. They were also responsible, he said, for his imprisonment and torture following the 2005 elections; he, along with the majority of the Kamenge inhabitants, had voted for FRODEBU.

My joy about the news was dampened, however, when he told me that his job was not at the transport hub: it was at the *documentation* (the secret service). The secret service had regularly been in the news lately, accused of extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses.[101] Would Gabriel end up compromising more than political and civic ideals?

A few weeks later, Gabriel and Elodie were at my place. Gabriel was telling me about a training he had received for his new job. Elodie, eyes fixed on the baby on her lap, teased him: “You were manipulated.” Obviously annoyed, he

[101] See for instance, HRW 2010a.

> denied it: in order to work for the *documentation,* he now said, one had to be a patriot.
>
> Gabriel and Elodie, fieldwork notes and interviews, 2010

Like with the other examples, Gabriel's decision to support the ruling party occurred in the context of limited life chances. He was well aware of the dangers involved in becoming politically active. Indeed, he had had first-hand experience with that after the previous round of elections. Nonetheless, he saw political participation as one of the few ways to improve his career chances and take his responsibilities as eldest son, father and husband. He decided to rally for the party that he believed was most likely to win the elections and would thus be in the best position to offer him a job.

His actions cannot be seen simply in terms of danger and opportunism, however, as he had to confront moral dilemmas. Firstly, in the eyes of observers, including his wife Elodie, Gabriel was manipulated (or bought) by the political party elites. His 'gain' in starting to be a good son, husband and father thus entailed a loss in terms of being trustworthy and true to his beliefs, as a man should. Second, given that he was offered a job at the politically and morally tainted secret service, 'finding life' brought other costs as well. Some of his friends preferred to hang out with him only in private settings, others started to avoid him altogether. He had foreseen this already before taking the job, and had told me that he would lose many friends. He tried to prevent it by being as open as possible about his job at the *documentation*. Nonetheless, he soon enough reframed his actions as 'patriotic' rather than 'strategic', and became less and less ready to talk about his work. The repercussions in the longer term were more difficult to estimate: "I might never be able to visit Europe or the USA," he once told me, "because of my knowledge of national secrets." Moreover, I wondered what would happen if those in power were overthrown.

The story of Arsène, below, critically reminds of the importance for the youths to try strike the right balance between their contemporary positions and ambitions, and their longer term wellbeing. Arsène's past participation in the rebel movement Palipehutu–FNL hunted him and put him and his family at risk:

> In 2009, after years of involvement in the Palipehutu–FNL rebel movement, Arsène returned to civilian life. He maintained the contacts he had established throughout his 'career' as a rebel. Some of them were his best friends. Moreover, he profiled himself as a representative for the ex-combatants in his neighbourhood. He hoped that through the demobilization programme this position would give him opportunities for a prosperous career. In that same year, he had a child and got married. He found a wage labour job in a local industry.
>
> In the run-up to the elections, he was approached by the incumbent party to change his political allegiance. He refused, but as he felt threatened, he left his home in Bujumbura for some time for the heat to pass. After the elections (he

> had returned), he was asked in not unintimidating ways to join the *documentation*. Again, he declined the 'offer'. He suspected it would entail ratting out and even killing his former FNL colleagues. He motivated his decline to me by saying that did not want his child to suffer from the bad reputation he risked if he did not "abandon *that* career". Moreover, he worried that about the future role of the International Criminal Court.
>
> Upon his refusal, he was repeatedly threatened by people from the security forces to succumb and accept the job. He approached me for help. But my attempt to seek possibilities for protection through the Netherlands *Bureau d'Ambassade* was countered by their saying that it was impossible to provide a 'safe haven for every FNL'. After repeatedly spending the night at friends' places, he fled to another province.
>
> Fieldwork notes, 2007–11

Arsène's story shows that his past active political participation influenced his present inability to avoid security risks and withdraw from politics. Moreover, his present choices could have vital consequences for not only his own life but also for that of his young child. He had to devise tactics in an increasingly risky but narrowing field of opportunities.

Arsène's situation was not the same as the situation of '*every FNL*'. Yet, nor was his story unique. Months later I received a news report through a friend, reporting on the death of another former FNL rebel with a story that is very similar to that of Arsène. The Human Rights Watch report, dated July 25 2011, discussed the discovery of the body of Audace Vianney Habonarugira 10 days earlier. He too had been asked to join the security forces, and like Arsène, he had declined. The report stated the following:

> "(London) – Burundian authorities should investigate and bring to justice those responsible for the dozens of political killings in Burundi since late 2010, Human Rights Watch said today. The apparent politically motivated killing of Audace Vianney Habonarugira, a former rebel commander whose body was discovered on July 15, 2011, is the latest in a string of killings linked to the security forces, Human Rights Watch said. (...) His killing and that of dozens of others raise concerns for the security of those who left rebel groups to resume civilian life in Burundi. (...) Habonarugira, 28, had been a colonel in the FNL, which he had joined in the 1990s as a child, before he was demobilized in 2009. Since then he had trained and worked as a driver and mechanic, and resumed civilian life.
>
> In early 2011, Habonarugira began receiving threats from people linked to the security forces, sources told Human Rights Watch. (...) On March 7, Nahimana and three other men came to Habonarugira's house and took him away. A witness told Human Rights Watch that Nahimana loaded a gun and told Habonarugira: "We offered you work but you refused. Now we have been given the task of taking your corpse to our bosses. We are not going to take you there alive. We will take you there dead." A policeman accompanying Nahimana then

> shot Habonarugira several times in the side and in the stomach, severely wounding him. During 10 weeks in the hospital, Habonarugira was threatened by police. (...) After Habonarugira's discharge on June 27, the authorities pursued him from province to province. (...) Less than a week later, on July 15, Habonarugira's body was found at Gasamanzuki, in Isare commune, not far from Bujumbura, with the body of another man whose identity has not been confirmed. (...)”
>
> Human Rights Watch, 25 July 2011

The accounts show that the choices and actions of youths during previous periods of turmoil, critically affected the risks and their room for manoeuver in later periods.

