

# Human security in Burundi: The view from below (by youth)

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*This paper presents the result of a few hundreds of conversations with ordinary Burundians – foremost but not exclusively youth – about what 'peace' means to them. It develops a typology of answers people presented, and links these popular insights to the human security agenda.*

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## Introduction

Burundi has just come out of 13 years of brutal civil war. It started in October 1993, when, after exactly 100 days in office, Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president (Frodebu party), was killed in a coup d'état. The coup itself formally failed a few days later, after an international outcry, bolstered by freezes of aid. Yet the dynamics it set in motion remained: a constitutional crisis that was to last for years, mass ethnic and political violence throughout the country, and further confirmation for both sides that the other was not to be trusted.

Immediately after the coup, pogroms began against ordinary Tutsi throughout the country, organised by local Frodebu leaders. The army responded violently. The political process was deadlocked. Presidents and governments came and went. Hutu rebel groups emerged, split, and launched attacks from Tanzania and the Congo. Children were the preferred soldiers on all sides. Rape was commonplace. Fear and violence prevailed. The capital city of Bujumbura became ethnically cleansed. Ordinary citizens were slaughtered by all parties. Looting was a constant threat. During those awful years, around 300 000 people were killed, over 500 000 fled abroad, and another 800 000 were displaced internally, often for many years.

Under enormous international pressure and with, among others, South African facilitation, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was eventually signed on 28 August 2000. This agreement and its protocols marked the beginning of the transition out of war toward the development of new institutions designed to support and maintain peace, integrate the army, adopt a new constitution, organise elections, and kick-start development – a tall agenda. The fighting went on for years more, though, calming only after the Pretoria Protocol on Political, Defence, and Security Power-sharing signed in October 2003 by the largest rebel group, the CNDD/FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy), and the Burundian army. Even after that, one rebel group, the FNL (National Liberation Forces in Burundi), did not lay down arms: negotiations are still under way.

By the summer of 2006 (when I did my research), a new, elected government had been in power for almost a year. The elections had gone peacefully; they were won by the CNDD/FDD, the strongest of the Hutu rebel movements. The international community had supported the process until the end, providing diplomatic, security, humanitarian and development assistance: a textbook case of a successful and well-supported transition.

My research consisted of hundreds of open-ended individual conversations with ordinary Burundians in rural and urban Burundi: farmers, peanut sellers, masons, grooms, servers in bars, demobilised soldiers, telephone card sellers, and bike-taxi drivers. I focused strongly on young men, a group that is often seen as the key threat

when it comes to violence, but I did interview women and older persons as well. The broad aim was simple: after 13 years of war, how do (young, male) ordinary Burundians see the future? Most questions were totally open-ended, with no possible 'good answer' or even, usually, a particular field of inquiry implicated. We asked, for example: 'How is your life different from the life of your parents?', 'What is the situation here of men/women your age?', 'If you became communal administrator tomorrow, what is the first thing you would do?', or 'Whom do you admire?' All these questions were designed to allow people to talk about what they considered important, as citizens, as members of families, as analysts even.

In this article, I want to share the results from one specific question, with which I usually ended the conversations. The question was simple, and more focused than the others: 'What does peace mean to you?' I asked this question in six different places (three rural and three urban), representing different situations of life during the war: a rural commune that had been little touched by the war, and where most people had stayed at home (Busiga); a neighbouring commune that had been devastated by the war, with lots of internal violence; and a very significant IDP population (we did five weeks of interviews in the IDP camp of Ruhororo, which still contained more than 13 000 people); the commune with the highest number of repatriated refugees (Nyanza-Lac, economically richer than the other two rural ones, and located at the other end of the country); and different neighbourhoods in the capital city of Bujumbura. In the latter, I worked in two of the poorest neighbourhoods (Kamenge and Musaga, predominantly Hutu and Tutsi respectively), as well as in better-off urban neighbourhoods. I received answers from 181 people to this question.

