



# Effects of Political Conflict on Household Livelihood Security in Ntakangwa Commune, Bujumbura Province, Burundi

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**Abstract:** *Post-independence ethnicity conflict recurs before and after every election in Burundi. The current conflict which started in 2015 is political rather than ethnic in nature. Since the election season started, fighting leading to civil war re-emerged and a number of people have been displaced, killed, injured, tortured and others have traumatic mental illnesses. Anchored on conflict theory, the study investigated the implications of political conflict on sustainable livelihoods security at household level. It predominantly adopted mixed research design, which embraces qualitative and quantitative approaches. A sample of 102 respondents was determined through the use of multi-stage sampling technique, probability and non-probability sampling procedures to sample target groups namely family members (parents), community leaders and the youth. Observation checklist, interviews, content analysis guide and questionnaires were the key instruments used for data collection. Themes were built as they emerged from the qualitative verbal expressions of the observation units, while quantitative data were analysed by use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20. The findings revealed that intolerance in politics, leaders' selfishness; stereotypes based on regionalism, ethnic membership and class were the main sources of discrimination in politics, which adversely affected the means of survival in different households. The study concludes that livelihoods securities (farming, employment, trade, mining, transport, education systems and culture) were negatively affected by political conflict at household level. The study suggests the following recommendations: government authorities and other stakeholders should create peace and harmony among the community members and control social strife during elections to promote mutual co-existence and sustainable survival mechanisms of the citizens.*

**Keywords:** *Political conflict, Burundi, Ntakangwa Commune, Peace, Sustainability, Livelihoods*

## 1. Introduction

Conflict is a state of disagreement and hostility that manifests between two or more individuals and even groups (Nicholson, 1992). This indicates that there is a misunderstanding on the same problem between parties in conflicts which makes them to be in two distinct parallels on the same social problem. Conflict in politics precisely implies a present state of disconnection on a predominant issue between two or more sides. In politics, conflict relates to a discrepancy between two groups engaged in a fight over authority, values, power, claims of status, and resources where the purposes of protagonists in conflict are to injure, neutralize or even eliminate the opponents (Lee, 2017). Political conflict occurs when there are difficulties in reconciling different interests or when there

are disagreements over objectives (Brück, 2003). Political conflict may take place as a conduct where protagonists in conflict behave in an aggressive way to defend their benefits and attempt to disturb other actors from achieving their goals. Unfortunately, some citizens in the affected communities don't have an in-depth understanding of the effects of conflict in politics on their livelihood sustainability. Political conflict may result from various factors, including ethnic or religious tensions, deliberate efforts by the state to subjugate particular groups, dissatisfaction or desperation on the part of marginalized groups, competition for scarce resources or over political power and extraction of resources from regions in competing claims (USAID, 2005).

Multifaceted sociopolitical issues which manifest in Africa often lead to political conflict. These problems can

be as an outcome of different causes which are categorised in the following three groups: roots causes, secondary causes and tertiary causes. Roots causes comprise of state collapse or coup, fortune, economic weakening and discrimination or inequality (DFID, 2001). Secondary causes comprise of lack of education, ethnicity abuse, regionalism, unemployment, militarization, and population pressure (DFID, 2001). They may also comprise of religious violence, class ratification and corruption, lack of inclusiveness patronage, impunity, weak institutional capacity, lack of participatory state apparatus; oil as causes of conflict, lack of commitment in the direction of nation building; and power fighting (Aziza, 2017). Tertiary causes consist of conflict cycle, lack of guarantors, regional and interlocking conflicts, misdirected humanitarian and inadequate or unfortunate mediation (DFID, 2001).

According to Schafer (2002), the situations of political conflict can be characterised by a state in which public institutions (legislative, executive, judicial) are extremely weakened or non-existent, a tough parallel or extra-legal economy, forced displacements, external legitimacy of the state is inoperative, existence of violence, presence of population purposefully excluded from enjoying human rights, existence of extreme poverty which makes the livelihoods security to be highly vulnerable to external shocks. The study done by Seddon and karim, (2002) revealed that the shocks caused by political conflict in a country may be manifested in presence of insecurity, which may lead to inaccessibility of resources, businesses disruption; infrastructures destruction, poor government services delivery, inflation, sexual violence against girls and women and social capital degradation. Tewodros (2015) confirmed that during political conflict in country, the cases of murders, kidnapping or disappearances, torture and extortion are among the shocks experienced by community members. In summary, the period of political conflict is characterized by high violation of international humanitarian laws manifested through the deprivation of freedom and arbitrary detention.

