

Peacebuilding in Post-Genocide Rwanda

The Role of Cooperatives in the Restoration of Interpersonal Relationships

Ezechiel Sentama

PhD Thesis



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

School of Global Studies

Peace and Development Research

Peacebuilding in Post-Genocide Rwanda:
The Role of Cooperatives in the Restoration of Interpersonal Relationships

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To

My Wife, Claire Mutamuriza

and

Our Son, Jeff Junior Sentama

*Your patience enabled me to climb and reach the top of one of the highest mountains
in academic endeavour.*

Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts.

--William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

If we would just support each other -- that's ninety percent of the problem.

-- Edward Gardner (1898-1966)

Either men will learn to live like brothers, or they will die like beasts.

-- Max Lerner (1902-1992)

It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.

-- Irish Proverb

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ASPR	Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution
BCICS	British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies
CERI	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales (Centre for International Studies and Researches)
CECORE	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CFRC	Centre de Formation et de Recherche Coopérative (Cooperative Training and Research Centre)
CIIR	Catholic Institute for International Relations
CPHS	Centre for Peace and Human Security
Ex-FAR	Ex- Forces Armées Rwandaises (Former Rwandan Armed Forces)
FED	Fond Européen de Développement (European Development Fund)
JICA ReSoESA	Japan International Cooperation Agency Regional Support office for Eastern and Southern Africa
ICA	International Cooperative Alliance
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMPUYABO	Impuzamashyirahamwe y' Abahinzi Borozi (Union of associations of farmers and stock breeders)
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MDR	Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (Democratic Republican Movement)
MIJEUCOOP	Ministère de la Jeunesse et du Mouvement Coopératif (Ministry of Youth and Cooperative Movement)

MINALOC	Ministère de l'Administration Locale (Ministry of Local Administration)
MINAFASO	Ministère des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Social Affairs)
MINASOCOOP	Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Mouvement Coopératif (Ministry of Social Affairs and Cooperative Movement)
MINASODECO	Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Développement Communautaire (Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development)
MINECOFIN	Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning)
MINICOM	Ministère du Commerce, de l'industrie, de la promotion des investissements, du tourisme et des coopératives (Ministry of Commerce, industry, investment promotion, tourism and cooperatives)
MINIFADECO	Ministère de la Famille et du Développement Communautaire (Ministry of the Family and Community Development)
MISSOC	Ministère de la Santé et des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs)
MUJEUMA	Ministère de la Jeunesse et du Mouvement Associatif (Ministry of Youth and Associative Movement)
NAPS	Network of African Peacebuilders
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OBM	Office du Bugesera-Mayaga (Bugesera-Mayaga Office)
OCIRU	Office des Cultures Industrielles du Rwanda-Urundi (Rwanda-Urundi Industrial Crops Office)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
PSD	Parti Social Démocrate (Social Democratic Party)
RTLTM	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (Independent Radio and Television of a Thousand Hills)
SPRC	Sudan Peace and Reconciliation Commission
TRAFIPRO	Travail, Fidélité, Progrès (Work, Loyalty, Progress)
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Introduction

Between April and July 1994, Rwanda was the scene of one of the most brutal genocides in the history of humankind. It is estimated that at least one million people were killed within that three-month period. After the genocide, a deep division between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members was evident. Despite the Rwandan Government's efforts (creation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, solidarity camps, traditional courts of justice-*Gacaca*, community mediators, etc.), the aftermath of the genocide remains a period during which the big challenge is concerned with how to restore relationships across the divides in question. Nowadays, in Rwanda, eyes are also turned toward cooperative organizations assumed to be a recruiting vehicle through which post-genocide recovery, social cohesion and reconciliation could be driven.

This study thus endeavours to explore whether a cooperative organization plays a role in peacebuilding after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, with a particular focus on the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. Considering the general observation that the cooperative method, notably in the developing world, emphasizes growth and development from below,¹ the study generally aims to bring its contribution in relation to the shortage of knowledge when it comes to the field of peacebuilding from below, notably regarding the mechanisms or methods to be used in order to overcome the painful past between conflicting parties. In particular, the study endeavours to provide an empirically based study on the relational outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership of the same cooperative organization after the genocide of 1994 in Rwanda.

The study is exploratory and qualitative, with a hermeneutic-interpretive orientation. Its theoretical framework combines intergroup contact theory with other theoretical perspectives on the restoration of interpersonal relationships during peacebuilding. Since the study is exploratory, the process of data collection was guided by the study's research questions, while the theoretical framework was used during the discussion of exploratory findings. The objective is to depart from respondents' perspectives and experiences (accounts) and provide a discussion from that. In order to deepen understanding of the subject under study, this study chose not to limit itself to only one cooperative. However, due to the constraints of time and resources, the scope was restricted to two cases of cooperatives—*Abahuzamugambi coffee*² and *Peace basket*—representing respectively Rwanda's major sectors of livelihood, namely agriculture and handicraft. The cooperatives in question operate in the Huye district of Rwanda's southern province.

¹ See for example in Carlsson Alf (1992). *Cooperatives and the State: Partners in Development? A Human Resource Perspective*. PhD Dissertation. Institute of International Education: Stockholm University.

² 'Abahuzamugambi' translates to: 'people with the same purpose/goal'.

1.1. Research problem

The problem around which this thesis turns consists of how to restore interpersonal relationships after violent conflicts, or mass atrocities—one of the pressing challenges worth taking up in post-conflict peacebuilding (Schirch, 2005:151; Miall, 2004:8; Ramsbotham et al., 2005:218; Lederach, 1997; Lederach et al. 2007; Staub, 2003:433).

In fact, one of the greatest impediments to the restoration of interpersonal relationships, following violence, is that conflicting parties are separated from one another. Fear, suspicion, mistrust, hatred and misperception set in, as relationships that had been friendly, open and trusting, no longer are so. Walls go up, and negative stereotypes, hostility and the change in communication patterns set in, as people move farther and farther apart (Burgess, 2003; Lederach et al., 2007:18; McMoran, 2003; Staub, 1996:189; Saunders, 1999). How to break down these negative and dehumanizing attitudes and behaviours, while increasing positive ones, and how to overcome differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and the devaluation of ‘them’, thus becomes a difficult task.

In this regard, the crime of genocide, such as the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which tore apart and profoundly destroyed the country’s human and physical capital, as well as its socio-economic and institutional foundation, serves as a typical example. Post-genocide Rwanda continues to grapple with a desperate need for the restoration of relationships across the divides—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, in the context of deeper poverty (Hagengimana, 2000 and 2001; UNDP, 2005; CNUR, 2000; MINALOC, 2001; MINALOC and MINECOFIN, 2006). In this regard, both Uvin (1998) and Zorbas (2004) argue that if poverty, inequality, exclusion and prejudice fed into the dynamics of genocide, it follows that ‘reconciliation’ has, as a necessary foundation, the notions of economic development, equality, participation, tolerance, human rights and the rule of law. For Havers, the restoration of interpersonal relationships of people affected by communal violence remains complex and difficult to achieve although there might have been a broad institutional mechanism in place to facilitate peacebuilding and humanitarian support. He argues that after the wave of emergency aid, communities needing assistance are often left alone with their plight in the face of the limited potential role of national governments due to the depth of wounds to be healed (Havers, 2006:35).

Therefore, in search of ways to restore relationships across the divides, it is generally contended that effective post-conflict peacebuilding—a multifaceted effort—requires top-down and bottom-up approach or public-private, partnerships (Lederach, 1997; Stephens, 1997). In this regard, the current discourse points to solutions derived and built from local sources (Ramsbotham et al., 2005:222), notably the particular role of *social arenas*—commonly understood as particular places or autonomous spaces, in a specific context, that limit the options of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and deconstruct the mechanisms of exclusion (stereotypes, dehumanization, enemy image), and where people can get into contact and confront each other non-violently throughout the process of change, from exclusion to inclusion (Schulz, 2008:35; Lederach, 1997). It is also generally contended that the relational outcomes resulting from the contact between conflicting parties depend upon the situation in which that contact occurs, as well as on other factors present in the situation in question (Allport, 1954, Forbes, 1997; Brewer and Miller, 1984; Miller et al., 2004; Kenworthy et al., 2008; Dovidio et al., 2003, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998). It is in this context that

many believe in, and point to, the role of cooperative organizations (Havers, 2006:2-3; Parnell, 2001:21; Warbasse, 1950, Parnell, 2001; Birchall, 2003; Soedjono, 2005; BCICS, 2006; ICA, 2006; Annan, 2006; ILO, 2006; IFAP, 2006; MINICOM, 2005, 2007). However, this sounds paradoxical if we consider other assumptions considering cooperatives, notably in the developing world, to be organizations whose time is past and whose outcome is failure and disappointment to those who put their faith in them (Galor, 2004; Williams, 2007). Empirical investigations in this regard are thus worth undertaking, notably in Rwanda, where cooperatives, composed of individuals from both sides of the conflict—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—continue to flourish since the aftermath of the 1994 genocide.

All the above considerations lead us to the study's research problem consisting in *knowing if, and how, a cooperative form of organization plays a role in the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties after violence*. What happens to conflicting parties' relationships when they belong to the same cooperative organization, in the aftermath of violence, such as the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, constitutes the aspect at the core of this study's research problem.

1.2. Study rationale

The restoration of relationships between conflicting parties, in the aftermath of a violent conflict, remains one of the major challenges worth taking up in post-conflict peacebuilding. In this regard, Rwanda offers a typical example of a society torn apart by a violent conflict. The genocide of 1994 destroyed relationships between Rwandans, who yet continue to live next to each other. It is in this regard that a study on how to restore their relationships becomes worthwhile to undertake, and this is what the present study endeavours to do. But why does the study lean toward an exploration of the role of cooperatives in this regard? Two reasons are put forward.

Firstly, it is commonly agreed that peacebuilding can either be driven from above (the top-down approach) or from below (the bottom-up approach) (Tønnesson, 2005; Keating and Knight, 2004; Haugerudbraaten, 1998:4; Lamazares, 2005; Ramsbotham et al., 2005; Lederach, 1997; Oda, 2007). However, there is little knowledge with regard to the bottom-up approach to peacebuilding, notably when it comes to the mechanisms or methods to be used in order to overcome the painful past between conflicting parties. While there has been growing interest in peace initiatives that occur on various tracks at the local level, there is still unfortunately little research in the field of conflict resolution and peace studies on grassroots peace work and, particularly, people-to-people initiatives (Gawerc, 2006:445). Most research energy is often focused on the top level—external actors or political leaders and activities—while the middle and grassroots levels are neglected (Lederach, 1998:236; Orjuela, 2004; Gawerc, 2006:445). Even the current methods of grassroots peacebuilding only “involve leaders for the grassroots who then in turn spread knowledge to their communities or villages” (Brounéus, 2008:37). Approaches to peacebuilding by people-to-people (ordinary people in this case) themselves, instead of people's representation by their community leaders (see Lederach, 1997) or with the intervention of a third party, remain, at least to my knowledge, an unexplored dimension. This is also what Oda emphasizes when he holds that “ordinary people are excluded and disqualified from peace-related responsibilities, which constitutes somehow a vacuum in the area of peace research” (Oda, 2007:6-7). This study is thus aimed at filling this gap.

Secondly, the undertaking of this study, focusing on cooperatives, was motivated by the recent belief, not yet empirically researched, regarding the linkage between cooperative organizations and peacebuilding. Despite the existence of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)³ since 1895, it is only very recently, in 2006, that the ICA and international attention (notably the United Nations and other international bodies, governments and individuals) has turned towards the possible connection between cooperative forms of organizations and peacebuilding. This historical event has consequently been sanctioned by two consecutive conferences: the first, *Cooperatives and the pursuit of Peace* (June 18-20, 2006) organized by the British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies, and the second, *Peacebuilding through Cooperatives*, during the 84th International Day for Cooperatives (1st July 2006) (ICA 2006). These conferences became a catalyst for the emergence of ideas and speculation regarding the connection between cooperative organizations and peacebuilding, particularly in the aftermath of violent conflicts. During the two conferences, the general assumption, that needed to be empirically investigated, states that cooperative enterprises serve as melting pots in post-conflict peacebuilding (ICA, 2006; Annan, 2006; IFAP, 2006; ILO, 2006; Havers, 2005:2). It was also during these conferences that the lack of empirical knowledge regarding the connection between cooperative organizations and peacebuilding was pointed out. For example, on the occasion of the second conference, Ivano Barberini, the president of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), emphasized the underestimation of the relationship between cooperatives and peacebuilding, even within the ICA, as follows:

I would like to express my appreciation and warm thanks to the organizers of this meeting, whose purpose is to closely examine an issue [the connection between cooperatives and peacebuilding], which is often talked about but never given the full attention it deserves, not even within our movement. (Ivano Barberini, 2006)

On the same occasion, MacPherson—the Director of British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies—in reference to the above contention of the ICA’s president, also stated:

The International Cooperative Alliance has formally recognized and encouraged the role that cooperatives play in ensuring more peaceful relations at local, national and international levels, but there has been lack of research undertaken to understand how effective cooperatives have been or could be in achieving such goals. (MacPherson, 2006)

It is on the basis of the above considerations emphasizing the shortage of knowledge when it comes to the field of post-conflict peacebuilding from below, and particularly the lack of knowledge regarding the connection between the cooperative organization and peacebuilding, that this study is undertaken. At its completion, the study contends to have shed light on this issue.

³ Founded in 1895, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)—the global representative of the world cooperative movement—is an independent, non-governmental organization which unites, represents and serves cooperatives worldwide. ICA members are national and international cooperative organizations in all sectors of activity. Currently, ICA has more than two hundred member organizations (223 in 2005) from 91 countries, representing more than 800 million individuals worldwide (ICA, Last Updated: 10 August 2005). (<http://www.ica.coop/ica/index.html>).

1.3. Study aim and research questions

The overall aim of this study is to contribute to knowledge in relation to the field of peacebuilding from below, notably regarding the mechanisms or methods to be used in order to overcome the painful past between conflicting parties. By considering the particular case of the genocide of 1994 in Rwanda, the study aims to provide an empirically based exploration of the relational outcomes resulting from post-genocide conflicting parties' membership of the same cooperative organization. Conflicting parties in question are constituted of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. In so doing the study inclines toward the deep understanding of the complex world of lived experience from the subjective viewpoints of those who live it—conflicting parties in this regard. The study limits itself to the case of two cooperative organizations, and endeavours to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of a cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships, and how does it have that impact?
2. Which factors explain the impact of a cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships, and how do those factors explain that impact?

These research questions are closely interrelated. The first research question is concerned with the nature of impact(s) that the cooperatives under study (in themselves and their activities) have on the relationships of their members constituted of post-genocide conflicting parties. However, before getting to empirical data concerning the impact in question (first research question), an exploration of conflicting parties' relationships prior to their membership of the cooperatives studied becomes paramount. In addition, an exploration of the reasons behind their membership of the cooperatives in question was necessary in order to understand whether, and how, these reasons relate to their relationships. This baseline information was expected to pave the way for the inquiry into the nature of the impact of a cooperative on its members-conflicting parties' relationships. However, since these two questions were not the study's main concern, they were not included in the list of the research questions. The second research question is concerned with the factors that contributed to the impact explored in the first research question and ways in which those factors explain it.

1.4. Scope of the study

This thesis is concerned with peacebuilding after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Bearing in mind that the genocide in question took place in the midst of a 'civil war' (between the former-defeated government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front—RPF), with other consequent relational problems, this study restricts itself to the genocide. In this regard, the study focuses on the relational dimension of peacebuilding designated under the restoration of interpersonal relationships, and limits itself to the micro level (individuals as units of analysis) rather than the macro level dimension (intergroup relations at community or country level).

The study is approached from a socio-psychological perspective rather than the mainstream juridico-political dimension. An assumption of socio-psychological methods is that the conflict has arisen through the social interaction of the parties and can thus be resolved through their direct, bilateral interaction (Kelman, 1992 in Fisher, 2001:28). At a relational level, post-conflict peacebuilding is neither approached from the top-level, nor the middle-range level. The focus is rather directed toward the grassroots level, and involves the direct contact between conflicting parties. In this regard, the study considers ‘primary’ cooperative organizations (composed of individual people) rather than ‘secondary’ cooperatives (federation) or ‘tertiary’ cooperatives (apex or confederation).⁴ Two cooperatives, representing respectively Rwanda’s major sectors of livelihood, namely agriculture and handicraft, and operating in the *Huye* district of Rwanda’s southern province, constitute the study’s case. These are the *Abahuzamugambi coffee*, from the sector of agriculture, and *Peace basket*, from the sector of handicraft. The justification of the choice of the study area and the cooperatives subject to the study are discussed later in the methodological part.

1.5. A conceptual clarification

It is of paramount importance to provide a conceptual clarification of some key concepts concerned by this study. This is notably the case of whom this study refers to as a *genocide survivor*, and a *former genocide perpetrator*, on the one hand, and what the study understands by *restoration*, *interpersonal relationships*, and a *cooperative*, on the other.

Before getting to the conceptual clarification of whom the study refers to as ‘genocide survivors’ and as ‘former genocide perpetrators’, it is worth emphasizing that the consideration that Rwanda is composed of three ‘ethnic’ groups—*Hutu*, *Tutsi*, and *Twa* remains controversial. Yet, although the discussion on whether these categories constitute ‘ethnic’ groups is beyond the purpose of this study, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is well known to have been planned and perpetrated in the name of the *Hutu* ‘ethnic’ group against the *Tutsi* ‘ethnic’ group. It is nowadays referred to as *the genocide against Tutsi*.

However, not all *Hutu* participated in genocide, all the more so since many of them (even the *Twa*) were killed and injured or hunted, either being accused of, among other things, protecting *Tutsi* or refusing to participate in genocidal acts. Some *Tutsi* and *Twa* also became involved in genocidal acts for various reasons (disguise, fear, etc.). The above considerations thus lead to the clarification of whom this study refers to as a ‘genocide survivor’ and as a ‘genocide perpetrator’.

Genocide survivor

By ‘genocide survivor’, this study refers to any individual, irrespective of his/her ‘ethnic’ or group background, who, in a way or another, was either injured, hunted, or targeted by genocide acts. In this regard, the study chose to employ the concept of ‘survivor’ instead of the term ‘victim’, not only because the term ‘survivor’ is familiar and widely used in much

⁴ A cooperative is generally defined as an association of individual people, or moral-legal persons. In terms of membership, a cooperative is generally categorized as: (1) *primary*—where members are natural persons instead of juridical persons such as corporations, partnerships; (2) *secondary*—to refer to the group of primary cooperatives in the form of unions and federation; or (3) *tertiary*—implying secondary upward to one or more apex organizations (confederation). (See for example Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:63-64)

of the literature on post-genocide, and above all in Rwanda, but also since the term ‘victim’ can be misleading, given that it can be used for both the offended against and the offender. As Kimberly (2003:3) emphasizes “people who are perpetrators are nearly always victims some place else in their lives.”

Former Genocide *perpetrator*

By ‘former genocide perpetrator’, this study refers to any individual, irrespective of his/her ‘ethnic’ or group background who, in a way or another, got involved in genocidal acts. In this regard, this study does not consider ‘bystanders’—understood as people who did not, or were less likely to, offer help in fighting or challenging genocidal acts—as belonging to the category genocide perpetrators. The least we can say is that (some) ‘bystanders’ could simply be family members of former genocide perpetrators.

Restoration of relationships

By emphasizing the ‘restoration of interpersonal relationships’, this study understands the concept of ‘restoration’ as the ‘rebuilding’, the ‘repairing’, or simply the ‘positive transformation’.⁵ The Greek word used for ‘restore’ (*katartizo*) means to repair or to mend. Therefore, throughout this study, the *restoration* of relationships implies people in a constant state of repairing, rebuilding, or simply transforming positively their relationships in the aftermath of divisive violence—overcoming or reducing (past) negative attitudes and behaviours while fostering new positive ones. However, this is a process which does not necessarily imply the return to the status quo (*statu quo ante*) in human relationships.

Interpersonal relationships

Although the understanding of interpersonal relationships in conflict is hardly distinguishable from intergroup relations (discussed at the beginning of chapter 2), the two being viewed as existing in a continuum, this study understands *interpersonal* relationships in reference to the relationships between two or more individual persons rather than the groups to which they belong. By taking the opportunity from this, it is worth emphasizing that the *interpersonal relationships restoration* should not be confused with *reconciliation*. The former is just one aspect of the latter. The study did not therefore choose to employ the concept of ‘reconciliation’, which, by often bearing a strong religious connotation, or being confused with forgiveness, remains complex, unclear, elusive, and consequently difficult to operationalize (this is discussed in chapter 2).

A cooperative

Although the understanding of a ‘cooperative’ will be largely discussed in chapter three, there is need to provide the reader, beforehand, with what this study refers to as a ‘cooperative’. But before getting to that, we need to differentiate *cooperation* in the cooperative from cooperation as *collaboration*, given that there is often a tendency to

⁵ By ‘transformation’ this study refers to the transformation of conflicts or relationships in a positive sense. This is why in some parts of the text the term ‘positive’ transformation is employed in order to emphasize that.

confuse them. ‘Cooperation’ as ‘collaboration’ can refer to group activity within any corporate conglomerate or subsidiary activity, and can easily be little more than assent to authority according to a feudalistic, hierarchical organizational system. Cooperation (in the cooperative) on the other hand, is rooted in a highly democratic, participatory, and group-directed process. ‘Cooperation’ *in the cooperative* demands a move away from a mere collaborative attitude within a typical corporate command chain (Williams, 2007:1).

In this regard, the study defines a cooperative in reference to ways in which it is understood in Rwanda, which maintains the widely-used and common definition of a cooperative, provided by the ICA. A cooperative is *an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.* (ICA, 1995; MINICOM, 2007:1)

This understanding considers the cooperative to be an institution on its own—an economic system beside others (socialism or communism, and capitalism). A cooperative is a social and economic institution, but essentially different from both private and public enterprise. It is a *middle way*, an economic system in its own right. A cooperative thus intends to counterbalance individual weakness through strength of numbers; that is to say, through a union of wills, efforts and resources of more or less numerous groups of persons who faced similar needs (de Drimer, 1997:469). The idea of the cooperative is that “by aiding each other and sharing the results, all gain.” (Williams, 2007:19)

1.6. Research methodology

This study is problem-oriented, and finds its place in the academic domain of *Peace Research* oriented toward the creation of knowledge or understanding about conflicts. It is an interpretive exploration with a qualitative orientation in data and analysis.

1.6.1. Research strategy: an interpretive exploration

This is an interpretive-hermeneutically informed study in the sense of capturing subjective human meanings while seeing things through the eyes of those who live them. Since this study seeks to achieve a deep understanding of the role of cooperatives in the restoration of relationships across the divides, it follows that reaching such an objective requires an exploration of the perceptions and subjective experiences of conflicting parties in question. This thus involves a deep digging through qualitative methods and the collection of qualitative data in a way that quantifying would miss or reach only superficially.

A question often posed concerns ontological and epistemological positions; that is, whether one subscribes to *objectivism* (positivism) or (*subjectivism*) interpretivism—two often opposed and competing philosophies. Positivism nomothetically seeks rigorous, exact measures to test hypotheses. In contrast to positivism’s *instrumental* orientation, the interpretive tradition (the view that the world is the creation of mind; the world is *interpreted* through the mind), assumes that “man is the measure of all things” and that “truth is not absolute but is decided by human judgment” (Bernard, 2000:18). In this regard, this study’s ontological and epistemological position depended on its aim rather than the preconceived philosophical position on what the world is constituted of or how to get to knowledge. The study thus maintains Hammersley’s contention:

Our decisions about what level of precision is appropriate in relation to any particular claim should depend on the nature of what we are trying to describe, on the likely accuracy of our descriptions, on our purposes...not on ideological commitment to one methodological paradigm or another. (Hammersley, 1992 in Silverman, 2005:14)

Therefore, considering the nature of this study's aim, which focuses on the deep understanding of the complex world of lived experience from the subjective viewpoints of those who live it, this study inclines toward an interpretive philosophy. Nevertheless, as emphasized above, the study's inclination toward interpretivism was not obsessed with the purity of interpretivism (and the ideological commitment toward it) over positivism, all the more so since the opposition between these two competing philosophies remains theoretically unsolved, and because both have strengths and weaknesses (Denscombe, 2002:22). Interpretivism was adopted since it stands as the suitable approach as far as the aim of this study is concerned. It is therefore the focus or aim of the study (understanding the contextual subjective experiences and perceptions from respondents), which inclined the study toward interpretivism, rather than a preconceived paradigmatic stand which assumes what the reality is constituted of. The above thus agrees with Denscombe, who states:

While the theoretical situation [between interpretivism and positivism] remains unsolved, empirical social researchers have been getting on with their business...In the absence of some universally accepted vision of what social reality is like or how we can know about it, and reflecting the actual situation in which empirical social research tends to embody aspects of either paradigm depending on the situation that is being investigated, good social research depends on adopting an approach that is suitable for the topic...What is suitable, itself, depends on what is practical to accomplish and what kind of data are required. It is a matter of what is needed – and what works best to achieve this. It is a matter of ‘horses for courses’ – selecting methods and analyses that provide the kind of findings that work best, while acknowledging that all approaches have their limitations and that there is no perfect approach. (Denscombe, 2002:22-4)

By adopting an interpretive approach, the author expected to share the feelings and interpretations of the people under study (conflicting parties) by seeing things through their eyes (see Neuman, 2003:76). This is the reason why, with the purpose of reaching a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study from the point of view of respondents, this study's approach borrows from hermeneutics in its form of interpretation. Hermeneutics is here understood as a method of interpretation and understanding favouring dialogue. It is the interpretation of processes by taking account of the meanings that respondents have already given to those processes. In this sense, the researcher's role was to give a second-order interpretation to respondents' first-order interpretations—research seen as a fundamentally interpretive activity (Alverson and Sköldberg, 2000:7).

Although it is good for a researcher to begin with a ‘hunch’ or ‘hunches’ of some kind, which are subject to test, the existing literature in relation to this study provides theories or hunches, which are not precise or comprehensive enough (weak predictions) to provide causal relationships between variables as ‘testable hypotheses’. Therefore, the study is neither aimed at a rigid cause-and-effect relationship, nor does it claim to produce a final truth. The purpose is to generate knowledge that opens up and furnishes opportunities for a

deep understanding of the case under study. Since this study is exploratory, the relationship between the literature and data collection process is less prescriptive; there is a greater degree of openness. In so doing, the process of data collection was guided by the study's research questions instead of the theoretical framework, or a purely hypothesis to be empirically tested. This does not mean, however, that this approach failed to build upon rigorous and systematic theoretical foundations within the existing literature, to which exploratory findings should be discussed and interpreted. Therefore, by taking a hermeneutic approach, it became impossible to be disengaged from theory and other elements of pre-understanding, since assumptions and notions in some sense determine interpretations and representations of the object of study (Alverson and Sköldbberg, 2000:8).

Since this study focuses on cooperatives composed of conflicting parties, with the objective of exploring the relational outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership of the same cooperative, intergroup contact theory was paramount. By considering intergroup contact theory as a leading theory, the objective was not to test the validity of the contact hypothesis, as emphasized above. Instead, intergroup contact theory was used in order to discuss exploratory findings about the relational outcomes of conflicting parties' membership (implying contact), of the same cooperative. In addition, intergroup contact theory was opted for since little research has been done regarding intergroup contact theory in developing countries, on the one hand, and in post-conflict contexts, on the other. The central assumption is that contact effects depend upon the situation in which it occurs, as well as on other factors present in the situations in question. However, intergroup contact theory was found not to be comprehensive enough to be able to be solely applied to interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. Therefore, other theoretical perspectives on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding have been added to it (see chapter two).

1.6.2. Qualitative data analysis

The empirical data used in this study were qualitative, and were analyzed qualitatively in the form of text. This entailed classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining empirical material (Rubin and Rubin, 2005) from the interviews and field notes to extract the meaning for an understanding of the subject under study in a coherent explanation.

There is no single way of analysing qualitative data (Powell and Renner, 2003:1). Therefore, the data analysis for the study began early—during data collection, where the results of early data analysis guided subsequent data collection. Data analysis was therefore iterative, recursive and dynamic (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:2). This means that the author did not feel constrained to preserve analysis as a separate stage of work that followed data collection. Ideas developed at the beginning of, and during, data collection guided the author and thus shaped the form of further questions and, consequently, data to be collected at the next stage. After completion of each interview, its content was carefully examined in order to see what could be learned, and to discover what needed to be found out next. It was an ongoing analysis, where some questions were subject to modifications, others completely dropped, while yet others were added. Therefore, at the end of each session of daily interviews, the author listened to the interviews that had been recorded and carefully consulted the field notes before preparing the next interview. As a result, the author had a working idea of which important concepts and themes were present. However, the major

part of data analysis was done after data collection, notably after the transcription of field notes and interviews; that is, during data presentation and analysis.

During data presentation, concepts and themes, as employed by the respondents, were examined across different interviews to combine the material into a coherent whole that described what was going on around the subject under study. Therefore, transcribed interviews and field notes were analyzed together, in order to pull out coherent and consistent descriptions and themes, which should eventually bring about conclusions that spoke to the study's research questions. Data analysis, being qualitative, was thus not concerned with counting or providing numeric summaries. Instead the objective was to portray shades of meaning through the words of respondents. During analysis, the interview materials and field note texts, as well as the researcher's own comments, were broken down into data units; blocks of information that were examined together. Thereafter, these data units were combined along the same topic or theme in order to get a coherent meaning. The mechanics, in this regard, referred to the reading of transcribed interviews and field notes, the identification of categories and themes arising, and the identification of how these themes and categories linked together in order to present findings by using exemplar quotes from the interview texts. The method of analysing relations between facts given during interviews consisted of reporting results as text, illustrated in the direct speech (respondents' testimonies or accounts). In this regard, respondents' responses to the interview questions were grouped according to keywords and themes that were evident in their answers. The discussions of exploratory findings, with some immediate conclusions, consisted in making sense (providing the meaning) of the texts at hand in relation to the literature and theoretical framework. After data were analyzed, and before the final report, a brief synopsis of the findings was brought back to some of the respondents for further discussions. These discussions contributed to the validity of the findings while deepening the understanding of the subject under study, with consequent conclusions.

1.6.3. An illustrative exploratory case study

This thesis is a result of an intensive exploration of two cooperatives—*Abahuzamugambi coffee* and *Peace basket*—(with individual persons as units of analysis) operating in Huye district of the southern province of Rwanda. This study is a type of case study that is both illustrative and exploratory. This refers to reaching in-depth information through an exploration (involving description) of what is happening and why, in the two cases, to show what a situation is like and to help in the interpretation of other data or theory, particularly if too little is known about the subject under study. In this regard, two classic aims of inquiry are concerned with the understanding of the nature of events, on the one hand, and their causes, on the other, whereby the site selected is considered to be typical or representative (Yin, 2003:15; GAO/PEMD, 1990:37-9). The choice of this study's area (Huye district), and the selection of the two cooperatives studied, followed certain criteria (a purposive logic), and opted for what Kuhn calls a 'paradigmatic case.' This means that, being a form of collections of information-oriented cases, this study, instead of looking at extreme, deviant cases, or critical cases, looked into paradigmatic cases—defined as exemplar or prototype—that is, cases that highlight more general characteristics of the societies or issues in question. By focusing on two cases, in the area, the purpose was not to compare the cases in question (this study did not employ a comparative approach). Instead, the purpose was to use both cases in order to provide rich and deep information on the subject under study.

Area selection: why Huye district?

It is true that the genocide touched all the regions of Rwanda harshly. But clearly, not all regions were affected in the same way. This study restricted its focus on the region/part of Rwanda, where the genocide raged in a unique way, comparatively. In this regard, Huye district is unique.

The present Huye⁶ district was the former prefecture (province) of Butare at the time of the 1994 genocide. As explained by both Melvern and Human Right Watch, in the early days of genocide (for two weeks, from the 6th of April 1994—the beginning of genocide), the prefecture of Butare where Butare was Rwanda's second city (now the headquarters of Huye district)—had remained untouched by genocide, and thousands of people fleeing the massacres elsewhere, from the prefectures of Kigali, Gikongoro and Gitarama, sought refuge and protection there. By recalling that the genocide is known to have been planned and perpetrated in the name of 'Hutu' people against 'Tutsi' people, Butare prefecture was reputed to have had a high percentage of Tutsi (more than 17 percent) compared to other regions, and its prefect—Jean Baptiste Habyalimana—was the only Tutsi prefect (Prefecture's governor) in Rwanda.

In Butare, Hutu and Tutsi (through notably strong intermarriages) had lived together in harmony for centuries. There was a strong bond between them. Tutsi had considered the prefecture of Butare in southern Rwanda as the ultimate haven. Butare held out the hope of safety, largely because the prefect (the only Tutsi prefect), backed by the local police commander, insisted on protecting Tutsi. Following his model and covered by his authority, most of his subordinates offered protection too (apart from the burgomaster of ex-Nyakizu commune). Hutu from the northern part of Rwanda sometimes used to say that there are no Hutu people in Butare, meaning that the Hutu population there was so fully integrated with the Tutsi people that it had lost any distinctively Hutu characteristics. The old royal capital of Nyanza, in the north-western corner of the prefecture, had been renamed to be a historical symbol of unifying Hutu and Tutsi of the region. A combination of these factors, coupled with the stronghold of notably the PSD⁷ opposition party and other parties had made Butare immune to genocide for two weeks (Melvern, 2005; Human Right Watch, 1999).

But since 13th April 1994, the RTL (private radio) announced that there were Tutsi people hiding themselves among people fleeing to the prefecture of Butare. Four days later, on 17th April, the prefect of Butare was named on radio RTL and was accused of working for the RPF. On 18th April, the interim government dismissed the prefect. He was captured at his home and then sent to the headquarters of the interim government (that had moved) in Gitarama, where he was executed (Human Right Watch, 1999:353). As Melvern, Human Right Watch, and Twagilimana continue to emphasize, the Prime Minister in the interim government (Jean Kambanda) was travelling the country to incite, encourage and direct massacres: "the population must search out the enemy and this enemy is Tutsi and Hutu who

⁶ Huye District of Rwanda's southern province has an area of 581.5km² with a population of 290,677 (PDD—Plan de Développement du District, 2007)

⁷ As Twagilimana states, PSD was the second largest opposition party (after MDR) in the South (Butare, Gikongoro and parts of Kibuye, Kibungo, Gitarama, Kigali, and Cyangugu). See Twagilimana (2003): *The Debris of Ham: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and the 1994 Rwandan Genocide*. Oxford University: Press of America, 2003, Viii.

did not agree with our [government] policy.”⁸ They contend that Kambanda was in Butare on 19th April at the inauguration of a new prefect, as was the President of the interim government (Théodore Sindikubwabo). They also contend that these two (who in fact originated from Butare) have addressed local dignitaries and gave inflammatory speeches. They made several rounds of Butare prefecture, haranguing and chastising the people of Butare for their lack of concern about what was going on in the rest of the country, that people’s indifference had to be forcefully condemned, and that it was after popular zeal was acquired that the genocidal acts took place in gigantic and horrific proportions. Moreover, they hold that genocidal massacres in Butare proved to be the most devastating because there was a concentration of Tutsis who had fled from other parts of the country thinking that the massacres would never reach the region. Furthermore, they contend that the genocide planners put much force in Butare, as this was the province where there was a great opposition to the government, with strong and challenging political parties such as MDR, and PSD. Out of the total number (9,362) of first level genocide perpetrators (planners) in Rwanda, the southern province occupies half of them (Melvern, 2006:212-5; Human Right Watch, 1999:353; Twagilimana, 2003). It is on the basis of these considerations that Huye district (former Butare prefecture/province) was purposively selected. Two cooperatives operating in this district were also purposively selected.

Two cases of cooperatives

This study focuses on two cooperatives—*Abahuzamugambi coffee* and *Peace basket*—operating in the Huye district. However, before the choice of the cooperatives in question was made, a preparatory study (pilot) was conducted on one cooperative, also operating in the Huye district; that is, *Koperative y’Abahinzi b’Igishanga cya Rwasave-COAIRWA* (Cooperative of farmers of Rwasave swamp), an agricultural cooperative composed of 3,615 members (1,245 males and 2,370 females). Although this cooperative was a good case, the findings in this regard were not sufficiently robust so as to be included in this study, all the more so since the purpose of the preparatory fieldwork was to frame the study’s research questions and develop the proper methodology to be used in the main fieldwork. It was also on that occasion that the two cases of cooperatives were selected as the subjects of the main fieldwork.

A number of reasons prompted the researcher to purposively select the two above-mentioned cooperatives; (a) they respectively belong to the major sectors of livelihood in Rwanda, generally, and in Huye district, particularly, namely agriculture and handicraft; (b) they were created soon after the genocide when the wounds were still fresh; (c) they were created (initiated without external involvement) from below by their members; and (d) they regrouped individuals from both sides of conflict, male and female, who also lived side by side before the genocide. *Abahuzamugambi coffee* cooperative (located in the Kizi cell of Maraba sector in Huye district) occupies the south-west part of the district, while *Peace basket* cooperative (located in Buhimba cell of Rusatira sector in Huye district) covers the north-east part. *Abahuzamugambi coffee* cooperative was created in 1999 by coffee growers themselves (not by the government or any other external intervention). It was ranked as one of the top ‘well-functioning’ cooperatives in Huye district. It was awarded, on November

⁸ That statement was put during the interview Jean Kambanda had with RTL (Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille-Collines).

24th 2005, the sixth City of Gothenburg (Sweden) International Environment Prize for its work to produce coffee in a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable way. Peace basket cooperative—the only cooperative in Rwanda named with the emblem of ‘peace’—was also created by its members, in 1997. It is the first association from the handicraft sector, which operated before other cooperatives in Huye district. The two cases of cooperative selected not only differ in the activities carried out, but also in terms of the ways in which the cooperative members stay in contact with each other. Members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative generally do not meet every day. They generally meet and work together when they do so to maintain coffee plantations, and when the coffee plants are ripe (period for harvesting, sorting, and sunning coffee). Comparatively, members of Peace basket cooperative are generally in contact with each much more intensively (three days each week—Monday, Tuesday and Friday), and often on a daily basis, since it often happens that they stay together and weave baskets for a number of weeks (often sleeping in the same accommodation) when they have an important order. In the study’s empirical part, each case is presented in much more detail. The author found it suitable to present in detail each case of cooperative studied, and the methodology employed, notably during data collection (presentation, respondents and field visit), before the presentation and analysis of empirical data. The methodology provided in this chapter, for each cooperative studied, thus remains at a general level.

1.6.4. Data collection methods: Interviews and field notes

Empirical data were mainly gathered through personal interviewing, which implies that the researcher had direct contact with respondents and informants participating in this study. In addition, field notes for relevant behaviours or facts observed while interviewing were also taken. During interviews, the researcher spent sufficient time (two months for each case of cooperative) to enable regular interactions with respondents (cooperative members particularly). Therefore, the main data collection method was qualitative interviews (both individually and in mixed-groups) conducted in *Kinyarwanda* language, although field notes from observations also proved to be relevant. The main reasons behind the option for interviewing were twofold. First, because of the study’s aim is: to explore what respondents say, feel, and experience; that is, their perceptions and experiences. Second, due to the context, society or tradition, in which the fieldwork was conducted; that is, the rural area of Rwanda where, not only is illiteracy high, but also where the oral culture is favoured as a method of communication. In this regard, Bonduelle’s contention is supported:

Experience proves the inefficiency and the non-validity of the questionnaire distributed to recipients and populations aiming at knowing their expectations... The questionnaire established a priori limits the emergence of new and unexpected data. It binds itself in a setting defined in advance without allowing the possibility to elaborate the new hypotheses...The questionnaire appears inappropriate to the collection of relevant information in the African context, still dominated by the ‘oral’ civilization, the context where to express oneself, one borrows a thousand detours, and other channels such as the laconic language, etc. (Bonduelle, 1983:64-5—author’s translation)⁹

⁹ The French version quotes: “L’expérience prouve l’inefficacité et la non validité de questionnaire distribué aux destinataires et aux populations dans le but de connaître leurs attentes...Le questionnaire élaboré *a priori*

Therefore, interviews helped in collecting data directly through face-to-face interactions and interviews (exchange and extended dialogue) on the perceptions and experiences of cooperative members-conflicting parties, with regard to the role of their respective cooperatives in the restoration of their relationships. It was a valuable tool, as it offered the opportunity for interviewees to open up and provide confidential information. It also helped the researcher not only to be free in asking questions and to probe for more clarifications, but also to interpret the likely validity of what was said by the interviewees (tone voice and body language).

It is in this regard that qualitative in-depth interviews with open ended questions, either in groups or individually, served as the main source of information. Interviews were thus conducted in Kinyarwanda language, recorded (with permission of interviewees), and later transcribed and translated into English. An interview guide was developed in a sequence that made sense to interviewees. The major themes around which interviews were conducted were:

- Identification of respondents (age, sex, marital status, education level, group category of the conflict, sector and cell of residence)
- Conflicting parties' relationships before and after the genocide, prior to their membership of the cooperative studied.
- Reasons that prompted conflicting parties to form or join the same cooperative.
- Reasons behind conflicting parties' non-membership of the cooperatives studied.
- Ways in which each cooperative studied was perceived by its members.
- Ways in which the cooperative studied impacts/impacted on the relationships of its members-conflicting parties.
- Factors behind the impact in question.
- Non-members' perceptions of how the cooperatives studied impact on the relationships between their members-conflicting parties.
- The cooperative's relational role and the institutional and macro contexts.
- Problems encountered by the cooperative and how these problems relate to the relationships of cooperative members.

The process of interviewing was inspired by Hoyle et al. (2002). The researcher ensured the questions were asked in a proper way, which were comprehensible by the respondents and which motivated them to make the necessary effort in answering them. The researcher was constantly aware that motivation forces that encourage respondents to successfully participate should be mobilized, and negative forces countered. In so doing, the researcher placed much emphasis on the first moments of contact with participants. As a positive force, the researcher introduced himself in such a way that participants liked and believed him (while countering possible dislike).

limite l'émergence des données nouvelles et inattendues. Il s'enferme dans un cadre défini d'avance sans laisser la possibilité d'élaborer les nouvelles hypothèses...Le questionnaire paraît inapproprié comme technique de recueil de l'information pertinente dans le milieu africain, encore dominé par la civilisation de l'oralité, où pour s'exprimer, la pensée emprunte mille détours, d'autres canaux tels que le langage laconique, etc." (Bonduelle, 1983:64-5)

Therefore, in the introduction, the researcher talked about himself (a Rwandan, a learner-student, a peace builder and trustworthy human being); he explained the purpose of the study and its relevance in a way that provoked interest for every participant (i.e., the importance of the study to the respondents and the country), and ensured the confidentiality of respondents' information. The researcher was aware that some respondents, if not all, would be reluctant to the use of a tape recorder. The researcher thus explained to respondents that its sole role was to help in the subsequent transcription of the information while reassuring them of confidentiality. The interview began after they had given their consent.

During the process of interviewing, the researcher made sure that his conduct was friendly, courteous, conversational, cooperative and unbiased. This was important as it put respondents at ease so that they talked freely and fully. The researcher made sure to show an interested manner toward the respondents' opinions, rather than divulging his own. The researcher was very careful not to suggest a possible reply, and was rather simply probing. (More details about how the researcher obtained introductions to the respondents are presented in chapter 4 and 5 respectively for each case of cooperative studied).

It is worth also emphasizing that for the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, interviews were conducted in four mixed-groups and individually (with regard to cooperative members) and only individually with regard to non-members. Concerning Peace basket cooperative, members were interviewed individually, while what can be referred to as a group interview was done every day in chatting with respondents, as they always wove their baskets while sitting together as a group. However non-members for this case were interviewed individually.

An important point worth emphasizing here is concerned with the researcher's presence as Rwandan, which was thought to affect the data to be collected. In fact, since the researcher is a native of Rwanda, he was concerned about how he would be perceived (for example, in reference to his 'ethnic' or group background), which would possibly complicate the task of data collection. However, the researcher found that respondents (notably cooperative members), in general, were not concerned with that issue, although strategies of humbleness and openness also contributed. On the contrary, on first contact, many perceived the researcher as a representative of the government or an NGO, and proceeded to ask for advocacy and financial assistance to the cooperative. This did not however affect interviews since after the researchers' introduction participants came to know, and to only consider, the researcher as a Rwandan and research student.

Apart from that ultimately unfounded concern, the researcher was confident that—since he is a native of Rwanda, and familiar with the country's context, genocide experience, language and culture—the field exercise would be easier, because proverbs, cultural non-verbal clues (such as the indicators of anxiety and uncertainty, of confidence and assertiveness, hesitation, silences and variation in word choice), as well as other cultural tips for laconic language, could be easily noted. It was thus easy to understand the emotional perspectives of the participants in a way that might have been more difficult for a foreigner to pick up. Interviews with women, as well as other categories of respondents, did not encounter any difficulty. The exercise of data collection did not meet any major problem that might have impacted on data validity.

Group interviews

...groups are meaningful if one wants to explore thoughts and feelings, and not just behaviour. Things that are not likely to emerge in the one-to-one interview are more likely to come out in focus groups because group dynamics can be a catalytic factor in bringing information to the fore. (de Vos et al., 2002:291)

This study used group interviews in order to collect data on consensus, notably with regard to mainstream opinions. The general conversations and discussions with respondents as a group around the topic, and thus the research themes, were beneficial. Since cooperatives studied are constituted of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, the researcher found it relevant to conduct interviews in groups composed of both categories (mixed-group) before getting to individual experiences. The purpose was to access rich information on consensus, but particularly to see whether there were differences in conflicting parties' viewpoints. The researcher believed that it is more difficult to tell lies in a mixed group than when two groups are interviewed separately. It was also an occasion to take notes about what was observed—during the discussions—with regard to respondents' behaviours and attitudes, and the non-verbal clues or body language, and therefore to gain firsthand insights in this regard. Moreover, considering the subject under study, interviewing conflicting parties while seated together (in a mixed-group) was believed to provide a meaning in itself. Private experiences that could have not been spoken in groups have been accessed through individual interviews.

Individual in-depth interviews

Given that the method or technique of group interviewing was not considered enough in itself or relevant to elicit private information, these were followed by individual in-depth interviews. Therefore, due to the sensitivity of the subject studied, and in search of personal perspective and experience, and so private information, individual in-depth interviews were used with extensive probing. In conducting in-depth interviewing the researcher immersed himself in the data and ongoing analysis for two months in each cooperative before the final analysis. With this intensive involvement, the researcher was able to develop a sense of what the data were saying or emphasizing, which was helpful in the final analysis.

1.6.5. Respondents and informants

This study involves two categories of respondents. The first category concerns cooperative *members*, comprising individuals from both sides of the conflict—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. The second category concerns individuals who are not members of the cooperatives studied, referred to in this study as *non-members*. Non-members were added in order not only to deepen understanding, but also to achieve much more validity of the data thus collected from members. In this regard, both categories of conflicting parties were consulted. The total of respondents for the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was 169 individuals (54 from the category of genocide survivors and 115 from the category of former genocide perpetrators; 151 were cooperative members while 18 were non-members).

With regard to Peace basket cooperative, respondents totalled 50 individuals (16 from the category of genocide survivors and 24 from the category of former genocide perpetrators; 38 were members while 12 were non-members). Therefore, the total of respondents with whom interviews were conducted was 219 whereby the majority is constituted of former genocide perpetrators and their family members. The detailed information about data collection methods, respondents, as well as the field visit for data collection for each case of cooperatives studied are provided in the study's empirical part, before data analyzing.

The process of data collection was followed by a discussion, notably on the findings, with individuals (called informants here) judged to 'good sighted' with regard to notably cooperative issues, and/or reconciliation. These discussions involved *three* persons: the agent in charge of cooperatives in Huye district; the head (now Director General) of the Task Force (now Rwanda Cooperative Agency) in the Ministry in charge of cooperatives (the Ministry of commerce, industry, investment promotion, tourism and cooperatives-MINICOM); and the Executive Secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC). These individuals were helpful particularly in viewing field data collected and thus in helping the researcher to understand the subject under study within the institutional and macro-contexts in which Rwandan cooperatives operate. This implies that the number of individuals (219 respondents and 3 informants) with whom interviews were conducted was 222 as portrayed in the table below.

Table 1.1 Distribution of respondents and informants

<i>Interview focus</i>	<i>Cooperative cases</i>					
	<i>Abahuzamugambi coffee</i>			<i>Peace basket</i>		
<i>A. Respondents*</i>	<i>Genocide survivors</i>	<i>Former genocide perpetrators</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Genocide survivors</i>	<i>Former genocide perpetrators</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.Members Mixed-group interviews	46	105	151	9	29	38
2.Members Individual interviews	9	20		9	29	
3.Non-members	8	10	18	5	7	12
Sub-total	54	115	169	14	36	50
<i>Total respondents</i>	219					
<i>B. Informants</i>	3					
Total of respondents and informants	222					

* Each category of respondents (genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators) includes also its family members or relatives. Figures for mixed-group interviews also include those for individual interviews.

1.6.6. Construct validity

Construct validity is especially problematic in an illustrative-exploratory case study. It has been a source of criticism, particularly because of potential investigator subjectivity (Tellis, 1997). To counter this, the study adopted Yin's proposed four remedies: (1) use multiple sources of evidence, (2) establish a chain of evidence; (3) have key informants review a draft case study report; and (4) effective mastering of the art of accurate listening (Yin, 2003:34).

In order to achieve valid data, the strategy was to interview both the category of cooperative members, on the one hand, and the category of non-members, on the other. In addition, interviews (in groups and individually) concerned both categories of conflicting parties—genocide survivors, and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, in a mixed group. From these categories, data of various characteristics were collected from individuals: young, adults, old-aged, men, women, widows and widowers, orphans, married, and single. It is in this regard that, for both cases of cooperatives studied, data collected from cooperative members and non-members was cross-checked, which is referred to as a 'validity check' process.

In addition, in order to collect valid data, the art of listening was maintained as central. The researcher was aware that respondents might misunderstand the questions posed to them and that they might make unconscious errors in responses, since the subject under study is sensitive. This required a lot of creativity and patience on the part of the researcher. Therefore, the following approach was adopted: while listening to respondents, the researcher was psychologically prepared to be empathetic with regard to their feelings and reactions; and second, the way things were said revealed more of the intended meaning than the worlds that were spoken, and therefore the researcher had to carefully and accurately listen to what respondents were saying and the meaning behind their words. This was done through picking up relevant non-verbal clues, such as the indicators of anxiety and uncertainty, of confidence and assertiveness, hesitation, silences and variation in word choice. Being a native of Rwanda, as discussed earlier, and thus sharing experiences, language and culture, this exercise was conducted without difficulty.

As put above, it was after the exercise of data collection that a summary of the findings from the field was brought to informants for a view by considering the institutional and macro-context in which cooperatives operate. Finally, after data analysis, a brief synopsis of the findings was brought back to some respondents (those who were available) for further discussion—an exercise which took one month (January 2009). The discussion in question corrected, broadened, and deepened the researcher's understanding of the respondents' subjective experiences and perceptions, to achieve higher validity.

1.6.7. An ethical problem

This study had to deal with an ethical issue concerned with the use of ethnic labels in post-genocide Rwanda. In Rwanda, nowadays, it appears politically unacceptable to publicly use 'ethnic' labels in reference to people, such as *Hutu*, *Tutsi*, and *Twa*, with the risk of being treated as 'divisionist'—sowing division in the Rwandan community. But this seems controversial, given that while the Rwandan constitution emphasizes *Rwandans* (instead of 'ethnic' labels), the 1994 genocide is described as 'the genocide against Tutsi people'. There is, thus, still confusion about whether the use of these terms is officially proscribed or not.

This is the reason why this study followed an intellectual argument with a non-terminologist departure of who is in particular category of ‘ethnic’ group.

Nevertheless, respondents used these labels as they appear in the study’s empirical part. Although the researcher had decided to avoid the use of these labels, respondents often used them. This was thus a critical ethical issue. The researcher could neither prevent the respondents from using these labels, nor be complicit in the use them. This problem was solved by letting respondents freely express their viewpoints without incitement or support in the use of these labels, and without bringing a discussion to that as an issue. This is why these labels are reproduced in the study’s empirical part in presenting respondents’ testimonies.

1.7. Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by describing its research problem, the rationale, the aim and research questions, the scope and the definition of key concepts, as well as its methodology.

The second chapter constitutes the study’s theoretical perspective, and aims to provide and discuss the study’s theoretical framework. The chapter discusses intergroup contact theory as well as other theoretical perspectives on post-conflict relational peacebuilding. The theoretical framework, in question, puts forward a number of factors affecting the restoration of interpersonal relationships. It is on the basis of these factors that exploratory findings are discussed and interpreted.

The third chapter is focused on the context of cooperative organizations with a particular emphasis on Rwanda. The chapter begins with a general historical perspective of cooperatives toward ways in which a cooperative organization is understood. The chapter problematizes cooperatives in general and provides a critical perspective with regard to their role in a society’s development, in crisis, and in peacebuilding.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters are concerned with the study’s empirical part. Chapter four and chapter five are respectively concerned with data from Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and Peace basket cooperative with regard to the study’s first research question. Chapter six focuses on the study’s second research question, for both cases.

The seventh chapter is concerned with the discussion, and interpretation, of exploratory findings from both cases studied. Exploratory findings are brought together and discussed comparatively. Moreover, exploratory findings are discussed in a way that is tied to the study’s theoretical framework.

The eighth chapter is concerned with the study’s conclusion. The chapter summarizes the findings in relation to the study’s research questions, and concludes with a discussion of the study’s research problem, aim and theory, as well as its limitations that consequently suggest perspectives for further research.

Theoretical perspectives on Interpersonal Relationships Peacebuilding

While this study is exploratory, the relevant theoretical perspectives, which provide a theoretical framework to which exploratory findings must be tied, are important. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical framework, which combines intergroup contact theory with other theoretical perspectives on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. In this regard, intergroup contact theory constitutes the core aspect of the framework. This is so given that, in addition to the fact that this study endeavours to explore the relational outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership (implying contact) of the same cooperative organization, there is relatively little research that has been conducted, based on interpersonal/intergroup contact theory, with regard to post-violence contexts,¹⁰ on the one hand, and in the developing world, on the other.

However, before discussing the study's theoretical framework, it becomes paramount to provide a brief clarification of the relationship between the terms *intergroup* and *interpersonal*. In fact, one major area without consensus in the literature covering human relations involves the difference between interpersonal and intergroup relations. Brown and Hewstone (1986) hold that the confusion in understanding the roles of intergroup and interpersonal aspects when people interact largely stems from the lack of theoretical distinctions between the two, and the loose manner in which terminology is used. In this regard, some writers contend that social group awareness is ever present, and all interactions are based on one's social group in relation to others. Others argue that interactions among people are strictly one-to-one; that is, interpersonal. More likely is the contention that these two types of interactions exist along a continuum, and the nature of the interaction is not easily distinguished (Kimberly, 2003; Brown, 2000).

Despite the fact that this study focuses on the interpersonal, rather than intergroup, aspect, it maintains that the two terms exist along a continuum. These terms are closely interrelated (which does not however suggest that they are necessarily synonymous) and a clear-cut distinction between interpersonal and intergroup relations can rarely be made. (Evaldsson, 2007:61).¹¹ The relationship between two individuals belonging to different groups can be difficult to distinguish from their respective groups. As Forbes holds, contact has two aspects: the individual aspect and the collective or social, aspect. When a member of one group begins to interact with a member of a second group, there is an increase in contact

¹⁰ Much research on intergroup contact theory focuses on majority and minority groups (in the example of blacks and whites), notably in developed countries. Very little is known about the applicability of this theory on post-violence situations and particularly in the developing world.

¹¹ Evaldsson quotes Tajfel and Turner who define a group as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in the common definition of themselves and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it (Evaldsson, 2007:61).

both for these two individuals and for the groups to which they belong. However, it may be possible that the effects of the increased contact are generally different for the individuals in question than they are for the groups (Forbes, 1997:166-7). It is also worth recognizing that the person with whom one is interacting can become the representative of the group to which the person in question belongs. Although it may seem intuitive that the interaction between two people interacting on a one-to-one basis can be described as interpersonal, the distinction between whether an intergroup or interpersonal process has occurred should not be based merely on the number of individuals who interact. The quality and content of the contact among people is also relevant. This is so given that it seems impossible for an observer to distinguish whether the interaction is one of an intergroup or interpersonal nature in many social situations. An observer of the interaction can attempt to make distinctions, but ultimately the interpersonal or intergroup implications of an interaction are cognitively and psychologically determined by the individual. It thus seems reasonable to suggest that the interpersonal to intergroup connection of an interaction is determined by the individual in the experience (Brown, 2000; Kimberly, 2003).

Therefore, since this study is mainly concerned with respondents' subjective perceptions and experiences, which are difficult to measure, it follows that "assigning an individual's perception and experience of contact would be the purest indication of an interpersonal interaction" (Kimberly, 2003:43). Thus, while recognizing that the interpersonal and intergroup dimensions are closely interrelated, this study's particular focus is limited to the interpersonal aspect, where individual persons are units of analysis (individuals' interactions as parties in conflict) rather than their interactions extended to, or representing, their respective groups of identification. In this study's particular context—post-genocide Rwanda—individuals belonging to the cooperatives under study are constituted of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. The theoretical journey begins with the concept of peacebuilding, while the restoration of interpersonal relationships dimension is positioned.

2.1. Peacebuilding

One of the best ways to understand and position the restoration of interpersonal relationships within peacebuilding is to first understand the concept of peacebuilding. How the concept of peacebuilding actually emerged, and how it is generally understood and approached, thus constitute a relevant theoretical guide.

2.1.1. The emergence of the concept of peacebuilding

It is generally held that peacebuilding has been practised since ancient times,¹² and later as a form of confidence-building during the Cold War and an instrument in reducing conflict around issues of economic inequality (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006:16; De Zeeuw, 2001:13). Yet Johan Galtung (1976) is credited with coining this concept, in contrast to terms such as

¹² It is commonly argued that the birth of modern peacebuilding started with the Hague peace conference in 1898, followed by the foundation of the League of Nations, resulting in the creation of the United Nations (UN) at the end of World War II with the main objective to monitor and support world peace through mediation, facilitation, good offices and arbitration between states.

‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peacemaking’. Galtung defined peacebuilding in relation to ‘structure of peace’, the scope being concerned with inter-state wars and relationships (Oda, 2007:5; Mazurana and McKay 1999:143; Ramsbotham et al., 2005:186).

Peacebuilding analysis and practice gained significant international momentum in the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, as the focus shifted away from inter-state conflicts to the management and resolution of armed conflicts within states (Miall et al., 1999; Eriksson et al., 2003). The argument was that because the nature of conflicts had changed, since the end of the Cold War, it was necessary to change the process, the goals, and the actors that can lead to peace (Galama and Tongeren, 2002:17). It was during this period that the concept of peacebuilding became popularized by the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali while making clear the functions of UN organizations for conflict resolution in the post-Cold War era.

In fact, since 1990, despite the belief that the end of the Cold War in 1989 was to have introduced a new era of peace, rights and privileges of human beings, pervasive and pernicious violent conflicts¹³—most of which having been occurred within countries—have persisted in many parts of the world (Prager and Govier, 2003:169; Maynard, 1999; Paris, 2004:1; Gawerc, 2006:436). Secessionist struggles, civil wars, local warlord-ism, collapsing states, gross human rights violations and genocide characterized this period. The level of violence in many of these cases was intense in many countries, such as in the former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Kosovo, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and others, notably in Africa (Staub et al., 2005:298; Prager and Govier, 2003). It was in this context that the idea of peacebuilding gained significant international momentum, with the central idea to provide countries emerging from violence with the skills and resources they required, not only to rebuild, but also to prevent future violence (Atack, 2004:17; Prager and Govier, 2003:170; Cousens in Cousens et al., 2001:2).

As pointed out above, the first international appearance of the concept of peacebuilding was found in the 1992 and 1995 editions of *An Agenda for Peace*, proposed by the former UN-Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Boutros-Ghali’s 1992 report proposed a new framework to manage international armed conflicts. Proclaiming the advent of a new generation of peace missions in the post-Cold War era, Boutros-Ghali suggested the use of innovative concepts, notably ‘peacebuilding’, limited to the post-conflict period and defined as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:46; Jeong 2002:20; De Zeeuw, 2001:13; Paffenholz and Spurk, 2006:16-17).