To summarize, the practices of youths in the ‘vital conjuncture’ that the electoral period represented were influenced by, firstly, structural factors such as the relation between youths and political leaders and the historically built reputation, networks and poverty in particular neighbourhoods; second, social characteristics of one’s environment such as the political engagement of people in one’s social network and in the family (e.g. especially this if this entailed exerting pressure to become politically active); and third, personal characteristics such as gender, education (but not necessarily in a straightforward way), one’s political participation in the past; and fourth, unexpected life events (e.g. pregnancy, marriage or death in the family). These last third and fourth points were especially important in terms of the amount of pressure experienced by the individual youth to see and seize the elections as a vital conjuncture.

V. Discussion: Tactics and Conjunctures

In this chapter, I explored the choices and action of youths regarding political participation in light of their ‘searching for life’. This occurred in a highly unpredictable political environment that offered few life chances. One could thus say that whereas the previous two chapters focused more on aspects of uncertainty, this chapter described primarily practices devised in the context of contingency and insecurity (Whyte, 2009; see also Chapter 1).

I argued that we can distinguish two types of periods in which the requirements and opportunities for youths to devise tactics for improving their lives and livelihoods differ. Firstly, in periods of relative stability, in Burundi, and especially in Bujumbura’s urban periphery, youths’ prospects of forging access to employment opportunities and other life chances were slim; they were largely cut off from society’s political elite who were known to help those in their networks. Indeed, the political pervaded their lives, but the political elite’s networks were largely closed off for them. In the face of these constraints, the

main purpose of action was to create options in preparation for possible future opportunities. Youths worked subjunctively on themselves, while waiting and enduring. Moreover, they watchfully followed political developments, but tried to abstain from clear side-taking or made use of the available space to shift political allegiance. I referred to these tactics as 'patience tactics'.

The space drastically narrowed when tensions rose. Possibilities for ambiguity or flexibility radically shifted: youths could no longer work on themselves; it was about displaying political allegiance. Especially male youths, due to their reputation as dependent but dangerous, were pressured into showing their colours. Neutrality was at best believed foolish, at worst suspicious.

Such periods also presented themselves as a vital conjuncture. Youths had a small chance of forging the much needed connections with elites through political participation. Yet, this entailed exposure to danger and moral compromise. This critical period thus demanded tactical decisions, made on the spot, but in view of more distant horizons. Action could have vital, long-term consequences both for the youths and for the people around them. Clarity, as the opposite of indeterminacy, was potentially devastating as well as a life-saver.

The analytic distinction between process and event or the everyday and the extraordinary can be useful to explore such alternating practices. Although the "critical events (…) figured upon a background of persistent conflict and decline; on chronic disorder and disruption" (Vigh, 2008, p. 5), the space for manoeuvre was different in respective periods, and practices in one period were constitutive of the practices in the other period. For instance, the choices and actions of youths in terms of political participation and violence in the previous decades structured the present interdependent relation between youths and political leaders, which shaped the pressures on youths to participate in politics. Similarly, individual youth's tactics in the past shaped their present-day space for manoeuvre in the political terrain. Furthermore, because of the cyclical alternation of periods of less and of more tension, youths, in shaping their practices, took into account the potential of critical periods in the periods of reduced tensions (the anticipation of new critical periods is nowadays perhaps even more 'predictable' than it was before because of the 5-yearly scheduled elections). The crisis dynamics of relative stability and heightened tensions therefore cannot simply be seen as recurring types of periods. Rather, they appear to have a cumulative or spiralling effect. Youths constantly have to judge whether to invest in remaining elusive or to engage in profiling themselves so as to successfully seize the anticipated chance in an increasingly narrowing space.

CONCLUSION

BEYOND THE SPACE OF THE OTHER

I. SUMMARIZING '*SOMETHING*'

> But today we can see that war [is] in the hearts of people, is it something, it is something that we apply as though it were simple. But it is not simple. Today we see people tell us '[killing] is not the first time and it will not be the last'. (…) It is as though I could say that it is something that they programme in people, that is being programmed in the people of Burundi.
>
> Mathieu, Bujumbura, May 2011

In this thesis, I explored the social genesis of war and peace in Burundi. I approached this topic through a focus on everyday practices of classification and identification by male and female youths on the northern periphery of Bujumbura. Because of my interest in the apparent cyclical alternation of war and peace in Burundi, I explored both the logics of the youths' practices and the effects that were already rendered visible. I aimed to understand how youths' practices affected the consolidation of peace or relapse into war, without ignoring the indeterminacy that pervaded daily life in Burundi.

Part of the earlier quoted interview with Mathieu is reproduced above in order to highlight the intangible force field that seems to trap Burundians in cyclical war. In Burundi, where severe scarcity pervades all domains of life and violence and exclusion have been the political way to deal with this, it is feared that violence has become part of the 'habitus' that informs people's practices in various contexts (Bourdieu, 1990; see also, Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 2009, pp. 368–9). The governing elite has since long been viewed as the instigator of hatred and violence, but ordinary people – neighbours and former neighbours, as Innocent's guided tour in Chapter 3 illustrated – present perhaps the most treacherous and immediate threat of danger. Yet, as Mathieu and other youths I introduced throughout this thesis also argued, something can be done: '*If I can criticize, it is something*' (see page 15). Within the force field, which is 'leaking out on all sides' (Deleuze in Biehl and Locke, 2010), especially because of the fractured institutions and structures resulting from war, youths sometimes tried to escape and overcome the forms of power and knowledge associated with exclusion and violence, and expressed desires that may be world altering (ibid). At other times, youths '*join[ed] the game',* as one of my interlocutors expressed his tactical participation in politics (see page 155). Moreover, and this caught my special interest, the youths' everyday practices had effects that escaped the strictures constraining their navigation. These effects were hard to pin down,

were not necessarily intended and were still emerging, but appear important for understanding the war–peace continuum (Utas, 2003; Richards, 2005).