The first election in Burundi took place on September 8, 1961 and Prince Louis Rwagasore's party UPRONA (Union pour le Progrès National) won the election with over 80% of electorate's votes. However, the 29 year old Prince Louis Rwagasore (Tutsi –Ganwa) was assassinated on October 13, 1961 (Rawson, 2009). According to United States department of states (2008), the independence of Burundi was officially declared on July 1 1962. In 1963, King Mwambutsa appointed Pierre Ngendandumwe (Hutu), Prime Minister, who was assassinated on January 15, 1965 (Lemarchand, 1996). In May 1965 parliamentary elections brought the Hutu to be the majority in parliament, but King Mwambutsa appointed Tutsi as Prime Minister and some Hutu dissatisfied with the decision where ethnic tensions increased and even a coup was attempted in October 1965. This conflict continued until 1972 and caused the death of 5, 000 people

(University of Massachusetts, 2006). The period after 1972 was characterized by a bloody massacre and thousands of Burundians (Hutu and Tutsi) were killed. The conflict generated a dreadful regression directed against Hutu by the Tutsi who dominated the army. Most educated Hutu capable to be involved in economic power as well as political administrative were physically eliminated and others fled the country (Nkurunziza, 2005). The conflict resulted in 300,000 Burundians dead and more than 300,000 were displaced (Unicef Burundi, 2013). According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) (1972), the population in 1972 was 3,527,464, which means that over 8.5% of people died due to that political conflict of 1972. After over three decades of Tutsi-dominated military dictatorship, the country reached to its first democratic transition in 1988. These developments were stopped when Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected president was assassinated on October 21, 1993 after an attempted coup by Tutsi dominated forces in collaboration with some politicians from the ruling party UPRONA. Ndadaye's assassination resulted in the outbreak of civil war which cost the lives of thousands of Burundians. The war came to an end after a long and difficult peace reconciliation process, which resulted in the signing of the Arusha peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi in August, 2000 (Burihabwa, 2017).

This study will focus on the current political conflict which started in April, 2015, where the contested candidature of President Nkurunziza to rule the third term by politicians in opposition and civil society activists is the root cause. This discrepancy on the Arusha Agreements has resulted in political violence where more than 500,000 refugees (4.5% of population in 2015) fled the country; many other thousands of citizens were killed and economy of the country was put under recession. National and International organizations confirmed that there were cases of sexual violence against girls and women, killings, kidnapping/disappearances, torture and intimidations (Institute de Relation International et Strategic, 2016).

## 1.1 Research Problem

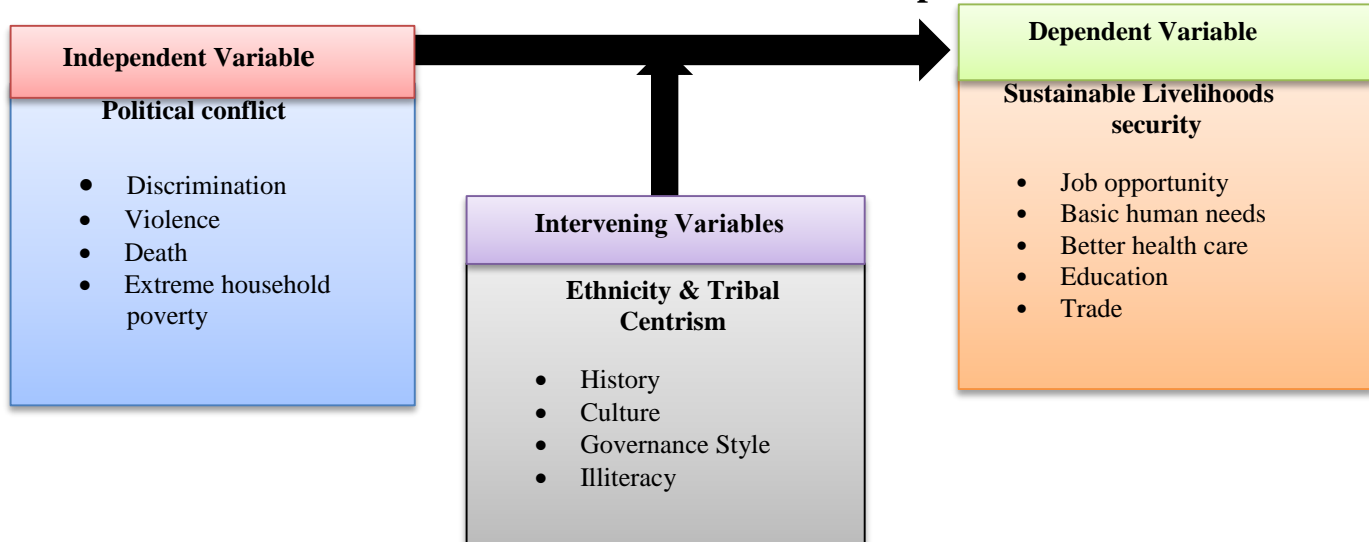
Bloody political conflict and ethnic clashes are common before and immediately after elections in Burundi. In fact, there are parts in the Country which are not fully safe throughout the year. This study set out to examine the sources and effects of political conflict generator of insecurity in Ntahangwa commune which has negatively affected the livelihoods security in different households of local communities. The insecurity has caused wide spread destruction of livelihoods and infrastructural facilities which undermined the previous gains achieved specifically in the study area. Politically organized violence does not only cause deaths, but also it destabilizes learning in schools and basic services delivery like medical and trade, leading to increased outbreak of