Since 1992, peacebuilding had remained focused on post-conflict situations, reflecting the linear thinking about conflict, where peacebuilding takes place only after the phases of preventive diplomacy (conflict prevention), peacemaking (conflict ending) and peacekeeping (conflict management) have been completed (De Zeeuw, 2001). This was found to be the shortcoming that the ‘Supplement to An Agenda for Peace’ (1995) rectified. Therefore, since 1995, the use of the concept of peacebuilding took a broad perspective in relation to two types: efforts to reinforce preventive diplomacy, and efforts to buttress peacemaking (Boutros-Ghali 1992:46, Jeong 2002:20). While differentiating between peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, Boutros-Ghali had emphasized the importance of structural peacebuilding in the post-conflict period, stating its functions as:

¹³ From 1989 to 2000, it is held that there were 111 armed conflicts in the world, of which 104 were intrastate conflicts (see Wallensteen and Sollenberg, in their article *Armed Conflict (1989-2000)*, 2001:632).

“rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:8; Mazurana and McKay, 1999:143). Over time, however, the structural orientation of peacebuilding has been expanded upon by those who view peacebuilding as encompassing equality and social justice, improved relationships, and meeting of basic needs (Fisher, 1993; Lederach, 1995a-1995b; Mazurana and McKay, 1999:143). Concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-enforcement have been reframed, and military-focused missions have been replaced with a broader notion of peacebuilding efforts. Simultaneously, the notion of neat, chronological phases of conflict followed by stabilisation, transition and consolidation have proven problematic when applied to the realities of complex peace operations and development. There was a need both to respond more effectively to the immediate crises, and to plan post-crisis responses in the context of long-term peace-building strategies (CPHS, 2006:3).

Despite some contentions that peacebuilding remains a complex concept that is difficult to define, there is a general and common understanding, reflecting the above developments, that peacebuilding can be defined in two ways.

2.1.2. Two ways of understanding peacebuilding

There is a common understanding that peacebuilding is an elastic concept that may be either *broadly* or *narrowly* defined.

On the one hand, peacebuilding, *narrowly* defined, concerns the post-conflict/violence period, commonly termed *post-conflict peacebuilding*, to refer to a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation, with a major concern being the repairing, or positive transformation, of broken human relationships. This was, as discussed previously, the first conception of the United Nations document *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), in which peacebuilding was viewed as a long-term process that occurs after violent conflict has slowed down or come to a halt (Maiese, 2003). This refers to the fourth¹⁴ phase of the peace process that takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping operations; the focus being on addressing the causes and the effects of the conflict (World Bank, 2006; Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Lederach, 1997; Harbottle and Harbottle, 1997; Jeong, 2002).

On the other hand, peacebuilding, broadly defined, is understood as a broad umbrella that encompasses not only long-term transformative efforts, but also peacemaking and peacekeeping (short-term operations), which point to the conflict cycle, which refers to conflict escalation and de-escalation. In this encompassing and broad view, peacebuilding includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, normalization and reconciliation. The process is thus concerned with prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace consolidation/reconciliation (Ramsbotham et al., 2005:11, 23; Lambourne, 2004; Haugerudbraaten, 1998; Maiese, 2003).

¹⁴ Alongside ‘preventive diplomacy’, ‘peacemaking’, and ‘peacekeeping’, ‘post-conflict peacebuilding’ was the fourth pillar of a comprehensive approach by the UN and other multilateral bodies concerned with peace and security, not only between states but just as importantly, within them (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1995; Cousens in Cousens et al., 2001).

It is in relation to these two ways of understanding peacebuilding that the concept of interpersonal relationships peacebuilding is positioned. As far as this study is concerned, the focus is restricted to the *narrow* understanding of peacebuilding—known as *post-conflict peacebuilding*—to refer to the long-term process that occurs after a violent conflict. In this regard, post-conflict peacebuilding appears to be presented as a multi-faceted, multilayered effort that needs to address cause-and-effect factors in the security, political, economic, and reconciliation spheres, which implies post-conflict peacebuilding effort on the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions. According to Lederach et al. (2007:18), these dimensions seem to be linked, and equally importantly, despite the shortage of literature on how they relate to each other. Since this relationship goes beyond the limits of this study, it is important to briefly describe each of these dimensions in order to clearly position the interpersonal relationship dimension, which constitutes the particular focus of this study.

The *personal* dimension of conflict refers to the consideration that conflict changes individuals personally, emotionally and spiritually and centres on desired changes at the individual or personal level. The destructive effects of social conflict must be minimized, and its potential for personal growth must be maximized, efforts being centred on the treatment of mental health problems. Typical emotional effects include depression and trauma, where a person is often left with intense feelings that negatively influence his or psychological well-being. After an experience of violence, an individual is likely to feel vulnerable, helpless, and out of control (Maiese, 2003:3-8; Lederach, 1997:83).

The *relational* or *interpersonal* dimension focuses on the causes and the effects of war-related hostility through the repair/restoration and/or transformation of damaged relationships. It refers to people who have direct face-to-face contact; and when conflict escalates, communication patterns change, stereotypes are created, polarization increases, and trust decreases. As discussed further in this thesis, the relational dimension lies squarely in the reconciliation sphere.

The *structural* dimension focuses on the socio-economic and political conditions that foster violent conflict. It underlies the causes of conflict, and the patterns and changes it brings about in social structures. The root causes of conflict are typically complex, but they include skewed land distribution, development-related issues (such as poverty), environmental degradation, democracy, and unequal political representation. In order to establish lasting peace structural causes of the conflict are analyzed and social structural change is initiated (Lederach, 1997:83; Maiese, 2003:3; CPHS, 2006:6).

The *cultural dimension* refers to violent conflict causing deep-seated cultural changes, for example, the norms that guide patterns of behaviour between elders and youth, or women and men. It is concerned with the cultural causes of the conflict, the conflict in the cultural patterns of a group, and to the way that culture affects the development and handling of conflict (Lederach, 1997:83; Ramsbotham et al., 2005:12). This dimension is argued to embody the other three dimensions.

Considering the above dimensions of post-conflict peacebuilding, it follows that this study is restricted to the *relational dimension* of conflict, which focuses on the restoration or (positive) transformation of interpersonal relationships—*relational peacebuilding*. But, since a clear understanding of this dimension is provided later, this study's focus is firstly positioned based on ways in which peacebuilding is approached.

2.1.3. Two approaches to peacebuilding

A general statement in peacebuilding literature is that peacebuilding can be driven either *from above*—the top-down approach, by external actors (international bodies or national governments)—or *from below*—the bottom-up approach, by local non-state actors (Oda, 2007; Tønnesson, 2005; Keating and Knight, 2004; Haugerudbraaten, 1998:4; Lamazares, 2005; Ramsbotham et al., 2005; Lederach, 1997). However, it is observed that most texts dealing with peacebuilding often tend to promote a concept that is heavily approached in a top-down manner.

The reason for overemphasizing the top-down approach to peacebuilding is perhaps due to the fact that official peacebuilding has emerged as an international involvement in conflict situations, and therefore is mainly associated with the work of outsiders, donors and intervention forces (Paris, 2004:2; Prager and Govier, 2003:170-93; Keating and Knight, 2004:xxxi; Tønnesson, 2005:4). Consequently peacebuilding finds itself much more frequently approached in a top-down manner (Lederach, 1998:242, Killick et al., 2005:16), thus following the single paradigm (liberal democracy and market economy)—liberal internationalism—guiding the work of most international agencies aiming to transform war-torn states into ‘liberal market democracies’ (Paris, 1997:2004). These liberal market democracies are often sought to be transplanted and implemented in all war-torn countries, with the assumption that it would suffice to export the market democracy model in order to secure a peace-built on the basis of democratic and economic liberalism (Jeong, 2002:24), with less attention paid to actions of local actors, who are simply taken as ‘implementing partners’ (O’Reilly, 1998:17; Haugerudbraaten, 1998:7).

John Paul Lederach stands as one of the writers who challenged the top-down approach to peacebuilding. In Lederach’s view, the single most important aspect of encouraging an organic perspective of peacebuilding politics is to create a genuine sense of participation, responsibility, and ownership of the process across a broad spectrum of the population (Lederach, 1997:242; Voget, 2007:1; Jeong, 2002:42) instead of transplanting international liberal democracy, to be blindly implemented by local peacebuilding actors. Prager and Govier (2003:5) also hold that it is very difficult for outsiders to intervene constructively, so as to build within a country a capacity for sustaining non-violence and better relationships. In this regard, Tongeren et al. (2005:2) state that the international community, as it is embodied by the UN, has too often proven ineffective when faced with the harshest realities of world conflicts. They also emphasize that since the nature of conflicts has changed, shifting from inter-state to intrastate, so must the strategies to solve them change. It is in this regard that many hold that the top-down approach needs to be supplemented with bottom-up approaches, or grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Their point is that peacebuilding solutions must be adopted by local actors and cannot be forced from above (Galama and Tongeren, 2002; Bendaña, 2003; Gawerc, 2006; Maynard, 1999; Racioppi and See, 2007; Tongeren et al., 2005; Diamond, 1991; Chufrin et al. 1993; Fisher, 1993; Rupesinghe, 1995; Lederach, 1997; Jakobsson, 1998; Juma, 2005; Paffenholz, 2003 and 2006).

This is one of the reasons behind this study’s focus on peacebuilding approached from below. In so doing, it becomes necessary to elaborate further on this approach.

2.1.4. Peacebuilding from below

Despite the growing body of literature challenging the top-down approach to peacebuilding, there is a need for more research regarding the effectiveness of the bottom-up approach. Since the early 1990s, the literature on peacebuilding has burgeoned, while within the conflict resolution field a number of scholars and practitioners have led a revision of thinking about the complex dynamics and processes of peacebuilding. This includes the idea that the effectiveness of peacebuilding processes must be based not merely on peace agreements made by governments and elites, but more importantly on the empowerment of communities torn apart by war, to build peace from below, in order to enhance sustainable citizen-based peacebuilding initiatives (Ramsbotham et al., 2005:216; Lederach, 1997).

These shifts in thinking have moved the emphasis in conflict resolution work from an outsider neutral approach towards partnership with local actors, and it is this relationship which is one of the key characteristics of peacebuilding from below. In the perspective of peacebuilding from below, solutions are derived and built from local sources (Ramsbotham et al., 2005:215-22). While emphasizing the role of leaders for each category, Lederach (1997:39) developed a conceptual model based on the view that people possess a potential for peace. He proposed a pyramid model of an affected population, consisting of three categories: *top level* (key political and military leaders with high visibility), *middle range* (leaders respected in sectors such as education, business, agriculture, health, religion, NGOs or ethnic groups), and the *grassroots* (leaders of local communities, indigenous NGOs or local health officials). In this model the significance of the middle-range approaches to peace is systematically formulated. Lederach's framework, in which a great deal of attention is paid to indigenous resources, thus shows a substantial shift from state-centric to multi-track approaches to peacebuilding (Oda, 2007:6). Lederach calls peacebuilding by the middle-range and grassroots members of an affected society *peacebuilding from below* (Lederach, 1997; Oda, 2007:7; Harpviken et al., 2004).

In this regard, Thania Paffenholz (2003, 2006) uses the term *community-based bottom up peacebuilding* to describe the Life and Peace Institute's (LPI) approach towards peacebuilding during more than a decade in Somalia. This approach emphasizes the importance of having a broad-based and participatory process, where local people are empowered to actively participate in the peace and reconciliation process. For Paffenholz, peacebuilding from below is both a practice and an attitude. As a practice, it means peacebuilding engaged at the local level by the people who live in the midst of violence. As an attitude, it rests on the assumption that those most affected by violence, and who understand and have to live with its consequence, are likely to be best placed to find the most appropriate solutions to it (Paffenholz, 2006:6; McDonald, 1997:2).

Whereas people within the conflict are normally seen as a problem, with outsiders providing the solution to the conflict, in the perspective of peacebuilding from below, solutions are derived and built from local sources, where a myriad of grassroots and community-based organizations (which represent local interests, local opinions and local cultures) are decisive actors in the work of grassroots peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al., 2005:222-3; Jeong, 2002:151-3). While this does not deny a role for outsider-third parties, it does suggest a need for a reorientation of their role. Therefore, peacebuilding from below may be broadly defined as practice, by local non-state actors, utilizing various resources, to create amicable relationships with national, ethnic, racial, religious or political others, and to build a social structure which is able to promote a sustainable peace. Yet, as Oda (2007:7)

argues, this type of peacebuilding remains invisible, and which therefore constitutes a vacuum in peace research. Empirical studies regarding the role of grassroots, non-state actors appear to make a great contribution to this area—the main aim of this study. The next section deals with what this study concretely implies in talking of interpersonal relationships peacebuilding and the theories on the restoration of interpersonal relationships—the relational dimension of peacebuilding.

2.2. Understanding and theorizing about interpersonal relationships peacebuilding

The common argument in post-conflict peacebuilding literature emphasizes that the progress in peacebuilding mainly relies on the (positive) transformation or restoration of broken relationships between people in conflict (Schirch, 2005:151; Jeong, 2005:4; Lederach, 1997:20, 82-3; Ramsbotham, 2005:231). This is so since one of the terrible costs of violent conflicts is the resulting damage done to human relationships. Such conflicts strain interpersonal relationships and make it difficult for conflicting parties to recognize that they share common needs and goals. Fear,¹⁵ mistrust, anger, and hostility become the norms of interaction, causing adversaries to become suspicious of each other. Parties in conflict tend to form negative stereotypes¹⁶ and enemy images and to dehumanize¹⁷ each other (Jeong, 2002:104; Opatow, 2000:417; Bloomfield et al., 2003:11; Burgess, 2003).

Therefore, peacebuilding, at this level, needs to address that negative attitudinal relationship, by at least engendering a minimum basis of trust so that there can be a degree of cooperation and mutual reliance between people in question (Bloomfield et al., 2003:11). What this requires (among other factors that are discussed further below) is truth; perpetrators' repentance, which implies acknowledgement of wrongdoing and remorse, apology and request for forgiveness, and consequently a re-establishment of positive relationships, where divides are bridged and other negative relational attitudes, and behaviours are broken in favour of positive ones. Repentance or confession means one coming to the knowledge of being in error and coming to conviction to change. It is worth noting that restoration (in the sense discussed above, of broken relationships) is not limited to the sense of getting something back again, but it rather also relates to the building of new relationships (Lederach, 1997:34).

¹⁵ *Fear* is defined as “an unpleasant and often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.” Merriam-Webster in Barker, Phil. ‘Fear.’ *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: July 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/fear/>>

¹⁶ *Stereotypes* (or ‘characterizations’) are generalizations or assumptions that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group, based on an image (often wrong) about what people in that group are like. Burgess, Heidi. ‘Stereotypes / Characterization Frames,’ *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: October 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/stereotypes/>>

¹⁷ *Dehumanization* is a psychological process whereby opponents view each other as less than human and thus not deserving of moral consideration. (Maiese, Michelle. ‘Dehumanization,’ *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: July 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dehumanization/>>)

The above considerations point to ways in which conflict is generally understood—a triangle involving three vertices: attitude (A), behaviour (B), and contradiction (C). The A component includes the parties' misperceptions of each other and the development of demeaning stereotypes under the influence of negative emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. The B component is characterized by threats, coercion, and destructive behaviours. The C dimension refers to perceived incompatibilities among parties in conflict (Ramsbotham, et al., 2005:9-10). This reflects Fisher's definition of conflict as "a social situation involving perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two or more parties, attempts by the parties to control each other, and antagonistic feelings by the parties to control each other" (Fisher, 1990:6). In this regard, as Mats Friberg (2003) emphasizes, Fisher's definition indicates that, in the generic sense, conflict between parties or actors involves: (a) attitudes toward each other ('antagonistic feelings'), (b) behaviours towards each other ('attempts by the parties to control each other'), and (c) contradiction or content of the conflict ('perceived incompatibilities in goals and values'). It follows that after the manifest conflict, one of the difficult tasks is to address the causes and the effects of the conflict in question. It is at this level that the restoration of relationships between the actors or parties becomes one of the key issues to be addressed.

Relational peacebuilding focuses on the repair or positive transformation of damaged relationships, and thus particularly depicts the attitudinal changes (A dimension of conflict) resulting in, and desired for, positive relationships. Here, the areas of relational affectivity expectation and interdependence, and the expressive, communicative, and interactive aspect of conflict, are taken into consideration. There is thus a need for transformation which, in this regard and prescriptively, represents intervention that minimizes poorly functioning communication and maximizes mutual understanding, and that brings to the surface the relational fears, hopes and goals of parties (Lederach, 1997:82-3). It is generally a process that moves from dehumanization to re-humanization. This is notably so in the case of genocide, which negates the very idea of human essence. In this regard, dehumanization—the process of stripping away human qualities—is defined as a psychological process whereby opponents view each other as less than human and not deserving of moral consideration (Opatow, 2000:417). Dehumanization is an extension of a less intense process of developing an 'enemy image' of the opponent. An enemy image is a negative stereotype through which the opposing group is viewed as evil, in contrast to one's own side, which is seen as good (Stein, 1996:94). During the course of a protracted conflict, feelings of anger, fear and distrust shape the way that the parties perceive each other. Adversarial attitudes and perceptions develop and parties begin to attribute negative traits to their opponent. They may come to view the opponent as an evil enemy, deficient in moral virtue, or as a dangerous, warlike monster (Maiese, 2003). With enemy images, it becomes difficult to empathize, as meaningful communication is unlikely, and it becomes difficult to perceive any common ground.

Therefore, the psychological process of dehumanization might be mitigated or reversed through re-humanization efforts (recognizing the common humanity of one's opponents and including them in one's moral scope—recognizing the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family), the development of empathy, the establishment of personal relationships between conflicting parties, and the pursuit of common goals. Re-humanization can thus help to break down enemy images or damaging stereotypes. Once one's opponent is viewed not as an evil monster but as a fellow human deserving moral consideration, the conflict can be reframed in more productive ways. In this

regard, it is argued that the methods that foster empathy can play a role in (re) humanization (Maiese, 2003).

It follows that the restoration of relationships can be expected to reach the level of mutual trust between conflicting parties. Trust is a critical part of the peacebuilding process. It is fundamental to the relationships-building process between the parties in conflict (Nootter, 1995:5) given that it revolves around issues of relationships and “is linked with expectations” (Friberg, 2003:16). As the conflict resolution practitioner explores and repairs relationships between conflicting parties, he or she will undoubtedly encounter issues of trust at one level or another (Nootter, 1995:3). The process of trust requires that each party—both the offended and the offender—gains renewed confidence in himself or herself and in each other. It also entails believing that humanity is present in every man and woman: an acknowledgement of the humanity of others is the basis of mutual trust and opens the door for the gradual arrival of a sustainable culture of non-violence (Bloomfield et al., 2003:20). It is also argued that the need for trust arises from people’s interdependence with others. Trust has been identified as a key element in successful conflict resolution insofar as trust is associated with enhanced cooperation, information sharing, and problem solving (Lewicki et al., 1998). However, as is the case for relationships in general, rebuilding trust depends on recognition of guilt and acceptance of responsibility for physical and psychological injury. As Pouligny (2002) holds, the truth about the past and the present will never be revealed without open and shared recognition of the pains suffered and the losses experienced by the ‘victims’. However, the restoration of interpersonal relationships seems to be confused with the concept of ‘reconciliation’. Yet the former is in fact an element of the later. A discussion in this regard deepens understanding of what this study refers to as interpersonal relationship restoration.

2.2.1. Reconciliation in relation to the restoration of interpersonal relationships

Despite its increasingly common usage in a range of diverse contexts, there is lack of common understanding about the definition of reconciliation. Reconciliation remains a complex and context-dependent concept (Evaldsson, 2007:37; Kostić, 2007:31). Some writers suggest that reconciliation can be referred to as goal/outcome, or as a process, while others consider the concept to be both a goal and a process (Kostić, 2007:31; Bloomfield, 2005:12; Villa-Vicencio, 2006:60; Borer, 2006:31; Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004:11). Others such as Lederach (1997) consider reconciliation as a place; while Borer (2006:67) holds that reconciliation occurs at many dimensions—spiritual, personal, relational and social, structural and ecological. Furthermore, reconciliation is often restricted to interpersonal relationships, and becomes defined in terms of bringing together former adversaries on the basis of a minimum mutual acceptance. This implies the restoration or transformation of the minimal acceptable relationships between former adversaries, which build on a minimum of mutual acceptance, in a viable and cooperative manner (Lederach, 2002:24; Kostić, 2007:31; Galtung, 2001:1-2; Villa-Vicencio, 2006:60). In this regard, a ‘minimum acceptable relationship between former adversaries’ is defined in terms of the existence of mutual trust, positive attitudes and behaviours, and the consideration of the parties’ needs and interests. Other researchers argue that the goal of reconciliation, beside mutual accommodation and acceptance of former adversaries, also includes forgiveness. In this regard, acknowledging the past stands as a key condition for adversaries to be able to engage in building a common future (Kostić, 2007:32).

Other discussions about reconciliation touch upon its character or approach, by making a distinction between individual reconciliation and national unity and reconciliation (Kostić, 2007:32).

The first type (model) of reconciliation is concerned with what is called *intrapersonal reconciliation*—the process by which individuals who suffered from, or conducted, violence need to reconcile with themselves. It is often referred to as trauma ‘healing’ (Stovel, 2006:23).

The second type (or model) of reconciliation is called *interpersonal reconciliation* (IR), sometimes also called *thick* reconciliation, associated with a religious paradigm—with individuals as units of analysis. It is concerned with the reparation of relationships between victims and those who harmed them or their loved ones (Stovel, 2006:24). Here reconciliation happens to individuals, usually between two (a group of) people (survivor and perpetrator), but also sometimes with an individual themselves. The interpersonal understanding of reconciliation is characterized by ‘a shared comprehensive vision, mutual healing and restoration, and mutual forgiveness’. Its elements also include “confession, sacrifice, and redemption” (Borer, 2006:32). Although this model varies according to individual emphasis, certain concepts are strongly identified with it, including healing, apology, forgiveness, confession, and remorse. In this model, individual reconciliation can foster sustainable peace if and when the following core elements, outlined by Assefa, are taken into consideration: (a) honest acknowledgment of the harm/injury each party has inflicted on the other; (b) sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done; (c) readiness to apologize for one’s role in inflicting the injury; (d) Readiness of the conflicting parties to ‘let go’ of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury, (e) commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury; (f) sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible; and (g) entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.

The third model of reconciliation can be described as *political reconciliation*, often referred to as ‘National Reconciliation’ (NR), and also called *thin* reconciliation, associated with a national or political paradigm—with socio-political institutions and processes, as units of analysis. Some also talk of National Unity and Reconciliation (Borer, 2006). This approach to reconciliation, unlike the second (thick reconciliation), assumes that former enemies are unlikely to agree with each other or even to get along very well. In this regard, one important aspect of NR is ‘the development of a political culture that is respectful of the human rights of all people’. As Borer stresses, NR’s emphasis is that “the state should strive to build legitimate and representative state institutions which respect fundamental human rights” and in which it is the state’s responsibility to “create a culture of rights based upon an inclusive and democratic notion of citizenship” (Borer, 2006:33). He also emphasizes that in contrast to thick reconciliation, the NR model, considered as secular, is a model in which “people hear each other out, enter into a give-and-take with each other about matters of public policy, build on areas of common concern, and forge compromise with which all can live” (ibid).

In sum, the NR model of reconciliation is most closely associated with the following terms: tolerance, rule of law (justice), democracy, human rights culture, conflict resolution, transparency, and public debate. In this regard, the international, hybrid and domestic tribunals are seen as part of a top-level approach to reconciliation. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) have become an almost routine element of post-conflict peacebuilding in countries emerging from internal conflict. At the middle level approach, problem solving

workshops, conflict resolution training and peace commissions offer what is called a “middle-out” approach to peacebuilding. It is based on the idea that the middle range contains a set of leaders with a determinant location in the conflict which, if integrated properly, might provide the key to creating an infrastructure for achieving and sustaining peace (Lederach, 1997:44-51). At the grassroots level, the focus is on the population represented by its leaders—meetings for leaders from both sides of conflicting parties with the help of aid workers who are trained in such meetings (Brounéus, 2008:5).

As far as this study is concerned, reconciliation is restricted to the process involving the transformation or change at the *interpersonal relationship* level after a conflict has caused a rupture in people’s relationships (*thick* reconciliation), given that it is focused on individuals as units of analysis; that is, the restoration of damaged relationships among parties in harmful conflicts (Tarekegn, 2005:31, 33; Lederach, 2006:34; Ramsbotham et al., 2005:231).

The context of post-genocide Rwanda reminded us that (as discussed at the beginning of this chapter) the need to overcome or transform the enmities—between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—developed during the genocide, suggests a need for reconciliation (Lambourne, 2004:4). In this regard, the interpretation of reconciliation is restricted to the alteration of negative conflict attitudes through enhancing mutual trust and understanding, and challenging misperceptions and distrust, among other negative relational aspects (Ericson, 2001:65; Staub, 2000:376). It is also concerned with mutual acceptance of one another by members of formerly hostile groups. Such acceptance includes positive attitudes, but also positive actions that express them, as circumstances allow and require (Staub and Pearlman, 2001 in Staub et al., 2005:301).

Therefore, this thesis maintains, respectively, Ewaldsson’s theoretical understanding and Love’s practical understanding, of reconciliation as:

...a process, which includes the reduction of animosity and of negative, derogatory or hostile attitudes and feelings, as well as the enhancement of positive, peaceful, non-violent attitudes and feelings (among which trust, tolerance and respect are particularly important), between the parties after a conflict has caused a rupture in their relationship. (Ewaldsson, 2007:8)

...bringing together people who are divided through conflict, to meet; listen and hear each other’s story; to develop mutual understanding, respect, tolerance; to take responsibility for past wrong and to forgive; and to seek new ways forward through more coextensive relationships. (Love, 1995:218)

The above contentions consider reconciliation as an encounter suggesting that a space for the acknowledging of the past and envisioning the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present. For this to happen, people must find ways to encounter themselves and their enemies, their hopes and their fears (Lederach, 1997:26-7). Being distinct from forgiveness, reconciliation is a process that is conditioned on the attitude and actions of the offender. Even if the offender confessed his or her wrong to the one he or she hurt, and appealed for forgiveness, the offended person could justifiably say, “I forgive you, but it might take some time for me to regain trust and restore our relationship.”

Considering all of the above developments, there is a need to emphasize that interpersonal relationships restoration is not synonymous with reconciliation; rather the former is one aspect of the latter. Therefore, throughout this study, the use of the term ‘reconciliation’ is restricted to the restoration or transformation of relationships between conflicting parties—a process affected by various factors, to be discussed further below. In this regard, a point of departure is that, as touched upon previously, it is generally suggested that interpersonal reconciliation necessitates favourable contact among members of conflicting parties that allows them to work together or play together in a way that heightens a sense of shared humanity and promotes empathic personal contact and mutual respect (Hamburg, 1998:31). It is in this perspective that, in order to build new relationships, scholars such as Lederach and Crocker call for a social space where people can recount their experiences and share perceptions and feelings with one another through an encounter (Lederach, 1997:26, 29; Borer 2006:33, Crocker et al., 2007). In this regard, a report from Caritas Internationalis suggests three elements that are important for opening up spaces for reconciliation.

First, people need safe, *hospitable spaces*. This means that basic human needs, such as being free from physical harm, and having shelter and food, are met. Without these basic needs being met, conflicting parties may continue to live in fear and anxiety.

Second, spaces for reconciliation have to be places *where conflicting parties can act graciously and experience graciousness*. Breakdowns in relationships are ultimately about a loss of trust, which is likely to be restored when conflicting parties are reasonably sure that their trust will not be broken again, and when trust is not forced or threatened. Therefore, safe, hospitable spaces allow conflicting parties to rebuild trust as they experience graciousness. Expansive acts of graciousness are denied as relationships breakdown. Graciousness, unlike gratuitous acts of violence, has a purpose; it allows conflicting parties to rebuild trust, and to feel hospitality, and it can help restore their broken spirit.

Third, spaces for reconciliation are places *where conflicting parties can discover or build something new*. The free character of the space means that the parties do not know everything that can come out of it. If the experiences that victims had were highly traumatising, the experiences of the new may be of discovering their own personal strengths and those of their communities. Paralysis may be replaced by renewed confidence and the ability to build something anew with others (Caritas Internationalis, 2002, 2006:29, 30).

In connection with the above developments, the literature on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding (relational peacebuilding or interpersonal reconciliation) generally suggest a number of factors led by the engagement of conflicting parties, which assumes an encounter. The process generally implies a space where both truth and forgiveness are validated and joined together, rather than being forced into an encounter in which one must win out over the other, or envisioned as fragmented and separate parts (Lederach, 1997:31-7). It is in this context that intergroup contact theory¹⁸ has led the way.

¹⁸ The *contact* referred to, in this study, concerns direct face-to-face interactions. This study emphasizes face-to-face interactions (direct contact) while acknowledging that there exist other forms of contact (indirect contact) such as observation of the out-group in public settings, or vicariously through media coverage of the out-group (Lee, Farrell, and Link (2004). Revisiting the Contact Hypothesis: The Case of Public Exposure to Homelessness. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1, February, pp. 40-63).

2.2.2. Restoring interpersonal relationships through contact

Intergroup contact theory stands as one of socio-psychology's strategies for transforming interpersonal relations by reducing negative-dehumanizing attitudes and behaviours, including prejudice,¹⁹ negative stereotyping,²⁰ or discrimination,²¹ while fostering positive-humanizing ones among conflicting parties (Ortiz et al., 2007:2; Dovidio et al., 2003; Brown and Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005 2006; Saguy et al., 2008:432).

Theorizing about the place of contact in relational peacebuilding can be traced back to the nineteenth century, whereby theorists began to speculate about the effects of contact between conflicting parties long before there was a research base to guide them. Some writers (notably during nineteenth century thinking, dominated by Social Darwinism) were quite pessimistic, as they assumed that interpersonal or intergroup contact would inevitably lead to conflict. Others were more optimistic, with the assumption that such contact would rather foster mutual understanding. It was during early studies, especially following the Second World War—notably with the well known example of Robin Williams Jr. (1947)²²—that research stressed that intergroup contact would maximally reduce prejudice, provided that a number of conditions were fulfilled; when: (a) the two groups share similar status, interest, and tasks; (b) the situation fosters personal, intimate intergroup contact; and (c) the activities cut across group lines (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006:751-2). However, it was the statement of Gordon Willard Allport (1954) on *The Effect of Contact*, in his book entitled *The Nature of Prejudice*—specifying the critical situational conditions for

¹⁹*Prejudice*, typically referring to individuals, is generally given a negative connotation. It is thus defined as an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization or a negative evaluation, or antipathy toward a social group or its members (Allport, 1954: 9; Amir, 1976; Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2003; Levin et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1986; Stephan and Stephan, 2000). But prejudice can also be positive. Therefore, by prejudice, this study refers to its negative evaluation or aspect; that is, hate-prejudice instead of love-prejudice. Prejudice thus refers to unjustified negative attitudes that one person holds about another based exclusively on a person's membership of a social group (see also in Forbes 1997:15-19)

²⁰*Stereotypes* are essentially generalizations that are made about individuals or groups. Although such generalizations are sometimes argued to be necessary (Burgess, 2003), this study is focused on the dealing with negative stereotypes, defined as hostile attitudes towards a person who belongs to a group, simply because he/she belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group (Dugan, 2004). Stereotypes are thus conceived as exaggerated images of the characteristics of a particular group, where the 'other' group is being imaged negatively (Dovidio, et al., 2005).

²¹*Discrimination* is defined as behaviour (an action) with reference to unequal treatment of people because they are members of a particular group (Farley, 1994). The discrimination discussed here is 'personal' discrimination. This study emphasizes 'personal' (or individual) discrimination, since discrimination can also be *legal* or *institutional*. As Farley (1994) holds, personal/individual discrimination is directed towards a specific individual and refers to any act that leads to unequal treatment because of the individual's real or perceived group membership. Legal discrimination refers to 'unequal treatment, on the grounds of group membership, that is upheld by law' (the example of apartheid); while institutional discrimination refers to unequal treatment that is entrenched in basic social institutions resulting in advantaging one group over another (the historical Indian caste system offers a good example).

²²Williams' monograph known as *The reduction of Intergroup Tensions*, offered 102 testable 'propositions' on intergroup relations, which included the initial formulation of intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew, Thomas F., (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol.49. Annual Review Inc., p.263.

interpersonal/intergroup contact to reduce prejudice—which became the most influential thinking on this point. In the context of the majority-minority groups (Negro-White) in the United States of America, and emphasizing that contact is a situational variable, Allport's statement of reads:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups. (Allport, 1954:281)

The above statement of Allport's conclusion thus emphasizes that prejudice is lessened when there is: (1) *equal status* between the groups within the contact situation; (2) in the pursuit of *common goals, interests and humanity*, which stresses the importance of; (3) *cooperative activity* (instead of competition) and thus a *superordinate* role relation involved instead of a subordinate one (Allport, 1954:262, 276); and (4) provided that the contact situation is sanctioned by *institutional supports* (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere) (Allport, 1954:281). The statement also emphasizes that the effect of such contact can be hampered by *individual character*. This in fact reflects Allport's suggestion of the necessity to take into consideration the *personality* of individuals in contact (high or low level of initial prejudice, prejudice at the surface, or prejudice deeply rooted in one's character structure, previous experience, either good or bad, age and education level, and other personality factors) in studying the effects of contact on prejudice (Allport, 1954:262-76).

The studies conducted since Allport's original formulation, while adding new features, generally support the importance of his initial statement while extending it, although there have also been critiques. In this regard, the theme of improving interpersonal/intergroup relations has thus been centred on contact theory, which derives from the *contact hypothesis*.

The contact hypothesis

The contact hypothesis is a broad generalization about the effects of intergroup contact on prejudiced opinions and discriminatory behaviours. The general idea is that more contact between individuals belonging to antagonistic social groups tends to undermine and/or reduce negative stereotypes and prejudice, while improving intergroup relations (Forbes, 1997:ix).

As discussed above, the most frequently cited statement of the contact hypothesis was provided by Allport. Although his statement underscores a number of conditions for contact to reduce prejudice, Allport admits that the case is not so simple. He recognizes that contact has complex effects, and prescribes how an analysis of these effects should be conducted, by distinguishing different types of contact that may have different effects in different circumstances. While the early understanding of contact was simply that contact—particularly close and sustained contact—with members of different cultural groups promotes positive, tolerant attitudes, and that, by contrast, the absence of such contact is believed to foster stereotyping, prejudice, and ill will toward these groups, research showed that contact between the members of different groups did not always reduce prejudice, and that only certain kinds of contact does this (Weaver, 2007:255). As Love emphasizes, contact and interaction between ethnic conflicting parties may not have the desired positive results.

Contact that is badly planned, badly supervised, and badly controlled, or that is held in the 'wrong' place at the 'wrong' time, may in reality serve to increase and confirm prejudices already held by the opposing groups. He also holds that groups that have lived apart cannot be expected to suddenly change attitudes and perceptions overnight because of one exchange meeting (Love, 1995:53). The general argument in this regard is that contact between members of opposing groups, under the right conditions, would reduce intergroup hostility and lead to more positive intergroup attitudes (Dovidio et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2007:427-8; Pettigrew, 1998; Turner et al., 2007:427; Love, 1995:53; Allport, 1954). It is in this regard that Allport's contribution became important when, by also emphasizing that simple contact between groups is not automatically sufficient to improve intergroup relations, he argued that for contact between groups to reduce bias successfully, certain prerequisites must be present. This version of Allport thus emphasized the prerequisites or conditions for contact to be successful in reducing intergroup conflict and achieving intergroup harmony. Allport believes that while research and conclusions are drawn chiefly from the United States of America, his analysis has universal validity. Nevertheless, he contends that the ways in which prejudice is manifested vary considerably from country to country, since the selected victims are not the same, attitudes toward physical contact with disparaged groups differ, and accusations and stereotypes vary. He also holds that "yet, such evidence from other countries indicates that the basic causes and correlates are essentially identical" (Allport, 1954:xvi-xvii). Before elaborating developments since Allport, the following section discusses the prerequisites emphasized in Allport's seminal statement.

Equal status within the contact situation

Allport (1954) stressed that equal status between individuals or groups within the contact situation tends to decrease prejudice. It is however argued that equal status is not easy to define and that researchers use the term in different ways. Some writers hold that the groups should be of equal status coming into the contact situation (Brewer and Kramer, 1985; Foster and Finchilescu, 1986). Others argue that equal status in the situation is effective in promoting positive intergroup attitudes even when individuals or groups initially differ in status (Patchen, 1982; Schofield and Eurich-Fulcer, 2001), while others hold that what is critical is that both individuals and groups perceive equal status, at least within the context of the contact situation (Amir, 1998:174, Pettigrew and Tropp, 2003:264). For Forbes, if individuals interact in stereotyped roles of superiority and subordination, their interaction will likely reinforce rather than break down their stereotypes of superiority and inferiority (Forbes, 1997:116). This is the basic idea behind the various stipulations of equality of status as a condition for positive effects of contact.

Despite these apparent disagreements, equal status between the interacting groups has generally been accepted by psychologists involved in this area as a prerequisite for positive change. However, as Forbes holds, "there are still some doubts that equal status of the interacting groups is a completely essential requirement for change." (Forbes, 1997:121) Yet, "it has been urged that although equal status [contact] does not necessarily produce better ethnic relations, positive change cannot be anticipated at all in its absence." (ibid) In this regard, as Forbes holds, empirical research has shown that any attempt to explain different correlations between contact and prejudice simply in terms of the equality or inequality of those in contact would be unrealistic (Forbes, 1997:122). Other features should also be taken into consideration.

Common goals, interests and humanity

There is a general belief that one of the keys to successful contact is for both conflicting parties to participate jointly in a task, the completion of which is important to both groups. Allport holds that even though groups might have 'good will' toward contact, "no one can improve community relations in abstract since good will contact without concrete goals accomplishes nothing" (Allport, 1954:276). The general point is that for contact to contribute to improved relationships participants must be pursuing a common goal, or common goals, interests and humanity, because prejudice reduction through contact requires an active, goal-oriented effort toward a goal the groups share (Allport, 1954:276; Miller and Harrington, 1992; Bloomfield, 2003:45; Hewstone, 2003:352; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2003:265).

However, the fact that conflicting parties share goals, interests and humanity is not enough. As Allport argues:

Only the type of contact that leads people to *do* things together is likely to result in changed attitudes...It is the cooperative striving for the goal that engenders solidarity...Although the fact that people of different groups want to come together and do something to repair the ravages of prejudice in the community is good beginning (the ground of acquaintance thus laid), an agenda for the improvement of community relationships can gradually be evolved, and common projects and cooperative endeavour will then fortify and implement what might otherwise be abortive good will. (Allport, 1954:276-279)

It is in this context that the achievement of common goals through cooperative interdependence was emphasized by Allport, and others researchers.

Cooperative interdependence

Not only must groups seek common goals, but the attainment of these goals must be a *mutually dependent* effort involving no competition along strictly racial lines...The lesson is clear: contact situations which lead to interracial harmony must involve cooperative interdependence. (Pettigrew, 1971:276)

Many social scientists have said that common interests, or common goals, in the sense of reasons for cooperation, must be present before greater contact can be expected to have positive effects. Others (the proponents of realistic conflict theory) seem convinced that cooperative or competitive interdependence is such a crucial variable that its fundamental importance is obscured if it is called merely a condition for positive or negative effects to arise contact (Forbes, 1997:122). The simple and general argument, in this regard, is that attainment of a common goal, or common goals, by participants in the contact situation must be an interdependent effort without intergroup competition (Allport, 1954; Hewstone, 2003:352; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). What is clear is that contact involves different attitudes and behaviours depending upon whether the individuals in contact are either cooperating with each other or fighting each other.

First, contact theory does not claim (although of course it also does not deny) that conflict or cooperation between two ethnic groups (A and B) may have effects on the ethnic attitudes of their members. The point is that the ethnic attitudes of individuals, who are unavoidably members of particular ethnic groups, are undoubtedly influenced by the relations of cooperation or competition that exist between their groups. If two groups share a common or 'superordinate' goal that requires a joint effort for its attainment by both groups, then the relations between their members are likely to be better, and their attitudes towards each other more positive, on average, than if the two groups were competing for a goal (territory, power, victory) that only one can have (Forbes, 1997:122).

In fact, a principle in the social sciences states that whenever the cooperation of two people is enlisted toward the completion of some task that is of equivalent importance to both (and which cannot be successfully completed except through the close cooperative enterprise of the two people), those people will come to like each other, they will become friends, and their values, attitudes, goals, etc., will tend to become increasingly similar. This is known as the *principle of the superordinate goal*, describing cooperation to solve mutual problems (Gilmartin, 1987:286; Love, 1995:56). In its constituent elements down, the word *superordinate* means something greater than independent parts—a group being greater than the sum of its parts. It is the added value of the group that is necessary to achieve the Superordinate Goal (Staub, 2003:445-6). A superordinate goal is “an urgent goal that could only be achieved by cooperation between the conflicting groups” (Ryan, 1995:137). In this regard, cooperation refers to a pro-social behaviour performed for the common benefit of all. It involves sharing both the labour and the fruits of the labour (Worchel et al., 1989:213). The general argument, connecting the two concepts, is that “cooperation between conflicting groups necessitated by a situation embodying a superordinate goal which is achieved will tend to reduce intergroup conflicts, even though the underlying cause of the frustration remains unchanged” (Hunger and Stern, 1976:594). As Ryan holds, experimental research has found that pursuit of such goals can help reduce stereotyping and hostility between adversarial groups. Drawing on this research, some theorists have suggested the creation of supra-national institutions to pursue key economic and social goals. Their hope is that interdependence will broaden narrowly defined identities and reduce hostile attitudes (Ryan, 1995:141). The point is that cooperative relationships display a number of positive characteristics, including more effective communication, open and friendly attitudes, and a sense of mutuality, while competitive processes tend to yield the inverse, negative effects (Deutsch, 2000:27). It is in this regard, Ryan cautions, that when the costs and benefits of interdependence are not equally shared, interdependence may become a source of conflict (Ryan 1995:141). Amir also argues that contact may intensify negative attitudes in the absence of superordinate goals, or when one side is disadvantaged by the contact (Amir, 1998:174-8). The assumption here is that cooperative activities tend to improve intergroup relations, while competitive activities may have a negative effect (Amir, 1998).

Second, contact theory neither claims nor denies that the relations between two individuals in contact are likely to be greatly affected by what these individuals actually do to each other. If they help each other to attain important goals, so that both are better off as a result of their interaction, positive attitudes are more likely to develop between them than if they spend their time insulting, frustrating, or torturing each other (Forbes, 1997:123). This refers to the general belief that when opponents can be brought together in some cooperative endeavour, they tend to break down their negative stereotypes, begin to depend on each other, and start building normal, positive relationships which can later be extended to issues

in conflict. Examples of such projects include rebuilding war-damaged houses, buildings, or roads, or developing joint educational efforts. The advantage of such projects is that people can begin the process of building trust and understanding with people on the other side, while they focus on an external, clearly mutual problem. Once they learn to work together, and learn that they can, indeed, solve problems together, then they are in a better position to redefine (or reframe) their fundamental differences in terms of common problems, and can begin to work together in a cooperative way to solve those problems (IOTPOC, 1998). This is perhaps the reason why writers contend that joint activities or projects, in which conflicting parties develop interdependence and exchanges (intergroup dialogues, cooperative learning groups, educational projects, sporting events, or any other opportunities), and which can be provided to bring people together in a positive and cooperative way, have an increased likelihood of transforming interpersonal relationships (Allport, 1954; Dovidio et al., 2005; Stephan and Stephan, 2005; IOTPOC, 1998; DeVries et al., 1978; Hunter and Elias, 1999; Schulz, 2008; Staub, 2003).

Institutional supports

Human beings, even social scientists, generally tend to follow their leaders and do what they are told, especially when the orders are backed by overwhelming force. It is beyond dispute that the example and instruction of leaders—political, military, judicial, intellectual, and correctional—can have effects on racial and ethnic attitudes...The effectiveness of interracial contact is greatly increased if the contact is sanctioned by institutional support. (Forbes, 1997:129)

The above statement underscores Allport's initial emphasis that contact should be sanctioned by institutional support; that is, by law, custom or local atmosphere (Allport, 1954:281). In this regard, Amir, cited quoted by Forbes states:

The sanction of contact by institutional support increases greatly the effectiveness of interracial contact. In this regard, the support may come from the law, a custom, a spokesman for the community, or simply from a social atmosphere and a general public agreement. In some cases, governmental policy may be the influential factor...However, in many intergroup situations neither the social atmosphere nor institutions favor intergroup mixing for a variety of reasons. When such a state occurs, it may strongly hinder the development of successful intergroup contact and ethnic integration. (Amir, 1976:277 in Forbes, 1997:129)

This statement suggests a statistical interaction between contact and public opinion or leadership, as determinants of prejudiced attitudes. To simplify, "the greater the contact, the less the prejudice when there is normative support for equal status contact, but the greater the contact, the greater the prejudice when law or custom discourages equal-status contact" (Forbes, 1997:129). In this regard, Allport had emphasized the necessity of considering the social atmosphere while studying the effect of contact on prejudice; that is, the social atmosphere surrounding the contact, which opposes segregation to egalitarianism, voluntary to involuntary, real to artificial, typical to exceptional, and important and intimate to trivial and transient. In this regard, Amir emphasizes that contact is more effective when it has broader institutional support, even if that is just a supportive social atmosphere (Amir, 1998:178).

The above four features became the leading prerequisites—considered by many as the ‘independent variable’ side of contact (Hewstone, 2003:352; Pettigrew, 1998)—under which contact between members of opposed groups should be implemented. Hewstone rephrased these conditions and emphasized that members of the two groups should be brought together under conditions of equal status, in situations where stereotypes are likely to be dismantled, where there is intergroup cooperation, where participants can get to know each other properly, and where wider social norms support equality (Hewstone, 2003:352). Since Allport’s original formulation (1954), the contact hypothesis has received extensive empirical attention.

Extension of contact hypothesis

Research since Allport’s original formulation (1954) has extended Allport’s ideas about when contact will be most effective. Hundreds of studies have been conducted of contact in communities, organizations and schools, and among ethnic groups, establishing contact as “one of the most durable ideas in the sociology of racial and ethnic relations” (Weaver, 2007:255). This research has identified other conditions that facilitate prejudice reduction as a function of contact. As Hewstone puts it, “perhaps most prominent of these conditions is acquaintance potential” in contrast to casual contact, which takes place by mere presence (Hewstone (2003:352). This is what is known as *true acquaintance interpersonal contact*, which involves more active engagement in interaction with another individual (Forbes, 1997; Kimberly, 2003). This condition comprises two elements: affective ties and the opportunity to learn about out-group members; that is, “contact is thought to reduce prejudice when it generates positive affect, empathy, and *friendship* among participating individuals” (Batson et al., 1997; Herek and Capitanio, 1996; Pettigrew, 1998).

In concrete words, acquaintance potential assumes that: (a) contact offers the basis for challenging negative attitudes between people; (b) successful contact requires frequent systematic meetings; (c) high contact facilitates the acquisition of new information about each group; (d) contact facilitates the discovery of similar attributes leading to similarity—attraction; and (e) repeated contact leads to a more positive evaluation of others (Pettigrew, 1998:76; Weaver, 2007:256). It was Pettigrew who, after decades of studying contact, emphasised *friendship* between participants in contact, and added this as the fifth condition under which contact reduces prejudice; that is “the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends” (Pettigrew 1998:76). Friendship, which also requires the operation of conditions specified by Allport for optimal contact, was associated with empathy and intimacy among individuals involved in the contact situation. It is in this regard that the duration (short-term or long-term) of the contact is emphasized. The argument is that, as Pettigrew holds, successful intergroup contact requires repeated contact over a period of time, because bringing participants together for one-time interactions does not result in long-term change in attitudes, awareness, or knowledge. On the contrary, repeated contact over a period of time is necessary for comfort levels, trust, and friendships to be built (Pettigrew, 1998:7).

Among other studies, Amir’s review of the contact literature is notable, which found support for the reduction of prejudice under the conditions specified by Allport. Amir held that contact between members of different ethnic groups does tend to produce changes in attitudes between these groups if the contact has taken place under ‘favourable’ conditions. He consequently maintained all of Allport’s stipulations as favourable conditions (Amir,

1969 and 1998). Ryan (1995:137-41) also maintained that the idea that greater contact alone will build peace is flawed. He argues that contact only improves attitudes when that contact is intimate, pleasant, between equals, socially supported, and in pursuit of common goals. Absent those conditions, increased contact may lead to increased hostility. In this regard, Govier and Verwoerd (2002:193) clarify that intimate relationships are characterized by close and frequent contact, and that such relationships require deep trust—a confident expectation that the other is accepting and loving, honest and truthful, caring and non-manipulative, dependable emotionally, loyal, desiring of closeness—and close contact, where apology, expression of sorrow and forgiveness are favoured. Likewise, Amir holds that casual contact, even if frequent, is less likely to change attitudes than intimate contact. He gives an example of workplace contacts, and argues that they do not generally produce any significant improvement in attitudes towards another group, while close acquaintance and more intimate relations are more likely to reduce prejudice. His main argument is that when intimate relations are established, the in-group member no longer perceives the member of the out-group in a stereotyped way, but rather begins to consider him or her as an individual, and thereby discovers many areas of similarity (Amir, 1998:174-8).

Other researchers extended ideas about when and why contact will be most effective. It is in relation to the conditions for contact to be most effective, the three distinct lines of research examined the nature of perceivers' cognitive representation of groups, each proposing ideas about how the categorization of 'us' and 'them' will be optimally effective in reducing prejudice (Kenworthy et al., 2008). Brewer and Miller (1984)—the proponents of an interpersonal approach—proposed the *decategorization* model, minimizing the use of category labels altogether, and instead interacting on an individual basis. Decategorization predicted optimal contact under conditions of minimized salience of group membership and group boundaries. This would allow those involved in the intergroup interaction to focus on personal information that individuates out-group members and makes them unique and distinct from their group as a whole. Gaertner et al. (1989) proposed another model—*recategorization*—suggesting that intergroup contact could be maximally effective if perceivers rejected the use of 'us' and 'them' in favour of a more inclusive, superordinate 'we' category. These two models can be seen as extensions of Allport's notions of perceived similarity between groups, and to a lesser degree, equality of status (Kenworthy et al., 2008). Hewstone and Brown (1986) proposed another model, called *categorization* (or sometimes mutual intergroup differentiation), which pointed out practical problems with personalized, as opposed to group-based, interactions, and instead promoted keeping group boundaries intact and salient during intergroup encounters. In contrast with the decategorization model, Hewstone and Brown argued that by focusing solely on individuating information (decategorization model), the out-group member would not be seen as an out-group member at all, and thus any positive outcomes that result from the interaction would fail to generalize to other members of the category. In other words, they are likely to be sub-typed, or cognitively processed as separate from the group as a whole, or treated as an individual with no connection to the overall group. A real concern is that individuals may discount positive experiences with out-group members as an exception to the rule. Consequently, they argued that, under decategorized contact, attitudes towards the out-group as a whole would remain unchanged, due to the very conditions intended to produce the attitude change. Nevertheless, for categories that are visually salient (e.g., race, gender), complete decategorization is unlikely to occur, thus providing some basis for the benefits of positive personalized interaction to generalize to attitudes to the group as a whole (Miller et al., 2004).

Therefore, Hewstone and Brown's (1986) alternative general theoretical solution—*categorization*—proposed that for the positive effects of contact to generalize to the entire out-group, it is vital that category salience remains relatively high during the interaction. Although it is not necessary that category salience be maintained at all times, ideally it should occur before the out-group individual is perceived as atypical of their group. Nevertheless, as Kenworthy et al. (2008) argue, “despite their conceptual differences, all of the various models that followed Allport paid a tribute to his ideas in some fundamental way.” Although this study is not aimed at settling this discussion, it maintains that the categorized, decategorized, and recategorized aspects of contact are compatible.

Other studies suggest that individual characteristics (such as gender and socio-economic status or other significant means by which individuals group themselves) must also be taken into account in the study of interpersonal/intergroup relations (Kimberly, 2003:43). However, “the mainstream social psychology has long believed that what really matters is not who you are, but where you are” (Waller, 2007:230).

In fact, while writing on *social construction of cruelty*—a chapter in his book on *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*—James Waller insists on the ‘power of the situation’ in influencing people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviours—in addition to the cultural and psychological construction of respectively ‘worldview’ and the ‘other’.²³ In this regard, Waller argues that predictions based mainly on personality variables often misinterpret or underestimate the dominating and pervasive power of the situation” (Waller, 2007:138). Waller emphasizes three momentum inducing features of a social construction of cruelty that are most relevant to understanding how ordinary people commit genocide and mass killing. These are *professional socialization* (information on the behaviours guiding the organization), *group identification* (emotional attachment to the group), and the *binding factors of the group* (pressures or group dynamics—such as conformity to peer pressure, kin recognition cues and gender—that work to keep people within an evildoing organization or hierarchy). In this regard, Waller maintains Zimbardo’s contention that “individual behaviour is largely under the control of social forces and environment contingencies rather than personality traits, character, and will power...” (Waller, 2007:203-69)

Despite Allport’s conclusion expressing scepticism regarding the possibility of reducing prejudice when it is rooted in the character structure of the individual (Allport, 1954:281), the fact that contact can lead to greater prejudice and rejection, or to greater respect and acceptance, depending upon the situation in which it occurs, is also emphasized (Allport, 1954:275; Forbes, 1997:23). The basic issue, then, concerns the types and situations in which contact leads to positive or negative outcomes.

²³The *cultural construction of ‘worldview’* examines the influence of cultural models—related to collectivistic values, authority orientation, and social dominance—that are widely shared by members of a perpetrator group while the *psychological construction of the ‘other’* analyzes how victims of genocide and mass killing become simply the ‘object’ of perpetrators’ actions through the processes of us-them thinking, moral engagement, and blaming the victims (See Waller’s model of *How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*, 2007:138).

Types and situations of contact

In discussing the effects of contact, Allport argues that the effects of contact depend upon “the kind of association that occurs, and upon the kinds of persons who are involved (Allport, 1954:261-2; Forbes, 1997:20). Allport distinguished roughly thirty independent variables that could be used to define different types or situations of contact, although more emphasis was placed on some rather than others. With regard to the types of contact, Allport emphasized the dichotomy between *casual* and *true acquaintance* types of contact. Casual contact is the kind that is practically inescapable whenever two or more groups live intermingled in a common territory. In this regard, his argument is that casual contact increases prejudice rather than dispels it: ‘the more contact the more trouble’. On the other hand, Allport holds that true acquaintance, in contrast with casual contact, lessens prejudice (Allport, 1954:227-68; Forbes, 1997:20-1). Concerning the situations of contact, Allport recognized that there is a *personal* as well as a *situational* factor in prejudice. In this regard, Allport cited a study of children at an interracial summer camp that showed equal gains and losses in prejudice as a result of the camping experience. It is in this regard that he stressed that “it was the anxious and the aggressive boys who failed to develop tolerance as a result of their equal status contact with Negro boys” (Allport, 1954:280, Forbes, 1997:21-2). Yet, individuals’ personalities should not be ignored. As Forbes argues, the relation between contact and prejudice is at best a statistical rule: even equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals does not reduce prejudice amongst all the individuals concerned, since some personalities resist the effects of contact (Forbes, 1997:22).

Other features related to contact theory emphasize a very broad generalization that contact among individuals, particularly *voluntary* contact, is associated with positive attitudes (Forbes, 1997:167). This reflects Allport’s emphasis on the social atmosphere surrounding the contact; that is, voluntary or involuntary, among other things (Allport, 1954:262).

Investigating intergroup contact

The investigation or measurement of contact may look at different levels of types of contact. But the central theme of improving or repairing interpersonal or intergroup relations has been the need to increase the quantity and quality of intergroup contact (Hewstone et al., 2002 in Voci and Hewstone, 2003:38). It follows that contact can generally be investigated in either its quantity or its quality (Niens et al., 2003:9-10).

The *quantitative* aspect of contact, on the one hand, implies the frequency, duration, number of persons involved, and variety (Allport, 1954:262). This contact may occur through meeting neighbours, work colleagues, leisure activities, or friends etc. Quantity of contact may thus be measured by asking how frequently a person meets with members of the other community, the duration, and the number of persons involved in contact. What quantity of contact does not address, however, is how positive or negative an individual perceives the contact to be.

On the other hand, *quality* of contact is concerned with how positive or negative individuals experience contact with out-group members, and how meaningful that contact is to them (This type is often stated to be more important than the quantitative type, although an individual may have large and regular number of intergroup interactions, which has an effect, even though the contact may not be very deep). In this regard, quality contact may

refer to some basic dimensions. Firstly, *positive* versus *negative* experiences of contact, which may affect the outcome of intergroup contact; and secondly, casual versus intimate contact may also affect the outcome of the contact experience—that is, *casual* and superficial versus *intimate* or deep and real contact. The same applies to extended period versus single instance of contact (Niens et al., 2003:9-10; Evaldsson, 2007:71). Thirdly, whether the contact is *voluntary* or *involuntary* can also impact on its outcome—that is, if an individual perceives him or herself to have been forced into a contact situation, and even more so if the perception is that the purpose is to enforce attitude change, backlash effects can occur, where the individual becomes even more negative toward the out-group (Evaldsson 2007:71). For the purpose of this study, the focus bends toward the subjective quality of contact, given that existing research using intergroup contact has largely focused on quantitative objective measures.

Critiques of the contact hypothesis

The theory of intergroup contact, and its role in the reduction of interpersonal or intergroup negative attitudes and behaviours, has dealt with various critiques over the years. Debate has focused on whether the proposed optimal conditions are sufficient, or even necessary, for contact to reduce prejudice (Turner et al., 2007:428). In this regard, it is argued that optimal intergroup contact can be difficult to achieve, given the anxiety (which carries the threat of creating negative rather than positive outcomes) and hostility that sometimes pervade intergroup relations (Ortiz and Harwood, 2007:1). Some writers thus propose that the conditions put forward, for positive effects of contact between conflicting parties, should be thought of as facilitating rather than essential conditions (Pettigrew 1998; Hewstone 2003:352). Others also question whether intergroup conflicts can be resolved through interpersonal contact. They think that when contact does lead to improved personal attitudes, the changed individuals face a re-entry problem as they return to their communities, and that their new, more positive attitudes towards their opponent are likely to be greeted with suspicion by their own community. Their major argument is that neither contact hypothesis can be generalized from one member of the group to the out-group as a whole (that is, many effects do not generalize beyond the immediate contact situation and participants), nor does it specify how the effects generalize to other situations, the entire out-group or uninvolved out-groups (Pettigrew, 1998; Niens et al., 2003; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006).

Pettigrew (1998:69-70) appears to be one of the writers who provided a clear list of critiques directed towards intergroup contact theory. He indicates four problems with the contact hypothesis, while putting forward some suggestions in this regard. The first problem is the *causal sequence*, which refers to the selection bias whereby, “instead of optimal contact reducing prejudice, the opposite causal sequence could be operating. Prejudiced people may avoid contact with out-groups” (ibid). The second problem is that of *independent variable specification*, whereby Pettigrew argues: that Allport’s hypothesis risks being an open-ended laundry list of conditions, ever expandable and thus eluding falsification. He also argues that many factors would exclude most intergroup situations and that the hypothesis would rarely predict positive results from contact, although research typically finds positive results. In addition, he holds that the problem is that writers often confuse *facilitating* with *essential* conditions; and that many factors suggested for optimal contact may not be essential but rather relate to the underlying mediating processes. The third problem is related to *unspecified processes of change*, whereby Pettigrew argues that

the original hypothesis says nothing about the *processes* by which contact changes attitudes and behaviour; that it predicts only *when* contact will lead to positive change, not *how* and *why* the change occurs; and that a broader theory of intergroup contact requires an explicit specification of the processes involved. The last problem concerns *the generalization of effects*, whereby, according to Pettigrew, the effectiveness of contact hypothesis is limited since it does not specify how the effects generalize beyond the immediate situation.