II. Agency and Effects in Reinventing Peace

I pointed out in Chapter 1 that research shows that even in the face of extremely disempowering circumstances, young men and women struggle for "a sense of agency" (Jackson in Finnström, 2008, p. 10). This study confirms this: the urban male and female youths in the *Quartiers nord* of Bujumbura were actively engaged in efforts to improve their lives and those of the people around them. Yet, despite their efforts, whether marginalized young men and women are able to effect change is generally considered doubtful (cf. Vigh, 2006a, p. 35; Waage, 2006; Van der Molen and Bal, 2011). Indeed, also my interlocutors were careful not to overestimate their power to effect change. I refer again to Mathieu's assertion: "*You cannot tell me it is the little person on the mountains in Bujumbura Rurale (…) It is the politicians who have the power to make things happen*" (interview, page 15). Hence also the tactical nature of the youths' practices.

Nonetheless, this idea seems to conflict with popular peace-building approaches (Kemper, 2005) and academic studies on youth and war, both of which argue that youths are key actors in peace-building processes. Youths are described as "vanguards and vandals" (Abbink and Van Kessel, 2005), "makers and breakers of society" (Honwana and De Boeck, 2005), and "both social navigators of the present *and social generators* of individual and collective futures" (Christensen, Utas, and Vigh, 2009, p. 19, *my emphasis, LB*).

It is well known that a young person's development occurs through complex interactions between that person and his/her environment (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The primary importance of interactional processes in this development entails that the developing individual will be simultaneously fitting into the prevailing order and playing his/her part in changing it (Tudge et. al, 2009, p. 200). The question of how this happens has generated a considerable number of studies on the ways in which youths navigate terrains of war and peace. Yet, the effects of youths' navigation in most studies remain obscure. In this study, I tried to assess how youths were reproducing and changing the prevailing order – or, the prevailing disorder.

My investigation was premised on the observable immediate present. The highly unpredictable context of Burundi made me wary of futurology. In each chapter I therefore explored the effects of practices that were already being rendered visible. I explored the effects of the youths' practices on war and peace dynamics, not only in relation to dominant adult power but also beyond "the space of the other" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 37).

Firstly, in Chapter 3, I described the youths' practices of classifying peers based on neighbourhood residence. Neighbourhoods were particularly significant because of the connections between neighbourhoods and past and on-going violence and socioeconomic and political differences. These mapping practices seemed intended to identifying friend and foe, and to, purposively, manipulate potential foes into not acting upon their alleged otherness. Yet, the practices also had other effects, that were perhaps less intentional. Through mapping, as I showed, the differences between the youths from the various neighbourhoods were being standardized, and they followed the logic of hierarchy. The youths thus also contributed to the emergence of a 'mythical map' with potential for on-going and renewed forms of exclusion.

Second, in Chapter 4, I showed that, generally, youths were extremely wary of identity categories that were attributed the potential to exclude and to result in selective violence. Yet, the observations, fears, hopes and desires related to the significance or non-significance of particular identity categories, such as 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi', generated considerable contradictions and doubts. I proposed to understand the emerging trends by acknowledging rather than reconciling the 'lines' and the 'conflicting narratives' (Goffman, 1999). As Gluckman, inspired by Marx, already noted in his work on the situational analysis and the extended case method, contradiction and its forces engender historical process (in Kapferer, 2005, p. 88). In Burundi, the contradictions in how people dealt with identity categories reconfirmed the treacherousness of how categories could be employed by others. This stimulated the creation of new contradictions through more doubts and through deliberate misrepresentation. This "self-referring chain" (Mbembe and Roitman, 1995), however, should not be interpreted as necessarily fateful. The contradictions seemed partly inspired by the aim to create space and time for developing a different course of events, and for strengthening the 'lines' that were also there and actively promulgated by the youths.

In Chapter 5, I described youths' actions and choices regarding political participation. In this domain, youths perhaps felt most subjugated to existing knowledge and power structures. They imagined their projects of 'searching for life' as strongly dependent on the space and rules set by the more powerful elements in society, namely the politicians. Their practices were generally geared at keeping options open and even at trying to avoid becoming part of the game, at least, in the periods when political tensions were relatively low. In these periods, they sought control over their lives primarily by working subjunctively on themselves. Yet, the likelihood of being able to remain versatile and elusive decreased dramatically in periods of heightened tensions. Many youths approached such periods as 'vital conjunctures' that could lead to promising life chances.

The effects of the youths' political practices in the period of heightened tensions were perhaps most significant in terms of how they shaped successive opportunities for political participation and side-taking, or the avoidance thereof. Think for instance of Félix, whose claim of being politically neutral was distrusted due to his political participation in the JPH during the war. Indeed, youths' political participation or non-participation at one stage strongly influenced the space for manoeuvre at later stages, both for individual youths and for youths in general. There appeared to be a spiralling effect that increasingly narrowed the youths' opportunities to operate outside or despite the power structures. In these crisis dynamics, the political elite and the youths collaborated, apparently highly aware of the 'manipulation' taking place.

III. Elusive Tactics

The youths' practices can also be seen as affecting the logics of subsequent everyday practices, particularly those of 'elusive tactics'. This brings us to the second set of questions I took up in this thesis, concerned with the logics of Burundian youths' doings in the aftermath of war. How do youths construct choices for action in extremely fluid and shifting fields of opportunities when these opportunities might, or even probably entail something as vital as violence and war (cf. Schutz in Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 987)?