diseases like Malaria, trauma and other psychological disorders. Inhabitants of Ntakangwa commune, though not the worst hit, always experience the effects of war, which have made them live in fear, abject poverty and slow socioeconomic growth. Some young people in their thirties have never lived in total peace. However the sources and effects of political conflict on households' livelihoods security in Ntakangwa commune have not been well investigated which is the gap this study tried to bridge.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- a) To investigate the sources of political discrimination in the communities of Ntakangwa commune.
- b) To explore the effects of insecurity caused by political conflict on realization of sustainable basic livelihoods security in Ntakangwa commune.

## 1.3 Conceptual Framework



The sustainable livelihoods security is influenced by the level of accessibility on job opportunities, basic human needs, better healthcare, education and trade without discrimination, violence and death caused by political conflict together with insecurity. Sustainable livelihoods can also be influenced by the intervening variables specifically ethnicity and tribal centrism where background history, culture, governance style and illiteracy are indicators which influence the sustainable livelihoods security in community.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Sources of discrimination in politics among communities

Tribal egocentrism thrive due to institutional biases and deep rooted customs of war and prejudice in societies around the world are among sources of political ethnic discrimination and exclusion (Henry, 2010). While prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination are closely linked, they yield to long-term hatred of those who are considered strangers as Al Ramiah, (2014) asserts. Just like in Burundi, many people in other African countries are close members on the basis of tribe or clan, age, gender, language, religion, political opinion, social origin,

economic status. Women, girl children and the elderly have been affected more as Teddy (2016) claims.

Just like in the close social class system within the Sahel region of Northern Africa, the cases of exclusion based on “occupational” specialization of endogamous groups, in which membership is ascribed by social interaction which is regulated by the leaders; the poor and minority groups in Ntakangwa commune is usually evident (Tuden and Plotnicov, 2016). There is discrimination founded on real places of origin for some communities. There are those who are believed to have come from Rwanda and others from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and are never welcomed although they are indigenous in all aspects. The Twa of Burundi and Rwanda exemplify how discrimination against hunters can marginalize and negatively stereotype an entire people, leading to their inability to achieve equality and exercise true coexistence. In all cases of discrimination, people are severely restricted to access to their civil, cultural, political, social, and economic rights (Teddy, 2016).

Political discrimination in Burundi is fuelled by isolation of some political parties and some individual politicians presume that those among the ruling elite benefit much more than them. The politicians in opposition don't have opportunities of exercising freedom to their activities at equal level as politicians in government. Because of that

discrimination in different political activities, the result is the political conflict where those marginalized politicians influence their people to reiterate and defend their rights through demonstration, fighting and war (Burihabwa, 2017). Political conflicts involve fighting between two or more groups that request the freedom and independence in order to be involved and contribute in the national leadership (Donald & Horowitz, 2016). Groups involved in internal conflict are frequently united by ethnic, region and religious identity (Brown and Stewart, 2015).

## **2.2 Effects of insecurity caused by political conflict on household livelihoods security**

When deadly conflicts occur in Burundi, just like in other countries of the World, wealthy political leaders flee the country to safer places, and make big political come backs on their return! The irony is that the poor happily receive them chanting (Nduwimana, 2015). Persistent conflict diminishes livelihood opportunities leading to famines in a country that has plenty of all types of natural and cultivated food stuffs. The mineral cartels take over and control the diamond and other mineral trade. Hospitals and schools are ever dilapidated making the economy unable to pick up (Benjamin, 2014). Frances Stewart defines differences in groups' access to economic, social, and political resources as "horizontal inequalities," in contrast to the traditional "vertical" inequalities that apply to individuals rather than groups (Helsinki & Atkinson, 2015).

The horizontal inequalities justification of conflict is founded on the understanding that cultural differences that correspond with political together with economic differences among groups can be the sources of deep rancour that may possibly lead to discrimination and cause violent struggles. These inequalities may involve regional differentiation, in which case they often lead to separatist movements (as in Aceh, Indonesia, and the Tamil regions of Sri Lanka), or different identities may occur within the same geographic space in Africa (such as in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda), where political participation, economic, and political rights are at stake (Graham and Stewart, 2015).