The above discussions on the effects of intergroup contact on prejudice or negative attitudes and behaviours seem to offer a framework for studying the relational effect of contact in the cooperative organization, between conflicting parties. However, considering the existing literature on the relational dimension of peacebuilding (interpersonal relationship peacebuilding, or reconciliation, at this level), it follows that the features or factors provided by intergroup contact theory are not comprehensive enough to be solely adaptable for this purpose. Therefore, with the help of other theoretical perspectives on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding, other factors are added to contact theory. These factors include truth, acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness, justice, education, communication, socio-economic issues, as well as culture, rituals and symbols.

2.2.3. Truth and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

There is a common argument that truth-telling/seeking which goes hand in hand with truth-seeking and post-conflict peacebuilding go hand in hand. Scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding, as well as populations of war-torn societies, increasingly agree that some kind of formal accounting of the past is essential to achieve lasting, ‘self-enforcing’ peace in war-torn states. Truth-telling/seeking is increasingly considered a necessary, if not vital, component of the peacebuilding process. Truth-telling advocates offer a host of reasons why exposing and publicly accounting for wartime misdeeds is an essential component of the relational peacebuilding process (Mendeloff, 2004:355-6). The argument is that truth-telling creates objective opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective responsibility (Bloomfield et al., 2003:21).

Proclaiming the truth tells victims that the world does not regard such behaviour as acceptable, which contributes to feelings of safety and begins to restore the group’s connection to the world community. It is also argued that by exposing the truth of past crimes, victims or survivors can begin to heal from the trauma of war and receive closure. Once they have begun to heal, they can then work towards reconciling with their former adversaries. This is an individual therapy, which is connected to relational peacebuilding. Often harm-doing is thought to be mutual. Even when one group is clearly the perpetrator, as is the case in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, there appear to have been some forms of mutual victimization over the course of history, or some acts of revenge following violence. However it is contended that ‘truth’ is only one ingredient, and an important step in itself, since ‘truth’ alone will not bring reconciliation (Huysse, 2003:24; Freeman and Hayner, 2003:122). But, some believe that truth-telling leads directly to trust, empathy and even forgiveness. This conviction is notably clearly present in the label ‘truth commission’ (SPRC and JICA ReSoESA, 2006). Here, it is worth emphasizing that truth-telling/seeking is generally and often limited to Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), Workshops, and International Tribunal Courts. In this regard, one of the most popular transitional mechanisms in recent years is what has come to be known, in its generic form, as the Truth Commission. Yet, as is often argued, one of the shortcomings of truth commissions is their

inability to secure meaningful cooperation from perpetrators, given that they don't involve them (Freeman and Hayner, 2003:137). Recent findings also suggest that truth-telling through TRCs may even be re-traumatizing (Brounéus, 2008).

2.2.4. Acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

There is a common contention in psychodynamic theories of group change that an essential ingredient of successful restoration of interpersonal relationships after violence involves group processes of acknowledgement, mourning, apology and forgiveness. The point is that explicit acknowledgement and acceptance of moral responsibility for past events that victimized the other group, along with assurances that similar events will not happen in the future, can activate a response of forgiveness that releases, on a deeper level, resistance to completing the mourning process and moving forward into problem-solving for a better future.

In fact, it is commonly argued that when perpetrators *acknowledge* what they have done, knowledge becomes, in a sense, truth, and survivors are assured (at least to some extent) that the past will not repeat itself. This in itself contributes to survivors' healing and facilitates dialogue. However, for the act of acknowledgement to be effective it must be both completed and detailed (Jeong, 2002:105-6). The next step is *contrition*, which involves the taking of responsibility for past actions, to express regret, *apologize*, and directly ask for forgiveness. Again, sincerity, as judged by the 'victim', is the key to the success of this step (Jeong, 2002:106). The first two steps by the oppressor/aggressor prepare the ground for the final psychological step, which is the survivor's voluntary *forgiveness* of past injuries. It may take time for survivors to express their forgiveness, but true acknowledgement and contrition by the other side will in themselves have a positive effect on relations between the parties. Genuine forgiveness does not take place if anger and resentment are denied or ignored, although forgiveness does not necessarily assume an attitude of superiority of self-righteousness. These three elements (acknowledgment, contrition-apology, and forgiveness) are essential in order for victimized groups to be reassured that they will not suffer the same abuse in future (Jeong, 2002:106).

It is generally argued that apology and forgiveness are two sides of the same emotional coin (Hauss, 2003). They can occur at the private level only, or they may also affect the interpersonal relationship. As Barkan and Karn observe, apology can help "bridge the victim's need for acknowledgment and the perpetrator's desire to reclaim humanity" (Barkan and Karn, 2006). The same function can be said of forgiveness, which may be defined not only as a form of acknowledgment but also as an obligation toward the repentant offender (Schimmel, 2002:46). Conceived as such, both apology and forgiveness are assumed to restore the relationship between perpetrators and survivors. As Hauss holds, the causal mechanism involved is that they help define the past in a mutually agreed upon manner between the oppressors and the oppressed against, thus shaping the identities of both through a process called re-negotiating history. The oppressors who committed human rights violations and other atrocities have to take responsibility for their actions, and apologize. By the same token, the oppressed against have to find the space in their hearts to forgive those who victimized them, even though the pain and suffering will never disappear. But forgiving is just as important as apologizing in any society which wishes to put its struggles behind it and create a more peaceful and cooperative future. Apologies and forgiveness expressions

are considered as important because intractable conflicts generate such deep and searing emotions. Even after the fighting stops, people still feel the pain, hurt, anger, fear, and hatred that produced the conflict and its horrors in the first place. Without apology and forgiveness, people remain locked in the value systems that produced the conflict (Hauss, 2003). By apologizing, the wrongdoer party indicates to the other that he or she is sorry for what he or she did, that they should not have done it, and that they will not do such a thing again. In acknowledging wrongdoing and responsibility, expressing sorrow, and taking initiative to restore the relationship, he or she attempts to bridge the gap with the partner or friend who was hurt. The other will accept the apology only if she or he trusts the wrongdoer enough to regard her or him as sincere and credible (Govier and Werwoerd, 2002:193). Some argue that (when perpetrators are still alive) apology has symbolic meanings not only for survivors, but also for perpetrators of violence. Their argument is that apology from aggressors is a vital condition for survivors to forgive and move on to the promise of a more peaceful future. Moreover, offenders can recover their own humanity through apology proceeding from an admission of past misdeeds. Therefore, real liberation comes through a process of forgiveness following apology (Jeong, 2005:156; Long and Brecke, 2003).

In the case of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, some argue that forgiving is difficult (although necessary), as the very idea of it can be offensive, considering the deep level of atrocities committed. It is also argued that it is difficult for many survivors to consider forgiving those members of the perpetrator group who did not personally participate in violence; that is, those who either belong to the perpetrator group or who were passive bystanders. As Shyaka argues, prior to the restoration of mutual friendly relationships, one who has caused harm to the other should admit and regret his/her wrongdoings, apologize for them and if need be, give compensation (Shyaka, 2004:5—footnote). However, there is still little research regarding the connection between acknowledgment, contrition-apology, and forgiveness, and the improvement of broken relationships, especially in the aftermath of horrible atrocities such as the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

2.2.5. Justice and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

The bulk of the literature concerning the relationship between justice and peacebuilding in attempting to rebuild human or social relationships after violence has been written from a conflict resolution perspective. By contrasting ‘mercy’ or ‘amnesia’ (letting go of the past, the forgive and forget approach) and retaliation (cleaning the slate by avenging the past (Ramsbotham et al., 2005), with other paths to relational peacebuilding, there is a broad contention, in the literature, that justice stands as another important aspect of peacebuilding in a post-conflict situation where there is a need to deal with the perpetrators of war crimes and other human rights abuses (Lambourne, 2004:4; Ramsbotham et al., 2005). Justice represents the search for individual and group rights, for social restructuring, and for restitution. It is argued to be different from mercy, which articulates the need for acceptance, letting go, and a new beginning (Lederach, 1997:29). However, justice is a complex concept, which has substantive and symbolic, economic and social, legal, and psychological meanings. It may be *retributive*, *restitutive (or reparative)*, *restorative*, or *distributive (or economic)* (Lambourne, 2004:8; Abu-Nimer 2001:312-3).

Although retribution (through international tribunals) originally meant a settling of accounts, involving both the punishment of evil and rewarding of good deeds, it has become associated solely with punishment and revenge in common usage in the twentieth century

(Abu-Nimer, 2001:312). Restitution, meaning the recovery of losses or compensation to rectify harm, generally takes the form of a financial payment made to the offended against either by the offender or the state.

Restorative justice puts emphasis on restoring relationships between parties in a conflict, instead of inflicting punishments. Restorative justice is based on recognition of the humanity of both offender and offended against, and the goal is to heal the wounds of every person affected by the conflict or offence. However, since options are explored that focus on repairing the damage, the concept of restitution also plays a role in the implementation of restorative justice. Therefore, restorative justice appears, in general, to be characterized by four key values: (a) *encounter*, creating opportunities for both victims and offenders, and community members, who want to meet to discuss the crime and its aftermath; (b) *amends*, expecting offenders to take steps to repair the harm they have caused; (c) *integration*, seeking to return survivors and offenders to whole, contributing members of society; and (d) *inclusion*, providing the opportunity for parties with a stake in a specific crime to participate in its resolution (Van Ness and Strong, 2003).

Distributive justice, or economic and social justice, is concerned with giving each person his or her proper share and achieving a fair outcome, and is linked to both restitutive and restorative justice. In cases where one group has suffered economic discrimination over many years, economic justice may take the form of programmes to lift the disadvantaged groups out of poverty. Social justice is closely linked to economic justice, and is achieved when socially disadvantaged groups are provided with some means (most commonly structural) of achieving social equality with the dominant group. The main point is that when people have been wronged, they express a desire for justice, which can be interpreted as a human need to feel a sense of justice. However, it is argued that what type of justice is necessary varies with individual circumstances and predispositions, the type of wrong and the local context. Clearly, different people have different priorities and needs in relation to justice (Lambourne, 2004).

Besides truth-telling/seeking, which goes hand in hand with acknowledgment, contrition-apology, forgiveness expressions, and justice, in relational peacebuilding, the literature on relational peacebuilding also emphasize that education and communication are important factors.

2.2.6. Education and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

Education is believed to help counter the negative attitudes. It can aid in humanization by conveying the idea that we are all part of a vast, interdependent, 'worldwide family' sharing fundamental human similarities. (Hamburg 1995)

While it is often contended that education—in terms of school system—can be a prerequisite for peace, the fact that it can also serve as a conflict-exacerbating factor (factor playing a role in the creation of causes of conflict) is also emphasized. This is so since, as Seitz holds, education has too often been manipulated in the pursuit of domination and oppression. Education systems segregated along ethnic or religious lines, such as those in Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, help to perpetuate dramatically divergent views of both history and current events. A segregated education system can hinder the development of meaningful relations across ethnic or religious divides (Seitz, 2004:17). A 1996 report from the UNESCO Commission on

Education placed great emphasis on a type of education called ‘Learning to Live Together’. In this regard, programmes designed to educate in ‘an intelligent and peaceful way’ have been developed globally and are encompassed in a number of different educational models (Huysse, 2003:28). One of these is ‘Education for Reconciliation’, in Ireland. It is in this context that education for peace, known as *peace education*, is advocated. Peace education refers to “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.” (Fountain 1999 in Seitz, 2004:1) Other prejudice reduction programmes are advocated, and include formal education, community conferences or festivals, and mass media campaigns (Ryan, 1995).

Furthermore, Lederach advocates conflict resolution training approaches at the middle range level of peacebuilding. Training approaches, which differ from problem solving approaches, generally aim at raising awareness (educating people about conflict) and imparting skills for dealing with conflict. In terms of education, training programmes are developed to provide participants with an understanding of how conflict operates, the general patterns and dynamics it follows, and useful concepts for dealing with it in more constructive ways. In terms of the development of skills, training has the more concrete goal of teaching people specific techniques and approaches for dealing with conflict, often in the form of analytical, communication, negotiation, or mediation skills. In contrast to problem-solving workshops, the focus of training is internally, rather than externally, oriented (Lederach, 1997:47-8). One of the key benefits of peace education, commonly advocated by writers in peace and conflict studies, is that it increases communication for mutual understanding among participants.

2.2.7. Communication and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

There appears to be a common understanding that interpersonal violent conflict often involves a breakdown in communication, and that where adversaries are unable to talk to each other, it is unlikely that they can resolve their differences. It is also argued that without communication, the ‘other’ is frequently dehumanized, and mistrust and fear prevail. Conflict transformation, then, frequently involves finding ways to restore communication and encourage dialogue, which can occur at all levels, from the grassroots up to heads of state (Van Tongeren et al., 2005:87). This is thus assumed to lay the groundwork for the reciprocal enactment of acknowledgement of transgressions, apologies for these, forgiveness of these, and assurances that such acts will not occur in the future (Fisher, 2001:28). In this regard, it is argued that opening channels of communication and interaction is crucial, as it asserts a shared humanity, challenges prejudices and shows opponents that division is not the means of addressing conflict issues, and creates opportunities (offers space) to address relational issues (International Alert, 2006:114). When channels of communication are opened, the hostile person can discover that her or his ‘enemies’ do not, in fact, wish her or him harm, and she or he comes to see the aggressiveness in her or his own behaviour; and as a result becomes less defensive and hostile (Forbes, 1997:19).

However, communication per se does not assure conflict transformation, since in certain cases, it can actually worsen communication outcomes. Poor communication is very likely to exacerbate conflicts (Krauss and Morsella, 2000). In this regard, it is generally

stated that what is needed is *effective communication* between former enemies, which is one of the essential elements for relational peacebuilding (Jeong, 2005:9; Maiese, 2003). Effective communication refers to communication which is open and empathic between conflicting parties (Maiese, 2003). Yet, effective communication requires ‘safe’ spaces that will help to change perceptions, build trust, open communication (not defensive) and increase empathy. This is so since interpersonal communication can be difficult at the best of times, because of misunderstandings, hurt feelings and prejudices. The point is that if no ‘safe’ spaces are provided, communication between conflicting parties can be extremely negative, even leading to destructive outcomes. ‘Safe’ spaces—advocated for constructive communication—involve dialogue in traditional problem-solving workshops (open dialogues in which problem identification and the generation of solutions towards understanding, is nurtured), and in joint projects that are unrelated to the conflict’s core issues, and that rather centre on shared interests (Maiese 2003). As Krauss and Morsella’s study found, communication, coupled with a genuine desire to solve a problem that conflict parties share in common, makes the restoration of their relationships more likely (Krauss and Morsella, 2000). Buber (1958) perceives open and honest communication as a true encounter between equals, and terms such rare meetings *dialogical moments*.

It follows that the relational aspect of the communication process—the fact that communication takes place between people and influences every aspect of their relationship—is central to understanding why certain communications succeed while others do not. Obstacles to communication include not only the words spoken during the interaction, but also non-verbal behaviour, prior experiences and pre-existing attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions. For example, strong and extreme emotions—such as anger, fear, sadness, and distress—can cause people to become *defensive* and avoid open communication, especially when they are in the presence of others whom they perceive as being the cause of such emotions. When one is faced with aggressive behaviour, either verbal or physical, open interpersonal communication will also be impossible. In this regard, one remedy is to find and sustain a supportive climate for effective communication between conflicting parties (Chaitin, 2003). Supportive climates include situations which encourage descriptive speech, in which the listener perceives requests for information as genuine; that is, problem-oriented atmospheres, in which mutual solutions to conflict, rather persuasion, are nurtured (Gibb, 1961). In addition, participants in the communication should not have been coerced into taking part in the interpersonal dialogue (Chaitin, 2003). In this regard, the context—the situation—in which the communication takes place stands as one of the key factors affecting the nature of communication.²⁴ This includes shared contexts such as culture, as well as personal contexts such as family or religion (Caritas Internationalis, 2002, 2006:112). Therefore, genuine dialogue/communication stands as a necessary condition for parties to reconcile their relationships (Abu-Nimer, 2001:341). Yet, the process of relationships peacebuilding also points to socio-economic issues.

²⁴ Other key factors, seemingly less relevant to this study, include time, noise, and the field of experience (see Caritas Internationalis, 2002, 2006:112 on *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual*). Available at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6QKBG4/\\$file/caritas-gen-oct02.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6QKBG4/$file/caritas-gen-oct02.pdf?openelement). Consulted on 14 September, 2006.

2.2.8. Socio-economic issues and the restoration of interpersonal relationships

There is a wide argument that one of the major prerequisites for relational peacebuilding is successful socio-economic development. Socio-economic factors have notably often been cited as one of the major causes of conflicts, notably in the developing world. For example, theorists believe that competition for scarce resources is a common factor in almost all ethnic conflicts in Africa. Therefore, it is often argued that socio-economic development, often referred to as structural transformation (poverty reduction, distribution of resources, health insurance, job creation, or simply the satisfaction of material needs) is essential for peacebuilding. Economic development, through cooperation, it is often thought, should reduce ethnic conflict and increase respect for individual rights. As Forbes holds, people drawn into networks of cooperation and exchange become tied together by their practical economic interests. Under the influence of these new interests and engagements, they begin to see their clashing commitments in a new and clear light. People gradually learn to see each other as individual members of a ‘family’ and to recognize their own interest in upholding a common set of basic rights for all (Forbes, 1997:2).

Efforts in post-conflict peacebuilding have thus tended to focus on re-ignition of the economic engine, to facilitate resuscitation of full-scale economic activities and setting the country on a path to peaceful and inclusive development (UNDESA, 2004:1). In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, the United Nation’s Economic Report on Africa (2003) offered an assessment of the economic reconstruction after the genocide, stating that the 1994 genocide was conditioned by poverty and resource scarcity, and that possible solutions in the economic sphere have to occur in tandem with interpersonal relationships improvement (Cannon, 2005:2). This is connected to some empirical evidence, which show that poorer countries are more likely to experience violent conflict, while conflict-affected countries tend to experience higher levels of poverty. The point is that violent conflict results in the destruction of economic and human capital. A country emerging from conflict is faced with damaged physical infrastructure, scarce employment opportunities, reduced foreign investment and increased capital flight. Statements taking socio-economic development as a key factor in promoting peacebuilding thus emphasize that when economic and social opportunities exist, the transition to peace is more sustainable and, hence, in post-conflict peacebuilding, more effort should be made to create economic opportunities in order to increase the probabilities of lasting peace. The argument is that the creation of socio-economic opportunities is vital to prevent the reoccurrence of violence in post-conflict societies, given that these opportunities: (a) reduce social tensions and restore interdependent relations that help transition to peace; (b) help redress grievances of people and create a wider middle class upon which democracy can be built; and (c) raise hope and trust in people (Yakhyoev, 2006). Walter’s study of civil war suggests that improvement in economic well-being, among other things, decreases the risk of experiencing war anew (Brounéus, 2003:24 in Brounéus, 2008).

In the work of truth commissions, around the world, the importance of economic compensation has often been emphasized: “economic justice” (Boraine in Brounéus, 2008:24), since after violence there are often vast socio-economic gaps between former perpetrators and survivors. Yet, socio-economic development discussed in Truth and Reconciliation Commissions is only for survivors (through reparation and compensation), in contrast with economic development, which benefits all parties to a conflict. For example, Lambourne (2004) argues that improvement in socio-economic conditions for survivors is a

key step to reconciliation. Yet, generalizing, this would be questionable, notably in poor countries, since offenders might also be suffering the same socio-economic problems (as is the case in Rwanda). However, there remains a lack of agreement about the specific relationship between socio-economic development and relational peacebuilding or conflict. Despite the small amount of literature connecting socio-economic development to the restoration of human relationships, it is sometimes argued that human relationships demand more than a simple increase in socio-economic indicators, given that they require psychological or emotional change from hostile attitudes to more moderate or positive ones. The argument is that unless conflict resolution efforts address the emotional and symbolic roots of ethnic violence, as well as the tangible interests at stake, they will continue to be ineffective (Byrne et al., 2008:5). Ryan also notes that there is little evidence that economic development promotes peace, given that this theory overstates the power of economic development to change identity and underestimates the attachment to ethnic identity whatever the economic situation (Ryan, 1995:141).

Despite the lack of agreement about the evidence that socio-economic development promotes or builds peace, the broad contentions supporting this view suggest that it can be effective to transform human relationships, following violence, when self-interest cuts across the divide. This refers to the contact between divided parties around something of equal importance for both of them. For example, Bloomfield (2003:45) argues that where poverty affects people on both sides of the conflict, the poor can increase their resources by joining together to fight for more equitable resource sharing. In the particular case of Rwanda, Zorbas argues that poverty reduction is connected with reconciliation. In her research on reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, she concluded that poverty reduction is a key part of the answer to a widowed Rwandan woman's question: "how can I forgive, when my livelihood was destroyed and I cannot even pay the schooling of my children?" In this regard, her argument was that the widow's question was insightful because it implies that if someone would help her restore her livelihood, and help her pay the schooling of her children, the groundwork would have been laid for the process of forgiveness and/or reconciliation to become thinkable (Zorbas, 2004:37-8).

In connection with the above factors, the literatures on relational peacebuilding also suggest the importance of the country's culture, rituals and symbols in the restoration of interpersonal relationships.

2.2.9. Culture, rituals and symbols in the restoration of interpersonal relationships

It is generally argued that the way in which a community deals with a violent past is intimately linked to its customs and culture (Bloomfield, 2003:46). These include cultural rituals ceremonies, myths, and other symbolic actions and expressions. Schirch holds that a ritual has three specific characteristics. First, it occurs in a unique social space, set apart from everyday life. Second, communication operates through symbols and emotions rather than relying primarily on words or rational thought. In ritual, individuals learn by doing, and utilize nonverbal communication. Third, ritual confirms and transforms people's worldviews, identities and relationships with others. The symbolic dimension focuses on how worldviews shape people's understanding of their problems. It includes the perceptual, emotional, cultural, value-based, and identity-driven aspects of conflict. When two cultures understand the world in vastly different ways, they may be unable to see conflict from the other's point of view. As Schirch holds, ritual theorists (such as Emile Durkheim) claimed

that more formal ritual spaces were used to define group identity, create internal solidarity, and permit individuals to engage in and express relationships with others. She holds that “doing something together helps them [people doing it] feel as one” (Schirch, 2005:139).

Symbolic approaches to peacebuilding thus involve creative strategies aimed at shifting perceptions (Schirch, 2005). While culture is often viewed as an obstacle to addressing conflict, particularly by theorists rooted in the material or social dimension of conflict, symbolic approaches can also use culture as a source for peacebuilding (Schirch, 2005:44). The point is that each culture has a tradition for handling conflict. Here culture refers to “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experiences and guide their action” (Geertz, 1973 in Schirch, 2005:44). In this regard, Schirch argues that symbolic approaches to peacebuilding, which focus on how people’s worldview shapes how they understand and make meaning of conflict, include efforts to shift or transform worldviews or perceptions through creative strategies to engage people’s physical and sensual selves, their emotions, their identities, and their values. She argues that cultural groups share common ways of being, values, social structures, and rules of interaction, and that they develop common ways of addressing conflict (Schirch, 2005:32-45).

Cultural responses to the past vary from one society, or context, to another. Some societies embody a natural urge to forgive the injustices inflicted on them in the past. Others focus on justice (legal, distributive or restitutive), while others display a strong aversion to letting bygones be bygones. For example, the *ubuntu* philosophy is often emphasized as a cultural principle in South Africa in reference to the numerous relationships of individuals. This concept denotes the essence of human togetherness or solidarity, and tolerance or compassion. For example in Zimbabwe, the concept refers to *unhu* in the Shona language. In Uganda or Tanzania, it refers to *obuntu* (human generosity respectively in Luganda language and Haya and Nyambo languages). In Rwanda and Burundi, the concept refers to *ubumuntu* (humanism) or simply *ubuntu* (to refer to human generosity).

In the particular case of Rwanda, some cultural approaches to post-genocide peacebuilding, at the local level, along with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), enacted in March 1999, are worth relating. These local mechanisms include *gacaca* jurisdictions, *ingando* (solidarity camps), *abunzi* (mediators or conciliators), *itorero*, and *ubusabane*. Other local initiatives (notably involving ordinary people) that are focused on socio-economic activities are comparatively less talked about, as far as post-genocide peacebuilding is concerned. Apart from cooperative organizations, which are currently advocated by the Rwandan Government as alternatives to post-genocide recovery, other initiatives include various associations, local NGOs, *ubudehe* and *umuganda* (community action), which mobilize people towards socio-economic ends. The first five local cultural approaches, beside community action towards socio-economic ends) are developed below:

Gacaca

Gacaca tribunal is a modernized form of a very traditional justice mechanism; that is, culturally familiar to Rwandans. Literally, ‘on the lawn’, *gacaca* is the traditional reconciliatory justice adopted by the Government of Rwanda to handle some categories of genocide cases. It is based on the traditional practice of community conflict resolution carried out openly with the participation of the whole community. Being inspired by the Rwandan traditional culture of an informal system of justice, where people used to sit

together in *agacaca* (grass) and settle their disputes, the gacaca jurisdiction (court or tribunal) was established in 2001, in the wake of the 1994 genocide. The system was judged necessary in order to ‘establish the truth’ and ‘eliminate the culture of impunity’, while speeding up the process around those who were being detained on genocide charges, thus overcoming the chronic problem of the overcrowded prisons and delays in trying those accused (more than 200,000 people were imprisoned). Gacaca jurisdictions were charged with hearing cases of crimes of genocide and other crimes against humanity committed between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994. The main objectives of the system were: (a) the reconstruction of what happened during the genocide; (b) the speeding up of the legal proceedings by using as many courts as possible; and (c) the reconciliation of all Rwandans, and building their unity. The gacaca system invites the participation of ordinary people assisted by lawyers, but remains a permanent court that follows the rules set out in the law, which deals with the crimes of genocide. The court hears the cases of those accused of the lower (second and third) categories of genocide; i.e. not those of the planners and ring leaders (Bloomfield, et al., 2003; MINIJUST, 2008).

Ingando (solidarity camps)

*Ingando*²⁵ is taken from the Rwandese verb *Kugandika*, which refers to halting normal activities, in order to reflect on, and find solutions to, national challenges. Ingandos are traditional approaches developed by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission as a tool to build coexistence within communities. Ingando are aimed at enabling Rwandans to come to terms with the past by facing history, forging a common vision for a united future, and creating a forum for trust building and critical analysis of national challenges with a view to searching for solutions to address them. At the beginning, the first beneficiaries were ex-combatants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The programme later expanded to include school youth and students at secondary and tertiary levels. By 2002, the training was extended to informal traders, and other social groups including survivors, prisoners, community leaders, women and youth. Today, ingandos are carried out countrywide, and touch numerous categories of Rwandans: pre-University students, University lecturers, sex workers, provisionally released prisoners, youth, women, community leaders and other public service workers. Ingandos entail residential camps, bringing together between 300 and 400 people per programme, for between 3 weeks to 2 months, depending on the time available and the focus of the sessions. Topics are covered under five central themes: analysis of Rwanda’s problems; history of Rwanda; political and socioeconomic issues in Rwanda and Africa; rights, obligations and duties; and leadership. A National Ingando Centre has been built in Nkumba, Northern Province, as a permanent facility house for the programmes (NURC, 2007).

²⁵ In ancient Rwanda, ingandos were first developed by the military. With the advent of colonialism, it was a well entrenched practice. As Rwanda sank deeper into postcolonial conflict the institution of Ingando lost its relevance and was no longer practised. Moreover, the royal institutions, which had held Rwanda together for centuries were abolished. Faced with disasters (wars, natural calamities etc), the Mwami (King) mobilized and prepared the population through Ingandos.

Abunzi (Mediators /conciliators)

Abunzi is a word stemming from the *kinyarwanda* word ‘*Kwunga*’—to reconcile or to restore. These are elected officials at community level who manage minor social conflicts, and reconcile people, thereby reduce tensions in the community. Therefore, *abunzi* are community reconcilers, elected by the population on the basis of their integrity. This process reinforces unity and aids reconciliation (NURC, 2007).

Itorero

Itorero (which does not yet have an appropriate translation in English) is an informal education system aimed at national civic education. It is a platform that aims to provide a forum for Rwandans in various social groups to discuss national unity, reconciliation and other social and development issues affecting the country. The process generally culminates in some convivial activities, notably entertainment, whereby people perform cultural dances known as *ibitaramo*(community evening parties where songs and dance are performed).

Ubusabane (convivial party)

Ubusabane is a Rwandan traditional event where people organize a ‘get together festival’ (party in which people share food and drinks, and dance) with the aim of fostering unity and reconciliation, and promoting friendship and partnership among communities. *Ubusabane* can also be used as an opportunity to celebrate a successful achievement. From ‘*convivere*’ (*com*: ‘together’ plus *vivere*: ‘to live’), the concept of ‘conviviality’ literally means *to carouse together*.

2.3. Conclusion to the theoretical framework

This chapter aimed to discuss the study’s theoretical framework, to which exploratory findings will be connected. The framework combined intergroup contact theory with other theoretical perspectives on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. Since this study is particularly focused on the relational outcomes of post-genocide conflicting parties’ membership (implying contact) of the same cooperative organization, intergroup contact theory was opted for as the core aspect of the theoretical framework. However, intergroup contact theory was found not to be comprehensive enough to be the sole analytical tool to be applied to interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. Therefore, other theories on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding, suggesting other factors affecting this process, have been added to it.

Before a summary of these factors is made, it is relevant to first discuss the use of intergroup contact theory in this study, since it is at the core of the study’s framework. Despite many challenges found in using intergroup contact theory as an explanation of outcomes when conflicting parties meet and interact, the usefulness of the theory (intergroup contact) in relation to the restoration interpersonal relationships remains highly relevant. Although generalizations about the effects of contact are said to be hampered by “inconsistencies in conceptualizations” (Forbes, 1997:7), most writers agree with, and even stress, the point that contact per se cannot be considered an unqualified tool or a general

panacea for changing prejudice or promoting better intergroup relations: only in specific situations or under special conditions will intergroup contact achieve this end (Kenworthy, 2008; Amir, 1976 in Forbes, 1997:23). One of the major contentions is that contact effects depend upon the situation in which contact occurs, as well as on other factors present in the situations in question. Academic research can thus be summed up as follows: *contact, under favourable conditions, between individuals belonging to antagonistic social groups tends to undermine negative and hostile interpersonal attitudes and behaviours toward each other while fostering positive and friendlier ones* (Allport, 1954; Jackson, 1993; Forbes, 1997).

However, as discussed in this chapter, there remains lack of consensus on whether the conditions outlined by Allport and others, for contact to produce positive relationships, should be regarded as essential, or whether they rather act as facilitating conditions that enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge. Since the main purpose of this study does not depend upon engagement in this discussion, these conditions can simply be considered as an interrelated and infinite bundle of features rather than as absolute independent variables. What the study thus considers as most important is what is experienced in the contact situation. Therefore, by applying intergroup contact theory—as the leading theory—to the case of cooperative organizations, the study’s essential desire is neither to rigidly test the validity of the contact hypothesis nor to use the theory as a tool for data collection. Instead, the study’s purpose is to use contact theory as a guide for the discussions and interpretations of exploratory findings on ways in which contact, in the cooperative, between conflicting parties, impacts on the parties’ relationships. The box below summarizes the factors affecting the interpersonal relationships peacebuilding, which constitutes this study’s theoretical framework.

Box 2.1. Factors affecting interpersonal relationships peacebuilding

Factors affecting interpersonal relationships peacebuilding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflicting parties’ personal contact - Common goal - Cooperative interdependence - Equality among parties in contact - Institutional support - Friendship potential - Truth-telling/knowing - Acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness - Communication - Justice - Education - Socio-economic development - Culture, rituals and symbols
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It is worth re-emphasizing that this study is exploratory in the sense of considering the relationship between the theoretical framework and data collection as less prescriptive. Although the theoretical framework appears to be extremely systematic, the process of data collection remains exploratory and is based on the study’s research questions instead of the theoretical framework. The purpose is to depart from respondents’ perspectives and experiences and provide an analysis from that. The framework is thus used only in the discussion or interpretation of exploratory findings. Chapter three provides the general context of cooperatives, with a particular emphasis on Rwanda.

The context of cooperative organizations

An exploration of the role of a cooperative organization in relational peacebuilding first necessitates an understanding of the general context of cooperatives as institutions. In this regard, this chapter begins with a general historical perspective of cooperatives. In addition, the chapter discusses the ways in which a cooperative organization is understood, as well as the cooperative method, implying a number of values and principles. Furthermore, the chapter problematizes cooperatives in general, with a particular focus on the developing world. From this, the chapter provides a critical perspective of cooperatives with regard to their role in a society's development, and in both the crisis and peacebuilding. The chapter ends with the context of cooperatives for the particular case of Rwanda.

3.1. What is cooperation?

Before embarking upon the context of cooperative organizations, it is relevant to provide a clarification distinguishing 'cooperation', commonly employed as 'collaboration' in the broad sense of the term, from 'cooperation', employed in the cooperative organization.

In fact, the spirit of cooperation is considered as being as old as humankind, and in perfect accord with the nature of human beings. This is so, given that throughout human history, some activities have always been undertaken by groups rather than individuals, simply because this was a better and more economical way of doing things. (Calderon and Gonzalez, 2004:74; Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:xi). Early people had to learn to work together to meet their common needs, or perish. For example, the pilgrims who settled at Plymouth (Massachusetts), jointly cleared fields abandoned by the indigenous people (Native Americans), broke up the soil, and planted and cared for their corn. After the harvest, celebrated with the indigenous people in 1621 with a Thanksgiving feast, the corn was shared equally among the settlers (Frederick, 1997:2). Human beings realised by experience that their needs could be obtained more easily by working with others, in what is called 'cooperation' (Fajardo and Abella, 1999:1). In many parts of the world, traditional forms of cooperation have existed for many centuries and, in many cases, continue to the present time. These traditional cooperative practices are often deeply rooted in local culture. Typical examples include: systems of work sharing (e.g. at harvest times), irrigation/water sharing arrangements, rotating savings and loan clubs (each member pays into a fund regularly and each member takes it in turn to take a lump sum advance), burial societies, and so on. Quite often traditional forms of cooperation are informal arrangements not covered by any specific legal framework, which depend upon the existence of cultural practice and peer pressure to sustain the cooperative way of working (Parnell, 2001:8).

Despite these general considerations, cooperation in the cooperative as a form of organization should not be confused with cooperation which is the general ideal of the society (Williams, 2007). While the ‘cooperative’ is a form of enterprise or organization, ‘cooperation’, in the broad sense of the term, is a societal approach for all to embrace. The cooperative organization requires cooperation, but the activities of cooperation, broadly speaking, carry far beyond the legal framework of the cooperative organization itself (Béchar, 2006). Putting this in a simple way, cooperation as the ideal of society usually refers to what is simply termed as ‘collaboration’, while cooperation in the cooperative organization is rooted in a highly democratic, participatory, and group-directed process (Williams, 2007:1). Therefore, the concept of cooperation, in the cooperative organization, generally implies a method employed by a group of persons, small or large, with a commitment to join action, based on a number of values and principles in order to satisfy the need that is socially desirable and beneficial to all taking part (Laidlaw, 1974:32; Béchar, 2006).

3.2. The historical context of cooperatives

Although there is no definitive agreement as to the exact origin of the cooperative movement, some authors locate the roots of formal cooperation far back in history (Holmén, 1990:16). History shows that Babylonians practised cooperative farming and that the Chinese used savings and loans associations (Fratini, 2005). However, it is generally agreed that the origins lie within Europe (Shaffer, 1999; Holyoake, 1908).

3.2.1. Cooperative spirit during Ancient, Medieval times and the Industrial Revolution

Much of the literature on the cooperative movement seems to be unanimous that during ancient times, proof of human groupings, with economic aim, were discovered in caves, and valleys, and along rivers, lakes, and seas. History books inform that Babylonians observed some form of cooperative farming (tenant system of agriculture) and that religious practices in China encouraged the poor to practise a form of cooperative credit parallel to the present day credit unions. It is also held that the spirit of cooperation developed more formally during medieval times, with guilds representing the first great conscious efforts for the establishment of formal organizations to promote the welfare of selected groups in society (Fajardo and Abella, 1999; Birchall, 1997; Garcia and Guanzon, 2004; Holmén, 1990; Warbasse, 1950; Gibson, 2005; Fratini, 2005; Carlsson, 1992).

Nevertheless, it is commonly stated that cooperative forms of organizations, as we know them today, began as a reaction to the industrial revolution²⁶ that started in the 18th century notably in England (Fajardo and Abella, 1999:1; Birchall, 1997). In this regard, it is contended that the industrial revolution considerably changed the social and economic lives of the people, especially the working class. The introduction of machines in factories had caused redundancy for many people who had depended mainly on weaving for their livelihood. The traditional industries were rendered unprofitable by the more efficient factories, which utilized machines and better technology. As a result, there was a great labour mobility from the rural areas to the industrial centres. This influx of people in the

²⁶ Cooperatives were not initially formed as socialist enterprises, even though this later became the case when they were introduced in socialist countries.

urban communities created more social and economic problems. The government (in England) then, as a matter of economic policy, did not interfere actively in business affairs. It was a period of free competition and ‘survival of the fittest’, a condition that was most favourable to the capitalists. They became richer and more powerful, at the expense of the poor workers that were fully exploited. Poor workers had to work for long hours and yet they were given very low wages. For families to be able to survive, children and the elderly had to work and long without protection from the government and benefits from the capitalists (Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:3; Fajardo and Abella, 1999:3-4; Birchall, 1997). It is in this context that formal cooperation (and so the cooperative movement) emerged as a movement of emancipation and of spontaneous origin. Together with other popular movements of the time (such as emerging labour movements, liberalism and socialism), cooperation was a symptom of the turbulent process of societal transformation. It was largely a reaction against the expanding urban-capitalist society, which often brought hardship and poverty to the masses (Holmén, 1990:17). ‘Utopians’ such as Robert Owen, Saint Simon and Charles Fourier are cited among leaders of the revolutionary movement. Its originators, as far as it is known, were workers employed by the government in the dockyards of Woolrich and Chatham. In 1760 they organized a corn mill on a cooperative basis, as a move against the high prices that had been charged by the corn miller. Robert Owen²⁷ was one of the most remarkable men who emerged out of the Industrial Revolution.

Although it is generally contended that the cooperative movement began in Europe, this was not because of any inherent ability to cooperative among Europeans, but rather because the Europeans were the first to feel the effects of the industrial revolution; if there is an innate tendency to cooperate, it is found all around the world (Birchall, 1997:75). As a modern phenomena, cooperatives originated in England, in the mid-nineteenth century. It is generally traced back to a group of 28 workers in Rochdale, England, in 1844, called the ‘Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale Society’ (EPRS).²⁸ These pioneers were attributed to be the first to found the real and successful cooperative movement. With the goal of social improvement, these 28 unemployed community members saw the opportunity to pool their limited resources and attempt cooperation for the good of the group (Fratini, 2005; Holmén, 1990:18; Gibson, 2005:4).

3.2.2. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers

On a Sunday afternoon in 1843, in the town of Rochdale, England, a group of workers met together to discuss their problems, and how to improve their wretched lives. One member of the group, Charles Howarth, suggested that each of them would contribute two pence a week to a common fund and would use the money to start a small store of their own. A discussion in this regard continued and finally the 28 flannel weavers of Rochdale (27 men and 1 woman, all poor and uneducated) agreed to contribute two pence each, and they adopted

²⁷ Robert Owen (1771-1858), dubbed the father of cooperation, was a Welsh social reformer, even though he was a manufacturer. He started working as a shop-boy at the age of ten. For twenty years (1780-1800), he had acquired much experience in several business ventures before he became a part-time owner and manager of New Lanark cotton mills in Scotland, where the majority of workers were women. (Garcia and Guanzon, 2004, Fajardo and Abella 1999)

²⁸ At about the same time, in Germany, the ‘Raiffeisen’ cooperatives were established, and these also spread rapidly, especially in rural areas. It was this model of credit and savings cooperative that was later to inspire the ‘Credit Union’ movement.

guiding principles. This was a great sacrifice because they were very poor. It took them several weeks to accumulate 28 pounds. With this money, they put up their store in a small street called Toad Lane in Rochdale. They began selling basic commodities, like flour, oatmeal, sugar, butter and candles (Fratini, 2005; Carlsson, 1992; Fajardo and Abella, 1999; Birchall, 1997; Garcia and Guanzon, 2004; Holmén, 1990).

On a cold December day in 1844, just four days before Christmas, the shutters of their store came down for the first time. Before the end of 1845, their store was operating successfully, and dividends were paid to the members. The people in the community saw the 'Rochdale Pioneers' and their families wearing new clothes and shoes, which were not common to workers in Rochdale at that time. The success of the members of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers encouraged many people in the community to join the society. The principles and practices of the Rochdale Pioneers were adopted in many parts of Britain, then in continental Europe and Asia, and eventually throughout the world—cooperatives being involved in various activities, notably agriculture, consumption, fishing, banking and insurance and craft—with a central focus on the improvement of welfare, and the satisfaction of the growing needs of poor people (Birchall, 1997; Fajardo and Abella, 1999:5).

Even though cooperatives appeared in the previous century, Rochdale (1844) is seen as the first 'modern' cooperative, since it was where the cooperative principles were developed (Gibson, 2005:4). The Rochdale Society was a self-help association without revolutionary aspirations. It was no longer a vision of a new society that forced the members to found a cooperative, as during the days of Robert Owen and others (Holmén, 1990:17). The rules established by the Pioneers of Rochdale Society—including, among others, democratic control, limited interest on capital, and patronage refunds of profits to members based on usage—have remained the foundations for cooperatives, up to the present (Fratini, 2005). The early success and popularity of the Rochdale group led to an increasing number of cooperatives on the European continent (Williams, 2007:11).²⁹

3.2.3. Cooperatives in the Western, Socialist and Developing Worlds

Throughout the world, cooperatives came in different perspectives, with consequently different problems. In the developed world, notably in Western Europe, most understand that the cooperative movement arose as one of two major reactions to negative side effects of the industrial revolution. The other major movement was the rise of the labour movement. While the labour movement found its power in confrontation with management, the cooperative movement focused its energy and power in providing a more democratic alternative to increasingly hierarchical free market capitalism (Williams, 2007:2-3). As capitalism matured, cooperatives were forced to adjust to its compelling demands (Holmén, 1990:18-19). However, the two World Wars, the economic recession, and political repression impacted negatively on the cooperatives of the West (notably in Europe), in general, although some survived, with an opportunity to adopt new strategies and reach their highest point of development (Birchall, 1997:124-5).

In Socialist states, cooperatives were conceived quite differently; that is, originating from above (imposed by the state and thus controlled by the state), and were instruments for

²⁹ For details in this regard, see Williams, Richard C. (2007). *The Cooperative Movement: Globalization from Below*. Aldershot, Hampshire, Burlington: Ashgate.

imposing a socialist, collectivized and centralized mode of agricultural production upon the peasantry (Holmén, 1990:21). Consequently, cooperatives operated under the supervision of governments, which contributed to the failure of many cooperatives, as was the case in Russia (Williams, 1997:20).

In the developing world, and particularly in Africa, the cooperative experience did not arise as a reaction to the push and shove of economic concepts that originated in reaction to the industrial revolution. Rather, early cooperation, in the developing world, faced another experience, quite different from that of its 'modern' setting. Although it is generally said that that cooperation in the developing world was based on creativity and inventiveness, given that people were used to working together cooperatively³⁰(Williams, 2007:4), modern cooperative organizations were first introduced by the colonial powers (Holmén, 1990:22). In the developing world, cooperatives did not thus, as a rule, emerge as a spontaneous response to social conditions and economic needs as they did in Europe. The first formal cooperatives were usually created during the period of colonization, and were used as tools serving the colonizing countries' interests. After independence, national governments, often inspired by the socialist system, did not contribute to genuine democratic and autonomous cooperative development. The colonial governments and (after independence) the national governments and state authorities were, as a rule, those who took the initiative and acted as 'interfering organizers' of cooperatives (van Doore, 1982; Couture et al., 2002; Eschenburg, 1985, in Carlsson, 1992:37). In this regard, as Birchall (1997:131) emphasizes, there have been three distinct phases in the development of cooperatives in Africa: (1) a colonial phase, in which western European governments introduced cooperatives as a tool of economic development;³¹ (2) a populist-nationalist phase, in which African governments changed the ideology but kept to the same kind of development processes and cooperative structures; and (3) a structural adjustment phase, in which cooperatives have (to borrow a phrase from Rousseau), been *forced to be free*. A general contention in this regard is thus that the origin (early formal cooperation) of cooperatives in developing countries was, from the beginning and during the (usually) colonial past, linked to the state.

3.3. Understanding a cooperative

Despite the existence of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) since 1895—the highest international organization accepted as the final authority for defining cooperatives and their underlying principles—cooperatives have always been understood and promoted differently at various times, by various people, in different countries, and under different political systems (Laidlaw, 1978). The divergences in this regard are perhaps due to the fact that cooperatives in different parts of the world have diverted from the declared cooperative identity in various directions, while cooperative basic values and principles have been interpreted differently in different practical contexts. A general explanation in this regard is that cooperatives have been established in various political, economic and cultural contexts,

³⁰ It is generally contended that there was a long tradition of solidarity in the developing world, notably in Africa whereby, without adopting the cooperative model as it is known in western countries, many informal organizations developed in order to improve the socio-economic life of the population (Couture, et al., 2002).

³¹ The leading countries in the 1920s where laws regarding cooperatives were enacted, included Tanzania (1925), Zimbabwe, (1926), Tunisia, Ghana, Congo, Morocco, Kenya, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Egypt.

and have also to some extent collaborated, and identified themselves, with political parties and other movements. This has given different interpretations and priorities to cooperative basic values and consequently principles, which had different relevance from time to time and place to place (ICA, 1992). Interpretations and controversies around the concept of cooperative are well enunciated in four schools of thought (Holmén, 1990:25).

3.3.1. Cooperative schools of thought

Four schools of thought help in clarifying the different contexts in which cooperatives are understood:

The Cooperative Commonwealth School

The philosophy of the Cooperative Commonwealth School maintains that the cooperative movement should aim to embrace all fields and permeate all activities of life until it becomes an all-inclusive system. This was the stated objective of the Rochdale Pioneers and many early nineteenth century cooperators. The chief features of this school are that *it places no limits on the possibilities of cooperatives to expand and spread into all fields*. The school assumes the possibility of a totally cooperative social order. Thinkers subscribing to this school of cooperative thought include Robert Owen, James Peter Warbasse and George Keen. But today Cooperative Commonwealth thinking is generally regarded as highly idealistic, doctrinaire and utopian. It appears neither practical nor realistic in present-day society.

The School of Modified Capitalism

The philosophy of the School of Modified Capitalism is that cooperatives are essentially capitalism with a slightly different set of rules. Cooperatives serve mainly to restrain the capitalist system and curb its excesses. Cooperatives are also useful for situations that are not attractive to capitalist business, where profits are uncertain or marginal. Cooperatives should not eliminate profit-making but rather try to get everyone involved. The chief feature of this school is that *it views capitalism as the model and fundamentally legitimate form of business, and cooperatives as only a modification or special form of it*. Cooperatives subscribing to this school include a large section of the cooperatives in the United States of America, but also those in some parts of Canada (not widely supported outside North America, however), especially farm marketing and credit union cooperatives whereby cooperative leaders generally see themselves as partners with private business in opposing government intervention in economic affairs.

The Socialist School

The philosophy of the Socialist School is that cooperatives are essentially a socialist institution, oriented to left-wing ideology. One branch of this school sees cooperatives from a public and social, rather than a private and individual, viewpoint, while another sees them as junior partners of the State in a centrally planned socialist economy. This school stands in polarity to School of Modified Capitalism. The chief feature of the Socialist School is that *the State per se should be the commanding and final authority over all economic activity*;

cooperatives are an integral part of government planning and are subsidiary to state enterprise. The supporters of the Socialist School are numerous in some countries of Western Europe, and are dominant in the communist countries and many developing countries.

The Cooperative Sector School

The philosophy of the Cooperative Sector School is that cooperation is a distinct economic sector in its own right. Cooperatives are essentially different from both capitalism and public enterprise, although they have some features of one and some of the other, and thus may be considered a ‘middle way’ between the two. The ideal economy is one that has a good balance of public, cooperative and private sectors. The chief feature of this school is that it sees *cooperatives as co-existing with the other two sectors (public and capitalism) and all three complementing one another in building a strong economy and a good social order.* Supporters of this philosophy are numerous in Europe, especially the Scandinavian countries. This is also the case for many developing countries, notably in Africa, and in Rwanda in particular.

Considering the above cooperative schools of thought, the International Cooperative Alliance (1995), as well as many scholars, such as Fajardo and Abella, 1999; Warbasse, 1950; Mshiu, 1998; Gibson, 2005; Holmén, 1990; Laidlaw, 1974 and others, contend that the cooperative sector school has more realistic visions and offers the most reasonable theory to explain the place of the cooperative movement in modern society. This understanding considers the cooperative movement as an economic system alongside others (socialism or communism and capitalism). The point made in this regard is that in order to achieve their maximum strength and effectiveness, cooperatives of various kinds must regard themselves, and, as far as possible, act, as a distinct sector within the national economy of any country. As business organizations, cooperatives are partly private and partly public, but essentially different from both private enterprise and public enterprise. As discussed below, this is the context in which cooperatives are understood in Rwanda. They are a *middle way*, an economic system in their own right beside the other two major economic systems—capitalism and socialism (Fajardo and Abella, 1999; Warbasse, 1950).

Yet, in spite of ideological and theoretical divergences on the understanding of cooperatives, cooperative principles and values remain generally shared, despite an endless debate over them (Holmén, 1990:25). Moreover, despite these various definitions of what is a cooperative, there seems to be a universally employed view of a cooperative. This understanding is in accordance with the definition provided (in the Statement of Cooperative Identity) by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA, 1995)—as the representative of cooperative institutions worldwide—which revises and updates cooperative definition, philosophy and identity, based on the compromise of the country members. According to the ICA, a cooperative is:

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. (ICA, 1995)

This definition emphasizes two types of persons that can form or join a cooperative: natural persons as individuals, on the one hand, and moral or legal/juridical persons as entities, on

the other (Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:29). The above definition, which is recommended to apply to all cooperatives regardless of type, community or membership size, or geography (Gibson, 2005:5), stresses that cooperatives are independent of government and are not owned by anyone other than the members. In connection with the above definition, cooperatives are thus associations of persons, which implies individual people but also 'moral/legal persons' (organizations that may themselves have members). This means that federal bodies whose members are primary cooperatives can also become cooperatives, and that small businesses can also be members of their own cooperatives. Members are united voluntarily, and should be free to join or leave. Collective farms, or village or neighbourhood associations, that include all people in an area (whether or not they want to be members) are not genuine cooperatives. Cooperatives are designed to meet their own needs as defined by the members. This also means that organizations that are set up primarily to meet the needs of others are not cooperatives. Nor can cooperatives be diverted into meeting needs that have not been sanctioned by the members, without them ceasing to be cooperatives. Cooperatives are distinguished from shareholding firms by their democratic nature, among other things implying cooperative values and principles, with voting rights being assigned per person rather than proportionally by size of shareholding. Finally, they are enterprises, and not charities, NGOs, or branches of government (Birchall, 2004:6; ICA 1995, 2005).

What is also worth emphasizing, at this level, is that just as there are various ways of defining cooperatives, there are also many possible classifications that could be applied to cooperatives (Carlsson, 1992:41). Various forms of cooperatives tackle different kinds of problems. In general, the major categories of cooperatives are: producer, consumer, marketing, supply, services, workers, etc. What they have in common is that they serve their members and the community, aiming to improve the quality of life for their members (Williams, 2007:14).

Otherwise, generally, the above ICA's definition of a cooperative emphasizes the following characteristics:

- A cooperative is *autonomous*; that is, it is as independent of the government and private firms as possible.
- It is an *association of persons*; that is, cooperatives are free to define 'persons' in any legal way they choose—individual or legal persons.
- The persons are united *voluntarily*; that is, membership should not be compulsory, in the sense that members should be free to join or to leave (Prakash, 2003:4). The word 'voluntary' is derived from the Latin word *voluntas*, meaning *will* or *free will*. No person can be forced to form or join any cooperative. Persons should form or join a cooperative out of their own free will and volition. No matter how laudable the ends and purposes of a cooperative, the basis of membership should still be one's own free and unadulterated consent (Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:30).
- Members of a cooperative *meet their common economic, social and cultural needs*; that is, members must consciously pursue such common objects. The object in view should be honest, which means for example that a gang of swindlers cannot be called cooperators (Strickland 1934:4; Garcia and Guanzon, 2004:29-31).
- The cooperative is a '*jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise*'. Within the cooperative, control is distributed among members on a democratic basis. The dual characteristics of ownership and democratic control are particularly important in differentiating cooperatives from other kinds of organisation (Prakash,

2003:5). This means that the action of the institution should be conducted, so far as possible, by the efforts of the members themselves, whereas in a joint stock company control rests in the hands of directors; shareholders merely demanding a dividend but not necessarily buying from the company or selling to it (Strickland, 1934:4-5).

In short, it is generally stated that two limbs characterize cooperatives. First, cooperatives are institutions funded by and belonging entirely to the members. Second, they are created in order to render the best services at the lowest possible cost to their members (Galor, 2004). Structurally, it is generally contended that a cooperative is characterized by a double (dual) nature. Although the above-mentioned definition also emphasizes the cultural dimension, the common parlance is that a cooperative is both an *association* of persons (members) and an *enterprise* (a means by which the association satisfies the common need). In this understanding, it follows that the cooperative has both a social character and an economic character. The association of people requires a democratic structure (general meeting, board of directors, other boards and committees) in which members or their representatives can participate either directly or as delegates of groups of members. The enterprise structure may be simple or complex, depending on the scale and nature of the economic activities, but it will likely be similar, in some ways, to that of other private enterprises (Bridault, 1998:36).

However, despite the general, and common, parlance that cooperatives have both ‘social’ and ‘economic’ objectives—this being sometimes even used as a form of definition of what cooperatives *are* and what they are *for* (that they differ from other businesses because they have social goals)—this terminology can also be misleading. As Fairbairn (2003) contends, various distinctions of what is social and what is economic may offer an adequate working definition, but they provide an impoverished view of what cooperatives can actually accomplish. He argues that the idea that objectives are ‘social’ *or* ‘economic’ is a reductionist and simplistic idea. It provides little guidance to cooperatives in deciding *which* social or economic tasks to focus upon; and it suggests trade-offs and dispersals of energy when synergies may be called for. It is in this regard that Fairbairn holds that there is a more integrated and helpful way of thinking about strategic direction in cooperatives: to pursue an *integrated approach*, in which social goals are accomplished through economic activities, and in which the membership of the cooperative is the place where social and economic functions come together. Fairbairn thus proposes *to go beyond structure to relationships*. He argues that the key to a cooperative is the relationships that it cultivates and embodies. The most important of these may be the relationships between the cooperative and its members, as well as relationships *among* the members. Of course, as Fairbairn argues, any business depends on relationships with its customers, employees, investors, and so on. The difference in a cooperative is the closeness and multidimensionality of the relationships with members: they are customers as well as owners, part of the governance structure as well as the focus of operations. Therefore, according to Fairbairn, the relationship with members is what creates the cooperative difference: it is a source of distinctive possibilities. He states: “A cooperative is defined by, and draws strength from, its relationships... Seeing a cooperative as defined by relationships is different from seeing it as defined by structures.” In this regard, he holds that “a relationships-based view of cooperatives highlights the importance of issues of *trust* and of *agency*: how much and in what ways members trust the cooperative, and to what extent it is efficient in acting as an agent of their interests.” (Fairbairn, 2003:4-6)

Notwithstanding the above discussion, it is less controversial since Rochdale that cooperatives operate under basic and ethical values, as well as updatable principles, which constitute a basis for differentiating a cooperative organization from other forms of organization or enterprise.

3.3.2. Cooperative values and principles

One of the original purposes of the ICA has been to safeguard, periodically update, and interpret cooperative principles. It did this in 1937, again in 1966 and lately in 1995. In spite of the vast differences in national circumstances, industry practices, cultures and ideologies, cooperators were able to identify, and agree on, those characteristics that describe their unique form of human enterprise. These are the values and principles which give voice to the enduring soul of the cooperative movement, as recently provided in the 1995 statement of cooperative identity, from a worldwide consensus. The ICA sees these values and principles as “inherently practical principles, fashioned as much by generations of experience as by philosophical thought” (ICA, 1995). Whereas cooperative values were set once for all (remained unchanged), cooperative principles, which are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice, are subject to revision and thus change.

However, in the next developments, there are some observable inconsistencies or overlaps related to cooperative values and principles and the relationships between them. Clarifications and shortcomings, in this regard, thus need to be addressed even if their remedy is beyond the aim of this study.³² Firstly, the current revision of cooperative principles (1995) makes a distinction between basic values and ethical values, but does not attempt to rank them in order of importance or to link them directly with the principles. Secondly, cooperative values and principles overlap, which is potentially confusing (for example democracy, which is both a value and a principle). Thirdly, as will be found notably throughout the explanations of cooperative values, some values are ends in themselves while others are means to an end. While values are ideals usually seen as ends in themselves, it is clear that for example ‘caring for others’ or ‘honesty’ may sometimes be a means to another end. Fourthly, the descriptions below, of cooperative values and principles, are concerned with what is ideal rather than what is real, given that the reality about ways in which cooperatives operate or function might be very different from the ideal advocated.

Cooperative Values

Cooperatives values are the foundation upon which the design and wording of the cooperative principles rest, which in turn influences the way the cooperative’s daily business is run. The cooperative values are considered as the key to a well functioning cooperative. The cooperative way usually means working together under a special set of values, norms and rules, which remain basically unchangeable. In fact, cooperatives are based on six *basic* values and four *ethical* values. Basic cooperative values are general norms that cooperative members, cooperative leaders and staff should share, and which should determine their way of thinking and acting. These are *self-help*, *self-responsibility*, *democracy*, *equality*, *equity* and *solidarity*. Ethical values, contained in the belief of the tradition of the cooperative

³² Birchall (1997) also noted these shortcomings.

founders, comprise *honesty, openness, social responsibility* and *caring for others* (ICA, 1995; Hoyt, 1996; Carlsson, 1992; Pobihushchy, 1995; Hakelius, 1996).

1. *Self-help*³³

The concept of self-help, as it is generally applied to imply ‘self-reliance’, is described as “...any voluntary action by an individual or group of persons which aims at the satisfaction of individual or collective needs or aspirations.”(Verhagen, 1987:22) This value encourages individuals to satisfy their own needs and obligations through their own efforts to the extent reasonably possible under the circumstances. In a cooperative, people thus help each other whilst helping themselves by working together for mutual benefit. The point is that by combining efforts, people are able to achieve things they could not do as well on their own, and by successfully solving their problems, people develop confidence and faith in themselves.

2. *Self responsibility*

According to this value, which is similar to the previous one, each individual within the cooperative is responsible for her/his own well-being and should take responsibility for any consequences that flow from whatever she or he does in pursuit of personal need.

3. *Democracy*

Democracy is a philosophy/practice of governance in which the people are collectively the repository of authority. The exercise of that authority is democratically legitimate only if the people who will be affected by that exercise are consulted openly and freely. Of course, that means that the people/members have reasonable access to all the information relevant to the decisions respecting the exercise of the authority of which they are the repositories. Cooperative members have the right to participate in, to be informed, to be heard and to be involved in making decisions. Members are the source of all authority in the cooperative. The value of democracy, which also serves as a cooperative principle, goes back to a conception of human rights and the equal value of individuals. It reflects a belief in the ability of all individuals to participate in and be responsible for common undertakings to improve the conditions of life.

4. *Equality*

Equality as a value flows from the traditional wisdom that each person, irrespective of talent, skill, appearance, race, creed or political belief, possesses an intrinsic value and thus as a human is of no greater or lesser value than anyone else. This means that each person (cooperative member) is intrinsically valuable, without the attachment of inferiority or superiority. While certain skills and talents may be of greater importance to the well-being of a collective, be it a society, community or cooperative, each and every person, as a human

³³ It is worth noting that in developing countries, cooperatives are not the only form of self-help groups, although they are the most common and typical. Many other self-help organizations—not yet acknowledged legally (generally termed as ‘pre-cooperatives’, or simply as ‘associations’)—as is the case for cooperatives, also operate for joint economic activities (see also Alf Carlsson, 1992:18-20).

being within that collective, is of equal value; each cooperative member has equal rights. This value is particularly pertinent to decision-making and governance of the cooperative, requiring that each person in that cooperative has an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making and governance. This value is associated with the value of democracy.