In Chapter 1, I stated that anthropological research shows that the modes of operation or schemata for action in contexts marked by indeterminacy and violence often follow particular logics. People put more emphasis on intentions, explore alternatives, improvise and use trickery, and action is often oriented towards the short term (e.g. Good and Del Vecchio Good, 1994; Whyte, 1997; Honwana, 2000; Johnson-Hanks, 2005; Utas, 2005a; Vigh, 2006b; Waag, 2006). Such practices are usually defined as tactics, which, in line with De Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics, are generally described as being part of the trajectories travelled by the weak (1984; Honwana, 2000; Utas, 2005a). Furthermore, to grasp the particular characteristics and logics of tactical practices, anthropological studies have proposed concepts such as subjunctivity (Good and Del Vecchio Good, 1994; Whyte, 1997), judicious opportunism (Johnson-Hanks, 2005) and social navigation (Vigh, 2006b).

In this thesis I referred to these concepts in order to frame and reflect on my research findings. The concepts – which, I argued, interact differently with the dimensions of uncertainty, contingency and insecurity – were more or less applicable in the different contexts that I described. In Chapter 4, for instance, I argued that youths sometimes engage in subjunctivizing tactics. I showed that Elodie regularly emphasized the uncertainties about events in the past and about the salience of particular identity categories, therewith explicitly holding on to

the openness of possibilities. The 'patience tactics' I explored in Chapter 5 can also be viewed as subjunctivizing practices: they were aimed at creating alternatives by increasing versatility and encouraging the patience to endure, because the occurrence of life chances was an open possibility. In critical periods – vital conjunctures (Johnson-Hanks, 2005) – such as the electoral period, however, youths had to judiciously decide on the extent to which they would participate in politics and to which party they would show allegiance. These rather exclusive choices had to be made in extremely insecure and constraining circumstances. This confronted youths with a number of dilemmas. Moreover, the youths had to take into account both immediate and more distant horizons. Their social navigation led potentially to vital consequences for themselves as well as for the people close to them, both in the short term and for the anticipated, future critical periods.

Violent Pursuits

My findings thus underline the usefulness of the concepts for tactical practices for understanding the everyday practices of youths in Burundi. The findings also contribute to further developing these concepts and their applicability. First, in terms of whether and, if so, how tactical practices are oriented towards pursuits of certainty and order, or more specifically, towards violent pursuits of certainty.

Various studies that focused on indeterminacy appeal to the idea that people are naturally inclined to remove "unacceptable levels of uncertainty" (Appadurai, 1998, p. 905) and insecurity, even by means of violence (e.g. Haram and Bawa Yamba, 2009; Eriksen, Bal and Salemink, 2010; Risør, 2010). In this line of thought, Bauman (1991) suggested that in 20th-century Europe the rise of modernity and its concomitant quest for order brought forth, as an attempted solution to strangers and ambiguity, violence and genocide. Appadurai (1998) considers what he calls 'vivisectionist violence' a means by which people quite literally try to expose the treacherous insides of the other, in order to ascertain the true identity of the other as traitor. Risør (2010) adopted a similar perspective on the ways in which people deal with suspected dangerousness in El Alto, Bolivia: she argues that 'mob justice' killings are a way to 'deface' (Taussig, 1999) criminal suspects, and an attempt "to bring forth and fix an elusive 'criminal dangerousness' in specific bodies in order to act upon it (…) as a matter of bringing closure to dangerousness" (p. 19).

These studies do not necessarily proclaim that the quest for order or closure in contexts marked by indeterminacy inevitably results in violence. Yet, they all assume the naturalness of such a quest. My findings in Burundi reveal a more diverse picture of how people deal with uncertainty. Youths in Burundi were continuously involved in 'seeing' and monitoring the apparent and the hidden.

They proved to be quite critical observers of the uncertainty shrouding the sentiments and intentions of others (cf. Turner, 2005). They were strongly attuned to lurking dangers (cf. Vigh, 2011). Nonetheless, such endeavours of ‘seeing’ and ‘seeing far’ usually culminated in the conclusion that it was difficult to know what was ‘in the hearts’ of people (cf. Ingelaere, 2007). And, although this could lead to disappointment, frustration or apathy, youths often appeared to be committed in a more positive way to the unknown.

Indeed, as I argued in Chapter 4, youths now and again dwelled on uncertainty in order to stretch the space and time for peace-building and reconciliation, or, as I showed in Chapter 5, turned the periods of wanting and waiting into an opportunity to prepare better and more secure futures. It seemed that uncertainty served the imagination and actualization of more positive or hopeful scenarios, as though the opposite, namely immediate certainty, stood for danger and deficit. Uncertainty meant buying time.

This is not to deny their quest for an orderly world, which was also observable in the practices of youths. This became particularly obvious in the ‘mapping’ practices I described in Chapter 3. The youths waved aside inaccuracies and ambiguity in favour of assertions of ‘truth’. Yet even in these practices of mapping the people around them, there was an element of disturbing the assumed ‘truths’, of disturbing its feared consequences. That is, youths tried to identify ‘guilty’ and ‘potentially dangerous’ others, apparently also to intimidate or manipulate them into not acting upon this otherness.

These specific ways of dealing with uncertainty are strongly related to the past experiences of violence and the persistent fear of violence to come. *It is a ‘peace’ of two or three minutes*, Ismaël claimed in this regard (see page 26). In the recent aftermath of war, a period perhaps best described as ‘no war, no peace’ (Richards, 2005; Mac Ginty et. al., 2007; Montoya, 2011), youths were looking for ways to acknowledge the past and to do things differently, but without betraying the past or failing to learn from it. Anatol’s earlier quoted remark (see pages 116) is especially illustrative of the resulting hesitations and doubts about how to do this:

> I told you I prefer to forget, but every time I remember the past… I mean, it is the past that makes the person. (…) [It] gives us an image so as to prepare the future. I try to forget all that concerns ethnic identities (…) I do not base myself too much on [political parties], but…
>
> Interview, Kamenge, May 2010

Emotions and Tactics

This brings me to another issue I wish to highlight in this part, namely the role of emotions in shaping tactics. To explain action, studies often privilege the

pragmatic reasoning of actors. Action is usually investigated in relation to opportunistic, "situated readings of terrains, horizons and possibilities" (Vigh, 2006b, p. 30). My findings, however, reveal that at times desires, fears or moral emotions are equally important for shaping navigation. This may be the case especially in situations of extreme uncertainty. Hope for a better future and anxiety about danger interact with cognitive rationalities, and provoke reactions to relationships and events that may be differently estimated from the actor's purely pragmatic point of view.