I had different theoretical aims with this line of questioning. First, I wanted to obtain an empirical sense of the 'positive peace' vs 'negative peace' debate. This debate started in the late 1960s, against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and an increased questioning of North–South differentiation. 'Traditional peace research' was under attack by a new generation of radical, mainly European, peace scholars. One of their prime complaints was that traditional peace researchers focused solely on negative peace, that is, the absence of war, uncritically elevating this situation to an absolute ideal. This, the critics argued, neglected what they called positive peace, that is, social justice. In situations of high exploitation and inequality, is the absence of overt war truly the best possible outcome? I was curious to know: how do Burundians, spontaneously, define peace? Do they fall into the negative or the positive peace camp? There is very little research on this: I personally know of only one paper, by a team of colleagues at Tufts International Famine Center who did a similar research in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone (Donini et al 2006).<sup>1</sup>

From this concern with positive peace and structural violence, it is but a short way to the concept of human security (Paris 2005:767–768). Indeed, when a radical scholar such as Reardon (1988:16) defines peace as 'the absence of violence in all its forms – physical, social,

psychological, and structural', we are very close to Jennifer Leaning's (2001) definition of human security as the 'social, psychological, political, and economic factors that promote and protect human well-being through time'. Two moves took place here: away from security as an attribute of states to one of people; and to a more holistic, broad-based definition, going beyond acute physical violence only (Thakur 2004:347; Thomas 2004:353<sup>2</sup>). Do ordinary people link freedom from fear intimately with freedom from want?

Finally, I wanted to compare people's answers with the post-conflict agenda as it plays out in Burundi and other countries. This agenda is premised on at least three main parts, which one finds, ideologically and organisationally, in all post-conflict situations: security (peace negotiations and their implementation, SSR, DDR); development (economic growth and social services); and justice/reconciliation. Governance (democracy, bureaucratic competence, decentralisation, human rights, etc) is then a theme that runs through all of the above, or a fourth sector.

There is an intuitive logic to this set-up, but it has been criticised by scholars. One of these criticisms is that this agenda is an external one, an export of Western neo-liberal thinking – in both the economic and political realm – that, while nice at home and theoretically desirable everywhere, is simply not something people locally desire (Gordon 1997; Paris 2002) or want to prioritise (Paris 2004). So, the answers to this question might give me some idea whether the broad elements of the post-conflict agenda are in touch with Burundians' own sense of what they want at the end of war.

## What does peace mean to Burundians – the data

First it must be said that more than half of all the Burundians I spoke to about this issue – 180 or so people – employed multi-criteria definitions of peace. In other words, they

	Busiga	Ruhororo camp	Ruhororo colline	Nyanza-Lac	Musaga	Kamenge	Bwiza	Other urban	TOTAL
Security	19	18	4	14	25	17	9	11	<b>117</b>
Basic needs	7	15	3	8	19	6	3	7	<b>68</b>
Good relations	11	9	2	6	13	12	3	4	<b>60</b>
Mobility	8	4	1	9	8	7	2	3	<b>42</b>
Good governance	2	0	0	7	6	3	0	4	<b>22</b>
Individual	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>318</b>

told me that peace was a combination of goods, which they could not or did not want to separate. Less than one half stuck to a one-dimensional definition of peace. The table tallies all definitions given to me by location: the multi-criteria ones are added up under their relevant headings.