Horizontal inequalities are multidimensional, concerning access to the variety of resources along economic, social, and political vectors or dimensions (DFID, 2013). Along the economic vector, not only income is important, but access to employment and to a variety of assets (e.g., land, credit and education) comes into play. Along the social vector, access to services (e.g., health care, clothing, clean energy and water) and to assets (e.g., housing) can form relevant horizontal inequalities. The political vector includes power at the top (e.g. the presidency, the cabinet), at lower

levels (e.g. parliamentary assemblies, local government), in the bureaucracy at all levels, and in the army and the police. The relevant horizontal Inequalities are those that matter to people, and this varies across societies (Chambers, 1992). For example, in Africa, specifically in Zimbabwe unequal or inadequate access to property is important, while in Northern Ireland conflict concerned horizontal inequalities in housing, education, and jobs. Horizontal inequalities seem to be more provocative where they are consistent across the political and economic dimensions. The evidence is that economic and social horizontal inequalities provide the conditions that lead to dissatisfaction among the general population and, consequently, give rise to the possibilities of political mobilization, but political exclusion is likely to trigger conflict by giving group leaders a powerful motive to organize in order to gain support. There is also often a provocative cultural dimension in group mobilization (Anna, 2014).

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the conflict theory and the theory of sustainable livelihoods. The conflict theory by Karl Max (1818-1883) shows the existence of opposing forces in life of individuals, social structures and groups by explaining factors which can be the sources of conflict. The theory views the human society as a collection of groups and individuals, each with their own motives and expectations when competing for different interests. The assumption underlying the conflict theory is that members in community do not have the same values and interests or expectations which vary based on one's privileges, class, position, ability and wealth, where the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities presented is encouraged by that group membership. The conflict theory is strong at a group level of analysis and weak at the individual level of analysis. However, the conflict theory doesn't often explain very well why people cooperate in order to work together and achieve sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, the theory of sustainable livelihoods was used in this study in order to bridge this gap. This theory explains sustainable livelihoods and how they can be achieved using various methods for the sake of lasting livelihoods improvement among poor people. According to the Sustainable Livelihoods Office (1999), sustainable livelihoods can be seen as a way of thinking about development goals together with the scope and priorities in order to enhance progress in eradication of poverty in different communities (Bennett, 2010). This study therefore attempted to find out to what extent is conflict theory applicable by indicating the factors like economic, physical, social, human and especially political factors that influence political conflict in Burundi, while the sustainable livelihoods theory provided appropriate solutions to sustain livelihoods for people in conflict

situations through cooperation and avoidance of conflicts in their communities.

### 3. Methodology

The study used the mixed methods research approach, where quantitative descriptive and qualitative perspectives were applied. The Glen’s Sample size table was used to determine a sample size of more than 100 respondents for inclusion in the study. Multi stage and purposive sampling techniques were used to identify and select potential sub-districts for inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling became hardy in selection of the key informants, while interviewing method and observation were extensively employed in data collection. A questionnaire for the general population, an observation check list and a key informant’s interview guide were the main instruments of data collection.

**Table 1: Sampling Frame**

Respondent's Category	Desired sample size n	Sampling Technique
Family members (Parents)	36	Purposive sampling
Community leaders	12	Purposive sampling
Key Informants	6	Purposive sampling
Youth	48	Simple Random sampling
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>102</b>	

### 3.3 Data collection

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using observation check list, interview guides for key informants and parents, while questionnaires were used for community leaders and youths. The secondary data were obtained through content analysis guide and review of different articles, journals, books and report of national and international organizations.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used in this study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze quantitative data, where the findings were presented in form of table and charts. Framework and thematic analysis were used to analyze qualitative data where, themes were built as they emerged from the qualitative verbal expressions of the observation units.

### 3.1 Target Population

The target population of this study involved family members, especially parents, community leaders, and the youth from Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura province. The reason of choosing this target population was that they were key stakeholders who had experienced and possessed information on how political conflict started and the effects it generated to community members from different households.

### 3.2 Sampling procedure

The study used probability sampling, where simple random sampling was used for youth and non-probability sampling, especially purposive sampling, was used for parents, community leaders and key informants.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This study presented and discussed the results according to the stated objectives. The two objectives were: to investigate the sources of political discrimination in communities and to explore the effects of insecurity caused by political conflict on realization of sustainable basic livelihoods security in Ntakangwa commune.

### 4.1 Sources of political discrimination among communities of Ntakangwa commune

As revealed by findings of this study, the major sources of political discrimination often observed are related to political intolerance among different members of political parties. In fact, people who are not affiliated to the ruling political party CNDD-FDD (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocracie-Forces de Défense et de la

Démocratie), especially the opposition members are not considered like those members of the ruling party. There is also lack of political education among leaders which fosters dictatorship leadership; where political discrimination and political intolerance took place as results. The selfishness of some leaders led them to protect their interests through discrimination and detriment of citizens' common interests, where participation in decision making for citizens is ignored due to lack of freedom of expression. The other causes are negative ethnicity, class, fighting for power, and regionalism which influenced discrimination in Burundi's politics based to the group membership.

Respondents specified other sources of political discrimination among communities which are: large number of competing political parties which need to recruit members by any means necessary, even through the use of offensive utterances. This generated hatred among the community members of Ntahangwa commune. Lack of freedom and fair competition amongst political parties were also sources of discrimination in sharing of power. Each party pushing for sole rights without taking into account the views of others.