The importance of emotions for shaping youths' navigation became particularly clear in Chapter 4, which dealt with the salience of identity categories, such as Hutu and Tutsi, in social relations. This is probably not a coincidence, as emotions are particularly relevant in contexts where social relations are being redefined, particularly if a history of betrayal pervades these relations. As Turnaturi argues: "[a]mong all intersubjective experiences, betrayal is certainly the one most loaded with emotions" (2007, p. 29).

Turnaturi (2007) describes betrayals as a product of changing social relations, avoidable "[o]nly when change is accepted and welcomed as a challenge to redefine oneself and redefine the relationship…" (p. 21–22). Yet, this requires the cooperation of all parties, and given the history of collective violence in Burundi, such cooperation was highly precarious; it depended on the other, but trust in the other had been severely undermined and every change was now seen as possible betrayal. In this regard, I soon learned that the regularly heard remarks 'she/he changed' or 'you changed' (*tu as changé*) hardly ever had a positive connotation. Turnaturi suggests that betrayal is feared so much because of its relational nature: betrayal always "involves the rupture of a pact, the negation of the principle of cohesion, and a threat to the possibility of *all* relations" (2007, p. 28, *emphasis in original*). To be betrayed is to be abandoned. Moreover, betrayal reveals our fragility and dependence on others (p. 29), which is especially frightening in a context where the means to protect oneself are extremely limited.

Ordinary 'Extraordinary Circumstances'

An exploration of the role of emotions in everyday practices also helps to shed light on the haphazardly encountered contradictions and paradoxes, which I referred to as 'conflicting narratives' that deviate from the 'lines' usually taken (Goffman, 1999). The conflicting narratives could sometimes be understood through a situational analysis, but at other times they challenged the analytic forms commonly applied in anthropology. This made me conclude, for instance, that: *'[s]tandpoints on ethnicity differ not per person or environment, but per moment*.' Yet, whereas I as a researcher was predominantly intrigued by such

contradictions, many of my interlocutors interpreted them as "a sort of revelation or epiphany" (Turnaturi, 2007, p. 14). Inconsistencies were often viewed as hidden truths disclosed.

The sudden alterations in human relations and extraordinary actions by others, nonetheless, seemed to have gained an uneasy, steady presence in Burundi. Unpredictability has become the predictable state of affairs. Think for instance of the taxi driver Sylvère, who said that '…*at the moment of change, 'they' can suddenly change. Just like when the war broke out* (see page 111). In this example also, the changes that occurred, despite the fact that change in itself was anticipated, was laden with emotions that commonly accompany betrayal.

The influence on everyday practices of such an anticipation of "extraordinary circumstances" (Spencer, 1990, p. 622) in which the "negative potentiality" (Vigh, 2011) of people could materialize, became especially clear in Chapter 5. Youths anticipated the 'vital conjuncture' (Johnson-Hanks, 2005) that the electoral period represented as one in which people around them would reveal their positions and they adjusted their practices in both the period of anticipation and the critical moments accordingly. If their own positions would be revealed as contrasting with those of the people in power or the people around them, it could put them in a vulnerable position, liable to violence and exclusion in critical moments.

In the face of this unpredictability and insecurity, youths commonly geared their practices at versatility and remaining elusive. They engaged in subjunctivizing practices, also in the way they forged and maintained relations. The central aim of action in such 'elusive tactics' was to protect oneself against suspected, latent dangers and to maintain options to seize future opportunities. The elusive tactics allowed youths to remain or become more versatile, flexible and, quite literally, difficult to pin down. In critical periods, youths had to judge whether it would be better to try to, as far as possible, remain elusive for the time being, or whether to try and seize the opportunity that had come along – which meant they would have to show their colours. Indeed, elusiveness offered a kind of protection, but at the cost of order, and of possible gain.

The description of the Burundian youths' elusive tactics, one may argue, is also observable among youths elsewhere. Youths are reputed for keeping options open, for their non-commitment, their changing loyalties, and their doubt and emotional instability. Similarly, fieldwork descriptions about other conflict-prone settings describe tactics like hiding, deceiving, changing alliances and opportunism. Nonetheless, I argue, in Burundi, the extreme livelihood insecurities, the specific relationship between youths and political (party) elites, and the continuous uncertainty about the regional, ethnic and political 'other', make that elusive tactics play an especially significant role in forging and maintaining social relations. Cultural, social and political legacy seem to promote

elusive tactics as a way to protect oneself against others. Indeed, a predisposition to mistrust appears to be transmitted to new generations as they come of age. A clear illustration of this can be found in the following description of a fieldwork encounter with Laurent. Laurent had just told me that he had misrepresented his age to me, and tried to explain to me why:

> That is how you grow up, because Burundians are like that. There are Burundians that want to get to know you because they want to hurt you, just like there are Burundians that want to get to know you to do you good. But you cannot know it beforehand. And that is exactly why, when I grew up, my mother told me to tell a few lies the first time I meet someone. It was not personal. I could have made an exception for you because you are a *muzungu*. So perhaps this rule does not apply to you. But it has become automatic for me. Because I listen to my mother, because I love her. Sorry.
>
> Fieldwork notes, May 2010

Elusive tactics can be more or less conscious, as the 'reflexive' lie of Laurent suggests, and may result more or less directly from a particular situation. Moreover, the effects of elusive tactics go beyond the particular situation and affect relationships in more lasting ways. Especially the exposure of such tactics may appear as a kind rupture and is susceptible to interpretations of betrayal. The apology of Laurent suggests that he was well aware of this. Like in this example, however, youths were trying to curb such negative effects.