5. Equity

This value has two distinct but related meanings. One meaning of this value is as an end. The other meaning is that of a means to that end. Equity as an end refers to fairness in the relationships between and among individuals, and the manner in which authority is exercised over persons. Equity as a means refers to the ownership of property or assets with which persons can protect themselves against exploitation by others, mainly corporate interests. In the cooperative, that ownership gives the owner/member the right to participate in the decisions of the cooperative which, along with the participation of all the other members/owners of the cooperative, assures each and all of them fairness in their relations with each other and the organization, that is, the cooperative. It is the equity which provides the owners with the right and opportunity to structure the decision-making and governance process that will ensure that fairness is an essential characteristic of the cooperative. Therefore, each cooperative member should be treated fairly and justly.

6. Solidarity

Solidarity as a value refers to the respect and dignity with which the individual persons of a community relate to one another. It is a relationship that grows out of each person seeing the other as valuable as the self. Solidarity also encompasses the concept of interdependency that is so critical to the health and vitality of the cooperative. Therefore, cooperative members must support each other.

7. Honesty

This value has the quality of both end and means. Honesty is a good in itself and is also a means to other goods. Honesty is an important prerequisite to continuing good relations among persons and within collectives such as cooperatives. Honesty is both a quality of, and a means to, human fulfilment. Truth is a critically important component of rewarding community and collective life. Thus, members are encouraged to be honest.

8. Openness

This value refers to the structured and reasonable availability to the membership of information and knowledge relevant to the successful life of the cooperative. The value presupposes that the governance of the cooperative is a democracy; hence the membership is the repository of the authority exercised in that governance.

9. Social responsibility

This value is most relevant to the public image that the cooperative enjoys or suffers in the community it serves, and beyond. On the one hand, it refers to the cooperative accepting

responsibility for, and ameliorating the negative consequences for society stemming from, its actions and operations. On the other hand, social responsibility refers to the cooperative's acceptance of the responsibility to work towards the betterment of society and towards the amelioration of oppressive conditions in that society. The outcome of the cooperative activity must, furthermore, be conducive to the interests of the whole society and not serve as a means for small groups to secure profits for themselves.

10. Caring for others

This value refers to the obligation that each cooperative member, each cooperative and the cooperative movement as a whole, must act in such a way as not to cause harm or difficulty for others, either of today, tomorrow or the distant future. Additionally, this value imposes the obligation and requirement on every element of the cooperative movement to be proactive in leadership towards rectifying the structural and social causes of oppression and indignity. It flows out of the ancient, but nonetheless relevant, dictum: 'Do unto others that which you would have them do unto you.'

The above ten values have been compared to the 'raw material' of an applied cooperative values system, adjusted to the individual society, which has to be given a concrete meaning to be relevant in each individual case. The identity, role and functioning of cooperatives, and how they are perceived by the surrounding society, will depend upon the practical application of these values (Carlsson, 1992:45). To put these values into practice, a set of principles have been revised and adopted. Thus, in 1995, the Centennial Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance adopted a Statement on the Cooperative Identity, including a revised set of seven principles.

Cooperative principles

Cooperative principles were originally a loose mixture of aims and procedures of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers (1844). Aware of the causes of the failure of previous cooperatives, and given their desire to improve the prevailing social and economic order, the Rochdale Pioneers formulated rules and objectives to ensure the success of their cooperative society. Much more important, however, was their determination to alleviate the miserable conditions spawned by the oppressive capitalistic system (Fajardo and Abella (1999:13-15). Cooperative principles, as revised in 1995, are intended to articulate guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. These principles are: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community (ICA, 1995, 2005). These principles, referred to in the ICA's report (1995:10-11), have been reproduced by many writers, including Kate Philip, (2003), Pobihushchy (2002) and Hoyt (1996), Hakelius (1996), Williams (2007), Birchall (1997), Fajardo and Abella (1999), and many others.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

This principle emphasizes that cooperatives have to be voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. This principle implies

that individuals must not be coerced into cooperative membership. At the same time, while membership is open, the principle assumes that the member should be able to use the services provided and be willing to take on the responsibilities of membership. This language recognizes that some cooperatives may restrict membership based on ability to use the cooperative or on a limit to the number of members the cooperative can effectively serve. The important idea here is that cooperatives must not discriminate against potential members based on their inherent characteristics (social, racial, political, religious or gender).

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

According to this principle, cooperatives must be democratic organizations controlled by their members, who must actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. The democratic principle ensures for members the ultimate power to govern their cooperative. Men and women serving as elected representatives should be accountable to the membership. Building on the principle of open and voluntary membership, the principle of democratic member control defines the way in which members will make decisions. It emphasizes that members must participate in setting policy and giving broad direction to cooperative activities in a way in which no member has a greater voice than any other member.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

According to this principle, cooperative members have to control the capital of their cooperative equitably and democratically. They should receive limited, if any, compensation, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members have to allocate surpluses to any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by members.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

This principle emphasizes that cooperatives must be autonomous self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they must do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy. This is the principle of complete autonomy and independence.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Right from the days of the Rochdale Pioneers, education and training of members and employees is one of the most important activities of cooperatives everywhere. According to this principle, cooperatives have to provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. In this regard, the principle of education is set as a priority of the cooperative movement in the new Statement of Identity provided by the ICA. In this regard, the background paper on the principles emphasizes that cooperative education

is more than advertising a product or distributing information. It is critical to the effective and informed participation of members which lies at the core of the cooperative definition. “It means engaging the minds of members, elected leaders, managers and employees to comprehend fully the complexity and richness of cooperative thought and action.” (ICA, 1995, 2005) The rewritten principle also highlights the importance of educating the young and opinion leaders about the nature and benefits of cooperation. The point is that if cooperatives are to be part of the solution to many of the world’s problems, people must first be not only aware of the concept. In addition, the argument behind ICA’s emphasis on cooperative education is that “cooperatives are human centred and cooperation could in itself be seen as a process of education, and of development of people (Ibid).” The ICA also considers education to be an unconditional prerequisite for the efficient functioning of cooperatives. Therefore, for the ICA, members must have at least a basic knowledge and awareness of their society and cooperative methods and objectives in order to implement cooperative values.

6th Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives

This principle emphasizes that cooperatives should serve their communities effectively and strengthens the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for the Community

According to this principle, cooperatives ought to work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members. This is concerned with environment and sustainable living. Grounded in the values of social responsibility and caring for others, this new principle articulates the cooperative interest in making contributions to a better society at large.

The first six cooperative principles (which are essentially the original Rochdale Principles) indicate ways of improving human conditions, while the seventh extends the cooperative’s responsibility to the community. These seven cooperative principles are now strongly recommended to all cooperatives around the world by the ICA (Williams, 2007:12). Moreover, as Birchall and Ketilson emphasize, the first four of these are core principles without which a cooperative would lose its identity; they guarantee the conditions under which members own, control and benefit from the business. The education principle is a commitment to make membership effective, and so is a precondition for democratic control, while cooperation among cooperatives is really a business strategy without which cooperatives remain economically vulnerable. The last principle—concern for community—recognises that, unlike investors, cooperative members tend also to be members of a particular community. Often, one of the business aims for the cooperative is that it will meet the needs of this wider community. It is thus important to distinguish between the primary aims of the cooperative, which are to meet the members’ economic needs, and its aim to serve the community (society’s development). (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009:11)

Taken together, these cooperative principles, and the underlying values to which they give expression, should enable us to evaluate the performance of different types of cooperatives in the varied settings in which they operate, in different regions of the world

(Birchall, 1997). In this regard, as MacPherson, who drew up the latest set of principles, emphasizes, cooperative principles, taken together, are more than just the sum of their parts:

They are subtly linked; when one is ignored, all are diminished. Cooperatives should not be judged exclusively on the basis of any one principle; rather, they should be evaluated on how well they adhere to the principles as an entirety. (MacPherson, 1996:3)

For example, and in agreement with Birchall (1997), the principle of *voluntariness* is a precondition for democratic member control, because people who have not joined freely are unlikely to take as much interest in the organisation. The principle of *open membership* does not impinge directly on the other principles, but it can be seen as a precondition for fairness in the third principle, *member economic participation*, given that if entry to a cooperative is discriminatory, the sharing out of the benefits is not as equitable as it seems. The principle of *democracy* is also tied to member economic benefit, because without democratic decision-making the benefits may not be distributed equitably, and may not even go to members at all. The *economic benefits*, if allocated to reserves, enable the organisation to be independent, and they may be allocated via a social dividend to the community. The principle of *autonomy and independence* has an obvious tie in with voluntariness; there is no point in individual membership being voluntary if the organisation joined is not autonomous and independent. *Education and training* is both a principle and a precondition for the rest of the principles; its most basic purpose is to inform people that other principles exist. *Training* is needed for the exercise of democracy and the effective running of a cooperative so as to ensure its independence and member economic benefits. *Cooperation between cooperatives* ensures that they become strong enough to counter state interference, and strong enough economically to compete effectively in the market. This relates to the cooperative principle of sustaining economically the community in which it operates, which depends on its success in the rest of principles.

The above considerations lead to the critical discussions problematizing cooperatives, in general, with a particular focus on the developing world.

3.4. Problematizing cooperatives

From time to time comments are raised, particularly in the developing world, to the effect that ‘cooperatives are prone to failure’, despite the general consideration that cooperatives, as agents of societal change or transformation, are the most effective way of bringing economic development. While it is true that some have become effective, others have failed, costing members the equity they had invested. Others have not pursued effective strategies for the long-term benefit of their members. In still other cases, members have had unrealistic expectations concerning a cooperative’s ability to satisfy their needs (Anderson and Henehan, 2003:2).

In fact, in the *developed world*, notably in Western Europe, the early cooperative movement (1760) failed because of various causes. There were several internal shortcomings of the individual cooperative societies, such as inefficient business management and dishonest officials. Moreover, meetings between managers and members were neglected. Management was left entirely to a few individuals (Holmén, 1990; Gibson,

2005). Later, (in the 20th century), the two World Wars, the global economic recession of the 1930s, and political repression, impacted negatively on the cooperatives of the West (notably in Europe), in general, although some survived, with an opportunity to adopt new strategies and to reach their highest point of development (Birchall, 1997:124-5).

In *socialist* countries, as pointed out earlier, cooperatives have emerged and functioned under state control as instruments of the government, for imposing a socialist, collectivized and centralized mode of agricultural production upon the peasantry. As emphasized by Couture et al. (2002), the state-controlled period was characterized by government interference in cooperative affairs at all levels. Most of the time, member registration was compulsory, and the directors and staff were not appointed or elected by the members, but directly appointed by the state. In many countries, cooperatives were not particularly concerned about profitability, since they were subsidised by the government and received preferential treatment. In the same way, they were subjected to rigid state planning, which did not provide them with the possibility to develop their own entrepreneurial strategies. Their business affairs were often restricted to a small range of products and services, and state control extended to instructions and directives concerning, for example, the number of employees and their wages. Cooperatives of many socialist countries were in fact instruments of the state, and were used to help meet the needs of the nation rather than those of cooperative members.

The collapse of socialist regimes in the late 1980s and 1990s led to the decline of the cooperative movement, notably in many Central and East European countries. As they were used to being subjected to state control, many cooperatives were not prepared to face the challenges of the competitive market and to manage their social and economic development in an autonomous manner. The collapse of socialist regimes thus brought about drastic changes. Since membership was no longer compulsory, cooperative membership and, consequently, capital share income, dropped. Also, government subsidies disappeared or decreased significantly. These financial losses, in addition to the consequences of hyperinflation on input prices and the buying capacity of the population, led to huge financial problems. It was also difficult for many cooperatives to survive in the context of a 'shadow economy' and unfair competition. Inconsistent taxation policies and the weakness of the banking system were also obvious factors which hindered cooperative development. Also, cooperative directors and managers were often not well trained, and sometimes lacked the necessary minimal competencies to manage a cooperative in a liberalized market context. The training programmes that were offered by the state did not enable managers to face the new challenges of a competitive environment. Moreover, as a consequence of the state-controlled period, cooperatives systematically suffered from over-employment; the consequent disappearance of government subsidies forced many of them to dismiss employees, or perhaps worse—to act as a pension fund for retired workers. Genuine cooperative principles, having barely been applied, were not generally shared by the members or the population, and cooperative membership was usually passive. All of these problems eventually led to the dissolution and bankruptcy of many cooperatives (Carlsson, 1992). It should also be noted that the particularities of privatization often played an important role in setting the pace for cooperative development. In this regard, Russia offers a prime example. Russian cooperatives, which go back to the late 1800s, operated under the supervision of the strong authoritarian oversight government of Stalin. The *Kolkhoz* (short for collective farm), which dominated within the Soviet cooperative system over many decades, were in character top-down production cooperatives which had come about through

forced collectivization. The negative reaction of politicians, treating cooperatives as remnants of communism, also began to undermine their success, and even led them to be associated with the Mafia (Williams, 2007:20). Kolkhozes have been always poorly run and known for remarkably low labour productivity (Trembl, 1997).

In the *developing world*, as in the socialist countries, the origin of cooperative institutions was linked to the state. Cooperatives did not, as a rule, emerge as a spontaneous response to social conditions and economic needs as they did in Europe. The colonial governments and (after independence) the national governments and state authorities were, as a rule, those who took the initiative and acted as ‘interfering organizers’ of cooperative (Carlsson, 1992:37). This is perhaps the reason why the term *cooperative* has often had a bad reputation in many developing countries, especially in those countries where in the past cooperatives were controlled by the state (Ethiopia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Sudan, Tanzania, Vietnam, for example), and where membership was compulsory. Cooperative members considered a cooperative as a ‘state business’ and often ignored their own rights because they had never had the possibility to exercise them. Far from considering that they benefited from their membership, cooperative members considered that they were exploited and had no ownership feeling (MINICOM, 2006:9).

This is perhaps the reason why much literature on cooperatives in the developing world, and in Africa particularly, reports on ‘cooperative failures’, which raises some doubts about the efficiency of cooperative objectives and methods and their successful application in the developing world. In this regard, it is noted that both external and internal factors decide the degree of success or failure of cooperatives organizations, whereby the state has a significant role to play (Carlson, 1992:5). As Galor emphasizes, while focusing on the context of Africa, some pretend that the reason for failure of cooperatives is the lack of financial resources needed for their functioning. Yet the question is why the cooperatives suffered from this deficiency; that is, why they do not have enough financial resources. By recalling that cooperatives stands over ‘two legs’ in order to be solid and sustained (the *equal ownership of members of their cooperative*, and *the cooperative’s mission to render to members the best possible service at the lowest possible cost*), Galor holds that in the developing world, notably in Africa, cooperatives have not stood on these two legs, which is the reason behind their failure. With regard particularly to the first leg, implying that the cooperative belongs to its members entirely, equally, and according to members’ own equal shares, Galor contends that, in most cooperatives in the developing world, notably in Africa, this notion does not exist, and the cooperatives, practically, belong to members on an indivisible basis—namely, they belong to everyone commonly, and belong in fact to no one. In Galor’s view, this is one of the major reasons for the decline of so many cooperatives in so many places (Galor, 2004). Anderson and Henehan (2003) argue that the reasons behind the poor performance of cooperatives, which give them a bad reputation, refer to conflicting goals (management may pursue goals, with the approval of the board, that are not in the best interests of members), poor management (managers with insufficient vision and ability to implement action plans, the board not giving management sufficient control of operations, interfering with the implementation of cooperative strategies, or just plan meddling in operations), poor implementation of cooperative principles, and lack of market alternatives (in the case of production cooperatives, whereby members are left with fewer alternatives through which to market their products or purchase their supplies and services. People like to have alternatives, and as their alternatives reduce, people can feel constrained and frustrated). *The Business Failure Record* (2005) points to economic factors (high interest

rates, inadequate sales, insufficient profits, being uncompetitive), finance causes (heavy operating expenses, insufficient capital), experience causes (lack of business knowledge and lack managerial experience), neglect (lack of commitment, business conflicts, family problems), disaster, and fraud.

Nevertheless, since the history of cooperatives in the developing world is linked to the state (notably the state's interference), it follows that the reasons behind the failure of cooperatives in the developing world point mainly to the state-cooperative relationship³⁴ (Laidlaw, 1980:41; Carlsson, 1992:27). The reason behind the particular connection between the state and cooperatives is that both the state and the prevailing system can directly and indirectly influence the environment of cooperatives, making it either favourable or unfavourable to their growth and development. In this regard, it is generally held that although state support is required to develop cooperatives, notably in the developing world, it is generally observed that cooperatives that are state-sponsored and continually supervised generally do not function primarily as voluntary self-help institutions, but rather as instruments of the state to implement its policies. These cooperatives are sometimes labelled as state-sponsored or 'pseudo-cooperatives', due to interference from the authorities. The relationship between the state and cooperatives in the developing world has, thus, often been described as "...self-contradictory, both encouraging and irritating, essential and controversial, promising and obsessing" (Carlson, 1992:6).

In the developing world, both the state and the cooperatives exist in a cultural and socio-economic context within which they have different roles and obligations. Therefore, they also have separate and partly conflicting expectations (as well as perspectives) on the relationship, as regards its character and purpose, and concerning their respective roles. In many developing countries, cooperatives are imposed by the government. These are typically called 'top down' cooperatives, as opposed to 'bottom up' cooperatives, in which grass-roots members take the initiative to organize a cooperative. The state structure, being superior to the cooperative structure, sets the rules and limits of the application of cooperative objectives and methods. The state, however, usually sees cooperatives as instruments with which to control agricultural production and to plan and implement its policies, e.g., to promote rural development and land reform. The basic contradiction in this context is that the state 'wants' or 'expects' cooperatives to 'do' certain things and to do what is required within a certain time limit, during a planning period. A conflict of interest therefore arises between the state and the members of cooperatives who have their own expectations of the cooperative organization. Yet, as Odede and Varhagen contend, when cooperative methods and organizations are used by national policymakers as the major instruments for rural development, "there is little likelihood" for cooperatives to develop in a speed and direction commensurate with the aspiration of national leaders (Odede and Varhagen, 1978, in Carlsson, 1992:21). In a majority of Third World countries, cooperative organizations operate under condition of strict control by state authorities, and are heavily dependent for their continued existence on outside financial and managerial support from the state. A clear policy for the promotion of cooperatives seldom exists, and no time schedule for the 'phasing out' of the state is ever provided (Carlsson, 1992:25). The tendency rather indicates an increase of the influence, supervision and control (even

³⁴ In this regard, it is maintained that, as Carlsson understands, the 'state' is encompassing government at both central and local levels—the state apparatus that embodies its economic and political power. The state exists within a given political and economic system, out of which it has also grown (see Carlsson, 1992:5).

interference) of the state. The effect is an augmented dependence of the cooperative in developing countries, a process that, furthermore, appears to be irreversible. Two implications of the tendencies of increased state involvement are usually emphasized, namely that: (a) cooperatives cannot be developed *solely* by law and government support; and (b) government support seems to have, as a consequence, a perversion of cooperatives (Bager, 1986).

In Africa, particularly, the consequences of state control on cooperative development are largely the same as those mentioned above with regard to socialist countries. In many countries, the African governments controlled all levels of cooperative activities, from the appointment of directors and managers to business activities. Again, there was often a relationship between generous cooperative credit schemes and the rhythm of political elections. However, the withdrawal of the state from cooperative affairs and the quick arrival of the competitive market economy also caused problems for cooperatives. As was the case in former socialist countries, many African cooperatives, deprived of government subsidies to which they had become addicted and of a part of the income coming from membership fees, encountered major financial problems. Moreover, generally speaking, people in Africa had little confidence in cooperatives, as genuine cooperatives had barely existed in their region (Couture et al., 2002:3).

Yet, state support is needed to ensure cooperative growth and development. But as put by Carlsson (1992:25), the role of the state (through cooperative legislation and policy) in cooperative development should be to provide an enabling context that facilitates the deployment of the people's capacity to bring about the desired change. This is why the ICA, literally from the beginning of its existence, has been preoccupied with problems connected to the state-cooperative around the topic: "The duty of the state toward cooperation: should it subsidize or not?" (Watkins, 1970:69; Carlsson, 1992:27) It was proposed that public authorities should treat cooperatives favourably and that state intervention: "...should be moderate and temporary and should scrupulously respect the self-government of Co-operatives institutions" (ibid). It was thus predicted that the interaction between cooperatives and the state would increase and intensify, with collaborative arrangements in enterprise and public service supplementing each other, and "...with government filling the functions that only government can perform, and cooperatives doing what cooperatives are best able to do" (Laidlaw, 1980:41; Carlsson, 1992:27). In this regard, it is emphasized that the functions and responsibilities of cooperatives could not expect 'absolute freedom', as the state must be responsible for the fiscal management of the national economy. Below that level of control, however, cooperatives should be autonomous and governments should learn that they cannot do everything, but rather have to encourage citizens to take on responsibility for various economic functions. Similarly, the ILO (1966:paragraph 4), in its recommendation on cooperative development, concludes that the role of the government should be to "...formulate and carry out a policy under which cooperatives receive aid and encouragement, of an economic, financial, technical, legislative or other character, without effect on their independence" (cited in Carlsson, 1992:27). Therefore, it is generally contended that what cooperatives in Third World countries have a right to expect is for the state to create the necessary conditions for the reproduction of cooperative organizations and to enable the cooperatives to serve the interests of their members. More generally expressed, it is a matter of 'help to self-help' which is required (Carlsson, 1992:20).

The above discussions lead to other critical discussions related to the place of cooperatives in a society's change and development, notably in the developing world.

1.5. Cooperatives in a society's change and development: a critical perspective

Do cooperatives play a role in society's development as agents of change? This is the overall question to which this subsection is aimed at answering, by taking a critical perspective. The main message, in this regard, is that despite the general argument that cooperatives have changed the lives of millions around the world, there is also a common myth or contention that cooperatives are more likely to fail than standard corporations (Williams, 2007:9).

In fact, the role of cooperatives in a society's development has always focused on their role in socio-economic development as an agent of change, particularly in developing countries. Expectations about the roles and potentials of cooperatives as development instruments (notably as a means to solve the problems of agriculture and food-supply) have been both varied and far-reaching, to say the least (Holmén, 1990:30). In this regard, the general contention is that cooperatives proved to be the most effective way of bringing economic development in rural areas—cooperatives being better placed to find and provide solutions more effectively than outsiders. In the developing world, particularly, one of the most widely implemented efforts to speed up development has been to organize people in rural cooperatives (Holmén, 1990:5). For Galor (2000), the cooperative is probably one of the only means by which poor individuals can escape their poverty. As emphasized above, rural cooperatives in developing countries have not only been expected to fulfil economic objectives; they have also been assigned social objectives. In this regard, among the ideas associated with the cooperative movement has been the aim that class distinctions among members should be eliminated or at least greatly reduced, and that the cooperative should promote egalitarianism with regard to the means of production, and with regard to income and benefits (UNRISD, 1975:6, in Holmén, 1990:33). Equality, or the promotion of egalitarianism, is one of the values guiding cooperatives.

There has thus always been a belief that cooperatives intervene in areas and sectors where the government and the private sector, as well as the rest of civil society components failed to intervene. Since they operate within the communities from which members are drawn, cooperatives are perceived as sensitive to social and economic conditions, and the problems of that society. It is also believed that cooperatives minimize the responsibility of the government in organizing and supporting rural development (especially in developing countries) in places where government resources are meagre, notably through self-organized projects, following their various sectors of activity. Cooperatives' main role, therefore, is that they help people in weak economic positions to gather resources and carry out social and economic activities under conditions where it would otherwise have been virtually impossible for individuals to attain any formal positive advancement (CFRC-Iwacu, 1998:3). Cooperatives are assumed to contribute to economic and social development by helping ensure the fullest possible participation in the development process of all population groups, including women, youth, disabled persons and the ageing. Cooperative objectives and methods emphasize growth and development from below, and with the explicit purpose of developing the people participating in the cooperative (Carlsson, 1992:3-5). For Galor (2000), an individual joins a cooperative when he realises that his lone efforts are insufficient to achieve his goal. At that point, he becomes ready to rise above his own individual concerns, to cooperate with others who have the same needs, and to establish a cooperative. For Galor, the goal of people who have reached this understanding is single and

exclusive: to get the best possible service at the best possible price from the cooperative they have established.

By following cooperative sectors of livelihood and their role in the society's development, it is contended that agricultural cooperatives, being based in rural communities—and thus being close to the pulse and feelings of the people, have the ability to organize and mobilize resources and people to help themselves within the rural community, while providing an essential support to the development objectives of both farmers themselves and national development policy. Consumer cooperatives, which could be either in urban or rural communities, also play a role in the distribution of goods at competitive prices, often in areas not properly served by other retailers of consumer goods. Saving and credit cooperatives contribute significantly to national development by mobilizing local savings and facilitating ordinary people—be they workers or farmers to access development credit in a way that commercial lending system would not make possible. Housing cooperatives ease the problem of social housing, especially in large metropolises, where scarcity of shelter often leads to the development of shanties and slums, with the consequent maladies, crimes, and other social problems (CFRC-Iwacu, 1998).

However, it is worth emphasizing that cooperatives are not always successful in their role towards a society's development; they also register failures. According to Galor (2000) the cooperative is, in most countries, viewed as an organisation whose time is past and whose outcome is failure and disappointment to those who put their faith in it. In this regard, Carlsson's reports on 'cooperative failure' in development and raises doubts about the efficiency of cooperative objectives and methods, and their successful application, above all, in developing countries. He also argues that both internal and external factors determine the degree of success or failure of cooperative organizations Carlsson (1992:5).

Despite the above discussed-general view about the role of cooperatives in a society's development, conflicting opinions exist as to the role that cooperatives play, or should play, in the larger (national) societal perspective. Therefore, the role of cooperatives in society can be perceived in the following different ways, each way being influenced by the general socio-economic and political environment in which the cooperatives exist, as put by Carlsson (1992:40). First, cooperatives can be regarded basically as one particular form of business undertaking, among others, formed to meet the material needs of the members as well as of other people who wish to use the services of the cooperative. Cooperatives are then usually seen as having a corrective and supplementary role in society in competition with other forms of business undertakings. Second, cooperatives can also be perceived as a coherent social movement, with the help of which people in collaboration and through cooperative business enterprises promote their interests and influence the society as a whole. Cooperative movements are then sometimes considered as constituting a special, independent cooperative sector of the society, which is accentuated if a cooperative movement exists as an apex-organization representing all cooperative members in connection with, for example, negotiations with the government. Third, cooperatives can be considered as an economic/social system, striving to replace the capitalist system with a cooperative economic system, which is focused on the needs of the people, generally wishing to substitute the competitive character of capitalist society with cooperative values of mutual support between the individuals, i.e., the universal view of cooperation. Fourth, in countries with a centrally planned and controlled ('command') economy, cooperatives are usually both internally and externally conceived of as constituting an integral part of the economic and political system. The two first categories are argued to be quite prevalent in

developing countries, while the third category is exceptional (but is occasionally heard of). The fourth has been prevalent in the social system but has decreased in relevance with the changing of socio-political patterns in the developing world during the 1980s in the wake of the dismantling of state socialism in Eastern and Central Europe. The fourth category has been common in the former socialist republics in Central and Eastern Europe (Carlsson, 1992:40).

The major critique of cooperatives in the developing world, notably in Africa, is concerned with the applicability of cooperative principles, which is the reported cause of their failure. In fact, a cooperative, in principle, stands on 'two legs', in order to be solid and successful. As discussed previously, these legs are: (a) the equal ownership of members of their cooperative; and (b) the cooperative rendering to its members the best possible service. Yet, as both Galor (2004) and Holmén (1990) respectively emphasized, it was found that cooperatives, notably in the developing world, do not always stand on these two legs, which is the main reason behind their failure. For example, considering the first leg, the notion of ownership does not exist, and the cooperatives, practically, belong to members on an indivisible basis—that is, belonging to everyone commonly and belonging in fact to no one. With regard to the second leg, there are many reasons behind cooperatives' failure to achieve their missions. However the major ones are associated with their creation from outside and their poor management. In fact, the failure of cooperatives, notably in developing countries, is attributed to their being imposed on people instead of developing spontaneously from people (albeit with external encouragement support from outside). In many cases, cooperatives are organized without an economic feasibility study that must determine their viability before they are granted registration. Cooperatives formed in this manner often lack proper planning and administrative and management systems that are vital for their success. The infrastructure and facilities in which cooperatives operate (roads, water, electricity, communication systems, etc.) constitute another important factor for the success or failure of a cooperative (*ibid*).

Another reason for cooperatives' failure is related to the policy and legal environment in which they operate. In fact, if there is no policy and legal framework—which helps to create a favourable environment for cooperatives development—cooperatives are doomed to failure. Although it is generally held that cooperatives should never be subject to political interference or government control, there should be a policy and legal environment that is supportive, and encourages cooperative development. Since, as indicated above, cooperatives have an important role to play in society's development there is nothing wrong at all in government supporting cooperative development (Carlsson, 1992). However, it is argued that this support should not be an excuse for compromising the autonomy and democratic nature of cooperatives. Political interference in the affairs of cooperatives stands as a major cause of cooperative failure.

In a short, there is substantial critique against cooperatives, notably in developing countries, as tools of development or as agents of change. The alleged interrelated shortcomings of cooperatives as instruments of change and development of a given society mainly point to the following main issues: the failure of cooperatives to bring structural change and to benefit the poor; the fact that cooperatives suffer bad management; and that they are often exhausted by political or government interference. It follows, therefore, that, for cooperatives to successfully play their role in society's development, a number of conditions—related to the above-mentioned alleged shortcomings—should be fulfilled. These conditions point to the necessity for cooperatives' autonomy, in a way that makes

their members the owners (in successful planning and democratic management), on the one hand, and that limits external or political interference to only the elaboration of a policy and legal conducive environment, on the other.

However, as Holmén (1990:47) emphasizes, the substantial critique directed against Third World cooperatives is partly justified, but much of it misses the point. He argues that the so-called ‘cooperative crisis’ is largely a “crisis of unrealistic expectations” (ibid). He rejects declarations that cooperatives can solve most, or even all, development problems, and that cooperatives should serve all peasants (and particularly the poor). His argument is that cooperatives are economic associations, but they have been given social and political objectives that they are not able to realise.

3.6. Cooperatives in crisis situations and peacebuilding

There is shortage of literature on the relationship between cooperative forms of organizations and crises, and consequently of cooperatives and peacebuilding. The lack of theorizing in this regard can perhaps be explained by the lack of empirical research—the main gap that this study aims to fill. The existing literature in this regard points to the work of Edgar Parnell, who reviews the role of cooperatives and other self-help organizations in responding to crisis³⁵ and reconstruction. Parnell puts a particular emphasis on the challenges related to employment resulting from four types of crisis: difficult social movements and political transition; armed conflicts; economic and financial downturns; and natural disasters. He argues that in times of crisis, people are often overcome by a sense of hopelessness and despair, when they feel totally dependent upon outside assistance and come to rely on outside interventions. It is in this context that Parnell holds that cooperatives can have an important role in terms of capacity building among those groups that are most likely to be severely affected by a crisis, and that in general, cooperatives have the capacity to considerably enhance the ability of the affected population and the indirect beneficiaries to cope with crisis and to prevent or reduce the impact of a crisis. He concludes that cooperatives and other self-help organizations: (1) can have an important role in terms of the capacity building among the affected population, which is essential for a lasting solution to the crisis; (2) facilitate local ownership and sustainability; and (3) contribute as a response to crisis by means of helping to create employment, alleviate poverty, promote social dialogue, implant democracy and address social protection and other socio-economic needs (Parnell, 2001).

Another valuable work is that of James Peter Warbasse, who, in his book entitled *Cooperative Peace* (1950), advocated that the cooperative method is a solution to the world’s problems—a tool for peace among nations. Warbasse devoted a chapter on ‘cooperation in times of war’, and argued that during the World War periods of 1914-18 and 1939-45, cooperatives have shown their peaceful proclivities. Warbasse advocated consumer cooperatives as a general approach to economic and political life, and saw in the cooperative movement a way to achieve greater democracy. He considered cooperation as a kind of

³⁵This study maintains Parnell’s understanding of a crisis as a situation which encompasses many different types of disasters and other events where the functioning of society is seriously disrupted, causing widespread human, material or environmental losses (Parnell Edgar. *The Role of Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations in Crisis Resolution and Socio-Economic Recovery*. Report prepared for: ILO, Cooperative Branch and IFP/Crisis—InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction, International Labour organization, Geneva, 2001:1)

commerce, which has the power to exclude from economic life causes of human hostilities, and as a non-political method which automatically takes the profits out of war and makes war much less profitable. Warbasse views cooperation as a way of harmonizing human interests; receiving help and sympathy from others by giving help and sympathy to others. It means working together in mutual aid, in contrast to isolation and antagonism (Warbasse, 1950). In addition to Parnell and Warbasse, recent contentions (2006) that are not yet proven however, assume that cooperatives can play a role in peacebuilding (Birchall, 2003; Soedjono, 2005; BCICS, 2006; ICA, 2006; Annan, 2006; ILO, 2006; IFAP, 2006). The general assumption focuses on the fact that after a crisis: (a) cooperatives have a key role in the recovery process (Birchall, 2003:25); (b) cooperatives' nature of working together fosters trust and helps develop social capital within communities (Annan, 2006); and (c) coupled with the provision of employment, cooperatives' principles and values encourage solidarity and tolerance (IFAP, 2006; ICA, 2006).

These considerations remain speculative, however. The potential for cooperatives to contribute towards peace and peacebuilding lacks empirical evidences. In this regard, much of the records of the ICA emphasize how the cooperative movement survived wars and related conflicts, rather than showing a remedying role that the movement played (although resolutions on peace were almost always discussed in various ICA congresses). This is shown in the widely publicized and documented book of Rita Rhodes, related to peace—*The International Cooperative Alliance during War and Peace* (1995)—where, for example, the author only emphasized how the cooperative movement survived the First and Second World Wars or the holocausts, instead of elaborating on the role that the movement played in ensuring peace during those periods. It follows that much of what is advocated on cooperatives' potential in peace/peacebuilding remains speculation.

On the other hand, the history on cooperatives also shows that they have been sources of conflicts and wars. In centrally planned command economies, the cooperative paradigm became the prototype for a complete confiscation of land and productive assets of peasants and for total subjugation of agricultural labour to state interests. In the Soviet Union the (top-down) cooperatives became known as 'agricultural *kolkhozes*, which were private producers' cooperatives, with people working on land granted to them without charge by the state. Organized by armed force on a large scale in the late 1920s and early 1930s, *kolkhozes* became the main form of agricultural organization under the full control of the Communist Party. The forced collectivization campaign resulted in the 1932-1933 famine, in which some five to six million rural residents perished. Under the collectivization scheme, peasants were forced to surrender, without compensation, their land, livestock, tools and implements upon joining the *kolkhoz* (Tremblay, 1997). The same can be said of the bottom-up communities in Israel, known as *Kibbutzim*,³⁶ which contributed to Israeli state-building, and to the marginalization of Palestinians, while fostering militarization, whereby indigenous militarization was combined with agricultural work in Israeli's frontier settlements (Sadeh, 1997).

³⁶ Set up under *kvutza* ('group' in Hebrew, renamed *kibbutz*, 'community' when membership grew) by a group of young Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, inspired by Zionist and socialist ideals, a *kibbutz* is "... a voluntary collective community, mainly agricultural, in which there is no private wealth and which is responsible for all the needs of its members and their families." (Encyclopedia Judaica, 1969). (See Fidler, Jon (2009).

With regard to the current world structural changes, notably the economic and financial crisis, the banking crisis and the resulting recession, some hold that cooperatives are now in one of the most critical moments of their evolution. It is in this regard that de Drimer (1997) questions whether cooperatives will be able to preserve their nature and their members' general interest in the face of structural changes, given that they are facing difficulties mostly derived from these new economic and financial conditions.

But Birchall and Ketilson hold that although the financial and ensuing economic crisis has had negative impacts on the majority of enterprises, cooperative enterprises around the world are showing resilience to the crisis. Their point is that financial cooperatives remain financially sound; consumer cooperatives are reporting increased turnover; worker cooperatives are seeing growth as people choose the cooperative form of enterprise to respond to new economic realities. The authors state that the cooperative model of enterprise is a sustainable form of enterprise that is not only able to withstand crisis, but to maintain the livelihoods of the communities in which they operate. They hold that financial cooperatives can help lessen the impact of the banking crisis as they continue to trade without the need for government bailouts, and demonstrating that a more risk-averse sector exists that is focused on the needs of customer-members. The authors also argue cooperatives can lessen the impact of the recession by the mere fact that they survive and continue to carry on business and that they can use member capital rather than bank borrowing to expand the business, while providing services to more risk-averse consumers. The authors also contend, more specifically, that worker cooperatives can concentrate on employment creation through labour cooperatives, employee buyouts and rescues; consumer cooperatives can concentrate on lowering the cost of food and other essentials; and producer cooperatives can concentrate on making members' businesses more productive. Nevertheless, they also emphasize that, of course, as with any other types of business, if a cooperative is being badly managed or has serious weaknesses in its business strategy, a recession will expose this out and it may fail. Furthermore, they hold that it is generally agreed that recession will hit developing countries hard (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009).

Considering the above discussions, and in connection with the literature discussed in the chapter 2, it follows that an exploration of whether a cooperative plays a role in post-conflict peacebuilding appears to be relevant. Since the study focuses on the particular context of post-genocide Rwanda, the context of cooperatives for this particular case will be discussed.

3.7. Cooperatives in the Rwandan context

This section aims to provide a general context of cooperatives in Rwanda. It is mainly concerned with their historical background, the ways in which cooperatives are understood in Rwanda, as well as their place in Rwanda's development.

3.7.1. The historical context of Rwandan cooperatives

In Rwanda, as in other developing countries, people have traditionally worked together towards a common economic end. Traditionally, Rwanda had its own self-help forms of people working together. Rwandans used to cooperate in several sectors, such as building, cultivation and hunting—activities commonly known as *Ubudehe*, *Umubyizi* and *Umuganda*. Although that was cooperation, it was not based on the cooperative principles as recognised today, because the end of the activity determined the end of cooperation, while the end of a specific activity does not determine the end of today's cooperatives (Kagame, 1971; MINICOM, 2006:2). However, cooperation, in the cooperatives as we know them today, is a recent invention in Rwanda, argued to be a false foundation, since they have been introduced by colonial authorities (MINICOM, 2006:3).

The first institutionalization of cooperatives in Rwanda took place with the enactment of Cooperative Ordinance—the first royal decree of 16th August 1949, under which cooperatives were given a life span of five years. The first cooperatives in Rwanda thus became established since 1953, starting with *Georwanda* (1953)—engaged in mining activities, under the government's control. The second royal decree of 24th June 1956 was enacted empowering cooperatives to be under the same umbrella. It was under the same law that the life span of cooperatives was extended from five to 50 years (CFRC-IWACU, 1990). Therefore, before the independence of Rwanda in 1962 there were only eight cooperatives, all centred on industrial or cash crop production (tea and coffee) for the sole benefit of the colonial government. These were, namely, *Georwanda*, *Somuki*, *Impala*, *Nkora*, *Abahizi*, *TRAFIPRO*, *Thé-Ntendezi*, and *Codar*, comprising in total 22475 members (MINICOM, 2006:1). These cooperatives operated under the 1949 and later royal decrees. It is also argued that all of these cooperatives have been 'parachuted' (meaning created from the top). Some of them were created by the reverends in the context of the benefit schemes (*Codar*, *TRAFIPRO*), others by OCIRU with a view to developing farming exports (*Impala*, *Nkora*, *Abahizi*), while others were created by the mining companies (*Somuki* and *Georwanda*). Only the '*Thé-Ntendezi*' cooperative was created by the European beneficiaries, but it has never really operated like a cooperative (Ntavyohanyuma and Yankunda, 1992:7-8).

During the colonial period, and slightly after the county's independence (1962), cooperatives were not so popular. The majority of them were the product of the state and donors, who developed a culture of dependency by conditioning external assistance to the formation of cooperatives. Thus members looked at a cooperative as a means of only getting financial assistance from donors rather than as a productive enterprise (MINICOM, 2006:3). It was late in 1966 (22 November) that the government of the time officially declared the law governing the cooperatives in Rwanda, with the real expansion of cooperatives by the creation of zones intended to be the poles of development—such as the peasantries. It is in this regard that the *Office du Bugesera-Mayaga* (OBM), which initiated coffee cooperatives, was created. It is also in the same period that tea cooperatives (*coop-thé*) have been created.

All these cooperatives were funded by the *fond Européen pour le Développement* (FED). In the same period (1960s), catholic missionaries created, in Kigali, cooperatives such as *MERA* and *Sokorwa* for the social rehabilitation of physically handicapped people, and in Butare the *Configi* cooperative in order to create jobs and enables people of the region earn incomes (MINICOM, 1998:3; CFRC-IWACU, 1990).

From 1970 to 1990, the cooperative movement (concerned with agriculture, industry, craft and trade) expanded considerably, with many cooperatives and pre-cooperative associations—mainly in the sector of agriculture, together with a new law, n°31/1988 of 12th October 1988, which was enacted in order to streamline activities of cooperatives. However this cooperative expansion was the fruit of the state's intervention, instead of people themselves. The state, notably, strengthened the *TRAFIPRO* and created the *Cecom* in 1975, the creation of *Banques Populaires* (Banks of People), Credit and Savings Cooperatives, and the cooperative *Kabizecya*, in Cyangugu prefecture, which, later, became *Sonafruits*. In the same way, cooperative unions and federations, in the example of *IMPUYABO* of Musambira, in Gitarama prefecture, were created. As reported by the MINAFASO (1999:12), from 1966 until 2008, cooperatives were backed under supervision of nine ministries³⁷ while a research and training institute on cooperative matters (CFRC-IWACU) was created in 1981.

Statistically, there were eight cooperatives from 1953 to 1960; 57 from 1962 to 1969; 279 from 1970 to 1978; and 553 from 1978 to 1990. In 1992, there existed 8,752 organizations with a cooperative character while the number of 'real' cooperatives (having a legal status) totalled 707 (MINAFASO, 1999:10 and MINICOM, 2006:15). This expansion of cooperatives, however, only lasted until 1994 (the period of war and genocide), when cooperative activities halted. The war and genocide have had adverse effects on the already faltering cooperatives, at the level of human, material and financial resources.

After the genocide, in 1996, out of the total of 8,752 organizations with a cooperative character, and 707 real cooperatives, before the 1994 genocide, only 4,757 organizations, and 260 real cooperatives managed to resume their activities. In 2006, the total number of cooperatives totalled 919, while organizations with a cooperative character totalled 12,015. The total of these cooperatives or organizations operating under cooperative principles was therefore 12,934. In detail, concerning the cooperatives legally recognized, 347 were legally registered with the Ministry in charge of supervising cooperatives—the MINICOM, while 572 were real cooperatives legally recognized by the districts in which they operate, although not yet registered in the ministry. With regard to other organizations with a cooperative character, 10,038 were pre-cooperative associations legally recognized by the districts in which they operated, while 1,977 were informal pre-cooperatives not yet legally recognized by the districts in which they operate (MINICOM, 2006:20). These statistics (for legally recognized cooperatives) are represented in the figure 3.7.1 below. The figure shows

³⁷ In 1966, cooperatives were backed by the *Ministère de la Famille et du Développement Communautaire* (MINIFADECO). In 1973, cooperatives came under the supervision of the *Ministère de la Santé et des Affaires Sociales* (MISSOC); the *Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Mouvement Coopératif* (MINASOCOOP), in 1975; the *Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Développement Communautaire* (MINSODECO), in 1981; the *Ministère de la jeunesse et du Mouvement Coopératif* (MIJEUCOOP), in 1984; the *Ministère de la Jeunesse et du Mouvement Associatif* (MUJEUMA), in 1988; the *Ministère du Commerce* (MINICOM), in 1997; the *Ministère des Affaires sociales* (MINAFASO); and since 2008, cooperatives are, once again, under the Ministry of commerce, industry, investment promotion, tourism and cooperatives (MINICOM).

how the genocide impacted on the life of cooperatives, with those that have been able to reopen their offices or to become established, two years after the genocide

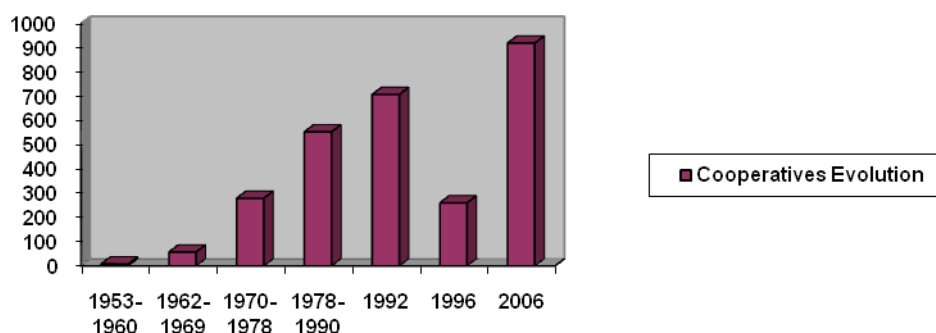


Figure 3.1 Evolution of cooperatives before and after the Rwandan genocide of 1994

An important point worth noting is that since the creation of the first cooperative in 1953 until the 1994 genocide and thereafter, there was no national policy on cooperatives in Rwanda. It is only very recently, since 2006, that a national policy for the promotion of cooperatives has been adopted. In addition, most new cooperatives and similar associations, created after the 1994 genocide, were the pure initiative of the people themselves. The government, notably at the local level, was not even aware of the existence of the majority of them (MINICOM, 2006:3). Although there is still lack of statistics on the real proportion of Rwandans who are members of cooperatives, the fact that the level of people's membership of cooperatives is still relatively low (MINICOM, 2006) should not be ignored.

3.7.2. Understanding cooperatives in the Rwandan context

Rwanda's cooperative movement embraces the cooperative sector school of thought, which considers cooperatives to be an economic system in its own right, and a distinct sector within the national economy of the country. The Rwandan cooperative policy agrees, and reproduces the above-mentioned 'universal' definition provided by the ICA (MINICOM 2007). However, the Rwandan law on cooperative provides its own definition. Article 2 of the law n°50/2007 of 18/09/2007, providing for the establishment, organization and functioning of cooperative organizations in Rwanda clarifies that:

The cooperatives are associations of natural or legal persons operating together in activities aiming at promoting their members in accordance with values of mutual responsibility and self-help, democracy, equity and equal rights to its assets...honesty, openness and common interests of members. (Republic of Rwanda-Official Gazette, 2007:21, art.2)

According to this law, cooperative organizations should respond to the needs of their members, who should be entitled to equal participation and share in the capital establishment in conformity with cooperative principles. In addition, the above-mentioned law's 4th article defines a cooperative as a body corporate with: (1) legal personality; (2) power to sue and be sued; (3) power to enter into contracts; (4) capacity to hold movable and immovable properties of every description; and (5) the ability to do all things necessary for

the purpose of and in accordance with its by laws. The above brings clarity to the ways in which the Rwandan law defines a cooperative, since the understanding of cooperative in the Rwandan context remains in harmony with the previous understanding of the cooperative as provided by the ICA; that is, the definition of a cooperative, as well as cooperative values and principles thus adopted in this regard. This study thus uses the term *cooperative* in a limited sense, referring to organizations that define themselves as cooperatives, which, in one way or another, follow the ICA principles.

3.7.3. Types of Rwandan cooperatives

Article 5 of the law n°50/2007 of 18/09/2007 providing for the establishment, organization and functioning of cooperative organizations in Rwanda, stipulates that while cooperative organizations may carry out activities in all sectors of economic and social life, there are four main types of cooperatives, notably: (1) production; (2) commerce and consumption; (3) services; and (4) multipurpose cooperatives. (Republic of Rwanda-Official Gazette, 2007:23). Of the 12,934 cooperative organizations operating in Rwanda in 2006, 68 percent operate in the domain of agriculture; 12.8 percent operate in credit and savings; 5 percent operate in craft; 4.4 percent operate in commerce; 4.2 percent operate in services; while other types of cooperatives or pre-cooperatives (such as fishing: 0.5 percent, and construction: 0.4 percent, and others, totalling 3.6 percent) are low-represented (MINICOM, 2006:6-7). The majority of cooperative organizations are found in agriculture, as Rwanda's economy is agrarian, in which subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity.

3.7.4. The Rwandan national policy on cooperatives

Although it is generally contended that cooperatives should never be subject to political interference or government control, a policy and legal environment that are supportive of the development of cooperatives is of paramount importance. This government support should not however be an excuse for compromising the autonomy and democratic nature of cooperatives. This is so since political interference in the affairs of cooperatives has often been considered as a major cause of cooperative failure.

Despite this, the failure of Rwandan cooperatives in the past is also attributed to the lack of policy framework in this regard, among other things. More than 50 years since the creation of the first Rwandan cooperative in 1953, no national policy on cooperatives had been made. As pointed out earlier, it was only very recently, in 2006, that a national policy for the promotion of cooperatives was adopted (MINICOM, 2006:3-4). The now existing national policy on cooperatives is a part of the concerted efforts of the Rwandan Government to provide an appropriate policy framework to, and legislative support for, cooperatives, with a view to revitalizing them. The policy highlights the importance of cooperatives, reviews their past and present, and scans through the constraints and opportunities they represent for national development. Further, the document lays out policy, strategies and an action plan aimed at ensuring that cooperatives become a viable tool for social-economic development in Rwanda (MINICOM, 2007:1).

The policy considers the cooperative sector in Rwanda as large and diverse. It consists of savings and credit cooperatives, banking cooperatives, agricultural cooperatives, small processing and marketing cooperatives, fishery cooperatives, and consumer, worker, handicraft and artisan cooperatives. The policy also considers cooperatives to be good

mechanisms for pooling the people's meagre resources, with a view to providing them with the advantages of economies of scale. Further cooperatives are considered to be a key organizational form of community development, and a tool for combating social exclusion and promoting peace and reconciliation, for example, through local development initiatives and mobilization of savings, among other initiatives.

MINICOM (2007) reports that the *mission* of the policy is to promote an autonomous and economically viable cooperative movement founded on cooperative values and principles, and is able to enhance social integration and uplift the standard of living of its members. As stipulated in the policy, the general *objective* of the National Policy is to facilitate all-round development of the cooperatives in the country in order to make a significant contribution to the national economy, particularly in areas that require people's participation and community efforts. Through this policy the government will create a National Cooperative Authority of Rwanda. Under this Authority, cooperatives should be adequately coordinated and receive necessary support, encouragement and guidance, so as to ensure that they work as autonomous, self-reliant and democratically managed institutions that are accountable to their members. This is critical, since a sizeable segment of the population in the country lives below the poverty line, and cooperatives offer the most viable and efficient mechanism to offer support to this section of the population

In order to achieve the above objectives the policy highlights a number of *strategies* that have been formulated on the basis of the identified objectives, in order to surmount constraints reflected in the current context of the Rwandan cooperative movement, among others: (a) facilitating a disengagement by the state; (b) updating the policy and legal framework; (c) exempting cooperatives from the taxation system; (d) ensuring cooperatives benefit from regional and international integration; (e) integrating research, cooperative information, education and training in schools and university programmes and curricula; (f) institutionalizing the cooperative concept; (g) encouraging national and international cooperation; and (h) encouraging active participation of marginalized groups.

3.7.5. Cooperatives and development in Rwanda

The role of cooperatives has acquired a new dimension in the changing scenario of globalization and the liberalization of Rwanda's economy. Internal and structural weaknesses of these institutions, combined with a lack of proper policy support, have neutralized their positive impact. There are wide regional imbalances in the development of cooperatives in the country. This has necessitated a clear-cut national policy on cooperatives, to enable sustained development and growth of healthy and self-reliant cooperatives for meeting the sectoral and regional aspirations of the people in consonance with the principles of cooperation. In this connection, it is also imperative to address the issues that need to be attended to, by evolving a suitable legislative and policy support for these institutions.

According to the new policy on cooperatives, the government stipulates that cooperatives contribute to the achievement of Vision 2020.³⁸ This notion is supported by the

³⁸Rwanda's Vision 2020, hoped to be achieved in a spirit of social cohesion and equity, is translated into an achievable programme based on the following pillars: (a) Reconstruction of the nation and its social capital anchored on good governance, underpinned by a capable state; (b) Transformation of agriculture into a productive, high value, market oriented sector, with forward linkages to other sectors; (c) Development of an efficient private sector spearheaded by competitiveness and entrepreneurship; (d) Comprehensive human

policies contained in the National Poverty Reduction Program, which emphasizes rural economic transformation, human resource development, development and promotion of the private sector, and poverty reduction. Despite the lack of literature on tangible achievements of cooperatives in Rwanda, the general contention in the recent reports of the MINICOM is that cooperatives are promoting the socio-economic well-being (income) of people—above all in rural areas. This results in rural economic transformation, considering the fact that cooperatives are found in various fields promoting the agriculture sector, savings and credit, handicrafts, fishing, consumption, housing, and so on. The cooperative sector's opportunities, for the country's development, are thus embedded in its above-mentioned diversity. Cooperatives are argued to be an ideal instrument combating poverty and social exclusion (MINICOM, 2007). In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, cooperatives are seen as part of the government's wider strategy for eradicating poverty in the country as well as serving as a tool for social integration and recovery (MINALOC and MINECOFIN, 2002:2).

Nevertheless, in Rwanda, cooperatives have also often suffered a bad reputation, and many have registered mixed results (ups and downs in their effectiveness), while others have failed completely. The well-known slogan, in this regard, was that *cooperatives benefit only their leaders or managers*. In the past, the failure of Rwanda's cooperatives was attributed to their false foundation by colonizers, and later by donors and government, which served the interests of others to the detriment of the interests of their members. Their failure was also due to their poor management and, above all, the interference of government representatives in their affairs. The recent report of the MINICOM attributes the failure of Rwandan cooperatives to internal and structural weaknesses of these cooperatives, combined with a lack of a policy framework (MINICOM, 2007:4). This has necessitated a clear-cut national policy on cooperatives (described above), and a new law to enable sustained development and growth of healthy and self-reliant cooperatives for meeting the aspirations of the people in consonance with the principles of cooperation. An exploration of the role of cooperatives in post-genocide relational peacebuilding thus falls within the scope of this context—a mixed or controversial conception of cooperatives.

3.8. Summary of the chapter

The cooperative institution has been considered for many years the most widespread form of organisation in the world, particularly in developing countries. It aims at, above all, serving its members, and has the method of achieving this objective (cooperation involving overlapping values and principles). An individual joins a cooperative when he or she realises that his or her lone efforts are insufficient to achieve his or her goals. At that point, he or she becomes ready to rise above his or her own individual concerns, to cooperate with others who have the same needs, thus establishing a cooperative. The goal is to get the best possible service at the best possible price from the cooperative they have established.

In reference to the understanding of cooperatives in the Rwandan context, this study uses the term *cooperative* in a limited sense, referring to organizations that define

resources development, encompassing education, health, and ICT skills aimed at public sector, private sector and civil society. To be integrated with demographic, health and gender issues; (e) Infrastructural development, entailing improved transport links, energy and water supplies and ICT networks; (f) Promotion of regional economic integration and cooperation (MINECOFIN, 2000:3-4).

themselves as cooperatives, and which follow the ICA principles. In this regard, the study embraces the cooperative school of thought. It follows that this study places cooperatives in a distinct sector within the national economy of any country. By acknowledging that whether or not the cooperative is a profit making organization remains a controversial issue in debates, the study maintains that a cooperative organization is comprised of individual persons, known to be individually weak in carrying out their activities (in reference to a weak position in an individual business/action relative to the position in the cooperative). The study considers a cooperative to be a 'middle way' (between the private and the public) organization formed by relatively weak persons, who own and run it, on basis of cooperative values and principles, in order to satisfy their common need. Therefore, a cooperative is not an entirely public organization, but serves the public. Likewise, a cooperative is not an entirely private organization in the sense of aiming at making profits; instead it is private in the sense of providing services by means of a private enterprise. Therefore, a cooperative exists when it is needed; that is when individual persons are in a weak position and who, in order to obtain strength, work cooperatively.

However, the literature on the history of cooperatives indicates that they have experienced success as well as failure. With regard to the latter dimension, the literature emphasizes that in the developed world, notably in Western Europe, the early cooperative movement (1760) failed because of several internal shortcomings of the individual cooperative societies, such as bad management and dishonest officials, coupled with a lack of democracy, as well as the macro context, notably the two World Wars, the 1930s economic recession, and political repression. In socialist countries, cooperatives were just instruments of the state, as a means for imposing socialist, collectivized and centralized mode of agricultural production upon the peasantry. In the developing world, cooperatives have failed due to their false foundation (introduced by colonizers), internal problems (mismanagement, poor leadership, etc.), as well as external problems (states' interference in cooperatives' affairs). It is within this context that the connection between cooperatives and relational peacebuilding is explored.

Impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the study's first research question, for the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. The chapter analyzes exploratory findings from the cooperative in question regarding its impact on the relationships of its members, who are constituted of conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. The chapter aims to explore the relational effect resulting from conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. As findings show, respondents seem to have generally reported a positive picture of the impact of their cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships. Yet, as also found, shortcomings or problems, in this regard, were reported.

It is worth emphasizing beforehand that the findings presented in this chapter are concerned with respondents' perceptions and experiences, given that the discussions and eventual interpretations in this regard are provided in a separate chapter (chapter 7). Before getting to the empirical data, a brief presentation of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, the respondents, as well as the field visit for data collection, is important, since the study's methodological part (chapter 1) was limited to general perspectives.

4.1. Presenting Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative

Founded in January 1999 by 192 coffee growers (farmers), Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is an agricultural coffee cooperative located in the Simbi sector of Huye district, in the southern province of Rwanda. Its members include genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators. At the time of investigation, its members totalled 2,326 of whom 62 percent were female. Abahuzamugambi was created with the aim of improving the socio-economic living conditions of, above all, its members. The carrying out of its activities is divided into four zones—Mugobore, Cyarumbo, Simbi and Maraba—covering the west-centre of Huye district; that is, six administrative sectors; namely, Simbi, Mbazi, Huye, Karama, Kigoma and Maraba. The cooperative's main focus is to buy fresh coffee of cooperative members, and process the coffee for internal and external commercialization. It is progressing economically and now has two washing stations and its own bank.

4.2. Respondents

Empirical data were collected from members of Abahuzamugambi coffee, as well as non-members. Cooperative members were the key focus of this study, while non-members were added for data validity control. Both members and non-members include genocide survivors and genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members.

Concerning the category of members, data were collected from group (mixed) and individual interviews. Group interviewing was opted for in order to access as many people from various categories as possible, from which some, who would later be subject to individual interviews, were purposively identified. The purposive choice of respondents for group interviewing was made in a way that included and mixed various categories of people (by taking into consideration gender, age, marital status and conflicting parties). Individuals subject to group interviewing were thus purposively selected from people gathered during the meetings for each zone visited. The total number of individuals for each group (by zone) is distributed as follows: 46 for Simbi, 29 for Cyarumbo, 33 for Mugobore, and 43 for Maraba. Four group interviews totalling 151 individuals (58 male and 93 female), of whom 46 belonged to the category of genocide survivors, and 105 to the category of former genocide perpetrators, were thus formed. It was from this total (these groups) that some were identified for individual interviews. The purposive choice led to a total of 29 cooperative members subject to individual interviews, distributed by group or zone as follows: 7 for Simbi, 8 for Cyarumbo, 6 for Mugobore and 8 for Maraba.

Therefore, through group interviews, data were collected from 151 cooperative members, of which 29 individuals were also subject to personal interviews (9 belonging to the category of genocide survivors and their family members, while 20 belonged to the category of former genocide perpetrators and their family members). Group interviewing is often referred to, in this study, as mixed-group interviewing. ‘Mixed-group’ is emphasized in order to underscore that the group interviews were composed of individuals from both sides of the conflict—former genocide perpetrators and genocide survivors, as well as their respective family members. Interviewing them while seated together was believed to be valid and reliable given the subject under study, all the more so since private information could be reached during individual interviewing.