Respondents used the example of the CNDD-FDD political parties which try to prevent other political parties from the opposition to recruit new members. There was also lack of democracy in Burundi. Citizens were not allowed to give their views on political situation in the country. They were not allowed to criticize the actions of government. Those who dared were threatened and even killed. As a result, animosity grew between them and the government.

A dictator-like attitude by some leaders was another reason. Some leaders wanted to cling to power by undermining the voice of citizens. They tried to force them to support their poor decisions. This put the country in a state of unrest. A revolution was one of the avenues used by those who felt oppressed. This eventually resulted in violence and insecurity in the community.

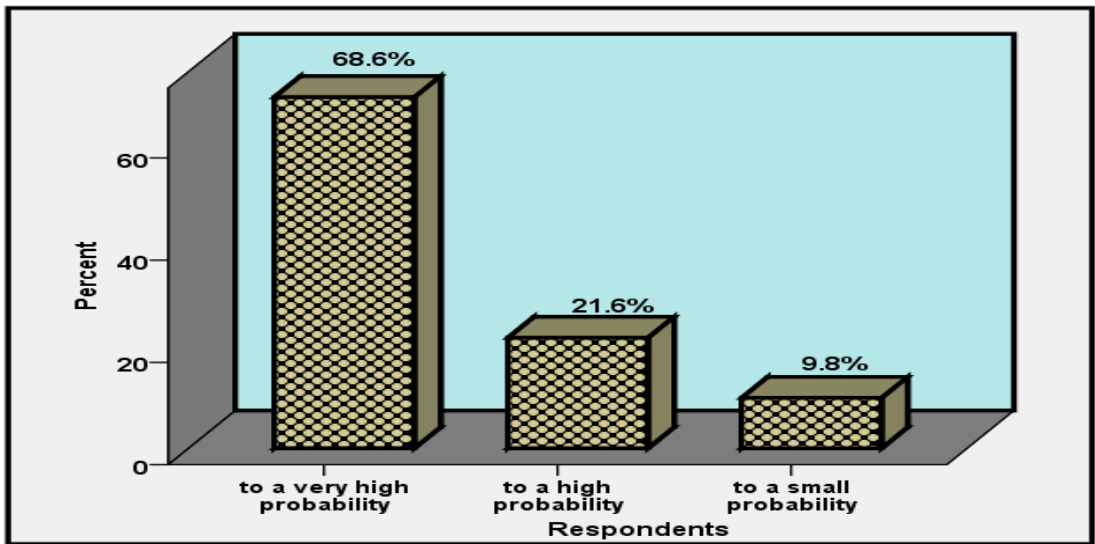
In summary, private motivation is a major source of political discrimination among communities. This may most likely trigger political conflict. Private motivation, which includes selfishness combined with lack of education among leaders lead to the mismanagement of public resources and the result was political conflict in country. Beside individual motivation, leaders lack a strategic plan in their leadership. They simply focus on what they can get today as wealth without thinking about the future of the country.

## **4.2 The key participants in the political discrimination**

The key participants in that discrimination are as matter of principle some of administrators in different sectors, police officers , secret service 's personnel , the justice member 's personnel and persons liable to the political party on power (CNDD -FDD) particularly some youth belong to Imbonerakure league and other extremists belong to different political parties and ethnic groups . There are also politicians who were on power in the past and were engaged corruption and crimes against humanity . Consequently , in order to protect themselves they contributed to create distraction through political discrimination among communities . This generated conflicts, buying them time to escape justice.

### **Probability to which the political discrimination can result in political conflict**

The participants were asked about the probability to which political discrimination amongst members of communities can result in political conflict. This was intended to make the researcher aware of the importance of the sources and key participants in political conflict.



**Figure 1:** Probability to which political discrimination can result into political conflict

As presented in Figure 1 above, thirty five respondents 35(68.6%) confirmed that political discrimination among members of communities of Ntakangwa commune may result in political conflict to a very high probability. Eleven 11(21.6%) agreed with a high probability and five 5(9.8%) agreed with a lower/small probability. Based on Henry (2010), discrimination may occur because of institutional bias, which is enacted by prejudiced and/or

unprejudiced social actors and takes the form of “laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce group based inequities in any society” and the result is conflict among communities. This was an indication that political discrimination was one of indicators which triggered political conflict in Burundi, particularly in Ntakangwa commune.