Breaking the Cycle

It may be argued that in Burundi, efforts to break the cyclical dynamics of violence and insecurity are most promising in periods when "… the angst, uncertainty, and passion for the possible that life holds through and beyond technical assessments" (Deleuze, in Biehl and Locke 2010, p. 319) is strongest; that is, when the desire for or belief in openness and alternatives is stronger than the knowledge and power that constrain everyday practices. Faced by indeterminacy, youths tried to affect the war/peace dynamics directly, sometimes even attempting to go beyond the strictures set by more powerful actors. The claims of youths that ethnicity as a relevant social category was disappearing or their disapproval of relationships based on common background characteristics, as described in Chapter 4, are a case in point. The period of indeterminacy, in that sense, may be seen as an opportunity to foster peace. Yet, simultaneously, the periods of indeterminacy appear to foster practices that perpetuate unstable and mistrustful social relations. They generate a continuous subjunctivity in the relations between people. These effects are not necessarily intentional, but nonetheless influence the process of consolidation of peace or

relapse into war. With indeterminacy, time for more hopeful and peaceful scenarios is bought, but ‘extraordinary circumstances’ and ‘betrayal’ remain a looming possibility.

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English Summary

Elusive Tactics: Urban Youth Navigating the Aftermath of War in Burundi

This ethnographic study explores the social genesis of war and peace in Burundi. The topic is approached through a focus on everyday practices of classification and identification among youths on the northern periphery of Bujumbura. The study reveals the ways in which male and female youths grapple with insecurities and uncertain prospects concerning violence and exclusion that characterize Burundi in the aftermath of the civil war. Therewith, the study gives insight into purposive action in indeterminate contexts and illuminates the agency of 'ordinary people' – here, youths – in reinventing peace.

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter describes the methodology and theory that underpin this study. In the chapter, I propose to focus on the immediate present and embrace a more open-ended anthropology as a way to deal with the indeterminacy that affects fieldwork findings and relations and to start exploring the still emerging effects of everyday practices. The chapter also reflects on current anthropological theory on war and peace as constituted through and moderated by social action, youths as key actors in peace-building and theory developed to grasp tactical practices, which allegedly prevail in contexts marked by high levels of uncertainty, insecurity and contingency.

The second chapter serves as a historical background. Writings about history in Burundi help to contextualize the contemporary situation of 'no war, no peace'. In the chapter, I argue that war-peace dynamics in Burundi are embedded in regional and global power struggles and that in Burundi's recent past, a political system strongly based on exclusion and violence has emergenced. I point to the importance of regional and ethnic identity categories as bases for discrimination and the significance of vertical ties between the ruling elite and ordinary people. Purportedly, Burundian history is partial and highly politicized. In addition, I suggest, the contested nature of history itself appears to become a tool in struggles over truth, power and impunity.

The subsequent chapters present my main empirical findings regarding the ways in which youths deal with uncertainty, insecurity and contingency in their surroundings. In Chapter 3, I argue that youths are engaged in 'mapping' practices, through which youths categorize others according to their neighbourhood residence; apparently as a way to get grip on the people around them and to prepare against latent danger. The 'mapping' practices also feed into a 'standardization' of differences between neighbourhoods and their

residents. The categories are strongly based on wartime categories and experiences and follow the logic of hierarchy. They thus have a potential as 'mythical maps' for processes of exclusion, though youths also 'disturb' and 'contest' the assumptions based on the emergent categories.

Chapter 4 looks at how youths navigate the uncertainty about the salience of ethnic and other identity categories. Identification practices were often seen as omens of imminent violence. Not the categories themselves but the employment of the categories was questioned and feared. This leads to a preoccupation with hidden realities and an engagement in protective measures geared at remaining difficult to define, which results in conflicting narratives that reaffirm the existence of hidden and potentially treacherous realities. Yet, the youths' practices also help to imagine and prepare an alternative, more peaceful future. I argue that, here, emotions like hope or fear seem to strongly affect the youths' navigation.

Chapter 5 looks at youths' engagement in politics in view of their preparations for their futures. I show that the 'crisis dynamics' in Burundi, which are characterized by periods of relative stability alternating with periods of heightened tensions, affect the kind of practices youths engage in. In periods of relative stability, youths appear more inclined to focus on themselves. They try improving their skills and capabilities and they abstain from clear side-taking. By increasing versatility and encouraging the patience to endure, they try to create alternatives. In periods of turmoil, the possibilities for such practices drastically narrow. Many youths feel compelled to display their political allegiance and make exclusive choices. In this, youths have to take into account both immediate and more distant horizons. Their choices and actions appear to have a spiralling potential: the space to operate outside or despite power structures increasingly diminishes – for themselves, the people close to them and possibly, for next generations.

The last chapter – the conclusion – highlights my findings in view of what they contribute to current anthropological theory on tactical practices and their effects on peace-building. I suggest that some of the practices I described in the thesis can be seen as 'elusive tactics'. Elusive tactics refer to practices that allow people – here, youths – to remain or become more versatile, flexible and, quite literally, difficult to pin down. These tactics can be protective and can help foster the desire for or belief in openness and alternatives. They help challenge the knowledge and power that constrain everyday life. Yet, elusive tactics also perpetuate and reiterate mistrustful social relations. Amidst indeterminacy, extraordinary circumstances and betrayal remain a looming possibility.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Schijnbewegingen: Hoe jongeren hun weg vinden in naoorlogs Burundi

In deze etnografische studie onderzoek ik de sociale genese van oorlog en vrede in Burundi. De focus is op alledaagse patronen van classificeren en identificeren door jongeren in de noordelijke buitenwijken van Bujumbura. Ik kijk daarbij naar hoe jonge mannen en vrouwen omgaan met heel onzekere vooruitzichten voor geweld en uitsluiting; tekenend voor het dagelijks leven in naoorlogs Burundi. De studie draagt zo bij aan inzicht in de wijze waarop sociale actie in precaire omstandigheden vormkrijgt en in hoe 'gewone mensen' – in deze studie, jongeren – bijdragen aan het hervinden van vrede.