## Negative peace

The most frequent definition is clearly a standard 'negative peace' one: it occurs by far the most, coming in at double the frequency of the next answer. It also occurred most in 'single criterion' definitions. Most people talked about negative peace in general terms: the absence of gunshots, of fear. Many employed the same image: 'to sleep at night without fear'. This came back over and over, in rural and urban areas. A few people made very strong 'negative peace' definitions, making clear that they intended to limit peace to only that notion, and explicitly excluding any 'positive peace' aspects. See the following statements, for example:

- 'Peace is getting up in the morning to go work, and in the evening being able to enjoy the fruits of your work, whether it is little or much, but in calm' (Busiga female farmer, younger than 30)
- 'Even for those who are hungry, to have security is good for them, and it does make a difference. If there is peace, they can work to fight their hunger' (Busiga male, 40 years, leader of local cooperative, veterinarian)
- 'Peace is about eating and sleeping, being able to enjoy the fruits of your work. When there is peace, you can work with a calm spirit. Even if the situation isn't good today, you can have hope for tomorrow as long as you can invest in an activity' (28 year old male farmer and mason, Nyanza-Lac)
- 'Peace is not hearing gun shots anymore. It is not fleeing one's house. Even if I have to sleep on an empty stomach, I know I will wake up in security' (23 year old unemployed woman, sexual abuse victim, Musaga)
- 'Peace is foremost physical and psychological security. One should not have to be obsessed by security problems. One must arrive at a stage where you don't think of those things anymore' (36 year old demobbed, mechanic, Musaga)

We can consider this a victory for negative peace, or a loss: it is, after all, rather impressive that about 60 per cent of those who talked about what peace means to them, in a country emerging from 12 years of war, did not mention security or violence or gunshots at all! This clearly suggests that a negative peace definition does *not fully* cover what ordinary Burundians perceive. Peace to the majority of Burundians means more than no war.

There are no meaningful variations in this definition: both in the city and in the countryside, among men and women, rich and poor, and all social categories, people talk about negative peace in roughly equal proportions: it is always the largest category, accounting systematically for about one third of all answers.

But there is more. A significant number of the negative peace answers clearly included theft and criminality in their definition. This is primarily the case in Busiga, which must until recently have had a chequered security record in terms of thefts and banditry. It is also the case in the city, especially in the poor urban neighbourhoods. In other words, in the ‘peace equals security’ definition, more is included than the absence of war: people value the absence of crime very much, and they consider there is no peace without it. Peace, then, is about the military as much as about the police.

Many people have suffered more over the years from criminality than from direct politically motivated warfare. Indeed, the overwhelming issue that is brought up repeatedly when people discuss these years of war is pillage: it is hard to find any family, any person who was not deeply marked by the theft of his or her animals and possessions, the destruction of his or her house, etc. For many, this happened more than once, and it happened throughout the last 12 years, including the years when the peace agreements had already been signed, or even when demobilisation was well advanced. In other words, the prime face war takes for many ordinary people is criminality and banditry, and much of this was not necessarily the same as THE WAR in capital letters – the big conflict between clearly defined politico-ethnic parties. If that criminality continues after THE WAR ends – or even worsens, as may occur – there is no peace dividend; indeed, in people’s perceptions, there may be no peace, period.

### **Positive peace/development**

The second most frequent answer people gave us to the question ‘what does peace mean to you?’ was in terms of basic needs. Many people told us that there is no peace without a minimum of material and psychological wellbeing. As a 35 year old woman in Ruhororo asked us: ‘How can you have peace or be free if your stomach is empty?’ Indeed, the image that dominates this category is overwhelmingly the empty stomach.

- ‘Amahoro starts with the belly, when it is empty there is no peace. There is no peace here, it is another war (a new war)’ (Ruhororo site, 52 year old female)
- ‘Peace is if you know where to get your food every day, because the stomach always needs something’ (Ruhororo colline, 30 year old female)
- ‘Peace is foremost having bread. If my children and those of my neighbours don’t cry of hunger at night I have peace in my heart’ (29 year old male migrant in Musaga)

- 'Peace is having enough to eat: for example, in my region of origin I cannot say I lived in peace because I was hungry. But today I can say I live in peace because I know no hunger any more. Also, peace is not to be destabilised by gunshots' (38 year old male migrant day labourer in Nyanza-Lac, with no education and very poor)
- 'A place without peace is a place with poverty, crime, where children die of hunger. Peace is the source of life. The war left many problems – orphans, destruction – that are still not solved, so there is no peace yet' (19 year old Musaga male student)
- 'Peace is economic: it is having enough to eat, to pay for studies for those who still can do it, to get healed when you are sick' (18 year old female in Kamenge)
- 'For me peace is foremost bread. Afterwards it is security and work' (44 year old university-educated male, Bujumbura)