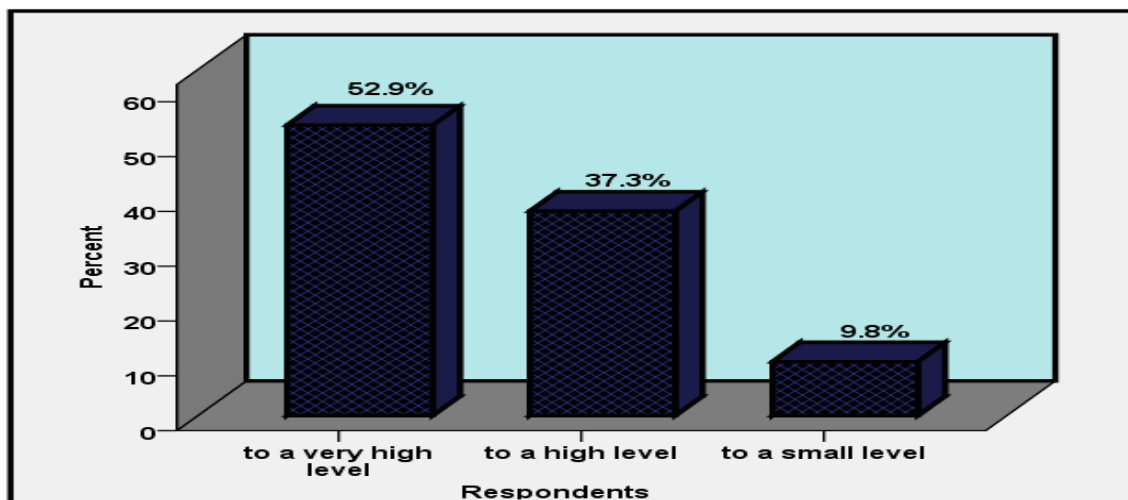
**Table 2: The extent to which the selfishness of leaders can lead to political discrimination**

Extent	Frequency	Percent
To a very large extent	37	72.5
To a large extent	11	21.6
No extent	3	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings on table 2 above, reveal that thirty seven respondents 37(72.5%) indicated that they were in agreement with the statement to a very large extent, eleven 11(21.6%) agreed to a large extent, and three 3(5.9%) disagreed with the statement. As revealed in the past by economists Collier Paul and Anke Hoeffler, (2004), private or individual motivation was the fundamental cause of conflict. Collier and Hoeffler put forward econometric evidence to defend the view that “greed”

motivates people to fight. To support this view the respondents argued that conflict was caused by individual greed that resulted to political discrimination among communities. The findings proved that political discrimination was the result of selfishness of some leaders who protected their own interests through ignorance of the laws and the disruption of freedom of expression among people.



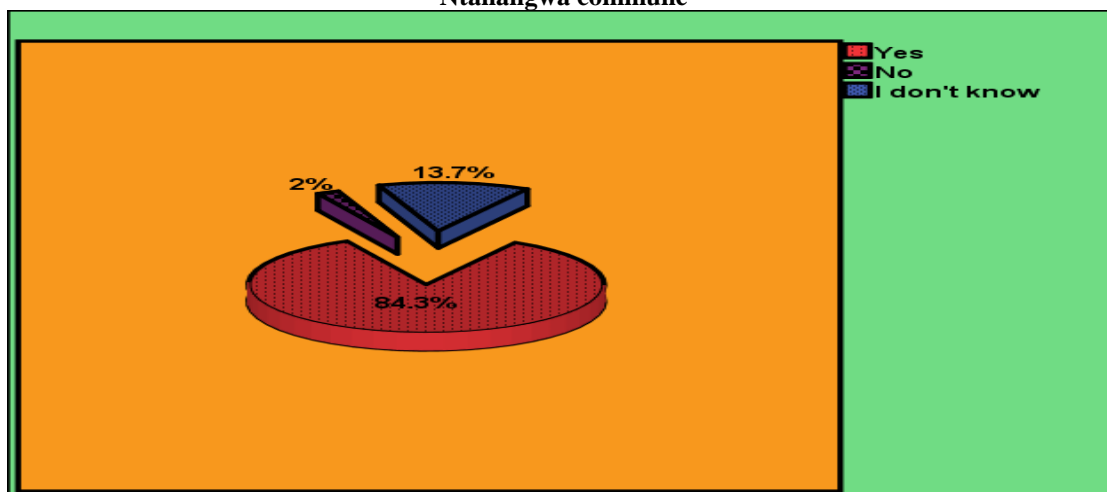


**Figure 2: Level to which political discrimination undermined freedom of expression**

As revealed in figure 2 above, twenty seven respondents 27(52.9%) indicated that political discrimination undermined freedom of expression and caused political conflict among the communities to a very high level, nineteen 19(37.3%) indicated a high level, and the findings also show that minority of respondents 5(9.8%) indicated that freedom of expression was undermined to a very low/small level. In general, the findings showed that

most of the respondents confirmed that political discrimination, to a very high level, undermined the freedom of expression. This may be explained by the fact that during political conflict in Burundi, especially in Ntangwa commune, the prevailing violence negatively affected the people’s freedom of expression. They are afraid to be killed, tortured and forced exodus.