Het proefschrift bestaat uit zes hoofdstukken. Het eerste hoofdstuk beschrijft de methodologie en theorie die aan de basis van deze studie liggen. De onduidelijkheid van de context heeft invloed op onderzoeksgegevens en veldwerkrelaties. Als antwoord hierop en om nog in wording zijnde trends te kunnen onderzoeken, stel ik een focus op het hier en nu voor en pleit ik voor een antropologie met een open-einde. Ik reflecteer ook op gangbare antropologische theorieën over oorlog en vrede als processen gevormd en gemitigeerd door sociale actie, over jongeren als sleutelfiguren in vredesprocessen en over tactische wijzen van handelen. Deze laatsten komen veel voor in omstandigheden die worden gekenmerkt door onzekerheid, onveiligheid en schokken.

Het tweede hoofdstuk geeft een historische achtergrond van de huidige situatie van 'geen oorlog, geen vrede'. In het hoofdstuk laat ik zien dat politieke processen in Burundi zijn ingebed in regionale en mondiale machtstrijd en dat in het recente verleden een systeem is ontstaan met geweld en uitsluiting als sturende mechanismen. Ook tekenend voor dit systeem waren het belang van regionale en etnische identiteitscategorieën en de sterk verticaal gestructureerde verbanden tussen de heersende elite en de 'gewone mensen'. De Burundese geschiedschrijving is beperkt, vaak eenzijdig en zeer gepolitiseerd. Maar de betwiste aard van de geschiedenis zelf lijkt ook steeds meer te worden ingezet als middel om waarheid, macht en straffeloosheid te bevechten.

De hoofdstukken 3, 4 en 5 bevatten mijn belangrijkste empirische bevindingen over de manieren waarop jongeren omgaan met onzekerheid, onveiligheid en

schokken in hun omgeving. In hoofdstuk 3 betoog ik dat jongeren anderen 'categoriseren' op basis van de wijk waarin ze wonen om vat te krijgen op hun omgeving en om zich voor te bereiden tegen sluimerend gevaar. Dit lijkt ook te leiden tot een 'standardiseren' van verschillen tussen bewoners van verschillende wijken. De opkomende categorieën zijn sterk gebaseerd op categorieën en ervaringen uit de oorlogstijd en staan hierarchisch ten opzichte van elkaar. Hoewel jongeren de veronderstellingen regelmatig betwisten, hebben genoemde categoriën ook de potentie te dienen als 'plattegrond' in nieuwe processen van uitsluiting.

Hoofdstuk 4 kijkt naar de wijze waarop jongeren de onzekerheid over de betekenis van etnische en andere identiteitscategorieën navigeren. Identificatiepraktijken worden vaak gezien als voortekenen van geweld. Niet de categorieën zelf maar het gebruik ervan wordt betwist en gevreesd, en zorgt voor zorgen over een verborgen realiteit. Veel beschermende maatregelen die mensen nemen, zijn erop gericht moeilijk te definiëren te zijn. Deze leiden tot tegenstrijdige verhalen die het bestaan van een verborgen en mogelijk verraderlijke realiteit lijken te bevestigen. Maar de ruimte die het 'nog niet gedefinieerde' creëert, helpt ook om voorstelling te geven aan een alternatieve, meer vreedzame toekomst. Ik betoog dat emoties als hoop en angst hier sterk van invloed zijn op de opkomende patronen van handelen die bij de jongeren te zien zijn.

Hoofdstuk 5 kijkt naar de politieke participatie met het oog op hoe jongeren zich voorbereiden voor de toekomst. Ik laat zien dat de 'crisis dynamiek' in Burundi, die wordt gekenmerkt door periodes van relatieve stabiliteit afgewisselend met spanningen, invloed heeft op hoe jongeren zich tot de politiek verhouden. In periodes van relatieve stabiliteit lijken jongeren meer geneigd zich te concentreren op zichzelf. Ze proberen hun kennis en vaardigheden te verbeteren en ze onthouden zich van eenduidige (politieke) keuzes. Door zich te richten op veelzijdigheid, doorzettingsvermogen en geduld proberen ze verbetering van de situatie van henzelf en hun omgeving mogelijk te maken. In periodes van onrust wordt de ruimte hiervoor drastisch beperkt. Veel jongeren voelen zich gedwongen om eenduidige keuzes te maken en hun exclusieve, politieke loyaliteit kenbaar te maken. Dit is ook een kans om zich te onderscheiden van anderen en iets te bereiken. Maar jongeren moeten hierbij rekening houden met zowel de nabije als verre, moeilijk te voorspellen toekomst. Hun keuzes en acties beloven een stapelwerking: de ruimte om buiten

of tegen machtstructuren in te opereren lijkt steeds kleiner te worden – voor henzelf, voor hun omgeving en voor volgende generaties.

Het laatste hoofdstuk geeft een samenvatting van mijn bevindingen met het oog op de bijdrage aan antropologische theorievorming over patronen van handelen en effecten voor vrede. Ik beargumenteer dat sommige handelingen erop gericht zijn veelzijdig en flexibel te worden en, bijna letterlijk, om ongrijpbaar te blijven. Deze taktieken kunnen beschermend werken, het geloof in positieve verandering bevorderen, en ze helpen heersende aannames over kennis en macht ter discussie te stellen. Maar deze ‘schijnbewegingen’ (*elusive tactics*) versterken ook het wantrouwen binnen sociale relaties. Bij zoveel onzekerheid blijven schokkende gebeurtenissen en verraad denkbaar.