These, then, seem pure 'positive peace' definitions: peace is not simply the absence of war (negative peace), but the achievement of a just and decent life. Note, fascinatingly, that Donini heard exactly the same thing in Afghanistan, and he quotes people as saying that 'there is no peace without bread'.

A core belief about violent conflict held by the post-conflict and development community everywhere, including Burundi, is that poverty is the prime root cause of violent conflict. To promote peace, then, we need development, not because development is intrinsically and equally part of peace or (human) security, but because development is a pre-condition for, a root cause of peace.

Burundians intellectuals certainly would agree. They generally adhere to the popular argument that poor and desperate people – and Burundi has many of them – are wont to engage in violence, especially unemployed young men. They add a cultural argument that is more specific to Burundi: this country is profoundly characterised by jealousy, and as a result, those who have less than others will turn against the latter. In that vision, then, someone who has a lot while his or her neighbour has much less – has an empty stomach – fears the neighbour's jealousy, his or her potential aggression.

Is that what ordinary Burundians were indirectly telling me? A few seemed to do just that:

- 'There are three levels to peace. One is individual – that you are not sick and hungry. Another is mutual understanding, that there is no discrimination. My own life is at peace, but not for all of us, the individual dimension is often lacking. People are often hungry and sick, they have heavy debts and family conflicts, and that can disrupt peace' (17 year old male herding cows in remote colline of Busiga)

- 'Peace is when nobody is victim of injustice. It is also when the entire neighbourhood has enough to eat. If your neighbour doesn't have what is needed you too become vulnerable' (25 year old male migrant to Musaga, no education at all)
- 'To me peace is security, both physical security and food security. If the two are present, there is no reason to be mean to others' (27 year old female migrant in Musaga)
- 'People must have work and quit poverty: if they don't, they start thinking badly of each other, because they feel bad themselves' (29 year old mechanic, Bwiza)

But these four were the exceptions; in all other conversations, people did not make explicit arguments like this. Most people just told me that somebody with an empty stomach does not live in peace, period – not that he is a danger to others, that he will engage in violence, or that his neighbour is afraid of him. More generally, in almost none of the conversations with hundreds of ordinary people was jealousy discussed as a major factor. In conclusion, I believe that these positive peace definitions are to be taken at face value. For young Burundians, one crucial element of peace is economic wellbeing. This is not because they make complicated assessments that poverty causes violent conflict; it is because they think that peace includes an element of social justice, period.

## Social peace

The third most frequent answer defined peace as 'good social relations'. This we may call a 'positive peace' definition, too: it is more holistic than simply the absence of war, privileging social relations, cohabitation, entente, love. Let us look at some of the language associated with that definition:

- 'If we live in the same place and understand each other there will be peace' (21 year old female in Busiga)
- 'If there is a good entente between people, no trouble in community, and they can speak well together' (Busiga, 30 year old male)
- 'No troubles among people living in the same area' (16 year old female in Ruhororo camp)
- 'Peace is in someone's heart, it is about giving peace, not trouble others. One's peace depends on one's neighbours' (47 year old demob in Nyanza-Lac)
- 'Peace is when people live together and share, they don't kill each other but help each other. There is almost peace now, so there is hope' (30 year old student from the interior, living in 'Chechnya', a very poor neighbourhood in Musaga)