In addition, and for the purpose of the ‘validity control’ (cross-checking data provided by cooperative members), data were also collected (in a ‘snowball’ way) from 18 non-members (10 males and 8 females), of whom 8 belonged to the category of genocide survivors and their family members, and 10 to the category of former genocide perpetrators and their family members. Therefore, the total number of respondents (members and non-members) subject to both group and individual interviewing was 169 (68 males and 101 females).

4.3. Field visit

The field visit began on Monday 7 January 2008 with the researcher’s introductory meeting with the executive secretary of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. Equipped with an official letter from the representative in charge of cooperatives, in Huye district, the meeting in question was aimed at describing the purpose and relevance of the study. It was from this meeting that a 25 year-old single man, in charge of cooperative training, was tasked with

guiding and facilitating the researcher's access to the sites (4 zones) to meet cooperative members. That first day fortuitously coincided with the date on which the council of representatives of the four zones of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was to take place. The researcher attended that meeting together with the guide/facilitator. This meeting provided excellent access to Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative's council representatives, and was an opportunity to discuss with each of the zones' representatives the purpose and relevance of the study and to elicit their support and facilitation for accessing cooperative members in their respective zones. Since each zone holds a meeting once a week, the timetable for meetings with cooperative members, in each zone, was made accordingly. Therefore, for each zone, the first meeting was concerned with mixed-group interviews (which lasted for three hours on average), and the identification of individual people, who would be subject to further personal interviews in the following days. The introduction to cooperative members during their weekly meetings was facilitated by the representatives of each zone. It was after this introduction that a relatively small number of cooperative members (between 20 and 50) were requested to get together for group interviews. The researcher had requested the council representatives to ensure that both categories of conflicting parties—genocide survivors and perpetrators and their respective family members—be included. They also had to ensure that for each category, women, men, youth, old, orphans, widows and/or widowers, were included.

Mixed-group interviews began in the Simbi zone. The group interview for this zone was constituted of 46 cooperative members. As pointed out above, it was from the group interview that the researcher had to purposively identify people (from each of the above categories), who would be subject to individual interviews. Consent from subjects was of course required. After individuals were identified for personal interviews, appointments, either at home or in another suitable place (notably at their cooperative's office), were made. The process was the same in the other zones, whereby, as put above, the group interview for Cyarumbo was composed of 29 individuals, 32 for Mugobore, and 43 for Maraba.

With regard to interviews with non-members, no group discussions were formed since non-members are scattered in zones. Access to them was achieved in a snowball way. The processes generally consisted of interviewing one person first (a member or a non-member), and then ask him or her to indicate other non-members. Individual interviews lasted 45 minutes, on average. For both categories of respondents (members and non-members), the main method of data collection was interview. However, field notes for every relevant behaviour or fact observed while interviewing were taken, which constituted another data collection method added to interviewing. Apart from field notes, interviews were recorded by means of an audiotape. The fieldwork consumed two months (January and February 2008).

The next section discusses data collected. As will be noticed, before getting to findings related to the research question focused on in this chapter—the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members' relationships—respondents were asked to provide information on the nature of their relationships, prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, on the one hand, and the reasons behind their membership of it, on the other. The purpose was to create baseline information clarifying the nature of the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members' relationships.

4.4. Conflicting parties' relationships prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative

Information about the nature of the relationships between conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is worth knowing. That information provides baseline data for the study's critical concern of the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members' relationships. Were the relationships between conflicting parties already restored prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee? How were these relationships (their nature) generally?

4.4.1. Anger, hatred and fear

As the findings indicate, anger, hatred and fear were emphasized by both conflicting parties as issues that characterized the nature of their relationships prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. But what were the fear, anger and hatred actually about? Respondents' illustrative testimonies begin with the experiences of genocide survivors, notably this statement of a 59-year-old widow:

After the genocide! Hehehe! We were animals! We were hyenas! For example me, because my whole family has been exterminated, I was a hyena; I mean, I was wicked. I am telling you! I could even eat you³⁹ [somebody]! Eh! I was left alone, you understand! Things were really bad. When the genocide ended! We, survivors! We hated anybody who is a *Hutu*. But we also feared them as we thought they will kill us again. Fear was everywhere. (Intgr.1)⁴⁰

The above statement emphasizes how a genocide survivor portrays the negative and hostile attitudes of genocide survivors in general toward former genocide perpetrators and their family members (fear, anger and hatred) being reduced to one ethnic group. As the statement emphasizes, those that survivors hated belonged to the group of *Hutu*, be they former genocide perpetrators or their family members. However, during that mixed-group interview, both genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators emphasized that despite such hatred toward the *Hutu* without distinction, not all *Hutu* people killed, all the more so since some of them were killed and that some *Tutsi* also killed. In this regard, a 34-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators held:

Of course not all *Hutu* killed; even some *Tutsi* killed. But we understand that since the genocide was committed in our name [*Hutu*], and many *Hutu* of course got involved; For example, starting from my family, my father and other members of my family participated in those killings; I truly understand them [survivors]. (Intgr.1)

³⁹ By "I could even eat you" the widow does not imply eating a human being as food; rather this is an expression of hatred, rage and anger, which could culminate in killing, injuring somebody physically or any act of hurt.

⁴⁰ Intgr. refers to *interview in group*.

As genocide survivors also maintained, their generalized hostile feelings toward ‘all *Hutu*’ were caused by their pains, losses and sufferings during the genocide (intgr.1). Therefore, not only were genocide survivors angry at and hated former genocide perpetrators and their family members, but also they were afraid of them. Survivors were afraid that former perpetrators would kill them again. But how do former genocide perpetrators and/or their family members, in turn, perceive their relationships with survivors prior to both sides’ membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative? In this regard, the accounts respectively from the 46-year-old male, the 59 year-old widow, and the 48-year-old female—all family members of former genocide perpetrators, state:

Yes, what she [widow-survivor] is telling you is true. After the genocide! Oh!Oh!Oh! When you were about to meet with a genocide survivor, you felt your hair is gone, and you could quickly flee and find where you can hide from him. Even he, himself, could flee! Yes, he could also flee and hide from you! [all burst into a loud laugh]. (Intgr1)

Even people who had done nothing were afraid because, for example, the genocide was committed in the name of *Hutu*. So, all *Hutu* and their relatives were afraid of survivors. We thought they will revenge or simply kill us because of our relatives who are *Hutu*! This [revenge] indeed happened in many ways and we were afraid and angry too. (Intgr.2)

Let me begin with myself. When I came back from refuge,⁴¹ I saw a man who was my best friend before [the genocide] because I could not pass by his home without greeting him. I even used to visit his family and stay for some days. But in spite of the fact that he was my friend before; oh!! When I saw him, simply because he was a genocide survivor, I became overwhelmed by fear as I thought that he will immediately kill me! Can you imagine! And then I fled; I fled, fled, and when I fled, he called me by saying [her name]! And he followed me saying you [her name], you cannot even greet people? You no longer greet people? He wanted me to stop fleeing and greet him; but I refused and ran away. I am telling you; that time! I was afraid to the extent that even when I could hear that there is someone knocking at our door or just greeting far by, I could hear my heart is gone. (Intgr.1)

The above statements depict how the members of former genocide perpetrators were afraid of revenge from genocide survivors and their family members. They were afraid of the latter, but they were also angry at, and hated, them. The main reason behind their fear, anger and hatred is due to alleged genocide survivor’s involvement in the revenge killings and ‘unjust’ imprisonment of the family members of former genocide perpetrators (Intgr.1).

All of the above developments show how the relationships between conflicting parties, prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, were characterized by fear, anger and hatred, to the extent that even when, for example, a survivor was sick, none of the family members of former genocide perpetrators would even visit him/her, and vice versa, and that individuals from both sides of the conflict could pass without greeting one another (intgr.1-4). The above considerations lead to how the relationships between conflicting parties were also characterized by division, suspicion and absence of communication.

⁴¹ She had fled the civil war and had been in a refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1994.

4.4.2. Division, suspicion and absence of communication

As the data indicate, members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative emphasized that conflicting parties' fear, anger and hatred toward each other led to deep division (and thus discrimination), along with suspicion and cutting off of communication between conflicting parties. In fact, during groups interviewing, respondents revealed that the genocide brought up a deep divide between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators and their respective families members. Each side suspected the other of the possibility either of "vengeance by survivors" or "further killings" by former genocide perpetrators, notably in order to eliminate witnesses to their genocidal acts (intgr.1-4). Consequently, individuals from both sides of the conflict could not talk to, and suspected, each other. As the data also indicate, even when communication between the sides was unavoidable, it was scornful and insulting. Illustrative testimonies begin with the statements of the family members of former genocide perpetrators, respectively the 46-year-old female and 28-year-old female whose parents were imprisoned due to genocide acts:

Truly, we were completely divided and each group discriminated the other. Oh! Before [membership of the cooperative] we couldn't talk to each other. For example, when a member of your family could see you may be greeting a [genocide] survivor, he could warn you, and say, 'why are you talking to them?' A survivor could also warn his fellow and say 'what do you negotiate with that *interahamwe*?⁴² Don't do that again, he is spying you! Do you want to get poisoned? Ok, trust them and you will see!' [all burst into a loud laugh]. (Intgr.1)

Me, after the genocide, I was still young but I could notice that my parents are in prison because of their involvement in genocide acts; and I was thinking to myself: will it be possible that I visit this or that person? I mean survivors; how will that be possible? And when I also looked upon my state of poverty without clothes; all these things made me feel in loneliness. I couldn't talk to anybody. I felt that no one could hear me; I also suspected genocide survivors because I was thinking that they will put me in prison too, or kill me. Eh! Who could trust them? It was a bad situation! [all burst into a loud laugh]. (Intgr.3)

From the above statements, it appears that there was division and a general cut off of communication between conflicting parties. As also pointed out previously, even when communication between them was unavoidable, conversations were scornful and insulting. The statement below, of a 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor, illustrates that:

There was another bad thing they [family members of former genocide perpetrators] used to say. For example the women whom husbands were imprisoned; when you could meet they could say, 'heee! We, we are at least able to bring them food [husbands imprisoned], but you, you do not even see them! [as they were killed]! What are you looking? Like hell! They [ours] will get out of prison!' And of course they [family members of former genocide perpetrators] could not come near us. (Int.21)⁴³

⁴² *Interahamwe* was the name given to a paramilitary organization whose members led the carrying out of the Rwandan Genocide. In present-day Rwanda, *interahamwe* implies a genocide perpetrator, a killer, or an evil person (Researcher's emphasis)

⁴³ Int. refers to *interview*.

The above statement expresses how negative were the relationships between women of both sides of the conflict. The women whose husbands were imprisoned were convinced that it was the women-genocide survivors who had participated in the imprisonment of their husbands.

Considering the above, the study was interested to determine why conflicting parties' relationships were still negative in these ways prior to their forming or joining their cooperative, while it could have been hypothesized that other mechanisms (like the Church) could have impacted positively on their relationships. In this regard, members were unanimous that when the Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was created, "wounds were still deep", "things were still mixed up", and "people had lost trust in churches and their leaders, given that many of the later had participated in genocidal acts" (intgr.1-4). For example, a 48-year-old widow stated:

What they are telling you is true. We could not even go in the churches; yes, very few attended but in general none wanted to meet with other people. You know that even the priests killed! No trust in churches was there that time. We were still keeping watching on each other. So things were still mixed up; there was no interest in meeting with others. Churches were attended by people who came from outside.⁴⁴ In few words, it was still soon to talk to each other. (Intgr.4)

If, as expressed above, conflicting parties' relationships prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, were negative—characterized by fear, anger, hatred, division, suspicion, mistrust and absence of communication—how did it come that they finally decided to come together in a cooperative? In other words, did they come together (form or join Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative) in order to address these negative relationships between them? This is a question worth answering before discussing the impact of the cooperative in question on their relationships.

4.5. Reasons behind conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative

Members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (conflicting parties) were requested to indicate the reasons that prompted them to form or join their cooperative. The purpose is to know the connection between the reason(s) behind their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee and their above-mentioned post-genocide negative relationships; that is whether the purpose behind their membership of this cooperative was to restore their relationships. Non-members' accounts about the reasons behind their non-membership of the cooperative in question are also insightful in this regard; that is whether, for example, they had no interest in membership of that cooperative, or whether there were other reasons behind their non-membership. By beginning with the responses of cooperative members, it was found that the reasons behind conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative were not related to their above-mentioned relational problems; that is, the motives behind their membership of the cooperative had nothing to do with a desire to restore their broken relationships.

⁴⁴ The respondent refers to former Rwandan refugees who had fled the massacres notably in 1959 and 1973 and returned to their country after around 35 years in exile, notably in neighbouring countries.

4.5.1. Fighting against poverty

As cooperative members, from both sides of the conflict, emphasized, the fight against poverty was the main reason behind their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. Other concepts like ‘development’, ‘increase of well-being’ and ‘getting money’ were employed to emphasize the same thing: *fighting against poverty*. In members’ descriptions, ‘poverty’ or ‘development’ referred to basic needs such as food, clothes, medication, shelter, and children’s school fees. By joining other coffee growers in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, each member hoped to increase coffee production, and thus make a living—a process that would have been difficult or even impossible for some, when working alone. Illustrative testimonies begin with genocide survivors, who emphasized that their harsh state of poverty was behind their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, since their properties were either destroyed or looted during the genocide, and who testified that individual work while maintaining their coffee plantations, or sorting the coffee, could not enable them to increase their production and escape poverty. After their coffee was ripe and ready for harvest, the individual work of husking, sorting and drying coffee in the sun was tiring and monotonous. To be productive, they therefore needed help from neighbours—coffee growers, including individuals from the other side of conflict. The respective statements of the 52-year-old and 48-year-old widows illustrate that:

Working individually could not reduce my poverty. I have been left alone, without anyone of my family to help me. I have no children, and as you see I am old. Yet, I had to survive! I joined others because I believed that they will help me. Now you can see; I am fine. (Int.24)

Me too, what I can say which is the same as what my fellows said. I believed that by joining this cooperative I will be able to fight against my poverty. You know that during genocide all our properties were destroyed and others looted. Also, by joining this cooperative, I believed that I could ease the fatigue I had while working alone in my coffee plantation; that is, while maintaining, harvesting, and sorting coffee alone. So I was obliged to work with everybody. (Intgr.4)

In the same way, former genocide perpetrators and their family members emphasized that their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was motivated by the desire to fight against poverty through increasing their income. A 57-year-old male and a 51-year-old female—both family members of former genocide perpetrators—stated, respectively:

The reason that prompted me to join this cooperative; I believed that I will gain profit; I mean money, increase my income. Poverty is bad! I had to fight against it, but it was hard to do that on my own. (Int.1)

Me, I decided to become a member of this cooperative after I realized that I am lagging behind in development. I then realized that I cannot achieve anything on my own, and I thought to myself: let me join others in that cooperative, so that I can also be *umuhuzamugambi*;⁴⁵ and I thought that may be this will be helpful to me with regard to any problem I might be having. (Int.8)

⁴⁵ *Umuhuzamugambi* translates a person who shares a goal or a purpose with others.

What is clear from the above is that individuals from both sides of the conflict were pushed by the *material* motive; they were *obliged* to get together in order to fight against poverty, which is in no way concerned with their desire to restore their relationships. Another personal motive—the alleviation of loneliness—which was also in no way concerned with the restoration of relationships, despite the fact that it is concerned with the social dimension, was also emphasized.

4.5.2. Alleviating loneliness

The desire by individuals from both sides of the conflict to alleviate loneliness stands as a second reason (less important, as found, however) behind their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. This reason was timely (opportune) since the main motive, behind their membership of the cooperative, was found to be the desire to fight against poverty. Alleviating loneliness thus stood as the second reason behind conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. In this case, joining Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative in order to alleviate loneliness implied that lonely individuals met with others, notably from the other side of the conflict, since Abahuzamugambi coffee was open to both groups. What is also apparent is that conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was motivated by the need to alleviate loneliness rather than the desire to meet for relationships restoration. The fact that individuals from both sides of the conflict met in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is simply justified by each individual's desire to alleviate their situation of loneliness. As will be discussed in chapter 7, this reflects the country's culture that does not easily accept individualism. Hence, the desire was based on the need for individual healing, rather than for the restoration of relationships. The contentions below, formulated during the fourth group interview, by the 44-year-old widow and the 53-year-old male—both genocide survivors—serve as illustrative examples:

The other reason that prompted me to join this cooperative! Oh! Simply being together with others around an activity, which allows you to meet, you feel you...it can't be described; you break with loneliness. This is also the reason why I joined this cooperative. (Intgr.4)

Yes, it is true, it is really true because, above all; when you choose to become a member, you [want to] meet with others; loneliness disappears because you got closer to people; because you managed to meet with those people, and you can feel that your humanism stills goes on. But the truth of the matter is that we all came here to fight against poverty, but this was an opportunity for us to break with loneliness too. (Intgr.4)

However, even though conflicting parties' desire to alleviate individual loneliness involves a relational element, it had nothing to do with the restoration of their relationships. The point is that individuals from both sides of the conflict were motivated by the desire to get closer to other people, to satisfy a social belonging, which is embedded in the country's culture (to be discussed later).

From the above, it follows that two reasons (materialistic and social belonging) are behind conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, rather than

a desire to restore their relationships. But why did non-members not join Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, while they were neighbours to its members and activity? While enumerating the benefits offered by Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative to its members, along with expressing sadness about their non-membership of it, non-members (from both sides of the conflict) argued that their non-membership should not be attributed to their non-willingness to join. For some, their non-membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was due to the lack of basic required conditions for membership, such as coffee plantations, land and disability. For others, non-membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee was due to religious beliefs prohibiting them to join associations or cooperatives, as is the case for the ‘temperate’ Christians, or due to religious consecration activities (i.e., Jehovah Witnesses, priests, and so on), which oblige the individuals in question to move constantly, and thus having a lack of time for cooperative activities. Furthermore, one interviewee—a 54-year-old widow and genocide survivor—cited ignorance: “I don’t know anything about cooperatives” (int.40).

Otherwise, non-members, from both sides of the conflict, contended that they were aware that they were lagging behind economically and in their relationships with other people, since they could not access the benefits offered by Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. Statements such as: “they are comparatively much more advanced”, “we are poor while they [cooperative members] are rich”, or “they at least talk to each other”, were common to non-members interviewed. It is in this regard, for instance, that genocide survivors emphasized that cooperative members are comparatively more advanced socially and economically because the latter benefit a lot from Abahuzamugambi, such as “discounts and dividends, easy financial loans, jobs in the cooperative, conviviality with others”, and the fact that “members have many friends, support each other, and are able to pay school fees for their children or acquire whatever they need” (int.30-37). Likewise, former genocide perpetrators and their family members stressed their lower advancement (economically and socially) in comparison with Abahuzamugambi members, since the latter benefited from their cooperative in many ways, including “access to financial loans” whenever necessary, the possibility of “buying cheaper things” with the help of their cooperative, the “possibility to meet other people,” and, above all, the “possibility of joining efforts with others for a bulk of production” (int.38-47). It is worth emphasizing that even the above-mentioned 54-year-old widow genocide survivor, who had previously claimed to “know nothing about cooperatives”, nevertheless admitted that Abahuzamugambi members were economically advanced in comparison with her, because they benefited a lot from their cooperatives, notably “access to financial loans, bicycles to support them in the transportation of coffee, cattle, and agricultural fertilizer” (int.40). What is also worth noting is that even non-members (conflicting parties), who argued to have lagged behind, emphasized their loss in personal material goods and the relational dimension, which in no way implies their desire to restore their relationships.

Therefore, considering all of the above findings, it is clear that despite the negative relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, their subsequent membership of this cooperative was in no way motivated by a need to restore these negative relationships. Rather, their motives were mainly material (to fight poverty). It was also found that many wanted to alleviate loneliness, which was also found to have nothing to do with their desire to restore their relationships. If this is so, an important question concerns the nature of the impact resulting from their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative.

4.6. Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and conflicting parties' relationships

We are thankful to the person who brought this idea of cooperatives. Of course *nta byera ngo de* [nothing can be pure white]⁴⁶, but because of this cooperative, we can now live together peacefully. (Int.26)

The above statement of a 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor reflects the general conclusion of the members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative regarding its impact on the relationships among them. But how does Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative actually impacted/impact on its members' relationships? During interviews, cooperative members, some with excitement, emphasized that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative impacted/impacts positively on their relationships. But does this mean that there are no problems within Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative? As its members emphasized, to quote one of them, "problems always exist wherever you find people, but in general the role of our cooperative in reuniting and reconciling us is undeniable" (int.19). This reflects the above-statement of the 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor, who used the Rwandan proverb, stating *nta byera ngo de* (translated as *nothing can be pure white*)⁴⁷. In this regard, as will be analyzed in the end of this chapter, members' contentions underscored the problems faced by their cooperative, which however, as found, remain relatively minor and have not yet impacted on members' positive relationships built thus far. Non-members also argued that though they could not fully and confidently conclude about the real impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members' relationships, because they "are not its members and thus ignore what is really taking place in the cooperative" (int.32), they emphasized that they observe many positive effects among cooperative members whom they are neighbour to, such as reciprocal visits and support, and the convivial life among cooperative members.

The next sections of this chapter are concerned with ways in which Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative impacts or has impacted on its members' relationships. In this regard, respondents' contentions also (directly or indirectly) emphasize a number of factors behind that impact, which will be isolated and analyzed in a separate chapter (chapter 6). Conflicting parties' experiences and perceptions on the nature of the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on their relationships is an issue of relevance. As findings in this regard indicate, their contentions refer to their previous negative relationships prior to their membership of this cooperative.

What is also worth re-emphasizing is that, although conflicting parties' accounts seem to show a solely positive picture regarding the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on their relationships, the restoration of broken human relationships is a long and often slow process, which is subject to flaws and setbacks. These have been put forward by conflicting parties and are analyzed at the end of this chapter.

⁴⁶ Translation supplied by the researcher.

⁴⁷ *Nta byera ngo de* (nothing can be pure white) is a proverb used in Rwanda when one's excellent achievements are soiled by something bad; even if it might be small. It implies that in everything or every undertaking, there are often or always shortcomings.

4.6.1. Breaking down division and restoring positive communication

One who thought that killers could not sit together and eat together with us can now see that. There is no division in this cooperative. Rather it reunited us. (Intgr.1)

In connection with the above statement of the 46-year-old widow-genocide survivor, during the first mixed-group interview, data generally indicate that conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled positive interactions and communication among them in a way that some members often referred to as 'soothing' or 'healing' conversations. Not only were their divisions broken, but also positive communication among them became nurtured as they strived together to increase coffee production. This underscores two important factors (the importance of contact and positive communication), which will be elaborated in chapter 6. Likewise the above-mentioned statement, an account of a genocide survivor—the 53-year-old widower—emphasizes the common objective, notably among members from conflicting parties, which constituted an occasion for constructive conversations and equality among them, and consequently unity: He states:

For example me; I often watch. Since this cooperative was established, genocide survivors and the rest of people; all joined together; you can see that they all share the same objective, or job. We, members, have no problem, because when a member gets into contact with the other, for example when they are transporting the coffee to the washing stations, they talk to each other, they are received equally. We are no longer divided; the cooperative reunited us, we are one! Another important thing is that we are no longer starving. No poverty. This is actually the most important thing that this cooperative enabled us to achieve. (Int.28)

The above account by the genocide survivor-widower maintains what former genocide perpetrators and their family members had put forward during the first group interview. It is in this regard that the 47-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator, who was imprisoned and released after confessing, testified:

Me! I was in prison, I sinned [committed genocide] and I acknowledged that. I repented because my heart was not stable given what I had done. People forgave me, and I was thus released from prison. When I came into this cooperative, I found all the people there, genocide survivors, those who are not genocide survivors, all are in the cooperative! I was surprised. After some days, I realized that they are rather united when we converse. The simple fact that we work together for the same goal is very important. No intrigues; we work together without any problem. Don't you see these coffees up there; you see! Behind my house! When we are in that coffee plantation, people are all mixed and we work in these coffees together. There is no ruse here; we get money and we are happy together; we even celebrate that! Yes, in our convivial parties. (Intgr.1)

From the above, a picture of how Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative has enabled, and still enables, conflicting parties to break down division and consequently overcome discrimination, while fostering positive communication, can be easily seen.

4.6.2. Overcoming fear and suspicion

As data indicate, post-genocide negative relational problems of fear and suspicion, which characterized the relationships between conflicting parties, have been overcome as a result of their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. As found, non-members interviewed were still fearful and suspected their ‘enemy’. Below are some illustrative experiences and perceptions. By beginning with genocide survivors, this testimony of the 44-year-old widow, during the first mixed-group interview, reads:

Me, the evidence that I can give about this cooperative is that, me, I was a neighbour to someone, he really killed my family and there was no one left. Then I was involved in putting him in prison. But before his imprisonment, I asked people to seriously beat him until he looks like he is dead. They effectively beat him and he really looked like dead, and they put him in prison. Then when I became a member of this cooperative, I found out that the man’s daughter is also a member. Here she is; I am not lying [while smiling]. I couldn’t do otherwise; I couldn’t avoid getting into contact with her and even going to her home because in our cooperative we must support each other. Then I wondered: will I go to her home while I beat and imprisoned her father? I was very ashamed, but also afraid. I decided not to go to her home, but after just few days, I got surprised because that girl came to my home and invited me in her wedding. I am telling you, I did not sleep that night; my heart was beating. (Intgr.1)

She went on:

...in the morning, I asked for advice from other cooperative members; they told me that I must attend the wedding. They told me: ‘Don’t worry; if someone invites you, you must go’. They also said: ‘After all, we are in the same cooperative, so you must go!’ I kept quiet; but [some days] before the wedding; amazing again, whenever I was absent to sun the coffee here in the cooperative, the girl was doing that for me. I was therefore obliged to converse with her! So we started talking to each other, and share food she had brought. And we became friend. I attended her wedding and helped her in its preparations. I told her what I had done to her father, though I knew that she was aware of that, and I asked for forgiveness. This actually happened nearly before the period when her father confessed and asked me for forgiveness. He is now out of prison. I also apologised for what I have done to him. It is a period I will never forget. Now we are best friends, why? Because of our contact in this cooperative! (Ibid)

The researcher also interviewed the daughter of the victim (who was imprisoned) referred to by the above genocide survivor, who had also taken part in the same group interviewing. The 24-year-old young female reported that she was aware of what the 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor had done to her father, but that she had put that aside, not only because she “could not do otherwise” (Intgr.1), but also that her anger towards the lady had receded after she joined the cooperative, due to “teachings” but also since she was much more focused on “money through coffee production than hatred” (ibid). She stated:

Actually I knew everything about what she had done to my father. Of course I could not do otherwise, but the most important thing for me was to get money through coffee production rather than going back into these issues of hatred. The problem I had was poverty. But, it is true that this cooperative enabled me to meet with her. There I

learned a lot and I realized that I don't have to be like her. So I decided to invite her in my wedding. For me I had no problem; my anger had cooled down. (Intgr.1)

The above statement also emphasizes that anger and hatred receded, which will be discussed further below. Otherwise, former genocide perpetrators and their family members also viewed things from a similar perspective. For example, a 36-year-old single male-former genocide perpetrator, who was detained in prison for 10 years and released after confessing, held:

For example, me I was even in prison. After I was released, I came and got into contact with other people, but I can tell you, me I praise this cooperative because of that contact and conversations I found there; the cooperative became an encounter that helped me to brake with my fear and regain my humanism, and be able to live together with people again. (Intgr.1)

With regard to suspicion, the 33-year-old and 53-year-old males-family members of former genocide perpetrators describe, respectively below, how Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative also enabled conflicting parties to overcome suspicion:

No suspicion in this cooperative. We discuss everything, everyone talks of his situation; that is, what happened to him during genocide; and you find we are all happy! Even when you come with your particular problem like suspecting someone or just with fear; after few days you change and you become like others. Yes, because of the good spirit in this cooperative; we love and support each other; no suspicion. (Int.7)

Truly there is no suspicion! I give you a reason why I see that there is no suspicion: in this cooperative, whenever one repents and asks for forgiveness, you see the reaction from members, survivors do not hesitate; they forgive him because they have changed; because in this cooperative the communication is good, so no intrigues. For example, when I came from refuge, I got married, and I married a Tutsi! Me a Hutu! You cannot believe in that but because of this cooperative, things changed. Other members teach and advise us, we converse all the time and, truly, no suspicion. (Int.9)

The above considerations emphasize that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled both of these conflicting parties to overcome fear and suspicion. The decrease of fear and suspicion resulted in the increase of trust among conflicting parties, as will be developed further below. But individuals from both sides of conflict also overcame anger and hatred towards each other.

4.6.3. Overcoming anger and hatred

As the data indicate, conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled them to work together and communicate, and consequently to overcome reciprocal anger and hatred (although fear is also emphasized). Illustrative examples in this regard begin with the statement of the 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor:

Of course no one can say that everything is completely alright; sometimes you feel some anger still in you, but in general, for many of us anger and hatred disappeared.

Really I am thankful for what this cooperative did, because it managed to bring people together, otherwise a genocide survivor would have remained a beast; a killer also would have remained a beast; but nowadays when we meet at work and during our meetings, we discuss the negative consequences of remaining a beast or of keeping hatred. Actually, before we got into this cooperative, women whose husbands were imprisoned were scorning us; but they got healed since the creation of this cooperative; and you can see them as normal women. Due to teachings in the cooperative, everything is now fine. (Intgr.4)

The above statement emphasizes how anger and hatred between conflicting parties receded due to communication and teachings (the factors to be discussed in chapter 6) while working together convivially in the cooperative. These considerations of survivors were also maintained by former genocide perpetrators and their family members. For example, a 60-year-old male stated:

When we got into contact, we found it good because someone who sinned [perpetrator] managed to ask for forgiveness from the one to whom the sin was committed [survivor], and this slowly cooled down his [survivor] anger. You could talk and the more you dialogue with him, being together, his heart begins to soothe and after his heart is soothed, his anger, which caused both of you to fear each other, also cools down; and you could see him coming to you, little by little, and borrows for example an axe and you lend it to him; and he returns the next day to borrow other things or to seek for any other assistance, and you assist him; and little by little anger cools down and disappears because of that frequent contact. But when people never get into contact, there is no possibility for anger to cool down, they remain in fear and anger toward each other; they always blame and accuse each other. But I am telling you when the two parties meet in a place like here [cooperative], fear begins to disappear. (Int.13)

Apart from enabling conflicting parties to overcome negative and hostile attitudes, positive relationships were also nurtured by Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, in addition to the positive communication, as discussed above. The common concept used in this regard, is *conviviality* among cooperative members.

4.6.4. Nurturing conviviality among cooperative members

I swear by the truth of God; I swear by the hand...God above! We even marry each other, we...live convivially, and we rescue each other and support each other...I swear! This cooperative made it possible [others laughing]. If now I love survivors whom I hated before coming into this cooperative, what do you want me to tell you? This cooperative changed our minds. We are now friends of people whom we hated; people who hated us and were also afraid of us! (Intgr.2)

The first thing that happened in Abahuzamugambi; there has been love; people loved each other. Can you imagine a [genocide] survivor and a killer [perpetrator] working together, and talking to one another! I remember a person [who was not cooperative members] saying 'but this Abahuzamugambi people always hug each other! They always hug each other as if years had passed without seeing each other!' Indeed, many people wonder about our behaviours. The cooperative played a very important role in

reuniting us. You cannot imagine! [while exclaiming]; it really did good things to us. (Intgr.4)

The concept of *conviviality* is a common and everyday term used in Rwanda. The term implies people living together harmoniously or affably while supporting each other. Respondents also employed the strong concept of 'love', as the second statement above, of the 33-year-old widow-genocide survivor, underscores. This implies that, in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, the decrease in fear, suspicion, hatred, and anger yielded to the increase of conviviality expressed in friendship, love and mutual support. It is in this regard that, as the data indicate, cooperative members (but also non-members, in some aspects) emphasized that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative impacted positively on its members-conflicting parties' relationships, by enabling them to work and live together convivially; that is, affably. Therefore, in connection with the above statement of a 60-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators, genocide survivors also argued that by coming into contact with former genocide perpetrators and their family members, in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, they conversed and supported each other, and ended up becoming friends while living convivially to the extent of having *intermarriages* (intgr2). An illustrative testimony could be that of the 52-year-old widow-genocide survivor:

Of course there is still a long way to go; but for us, because of this cooperative, this is a reality. Yes, it is true. Because of this cooperative, people changed; they are marrying each other, for example, my daughter, recently, married a 'Hutu' boy! It is because me and the boy's parents became friends when we met in this cooperative. Actually we hated all *Hutu* because genocide was perpetrated in the name of *Hutu* and that many *Hutu* killed; but the reality is that there are *Hutu* who did not kill; some have even been killed while trying to hide ours! Of course, it is not easy to admit this for most of people who suffered a lot, but for us who have been educated, we find that normal. The past should be surpassed. (Int.8)

The above contentions were also maintained by the 53-year-old male and the 28-year-old female-family members of former genocide perpetrators. They respectively stated:

For example me, when I returned from the refugee camps where I lost my wife and five children, I remarried a genocide survivor with the help of another survivor whom we met in this cooperative. We now have twins-daughters. So how can I tell you about our relationships? It is simply very good. That is my new family! (Intgr.2)

Yes, me too, I got married in the family of [genocide] survivors. Me, when the war and genocide took place I was still a child. We took refuge in [the Democratic Republic of] Congo, but when we returned to Rwanda, from the refugee camps, my father was imprisoned; but I can tell you I married a genocide survivor, just because we met in this cooperative. We all had changed; the anger and fear we had ceased. This means that my mother in law is a [genocide] survivor! I hope that you understand. (Int.10)

With regard to *mutual support and care*, cooperative members emphasized that not only do they support each other in their cooperative, notably while maintaining, sorting and transporting coffee to the washing stations; but they also support each other when they go back to their respective homes with regard to other activities or issues which are not related

to their cooperative's operations. In fact, during group interviews or individually, cooperative members unanimously reiterated that conviviality or friendship nurtured in their cooperative is not only enjoyed while working together in the cooperative, but also it accompanies them in their respective homes and neighbourhoods. This means that when cooperative members return to their homes, friendship and conviviality endure. As they accounted, they visit, support, and take care of each other, in good or bad times, namely during parties or sickness. For example, while talking of good times, such as during wedding ceremonies⁴⁸ or children's baptisms, the 53-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators stated:

For example, during parties, people invited first are cooperative members who, actually, are the first to also support in the preparation of the ceremony. Now imagine this mixture of girls who are [genocide] survivors and others who are not survivors cooking together or serving drinks during the ceremony! Isn't it good? People are mixed and we share everything those girls serve, food or drinks; and the means used for this ceremony should also come from both survivors and others! Can you understand this? (Intgr.2)

As also pointed out above, another relational aspect, accounted to have been nurtured because of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, is that cooperative members support each other away from the cooperative through non-discriminatory projects of mutual help, notably in maintaining other cultures. An illustrative account in this regard could be the statement of the 57-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators:

When we go back home, we maintain our friendship and conviviality, and create other projects in which we work together; and even when one of us has a particular hard work, or any problem, which needs support, we intervene. Often, one prepares beer, and calls the rest of us to support him while drinking the beer together, this is the old culture; you know that! And we really like it. What else do you really want me to tell you? This cooperative! It reunited us. (Int.11)

In connection with the above, cooperative members also emphasized that they particularly support old-aged members or those who are sick. In this regard, a 60-year-old male-genocide survivor and a 51-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, stated, respectively:

Truly, getting together in the cooperative is good. For example nowadays, ten households, every week, help each other by cultivating in rotation. Yes, there are some people who are physically weak like old mothers; they get support from young people. Actually in our village, we are really developed. You should come often and watch that yourself; even people who cannot do anything, we cultivate for them; we help them! Now imagine, all of us mixed together and cultivating in one household's field in rotation! I hope that you understand that. (Int.13)

⁴⁸ In Rwanda the wedding ceremony is an important and big event. Its preparation follows various stages involving parties or celebrations for each stage (initiation, knee bending, dowry, administrative vow, and the religious-nuptial blessing). The highest point of the wedding party (religious-nuptial blessing) takes the whole day. Hundreds of people attend the wedding, in general. It is during weddings that one discovers people who either love or simply care about the bride and groom. People generally provide money and provide their support during various activities during the wedding ceremony.

A very good thing that this cooperative brought about; you see; if we hear that our fellow cooperative member is sick, we go as a group of members and visit him. Yes! We even cultivate for him; but first we go there to see his state of health, and if it is necessary, we bring him to the hospital and provide the financial support. Another thing is that when we have a poor person in the cooperative, and you find him vulnerable; we contribute financially and decide on what can be made in his favour. (Int.16)

But do all of the above accounts, which seem to only show a positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships, imply that the latter reached the level of trusting each other? In this regard, members Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, following the example of the 50 year-old male family member of former genocide perpetrators, and the 53-year-old male-genocide survivor, contended:

Trust! That is the first thing we have in this cooperative. Eh! We share everything, we eat together; we no longer think of poison like before. If we borrow money from each other and support each other in whatever circumstance, what do you want me to add? Of course trust does not come immediately; you must cultivate it; and this is what this cooperative helps us to do; conversations! Oh! I am happy with that. (Int.29)

That is right, trust? Yes, trust is there in this cooperative. It developed little by little as we were conversing and supporting each other. But before [membership]! I am telling you; we couldn't even look at each other! This cooperative developed trust among us; and indeed, as I told you, this goes back to that contact which favours conversations and conviviality. For example, when you go in the cabaret and buy a bottle of beer, you give to him,⁴⁹ because you know each other in the cooperative, and he became your friend; you give him the bottle [of beer] because you know that there is no longer suspicion of poisons; there is trust because we are in the same cooperative and we always have good conversations, and love develops. But before, suspicion was there and you could even say that you cannot talk to him; but here in the cooperative, we managed to meet and talk, and as I see it, we changed. (Int.28)

The viewpoints of non-members are now juxtaposed against the above contentions of the members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. Genocide survivors also maintained that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled people—that is, genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators—to come into contact (int.34, 35); to tell the truth about what happened during the genocide (int.30, 35); to communicate and have dialogue with each other (int.30); and to visit each other and live convivially (int.34, 35). They argued that truth telling was manifested later in *Gacaca* courts whereby cooperative members complemented one another in telling the truth as “they are used to discuss that in their meetings and convivial parties in the cooperative” (int.35). For example, the 40-year-old and the 36-year-old widows-genocide survivors stated, respectively:

Yes, the cooperative [Abahuzamugambi] has changed something because it brings together people of all ethnic background without any discrimination. May be it is

⁴⁹ He implies a former genocide perpetrator or his/her family member.

because of frequent contact that people changed; because they visit each other and converse. (Int.34)

Although I do not have coffee, I watch that. This cooperative [Abahuzamugambi] enabled people to get into contact; and you really find they work together in conviviality; they support each other in telling the truth for example in *Gacaca*. Their cooperative brings together people of different ethnic background. I think they no longer fear each other as we still do. (Int.35)

In the same way, former genocide perpetrators and their family members emphasized that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled their contact with genocide survivors (int.45) and enabled them to communicate positively (int.39, 46). With regard to conviviality or friendship among Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members, non-members maintained the positive impact of the cooperative. Their general contentions emphasized that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative enabled conflicting parties to live convivially and support each other (int.44, 46). For example, a 66-year-old male and a 80-year-old widow-both family members of former genocide perpetrators, argued, respectively:

It [Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative] played a positive role. Because it brought together all the people; survivors and the rest; they live convivially and support each other when there is a problem. They even invite us when they have organized their convivial parties. As I see it, there is no discrimination; we all witness that they help each other. (Int.45)

Yes, their cooperative changed them so much because they love each other; it is like they are reunited; they visit each other and are together most of time. You know, they support each other in their daily activities like cultivating. Me, I did not join because I have no coffee; this is actually the reason why I am lagging behind in comparison with them. (Int.46)

Genocide survivors also viewed things similarly, as illustrated in the example of the 38-year-old widower:

Oh! Abahuzamugambi members! They were bad and poor like us but once they went there [became members of Abahuzamugambi], things changed. They go, and in few months they become rich! But what amazed me is how they love each other! Even those who hated you start visiting you! And you feel ashamed. The problem is that I have no coffee plantation; otherwise I would have joined them. They live convivially, they are friends. Some even often invite me and we share beer, but I am telling you, they are happy. Everybody who watches them can witness that! Now tell me, can you become rich like them and maintain hatred? They are rich this is actually the reason why they don't have problems among them. (Int.43)

The above statement underscores an important point; that is, cooperative members live affably because they are wealthy, which points to the economic motive behind conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, as put forward earlier.

All of the above perceptions and experiences from Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members and non-members alike depict its positive impact on conflicting parties' relationships, which were negative prior to their membership of it. This seemingly

entirely positive impact was thus accounted by both categories of respondents, despite the fact that the motives behind conflicting parties' membership of the cooperative in question were individual and material rather than a desire to restore their relationships. Nevertheless, as was also discovered, not all is solely positive in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. This was notably expressed by cooperative members through the Rwandan proverb *nta byera ngo de* (nothing can be pure white), to mean that shortcomings are always present in all undertakings.

4.7. Obstacles to the relational impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative

Nowadays our leaders are disappointing us. They take some decisions without our knowing. Most of times, the problem comes from [local government] authorities who interfere in the affairs of our cooperative and corrupt our leaders. They interfere maybe because they have realized that we are getting a lot of money from our cooperative. They thus want to steal our money by using our leaders as it used to be before the war [war and genocide]. Otherwise we, members, are very fine. We pray that they [leaders and government authorities] do not continue like that. (Intgr.4)

We wish we could have good leaders; those who do not focus on their own interest or the interests of their family members. Otherwise, we [ordinary people] are fine; we live convivially. (Intgr.3)

Despite the seemingly solely positive image attributed to the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members-conflicting parties' relationships, which emphasizes the factors that led to that impact (to be analyzed in chapter 6), data indicate that not all is entirely positive. Internal and external shortcomings or obstacles have been discovered, as summarized in the above statements of the 38-year-old female-genocide survivor and the 53-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators. These shortcomings are twofold: *Internal problems* (bad leadership and cooperative's mismanagement) and *external problems* (government authorities' interference into cooperative's affairs). Although cooperative members argued that these problems were recent, the fact that the latter are likely to hamper the functioning of the cooperative, and so its mission, have been deplored by respondents. In this regard, cooperative members expressed themselves, once again, through the Rwandan legendary proverb that '*nta byera ngo de*' (nothing can be pure white).

Internal problems, on the one hand, involve the nature of the leadership and the management of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, in general. This refers notably to ways in which democracy is exercised, as well as how the cooperative is managed financially. As respondents held, in the present time, Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative lacks good leadership (or good leaders), and its funds are currently managed with a lack of transparency (financial mismanagement); i.e. there is a lack of genuine accountability. Contrary to the claims by the leaders of the existence of democracy and good management of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, members deplored the ways in which decisions were made regarding, notably, the election of cooperative leaders and the use of funds. They held that recently some decisions had been made without members knowing and the financial accountability is poor. An example given by cooperative members, with regard to shortcomings related to democracy in the cooperative, was the abrupt dismissal of both the President and the Executive Secretary of the cooperative (both founders of the cooperative)

by “a group of people who claim to be educated” (intgr.1-4), who accused the people dismissed of “being not qualified to lead the cooperative” (ibid.). In connection with this, respondents, either in mixed-groups or individually, also deplored ways in which the decisions regarding their cooperatives’ funds were made, as they do not know ways in which these funds are allocated. As members reported, decisions in this regard are made without members knowing, while the reports of the final decisions in question are only communicated to members after the event. Although, according to members, these problems have not yet had a noticeable impact on cooperative members’ relationships, they were considered to be a hindrance to the functioning of their cooperative, which, in the long run, might even impact on members’ relationships and the cooperative’s success. In this regard, the 52-year-old and the 60-year-old males-family members of former genocide perpetrators (during the second group interview), held, respectively:

I do not mean that they put all cooperative’s money on their accounts. Eh, but you never know! Because they do not tell us how all the money is affected. For example, the 80 million [Rwandan francs] got from Sweden; where did they put that? They tell us that they will build new washing stations but they did not involve us with regard to this decision! Yes, we celebrated that money but the rest; they take us as if we are stupid! What I mean is that they do not involve us in allocating that money in different activities. They just come and, or tell our representatives to, tell us that they have decided to use the money like this or that. But we have to be consulted also! (Intgr.2)

We are generally treated equally; but as they told you, sometimes problems arise. Some decisions are made without our consent, and we are requested to only implement them. This is not good of course but it does not happen all the time. Most of time decisions are made by our representatives in our respective zones, but they also report to us that some decisions were already made before the meetings were called upon. We, members, have no problem, we are living together convivially, but the problem is with some of our leaders; before it was good, but now they [some leaders] started to mix up things. (Intgr.2)

External problems, on the other hand, pointed to the interference of local government authorities in the internal affairs of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, notably during decision-making. This was reported to be the case during the dismissal of the cooperative’s former leaders (the president and the executive secretary) and the appointment of the new leaders, suspected, by members, to be serving the interests of these local government authorities. As members reported, this problem arose when the district mayor and other government representatives at sector levels interfered during elections of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative’s new leaders. Members thus accused local authorities of collaborating with the group of so-called ‘educated people’ who now lead the cooperative. In this regard, the 53-year-old widower-genocide survivor, and the 33-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, stated, respectively:

I give you an example of our ex-president and executive secretary. The mayor of this district had come himself, together with our now new leaders. They refused their [ex-president and executive secretary] candidature for presidency and executive secretary, saying that they are not educated enough! Yet, for example the former executive secretary was the one who initiated the idea of this cooperative! He had contributed a lot in the well functioning of this cooperative. This is not good. Of course we accepted

because we could not do otherwise. Some time they [new leaders] really make decisions without our knowing. Of course it is not all the time, and this is why we are telling you that we are happy with this cooperative, but you know wherever there are people, problems arise. (Int.28)

Of course we do not want to see our cooperative having problems. We do not want that to happen. We are happy; these people from outside, like that mayor, should not interfere in the affairs our cooperative; they can even divide us! This is what happened during the genocide no! But we know that this will get resolved because it is not yet a very serious matter. (Int.7)

The above testimonies show that despite respondents' previously-stated positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on members-conflicting parties' relationships, there also exist internal and external problems in the cooperative, which are likely to raise conflicts, thus hindering its positive impact. This will be critically discussed in chapter 7.

4.8. Summary of the chapter

This chapter was concerned with the study's first research question: ways in which the Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative impacted or impacts on the relationships of its members, constituted of post-genocide conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. As the data indicated, conflicting parties' relationships were negative before their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. Problems characterizing their relationships emphasized division and consequently the absence of communication, including scornful and insulting conversations, fear and suspicion, as well as anger and hatred. Yet, data indicated that conflicting parties' membership of the cooperative was in no way motivated by a desire to restore or improve their relationships. On the contrary, they were motivated by a need to satisfy material interests (fighting poverty) as well as personal desires (alleviating loneliness). Nevertheless, although conflicting parties' membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was not motivated by their desire to restore or improve these negative relationships, data also indicated that their membership of this cooperative came to impact positively on their previously reported negative relationships. As found, Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative provided a favourable environment for enabling conflicting parties to overcome division, fear, suspicion, anger and hatred, while fostering positive communication, trust and conviviality among them.

However, the apparently sole positive picture, generally showing positive impacts, coexists with internal and external shortcomings or obstacles. Internal problems are concerned with bad leadership in terms of the mismanagement (in use of cooperative funds and in decision-making) of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, and the lack of accountability, whereby leaders often take decisions without members knowing, and where the use of cooperatives' funds is not accounted for. External problems are concerned with the interference of local government representatives in the cooperative's affairs. Yet, notwithstanding these problems or shortcomings, there is a need to know the factors that contributed to the relational impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. A number of factors explain the impacts noted. These have been isolated and will be presented and analyzed in chapter 6. Chapter 5 explores the study's second case—Peace basket cooperative—from the perspective of the same research question.

Impact of Peace basket cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships

This chapter is concerned with exploratory data for the study's second case—Peace basket cooperative. As with the previous case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (chapter 4), this chapter focuses on the study's first research question—the impact of Peace basket cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships. Likewise, the chapter is concerned with respondents' accounts, since the critical discussions tied to the study's theoretical framework will be provided in chapter 7. It is worth recalling that the conflicting parties in question are constituted of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. The relational outcomes resulting from their membership of Peace basket cooperative is thus what this chapter is aimed at presenting and analyzing. However, although, respondents seem to have shown a solely positive picture of the impact of their cooperative, a heavy obstacle in this regard has been emphasized. The chapter begins with a description of Peace basket cooperative, the respondents, and the field visit for data collection.

5.1. Presenting Peace basket cooperative

Peace basket cooperative is a handicraft cooperative located in Buhimba cell of Rusatira sector, in Huye district of the southern province of Rwanda. Founded in July 1997, two years after the 1994 genocide, its mission, according to its status, is to *improve the socio-economic living conditions* of its members. The reason behind the denomination of this cooperative as that of '*peace*' was simply that its members wanted to underscore that their cooperative is inclusive; that is, it does not discriminate against people despite the fact that the country was still divided⁵⁰ when the cooperative was created. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that the president of Peace basket cooperative (a 64-year-old widow, named 'mother'⁵¹ by cooperative members, and who took the initiative to create Peace basket cooperative) is a genocide survivor-widow, while the vice-president (a 46-year-old man) is a

⁵⁰This concerns the division between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members whose wounds—physical and emotional—were quite fresh when Peace basket cooperative was created (two years after the genocide).

⁵¹The 'mother' is the designation (or name) that members of Peace basket cooperative give to the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and the initiator and president of the Peace basket cooperative, whose big family, including husband, children and parents, was killed in the genocide. Before the genocide, she was popular in the village not only due to her well-known interest in the weaving and selling of baskets throughout the country but also given that her family was comparatively wealthy, thus employing a large number of people of the neighborhoods, either in agricultural fields, farms, or at home. A large number of those people employed indeed participated in the killing of her family members. When the genocide took place 'mother' was away from her family and village, selling the baskets in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, where she miraculously survived.

genocide perpetrator, who confessed his direct participation in genocide massacres, and was thus released from prison after nine years of detention.

The cooperative members include individuals from the north-eastern part of Huye district, covering the administrative sectors of Rusatira, Ruhashya, Rwaniro and Kinazi. Its members, who generally neighbour each other, totalled 38, at the time of the investigations. They include both genocide survivors and their family members (nine), and genocide perpetrators and their family members (29), and were constituted of 28 females and 10 males. Members generally weave baskets from Monday to Friday, from 08:00 until 15:00, sitting together either under the same roof of the cooperative's office-house or outside of it, under a large tree. It also often happens that when they have an important or urgent command they weave the baskets together, during the day and night. They share whatever they have prepared in the way of food and drink, and when tired, they sleep in the same area, as they have beds reserved for this purpose in the office-house of their cooperative.

It is also worth emphasizing that Peace basket cooperative created other associations of basket weavers, as its branches⁵² in the southern province, although the latter have not yet been granted a legal status of cooperatives. Members of Peace basket cooperative are also constantly invited to teach other people how to weave baskets and to form similar organizations throughout the country.

5.2. Respondents

This study's case involved two categories of respondents. Members of Peace basked cooperatives, on the one hand, and non-members (individuals who are not its members, yet are living in the same neighbourhood as its members), on the other. Each of these two categories of respondents involved genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. In this regard, data were collected from the total of *38 cooperative members*, of whom 9 belonged to the group of genocide survivors, while 29 belonged to the group of former genocide perpetrators and their family members. They were subject to one group interview (given that they form one group of weavers seated together), as well as individual interviews. In addition, data were collected from *12 non-members* (four male and eight female), of whom five belonged to the category of genocide survivors, while seven included former genocide perpetrators and their family members, and were all subject to individual interviews. It is recalled that respondents included non-members in order to control the information provided by cooperative members for data validity. In total, data were collected from *50 respondents* (16 males and 34 females).

5.3. Field visit

The visit began on the afternoon of Tuesday, 4th March 2008, with the researcher's visit to the home of the president of Peace basket cooperative. The purpose and relevance of the

⁵² Peace basket cooperative now has many branches (associations) in the country's southern province, which are now in the process of operating as cooperatives. Peace basket members are also being requested by the MINICOM- the Ministry in charge of supervising cooperatives to train other people in weaving baskets, throughout the country.

study was presented, and the president of the cooperative approved the researcher's visit to the cooperative, and interviewing of members, the following day.

The first visit to the cooperative occurred on Wednesday, 5th March, when the researcher met with members gathered while weaving baskets. On following days, the researcher attended their everyday gatherings. Individual interviews commenced on Thursday, 6th March. Personal interviews were always preceded by, and ended, with general discussions with all members while sitting together. The interviews served as the main data collection method, in addition to which field notes were taken throughout the interviews process. No separate groups were formed for interviews since cooperative members always weave their baskets while sitting together as one group. Chatting with them as a group (one group interview), while weaving their baskets, thus proved to be the most effective data collection method available. The daily personal interviews were conducted with from four and up to seven individuals. While the tape recorder was always used during individual interviews, it was only used occasionally during the casual group discussions, and only when it was really necessary and practicable. The tape recorder was thus mostly used during individual interviews, given that its use during group discussions (members seated together as one group while weaving baskets) was found to be somewhat disturbing the natural flow of conversations. With regard to non-members, individual interviews were conducted in their respective homes. Reaching them was done in a snowball method. Some cooperative members introduced the researcher to some of their neighbours who were not members of Peace basket cooperative. The latter, in turn, indicated other non-members, and so on. Individual interviews, for both cooperative members and non-members, lasted for an average of one hour. The fieldwork covered the months of March and April 2008.

As with the first case (Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, discussed in chapter 4) there is a need to provide baseline data regarding the nature of relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative, as well as the reasons behind their membership of it. The purpose is to know whether they became members of the cooperative after their relationships had already been restored or prior to that, and whether there is a connection between these relationships and the various motives behind their membership of it.

5.4. Conflicting parties' relationships prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative

Because of genocide; you know that there are people whose family members have been killed and the others who were involved in those killings. So, these two categories of people could not talk to each other after genocide! There was fear and suspicion that each group will kill the other! Who could trust the other? Hatred was everywhere. (Int.48)

As emphasized in the above statement of a 29-year-old widow-family member of former genocide perpetrators, data generally indicate that the relationships between conflicting parties, prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative, were characterized by negative and hostile attitudes towards one another. Despite the possibility that other mechanisms could have impacted on their relationships (churches, government-initiated projects, etc.), this was not found to be the case, since the Peace basket cooperative was

created in 1997 when the wounds consequent to the genocide were still fresh. As data indicate, the negative and hostile attitudes and behaviours characterizing conflicting parties, before their membership of Peace basket cooperative, include division and absence of communication, fear, suspicion and consequently mistrust, as well as anger and hatred.

5.4.1. Division and absence of communication

As data generally indicate, the post-genocide period was characterized by a division between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative. Consequently, the possibility of contact and, eventually, communication between them was absent, and whenever contact was unavoidable, conversations were only scornful or insulting. This fact was perceived by the respondents as “one of the regrettable relational problems consequent to the genocide” (int.51). In general, after the genocide, “none [from the two groups] could talk to each other” (int.55), “or come near the other” (int.63). As pointed out above, even when the sides would meet, scornful and insulting expressions such as “you killers!”, “you killed my family”, “you imprisoned my family!”, “don’t look at me!” were a norm of relationships (group-chat int.).⁵³ Therefore, with the absence of contact and consequently the cut-off of the communication between conflicting parties, truth telling about what happened during genocide was impossible. In this regard, the president of Peace basket cooperative, a 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and a 29-year-old widow-family member of former genocide perpetrators, state, respectively:

There was complete division between us. They had killed ours badly. I did not even want to see them! We could not communicate of course. Of course I wanted to know how my family members were massacred; who killed them and where they have been thrown! But I am telling you, when they saw me they all fled! I was afraid too! No, you can’t know the truth if people who have to tell the truth are running away from you. Can you know the truth without talking to them? (Int.78)

Of course communication was impossible. Eh! When we caught sight of [genocide] survivors, we hid! How to know the truth unless we meet and talk? It was impossible! Who do you think wanted to be killed or be put in prison that time? None. Fear was everywhere. (Int.48)

Individual interviews with non-members, from both conflicting parties, also maintain that after the genocide, people were so divided that two camps were created immediately: genocide perpetrators and genocide survivors, and their respective family members. Non-members also emphasized that one of the unfortunate consequences of such a division was the impossibility for the sides to communicate positively (int.79-90). Division, and consequently the absence of communication, between conflicting parties went hand in hand with a number of other relational problems (notably fear, as emphasized in the second statement above).

⁵³ *Group-chat int.* refers to the group discussion interviews.

5.4.2. Fear, suspicion and mistrust

After the genocide! Oh! Before my membership of this cooperative! It was catastrophic. Things were very bad! Oh! Fear, my God! Oho! Oh! Oh! So much fear! For instance, when you caught sight of someone [survivor], you had to hide from him. Either in your house or in a bush, wherever you could find as a hiding place you had to go. (Int.59)

I am telling you the truth, when you could catch sight of a genocide survivor; I am not lying you; you could feel your heart is gone! And you could say, 'It is over', I am dead. Yes we were afraid and suspected that they [survivors] could revenge. None who is not a survivor could trust them [survivors]. (Int.64)

As emphasized in the above statements of, respectively, the 42-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and the 46-year-old female-former genocide perpetrator (the vice-president of Peace basket cooperative), fear and, consequently, suspicion and mistrust also characterized the relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative. Respondents' general contention in this regard was that everybody was afraid and suspicious towards one another. Not only were former genocide perpetrators and/or their family members afraid and suspicious of, and consequently distrusting, genocide survivors and their family members; but also the latter were also afraid of, suspected and distrusted the former. The scenario was thus reciprocal. Other illustrative testimonies begin with the experiences and perceptions of genocide survivors. The personal interview with the initiator and president of Peace basket cooperative—the 64-year-old widow whose large family was killed during the genocide—is insightful. She states:

When I came out of my hiding place, I decided to go back home and ensure myself about what happened to my husband, my children, and my whole family. But when I got near my village, fear caught me! Yes, because I had realized that most of people, in my village, who were catching sight of me were running away! My fear increased; I am telling you! They fled! My son, I was afraid! Eh! But do you imagine, to just get out from the car and everybody runs away! They knew me! And I knew them too because they were my neighbours! Of course I found that my family had been massacred. I was overwhelmed by fear. I then decided to go back. But fear! I was thinking that they [those who had fled] will come back with the machetes and kill me also. So in that period, I had become mad; I was like a foolish. I was considering everybody I saw there as a killer. But now you see, because of this cooperative I am together with some of those people whom I was afraid of and who were running away from me! Ten years have now passed. Amazing, isn't it? (Int.78)

The above statement illustrates how the 64-year-old widow-survivor, now president of Peace basket cooperative, was afraid of people of her village whom she considered as killers, and suspected as potential killers. The statement also describes that the same people were afraid at the sight of the widow-genocide survivor. It is worth emphasizing that some of the people whom the 64-year-old-genocide survivor was afraid of are now, together with her, members of Peace basket cooperative.