SOMMAIRE EN FRANÇAIS

TACTIQUES ÉLUSIVES: LES JEUNES URBAINS SE FRAYANT UN CHEMIN AU BURUNDI D'APRES GUERRE

Dans cette étude ethnographique, j'explore la genèse sociale de la guerre et de la paix au Burundi. J'aborde ce sujet en mettant l'accent sur les pratiques quotidiennes de classification et d'identification chez les jeunes gens (hommes et femmes) dans la périphérie nord de Bujumbura. L'étude décrit la façon dont les jeunes font face à l'insécurité et aux perspectives incertaines liées à la violence et l'exclusion qui caractérisent le Burundi à la suite de la guerre civile. Alors, l'étude apporte de la clairvoyance sur les actions ciblées dans des contextes indéterminés et sur la fonction des « gens ordinaires » – ici, les jeunes – pour réinventer la paix.

La thèse est composée en six chapitres. Le premier chapitre décrit la méthodologie et la théorie qui sous-tendent cette étude. Dans ce chapitre je propose de se concentrer sur le présent imminent et d'embrasser une anthropologie ouverte comme moyens de traiter l'indétermination qui influence les relations et les constatations rencontrées sur le terrain et pour explorer les effets encore émergents des pratiques quotidiennes. Dans le chapitre je décris aussi la théorie anthropologique actuelle sur la guerre et la paix étant constituée à travers et animée par les actions sociales, sur les jeunes comme acteurs incontournables dans la consolidation de la paix, et sur la théorie développée à saisir des tactiques pratiques.

Le deuxième chapitre sert comme un arrière-plan historique. Les écrits sur l'histoire au Burundi aident à mettre en contexte la situation contemporaine du « pas de guerre, pas de paix». Le chapitre montre que les dynamiques de la guerre et de la paix au Burundi sont liées aux développements régional et mondial. Le passé récent au Burundi a vu l'émergence d'un système politique fortement basé sur l'exclusion et sur la violence et l'importance, entre autres, des catégories d'identité régionales et ethniques comme bases de la discrimination. Dans ce chapitre je signale aussi l'importance des liens verticaux entre l'élite dirigeante et les gens ordinaires. L'histoire burundaise est partiellement et hautement politisée. La nature litigieuse de l'histoire semble devenir un outil en soi aussi dans les luttes sur la vérité, de la puissance et de l'impunité.

Dans les chapitres suivants, je présente mes principaux résultats empiriques au sujet de la façon dont laquelle les jeunes traitent l'incertitude, l'insécurité et la contingence dans leur environnement. Dans le chapitre 3, j'explique que les jeunes sont engagés dans des pratiques de « catégorisation de quartiers », apparemment comme un moyen d'avoir une emprise sur leur entourage et de se préparer contre un danger latent. Ces pratiques alimentent aussi une « normalisation » des différences entre les quartiers et leurs habitants. Les pratiques de « catégorisation de quartiers» reposent fortement sur les catégories de l'époque de la guerre et suivent la logique de la hiérarchie. Il y existe alors un potentiel comme « catégorisations mythiques » pour les processus d'exclusion, mais il faut noter que les jeunes sont aussi « gênés » et « contestent » les hypothèses fondées sur les « caractéristiques des quartiers ».

Dans le chapitre 4 on examine comment les jeunes naviguent sur l'incertitude quant à l'importance des catégories ethniques et autres catégories identitaires. Parce que les pratiques d'identification sont souvent considérées comme des présages d'une violence imminente, non pas les catégories elles-mêmes mais l'emploi de ces catégories sont remises en question et craintes. Cela conduit à une préoccupation avec des réalités cachées et un engagement dans les mesures de protection avec l'intention de rester difficile à définir, ce qui donne lieu à des récits contradictoires qui réaffirment l'existence des réalités cachées et potentiellement perfides. Également, cela aide à imaginer et préparer les alternatives futures plus pacifiques. Les émotions comme l'espoir ou la crainte influencent fortement la navigation de l'incertitude quant à l'importance des catégories.

Dans le chapitre 5 l'engagement des jeunes dans la vie politique en vue de préparer leur avenir est exploré. La « dynamique de crise » caractérisée par des périodes de stabilité relative, alternant avec des périodes de tensions élevées, influence le genre des pratiques auxquelles les jeunes gens s'engagent. En période de stabilité relative, les jeunes semblent plus enclins à se concentrer sur l'amélioration de leurs compétences et leurs capacités et ils s'abstiennent de prendre des positions claires. Ils augmentent la polyvalence et encouragent la patience à endurer pour créer des ouvertures en vue de changements et d'améliorations. Dans « les périodes critiques » les possibilités pour les jeunes de s'engager dans ces pratiques se réduisent drastiquement. Beaucoup de jeunes se sentent obligés d'afficher leur allégeance politique et de faire des choix exclusifs. Les jeunes sont obligés de prendre en considération aussi bien des horizons immédiats que des horizons plus lointains. Leurs choix et leurs actions semblent

avoir un effet de spirale qui réduit de plus en plus les possibilités de jeunes à opérer en dehors ou malgré les structures de pouvoir, potentiellement aussi pour les générations futures.

Dans le dernier chapitre, la conclusion, je mets en évidence les résultats au vu de ce qu'ils contribuent à la théorie anthropologique, notamment sur les pratiques tactiques et leurs effets pour la consolidation de la paix. Je propose de définir certaines des pratiques comme « des tactiques élusives ». Cela réfère aux pratiques qui permettent aux gens – ici, les jeunes – de rester ou de devenir plus polyvalents, souples et, presque littéralement difficiles à cerner. Elles favorisent le désir pour la croyance aux alternatives, au-delà de la connaissance et la puissance qui limitent la vie quotidienne. Pourtant, ils perpétuent et favorisent aussi les relations sociales méfiantes. Les circonstances extraordinaires et la trahison restent une possibilité imminente.