- 'Peace is solidarity between people. It is mutual help and good relations in general. To strengthen peace I must participate in communal development works. I must not provoke troubles. I must conduct myself as a responsible man' (25 year old seller in a boutique, Musaga)
- 'Peace for me is good cohabitation between people, without suspicions. It is also mutual help between inhabitants of the same place. To reinforce peace we need to work on the development of our country. If people are at work they have no time to think of divisions of all kinds' (19 year old male boutique owner, Musaga)
- 'Peace is when you have no problems, which is not only that people don't shoot at each other but also that they live well together' (24 year old restaurant cleaner, Kamenge)
- 'For me, peace is not the absence of war. It must be felt in the hearts of all' (former FAB officer, Bujumbura)

There are no particular regional variations in this answer: it comes back everywhere as a major undercurrent, either as part of broader definitions or as a single criterion. In Kamenge it is more highly represented – maybe because this neighbourhood was the epicentre of the ethnic cleansing that took place in Bujumbura in the awful years immediately after the war broke out in 1993.

Like the previous answer, it is possible to argue that this is a root-cause definition of negative peace. Indeed, the war in Burundi was an 'ethnic' war, and hence good social or ethnic relations can be seen as directly linked to ending war. Yet, here too I would prefer to take people at face value and not attach too much outside interpretation to their words: the way they told it to me, they seemed to value fine social relations as a good in itself. This social relations definition of peace goes beyond simple negative peace. It sets the bar higher: not only is peace the absence of violence, it is a situation of love, of cooperation and social interaction.

## Mobility

A surprisingly large number of answers related peace to mobility. For example:

- 'Peace is being free to move around and visit friends and family' (24 year old female in remote colline in Busiga)
- 'You can go anywhere you want to inside the country in order to get new ideas and earn a living. Wherever you go, you can come back safe' (33 year old male in Busiga)
- 'Freedom of movement – people can go anywhere to find work' (23 year old male, Busiga)

- ‘You can take up opportunities that exist elsewhere’ (19 year old male, Ruhororo site)
- ‘When you can visit others’ (18 year old male, Ruhororo site)
- ‘Mobility even at night’ (32 year old male, Ruhororo remote colline)
- ‘Peace is when you can circulate freely through the commune and are able to do the activities you want to do’ (23 year old male, Nyanza-Lac)
- ‘Peace is to live in a good place where you can circulate in all liberty’ (19 year old female public phone booth operator, Kamenge)
- ‘Peace is when you can take care of your activities in different localities without worry about tomorrow.’ (28 year old self-demobilised, works in store in Kamenge)
- ‘A place where you can come and go as you wish, that is peace’ (20 year old student, Bujumbura)

All of these definitions contain a strong element of mobility, of capacity for movement: peace is the capacity to move around freely, whether for work or socially. This freedom of movement is deeply appreciated and mentioned surprisingly frequently. We find the same result in other researches. In Donini and his colleagues’ research (2006:12) in Kosovo it was mentioned as well. Yuko Miyazawa (2005) interviewed 40 youth in post-conflict Bougainville. The second most frequent category she encountered was ‘freedom of movement’.

The surprising importance of mobility in defining peace relates to three factors. First, during the war, people were very much restricted. IDPs and refugees were literally imprisoned in their camps; urban dwellers were ethnically cleansed into their own neighbourhoods, and even there could hardly leave the house. Thus it would be no surprise that the war creates a sense of imprisonment, of being trapped in a place against one’s will.<sup>3</sup>

Second, mobility is generally a symbol of wellbeing for Burundians. Indeed, this theme recurs throughout the research. When people talk about the good life, about dreams for the future, about peace, they often use mobility definitions: a better and peaceful life is one in which people can move around, can go to places – cities? abroad? – and can avail themselves of opportunities that may be available elsewhere.

Third, it relates to expectations of the state, and to security. Burundians have a sense that to be able to go to places is something the state has to be able to guarantee. If one

can do that without fear – of soldiers or rebels, of bandits, of arbitrary threats – one lives in a state that is at peace. Hence, there is an element of negative peace and possibly also of rule of law built into this definition: one further proof that the dimensions of peace overlap and interact.