In connection with the above, other illustrative testimonies from other members of Peace basket cooperative, from both sides of the conflict, are worth putting in order to

deepen understanding. Most of their contentions point to the ‘mother’ to refer the above-mentioned 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor whom almost former genocide perpetrators in the village were afraid of. Former genocide perpetrators and their family members were afraid of her not because she was hateful or mean, but rather, they were afraid because they feared that she would revenge her family’s murders, either by killing in return or causing them to be imprisoned, given that many had participated in the extermination of her family members, as well as in the looting and destruction of her family’s property (group-chat int.). It is in this regard that a 21-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators and a 43-year-old female-genocide perpetrator, who was imprisoned for five years and was later released after confessing, testified, respectively:

You see that mother; after the genocide; you see; her family was massacred and her house destroyed, and her property looted. She was left alone because, luckily, she was not in her home during genocide. But I am telling you when she came, everybody who caught sight of her fled and hid. People were afraid because they thought that she will bring the military and revenge. But she was also afraid! Imagine you come and you see people are fleeing from you! It was a problem, isn’t it? (Int.49)

After the genocide! We were very afraid of that mother; but she was also afraid of us. Catching sight of her, a bit far, we had to run away; even after [some days], when for instance I could come from this side [showing her left side] and catch sight of her in front of me, I had to quickly run and find where to hide myself. I couldn’t get near her though we were neighbours. When I could catch sight of her; ha ha ha! Fear! And I said to myself: that one! She will kill me when I will get nearby; simply because I am a *Hutu*. (Int.61)

The above accounts, show that not only were former genocide perpetrators and their family members afraid of the ‘mother’ in the village in question, but also fear, suspicion and distrust were generalized in the region opposing genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. As both sides of the conflict argued, in general, genocide survivors and their family members were afraid of the renewal of massacres (or other forms of killings) by former genocide perpetrators, while the latter and their family members were also afraid of being killed or imprisoned in the form of revenge by genocide survivors. A 34-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators states:

After the genocide! Oh! Actually, in our village, it is a place where many people died during the genocide. Almost nothing left. So, when you could catch sight of a genocide survivor, you only tried to find somewhere to hide; like here behind the door, and he passes. Me, the reason why I was afraid is that I thought that genocide survivors will revenge by killing us. (Int.57)

Fear and, consequently, suspicion led to the loss of trust between conflicting parties. It is in this regard that both a 29-year-old single female-family member of former genocide perpetrators and a 28-year-old female-genocide survivor whose entire family was killed stated, respectively:

How can you trust people you can't even talk to? We were all afraid, even [genocide] survivors. The only thing that we knew is that they [genocide survivors] will revenge by killing us. So no trust was there. (Int.48)

Trust that time? We had lost trust because they killed ours. Eh! Who could think that they stopped their killings? Trust! No trust was there. It was only fear. (Int.60)

With regard to non-members, the perceptions of both sides of the conflict maintained that fear, suspicion and distrust are among the relational problems that characterized conflicting parties after the genocide. For example, both a 53-year-old widow-genocide survivor, and a 60-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, stated, respectively:

In our village, after genocide! Generally our relationships were very bad because we were afraid that they will kill us again; actually suspicion; we suspected each other; there was so much fear. And do not talk of trust; it was not there. I am telling you that the world had ended. Even these members of Peace basket were like that. None talked to the other before [their membership of the cooperative]. We know them no! Some are our neighbours; others are our family members. (Int.85)

After the genocide! There was suspicion because there are those who killed people and those who were imprisoned while they have done nothing. Everybody was afraid as we suspected to be imprisoned also. Things were very bad in this village, and that is true, people were put in prison every day without having even conducted investigations first. Didn't you meet with them in that [Peace basket] cooperative? They are there together; they changed; they will tell you how they were before [their membership of Peace basket cooperative]. (Int.87)

All of the above accounts illustrate how fear, and consequently suspicion and mistrust, characterized the relationships between conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—before their membership of Peace basket cooperative. In addition to these negative features, hostility, manifested in anger and hatred among conflicting parties, was also present.

5.4.3. Anger and hatred

In addition to fear, suspicion, and distrust, respondents' accounts also emphasized anger and hatred as other relational problems between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative. Illustrative testimonies concern the respective accounts, below, of two genocide survivors: 28-year-old and 25-year-old orphan females, as well as a 60-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators:

Truly after the genocide, when we passed, we could not look at them [former genocide perpetrator of their family members]. Even whoever attempted to come home, I could not open the door for him because of what they have done to us [killing theirs]. Just looking at him, I was full of anger. I hated them to the extent that I even wanted all of them to die also. I was extremely wicked. I could not tolerate to see anyone of those people. (Int.60)

Of course when we met, none could greet the other. Actually, if we have had means we would have killed them [former genocide perpetrator of their family members]. Me too, I was thinking like that of course because I have none left in my family, all have been killed by them! (Int.55)

That is true, they [genocide survivors] hated us but we also hated them. They were considering all of us, I mean *Hutu*, as killers while it was not the case. Not every *Hutu* killed, you know that, no! (Int.87)

The above statements exemplifies members' accounts on how genocide survivors, who "had gone like mad" (int.50, 60), were angry towards, and hated, former genocide perpetrators and their family members. Likewise, non-members, not only emphasized fear, suspicion and mistrust, but they also underscored anger and hatred, as the relational problems between conflicting parties, prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative (int.79-90). An illustrative testimony is the account of a 38-year-old widow-genocide survivor, who stated:

Yes, we know them because they are our neighbours; they were like us. They were also afraid and hated each other. Some are our family members; we know that they were also afraid and animals like us; but because they know how to weave baskets they joined that cooperative. They are together now. (Int.87)

All of the above accounts show that the relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative were negative. These relationships were characterized by division and the absence of communication, and by fear, suspicion, and mistrust, as well as anger and hatred. Yet, some of the people (conflicting parties) whose relationships were negative are now members of the same cooperative—Peace basket. It is therefore paramount to know whether their membership of the cooperative was motivated by a desire to restore these negative relationships before considering the cooperative's impact in this regard.

5.5. Reasons behind conflicting parties' membership of Peace basket cooperative

Why did people, from both sides of the conflict, form or join Peace basket cooperative? This question seeks to understand whether the reason(s) behind conflicting parties' membership of the cooperative relate to their previous negative relationships, which serves as a base for further investigations about the nature of the impact of Peace basket cooperative on their relationships. Non-members also expressed the reasons behind their non-membership of the cooperative. As data indicate, two main reasons are argued to have prompted conflicting parties' membership of Peace basket cooperative: the desire to *fight against poverty*, on the one hand, and to *alleviate loneliness*, on the other, rather than a desire to restore their relationships. These issues are explored below.

5.5.1. Fighting against poverty

As findings indicate, the fight against poverty was the main reason that prompted the members of Peace basket cooperative to form or join their cooperative. In this regard, the

fight against poverty was also designated or explained, by some respondents, as to develop (int.56), to increase income (earning money), to satisfy personal socio-economic needs (int.52, 57, 67, 68), or to improve living conditions (int.76). Reference was mainly to the satisfaction of basic physiological needs, such as food, clothing, medicines, shelter, and other livelihood basic needs (such as children's school fees). For example, the youth interviewed had failed to join schools or had dropped their studies because of a lack of ability to fund tuition fees and other required material and equipments, and therefore they believed and expected to get money (earn income) from Peace basket cooperative in order to sustain themselves and their families. It is in this regard that a 21-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 28-year-old female-genocide survivor, stated, respectively:

The reason why I joined others is that actually this cooperative is important for me because I have not been able to go further with my studies due to poverty. So I came [in the cooperative] in order to develop; to get money and to reduce poverty in my family, and also at least pay the school fees for my little siblings. (Int. 48)

It is actually this [Peace] basket cooperative, which makes us live; it feeds us and one can now buy clothes. You see, after genocide I was left alone. It was difficult to survive because I had gone mad. But this cooperative is giving me money; I buy everything I need. Now my living conditions are improved. I am not poor, you see me no! (Int.60)

In addition to people's membership of Peace basket cooperative with a desire to reduce poverty and thus improve their living conditions (a material motive), their desire to alleviate individual loneliness was also emphasized. The latter motive was, however, given a lesser weight in comparison with the former (material) reason.

5.5.2. Alleviating loneliness

The secondary reason behind conflicting parties' membership of Peace basket cooperative concerns their desire to alleviate loneliness. In their explanations, living in loneliness without anyone to meet with and talk to or converse with was problematic, and even unbearable. The desire was thus to also meet with other people (int. 59, 78). For example, the initiator and now president of Peace basket cooperative—a 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor—and a 49-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, accounted, respectively:

When I initiated the idea of this cooperative, of course I wanted to re-launch the work of weaving basket and earn income as it was before; but I also wanted to alleviate my loneliness given that I couldn't survive while living alone. Loneliness is dangerous! (Int.78)

I joined this cooperative because I had a problem that I wanted to solve: two problems actually. First and foremost I wanted to fight against poverty. I was very poor. But in addition, I was living in loneliness. My husband was in prison and I have no children. Imagine being alone at home without meeting with others and at least converse! It was very bad! (Int.58)

From the above, fighting against poverty and loneliness thus stood as the main reasons that prompted Peace basket cooperative members to form or join their cooperative. But what are the reasons behind other people's non-membership of Peace basket cooperative, while they live in neighbourhood with its members? In fact, non-members emphasised three main reasons for their non-membership of Peace basket cooperative. The first was the fact that they do not know how to weave a basket. The second reason was their lack of time, due to occupation in other daily activities. The third reason was related to ignorance of the importance of the cooperative on people's lives. In this regard, illustrative examples, in the testimonies of a 36-year-old female-genocide survivor and a 58-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators, are worth providing. They state, respectively:

I did not actually join Peace basket cooperative because I do not know how to weave baskets, but I would love to. May be I will join other cooperatives. Actually I was busy with other activities, but definitely I will also join cooperatives; may be not this one [Peace basket], but others, so that I can also fight against poverty and be near others. (Int.80)

Oh, me! Sincerely, I didn't know how cooperatives are important. I was thinking that they were like before [the genocide]. I was a member that time but I am telling you, the money was consumed by people who were educated. Nowadays, may be they have changed. But Peace basket! Oh! Its members are rich. If I don't join it I will join another cooperative because I don't think that I have that talent of weaving baskets. (Int.89)

Considering all the above contentions, it follows that people from both sides of the conflict formed or joined Peace basket cooperative in order to satisfy individual and material needs; that is, to fight against poverty and to alleviate loneliness, instead of desiring to restore their previously-mentioned negative relationships. The question is now how their cooperative impacts or impacted on these relationships—either in restoring or exacerbating them.

5.6. Peace basket cooperative and conflicting parties' relationships

Oh, so much! This cooperative came as a solution to those problems among us after the genocide. (Int.73)

My son, this cooperative is very important for all of us; the killers and us. Ask them, they will tell you. Our relationships? Yoyoyoyo! It restored everything! We told you that before, no! Before, none could look at each other, but now see! We are together, and you are asking whether it had done anything? If it brought us together we survivors and those killers, and that we now live convivially, what do you want me to say, you son? It made it! (Int.78)

As the previous developments indicated, post-genocide relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative were characterized by division and the absence of communication, fear and suspicion, as well as hostility manifested in anger and hatred. Therefore, whether and how this cooperative deals with these relational problems is what this section is focused on.

In connection with the above statements of respectively the 23-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and the president of the cooperative—a 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor, data indicate that Peace basket cooperative impacted positively on these relational problems. A hindrance in this regard has however also been emphasized. But in general, when asked whether Peace basket cooperative impacted or impacts on its members-conflicting parties' previously mentioned relational problems, all cooperative members expressed amazement at the question. They actually wondered why such a question was asked, while the answer to it “is obvious in the eyes of everyone” (group-chat int.). According to the respondents, a simple observation of members from both sides of the conflicting sitting and weaving baskets together, and spending many nights together sleeping in the same accommodation, would have made the answer to the question clear and obvious (ibid). Illustrative testimonies state the respective accounts of the president of Peace basket cooperative (the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor), and its vice-president (a 46-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator who was released from prison after confessing). They stated:

Oh! Actually it is not bad to ask such a question; but also I think you ask this question just to ask it [while smiling]; but you see us yourself! You, yourself, are a witness now! We are seated together no! Both survivors, those who sinned and who repented, their children; we are all here together conversing with you! So conclude by yourself! [all burst into a loud laugh]. Our cooperative! Its role is obvious to everybody; it reunited us; can't you see that yourself! (Group-chat int.)

Peace basket! It is really a Peace basket; I can't make it a secret. You can't even ask me whether I believe in that or not; I am fully convinced because I saw what it has done for me. You see everybody here is like my sibling; they are actually my siblings. I couldn't imagine whether I could talk to people again considering what I have done [killings]. It is simply a miracle. (Int.64)

On the basis of the above, the impact of Peace basket cooperative on its members-conflicting parties' relationships is now explored. Cooperative members talked of division, fear, suspicion, mistrust, anger and hatred, on the one hand—which were ultimately overcome—and on the other, communication and conviviality (close friendship and mutual support)—which were ultimately nurtured and improved.

5.6.1. Breaking down division and discrimination

Peace basket cooperative! Yooo! At least for us, cooperative members, division came to halt. This cooperative truly brought people together again. After genocide! Oh! People were completely divided. Bringing them together seemed to be a dream. But our cooperative really brought them together. I am telling you. Watch that yourself. We are always seated together here. (Int.78)

As it appears in the above statement, one of the most important things Peace basket cooperative has done, and still does, in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, was and is to break down the division between conflicting parties by bringing them together. As cooperative members held, conflicting parties were enabled to come together because Peace basket cooperative was created under the non-discriminatory principle. Members held that

only individuals who wanted to form or join voluntarily could come. People were encouraged to join. Individuals who did not come had their own reasons, notably the fact that they belonged to other cooperatives or associations, or that they did not know how to weave baskets (group-chat int.). Bringing together conflicting parties, without discrimination, was thus argued to be the first positive impact of Peace basket cooperative as far as conflicting parties' previous relational problems are concerned. In this regard, a contention of the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and president of Peace basket cooperative appears to deepen understanding:

Let me tell you; it [the cooperative] helped genocide survivors; Eh! You must know that. This [Peace basket] basket cooperative brought together the killers [former genocide perpetrators] who have been released from prisons and those whose family members have been killed, starting from me [genocide survivor]. It actually brought together each category of Rwandans and it brought all of them back to the normal life; I think that this is, in short, the story you wanted to know about. (Int.78)

The above accounts were also maintained by other cooperative members, in the example of a 45-year-old female and a 21-year-old young male, both family members of former genocide perpetrators. They stated, respectively:

Truly, this cooperative broke down those divisions. Whoever comes in this cooperative is received warmly. It is not because they can't do otherwise [when they become members], no. For instance, this cooperative enabled me to get to this mother who is a [genocide] survivor, and it enabled the contact between me and her. You see, we are all laughing; all of us here! But it is because there is a thing, which brought us together and united us! It is this [Peace] basket cooperative! For example, when we get money we all go, together, and eat and drink and rejoice, together. (Int.62)

Although I was still a small child during the genocide, I could see people fleeing, people being put in prison, others being killed. So I knew that people were divided. So, the importance of the [Peace] basket has been that both those whom theirs have been killed and those who killed were brought together and weave baskets together; they become united. (Int.49)

In connection with the above accounts, the general expression among cooperative members interviewed was that the cooperative "brought us together", "broke down divisions" and "united us". They liked their cooperative simply because it enabled them to get together and that, apart from the money they earned from it, meeting with others and conversing, was also an important and particular thing which makes them happier (int. 52, 55, 60, 62, 65).

In addition, as cooperative members held, and as pointed out earlier, Peace basket cooperative brought conflicting parties together, given that it was created under an inclusive principle. Illustrative statements, in this regard, are the respective accounts of the 35-year-old male and 28-year-old female, both family members of former genocide perpetrators, and a 28-year-old orphan female-genocide survivor:

This cooperative does not discriminate, no ethnic discrimination. All categories are in it, be they *Twa*, *Hutu*, or *Tutsi*; be they [genocide] survivors or killers [genocide perpetrators]; all are in this cooperative, and there is no problem. (Int.53)

It [the cooperative] brought us together without discrimination, as all ethnic groups. If you are interested in those things of ethnicity, you will find everybody here; we are together, none relies on those divisions of survivors or killers. We got together in order to weave baskets, get money and live convivially, no way to go back to divisions again. (Int.65)

When I see what happened [genocide], I could not think that people will get together again. But when I arrived in this cooperative, I found a different picture; none bends in these ethnic characteristics anymore or use them to harm the other; for example say, 'this one is a genocide survivor, or this one has a family member in prison; so we cannot sit together'; no, we are one; there is no discrimination. These bad things came to halt because we met in this cooperative. (Int.60)

In line with the above contentions, data indicate that after conflicting parties' contact in Peace basket cooperative, working together thus became an opportunity for effective communication among them. The next section examines ways in which this communication takes place.

5.6.2. Fostering positive communication

Truly, a person who didn't converse with his father cannot know what his grand father said. (Int.59)

Sincerely speaking, I am telling you the truth, anyone who would like to talk of good things of this basket [cooperative], day and nights can pass, as that song reads. But I thank God that this [Peace] basket cooperative enabled me to get into contact with other people and converse with them; they all now come to our home and we chat, we sing, we laugh, and when there is food, we share; and this really soothes my heart. This is what I was actually lacking in my traumatism. Those conversations soothe my mind and my heart. (Int.60)

In line with the above statements of, respectively, a 42-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 28-year-old female and genocide survivor, findings indicate that not only did Peace basket enable the contact between conflicting parties, but it also fostered positive communication among them. As respondents held, conversations take place during their interactions, either when they are seated together while weaving baskets, or during scheduled meetings, training sessions and during convivial parties.

Earlier, it has been seen that prior to conflicting parties' membership of Peace basket cooperative, communication between them was generally absent, and that even when it was inevitable, it was scornful and insulting. The above testimonies emphasize the impact of Peace basket cooperative in fostering positive communication among conflicting parties. Other illustrative accounts are the statements of a 28-year-old orphan female-genocide survivor, a 24-year-old single female, and a 17-year-old single male; the latter two being family members of former genocide perpetrators. They held, respectively:

This cooperative enables good conversations. I mean conversations which soothe one's mind. We are always reminded that we are equal. We called it a 'basket of peace' because it really became a peace basket; it helped us to talk to each other again,

a thing which was like a dream. Conversations here soothe our minds because we discuss our problems and understand each other. If one understands you problems you feel soothed no! (Int.59)

I am telling you; although we took refuge when I was still a kid, I saw people killing each other. I could not therefore imagine that peace will come back again, and that neighbours could talk to each other again; but now you can watch it yourself, the [Peace] basket cooperative enabled that. (Int.51)

I can't get out of this cooperative. Getting out of it! I will be going where? Where I reside, there is no people with whom I leave. This cooperative makes me happy; I converse with people; I can't have any problem. Have you ever heard about that [the problems]? We, all, sit together and weave baskets while conversing. Can you imagine, I am young but the cooperative considers all of us as equal! Actually, I don't have words in which to express that. (Int.74)

From the above, an important point to note is that the communication in question is not just simple communication, but positive communication, which "soothes cooperative members' minds and hearts" (int.59). A best illustrative example is provided by a 28-year-old female-genocide survivor, whose entire family was killed during the genocide, and who is now taken care of by the president of Peace basket cooperative. Her first contention was presented above in the second of the leading statements. During individual interview, she emphasized that after the genocide, she got traumatized and that despite four years of intervention by trauma counsellors (in various trauma centres), she could not recover. However, when she was invited by her care-giver in 1999 (the president of the cooperative) to join Peace basket cooperative, the daily contacts and conversations with cooperative members soothed her trauma, and she began to recover. Since then (1999), as she holds, her trauma healed. Her trauma healed little by little, whenever cooperative members, who had taken part in the killing of her family, expressed remorse and repented. This was also facilitated by the intervention of other genocide survivors, and members of the same cooperative, who always encouraged her to ease her anger, as the former had also eased theirs and had forgiven the former genocide perpetrators (int.60). Her testimony reads:

For example me, I got traumatized after the genocide, but I am telling you that everything started to cool down when I joined this cooperative. Whenever I could come and stay together with cooperative members, talking with them, winking at each other, discussing everything, my burden of traumatism and that of being an orphan soothed. You see, former killers are in the cooperative, but they had come to me and repented. When they saw me, most of them were in tears again, and I became overwhelmed with pity; then I told them that there is no problem; conversations started and they repented again. Telling you all my experience can take many hours. But what I am telling you is that, being with them every day, singing with them together, laughing with them together; Eh, even other survivors were happy; so I started to be a human a gain. Other survivors also encouraged me to ease my anger as they did. Now I am fine. They are helping me now. I am telling you, whenever I am with cooperative members while weaving baskets, including those who exterminated my family, I feel some peace of mind, I feel soothed. Even people who were afraid of me no longer do so. I have no problem now. Witnessing them repenting while sitting together is the first thing that healed me. But I am telling you; what I was happy with is that this soothed my heart and my whole body felt soothed. I was brought to various

centres for trauma but it didn't work; but in this cooperative, it worked. The more I talk and converse with the members of peace basket cooperative, the more I feel soothed. (Int.60)

Not only were genocide survivors' minds soothed through their membership of Peace basket cooperative. This was also the case for the former genocide perpetrators and their family members, as exemplified by a 28-year-old female whose sister and brother were imprisoned, and a 22-year-old single female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, respectively:

When I am with others in the cooperative, when we converse, when we wink at each other, when we sing, I feel happiness. This cooperative gives me peace of mind. In few words, I am calm; it gives me peace together with people whom we are together. (Int.65)

In this cooperative, we even discuss what is not going well between ourselves; we discuss that. This basket builds; it doesn't destroy; because you, all the time, converse together and you feel it is joyful. (Int.75)

In addition to the above accounts, cooperative members held that in their conversations they had no intrigues or dishonesty; they understand each other, as notably put forward by a 25-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 20-year-old female-family member of genocide survivors. They stated, respectively:

In this cooperative! We live together affably; like the way you see us together today; watch yourself how people are laughing! We understand each other! We live convivially! The basket [cooperative] removed misunderstandings. (Int.63)

Yes, we do that. We actually discuss everything. We don't leave anything behind. At the beginning we used to discuss why we were divided; and they [members] said; 'let peace be among us now'; so all these things of ethnicity! Never! We discussed that and concluded that they divided us and that the genocide was their consequences. Now we no longer talk of those so much because we became like one. (Int.50)

Although, as pointed out previously, conversations take place all the time when members meet, while weaving baskets, or when they have training sessions or during convivial ceremonies, cooperative members held that 'soothing' conversations mainly take place when they are seated together while weaving baskets and during convivial parties. This is the time for them to chat, rejoice and deeply discuss everything, notably the relational consequences of the 1994 genocide—discussions in which everyone looks back and compares his or her past to how far he or she is now (int.52). These conversations enable conflicting parties to overcome harmful thoughts little by little, as a 28-year-old female-genocide survivor whose whole family was killed, stated:

Yes bad thoughts of course fade away. A bad thought! You can't keep it while in this cooperative given that none in the cooperative will be supporting you. We hiss each other, we love each other. This cooperative! It gives me peace. (Int.67)

In addition, as the data indicate, the fallout of positive or ‘soothing’ communication between conflicting parties consequently enabled them to overcome their harmful thoughts, and hostile attitudes and behaviours.

5.6.3. Overcoming fear and suspicion

[After the genocide] I was afraid because I recalled what happened [genocide] and thought that this will happen again. But after I joined this cooperative, I found a different picture; we are all together, none is afraid of the other; but rather we are friends. After the genocide, there was suspicion; some would see you and begin to question and ask themselves whether you are a *Hutu* or... But in this cooperative, those things passed. We all help each other in weaving our baskets; no time for those bad things. (Int.51)

The above statement of a 24-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators illustrates the impact of Peace basket cooperative with regard to how conflicting parties’ reciprocal fear and suspicion were overcome, in the aftermath of the genocide. Cooperative members share that “conflicting parties managed to live together convivially without suspicion”, and that they “overcame fear from each other”, given that “none sees the other in terms of division or discrimination of the kind of ‘killer’ or ethnic group” (int.48-78). In this regard, a 43-year-old male, a 34-year-old widow and a 29-year-old female, all family members of former genocide perpetrators, accounted, respectively:

People who were afraid of survivors found themselves working together with them with the same objective, and they overcame their fear toward each other; they talk to each other, they share the good they have [drinks and food] and hardship while striving together to reduce poverty. (Int.61)

That time [after genocide], when you could see someone you had to hide, even that person you would be hiding from also hide from you. But with this cooperative, you can see it yourself! It is not easy to explain this to you, it is beyond our understanding. If I recall how we were hiding from each other and that now how we are working together and united, it becomes impossible to be explained to you! This [Peace] basket! It is really a Peace basket. When we got together! Even the person who was afraid came out and joined us. (Int.57)

You see, after genocide, I was afraid; whenever I was seeing survivors, I had to flee and hide from them [while smiling], but after I joined this cooperative and lived together with others, above all survivors, fear disappeared. I have no problem now. We live convivially. (Int.48)

However, as the findings indicate, a nuance has been underscored by a 29-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators:

Of course membership of the cooperative does not mean that all the problems stop automatically. It takes time of course. However, the more you work together convivially and talk to each other, you see that it is quite different from seeing a person and flee! In this cooperative we meet, we talk to each other, we discuss things

in a soothing way, and we advise each other. Of course those problems of fear cool down little by little. (int.48)

The above statements state that evolution from fear and suspicion to friendly or ‘convivial’ relationships is a process, which takes time and happens little by little, rather than being automatic. It is in the same way that, as cooperative members held, Peace basket cooperative also enabled conflicting parties to overcome anger and hatred towards each other.

5.6.4. Overcoming anger and hatred

Me, I have none left in my family; all of them have been killed [during the genocide]. But nowadays, because of this cooperative, which enabled me to work together and converse everyday with others including those who exterminated my family, I no longer hate them. What I am telling you is true, this [Peace] basket! I love it. (Int.55)

In connection with the above statement of a 20-year-old single female-genocide survivor, whose entire family was killed during the genocide, findings indicate that not only did Peace basket help people to overcome reciprocal fear and suspicion, but they also overcame anger and hatred towards each other. Other illustrative testimonies follow, beginning with genocide survivors, notably the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and president of Peace basket cooperative. She states:

Former killers who are at least members of this cooperative changed, and I can testify that. Do you get me? Not only we are members of the same cooperative, but also they are the one who support us in everything. So, because they changed, you too, the anger you had toward them cools down little by little. Actually all of these members you see over there the majority are former killers. But we are together, they are changing little by little; and we also are changing; no anger or any fear; they became our new brothers and sisters [burst of laughing]. That is what you wanted to know about no! (Int.78)

In the same way, another genocide survivor, the 28-year-old female, whose entire family was killed, and who had been traumatized after the genocide, as presented above, stated:

Truly after the genocide, we were animals; we were beasts. I hated the *Hutu* in general and especially those who exterminated my family. But I am truly telling you, because of this [Peace] basket cooperative all of these things of hatred and anger came to halt; they have been uprooted from me. Actually, me, I have no words of expressing that; you can’t understand that, may be. It is not easy to express how this [Peace] basket changed me. I am telling you the truth that after we met with people who killed ours, we[genocide survivors] became very happy because, before [membership of the cooperative], my heart was heavy, full of hatred; but I am telling you that every day, my heart get soothed little by little, as I feel a fog of hopelessness and hatred is getting away from me; yes it is true, I hated them, but the more you get closer and get together and converse, the more hatred cools down, as they also repent and express sorrow. Repenting is just the minimum. (Int.60)

Bearing in mind the above statements of genocide survivors, how former genocide perpetrators and their family members view things become relevant. In fact, their

contentions support those made by the genocide survivors. They emphasize that because of 'positive' conversations in Peace basket cooperative, which led to the truth about what happened during the genocide, as well as repentance, they are now great friends of genocide survivors, and that reciprocal anger and hatred ceased. A 29-year-old female stated:

You see, in this cooperative we are close friends, we play friendly with everybody without distinction. Survivors love us; we live like siblings. Otherwise before our membership, everybody was in conflict with the other; but nowadays they no longer hate us; we also no longer hate survivors saying that they put ours in prison! No; by the way we are aware that ours sinned! (Int.48)

The above statement emphasizes friendship among Peace basket cooperative members, who were divided and hated each other before their membership of it. The friendship thus nurtured was designated under the concept of 'conviviality'.

5.6.5. Fostering conviviality among cooperative members

Peace basket cooperative brought us together; we work together and live convivially. All the categories of people are here; they are all my friends; they are always there to support me whenever I have a problem. I actually now trust them. We are united, and we are nowadays in the phase of teaching other people throughout the country. (Int.58)

You better stay with us and watch; we have boys, girls, those released from prison, survivors, all! Young people usually work everyday; we even have beds here! Yes, we sleep here sometimes when we have an urgent work (order placed); we cook and eat together without any problem. (Int.60)

Conviviality among cooperative members, characterized by *close friendship* and 'love', *unity*, and *trust*, as data indicate, were relational aspects reported to have been nurtured by Peace basket cooperative. This refers to the above contentions of a 49-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 28-year-old female and genocide survivor. As emphasized by cooperative members, conviviality among them develops and improves through daily 'soothing' conversations, and songs performed while weaving baskets, the mutual support of members' respective families, and through the sharing of food and drinks, and jokes either at work or during convivial festivals, parties, and other meetings. The researcher noted the joking conversation between the president of the cooperative (the widow-genocide survivor) and the vice-president of the cooperative (the former genocide perpetrator). The former was jokingly accusing the latter of having delayed presenting her new fiancée and obliging him to buy beer for that omission. The joke was completed with the widow's statement, while laughing: "Did you forget that I am your mother in law?" The researcher also noted members' relationships, during their convivial party, and particularly during the wedding ceremony of one of cooperative members (the 26-year-old orphan female and family member of former genocide perpetrators), in which the researcher participated. During this ceremony the president of the cooperative was the 'mother' (replacing her biological mother) of the girl in question, and the preparations as well as the leading of the wedding ceremonies were largely done by cooperative members. This appears to reflect cooperative members' statements, during group chat, of "we are one", "we are friends", "we live convivially", "we love each other", "we trust each other",

and “we help each other” (group-chat int.). In this regard, for example, the 20-year-old female-genocide survivor argued that “when one arrives in Peace basket cooperative, he immediately realises that people changed, as shown by members’ songs, jokes, and mutual support” (int.55). This also refers to what the 47-year-old, the 28-year-old and the 29-year-old females-family members of former genocide perpetrators, stated, respectively:

In a few words, Peace basket cooperative is a new family for all of us. All members help and rescue each other. Whenever there are weddings, for instance, cooperative members are the first to offer their support. (Int.56)

We, cooperative members, we are one. When for example we meet outside the cooperative, for example in the market, you better watch us hugging each other! Of course we hug other people too, but for cooperative members we hug each other differently! Because we are very close friends! Me, I actually compare that with students. You know how students hug each other when they meet, when they are in holidays! When they meet for example in the market, they form their own group. We also do the same. (Int.65)

In our cooperative, genocide survivors are there, others are there also including genocide perpetrators. When you help each other and share food, it is a good thing to me! It means that for example we, who are in this cooperative; you can see that we are completely different from non-members because they [non-members] are still afraid of genocide survivors, but we, we have been able to be with them, we talk to each other, we live convivially, and we don’t have any worry. (Int.48)

Conviviality among cooperative members thus led to understanding, notably by former genocide perpetrators, of the weight of harm that they caused. A testimony of the vice-president of Peace basket cooperative—a 46-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator, who was released from prison after confessing—illustrates:

I understand how evil I was when I see a survivor left alone while most of us still have some of our family members. I feel I can cry but when I remember that I also participated in the killings... what can I do? I repented but it is not enough even if they forgave me; unless I bring back their family members I killed, but it is impossible. It’s sad! (Int.64)

The following discussion concerns how non-members perceive the impact of Peace basket cooperative on their relationships. Despite some reservations by some non-members, who argued that they knew little about what is happening in Peace basket cooperative since they are not its members, non-members generally emphasized that Peace basket cooperative has a positive impact on conflicting parties’ relationships, as it brought them together, and that by working together in order to solve their common problem of poverty, they can live convivially (int.80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 89, 90). In this regard, the emphasis was, above all, put on the fact that Peace basket cooperative enables contact between conflicting parties. A 38-year-old widow-genocide survivor, and a 54-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators, stated, respectively:

I am not a member of this cooperative because I don’t know how to wave a basket; but I can tell you that Peace basket cooperative brought survivors and perpetrators

together. Everybody thought it was impossible, but we watch them; they are happy together in that cooperative. This is true. (Int.84)

I think they [cooperative members] discuss everything because one of them with whom we are in neighbourhood told me that they discuss all the problems related to genocide. Actually the fact that it brought together killers and survivors is enough. None could talk to the other before. I also watch them; they are friends. For example during convivial festivals, they invite us also; we go and drink and eat together, and we all dance together. Watching that is really wonderful. It is like a miracle; none could think that people could get together again and sing and dance. It is there [in convivial parties] that we see how convivial they are; we dance, we sing; and all 'ethnic' groups are always there. I think a cooperative can do a lot in reuniting people. (Int.81)

Considering the above contentions of members of Peace basket cooperative, and non-members, it appears that these respondents seem to only show a solely positive picture of the impact of the cooperative in question on conflicting parties' relationships. Yet not all is perfect; Peace basket cooperative is now facing a contextual problem, to which the next subsection turns.

5.7. An obstacle to the relational impact of Peace basket cooperative

We do not have any problem among ourselves. The only problem we have is to find the market for our products. It seems that the government does not even know us. We need to find the market for our basket. Didn't you see them filled in that room? We have no market nowadays. This is the big problem for us. (Group-chat int.)

As the data indicate, there are no perceived internal problems among members of Peace basket cooperative as far as members' relationships are concerned. What was found to be the heavy problem is contextual—the lack of a market for the baskets woven. This is what the above statement of the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor, and president of Peace basket cooperative, reported during group discussion interviewing. That there is lack of a market for the baskets woven by Peace basket cooperative members constitutes a big problem for the cooperative's success. During individual interviews, members' worries in this regard were expressed. Illustrative examples are the statements, respectively, of a 49-year-old female and a 34-year-old widow, both family members of former genocide perpetrators:

We are very happy in this cooperative, but nowadays we have a problem of where to sell our baskets. We try to comfort each other but the problem is there. Sometimes, we receive a command [order placed] and when we are about to send the baskets thus woven, we hear that the command is cancelled! Yet the baskets were already woven. Those who had given us the command always tell us that where they expected to send the baskets also cancelled their commands. So it is a problem. (Int.58)

What they told you is true, now we just weave without a command [order placed]. We just weave them and try to find the market after. But this is a problem because we have no fixed market. So, there is no assurance that what we wave will be sold. Yet our survival depends on baskets sold! We were happy because we were getting a lot of money from our baskets. We thought that we will continue to sell our baskets but now

you see no market. This is bad because there is a risk that we stop weaving other baskets. But we hope that things will be fine. (Int.57)

The above contentions show that although Peace basket cooperative members report that their cooperative impacted positively on their relationships, and that they weave their baskets together without internal problems, the fact of not having a stable market for their products constitutes a big problem, which is likely to impact negatively on their effectiveness and eventually their cooperative's future. This refers to the structural or economic context within which this cooperative operates, as will be discussed further in chapter 7.

5.8. Summary of the chapter

This chapter was aimed at exploring the study's first research question for the case of Peace basket cooperative; that is, Peace basket cooperative's impact on the relationships of its members, constituted of conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. As found, conflicting parties' relationships, prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative, were negative (characterized by division, lack of communication, fear, suspicion, mistrust, anger and hatred). Despite this, conflicting parties' membership of peace basket was in no way motivated by the desire to address these relational problems. They were motivated by the need to satisfy material (fighting against poverty) and individual (alleviating loneliness) motives. Yet, as found, their membership of this cooperative impacted positively on their relationships. Peace basket enabled them to, little by little, overcome their previous negative and hostile relationships (division, fear, suspicion, mistrust, anger and hatred), and move towards positive ones (positive communication and conviviality). The factors that led to such an impact were isolated, and are analyzed further in chapter 6. However, despite the positive impact of Peace basket cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships, this cooperative was found to be facing a big problem; that of finding a stable market for the baskets woven.

Factors behind the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee and Peace basket cooperatives on conflicting parties' relationships

This chapter aims to answer the study's second research question, which is closely interrelated with the first research question, analyzed in chapters 4 and 5 (and is actually an extension of it), for both cases of cooperatives studied, respectively. The first research question was concerned with the nature of the impact each cooperative studied had on its members-conflicting parties' relationships. The factors that thus led to that impact is what this chapter is aimed at analyzing. As will be discussed, these factors are closely interrelated, and overlap in many ways. As will also be discussed, and as appears to have been the case for first research question, the findings from both cases of cooperatives studied generally look similar and appear repetitive, which will be discussed in chapter 7. The chapter commences with the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative.

6.1. Case 1: Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative

In chapter four, data were analyzed regarding the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members-conflicting parties' relationships. It was found that members' relationships prior to their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee were negative—characterized by division and absence of communication, fear, suspicion, anger and hatred. This implies that conflicting parties' relationships were not yet restored before their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. It was also emphasized that conflicting parties' membership of this cooperative was not motivated by a desire to restore their relationships. The purpose behind their membership of it was rather to satisfy personal and material interests (alleviating poverty and loneliness). Nevertheless, it was found that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative impacted positively on conflicting parties relationships, as it enabled them to break down division, and overcome fear, suspicion, anger and hatred, while restoring positive communication and fostering conviviality. The question thus becomes the factors that led to such impacts. In this regard, it will be shown that a number of interrelated and overlapping factors contributed to the positive impacts of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on the relationships of its members-conflicting parties. It is first necessary to describe the ways in which Abahuzamugambi coffee is perceived by its members. As will be discussed, the ways in which members perceive their cooperative are generally connected with the factors that led to its impact on their relationships (analyzed in chapter 4).

6.1.1. Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative: an encounter, a (new) family and a school

This cooperative is an encounter between people who were divided. A person who is not a member of the cooperative or any association like this misses an encounter with others; he also misses a school because the cooperative; for instance like us who are its members, we have a school from which we learn a lot about our agricultural activities and our relationships. This is actually our new family; we advise each other. So, a non-member has no idea about all this; he is still lagging behind, and can even move backwards. (Int.14)

The above statement of a 36-year-old single male-former genocide perpetrator emphasizes three ways in which Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is generally perceived by its members: an *encounter*, a *family* (some spoke of a ‘new’ family) and a *school*. This threefold way of members’ perception of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative not only refers to ways in which the cooperative impacted on their relationships (as analyzed in chapter 4), but also to the factors behind that impact. It is necessary to first analyze cooperative members’ experiences and perceptions with regard to these three ways in which they perceive their cooperative.

Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, an encounter

The key concept that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members (from both conflicting parties) repeatedly underscored and insisted on is that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is an *encounter*, where “people who were divided after the genocide came into contact with each other” (intgr1-4) and that “contact between conflicting parties allows things to get to light” (ibid). As will be discussed further, this implies truth and hidden feelings and behaviours, which were reciprocally disclosed among cooperative members. Illustrative experiences and perceptions depicting Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative as an encounter are worth putting forward. In this regard, a statement of a genocide survivor, a 53-year-old widower, reads:

Actually, our cooperative is an encounter;⁵⁴ it is a thing that enabled people who were divided to get into contact. What I am saying is that it is an encounter; actually, much more things get to light because people got into contact. (Int.28)

Likewise, an experience of a 36-year-old single male-former genocide perpetrator, emphasizes how, as a perpetrator, Abahuzamugambi enabled him to get into contact with other people whom he was afraid of, while he had lost hope of that possibility considering his involvement in genocidal acts. He states:

When I was released from prison and joined this cooperative; this enabled me to get into contact with other people; and whenever we had meetings and discuss all the problems, I discovered that even people I thought that I cannot talk to were talking to me. When I asked a question and that these people answered it as if they have no problem with me, I really saw change. And even after they came to me, and we discussed everything. I am telling you, it was good, and I can witness that a

⁵⁴ By *encounter*, respondents refer to a space/place, where people meet/come into contact.

cooperative is a thing that enabled me to get into contact with people [genocide survivors] whom I was afraid of and who could also be afraid of me. (Int.14)

The ‘other people’ the single man refers to are genocide survivors and their family members, whom he was afraid of.

From the above, it follows that Abahuzamugambi is perceived by its members (conflicting parties) as an encounter. This underscores the importance of encounter/contact as a factor that has had an impact on cooperative members’ relationships. But, in addition, Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative is also perceived by its members as a (new) family.

Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, a (new) family

As data indicate, not only is Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative perceived by its members (conflicting parties) as an encounter, but also as their (new) family—a feature which genocide survivors particularly emphasized. This underscores a number of elements (as put forward in chapter 4) fostered as a consequence of the ‘family’ life in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. These elements emphasize members’ positive communication and ‘conviviality’, which imply friendship and mutual care and support among cooperative members. Illustrative contentions in this regard begin with the statement of a 48-year-old widow-genocide survivor:

Yes, until today, this cooperative is our new family. We have new friends, most of them come from the families of people who killed ours, but what happened, happened; they told us the truth, even though we knew that already; and we forgave them. We realized that they changed, and it is like we are a new family because ours died. So they repented and they are like our siblings because they are the only people who help us. For example, when you pass beside anyone you even hit him, like kids! And he also hits you, and we all laugh. We now have people to talk to. We work together and now at least we are a bit happy. (Int.27)

Former genocide perpetrators and their family members also consider Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative to be their (new) family. Illustrative examples are the testimonies of, respectively, a 59-year-old female, and a 35-year-old male—both family members of former genocide perpetrators:

It is true; we are in the same family, we help each other; whoever has a problem calls us and we support him. Survivors and ourselves, who came back from refuge,⁵⁵ we all work together and help each other; we share everything; we even marry each other! (Int.12)

This cooperative brought us the very good things, mostly ourselves who get jobs from it. We meet and work convivially. For example at lunch time, you find a genocide survivor taking you on the shoulder and asks you to go for lunch; and we eat together; and may be you say, ‘I have no money’ and he tells you, ‘me, I have a hundred, so let us go’; and you go and share food. And, in turn, when you also get money, you buy

⁵⁵ He refers to new returnees from refuge camps (in neighbouring countries—Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Tanzania) due to the 1990-1998 civil war during which the genocide was also perpetrated.

food and you both share. This is how we became friends and live convivially; we visit each other, we help each other; so we live like a family. (Int.16)

Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, a school

In short, me, I consider that becoming a member of a cooperative is like going to a school. At the beginning we were constantly reminded by our leaders that we are one, that we are equal and that we have to support each other. Now we know that, so we also remind each other, especially when one of us seem to go astray and misbehave. This is actually a school for all of us. (Int.19)

The above statement of a 35-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators illustrates how members perceive their cooperative as a school. The statement underscores three things: members are constantly taught that they *are one* and *equal*, and that they *have to support each other*, which, as put in chapter 4, impacted positively on their relationships. In connection with the above statement, illustrative accounts of cooperative members from both sides of the conflict begin with genocide survivors. During the fourth group interview, a 53 old-widower stated:

It [the cooperative] is a school; yes, it is like a school. In this cooperative, people get an opportunity to learn. For example, we discuss what happened [during genocide], and for instance, one advises the other. For example some say: ‘didn’t you see that [name] repented and was forgiven? Why don’t you also do the same?’ and this person also does the same, and repent, and they forgive him. In this cooperative, a person is a shepherd of the other; when we meet like how we are seated here, we talk, converse and recall what happened; and you say: ‘Do you recall that time!’ [time of hatred and fear] (Intgr.4)

The above statement underscores how Abahuzamugambi coffee is reported to be offering an opportunity for members to receive *advice* and *learn* from each other, whereby members are *shepherds* of each other. Former genocide perpetrators also see things in the same way. An illustrative testimony, in this regard, is the statement, of a 57-year-old male:

Actually, things like this cooperative! Actually a cooperative is a school; do you understand? Because when you get into the cooperative, you become fed with new thoughts, which oblige and push you to change in your attitudes concerning how you relate to other people. Do you understand? You change ways of thinking; you change ways of relationships; because actually the cooperative is like a school. Look: when a person has not been at school, he becomes like a beast, he has no positive thoughts. For example when he has fear, he behaves like an animal, be he a genocide survivor or a killer; when a person is alone he does not think normally, but when a person gets into contact with others, he easily change his ways of thinking and the ways of working. Otherwise, what I can tell you is that the cooperative is a school because you learn a lot of things. We all know that we strive for the same objective; we are all poor! You saw us sitting together with survivors; we are always like that; this cooperative changed us! I told you that the cooperative is like a school, when I am absent to come and be together with others here [in the cooperative] I feel I have no appetite. It [the cooperative] fosters good relationships because it does not discriminate; unless you discriminated yourself. (Int.11)

This statement emphasizes the change in a member's attitudes and behaviours due to education benefited from Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, and the fact of getting into contact with others (not living alone), as they become fed with new thoughts with a positive effect on his/her relationships with his/her fellows.

In general, the above contentions describe Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative as an encounter, a (new) family, and a school, which underscores interaction in which communication takes place. The nature of that communication is examined further below. But, what are non-members' accounts in this regard? Findings indicate that non-members' contentions are limited to the perception of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative as an encounter and a family. Their explanations depict it as a place where members of genocide perpetrators come into contact (encounter) with those of the genocide survivors, and that it becomes like a family as they watch them supporting each other affably, which looks like a family (int.30-47). An illustrative testimony was provided by a 55-year-old widow-genocide survivor:

That cooperative [Abahuzamugambi] is like a family for them, we always watch them visiting each other, singing together for example when they have organized their convivial parties when their coffee is sold. Eh! They even invite us! I wish I could join and become a member too, but I have no coffee. But what is obvious to everyone is that Abahuzamugambi coffee brought survivors and killers together, I even heard that they repent and forgive each other! It is amazing. (Int.33)

All the above contentions reporting Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative to be an encounter, a (new) family and a school, consequently lead to the factors, or activities, of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative that have led to its impacts on its members-conflicting parties' relationships (analyzed in chapter 4). It is in this regard that the importance of interpersonal contact, cooperative work, communication, education, truth-telling (coupled with, acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness), as well as poverty reduction, constitute the major factors that the researcher isolated.

6.1.2. Contact, working together towards a common goal, and communication

When divided people meet in an encounter like here; not only they support each other, but they also get time and space to talk and discuss what divided them, such that one can understand where truth is. (Int.28)

The above statement, of a 53-year-old widower-genocide survivor, emphasizes four interrelated and overlapping factors—*contact*, *working together*, *communication* and consequently *truth* among conflicting parties through Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. By beginning with *contact*, as found, cooperative members emphasized that *bringing together individuals from both sides of the conflict* was one of the most important and leading factors that contributed to the positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on the relationships of its members. In this regard, the contentions below of, respectively, a 36-year-old single male-former genocide perpetrator who was imprisoned and released after confessing, and a 46-year-old widow-genocide survivor, serve as illustrative examples:

This cooperative brought us together. I can take our cooperative as...it well, well reconciles and connects together; it reconciles things which were separate. For example, when we are in the coffee plantations, we cultivate, and there is a *Tutsi*, there is a *Hutu*, there is a *Twa*. What I mean is that this time, we have a new history which now reunites Rwandans, because the cooperative has already...it brings together in itself all these parts of Rwandans, and we are all in it without seeing ourselves in the image of... in these parts of Hutu or...parts-parts-parts! Rather we join it as one person, and we work for the benefit of all of us. (Int.14)

This is actually one of the best things this cooperative did; it brought us together again. We, survivors, were in loneliness, alone as ours were killed; but now, at least, we have people to talk to; they became our friends, and they help us. (Intgr.4)

These statements emphasize the importance of contact between post-genocide conflicting parties and its consequences (breaking with divisions and loneliness, working together, and conversations). In connection with the above, as members emphasized, conflicting parties' encounters at Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative do not involve any form of discrimination. Cooperative members held that anybody (genocide survivor or a genocide perpetrator, or any other person) having coffee is free to join the cooperative. In addition, the contact in question has become an opportunity for members to *develop friendship*, which is materialized in the sharing of whatever they have (such as food and drink). It is in this regard that the statements of a 46-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 38-year-old widow-genocide survivor, serve as illustrative examples:

Actually the cooperative brought us together without any discrimination; it includes men, women, widows, [genocide] survivors, killers; all of us are in the cooperative. Now things are very good. We all work together, and when we get hungry at lunch's sun, we keep being together and share that hunger; and whenever there is a corn, we share it together, one by one, without considering the particular trait of the person next to you. If one buys something, we share it without discrimination. Most of times, in our zone, we even bring food at work and at lunch time we sit down and share. We even set a timetable whereby each of us is assigned a date on which he should bring food, and we do so alternatively. I bring food today and we share, and a survivor brings food tomorrow, and so on. So, we share everything without discrimination because we became united. (Intgr.1)

Truly, we are happy because no discrimination takes place in this cooperative. They [cooperative founders] never chose and say for instance "we only accept this category of people into the cooperative and reject the other people", no; all of us came and joined the cooperative. Everything which is in the cooperative is actually ours [the members], there is no discrimination. (Intgr.1)

But, as the data indicate, conflicting parties did not just get into contact without a purpose. The contact was planned to be permanent. As it appears in the statement above, of the 36-year-old male and former genocide perpetrator, members came into contact in order to *work together* towards a common goal (for the benefit of everyone). It follows that working together is another factors that bore a positive meaning to conflicting parties' relationships. In this regard, a 52-year-old widow-genocide survivor stated:

This cooperative brought all of us together, in order to work together. After the genocide, people could not get closer to each other; but nowadays we are *impuzamugambi*;⁵⁶ we support each other. The simple fact of working together means a lot for us; it is like we are one, no intrigue; we work for a common cause no! We all want to get rid of our poverty, and see how we can help each others and develop. (Int.29)

In connection with the above statement, data indicate that, following their respective zones, members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative generally maintain, harvest, sort, and sun the coffee while working together (intgr.1-4). For instance, usually, the coffee to be maintained, harvested and sorted is of a very large quantity, beyond the limited capacity of the genocide survivors alone. They thus find themselves in need of support to maintain their coffee plantations: harvesting, sorting and transporting their coffee to the washing stations, which requires the assistance of other cooperative members. In this regard, only other cooperative members intervene. It follows that contact between conflicting parties with the purpose of *working together interdependently* stands as another important factor for relationships restoration. But, in addition, *communication* among conflicting parties (members) takes place during their interactions while working together. In this regard, a 43-year-old widow-genocide survivor accounted:

Yes, it is true; the simple fact of getting together and working together in this cooperative, conversing, winking at each other, and laughing. Although in the end you have to go back home in your loneliness every day; but at least you had spent the whole day laughing together with others in the cooperative; and when you are at home, you remember what you were discussing and you feel some peace of mind in you, and the [psychological or emotional] burden soothes. (Intgr.4)

As exemplified in the above statement, data indicate that cooperative members-conflicting parties' interdependence (working together cooperatively) in the coffee plantations became an opportunity for them to communicate positively. In this regard, as found, not only did they discuss how to increase production, but also, "it is an opportunity to discuss problems related to the genocide consequences among us [them]" (ingr.2). As put in chapter 4, most cooperative members referred to this communication as 'soothing conversations'; that is, conversations or dialogue in which one's psychological or emotional problems are soothed (int.14). In this regard, cooperative members' general contentions emphasized that "the simple fact of not being together with others is a loss itself" (int.10); because that person "remains kept in loneliness" (int.14), and that he is "is like a beast" (int.11, 15). Therefore, because "the genocide left people as animals"; so "this person will keep his bad thoughts while these could be cooled down when he joins others" (ibid). In this regard the experience of a 36-year-old single male-former genocide perpetrator, who was detained in prison for 10 years, and released after confessing, is relevant:

When I was released from prison, and got into contact with cooperative members, I found that as a something that addresses everyone's psychological problems, and in his heart, and whenever he feels tired in his mind and heart, he gets into contact with others, and the good conversations, which are over there soothe his heavy burden of

⁵⁶ *Impuzamugambi* (like Abahuzamugambi) translates 'people with the same goal or purpose'.

problems. When a member winks at you, for example, you feel soothed. In the cooperative, we are equal. This is a thing for which I am really thankful in this cooperative. This happened to me. I am now happy. (Int.14)

The above considerations emphasize how Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, perceived as an encounter, has enabled contact between divided groups, who not only work together for mutual interest, but also communicate positively during their daily interactions. But, in an overlapping connection with this positive communication, cooperative members also spoke of *educative trainings* as another factor behind the impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships.

6.1.3. Educative training

This cooperative educates us. During trainings, our leaders tell us that this cooperative is for our benefit; all of us; to increase our coffee production, and improve our living conditions. We are always reminded about that all the time; and we have to put the past down [aside] and live convivially in order to achieve this objective. You can't achieve anything or reach anywhere if you hate others. We are always reminded that. Now we have changed; and this is why we are rich in comparison with those who are still in those bad things of hatred. (Intgr.4)

As put previously, data indicate that members perceive Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative as a school. It is in this regard that education through training carried out within this cooperative was found to be another factor behind its positive impact on conflicting parties' relationships. As members held, issues related to their relationships during the genocide are easily discussed (positive communication) in an educative manner. They are constantly reminded (advice and warnings) of the benefits of working convivially, while putting negative and hostile attitudes aside, if their cooperative is to be successful.

As found, trainings that were normally dedicated to ways of increasing the quality of production also embrace the relational dimension; that is, friendship and mutual support among cooperative members, as a condition for successfully increasing the quality of coffee production. As pointed out above, education is regularly provided as soon as people are brought together. This is done through formal training sessions organized by cooperative leaders, but also informally during conversations while working on the coffee (where they advise and correct each other), as well as during convivial parties. The themes centre mainly on how to improve the quantity and quality of coffee production. In order to attain this goal, cooperative members emphasized that during training sessions they are also reminded that increasing the quality of coffee production will depend on conviviality, solidarity, unity and equality. In addition, members are reminded that they share the same common objective: "to fight against poverty" or "to develop themselves". They are also taught that "the past [division, hatred and so on] should be surpassed" and that "fear and hostility should come to a halt" (ingr.1-4). In addition to the above leading statement of a 38-year-old widow-genocide survivor, other illustrative testimonies include that of a 36-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator, who was detained in prison for 10 years and released after confessing, a 33-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor:

When we get into contact with the survivors, in this cooperative; we, who have sinned; when we meet in that encounter, I am telling you, it is actually where we even discuss all these things, and this educates us. We discuss all those problems which divided us; and everybody gets advice from these conversations, and you learn that the evil is cleansed by the good. And people can now see you as a person who can change completely. Otherwise when you stay in your loneliness, with bad thoughts, you can't get corrected. (Intgr.3)

This cooperative educates us. We sit down and discuss why people killed others, and we question why that happened. Then people begin sharing their stories, case by case. Myself, one day, I conversed with a genocide survivor; she told me that she managed to restore relationships with most of people who killed her family, but that there is only one person that she did not manage to digest, and she said, 'I will kill him', then I said, 'people exterminated your family, and you also want to become a killer?' And I said, 'no, never do that'. Can you imagine! She listened to me and accepted my advice, while she knew that some of my family members also killed; because we met in this cooperative and talked, and that we had become friends; she gave up of that idea, and everything is now fine. But that person she wanted to kill is not a cooperative member. (Int.7)

Of course we discuss everything as friends. Concerning our relations, we discuss for example how a genocide survivor gets traumatized, how a killer gets traumatized, and we learn that if what is in you, what you have done or what happened to you, is not spoken out, you will get traumatized. So we understand how one gets traumatized if one does not speak out all things that can harm him or which are a burden to him. So we mutually converse in truth. What I was actually satisfied with, in this cooperative, is that they taught encouraged us to repent and ask for forgiveness, and once you repent and forgiveness is not granted immediately, as long as you constantly meet and converse, he will end up forgiving you. This is a lesson I learnt. What Abahuzamugambi has done in this regard is really a step-forward in reuniting us. The simple fact that we are considered as equal is enough for me. (Intgr.4)

Furthermore, as pointed out previously, conflicting parties receive education during convivial parties (*ubusabane*) organized notably in order to celebrate their harvest. It is recalled that *ubusabane* is the Rwandan cultural event, the 'get together party or ceremony', which is translated, in Rwanda, as *conviviality*. Its aim is to celebrate an achievement and/or foster unity and friendship among people through parties or celebrations. In this regard, a 44-year-old widow-genocide survivor stated:

Apart from many trainings organized by our cooperative, what you have to know is that every year, we organize *ubusabane*. Some of us bring beer, others food. All members are there, all of us are there; we even contribute financially and the cooperative brings its contribution. We even invite people who are not cooperative members. We bring our children and all our family members; and we eat and drink, we play, we dance, we sing, we converse; it is very good! (Intgr.1)

Former genocide perpetrators and their family members also confirmed the above statement of the genocide survivor, during the same group interview. It is in this regard that a 60-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators, stated:

Whenever our coffee is ripe in October, our cooperative brings its [financial] contribution for the convivial party, and we, members, bring also [traditional] beer and food [corn] or we contribute 200 [Rwandan francs] and organise the conviviality day. On this day, we play, we sing and dance. But we also invite people who are not cooperative members. And because there is drinks and food, many people invite themselves; that is also an opportunity to encourage them to join us in the cooperative. We sensitize them while drinking beer, we talk. We even bring our spouses and children. We are happy here! (Intgr.4)

However, the above accounts do not mean that training provided by Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative to its members restores their relationships automatically; rather it is a process, which rebuilds members' relationships little by little. It is in this regard that a 53-year-old widower-genocide survivor, stated:

Of course, this does not mean that a cooperative is a thing that automatically removes evil and negative thinking from somebody; it only helps people to get into contact, talk to each other and it helps them to recover little by little. It only helps people who can be helped; people who, after hearing that others changed, learn something from them and change also. Like a school! Not all students are brilliant but this does not mean that they have not received education. In our cooperative, too, it is like that. But I am really telling you! In our cooperative people changed, we meet and talk to each other, and there is no problem. Education we get from this cooperative should not stop, it is like a miracle. (Intgr.4)

In connection with the above, and as emphasized at the beginning of this section, cooperative members held that it is during daily informal conversations among cooperative members, while working together, and during educative trainings, that truth coupled with acknowledgment, apology and eventually forgiveness were nurtured.

6.1.4. Truth-telling, acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness

As the data indicate, the truth about what happened during the genocide, acknowledgement about the wrongdoings, expressions of apology while requesting for forgiveness, as well as forgiveness granting, stand as a further group of factors that are behind the positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee on the restoration of its members' relationships. These factors also appear to be the content of communication among cooperative members, but they are separately considered here to allow a deeper understanding. As cooperative members from both sides of the conflict held, they reciprocally disclose truth and acknowledgement about wrong attitudes and actions, along with apology and forgiveness, in their daily conversations. Illustrative accounts from, respectively, a 47-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator who was imprisoned and released after confessing, a 48-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 38-year-old widower-genocide survivor, stated:

What I can tell you first and foremost is that we committed sins [genocide] and we confessed that, and asked for forgiveness, and people forgave us. What we did is known by everybody; truth is already known, but we had to repent and apologize first. Myself, I was in prison, when I got released and came to this cooperative, I found here people living without suspicion. I had repented while in prison but we also discussed

that here. They told me that they had already forgiven me. None was suspicious in my regard, none! Truly, they received me as a human. Me who killed people! Can you imagine survivors receiving me [affably]! It was beyond my understanding. I hope you understand. (Int.8)

With this cooperative! None ever fear to speak the truth. He tells you in truth and you too tell him in truth; do you understand? When people work together and recall and discuss things that were dividing them, this means that these people are now living humans and these bad things of the past stopped. When we meet we recall those things; how the situation was after the genocide and you could say, for example: ‘that time! I was evil’. The other person also tells you, ‘I was also evil like this or that’, or ‘that time I did not want to speak to or see anybody’, and you could go on with your conversations. Yes I am telling you; this is true. (Intgr.2)

Yes truth is there; everything that happened during genocide; we all know that. We recall and discuss that. You know that the genocide took place in the eyes of everyone; so we discuss that when we are working in the cooperative and you cannot lie, they [genocide perpetrators] even repent and we forgive them. You know, when they tell us everything, because we also know that we understand and forgive them. But it is because we are always together and that we have been educated. We understood that we cannot move forward if we continue to hate them given that ours will not come back to us. We have to put the past aside; we no longer hide things. (Intgr.3)

All of the above accounts emphasize a number of factors behind the positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (perceived as an encounter, a (new) family and a school) on conflicting parties’ relationships. These factors underscore the contact between divided groups, who interact and work together in a ‘soothing’ communication and education, where truth is told, wrongs are acknowledged, and where apology and forgiveness are expressed. But, as cooperative members strongly emphasized, these factors are not, of themselves, enough for restoring relationships. While they held that “this is of course important” (intgr.1-4), they emphasized that the key factor behind the positive impact of their cooperative on their relationships remains the fact that they managed to reduce their poverty (ibid)—a factor constituting the main purpose behind the creation of the cooperative.