**The effects of insecurity caused by political conflict on realization of sustainable basic livelihoods security in Ntangwa commune**



**Figure 3: Intention to know if people were affected negatively by political conflict**

As presented in figure 3 above, a high number of respondents 43(84.3%) indicated that people were affected negatively by insecurity caused by political conflict at household level, two 2(2%) of respondents

disagreed on the negative effects and seven 7(13.7%) of the respondents didn’t know how political conflict affected people in different households. It is thus safe to say that more than three quarters of respondents confirmed that people were negatively affected at the household level



by insecurity caused by political conflict in Ntahangwa commune.

The negative effects at the household level caused by political conflict as specified by respondents are: The extreme poverty in the households; the rate of students withdraws and drops out from schools extremely raised; diseases including trauma and malaria, household instability because of the death or absence of providers for household necessities; family conflicts; loss of young lives due to drug abuse and criminal activities which eventually cost them their lives; hate, social killings, negative ethnicity, regionalism, tribalism and discrimination become widespread among families; the number of orphans and widows increased in most households, many people lack proper shelter because their houses are destroyed; NGOs close down which means that many members of households lose their jobs.

Justino, (2011) clarifies those effects at household level by showing the direct effects of political conflict which include changes in organization of household because of death, damages or injuries for family members and changes in economic status of the household because of asset destruction and the effects related to migration and forced displacement. Indirect effects consist of changes in households' surrounding institutions and environment such as changes in social networks, changes in access to

employment markets and changes in local and national political institutions. Political conflict makes the household to lose the capability to react to economic slowdown and reduced market access.

The research findings revealed also that Insecurity caused by political conflicts affected social organization by fuelling social division through generation of hatred among community members. This resulted in killings. It generated social injustice where the members of government became untouchable and remained unpunished by the justice of Burundi. On the other hand, members of the opposition were over punished even for minor errors or for no good reason. They were put in prisons as a result of impunity. Socially, the research findings revealed that the political conflict generated insecurity in Ntahangwa commune. This affected the lives of people by forcing them to migrate and eventually become refugees either within Burundi, or in nearby countries like in Rwanda (Camp MAHAMA), Tanzania (camp NDUTA, NYARUGUSU and MUTENDERI), Uganda (Camp NAKIVALE), DRC (Camp NYARUSENDA) and Kenya (Camp KAKUMA). The political conflict also adversely affected the education. Schools were forced to close as a direct result of the ongoing violence in addition, teachers were not well paid, which as a result affected the quality of education.

Economically, political conflict reduced productivity among people because they became idle due to lack of

capital and job opportunities, death or disability of those in the productive age bracket and disruptions in their daily activities as a direct result of insecurity. Political conflicts resulted in high rates of inflation where the prices of most goods in Burundi sky rocketed to unaffordable levels. This paved way for poverty to take place in most areas. This was bad for the country, especially Ntahangwa commune.

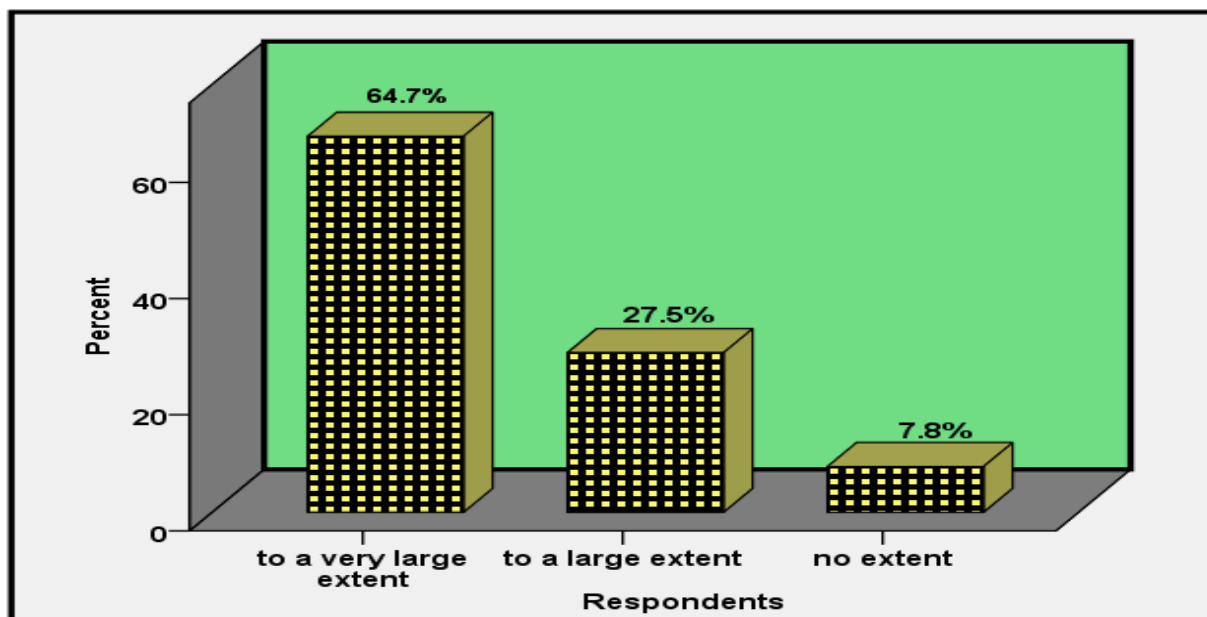
Findings from literature support these research findings showing how political instability impeded market activity in Bujumbura, especially in Ntahangwa commune, which accounts for 55% of Burundi's economic output. Rates of inflation for basic commodities in the capital Bujumbura increased from 7.2% to 11.7% and continued to rise. The country's long-term poor economic performance because of the political conflict left close to 65% of the population living under the poverty line (Nduwimana, 2015). The socioeconomic situation in Burundi continued to deteriorate because of the political conflict. According to the World Bank, in 2017, economic growth remained at 1.5 per cent, while there was no change in key macroeconomic indicators. According to Kenya's journal, Daily Nation of the first September 2018, the annual economic growth dropped from an average of 4.2 percent between 2004 and 2014, to a mere 3.9 percent in 2015 and a further contraction of 0.6 percent in 2016. The United Nations, Security Council (2018) emphasized the research findings by showing how public investment and foreign exchange reserves dropped sharply during that year. Inflation soared from 5.6 per cent in December 2016 to 18 percent at the beginning of December 2017. The shortage of United States dollars increased the cost and decreased the accessibility to imported items including food, medicine, fuel and electricity, and depreciated the national currency. Unemployment among young people was another cause for serious concern, given that 65 percent of young people were estimated to have been out of work in December 2017 and they continue to increase. According to civil society activist Faustin Ndikumana, the national director of PARCEM (Parole et Action pour le Réveil des Consciences et l'Evolution des Mentalités) or (Word and Action for Consciences Awakening and Mentalities Evolution), 55% of youths in urban area and 45% youths in rural area were out of jobs in 2019. Chronic malnutrition, however, remained prevalent in most provinces including Bujumbura province, particularly in Ntahangwa commune.