## Peace as good governance

Remarkably few definitions of peace referred to the major political stakes over which the war was fought. Here are some quotes:

- 'Peace is to be easily capable of finding what to live off, and to live in a country where human rights are respected' (18 year old female repatriated refugee, Nyanza-Lac)
- 'For me there is no peace here for we have no water, electricity, and the police harass us instead of protecting us, there is no respect for the law or for rights and dignity in general' (23 year old hotel manager, Musaga)
- 'Peace to me is good and peaceful cohabitation and respect for individual rights and the law, without favouritism and with the same access to rights and obligations for all' (31 year old unemployed male, Musaga)
- 'Peace for me is when the country is on the right path, that is to say, respect for the human rights of all, freedom for all, punishment of criminals and all people who do wrong in respect of the law' (34 year old seller of charcoal, Musaga, born in the interior)
- 'Peace exists where there are no problems and the rulers are there to help the people and to give advice so that people behave the right way' (17 year old student, Kamenge)
- 'Peace is when there is justice for all and absence of corruption in a community, for then the community will have hope for a better tomorrow' (34 year old professional, Bujumbura)

Clearly, Burundians do not spontaneously define peace in political or governance terms. Only a small category of people do, and to them it is mainly an add-on to other criteria. This may be because most ordinary Burundians feel far removed from national politics, especially as our conversations were about their own lives. Or it could be that Burundians fear to talk to a stranger about matters of high politics. History has shown that politics is a dangerous matter, and why court potential problems? The minority that constitutes the exception to this rule consists mainly of people who are politically angry; indeed, in several of these quotes, it is clear that the speaker is talking about the current situation,

and does not like it! Quite a few of them are ex-combatants as well. This interpretation is reinforced by geographic distribution: these answers occur least frequently in the communes that are politically closest to the current government and vice versa. In short, then, these governance answers seem at least in part to be an indirect way to critically comment on current politics.

## Peace of mind

A final answer that seldom emerged is one that we can call the ‘peace of mind’ category: it only came up once on its own, but was usually a sort of ‘seal of quality’ on top of other criteria. See for example the 19 year old man in Busiga who gave us a complicated definition of peace, involving security, good relations and basic needs, and then added that ‘he also lives in peace because what he owns he earned, and hasn’t stolen’. Or the couple of young people whom we talked to in a remote colline in Ruhororo. He was 20 and she 17, and she had just found out that she was pregnant by him. She had immediately been kicked out of school and out of her parents’ house. Their anguish was so deep that it brought tears to the eyes of the Burundian woman doing the interview; their definitions of peace, not surprisingly, reflected this lack of personal peace. Here are his and her answers:

- ‘To have peace in my heart. For example, at this point I don’t have peace b/c of the difficulties that we are in’
- ‘This word starts with the individual. For example, I do not have this word in my life. While others here have it in their own way, I live in a situation of anguish’

## Conclusion

More than half of all Burundians employed multi-criteria definitions of peace. This is very much in line with a recent move in international discourse towards human security. Indeed, one of the things that sets human security apart (at least in its original scholarly and UN conception) is that it is by definition a combination of concerns, namely those of development and those of traditional security. These two concerns are the ones most talked about by Burundians, at first sight suggesting that a human security approach has solid grounding in people’s own lives. And to be clear, it is the broad, ‘UN’ or ‘Japanese style’ definition of human security that they refer to, not the narrow ‘Canadian’ one (see Ball 2001).

The way in which Burundians define peace – the deep interrelation between security, development, and social relations – is even better represented in the post-conflict agenda, which is truly built on these pillars. The first three categories – accounting for 80 per

cent of all answers – are precisely the same categories that the international community privileges: security, development and reconciliation. Foreign experts and ordinary Burundians may use different terms and surely live in different worlds, but they are talking about the same things. This is good news.