6.1.5. Poverty reduction

Yes, contact and conversations with others is important but if our cooperative can not reduce poverty, then it is meaningless. Can you be in good relationships with someone if you are hungry? Conversations come when there is something in the stomach. You also know that! This is what this cooperative actually achieved; and this is indeed the reason why we created it. [laughs] (Intgr.4)

As the above statement of a 53-year-old widower-genocide survivor emphasizes, poverty reduction stands as the principal factor behind the positive impact of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members-conflicting parties’ relationships. The cooperative impacted positively on its members’ relationships since it is was effective economically. In fact, the main objective behind the creation of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was to increase the socio-economic standard of living of its members. As put in chapter 4, people

formed or joined Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative in order, above all, to fight against poverty or simply to develop or increase their well-being. This was in fact the main reason that prompted conflicting parties to form and/or join Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. In this regard, cooperative members emphasized that it was the successful achievement of what they expected from their cooperative (the *material interest* referred to by members as poverty reduction, or development, or increase of well-being) that is central to the improvement of their relationships.

In fact, after members' coffee is ripe and ready for harvest, the individual work of husking, sorting and drying coffee in the sun is tiring and tiresome. Their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative was thus considered to be a means by which they could join efforts to increase production (intgr.2). In addition, as members held, when one works individually, s/he gets a non-compensatory reward when the coffee is sold to private businessmen or shopkeepers. It is in this regard that members reported that coming together in Abahuzamugambi cooperative thus helped them to not only reduce the tiring work, but also to increase the harvest and price of the coffee. Before their membership of Abahuzamugambi coffee, they worked individually and hard, for a very low price offered by the local market (110 Rwandan francs or less) while in the cooperative the price offered is high-130 Rwandan francs (int.12).

Cooperative members also emphasized that they increase their income not only from the increased price of their coffee through the cooperative, but also through other advantages or benefits offered by the cooperative, which cannot be provided by the private market. These advantages include notably jobs in the cooperative, for either cooperative members themselves or their family members, easy access to financial loans and dividends. Other advantages include agricultural fertilizers and seeds to increase yields, training on coffee maintenance and other agricultural techniques, and particularly safety for their money, as the latter is kept in their cooperative's bank. It is in this regard that they managed to build houses, to acquire more land and cattle, to send their children to school, and pay their families' health insurance. An illustrative testimony, in this regard, is a statement of a 60-year-old male-family member of former genocide perpetrators:

Oh! I am a happy man now! I get my money, for instance 50 thousand [Rwandan francs]; I only take 15 thousand and bring that home, while the rest is put in our cooperative's bank. All the time, wherever I am, I feel my heart is shining; I smile all the time. When I get into my coffee, I smile; when I go to our cooperative's bank, I also smile. Wherever I am, I feel I am shining, because I know that nowhere hunger will penetrate. My coffee is uplifting me, and all the cooperative members also uplift me. (Int.13)

In the example of the above statement, data indicate that Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members are generally satisfied with the socio-economic role of their cooperative. The cooperative enables them to improve their socio-economic standard of living, which would have been difficult, or even impossible for some (such as genocide survivors), when struggling individually. In this regard, the general contention of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members is that without Abahuzamugambi cooperative's successful achievement of its mission of fighting poverty, its impact in the restoration of relationships between its members would be an illusion, because it would simply "cease its activities and close its doors" (intgr.1-4). In connection with the earlier-leading statement of the 43-year-old widow-genocide survivor, a 28-year-old female-family

member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 53-year-old male-genocide survivor, held, respectively:

Actually people can continue to live together, but the problem of poverty cannot allow this, you can't talk to people or bring those issues of good relationships when you are hungry. It is not possible. (Int.10)

That is actually what we told you previously, there is a proverb, which says: 'When the stomach is empty, ears do not hear'; it means that when you are hungry, whatever people do can't please you. (Intgr.4)

All of the above developments show how the factors thus isolated and found to be behind the positive impacts of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on conflicting parties are interrelated, overlapping and complementary although, as also emphasized in the above two statements, the latter factor (poverty reduction) appears to be the primary factor.

Non-members emphasized only three factors: contact, communication, and poverty reduction. They believed that members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative live together convivially due to the fact that 'their cooperative brought them together' (contact), that 'they manage to talk to each other', and that above all 'they benefit economic advantages' from it. As was the case for members, non-members also emphasized the importance of the material factor. It is in this regard that some also referred to the Kinyarwanda proverb saying: "*iyu mu nda harimo ubusa, amatwi ntiyumva*" (when the stomach is empty, ears do not hear) (int.30-46). This implies that when one is hungry or poor, s/he cannot contribute to anything as s/he is without the possibility to communicate.

Bearing in mind the above developments regarding the factors behind the reported impacts of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative on its members-conflicting parties' relationships, the following section considers the study's second case—Peace basket cooperative.

6.2. Case 2: Peace basket cooperative

Chapter 5 discussed the study's first research question, concerning the impact of Peace basket cooperative on the relationships of its members, constituted of post-genocide conflicting parties-genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. Members (and also non-members), who had reported to have been divided with negative and hostile attitudes and behaviours prior to their membership of Peace basket cooperative, held that this cooperative impacted positively on conflicting parties by enabling them to gradually overcome these negative relationships while fostering positive ones. In this regard, data indicated that Peace basket cooperative enabled its members-conflicting parties to overcome division and discrimination, fear, suspicion, anger, and hatred, while fostering positive communication ('soothing conversations'), and conviviality among them. The factors that led to this positive impact are what this section is aimed at analyzing. As was the case for the study's first case, it is firstly necessary to understand the ways in which members and non-members perceive Peace basket cooperative, before turning to the factors that led to its impact on conflicting parties' relationships. As will be discussed, the ways in which Peace basket is perceived by its members underscore the factors behind the nature of its impacts analyzed in chapter 5.

6.2.1. Peace basket cooperative: an encounter, a (new) family and a school

The ways in which Peace basket cooperative is perceived by its members is closely linked to the factors that led to its impacts on conflicting parties' relationships. In this regard, Peace basket cooperative is perceived as an encounter, a (new) family, and a school.

Peace basket cooperative, an encounter

Peace basket is an encounter; this cooperative brought together divided people, without intrigues or discrimination among them. (Int.49)

As the above statement of a 21-year-old single male-family member of former genocide perpetrators emphasized, the concept to which all respondents repeatedly pointed out was that Peace basket cooperative was an *encounter*, as it brought together people (i.e. conflicting parties) who were divided after the genocide, and thus made possible the communication between them (contact and communication thus became the key factors behind this cooperative's impact, as discussed further below). Illustrative testimonies begin with the contentions of the president and the vice-president of Peace basket cooperative. The vice-president—a 46-year-old male-former genocide perpetrator, who was imprisoned and later released after confessing—stated:

The [Peace] basket cooperative is an encounter. Yooo! It became an encounter between me and survivors. You see, when we sit together while weaving the baskets; me who was in prison; imagine! Being released from prison and meet face to face with a genocide survivor! This can normally be perceived as a big problem! Actually, when I saw this mother [president of the cooperative], I said to myself: now my life is over; she is going to kill me. But surprisingly, she did not; rather she invited me to join the

cooperative! It [basket cooperative] became an encounter between me and those whom I thought that they are my enemies. (Int.64)

In connection with the above statement of the former genocide perpetrator, the statement of the person she refers to as being afraid of (a 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and president of Peace basket cooperative) is relevant. The president maintained that Peace basket cooperative is an encounter between genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. She stated:

Peace basket cooperative! Yoyoyo; this cooperative! It truly brought people together again. What they are telling you is true; the basket [cooperative] is an encounter. Actually, the majority of [cooperative] members you see over there are killers. They killed. But we are together and there is no problem. They confessed and we forgave them. The past should be put aside; we need to live we who got the chance of surviving. None should incite us to kill each other again, these rich people [government officials and elites] are lying us! After they get their bread, they go down to us and incite our neighbours to kill us while they remain in their offices with their big stomachs! We are tired of that; I think none will follow their advices again; this is actually what happened during killings [genocide]! Now see the consequences; they [government officials and elites] don't even know how we live! But this cooperative reunited us; they don't even know that, I guess. (Int.78)

The above statements depict Peace basket cooperative as an encounter, in which genocide perpetrators and former genocide survivors, as well as their respective family members, have been brought together. But Peace basket cooperative is also perceived by its members as a (new) family.

Peace basket cooperative, a (new) family

Yes, it is true; this cooperative is truly, a new family; because whenever you have a problem you bring it to members indiscriminately. We live like a family. I am telling you the truth; when we get money, we buy food and all of us share; none can go for lunch alone; we are one family; [Peace] basket cooperative brought us together again; it is very important for us. (Int.57)

In a few words, Peace basket cooperative is also a new family for all of us. All members support and rescue each other. Whenever there are for example weddings, cooperative members are the first to offer their support. (Int.56)

The above leading contentions of, respectively, a 34-year-old widow-family member of genocide perpetrators, and a 47-year-old female-former genocide perpetrator, indicate that not only is Peace basket cooperative perceived by its members as an encounter, but also as a (new) family. In general, Peace basket cooperative members testify that they work and live together as a family. When one has a particular problem, it is the members of the cooperative who come to provide first assistance (int.63, 56, 57). Further illustrative testimonies, regarding notably how a new member is received in Peace basket cooperative, were put forward by a 29-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, a 46-year-old former genocide perpetrator and vice-president of the Peace basket cooperative,

and a 28-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators (whose sister and brother are in prison):

Oh! Here [in the cooperative]! We sing together; we rejoice here. And this is actually how we always receive a new member. We became friends! We are like siblings! It is a miracle for us. (Int.77)

How I have been received here? It is like they rescued me. I was [psychologically] dying little by little; I couldn't imagine that it would happen to talk to people, considering what I have done [killings]. But the president [of the cooperative] invited me, I came with fear but the miracle I saw is that everybody received me with joy; it was as if they missed me while I was looking like a thief [laughing]. Indeed I was. Imagine a killer! Then I found them together weaving; some were even singing the song which was played in the radio they had brought. You can't believe in this. You see everybody here is like my sibling. Actually they are my siblings. It is my family. I was hopeless and afraid; I have no other friends than cooperative members. You can't understand how I am happy. (Int.64)

Yes, it is true. For instance, a genocide perpetrator who was released from prison; when he comes in the cooperative, he feels that he is like others and his life in prison start to be forgotten little by little, because when he arrives here, none laughs at him saying 'he is a killer or...'; no; we never talk of those things, but rather we receive him with warm welcomes; and he too realizes that he is in a new family of people who are mixed and work together to get money, and live together peacefully; so he must also change, be that as it may. (Int.65)

Moreover, within Peace basket cooperative, its members also act (correctively and/or punitively) as a family whenever a member misbehaves with regard to her/his relationships with other cooperative members. By way of illustration, on one occasion, the researcher's arrival at the cooperative coincided with a reprisal of a single female who had talked to her fellows impolitely. Claiming to be against alcohol, she had refused to sit beside a woman by 'impolitely' arguing that the woman in question smelled of alcohol (beer). On this occasion, a 42-year-old female and family member of former genocide perpetrators stated:

Eh! Here! [In the cooperative] We are a family! Whoever misbehaves or misconducts in anyway is corrected and often punished as we normally do in families. Even when you arrived, we were scolding somebody, a girl who seemed to refuse sitting beside a woman smelling alcohol. This is a family; we discuss everything and advice each other. We have even the right to expel somebody from the cooperative if he continues to misbehave while ignoring our advices, but as a family we first help him by all the means, like advice, etc. (Int.59)

The 20-year-old single female, whose father was imprisoned, and who was scolded for her misbehaviour, stated:

Yes, it is true. Actually, I am a converted Christian; I hardly support the smell of alcohol; but truly I did not say it in a Christian way. I apologized. It happens. I am happy that they [members] corrected me. They actually advised me in a lot of things; otherwise I am happy, they are like my parents, I can't be angry at them. (Int.68)

This statement, in the same way as the above contentions, emphasizes Peace basket cooperative as 'a (new) family'. This therefore points to an important point regarding ways in which equality, and so democracy, is implemented in the cooperative. This will be discussed further below, concerning the factors behind the impact of Peace basket cooperative on its members' relationships. Otherwise, members' perception of Peace basket cooperative as a (new) family can also be read through the following statement of a 45-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, who accounted about how she was received in the cooperative after returning from the refugee camp:

You know, after the genocide we were all scattered. Myself, I was in refugee camp in Zaïre [Democratic Republic of Congo]. I am telling you, they forced us to come back to Rwanda and I came being traumatized because I thought that I will be killed. But amazingly, when I arrived none touched me. This mother whose family was completely exterminated got to know that I came back and called me in order to join this cooperative because she knew me since we had weaved basket together before the genocide. But I am telling you, when I heard that she wanted me, fear overwhelmed me. Then, I said to myself, 'let me close eyes and go; if she kills me I will die, even I am not here in this world to last for ever'. Surprisingly when I arrived in the cooperative everybody rejoiced. She also came and embraced me. Things started like that! Everybody was happy, and my fear disappeared immediately. Now look! We are together and there is no problem. There is a lot to say. Even my husband came back and was immediately put in prison. I did not even see him, but this mother told us: 'let us work together, what happened, happened; let us reunite'; and I am now happy! You better stay with us and see how we live together! It's a family! You will not believe in that! (Int.62)

The above perceptions of Peace basket cooperative as a (new) family leads in turn to ways in which life in the cooperative is compared with life in members' respective homes. As emphasized in the statements below, Peace basket cooperative members prefer the daily life in their cooperative in comparison to that of their normal homes of residence. This refers to the second reason why they formed or joined this cooperative (chapter 5). Not only did they want to fight against poverty, but they also wanted to alleviate loneliness. It is in this regard that genocide survivors, notably the 19- and 28-year-old orphaned females, stated:

Never, never! You can't achieve anything when you stay in loneliness at home. Because when you join others and work together with them, at least you talk, and you go back home with peace of mind! Things of being afraid toward each other ceased, we all are in good relationships like siblings here. (Int.69)

No, staying home! You can't be happy, because when I am here in this cooperative, I meet with others and we talk, we rejoice, but at home you are alone, and you stay in loneliness! Here we are happy; there is no discrimination as it is the case outside [of the cooperative] where people are afraid of each other. But when people are brought together, they converse and it is very good. (Int.59)

In the same way, genocide perpetrators and their family members also prefer to stay with cooperative members, rather than staying at home. A statement of a 35-year-old female-

former genocide perpetrator, who was imprisoned for 5 years, and released after confessing, illustrates this:

No way! You can't compare here [in the cooperative] and our homes! Here we are always happy; but when you are at home, you don't feel happy because of loneliness and you can even end up hating people. But when you join others here, all those bad thoughts you had cool down and you feel your heart is clean. Here [in the cooperative] really heals. For example, yesterday I came from the clinic but I said to my self that I can't go home without passing to the cooperative, and I was convinced that when I pass to the cooperative and stay together with my fellow members for a while, I will recover my pain. But I am telling you that when I arrived in the cooperative I felt soothed, and now you see that I am fine! I have no pain! (Int.53)

In addition to members' perceptions of Peace basket cooperative as an encounter and a (new) family, they also perceive it as a school.

Peace basket cooperative, a school

The awl⁵⁷ is our pen, whereas the basket is our degree. We are no longer students [weavers], but rather teachers because we are now teaching others throughout the whole country how to weave baskets in conviviality. (Int.59)

As the above statement of the 42-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators emphasizes, the awls (pointed metal tools used to weave baskets) are compared to pens normally used by students of formal schools, while the degree obtained is the harvest of baskets. The statement also emphasizes that Peace basket cooperative members are now teachers of other people in Rwanda, who are willing to weave baskets. As findings show, and as will be discussed below, education provided by Peace basket is not limited to the production of baskets, but it is also extended to post-genocide relational problems of cooperative members, as cooperative members or new weavers are reminded that the weaving of baskets should be done in a convivial relationship among weavers. In the same way as the above leading statement, a 20-year-old single female, whose father was imprisoned, emphasizes how she had been trained by Peace basket members, and thus overcame the hatred she had towards people (genocide survivors) who had imprisoned her father whom she believed was innocent.

As a member of this cooperative, it so much educated me because I no longer hate people who imprisoned my father as it used to be before [membership]. This cannot happen to me because I have been changed through teachings and advice from members of this cooperative. We are one; none is superior to the other. (Int.50)

An important point to re-emphasize is that Peace basket cooperative was, at the time of research, deploying its members, alternately, throughout the entire country to teach others about the Peace basket method—weaving baskets in order to live together peacefully and in order to fight against poverty.

⁵⁷ In the case of the weaving of baskets, an awl refers to a Rwandan traditional pointed hand metal for making holes while weaving baskets.

But how is Peace basket cooperative perceived by non-members? The data showed that non-members also prefer the life in the cooperative, in comparison with their own homes of residence. Although they did not belong to this cooperative, for the reasons related in chapter 5, their contentions underscore the importance of the *life-together* or *gathering with other people*, in comparison to staying at home—argued to be ‘staying in loneliness’. Their general argument was that ‘unless one is a member of another cooperative or association, the non-membership of Peace basket cooperative is *kunyagwa zigahera* (literally, ‘seeing your cows taken away as booty without any chance of getting them back again’⁵⁸), which means ‘to lose a lot’. As non-members held, not only do non-members miss out on the economic advantages of the cooperative, but they above all miss out on meetings with others, the company of others, and conviviality with them (int.79, 83, 85, 81, 83, 85). It is worth emphasizing that non-members only referred to Peace basket cooperative as an encounter and a family, in which conflicting parties were brought together. Non-members argued that they watched/watch cooperative members living as a family when they support each other and when they converse during convivial festivals.

Bearing in mind the above contentions depicting Peace basket cooperative as an encounter, a (new) family and a school, the next section considers the factors that led to its positive impacts on its members-conflicting parties’ relationships (analyzed in chapter 5).

6.2.2. Contact between conflicting parties

As the data indicate, one of the most important factors behind the positive impact of Peace basket cooperative on conflicting parties’ relationships (analyzed in chapter 5) is that it brought them together—that is, Peace basket cooperative enabled contact between conflicting parties. This is connected to the above-mentioned perception, by both cooperative members and non-members, of Peace basket cooperative as an encounter. A 26-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators stated:

Oh! Simply contact; people being together! This is very important. It is actually contact that enabled conviviality among us. We are one; yes, because it brings different people together without any discrimination, even people who have been released from prison! You saw them no! We are together. My father is also in prison but whenever I am here I feel happy because I am together with others. (Int.71)

The importance of contact across the divides was justified by respondents’ refutation of the possibility of restoring the sides’ relationships while keeping them separate. A 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and president of the Peace basket cooperative stated:

How can you reconcile if you don’t meet? Remember, our culture says that *nta mugabo umwe* [none can live as an island]. People who looted my property, people who demolished our houses; all we are together in this cooperative, and the more we weave the baskets while seated together the more they feel close to me and forget the guilty of what [genocide acts] they have done to me; that helped me too because it prevented me from getting traumatized or keep bad thoughts such like ‘they will kill me also’. Definitely, I won’t survive while living alone; but I am telling you, when we

⁵⁸ The Rwandan expression of *kunyagwa zigahera* refers to the country’s tradition whereby cows have always symbolized wealth. Loosing them was equated to a decrease in wealth, or generally a failure or a hopeless life.

are together and weaving the baskets together, I feel that my mind is soothed; actually the key thing is not living alone. If you separate us, where will we meet? But this cooperative made it! (Int.78)

The above statement emphasizes an important point: “The more we weave basket[s] the more they feel close to me and forget the guilty of what they have done to me” (int.78). This also underscores the meaning behind the *nta mugabo umwe* (none can live as an island) adage, that the culture has an important role in addressing issues (which will be further addressed in chapter 7). This is perhaps the reason why, as discussed in chapter 5, Peace basket cooperative members joined the cooperative not only to fight against poverty, but also to alleviate loneliness. In the same way, a 20-year-old single female-genocide survivor emphasized:

Membership in this cooperative has a crucial importance because; imagine if we were remained divided; me here and the other there! In this case our thinking would only be on ethnicity and division; you see! And problems would have remained; but when we get together in a place like here [in the cooperative] we converse and we even discuss those issues of ethnicity until they become meaningless for us. Contact is very important; you see. (Int.50)

But, as the data also indicate, the purpose behind conflicting parties’ contact in Peace basket cooperative is also important: working together toward a common goal. As was found, weaving the baskets (seated together) to reduce poverty (a common problem for both sides of the conflict) offers an opportunity for the sides to converse and eventually advise and correct each other.

6.2.3. Working together towards a common goal, conversations and education

As the data indicate, sharing a goal of weaving baskets while seated together and conversing, as well as educating each other, there were other factors behind the positive impact of Peace basket on conflicting parties’ relationships. This is illustrated notably in the statement below of a 35-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators:

Most of [the] time, we even sleep here [in cooperative house] because we have beds here; and we spend the whole night talking, weaving, and discussing everything; people give testimonies about how they lived during and after the genocide and how things went these times; we discuss how our relationships have been destroyed and how before, in our couture, it was, and so on. It is [the cooperative] a family. This is actually what is behind our conviviality. (Int.53)

With regard to conversations, in particular, a 29-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators described the reasons behind the benefits of Peace basket cooperative on members’ relationships:

The secret? It is the conversations. Actually, the problems get solved when a person manages to dialogue with the other. Here we converse to the extent that whoever sinned gets the opportunity to repent and asks for forgiveness. Now tell me, if you see him [the other party] and flee, how can you ask for forgiveness? Me, I find the cooperative as a good thing that brings people together. When people get together, it is

good. So the secret of Peace basket cooperative is that it brought us together and that we dialogue, join our forces, offer advice to each other, and all develop. It [the cooperative] is actually an opportunity for us to discuss our problems. (Int.48)

As emphasized in the above statement, when conflicting parties come together and weave baskets while sitting together, this constitutes an opportunity for positive conversations regarding their relational problems. It was also an occasion for mutual support and correction; that is advice or simply education. As found, education takes place when Peace basket cooperative members advise and correct each other (as a family) while weaving baskets together, during training sessions, during friendly visits in their respective homes, and particularly during organized convivial parties while celebrating their cooperative economic success, notably after their baskets have been sold. Education centres on the necessity for members to work together as one and on an equal basis, to love one another, to put aside what divides them, and to support each other for the benefit of all (producing baskets and sharing the benefits equitably). This is perhaps the reason why members perceived Peace basket cooperative as a (new) family and a school. Concerning education in the cooperative, in particular, illustrative testimonies are the statements of, respectively, a 21-year-old single male, a 34-year-old widow, and 54-year-old female—all family members of former genocide perpetrators.

Here [in Peace basket cooperative], one gets advice and brakes with hatred. This cooperative is actually a school; it educated us and we are friends and love each other. We have the same objective; we all want to fight against poverty. So we have to help each other. Nowadays, we are also teaching others throughout the whole country; we teach them how to get together and break with divisions, and develop together through the weaving of baskets. (Int.49)

Yes; normally when many people are together, they converse, and through this, they advise and educate each other. Working together teaches you; it makes you develop to the extent that you stop begging. Actually the cooperative is a school. We broke with those things of division. (Int.57)

We are all well together; we have been educated. Actually when a person gets together with others, the problem or the worry he had on his heart soothes. Just stay with us, for some more days, and see how we will receive the mother. You will see how we behave toward her. We are happy. Whoever would come with his animosity spirit can heal. Life here in this cooperative! Often we, members, bring things like beer and food and we put that in the mother's home and we share, we dance, we sing. Coming in this cooperative is like receiving salivation in the Church! We have changed. If you make days without coming here, it is like you are dead. Being together with others is really nice. (Int.76)

In connection with the above statements, data also indicate that educative conversations in Peace basket cooperative led to reciprocal disclosure among its members-conflicting parties. As pointed out in some of the previous statements, educative conversations in turn led to truth-telling about what happened during and after the genocide; the wrongs were acknowledge and apologized for, and forgiveness was requested and eventually granted. These stand as another group of factors behind the impact of Peace basket cooperative on its members' relationships.

6.2.4. Truth-telling, acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness

As the data indicate, not only did Peace basket cooperative enable divided people to come into contact, work together, and converse in a way that educated and helped them to break down and overcome their harmful attitudes and behaviours, but this in turn led to truth-telling, as well as the reciprocal disclosures in acknowledgement of wrongdoings, apology, and consequently forgiveness among conflicting parties. Beginning with genocide survivors, an illustrative example is the experience of the president of Peace basket cooperative, a 64-year-old widow and genocide survivor:

I am telling you that what this cooperative has done to these people, I mean killers [former genocide perpetrators], is that it helped them to confess their sins; that is what they have done during genocide. For example [name of the perpetrator] told me personally: “we killed people and now you see we are sitting with you; we are gathered around you, without any problem! We always kids on you!” Actually, that old man you saw; the old one; he really confessed and repented and asked for forgiveness! I am telling you some of these killers who are members of this cooperative changed, and I can testify that. I also confessed that I feared and hated them. Now you see, we are together peacefully! (Int.78)

Genocide perpetrators or their family members also support the above contentions, by emphasizing that “when people repented and asked for forgiveness, they were forgiven” (int.51). In this regard, the 35-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators states:

Yes we spoke the truth, people repented; even now they still repent. Everything is discussed. When we are seated together while weaving the baskets, we discuss everything. Nothing is hidden. (Int.53)

As pointed out earlier, cooperative members do, or are taught to, consider each other as equal. This refers to the way in which power and democracy are exercised in Peace basket cooperative, which, as found, constitutes another important factor behind the impact of the cooperative in question on its members-conflicting parties’ relationships.

6.2.5. Equality and Democracy

Here [in the cooperative] everybody is treated equally. I told you that here we respect each other. Actually we have been educated. We have rules here that we are equal. When we have to decide on something, we discuss it and agree and take a conclusion. We some times vote. None is inferior to the other. (Int.60)

In Peace basket cooperative, as the data indicate, members are treated equally and their cooperative is managed democratically. The general argument in this regard is that members effectively work under rules of solidarity and mutual respect, unity, and equality. ‘We are one’, ‘we are one family’, ‘we are equal’ were common expressions repeatedly employed by cooperative members. In fact, cooperative members contended that they were united and

equal as they weaved their baskets while seated together convivially, to the extent of spending nights together and thus sleeping under the same roof (at the workplace), and thus concluding that their cooperative is a (new) family for them. While maintaining the above contention of the 28-year-old orphan female and genocide survivor, two females—a 42-year-old and a 47-year-old—both family members of former genocide perpetrators—argued, respectively:

We are equal, we are treated equally. So no problem here, none is superior to the other because we decide together on how we share and use money we get from our baskets. If we do not do that by consensus, we vote. This is actually a family; we are reminded that we are one. If one of us seems for example to forget this, we correct him; eh, we can even punish him. (Int.60)

First of all we are all poor; of course the wealth we have is different but we came here because we have the same need; we want to fight against poverty, all of us together. Equality here is the first thing that we have. To make decisions? We agree on something or we vote; no problem. But generally we agree. None decides for us; when one proposes something serious we discuss it because we are always together here, and then we decide on consensus. (Int.56)

Bearing in mind the above, and previous contentions, there is another factor that was reported by members to be the key factor behind the positive impact of Peace basket cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships. That factor is poverty alleviation.

6.2.6. Poverty alleviation

When you are not starving; I mean, when you are not poor, then it is very easy to be open for dialogue and reconcile with the person who was your enemy. If you are hungry, can you hear something? You are rather full of *umushiha*.⁵⁹ [while smiling] (Int.60)

As the data indicate, the alleviation of, or fighting against, poverty stands as the main factor that lies behind Peace basket's impact on its members-conflicting parties' relationships. As cooperative members emphasized, the socio-economic dimension (or simply poverty alleviation) stands as the key factor in the improvement of their relationships. In fact, as found in chapter 5, and in line with the cooperative's mission (improving the socio-economic standards of living of cooperative members), fighting against poverty stood as the main reason behind conflicting parties' membership of Peace basket cooperative. It is also worth emphasizing that despite the fact that Peace basket cooperative members admitted that the contact between conflicting parties was important, as it enabled them to alleviate loneliness, it was found that poverty reduction stands as the key focus.

In connection with the above statement of the 28-year-old orphaned female-genocide survivor, cooperative members generally argued that when one is poor, it is not possible to think normally; rather he is overwhelmed by bad thoughts (int.77, group-chat int.). Illustrative examples are the perceptions of a 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor, a 21-year-old single female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 47-year-

⁵⁹ *Umushiha* is a Kinyarwanda word referring to an excessive irritability and anger aimed against the world generally and people.

old female-former genocide perpetrator who was released from prison after confessing. They stated, respectively:

Even meeting with others helps. Yes, money is paramount, but meeting with others is also very important; seeing two people, three...It is good in itself. But truly the most important thing is the reduction of poverty. (Int.77)

The basket without bringing us money! This can be a big hindrance. You see, when a person works, the objective is to gain something, so that he can get food. Actually people killed because of the stomach! Oh, poverty reduction first! (Int.49)

Eh, can you work without getting money and not lose courage? It is quite clear. Let say, I come here while others remained at home cultivating; you understand that if you come and get nothing, you will end up stopping to come! There is a singer who said "you can't do anything when hunger is cutting your intestines". So, tell me, can you join others when you haven't got soap and take a bath first? Or, if you struggled with the night with hunger, what can you achieve? (Int.56)

It is worth emphasizing that the alleviation of poverty was also designated or explained, by some respondents, as to develop (int.56), to increase income (earn money), to satisfy of one's needs (int.52, 57, 67, 68), and the improvement of one's living conditions (int.76). As the main reason behind conflicting parties' coming together in Peace basket cooperative, it follows that the cooperative's potential economic failure could impact negatively to members' relationships. For example, youth interviewed had failed to attend school or had dropped their studies because of a lack of tuition fees and other required material or equipment, and therefore believed and expected to get money (earn income) from Peace basket cooperative in order to sustain themselves and their families. In this regard, a 21-year-old orphaned female-family member of former genocide perpetrators, and a 28-year-old orphaned female-genocide survivor, stated, respectively:

The reason why I joined others...actually...this cooperative is important for me because I have not been able to go further with my studies...because of poverty. So I came in order to develop; to get money and to reduce my poverty in my family, and also at least pay the school fees for my little siblings...I am now able to sustain my family; otherwise I could have remained alone and kept hating survivors. Because I am [economically] happy, I can now live convivially with them. (Int.48)

It is actually this basket [cooperative] which makes us live; it feeds us, one can now buy clothes. You see, after genocide I was left alone. It was difficult to survive because I had gone mad. But this cooperative is giving me money and I buy everything I need. Now my living conditions are improved. I am not poor! You see me! This thus makes me living convivially with others. If one is poor, he cannot live convivially with others because... you know if you are hungry, can you smile? Rather you hate everybody. (Int.60)

Therefore, for cooperative members, the restoration of conflicting parties' relationships is only possible if poverty is at least reduced if not eliminated. For them, the restoration of relationships represents peace. And peace, as respondents held, is a situation of non-poverty. Therefore, as respondents contended, positive relationships—*conviviality*, in respondents'

terminology (int.58, 60, 85)—is possible when, above all, people have well-being; that is, when people are not poor. It is also in this regard that the 64-year-old widow-genocide survivor and president of Peace basket cooperative, stated:

People can live convivially when they are not poor; when they get what they can eat and do not starve, and when they are healthy. For instance when each has a house. In short the well-being without hunger. (Int.78)

The above contentions were supported by non-members, many of whom also emphasized that poverty reduction is a key to the restoration and improvement of conflicting parties' relationships. 'You can't live convivially with others if your stomach is empty' was the message delivered in this regard. For example, a 41-year-old female-family member of former genocide perpetrators argued:

Eh! The first thing is food; you have to eat first, and [when] you are healthy. You can't live convivially with others if your stomach is empty. Actually, if one is not poor; it is when you satisfy all your basic needs; food, you get clean water, you have where to sleep, you get money for your children's school fees; their clothes...it is all these things! When you get those, it is easy to be in good relationships with others. Otherwise it is not possible. (Int.88)

The above discussion concerned the factors that led to the impacts of Peace basket on its members-conflicting parties' relationships. As it also appeared, poverty alleviation stands as the key factor. This will be further discussed in chapter 7.

6.3. Summary of the chapter

This chapter was concerned with the study's second research question: the factors that led to the impact (analyzed in chapters 4 and 5) of both cases of cooperatives studied on their members-conflicting parties' relationships. These cooperatives are Abahuzamugambi coffee and Peace basket. For both cases of cooperatives, it was generally found that, despite the problems (mismanagement of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative by its leaders and local government's intervention in its internal affairs, as well as the lack of market for the case of Peace basket cooperative's products) put forward respectively at the end of chapters 4 and 5, the factors that led to the positive relational impact of the cooperatives in question are interrelated and overlapping. They point to the importance of contact, working together for a common goal, as well as communication and education, in leading to reciprocal truth-telling, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness, and, above all, to the cooperative's success in fighting against poverty. There is thus a need to provide a deeper discussion and interpretation of the findings (analyzed in chapters 4, 5 and 6), which will involve returning to the study's theoretical framework (chapter 2), as well as to other literature reviewed (chapters 2 and 3).

Discussion of findings

This study is exploratory, to the extent that the components of the theoretical framework were not followed while collecting empirical data. Instead, the process of data collection was based on the study's research questions. In this method, the objective was to later connect empirical data thus collected in this exploratory way to the theoretical framework. The purpose of this chapter is thus to discuss and interpret the exploratory findings analyzed in chapters 4, 5 and 6, while tying them to the study's theoretical framework. It is on the basis of these discussions that eventual conclusions are drawn. Exploratory findings analyzed in chapters 4 and 5, for the cases of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and Peace basket cooperative, respectively, concern the study's first research question, which is aimed at exploring the *impact* of the two cooperatives on the relationships of post-genocide conflicting parties. Chapter 6 was focused on the study's second research question for both cases of cooperatives, with regard to the *factors* explaining their impact that was explored in the first research question. It is worth recalling that the conflicting parties are composed of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. Therefore, this chapter is concerned with two things: on the one hand, exploratory findings from both cases of cooperatives studied will be brought together and discussed comparatively; on the other hand, the study findings will be discussed and interpreted in a way that is tied to the study's theoretical framework.

7.1. Bringing together the findings from the two cases of cooperatives

Although this study did not employ a comparative approach, it is paramount to bring together and discuss the findings from the two cases of cooperatives studied in a comparative way. In so doing, the objective is to deepen, and so to enrich, the understanding of the subject under study. The present section thus provides an overall observation of the findings from both cases of cooperatives studied, as well as a broad discussion in this regard, before coming to the key purpose of the chapter—the detailed discussion and interpretation of exploratory findings in connection with the study's theoretical framework.

7.1.1. An overall observation of the findings

The overall observation of exploratory findings from both cases of cooperatives studied reveals three things: firstly, the apparent similarity/sameness and repetition/replication of the results across the two cases of cooperatives studied; secondly, the apparently solely positive picture portrayed by respondents from the cooperatives studied concerning their relational impact; and thirdly, the problems differently experienced by the two cases of cooperatives.

Therefore, before providing a general discussion and interpretation of the exploratory findings from both cases of cooperatives studied, the above overall observation of the study findings necessitates that the following question be discussed: how to explain the similarity, and the apparent replication, of the findings from both cases of cooperatives studied, and particularly respondents' use of same concepts? This question was kept at the forefront of analysis, particularly in crosschecking exploratory findings through a revisit to some respondents for further discussions, either at work (in the cooperative) or in their respective homes informally.

In this regard, an explanation for the apparent conundrum could be that the similarity, and the apparent replication, of findings from both cases of cooperatives studied implies that something important and valid is going on with regard to the connection between the cooperatives studied and the relational peacebuilding. The point is that although this proposition seems to challenge the methodology, which could have only considered positive cases of cooperatives under study and thus leading to the same results, the apparent replication of findings should not be perceived as a shortcoming; rather this indicates that the findings from both cases of cooperatives are mutually reinforcing. After all, the findings in question are concerned with conflicting parties' own experiences and perceptions. Respondents' use of the same concepts is perhaps due to the fact that conflicting parties interviewed not only lived next to each other on the same hills, and thus share the same experiences of the periods before, during and after the genocide, but also, as is the case for the entire country, they share the same culture, custom, daily living habits and problems, and particularly the same language.

However, the apparent sameness of the results across the two cases of cooperatives studied does not imply that the positive impact thus portrayed happened in the same intensity level for both cases. While it appears obvious that the positive impact in question is a result of working together cooperatively between conflicting parties, as well as the economic success of their cooperatives, that there could be a difference regarding the intensity (intimacy) of contact among the sides (time spent together) in the cooperatives in question suggests the relational impact of these cooperatives is not the same, at least, with regard to some aspects of conflicting parties' relationships. Conflicting parties working together is one dimension, while the intensity of contact in this regard becomes another dimension. The two dimensions are likely to impact on conflicting parties in different ways. In this regard, as found, the contact between conflicting parties in Peace basket cooperative was much more intense, to the extent that they stay and live together for a number of weeks when they have important tasks to complete. This is not the case for Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, where the contact is comparatively less intense. It follows that the relational outcomes (impact) resulting from intense positive contact are likely to be more influential than those with less intense positive contact. Some aspects favouring contact are much more cultivated in intense positive contact (Peace basket cooperative) than in a lesser amount of positive contact (Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative). To the extent that the contact in the cooperative was more intense, the less relational problems were experienced. This is arguably the reason why the relational problems between members of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and their leaders were found, which was not the case for Peace basket cooperative.

This general observation of the study's findings leads to the general discussion and interpretation of the findings in question.

7.1.2. A general discussion of the findings

This subsection is concerned with the general discussion of the study's exploratory findings, since the detailed discussions and interpretations will be provided subsequently, while tying the findings to the study's theoretical framework.

This section recalls that the study was concerned with the relational outcomes resulting from post-genocide conflicting parties' membership of the same cooperative organization. The particular focus was thus directed towards the nature of the impact of a cooperative organization on the relationships of its members, constituted of post-genocide conflicting parties, as well as the factors behind the impact in question. Before collecting data related to these research questions, some baseline information proved to be paramount. These were, notably, concerned with the nature of relationships between conflicting parties' prior to their membership of the cooperatives studied, as well as the reasons behind their membership, which also indirectly pointed back to the nature of relationships among people before the genocide.

With regard to the latter point, it was found that the relationships among people before the genocide were generally positive. Before the genocide of 1994 in Rwanda, people generally lived in 'harmony'⁶⁰ despite the political problems (inequality during the monarchical regimes) and notably the political turmoil since 1959,⁶¹ as well as the alleged 'divisive' and 'dictatorial' governments after the country's ascension to independence, which brought political violence and insecurity. The situation worsened, particularly since the 1990 civil war launched by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF),⁶² coupled with the country's approval of political parties, up to the 1994 genocide and of course in its aftermath. The argument that the relationships between the conflicting parties under study (cooperative members)—which became negative after the genocide—were generally positive before the genocide appears thus to be challenging the literature contending that Rwanda is historically a hostile society. Although the contention that problems of inequality among Rwandans existed as the result of the country's long history of highly authoritative and dictatorial central administration and government appears well grounded, these problems were political in nature. This agrees with what Olson emphasizes when he holds that the Rwandan genocide was planned, led and controlled not by poverty-stricken subsistence-dependent ordinary people, but by political and military elites anxious to gain political power. The genocide was thus tied to political aspirations and fears, since the Rwandan administration and government, almost to the exclusion of any other source, was

⁶⁰ As Lambourne clarifies, Rwandan pre-colonial history, characterized by the political domination of *Tutsi* (cattle-owning) over the *Hutu* majority (agriculturalists), marked a more symbiotic than exploitative relationship between the two ethnic categories, as they were treated as interchangeable according to a person's status rather than being seen as a fixed ethnic identity. The interethnic hatred and cycles of violence and revenge between the two groups that culminated in the 1994 the genocide did not begin until the end of the colonial era. (Lambourne, Wendy. "Justice and Reconciliation: Postconflict Peacebuilding in Cambodia and Rwanda." in Mohammed, Abu-Nimer. *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001:322)

⁶¹ This was the year of political struggle and turmoil during the 'Hutu Social Revolution', towards the abolition of the monarchy. It was also a period during which many Tutsi fled the country to the neighboring countries (notably Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya and the Democratic republic of Congo).

⁶² The RPF is said to have been mainly formed by the 'Tutsi' refugee Diaspora in Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who had escaped ethnic purges during the political struggle and massacres of 1959.

the paramount source of jobs, wealth and power (Olson, 1995:221). Ordinary people neighbouring each other were generally friends, they employed and married each other, and had belonged to the same institutions or organizations (churches, associations, cooperatives...) involving positive contact for a long time.

As respondents from both cases of cooperatives studied emphasized, there was no enmity among people before the genocide. How then is it possible to explain ordinary people's massive and abrupt turn to extreme hatred which culminated in friend killing friend, spouse killing spouse, child killing parent, relative killing relative, and neighbour killing neighbour? The massive mobilization and involvement of ordinary people in genocidal acts was mainly the result of the strong dictatorial and authoritative government's encouraging and obliging power (politically inspired genocide rather than merely ethnic), coupled with, or supported by, Rwandans' culture of fear, conformity and submission to the government's authority and injunctions or orders. The point is that the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was a result of a long history of political struggle,⁶³ employing the ethnically-based 'divide and rule' formula as the means, rather than being the result of historical hostility among ordinary people themselves. Before the genocide, the former governments had become dictatorial, while ordinary people were generally afraid, ignorant and submissive, which may explain why they have been considered as a 'fearful' and 'conformist people' in some quarters, obeying or imitating what government officials, elites or other dignitaries do or tell them to do. The point refers to what Reyntjens calls *socially conformist behaviour*; that is, Rwandan people tend to do what their neighbours do or what a person in authority tells them to do (Reyntjens, 1996:245), and agrees with Mamdani's emphasis of a *culture of fear* and *obedience*, and *deep conformity* whereby fear and obedience are like flip sides of a single coin: common to them is the claim that the person involved has ceased to think (Mamdani, 2001: 200). This also agrees with Forbes (1997:129) who argues that "human beings generally tend to follow their leaders (political, military, judicial, intellectual, and correctional), and do what they are told, especially when the orders are backed by overwhelming force, and that it is beyond dispute that the example and instruction of these leaders can have effects on racial and ethnic attitudes."

After the genocide, and as found in this research, the relationships between conflicting parties prior to their membership of the cooperatives studied were negative. Division, and consequently the absence of communication (or existence of scornful and insulting conversations), fear, suspicion, anger and hatred characterized the relationships between conflicting parties. This implies that the 1994 genocide destroyed the positive relationships that people had before, although the 1990 civil war also contributed.

The above developments thus indicate that the cooperatives studied were created by conflicting parties whose relationships were not yet restored. How to explain this fact, since one could reasonably presume the possibility that there might have been other mechanisms (such as the Church or the government initiatives) that could have already impacted positively on conflicting parties' relationships prior to their membership of the cooperatives studied? As found, each cooperative studied was created when the wounds of genocide were still fresh (Peace basket, created in July 1997; and Abahuzamugambi coffee, created in January 1999). These cooperatives were initiated under conflicting parties' own initiatives,

⁶³ Genocide-related massacres first targeted political opponents and human rights workers, both 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi', and then concentrated on all Tutsi (distinguished by their identification cards) as probable political enemies and potential collaborators with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (see des Forges, 1999 and Olson, 1995).

mainly in order to solve a much more pressing and common problem at hand (poverty) rather than desiring to restore their relationships. These cooperatives were thus not created under the external influence of, say, the government, NGOs, or the Church. Rather, they were initiated by their members before the government even officially engaged in the ‘war against poverty’, on the one hand, and before it launched the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission,⁶⁴ on the other. That the two cooperatives studied were created when the wounds were still fresh appears reasonable if it is recalled that the genocide took place within the context of civil war, which was still going on until at least the end of 1999⁶⁵—a difficult situation, which had prevented the government from immediately embarking on reconciliatory processes soon after the genocide. Also, why had conflicting parties’ relationships not been restored or, at the least, improved, given that the Church was an institution which was operating soon after the genocide, and that the majority of people were religious followers before the genocide?

One of the best and promising mechanisms, which would have been believed to have had a positive impact on conflicting parties’ relationships prior to their membership of the cooperatives studied is religion, and particularly the Christian Churches. Rwandans had always been reputed to be religious, and loyal to God and particularly the Christian Churches, over a long period. Before the genocide, the majority of Rwandans were Christians,⁶⁶ and active members of Christian churches.⁶⁷ Indeed, over the years, the Church (particularly the Roman Catholic Church) was the strongest institution, to the extent of influencing the government. The Church had become the most important of all social institutions, and was considered to be a holy, sacred and inviolable institution. The clergy had enjoyed indisputable moral authority and were deeply revered by the majority of their parishioners (Kubai, 2005:9). It was thus a custom that whoever could take refuge in the Church buildings was assured of protection, given that the church was strong. This was notably the case of the massacre of ‘Tutsi’ in 1959 and 1973, whereby those who found their way into Churches were allowed to live. Rwandans had expressed a strong belief in God, and so to the Church, to the extent that there was a common saying that *Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha i Rwanda* (God spends the day elsewhere but sleeps in Rwanda). When the 1994 genocide started, the first impulse for the people was thus to run for sanctuary to the nearest place of worship—Church buildings.

⁶⁴ The National Poverty Reduction programme was set up in November 2000, while the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission was enacted in March 1999.

⁶⁵ After the genocide was ‘over’, the war between the new government and those then labeled as *abacengezi* (infiltrators) of the fallen government (ex-Rwandan Armed Forces and *interahamwe* militia) was still ongoing until at least 1999.

⁶⁶ Rwanda was said to be the most Catholic Church country in Africa. Nearly 90 percent of the population was Christian before the genocide: 62.6 Catholic; 18.8 percent Protestant and 8.4 percent Seventh Day Adventist. Although the Catholic Church retains the majority of Rwandan Christians, the percentage has changed since the genocide, due to a variety of factors, including the emergence of numerous new churches (see Kubai, Anne, 2005:9; Government of Rwanda, 1994:1261-28).

⁶⁷ As Timothy Longman (1997) says, churches represented a massive presence within Rwandan society and economy. Particularly in rural areas, where the state’s presence was more limited, the population turned to churches not only for spiritual needs, but as their primary social centre, for healthcare, for education, for assistance in developing economic alternatives, and for charity. With few natural resources and a very low level of industrialization, churches were the largest off-farm employers in many rural areas.

However, during the 1994 genocide, the situation had changed, as the Church had relatively lost its power.⁶⁸ By then, the government controlled, and collaborated with, the Church. When the genocide began, people had fled to Church buildings to find refuge as usual. Nevertheless, people who sought sanctuary in the Church buildings were instead slaughtered there. According to some estimates, as Longman (1997) holds, more people were killed in Church buildings than anywhere else. This explains why, in the aftermath of the genocide, Rwanda's Christian churches faced strong criticism. The general failure of the Church leadership to condemn massacres on Church property and attacks on Church personnel, in the years preceding, and during, the genocide, clearly undermined the principle of sanctuary in Rwanda.⁶⁹ This is perhaps the reason why a vast body of literature on the 1994 genocide in Rwanda implicate the Church directly. Many journalists, scholars, human rights activists, politicians, Church personnel, and Church followers and loyalists have accused the Church leaders, notably the clergy, of not only failing to oppose the genocide but also of their active complicity in the genocide acts (although some individuals and agencies within the church did, in fact, oppose and contest the genocidal acts). This is also perhaps the reason why, in the early years following the genocide (the period during which the cooperatives studied were created), people's beliefs and loyalty in the Church had diminished, often to the extent of renouncing their faith in the living God. In the aftermath of the genocide, the accustomed saying that *God spends the day elsewhere but sleeps in Rwanda*, was thus turned (by many) to *Where was God when the genocide was being committed?* This represented a spirit of revolt against the essence of God, religion and thus the importance of the Church. It was during this period referred to as people's 'rebellion' and 'disloyalty' against the Church—before the government's active involvement in the reconciliatory process (in terms of policies, programmes and strategies, in the example of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission)—that the cooperatives under study were created. It is argued here that this is one of the reasons why the cooperatives studied were not created by individuals whose relationships were already restored. But, does this then mean that their membership of the cooperatives studied was therefore aimed at restoring or improving these relationships? This study found that, as has been discussed previously, the answer is no. Both cooperatives studied were not created by conflicting parties whose motive was to restore their relationships. Rather, people became members of the same cooperative in order to solve other problems they had in common (above all poverty) rather than their conscious desire to meet for a reconciliatory work. The common problem faced by both sides of the conflict—extreme poverty—after the genocide had obliged those living in proximity to combine their efforts in order address it. It was thus impossible that the contact between conflicting parties could be avoided since they lived side by side. Therefore solving this problem effectively necessitated that they work together, which implies contact between them. In this regard, the desire to fight against poverty thus became a pushing/pulling factor, while the cooperative stood as a solution—a space for contact.

⁶⁸ The groundwork for genocide was laid over a period of several years by the authoritarian regime (Longman, 1997).

⁶⁹ In this regard Timothy Longman (1997) argues that the culpability of the churches lies not only in their historic role in teaching obedience to state authority and in constructing ethnic identities, but also in their modern role as centres of social, political, and economic power, allied with the state, actively practising ethnic discrimination, and working to preserve the status quo.

In fact, in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, individuals from both sides of the conflict, who were accustomed to working together or supporting each other before the genocide, faced extreme poverty in a more or less similar way. Their state of poverty had increased as a result of the genocide and the civil war.⁷⁰ Addressing the problem of deep poverty thus seemed very difficult, or even impossible for many, while working individually—all the more so since many people were left orphaned or widowed, and many households left headed by young people. Conflicting parties thus found themselves obliged to combine effort in order to increase production and thus income, while also acquiring other advantages provided by the cooperatives (loans, dividends, training, etc) in comparison with the market or private-capitalist sector. Therefore, as emphasized above, given that both sides of the conflict lived side by side, they found themselves in need of each other and thus to meet in order to fight against the common problem of poverty. Fighting against poverty through the cooperative required that people thus adopt a new spirit (working together or cooperative interdependence). It was thus this new spirit (cooperation towards a common end) to which each cooperative member had to submit that mainly lies behind the positive impact of cooperatives studied on their members-conflicting parties' relationships. By adopting the cooperative spirit towards a common end, conflicting parties were thus called to put aside what divided them and to focus on what united them. However, as found, the setting aside of divisions does not imply their burial or keeping them from discussion. It rather became an opportunity to discuss and transform them constructively. Conflicting parties' successful achievement of a common end thus necessitated that they positively redefined and transformed their previous negative relationships.

Findings from both cases of cooperatives generally show their positive impact on the relationships of their members in a similar way. The successful achievement of the mission of each cooperative studied (increasing the socio-economic standard of living of, above all, cooperative members) was found to be at the core of their positive impact on conflicting parties' relationships. Since both sides of the conflict faced the common problem (poverty), it was found that their joint effort in striving to solve it successfully became an opportunity for them to meet, interact, and work together constructively, in a way that enabled them to not only overcome division, but also to overcome their previously held negative and hostile-dehumanizing attitudes, while fostering positive ones. It is in this regard that, as found in both cases of cooperatives studied, conflicting parties managed to overcome division, miscommunication, fear and suspicion, as well as anger and hatred towards each other, while restoring positive and 'soothing' communication, and nurturing 'conviviality', explained in friendly relationships. The interrelated and overlapping factors that led to that positive impact, for both cases of cooperatives, emphasize the importance of *contact* among conflicting parties who *work together cooperatively, communicate and educate* each other towards a *common goal*. This, in turn, led to the development of *truth-telling, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness* expressions among conflicting parties. In particular, for both cases of cooperatives, *cooperative's economic success—fighting against poverty*—was found to be the key factor in this regard.

However, despite this similar and apparently solely positive picture regarding the relational impact of cooperatives studied on conflicting parties' relationships, some problems or shortcomings in this regard, which varied for each case of cooperatives studied,

⁷⁰ It is worth recalling that the genocide was committed in the midst of a destructive civil war between the defeated government and the rebels (Rwandan Patriotic Front) since 1990.

have also been discovered. For the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, the problems were both internal and external. Internal problems pointed to bad leadership, whereby cooperative members accused their current leaders of mismanaging the cooperative. This mismanagement refers to the misuse of cooperative funds, and to the process of decision-making without members' knowledge or consent, coupled with a lack of leaders' accountability in this regard. This questions the applicability of the cooperative value and principle of equality-democracy, which implies that members must actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. The external hindrance points to the interference of local government officials in the cooperative's affairs, notably in decision-making. These internal and external obstacles experienced in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative were not, however, experienced in Peace basket cooperative. Rather, the obstacle faced by Peace basket cooperative pointed to the lack of a market for its products (baskets), a problem which was not reported in the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. The lack of a market for the products of Peace basket cooperative was found to be putting it at risk of failure, which in turn was likely to impact negatively on members' relationships.

Therefore, although both cases of cooperatives studied are reported to have impacted positively on the relationships of their members-conflicting parties, internal and, particularly, external problems experienced appears to make them vulnerable. This thus points to the heavy weight played by the macro-context in which these cooperative organizations operate, which should be taken into account in considering the role of cooperatives in relational peacebuilding. Thus, despite the seemingly solely positive picture portrayed by the respondents regarding the relational impact of the cooperatives studied, the shortcomings or obstacles thus discovered imply that the positive effects on relationships are at risk. The next discussion will deepen the discussion of this aspect.

7.2. Connecting the findings to the study's theoretical framework

This study's theoretical framework (chapter 2) emphasized a number of factors affecting the restoration of interpersonal relationships or relational peacebuilding. These factors point to conflicting parties' personal contact, cooperative interdependence in working towards a common goal, equality among parties in contact, institutional support, friendship potential, truth-telling, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness, communication, justice, education, socio-economic development, and culture, rituals and symbols. The purpose of this section is thus to tie exploratory findings, from both cases of cooperatives studied, to the theoretical framework. As observed, these factors, as well as the positive impacts to which they led, are interrelated and largely overlap.

7.2.1. Positive personal contact

Once the restoration of relationships between divided parties requires that the parties meet, the critical task therefore becomes how to effectively, and constructively, bring them together. As pointed out earlier, conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—live side by side on the

same hills, in a country where individualism⁷¹ is hardly bearable. It follows that their relationships cannot be restored (or at best they will be hindered in that process) if they are kept separated from each other.

This study has found that the contact in the cooperatives studied, between individuals from both sides of the conflict, was considered to be one of the key factors (an important step) explaining their positive impact on the relationships of the parties. Each cooperative studied, perceived by its members as *an encounter*, brought together (enabled the contact between) genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, which emphasizes the importance of contact *per se*. While theories espoused in the literature concerning contact appear to indicate favourable conditions for contact to yield positive relational outcomes, this study found that, although the necessity of ‘favourable contact’ remains clear, it is also worth recognizing that contact *per se* can be meaningful in a society, such as Rwanda, where individualism is hardly bearable. The early assumptions on contact theory therefore remain valid—simple contact between members of antagonistic groups is likely to undermine negative attitudes, while fostering positive ones, and, in contrast, the absence of such contact is believed to foster negative attitudes and behaviours. This also refers to Allport’s contention that contact should be perceived as important by conflicting parties, and that the perceived importance of contact can vary from one context to another. Nonetheless, the contention that the relational outcomes of contact *per se* are not always positive is far from questioned. As found, although the perceived importance of contact between conflicting parties might be an important step, that contact *per se* is not enough to justify contact as a factor yielding positive relational outcomes remains unquestionably valid. Contact between conflicting parties can even be meaningless or even destructive as far as the restoration of their relationships is concerned if the place or situation in which the contact in question takes place is not favourable. This refers to the general assumption, in intergroup contact theory, that the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties will depend on *favourable* contact; that is, to be maximally effective, contact requires that some *prerequisites* be fulfilled. As was found, the nature of the relational outcomes resulting from the contact in the cooperative between conflicting parties depended on the nature of the purpose behind that contact and its effectiveness, as well as the atmosphere in which the contact in question takes place; that is, whether contact in the cooperative between conflicting parties is constructive or destructive. This refers to what is emphasized in contact theory; contact that is held in the ‘wrong’ place at the ‘wrong’ time may increase and confirm negative relationships already held by conflicting parties. As found, this involves a number of aspects: the *purpose* of contact, the *method*, the *environment* or *atmosphere* in which the contact takes place (internal and external), as well as the *effectiveness* of the purpose behind contact. The impact of cooperatives studied on conflicting parties’ relationships depends on the interrelationship between a number of factors centred around the *positive contact* among conflicting parties in order to: (a) *successfully* achieve a *common goal* important for both parties; by (b) *working together cooperatively*; which implies interactions in which (c) *communication* and *education, truth-telling, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness* take place; on the basis of (d) *equality* among cooperative members; and whereby (e) the *institutional framework* is supportive.

⁷¹ ‘Individualism’ is understood in the opposition to collective, cooperative or social and community life/spirit. It is in this regard that, as findings indicate, loneliness was perceived by respondents as a problem to living conditions worth addressing, which is why their membership of cooperatives was believed to alleviate loneliness.

7.2.2. Common goal among conflicting parties

The nature of the purpose behind contact between conflicting parties, in the cooperatives studied—*achieving a common goal*—was found to be an important factor behind the positive impact of the cooperatives on their members-conflicting parties' relationships. In this study's case, as emphasized previously, the goal behind conflicting parties' contact in the cooperatives studied was the resolution of a problem common to both sides of the conflict—*poverty*. It is in this regard that the contact between conflicting parties, in both cases of cooperatives studied, was found to be constructive, since individuals from both sides of the conflict were engaged in the resolution of a common problem, thus necessitating that they worked together interdependently (cooperatively) while addressing their previous negative relational problems. In this regard, conflicting parties' contact toward a common end was not just a simple, casual contact. Although the contact varied from one cooperative to the other (much more intense in Peace basket cooperative than in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative), it was found to be a conscious and planned decision which was voluntary and natural, rather than casual or forced by an external hand (as discussed previously). For the voluntary and natural contact to take place, as found, it was simply enough that one or two individuals initiate the idea of creating a cooperative and sensitizing it to their neighbours. This was the case for Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, whereby a family member of former genocide perpetrators, after realizing that people in the village were becoming poorer while the majority of them had coffee plantations, stood up, sensitized, and encouraged his neighbours, from both sides of the conflict, to combine resources for production. This was also the case for Peace basket cooperative, whereby a widow-genocide survivor gathered weavers (males and females with whom she had previously worked in a similar association before the genocide) from both sides of conflict for a mutually supportive action of weaving baskets. This process of people's membership of both cases of cooperatives studied, on a natural and voluntary basis, is contrary to the formal state-approved process (involving interference of the government) that had previously characterized the cooperative movement in Rwanda and that was argued to be one of the root causes of their failure.

It follows that when conflicting parties share something of equal importance for both, this constitutes an opportunity for them to meet or come into contact—another factor towards constructive contact. This supports the common argument, in the literature regarding contact theory, that for contact to contribute to improved relationships, conflicting parties must be pursuing a common goal of importance for both sides; that is, contact around something constructive and important for both sides of the conflict (baskets or coffee production aimed at alleviating poverty, in this case). However, as also found, and consistent with the literature on intergroup contact theory, contact between conflicting parties, for a common goal, is not enough of itself to be maximally productive in the restoration of relationships; rather it is but one important factor. The method, through which such a common goal is achieved, is very important. It is in this regard that working together cooperatively, or cooperative interdependence, was found to be another important and closely interrelated and complementary factor behind the positive relational outcomes of the cooperatives studied. This concurs with Allport's contention that conflicting parties holding a shared goal is not enough, and that "only the type of contact that leads people to *do things together* is likely to result in changed attitudes" (Allport, 1954:276).

7.2.3. Working together cooperatively

Working together cooperatively, or cooperative interdependence, among conflicting parties, is the method used in the pursuit of the goal they share. In this regard, conflicting parties' working together cooperatively appears to be much weightier than the common goal that lies behind it. The point is that having a common goal can, in certain situations, can be a less important factor for beneficial contact across the divides when the achievement of that goal does not imply cooperation. This is so, since conflicting parties may have a common goal, but achieve it on an individual basis, which does not thus enable the contact between the sides and the positive consequences that can flow from it. However, consistent with what many social scientists suggest, common goals, in the sense of reasons for cooperation, must be present before greater contact can be expected to have positive effects. This also points to the positive nature of contact activity (cooperative interdependence), which is in contrast with negative interdependence, resulting from individuals being in competition among themselves while working against each other to achieve a goal that only one or a few may attain. This is thus consistent with intergroup contact theory, assuming that for contact to contribute to improved relationships, it is not only necessary that participants be pursuing a common goal, but that the attainment of that goal must be an interdependent effort without intergroup competition.