Insecurity caused by political conflict caused the movement of people from one place to another. This affected the availability of manpower because those that remained were not productive enough. Many became idle and extreme poverty coupled with difficulties of accessing basic human needs kicked in. This was the main origin of

death of family members. All these factors made the realization of sustainable basic livelihoods security an uphill task. In Ntampangwa commune, many activities closed from 6 p.m because of insecurity. That diminution of working hours negatively influences the development of the communities. The people experienced reduced income levels and were, as a result, unable to sustain the basic livelihoods of their families. Many sectors like education, healthcare, basic human needs (food, shelter, water and clothing), were in bad shape due to widespread poverty in that locality.

The research findings are in line with the April, 2019 PARCEM’s report in which the National director, Faustin

Ndikumana, stated that the problem of under-employment was as a consequence of the diminution or limitation of hours available for working. He attributed this to the ongoing violence and insecurity resulting from political conflict. Productivity decreased because many employees were unable to work for the required number of hours. This situation was the root cause of the reduction of employees, which eventually resulted in the disturbance of their activities and social capital in general. All these events undermined the realization of sustainable basic livelihoods security in Bujumbura town, specifically in Ntampangwa commune.



**Figure 4: The extent to which negatives effects undermined the livelihoods of community members in Ntampangwa commune**

The findings in figure 4, reveal that thirty three 33(64.7%) respondents showed that fourteen respondents 14(27.5%) indicated a large extent and only four respondents 4(7.8%) indicated no extent. This can be interpreted to mean that the negatives effects of insecurity caused by political conflict undermined the livelihoods of community members to a very large extent. This meant that their everyday lives were undermined when they were not able to create the activities in order to generator enough income that could adequately sustain their livelihoods. The end result was increased and persistence of poverty in the households.

Once sustenance ways are not sufficient, it disturbs the wellbeing of members in different households. The findings revealed that the negative effects of insecurity

caused by political conflict disturbed the well-being of community members from different households. Family members became sick and they were not well treated, others were evicted from their houses by their landlords and had to live in unsafe places. The findings also revealed that children were not provided with basic education but involved in political games such as demonstrations by singing unethical songs in public. This left most children uneducated and lack the necessary capacity to compete with others in future.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Political intolerance, lack of political education among leaders, selfishness influenced by greed, negative ethnicity, social classes, fighting for power and regionalism were the main sources of political and social discrimination. Political conflict undermined the realization of basic sustainable livelihoods security in Ntahangwa commune at a very high level. The households were more affected through the loss of their members, loss of assets like houses, properties and jobs where the income generation was disturbed, which led them to live in the extreme poverty.

The political conflict also generated insecurity in the area where people are limited for hours of working and free movement. Social network was negatively affected due to political conflict, which generated the presence of internal and external refugees and undermined the social organization and social capital. Political conflict also influenced the internal and external investors to flee the country where the sector of taxation, job creation, innovation, education, healthcare and entrepreneurship were affected negatively.

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