The biggest difference relates to the governance dimension. When Burundians think of peace, they very rarely mention governance dimensions. Only about 10 per cent of answers referred to a governance dimension of peace, and only three people used this as their sole criterion to describe peace. In addition, it seems likely that those who did use governance in their definition of peace were making critical, opposition-type remarks about current politics. They also belonged disproportionately to two categories: better educated (and usually richer) urban people and ex-combatants.

This does constitute a difference from the general approach by the international community which is rather obsessed with governance in post-conflict situations, whether it is the rapid and strong immediate push for democracy, or the constant human rights scrutiny many post-conflict regimes are subjected to. Indeed, the governance dimension is possibly *the* key feature of the peace-building agenda. Take this UN Security Council definition, for example, made after the release of the Brahimi report:

... peace-building is aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict and therefore encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programs and mechanisms. This requires short and long term actions tailored to address the particular needs of societies sliding into conflict or emerging from it. These actions should focus on fostering sustainable institutions and processes in areas such as sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and inequalities, transparent and accountable governance, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence.

Governance lies at the very heart of this agenda: more words are used to describe various dimensions it is than any other aspect. If they could read Roland Paris' recommendations – to phase in liberal democracy only later, after the service delivery and management capacity of the state has been strengthened – they seemingly would agree!

The answers we heard are generally very similar to those found by Donini and his colleagues (2006) in their studies in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. Their conclusion is:

... local communities view security as safety from physical harm and abuse but also extending far beyond to encompass a sense of well-being

including elements such as employment, access to basic services, political participation, and cultural identity, as one participant put it ‘there is no peace without bread’. Thus communities have a more holistic understanding of what constitutes security than the narrower concerns of the two other sets of actors.

Yuko Miyazawa (2005) interviewed youth in Bougainville after more than a decade of war, and received similar answers: the largest category spoke about ‘harmony and togetherness of people’, followed by freedom of movement, ‘freedom of speech’, ‘justice’ and ‘order’. A few mentioned ‘human rights’. And Tezare and his colleagues interviewed Eritrean refugees in Canada (2006). Their perception of peace seems to revolve around four pillars: absence of war; communal relations; human rights and freedom; and peace of mind. All these results are similar, both in their correspondence to the human security agenda and in the low importance they attach to explicit governance variables.

Donini et al (2006:8–10) interpret their results to mean that non-security concerns come to the fore once peace has been solidly established that is, the presence of these more holistic, positive peace concerns comes chronologically *after* straightforward security (negative peace) has been acquired. ‘Improved overall security has allowed communities to shift their sights progressively from physical security issues – freedom from fear and violence – to a range of human security issues.’ Is that so? Or do people *at all times* define peace holistically? The only way to empirically solve this would be to have done the same research in the same place at different times, and see whether the trends mirror this hypothesis. Unfortunately, neither they nor I did so. In the absence of that, all I can say is that ‘negative peace’ accounts for one-third of all answers everywhere, regardless of significant differences in the security situation: in communes that have known little active violence; among displaced people clearly still afraid to return home; in urban neighbourhoods still under attack from the FNL while I was doing my research; etc. This suggests – but does not prove beyond doubt – that the ‘extra’ dimensions of peace are always included – not only after ‘hard’ security has been established.

## Notes

- 1 They also interviewed peacekeeping organisations and aid agencies, which I did not, which allows them to make some interesting comparisons on how peace and security is differently defined by all three groups. On the other hand, all their interviews with the former two groups are individual, whereas all their conversations with ‘the population’ are in the form of focus groups, which I distrust, for the variation in opinions does not appear well in focus groups. Also, they did much fewer interviews than I did, working only two weeks in each setting.
- 2 For criticism of the breadth of this agenda, see Buzan 2004, Krause 2004 and Mack 2004.

- 3 This is Miyazawa's explanation (2005) for the frequent occurrence of mobility in Bougainville: 'Freedom of movement was a characteristic mentioned by those who did not have such freedom when living at care centres and bush camps.'

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