As found in this study, each member of the cooperatives studied strives for, and is responsible for, the well-being of his/her fellow members—a cooperative exercise that excludes competition among group members while favouring interdependence and mutual understanding among them. In this regard, the study found that the inability of some people in the areas to join the cooperatives studied was generally explained by the lack of land or coffee plantations (in the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative), or an inability to weave baskets (in the case of Peace basket), as well as other personal reasons, such as personal occupations or physical inability (i.e. handicap), or simply ignorance. Therefore, although conflicting parties came into contact in the cooperatives studied in order to cooperatively satisfy another need (above all, fighting against poverty), rather than to restore or improve their relationships, it was found that in the end this impacted positively on their relationships, as they engaged in a cooperative effort that nurtured positive communication and mutual understanding towards this end. It is in this regard that effective working together cooperatively (on the basis of cooperative values and principles—see chapter 3) became another decisive factor that explained the positive relational outcomes of the cooperatives studied.

Exploratory findings in this regard are thus strongly consistent with the literature on intergroup contact theory (see chapter 2), emphasizing that when individuals from both sides of conflict share a common ('superordinate') goal that requires their joint efforts for its attainment, their relationships are likely to take a constructive direction as their attitudes towards each other become more positive than if the two groups were competing for a goal that only one side of the conflict could attain. The study found that fighting against poverty was that superordinate goal, given that it was equally important for individuals from both sides of the conflict, and that its successful resolution necessitated that the sides worked together cooperatively.

As found, the cooperative work enables the interdependence of cooperative members towards a common goal, which consequently became an opportunity for the restoration and improvement of their relationships—given that members were conflicting parties.

This is why this study's findings strongly support contact theory's principle of 'superordinate goal', emphasizing that "whenever the cooperation of people is enlisted toward the completion of some task that is of equivalent importance to both, and which cannot be successfully completed except through the close cooperative enterprise of the two people, those people will come to like each other, they will become friends, and their values, attitudes, goals, etc., will tend to become increasingly similar" (Gilmartin, 1987:286, Love 1995:56).

As found, conflicting parties' decision to work together to satisfy a common need—an activity involving participation and interdependence—was a result of a positive expectation that each side had in relation to the others. Each side expected that the other side would contribute to his or her well-being, and thus accepted working together interdependently, given that both sides were expected to share the success or the failure of their cooperative. It follows that they all strove towards the success of the cooperative, which implies a common understanding and eventually trust, with ultimately positive consequences on their relationships. The relatively simple act of trusting that each side of the conflict would contribute to the well-being of the other was thus found to be an important aspect characterizing conflicting parties' improved and restored relationships. This would arguably not have been possible in the case of competition. This thus points to Friberg's contention that, "if we expect the other party to respond to our moves by taking advantage of us we will not engage in them". (Friberg, 2003:16) Conversely, "if we expect the other party to respond positively to an invitation to cooperate we will engage in cooperative moves...The level of trust between the parties is an important variable because human thinking and action is partly determined by expectations." (Ibid)

As found, the fact that genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, share a common problem (poverty) and that addressing it necessitated that they worked together cooperatively, this constituted an opportunity for them to engage in positive contact, interactions and communication that affected their relationships constructively. It was thus through the method of cooperation, or cooperative interdependence, that conflicting parties' relationships were gradually improved and restored. This thus supports the common contention in the literature on intergroup contact, contending that if conflicting parties help each other to attain important goals, so that both are better off as a result of their interaction, positive attitudes are more likely to develop between them than if they spend their time insulting or frustrating each other.

In other words, when opponents manage to be brought together in some cooperative endeavour, they tend to break down their negative attitudes and behaviours, they begin to depend on each other, and they therefore start building normal, positive relationships, a process that becomes extended to previous negative aspects of their relationships. The point is that when conflicting parties resolve to focus on the resolution of a common problem (poverty, in this case), it becomes an opportunity for them to meet constructively since its resolution necessitates that they cooperatively engage in positive interactions and communication.

7.2.4. Effective communication—truth, acknowledgement, apology, forgiveness and friendship

The social-psychological underpinning of Interactive Conflict Resolution lead to the general working assumption that full successful reconciliation between alienated groups cannot take place without an adequate degree of genuine dialogue...of a mutual and interactive nature. That is to say, the conditions and outcomes of successful dialogue...lay the groundwork for the reciprocal enactment of the necessary elements of reconciliation: acknowledgement of transgressions, apologies of these, forgiveness of these, and assurances that such acts will not occur in the future. (Fisher, 2001:28)

In connection with the above statement, this study's findings have shown the importance of effective or positive communication (genuine dialogue) and the consequences thereof, as conflicting parties strove together (worked cooperatively) to achieve a common goal (improving their living conditions; referred to as fighting against poverty). It follows that the purpose behind their contact in the cooperatives studied (common goal), as well as the method for achieving that purpose (cooperation), determine the nature of interactions and so communication (positive communication). In the above discussion, it was emphasized that the contact between conflicting parties was positive, since both sides had been brought together (contact) around a common need to be satisfied cooperatively. This, in turn, facilitated the development of positive communication for mutual understanding, which turned to be a constructive process, whereby reciprocal truth, acknowledgement, and expressions of apology and forgiveness, and friendship were fostered among the members.

There is a common argument in the literature on relational peacebuilding that positive or constructive communication and dialogue positively redefines relationships between conflicting parties. Despite some shortcomings found between cooperative leaders and members with regard notably to the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (bad leadership resulting in the cooperative's mismanagement), a positive communication among cooperative members was generally found in both cases of the cooperatives studied. This was the type of communication that was found to be generally 'open', 'truth-telling', and 'sympathetic' among cooperative members. Cooperative members, in both cases of cooperatives studied, generally referred to this type of communication as 'soothing conversations'; that is, positive communication in the sense of containing information and learning for mutual understanding (rather than being defensive), in which disclosures of truth, acknowledgement of wrongs, apology and expressions of forgiveness took place. These were considered as the necessary, if not vital, components of the relational peacebuilding process. This thus supports the assumption that when former perpetrators acknowledge what they have done, and apologize and directly request forgiveness, knowledge becomes, in a sense, truth, and survivors are assured (at least to some extent) that the past will not repeat itself, which facilitates dialogue towards positive relational outcomes.

But how is it possible to explain such positive relational outcomes resulting from positive communication in the cooperative, among conflicting parties, if the traumatizing context in which the genocide was perpetrated is recalled—the killing of friends, neighbours, spouses, parents, children, and siblings? As discussed above, the 1994 genocide

in Rwanda was highly political in nature, while the massive mobilization of ordinary people to committing genocidal acts was largely the result of their historical culture of conformity and submission, rather than of historical hostility among them. Therefore, since conflicting parties' relationships were generally positive before the genocide, this came to facilitate the hard task of restoring and improving them after they ruptured as a result of the 1994 genocide. Through the cooperative organization, it was thus possible for conflicting parties to engage in the process of restoring their previous convivial life (friendship), not necessarily as it was before the genocide, but at least to engage in positive communication towards new positive relationships. It is in this context that positive communication, involving reciprocal disclosures about truth, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness expressions, was thus made possible in both cases of cooperatives studied.

In this regard, something apparently unusual, or less common, in the process of post-conflict peacebuilding is the importance of the two-way formula related to reciprocal disclosures, as found in both cases of cooperatives studied. While the one-way process is relatively well-known—whereby the focus is on the oppressor, who is the only party supposed to reveal information about his/her wrongdoings—this study revealed that the process of relational peacebuilding becomes much more promising when there is the possibility for a mutual (reciprocal) willingness from both sides of the conflict to reveal information about themselves to one another. In this study, the information in question concerned the truth about what happened during and after the genocide, which also brought in conflicting parties' negative relationships of fear, suspicion, anger and hatred—information that might have normally remained hidden or suppressed. Former genocide perpetrators revealed their past wrong actions and attitudes while expressing remorse, bearing the responsibility for them, and asking for forgiveness. Their family members also disclosed the former's genocidal acts, as well as their own negative attitudes (after the genocide) towards genocide survivors and their family members. In turn, genocide survivors also were able to acknowledge and reveal their revenge actions, and negative attitudes and feelings, towards former genocide perpetrators and their family members. This was a two-way process, in contrast with the one-way process in which all focus is on the offender.

It is in this same spirit (the two-way formula), notably during the daily conversations while working together, that reciprocal hostile attitudes and behaviours were disclosed by individuals from both sides of the conflict, rather than shifting the responsibility to one another. However, self-disclosures were made at an interpersonal level rather than the group level (that is, not under 'ethnic' groups). Resistance, by some, was reported to have been challenged as members implored, urged and advised individuals in question to humble themselves. In this regard, open communication, during which truth was disclosed, led conflicting parties to reciprocally acknowledge and/or express the truth about their wrong, express remorse, apologize, and ask for forgiveness, which was in turn granted by the offended against. Therefore, contrary to the common and well-known one-way peacebuilding formula, whereby only perpetrators are expected to acknowledge, express remorse, apologize and ask for forgiveness, this study found that genocide survivors also, in turn, not only revealed their harmful acts towards perpetrators (revenge acts), but they also revealed their previous negative feelings (anger, hatred, suspicion, fear and distrust) towards former genocide perpetrators and the latter's family members. This is a reciprocal process, which does not appear to be emphasized in the peace and conflict field. This is so since much existing work regarding interpersonal relationships restoration concentrates on the

necessity for former perpetrators' inclination and acceptance of their responsibility for transgressions, offering sincere apology and genuine atonement.

Therefore, based on this study's findings, it follows that, while this approach appears to be effective, the processes of restoring interpersonal relationships becomes far more effective if survivors also disclose their negative actions or attitudes that would have otherwise remained hidden. Even though the survivors might not have committed any apparent harmful acts toward perpetrators in the form of revenge, they may have at least developed, in one way or another, a sense of hostility and dehumanizing imaging, characterized by hidden hostile feelings and attitudes towards the perpetrators. It follows that survivors' hostile and dehumanizing attitudes toward former perpetrators need also to be disclosed for the process of successful relationships restoration to effectively bear fruitful outcomes. However, although any side of conflict can take a lead in this reciprocal process of self-disclosure, it was found that the process becomes most promising when the perpetrators or their respective family members take a lead. The two-way formula is thus likely to allow conflicting parties to discuss the issues (the problems related to their relationships) rather than the person (individual personality). This might appear doubtful for the case of the one-way formula, since its focus is on both the wrongdoer as a person (his/her individual personality) and his/her wrongdoings (actions). It is in this context that, even though it seems difficult to separate the person from his/her actions, the findings of this study suggest the separation of the two aspects where, while engaging in the process of relational peacebuilding, the communication among conflicting parties needs to deal with harmful actions, rather than their author (wrongdoer).

With regard to the nature of communication among conflicting parties, this study found/believes that the communication among cooperative members-conflicting parties, during reciprocal disclosures, was at the level of 'sympathy' rather than at the deeper level of 'empathy' yet suggested in the literature on relational peacebuilding. Although respondents reported the 'soothing' communication among them, it appeared that (considering the deep psychological and emotional consequences of the Rwandan genocide) this type of communication in the cooperative was still at the upper-shallow level of sympathy rather than the deep level of empathy. While recognizing that it seems extremely hard to judge the meaning of a person's words, expressions or gestures, as between either empathic or sympathetic, it appeared that reaching the deep level of empathy soon after atrocities such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide requires far more time. Sympathy remains restricted to the feeling *for* the individual—(one feels sorry for the other)—and this is what was found in the cooperatives studied. But empathy is much deeper. The concept of 'empathy' stems from Greek roots, to translate the German word *Einfühlung*, meaning 'feeling *with*'. Empathy implies feeling *as* the individual feels (walking in the same shoes) (DeVito, 1989:97). While this is what seems ideal in relational peacebuilding, the researcher is convinced that it was not what was found to have characterized the positive communication between conflicting parties in the two cases of cooperatives studied. This is so since genocide perpetrators expressed sadness and felt sorry *for* their genocidal acts. This was also the case for genocide survivors, who also expressed sadness and felt sorry *for* their acts of revenge and negative feelings towards former genocide perpetrators and their family members. These were thus sympathetic expressions and acts among conflicting parties, which were expressed, during communication and interaction (verbally and non-verbally), through words and facial expressions such as winks or hissing, and physical contact such as mutual touching on shoulders and physical closeness (either while working together or

outside cooperative activities), as well as through actions (which included mutual support and care for the needy). It is argued that cooperative members' phrases such as 'we are one', and 'we are one family' are a result of sympathy rather empathy, in the strict sense of the term, or at the most empathy in its embryonic stage. It is in this context that sympathetic communication, through which reciprocal disclosures regarding truth, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness, were facilitated became another group of factors behind the impact of cooperatives studied on their members' positive relationships.

With regard to communication, in particular, it was found that the kind or nature of communication nurtured determined the kind of interpersonal relationships outcomes. This is so since ineffective, or bad and negative, communication can even widen and exacerbate the division and hostility already held by conflicting parties. It is at this level that the cooperatives studied were found to be playing an important role, given that communication among cooperative members was positive and constructive as they engaged in cooperative work towards a common goal. This is therefore consistent with the literature that emphasizes the importance of constructive or positive communication (verbal and non-verbal) in the restoration of relationships. The point is that poor communication is very likely to destroy positive interpersonal relationships, or to exacerbate negative and hostile ones. As found in this study, each cooperative studied generally served as a favourable space for positive or constructive communication among its members-conflicting parties. As wrongdoers truly acknowledged and apologized for their wrongdoings while asking for forgiveness, this paved the way for the restoration of relationships among the parties. It is in this context that positive communication and dialogue in the cooperatives studied generated a sense of common purpose among conflicting parties, enabling them to see the relational problems in new and positive/constructive ways. Not only were truth, acknowledgment, apology and forgiveness expressions reciprocally disclosed among conflicting parties as a result of positive communication (positive climate), but also, as a result, *friendship*, expressed as *conviviality* among them, was gradually fostered and built up. This supports the literature on intergroup contact theory, suggesting that contact is thought to reduce prejudice when it provides the participants with the opportunity to become friends.

Therefore, for both cases of cooperatives studied, positive or effective communication among conflicting parties, which was found to be one of the casualties after the genocide, conversely became one of the primary ingredients in the restoration of interpersonal relationships. Both cases of cooperatives studied provided a safe environment, where conflicting parties managed to positively communicate/discuss and share their past experiences, perceptions, and feelings, while understanding each other, during a common project of striving towards a common end. Moreover, as also found, the communication involved education and training, in the form of information and learning.

7.2.5. Education in the cooperatives studied

The general argument in the literature on post-conflict peacebuilding emphasizes that education can serve either as a prerequisite for peacebuilding, or as a conflict-exacerbating factor. Chapter 6 of this study's findings indicates that each cooperative studied was perceived by its members as a school. It is in this regard that, as found, education or training in the cooperative (during formal and organized training, and informally during mutual advice while conversing and working together, and during convivial parties), stood as another factor for the efficient functioning and development of the cooperative organizations

studied, which have had positive effects on the relationships among cooperative members-conflicting parties. In this regard, cooperative education was found to be aimed at engaging the minds of cooperative members, not only to fully comprehend the complexity and richness of cooperative thought and action, but above all to appreciate the requirement of members' unity and interdependence towards an end they share in common. This therefore implies that education provided in the cooperatives studied is the factor most likely to transform conflicting parties' minds, rather than education limited to the simple transmitting of knowledge.

Ideologically, as Carlsson (1992:44) holds, cooperatives are human-centred, with cooperation seen as a process of education, and of development of people. As found in this study, education for cooperatives' economic success focused on members' awareness of cooperative spirit (values and principles—see chapter 3) and members' unity and interdependence towards a common goal. In this regard, as found, the education provided contributed to relational peacebuilding rather than being a conflict-exacerbating factor. It is reminded that for both cases of cooperatives studied, education was transmitted in three ways: (a) during cooperative work (advice, councils and warnings while working together), (b) during training sessions (by members themselves or by research centres on cooperatives or the ministry in charge of cooperative promotion), and (c) during convivial parties (ceremonies). In this regard, as found, education and training in the cooperative was a persuasive force which drew conflicting parties closer together, and governed and controlled their attitudes and behaviours. When cooperative members (conflicting parties) were constantly trained on attitude and behavioural change, and were requested to submit to, and internalize, the new philosophy of cooperation (values and principles), towards a common end, they began to gradually give up their negative or hostile-dehumanizing attitudes and behaviours towards each other, as they adopted and internalized positive-humanizing ones. A kind of 'new social identity', rather than sustained division, thus began to be established, as members strove together interdependently towards a common purpose. This thus emphasizes the importance of a positive education which is positive in consistence with Hamburg's suggestion that positive education can help counter negative attitudes (Hamburg, 1995). Therefore, for education to be a prerequisite for relational peacebuilding, it has to be constructive, since education can also be a conflict-exacerbating factor. However, to be most effective, as found here, cooperative education will depend on other factors, in addition to those discussed above. It is in this regard that this study's theoretical framework also suggested justice as another factor that affects the restoration of interpersonal relationships following violent conflicts.

7.2.6. Justice in the cooperatives studied

What type of justice was found within the cooperatives studied in relation to post-genocide relational peacebuilding? As emphasized above, open communication, during which truth was disclosed, led conflicting parties (above all former genocide perpetrators and their family members) to acknowledge the truth about their genocidal acts, to express remorse, to apologize and request forgiveness, which in turn was granted. What was also found in both cases of cooperatives studied was that forgiveness was restricted to letting go of hatred and resentment; that is, trying to understand while abandoning ideas of revenge acts against the wrongdoers. In this regard, forgiveness granted by genocide survivors marked a change in how they felt about former genocide perpetrators, but not a change in the actions to be taken

by justice systems. As thus found, even though genocide survivors forgave former genocide perpetrators and thus ended the cycle of violence, this does not imply that the latter could not undergo punishment by courts of justice.

The point is that what was found to be taking place in the cooperatives studied had aspects of mercy, which does not however imply ‘amnesia’—in the sense of a ‘forgive and forget’ form of justice, since none consciously forget. This contrasts with the old adage that understands forgiveness as to ‘forgive and forget’. This is so, given that genocide survivors cannot consciously forget the way they have been hurt. Likewise, former genocide perpetrators cannot consciously forget the way they have hurt other people. Forgiveness in the cooperatives studied thus involved trying to understand the wrongdoer, and so to have sympathy, with regard to influences that might have brought him/her to do what he/she did. What was thus found in both cases of cooperatives studied is some aspects of restorative justice (see chapter 2), notably the importance of *contact* or encounter (creating opportunities for survivors and former perpetrators, as well as their respective family members, to meet to discuss their relational problems) and *inclusion* (providing opportunities for conflicting parties to participate in its transformation). In this regard, justice was thus based on recognition of the shared humanity of both groups of perpetrators and survivors, to the extent that each becomes healed. The aspect of restorative justice focusing on the repairing of the damage was out of the question in the cooperatives studied, since that was a matter left to the formal justice system.

In addition to the above factors, the literature on relational peacebuilding also point to the importance of equality-democracy as another factor affecting the restoration of interpersonal relationships. As found in this study, ways in which equality-democracy was exercised in both cases of cooperatives studied explain the nature of their relational impact, despite some internal shortcomings experienced notably for the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative.

7.2.7. Equality-democracy amongst parties in contact

Despite the lack of common agreement in the literature on intergroup contact, regarding whether equal status between the interacting groups is an essential requirement for change, there appears to be a common understanding that positive change cannot be anticipated at all in its absence. Within an organization, such as a cooperative, equality is a value implying (associated with the value and principle of) democracy, the latter being understood as a form of post-conflict transformation, and as an effective way of implementing the principles of equality, representation, participation, accountability, and power-sharing (Bloomfield, 2003:10). Therefore, democracy in the cooperative organization implies that cooperative members give to each other what DeVito (1989:103) terms “unconditional positive regard”, whereby none is considered to be smarter, better looking, or more valuable than the other. Of course, never are people absolutely equal in all aspects, but the democracy discussed here is not political; it is rather democracy, as a value and principle within an organization—the cooperative in this case—but which is also concerned with power sharing, equal participation and responsibility, equality and equity, as well as accountability within the organization. It is a democracy in which every person as a human being within that organization is of equal value, and has equal rights. Each person (organization member) is intrinsically valuable, without attachment of the ideas of either inferiority or superiority. Here, equality-democracy is particularly pertinent to decision-making and governance,

which involves the quality of leadership. It is in this regard that some shortcomings, experienced differently by the two cases of cooperatives studied, were found.

By virtue of the cooperative principle of democracy, the cooperative is owned and governed by its members. Each individual-member in that cooperative should have an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making and governance of the cooperative. It is in this regard that despite some problems in the relationships between cooperative members and their leaders in the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (as discussed further below), equality among cooperative members constituted an important factor behind their reported positive impact on conflicting parties' relationships. As this study found, equal status among cooperative members-conflicting parties was present in two ways. First, conflicting parties were more or less of equal status in their membership of the cooperatives, since they were both poor. Second, conflicting parties were of equal status during their situation in the cooperative, since the cooperative principle, according to which all members have to submit and work, considers cooperative members on an equal footing. Therefore conflicting parties were of equal status, both while coming into and during contact situations. While some theories on intergroup contact point only to one aspect of equal status (see in chapter 2), this study found that the two aspects are reconciled.

However, as emphasized above, although it was generally found that equality among cooperative members was generally present in both cases of cooperatives studied, the current exercise of democracy remained questionable in the case of Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative. At the time of investigation, the principle of democracy was reported to be not well respected in this cooperative. The atmosphere between cooperative members and their leaders was found to be shaky, although it was found not to be impacting on members' relationships at that point. Members accused their leaders of mismanaging the cooperative (misusing of funds and making decisions without members' knowledge). Abusive interference of government representatives in the cooperative's affairs (notably during decision-making) was also reported. Yet, the cooperative, by definition and principle, is a democratic organization governed and controlled by its members. Members have to be consulted and must have reasonable access to all information relevant to the decisions, respecting the exercise of the authority (affecting them) of which they are the repository. As Parnell (2001:xiii) argues, it is the quality of leadership that determines the success of all forms of organizations.

It follows that if this problem persists, Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative will be doomed to failure, as befell the early cooperative movement (1760) in Western Europe, and later in the developing world, where cooperatives failed due to similar internal shortcomings, such as inefficient business management (management left entirely to a few individuals) and the presence of dishonest officials who neglected meetings between managers and members (see chapter 3). The persistence of the poor relationship between Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative members and their leaders is thus likely to affect its functioning, with a consequent risk that it might impact negatively on members' relationships. The persistence of local government's interference in the affairs of this cooperative (in decision-making and management) is also likely to negatively affect the principle of democracy, while impacting negatively on the cooperative's success and consequently the relationships among cooperative members. State's interference in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative's affairs also recalls the perceived eternal syndrome behind the failure of cooperatives, notably in the developing world, in general: that of the state's interference (influence, supervision and control) in the management of cooperatives,

notwithstanding the necessity of state support. The Rwandan local Government's interference in this cooperatives' affairs, the poor relationship between cooperative leaders and members, and consequently the absence of members' democratic participation in the management of their cooperative, is thus likely to hamper the development of this cooperative and thus the success of its mission (economic in this study's case), while impacting negatively on its members' relationships. Although Peace basket cooperative did not experience these problems, the lack of market for its products was found to be a hindrance to its economic success. It is in perspective that the socio-economic success of the cooperatives studied stands as another, key, factor behind their positive impact on members' relationships.

7.2.8. Socio-economic development: fighting against poverty

There is an apparent lack of agreement in the literature about the relationship between socio-economic development and post-conflict relational peacebuilding. While suggesting that much depends on the societal context, this study, pointing to the role of a cooperative organization, leads to the strong connection between these two variables. As found, it appears difficult to engage in the process of restoring interpersonal relationships in a society, such as Rwanda, faced with underdevelopment, notably when conflicting parties are faced with the problem of extreme poverty. Therefore, consistent with Zorbas' conclusions,⁷² it follows that solving conflicting parties' socio-economic problem (poverty in this case) is likely to lay the groundwork for the restoration of their relationships. In this regard, as found, the process of restoring interpersonal relationships becomes much more promising when conflicting parties share a problem (poverty in this case), which necessitates that they come together and work cooperatively to solve it. In the Rwandan context, where cooperatives are primarily economic institutions, the necessity for their economic success was found to be another key factor behind their positive role in relational peacebuilding. This refers to the theoretical suggestion that it can be effective to transform interpersonal relationships, following violence, when self-interest cuts across the divides—the contact between divided parties around something of equal importance for both of them—notably in this study, where poverty affects people on both sides of the conflict.

In Rwanda, generally, and in the region in which this study was carried out (Huye district), particularly, extreme poverty raged in the years immediately prior to the 1994 genocide, and then especially in its aftermath. Fighting against poverty was thus a common desire of individuals from both sides of the conflict. Respondents' common expressions of: 'when the stomach is empty, ears do not hear', or 'you can't live convivially with others if your stomach is empty' (see chapter 6), illustrate how poverty was perceived to be the most important challenge to address before engaging in the process of restoring conflicting parties' relationships. As constantly reminded, the economic success of the cooperatives studied (fighting against poverty) was the main reason behind their creation, and this became a key prerequisite for conflicting parties' positive future in their relationships. Since conflicting parties came together, in the cooperatives, to fight against poverty, it follows that their primary expectation was the cooperatives' success in this regard, which, as found, positively affected their relationships. The quest of conflicting parties to fight against

⁷² In her research on *Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda*, Zorbas (2004) concluded that poverty reduction is connected with reconciliation. See chapter 2.

poverty required that they work together cooperatively implied that they engaged in positive interactions, communication and interdependence, with consequent positive relational outcomes.

It follows that in order to impact positively on its members' relationships, the cooperative must be successful in its mission; that is, for the case of this study, the improvement of conflicting parties' relationships depends on the economic success of their cooperative. Since the essence of the cooperatives studied was the desire for individuals from both sides of the conflict to solve or satisfy a problem or need conflicting parties shared in common (other than that of restoring their relationships)—fighting poverty, it follows that solving or satisfying the problem or need becomes the key factor determining the nature of the future relationships among the parties. As emphasized earlier, a common problem or need for both parties in a conflict (fighting poverty), which could best be solved or satisfied if they work together cooperatively, thus constituted an opportunity to begin the restoration of their relationships. It is in this regard that the two cases of cooperatives studied impacted positively on the relationships of their members-conflicting parties, given that they were, above all, economically successful, despite some obstacles faced, as discussed above. This is the reason why the economic success of the cooperatives studied was celebrated in what is well known in Rwanda's culture as *ubusabane* (convivial party) organized by cooperative members and to which non-members are also invited. The economic success of the cooperatives studied, which was consequently celebrated through such parties, was thus found to be the glue in the process towards the improvement and restoration of conflicting parties' relationships. This was thus manifested during the celebration of their improved living conditions as a result of unified efforts and interdependence towards the successful harvests—representing the economic success of the cooperative.

The above discussions imply that cooperatives' economic success is likely to lead to a new phase of the relationships of cooperative members-conflicting parties. It is in this context that the economic success of the cooperatives studied (fighting against poverty) stood as another factor behind their positive impact on members-conflicting parties' relationships. However, the above discussed factors are not enough since cooperatives do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, they carry out their operations within a macro-context, which, in one way or another, affects the nature of their success and consequently their impact on members-conflicting parties' relationships. Supportive institutional frameworks, which point to the country's cultural, political and legal contexts, thus become another group of factors that must be considered.

7.2.9. Institutional support: Culture, rituals and normative support

The general understanding in the literature on relational peacebuilding points to the importance of institutional supports when a society seeks to deal with a violent past. This refers to the society's normative support, culture or customs, rituals, ceremonies and other supportive mechanisms.

As found in this study, the positive relational outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership of the cooperatives studied found their roots in Rwanda's culture or custom of cooperation, which is supported by consequent rituals (convivial parties) and the current law and policy on cooperatives. As emphasized previously, post-genocide conflicting parties-genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their

respective family members, live side by side, and generally share the same socio-economic problems, in a country (Rwanda) where the culture of individualism is hardly bearable. It follows that keeping them separated would therefore be destructive. This thus returns to Rwanda's culture of sociability and cooperation. Even though formal cooperatives were institutionalized by colonization, the spirit of cooperation existed in ancient Rwanda (see chapter 3). In Rwandan culture, unity, solidarity (in the sense of cooperation, interdependence or mutual support), and the fact that *none can live as an island*, have always been considered to be the foundation of society, and one of the best way for people to live and thrive. The report of the Ministry of Local Government (2002:1) reflects this:

From the time in memorial, Rwandans in their culture held that unity was strength, and that to survive they needed each other's help without any distinction—'solidarity' by 'working together'. This was Rwandan's traditional philosophy of mutual solidarity and assistance reflecting a number of collective activities they performed at village level. People jointly put up houses, cleared bushes and tilled land for growing of crops. Efforts were also combined to defend themselves against common enemies and generally came to each other's help both in time of happiness and time of sadness. It is realized that that spirit of mutual assistance was deeply rooted in the conventions and customs of the society. Such solidarity kept the Rwandan society quite intact and dynamic.

It is on the basis of this traditional culture of cooperation that a new notion of modern forms of cooperatives emerged, and continues to emerge, in Rwanda, with the ideology that there can be a better way of forging togetherness and solidarity through common social and economic purposes. For example, one of the components of the Rwandan Seal is the *basket*—the country's cultural art-craft. In this regard, as article 7 of the Rwandan new law (2008) emphasises—related to the characteristics, description, ceremonial and reservation of Seals of the Republic, and which provides the meaning of components of the Seal of the republic—the covered basket of two colours symbolizes the Rwandan culture to be safeguarded: saving, solidarity in all matters, and sharing (Republic of Rwanda-Official Gazette, 2008:6).

The above statement of the Ministry of Local Government backs up some of the respondents' contentions (see chapter 6), which emphasize the Rwandan saying: '*umutwe umwe wifasha gusara*' (one's individual thinking only assists on one's way to insanity/madness), or *ntawigira* (none can achieve anything by him- or herself). Conflicting parties' decision to work together through a cooperative organization is thus rooted in the country's culture of 'strength' or 'ensured achievement' through solidarity or cooperation. This is perhaps the reason why members interviewed contended that not only did they come together in order to fight against poverty, but also to alleviate loneliness. The country's culture of working together appears to have thus been supportive in this regard, since getting together with other people in Rwanda is culturally a part of life.

This is also connected to the country's ritual known under the term *ubusabane* (translated as conviviality/convivial party), which was found to be practised in both cases of cooperatives studied, as their members celebrated their cooperatives' economic achievements/success. It is recalled that *ubusabane* is the Rwandan traditional event where people organize a 'get together festival', at which people share food and drink, and dance, with the aim of either celebrating an achievement or promoting unity, friendship and partnership among communities. This event has thus become the social event of festivity or

party, at which the harvest is celebrated, and at which all are welcome. As found, this became the glue that improved conflicting parties' relationships. *Ubusabane* thus has become an expression of joy, resulting from the economic success which restores conflicting parties' relationships as they celebrate the economic success of their cooperative effort. This reflects Schirch's contention that "doing something together helps them [people doing it] feel as one" (Schirch, 2005:139). The point is that people (who had been antagonistic) tend to lose their sense of self (the 'us' and 'them' disappears progressively), and gain a feeling of union with others through doing a common action together as they successfully achieve it. This justifies the reason why the success of their cooperative action is celebrated. The success thus bears a distinctive value. This is the case for *ubusabane*, the organization of which requires that money, food, and drinks be collected, which implies that the cooperative has been productive; that is, it has been economically successful to the extent that cooperative members rejoice in this achievement, and have produced the means not only of improving their well-being, but also of celebrating the achievement. Ways in which this process impacts positively on cooperative conflicting parties' relationships thus appear obvious: getting together, working together, achieving economic goal (harvest-money-surplus), celebrating the achievement, and continuing the same process in the following next days and years. As Schirch (2005:193) holds, "when people sing, dance, or speak in unison with others, they begin to feel less like an individual and more like an essential part of a large group." It follows that their relations improve meaningfully as they gradually build a new identity—the 'we' identity. *Ubusabane* culture (celebrating cooperatives' success) thus appears to return to earlier times of cooperation, where people had to learn to work together to meet their common needs, or otherwise perish. This was notably the case for the pilgrims who settled at Plymouth (Massachusetts) and who jointly cleared fields, broke up the soil, planted and cared for their corn. They celebrated their harvest, together with the Indians, in 1621, with a Thanksgiving feast, as the corn was shared equally among the settlers (Frederick, 1997).

The above contentions—showing how the cooperative studied impacted positively on the relationships of their members through the culture of cooperation and the celebration of their success—are thus consistent with the theories on relational peacebuilding that stress the importance of the culture, or custom and rituals, as factors that affect the restoration of interpersonal relationships, and particularly, the contention that "the way in which a community deals with a violent past is intimately linked to its more general customs and culture" (Bloomfield, 2003:46). Considering the fact that traditional cooperative practices were often deeply rooted in the local culture (Parnell, 2001:8) this study's findings thus agree with Avruch's suggestion that solutions to conflicts have to be anchored in the local culture in order to be effective and sustainable (Avruch, 1998).

However, this point does not imply that culture of itself is necessarily or always the foundation upon which any successful conflict resolution stands or falls, since that culture can also be destructive. It is thus paramount to note that it is only the society's *constructive culture* that can form a promising foundation upon which the restoration of interpersonal relationships can stand. Therefore, when the society's culture is supportive, as is the case in the Rwandan culture of solidarity or working together cooperatively, it becomes promising that conflicting parties' relationships can be improved and restored. In addition, as also

found, a *genuine*⁷³ cooperative itself (autonomous, successful and democratically controlled cooperative), as a social space offering conflicting parties an opportunity to meet, constitutes a social atmosphere that is favourable to the positive relational effects of the contact. This would not be the case for a non-genuine cooperative. Moreover, as also found, the relational effect of constructive culture and rituals becomes much more promising when there also exists normative or political support, notably in the form of laws and policies.

In the present time, the Rwandan government is calling upon people to form or join cooperatives, which are believed to contribute to the country's 2020 vision, notably in poverty reduction, and in reconciliation. It is in this regard that a new law on cooperatives has been enacted and a national policy on cooperatives has been adopted. This normative and political support was found to be supportive as far as the development of cooperative movement is concerned, and above all for their positive impact on the relationships between conflicting parties. It was thus found that both policy and the law encourage conflicting parties to come into positive contact, to put aside negative attitudes and behaviour and work together to fight for their livelihoods. It is in reference to these principles that a cooperative created on basis of exclusion (discrimination) is not granted a legal status.

As put in the law providing for the establishment, organization and functioning of cooperative organizations in Rwanda (arts 2, 3, 38 and 46), cooperatives should be autonomous and democratically controlled (Republic of Rwanda-Official Gazette, 2007). The law and policy on cooperative movement in Rwanda, as also clarified by the head of the task force within the ministry in charge of cooperatives promotion (the Ministry of commerce, industry, investment promotion, tourism and cooperatives-MINICOM), strongly discourage and prohibit the possibility of creating cooperatives that are exclusive (Republic of Rwanda-Official Gazette, 2007: art. 2 and 3; MINICOM, 2007). The purpose is to encourage people to form cooperatives that bring together individuals from both sides of conflict, in order to rebuild a new, inclusive, Rwanda. In this regard, both the head (now Director General) of the Task Force (now Rwanda Cooperative Agency) in the MINICOM, and the Executive Secretary of the NURC maintained the importance of legal and political support. The statement below of the former informant appears relevant and encompassing:

When we sensitise and train cooperative members, we tell them that the cooperative should remain open. And open membership is a key cooperative principle. You know that the Rwandan society has been broken; this division, among other things, could be bridged if people work together around activities that unite them but which also give them economic profits on an equal basis. When they work together, when they produce together, and when they sell their production together, when they earn income together, we think that there is no reason that people kill each other again for utilities while they have a common need, and a common attraction, which is a cooperative. We think that a

⁷³ In this study, the understanding of a 'genuine cooperative' follows Couture et al., (2002:1-2), defining 'genuine cooperatives' in opposition to 'socialist' or governmentally dominated cooperatives. Genuine cooperatives thus refer to voluntary, politically independent, user-owned and user-controlled businesses created to provide their members with material and social benefits in a market environment. That is, a cooperative established and functioning as genuine (satisfying some conditions: it should be created under joint recognition of a common problem and be more efficient in performing the service, or solving the common problem cooperatively than individuals can). A genuine cooperative is thus autonomous, economically viable and democratically controlled.

cooperative is a factor of social cohesion. We think that a cooperative is an effective way that brings people together in order to build their social cohesion and so finally build a world in which people might not necessarily love each other, but live in harmony. And here economy is of great importance. Therefore, we never accept that people create cooperatives that are exclusive. If we allow the creation of cooperatives based on castes, clans, or interests of some people, then we will not be successful. It is an obligation, in the new law and in the new policy, that Rwandan economic cooperatives be open without discrimination. Cooperatives should be distinguished by their activities rather than ethnic or social origins. (Int. informant)

It is in this perspective that the updated law on cooperatives was enacted. A statement of the above informant also becomes relevant in this regard:

Yes this is why in the new law we rise up against anybody, above all elites; and the law was actually enacted in order to discourage, and if necessary, to be against people who abuse cooperatives. Because there is a risk that we fail in our quest to make cooperatives fruitful, productive and beneficial to everybody. If people will find that cooperatives are only benefiting some people to the detriment of others, not only we will fail to achieve our goal such as the material, the social and the social cohesion needs, but also we will risk to divide more the entire society. This implies that we have a huge responsibility, I mean the government, to discourage, and if necessary, to denounce and punish the bad practices of elites who truly—and I am not exaggerating while using this word—*suck* the poor peasants. (ibid)

The above contentions are thus consistent with intergroup contact theory, emphasizing that “the greater the contact, the less the prejudice when there is normative supports for equal status contact, but the greater the contact, the greater the prejudice when law or custom discourages equal-status contact” (Forbes, 1997:129). This thus seems true if one draws on the experience of other countries, notably of the Western Europe, such as the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden, where cooperatives prospered as the result of middle-class support (in the Netherlands) or support from all classes (in Sweden and Italy), through laws protecting the nature of the cooperative organization.

Conclusion

This study has aimed to contribute to addressing the shortage of knowledge in the field of peacebuilding from below, notably regarding the mechanisms or methods to be used in order to overcome the painful past between conflicting parties. The study aimed to provide an empirically based study of the role of a cooperative organization in the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Conflicting parties were genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. The study's scope was restricted to two cases of cooperatives—*Abahuzamugambi coffee* and *Peace basket*—representing Rwanda's major sectors of livelihood, namely agriculture and handicraft, operating in the Huye district of the country's southern province. The study's interrelated research questions were twofold. The first research question was concerned with ways in which the cooperatives under study impact or impacted on their members-conflicting parties' relationships. The second research question was focused on the factors that explain that impact. Whether a cooperative form of organization plays a role in the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties constituted thus the study's statement of research problem.

The study was restricted to the micro-perspective (how a cooperative impacts on, or relates to, its members) rather than the macro-context (community outside the cooperative, or the country level). The focus was mainly on members' subjective experiences and perceptions, although non-members were also interviewed. By taking a hermeneutic orientation, the study leaned towards an interpretive paradigm, while adopting a socio-psychological approach rather than a juridical-political approach. Data were qualitative, and they were analyzed qualitatively. The study was neither aimed at a cause-and-effect relationship, nor at producing a final 'truth'. The purpose was to generate knowledge that opens up and furnishes opportunities for understanding the subject under study. Respondents, who have been subject to group and personal interviews (members and non-members), comprised both sides of the conflict and totalled 219 (169 from Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and 50 from Peace basket cooperative). In addition, three informants were also added, thus arriving at a study interview sample of 222 individuals.

The study's theoretical framework (chapter 2) combined intergroup contact theory with other theoretical perspectives on interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. In this regard, intergroup contact theory took a lead, not only because the study was concerned with the relational outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership of the same cooperative, but also since little research has been conducted regarding intergroup contact theory in developing countries, on the one hand, and in post-conflict contexts, on the other. In this regard, the study's essential desire was not to rigidly test the validity of the contact hypothesis. Rather, its objective was to use contact theory as a guide to discuss the relational outcomes resulting from the contact, in the cooperatives, between conflicting parties.

However, intergroup contact theory was found not to be comprehensive enough to be solely applied to interpersonal relationships peacebuilding. This is why, with the help of theories on interpersonal relationships restoration, other theoretical aspects have been added to it. They include the importance of truth-telling, acknowledgement, apology and forgiveness, communication, justice, education, socio-economic issues, and culture, rituals and symbols. Empirically, the relationship between theory and data collection was kept less prescriptive; there was a greater degree of openness, given that the study adopted an exploratory approach. This implies that the theoretical framework was not scrupulously followed while collecting empirical data. Rather, the process of data collection was based on the study's research questions (departing from respondents' perspectives and experiences and provide an analysis from that). The objective was to subsequently connect the exploratory empirical data thus collected to the theoretical framework.

A general context of the cooperative movement, with a particular emphasis on Rwanda, was provided (chapter 3). It was on the basis of the study's theoretical framework and the context of cooperatives that exploratory findings (chapters 4, 5 and 6) were discussed and interpreted (chapter 7).

8.1. Summary of the study findings

This chapter departs from a summary of the study's findings. The chapter further connects the findings to the study's research problem and aim and ends with the study's limitations, which consequently suggest the perspectives for further research.

8.1.1. From dehumanization to re-humanization: the relational impact of a cooperative

The study's research problem on whether a cooperative form of organization plays a role in the restoration of relationships across the divides after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda invites an understanding of ways in which the cooperatives under study impact on their members' relationships. This was what this study's first research question was concerned with. An empirical exploration of two cases of cooperatives—Abahuzamugambi coffee and Peace basket—led to the general conclusion that an effective cooperative is likely to impact positively on the relationships of its members. Exploratory findings from both cases of cooperatives studied have shown that the cooperatives generally impacted positively on the relationships of their members-conflicting parties, given that they were generally effective despite some problems related to the mismanagement of notably Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative and local government's intervention in its internal affairs, as well as the lack of market for the case of Peace basket cooperative's products.

As found, each cooperative studied impacted positively on the relationships of its members whose relationships prior to their membership of the cooperatives were negative immediately after the genocide (division, absence of or bad communication, fear, suspicion, mistrust, anger, hatred). Yet, conflicting parties had become members of these cooperatives with the ultimate intention of satisfying personal and material needs (alleviating loneliness and poverty) rather than to restore their broken relationships. It was particularly the desire to fight poverty cooperatively (given that individual work was not thought to be effective in alleviating poverty) that obliged conflicting parties who lived side by side to come together.

Yet, this then became an opportunity for the sides to come into positive and beneficial contact in their relationships. The simple fact of interviewing conflicting parties in mixed groups (while seated together) was of itself revealing, and appeared to be the simplest evidence of positive relationships forming. Not only had division been erased, but also previous negative and dehumanizing attitudes and feelings of fear, suspicion, anger and hatred, had been gradually overcome, while positive-re-humanizing attitudes and behaviours had also been fostered. As found, positive communication had been improved and restored, and conviviality, characterized by friendship, and mutual support and care, had been fostered among the members. This represented a process of the transformation of conflicting parties' relationships, from dehumanization to re-humanization. Ways in which this transformative process took place were explained in a number of factors.

8.1.2. Factors behind the impact of a cooperative on conflicting parties' relationships

This study's findings led to the general conclusion that the cooperatives studied impacted positively on their members-conflicting parties' relationships, in what was summarized above as a transformation from dehumanization to re-humanization. A number of interrelated and overlapping factors that led to this impact have been isolated, while thus answering the study's second research question. These factors emphasized: (a) the importance of *contact*, (b) the existence of a *common goal* among conflicting parties, as the motive behind contact, (c) *working together cooperatively* as the method for achieving that goal, (d) the positive atmosphere in the cooperatives studied, characterized by *positive communication* (favouring reciprocal disclosures on truth, acknowledgement, apology, forgiveness and friendship), *education* and *equality* among cooperative members, (e) the *successful* achievement of the goal behind the contact (cooperatives' economic mission), and (f) the necessity for *institutional support* (culture and normative supports).

One of the key factors behind the positive impact of the cooperatives studied was that they enabled conflicting parties to come together; that is, the contact between the opposing sides. In a country such as Rwanda, where a culture of individualism is hardly bearable, keeping conflicting parties separated appeared to be destructive for their relationships. This is what the cooperatives under study—which were perceived by their members as encounters—enabled. The primary issue that cooperative members found positive in their cooperative was that the cooperative organization brought conflicting parties (divided people) together. Therefore, an initial conclusion is that in a society where the culture favours a social life (individualism unbearable), and where contact between conflicting parties cannot be avoided, contact between conflicting parties can be an important factor (a first step) towards the restoration of interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, this contact is likely to be destructive if it is not focused around a constructive purpose; that is, if the contact is not positive or favourable. Therefore, contact *per se* is not, of itself, enough to restore relationships. It follows that the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties, in the contact situation, necessitates that the parties confront each other constructively. The contribution of the cooperatives studied was found to be decisive in this regard.

As found, both cases of cooperatives studied brought together the divided parties around a constructive purpose; that is, a need or problem of interest to both parties. This became a much more favourable environment for rebuilding relationships, since the achievement of that common need, or the resolution of a common problem, required that

both sides worked together cooperatively; that is, they participated responsibly, equally, and interdependently. Contact between the divides was motivated, above all, by the common desire to fight against poverty—a common problem for both sides, which could not effectively be addressed unless conflicting parties worked together. The satisfaction of a common need through cooperative work thus necessitated that individuals from each side of the conflict put aside their relational problems, and focused on the common problem: poverty. However, putting aside negative-hostile attitudes did not imply keeping them from discussion. On the contrary, as found, this rather became an opportunity for discussing and addressing them. Working together cooperatively implied that conflicting parties interacted, communicated, and advised each other towards a common goal.

It follows that the parties' responsible engagement in this constructive process implied that they redefined their relationships. Previous negative relationships needed to be transformed if their joint efforts had to be effective in achieving their common goal. The cooperatives studied offered a valuable opportunity towards the restoration of conflicting parties' relationships, given that not only did cooperative members have the opportunity to discuss issues related to their previous negative relationships, but that they were also obliged to adopt a new philosophy (cooperation) through which the satisfaction of the common goal could be effective. That philosophy called for members' responsibility, unity, equal participation, and interdependence. Equality, democracy, communication and education while working together towards a common goal thus became an additional group of interrelated factors behind the positive impact of the cooperative organizations studied on the relationships of their members-conflicting parties. It was in this spirit that cooperatives studied became economically successful (which was celebrated during convivial parties known under the local concept of *ubusabane*) while transforming negative and dehumanizing attitudes towards positive and re-humanizing ones.

Therefore, when it is necessary that conflicting parties come into contact in order to successfully achieve a common goal cooperatively, it is likely that positive or constructive communication will take place, which will impact positively on their relationships. Therefore, the more successful the cooperative becomes as a result of members' cooperative efforts implying positive communication, the greater will be the positive impacts on their relationships. It can thus be concluded that the relational impact of a cooperative depends on its effectiveness in achieving the purpose behind its creation is concerned. In Rwanda, where cooperatives are mainly created for economic motives, it can be concluded that cooperatives can impact positively on the relationships of their members-post-genocide conflicting parties if they are successful economically; that is when they effectively serve their members. This not only depends on the nature of the internal atmosphere in the cooperative (the nature of the purpose behind contact, communication, education, and equality among cooperative members), but also to the nature of the external environment (the society's culture, rituals and political framework, that should be supportive). It is in this regard that some hindrances (discussed further below) were observed in relation to the cooperatives studied, which led to the conclusion that a cooperative remains a vulnerable institution despite respondents' contentions about its potential in relational peacebuilding.

8.1.3. Not all positive in the cooperatives studied

Despite the seemingly solely positive picture portrayed by respondents concerning the relational impact of the cooperatives studied, this study found that everything was not definitely 'beds of roses'. This is what was emphasized by the respondents in the Kinyarwanda proverb: '*nta byera ngo de*' (nothing can be pure white). This Rwandan proverb signifies that there are often or always shortcomings in every undertaking. A cooperative organization thus remains a vulnerable institution considering the internal and external shortcomings or problems found notably for the case of the two cooperatives studied.

Both internal and external problems were observed in Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, while Peace basket cooperative experienced an external-contextual problem. With regard to Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative, internal problems pointed to its poor management, which challenged its leadership (non-democratic decision-making, mismanagement of cooperative funds, and lack of accountability). External problems concerned the interference of local government officials in cooperative affairs (notably in decision-making). Peace basket cooperative, which did not experience such problems, was nonetheless found to be facing another major problem, which was a lack of a market for its products (baskets). All of these problems faced by both cooperatives studied were found to be major obstacles to their ongoing reported positive impact on the relationships of their members-conflicting parties. Therefore, the nature of the impact of the cooperative organization on relational peacebuilding depends on the nature of both the internal atmosphere, as well as the external-macro context (notably political, cultural and economic) in which the cooperative operates. It follows that if the internal and external contexts in which a cooperative organization operates are not supportive, then the expectation for its economic success, and consequently its potential for positive relational impact, risks being eroded and thus rendered illusory.

8.2. Concluding remarks and theoretical implications

The restoration of relationships between conflicting parties is one of the key tasks of post-conflict peacebuilding following violence such as that of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Whether a cooperative form of organization plays a role in this regard constituted the study's research problem. At the completion of this study, the general conclusion is that despite some internal and external shortcomings observed (as discussed above), the cooperatives studied, described as *connectors*⁷⁴ across the divides, contributed to the restoration of relationships of their members-conflicting parties, constituted of genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members. Each cooperative studied provided a favourable space in which negative-dehumanizing attitudes were overcome, while positive-re-humanizing ones were fostered: from fear to fearlessness, from suspicion to trust, from division to union, from anger and resentment to calm, from hatred to attraction and conviviality. This is so since the restoration of interpersonal relationships requires a space in which a traumatised person can be free from

⁷⁴ Cooperatives as *connectors* refers to cooperatives as spaces or mechanisms that, by bringing people (divided parties) together, transform their relationships positively through cooperative interactions. 'Connectors' can be contrasted with 'dividers'; attitudes and behaviours as well as structures that keep conflicting parties apart.

the burdens of the past. The point is that when people experience trauma, they lose personal and physical space in which to manoeuvre. For relationships to be restored, people thus must be in a place where they are able to think and act differently; that is, where they have space and opportunity to think not only about their physical survival but also where they can begin to imagine life without fear and hatred. This study has thus found that a genuine and effective cooperative comprised of conflicting parties can serve as that hospitable space. This appears to maintain Waller's insistence on the 'power of the situation' in influencing people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours (2007:230-69). However the study found that this role is conditional; a cooperative can play a positive role in the restoration of relationships between conflicting parties if it is effective in achieving the goal to which it was created for.

Since Rwandan cooperatives are, above all, economic enterprises, in a society where the incidence of poverty is high, it can thus be concluded that they are likely to play a positive role in the restoration of relationships across the divides when they are, above all, successful economically. It follows that, in a society where poverty is so rife, the more economically successful a cooperative, the more likely it is to improve its members' relationships. If it is maintained that extreme poverty in Rwanda is a consequence of genocide, among other factors, then poverty reduction is the key to post-conflict relational peacebuilding, whereby the cooperative organization holds the key. By stimulating economic development of conflicting parties (increasing the socio-economic standard of living of members), as a result of their joint efforts, the cooperative can thus mitigate their relational problems, while fostering positive new relations. The point is that, as an economic actor, the cooperative is intimately bound up in the wider relationship between poverty and conflict. To the extent that poverty itself is or has been a factor sustaining conflict, among other things, the cooperative could be, or could be seen to be, part of the same dynamic; that is, it has the potential to influence and constructively transform that dynamic. This means that without reducing poverty of its members-conflicting parties, the potential of the cooperative to play a role in relational peacebuilding in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda will be limited.

From the above discussion, a micro-macro link regarding the impact of a cooperative organization can thus be suggested. On the basis of the study's findings, it can be suggested that the more a cooperative impacts positively on the relationships of its members, constituted of conflicting parties, it is likely that the effects in question extend to the surrounding community level, as well as to the country level. Yet, this requires that the cooperative be genuine (autonomous, effective, and democratically controlled), which depends on the nature of the internal, as well as the external, environment. If that environment is not supportive, the role of the cooperative in relational peacebuilding, at the micro level, as well as the macro level, might be hampered. This is so since cooperatives do not operate in a vacuum. They carry out their activities within as socio-economic, political, and cultural environment which shapes their effectiveness (the success of their mission). Therefore, not only will cooperatives' role in relational peacebuilding depend on their internal effectiveness, but also on the nature (favourable or otherwise) of the external environment or macro-context (including the institutional framework) in which they operate.⁷⁵ Therefore, it may be suggested and claimed that unless Rwandan cooperatives are genuine and economically successful (in fighting against poverty, in this case), and unless

⁷⁵ The external environment of cooperatives can thus constitute either an opportunity or a challenge/threat as far as cooperatives' role in relational peacebuilding is concerned.

the micro-macro contexts are supportive, their potential in restoration of relationships between conflicting parties—genocide survivors and former genocide perpetrators, as well as their respective family members—will be difficult, or even impossible. This indicates the in-dissociable connection between the socio-psychological/cultural and the structural aspects of peacebuilding. The relational peacebuilding potential of cooperatives cannot thus be disconnected from the macro-context in which they operate. For example, if there is lack of a market, as was found to be the case for Peace basket cooperative, or if generally the external-context is faced with price fluctuations on the international market, resulting from a global financial crisis as it is the case nowadays (price fluctuations are the most common and pressing problem faced by cooperatives in undeveloped countries), it will be difficult for the cooperative to be economically successful. This recalls how the two World Wars, the 1930s economic recession impacted negatively on the cooperatives of the West (notably in Europe), in general, although some survived (Birchall, 1997:124-5). The negative effect would also be the case if there was an external interference in the affairs of the cooperative, which should be autonomous and democratic, as was the case for Abahuzamugambi coffee cooperative (local government officials' interference in decision-making).

On basis of the above conclusions, this study claims to have contributed to existing academic research concerned with the field of peace and conflict by filling the gap observed in the ways of approaching post-conflict peacebuilding from below. While the roles of *Tribunals* in top-level approaches, and *Truth Commissions* and *Problem-Solving Workshops* in middle-level approaches, and the approaches at grassroots level involving only the *representatives of local populations*, are familiar, this study has shown that genuine and effective cooperatives, which involve a people-to-people approach without public involvement or a mediator, can become an alternative—a new way that has not yet been emphasized in the field of peace and conflict research.

Present research concerning post-conflict interpersonal relationships peacebuilding has over-emphasized the role of Truth Commissions (truth-seeking by previously conflicting parties) and/or Problems-Solving Workshops (through restoring communication between conflicting parties). Both approaches are *public* and involve a third party. Conversely, cooperatives enable a direct confrontation between conflicting parties on a *private* basis, without a third party's intervention. Research has shown that there might be a risk that, when truth is told in public—notably in Truth Commissions—individuals involved in the truth-telling process are likely to experience trauma, or a risk of trauma exposure which may lead to retraumatization when giving testimony (Brounéus, 2008:15-16). As this study has found, cooperatives can offer an alternative, less risky method, since not only is the confrontation between conflicting parties—within the cooperative—private, intimate, voluntary and natural, but also the norms of interaction, communication and behaviours in the cooperative, coupled with the constructive motive behind conflicting parties' membership, provide a favourable atmosphere—an effective social space—that is constructive and that is directed towards restoration (through a two way formula) rather than a risk for (re)traumatization.

In addition, as Villa-Vicencio (2007) holds, the beneficial effects of truth-telling may well depend on the liberty of being able to speak freely, and involve a sense of belonging to the process. Yet, Brounéus' study concluded that the argument that Truth and Reconciliation Commissions do not affect those who were directly involved in the conflict is true (Brounéus, 2008:16). This study has shown that in the cooperative organization, it is just the opposite, since the cooperative affects those directly involved in the conflict. Therefore, in

the cooperative, the process works. The cooperative organization thus appears to provide an answer (at least partially) to Brounéus's conundrum, of "where and how a society and its people have the capacity to bear the challenges of truth, justice and reconciliation, without breaking up again" (Brounéus, 2008:11). The answer may be: in the cooperative organization, provided that both groups of conflicting parties are its members. It is also worth emphasizing that the restoration of interpersonal relationships after violence, such as genocide, remains a process. It is argued that if collective action can be used to dehumanize and violate human values, then the cooperative method can be used to re-humanize and restore them. It is the purpose behind cooperation that makes a difference. The difference between collaboration and cooperation in the cooperative organization becomes relevant here. Unlike collaboration, which is capable of being both destructive and constructive, cooperation (in the cooperative organization) appears to be only constructive by virtue of its values and purpose. The cooperative is thus formed for a constructive purpose, rather than a destructive one.

The above discussion implies that collective outcomes reached through participatory methods, such as problem solving or controlled communication workshops, facilitation, conciliation, mediation, consultation (Friberg, 2003), can be supplemented by cooperation (in the cooperative organization) in which, contact between conflicting parties is direct, natural, voluntary and private, and in which third parties are absent. Therefore, it can be concluded that not all processes directed towards the restoration of interpersonal relationships in the aftermath of violence necessarily require third parties. This study on cooperatives has shown that it is also possible that conflicting parties can improve or restore their relationships without the intervention of a third party or through a necessarily public process. Cooperatives can surely not play this role alone, but it is not unreasonable to expect that they be part of the solution, as an alternative to existing mechanisms, notably those that involve official diplomacy and third-party mediation.

8.3. Study limitations and perspectives for further research

Some limitations of this study, which suggest perspectives for further research, are put forward. First, it is worth recalling that this study was not aimed at providing a definitive 'truth' applicable to all situations or contexts. Since the study was concerned with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, it follows that the findings do not necessarily generalize to other conflict-prone contexts and societies, notably those that are not similar to the Rwandan context. For example this study's findings would not apply in societies whose cultures are characterized by, and favour, individualism (where the spirit of cooperation is less meaningful) or those where the problem of poverty is less severe. This study thus agrees with Miall's argument that "peacebuilding task varies with the country and the conflict." (Miall, 2007:33)

Another limitation is concerned with the effects of contact and personality difference. Although the findings suggest the existence of a connection between change at the individual level and change at the relational level, the study did not deepen understanding in this regard, since, as Allport suggests, it might be possible that certain individuals do resist the influence of contact, and that contact cannot overcome prejudice deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual. He asserted that, the reduction of prejudice is possible for a population of 'ordinary' people, with a normal degree of prejudice, but also only under

favourable conditions (Allport, 1954:281). Since this was beyond the purpose of this study, it is suggested that further research be conducted in this regard.

Moreover, the study does not generalize individual relationships to the groups to which they belong, which involves the connection between interpersonal relationships and intergroup relations. The study was limited to the micro-level of analysis—that is, how a cooperative impacts on its members—rather than the macro-perspective. It therefore follows that the problem of *generalization of effects* posed in intergroup contact theory, remains—that is, the macro-perspective of whether, and how, contact effects or outcomes resulting from conflicting parties' membership of the cooperative generalize to non-members, the community, and the entire society. It is thus recommended that this also be a subject for further empirical research. This also implies indirect contact in intergroup relations. Since this study focused on direct interactions between conflicting parties (direct personal contact in the cooperative), it follows that the study findings do not generalize to indirect contact (having an in-group friend who has an out-group friend). It is thus also suggested that indirect interactions be the focus of further research on interpersonal or intergroup relations.

To end, this study was exploratory, and was limited to a deep understanding/exploration of two cases of cooperatives operating in one specific geographical area of Rwanda. Further studies that cover a variety of cooperatives and that are extended across the entire country should thus be conducted. In this regard, it is suggested that, since this study did not take a comparative approach, comparative study on various cooperatives should be conducted.

Ultimately, this study concludes with the belief that despite the above limitations suggesting areas for further research, a meaningful light has been shone on the role of cooperative organizations in relational peacebuilding. The study argues that it has made visible what has been thus far obscured in peace and conflict studies, particularly in the field of peacebuilding from below, notably regarding the methods to be used in order to overcome the painful past between conflicting parties. By considering the diversity of ways in which the cooperatives studied have impacted on conflicting parties' relationships, it appears justified to suggest that the cooperative form of organization be considered as a partner in post-conflict peacebuilding processes. There is thus a need to shift attitudes away from the primary conception of cooperatives as simply agents of economic development divorced from the wider post-conflict peacebuilding process.

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